

August 2012

ADVENTIST WORLD



Tundra TREK

*Single—and wondering in the
Alaskan wilderness*

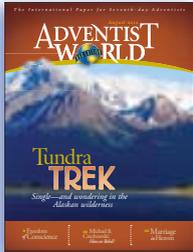
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“Just Try to Stop Me”

Nothing is more common in the world of Adventist worship and education than reminders of the obligation believers are under to share the good news of salvation and ultimate redemption through Jesus Christ.

Before we walked into the water on the day of our baptism, we were told of our responsibilities as a witness to His power and love. When we emerged, dripping wet, out of the river or baptismal pool, we were urged to share the gospel. In a hundred sermons since then we have heard the biblical imperative to “go therefore and make disciples of all the nations” (Matt. 28:19).

We have framed the sharing of the good news as a dutiful response to a command. And so we have invested in training seminars, coaching exercises, and practice sessions to make what often seems an unwelcome task more tolerable.

But biblical Christianity knows little of this sense of heavy obligation, in which, with Shakespeare’s schoolboy, we go “creeping like snail unwillingly to school.” An irrepressible joy suffuses the pages of the New Testament: we sense that it was harder for these believers to keep silent than to speak abroad the Name above all names.

Wherein lies the difference? They were reporting a personal encounter they had found with Jesus: words of admiration, praise, and witness flowed from them like “a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14), just as He had promised. They were reveling in a friendship with One who had suddenly made all things possible, including witness.

As you read the striking articles about witness in this edition of *Adventist World*, pray for an encounter with the Savior that will renew the story you are privileged to tell. No seminar technique, no memorized approach, will ever be even half as compelling as the testimony that begins “Ah, let me tell you what Jesus has done for me.”

Bill Kurtz



WORLD REPORT

Adventist Youth Musicians *Killed in Moldova Crash*

■ Three Seventh-day Adventists from Moldova, along with another young musician, were among those killed June 1 when the small bus in which they were riding collided with a tanker truck on a rural road. The truck driver also perished.

Deceased are Tatiana Catana and Viorica Ciobanu, two young musicians; Olga Jentimir, a spouse of one of the musicians and mother of another musician. Her son, Andrei Jentimir, was also a passenger in the minibus, and suffered a broken leg and arm, among other injuries. The tragedy also took the life of 12-year-old Artur Barba, who was not an Adventist but played in the orchestra.

The victims were from the Seventh-day Adventist church in Ivanovca Nouă, Moldova, and were returning from a funeral that had been held in the city of Ialoveni.

On Monday, June 4, a crowd of 1,500 gathered at the Adventist chapel in Ivanovca Nouă to pay their final respects to those who perished. Musicians from the adjacent village Singerei Noi also saluted the victims.

A rescue team and eight emergency cars arrived at the accident scene and transported 11 wounded musicians to the hospital, four of them in very serious condition days after the crash. Moldova was stunned by the severity of the crash, and media reports were filled with details for several days.

Moldova, officially the Republic of Moldova, is a landlocked state in Eastern Europe located between Romania to the west and Ukraine to the north, east, and south. The country has a population estimated at 4.1 million, and according to world church statistics there are 10,748 Seventh-day Adventist Church members worshipping in more than 150 congregations.

—Brent Burdick, *Euro-Asia Division*, with Adventist World staff

In Israel, Adventist Scholars Meet to Plan New Bible Commentary Series

■ More than 60 Seventh-day Adventist biblical scholars came together in the lands of the Bible to integrate thought and strategy as they planned a new reference series, to be known as the *Seventh-day Adventist International Bible Commentary* (SDAIBC).

Senior project editor Jacques Doukhan, professor of Hebrew and Old Testament exegesis at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States, identified three conference goals. The event was held at Kibbutz Maagan, on the southern shore of the Sea of Galilee, from June 6 to 11.

Continued on next page ▶

WORLD REPORT

“We are here,” Doukhan said, “to enjoy the land where Jesus walked as we taste again of the land of promise. We are also here to think, to reflect, and to clarify our responses to the hermeneutical and methodological concerns related to our project. Most important of all, we are here, not just to meet with each other, but to reconnect with the Lord, who is and will be the fulfillment of our best dreams.”

Doukhan also introduced the executive committee that planned and will administer the project. Committee members include professors Fernando Canale, Richard Davidson, Jiri Moskala, Teresa Reeve, and Tom Shepherd, all of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary; Paul Petersen, of Andrews University’s College of Arts and Sciences; Kwabena Donkor and Ekkehardt Mueller, associate directors of the General Conference Biblical Research Institute; Ed Zinke, former BRI associate director and senior advisor to the *Adventist Review*; and Scott Cady, com-



ECD PHOTO

Kenya’s president Mwai Kibaki addresses the gathering at the launch of the Adventist University of Africa Judith Thomas Library. Looking on is Ted N. C. Wilson (right), president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

mittee liaison with Pacific Press, publishers of the new commentary.

Basing his devotional remarks on Ecclesiastes 7:8, Doukhan said notwithstanding the compelling importance of linguistics and exegesis, or prayer and the Holy Spirit, no student should disregard the compelling importance of time spent in God’s Word to a proper exposition of the text.

Davidson, who is the seminary’s J. N. Andrews professor of Old Testament interpretation, urged all scholars to respect their own finitude and the unassailable authority of Scripture, bearing in mind the words of Isaiah as they work on their commentaries: “But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word” (Isa. 66:2).

—Lael O. Caesar, *Adventist World* associate editor, reporting from Israel, with AW staff

Kenya’s President Opens New Adventist University Library

■ The Seventh-day Adventist Church was praised May 28 for its leading role in promoting quality education to all in Kenya and the entire African continent. Kenya’s president Mwai Kibaki made the declaration at the opening of the Adventist University of

Africa’s (AUA) Judith Thomas Library on the school’s campus in the Nairobi suburb of Ongata Rongai.

“I commend the Adventist University of Africa for championing one of the flagships of the social pillar by facilitating and promoting provision of education,” Kibaki said.

Ted N. C. Wilson, General Conference president, hosted the Kenyan head of state at the Advent Hill compound that is home to AUA and the East-Central Africa Division, underscored the Adventist Church’s commitment to equipping the university to enable it advance high-quality education as espoused by the universal Adventist beliefs in the context of education.

“The Seventh-day Adventist Church believes and remains committed to offering an education that is socially, morally, and spiritually enriching. The opening of this magnificent library is an attestation to that focus,” emphasized Wilson.

The colorful event was also attended by local administrators, politicians, and cabinet ministers that included Sam Ongeri, a Seventh-day Adventist Church elder; higher education minister Margaret Kamar, and member of Parliament George Saitoti, who is also minister for internal security. (Tragically, Mr. Saitoti sustained fatal injuries in a helicopter accident a



LAEL O. CAESAR/AW

SCHOLAR’S PANEL: Panel members on the first day of conference planning the new *Seventh-day Adventist International Bible Commentary*, meeting in Israel’s Galilee region. From left: Ranko Stefanovic, Gerald Klingbeil, Roy Gane, Jacques Doukhan.

few days after the event.)

The foundation stone for the Judith Thomas Library, a three-story building, was laid in 2005 by Kenya's then-vice president Moody Awori with the initial US\$1 million for the construction being a donation from Thomas, an American philanthropist. A further \$1 million was mobilized through a special book project initiated by the late James Cress, then-secretary of the church's Ministerial Association, with the General Conference providing the rest of the funding to complete the US\$6 million facility.

The library will be home to an E. G. White Research Center that will house a special collection of books related to Adventist Church heritage; an African Heritage Center with relevant literature, art, and cultural artifacts as well as other related materials to aid research about Africa.

"The [library] subscribes to a number of online databases that provide full-text access to thousands of journals and books with a view to enhancing student research," added vice chancellor Brempong Owusu-Antwi.

The library is furnished with fiber optic Internet connectivity, enabling wireless Internet access in all areas within the university campus to provide access to information and resources.

—Milton Nyakundi, Adventist Media Center, reporting from Ongata Rongi, Nairobi, Kenya

Former GC President Receives Norwegian Honor

■ It was a reunion of longtime friends—Pastor Jan Paulsen, a Norwegian Seventh-day Adventist, and two civic leaders, ambassador

Knut Vollebæk and Ole Christian Kvarme, bishop of Oslo for the Lutheran Church of Norway.

The June 2 encounter was a joyous event: Paulsen, now-retired president of the General Conference, received the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit, one of the highest forms of royal honor given to civilians, presented by Vollebæk on behalf of King Harald V of Norway. The Order of Merit was founded by King Olav V, Harald's father, in 1985 and is conferred on foreign and Norwegian nationals as a reward for their outstanding service in the interest of Norway or in service for humanity.

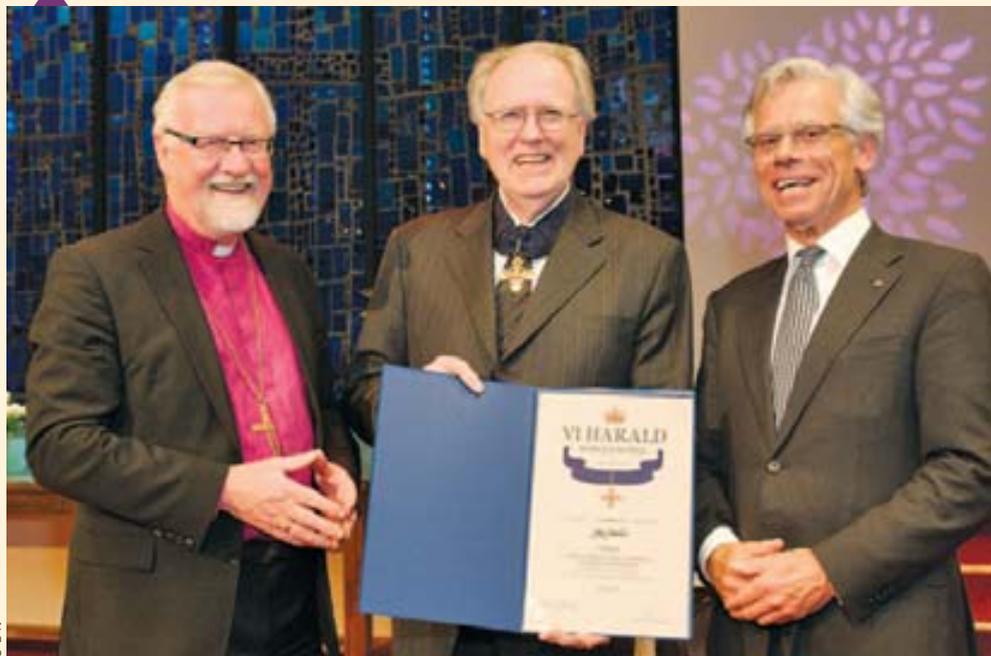
Paulsen told the audience at the Sabbath evening program during the East Norway Conference camp meet-

ing at Norwegian Junior College that the short reason given by the royal palace for appointing him a commander of the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit meant a lot to him: "Service for the good of humanity."

"What matters is what we have done for our fellow men," Paulsen said in his address. He paraphrased Jesus' words in Matthew 25: "I was in prison, you did not visit me. I was struggling with HIV/AIDS, why did you shun me?" Paulsen then stated what may well be termed the philosophy of his ministry: "Serving our Lord is not about what we have said; it is about how we treat other people."

Mark Finley, a former general vice president of the world church, repre-

Continued on next page ▶



ADAMS/TOR TJERANSEN

PAULSEN HONORED: Jan Paulsen flanked by Bishop Ole Chr. M. Kvarme (left), Church of Norway, and OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Knut Vollebæk, after receiving the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit at the Sabbath evening program during the East Norway Conference camp meeting, June 2, 2012 at, Norwegian Junior College (Tyrifjord Videregående Skole).

sented the General Conference at the ceremony. He read a letter from current GC president Ted N. C. Wilson, thanking Paulsen for his outstanding leadership. “Your commitment has inspired the church in its mission to reveal the loving character of Christ to all peoples” the letter from Wilson said.

Bishop Kvarme, who was one of the people behind Paulsen’s nomination for the honor, came to know the Adventist leader during the bilateral dialogue between the Lutheran World Foundation and the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which took place between 1994 and 1998, where both Kvarme and Paulsen were part of their respective delegations.

“These consultations brought us together and formed our friendship,” said Kvarme, who noted Paulsen had been a catalyst in developing educational institutions in West Africa. Paulsen’s contribution in developing Adventist-owned Babcock University in Nigeria to become a well-respected university not only in Nigeria but the whole region is well known, he added. The bishop also mentioned Paulsen’s initiative in establishing the church’s response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic through the foundation of the Adventist AIDS International Ministry with an office in South Africa as well as the cooperation with the World Health Organization in an effort to reach the UN Millennium Development Goals.

“You have performed your leadership as a committed Adventist, a devoted evangelical Christian, and a distinguished international citizen of Norway,” said Kvarme.

—Tor Tjeransen, Norwegian Union Conference

ANSEL OLIVER, *Adventist News Network,*
reporting from Greater Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Malaysian Mobile Medical Ministry Embodies Urban Focus

*Adventists bring “Hope on Wheels” to
morning market, follow-up with visitors*

At 7:00 one recent morning a nurse and two church workers got out of a van at a market to set up tables, plastic stools, and two red canopies.

The trio, all wearing white polo shirts with red trim, set up their booth not to sell produce, meats, or trinkets like nearby hawkers, but instead to conduct health screenings sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

This full-time ministry, called Hope on Wheels, operates five days a week to offer basic health assessments and comfort to those who may be experiencing severe health challenges. With obesity on the rise, some are surprised to learn that they may have diabetes.

For not selling, the team does a brisk business. Dozens visit its booth over the next three hours as the team offers tests for blood pressure, glucose, and body mass index. Later they’ll visit the homes of regular visitors to their booth, checking to see if guests have called their doctor about an issue or adjusted their diet as suggested.

This ministry, launched in February, is an ultralocal operation, one that was made possible by, literally, an extraordinary gift. A multimillion-dol-

lar tithe contributed to the Adventist world church in 2007, dubbed “extraordinary tithe,” established funds to ramp up projects worldwide, especially in the 10/40 window, a geographical rectangle in the Eastern Hemisphere between the 10 and 40 northern lines of latitude. It’s estimated that more than 60 percent of the world’s population lives in the region, less than 2 percent of which is Christian.

Local church leaders here in Malaysia’s peninsula, located within the 10/40 window, last year came up with the idea of a mobile medical ministry after hearing about similar initiatives in New York City and Sydney. But while some ministries outfit an entire bus and have patrons come on board, Hope on Wheels, operating out of a van, can get into smaller markets, malls, and schools.

“We’re trying to create awareness of the Seventh-day Adventist Church,” said Leong Fai, president of the Adventist Church’s Peninsular Malaysian Mission, home to about 5,200 Adventists.

The Adventist Church here is little known, even among those familiar with other Protestant denominations.

PHOTOS: ANSEL OLIVER/ANN



BLOOD PRESSURE CHECK (top, left) : In Greater Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Christina Joseph, a nurse, offers a blood pressure check to a patron of a morning street market. Joseph is part of Hope on Wheels, a mobile medical ministry that serves in markets on behalf of the Adventist Church. **HOPE ON WHEELS (bottom, left)**: Sunny Tan retrieves equipment from the Hope on Wheels van. The ministry operates in local markets throughout Greater Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. **HEALTH TEST (right)**: Ronald Longgou (right) helps a patron of a local morning market in Greater Kuala Lumpur test for body mass index. The former Bible worker is one of three team members of the Hope on Wheels ministry, which offers community health screenings and follow-up visits five days a week.

The mission operates in Greater Kuala Lumpur, the federal capital and the nation's most populous city, with more than 1.6 million people.

Malaysia is an economically strong Southeast Asian nation, a major exporter of energy, palm oil, and computer parts. Its official religion is Islam, which includes about 60 percent of the population. About 20 percent of citizens are Buddhist, and Christians make up less than 10 percent of the population.

"Before Hope on Wheels, many people didn't know about the Adventist Church like they do in Penang," Fai said of the island 200 miles to the north, home to Penang Adventist Hospital, which owns a bakery. "Adventist" brand bread is found in stores in Greater Kuala Lumpur.

"If [people] know about the Adventist Church, it's usually because of the bread," said Sunny Tan, a pastor who serves on the Hope on Wheel's team. "We're trying every way we can to reach out to people," the 30-year-old said.

The team will often coordinate with one of a handful of nearby Adventist churches to hold a monthly cooking demonstration. At markets, team members and volunteers will suggest people visit one of the cooking classes to learn how to make more healthful and appealing meals.

Tan said the team has operated here in the Puchong district for two months. They typically minister to a market once a week for three to six months, setting up at different locations five days a week. He said they

sometimes encounter gang members extorting market sellers, but they leave his team alone when they learn they are a charity.

When entering a new area, the team admits it's not above employing some strategy. Tan said they once had a local pastor join them wearing nondescript clothes. Market customers, weary of the sharply dressed crew that can appear like so many direct marketing teams, wondered what they were selling.

"They're not selling anything," the pastor said to assuage their skepticism.

"Step in and get a free health screening."

"I've even had my wife stand around holding our baby and doing the same thing," Tan admitted.

The team began its planning last September, creating a logo and hiring a designer to detail their van. The inspiration for their name: Pizza Hut's mobile kitchens.

"They had the popular slogan here, 'Hot on Wheels,' so we chose 'Hope on Wheels' because that's what we offer," said 24-year-old Christina Joseph, the team's nurse.

Shortly before 8:00 a.m. the third member of the team, Ronald Longgou, was fanning himself with his clipboard, the temperature already 84 degrees Fahrenheit, typical of the humid, tropical air near the equator. That's when Sharon Pfeiffer, a 54-year-old Malay, came in for her second weekly visit. It's not uncommon for people to visit the team's booth up to six weeks in a row.

"I saw this last week, and I liked the setup," Pfeiffer said. "I was so impressed that I called my friend," she said, pointing to an older Chinese woman nearby.

Pfeiffer said her family has a history of strokes, and she wants to learn to mitigate the possibility of having one herself. ■

On Sabbath, April 28, 2012, thousands of Seventh-day Adventists and guests were blessed as church leaders and the youth of the Dominican Union led out in the third annual Festival of Religious Liberty in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. During the past year Adventist youth and young adults eagerly prepared a well-crafted program featuring biblical scenes from Genesis to the New Testament church—all emphasizing religious liberty.

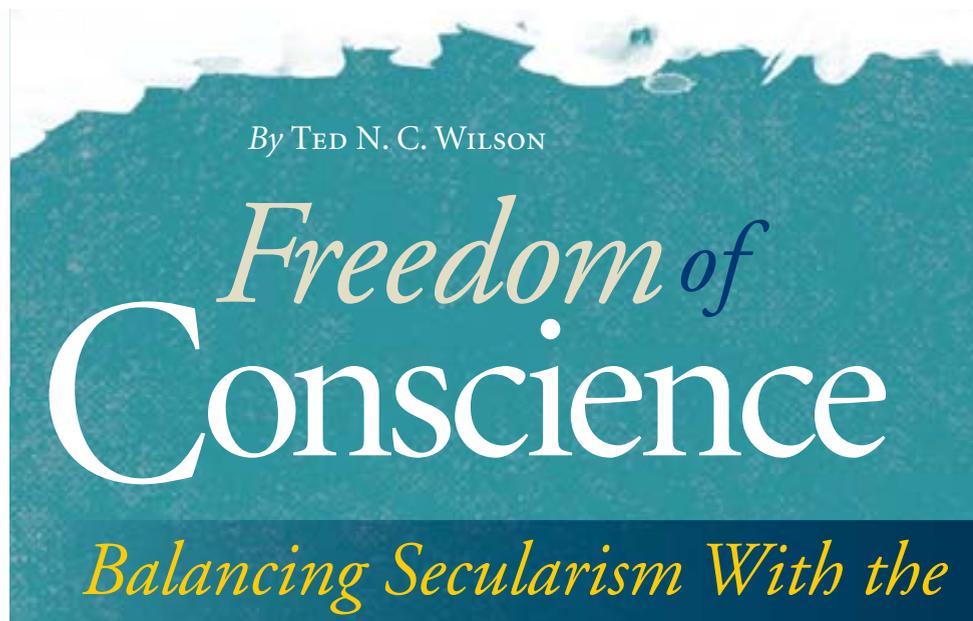
Religious liberty and freedom of conscience are gifts from God—gifts centered in free choice. These gifts are important for everyone in the world, and they are integral to our sharing the good news of the ultimate gift of Jesus Himself.

Religious Freedom in a Secular Society

Just days before the festival in Santo Domingo, I joined nearly 800 others at the seventh International Religious Liberty Association (IRLA) Congress in Punta Cana, where government officials, religious leaders, and guests from around the world gathered to discuss and promote a better understanding of religious liberty and freedom of conscience in the context of a secular society. In a world in which certain regions are growing increasingly secular, challenges to religious liberty are multiplying.

Seventh-day Adventists have always embraced religious liberty as an integral part of their beliefs, history, and mission. Religious liberty is in the very DNA of our church. Because we find the imperative of religious liberty and freedom of conscience in the Bible, we feel very close to the believers who stood for religious freedom during centuries of religious restrictions and persecution.

Religious freedom is a fundamen-



tal freedom—a basic human right.¹ It preserves an appropriate focus on personal, individual opportunities, yet it is also good for the well-being of societies and countries. Wherever it is honored and protected, justice, peace, and cultural progress inevitably increase.

But more than this, religious liberty and freedom of conscience have biblical foundations. Freedom of conscience is a gift from God, our Creator and Savior. He created us with the freedom to choose (see Gen. 2:16, 17). It's an important part of our human dignity. It was an expression of God's great love, and there's no true love without the freedom to love.

The Signature of God

Religious freedom bears the signature of a God of love, and plays an integral part in the great conflict between God and Satan, between good and evil. In the heart of the book of Revelation—Revelation 13 and 14—evil powers are described as oppressing, persecuting, and killing those who refuse to worship them (Rev. 13:14-17). In contrast, the peo-

ple of God proclaim their faith in Jesus—but they don't force anyone to worship Him. Christians have always testified to Jesus as the truth. But no one should ever be forced to accept that testimony. Jesus never imposed His teachings by using His power. Even His closest disciples were free to leave Him (John 6:67).

Jesus prepared His disciples to face persecution, but He never allowed them to persecute others, or to take revenge. Instead He told them, "When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another" (Matt. 10:23, NIV).² Instead of using violence, Jesus asked His disciples to love their enemies, a practice proclaimed again in 1 Corinthians 4:12, 13: "Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat."

An Approach to Secularism

The world's movement toward secularism is a process—a neutral, pragmatic, moderate secularism today could become an ideologically aggressive and coercive power tomorrow. This, of course, doesn't mean that *all* moderate secularisms today will



Right to Worship

become extreme tomorrow, but it reminds us that history amply illustrates this trend.

It's helpful to remember that in many Western countries secularism has been a reaction to the domination of religion for centuries. This has been the case in Europe, as well as in Australia and North and South America in differing degrees. In these places secularism has been progressing from a moderate stance toward a more radical form. When it reaches the level of national government and is invested by political power, it often leads, step by step, to the exclusion of religion from public affairs.

This process, however, is not universal. In some parts of the world efforts to impose a secularized model of society and government have failed, and dramatically so. This is also a reaction—not against religion, but against the process of secularization.

Extreme secularism is not irreversible. When it uses the power of the state to fulfill its antireligious agenda, it produces reactions for people of faith. Examples of aggressive secularism include the forced removal of his-

toric religious artifacts from public squares; imposing the practice of abortion on religious institutions, even when that practice goes against the conscience of practitioners; and decertifying Christian adoption agencies if they don't list same-sex couples as possible parents. Secularism doesn't target only Christianity, but other faiths as well. A much-reported act in France requires Muslims attending state schools either to remove their Islamic hijabs or to pay to attend private schools.

In these and other instances the secular state is no longer religiously neutral but has acted in favor of an extreme ideological secularism that does not respect religious freedom.

A Religious or Aggressively Secular State?

Some believers who feel threatened by secularism are tempted to establish a religious state, or at least one more friendly toward their religion. History has shown us that the usual first step toward that goal is a religious/political party that works to gather public consensus for a religious government.

Again, we can learn a lot from the past. Over the centuries religion formed the center of human societies. It was the reference point for everything—science, art, philosophy, politics, economy. But as we know, the society it inspired was not a model of religious freedom.

If the state gives to one religion a privileged legal position, no genuine civil equality is possible. Life becomes a nightmare for those who believe or practice differently. For example, which type of society would condemn a citizen to death for apostasy because they have changed religions—a secularized or religious society? Such outright violations of human rights are unfortunately completely legal in some nations, and are even included

in their constitutions or penal codes.

As members of a religious minority, Seventh-day Adventists should be alert when religious movements in their societies embrace political methods. History has shown the disastrous effects on religious freedom when church and state become united.

Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36); no country on earth can claim to be the "kingdom of God." At its best, any human government will be an imperfect attempt to establish peace by protecting the freedom and rights of all. But roots of persecution are planted when the state is made sacred. When it becomes "godlike," it betrays its purpose.

A Fundamental Freedom

If asked to choose between a religious state and an extreme secular state, I could not choose either one. We have seen religious freedom denied by both. My choice must always be for a state where religious freedom is described as a fundamental freedom and has the status of a protected human right.

A secular state can be supported by believers so long as it doesn't oppose the values of their faith. Christians are called to obey authorities and to respect the state. But when there is a conflict between the faith of Jesus and the claims of the state, we have a higher mandate: "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29, KJV).

Most of what we call "secular societies" are still open spaces where people holding different opinions can express their points of view. This "open space" produces tensions, and in such a context those who say nothing risk having nothing to say.

As we face the question of how to live in a context of secularism (with all its tensions) and still be faithful to our Christian values and beliefs, we have to accept this tension between secular-



A One-Day Church

Sizinda, Zimbabwe

ism and religion as part of a free society. We must accept the challenges and find appropriate responses through God's leading.

Tension Brings Opportunities

As tensions arise there will be opportunities to share our faith and values. If intolerant, ideological secularism attacks our religious faith, we must stand up for our faith with conviction. We should not be intimidated or give up. But we must face the challenge with the Christian weapons of hope, endurance, perseverance, kindness, and love.

Let's be fully engaged in our strong commitment and personal actions to live lives that promote religious liberty and freedom of conscience. Let's speak and advocate our positions in a winsome manner with grace, conviction, and passion. Let's seek wisdom from heaven to accomplish the great task of championing religious freedom, enlisting support from government and civic leaders, as well as the general public.

Let's especially encourage youth and young adults to join in constant vigilance and action for religious liberty and freedom of conscience for everyone. It's our God-given gift, and it's our great privilege to receive and share it. ■

¹See "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights," adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948. Even ostensibly secular organizations have recognized and enshrined this right.

²Scripture quotations credited to NIV are from the Holy Bible, New International Version. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.



Ted N. C. Wilson is president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A.

It took volunteers three days to build the one-day church at Sizinda, Zimbabwe. The first day they raised the steel skeleton, screwed it down tightly, and began work on the roof. The second day they finished the rafters and screwed down the sheet-metal roof. But since they had left the steel ridge-top pieces at camp,

three men returned the next day to complete the project.

Each day, some local members worked beside the volunteers. However, one man, dressed in a bright orange jumpsuit, just stood at the edge of the lot and watched; all day, every day.

When the volunteers finished the ridge cap, two of them took the tools back to the truck while Bobby, the third volunteer, walked over to greet the man in the orange jumpsuit.

After a brief greeting and handshake the gentleman asked Bobby, "May I tell you a story?"

"Certainly."

"In 1964 I began praying that God would help us build a house of worship in my village. I prayed that prayer every day for many years, but nothing happened. We continued to meet under this tree.

"Then in 1994 an angel came to me in a dream and told me that a church was coming. So I prayed more often, and we began building a rough brick church ourselves.

"Three years ago, I was given a new dream. I had the same dream several times. I saw an angel who had come here and was building this steel church for our members."

Robin, one of the other volunteers, joined Bobby and listened as the man continued his story.

"Sir," he went on, "I have watched you and the team as you have built this building. It is just like in the dream."

There was a brief pause as the man tried to find the right words. Then he spoke.

"You, sir, are the angel in my dream, and I thank you. Thank you for this wonderful gift. May I shake your hand please?"

As Bobby and Robin walked back to the truck, Bobby wiped away a tear and said quietly, "Robin, I've been called a lot of things in my life, but this is the first time I've ever been called an angel."

The One-Day Church program is a collaborative effort between the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Adventist-Laymen's Services and Industries (ASI), and Maranatha Volunteers International. These stories come to you each month from Maranatha storyteller Dick Duerksen.



PHOTOS BY ROBIN EAST



COOPERATING WITH GOD: Volunteer Bobby Williams (right) stands with the man who prayed that God would

provide a church building for his village. **AN ANSWER TO PRAYER:** This One-Day Church in Sizinda, Zimbabwe, is a testimony to the faithfulness of its members.



Enditnow, the campaign to stop violence against women and girls worldwide, has a new face in the North American Division (NAD). The campaign has been expanded to include not just women, but children and men as well. All forms of abuse are evil, regardless of the victim. God calls His people to speak out against, and do our best to prevent, all abuse because it destroys lives. It mars His image in victims and renders it difficult, if not impossible, for victims to see themselves in the light of heaven.

Because of the new focus, the name of the enditnow campaign has been changed slightly to enditnow: Break the Silence About Abuse. The name change in no way diminishes the emphasis on abuse against women, who constitute the majority of adult abuse victims. However, it acknowledges the fact that men and a disturbingly large number of children are targets of abuse as well.

The issue of abuse in the church has historically not received the attention such an evil warrants. Many members and leaders have thought that something as evil as abuse simply cannot exist within God's remnant church. However, that mistaken view has been changing, particularly over the past 20 years, as more and more victims have come forward. To its credit, the church has endeavored to prevent abuse and help victims find healing and justice.

Karen's Story

One woman's experience documents the life-altering effects of childhood abuse. Karen has struggled her entire life because of abuse that began in her home and set her up for victimization as a teenager. Here is Karen's story in her own words:

"Evil can be easy to hide in this world. It masquerades as innocence.



enditnow[®] Changes Focus *in* NAD

By CARLA BAKER,
Women's Ministries director,
North American Division

It is often justified, and we become desensitized to it, but evil hidden under the folds of a clerical robe does damage of an uncalculated nature. Its damage can be likened to molecular changes in the physical body, because it affects our very core and alters the way we perceive God and how we perceive God's view of us. I see life as a seesaw. Humans possess great power for doing good, or for doing evil. Therefore, churches have the potential to do great things—and to do great harm.

"My soul has a house, not a home. The doors and windows of that house were blown out at an early age, allow-

ing anyone to walk right in. No fences, gates, or barriers.

"My abusers were all church leaders. My father was not a pastor, but he was an elder who preached often and taught Sabbath school for 50 years. I thought the violence in our home was normal. The contrast between reality and the family persona we showed was crazy-making. Incest, attempted murder, torture, and unspeakable things haunt me still. My father was rebaptized at least six times. We moved twice to start again with his promises of reform.

"My eighth-grade teacher walked into my soul's house and stayed a while, leaving massive destruction. A

teacher in high school picked me out to befriend. He told me that he would prove to me that not all men were evil. By the time he was done proving that, there was no roof on my house.

“I wish I could say that everyone who noticed that something seemed wrong, and everyone I told, responded with help. In fact, *no one* responded. I learned that I was unimportant and invisible. I wish I could say my house has been repaired and is safe now, but I still have a long way to go. I wish I could say the Adventist Church is above reproach, but it is not.

“I look back on my life now and see how God has protected me and charted my healing journey. It is only by His sovereign grace that I have lived long enough to tell my story, ... and it is important to do so because it was under God’s name that so much evil happened to me.

“The results of my past are far-reaching. I still struggle with my view of God and how to relate to Him. I struggle with trusting anyone. I hang onto other people’s hope when I can’t find my own. I pray that God will hold me (not too closely, mind you) until I can feel His finger tip and believe He is who He says He is, ... and I wish deeply to know how to love Him.

“I am daring to look up and feel winds of change in the Adventist Church. As I sit on my own seesaw, struggling to learn balance in my understanding of life and love, I will be watching and praying for change in our church—change that is not afraid to admit its wrongs and to offer help to its wounded.”

Don’t Turn Away

For those who have never been sexually abused, Karen’s story may seem too bizarre to be believed. But

other abuse victims can relate only too well. They know that much less abuse than what Karen experienced can leave similar scars and long-lasting effects. Karen’s experience illustrates the tragic truth that individuals who are molested as children grow up without personal boundaries and are easy prey for other molesters.

Karen’s story also reinforces the truth that abuse in church families is the business of the church. Every church leader has a responsibility to become aware of the signs of abuse and not ignore them. We also have a responsibility to believe and investigate *through proper channels* all allegations of any type of abuse—including, but not limited to, child abuse, sexual abuse, and domestic violence—whether the alleged abuser is a church member, church leader, or someone else, and whether it occurs on church or church institutional property or elsewhere.

Every conference and union office, as well as union education departments, have policies pertaining to how allegations of abuse should be investigated. In cases of child abuse, state laws—which vary significantly from state to state—must be followed. Church leaders should become familiar with both state law and conference policies *before* abuse is reported, to avoid mishandling it during a crisis.

Jesus modeled a messy Christianity. He got involved with people who had very unpleasant problems, such as leprosy, demon possession, and prostitution, to name a few. With such an example, how can we ignore His hurting children in our midst?

The Good News

Several church agencies are working hard to educate pastors, administrators, and members about how to

prevent abuse, and how to minister to victims. Adventist Risk Management has an excellent new child protection policy² to train church leaders and volunteers on how to protect children from child predators on church and school property and at events sponsored by the church or school.

The NAD Office of Human Relations (OHR) concerns itself with personnel and member relationship issues, including but not limited to sexual ethics, diversity relations, conciliation, and dispute resolution, as well as promoting abuse prevention and awareness. Carolyn Forrest, OHR director and associate secretary of the NAD, is committed to helping church leaders address relationship matters via organizational policies, procedures, and education/training.

Several departments in the North American Division are also actively involved in abuse education and prevention: Children’s Ministries, the Education Department, Family Ministries, Health Ministries, the Ministerial Department, Women’s Ministries, and Youth Ministries. They recognize that in ministering to the whole person, we cannot simply ignore those who experience abuse or those who perpetrate it. Sweeping sin under the rug allows it to flourish, but the light of the gospel exposes it and helps eradicate it.

Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day

More than a decade ago the General Conference designated the fourth Sabbath in August as Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day (APED) around the world, and a resource kit is produced each year to facilitate local churches’ observation of the day. The OHR works to educate churches and leaders about the importance of APED observance, and most ministries and



departments in the North American Division make the resource kit available on their Web sites. You may download a sermon, a children’s story, and seminar for a Friday night or Sabbath afternoon program—in English, Spanish, and French. This year’s theme is “Moved With Compassion.”

Ideally, every pastor should preach a sermon at least once a year about the topic—whether or not he/she has knowledge of any abuse victims in the church. Since a large percentage of victims never report their abuse because of fear or shame, the fact that the pastor may be unaware that abuse exists in the church is not a reason to omit at least one annual sermon about the topic.

Beginning in 2013 the name of Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day will

be changed to reflect the inclusion of APED in the church’s ongoing emphasis on the enditnow campaign. Pending approval at 2012 Annual Council of the General Conference, the name Enditnow Day will replace Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day.

New Resource

Last October the NAD Women’s Ministries Department and the Loma Linda University Children’s Hospital Division of Forensic Pediatrics cosponsored a Summit on Abuse featuring more than a dozen presenters who are experts on various abuse topics. The seminars were videotaped and are now available for use by churches and other organizations for education and awareness purposes (see sidebar). In the next

few weeks videos featuring first-person stories of several abuse victims, including Karen, will also be available. We hope that churches will make use of these resources to help sensitize members to the realities of abuse.

Our desire is that as more and more church members and leaders become aware of the issues surrounding abuse in the church and understand correct ways to deal with both victims and perpetrators, the church will become what it was intended to be: a community of hope and healing for all who enter its doors. ■

* Not her real name.

¹ Elizabeth Lechleitner, “Abuse Prevention a Priority for Adventist Risk Management,” *Adventist Review*, Mar. 8, 2012.

² If the fourth Sabbath in August is not a convenient time for your church to observe APED, it is certainly acceptable to observe it another Sabbath.

Resources for enditnow, Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day, and Local Church Abuse Prevention and Education

The APED kit containing a sermon, a children’s story, and other resources is available on the NAD Women’s Ministries Web site, www.nadwm.org, as well as the Web sites of most other NAD ministries and departments.

- *Binding Up Bruised Reeds*, a quick reference guide for pastors and lay leaders. Available from AdventSource.
- *Breaking the Silence*, a set of seven brochures in English or Spanish, available from AdventSource.
- *Child Predators*, a video produced by Adventist Risk Management.
- *Love Shouldn’t Hurt*, a brochure for pastors and church leaders; available from AdventSource.
- Seminars from NAD Summit on Abuse, online at www.nadwm.org:
 - The Art of Bullying, Larry Blackmer
 - Responding to Abusers, Christopher C. Bradford
 - Breaking the Silence of Domestic Violence, Claudio Consuegra

- Domestic Violence Research in the Adventist Church, René Drumm
- Legal Implications for Reporting Abuse Within Organizations, Kent Hansen
- A Woman’s Worth, Darriel Hoy
- Teen and Young Adult Dating Abuse, Annie Perez, Ph.D.
- Long-term Risks of Abuse and Effecting Resiliency: What You Can Do, Kiti Freier Randall, Ph.D.
- Hope and Healing for Survivors, Katia Reinert
- Making a Difference in Spouse Abuse: Becoming a First Responder and Advocate, Stephanie Sheehan
- Overview of the Enditnow Campaign, Heather-Dawn Small
- Reality Bites: Dispelling Myths About Abuse, Clare Sheridan-Matney, M.D.
- Reconsidering Commonly Quoted Scriptures and Concepts, Doug Tilstra, Ph.D.

NAD UPDATE

The first North American Division-wide campus ministries conference was held April 13-15 on the campus of Columbia University in Manhattan, New York. Sponsored by Columbia University Adventist Christian Fellowship (ACF), North American Division Youth Ministries, and the Atlantic Union Youth Department, nearly 250 students from across North America spent a memorable weekend being inspired toward “breaking well” as opposed to “breaking bad” (a term referring to leaving home and making a bad break from parents into adulthood that spirals down instead of up).

Zane Yi, pastor of the Canton Seventh-day Adventist Church and professor of philosophy at Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, Georgia, encouraged students to break well into adult life, personally, on campus, and in the world they are preparing to serve. He initiated an interactive dialogue with students as they sat around tables, lights low, as in a café setting. During his weekend presentations he focused on the need to address the broken places on our campuses and to reach out to those in need.

Worship leader Nick Zork led the group in inspiring worship throughout the weekend that began on Friday evening at Church of the Advent Hope on Manhattan’s Upper East Side and continued on to Columbia University’s Earl Hall, a religious life building. The weekend featured a concert from Ohio’s Spring Valley Academy, other musical performances from the Columbia University Gospel Choir, and guitarist and singer/song writer Nick Zork, and breakout workshops on Sabbath morning. These included topics about relationships, spirituality, story as a form of communicating the



TOGETHER TO PLAN: University students and campus ministries leaders gathered at Columbia University for the first-ever Adventist Christian Fellowship Conference. **PRAISING GOD:** Worship leader Nick Zork (right) and a few friends lead out in singing praises to God during the worship services.



University Students *Meet to* Grow Ministries on Secular Campuses

By BERNADINE DELAFIELD,
Office of Communication, North American Division

gospel, and an update on campus ministry from ACF/NAD volunteer coordinator, Ron Pickell. Campus ministers and student leaders from across the NAD gathered in the afternoon to talk shop and plan future campus ministry conferences.

Yi’s final presentation emphasized the importance of going back to their campuses and sharing “what great things God has done for us,” from the story of the healed demoniac and his desire to stay with Jesus. “This is our challenge as well,” added Yi. “The challenge of returning to our campuses to share what God blessed us with in New York City.”

Nicole Conn, a student leader from Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, said

about the conference, “It was a huge blessing to have been part of this historic event. . . . The weekend showed me how much God wants to meet every young adult where they are, no matter what university they attend. God is not abandoning our young people who attend public universities. . . . The Holy Spirit is dwelling in public universities and among our leaders as well. Ohio University is one part of the mission field, and I’m delighted that our students had the opportunity to see the ‘big picture’ of what God can do.”

The NAD-sponsored Adventist Christian Fellowship Conference will be held every three years, with regional conferences in the intermediate years. Visit www.acflink.org. ■



Starting an ACF Chapter on Your Campus?

- 1.** Pray! God has resources, knowledge, and power beyond all human abilities. He is the only One who can make your efforts fruitful. Start with Him.
- 2.** Ask for help. Talk to local pastors and conference young adult directors. Find out if they know of other Adventist students or groups already meeting in your area.
- 3.** Find others. Be creative: search Facebook, arrange for a table at student orientation, advertise in church bulletins, advertise in the school newspaper, and talk to the chaplain's or dean of students' office.
- 4.** Get together. When you find other students interested in worshipping and fellowshiping as Adventists, start hanging out.
- 5.** Get organized. Become an officially recognized student organization to gain access to school resources: meeting rooms, Web space, and more! Connect with student government and the religious life office.
- 6.** Get connected. Get recognized as an official ACF group. Contact acflink.org to get your group listed on its site and hooked into the larger ACF network.
- 7.** Enjoy the journey! Growth takes time. Don't focus on numbers. Rest in the knowledge that you are following God's will and He will determine success.

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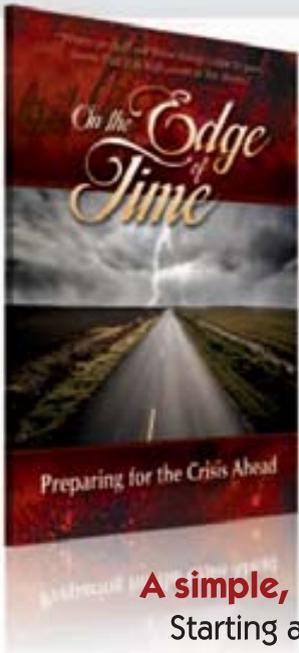


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The North American Division (NAD) is targeting more than 30 million Latino youth through an evangelistic initiative called “Changed: Real Lives in a Real World.” This yearlong initiative will present the three angels’ messages to youth and challenge them to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

By LAURA A. SÁMANO

CHANGED: Real Lives in a Real World

Traditionally, Latino evangelism has focused on foreign-born Latinos, first-generation immigrants. NAD statistics indicate that first-generation Latinos make up a vast majority of Adventist Latino membership and growth. Yet a 2010 survey by the PEW Hispanic Research Center shows that more than two thirds of Latinos in the United States were born here.*

Adventism is growing slowly among second- and third-generation Latinos. Ricardo Norton, director of the Institute of Hispanic Ministry for the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, says, “Most of our accessions are from the first-generation Latinos; 77.4 percent of baptisms and 71.43 percent of the Latino membership is first-generation Latinos.” The identity of a second- or third-generation Latino can be summarized in a statement such as “I was born in Los Angeles, but my parents are from El Salvador.”

Because of these generations’ blended linguistic and cultural characteristics, “Changed” is designed to speak to second- and third-generation Latinos and present Jesus as one who identifies with their needs, knows who

they are, and who they can become like.

R. Ernest Castillo, North American Division vice president for multilingual ministries, says, “Christ called us to ‘teach all nations,’ not some of them. Second- and third-generation Latinos are not excluded from this command.”

As part of a yearlong initiative, this Latino Youth NET includes several

weekend training events and a live satellite broadcast in Spanish, October 13–20 from Orlando, Florida, via Esperanza TV (www.esperanzatv.org), and in English, November 3–10, via Hope Church Channel (www.hopechurchchannel.org).

The broadcasts will air testimonies of young people who have been changed by Christ and are positively influencing the communities where they live.

The speakers for “Changed” are people who, in their love for God and youth, have devoted their lives to ministering to young people. Their personal testimonies and experiences will challenge youth to learn about the need for change, what happens when people are changed, and how to help others change.

The success of “Changed” depends on local congregational participation, and the NAD is providing churches with resources that will facilitate their participation in this initiative.

Training seminars will encourage young people to conduct evangelism in their community. “We are challenging them to be changed, and we want to equip them so they know how to accomplish the goal,” said Manny Cruz, associate director of the North

American Division’s Youth Department.

Resources for “Changed” include books, a small-group study guide, t-shirts, videos, a free smartphone application, and kits for churches and small groups to promote, prepare, and participate in this revolutionary initiative. Kits include promotional video clips, graphics, church bulletin inserts, a promotional poster, and a guide on how to use the material. The kits are designed so groups of different sizes can adapt them to their needs. These resources are available through Advent Source, www.adventsource.com or by calling 800-328-0525.

“Changed” is available 24 hours a day and seven days a week on its Facebook account, www.facebook.com/changedlatinoyouth, and on Twitter@Changed2012. Videos related to “Changed” are available at vimeo.com/changedlatinoyouth. The official YouTube channel for “Changed” is www.youtube.com/changedlatinoyouth.

Every Christian faces frustration with his or her walk with Christ; all Christians are challenged to continue their journey with their Redeemer. Although “Changed” is a yearlong initiative of the North American Division, it will be the beginning of a lifelong journey with Christ for some, and a renewed commitment for others. The change that the Holy Spirit wants to carry out in everyone’s life is a lifetime undertaking. ■

* Pew Hispanic Center, “Statistical Portrait of Hispanics in the United States, 2010,” Table 5.



Laura Sámano was part of the support staff for Multilingual Ministries in the North American

Division at the time this article was written.

NAD Letters

Hope Without Healing

I was deeply moved by Olen Nettburg's diary as revealed in "Hope Without Healing" (May 2012). The way the doctor tried to remain emotionally detached from this little boy, Emmanuel, who so bravely fought the third-degree burns, held me spellbound. I felt time creep along as each day brought more pain and less hope.

By the time day 34 arrived, I was emotionally drained. Nevertheless, I felt a huge wave of sorrow surge over me as I read about how the Benzakis had planned to adopt Emmanuel despite his horrid condition and were left to mourn his death. To me, Mrs. Benzaki's desperate question "Why? Tell me why" reflects the universal cry of most Christians when confronting ultimate heartbreak.

The answer is usually found only when we contemplate Christ, who understands and comforts, because He triumphed over death and thereby offers eternal hope to all. Thank you for this realistic portrayal of life in the Republic of Tchad.

JO RAY METHERELL
Chico, California

Help for Smoking Cessation?

I am writing in reference to the World Health article "Huffing and Puffing About Tobacco," by Allan R. Handsides and Peter N. Landless (May 2012). No mention was made of the famous and historically significant Five-Day Plan to Stop Smoking. In years past our church was a real pioneer in smoking-cessation programs. How could we forget such a wonderful program?

I was personally involved (as chair) with the Five-Day Plan for more than

25 years. The last five of those years was at Yale University (medical center and school), where they actually considered it "their" program, run by us.

Two famous doctors, known worldwide, lectured for us at no charge, and felt it was the best program they had ever been involved with.

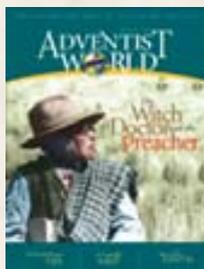
EV CASSAGNERES
Cheshire, Connecticut

In the article "Huffing and Puffing About Tobacco" we were told what we have to do but not how to do it. We used to have Five-Day Plans to Stop Smoking, but not anymore. Where are resources for churches—DVDs, workbooks, brochures—that can be used for seminars?

VIRGINIA COOMBS
Willows, California

According to the General Conference Health Ministries Department, a revised curriculum and materials for Breathe-Free, a smoking-cessation program, are expected by the end of 2012. This new program emerged from the church's Five-Day Plan to Stop Smoking, which is still utilized in places outside the United States. —EDITORS.

I was thrilled with the article "The Witch Doctor and the Preacher" (March 2012). I met Wellesley Muir and his lovely wife, Evelyn, in 1954 at Camp Wawona in Yosemite National



Park. She was my camp counselor; he was one of the camp leaders.

I made my decision to be a Christian at that summer camp, and have been a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church ever since. I count them as my missionaries, too!

RUTH (WARDMAN) BELMOUR
Pahrump, Nevada

Thank you for your letter. We are saddened to report that after a long and distinguished career as an Adventist missionary and pastor, Wellesley Muir passed away in April. —EDITORS.

Ordination Research

In response to the information that the NAD will participate in a process to study the theology of ordination by establishing a biblical research committee, as reported in the article "Delegates Reaffirm Commissioned Ministers as Conference, Mission Presidents" (February 2012), I would encourage those who wish to ignore any cultural context that might affect how we understand the Bible, to beware that they might find themselves promoting slavery.

Taking the Bible "just as it reads" would find one standing for slavery (Titus 2:9), just as easily as it might find one promoting that elders only be men. Paul's counsel must be seen against the background of a society in which women were not even taught to read, or whose testimony would not even be accepted in court, to understand why he did not encourage them to be elders. The way Jesus treated women in that same society should be much more instructive as we look for principles to guide the church today in involving women in the final message to the world.

RICHARD HABENICHT
Columbus, Wisconsin

Address Corrections

Address corrections for *Adventist World* should be sent to the union conference of which you are a member.

Vitamin B₁₂

Are You Getting Enough?

By ALLAN R. HANDYSIDES and PETER N. LANDLESS



I have been a lacto-ovo vegetarian for many years; yet when I was tested recently for vitamin B₁₂ they found my level to be very low. It's true that I eat an egg only very occasionally—but but I was still surprised. I thought lacto-ovo vegetarians were not supposed to be low in vitamin B₁₂.

Your question is pertinent to *all* vegetarians, but also to people who feel they are protected because they take a little dairy, or even some fish. The General Conference Health Ministries Department recommends a well-balanced vegetarian diet—for those who live in a region of the world in which plenty of fresh fruits, grains, nuts, and vegetables are available.

Vitamin B₁₂ is not found in a total-plant-based diet, except by a contamination of soil or manure. Folk often refer to an Edenic diet; unfortunately, we have been barred from such a diet since the Fall, with the tree of life now being an anticipated heavenly treat. It's strongly recommended and widely practiced that those consuming a total-plant-based diet, referred to by some as “vegan,” use B₁₂ supplements. Only soy milk that is fortified with B₁₂ is a dairy

equivalent. Soy milks that are not fortified do not count as dairy equivalents.

It's interesting that participants in the current Adventist Health Study being conducted at Loma Linda University in California, United States, were found to ingest more vitamin B₁₂ as lacto-ovo vegetarians than even nonvegetarians; and vegans ingested more B₁₂ than pesco-vegetarians (those who eat no meat except fish). Given the (so far) very small differences between all types of vegetarians, it's not possible to determine that one is clearly superior to another, though all vegetarians come out significantly ahead of nonvegetarians in nearly all categories so far examined. The study is still being unraveled, and the question “What is the best vegetarian diet?” cannot be answered with authority from the study results at this point.

Theoretically, those who consume a lacto-ovo vegetarian diet don't need to supplement, but it's a dangerous strategy to be “almost vegan” and not adopt the precaution most modern vegans do of using vitamin B₁₂-fortified products.

There also is a condition called pernicious anemia, where the absorption of vitamin B₁₂ is defective. As we grow older, our absorptive capacity also decreases. This means that even supplements of B₁₂ may not be adequately absorbed. There are forms of B₁₂ supplements that can be absorbed across the mucosa of the mouth. Injectable forms of B₁₂ are also available. If you are a senior, the simple assumption that your diet is deficient may not be totally correct. Pernicious

anemia should be considered, and you should be treated accordingly.

According to the Adventist Health Study 2 (AHS2), most lacto-ovo vegetarians are taking about two dairy equivalents per day, which is two eight-ounce glasses of milk or comparable amounts of dairy.

When we debate the superiority of one vegetarian diet over another, we are entering territory of opinion rather than of hard facts. Perhaps all argument will cease when we have firm data. We are not yet there.

During a time when the obesity epidemic is raging worldwide, we as Adventists sometimes are more focused on micronutrient differences than getting our children off the couch and active, as well as reducing their caloric intake of often highly refined foods.

The most pressing problems of a global prevalence are excess calories, inadequate exercise, and too much salt and fat. The simple approach to eating that focuses on the variety and sufficiency of whole, unprocessed foods is recommended. ■



Allan R. Handysides, a board-certified gynecologist, is director of the General Conference Health Ministries Department.

Peter N. Landless, a board-certified nuclear cardiologist, is associate director of the General Conference Health Ministries Department.

By DICK STENBAKKEN

The BELT of Truth

If you were asked to describe a Roman centurion or soldier, where would you start? Would your eye be drawn to the flashing, shiny metal breastplate? Maybe you would start your description with the distinctive helmet with its bronze decorations and colorful plume/brush. But Paul begins his description of the Roman/Christian armor in Ephesians 6:10-18 with the belt of truth. “Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist” (verse 6:14).*

A Roman Belt

Why would Paul begin with a plain, ordinary item like a belt? Most of us have all kinds of belts hanging in our closets, or around our jeans, skirts, or slacks. After all, a belt is so mundane, so plain, so non-noteworthy. What’s the significance of a belt? Those were my thoughts before my research revealed that the Roman military belt, *cingulum*, or *cingulum militare*, was one of the most prized possessions of a Roman soldier.

The *cingulum* was about 2.5 inches (6.2 centimeters) wide, often with an elaborate bronze buckle and a tang end of 1.5 inches (about 4 centimeters) that went through the buckle. The belt of the younger and lower-ranking soldier would usually be quite plain and unadorned. However, the more seniority and service a soldier achieved, the more elaborately decorated and distinctive the belt became. Higher-ranking centurions usually had bronze plates riveted to their belt that essentially covered the entire surface other than the tang.

Archeologists have excavated belt plates that show quite a wide variety of patterns and decorations. The very high ranking centurion might have engraved plates that had been decorated with niello, a process of filling in the low spots carved out of bronze plates with copper and lead sulfides to make a black contrasting pattern. The bronze and niello would then be sanded down to the same level, and often the bronze would be silvered, producing something similar to a cloisonné pattern of striking beauty.

A Roman military belt was so distinctive that a soldier, even with just his tunic and no armor, could instantly be



Jesus wants to surround us like a strong BELT.



identified by his belt. The belt was an absolute giveaway as to who he was. When a soldier was put on extra duty as punishment (that's a form of discipline with a long history), he would often have to stand guard duty in just his tunic without a belt. The tunic was similar to an extra-long T-shirt that came to the knees, so wearing it without his distinctive belt made the tunic look like women's attire. This would cause humiliation and embarrassment for the soldier.

If a soldier got into really serious trouble, his commander would strip him of his belt, which meant that the soldier no longer belonged to the legion and was unworthy to be known as a soldier. So, the cingulum was, indeed, a very important piece of the Roman soldier's uniform.

More Than Fashion Accessory

But the cingulum was much more than eye candy. It had multiple vital as well as practical functions. It encircled the armor, keeping it close to the body, ensuring better protection. It also helped to prevent chafing that would often result if the armor were worn loosely. The belt was cinched fairly snug to make it effective. Note that Paul says the belt is to be "buckled around your waist." It would be ineffective if it were simply a loose decoration. In addition to snugging the armor to the body, the belt also held the leather shoulder strap on which the *gladius*, or Roman short sword and scabbard, were suspended. That strap would be secured tightly under the belt and would keep the sword handy for immediate use.

Each Roman soldier also carried a side utility-knife dagger called a *pugio* which was attached directly to the cingulum. This dagger was used for close-up fighting, and no soldier would be ready for duty without it on his belt.

Lower ranking soldiers would have anywhere from five to eight leather straps attached to the belt hanging down from the belt to knee height at the groin area. The straps were about 1 to 1.5 inches wide (2.5 to 4 centimeters). The group of straps was known as a sporran. When Roman armor went from the chain-mail style, which came to just about the knee, to the solid metal-banded style, reaching only to the waist, soldiers added the sporran as extra

weight to prevent the tunic from being lifted by the wind as well as acting as an anchor whenever the soldier sat down. The actual protective battle worthiness of the sporran was minimal, but its placement had emotional value, for the dangling metal ends attached to each strap were designed to make noise as the soldiers marched into battle, thus serving as a type of psychological booster.

Lessons to Be Learned

Obviously, the Roman belt had many vital purposes well beyond our common belts today. No wonder Paul began his description of armor with the belt of *truth*. Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life" (John 14:6). Imagine this. Jesus wants to surround us like a strong belt and help keep us together in all the battles of life. He wants to be a "tight" part of our life, not just a mere attachment, loosely associated with us. When we allow Him to be our essential truth, we can be as clearly identified by those around us as His followers, just as the Roman soldier was identified by his cingulum.

God's truth is not mere decoration. Jesus, the living truth, brings real, down-to-earth, functional practicality to our existence and all we do and are. He helps us to be well equipped when facing our spiritual foe.

One important thing to remember is that the belt is not to be used as a weapon causing harm and destruction. Rather, it is a part of the whole armor that offers strength, readiness, beauty, and stability to our individual lives. Paul showed great insight when he started with the belt of truth, and we would be wise to buckle it around us daily.

How is your belt today? ■

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Dick Stenbakken is a retired director of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries. He writes from Loveland, Colorado.

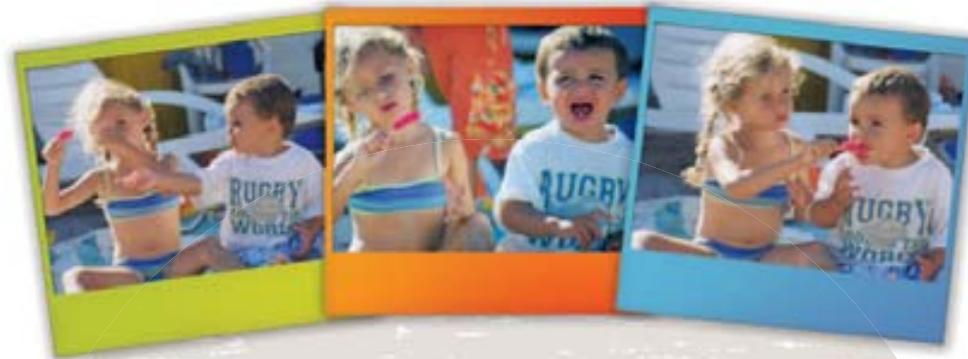
Family relationships—particularly those between spouses and their children—are the closest, most intimate bonds we have. Therefore, it is natural for conflict to easily emerge within the familial structure. Conflict can flare up over simple things such as a towel left on the floor, to something as complex as finances. Whatever the origin, there is potential for a disagreement to escalate to explosive levels.

Conflict, while sometimes a precursor to family dysfunction, separation, and even divorce, is also an inevitable part of human existence. Therefore, it is hard to believe individuals who say, “We never argue—we agree on everything.” Those who make this claim present cause for concern as one or both parties could be suppressing their true feelings for the sake of “keeping the peace.” The danger in that is that when individuals continually bottle up their emotions, the end result is far worse than if problems were appropriately addressed at the time they occurred.

We often view conflict as a negative thing, thus we make every attempt to avoid it at all costs. However, there are some positive aspects to conflict, and, if approached in the right way, these “bumps in the road” can strengthen relationships.

Positive Aspects of Conflicts

1. Conflicts present more than one view of a situation, which can lead to better solutions.
2. Conflicts can provide insight into the feelings of a spouse and other family members, thus creating a better understanding of each other.
3. Conflicts build self-confidence and self-awareness, if you are able to formulate and freely express your point of view.
4. Conflicts, if addressed properly, can demonstrate appropriate ways to resolve problems and can



By KAREN BIRKETT GREEN

Speaking Your Mind Without Losing It

*Resolving family conflicts in
a Christ-centered way*

communicate the normalcy of it being “OK” to disagree.

5. When conflicts are addressed and resolved, they provide a sense of accomplishment, mutual understanding, and peace. We are able to move ahead without constantly dwelling on unresolved issues.

Unhealthy Approaches to Conflict Resolution

When faced with disagreements, it is very easy to engage in unhealthy practices in our attempts to resolve our issues. Instead of trying to resolve them, we usually attempt to prove that our point of view is the only solution, and it is this attitude that causes us easily to fall prey to unhealthy meth-

ods of resolution. Consider the following unhealthy and unhelpful approaches:

1. Name-calling

This transforms the discussion into a personal attack on an individual rather than a mature attempt to address and resolve issues.

2. Becoming hysterical

Instead of calmly discussing the problem, the individual who becomes hysterical engages in such destructive behavior as threatening, blaming, yelling, nagging, and being overly defensive. This only serves to alienate the other party and escalate the situation.

3. Becoming historical

Bringing up past grievances only serves to elevate tension and can take

the discussion off topic, which leads further away from resolution of the current issue.

4. Overgeneralizing

When we use sentences such as “you are always late” or “you never call,” we really need to stop and consider if this is really truth or exaggeration. Using sweeping general statements only serves to blow a situation out of proportion.

5. Silent treatment/ignoring

Refusing to speak—not just of the conflict, but not to speak at all—is one of the worst mistakes to make. This approach only infuriates the other person and bottles up thoughts and feelings that will most likely be released later in an explosive manner.

6. Becoming physically abusive

Physical abuse presents the most serious cause for concern. It introduces a dangerous and violent dynamic to the relationship in which one person becomes the aggressor and the other, the victim. This makes the conflict much more difficult to resolve and threatens the entire future of the relationship. It is also unacceptable.

A Better Way

How then, can we appropriately resolve conflict? Appropriate conflict resolution honors God and respects the rights, opinions, and feelings of the other individual. Here are a few ideas to appropriately and successfully resolve conflict:

1. Define the problem.

When the problem is clearly defined, it keeps the discussion focused and the conversation productive.

2. Listen intently and with an open mind.

Usually in a conflict situation we are so focused on proving our point that we fail to listen intently with an open mind to what the other person is saying. We then miss out on perhaps

gaining another perspective and solution to the problem.

3. Ask clarifying questions.

When we listen intently, no doubt questions will arise. Clarifying points demonstrates to the other person that you are really listening and that you value their input.

4. Restate what the other person has said.

Once you have clarified matters and you feel you have a clear understanding of the other person’s point of view, restate their opinion in your own words. This not only ensures that you truly understand their perspective, but it demonstrates to the other individual that you respect their views.

5. Do not interrupt.

When the other person is speaking, be careful not to interrupt. If you are fearful that you will forget, jot down your thoughts and share them when it is your turn to speak. After you have restated the other person’s perspective, then you share yours. In turn, the other individual should follow the same steps in understanding your perspective.

6. Treat others with respect.

As you listen and present your point of view, it should be done with respect for the other person’s feelings and opinions. Interrupting, ignoring, yelling, and belittling do little to resolve anything.

Honoring God

As Christians we seek to honor God in all our interactions. Sometimes we forget to do this when we are dealing with our families and the complexity of our relationships with them. However, our families are one of the greatest gifts God has given us, and treating them with love and respect brings great honor to Him. When we contemplate whether our behavior is honoring God, it positively impacts our approach to conflict.

In Proverbs 15:1 He reminds us: “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” The tone in which we speak and the words we use greatly impact our outcomes. Soft tones and considerate words calm and diffuse tough situations.

As we struggle with our propensity to engage in unhealthy approaches to conflict, the Word of God directs us to self-awareness through surrender to God. We need to cry out with the psalmist: “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties” (Ps. 139:23). The words that we speak are merely a reflection of what is in our hearts (Matt. 12:34). As we allow God to search our hearts, He will point out to us those things that hurt us and cause us to explode in anger.

There certainly are times when conflicts seem insurmountable and all our attempts to resolve them fail. In those moments we should not be ashamed to seek counsel from trusted clergy or a Christian counselor who can provide an impartial perspective. The Bible states: “Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety” (Prov. 11:14).

As adults, we set the tone for the relational health of our family. How we respond in conflict serves as a witness not only to our children, but to others. Let us endeavor to resolve conflict God’s way, so that we can bring honor and glory to Him in all things. ■



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By CAROLYN STUYVESANT

Tundra **TRE**

For nearly three years, almost every day, I had prayed, “Oh, God, please don’t send me to the mission field—not to Africa or India or New Guinea or anywhere else—as long as I’m single. Yes, Lord, I’ll go if that’s what You really want, but oh I hope it isn’t what You want. Married? Yes! A thousand times, yes. But single? It’s so lonely. And then, who would look after me?” (That was before women’s lib—when women liked for husbands to love them, cherish them, and care for them.)

What would I do alone by the flickering flame of a kerosene lantern, alone evening after evening? Who would be with me in times of danger? Yes, I knew God cares for people. He comforts them, protects them, and helps them—sometimes—I had observed, but not, it seemed, always. If anyone had asked me if I believed He would look after all that for me, I would surely have said, “I know He does.” But somehow I was still apprehensive about it all.

Off to Alaska

One day I received a letter from my sister Elizabeth in Alaska. My brother-in-law, Dr. Harvey Heidinger, had added a few lines: “If you are brave enough and rich enough [I was neither], we can arrange for you to take a

trip out into the interior to some villages.”

The real message of the letter indicated that about the middle of July they would be moving from Anchorage, and that shortly afterward they would doubtless be going to the Orient as missionaries for four or five years, so if I really wanted a visit I’d better come soon.

Immediately I began working on days off and putting in extra hours so that I could have a little extra money and some time off. That “brave enough” idea stuck. Where would I stay if I went to the villages? I wasn’t rich. How could I take a side trip with no money?

Then it dawned. This was my chance! As I lay in bed night after night, I decided to be brave enough to go out to the Alaskan interior. I would go as far and as independently as I could and find out what God would do with me then. Would He really care for me?

“Yes, I’ll come,” I wrote to Elizabeth and Harvey. “I’m not rich and maybe not brave, but I’d like a trip to the interior. Plan anything for me you think is OK.” I knew this trip would be in a small plane. I didn’t like little planes. I wrote out a strange sort of will in case I didn’t come back, gave my apartment an extra good cleaning, and at last flew the six-hour trip from Los Angeles to Anchorage.



K Single— and wondering

On arrival Harvey said, “We have a great trip arranged for you to go out to a village. The government Native Hospital wants you to escort a baby back home to that village. The pilot is going tomorrow afternoon (Friday). You can stop at Nondalton or Newhalen. Then maybe you can go to some other villages and come back Tuesday. It’s free since you are escorting a patient.”

Where would I stay for four or five days? Nobody quite seemed to know. After a few hours’ sleep, we got up on a cloudy Friday morning to pack my few possessions. A change of clothes, a sleeping bag, a small box of food—that was all I took.

The Adventure Begins

About 3:00 in the afternoon things began to happen. Somebody handed me a 10-month-old Native baby and a paper bag with diapers and bottles. A tag on the baby’s back gave her name, Esther.¹ It also said “pneumonia,” “10 months,” and “Nondalton.” But I did not have just one child. There were three others—Mary, 10-year-old John, and 9-year-old Alice—all Natives.

Over the rippled, pale-blue water of Cook Inlet we flew. Beyond were mountains, blue and bluer. Clouds, white,

gray, and bluish hovered among the mountains, pushing each other far up into the blue sky. Snow clung to the mountains below the clouds. Sunlight filtered through, making blue and silver shadows on peaks and bays. On we flew, until we were over the Kenai Peninsula. Here weather-beaten spruce stand in miles upon miles of swamps. Here the moose slosh through mud and across the tundra.

The children were silent, speaking only when spoken to above the engine’s roar. I found myself thinking of God, the God who made the water, the spruce trees, and the sky. The world seemed very orderly out here. I felt guilty to try God. But I wanted to know. Did He know about me?

It was not long before Arnold, our pilot, was guiding us out across the water again. I wish you could see it the way it was that day: calm, silent, peaceful in its solitude. We turned toward the mountains once more to find the Newhalen River, which we followed for miles between snowcapped peaks. Not a house or road or car in sight.

At last we circled and splashed into the water by Nondalton. Two dozen Natives came running, and I gave away my papoose and Alice. Two hundred forty miles from a train or highway. Surely God was here. But what about farther away—what would He do with me?

Taking off again, we followed the Newhalen River once more, crossing more spruce-covered tundra to Lake Iliamna, more than 100 miles long. After a while Arnold, who carried mail as well as children, said, “Where do you plan to stay tonight?”

“Oh, I guess in a schoolhouse or out on the tundra,” I replied casually. We landed on the water by the pilot’s house about seven miles from the Newhalen village, and Arnold’s wife met us with a microbus. There were a few little trails around on which to drive.

Arnold took off again to deliver mail. Naomi, his wife, took me to their house. She said the schoolhouse was locked, and it was unsafe to sleep on the tundra. “Maybe you’d like to sleep in our guest cabin,” she offered. Though yet daylight, it was getting late, so I gladly accepted the offer.

At the supper table we ate a can of my vegetarian food. The whole family was pleased to have an alternate to dried moose meat. Lemon pie was for dessert. *Strange*, I thought to myself, *they’re so excited about what I brought. Did God know they were tired of moose meat? Of course He did! And lemon pie—of course He knows it’s my favorite. It was all made and in the refrigerator when I arrived.*

The children kept singing snatches of “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands.” *God must really be saying something to me*, I reflected again and again. Potted fuchsias, of all things—one of my most favorite flowers—brightened up the living room.

As I lay in bed that night, I was thinking, *How can I ever get away from people? This is just too easy. The test will never work because I’m always, always with people.* Then I fell into a troubled sleep and awoke, still troubled.

Discoveries

Just after breakfast the three children came running in. “We’ve found a bird’s nest,” they shouted excitedly. “Come quick and see! It’s in the rushes out in the water.”

“How do you get there?” “The rubber raft. It’s just a little way,” explained 11-year-old Kathy. Kathy, her friend Jeannine, and I slipped silently into the raft and softly paddled the few feet out to a round mud nest, sculptured to rise a few inches above the water. Six-year-old Joe and 9-year-old Dick had already arrived in their raft and were trying hard to be quiet. We pulled up close enough to see two eggs the size of a chicken’s lying in the grass-lined nest. A thoughtful-looking Pacific loon watched from far away, so graceful as to seem unreal.

Paddling back to shore, we saw three arctic terns of purest white dive for fish while their forked tails seemed to slash the blue sky. A greater yellowlegs screamed off to the horizon when I unwittingly frightened it out of the



ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE



“This was my chance! As I lay in bed night after night, I decided to be **BRAVE** enough to go out to the Alaskan interior.”



marshes. The words of Jesus came to my mind: “Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?” (Matt. 6:26).²

Birds—loons, terns, yellowlegs. Cared for by their heavenly Father. “He’s got the whole world in His hands,” the children kept singing.

Back at “home” Naomi suggested that we all fly over to an island to see a Native woman who had a 5-day-old baby. Air travel is about the only travel out there. The children were excited to be going somewhere.

We flew low over little islands and finally splashed down beside a tiny village. My sister had sent a box of baby clothes to be given away, so it was with considerable delight that I presented these to this mama and her beautiful new baby.

O God, You were there on that tiny, lonely, lovely little island with that Inuit woman whose husband was gone fishing much of the time, there with the baby and the other children. You even sent clothes for the baby!

Though rain was threatening, we splashed another take-off and then landed by a pebbled beach and hiked up on the spongy ferns and moss. If you are awed by great things, view the blue, ice-etched mountains towering beyond; if inspired by small things, look into the heart of the pink cranberry blossoms at your feet. If you thrill at stillness, it will be very still; if you exult in noise, the disturbed yellowlegs will break the silence by squawking 108 times per minute. Yes, and the wind will howl and the waves will splash and the rain will sing on Lake Iliamna.

And if you crave a song, you’ll hear the lovely words echo along the shores, “He’s got the wind and rain in His hands . . . He’s got the whole world in His hands.” *My hands. So small. Is that why I can’t understand how big my Father’s hands are?*

Tundra blossoms are delightful. There are tiny white star-shaped ones that grow in the grass. Cranberries are profuse. Dwarf dogwood three inches high blooms among the deer moss. “See how the flowers of the field grow,” spoke Jesus long ago to a crowd of people who were wondering what God would do for them (Matt. 6:28). *Did He really care? Did He really know that they needed clothes?* they wondered. Breathlessly the people waited. Why would Jesus point to the lilies of the field—the lilies no one planted or scarcely noticed? His beautiful melodious voice continued: “They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? . . . Therefore do not worry about tomorrow” (verses 28-34).

Now, nearly 2,000 years later, I could hear His gentle voice whisper, “Carolyn, consider the flowers how they grow. Don’t be anxious.”

Too soon we were in the air heading for the lakeshore and home. As we flew across the glassy water, guilty thoughts crept in. Why was I thinking of trying God to see if He knew about me? The birds, the flowers, even the agates at the islands’ shores spoke of One who knows and cares. Hadn’t He inspired David to write long ago: “Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? . . . If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast” (Ps. 139:7-10).

I didn’t want to be a doubter, but I wanted to know. Yet, out here where there were mountains piled on mountains at the tundra’s edge, where almost no one lived, I was having as delightful a time as any girl could have. I had tried to get lost but couldn’t. I had tried to have a hard time and hadn’t succeeded. What a gentle, compassionate God!

That evening I took a long walk between showers. All the blue had turned to gray. A brisk wind stirred the lake waters. A mist hid the ice-etched mountains. A damp silence crept in. A silence that made one feel shut in—a silence that made one feel far away. It grayed the houses. It dimmed the rushes that sheltered the loon’s nest. It muffled the short cry of the sea gull. *Could this be that glorious Lake Iliamna of only a few hours ago?* Yes, it was the same lake. There were the same birds, the same deer moss, the same mountains. *This gray world He holds in His big, kind hands too,* I mused.

I went to bed early that night and arose to a grayer world the next day.

The day wore on. I longed to know, to know for sure that God really would care for me—me—alone in the remotest places. Yet it seemed unkind, just not right to ask for more.

Naomi took me three and a half miles to the schoolteacher’s house for a visit in the evening. The teacher was a vivacious girl whose husband had gone fishing to the coast along with all the men and most of the women. Her little girls, Martha and Shirley, were equally as lively as their mother. “Come and stay with me,” Trish said. “Since my husband is gone, I sleep downstairs, so you may sleep upstairs. It’s so nice to have someone around. I’m glad you came.”

The Call

It was half past nine in the twilight when we returned to Trish’s house. She proved to be an exciting young mother who I’m sure was an authentic encyclopedia on the problems, trials, assets, joys, and sorrows of being a teacher in

an Inuit village. We talked until midnight. One of her little blonds still bore scars of an encounter she had had with one of their huskies.

Suddenly, Trish stood up. “One minute till midnight,” she said. “Let’s go see the weather.”

The gray had lifted. In the Northeast were patches of blue sky. Fragments of crimson clouds reminded us that the sun had set shortly before and would be rising in two and a half hours. Beautiful, spacious silence; lovely, soft

“He was there. I was there. We were together—just the TWO of us.”

sky; majestic icy mountains afar off; birds twittering close by. There was a hushed excitement in this midnight twilight that drove away sleep. Why must I give up to drowsiness? I had to.

By the time I had climbed the stairs and gotten into bed, the sparrows were chirping their morning songs. Sparrows at 1:00 on the tundra! I would not sleep. I would lie awake and listen to a lone sparrow break the silence with a song—the sparrow that sat in the tall spruce tree at the window by my bed. I would think of how God had held this loveliness in His hands for centuries, of how His arm is unwearied yet. I still wanted to know about me. What about God and me? Could He—would He—let me know a little more? Then I did what I did not intend to do. I went to sleep.

As I slept, I seemed to be walking across the vast, flat tundra. With a pack on my back and all alone I walked and walked and walked. Icy mountains in the distance carved the edges of the glorious red and orange and magenta sky. On and on I walked. Not a house. Not a car. Hundreds of miles I walked. Away and farther away. Awed by the mystery, the grandeur, the silence. Not tired—just walking.

And then I heard a voice to my left and a little behind. It was a lovely, soft voice that said, “Carolyn!” I stopped quickly, and turning to the left I saw a cross perhaps 10

feet tall a few yards off the trail, and on it the dark silhouette of a Man.

Strange how I never saw Him as I passed, I thought as I moved a little closer. The orange glow of the sky lit the countryside. I paused. Alone. With Him, Jesus. In wonder I waited. Strange that He should call to me. Strange that He should call my very own name. Was I really alone with Him? I gazed in all directions. No one else was around. Only Jesus. He was there. I was there. We were together—

just the two of us. He said so quietly, so tenderly, “Carolyn, I died for you. I will be with you to the ends of the earth.”

Then I awoke. It was 2:00 a.m.

There was a brilliant sunrise to watch out the double glass doors. I lay there till 7:00 with quiet, awesome thoughts of Jesus who died for me—who would be with me to the ends of the earth. Me! He died for me! He would be with me to the ends of the earth—Africa, Asia, New Guinea, any place, every place with me!

Two thousand years ago Jesus told His people, “I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt. 28:20). That was written for you and for me. Why had I not believed it?

Monday we flew back to Anchorage. Some people return from vacations with Eskimo dolls and ivory.

I took two sentences with me, etched on my heart forever. “Carolyn, I died for you. I will be with you to the ends of the earth.”

Precious, precious treasures from God’s heart to mine.

This experience happened in August 1963, when I was 33 years old. Forty-nine years later I marvel how my Savior has been with this single woman and cared for her during 10 years in Africa, traveling around the globe three times. If you are a single young woman wondering about your place in God’s dreams—trust Jesus. He will never let go of you. He never let go of me. ■

¹ The names of most individuals mentioned in this article have been changed to protect their privacy.

² All Scripture quotations have been taken from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.



Carolyn Stuyvesant spent many years in overseas missionary service and currently enjoys a very active retirement in Loma Linda, California, United States.

By ELLEN G. WHITE

Leaning on the LORD

Everyone can serve God—everyone.

There is a higher standard for us to reach. We are not making all that advancement that it is our duty or our privilege to make. How is it that we use the talent that God has given us in temporal matters and not in His service? Ought we not to have greater interest in eternal things than in those things which concern our temporal wants?

We have heard desire expressed that husbands and families should come into the truth. This is right; it should be a prominent wish. But do we do all our duty? Do we make all the advancement that we should? Do we not come far short of our duty in meeting the work of progression? Don't be a spiritual dwarf. We love to see infants and watch their baby ways, but the same ways would be disgusting if retained until the child was two years old. So the Christian must grow. Be *conformed* to Christ, not *deformed*. Just feel as though you were anchored in

Christ. Let there be a solidity to the sisters who are alone. Avoid frivolity and keep constantly watching.

The rich blessings of heaven are all ready to be showered upon us. Don't be selfish. With too many, all there is to religion is: Me and my family. They will not go out of their way to help and bless any others. In such case, God cannot bless them. It is when we are drawn out from self that God blesses us. He wants us to be drawn out from ourselves. That which we sow, we will reap. If you sow selfishness, you will reap selfishness, that is, you will have it fastened upon you. Let us get out of self and talk of the mercies and blessings of God.

Let all the sisters feel that if they haven't a husband to lean upon, they will lean more heavily upon God. Every one of our sisters can be a living missionary, and can bring light into every meeting. Do we act as though we were called from darkness into marvelous light? or as if we were lugging along a heavy weight? We must talk light and pray light, and light will come in. If only women in the church [would] show that God can work through women. It was Mary that first preached a risen Jesus. . . .

There are richer blessings for those that have the harder conflict, for Christ is a present help in trouble. But we must be divested of selfishness; be acquainted with the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, and we shall thus grow more and more like Jesus till the crown of immortality is placed upon our brows. ■

Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen G. White (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry. This excerpt appeared in the book *The Upward Look*, page 147.

The author of this month's cover story served God as a single woman on several of the world's continents.

“The rich blessings of heaven are all ready to be showered upon us.”

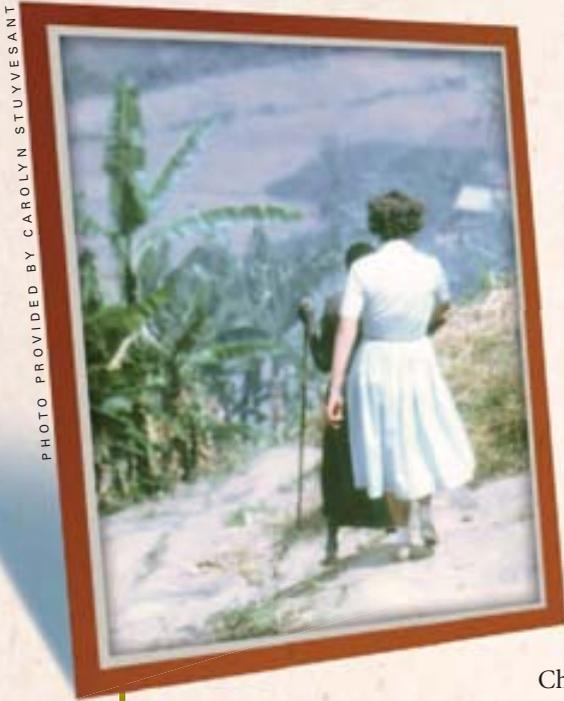


PHOTO PROVIDED BY CAROLYN STUYVESANT

STEWARDS

The Earth Is the Lord's,

When Christians hear the word stewardship, many associate it with an image of God demanding 10 percent of all income. While God does expect responsible use of the money He has given us, the biblical picture of stewardship is broader and much more positive. The sabbatical year in Leviticus 25 encompasses environmental resources, money/possessions, and time/opportunities, showcasing the stewardship principles that should pervade our lives and hearts. Here are a number of important facets of biblical stewardship:

1. Earth-care is our primary responsibility: “The land shall keep a sabbath to the Lord. Six years you shall sow your field . . . but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land. . . . What grows of its own accord of your harvest you shall not reap” (Lev. 25:2-5).

The injunction for the sabbatical year begins with a reminder that humans are to be caretakers of the earth. We are made in God’s image, and can even be considered the climax of Creation, but our purpose is not to exalt ourselves and/or exploit the environmental resources under our dominion. Indeed, humans are to act as God’s representatives on the earth, ruling it as He would if He were in our place. The Hebrew verbs in Genesis 1:26-28 do not give license to abuse, but demand a just and wise rule over God’s creation. Genesis 2:15 reiterates this principle of environmental stewardship by using Hebrew verbs for humanity’s care of the garden that are normally associated with the priestly care of the temple.

When animals are in need, Jesus instructs us to take care of them, even when doing so on the Sabbath requires what would normally be considered work (Matt. 12:11; Luke 13:15; 14:5). Humans are held responsible for the state of the earth and all the creatures that live on it (Rom. 8:19-22; Rev. 11:18).

2. People (and animals) are more important than profit: “And the sabbath produce of the land shall be food for you: for you, your male and female servants, your hired

man, and the stranger who dwells with you, for your livestock and the [animals] that are in your land—all its produce shall be for food” (Lev. 25:6, 7).

The sabbatical year does not just entail rest for the land, but its yield during that time is to be given to all those who are in need or oppressed, including the animals. Thus, helping the poor is much more important to God than making money or accumulating possessions. In Deuteronomy 26:12-14 the people were to give even their tithes to those who were poor and hungry.

Jesus reiterates the heart-changing intention of the law in Matthew 23:23, when he states that justice and mercy are inseparable from acceptable tithing. Paul implies that we should not become destitute ourselves in order to help the destitute, but that we should give as much as we are able, not just what is required (2 Cor. 8:12-14).

3. Any advantages in this world are only temporary: “And if you say, ‘What shall we eat in the seventh year, since we shall not sow nor gather in our produce?’ Then I will command My blessing on you in the sixth year, and it will bring forth produce enough for three years” (Lev. 25:20, 21).

The year of jubilee was a special type of sabbatical year, when slaves were freed and land was returned to its original owner. Even more than during the typical sabbatical year, however, anyone who lived off the land would likely be worried about how they were to survive this lengthy period with no agricultural activity. Thus, God reminds the Israelites that He has promised blessing and sustenance to those who are faithful to follow His law and let the land rest. The language here is similar to Malachi 3:8-12, where God promises to pour out blessings on all those who return their tithes to Him faithfully. Trusting God thus involves relinquishing not only one’s possessions and money, but even one’s time and opportunities for advancement (three years off from agriculture, release of all slaves, return of any acquired land, usury/bribery forbidden).

In the New Testament the church realized the value of



HIP as a Privilege

By A. RAHEL SCHAFER

and Everything in It

these jubilee principles, and attempted to make them applicable at all times as they shared everything in common, helped the needy, and supported freedom from slavery (Acts 2:42-46; 4:34, 35; 5:14-16; Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11; Philemon 15-17).

4. Everything we own actually belongs to God: “The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine” (Lev. 25:23).

While it is important to detail stewardship requirements concerning the environment, money, possessions, time, and opportunities, the most crucial principle is God’s ownership of the world and everything in it. We usually think that only the tithe must go to God (Lev. 27:30), but in reality, all that we have belongs to God (Ps. 24:1; 1 Chron. 29:14). Indeed, even our bodies are not our own, as we have been joined with Christ and bought by His blood (1 Cor. 6:15-20).

5. Stewardship is the ultimate call to rejoice in redemption: “Therefore . . . you shall fear your God; for I am the Lord your God” “who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan and to be your God” (Lev. 25:17, 38).

In reality we are privileged to practice stewardship. Deuteronomy 14:22-29 calls for rejoicing when bringing tithes/gifts to God. For that is what tithing truly is, giving to God what He has given to us in trust, which instills in our hearts a spirit of thankfulness and delight in the God

who redeemed us from destruction and who has given us so many good gifts.

In addition, God requests that we use these gifts to further the gospel and to help those who are in need. Our thankfulness for redemption leads others to that same redemption, spreading the good news and hastening God’s return. Just as the tithes supported the priests in the Old Testament (Num. 18:26; 2 Chron. 31:4-6), our support of those who minister the gospel is equivalent to supporting God Himself (2 Cor. 8; 1 Cor. 9:8-14), and we should rejoice in our privilege to do so (Rom. 15:26).

Recently, I have been commuting through downtown Chicago, and the many homeless and hurting people remind me of how blessed and rich I am. However, even if we were to lose our homes and all our possessions, Christians are rich in the things of God. We are always God’s stewards of our time and opportunities, giving every moment to our Savior who gave all for us. ■



A. Rahel Schafer is an assistant professor in the Religion Department at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States. She and her husband, Kirk, love to backpack, climb mountains, and lead church youth groups.

STEWARDSHIP

We are God’s stewards, entrusted by Him with time and opportunities, abilities and possessions, and the blessings of the earth and its resources. We are responsible to Him for their proper use. We acknowledge God’s ownership by faithful service to Him and our fellow men, and by returning tithes and giving offerings for the proclamation of His gospel and the support and growth of His church. Stewardship is a privilege given to us by God for nurture in love and the victory over selfishness and covetousness. The steward rejoices in the blessings that come to others as a result of his faithfulness. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15; 1 Chron. 29:14; Haggai 1:3-11; Mal. 3:8-12; 1 Cor. 9:9-14; Matt. 23:23; 2 Cor. 8:1-15; Rom. 15:26, 27.)



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*Do we have the freedom
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A newly retired gentleman bought a 22-foot powerboat to enjoy something new in his golden years. With great anticipation and excitement he launched his new toy at Lake Isabella for its maiden voyage. To his great frustration, no matter how far he pushed the accelerator forward the boat simply pattered along; it barely moved. Finally turning it around, he inched back to the marina and asked the mechanic for help.

The mechanic checked the engine, transmission, electronics—everything was perfect. He put on a mask and dove down to check the hull. When he came back up, he sputtered his diagnosis: “Sir, next time you might want to remove the boat trailer before you launch!”

Too many Adventist church members, and too many Adventist congregations, are simply pattering along. They’re moving forward—getting some things out of life—but they’re not living up to their full potential. And they’re most likely not enjoying the ride much either, frustrated by not going faster!

Truth is, if you want a motorboat to speed through the water with ease and efficiency, you have to remove any impediments, such as the boat trailer.

Lack of Gift-based Ministry

A recent national study by Gallup revealed a major impediment preventing many congregations from realizing their full potential: a lack of gift-based ministry. Fifty-three percent of church members strongly disagree with the statement “In my congregation I regularly have the opportunity to do what I do best.” Clearly there’s a significant power shortage in congregations in terms of fulfilled and maximized human potential.

Every year local churches convene nominating committees in an attempt to secure participation in their ministries. Unfortunately, it’s too often an arduous task, as more and more people are unwilling to simply be connected to just any ministry the church needs filled. They’re wary of doing the same old things in the same old ways; making them tired, burned out, bored, and frustrated. So it’s easier to just say no to the nominating committee.

In the same way, too many individuals’ talents, strengths, and spiritual gifts are going unrecognized and underutilized. The Gallup survey revealed that it’s not that members aren’t being asked to serve in the church; it’s more that they’re not being given the opportunity to do what they do best, to exercise their unique spiritual gifts and strengths in the context of church and community life. That is one of the big “boat trailers” that often hasn’t been

removed. And it’s keeping congregations from transformational mission for God’s kingdom.

The apostle Paul emphasized the importance of this paradigm and process when he wrote, “There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. . . . All of you together are Christ’s body, and each one of you is a part of it” (1 Cor. 12:4-6, 27).*

In the body of Christ, just as in the human body, every part is needed; every part has a unique function. For the whole body to be healthy and growing and maturing, each unique part has to fulfill its divinely designed role.

So what does this mean in practical terms? You and I are indispensable parts of Christ’s body, with Christ as the head. We are Jesus’ multiplied hands, feet, voice, and compassionate heart. What Jesus can no longer do in person, as He did when on earth, Jesus does through the power of the Holy Spirit in and through each of us.

If you and I are extensions of Christ, we each have a significant role to play in the cause of Christ. And who we are and what we do won’t be the same as what the person who filled the same role last year did, because our gift mix is unique. Distinctions in the church are not by hierarchical positions or power status but by giftedness. That puts all of us on the same level, only with different ways of loving and serving. We are each special, and we are each needed.

So providing intentional opportunities for every person in the congregation to both discover and use their gifts is one of the most strategic and godly parts of the church’s life and mission. It’s not a luxury; it’s a necessity by divine mandate. It contributes significantly to both the individual’s spirituality and the congregation’s mission.

Fortunately, the Adventist Church has a powerful resource to help every congregation develop and utilize its members’ gifts and strengths. More than half of our 5, 300 congregations in the North American Division have in their possession *Connections: Implementing Spiritual Gifts in the Church by Putting the Right People in the Right Place for the Right Reasons*, and have implemented it to varying degrees. But more is still needed.

Lack of Strength-based Ministry

The second major impediment congregations need to address is closely tied to the first, but has significant differences: a lack of strength-based ministry. We live in a

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culture (and church culture is often no different) that tends to emphasize weakness prevention and management. We're told that to become strong, successful, or to truly serve God best, we have to "fix" our weaknesses; that our talents and strengths are a source of pride that we have to guard against. But this may not represent the clearest thinking!

In Gallup's research into human potential over the past 30 years—including interviews with more than 3 million people—the evidence is overwhelming: we will be most successful in whatever we do by building our life around our greatest God-given abilities (strengths) rather than our weaknesses. While we always want to be available for whatever God asks us to do, how we contribute best to a ministry situation is often (surprisingly) linked to ways that make us feel the most fulfilled.

Theologically and spiritually, the truth is that we honor God most when we are living in alignment with the

unique and special ways that God has wired each of us. God has given each of us unique combinations of talents and strengths.

The psalmist David commented on this God-designed individual human uniqueness when he wrote, "You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb" (Ps. 139:13-15).

According to the research, there is a 1:32 million possibility that someone else has the same top five strengths in the same order you do. The problem is that most people don't even know what their greatest strengths are, even in the church world where theology



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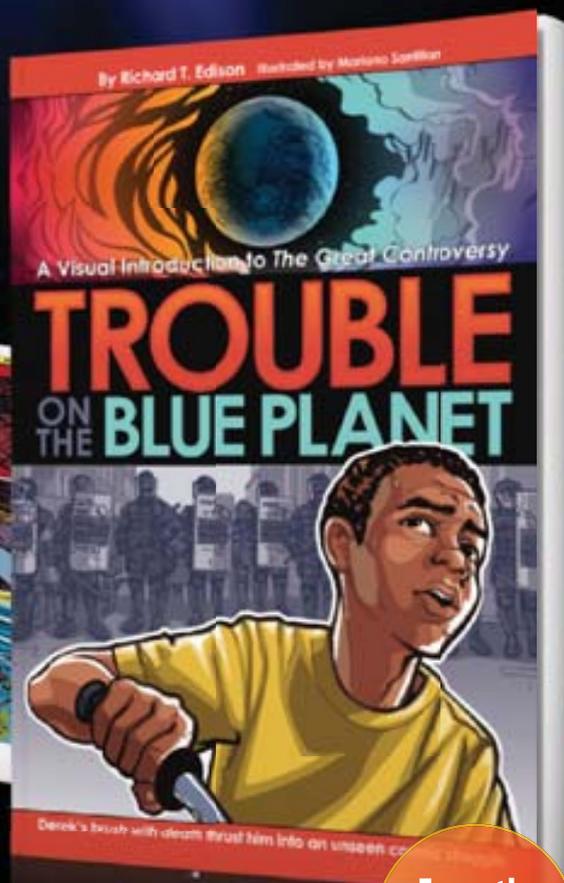
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Review & Herald®

“Imagine congregations filled with people who are **honoring** God by maximizing their unique strengths.”



PHOTO BY GERRY CHUDLEIGH

reveals that God wants us to use our talents and do ministry in our uniquely God-ordained ways; and this in spite of the emphasis on spiritual gifts discovery over the last 20-plus years.

Imagine congregations filled with people who are honoring God by maximizing their unique strengths, and are then given strategic opportunities to use those strengths to live out their service to God. This discovery has the potential of unlocking a congregation's most powerful resource: people using their God-given strengths.

Studies have indicated that those who have the opportunity to focus on their strengths every day are six times as likely to be engaged in what they do, and more than three times as likely to report having an excellent quality of life in general. Imagine how that translates to people's engagement and effectiveness in congregational life and mission.

The Difference Between Spiritual Gifts and Strengths

So what's the difference between spiritual gifts and strengths? Spiritual gifts help people find the ministry that God has placed them in the body to accomplish; strengths are God's way of empowering them with how they accomplish their ministry. Spiritual gifts define the outcome and ministry arena; discovering strengths defines your unique contribution in that ministry more clearly.

Ron and Gina are members of the same church. They both have the spiritual gift of evangelism; they have a pas-

sion for sharing their faith with others. But their strengths sets are different. Ron has the strengths of communication and the ability to win people over by positively influencing them. Gina has the strengths of empathy and relating intimately with people.

Ron's work in prison ministry provides him the setting to use his strengths well. "I love it when the inmates come to me with the chip on their shoulders like 'You aren't going to reach me with this Jesus stuff.' I'm energized with the challenge of reaching guys like this by finding ways that work in breaking down their barriers."

In contrast, Gina says, "My heart aches when I see my friends going through rough times. Those are the times I feel God uses me to either revive or deepen someone's faith. I love being a nonanxious and loving presence with them."

Both Ron and Gina have the same spiritual gift. But their strengths shape the way they use their gifts more effectively and how energized they feel living their gift with others. They both have said they are so thankful for the strengths training they've received that has empowered them to be more effective with their gifts.

So if we want congregations to develop effective ministries, as well as empower people to engage in those ministries more effectively, thus strengthening the mission of the congregation, we have to bring strengths discovery and usage into church life.

But it's difficult for a motorboat to speed through the water if the trailer's still attached.

Addressing the Power Shortage

We can address the power shortages in each other and our congregations by taking advantage of these proven resources for spiritual gifts and strengths discovery utilization. Imagine churches filled with people who embrace themselves as God has uniquely designed them. Imagine churches filled with people who empower each other to engage in loving and serving in the ways God has wired them. Imagine the sense of fulfillment and the experience of effectiveness flowing through our congregations.

Albert Einstein is purported to have said, “Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it’s stupid.” Talk about an impediment to living life with speed and efficiency.

Yet we often do that with people in the church when we don’t help them find their God-designed lives and expect

them to fit into some predetermined mold. Somehow contributing to people feeling stupid just doesn’t seem like God’s plan for people!

Wouldn’t it be far more fulfilling and transformational to be encouraged to be the geniuses that we are in the specific ways God has wired us to be?

It’s time to unstrap the trailer and set the boat free! ■

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Paul Richardson coordinates Reconnecting Ministries for the North American Division Ministerial Association. As a team member he loves to inform, include, and inspire people who believe the local church is the hope of the world.

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MESSAGE

More Than A Magazine—A Ministry



At first the sect that called itself Advent Christians supported him, totally unaware that he was accepting their funds while proclaiming Seventh-day Adventist doctrine.

In 1856 James White's evangelistic tent meetings at Perry's Mills, New York, attracted Michael Czechowski's attention. Baptized the next year at Findlay, Ohio, this former priest and revolutionary began a lengthy preaching career that his church was sometimes reluctant to support. Historians are divided about his memory. Was Czechowski a headstrong rebel, or a Polish national hero who was Seventh-day Adventist?

Restless Priest

Born in Poland in September of 1818, Czechowski was educated until 1835 in the important southern city of Kraków. When an eloquent sermon by a Franciscan priest set his resolve to work for the church, he entered the Franciscan monastery at Stopnica, the first of several at which he would study. But some time after being ordained in the capital of Warsaw, he became convinced that what he had supposed to be real devotion on the part of the clergy was sheer hypocrisy. Czechowski became involved in national reform movements, barely escaping arrest by the Russian authorities who occupied that part of his native country.

In October 1843 he decided to visit Rome to complain about priestly corruption. Arriving in October of 1844, he accomplished little in his visit with Pope Gregory XVI. Traveling to Paris, he found the French clergy no different from the Polish. Repeated disappointments with people helped confirm his commitment to God's guidance through the Bible. His zealous agitation for social integrity, his Bible study classes, temperance reform, and welfare improvement groups hardly pleased those whose selfish practice he kept disrupting. After about a year of such reform, he was imprisoned for political activities.

Released, he traveled to London and the security of friends' company. But after only a few months he was back in Paris to work for Polish émigrés. He again immersed himself in political activities, as his countrymen back home chafed under the control of Russian, Prussian, and Austrian partitioning powers. The irrepressible curate even organized a "liberation" army to free Poland, but like most Polish nationalistic efforts of that period, his uprising was a miserable failure. He returned to Paris and worked until July 1849, when certain religious authorities expelled him as a disturber of the peace.

Part I MICHAEL BELINA CZECHOWSKI

*Seventh-day Adventist
hero or rebel?*

By
NATHAN GORDON THOMAS

Exchanging Vows

Within 15 months thereafter, Czechowski exchanged vows of celibacy for those of matrimony. In September 1850 he resigned from the priesthood, and in October he married Marie Virginia Delavouet. He moved to London to escape further persecution, then moved on, with his bride to New York, arriving in 1851, in a free and happy land where he would not have to worry about his former persecutors. He would live and work in North America for the next 13 years. With \$4 in hand, he looked for work, finding a brickmaking job in New Jersey after three days. The heavy, all-day work, was too much. Kind friendship advanced him enough money to reach Montreal, Canada, where he found bookbinding, a less strenuous job. He was, moreover, a trained bookbinder. In three months he bought a shop of his own, but an 1852 fire destroyed that part of the city. Then the Baptist Home Missionary Society invited him to labor among the French Canadians in Clinton County, Upper New York. They were proud to have this educated man, whom they considered of noble birth, who spoke seven different languages and preached with indefatigable zeal. His work is remembered as quite successful, converting many souls from Catholicism, his own former religion, and in general changing Clinton County for the better.



Vows Again

But there was more for Czechowski to do than help the Baptists in Clinton County, as he learned when James White's preaching came to his town. His constant thirst for truth urged him forward to accept the gospel message for his time and become part of God's remnant church. He rejoiced in the news of Jesus' speedy return and was converted to the Seventh-day Adventist faith. Shortly thereafter, he was baptized at a tent meeting in Findlay, Ohio, where he had moved, and departed for Battle Creek, Michigan, headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. Established again as a bookbinder, he became acquainted with James and Ellen White, who welcomed him to Battle Creek, impressed by both his personality and spirituality. They had never seen a new convert to Adventism quite like him. They agreed to finance him on a missionary trip back to northern New York to preach present truth, new truth to his old friends.

Czechowski did have loose ends to tie up back in Clinton County. He still owed money to his former supporters, the Baptists. In fact he still owed \$50 on a house and lot that he had purchased while there. James and Ellen each gave him \$5, and other church members helped him pay that debt.

In northern New York, Czechowski worked very successfully among the French-speaking peoples. James White testified of his worth, writing that "providence has placed him with us."* Along with another French-speaking minister he was able to organize a conference among them when almost suddenly it seems, he decided to leave for New York City to work among its various ethnic groups. He was no farmer, he explained, had accomplished his mission in northern New York, and could not support his family where he was.

Czechowski Keeps Moving

Elder White seemed to understand. He and Ellen continued to help Czechowski and his family with money. However, things changed somewhat after Ellen was shown in vision on August 3, 1861, the wrongness of his move. He had not sought good advice for the move, she rebuked, and had followed his judgment only. But Czechowski pressed on, organizing small groups of Poles, French, Germans, Swedes, and English into congregations he called churches. James White advised him to go back and work in Vermont and northern New York State until a more organized system could be established in New York City. It was becom-

ing clear that, good points notwithstanding, Czechowski was not manageable at all. Nevertheless, he did move to Vermont where Elder D. T. Bourdeau had found him a house. While ministering there, he wrote his autobiography, hoping it would make him some money. It didn't. Having alienated church support by his poor business skills and inability to take anybody's advice, Czechowski set out on his own for Europe on May 14, 1864, to realize his great desire of taking his newfound faith to his European countrymen. He would labor there for the next 12 years. At first the Advent Christians supported him, totally unaware that he was accepting their funds while proclaiming Seventh-day Adventist doctrine.

He began in Italy, then moved on to Switzerland, where on February 7, 1866, he baptized Seventh-day Adventism's first two European converts in the frigid waters of Lake Neuchâtel. By June he reported seven evangelists supporting his European mission. But his greatest success, and the source of his downfall, would be Tramelan, site of Adventism's first organized church in Europe.

Albert Vuilleumier, who had hosted some of Czechowski's earliest lectures, discovered a copy of the *Review and Herald* in his room, wrote down the address, and communicated with Uriah Smith, the paper's editor. Church leaders in America were astonished to discover that there were Seventh-day Adventists in Europe, as Vuilleumier and his French church learned to their own amazement that other Seventh-day Adventists existed somewhere. Though Czechowski had brought them the truth, they could never, thereafter, trust the man who had kept secret the existence of his denomination. Not much later, the Advent Christians learned of his seventh-day-Sabbath preaching and ended their support for him. For these reasons, or perhaps under some other motivation of which we cannot be sure, this singular man then chose to continue his enigmatic story by departing for Hungary in 1869. ■

[to be continued in October]

* James White, *Review and Herald*, December 30, 1858.



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Marriage in Heaven

Will people
be **married**
in heaven?

I often hear this question from unmarried people, and occasionally from a spouse. The unmarried want to know because if there's no marriage in heaven, they want to get married and have children now.

I'm not sure why those who are married ask the question, but in most cases it appears they would like to continue the relationship in heaven. (In some cases they may be looking forward to being free from the relationship!) The Bible provides a clear answer that seems to create a theological problem.

1. The Answer From Jesus: Jesus was asked this question by Sadducees who hoped to disprove the doctrine of the resurrection. They presented a hypothetical case based on the biblical law of Levirate—where the brother of a man who died without having children would marry the former husband's wife in order to have children for the dead man (see Deut. 25:5, 6). The Sadducees told Jesus about seven brothers who, in fulfilling that law, had to marry the same woman because none of them had children with her. This was their question: "Therefore, in the resurrection, when they rise, whose wife will she be? For all seven had her as wife" (Mark 12:23). It was an attempt to discredit the idea of the resurrection.

Jesus charged them with ignorance: they didn't know what the Scriptures teach about the resurrection, much less the power of a God who is able to bring the dead to life. He then addressed the unspoken premise of the question. The Sadducees assumed that life after the resurrection would be a continuation of life as we know it now. Jesus surprised them by pointing to a significant element of discontinuity: "For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven" (verse 25). According to Luke, Jesus clarified the thought by saying they will "neither marry nor [be] given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection" (Luke 20:35, 36). At the resurrection people will not get married, because in the absence of death there is no need to per-

petuate the human race through reproduction. In that sense humans will be like the angels, who don't have to marry because they don't die.

2. Theological Implications: Jesus' answer creates in the mind of some a theological dilemma: If marriage, like the Sabbath, was instituted before the entrance of sin, why would it be incompatible with life in the new age? Would not this suggest that sin was able to damage a divine institution beyond repair, and that evil somehow thwarted divine intention for humanity?

These important questions deserve comment, even though we may not be able to provide final answers. In order to deal with the theological issue raised here I have to assume that God did not originally intend marriage to be a permanent or eternal social institution. This idea seems to be hinted at in Genesis. Marriage had two clear and closely related functions: procreation and companionship. Procreation had a very specific goal—"Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth" (Gen. 1:28)—implying that in the absence of death once that goal was achieved procreation would come to an end. This was confirmed by Jesus in His answer to the Sadducees.

Marriage as an expression of companionship was, in the absence of sin, transcended by a deeper fellowship and union with God. It is to this deeper—and at the present time—mysterious experience that Jesus referred to when He said that the resurrected ones "are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection" (Luke 20:36, NIV).^{*} This refers to an experience of family life that goes infinitely deeper than marriage, enriching us in ways we can't even begin to imagine. Our circle of loved ones will reach cosmic dimensions in the purity of unselfish love.

Feel free to disagree with me. ■

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After several years serving as director of the Biblical Research Institute, **Angel Manuel Rodríguez** is now retired and lives in Texas.

Understanding God's Will

By MARK A. FINLEY



Have you ever been faced with an important decision and wondered how you could understand God's will? What is the difference between a human impulse to do something and the divine conviction that you ought to do it? Is it possible to distinguish between our own will in a given situation and God's will? This Bible study will uncover biblical principles that provide answers to these questions. We will learn how to discern God's voice and understand His plan for our lives.

1 Read about Jesus' Gethsemane experience in Matthew 26:36-42, and compare it to John 8:29. What attitude did Jesus exhibit that prepared Him to understand the Father's will?

Jesus was willing to do the Father's will, even if it conflicted with His own. The Savior was committed to pleasing God in every circumstance of His life.

If we want our own way bad enough, God will allow us to have it. But we will not experience the joy of knowing God's will. To understand God's will, we must be willing to surrender our own opinions and the things we desire to follow wherever He leads and do whatever He asks.

2 Read John 14:26; 16:13; and 2 Timothy 3:16. What two divine guides will assist us in making decisions?

God has not left us alone in the decision-making process. He has given us the witness of His Holy Spirit and the witness of His Word. As we seek God's will with the desire to please Him, the Holy Spirit will guide us. The Holy Spirit often guides us through the Word of God—the Bible; in fact, the Spirit never leads us to do anything contrary to God's Word. While the Bible may not speak directly to our specific situation, it provides us with principles to assist us in the decision-making process. When we are faced with a decision, the Holy Spirit will help us discern Bible principles in answer to our prayers that will impact our decision.

3 What reassuring, hopeful promises does God give us in James 1:5 and 1 John 5:14, 15 regarding the decision-making process?

As we seek to understand God's will in prayer, He promises to give us wisdom. In prayer we acknowledge our total dependence on God.

4 When we are uncertain of which way God is leading, how does God often guide us? Read Proverbs 15:22 and 23:12.

God often leads us to godly, Christian friends who provide wise counsel. Sometimes we need a broader perspective, and a wider vision that a close friend, pastor, teacher, or confidant can provide.

5 In making wise decisions we should observe how God is leading and watch for the opening doors of His providence. Read Proverbs 23:26 and compare the principle you find there to the apostle Paul's experience in preaching the gospel in 2 Corinthians 2:12-14. How did Paul know that God wanted Him to proceed?

As we carefully observe God's leading, we too will see God opening and closing doors. This will help us to discern His will.

6 What principle in John 12:35, 36 do you discover for knowing God's will? How important is it to be obedient to God's will and walk in the light He gives us now so that we can know where He is leading us in the future?

Faithfulness in "walking in the light" God gives us today is one of the best ways to assure that we will understand His will in the future. If we fail to live up to the light He has given today, we may become confused in discerning His ways and end up "walking in darkness."

As we commit our lives to do whatever God asks and desire to please Him in all things—praying, studying His Word, seeking godly counsel, and watching for the open door of His providences—we can be confident that He will guide us. He has not left us alone in the decision-making process. The Holy Spirit will bring us deep conviction, and we will know which course to pursue. He has promised to guide us, and we can take Him at His Word (Ps. 32:8; Isa. 58:11). ■



Letters

Huffing and Puffing About . . .

I am writing regarding by Drs. Allan R. Handsides' and Peter N. Landless' article "Huffing and Puffing About Tobacco" (May 2012): Please think through what reaction we would expect if the Adventists en masse attacked the tobacco industry, and while we are at it, liquor industries, the pornography industry, and maybe, for good measure, politicians and the weather forecasters. Ellen G. White warns us that we are to be careful with our public words, lest they come back to bite us . . . when it is regulating worship and we are the receivers of "regulation."

JULIE THOMSEN
United States

Following the Way of the Word

Ted N. C. Wilson's article "Following the Way of the Word" (March 2012) was very timely. It emphasizes that we need not use the expedients of the emerging-church movement to keep the young in the faith—to "contend

“We have a sound **theology**, which is consistent and, most important, biblical.”

—KEVIN WILLIAM KOSSAR,
Ponta Grossa, Paraná, Brazil

earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3), as in the survey conducted during 2010 by the General Conference's Office of Assessment and Program Effectiveness. We have a sound theology, which is consistent and, most important, biblical. If young people use it, along with the methods of Christ, we will be ready for the mission, we will be ready for revival and reformation!

KEVIN WILLIAM KOSSAR
Ponta Grossa, Paraná, Brazil

Praise the Lord for "Following the Way of the Word." This is truly a great obligation. Multiple thoughts come to mind that solicit my comments from the article, but I will refrain. One thing that is upon my heart is if Wilson can do this—namely, call for a meeting/communiqué with all the conference youth directors. This can take place once a year for him to encourage, give global perspective, offer mentorship, field questions, set forth the vision, etc. The article is wonderful, but how many movers and shakers will read this?

VINCE ONKOBA
Africa



NAD OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Network of Nurture

I treasure *Adventist World*, and often go back and read previous issues. The article by Ted N. C. Wilson entitled "Network of Nurture" (December 2011) makes me want to comment on what he suggests: "Pay attention to younger people. Smile at them and say their name."

Just yesterday my husband was recalling an experience he had with Neal Wilson when he was the president of the Egypt field and visiting Middle East College (university now) after the church service in which my husband, Minas, praised the Lord in a special song. He met Wilson at the cafeteria, and Wilson greeted him, saying, "How are you, Minas?" That meant a lot to Minas at that time and

Where in the World Is This?

still does to this very day (my husband is in his 80s now). Minas appreciates Wilson taking special interest in him to know and to call him by name.

Our young people need a lot of such attention now. With all the attractions of the world, we have to show them such a way of caring and make our churches more attracting than the attractions of the world.

KAMLY M.
Beirut, Lebanon

A Favorite

Adventist World is one of my favorite magazines. Our Makadara Seventh-day Adventist Church has been distributing copies to non-Adventists, and some of these people tell us that they are really blessed by it. It would be great to get the latest *Adventist World* magazines in good time. God bless.

EDWIN OKIYA
Makadara, Kenya

Adventist World arrives late in some parts of the world. It is shipped via ocean freight to keep overall costs low so that as many of our members as possible receive it monthly. We adjust our production schedule in order to accommodate the long shipping timelines. We are glad you receive and enjoy Adventist World, albeit a little late.

—EDITORS

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PHOTO SUBMITTED BY JORGE FERNANDO

ANSWER: In Buenos Aires, Argentina, these are church members and part of the radio equipment from the Bethlehem Seventh-day Adventist Church. Every Saturday night from 9:00 to 10:00 they broadcast the Sharing Hope program. It can be heard on www.adventistascobar.com.ar/CompEsp.htm. From left: Gabriela, Jorge Fernando (owner of the radio), Rostia, Marcelo, and Adela.

“The church is to **transform** culture, not be guided by it.”

—PASTOR KRIS OBERG, during a presentation at the 2010 General Conference session in Atlanta, Georgia, United States



The three risk factors most likely to lead to cancer:

1. inactivity
2. obesity
3. tobacco

Source: American Cancer Society/Vibrant Life

50

WORDS OR LESS

My Favorite... Bible Character

■ I like Jacob's son Joseph. Although he had a life of ups and downs, he continued to represent his God well. In the end it was clear that God had a plan for him all along. It encourages me to keep faith in God through trials.

—MIRLENE ANDRE, *Baltimore, Maryland, United States*

■ The determination and faith of Esther inspire me every day. She is an example for us women. Although she had lovely outward beauty, she was firm in her principles, she made wise decisions, and she was willing to defend her people and testify about her God.

—LUCILA, *Taquara, Brazil*

Next time, tell us in 50 words or less about your favorite hymn. Send your response to: letters@AdventistWorld.org. Put in the subject line "50 Words or Less." Be sure to include the city and country from which you are writing.

Prayer & PRAISE

Please pray for my marriage. My husband and I are struggling to forgive and forget past mistakes and move on.

NAME WITHHELD, *United States*

I have been sick for some time now. Medical doctors have done their part; now I want Jesus to touch me. He is the Great Physician.

JONATHAN, *Nigeria*

Please pray for my studies. I finally succeeded! Pray for my family's financial situation as well.

NIRINA, *Madagascar*

Please pray for me to secure a job so our family can be financially stable.

JOAN, *Kenya*

I live in an area that has 14 political districts and only two branch Sabbath schools and three organized churches. I love to preach. Please pray for our FM radio station.

OBULI, *Uganda*

I need help registering my company. Because of rampant corruption, I need God's help.

NAME WITHHELD, *Zambia*

"Behold, I come quickly..."

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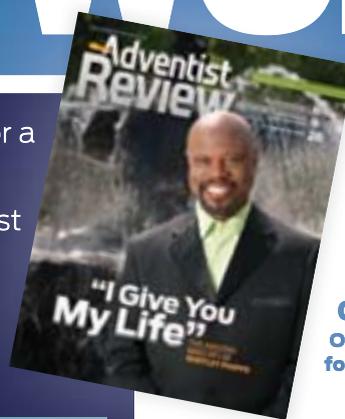
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