CBS Television Star Joins the Adventist Faith, Kicks up a Media Storm: Angus T. Jones, one of the world's top-rated child TV actors, has joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church and is eager to talk and act on his new convictions, but not all are happy with this turn of events....

Doug Batchelor Marketing His Latest Book Through a Leading Evangelical Magazine: Are Adventist writers finding a better way to reach non-Adventist readers through means other than free mail-outs or door-to-door sales? The fate in the marketplace of a new book by Adventist TV-pastor Doug Batchelor may be telling....

Pacific Union College Wins Local Election Battle about Land Development: Despite a long wait for the official results, an initiative that would have restricted the Adventist college's right to use and develop its own land near the small town of Angwin, California, has been defeated....

Adventist Frontier Missions Worker Killed in Accident in Papua New Guinea: Adventist Frontier Missions, an independent organization dedicated for the past 27 years to facilitating church-planting initiatives in "un-entered areas" of the world, mourns the death of John Lello, an American missionary who had served for three years in Papua New Guinea....

Student Magazine at Andrews University Publishes a Fourth Annual Edition: Andrews University has published a fourth edition of Envision, a magazine by students, about students, that focuses on the power of God working in their lives....
**New Census Says the Adventist Church is the Largest Denomination in Jamaica and Growing:** On the island of Jamaica in the West Indies, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has become the nation's largest denomination, with the churches of God and pentecostalism also growing well....

**International Day of Prayer & Fasting Scheduled Sabbath for Two Adventists in Prison in Togo:** Tomorrow (December 1) marks a day of prayer on behalf of two Adventists who were arrested earlier this fall and have been held in prison in apparent violation of their human rights by the government of Togo, in Africa....

**OPINION**

**Crowd/Mob Psychology:** As the US winds down from an arduous and sometimes baffling set of presidential campaigns, Blogger Herb Douglass reflects on the effect of group/mob psychology in producing passionate but not always satisfyingly moral outcomes in the democratic process....

**Advents and Advents:** Why do we Adventists, who believe ourselves to be overwhelmingly Bible- and Second-Coming-friendly, ignore the "Advent Season" and its celebration of both the first and second comings of Jesus? Devotional blogger Debonnaire Kovacs celebrates it on her own, and invites others to join her this season....

**SUBSCRIBERS' BONUS FEATURES**

**Loma Linda Health Still Pushing the Envelope:** Loma Linda Health has never been shy about moving into new and sometimes controversial territory, and the tradition continues as illustrated in two featured reports here (available only to AT subscribers)....
Breath of Life Reunions for Founders of Ground-breaking African-American Television: Oakwood University recently hosted a reunion of the founders and early presenters of "Breath of Life" ministries—which at the time was considered groundbreaking African-American television. They overcame any fear of the little red light and have prospered (available only to AT subscribers)....

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CBS Television Star Joins the Adventist Faith, Kicks up a Media Storm

Submitted: Nov 27, 2012
By AT New Team

Updated November 30, 2012 (See update at the bottom of the story.)

Angus T. Jones has been a child actor in a top-rated comedy show on CBS television for ten years. In the last year he joined a Seventh-day Adventist church in Los Angeles and over the last 24 hours he has kicked up a storm of comment on the Web and other media because he denounced his own show in a video he made with a controversial, independent Adventist ministry.

The videos “appear to be religiously motivated and authentic,” said the International Business Times, but there are problems both with the fact that Jones is paid over $300,000 per show to be part of the TV cast and the extreme ideas expressed in the past by the independent ministry that made one of the videos. It appears unlikely that he knows much about Chris Hudson from Alabama who produces the Forerunner Chronicles.

The well-established Voice of Prophecy broadcast ministry also interviewed Jones and invited him to speak at the Adventist Media Center, which is in the Los Angeles area. One dimension of this story illustrates the growing competition between “old” media ministries and “new” media efforts. ForerunnerChronicles is a “poor man’s broadcast” which uses YouTube, Twitter and social media to avoid the high cost of purchasing time on major television channels as well as professional production standards, and attracts viewers with sensational claims.

Hudson’s videos have been picked up by the Three Angels Broadcasting Network, another independent Adventist organization. Their current schedule includes a four-part series by Hudson on the “New Age Agenda” and a “Special Report [on the] National Defense Authorization Act.” He has described himself as a Seventh-day Adventist minister, although he is not a denominational employee and holds no credentials. It should also be noted that he is not the former National Football League player with the same name.

Jones started attending the Valley Crossroads Church at 11350 Glenoaks Blvd in Pacoima, a community in the San Fernando Valley north of downtown Los Angeles. The nearly 700-member congregation is an historically African American church affiliated with the Southern California Conference. Pastor Royal Harrison is the senior pastor and Pastor Morris Barnes is the associate pastor.

The congregation’s mission statement is “to make a difference in our community” and earlier this year it opened a new facility for the community food pantry it operates. It also sponsors diabetes and obesity prevention programs, offers blood pressure screening, regular fitness activities on Monday nights and
healthy cooking classes. Teams of volunteers based at the church reach out to the homeless and visit young people in the Nordoff Juvenile Hall in Sylmar, according to the church web site.

The Adventist teaching about hell first got him interested in Adventist doctrines, Jones says in the interview taped by the Voice of Prophecy for the pilot of a new television show Turning Point. He also liked the idea of the Sabbath and started personal Bible studies.

He does not come from a secular background. He was born in Texas which has a local culture saturated by the Southern Baptist faith and his parents put him in a Christian school when they moved to Los Angeles. He attended a Christian school from Kindergarten through his high school graduation.

“I’m concerned he’s being exploited by the church,” Carey Jones, the teen’s 42-year-old mother has told reporters. An entertainment gossip web site said that she believes he has been “brainwashed.”

A number of Adventist ministers have also expressed concern about the situation. “While I am pleased that Angus Jones is finding Christ,” one pastor wrote on the SDA Ministers page on Facebook, “I have some grave concerns about [him being] associated with [a group] notorious for right-wing extremism and conspiracy theory nonsense. ... It’s my hope and prayer that [he] finds some balanced, mainstream Adventists and pursues a healthy, sensible style of” Adventist faith. A significant number of other pastors have expressed similar views in several online forums and in Email to Adventist Today.

By Tuesday afternoon the denomination had released a statement “making it clear ... it has absolutely no connection with” Hudson and his independent ministry, reported TMZ.com in an exclusive. “The Seventh-day Adventist Church has released a statement about Jones ... saying it’s ‘happy’ Angus decided to become a member of the Los Angeles congregation back in June [and] we welcome him with open arms ... but the church wants everyone to know it was not behind the actor’s [video] rant.” About Hudson, “we are unable to offer information because Forerunner Chronicles is not a ministry operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its host is not a pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.”

Hudson has said in his videos that the rap artist Jay-Z “is a devil-worshiping Freemason and claims that President Obama is similar to Hitler,” states another Hollywood gossip web site. It quotes Hudson as saying, “The blueprint albums are special markers indicating Jay-Z’s progress in his obtaining degrees in the secret order.” His ministry is described by Postmedia News as “a radical offshoot of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.” According to the Huffington Post he has described President Obama’s health care plan as “a ‘carbon copy’ of the healthcare policies of Hitler, and that a gas crisis can lead to cannibalism.”

Clearly, the young star is struggling to cope with difficulties in his life. He turned 18 a little over a year ago and when he spoke at the Adventist Media Center on his 19th birthday, he mentioned “his parents’ divorce, using drugs and keeping his virginity,” reports Thewrap.com. “His grades began to dip ... when his parents began to have ‘marital issues’ [leading to] divorce. ... He said he began avoiding home and spending as much time as possible with friends and his girlfriend.” In this context he had a conversion
experience that led him to “follow God more seriously” and begin visiting a number of different churches. He was invited to Valley Crossroads Church by a long-time friend who was “never available on Friday nights,” Jones says in the video produced by the Voice of Prophecy.

Jones has an uncle who is serving a 99-year prison term for murder, reports the Daily Mail, a British newspaper. Both of his parents have been arrested in the past; his mother in 1997 charged with burglary and in 1992 for ripping the meter out of a taxi. His father was arrested in 1986 for marijuana possession and an unlocked handgun, and more recently for domestic violence.

The role that Jones has on “Two and a Half Men” is that of a son whose parents get a divorce; he and his father move into his uncle’s home, a philandering single entertainer. Viewers have literally watched him grow up over nearly a decade. It is “the biggest hit comedy of the last decade,” the New York Times has stated. The show’s original star had a famous meltdown a couple of years ago and when a new star took over, it’s ratings peaked at 29 million viewers but have dropped more recently to about 14 million viewers, according to the Daily Mail.

The young actor’s criticism of the show was seen as strange and even hypocritical by the entertainment media, but welcomed by some figures with long-standing concerns about the values expressed in popular culture. “We urge viewers to heed his call,” Tim Winter, president of the Parents Television Council, told Fox News. “We urge Mr. Jones to work from within the entertainment industry and raise standards to improve television for all Americans.” Dan Gainor, vice president for business and culture at the Media Research Center, said Jones’ remarks are “no surprise to anyone who watches TV [because] ‘Two and a Half Men’ is one of the most vile and sleazy shows in history.”

For the Adventist Church this media attention is as risky as the news of Jones’ conversion may be welcome. “Adventism is now being represented to millions of people by a brand new believer and some people with fringe theological agendas,” stated Spectrum, the journal of the largest organization of Adventist academics. “Adventist communication leaders should develop a public relations strategy ... that avoids exploitation and celebritization and that makes sure that correct information about Adventism gets reported as this story develops.”

Interpreting Adventist faith in the contemporary context is not easy, especially with the number of independent sources that believe they represent the truth and the denomination’s leadership does not. For example, Vulture.com reports that the video Jones made with Hudson “twice invokes the notion of the Laodiceans, a group criticized in the book of Revelation for being ‘lukewarm.’” Does the average American reading this reference really understand the nuances of Adventist theology related to this passage?

At the same time a young man’s life is at stake. “We need to pray for Angus and his friends at the Valley Crossroads Church,” one Adventist pastor wrote to Adventist Today.

The interview taped by the Voice of Prophecy, not the controversial one by Chris Hudson, can be
seen here:
http://www.theadventistchannel.com/watch/Turning_Point:_Angus_T_Jones/specials/

Update on November 30

Jones has apologized for any hurt he may have caused his fellow cast members on "Two and a Half Men" by the criticisms of the program in his video interviews. Although TMZ.com has reported that "Hudson has said that he and Jones have become close over the past year and share similar beliefs," Adventist Today has been told that the pastoral staff at Valley Crossroads Church (Jones' actual pastors) had never heard of Hudson until this week. He lives in Georgia or Alabama, according to conflicting reports, and is not a member of the Valley Crossroads Church. "It appears that he is simply trying to wedge himself into a highly visible story to get some publicity," one person in southern California told Adventist Today.
Doug Batchelor Marketing His Latest Book Through a Leading Evangelical Magazine

Submitted: Nov 23, 2012
By AT News Team

Outreach is a magazine read by large numbers of Evangelical pastors across the United States and the latest issue includes an ad featuring Seventh-day Adventist pastor and television evangelist Doug Batchelor. It is selling his new book, A World of Wonder distributed by afbookstore.com.

The book is a daily devotional with 366 short readings for the coming year, “nineteen years in the making.” The ad states that it is “available at leading retail outlets,” although Adventist Today checked two local Barnes & Noble stores and found that it was not on the shelf. It is listed with Barnes & Noble’s online book sales web site.

Batchelor is senior pastor at the Central Church in Sacramento, California, and his Amazing Facts broadcasting ministry is an institution of the Northern California Conference. He is controversial for taking very conservative positions on topics such as ending gender discrimination in ordination.

“Adventist authors have generally had great difficulty breaking into the Evangelical market,” a publishing executive told Adventist Today. “It is interesting how Batchelor is attempting to work his way into this. It can be lucrative, if he is able to sell enough books.”

“A number of scholars have pointed out a trend toward connections across denominational lines among leaders with common views on various issues,” one researcher told Adventist Today. “Perhaps this can be seen along those lines.” It remains to be seen what kind of sales the book has outside of Adventist circles and the reaction of Evangelical pastors.
Pacific Union College Wins Local Election Battle about Land Development

Submitted: Nov 28, 2012
By AT News Team

When the official vote was finally released November 27 in Napa County (California) the initiative was defeated that would have restricted land development on property owned by Pacific Union College (PUC). Earlier there was confusion when conflicting reports were circulated and a complete count had not been finished in any of the 167 precincts. The college is affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Earlier in the week Adventist Today talked to the staff of John Tuteur, chief of the election division for the county. The count was delayed due to the overwhelming number of mail-in ballots. In the end, more than 70 percent of the registered voters in this election mailed in their ballots and less than 10 percent went to the polls on election day.

A local group calling itself Save Rural Angwin used the initiative process in the state to seek a law that would have imposed zoning restrictions to keep the college from developing empty land connected to the campus. Officially labeled “Measure U,” legal counsel for the county told the Board of Supervisors that it was likely that at least parts of the measure might not be valid and would end up in the courts.

The measure was opposed in an editorial by the Napa Valley Register which called it “an extreme, precedent-setting solution in search of an unrealized problem.” The editors met with representatives of the neighborhood group and local residents who were against the measure. Save Rural Angwin is afraid that if additional housing is built near the campus it will overwhelm the infrastructure in the small community and change its “bucolic charm,” even though there is no such project being proposed and the college says it has no such plans.

The Green Party supported the measure and well-known entertainers were prevailed upon to make statements in support of it. “The real issue is property rights,” Maria Vance, an Angwin resident, told ballotpedia.org. The measure “would wrest control of its land from the college, a clear violation of property rights as we know them in America.” She saw the measure as “simply the attempt of a few Angwin citizens to prevent their ever having new neighbors. These people have acquired their … homes … but they don’t want others to have the same right.”

The Napa Valley Register pointed to the college’s failure to develop good community relations over the years as the root of the conflict. “It is the institution’s secretive approach to the sale of some of its parcels that spurred such drastic ballot action from its neighbors,” the editorial stated. Although the newspaper urged voters to reject the measure, it said “neither side is without fault. PUC needs to be more open [and] Save Rural Angwin needs to step back from its autocratic
solution and try to re-establish productive dialogue with the college.”

In the end, over 60 percent of the voters in Napa County rejected the measure. “I think it is clear that property rights are uppermost in the minds of people,” a local resident told Adventist Today. “No one wants a situation where your neighbors can tell you what you must do with your land.”

“Some people were premature in jumping to the conclusion that PUC would lose this vote,” an alum told Adventist Today. “The campus leadership seems to have done an effective job of connecting with their neighbors and making a good case. It remains to be seen what will happen next. I don’t think the opposition is going away.”
Adventist Frontier Missions Worker Killed in Accident in Papua New Guinea

Submitted: Nov 29, 2012
By Adventist News Network

An accident has claimed the life of John Lello, a Seventh-day Adventist missionary who was serving in Papua New Guinea through Adventist Frontier Missions (AFM). He died while felling trees near a remote project site in the South Pacific island nation’s East Sepik Province, the independent Adventist ministry said. He was 46.

“We are greatly saddened to announce the tragic death of John Lello,” a statement from AFM said. “Please join us in surrounding his family in prayer.” Lello’s wife, Pam, and the couple’s two daughters, Alissa and Abby, have since been flown to Port Moresby, where they were joined by Stephen and Laurie Erickson, another family working in PNG through AFM. Dale Goodson and his wife, AFM staff who spent 12 years in PNG with the Dowa tribe, left immediately to lend additional support.

The Lello family has worked under AFM sponsorship since 2009. They finished fund raising and launched to PNG in March. There, they ministered to the animist Ama people in the country’s northwest. The Ama live along a small tributary of the Upper Sepik River accessible only by plane or dugout canoe. In an article in an AFM newsletter at the time Lello expressed confidence that God was leading his family to PNG, adding that “one thing is certain – He is calling you to give your all.”

Lello was born in Cape Town, South Africa. He earned a bachelor’s degree in physics from Walla Walla University in 1991. He also completed a master’s degree in science education at the University of Maryland. Before accepting a post with AFM, Lello taught math and physics at Glendale Adventist Academy in southern California and Spring Valley Academy in Dayton, Ohio.

AFM is dedicated to establishing church-planting movements among people groups with no Adventist presence. It has 30 long-term missionary families or single missionaries serving worldwide and is recognized under denominational policy as a “supporting” independent organization. Lello is the first AFM missionary to die in the field over the ministry’s 27-year history.
The 2012 issue of *Envision* has a cover story entitled “G.I. Joe Rivera” which is a profile of a student at Andrews University as well as several other profiles of students. “We feature some students who’ve tackled some pretty daunting challenges head-on,” said Debbie Michel, associate professor of communication and editor-in-chief of the magazine. The stories focus on “the power of God in their lives.”
It also features articles on many topics of special interest to students, including ways to stay energized, how to get a great internship, and how to erase student loan debt. It is the fourth annual issue of the magazine produced by a collaborative effort of Andrews students from multiple academic programs, including those from classes on Publication Production, Advanced Media Writing, Publication Design, and Studio Photography.

“It was a great experience and I learned a lot about how a magazine works,” says Tacyana Behrmann, one of the magazine’s student editors. After her first year working on the magazine, Tacyana feels that she learned something about the business of journalism. “It gave me a look into the magazine publishing world—what it takes and the work that goes into it,” she says, describing how she used the campus “grapevine” to find stories for the magazine. Tacyana was one of about 50 students who were involved in producing this issue.

“The students have once again outdone themselves providing top-notch writing, photography and design,” said Michel. “It’s a great portfolio piece for them to show what they can do, in settings as close to the real world as a college environment allows.” Students experience every step of the production of a magazine, including writing, editing, design and photography.

_Envision_ is available for purchase for $2.50 at the Gazebo, the Andrews Bookstore, Apple Valley Market, Harding’s and the Adventist Book Center located near the campus in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Interested individuals outside the area can contact Debbie Michel at dmichel@andrews.edu.

_Keri Suarez is a media relations staff member for Andrews University._
New Census Says the Adventist Church is the Largest Denomination in Jamaica and Growing

Submitted: Nov 23, 2012
By AT News Team

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is the largest religious denomination in the Caribbean nation of Jamaica, according to recently released reports from the latest census in that country. A total of 322,228 individuals or 12 percent of the total population are reported to be Adventists. This represents an increase of 15 percent over the last decade or an average annual growth of 1.5 percent.

The second largest category is “Pentecostal” with 295,195 represents a cluster of denominations and independent congregations, as does the third largest category “Churches of God” at 246,838. Pentecostals grew by 19 percent over the decade or nearly two percent per year and Churches of God increased their adherents by 14 percent, a slightly lower rate than the Adventists.

The growth rate for Adventist adherents as reported in the Jamaica census is about the same as the growth rate for Adventist membership in the North American Division (NAD). The membership reports of the Jamaica Union Conference report a much higher rate of growth. It has not been less than 3.5 percent in any year over the last decade. This figure is often compared with that of the NAD and results in concern about a slowing growth rate among North American Adventists, but the Jamaica census data suggest that it may not be the whole story.

Mainline Protestant denominations and the Roman Catholic Church all suffered declines in adherents over the decade. The largest decline was in the Anglican Church which has traditionally had a significant role in the country because of Jamaica’s history as a British colony and Commonwealth nation.

The number of Jamaicans who told the official census-takers that they are Adventists is significantly greater than the 260,610 official membership figure of the Jamaica Union Conference. In fact, it is nearly 24 percent more, which is likely a larger factor than can be explained by the unbaptized children in Adventist families who may be reported in the census but would not be part of the official membership.

Both the government census and the denomination’s official membership reports position the Adventist community in Jamaica as one of the proportionately largest in the world. This means that the Adventist faith has penetrated this island nation to a greater degree than almost any other nation on the globe. One result is that immigrants from Jamaica have a very significant share of the denomination’s membership in the United Kingdom, eastern Canada and the northeastern United States.
Clinton Chisholm, a faculty member at the interdenominational Jamaica Theological Seminary, points out the religious influence that Jamaica has as “the Protestant stronghold of the Western world,” in a recent article in the Jamaica Gleaner. It is often said to have “the greatest number of churches per square mile” of any country, although Chisholm debunks this as being an actual quote from *The Guinness Book of World Records*. He does point to a report earlier this year from the Pew Research Center showing that the United States for the first time no longer has a Protestant majority.
International Day of Prayer & Fasting Scheduled Sabbath for Two Adventists in Prison in Togo

Submitted: Nov 29, 2012
By AT News Team

Leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church have announced a Day of Prayer and Fasting around the world this coming Sabbath (December 1) to protest the violation of the human rights of an Adventist pastor and a church member in the African republic of Togo. Adventist Today reported in early October on the detention of Pastor Antonio dos Anjos Monteiro, Sabbath School and Personal Ministries director of the Sahel Union Mission, which is headquartered in Tome, Togo. Bruno Amah, a church member and businessman, has also been arrested under similar charges.

The denomination is attempting to mobilize the 30 million Adventist adherents around the world to express solidarity with these two men and pressure the Togolese government for their release. “These are falsely accused, innocent church members,” said Pastor Ted Wilson, president of the General Conference, in statement released by the official Adventist News Network (ANN). “We are pleading with the Lord for his intervention so that they can be reunited with their families and continue their work.” Wilson visited the men in prison recently during a trip to several African nations.

Adventist representatives have met with the ambassador of Togo in the United States and high-ranking government officials in Togo. A social media campaign is collecting signatures for a petition and urging individuals worldwide to write to the government of Togo.

The two men were accused by a man who has admitted to serial killings. Local news media in Tome have portrayed the case as a criminal conspiracy to kill young women and sell their blood. Trafficking in children and child labor are identified as problems in Togo on the official U.S. Department of State website. It also reports that although “the human rights situation in the country [has] improved; however, serious human rights problems continue, including ... harsh prison conditions, arbitrary and secret arrests and detention [and] lengthy pretrial detention.”

The judicial system in Togo “blends African traditional law and the Napoleonic Code,” states the Encyclopedia of the Nations. “Trials are open and judicial procedures are generally respected. However, the judicial system suffers from the lack of personnel and remains overburdened.”

Many Adventists will skip meals on Saturday until the Sabbath ends at sundown, although it is recommended that everyone who participates is careful to remain fully hydrated and take necessary medications. Very young, aged or ill individuals should not participate in the fast, a physician told Adventist Today. “One alternative is to consume fruit and vegetable juices, but no solid food. The average adult will only be healthier if he or she does that for a day, and it is good to put one’s self in
solidarity with the men in prison who will suffer much longer.”

Adventist Today checked with several pastors around North America and found some who plan to preach about human rights on Sabbath. “It is good to focus attention on an attempt to help these two men,” said one pastor. “But these are not the only people on the globe who are being prosecuted without good evidence. Many people are deprived of human rights and this is an opportunity to take a stand on that.”

*If you wish to sign the petition, you can access it at this web address:* [http://www.change.org/petitions/seventh-day-adventist-church](http://www.change.org/petitions/seventh-day-adventist-church)
Crowd/Mob Psychology

Submitted: Nov 28, 2012
By Herbert Douglass

Years ago, many years come to think of it, I took a graduate course in Discussion and Debate. One of the books assigned to be read and discussed was written by Gustave Le Bon, in English translation *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*, 1896.

We discovered that the fascist theories of leadership that emerged during the 1920s owed much to Le Bon's theories of crowd psychology. At the same time, Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* drew largely on the propaganda techniques proposed in Le Bon's 1895 book. In addition, Benito Mussolini made a careful study of Le Bon's crowd psychology book, apparently keeping the book by his bedside. Others took his ideas and declared that a major feature of democracy was the manipulation of the mass mind by media and advertising. Theodore Roosevelt, as well as many other American progressives in the early 20th century, were also deeply affected by Le Bon's writings. [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gustave_Le_Bon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gustave_Le_Bon)

That book was an early eye-opener for me. Theories of how to excite a crowd, big or small, became living drama to me, down to our present day. And we have all learned a lot in the last 25 years about crowd control!

Mobs, according to Le Bon, have a “fetish-like respect” for tradition, except moral traditions because *crowds are too impulsive to be moral*. That’s why many say our Constitution is a “living, breathing” document that some say can be stretched to support rights to gay marriage and abortion; yet, they howl about studying the age at which Social Security and Medicare benefits kick in, as if the actuarials were written in stone in the 1930s.

Le Bon says that it is lucky “for the progress of civilization that the power of crowds only began to exist when the great discoveries of science and industry had already been effected.” If “democracies possessed the power they wield today at the time of the invention of mechanical looms or of the introduction of steam-power and of railways, the realization of these inventions would have been impossible.”

That is an outstanding observation that seems to be amplified year-by-year—the mind-set of the majority can be very persuasive (and counterproductive). Anybody who suffered with peptic ulcers for centuries and was told to drink milk is now grateful that the 2005 Nobel Prize in Physiology of Medicine finally was given to Barry Marshall and Robin Warren, who with tenacity and a prepared mind challenged prevailing dogmas. Wow! For twenty-three years, they were ridiculed by their professional
buddies.

In 1982, when the *Helicobacter pylori* bacterium was discovered by Marshall and Warren, stress and lifestyle were considered the major causes of peptic ulcer disease. It is now firmly established that *Helicobacter pylori* causes more than 90% of duodenal ulcers and up to 80% of gastric ulcers. Any physician today knows immediately what to prescribe with targeted medications, such as Pepto-Bismol, etc.

Group-think: When The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act was narrowly passed by Congress in 2010, something interesting happened: Immediately certain groups including government unions, were granted waivers! Democracy can be very strong, but somehow those on top are different—after all, Cuba and Venezuela were once “democracies” but their leaders (Fidel Castro and Hugo Chavez) always had immediate access to the best medical care.

I think of the group-think that seems to control public education in the USA: everyone should (must) go to the local school and block school choice—but leaders are permitted to bypass public schools for their own children who then attend plush private high schools.

Truth is irrelevant; only slogans and fear-mongering delight crowds. For example, herd mentality rules during a financial crisis because people are wired to follow the crowd when times are uncertain, experts say.

Gregory Berns, a neuroeconomist at Emory University in Atlanta, said in a telephone interview that he puts people in magnetic resonance imaging or MRI scanners while he tests their responses to various scenarios, and studies patterns of their brain activation. ONE CLEAR PATTERN -- THE BRAIN'S "FEAR CENTER" LIGHTS UP WHEN PEOPLE ARE UNCERTAIN.

"When people are presented with a situation where they don't have information or the information is ambiguous, we see activation of the amygdala and insula," Berns said in a telephone interview.

And people begin to doubt their own judgment. Bern's team did an experiment in which they recruited actors and true volunteers. "Their subjects went into a (MRI) scanner," he said. They were asked to do a simple task, assessing shapes. "We had the group (of actors) tell them the wrong answer sometimes," Berns said.

The volunteers began to change their answers to match what the group said. Perhaps they were merely overriding their own judgments for the sake of getting along, Berns said. But the scanner suggested another explanation: RUNNING WITH THE HERD!

Berns opined: "Our brains are really wired to accept the group opinion of the world."

All this makes me do further thinking. Especially when we realize that “last-day” circumstances focus on
national and international events that involve mass movements like we have never seen before—on all continents.

In our next blog, we will discuss the difference between a crowd and a mob, the plus and minuses of populism, the historical problems of democracy and why the United States is a republic and not a democracy—probably the longest-lasting republican form of government in history.

I am intrigued with prophecies such as “All the world marveled and followed the beast” Revelation 13:4, NKJV. Or, “These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast.” Revelation 17:13, NKJV. Wow!
Advents and Advents

Submitted: Nov 28, 2012

By Debonnaire Kovacs

Advent is amazing. I’ve said it before—maybe here, so if I repeat myself, feel free to surf on out—but I think the Adventist church as a whole misses a real opportunity in not following Advent. Like most people who are unfamiliar with the liturgical church calendar, I had heard of Advent and Lent, though I didn’t know much about them. I knew you “gave up something” for Lent, and I knew kids opened little windows in Advent calendars in the weeks before Christmas. What I had no idea of until recent years is that Advent is, in fact, celebrated not only to anticipate the world’s chosen anniversary of the First Coming (that is, Christmas), but to anticipate in real time the Second Coming as well.

Just look at the readings for this week in the Revised Common Lectionary:

**Jeremiah 33:14-16**—This is the prophecy of the Righteous Branch which is to spring up and bring righteousness and justice to the land—clearly a Messianic prophecy and usually seen as a prediction of the Messiah’s arrival, but the righteousness and justice part is not quite complete yet, I don’t think!

**Psalm 25:1-9**—This is the one that has been made into the popular echo song that begins “Unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. . .” It’s a prayer for God’s guidance, compassion, and forgiveness, which has to do with our lives now, in between the first coming and the second. Here is the “collect,” the prayer that goes with this week’s readings: Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

**1 Thessalonians 3:9-13**—This is Paul’s prayer for the Thessalonians: “And may He so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.”

**Luke 21:25-36**—This is the companion passage to Matthew 24, so dear to adventist hearts (that is, all who look for an Advent), and with good reason. It is filled with signs, portents, prophecies, and warnings. It also says, “Stand up and raise your hands, because your redemption is drawing near.”

This is the sort of thing our brothers and sisters in many churches (some Adventist ones, too) are hearing read and preached and taught. He came once. He’ll come again. Lift your hands!

Amen!
FYI, for any who might be curious about why I follow the lectionary in these blogs:

I became interested in the Lectionary because of something Kathleen Norris, whose writings bless me, said about it. She had grown up in a conservative church and became interested in “higher” church services because she enjoyed the richer liturgy. Early on, I didn’t understand this point of view. Like many Adventists and other more conservative denomination members, I was raised to think of liturgy and ritual as “empty formalism.” I didn’t realize yet that our own services, which almost universally follow the traditional Protestant order of service, are still rituals. Whether any ritual is empty or not is determined by the mindset of the worship leaders and the congregation.

Norris said that she came to realize that in most of the conservative churches, such as the one where she grew up, the pastor might choose one verse or several for the sermon, and if people didn’t read their Bibles at home,(sad, but very common) that might be all the Scripture they were exposed to. On the other hand, in a church which follows a lectionary, over the course of three years the congregation will be exposed to nearly the entire Bible, read aloud in their sanctuary.

This intrigued me and I looked up the Revised Common Lectionary online. I often read through those readings as part of my worship, and I find it (like any Bible reading, of course!) to be a great blessing.
As Features Editor for the online version of Adventist Today, my assigned task is to find individuals, groups, churches, or organizations who are working “outside the box” in ministering to a needy world for God. In a sense, the stories I have to share today could be seen as not being particularly “out of the box.” Loma Linda University Health is, after all, dedicated to serving health needs. But from the days of “Baby Fae,” who, in 1984, was the first infant recipient of a non-human heart transplant, to today, LLU shows its willingness to pioneer in controversial territory and to push the edges of possibilities in in human health and medicine.

These two stories are not in that sort of controversial and risky territory, but they do show that the workers at Loma Linda are still seeking the best Wholeness humanly possible for all their employees and patients. These two news items were shared by Herbert Atienza, Media Relations, LLU

Prostate Cancer Patients Treated With Proton Therapy at Loma Linda University Medical Center Show Excellent Quality of Life
New Breakthrough Study Reaffirms Proton Therapy Efficacy;
Post-Treatment Quality of Life on Par With Men Never Afflicted by Cancer

LOMA LINDA, Calif. – Oct. 30, 2012 – Prostate cancer patients treated with proton therapy at Loma Linda University Medical Center (LLUMC) have a post-treatment quality of life on par with men who have never been treated for cancer, according to a study presented at the annual American Society for Radiation Oncologists meeting in Boston.

The breakthrough study evaluated the quality of life of approximately 1,000 prostate cancer patients following proton therapy treatment at five centers and compared them to men who haven’t been treated for cancer. Of the 1,000 prostate cancer patients surveyed, 80 percent were treated at LLUMC’s James M. Slater Proton Treatment & Research Center, the first and foremost hospital-based proton treatment center in the nation.

“This study reaffirms the results we’ve seen from our patients for the past 22 years and supports the mountain of evidence regarding the efficacy of proton therapy,” said Jerry D. Slater, MD, chairman of the LLUMC Center. Dr. Slater and Dr. David Bush, vice-chairman of the Department of Radiation at LLUMC, were co-authors of the study entitled “Multi-Institutional Patient-Reported Quality of Life After Proton Therapy for Prostate Cancer Compared to Non-Treated Men.”

The study analyzed men at a median age of 65 who were at least one year from the end of their proton therapy treatment and specifically looked at their urinary, hormonal and bowel functions. In all of these areas, men who had been treated for prostate cancer with proton therapy fared as well, if not better, than the men who never had cancer. Sexual differentiators existed in men who were slightly older than the median age and/or were taking hormone therapy.
“Proton therapy is a highly effective treatment for prostate cancer as the targeted proton beams spare surrounding healthy tissue and minimize the typical side effects from standard photon beam radiation including incontinence and impotence,” says Dr. Slater.

Since LLUMC brought modern proton treatment for cancer into the mainstream in 1990, there have been countless studies and trials that have shown proton therapy to be the treatment of choice for many types of cancer. Over the years, proton treatment has been refined and, coupled with leading-edge technology, has become one of the best treatment options for doctors and patients. While prostate cancer remains one of the primary uses for proton therapy, the pinpoint accuracy of the proton beam also makes it a highly effective form of treatment for many other types of tumors including those found in the head, neck, lung and breast.

Loma Linda University Health recognized as ‘Gold Fit-Friendly Worksite’ by American Heart Association

LOMA LINDA, CA – Nov. 13, 2012 – Loma Linda University Health has been recognized by the American Heart Association as a “Gold Fit-Friendly Worksite” for encouraging a culture of wellness at the workplace, called “Living Whole.”

Loma Linda University Health also was chosen to receive the “Worksite Innovation Award,” for the “Living Whole Paging My Health Program,” a regular reminder system for employees about their health.

The initiatives at Loma Linda University Health are all part of the Living Whole Employee Wellness Program and include:

- Health risk assessments, allowing employees to receive an individual report on such topics as stress, fruit and vegetable consumption, and sleep, and a free one-on-one consultation with a registered dietitian.
- “Breathe Program,” a one-on-one tobacco dependency treatment program.
- “Better Understanding for Individuals Living with Diabetes (BUILD),” a disease management program that closely monitors employees with Type 2 Diabetes.
- “Living Whole Wellness Meals” made available to employees, designed to meet specific nutrition criteria.

“Through your ongoing efforts to provide a culture of corporate wellness, your organization has demonstrated extraordinary, tangible results,” said American Heart Association CEO Nancy Brown. “The creativity and leadership within your organization are an inspiration and you can be proud of the positive health impact you are making.”

Dr. Richard Hart, president of Loma Linda University Health, said the designation recognizes the institution’s priority of providing a healthy workplace for its employees.
“Our mission as an institution is to continue the teaching and healing ministry of Jesus Christ, and that mission starts where we work,” he said. “We are proud to be recognized as a workplace where wellness is given high priority and our employees can work within a healthy environment.”

The Fit-Friendly program recognizes employers who champion the health of their employees and work to create a culture of physical activity and health in the workplace. Worksites may also apply annually for the “Innovation” award, given to worksites that creatively implement programs to promote physical activity in the workplace. The recognition is valid for one year.
HUNTSVILLE, Alabama — A living history pageant filled the platform of the Oakwood University Seventh-day Adventist Church Saturday, Nov. 3, 2012. The directors and speakers for 38 years of the “Breath of Life” television program sat side-by-side to reminisce about how far the program has come.

Now taped in the Oakwood SDA Church at 11 a.m. on Saturdays, the program is carried in 25 countries through cable, internet and mobile app. “Breath of Life” airs in the Huntsville area on Comcast channel 3, Mediacom channel 4 and Knology channel 11.

On Sabbath afternoon, Pastor Walter Arties, who is also renowned singer, began telling the story of the early days of the program. In the early ‘70s, the Seventh-day Adventist denomination already had a popular religion program, “It Is Written,” with director-speaker Elder George Vandeman.

Little red lights

Walter Arties

Arties at the time was working at KHOF in the Los Angeles area. As he watched news coverage of the riots in Watts and the racial unrest across the nation, he knew it was time for the church to begin a program that featured more of the African-American pastors and musicians of the church. “Breath of Life” was one of the groundbreaking African-American television programs in the United States.

Arties called Elder Charles D. Brooks, a powerful preacher he had known from their student days at Oakwood University in Huntsville. Brooks is one of three internationally known Adventist leaders for whom the Bradford-Cleveland-Brooks Leadership Center at the university.
C. D. Brooks

“I was surprised and curious,” Brooks said of the phone call. “I saw it as an opportunity to minister to people everywhere, not just one congregation.”

But, he said, his experience with television was nil.

“I had no idea how terrifying a little red light could be,” Brooks said, remembering what it was like to preach to a camera, rather than a live congregation. “I was used to working evangelistic meetings, where I could look them in the eye, read them. How can you read a little red light?”

In those days, Brooks said, their budget forced them to cram all their taping into one intense week – 22 programs in one week of 20-hour days.

Thinking about their image, Arties said, he and the other members of the Breath of Life men’s quartet decided to buy matching suits.

“When we came out of that store, people stopped us with their autograph books out,” Arties said. “They thought we were the Spinners.”

“And I didn’t even know who the Spinners were,” Brooks said, stirring another wave of laughter from the audience of about 800.
Walter Pearson
In 1998, when Elder Walter Pearson was called as the next speaker-director, he knew he needed training in television.

Providentially, after he was a guest on a Dayton, Ohio, program, “At Home with Brother James,” a black cameraman stopped him at the end of the show.

“You have ‘it’,” the cameraman told him. “If you’ll come to me, I’ll teach you how to use it.”

“I didn’t know exactly what ‘it’ was, but I went,” Pearson said, stirring another wave of laughter. “He told me two things I’ll never forget. The first was, ‘You can’t blink. If you blink, people think you are lying.’ The second was, ‘Looking into that hole (of the camera lens), and see your brother sitting on the side of his bed in his pajamas.’”

The odd advice made sense, Pearson said: You have to be a regular guy to talk to your own brother. You know you can’t impress him, and you know you love him.

Pearson was shepherd of the program from 1998 until 2010, when Dr. Carlton Byrd, now also senior pastor of the Oakwood SDA Church, was asked to become speaker-director.

The partnership between “Breath of Life” and the university makes sense, Dr. Leslie Pollard, Oakwood University’s president, said. Oakwood can offer the program resources, and the program can offer talented students real-life experience in broadcasting.

A program like “Breath of Life“ happens only because of the contributions of thousands, the speakers emphasized. From the retired teacher who sends a modest donation to those who help with the technical aspects of the program.

“‘Breath of Life’ is not about personality, it’s not about human power,” Pearson said. “It’s about God’s power in our ministries. And all God needs is for everybody to do their part.

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