

QUARTERLY REVIEW

ORGAN OF THE
SOUTHERN EUROPEAN DIVISION of the General Conference of S. D. A.



How to Conserve our Membership

By N. F. Brewer

General Field Secretary, General Conference

[At the request of a number of the workers in the Southern European Division, we are printing below a morning devotional message by Elder N. F. Brewer at the Division Annual Council, Vienna, Austria, December 1954.]

This morning I want to talk to you about what I consider the most serious problem we have in the Seventh-day Adventist church today; that is, how to conserve our membership.

During 1952, in America, we added 15,353 members, but during that same time we dismissed 5,947 — about thirty-five per cent. According to your secretary's report, during the last 21 months you added to the church 13,915, but by apostasy you dropped 4,199 — about thirty-three and one-third per cent or one-third of your membership for the Division. That is too much isn't it? What do you think about it? It takes much labor to bring souls into the churches. Where is the man who talked last night from North Africa? I want to ask him whether it takes much effort to bring a Moslem into the Seventh-day Adventist church. It takes much effort to bring anybody in. It is not easy to bring a person to accept this truth. It means a whole change of their life, their habits, their eating, their dressing, and their day of rest. Yes, it takes much effort, much anxiety, much patience, and we spend thousands of dollars to bring them in. We open the front door of the church wide, and we do not

close the back one; and many are going out. Most assuredly we ought to do something about it. Do you not think so?

Every backslider always has a good reason according to his mind to apostatize. I shall try to analyze some of those reasons:

1. He may not have been truly converted when he came into the church. We have many people who have a *head* conversion, but not a *heart* conversion. They believe the truth. They know it is the truth, but it has not changed their lives. They have never experienced the new birth, and it may be that in our eagerness to get people to come into the church, some have come in without the real true new birth.

Some time ago a lady wrote a letter to the General Conference. She had a brother that she was trying to win to the truth. She wanted us to do something about it. This brother had known and observed Adventists for forty years, but evidently he had never seen anything consistent enough in their lives to bring him to accept the truth. "If something could be done," said this sister, "that we would have a body of converted believers, what an advance step that would be in spreading the truth!... God bless our ministry and ministers." And then she makes a statement I do not like to read: "May we have a more converted ministry who will bring more people to true conversion before baptizing them." That will give you an idea how some of

our laity are thinking. One of the reasons why members are going out of the church is that they are not truly converted when they come into the church. When trials come they just drift out.

2. Perhaps some friend has said something the member did not like. It may be true, or it may be false. Many times it is unintentional. Maybe it was just a word or two. It is generally very small when it begins, but if that person takes it to heart it grows and grows, and pretty soon he or she is out of the truth.

3. Some members look to other members as their example. A member has sinned, and that person says, "If that is the way Adventists live, then just count me out." Someone has been a stumbling-block. How important it is for our members to live right in the church! If we only knew how we are being watched by other members, by our relatives, and by the outside world, how careful we would be. But when we think that God is watching us, how much more careful we ought to be. Oh, that God would give us an awareness of His constant presence with us, and His constant eye upon us. How many things we would leave undone if we really realized God is watching us! But some member may stumble because of what they see in our lives.

4. Many leave the truth because there is such a lack of prayer and study of the Bible. They may not have any family worship. Their children never hear prayer in the home, except perhaps at mealtime. They grow up without a Christian background, and then the parents come and weep their hearts out when the children go out of the truth.

I was in a camp-meeting some time ago, and was talking on family worship. A lady came to me after the service. She said she had never had family worship in her home. "I have a daughter thirteen years old, and we are going to start having family worship tonight." I encouraged her all I could. Next morning she came to me with tears in her eyes. She said, "My daughter refuses to have family worship with me. What can I do?" She was thirteen years too late!

I wish that something would come into our ministry that would press this matter of family worship back to the churches and back to the people. How can we expect our children to grow up in the Christian faith without family worship? How can we expect them to go through the time of trouble without being prepared for it? The Catholics have a slogan, "People that pray together, stay together." I think we ought to have a slogan, "The family that pray together, stay in the truth."

5. Members marry outsiders, and their companions lead them astray. How many young people we have lost just because of that!

6. The members do not get the spiritual food they need when they come to church . . .

7. Some are tempted by Satan and fall. They go into worldliness. They lose their spiritual interest. Unless someone goes after them, and tries to win them back, they are gone.

There are two classes of backsliders. One is illustrated by the prodigal son or the lost sheep. The prodigal son knows he is lost. That sheep knows it is lost, but it does not know its way back. Then there is another class illustrated by the lost coin. The lost coin is unconscious and unconcerned about its loss; but it is still silver, and we have to work with those two classes.

How are we going to remedy apostasy? Let us make sure that our members are really converted before we bring them into the church. Then at the first indication of losing interest or non-attendance at church, either visit them ourselves or send someone else to visit them. Do not wait. Train older members of the church to always extend a warm welcome to those who come to church.

Elder Torrey told us an experience he had some time ago. He was away from home. He went into a church, saw an empty chair, and went up there to sit down. A lady said to him, "This seat is reserved." He went to another place, and went to sit down. Again someone said, "I am saving this seat for So and So." He went to three places, but all were reserved. Then he went to the back of the church and sat down. After the service he went out. Not one soul spoke to him. Nobody knew him. Do you think that if they had known he was the General Conference treasurer no one would have offered him a seat? Supposing he had been an outsider coming for the first time to our church? Do you think he would have wanted to come again? Would you? Oh, there is something about a warm welcome in a church that draws you to that church. Let us make our visitors feel welcome when they come to our churches. And let us remember that in the Seventh-day Adventist church we have no reserved seats; that is, in most of them.

Let us emphasize and hold up the privileges of being a church member. I have only heard one sermon in my life emphasizing the benefits and privileges of being a Seventh-day Adventist member. That is a new subject for some of you men. Put it down and work it out. It is a wonderful thing to be a Seventh-day Adventist church member. How many here think it is? Let us make the other person think that too. Let us make it so wonderful that the other person doesn't want to miss it . . .

Now when members backslide and go out of the church or are dismissed, how are we going to win them back? How did Christ win them back? You remember the story of the lost sheep. When the lost sheep was found, what did the shepherd do? Did he take his staff and strike it and say, "You naughty sheep, you caused me so much trouble; here I have

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God's Mysterious Ways

By Guiseppe Catalano

Church at Montalbano Jonico,
southern Italy,
raised up by two colporteurs.



How wonderful are the ways of God! We have another evidence of this in the founding of the new church at Montalbano Jonico, southern Italy. A few years ago, an elderly Protestant, a shoemaker by trade, (the first on the left in the picture) bought some nails for his work in Mr. Mottola's shop. (Mr. Mottola is the third on the left in the picture.) When the shoemaker returned to his workshop and opened the little package, he found, to his great surprise, that the nails were wrapped up in a page from the New Testament. He returned at once to the shop-keeper and inquired how he happened to have such a page. Mr. Mottola showed him a New Testament that he had bought from someone who had called at his shop. The shoemaker pointed out that this New Testament, although of Catholic origin, was exactly the same as his own. "The priests," he said, "preach that the Protestant Bible is different from theirs, and does not contain the truth. I have compared this page taken out of your New Testament with mine, and discover that it is exactly the same. How do you explain that?"

As a result of this conversation, there was awakened in Mr. Mottola's heart the wish to look into these religious questions more closely. He asked his customer whether it would be possible to procure a Bible like his. The shoemaker ordered a Bible, and the shop-keeper began to study it with growing interest.

During the summer of 1949, two of our literature evangelists came to this place. They inquired whether there were any Protestants in the town, and were shown the way to the old shoemaker, who was so happy to meet them. He told them that there was still someone in the town who was studying the

Bible, and accompanied them to Mr. Mottola's. He, too, was happy to listen to our two colporteurs. He immediately bought a book, which he read with great interest. As long as our brethren remained in this locality they held evening Bible studies in Mr. Mottola's home.

When they left they gave him the address of the mission headquarters in Naples, and enrolled him in the Bible correspondence course. Later Mr. Mottola wrote to our office requesting that someone visit him. Our evangelist, Vincenzo Stragapede, who was the worker in this territory, visited him, instructing him further in the truth and preparing him for baptism. At the time of the annual meeting of the South Italian Mission, July 1951, Mr. Mottola and his wife were baptized. Shortly after this a number of other persons were baptized, among them the old shoemaker.

So this is the way the fine little church in Montalbano Jonico came about. It is the very first in the province of Lucania, southern Italy. A marvelous missionary spirit reigns in this newly-organized group.

Referring to the text in Revelation 18: 1, "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory," Sister White explains that this mighty work will be brought about in a special way through the diffusion of our publications: "This is the very work the Lord would have His people do at this time." — *The Colporteur Evangelist*, p. 5. "The canvassing work is a most successful way of saving souls. Will you not try it?" — *Ibid.*, p. 33.

Ankazambo Mission School

By Henri Long

We have now been located in the Madagascar bush a year and a half. At the end of this first period of service, as we contemplate the past, and enumerate the signs of God's help and the manifestations of His power, we can not but repeat the words of the beautiful hymn: "Count your many blessings, . . . Name them one by one . . . And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done."

In July 1953, when we first set foot on Ankazambo hill, there were but two small buildings which had been constructed the previous year: the building for the little primary school, and the small native dwelling for the teacher. It seemed to me that the task confronting me was immense, and far beyond my strength; but today, on the same hill, stand three new buildings: the missionary's house, a second school building for the boys, and a second small dwelling for the teacher. A sixth building, which will be the finest of all, is under construction. Its four walls are already beginning to take shape. This will be the girls' school. Its construction was made possible by the generous financial contribution of the government. When this building will have been completed — and we hope to inaugurate it this coming September — we shall then have a real mission station at Ankazambo — the first on the



Left to right: boys' school, primary school, teachers' homes.

whole island, which will compare favorably with our flourishing mission stations in Africa. Of course these buildings did not come about of themselves; but with God's help, and under the competent supervision of René Villeneuve, who is much better qualified for this kind of work than I. We can now count on "tools" which will greatly serve in training workers for the cause of God in the northern sector of the great "Red Island."

And truly this is Madagascar's need today, for there is a grave lack of workers. The task that awaits us is immense, and we feel that past achievements are very meager when compared to it.

Until now we have worked almost exclusively in the cities and important centers; but the bush is there — waiting — with its hundreds of villages where there is neither school nor church, and where no one has ever come to tell the story of Jesus' love.

At present we have barely enough workers in Madagascar to care for the already-existing churches. What then can we do for the fields that are "white unto the harvest"? The answer to this question must be found at Ankazambo and other similar mission stations. We who are working here fully realize the great responsibility that rests upon



The six young men of the Tsimihety tribe who were baptized in July, 1954.

our shoulders, and we fervently ask the Lord to grant us the joy of contributing to the preparation of capable workers, animated with the zeal of the apostle Paul, that soon — very soon — a flame of hope may be lighted in the villages of the bush.

We are well aware of the difficulties to be faced to evangelize the tribes of the north, and particularly the Tsimihety people, where we are located. These people are intelligent, of robust constitution, but very suspicious. It is not easy to form friendly relationships with them. It is only after a year and a half among them that I have been able at last to win the friendship and confidence of the inhabitants of the villages bordering our mission station. This has been brought about in a large measure by the medical help my wife and I have been able to give them, although that has been very restricted. The work of evangelization would be greatly facilitated if we had a small dispensary and a specialized nurse. While waiting for the realization of our expectations, we are using the primary school, which now has 100 pupils, to prepare future workers for the field.

In June, 1954, when Brethren Girard and Ville-neuve visited us, we had the joy of gathering the first fruitage of the work accomplished at Ankazambo: six young men belonging to the Tsimihety tribe were baptized in the small stream that flows by our property. They are the first "hopes" of our work in this immense region. Since then new progress has been realized at our station. Last October, at the beginning of our second school year, we could enroll eighteen boys in our boys' boarding-school, instead of eight as in the previous year. If

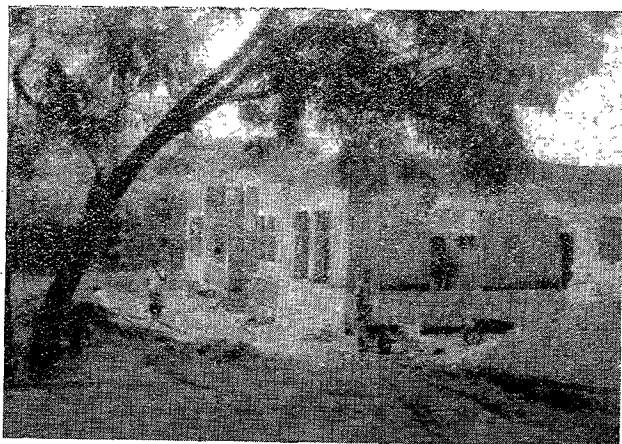


The school family, December 1954.

the increase should continue in the same proportion, we would then have to consider the construction of a larger boys' school, the present building being too small for future needs. Many other young people are preparing for baptism, and we hope to have a second and more important baptismal ceremony during the month of April.

It is not possible for me to close this brief sketch of past blessings without mentioning the opening of a meeting-place in the town of Befandriana, situated four miles from our station. The influence of a mission station should be like that of a stone cast into the water. "Throw a pebble into the lake and a wave is formed, and another and another: and as they increase, the circle widens until they reach the very shore." — *Counsels on Health*, p. 413. Conscious of our responsibility in this respect, we tried to raise up a small group of believers in the town of Befandriana, the county seat of the district. This result was achieved in March, 1954, and it will soon be a year now that twenty persons have been meeting every Sabbath to study God's Word and prepare for baptism. We hope that some of these will be baptized in a few weeks.

Past results are indeed encouraging, but they are only a very small beginning, and we are certain that God has far greater victories in store for the future. We ask Him to give us greater zeal and greater consecration in His service, so that through our humble instrumentality qualified workers may be sent forth into the field to finish the work that still remains to be done before the glorious appearing of our beloved Saviour.



Girls' school which is under construction.

STATISTICAL REPORT OF THE SOUTHERN EUROPEAN DIVISION OF S. D. A. FOR THE QUARTER ENDING MARCH 31, 1955

Name of Conference or Mission	Number of Churches	Previous Membership	Baptism	Vote	Letter	Total Gains	Apostasy	Death	Letter	Total Losses	Net Gain	Present Membership	Ord. Ministers	Lic. Ministers	Credentialed Missionaries	Licensed Missionaries	Bible Instr.	Elem. School Teachers	Canvassers	Total Laborers	Number of Sab. Schools	Sab. School Membership	Average Attendance
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
SOUTHERN EUROPEAN DIV.																							
AUSTRIAN UNION CONF.													3	1	3	4	—	—	—	11			
Danube Conference	19	1144	6	6	9	21	3	6	11	20	1	1145	7	4	2	1	1	—	11	26	19	1293	880
Alpine »	21	1492	17	—	10	27	11	7	13	31	-4	1488	5	4	1	2	1	—	16	29	21	1610	1060
Total :	40	2636	23	6	19	48	14	13	24	51	-3	2633	15	9	6	7	2	—	27	66	40	2903	1940
CZECHOSLOVAKIAN U. C.																							
Total :	114	6524	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6524	33	3	2	3	19	—	8	68	160	6000	5400
FRANCO-BELGIAN U. C.																							
Belgian Conference	14	928	8	—	2	10	—	3	2	5	5	933	3	3	—	4	—	—	—	10			
East France »	18	516	—	—	1	1	—	—	1	1	—	516	4	1	1	6	—	1	5	22	14	960	627
North France »	18	1258	14	2	9	25	3	6	11	20	5	1263	10	6	1	9	2	—	18	46	18	1317	1053
Southeast France »	22	998	—	3	30	33	—	4	13	17	16	1014	7	3	1	4	2	1	16	34	27	983	784
Southwest France »	7	218	4	—	1	5	—	—	1	1	4	222	2	1	1	7	—	—	5	16	9	310	235
Total :	79	3918	26	5	43	74	3	13	28	44	30	3948	34	16	5	35	4	3	49	146	84	4098	3068
HUNGARIAN U. C.																							
Total :	155	6827	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6827	26	10	4	15	35	—	—	90	175	7000	6500
JUGOSLAVIAN U. C.																							
Total :	230	7658	246	—	—	246	12	—	—	12	234	7892	47	11	2	8	23	—	—	91	300	9000	8500
RUMANIAN U. C.																							
Total :	551	41290	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	41290	78	11	—	47	—	—	—	136	560	40000	40000
SWISS U. C.																							
German Swiss Conference	34	1924	4	2	26	32	4	12	20	36	-4	1920	10	1	2	12	2	4	23	54	34	1752	1190
Leman »	25	1364	4	5	7	16	7	7	9	23	-7	1357	8	2	1	7	1	3	15	37	24	1264	1009
Total :	59	3288	8	7	33	48	11	19	29	59	-11	3277	18	3	5	21	3	7	38	95	58	3016	2199
ANGOLA UNION MISSION																							
Benguela Mission	23	4108	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4108	5	3	—	8	—	—	—	16			
Bongo Mission	1	522	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	522	3	1	—	3	—	—	—	66	104	6900	
Cuale »	1	129	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	129	1	1	—	1	—	10	—	13	15	649	
Lucusse »	1	611	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	611	3	3	—	3	—	—	—	34	26	1346	
Luz »	1	1061	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1061	2	1	—	—	—	14	—	17	35	2002	
Namba »	25	1745	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1745	3	7	—	—	—	—	—	48	87	5575	
Nova Lisboa Mission	25	1745	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1745	3	7	—	—	—	—	—	48	87	5575	
Total :	52	8176	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	8176	24	27	—	31	—	140	1	223	326	21332	15665
FRENCH EQ. AFR. U. M.																							
Batouri Mission	3	576	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	576	1	1	1	2	—	—	—	6			
Bertoua »	2	347	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	347	2	1	—	3	21	12	1	38	—	2116	1500
Kribi »	3	326	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	326	2	1	—	1	5	17	—	26	—	1878	1152
Nanga-Eboko »	2	307	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	307	1	1	—	1	13	2	—	18	—	760	660
Sangmelima »	6	1783	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1783	1	3	—	13	38	40	1	96	—	975	837
Yaoundé »	4	450	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	450	4	—	—	2	7	17	—	30	—	4088	3531
Total :	2	108	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	108	1	1	—	—	—	6	2	10	—	768	620
Maroua »	22	3897	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3897	14	9	1	24	97	105	4	254	125	10910	8614

How to Conserve our Membership

(continued from page 2)

gone hours to find you, and you have strayed away from the flock. Why didn't you stay with us?" Is that what the shepherd did? No. When he found that sheep he took it right into his arms. He bound up its wounds. He just pressed that sheep right to his heart. Isn't that the way we ought to do with the straying sheep of God's flock? — somehow love them back into the truth? How much is a soul worth? It cost the very life of our Saviour. That is what it cost to save you and me ... Souls that cost so much ought not to be treated with coldness and contempt.

Why did the Lord use a sheep to illustrate His tender care for His children? Because the sheep is one of the most helpless of animals. When it gets lost it can't find its way back. And when a sinner is lost it is very hard for him to find *his* way back. We must go after the lost sheep and not say like some shepherds, "Oh, if it comes back I'll open the door of the sheepfold and let it in, but I won't go after it." That is not the way our Saviour did. He went after that one lost sheep. One! The least number that He could count!

In China I visited one of our backsliders. I had not seen him for a long time, for I had not been in that part of China. He used to be one of our most efficient preachers. When I was in that church I made up my mind that I would visit him. I found out where he lived, and went over and rapped on the door. A voice said, "Come in." When I entered and held out my hand he put his hand back of him. I sat down and talked to him, and he recognized me right away. I didn't say anything about his hand going back of him. After we had talked a while I wanted to have prayer with him, and we knelt and had prayer. He arose with tears in his eyes, and said, "You are the first Seventh-day Adventist who has crossed my threshold for twenty years, and he lived within a mile of our church. I wonder how many there are within a mile of your church that are backslidden and have not been visited for twenty years.

When I left he came out to the gate with me. In parting he said, "I have gone a long way. I know this truth. I was a preacher, but you know I have been smoking." He didn't need to tell me that. But I didn't say anything to him about it. "But you know I don't think they want me back in the church," he continued. "I have thought many times to come back, but I don't think they want me back." And, my friends, the sad part of it is many churches do not want them to come back.

In the parable of the prodigal son we have not only the prodigal son, but the elder brother. You know what he said, do you not? What did he say? "No, I am not coming to your feast. If that backslidden brother is there, you won't find me there." This is what Sister White says: "The return of the prodigal son was a source of the greatest joy. The complaints of the elder brother were natural, but not right. Yet frequently this is the course that brother pursues toward brother. There is too much effort to keep reminding them of their mistakes. Those who have erred need pity, they need help, they need sympathy. They suffer in their feelings, and are frequently desponding and discouraged. Above everything else, they need free forgiveness." — *Testimonies*, Vol. 3, p. 104.

Then when those who have wandered away make an effort to come back, let us take them back. "There is need of shepherds who, under the direction of the Chief Shepherd will seek for the lost and straying. This means the bearing of physical discomfort and the sacrifice of ease. It means a tender solicitude for the erring, a divine compassion and forbearance. It means an ear that can listen with sympathy to heartbreaking recitation of wrong, of degradation, of despair and misery." — *Gospel Workers*, p. 184.

When we go to a backslider, let us listen to what he has to say, and listen with sympathy. Let us not argue with him. He has his reasons for being outside the church. It may be that somebody has done something that has shocked him. Let us say we are sorry that that happened. After he has told you his whole story he will feel better. Don't argue that the other person was right. We do not know whether he was right. It may well be he was wrong. Do not condemn him. "If you see one whose words or attitude show that he is separated from God, do not blame him. It is not your work to condemn him, but come close to his side to give him help. Consider the humility of Christ, and His meekness and lowliness, and work as He worked, with a heart full of sanctified tenderness." — *Testimonies*, Vol. 6, p. 125. "O the lack of deep, soul-touching sympathy for the tempted and the erring! O for more of Christ's spirit, and for less, far less, of self!" — *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 192.

"We need more Christlike sympathy; not merely sympathy for those who appear to us to be faultless, but sympathy for poor, suffering, struggling souls, tempted and discouraged. We are to go to our fellowmen, touched, like our merciful High

Priest, with the feeling of their infirmities." — *Ministry of Healing*, p. 164.

"While very sensitive to the least blame in regard to their own course, many are too severe in dealing with those whom they suppose to be in error. No one was ever reclaimed from a wrong position by censure and reproach, but many are thus driven further from the right path, and led to harden their hearts against conviction. A spirit of kindness, a courteous, forbearing deportment, may save the erring, and hide a multitude of sins." — *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 519, 520.

"Until the judgment you will never know the influence of a kind, considerate course toward the inconsistent, the unreasonable, the unworthy." — *Ministry of Healing*, p. 495. You will notice three classes are mentioned in this statement: "the inconsistent, the unreasonable, the unworthy." And yet we ought to be kind to those. "When we meet with ingratitude the betrayal of sacred trusts, we are roused to show our contempt or indignation. This the guilty expect, they are prepared for it. But kind forbearance takes them by surprise, and often awakens their better impulses, and arouses a longing for a nobler life." — *Id.*, p. 495.

Why, that is the way to win them back. God is giving a special invitation to backsliders to come back. Do you know that? "The Lord is giving the erring, the weak and trembling, and even those who have apostatized from the truth, a special call to come fully into the fold. But many have not learned that they have a special duty to go and search for these lost sheep." — *Life Sketches*, p. 187.

"The love of God still yearns over the one who has chosen to separate from Him, and He sets in operation influences to bring him back to the Father's house A golden chain, the mercy and compassion of divine love, is passed around the imperiled soul." — *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 204.

"Although a man may have sunk to the very depths of sin, there is a possibility of saving him. Many have lost the sense of eternal realities, lost the similitude of God, and they hardly know they have souls to be saved or not. They have neither faith in God nor confidence in man. But they can understand and appreciate acts of practical sympathy and helpfulness." — *Testimonies*, Vol. 6, p. 259.

"The Lord wants His people to follow other methods than that of condemning wrong, even though the condemnation is just. He wants us to do something more than to hurl at our adversaries

charges that only drive them farther and farther from the truth. The work which Christ came to do in our world was not to erect barriers, and constantly thrust upon the people the fact that they were wrong. He who expects to enlighten a deceived people must come near to them and labor in love. He must become a center of holy influence." — *Gospel Workers*, p. 373.

We are looking for a great inflow of new members in this Division in the next year. Do you know why the Lord does not let people come into the church? "The Lord does not now work to bring many souls into the truth, because of the church members who have never been converted, and those who were once converted, but have backslidden. We have no time to lose; God calls upon us to watch for souls as they that must give an account." — *Testimonies*, Vol. 6, p. 62.

Oh, my dear fellow-workers, would to God that I could say something that would in some way impress us with the duty of going out to those who have gone away from us: that we would make that our first duty. That we would gather those who have grown cold and indifferent in our churches, and bring them back into the warm atmosphere of the church. Would to God that when we go back we will somehow put our arms of love around those who have left us. They are just as precious as some other soul who has never heard this truth. Let us do something about it. How many will do that? You will be surprised how many want to come back to the church, but they think nobody cares. They think, Why should I come back. I am not wanted anyway. Let us make them feel that they are wanted. Let us not constantly remind them of their mistakes. . . . Let us love them back into the truth. Let us pray.

Our Father, we thank Thee for Thy many many blessings. We thank Thee that Thou hast called after us: that Thou hast given us a desire to serve Thee, O Lord. O give us a heart of sympathy, of love, toward those who have strayed away. Give us the wisdom that we might bring them back. And as we go to them, may Thy Holy Spirit open to us their hearts. Help every one of us to have a burden for those who have strayed away, and help them to come back. We ask, O Lord, that Thou will give us the grace to freely forgive those who have done wrong, and help us to bring them back, for Jesus' sake, Amen.

In the Throes of Idolatry

By H. Salzmänn

"All who make idols are nothing, and the things they delight in do not profit" (Isa. 44: 9, Revised Standard Version).

We had remained in this bush village for some time. It was easy to sell our publications, and we were well received almost everywhere. In the evening the whole village would gather around our improvised screen, and listen attentively as we explained the pictures thrown upon it.

Before leaving this desolate place, I was keen on seeing for the first time some crocodiles in their natural habitat. We crossed the river in a dug-out, then we crept through the bushes until we came to a lake surrounded by a veritable thicket of reeds. We advanced quietly, hoping to come upon the crocodiles unawares — on land.

There they were: two, three, six, and the seventh in the water! Three of them were more than nine feet long. With their great open mouths, displaying their magnificent teeth, they lay basking in the sun. We watched them at a distance of about fifty yards, and with field-glasses we could observe them at a much closer range. Who would dare go into that water and expose himself to a sudden and dangerous attack?

The French superintendent of the district made his dog bark to attract the attention of one of the "voay" (Malagasy for crocodile), and sure enough a great specimen advanced slowly to the water's edge, and remained at a distance of about ten yards, so we could get a close-up view of him. Their menu must be monotonous enough: fish, sick ducks. What an appetizing change a dog would be! especially as a "choice morsel" escaped them quite recently.

Two days and a half before this, at midnight, some natives came to this lake to fish. Making their way through the reeds, they reached the lake shore, and threw their fishing-lines into the water which teems with fish.

Be afraid? Why, no! The sorcerer prays to these crocodiles every Sunday, and he has the power to prevent them from becoming dangerous. Better still, had he not sold them a powerful "*gri-gri*" (amulet) to preserve them from being attacked?

Such confidence reaches far beyond our imagination! On this particular night, however, their confidence was considerably shaken. But for how long? Will not the sorcerer find some plausible explanation of the tragic happening?

A woman with some of her companions was standing on the lake shore, fully assured of the protective power of her "*gri-gri*" (amulet). But suddenly she feels excruciating pain. The mouth of one of these dreadful animals has closed around her ankle, and she is being slowly drawn into the water. Desperate cries for help rend the desolate stillness. With all her strength she clings to the reeds which cut her hands with their sharp leaves. But she must hold on at any cost, for certain death awaits her in the water. The most courageous of her companions approaches with a heavy cudgel, and with all her strength strikes the crocodile, that is still holding its victim, on the mouth. The moon lights up the pitiful sight. Finally the crocodile releases its prey, and the woman sinks fainting to the ground, quite exhausted from the terrible shock. She is brought to the superintendent's post, where first aid is given. But what a painful journey awaits her on the morrow! Across rivers where there are no ferry-boats, and over jolting trails she will be borne to the nearest hospital, a distance of ninety-five miles!

What a striking picture of Madagascar's needs! An immense country, sparsely populated, whose people can be reached only during certain months of the year, for when the rainy season comes on many of the roads are unfit for traffic. Nevertheless the everlasting gospel, with its liberating power, must penetrate into all the regions of this great island.

By far too many still know nothing of the redeeming work of our Saviour. We must have schools. We must have teachers. We must have evangelists, and nurses. We must have means with which to maintain and better equip our mission stations. There is so much to be done, and we are so limited! Come, Lord Jesus, come, and help us!

"It is not a conclusive evidence that a man is a Christian because he manifests spiritual ecstasy under extraordinary circumstances. Holiness is not rapture: it is an entire surrender of the will to God; it is living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God; it is doing the will of our heavenly Father; it is trusting God in trial, in darkness as well as the light; it is walking by faith and not by sight; it is relying on God with unquestioning confidence, and resting in His love."

Acts of the Apostles, p. 51.

In Memoriam



Jules Robert

A few days ago we were greatly saddened at the Division office to learn of the decease of our dear brother Jules Robert. Since then I have looked into certain facts concerning his life and service.

Jules Robert was born at La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland, on the 16th of October, 1864. When he was fifteen years of age he left Europe with his family for America. He was baptized at Battle Creek in September 1884. The same year he entered the print-shop of the *Review and Herald* to become a printer. In 1888 he returned to Europe with H. P. Holser, and entered the *Imprimerie Polyglotte de Bâle* (the Basel publishing house). In 1896 he went to Hamburg where he, in reality, founded what is now known as the Hamburg publishing house. Brother Robert was married on the 17th of April, 1890, and he died on the 17th of April, 1955 — the day of his sixty-fifth wedding anniversary.

Brother Robert has held the following posts of responsibility in the cause of God: editor of *Les Signes des Temps (Signs of the Times)* from 1898-1900; secretary-treasurer of the Latin Union from 1902-1916; director of the Gland institutions until 1925; director of the publishing house 1902-1911; administrator of the school 1908-1920; director of the health food factory in Paris 1911-1928; auditor 1925-1928. In this latter capacity he was obliged to travel considerably, even to Czechoslovakia and Poland. When the Franco-Belgian Union was

organized, J. Robert worked in Paris as union treasurer and Bible house manager.

I have probably forgotten to mention some of the posts in which Brother Robert served. He retired in 1932, his health preventing him from carrying such heavy responsibilities longer.

Although Brother Robert retired, he continued to do auditing work. Besides, we were always glad to invite him to our committee meetings, and to give him a warm welcome, for he was an excellent counsellor. He knew how to face and examine problems calmly and with sound judgment. Many men among us have this same gift, but at the same time have a heart of stone; but while Brother Robert could look problems straight in the face, he had, at the same time, a great, understanding heart. He was broad-minded, and as a natural consequence was always ready to give generously. In thinking of him a text in the Psalms comes to my mind: "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Psalms 85: 11). These traits were to be found in Brother Robert's character. Occasionally we try to make justice triumph to the detriment of peace. Brother Robert was just, but he understood also that peace is a precious virtue, and that we must be willing to pay a great price in order to maintain it. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face" (Psalms 89: 14). Always humble and modest, Brother Robert walked in the footsteps of his Master. "The memory of the just is blessed" (Proverbs 10: 14). If ever these words could apply to a man's life, it is surely to the life of Brother Robert. We shall long remember him, and this memory will certainly remain a blessing. In the name of the Division, I wish to express our deep sympathy to the bereaved family.

As I go back over my personal relationship with Brother Robert, I cannot but recall the words of the Scriptures concerning Barnabas: "For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith" (Acts 11:24). Brother Robert was certainly a *good* man. He lived under the influence of the Holy Spirit's guidance, and exercised great faith daily. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord" (Rev. 14: 13). May Brother Robert's godly life be an incentive that will inspire us to remain true and entirely consecrated to the Lord and His cause, and to serve faithfully to the end.

Robert Gerber.

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M. Fridlin Editor
..... Editorial Secretary

Here and There

The date of the 1955 Annual Division Council has been changed from December 7-14 to November 30 to December 7.

A. G. Roth, recently-appointed director of the Gland institutions, has taken up his duties at "La Lignière," Switzerland. Brother Roth was the second principal of our French seminary at Collonges-sous-Salève. He served the institution in this capacity for eight years — from 1922—1930. During the intervening twenty-five years Brother Roth has occupied various posts of responsibility in the United States and the Antillian Union Mission. His students and a host of other friends will be happy to know he has returned to Europe. We are truly glad to welcome him "back home".

By action of the Division committee on June 8, 1955, it was voted that the **Portuguese East African Mission** will be united with the Angola Union Mission. After the visit of Elders M. V. Campbell and M. Fridlin in Portuguese East Africa this spring it was felt that the Portuguese East African Mission can be administered more economically and effectively by the Angola Union Mission.

J. J. Aitken reports, "It is a great pleasure to visit **Le Foyer at Pignan**." This old people's rest home was opened a few years ago by Miss M. Becker, and owing to her good organization and competent supervision a number of our aged brethren and sisters can "come to the end of the road" in peace and contentment.

The Seventh-day Adventist **Welfare Center** in the city of **Vienna**, Austria, was able to cheer the hearts of 742 children and refugees during the bitter cold days of the past winter. To all were given packages containing life-giving food, and health-giving warmth. The total value of these gifts was over eighty thousand schillings.

We see the omens of a rapidly expanding and triumphant work in many countries of Europe. The laymen's growing interest in participating in the finishing of the work is evident by the great number of applications for admittance to the **seven schools of lay evangelism** being held this summer and fall in three different countries of Southern Europe. The first of these schools will be held in Switzerland, — one for the French-speaking group of future lay preachers, and another for the German-speaking group.

It is with deep regret that we announce the death of **Jean Meddour**, one of our young and promising workers who was connected with the No. African Union Mission as an evangelist in Tunis. Brother Meddour came to France last year with the hope of recuperating his health, but his condition became worse until he passed away on April 5, 1955. To his young widow and fatherless children we express our deepest sympathy, as well as to other members of the bereaved families.

We are happy to report that groups of young **American Adventists** are meeting regularly in **France** at Orléans and La Rochelle. We have eighteen soldiers with their families at Orléans, and about twenty at La Rochelle. These groups are doing active missionary work, and a number of the French people who have attended their gatherings have asked for baptism. It is surprising to note that Americans who had never heard of Seventh-day Adventists in the United States, have learned of them and our message in France.

A beautiful **chapel** in **Nikaia**, a suburb of Athens, was **dedicated** on Sabbath, April 9, 1955, and authorization has been granted to open its doors for public worship. This is the second church building in the Athens area where Paul's message of the return of Jesus is being preached with renewed emphasis and significance.

By action of the General Conference committee, March 2, 1955, it was voted that the administration of the **Israel Mission** be assigned to the Southern European Division, understanding that the territorial adjustment will be effected at a later date in harmony with the regular policy. It is certainly interesting that this part of the Bible lands belongs now to our Division. The Israel Mission has a population of 1,600,000. At the present time there is one organized church in this territory, with a membership of 32. The headquarters of this mission are located in Jerusalem. The president is Pastor J. O. Wilson.

Elder André Matton who has served faithfully for two terms in the French Equatorial African Union Mission as a mission field leader, has returned permanently to his homeland, France, because of the health condition of Mrs. Matton and the educational problem of their children. We wish to thank Brother Matton for the good work he accomplished in the mission field, and we pray that God will richly bless his work in the homeland.

Two other missionaries from the same union, **K. Scheidegger**, union secretary-treasurer, and **P. Bernard**, Y. P. M. V. and educational secretary of the union and head of the teachers' training school at Nanga-Eboko, are on regular furlough during the summer months, and will return to their field of labor this autumn.

From the Indian Ocean Union Mission **J. Surel** who is in charge of the Reunion Island Mission and **E. Vervoort**, president of the Seychelles Mission, are also on furlough and will return to their respective fields. We wish all of these missionaries a pleasant stay in France until with renewed strength and health they return to continue their blessed ministry in these far-away mission-fields.