



Ruy H. Nagel
South America

Ulrich W. Ffirkart
Euro-Africa

Israel Leito
Inter-America

Bertil A. Wiklander
Trans-Europe

Geoffrey G. Mbwana
East-Central Africa

Don C. Schneider
North America

Laurie J. Evans
South Pacific

Luka T. Daniel
West-Central Africa

Paul S. Ratsara
Southern Africa-Indian Ocean

Jairyong Lee
Northern Asia-Pacific

Arrur A. Stele
Euro-Asia

D. Ronald Watts
Southern Asia

Alberto C. Gulfan, Jr.
Southern Asia-Pacific

GC BULLETIN



World Division Presidents Elected to Serve for 2005-2010

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It's About People

BY NATHAN BROWN

As I sit in my comfortable delegate's seat (perhaps becoming a little less so after a week of sitting), millions in London and—as the news updates bounce around the world—countless more are reeling with the shock of another deadly terrorist attack. The story will continue to unfold over the next few hours and days, so any details I might give here would likely be out of date by the time this appears in print. But that these bombings are tragic was quickly realized as beyond question.

And so it was appropriate that, as the morning's business session was called to order, a statement responding to the London bombings was read, and Pastor Cecil Perry, president of the British Union Conference, prayed for the injured, the families of the victims, his homeland, and our world.

It almost goes without saying that there was no dissent, objection, or points of procedures raised. As such, this moment was one of the exceptions.

After a week of General Conference business sessions, one thing that has become obvious is the deep difficulties and frustration that come with trying to make decisions at such an international church level. While we

speak of unity, on many issues the worldwide church is less than one.

Perhaps some would claim this is simply part of the natural interaction amid a dynamic spiritual movement.

these life-shaking moments that our message and acts of compassion and hope make most sense. While we all struggle to explain the horrific absurdity of such evil acts, I'm proud to

belong to a church that steps up with some answers amid the tragic headlines. I'm proud that Adventist churches in the London region are open as places of prayer, and that Adventists are seeking to assist in whatever way they can in response to these attacks.

These are the most recent examples of the worldwide work of a people of hope, represented by the thousands of del-

legates and visitors at this session. While we probably all have our disappointments, our frustrations, and our divergent views on where the church should go on various issues, we are united in our mission to help and love others. And together—to borrow again from the statement shared by delegates—"we look forward to the time when all sin, death, and suffering are no more, when Jesus returns."

Nathan Brown is editor of Signs Publishing Company in Australia.



PHOTO BY ALDEN J. HO & REVIEW & HERALD

But at times it seems the session processes and governance are groaning under the weight of a church that has experienced dramatic growth and draws delegates from a myriad of nationalities, languages, and cultures.

Yet the pause at the beginning of yesterday's business highlighted the real unity among this diverse group: It's about people. Our unity of purpose is found in reaching out to hurting people, seeking to connect them with the love of God in practical and spiritual ways. As the statement read to delegates put it, "Seventh-day Adventists are people of peace and compassion."

While not wanting to endorse the tragedies of our world, it's perhaps in

Cycle of Life

“Sometimes you have to face harsh realities before you know what’s right.”

*Pastor Minervino (Minner) and Evelyn Labrador
Clearwater, Florida*



The first question our financial advisor asked us about retirement was: Do you have a will and other estate planning documents? We didn't. Within weeks, two tragedies in our church showed

us how important estate planning can be. A beloved deacon suffered a serious stroke. Machines kept him alive, but he could no longer communicate. Loving relatives found themselves in a painful argument – a conflict that could have been avoided, if only our church member had signed an advance medical directive. Then, a young couple related to a church member died in a car accident, leaving two young children. Because there was neither a will nor

guardianship papers, the family had no way of knowing what the parents' wishes were for their children. Before the issue was resolved peaceably, probate costs had significantly reduced the children's insur-

ance benefits and inheritance. When we thought about our own family, we knew we couldn't live with uncertainty. We had to fulfill our obligations as parents, as pastors of the flock and as responsible stewards of God's goods. Now that we have wills we are so relieved. We know that if anything happens to us, our sons will be raised in a home we've chosen for them.



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Through the Presence of His Spirit

Devotional message presented Thursday morning, July 7, 2005

Once I read this story. Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), the great artist, had to spend more than two years painting his world-renowned *The Last Supper*.

It is said that the delay was because even though he could find a suitable model to paint Christ at the center of his rough sketch, he had a difficult time locating someone who could embody Judas as a hypocrite-traitor, someone with a glum face marked by antipathy and gloom. One day as he walked by a street corner, under the shadow he caught sight of a man lying on the ground—a man who totally fitted the image of Judas that he had in mind. The artist was overwhelmed by this finding after such a long period of anxious waiting.

But before Da Vinci had a chance to grasp the man and take a good look at him, this fellow recognized him, and in sadness cried out, “Sir, do you still remember me? Years ago I was chosen by you to be the model of Christ in your new work, but now who do you want me to model for? Or how can I help? . . .”

Leonardo muttered, “Judas!”

An apocryphal tale, no doubt. But it makes the point. In countless cases such tragic consequences of sin in human characters are repeated again and again. And how can God’s image in humanity be restored to its original perfection that God intends—from Leonardo’s Judas to his Christ? Ellen G. White states that education, good manners, and willpower all have their place in helping us to do right things. But they cannot change our hearts, she says, or make our lives pure. Only new life from above can work within us and change us from being sinful to being holy (see *Steps to Christ*, pp. 18, 19). Jesus says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6, NKJV). The only way for us to be restored to God’s image is through believing in our crucified and resurrected Savior.



Robert Wong
*Director, Global
Chinese Ministries,
Chinese Union
Mission*

The Holy Spirit and Believers

In Jesus’ farewell speech, He introduced the Holy Spirit to His disciples and put emphasis on the Spirit as His representative, successor, and the finisher of His redeeming work on earth.

Jesus’ redemptive work on the cross for us is closely connected with the work of the Holy Spirit. As Ellen G. White wrote: “Everything had been transformed by the working of the arts of Satan” (manuscript 143, 1897, in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 16, p. 122). So we desperately needed the work of the Holy Spirit to restore God’s image in us.

The work of the Spirit for us comes in many ways, among them, the following:

By the Holy Spirit we comprehend God’s love manifested in Christ by faith (Rom. 5:5); by the Spirit we can say: “Jesus is Lord” (1 Cor. 12:3); the Spirit helps us repent, seek for righteousness, and be aware of the coming condemnation (John 16:8); and by the Spirit we are regenerated and led into the kingdom of God (John 3:6). Jesus said: “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit” (John 3:5, NIV). And only through the Holy Spirit can we produce the spiritual fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22, 23).

The Holy Spirit at Pentecost

Even after Christ’s resurrection—not to mention before His crucifixion—Jesus’ disciples were a group of fearful people, ready to run and scatter in the face of difficulty and persecution. How could such weak spirits and trembling hearts be witnesses for their Master? Could Jesus’ Great Commission be entrusted to such a group?

Ellen G. White had this insight: “Christ determined to bestow a gift on those who had been with Him and on those who should believe on Him. . . . Christ gave His representa-

rive, the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit. This gift could not be excelled" (manuscript 44, 1898, in *Christ Triumphant*, p. 301).

The unbelieving and vacillating disciples, however, had to prepare their hearts first in order to receive such a gift. But it was none other than the Holy Spirit who could prepare their hearts by convicting them of their sins of unbelief, helping them in their weakness, and leading them to repentance (John 16:7-9; Acts 5:31; Rom. 8:26; Eph. 2:8; Zech. 12:10).

Praise the Lord, the apostles and the first group of early Christians yielded to the pleadings of the Spirit. The result was the baptism by the Holy Spirit, in the form of Pentecost (Acts 2).

With the generous infilling of the Holy Spirit, the disciples' demeanor and conduct were imbued with Christ's mercy, reflecting the profound transformation in their inner being. Tender words and kind deeds became their hallmarks. With their spiritual eyes cleansed by penitent tears, they saw God in their brother's and sister's presence as well as the heavenly light shining forth from their coworkers' countenance.

Blessed with purity of heart and joy indescribable, they went out boldly to proclaim the risen Savior and urge sinners to make peace with God. The Spirit empowered them with an inner courage that could defy fear in the presence of dangers and persecution. The Holy Spirit reassured them of God's presence and God's promise of eternal life beyond this life. Death under persecution was no longer to be feared as they preached Christ and Him crucified.

What God did then, I am convinced, He can do again today—for us across the globe—if we will only humble ourselves and turn our hearts and seek His face.

The Holy Spirit, the Latter Rain, and the Church Today

Ellen White has reminded us that "the baptism of the Holy Ghost as on the day of Pentecost will lead to a revival of true religion" (letter 27,

1894, in *Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 57). If we follow the apostles' footsteps in being constantly praying together, in having sincere, contrite hearts, I believe our church can be filled with the Holy Spirit to proclaim God's message boldly.

We know that the glorious events that took place at Pentecost in the apostolic church was only a partial and initial fulfillment of Joel's exciting prophecy (Joel 2:28, 29). The outpouring of God's Spirit at Pentecost was like the early rain in Palestine—merely to water the seeds that have just been sown. The latter rain, with its full impact, will culminate right before the great harvest when Christ in full glory comes with all the mighty angels.

From our Adventist perspective, "the latter splendor of this house shall be greater than the former," to borrow the words of the Lord to the prophet Haggai (Haggai 2:9, RSV). If we consider that the great Advent religious revival occurred in the mid-nineteenth

century, then the first angel's message, calling people's attention to the judgment hour in the heavenly sanctuary, began in 1840-1844. Through the prophets God had promised the latter rain, previewed in the history of the apostolic church in Acts. It was signified by an "angel coming down from heaven, having great authority; and the earth was made bright with his splendor" (Rev. 18:1, RSV).

This world and the church need to witness God's coming glory in the form of a massive revival, permeated by the Holy Spirit. I believe God is planning for such a climax for the finishing of His work and initiating Jesus' second coming.

God's Word is sure; His promises never fail. We can trust Him to transform us by His Spirit today and every day, because "the Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children," destined to "share in his glory" (Rom. 8:16, 17, NIV). Hallelujah! Amen.

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Order complete sets of devotionals at the AdventSource booth by noon Friday, July 8. For after-Session sales call 800-328-0525.

Not all evening reports and musical presentations will be recorded for sale because of copyright restrictions. However, every effort is being made to make available as much as possible. Visit the AdventSource booth for availability.

A Time to Act

Delegates discuss humanity issues and discipling at Challenge to Mission sessions.

BY DANE GRIFFIN, CORRESPONDENT FOR THE ADVENTIST REVIEW, ASSISTANT TO THE MICHIGAN CONFERENCE PRESIDENT FOR MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

Delegates and church leaders gathered on Monday, July 4, of the General Conference session for the second of five one-hour dialogues on the challenges facing the church in its commission to evangelize the world.

“We are called to take the gospel to the entire world,” Global Mission director Michael Ryan reminded the delegates. “And that includes the large cities of the world. We must find ways to [understand] the people’s fears, their hurts, their joys.”

Ryan surveyed some of the enormous social challenges of the global environment in which the church operates. According to Ryan, 1.1 billion people worldwide live in extreme poverty, and 12 million children in the United States experience hunger each year. In 2004, 4.9 million people worldwide were infected with the HIV virus, with 3.1 million

deaths attributed to the complications resulting from AIDS, leaving 15 million orphans. Ryan also cited statistics that indicate 3 percent of the world’s inhabitants, or 185 million people, are illicit drug users.

Ryan then asked the delegates, “How does your church score when it comes to its interest in these needs of society? The fact is,” he said, “only 20 percent of Adventists are involved in addressing today’s pressing social issues. And as a people, we are very slow to get involved in the community on these issues.”

Mark Finley, vice president for global evangelism, summarized the presentation: “When churches are doing something in the community, those churches grow. If your church closed its doors tomorrow, would your community beg it to reopen because of what it would miss without you there?”

A lively discussion followed on how church members could be more involved in addressing social issues in their regions.

Tuesday’s meeting addressed apostasy of church members. After Finley presented sobering statistics on the growing number of people who leave the church, delegates shared ideas on how to address the problem.

Paul Thompkins, a lay delegate for the Trans-European Division, said the church needs to develop a better strategic plan to work with and nurture those who do leave the church. “Many of them,” he said, “haven’t left Jesus; they’ve just left the church.”

Basil Peter Adrian Hall from South Africa agreed: “God worked with Satan when he chose to leave the heavenly family. I don’t see the same attitude among the brethren to work with those who leave our family.”



LET’S BE PATIENT: Euro-Africa Division lay delegate Fatiha Benazza called for patience for new church members.

Revised Fundamental Belief Voted

BY MICKEY NICKLESS, CORRESPONDENT FOR THE ADVENTIST REVIEW, COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR OF THE MICHIGAN CONFERENCE

On Thursday, July 7, a revision of the wording of the newly voted Statement of Fundamental Belief, “Growing in Christ,” was approved. Because of technology issues, some delegates were not recognized by the chairperson during the earlier vote on July 4 to approve the new statement. Time was then given for additional discus-

sion, and a vote was taken to ask the ad hoc committee to seek consensus on the wording. A report was brought back to the floor with two slight revisions, which helped clarify the statement.

To read the full text of the new Fundamental Belief, “Growing in Christ,” go to www.adventistreview.org.

After the discussion turned to the issue of discipleship, Onaolapo Ajibale from the West-Central Africa Division said he felt there is too much emphasis on baptism numbers and not enough on how many members are being disciplined. "We need to stress discipleship, not baptisms," he said, to a round of applause from the audience.

Fatiha Benazza, a lay delegate from the Euro-Africa Division, told the crowd that when she first approached an Adventist pastor to request baptism, because she was a former Muslim the pastor sent her to a Baptist church. He didn't think she would make a good Adventist. "We need to be patient with people as they search and learn," Benazza said.

World church president Jan Paulsen told the *Adventist Review* that he urges Adventists to understand that people leave the church because they're not being nurtured and don't feel loved, not because they find fault with our doctrines.

"The church needs to be a good family," Paulsen said. "New members need to feel needed and loved. We must remember that we are a family, and that each member of the family is important."

For complete coverage of the General Conference session, visit the Adventist Review Web site at www.adventistreview.org.

Young Delegates Pose Tough Questions to President

BY BONITA JOYNER SHIELDS,

ASSISTANT EDITOR, ADVENTIST REVIEW

World church president Jan Paulsen met with young adult delegates of the General Conference session on



CONNECTING: Pastor Jan Paulsen and wife, Kari, discuss important issues with young adult delegates on Thursday afternoon, July 7.

Thursday afternoon, July 7, for "Let's Talk," the fourth in a series of forums in which Paulsen participates in unscripted dialogue with young adults under the age of 30. Delegates from Bulgaria, Romania, Ireland, Mexico, Australia, Mongolia, Tanzania, and the United States asked questions of the General Conference president. Topics ranged from abortion to youth leadership to suicide.

The live dialogue began with a challenging statistic: "Sixty to 70 percent of young people are leaving the church," stated the female delegate. "What can we do?"

Paulsen explained that most people who leave the church do so not from a disagreement with the beliefs but rather from fractured relationships. "The local congregation needs to be a people who are a loving community," he said.

Another topic on the minds of the young adult delegates concerned higher education. "How is the church assuring that higher education institutions are staying true to our mission?" was asked.

Paulsen affirmed that Adventist colleges and universities are invaluable to the mission of our church, and that the large majority of them are "safe" for our youth. Regarding the leadership of these institutions and their dedication to the mission of the church, Paulsen

reminded the delegates, "We appeal to one another, and we remind each other of our objectives. You, however, make the choice as to which school you will attend to acquire your education. Do your homework," he counseled.

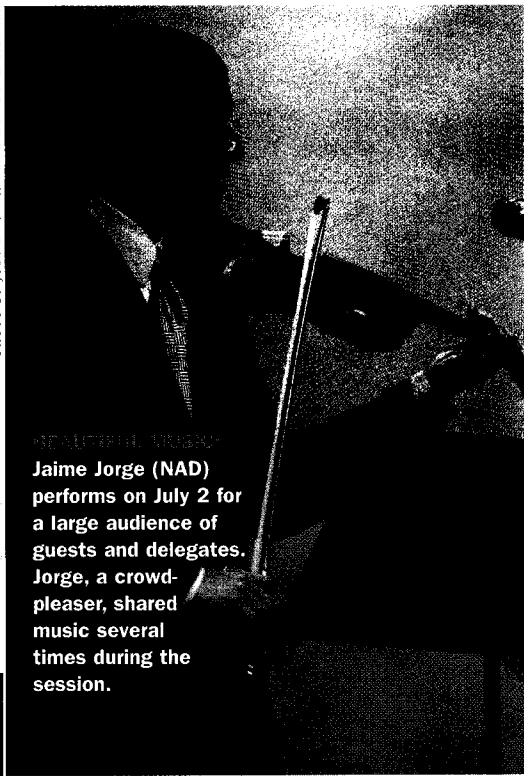
One of the more pointed questions dealt with the way business is accomplished at the GC session: "Politics are in place [here at the session]," one delegate insisted. "The chairs of the committees are rushing business through. It seems as if the delegates are only rubber stamps, and we don't have much power. How can we have checks and balances between the delegates and the Nominating Committee?" he asked.

"For every item that comes to the floor," responded Paulsen, "there are 20 people who want to speak to it. Delegates must be allowed to air their concerns; we need to listen to each other. Yet we also need to make progress. But if you don't like something, vote it down!"

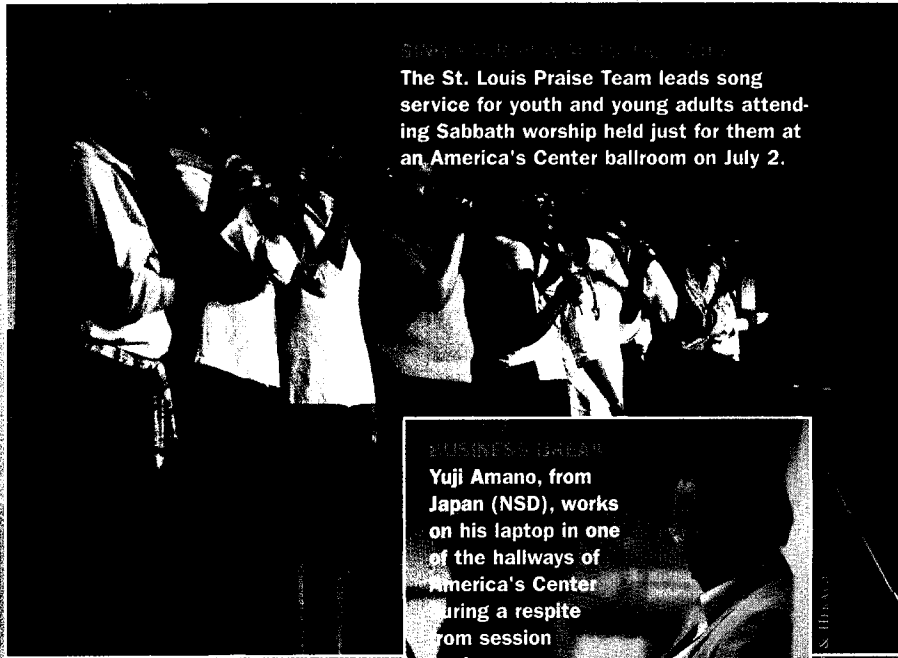
"The Lord has a plan," assured Paulsen, "and it's for us to discover what it is. 'Behind the scenes' agendas do not belong in the community of God's people."

For complete coverage of the General Conference session, visit the Adventist Review Web site at www.adventistreview.org.

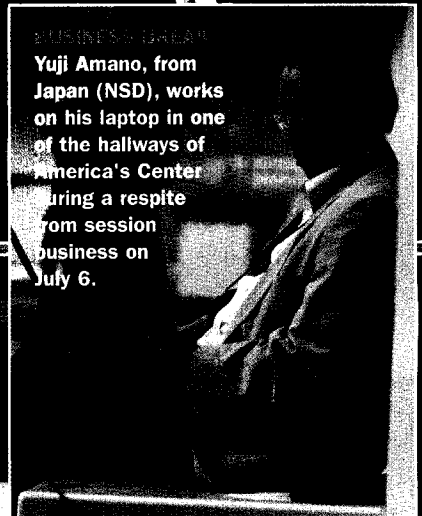
PHOTO BY JOEL D. SPRINGER © REVIEW & HERALD



HEALTHFUL TUNEUP
Jaime Jorge (NAD) performs on July 2 for a large audience of guests and delegates. Jorge, a crowd-pleaser, shared music several times during the session.

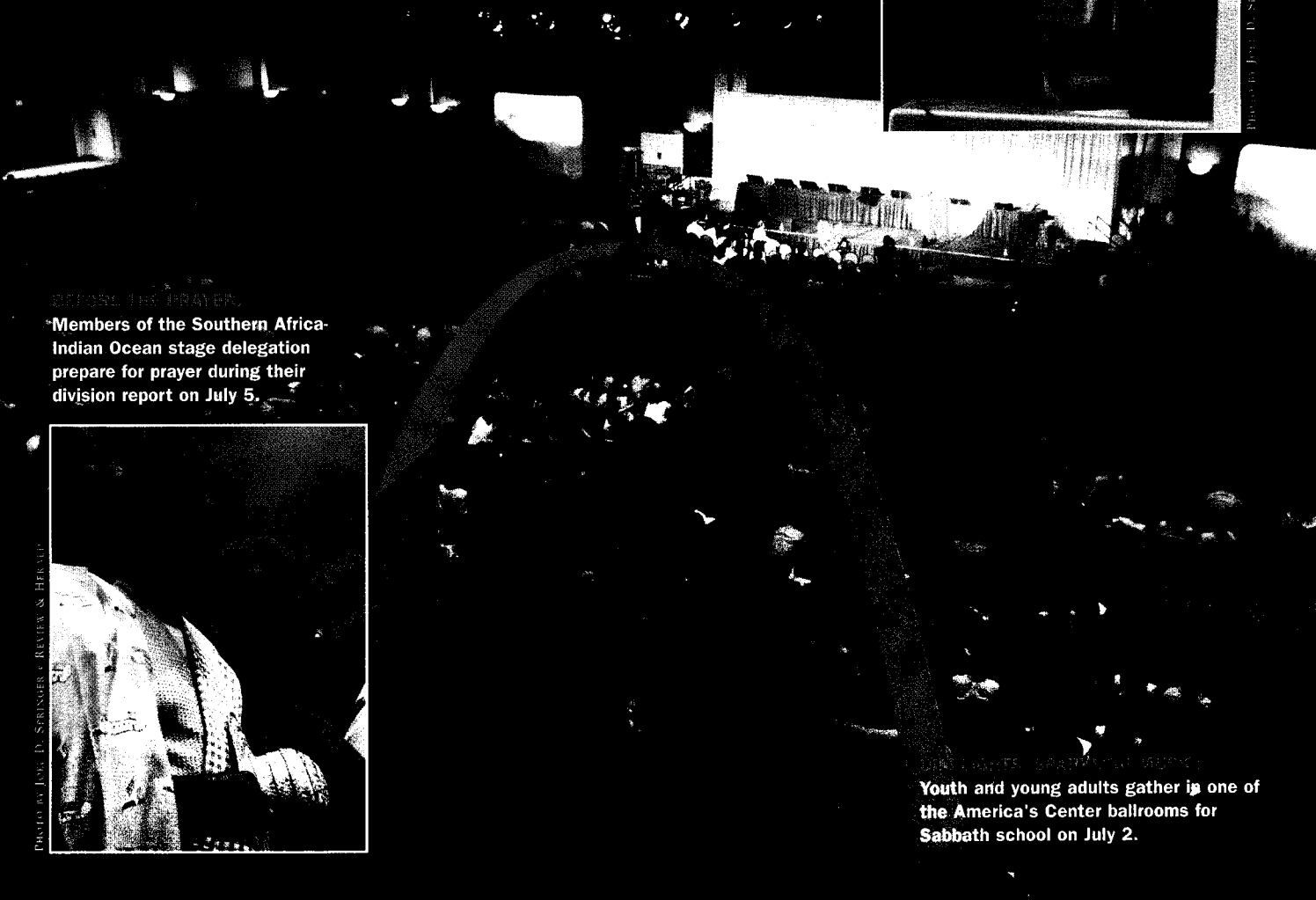


THEY SING TOGETHER
The St. Louis Praise Team leads song service for youth and young adults attending Sabbath worship held just for them at an America's Center ballroom on July 2.



BUSINESS IN JAPAN
Yuji Amano, from Japan (NSD), works on his laptop in one of the hallways of America's Center during a respite from session business on July 6.

PHOTO BY JOEL D. SPRINGER © REVIEW & HERALD



BEFORE THE PRAYER

Members of the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean stage delegation prepare for prayer during their division report on July 5.

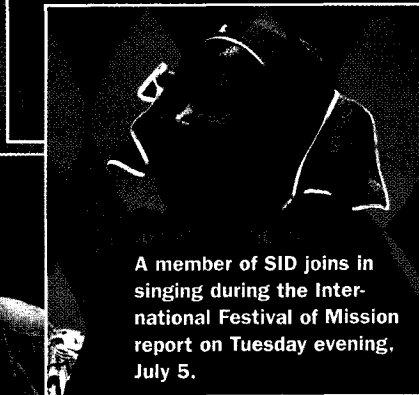


PHOTO BY JOEL D. SPRINGER © REVIEW & HERALD

YOUTH GATHER FOR WORSHIP
Youth and young adults gather in one of the America's Center ballrooms for Sabbath school on July 2.

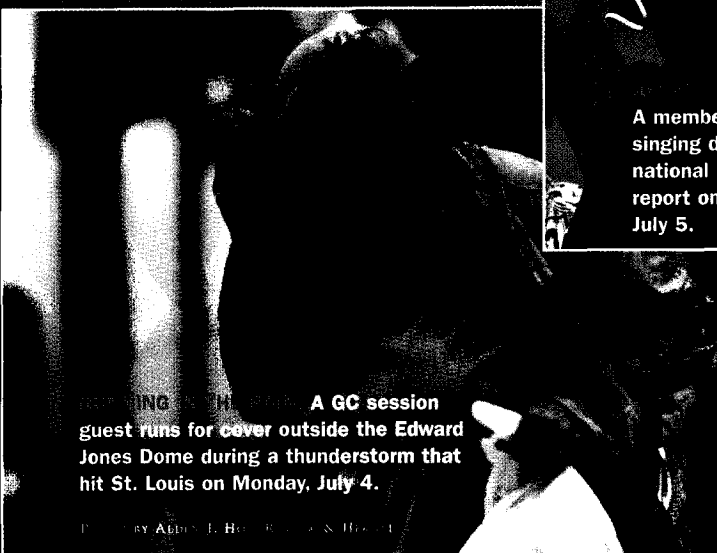


A member of the South Pacific Division delegation, dressed in traditional garb, opens their evening division report on July 4 with a greeting sounded on a conch shell.



A member of SID joins in singing during the International Festival of Mission report on Tuesday evening, July 5.

PHOTO BY JOEL D. SPRINGER © REVIEW & HERALD

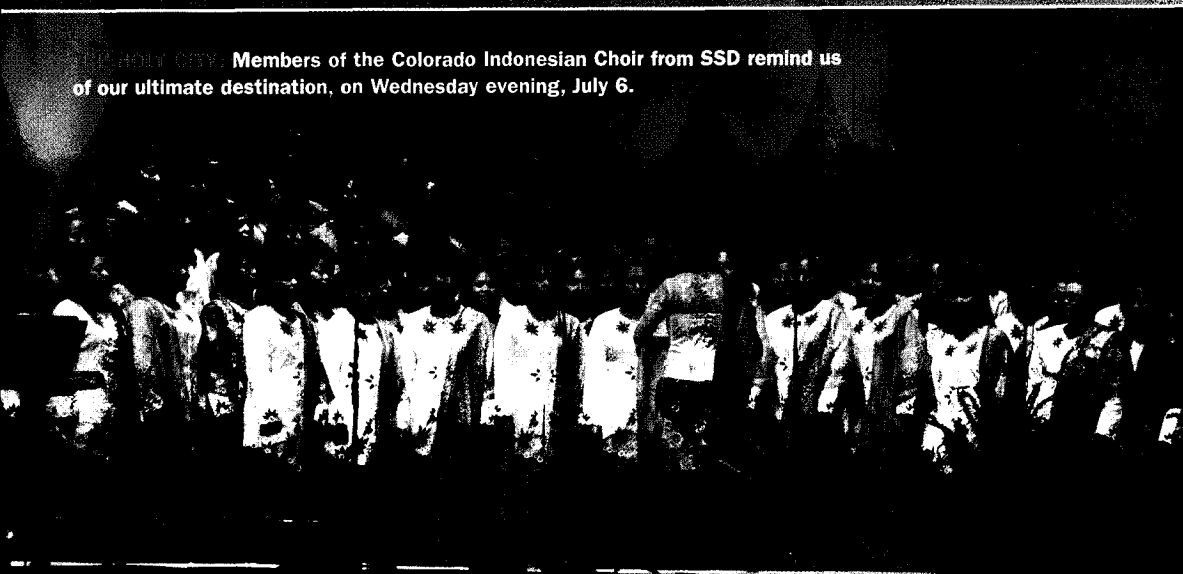


WINDING COVER A GC session guest runs for cover outside the Edward Jones Dome during a thunderstorm that hit St. Louis on Monday, July 4.

PHOTO BY ALDEN J. HO © REVIEW & HERALD

WINDING COVER Stephen Batchelor from NAD delivers a musical message on Monday evening about sharing the gospel with children, July 4, 2005.

PHOTO BY ALDEN J. HO © REVIEW & HERALD



THE HOLY CITY Members of the Colorado Indonesian Choir from SSD remind us of our ultimate destination, on Wednesday evening, July 6.

PHOTO BY JOEL D. SPRINGER © REVIEW & HERALD



ALL THAT WORK AND WE STILL LOOK GOOD: From writing news to shooting close-ups, from designing spreads to copyediting (and all the other jobs in between), the combined team of the *Adventist Review* and the *Review and Herald* make sure files for the daily *GC Bulletins* get to Hagerstown safely and on deadline.

How Do They Do It?

A week in Maryland equals 24 hours in St. Louis.

BY STEPHEN CHAVEZ,
MANAGING EDITOR, *ADVENTIST REVIEW*

Shortly after 8:00 a.m. each morning of the General Conference session, a van pulls up to the Ninth Street loading dock of America's Center, and a pallet containing 4,000 copies of the *Adventist Review* is off-loaded. The daily *Bulletins* have landed.

Every year Adventists by the thousands look to the *Adventist Review* for weekly news and information. But every five years at the quinquennial GC session the *Adventist Review* becomes a "daily," to report on events of the session from the previous day.

The weekly production process maintained by the paper's editors and designers under normal circumstances suddenly becomes compressed. Devotionals and division reports, as well as actions and proceedings from the floor, are reported and delivered to

the delegates on the floor the day after they happen.

"We work side by side with publishing house staff," notes *Adventist Review* editor William Johnson. "It's essentially an around-the-clock operation—demanding, but exciting and fulfilling."

The routine goes something like this: an editor of the day coordinates the material that goes into each day's *Bulletin*. Reporters and photographers are assigned to sit in on press conferences and chase down developing stories. Transcripts from the previous day's presentations and floor discussions, as well as reports from the Nominating Committee, are provided by the Office of the Secretary of the General Conference. Like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, the editor of the day finds ways to fit these with the devotional presentations, division reports, and advertisements.

Working with the editors is a copy editor and a group of designers from the *Review and Herald* Publishing Association, who help carry out the

editor's plan for that day's *Bulletin*.

Did I mention deadlines? Everything has to be complete—every photo placed, every fact checked, every file sent—by 5:00 p.m. Central Time so that the files can arrive electronically at the *Review and Herald* in Hagerstown, Maryland, where printing plates are prepared and placed on presses.

Overnight the issues are printed, bound, packed on pallets, and shipped to Baltimore-Washington International Airport for delivery to the America's Center by 8:00 a.m. As the print edition of the daily *Bulletins* hits the floor of the Edward Jones Dome, the online edition of the *Adventist Review* is released over the Internet (www.adventistreview.org), along with audio and video files. Throughout the day more than two dozen "newskids" sell the daily *Bulletins* at four locations within the complex.

"Of all the operations we perform," says associate editor Roy Adams, *Bulletin* coordinator, "perhaps none calls for more dependence on God than what we do at a session. The chances for serious blunder are so strong. But thus far, as in the past, God has come through for us."

For more than a century the *Adventist Review* has been the official record of the General Conference sessions. Although it's not possible to capture the General Conference experience in 32-page bulletins, even when they appear daily, it is possible to catch a glimpse of what God is doing among Seventh-day Adventists around the world by reading the daily *Bulletins*.

For complete coverage of the General Conference session, visit the *Adventist Review* Web site at www.adventistreview.org.



The production crew at the *Review and Herald* Publishing Association in Hagerstown, Maryland

From Graffiti to Grace

BY BONITA JOYNER SHIELDS, ASSISTANT EDITOR, ADVENTIST REVIEW

Impact St. Louis (ISL), a young adult evangelistic initiative taking place during the General Conference session, is continuing its ministry in the streets of St. Louis. Under the direction of Manny Cruz, youth director of the Texico Conference, members of the Street Artists Ministry are creating a mural outside the Agape Seventh-day Adventist Church on Bartmer Avenue to help announce the F.L.A.G. (Fun Learning About God) Camp taking place there.

"We create artwork as a community service—not to proselytize," explained Cruz. "We want to build bridges with the community and to serve as Jesus served. I do tell my group, however, 'Don't push religion, but always be listening to the Holy Spirit for opportunities to share Christ.'"

According to Cruz, creating a mural with trained artists usually takes about two hours, but it can take up to six hours when he is also teaching the youth the techniques of mural painting. Part of the process of creating this type of art is to clean up old graffiti that contains a harmful message and replace it with a healing message. Community residents have expressed appreciation for the work Cruz and his team perform, and often they bring them food and drink.

"In my younger years," said Charlotte Washington, a member of the Street Artists Ministry, "I painted on walls. Though it's associated with hoodlums, I like the fact that this ministry takes that negative connotation and turns it into something positive."

As a child Cruz would write on anything he could find—notebooks, homework papers, lunch bags. As he grew older, and before becoming an Adventist, Cruz became a "tagger"—

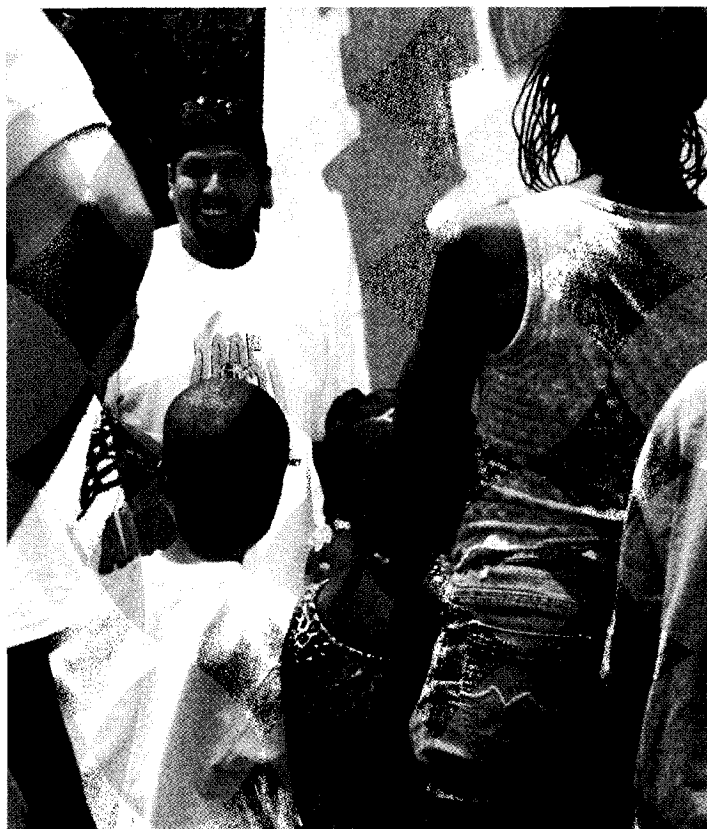


PHOTO BY JOEL D. SPRINGER / REVIEW & HERALD

HAVING FUN: Manny Cruz, leader of the Impact St. Louis Street Artists Ministry, tells kids about how they go about creating a mural, July 4.

painting graffiti on walls throughout the city of Los Angeles, leaving his name in as many places as possible. He now tells young and old about how God brought him out of a life of alcohol, gangs, and graffiti on the streets of Los Angeles to a new life of helping

'Instead of wasting your time doing this, shouldn't you be doing the work of God?' "I just smiled," he said.

For more news about Impact St. Louis at the General Conference session, visit the Adventist Review Web site at www.adventistreview.org.

Adventist Church Condemns London's Terrorist Attack

General Conference vice president Ted Wilson read to the GC session delegations on July 7 the following statement released by the church's Communication Department regarding the terrorist bomb attacks that occurred that morning in London, England:

"On behalf of all of us attending the 58th world session of the Seventh-day Adventist Church here in St. Louis, we would like to express our shock and horror at the mindless acts of terror, brutality, and extremism seen in London today. Our thoughts and prayers are with the injured and bereaved.

"We are living in an increasingly unstable and dangerous world. We recognize

that there are those who mistakenly see violence as the way to promote their cause, claiming that their cause is absolute and taking lives is fully justified.

"Seventh-day Adventists are people of peace and compassion. Our Lord is the Lord of peace. As a people we unequivocally condemn violence as a solution.

"Churches in South England are open for special prayer and the Advent Centre, close to one of the explosions in central London, is remaining open to care for the needs of those in the area. The church is in contact with hospital chaplains in the area, providing support as needed.

"Sadly we live in a world where these atrocities continue to happen. It is a sign of the times in which we live. But even within the context of sorrow we thank God for the hope that He gives to all who believe. We look forward to a time when sin, death, and suffering are no more—when Jesus returns."

kids and youth.

Cruz has been involved in youth ministry for more than 15 years. His unique Street Artists Ministry has taken him across the United States, Canada, and Mexico speaking to youth about the power of God in transforming lives.

When asked what was the most unusual response to his ministry that he has received, Cruz replied, "A church member once asked me,

For Discipleship

Devotional message presented Thursday evening, July 7, 2005

Some time ago I heard about a little boy who asked as he strolled down the street with his father, "Dad, how tall am I?"

The father said he guessed his son was about three feet tall, plus a few inches.

Then came a follow-up question: "Dad, how tall are you?"

Bemused at the boy's question, the father answered that he was about five feet ten.

Then the boy got to his real question: "Dad, how tall is Jesus?"

"Well," his dad replied hesitantly, "I don't know for sure, but He must be more than six feet tall." Then he asked why the boy wanted to know.

"You see, Dad, because Jesus is living in me, and He is so much taller than me, He must be sticking out of me all the time."

What Do People See?

What "sticks out" of our lives? Is it the Savior or is it self? Is Jesus bigger than anyone or anything else? In order for Jesus to "stick out" of us, we must "stick with" Him. Jesus said this to His disciples: "You also are witnesses, because you have been with me from the beginning" (John 15:27, RSV). Jesus said this toward the end of His earthly ministry as He reviewed His experience of training them. He closely connected His disciples' state of *being* to their state of *doing*. I mention *being* (with Him) first because that was what led them to *doing* (to witnessing for Him). This text clearly shows the linkage between cause and effect: being with Him resulted in witnessing for Him.

Jesus was not merely interested in dispensing information to His disciples, but in transforming their lives. Consider this relevant statement from Ellen White: "It is not the



Philip G. Samaan
Ellen G. White
Chair and Professor
of Religion, Southern
Adventist University

highest work of education to communicate knowledge merely, but to impart that vitalizing energy which is received through the contact of mind with mind, and soul with soul. It is only life that can beget life" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 250).

Therefore it is the life of Jesus reproduced in us that makes us fruitful disciples. And from that position of strength, anchored in Christ, we can transform our world. "It is in proportion to our devotion and consecration to Christ," Ellen White said, "that we exert an influence for the blessing and uplifting of mankind" (*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 37). It is in following Him that we become fishers of others (Matt. 4:19). To Jesus, following and fishing go hand in hand. There are those who want to do fishing without following, and those who want to follow without fishing; but it simply does not work.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the great German theologian and martyr for the cause of Christ, defined discipleship to Christ as a summons to an "exclusive attachment to His person," and as an "adherence to Christ" (*The Cost of Discipleship*, p. 63). Genuine discipleship is anchored in an intimate relationship with Christ. Any form of outreach to others must always issue forth from our love and devotion to Christ.

Reproduction, Multiplication, Infiltration

So what is discipleship for the Advent movement today? Certainly Jesus is the expert disciple maker, and His strategy of making disciples is the only one that will finish His work. When Jesus reproduces Himself in His disciples, such transformed disciples infiltrate the world where they live and work, making beachheads for the kingdom as they make their presence felt for God. They reproduce in others what was reproduced in them, and thus reproduction leads to multiplication

and infiltration of the world.

The great and urgent challenge of the church today is not merely adding more members, but reproducing and multiplying fruit-bearing disciples. In the marching orders of Christ's Great Commission He did not say go and make *members*, but go and make *disciples* (Matt. 28:19). That was His plan to propagate His message to the end of the world. Making disciples was Christ's prevailing passion and priority throughout His ministry, and it must be our top priority right now. Either we follow Him or we fail Him.

Jesus finished two crucial tasks while He was in this world. First and foremost in importance was His work of salvation on the cross when He declared, "It is finished" (John 19:30). The second task He finished was His work of making disciples when He affirmed, "I have finished the work which You have given Me to do" (John 17:4, NKJV). This statement was made in the context of His high-priestly prayer for His disciples. They were indeed whom He had in mind, for He mentioned them 40 times in the course of the prayer. He glorified His Father in training them. So besides His completed and indispensable work of salvation on the cross, those disciples were also His work that He came to accomplish. On the cross He provided salvation, and through His disciples He was to share it with the world.

This strategy of Christ to reach the world is sublime yet simple, efficient, and effective. Robert Coleman, in his book *The Mind of the Master*, asserts that this divine strategy seems "so unassuming in its simplicity, yet invincible in its ultimate triumph. Just as they had been disciplined, so they were to disciple others, teaching them in turn to do the same, until through this process of multiplication, their witness reached the uttermost parts of the world" (p. 8).

The Argentinian evangelist Juan Ortiz makes it abundantly clear when he describes Christ's strategy in these words: "To make disciples who make disciples who make disciples who make disciples" (*Call to Discipleship*, p. 18).

In case you are thinking that the redundancy is a mistake, think twice. It is intentional, to convey the idea that Christ's strategy was to have an ever-widening and expansive impact on the world.

Efficiency and Effectiveness

As we look at our churches today, let us ask ourselves, Are we more focused on efficiency than effectiveness? Both are important, but efficiency must lead to effectiveness. For the bottom line in all of this is effectiveness in making disciples. Are we, by God's grace, coming up with the product: a reproductive disciple? Are we following Christ's mandate of making disciples (not merely members) of people we evangelize? This is the only way they can grow in their spiritual vitality, thus arresting the spiritual hemorrhage in our ranks. Instead of becoming a draining failure, they become a driving force to move the church forward.

Jesus intended His church to be a factory to produce and reproduce spiritual lightbulbs to shine in this darkened world. Let us not be caught off guard if people come into our midst looking for fruit-bearing, light-giving disciples if that is what our mission is all about. Of course, this is possible only if we become the light of the world in Christ's light. Only healthy disciples can reproduce healthy disciples. But that is why the Holy Spirit bestows His gifts upon the church: to build up the body of Christ and equip it for service (see Eph. 4:11, 12).

By Their Fruits

What do transformed, fruit-bearing disciples look like?

First, they find their highest position in sitting at the feet of Jesus. Sitting at the feet of Jesus implies submission and teachability. It is a part of human nature to desire to have a high position in life, but we reach our highest position when we sit at the feet of Jesus (see *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 15).

Second, they find their greatest recognition in becoming like Jesus. In

Acts 4:13, the Jewish leaders recognized Peter and John as having been with Jesus, because they were like Jesus. This is the greatest spiritual product we can have in the church: becoming Christ-like in who we are and what we do.

Third, they know that Christ does not call them merely to enjoy being disciples but to engage themselves in making disciples. Devoted disciples must become bold and disciplined disciples.

Fourth, they love Jesus supremely more than anyone else or anything else. Jesus, in His parting words just before leaving this world, asked Peter three times if He loved Him more than these (John 21:15-17).

Fifth, they love Jesus with all their being, and they would gladly put their lives on the line for Him.

For me the most powerful example of a transformed and reproductive disciple is the apostle Peter. What a radical transformation Christ had wrought in his life: from cowardly denying his Lord to gladly dying for Him. What happened to him? He learned the crucial lesson of Christ trust and self-distrust. He experienced brokenness to the core of his being. Out of this brokenness, Jesus rebuilt a meek and strong disciple. Peter was totally open to the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost giving him holy boldness. Three thousand souls were cut to the heart and baptized (see Acts 2:37-40). Finally he looked forward to proving his undying devotion to Christ by looking forward to the honor of dying for Him.

Let us answer the desire of Christ's heart of becoming laborers in His field. In Matthew 9:36-38 Christ drew a contrast between the harvest and the laborers: the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. What is the solution? According to Christ, it is to pray. Now let us fully open our hearts to Him, committing ourselves to become His laborers, molded in His image, reproducing and multiplying many disciples for Him.

Profiling Adventist Leadership

Tuesday, July 5, 2005

HAROLD W. BAPTISTE: In the interest of time we are making a quick transition. The house is still in session, and so business is in order. We are simply changing to another item on the agenda. We have listened thus far to two excellent presentations on leadership. We have the third presentation today, and Linda Koh is going to introduce the presenter.

LINDA KOH: It is my privilege this morning to introduce the speaker of this hour. Dr. Angel Rodríguez is the director of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference. He is from Puerto Rico, and is very fluent in both Spanish and English.

Dr. Rodríguez comes to us with a wealth of experience. He started his work as a pastor; he has served as a professor at and president of Antillian College, as a professor at Southwestern Adventist College, and as the assistant director of the Department of Education in the Inter-American Division.

Dr. Rodríguez obtained his bachelor's degree from Antillian College, and Master of Divinity and Doctor of Theology degrees from Andrews University. He is also a well-established author, writing in many of our Adventist publications.

[The presentation by Angel Rodríguez is recorded in *Profiling Adventist Leadership*. Dr. Rodríguez closed his presentation as follows:]

ANGEL RODRÍGUEZ: Authority is a trust for which we are accountable to the global church and to our Lord. Modeled after Christ's authority, ecclesiastical authority constantly aims at the care of and the sincere concern for God's people. For the apostles, the most important thing as leaders was the building of the church, not their personal reputation and self-image. The use of ecclesiastical authority required from leaders is always to do what is good and right for the church and for the Lord. Thank you very much.

HAROLD W. BAPTISTE: Thank you very much, Dr. Rodríguez. We now go to the questions and remarks from the floor.

JUAN R. PRESTOL: Dr. Paulsen spoke and utilized the phrase "Adventist values" and the importance of having those values prevail. Dr. Behrens spoke about integrity. Now, in light of this most recent presentation, I have a question that I wish we could have some clarification on. At times integrity, truthfulness, honesty, and sincerity are not evident in an entity; in fact, often the opposite values prevail. It becomes impossible for an individual to point out the wrongs, because deceit, dishonesty, and lack of sincerity have already become systemic. When a group of individ-

uals create and nurture an atmosphere of corruption, and when institutionalized corruption is accepted as a way of life, what means are left to the individual seeking change?

ANGEL RODRÍGUEZ: This is a very complex question. There are several things that I suppose could be done. No doubt a change in leadership is required in such a situation, and since the system is so corrupted, the next level of church administration is responsible to find ways to effect changes to the system. So the stakes are very high when leaders do not live up to what is expected from them as leaders of the church by those who entrusted that authority to them.

SAMUEL KORANTENG-PIPIM: I'd like to express my appreciation to Dr. Rodríguez for this beautiful exposition on authority. In my opinion, this is one of the finest that has been presented anywhere. My question is this: What happens when the church goes beyond the boundaries of authority and enacts doctrines, practices, or procedures that may be contrary to God's will? What recourse is available?

ANGEL RODRÍGUEZ: The church is not infallible. We don't believe in the infallibility of the church, because the church is composed of individuals like me. And that is saying a lot. Therefore, mistakes are always possible. And that's why we have the famous preamble to the Statement of Fundamental Beliefs that calls us from time to time to revisit the expression of our fundamental beliefs in order to make sure that they express in a very clear and concise way true biblical teaching. The problem with the question raised is How do we decide that a particular expression of a biblical truth or a particular procedure is not biblical, particularly when the Bible itself is not explicitly clear about the issue? We cannot legislate in every detail, because the Bible does allow for diversity in areas. I give you a quick example.

We have never defined the nature of Christ. And consequently the church has allowed for diversity of opinions. Why? Because of the tremendous mystery that is present there. And because the Bible does not reveal the full depth of that ministry to us, we're looking forward to eternity to begin to understand.

HAROLD W. BAPTISTE: Thank you for your comments. We appreciate them very much.

VALENTINE C. ONWUBUARIRI: I want to underscore the fact that if ever there was a time that we needed a series like this, it is now. But my problem is: How

do we get this presentation to those who follow?

I have a suggestion, Mr. Chairman. When the first presentation was made, we were told that we are to learn by doing. I agree with that, but if we depend on learning from those who are already on the job, I'm not sure that is the best. I want to suggest that this management involves the curriculum of our colleges and universities.

A graduate becomes a pastor, and before long is elected president. That graduate is elected to positions that demand the application of management principles. But what if the graduate doesn't know them? I suggest that students be introduced to management programs.

HAROLD W. BAPTISTE: Thank you for your observations. These proceedings are being recorded so that your recommendations and suggestions can be evaluated and utilized.

SAL N. OKWUBUNKA: Authority is something that is passed on to an individual; it is a skill. And often those who are charged with authority transfer authorities to someone else. Pastors in churches transfer authorities to elders. Some of the elders are educated, and some are not. Imagine how somebody who is not educated will perform. That person will feel on top of the world.

HAROLD W. BAPTISTE: Permit me to interrupt you. Could you finalize your presentation?

SAL N. OKWUBUNKA: Is it possible to get this material disseminated to all the people?

HAROLD W. BAPTISTE: Thank you. Let's go to microphone 3. What you say is very important, so please use your time efficiently.

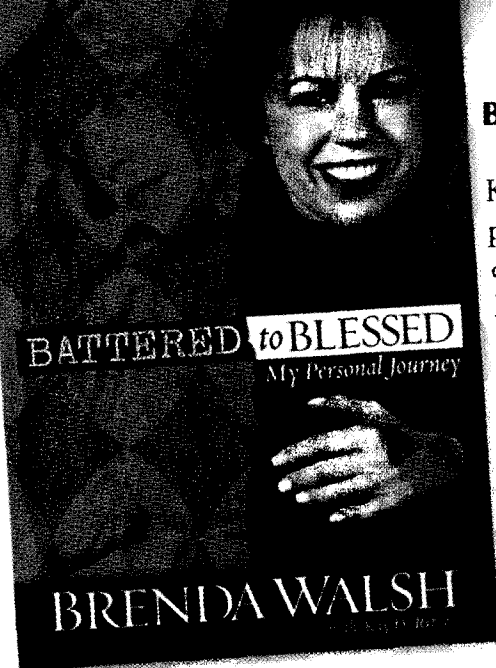
RENEE SKEETE: Mr. Chairman, I read this paper very closely last night and was saddened by the division between what was presented here and the way we often make our presentations; I'm thinking specifically of our dealings with the twenty-eighth fundamental belief.

I am addressing the issues on page 54. In order to stem corruption, perhaps our leaders should examine not only themselves and the motivation behind their administrative style but also the reason they are pastors. I am still unsophisticated enough to believe that ministers are called and that this is not merely a profession. And perhaps keeping that in perspective will help with corruption issues.

I would like to end on a very debatable note. Perhaps it is time that our church should consider returning a pastor to the

Continued on page 19.

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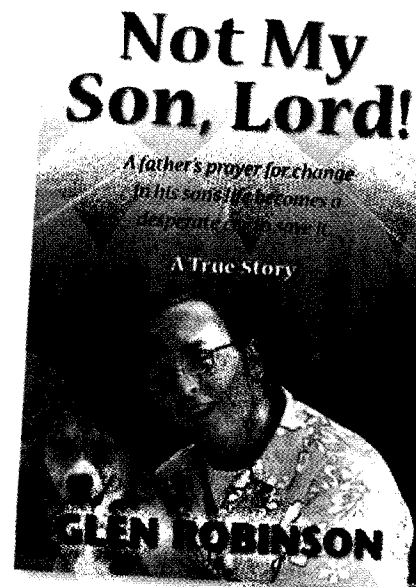


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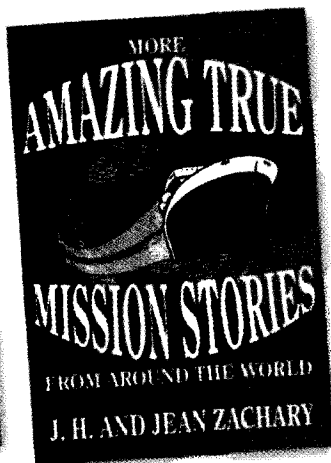


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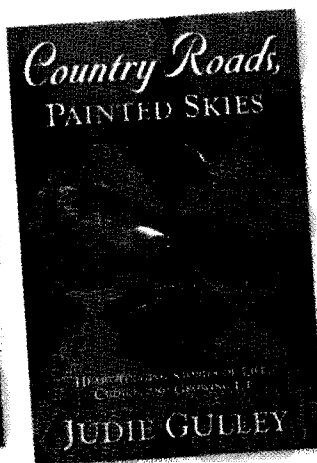


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Alberto C. Guffman, Jr.
President

Facing Tragedy, Intolerance, and Secularism

Presented Thursday evening, July 7, 2005

On Sunday morning, December 26, 2004, a volcano erupted from underneath the seas of north Sumatra, Indonesia, sending angry giant waves unleashing their fury over the whole Indian Ocean and finally releasing their wrath on innocent and unprepared shores. The Southern Asia Division and the Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD) were hardhit.

The worst effects of the tsunami were seen in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Myanmar, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. More than 280,000 people are confirmed dead. Countless tens of thousands are missing. We will never know the exact toll of this great catastrophe. Eight Adventists from Sri Lanka were confirmed dead and eight others from India were reported to have died. Several families lost their homes either totally or partially. Many people lost their livelihood.

Surprisingly enough, the global community, without regard to religion, creed, or ideology, came to the rescue. Millions of dollars poured in. People cared, Adventist Church members among them. The Adventist Disaster Relief Agency (ADRA), the church's arm for development and disaster relief, was there and remains there. Though comparatively small in size,

ADRA is not the tail in relief and rehabilitation. Individuals, churches, and organizations raised funds specifically to help fellow Adventists. Once again, church members have proved that they care.

This tragedy aroused serious questions among sincere believers. How many of those thousands were ready to die that morning? How many of them were ready for the coming of the Lord?

SSD's Challenge and Mission

The Southern Asia-Pacific Division, reported to have been "On the Move" during the 2000 General Conference session in Toronto, has been "On the Go" since then. The church has been involved in touching and transforming lives among

unreached peoples. Yet there is much left to do. Membership in this division is just over a million. About 90 per-

cent are in Indonesia and the Philippines. The remaining 10 percent are thinly spread out among the other 16 countries of the division. This poses an enormous challenge to leadership.

Of the 473 unreached population segments, 161 are in the SSD territory. Twenty-four percent of the world's adher-

ents to Islam live here. They are mostly in Indonesia, Bangladesh, and Malaysia. A large number of Buddhists live in Thailand, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. Two of the world's remaining five Communist countries are in our territory. Another country is under military control. The existence of the church in some places seems to be only a political ploy to show the world that there is religious tolerance and freedom in these countries. Yet the restrictions and prohibitions attached to the practice of one's religion make it almost impossible to fulfill the Great Commission. Several countries are among the poorest in the world. Natural calamities and devastating disasters often visit many of our nations, further complicating the already difficult challenges for the church to experience growth.

The challenge is great. The last two years of the past quinquennium have not shown any increase in membership. In fact, we have decreased. Our baptisms and professions of faith, along with letters of transfer, are still about the same as in the previous quinquenniums. The removal of names of people who have either died, migrated to other countries, or apostatized through the years made the difference. Had we succeeded in achieving the projections of Global Mission for the past five

Baptisms, Professions of Faith, and Letters of Transfers

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
from India	73,738	67,491	64,286	59,651	60,986

were reported to have died.

Membership Comparison

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
	1,162,640	1,218,486	1,249,279	1,165,307	1,064,375

years but not done a membership audit, our membership would have swelled to about 1.5 million or even more. We have straightened our records. We have taken this bold step to arrive at a more accurate and realistic figure in terms of baptized members. Our union conference and mission leaders assure us that this exercise was done with utmost care, following procedures outlined in the *Church Manual*.

The challenge now is to keep the remnant. Programs and activities that will keep converts inside the church must be developed. Follow-up and nurture activities must appeal to both old and new members. More fellowship and prayer meetings must be organized so that members can encourage and strengthen one another. Every department of the church must design programs that will foster unity, provide for growth, and enhance quality of life.

Church Growth

Through the combined effort of pastors, teachers, business workers, literature evangelists, health-care givers, lay preachers, and volunteer missionaries more than 300,000 individuals joined the church these past five years. Evangelistic campaigns, small group ministries, printed Bible lessons, personal Bible studies, house-to-house visits, Branch Sabbath Schools, Sow 1 Billion tracts, radio and television programs, and all kinds of witnessing initiatives brought in the following baptisms, professions of faith, and letters of transfer:

A total of 326,152 new members were brought into the church during the past five years. However, note that there was a decline in baptisms except in 2004. The increase of materialism and secularism in many countries of SSD has taken its toll among church members, affecting their zeal and enthusiasm for the work. Following is the membership comparison:

These are spread in 5,979 organized churches and 3,138 companies in five union missions and three union conferences, which comprise 14 local con-

ferences and 47 missions and attached fields. The following workers serve these members:

Fulfilling Mission Through Radio and Television

An interesting development is people's increasing interest in radio and television. These media are useful and effective tools in spreading the good news. Every denomination that has a strong radio and television ministry is growing rapidly. This is particularly true in the Philippines.

Hence there are now several local and cable television stations that broadcast God's good news from the Adventist Television Network (Hope Channel) and the Three Angels Broadcasting Network (3ABN). The Adventist World Radio (AWR) short-wave ministry is penetrating countries that could not be reached otherwise. Small FM radio stations, such as Batam Radio in Singapore and Joy 92 in Guam, proclaim the good news like unseen messengers. Local radio and television broadcasters, both pastors and lay preachers, are proclaiming the gospel. There is no doubt that soon every creature will hear the everlasting gospel of our Lord.

Centennial Celebrations

Adventist presence has been 100 years in the following countries: Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines. In October 2004 and March 2005, General Conference president Jan Paulsen participated in the church's celebrations in Sri Lanka and the Philippines. General Conference vice presidents Ted Wilson and Lowell Cooper celebrated with the Central and South Philippine union conferences, respectively, in March 2005.

In Sri Lanka, a parade that lasted almost two hours caught the attention of the people in the city of Colombo. The parade of about 2,000 church members was almost a kilometer long. Tracts and magazines were distributed while the parade was going on. The climax of the celebration was a grand program held at the city's largest



A two-division women's convention held January 2004 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, attracted more than 600 women.

convention center.

In the Philippines, simultaneous celebrations were held in three places on March 4 and 5, 2005. Elder Paulsen attended the North Philippine Union Mission's celebration in Manila, where a parade joined by more than 30,000 members climaxed in the formation of the "largest human cross" at the Rizal Park in front of the Quirino Grandstand. The Sabbath service was held at the Araneta Coliseum and attended by more than 15,000 people. Philippine president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo honored the celebration with a brief visit, greeting the Adventist community with "Happy Sabbath and Happy 100th Anniversary." Elder Paulsen offered a special prayer for the president.

Ted Wilson joined some 5,000 for the celebration in the Central Philippines. Since the Adventist message was brought to Philippine soil first by a literature evangelist, CPUC gave honors to their courageous colporteurs on Friday evening.

Lowell Cooper joined South Philippine Union's celebration. SPUC's weeklong celebration began with a literature evangelists convention, included a two-day unionwide Spirit of Prophecy congress, and ended with colorful Friday and Sabbath programs. About 15,000 people thronged the campus of Mountain View College for this special celebration. All the celebrations were filled with heavenly music, songs of praise, and special prayers of thanksgiving.

Workers Serve These Members

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Ordained Ministers	1,184	1,257	1,254	1,227	(not yet)
Licensed Ministers	721	720	754	869	(not yet)
Cred. & Lic. LEs	7,198	7,102	8,175	7,014	7,174
Elementary Teachers	2,880	3,075	2,962	3,280	3,435
Secondary Teachers	1,416	1,305	1,415	1,395	1,517
Tertiary Teachers	632	636	676	713	852

Finance

SSD's territory is not rich. However, with good financial management of the available resources, the work is going strong. Working capital and liquidity at the division have steadily climbed above the 100 percent level.

Although some institutions and subsidiary organizations are financially unstable, the overall picture is encouraging. We thank the able management of the SSD treasurer and his team.

More than 20 hospitals and clinics carry the good news through health-care services and healthy lifestyle education and promotion. The Health Ministries Department is one of the leading resources for health education programs in several countries, especially the Philippines. A total of 980 educational institutions, from elementary to tertiary level, meet the educational needs of more than 100,000 students, served by dedicated and devoted Christian teachers, numbering 5,400. Two major publishing houses and several smaller printing presses in different countries provide the books, magazines, and periodicals for more than 7,000 strong and courageous literature evangelists. Our faithful booksellers sold more than \$25 million worth of books during the past five years. More than 50,000 of those who were baptized into the church had at one time or another been contacted by our literature evangelists during this past quinquennium.

New Services at SSD Headquarters

During this quinquennium SSD established Philanthropic Services and Adventist Health Systems-Asia. Both have made a tremendous impact in many parts of the division. The spirit

of giving, both local and abroad, has been awakened and tapped as a result of the Philanthropic Services seminars. Several institutions and organizations that joined the program were tremendously blessed. Funds were raised and provided for projects that would have been impossible without the program of Philanthropic Services.

While not all hospitals and clinics have joined the Adventist Health System, it is evident that the member hospitals made significant and remarkable improvement in their operation and services. Even hospitals and clinics that have not joined the system are contributing toward the development fund under the system and in return receive consultation services from the system president.

Recognition and Acknowledgment

SSD recognizes and acknowledges the generous assistance of the McNeilus family, the Milton Afonso family, Gospel Outreach Ministries, Adventist Frontier Missions, Global Evangelism, Global Mission, Partnership in Evangelism of the Philippines, Adopt a Minister, The Quiet Hour, Amazing Facts, It Is Written, and the Voice of Prophecy. All other supportive individuals and independent ministries are acknowledged and recognized as well for their strong support

and assistance toward the work in our 18 countries. Our hearts will always be filled with gratitude and appreciation for all that you have done for SSD. We pray that God will continue to bless you abundantly and that your love for the work will increase so that many more will be reached by the message, and the work will soon be done.

Conclusion

The administrators, departmental directors, and service coordinators have all worked hard to serve the constituent organizations during these past five years. The support staff have been working very hard and been most cooperative. They have done most of the menial tasks in the office and keep the departments and services going. They are active in their local churches and in serving the community around the SSD headquarters.

The officers and department directors in the unions, conferences, missions, and institutions have all been very supportive. To God be the glory for all that you have done.

If we believe in the promise of Jesus, greater work will be accomplished than has been accomplished in the past. When divine power is united with our efforts, no barrier can stop the progress of the gospel. Let us go forward in faith, knowing that He is with us. The journey is not easy, but with Jesus all along the way, there is joy in service. The promise is sure: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20).



A divisionwide festival of the laity was held April 27–May 1, 2004, at Mountain View College, south Philippines. More than 15,000 attended.

Continued from page 14.

field after 10 years in any administrative office. Thank you.

HAROLD W. BAPTISTE: Thank you for your observations.

HAKHEEM SMITH: Mr. Chairman, this is indeed a very engaging paper, and I thank the presenter, Dr. Rodríguez.

I'm interested in the subject of diversity in the church and how we handle it. On page 54 of your paper you said, in paraphrasing the idea therein, "Diversity is subservient to unity." But when one looks at such passages in the Bible as Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and especially Ephesians 4, it seems to me that diversity comes before unity. And I want to believe that it is the way we handle diversity within the church, the local church or world church, that matters, and I believe that if we effectively handle diversity within the church, it leads naturally to unity.

Because Ephesians 4:13 says (after presenting the various gifts in the church), "Till we all come to the unity of the faith," I contend that diversity comes first.

HAROLD W. BAPTISTE: Thank you for the observation.

ANGEL RODRÍGUEZ: I agree with you. Diversity comes first. I stated that diversity is natural. Unity is something that you have to go after in the context of diversity.

HAROLD W. BAPTISTE: Thank you.

JOHN L. WANI: Mr. Chairman, when the presenter came to the microphone, he announced that the topic was a difficult one, and I think it is true. We are here in a session of the General Conference, the world body that governs the church, and I read here the challenges that Dr. Rodríguez presented, and it says, in part, "Authority should always be accompanied by the authoritative presence of a life fully consecrated to the Lord." And he also says, "A second challenge leaders confront is that of balancing local needs with the needs of the global church."

Again he says, "In such cases the authority Christ entrusted to the church would have been surrendered to the pressures of interest groups, and could threaten the unity that leaders would be attempting to preserve and nurture." And fourth: "Personal agendas are often promoted by individuals from outside the organizational structure of the church, through the creation of parallel organizational structures that compete with the appointed leaders for the attention of the world church." Mr. Chairman, these statements are a bit unfortunate in a way, because if they are within the Adventist Church, then we are in great trouble. But definitely they are there.

Now, Mr. Chairman, there are many of us, leaders of the church, delegates to this session, who have observed that there are diverse activities in some areas, even here.

I don't know what the leadership of the General Conference and leaders on other levels are going to do about such persons. In such situations the church is requested to pray, which I believe is good. We have to pray and consult with the Holy Spirit to give us guidance how to approach certain issues, but I believe there are times that the church needs to act. Mr. Chairman, what do we say about groups of people who divert attention of members into different thinking and different activity from the established authority of the church?

HAROLD W. BAPTISTE: Dr. Rodríguez, would you like to speak to this?

ANGEL RODRÍGUEZ: Yes, let me make a comment. One of the responsibilities of church leaders is to protect the message given to the church. You remember that triad that I mentioned? Mission, Message, Unity. That's one of the responsibilities of leaders. And by leaders we're not limiting this term to the General Conference, the division, the union, the conference leaders, or the mission leaders. We're talking about pastors.

We're talking also about church elders. And that requires from all of them a clear understanding of the message of the Bible, of the church, and the courage in the love of Christ. It also requires kindness and love to protect church members from the deception of those who want to work within the church while not supporting the message and the mission of the church.

HAROLD W. BAPTISTE: Thank you.

BRICE SAINTIL: First of all, I would like to congratulate Dr. Rodríguez for his presentation. This topic is very, very important. And yesterday we talked about values and integrity, which appears once more in his presentation. I think that I would recommend that all the leaders here today make plans to integrate these values into our education system. When I say education system, I mean at all levels of the learning and teaching process—from the beginning up to the university.

And there might be some who misunderstood your presentation, Dr. Rodríguez, when you said that once decisions are made by the global church, ecclesiastical leaders are entrusted with the authority to implement the will of the church in their respective areas of the world. I believe that leaders are not there just to implement the decisions of the church. Leaders are also there to have dreams, to invent, to be creative. They have to mobilize the followers in the mission of the church. I think they are not there just to sit down and implement; they are supposed to be creative, too.

There is another point that I would like to make relating to the fourth challenge to leaders. Leaders also face the challenge of attempts to usurp the power by well-intended individuals within the church. This might be a problem. Sometimes there

are leaders that are in fear of losing their power. But someone who has leadership needs to encourage and to promote other people to become leaders too, because we are leaders today, but our followers will be tomorrow.

When we fear of losing our power, we can become authoritative without exercising our authority. That's another deviation, another challenge for our leaders. Thank you very much for your attention.

ANGEL RODRÍGUEZ: I fully agree with the speaker, and when I address the issue of usurping authority I am thinking that church leaders will prepare leaders to handle such situations.

HAROLD W. BAPTISTE: We have eight minutes more. I am hoping we can take at least two speakers in those eight minutes.

PETER COUSINS: Allow me also to express my appreciation for the inclusion of this segment in the General Conference session. My spirit and confidence rose as Elder Paulsen introduced this long-overdue subject into our business session.

My concern today clusters around our strong cognitive emphasis. It has been said that the longest journey is the journey between the head and the heart. This is a journey that in my view we have only just begun. It seems to me that we poorly understand the relationship between authority, control, and power and the unity of the church. My concern, Mr. Chairman, is that our fervency for the purity of the message and mission of the church is sometimes precisely that which threatens to destroy our unity. This in turn impacts the power and integrity of our mission.

HAROLD W. BAPTISTE: Thank you very much.

CYNTHIA TUTSCH: I would like to express appreciation to Dr. Rodríguez for this very important, even urgent, document on authority, particularly in today's context. We should not allow ethnic, gender, or racial discrimination to ignore a segment of the global church or to conclude that others have little to offer to the global community of faith. Many times in various aspects of church governance the youth are left out. In view of the crisis that faces our church in this earth's last hour I think it is very important that no hand be stilled, no voice stilled, that could engage in evangelism and service and leadership. But not only should these voices not be stilled; I think it is imperative that leaders should intentionally provide opportunities for leadership that are ethnic-, gender-, racial-, and also age-inclusive.

HAROLD W. BAPTISTE: We want you to know that your observations, your questions, are all greatly appreciated. Unfortunately, the time restraints prevent us from having as broad a discussion as we would like. If you have recommendations

or suggestions that you would like us to look at, please give them to me so that we might utilize them in our preparation and development of future plans.

Our time is now expired. We appreciate your involvement and your participation in these discussions. And thanks again to Dr. Rodríguez for his presentation. [Applause.] I now declare the meeting adjourned until this afternoon. I ask you to stand for the benediction.

SARA DE BULLON: [Benediction in Portuguese.]

HAROLD W. BAPTISTE, *Chair*
BILL BOTHE, ATHAL TOLHURST,
FRED THOMAS, and CLAUDE
SABOT, *Proceedings Editors*

Ninth Business Meeting

58th General Conference
session, July 5, 2005,
2:00 p.m.

WILFREDO SUMAGAYSAY:
[Welcomed delegates to another business meeting of the fifty-eighth General Conference session. Prayer was offered to open the meeting.]

EVERLYN LIPKE: [Presented item of music.]

GERRY D. KARST: Good afternoon, and I welcome you to the 2:00 "Challenges to Mission" portion. The first day we dealt with "The Church and Spiritual Life," yesterday we talked about "The Church and Society," and today Elder Mark Finley is going to bring to us "The Challenge of the Church and Apostasy." Now I'd like to invite you once again to participate, as you have done in the past days.

MARK FINLEY: This section is called "Challenges to Mission," and we are focusing particularly today on a major challenge facing the Seventh-day Adventist Church and all Christian churches that experience growth.

The Great Commission that Jesus gave to the church was not "Go and baptize." The Great Commission was "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19, NIV), so baptism should take place after one has become a disciple of Christ. So the focus of the church is not on baptism. The Great Commission is "Go and make disciples," and it includes much more than baptism. Disciplemaking is the development of a

faith-filled group of people who are praying Christians, who are daily growing in grace, studying God's Word, worshipping with His people, and witnessing to the glory of His Name. When the church fails to nurture new converts, it really fails in accomplishing the Great Commission, and it's not faithful to God.

In the past five years the Seventh-day Adventist Church has exploded in growth, and we can praise God that 5,049,157 accessions to the church through baptism and profession of faith have taken place. But at the same time we lament the fact that in this same five-year period 1,397,608 people have been dropped from church membership.

That becomes a serious problem. Is it possible to reverse the church's high apostasy rate? And do we have any examples on a divisionwide basis in which there has been an intentional approach on the part of conferences and unions and divisions to reduce apostasy, and can we measure it statistically?

I would like to look at one division in particular. The South American Division has become a positive example of apostasy rate reversal. The secretary's report for the South American Division in the year 2000 indicated that the apostasy rate in South America in 2000 was approximately what the apostasy rate is all over the world today. It was 33 percent in 2000. The South American Division took a look at that.

Recent discussions with Elder Roy Nagel indicate that the apostasy rate in South America is now running at 18 percent. Now, that is a dramatic reversal, so the question becomes How was it achieved? The South American Division leadership reports that they have implemented a strategy of small groups throughout that division that in their mind have made a dramatic difference in reversing those apostasy rates. That may be something for other divisions in the world to take a look at.

Church growth thinkers list the following reasons that people leave the Seventh-day Adventist Church and churches in general.

1. Conflict with a pastor or another church member.
2. Discouragement over personal problems.
3. Lack of friends. Church growth studies indicate that if you do not establish a set of new friends within the church within the first year after you are baptized, your likelihood of leaving increases.
4. A weak biblical faith. A number of studies indicate that when people have a weak biblical faith, when they do not understand what they are doing in joining a religious community of Seventh-day Adventists, they are likely to leave more

quickly.

5. The perception on the part of some that have joined a church, a fellowship of believers, that it is not relevant to their needs.

6. Lack of a house of worship. In many places where there are mass baptisms, studies indicate that if a house of worship is not provided for those new believers, the likelihood for them to leave rises exponentially.

Let us look at the New Testament for a model of a vibrant, spiritual growing community. What are the elements of New Testament growth?

1. You notice that one of the elements of nurture in Acts 4:13, 31 is a meaningful devotional life.

2. Acts 2:42 describes a network of small groups in house-to-house fellowship that nurtured and bonded New Testament believers.

3. According to Acts 2:46, there was corporate worship and praise through the Sabbath experience and through biblical preaching. Corporate worship was a part of the New Testament experience.

4. There was active community involvement through witnessing, according to Acts 6:7 and Acts 8:4. That leads us, then, to some very important and critical questions:

In the past two years the Seventh-day Adventist Church has lost nearly one third of the aggregate number that was baptized. (It was not one third of those baptized—it was one third of the number of baptisms.)

1. Is that acceptable to the Lord? If not, what can we do about it?

2. How can we sustain rapid growth rates, while at the same time reduce apostasy?

3. What initiative can conferences, unions, divisions, the General Conference, take in the next five years to make a significant difference in reducing apostasies worldwide?

We can choose to spend the next 40 minutes describing how the church ought to be more loving and everything that the church isn't doing. May I suggest to you that there is enough creativity in this room, and enough brainpower in this room, from the delegates to the fifty-eighth session, that we together can come up with comprehensive strategies to make a difference.

PATRICIA GUSTIN: There is probably no part of what we do that is as neglected and as important as dealing with this question of apostasy. We have to constantly remember that evangelism is not an event but a process. We then move on to teaching, and that teaching can take many forms. It can be personal sharing, Bible studies, evangelistic meetings, but there must be a teaching ministry. Then of course there eventually comes a time for decisions and harvest, but the process is

Continued on page 26.



Israel Leito
President

Planning for Spiritual Success

Presented Thursday evening, July 7, 2005

Planning to succeed should be a major activity of any serious organization. Therefore, at the beginning of the quinquennium, the Inter-American Division (IAD) embarked on an ambitious project to establish a strategic plan for the division. Through exhaustive analysis, workers and laypersons agreed on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of the division. Based on these discoveries, they devised a plan and crafted a mission statement to be the guiding principle of the work in the division:

“Glorify God, and under the influence of the Holy Spirit, lead every convert to experience a personal and transforming relationship with Christ, enabling the believer to become a disciple in sharing the everlasting gospel with everyone.”

All to the Glory of God

In order to glorify God, it is imperative to know Him. Ramon Maury, the vice president who led the strategic plan formulation, puts it as follows: “Through prayer, daily study of the Bible, and the experience of worship, the disciple learns to glorify God. A dynamic and nurturing worship experience promoted by ‘Christ-centered strategic preaching’—a preaching that addresses needs of the congregation—may lead converts to Jesus and to a lifestyle that glorifies God in the church, the home, and the workplace. Such a worship uplifts the experience of the sanctity and love of God, and

responds to personal needs of all the segments of the congregation—adults, youth, and children.”

The departments of the church present a united front in this direction and seek to reach and help the leaders by presenting numerous retreats, seminars, congresses, etc. Because the home is where it all starts, the home of the pastor should be a model for the church. Most of the unions have conducted numerous pastoral couples’ retreats to help strengthen the pastors’ homes. Special attention has been given to ministers’ spouses. The Caribbean Union in particular is outstanding in this area, having published programs and books addressed to the needs of ministers’ wives.

To glorify God means to let all who hear about Him praise His name. Therefore, the places of worship, humble as they may be, must be the most attractive places in the neighborhood. To glorify God also means that the churches should be at peace internally and externally. The Lord has greatly blessed His church in Inter-America; we have few dissident movements to distract the church from its mission and dishonor God.

Under the Influence of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the only force that propels the mission of the church, and the church in Inter-America has been actively listening to the Spirit’s leading. In an environment of unity, love, order, and organization, the Spirit has enabled disciples. To labor

under the influence of the Holy Spirit means allowing each of God’s children to develop his or her talents. All gifts are to be used to the glory and honor of God, and all should work together for the saving of souls. To labor under the influence of the Holy Spirit also means that all should do what they do best. The participation of members in planning and implementation has conveyed to them a sense of ownership. Such influence did not take away serious challenges, and we have had our share of them. However, these have not deterred the church from a persistent trust in His leading.

Lead Every Convert to a Relationship With Christ

The church in Inter-America is not in the business of “counting heads.” Head counting is a temporary and short-term success indicator. Helping converts to experience a personal and transforming relationship with Christ is the measuring element for the church. Our business is to develop disciples, not win members. This does not mean less evangelism. But along with the winning of souls, an aggressive program of consolidation and discipling is in place.

Many churches give special instruction to the newly baptized members, such as keeping them in a special doctrinal class. Abundant materials have also been developed by the unions to facilitate the process of discipling. Thousands of books on the church’s fundamental beliefs have been printed in the major languages of the

division. The former Central American Union, which was divided into three unions because of its phenomenal growth, has required pastors and elders to pass an examination on the fundamental teachings of the church.

The establishment of the member as a disciple has not only helped stimulate intellectual and spiritual growth, but also fellowship in the church. Thousands of congresses, retreats, seminars, and other activities have been conducted. Although there is, sadly, a high percentage of attrition, we perceive a reverse trend. Our growth has remained steady, and fewer apostasies are taking place.

In order to make disciples of members, we felt the need to provide the church and the public with abundant truth-filled literature. IAD is now blessed with a second publishing house, thus strengthening the publishing ministry of the division.

Scores of new radio stations have bolstered the life and experience of the members and the public. The 15 radio stations in the division territory have become a major instrument in the consolidation of the members and the dissemination of the truth to the public.

Disciple-making is a priority even among the young. The support for youth ministry has resulted in the production of the *Youth Leaders Handbook*, which was researched, designed, and published by the Youth Department. The 7,697 Pathfinder and Adventurer clubs, with more than 206,586 members; the 19,761 classical youth societies; and the aggressive participation of the more than 638,946 senior youth and Master Guides all bear witness that disciple-making is being promoted at a young age. It is common to see the children take an active part in evangelism and Sabbath worship services.

Vacation Bible Schools have been bolstered by a new generation of materials designed and prepared by the IAD Children's Ministries Department.

Support by the members in finances, personal efforts, and influence are indicators of the success of disciple-making in IAD. The division gives steady and firm support to the mission of the church in other parts of the world—especially in the 10/40 window. According to published reports, IAD contributes the second-largest amount annually in mission offerings to the world church. Scores of ministers, financed by the church in Inter-

the developing economy indicators. On average, more than \$120 million in tithe and more than \$8 million in mission offerings have been returned annually to the cause of the Lord during this quinquennium.

The future of church leadership must be assured by the education of dedicated members—preferably in an Adventist institution. The 13 universities in the IAD have distinguished themselves in the task of guiding young disciples' minds. The fully-accredited Northern Caribbean University has become one of the largest universities in the Adventist world in full-time student equivalents.

	2000	2004
Membership	2,078,226	2,525,557
Yearly Tithe Returned	\$108,655,017	\$126,381,940
Yearly Mission Offerings	\$7,067,208	\$8,013,500
Ingathering Per Year	\$1,336,260	\$1,757,772
Number of Unions	12	15
Number of Local Fields	69	88
Churches and Companies	14,329	16,536
Number of Universities	11	13
Number of Elementary and Secondary Schools	889	995
Number of Workers	12,290	13,977
Number of Teachers	8,430	8,774
Health Food Company Branches	10	11
Number of Publishing Houses	1	2
Yearly Literature Evangelist Sales	\$10,948,571	\$24,817,429

America, take short-term assignments to the 10/40 window. Scores of students in educational institutions in Inter-America go to other parts of the division and the world to give their best to the Master. The student body at Montemorelos University contributes thousands of dollars as well as volunteer service to the work in the 10/40 window.

The strong response to a carefully crafted stewardship program has been another indicator of the commitment of the disciples in the division. The giving plan, called 60-20-20, is one way that the disciples in Inter-America have demonstrated their commitment to the Lord. Even though most of our territory is in the economically developing part of the world, the giving and dedication in Inter-America is above

Sharing the Everlasting Gospel

To fulfill the Great Commission is our passion.

Some of the IAD unions have followed a plan whereby the local pastor does not have to wait on the corporate church to devise plans to work. Pastors group together to think, plan, and execute plans tailor-made to

the needs of their fields. This has resulted in successful soul winning, retention, and training for mission. All the unions have a specific plan of action to achieve these ends, but the Central American unions have been at the vanguard in this process. Other unions, such as the Mexican unions, have devised a plan of action called CRECE ("growth" in Spanish). This stands for the major features of their approach to mission. C means communion, R means retention, E means evangelization, C means *crecimiento* ("growth"), and the E means education (or training) of the members for service and ministry.

Each union has its evangelistic specialty, such as the Caribbean and West Indies unions, which specialize in successful large evangelistic series. The Central American unions, Colombia,

Venezuela, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and others specialize in small group ministry. The churches divide into small groups with the specific mission that every "small congregation" must develop into a full-fledged church within a specified time period. This has become a successful church-planting endeavor. The Puerto Rican Union acquires a majority of its members through a program they call The Inverted Sabbath. Members come to church early on some Sabbath mornings and, with the pastor, hit the streets witnessing. In the afternoon they come back to church to share their experiences in witnessing. Laypersons in Inter-America do not wait for the ministers, for they recognize their calling and arduously participate in bringing in the immense majority of souls.

This matter of making each member an active and living element in proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ has created serious challenges for many of our fields. Ministers are being overwhelmed by the number of converts. In order to address this matter, the division and unions have decided to establish a ceiling to the number of members a minister can care for in an acceptable manner. Considering that some of our local pastors serve districts of 50 or more churches, it is no wonder that some ask the question "How is this possible?" We praise the Lord for the able and willing lay leaders who have joined forces with the pastors to satisfy this urgent need.

The division has also started a plan to help the unions get more pastors in the field, but this has proved to be a losing battle because of the phenomenal growth. Some of our universities, such as the Linda Vista University in southern Mexico and the Dominican Adventist University in the Dominican Republic, are creating innovative plans to train ministers quickly. Some ministerial students work during the week and attend the university on weekends for instruction. In other places, such as Cuba, it is reversed. The students are in the seminary during the week, and they pastor on weekends. The Venezuela-Antilles and the three Central

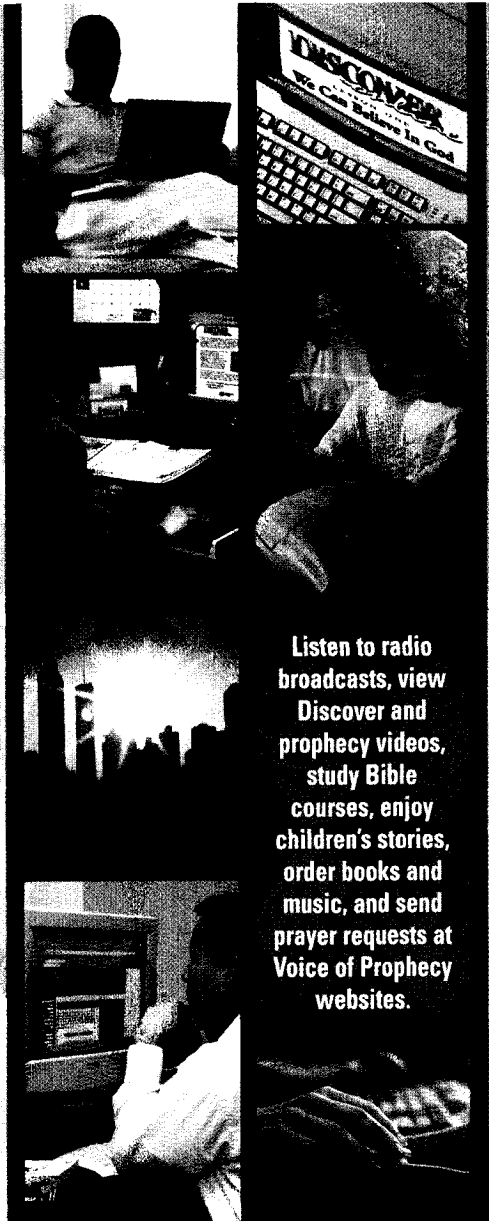
American unions have a more radical plan. In these unions, theology students pastor churches for a long period, then attend the seminary for short terms of intensive training.

Besides these innovative approaches, the professionals at the division office have produced materials and devised methods to help the ministers and members to fulfill the gospel

commission. An outstanding part of this endeavor is the family life approach to evangelism that has been used all over the world.

All is for the honor and glory of our Lord. Inter-America needs your prayers, and we will continue praying for our brothers and sisters around the world. We pledge them our support in preparing a people for the coming of the Lord.

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The Delegate

My name tag gave me access. But something even better lies ahead.

BY LELA GOODING

One of the mementos I usually bring home from professional meetings is the registration name tag that proclaims me an official attendee at the conference. Usually the tag sits on my dresser for a few days—while the memory of the event is still fresh or until the dust accumulates—before it's thrown away.

One tag, however, stayed for a long time, pinned on my little bulletin board. It was the name tag given to my husband when he attended a conference in Egypt. I went with Earl to Egypt, and the tag brings back precious memories of this breathtaking country with which I fell deeply in love. I loved the powerful sense of history that Egypt gave; the quiet grandeur; the Nile and the immediacy of Moses, Pharaoh, and Israelite slaves; the pyramids of Giza dwarfing the mighty Sphinx; the marvel of the ancient alongside the new as we drove through Cairo; the incredibly beautiful, gracious people.

But the tag holds another fascination, too. Under the name International Conference on Population Development (ICPD) appears the holder's identification: *Earl Gooding, USA*. I'm enthralled by the breadth of the simple identification. I've been to conferences at which the identification below my name has been my profession—Professor of English; or my place of employment—Oakwood College; or my immediate workplace—English and Foreign Languages Department. Occasionally I have been identified by my city and state of residence—Huntsville, Alabama. The larger the scope of the conference, the broader the identification category on the name tag. But never had I attended an international convention at which delegates were identified only by the name of their country. Such an alluring, broad categorization—the name of one individual with the name of their native land! The tag makes me think of being in heaven for

the first time. I can see my tag: Lela Gooding . . . Planet Earth.

General Conference sessions make me think of heaven too. The national and racial diversity, heart-warming mission stories, soul-stirring sermons, statistics on the growth of the church, renewal of acquaintances, and formation of new friendships. A GC session is a wonderful, inspirational event. I've been blessed to be able to attend most of them in the past 40 years. And until I had the privilege of representing my school at the fifty-seventh session in Toronto in 2000, the delegate name tag held a mystical power. Being a delegate meant having a place reserved for you. There was no need to hunt for a seat in the stands, no need to catch the eye of someone—usually in the middle of the row—and ask futilely, “Is this seat taken?” pointing at the empty seat next to them.

At the General Conference in Utrecht my brother-in-law was a delegate; his wife and children were allocated seats in the main auditorium and were identified on their name tags as guests. On an occasion, one child preferred to sit in the stands with her friends, and I was able to use her badge and sit in quiet comfort. That was a thrilling experience.

As a delegate myself in Toronto, I wore my name tag happily, even forgetting to remove it at lunch on the last Sabbath, with family and Canadian friends who knew me well. The tag assured me direct entrance to my reserved section on the main floor, just a few feet from the platform, where big screens and microphones were not essential. I did not have to negotiate my way through the tens of thousands of people in the stands, because there were entrances just for delegates. The privileges of being a delegate included a generous assortment of equipment, and came with joyful responsibilities to attend meetings, read up on issues, vote for or

against policies. I read all the literature, and except for one short meeting when I was called away by newly arriving family, I attended meetings from early morning to late night.

But occasionally I wished I had more free time to browse the bookstore

I'm looking forward to that great gathering in the sky.

or visit booths and collect a few exotic trophies from faraway lands as family members were doing. I heard vaguely that there were all kinds of outreach activities going on in Toronto, but I took no time to check them out, and learned about them mostly after GC, from the pile of daily *Adventist Review Bulletins* awaiting me at home. And frankly, I do not remember how my name and identification appeared on the name tag.

This year I'm again attending the session, though not as a delegate. I attend meetings, but I also spend plenty of time checking out booths and outreach activities, and discovering what's happening outside of the stadium. Occasionally I wish I had a reserved seat, more information on specific issues such as is distributed to delegates, maybe even that I could vote. But all of these conflicting desires are some of the reasons I'm looking forward to that great gathering in the sky. Forever is a long, long time, thank God. Time for meetings and sightseeing, studying and visiting, singing and chatting, praising and feasting. Today's high technology that allows me to see and hear platform participants from the back of the auditorium will be child's play compared to the experience of the "great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people

and language" in the stands and everywhere, as they behold their Savior face-to-face (Rev. 7:9, NIV). Even better, the "conference" will not end after 10 days, and instead of being delegates and guests, we shall be permanent residents. Exciting stuff! My reaction? "Yes! Yes! Alleluia!"

And we'll have the most wonderful

name tag: the *Father's name on the forehead of each ransomed child of God.* Saved by His amazing grace!



Lela Gooding is a professor of English at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama, U.S.A.

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Continued from page 20.

still not completed. There must be ongoing nurture. Jesus spent three and a half years with His disciples, and when He left them He said, "I have yet many things to say unto you" (John 16:12). The nurturing process is ongoing, and we must never give the impression that once one has entered into our fellowship the process is over. We are going to be dealing more and more with those who come to our faith from a non-Christian foundation. The need for nurture will only increase.

MICHAEL L. RYAN: I think most of you are aware of the fact that over the past 15 years I have had some small role in the Global Mission initiative. It has given me an opportunity to visit many new congregations that are scattered around the world. Some of those congregations are found in islands, very rural areas, but there are quite a number of them that are found in cities.

Sometimes I travel through an area, and there will be a group that is gathered for the first time in the history of our church, and there will be 50 new members. Another place, 30; sometimes 12 or two. On occasions I have had the opportunity to come back after one or two years. Sometimes I am very happy; at other times there is a deep sadness that comes over me, because the congregation that was established has reduced to less than half its original size.

I hope that our conversation this afternoon can be an expression from the world family. How can we develop a culture of nurture that keeps our people and disciples them to make them active members for Jesus Christ?

MARK FINLEY: I am going to ask our chairman to come, and we will focus on the question "What initiative can conferences, unions, divisions, and the General Conference take, in the next five years, to make a significant difference in reducing worldwide apostasies?"

GERRY D. KARST: Thank you very much for the presentation. This is once again dealing with one of those very significant challenges of the church that touch all of us everywhere, in every country of the world, and we need to talk about how to reduce that last ratio. I have heard it said that a choir that only practices and never performs will soon stop practicing. Perhaps there is something to be learned from that in the area of discipleship as well.

DOUGLAS HUENERGARDT: I would like to talk specifically about the terms *discipleship* and *disciplemaking*, because it seems that if we focus on these as a specific program of activities for church members, it places our perspective squarely on the interplay between us and Jesus—on Jesus' being able to give us that sense of what it means to participate fully in the kingdom that He offers. And that element is essential, because to the degree that we just

focus on developing a nurturing community, it becomes too focused in and of itself.

I believe that what is needed is the challenge, to both individuals and the community, to attempt to become Christ's disciples through their activities.

A number of people have been writing and speaking specifically about this, because our focus has been so much upon converts through baptism. Thank you very much.

Session Snapshot



PHOTO BY JOEL D. SPRINGER © REVIEW & HERALD

IN-BETWEEN: A young girl from the Southern Asia Division proudly represents her delegation during the Wednesday evening program on July 6.

DANIEL CHAIJ: I have a couple of recommendations specifically addressed to the field that I represent, which is the North American Division. We have heard of the high percentage of our youth that leave the church. I feel that the ministry to our children and youth is just as important as it is to the adults that we try to reach. Now, the elementary and academy enrollment in our schools in North America has been going down. This is particularly because our parents don't want to send their children to boarding school.

We have, therefore, right now in North America a redundancy of academies and colleges. If we were to sell some of these properties and establish an endowment fund so that more of our children could go to the elementary schools that we have, we would lose less of them later in life. That has been my observation and my experience. And I think that we would be doing

a very important ministry that is just as important to save the children in our families as to save new converts. I would propose that some serious consideration be made on this subject. I know that it goes against the established historical tradition, but we have too many boarding academies and colleges, and we need more elementary children in our schools. Thank you.

GERRY D. KARST: Thank you very much. And once again, all of your comments are being recorded so that they won't be lost.

JONATHAN KUNTARAF: When we study why people leave the church, in many cases the reason is not theological. It is the lack of warm fellowship and the lack of support that new members have received from our church members. Therefore, at all levels we need to strengthen fellowship opportunities so that our members can support one another. And we find also that many new members who join the church because of the efforts of our lay members stay longer in the church.

Sometimes when we have large evangelistic meetings many people are baptized without adequate follow-up support, and many of them leave the church after the evangelist leaves. Therefore, I think we need to strengthen the groundwork activities; to train our members to become more involved. As a result, new members will stay in the church because they will be supported by our own members. Small group ministries are very useful to meet these needs.

GERRY D. KARST: Thank you, Brother Kuntaraf; we always sense the passion when you speak.

ROBERT PAULSEN: I've had the privilege of going into many parts of the world and working for the Lord. We went into India and saw 15,000 baptized at one series of meetings. We had already made arrangements to build churches in every one of those villages so that they would have places to worship. Now when we provide a village with a church, the next village wants to hear about Christ and have a church also.

So my challenge is that maybe the General Conference will take a look at how our funds are allocated, and maybe \$1 million could be put out as a challenge to laypeople to match that and use it for building churches in these areas. This is needed also in Africa and other parts of the world. They need places to worship. Thank you so much.

GERRY D. KARST: Thank you, Brother Paulsen; we affirm you and the other laypeople who are out on the front lines doing evangelism.

PAUL TOMPKINS: I'm thrilled by the discussion that we're having. But I'd like to widen it slightly. I'd like to widen it to the area of recovery. I believe that we have

many young people who leave the church, perhaps in their late teens or early 20s. They may leave for a number of reasons, often because of lack of friendship. But so often we just carry on with church. We forget to nurture and visit them. In fact, studies show that very few ever receive any sort of visit or backup call. I would like us to develop a strategic plan over the next five years to reach out to our Adventist prodigals. I believe that there are many who will come back to the church. They never left Jesus; they haven't left God. They've forgotten about church. They can be reached if we will take time to pray and to act. I believe we can do it. Thank you.

JOCHEN HAWLITSCHKE: Apostasy takes place at the local church. In my opinion, the General Conference, unions, divisions, etc., cannot do very much about regulating that. It's my duty as a local church member, as the older brother, to support the younger brother, the newborn that comes in.

GERRY D. KARST: Thank you very much. A good point.

DENIS HANKINSON: Thank you. The Great Commission in Matthew 28 was to make disciples. And I know that teaching and baptizing are very important steps in that. Is it possible to get statistics about discipleship? In our conference we're attempting to develop ways of actually measuring that discipleship. The first is an attendance count. Our churches report their attendance at church each week. The second is a one-year hold rate. This is based on the data that suggests that the high percentage of people who drop out of church do so within the first 12 months. We've found that keeping these statistics has enabled us to give early indicators of health or disease in our churches and then to work with those churches to plan initiatives to develop the good things they're doing or work on the areas that they are struggling with. Thank you.

ARTUR STELE: How to retain the church members is a very serious challenge for the Euro-Asia Division. I believe there are two areas in which we as a church need to work. First, we need to work on how we worship on Sabbath. When people come to our worships, they must see, must experience, that something is going on that is real, that the Lord is present, that people are really worshipping in a very live manner. Very often our worships remind me of funeral ceremonies. I think we must work in this area.

Second, we need to provide circles or small groups during the week that can help our people to feel that they are loved, that somebody cares about them. When we look at the membership in our division, sometimes 70 to 80 percent are women. Their husbands, their families, are outside of the church. They come, but they need support

groups. The small group can provide love, care, spiritual nourishment, and prayer, and so I would like for us to work on these two areas.

GERRY D. KARST: Thank you, Elder Stele.

BASIL HALL: We see around us in our churches influential pastors leaving or having a difference with the mother church and then going independent. Sister White tells us that when Lucifer decided to become Satan, God spent a lot of time trying to woo him back. But when these independents are created, I don't see the same spirit from the leadership of the church in wrestling with these people. So I would like to see the leadership, especially, address this issue.

GERRY D. KARST: Thank you very much.

ALEX R. PONNIAH: I would once again record a word of thanks to Elder Mark Finley. He has passion for evangelism; he's one of our greatest evangelists in our church. He has identified the need for discipleship, and I think that is one of the core areas needed to retain and maintain our membership in church. Our church has a lot of materials on discipleship, but the question is Are we using these materials effectively in discipling? I would like to share what my own local church has implemented in order to ensure that there is some form of protection, some form of continuity, some prevention of backsliding. At the time of baptism a spiritual guardian is appointed to take care of that individual, a sort of mentor who follows up with that person to ensure that the person comes to church, fellowships, worship service, etc.

Also, Sabbath school in itself can be a cell group to invite participation of its members. Thank you.

STOY PROCTOR: I wonder if we could have departments and other teams be a part of this planning process so that we address the discipleship issue after the evangelistic campaign has finished, and also spend a little of our resources on discipling at the time that we're planning for these evangelistic campaigns.

GERRY D. KARST: Thank you, Elder Proctor.

JESUS URIARTE: I must say that in my local church and my local conference we are making a concerted effort to follow Christ's calling not in having people baptized but in making disciples. There are a few suggestions I would like to bring for your consideration. 1. Our local pastors have to be involved in this. We can speak here until next year, but if the local pastors don't become involved in discipleship, it is not going to happen. 2. We should have departments whose only purpose is to follow up on new disciples. 3. We should develop a curriculum of continuing studies with these new disciples. 4. We should

involve these new members in active participation in our churches. Thank you.

VIOLETO BOCALA: I want to address the question that was raised by Dr. Ryan. Those who are baptized often leave after one year. Often in developing countries we have a great number of baptisms but also a large number of backsliders. I want to make two suggestions as to how we can help this. First, I would suggest to the local missions or conferences that when they penetrate a new area, they should see to it that they have a worker, even a lay pastor only, left in that newly established congregation to nurture the congregation at least one year.

Second, the local missions or conferences should include, in their budget, funds for a church building for the congregation that is raised.

FATIHA BENAZZA: I have a suggestion: it is important to be friendlier with people and to know the culture of the people. It is very important that we be patient. When someone gives his or her heart to Jesus, we have to see what spiritual gifts that person has and invite the person to do something in the church.

GERRY D. KARST: We thank God that you are here. Again, thank you so much for your contributions, and once again, please write them down and turn them in to the presenters. At this time we need to adjourn this meeting of the General Conference session to make way for a brief corporation meeting, which will follow immediately. [The meeting was adjourned.]

GERRY D. KARST, *Chair*
AGUSTIN GALICIA, *Secretary*
BILL BOTHE, ATHAL TOLHURST,
FRED THOMAS, and CLAUDE
SABOT, *Proceedings Editors*

Ninth Business Meeting Actions

July 5, 2005, 2:00 p.m.

CHALLENGES TO MISSION 2005-2010

Presentations were made on the Challenge of Mission by Mark A Finley, Michael L Ryan, and Patricia J Gustin. A lengthy discussion followed.

GERRY D KARST, *Chair*
AGUSTIN GALICIA, *Secretary*
LARRY R EVANS, *Actions Editor*
JANET C UPSON, *Recording Secretary*

Tenth Business Meeting

58th General Conference session, July 5, 2005, 3:10 p.m.

GERRY KARST: I will call the General Conference back into session, and at this point we will take the item that was tabled in the previous session off the table.

I see the speaker who made the previous motion standing by the microphone, and I will grant him the floor at this time.

CLAUDE RICHLI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Based on the comments of the parliamentarian this morning as well as on the comments of the General Conference president, I am more than willing to withdraw the motion, and I appeal to the chair to let the speaker who would be willing to make a motion to reconsider making that motion.

GERRY D. KARST: Thank you, Elder Richli. The motion does belong to the floor, but the one who made it has given his consent to withdraw it, so unless there is any opposition to that, we will accept from the chair the withdrawal of that motion. Is there someone who supported the earlier motion to endorse this new fundamental belief wishing to move a motion to reconsider?

[A motion to reconsider was made, seconded, and voted.]

[A motion that the item be referred to the committee was made, seconded, and voted.]

LOWELL C. COOPER: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to introduce a procedural motion because we've had a number of attempts to use a point of order procedure to address the calling of the previous question. In order to give the body better facility to make its determination on the length of discussions, I'd like to introduce the motion that floor discussion of an item after its introduction be entertained in 15-minute segments, thus autho-

rizing the chair to ascertain the will of the body on whether or not discussion should continue for another segment. I'd like to move that, Mr. Chairman.

[The motion was seconded, and voted with a two-thirds majority.]

GERRY D. KARST: Let's come now to the presentation "Tell the World," Elder Ryan.

MICHAEL L. RYAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Two days ago you received a handout called "Tell the World." And at the back of that booklet is a DVD. One of the challenges to any organization is to align its resources in the direction of its mission. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a lot of resources. But to get these resources and to align them in a common direction is always a challenge. This little booklet, "Tell the World," is a guide to divisions, unions, and conferences that is easy to follow. Now, we realize that there are a lot programs and a lot of diversity in the church, different needs and different places, and so this is not meant to be something that is etched in stone.

[The DVD was then shown to the delegates.]

MICHAEL L. RYAN: Mr. Chairman, prior to making the motion to accept this report, I would like to give credit to

being on the floor for the business session. There are other attractions, and in previous sessions sometimes we have been rather few on the floor when items have been brought, but you have been here, and I want to say thank you.

MICHAEL L. RYAN: Larry Evans, the undersecretary, will introduce to us item 302.

LARRY R. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is found on page 36 of your backup materials. We have one sentence that we would add: "The General Conference president shall be an ordained minister of experience." I would move that.

MICHAEL L. RYAN: I have a second. I see someone at microphone 4. Dr. Beardsley.

LISA BEARDSLEY: I wholeheartedly agree that the General Conference president should have experience in ministry and that the General Conference president must have a shepherd's heart for the worldwide church. The General Conference president must also be visionary, a capable administrator of a multinational global organization, a compelling communicator, and a role model in integrity, humility, faith, and practice. In recent years, however, ministerial ordination has been more specifically focused on those with a tradi-

tional pastoral experience and training. The proposed amendment overlooks the fact that pastoral experience can come from a variety of contexts, such as hospital or military chaplaincy, the ministry of education, the ministry of healing, literature evangelism, and media ministry, to name some of these contexts. It also overlooks that church endorsement is also demonstrated through church credentials other than ordination. The amendment presents no evidence that it is biblically based or informed by the writings of Ellen White; in fact, it seems to disregard Joel's description of the latter rain on the remnant church with a liberal and indiscriminating outpouring of God's Spirit on His people, young and

old, male and female. The amendment disregards the transforming power of Christ that equips all for ministry by erasing the oppressive distinctions of class, race, and gender that Paul describes in Galatians 3:28. This amendment would disqualify some otherwise qualified candidates who have demonstrated spiritual leadership in

Session Snapshot



FROM THE BOOTH, AROUND THE GLOBE: Adventist World Radio translators work on getting programming to listeners around the world while at AWR's exhibit at the GC session.

Bettina Krause. Bettina was very instrumental in putting this report together, and I want to thank her for the work that she put in on that. [A vote was taken to record the presentation of the report.]

GARY D. KARST: Just before turning the chair over to Mike Ryan, I want to say a word of appreciation to the delegates for

chaplaincy, Adventist education, the ministry of healing, or other contexts. This amendment might even disqualify some scholars with earned doctorates in biblical studies or biblical languages teaching in a seminary that prepares ministers. This amendment would disqualify some university college presidents who faithfully nurture the collegiate flock and demonstrate spiritual leadership and administrative skill. This amendment would also categorically disqualify all women in ministry. I would prefer to continue to allow the Nominating Committee to consider the totality of a presidential candidate's qualifications and giftedness by God. The spiritual needs of the worldwide church vary, and each president has brought his own unique experi-

ence to those needs. This amendment would constrain a full deliberation by the Nominating Committee. For these reasons I move to refer this back to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee to consider a revision to read, "The General Conference president shall be an ordained or credentialed employee of experience." Thank you.

[The motion was seconded. The chairman put the motion to a vote, and declared it lost.]

GUILLERMO MAGANA: That was pretty close. Is there any type of system that we have that would count and see how many of the majority voted?

MICHAEL L. RYAN: Yes, there is a provision that we can do that. You would need to call for a division of the house.

GUILLERMO MAGANA: I call for a division of the house.

[Following a division of the house, the chairman again declared the motion to refer lost.]

LAWRENCE T. GERATY: I rise to speak against this proposal because it seems to me that it makes a mockery of the two resolutions we voted over the weekend: the resolutions on the Holy Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. It seems to me that one will look in vain in those sources for authorization to exclude women from leadership positions in the church. This morning we had an excellent paper on leadership from Angel Rodríguez. On pages 55 and 56 of *Profiling Adventist Leadership* he talked about the importance of inclusion in

Nominating Committee Report—7

VOTED, To approve the following partial report of the Nominating Committee for General Conference (GC) entities:

General Conference Auditing

Service Board:

GC President

GC Secretary

GC Treasurer

GC Vice President

GC Auditing Service Director

Scilas Barbosa Filho

Gilles Carel Beesoo

Wilfried Detlefsen

Joseph Fan

Hyden Gittens

Anwar Hutabarat

Jack Krogstad

Jeremiah Lima

Roger Marshall

Kwame Manu-Debrah

Frensy R Panneflek

John Stanley

Timur Osin

GC Auditing Service

Director:

Eric A Korff

Associate Directors:

Maxwell P Blakeney

Daniel E Herzel

Douglas D Reeves

Ruel A M Baculanta,

Southern Asia-Pacific Area

Geraldo Bokenkamp,

South America Area

Paul H Douglas,

Inter-America Area

Coenraad J Haupt,

Southern Africa Area

Mark S Hyder, *North America-*

Central Area

Paul Johnson, *Euro-Asia*

Area

Robyn W Kajiura,

North America-East Area

Emmanuel S D Manu,

Trans-Africa Indian Ocean Area

Mark R Pannekoek,

South Pacific Area

Michael Prasada Rao,

Southern Asia Area

Jeremy T Smith, *North*

America-West Area

Kim Tae Sung, *Northern*

Asia-Pacific Area

Terence de Villiers,

Trans-European Area

Norbert Zens,

Euro-Africa Area

Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries

Associate Director:

Gary R Council

Communication

Associate Directors:

John T J Banks

Reger C Smith Jr

Education

Associate Directors:

John M Fowler

Andrea Luxton

Luis A Schulz

Health Ministries:

Associate Directors:

C Joan Coggin

Craig R Jackson

Patricia S Jones

Kathleen Kuntaraf

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Peter N Landless

Quintes P Nicola

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Thomas J Zirkle

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Almir M Marroni

Trust Services

Associate Directors:

Charles B Simpson

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Secretariat:

Associate Director:

Rosa T Banks

Women's Ministries

Associate Director:

Raquel Arrais

Youth Ministries

Associate Directors:

Van Hurst

Erton Carlos Kohler

several matters, including gender.

We all recognize that it is unlikely that the Seventh-day Adventist Church will elect a female president, but why vote a policy that from the beginning excludes more than half of our membership? This is telling God that even if He calls another Ellen White our church will not recognize her leadership. Remember that in Christ there is no male or female, so why should it not be the same in this church that we love? I appeal to the delegates to reject this exclusionary policy. Let us stand for the inclusion that has been advocated in our leadership sessions. Let us not tie God's hands to bring into leadership those whom He will. Thank you.

MICHAEL L. RYAN: Thank you very much for that, Dr. Geraty.

GUILLERMO MAGANA: I also agree with Dr. Geraty and speak in opposition of the amendment. I am going to come at it from the youth perspective. I attend Andrews University, and we have a fine seminary there. There are a lot of students that would be great once they become ordained; however, there are also other students who are not in the seminary but are in other different majors, and they would make fine General Conference presidents down the road if they would choose to do so. I think this is just narrowing down the scope of those that would wish to pursue this or what persons God has in His plan.

It would be like saying, in the political arena, that one has to be a lawyer in order to run for president of the United States. So I speak in opposition of the motion.

MICHAEL L. RYAN: I make no comment on your position, but it is very refreshing to hear young people's voices echoing across this auditorium.

ALVIN KIBBLE: Mr. Chairman, I stood earlier to express my approval and my affirmation of the strategic plan that had been presented before the assembly. Within that

plan were three strategic values that we also voted and approved of, those being that we value growth, that we value quality of life, and that we value unity.

Previously when I stood, it was for the purpose of asking how we were going to translate those key values throughout the world church and within the divisions that make up the world body. Unless or until we have clear intentional targets, those values simply become wonderful sentiments.

Mr. Chairman, it is noticeable that right after approving of that wonderful strategic plan and those core values, we would propose to take an action that would strongly strike at the inclusion of all genders in the selection of the leadership of our world church. It is for this reason that I would appeal that we reconsider the former action in recognition of the value of unity, and that we continue to pursue clearly a definition of what that value means in our operation and practice.

SAMUEL KORANTENG-PIPIM: Mr.

Chairman, I rise in support of the amendment, which says, "The General Conference president shall be an ordained minister of experience." I think it is a good thing. The church is not a corporation. The church is not a political institution. It is a spiritual entity, and the Bible teaches that the church must be headed by ordained elders or ministers.

MICHAEL L. RYAN: Thank you for that comment.

GEORGE REID: I regret, Mr. Chairman, that we are coming back to something that this church has dealt with twice before in session. I am rising to speak in favor of the proposal. If we are going to approach the question of women's ordination through a back door, then let's be quite honest and set it out front.

HARLIN ABAYON: I stand to speak against the amendment because I believe we are now in our fifty-eighth session of

the General Conference, and we have already elected the president of the General Conference, and this provision was not there.

I think, Mr. Chairman, we should not limit the powers of the Nominating Committee, because the Nominating Committee is trusted by the delegates, and trusted by the church, to elect even without this particular provision.

ABRAHAM CANTEROS BASUR: Mr. Chairman, I think that we have been on this subject for a long time, and it is time to put an end to it.

PATRICIA MUTCH: Mr. Chairman, It's my understanding from the presentation of this item that the rationale that caused the committee to present it to us is that it needed to be aligned with other parts of the constitution or bylaws that restrict leadership in other levels of the church organization to ordained ministers. I would like not only to speak against this item, but also to call into question the wisdom of those other items that this was intended to be aligned with. I believe that God made the human being in two forms,

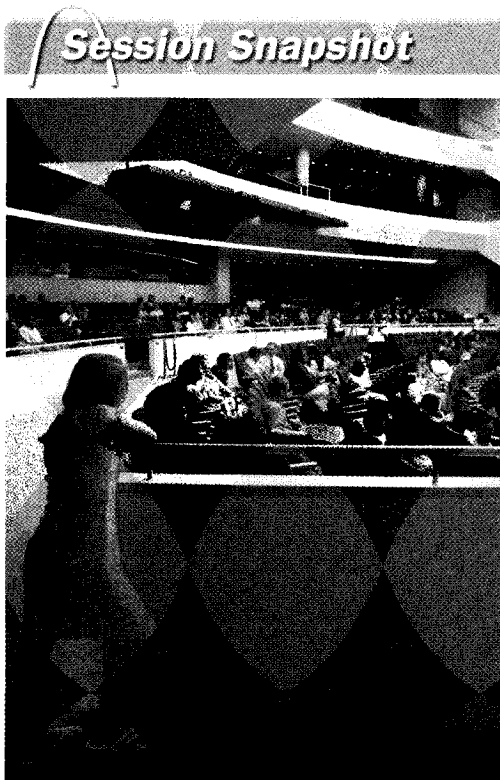


PHOTO BY JACQUELINE D. SORNGER & REVUE

ON THE SIDE: Katrina Nelson (NAD) listens to the junior Sabbath school program on July 2.

ADVENTIST Review

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male and female. And research on the brain as well as evidence from leadership around the world today shows that He gifted both forms of the human species with abilities and wisdom and capacity.

I speak against this motion.

MICHAEL L. RYAN: Thank you, Dr. Mutch. We're nearing the end of the 15-minute period. We will take a few more speakers. And I would hope that eventually we can bring this to a vote.

JOHN FOWLER: As was mentioned by the previous speaker, the requirement of ordination for several positions is already in the constitution. I do not think we should sacrifice the need for ordination to the top leadership positions of this church by arguing for ordination or by arguing that such a provision excludes the women. That issue must be addressed by revisiting the issue of ordination if necessary. I support this amendment.

ISRAEL LEITO: I move the previous question. [Seconded.]

MICHAEL L. RYAN: Let's vote on

whether we're going to extend the time for discussion. [It was voted not to extend the time for discussion.]

AGUSTIN GALICIA: The motion before us states, "The General Conference president shall be an ordained minister of experience." [The motion was voted.]

MICHAEL L. RYAN: I'm asking Larry Evans to bring the next item.

LARRY R. EVANS: On page 37 of your backup materials you will find Article I—Territorial Administration. There have been some realignments of divisions, and we need to amend the constitution and bylaws accordingly. [The changes were moved, seconded, and voted.]

MICHAEL L. RYAN: We will then go to item 308. Please introduce that for us.

LARRY R. EVANS: This is item 308, page 84 in the backup material. [The change in terminology from Standing Committees to Session Committees was moved, seconded, and voted.]

LARRY R. EVANS: Item 313 is found on page 89. This is in reference to a recom-

mendation for consideration by the Constitution and Bylaws Committee made at the last session in Toronto.

A request was received by the Constitution and Bylaws Committee to consider an amendment to the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Constitution, Article X, Term of Office, limiting service by a General Conference president to two consecutive terms of service. After the issues involved were considered, it was voted to refer this request to the General Conference session with a recommendation that the change not be approved.

[The motion was tabled until copies of the backup material could be made available for those who did not receive it.]

Continued in Bulletin no. 8.

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All are precious in His sight.
 We are all here, too.

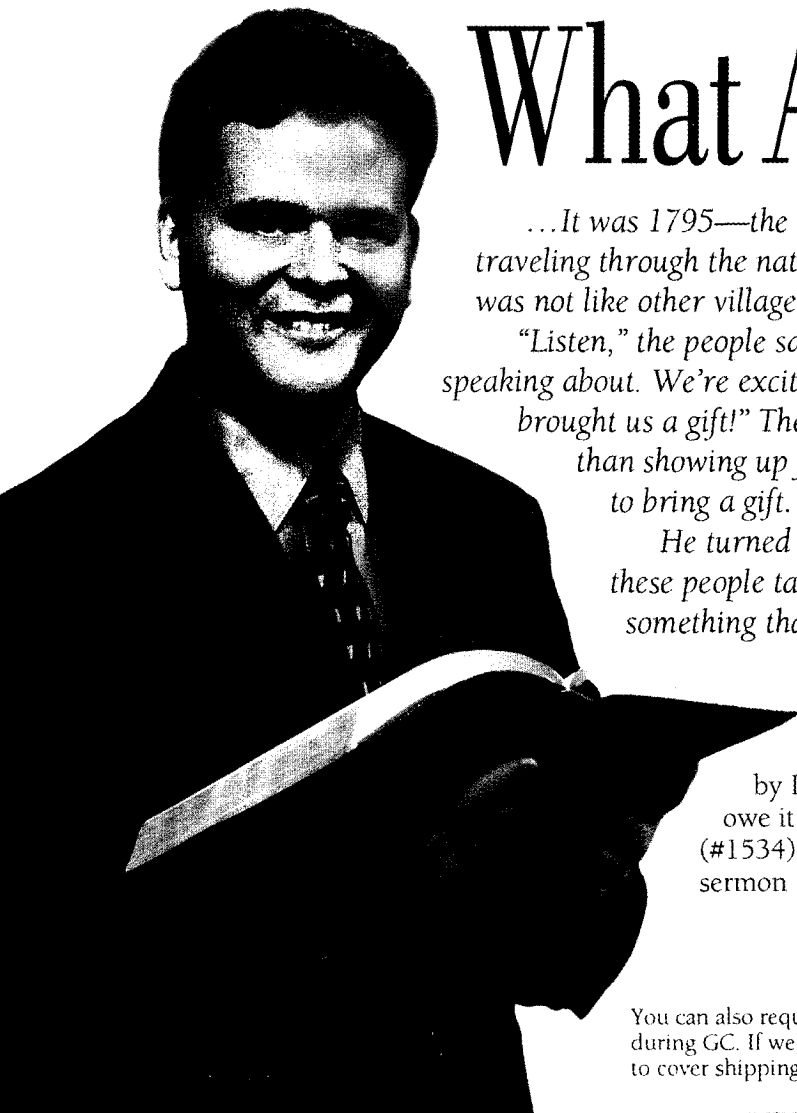
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