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Volunteer Physician Missing from Adventist Mission Trip in Ukraine

Submitted: May 15, 2013

By AT News Team Updates added at the end on May 16 and 18

A massive search is being organized for Thursday morning (May 16) to find Dr. Jay Sloop, a physician from Yakima, Washington, who was in Kiev, Ukraine, with a team of volunteers helping the Seventh-day Adventist Church set up a lifestyle medicine center there. The 77-year-old takes a walk every morning, usually with friends, but left the place he was staying by himself at 6:45 on Tuesday morning despite the fact that a roommate could not accompany him. He told the roommate that he would be back for breakfast in 45 minutes, according to The Spokesman-Review, a Spokane daily newspaper, but did not return.

Local police were called the same day, according to the Web edition of the North Pacific Union Conference Gleaner. By the next morning the United States Embassy, the State Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) had been notified. Wednesday afternoon "the family believes they may have narrowed the search down to one park," the Gleaner announced. This park will be the focus of the search on Thursday.

"He was recorded on security video leaving," the Yakima Herald Republic quoted Jay Wintermeyer, communication director for the Upper Columbia Conference where Dr. Sloop has served as health ministries director since he retired from private practice in 2005. "His passion is for teaching lifestyle change to communities," stated The Statesman-Review.

The news media in eastern Washington have reported that Dr. Sloop has been staying in a hotel with other volunteers, but the Adventist Review news editor, Mark Kellner, stated that he was staying at the Ukrainian Union Conference office and had agreed to meet the others at the home of the local health ministries director. The Gleaner online edition states that the family has set up a blog to share information at sloop.net/wordpress, but Adventist Today has been unable to find that site on the Web.
"He's a pillar of our church," KEPR-TV, the CBS affiliate in Pasco, Washington, quoted Nita Hinman, a friend and Adventist church member. "He's a pillar of our community and I just can't say enough good things about him." Pastor Harry Sharley told the television station that Dr. Sloop's family was flying to Ukraine immediately. "It comes as a real shock," the pastor was quoted. "We are praying and hoping Jay Sloop is found well and able to return here to the Yakima Valley."

Dr. Sloop is a 1960 graduate of the School of Medicine at Loma Linda University. He completed residencies in internal medicine and obstetrics–gynecology at White Memorial Medical Center in Los Angeles. He is a graduate of Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska. From 1969 to 2005 he had a private practice in Yakima and provided inpatient care and taught classes at Total Health Lifestyle Center. He has been in the Ukraine for the past three weeks, reported NBC television.

Adventist Today will update this story as it is able to talk to a family spokesman and information comes in from the search.

Additional on May 16

A search of Zamkova Gora park started at 8 a.m. local time on Thursday (May 16), according to Sloop family members in Kiev. There are a number of very steep areas in this park and the goal is to conduct a thorough grid search. On Wednesday evening the family appealed for anyone with rock climbing gear and experience to assist in certain areas. Jeff Sloop, a grandson of Dr. Sloop's, flew to Kiev from his student missionary assignment at Nile Union Academy in Egypt to assist with the search, Adventist Today was told by Russell Gilbert, a long-time friend of Dr. Sloop's in Yakima.

Gilbert called Sloop "a prince of a man," and said that he enjoys nature and has climbed Mount Rainier. Gilbert stated the he had climbed Mount Adams with Sloop. Dr. Sloop hasn't climbed mountains for a few years, Gilbert said, but he is still quite active. "He is in good shape for a 77-year-old. He walks often; leaving for a walk is not uncommon for him."

Adventist Today has confirmed that the blog which the family is using to provide regular information can be accessed here: http://www.sloop.net/wordpress/

At the end of the day in Kiev on Thursday (May 16) a family spokesman reported on the blog that only three people had been able to join the search that day. It was a rainy day there. No report of anything found.

Additional on May 18
Friday night (May 17) Dr. Jay Sloop's son Greg reported on the family blog that a large group of volunteers were able to complete a grid search of the park on Friday. No sign of Dr. Sloop was found.

Greg also reported that Dr. Sloop had made an ATM transaction shortly after he left for a walk in Kiev Tuesday morning, but it was for a modest amount and there was no sign of distress in the pictures or anyone in the background. “No bank transactions have been attempted ... since,” Greg wrote. In addition, Greg said there have been no reports of a kidnapping.

“We are doing everything we can to provide all possible help and assistance in the search for Dr. Sloop,” the Yakima Herald quoted Pastor Victor Alekseenko, president of the Ukraine Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Greg wrote in the family blog that despite language differences, Adventists in Kiev have been working hard to help find the doctor.

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The Danish Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in a constituency session yesterday (May 12) voted to end gender as a consideration in the appointment of pastors. In what was evidently an attempt to avoid direct confrontation with the General Conference administration while maintaining the principle of equality, the delegates also voted to suspend all ordinations until after the 2015 GC Session, at which it is the intention of the denomination's leadership to reconcile the ongoing tensions on this topic. Five other union conferences have previously voted to change the policy against the ordination of women employed by the denomination as pastors. The North German Union Conference, the Columbia Union Conference and the Pacific Union Conference in the United States, the Netherlands Union Conference and the Norwegian Union Conference have all taken similar stands. In the U.S. many women pastors have already been ordained or issued ministerial credentials, while Adventist Today has received no reports of this happening in Europe to date. The statement voted at the constituency session in Denmark includes a clear and simple statement of a theology of ordination rooted in a creationist doctrine of humanity and the Adventist understanding of the sanctuary. "According to the Seventh-day Adventist Church's belief in creation ... God has created mankind–man and woman–in His image and therefore equal," the statement begins. "Because of sin, God instituted a special priesthood reserved for men [which] with its sacrifices ... found its fulfillment in Jesus Christ. There is no longer any special priesthood. Jesus Christ is our only true priest ... in the true temple in heaven." The statement continues, "All of Christ's followers–both men and women–were lifted up to be a 'chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, to declare His praises' (1 Peter 2:9). This royal priesthood has a common purpose, namely to proclaim the gospel. This ministry is based on the spiritual gifts which the Holy Spirit gives equally to men and women (1 Corinthians 12). Paul mentions some specific grace-based ministries in the Church, including apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.
Based on this theology of ordination, the delegates adopted a policy that "the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Denmark will not distinguish between genders when appointing pastors, and wishes to see equality between genders in all areas of responsibility." And, it "will suspend the ordaining of any new pastors until the General Conference session in 2015." The simplicity and fundamental Bible teachings about ordination in this statement "really bring into question the need for the study that the GC has underway," a retired church administrator told Adventist Today. "This document clearly shows what the biblical, Adventist theology must be on this subject."  

Addedum on May 15

An Adventist Today reporter talked with Pastor Thomas Muller, president of the Danish Union Conference. Muller said that this topic has been discussed there for a long time. In the fall of 2012 the youth advisory council of the union conference presented a document to the union executive committee asking that a decision be made about ordination. At about the same time at least one of the pastors wrote a letter making the same request.

The union executive committee appointed a theological study committee which met four or five times and brought back a draft of the document which was eventually voted by the constituency delegates. The union executive committee was nearly unanimous in recommending the document to the constituency session. Only one or two members voted against it or turned in a blank paper ballot.

The vote at the constituency session was 104 in favor of extending ordination to women and 31 against. Most of the 31 who voted against the ordination of women pastors are against women serving in any leadership role in the church despite the fact that women have been serving as local elders, pastors and in other leadership roles in the Adventist Church in Denmark for some time.

The final paragraph suspending ordinations until after the 2015 GC Session was not part of the draft document recommended to the delegates. It was added from the floor during the discussion.

There are four or five young pastors who would normally be ordained in the next two years, and two of them went to the microphone during the discussion and volunteered to wait until their colleagues who are women can also be ordained. There are three women employed by the Danish Union Conference as ministers. Two of these lead local churches and one serves as director of family ministries. All three are seminary graduates.

Of the 2,500 members of the Adventist Church in Denmark, Muller estimated that maybe 50 to 70, at most 100 are against women's ordination. "Especially among young people, its such an ethical issue," said Muller. "This is about equality. Women are doing the work of
pastors, and this is about recognizing and supporting their work. Denmark has a culture of gender equality. The Lutheran Church in Denmark first ordained a woman for ministry in 1948.

"We come from a culture where equality is very highly respected," Muller reflected. "We're struggling as a church to defend our position among Danes." Some Adventists in Denmark don't want to wait for the GC to approve ordination for women, Muller told Adventist Today. "They want to move ahead with ordination now."

But, "we are not moving to action with this document. We are just defining our position. ... It is our intent to send a signal to the rest of the world church. ... We would be satisfied if ordination for women would be opened up either on a union or division basis. We respect that in some cultures it is not fitting for women to be pastors."

It was also important to take this step for the younger generation of Danish Adventists. "They need to know where the Church in Denmark is headed, even though the world Church may be heading in another direction. We can't afford to wait another two years [because] there are young women thinking about studying theology. We need more female pastors."

No one from the GC was present at the constituency session. The president and treasurer of the Trans–European Division were at the meeting. The official news service of the GC, the Adventist News Network (ANN) reported the position paper voted by the delegates.

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Church Schools Across the U.S. Compete in the Adventist Robotics League Championship

Submitted: May 13, 2013

By Adventist Today News Team

Last week eight teams traveled to Sacramento Adventist Academy for the Adventist Robotics League (ARL) national championship. Each team brought a robot they had built designed to meet this year's challenge, the needs of senior citizens. They had received a four-by-eight-foot map in September outlining the elements of the mission their machine must achieve.

Each robot attempted to accomplish as many as 14 things in two minutes, including overcoming a number of obstacles. The teams were scored on how well the robots performed, a community service project they did related to the needs of senior citizens, the technical aspects of their robots, and how well they demonstrated the values of teamwork, gracious professionalism, and collaboration. Each of the four areas was scored by judges at beginner, developing, accomplished and exemplary levels.

The teams were made up of four to ten students from grades four through eight (9 to 14 years of age) with an adult coach. They came from Loma Linda Academy, Hollister Adventist Christian School and Magalia Adventist School in California; Orlando Junior Academy and Forest Lake Education Center in Florida; Shenandoah Valley Adventist Elementary School in New Market, Virginia; Five Falls Christian School in Great Falls, Montana; and a team made up of home school children from Stanwood, Washington.
Awards were given for robot performance, design elements, community projects and core values. The home school team from Washington was awarded the overall championship. "The focus ... is not on winning but on putting knowledge and skill to work for the betterment of others," Mel Wade, ARL director, told Adventist Today.

The teams from Florida and Virginia had participated in the regional Southern Challenge which brought 25 teams to Southern Adventist University in April. That event was hosted by the university's School of Computing. Next year there will be five of these qualifying tournaments, said Wade. The theme in 2014 is about coping with natural disasters.

The School of Engineering at Walla Walla University sponsored this year's national tournament. The ARL is sponsored by the Office of Education at the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination.

"Robots are not science fiction or toys anymore," an Adventist engineer that works for a robotics firm told Adventist Today. "These kids are growing up in a world where more and more serious work is being done by robots in factories, warehouses and many other places. Large numbers are being sold to industries all over the world. It is important that Adventist faith deal with this reality, and it is encouraging to see Adventist schools taking science and technology education seriously."

More information is available at:

www.adventistroboticsleague.net/

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Waco Symposium Presentation Published in Christian Century

Submitted: May 12, 2013

By Adventist Today News Team

One of the presentations at the symposium on the Waco tragedy of 20 years ago held at Baylor University in April has been published as an article in the current issue of Christian Century (dated May 15, 2013). Adventist Today published an overall report at the time of the event, but did not have access to manuscripts of any of the presentations.

The deadly confrontation between the Branch Davidian Seventh Day Adventists and law enforcement "forced religious believers to explore the consequences of apocalyptic thought and fundamentalist faith," stated Dr. Philip Jenkins, one of the most widely respected historians of religion in America. He puts the episode in the context of the interaction of religion and politics in the 1990s.

"Waco demonstrated everything that was wrong with 'extreme' religion: its fanaticism and sexual hypocrisy, leading inevitably to violence and sexual exploitation." This view was widely popular at the time, Jenkins said, "in reaction to the prominence of the Moral Majority and the Christian right during the Reagan era."

"A rival interpretation blamed the violence on the brutal excesses of an out-of-control federal government engaged in a systematic assault on the lives and liberties of free citizens, specifically Christians. ... The Branch Davidians were not a cult but a persecuted church." In the aftermath, Jenkins points out, Wayne LaPierre of the National Rifle Association labeled Federal agents "jackbooted government thugs."
Jenkins connects the key role that conservative religion plays in right-wing politics and the ongoing "culture war" to these two rival views of the Waco tragedy, and states the Oklahoma City bombing "on the second anniversary of the Waco firestorm ... was widely taken as revenge for that event." Although he very briefly mentions the Seventh-day Adventist Church, he does not connect the religious-political entanglement that he analyzes in great detail to the way in which many Adventists have interpreted the prophecy of Revelation 13.

"Waco and its aftereffects continued to poison the political atmosphere, contributing mightily to the polarization of U.S. politics that we often lament today," he concludes. Beyond the tragedy for the families directly involved, Waco was "also a potent symbol of and contributor to a bitter and seemingly irreconcilable polarization" in America. It "still casts a very long shadow."

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On May 4, 2013, the Anaheim Adventist Church hosted a Hymn Festival. Choirs from Orangewood Academy and San Diego Academy united to sing hymns from the Adventist Hymnal. In the introductory remarks, Orangewood Academy choir director James Woods stated that students have “discovered” the hymns in the Adventist Church Hymnal. “They love them,” he said.

This remark called to mind a study I did some years ago that examined early Adventist hymns and how they shaped people's attitudes. I had read articles that addressed this subject, including one by S. T. Kimbrough, Jr.: “All Christians need to develop critical acumen about what they sing. Hymns are theology, and Christians tend to reflect the content and mood of their hymns in the way they think and live as a church and community…. There is a need to recognize hymns for precisely what they are, in both words and music, and to discard poetical and musical statements which perpetuate a static theology which never leads beyond self to service.” — Theology Today, April 1985.

From earliest times hymns have served to unite and inspire Adventist believers. Our hymns, whether by intent or default, express in subtle and direct ways our theology and practices. The hymns published in early Adventist hymnals reflect or, perhaps in stronger terms, shaped how the first Adventists understood their community, their mission and their world. The hymns sung by Adventist congregations Sabbath after Sabbath employ metaphors and similes to inspire church members to take advantage of the opportunities that await development for the church and the kingdom. The writers weigh in on opportunity that is within the community and the Advent believers are admonished to take immediate action. In the early hymns one looks in vain for hints that community needs or humanitarian response
is part of the equation. The world is a field awaiting harvesters to go forth and reap. Earth is viewed as a lonely place and escape is near, even at the door. The early Adventist hymns suggest that the community and its people were to be more exploited than nurtured, ministered to or understood. At times, the hymns were counter to Adventist theology. Example: “Their souls shall never die,” from the hymn written by I. Watts published in the 1908 Christ in Song.

This examination of Adventist hymns may help us understand the suspicion Adventists have toward involvement in the larger community except to recruit members, and the reluctance Adventists have had to engage the local community or to be involved in the political arena. Personal comments are limited and noted by brackets. The reader can draw her/his own conclusions on the words of a hymn may have influenced Adventist theology and behavior. Have fun!

Chronology of the Early Adventist Hymnals
1849 – Hymns for God’s Peculiar People; That Keep the Commandments of God and the Faith of Jesus, Based on The Millennial Harp or Second Advent Hymns published by Joshua V. Himes, 1842, 1843, 1848.
1855 – Hymns for Those Who Keep the Commandments of God and the Faith of Jesus.
1886 – The Seventh-day Adventist Hymn and Tune Book (Hymns and Tunes)
1900 – Christ in Song (Revised 1908)
1941 – The Church Hymnal (First official hymnal since 1886.)
1985 – The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal

Samples from the 1849 Adventist Hymnal

Lo! Another angel follows
Lo an angel loud proclaiming
With the gospel of good news.

Yet, a third and solemn message,
Now proclaims a final doom
All who “worship Beast or Image;”
Soon shall drink the wrath of God:
Without mixture
Mercy now no longer pleads.
Here they are, who now are waiting,  
And have patience to endure;  
While the Dragon’s hosts are raging  
Those confide in God secure:  
Faith of Jesus;  
And COMMANDMENTS, keep them pure.

Washing Feet—An Old Hymn
When Jesus Christ was here below,  
He taught his people what to do.  
And if we would his precepts keep,  
We must attend to washing feet.

The Lord who made the earth and sky,  
Arose and laid his garments by;  
And wash’d their feet to show that we,  
Like Christ, should always humble be.

He wash’d them all, tho’ all were clean,  
Save Judas, who was full of sin.  
May none of us, like Judas, sell  
Our Lord for gold, and go to hell

The Seal
Behold a light appears,  
The holy sabbath (sic) day,  
And magnified so clear,  
That none may need to stray;  
Though small at first, as sun beam’s ray,  
Its strength ascends to perfect day.

It is the message clear  
Ascending from the east,  
God’s servants now appear  
Who will not worship “BEAST;”
Four angels hold the winds reveal’d
Until God’s servants all are seal’d
The Sabbath is a sign,
A mark which all may see,

And sure will draw a line
When servants all are seal’d
And while destruction’s in the land
This mark will guard the waiting band.

Restitution
Oh, spare thy people, Lord,
and bring them full salvation;
Fulfill they faithful word,

Rescue the sleeping nation;
Thou voice of God should from on high;
The signal give for reaping;

Come thou and reap the harvest dry;
Oh, gather all the sleeping:
Spare now the “remnant” Lord
The foe doth yet pursue them.

Oh, for thy blessed word,
Do thou with strength renew them.

Have You Faith?
Jesus our Saviour (sic) says—I will appear!
Have you faith?
My trumpet is sounding majestic and clear!
Have you faith?
The faithful alone I come to see,
And they shall live and reign with me,
Only have faith! [Three verses end with this imperative]

Armageddon
Ripe is the vintage of the earth;
Its clustering grapes are round and full;
And vengeance, vengeance bursts to birth,
Sudden and irresistible!
Messiah comes to tread amain, (sic)
The wine-press of the battle-plain

The cry is up, the strife begun,
The struggle of the mighty ones;
And Armageddon's day comes on,
The carnival of Slaughter's sons;
War lifts his helmet to his brow:
O God, protect thy people now!

This World Is Not My Home
Farewell! farewell! to all below,
My Jesus calls and I must go:
I'll launch my boat upon the sea,
This land is not the land for me.
This world is not my home: (4 X repeated) (Sic)

Farewell! my friends! I'll not stay here—
The home I seek will soon appear;
Where Christ is not I cannot be;
This land is not the land for me
This world is not my home, &c.

I'm A Traveler
I'm a lonely trav'ller here,
Weary, opprest;
But my journey's end is near,
Soon I shall rest.
Dark and dreary is the way,
Toiling I've come—
Ask me not with you to stay—
Yonder's my home.
The Jubilee Prayer
We are in the time of waiting;
Soon we shall behold our Lord,
Wafted far away from sorrow,
To receive our rich reward.
Keep us, Lord, till thine appearing,
Pure, unspotted from the world;
Let thy Holy Spirit cheer us,
Till thy banner is unfurl'd

Be of Good Cheer
Christian, thy warfare soon will be o'er;
Oh, do not fear, do not fear,
Soon thou shalt rest where thy foes come no more—
Be of good cheer, of good cheer.

Here Is No Rest
Here, o'er the earth as a stranger I roam,
Here is no rest—is no rest;
Here as a pilgrim I wander alone,
Yet I am blest—I am blest

Let them revile me, and scoff at my name,
Laugh at my weeping—endeavor to shame;
I will go forward, for this is my theme;
There, there is rest—there is rest

Here are afflictions and trials severe;
Here is no rest—is no rest;...

This world of cares is a wilderness state,
Here is no rest—is no rest;
Here I must bear from the world all its hate—
Yet I am blest—I am blest.

The Little Flock
How happy are the little flock,
Who, safe beneath their guardian Rock,
In all commotions rest;
When war's and tumult's waves run high,
Unmov'd above the storm they lie,
And lodge in Jesus' breast

Such happiness O Lord, have we,
By mercy gather'd into thee,
Before the floods descend;
And while the bursting cloud comes down,
We mark the vengeful day begun,
And calmly wait the end.

The plague, and dearth, and din of war,
Our saviour's (sic) swift approach declare,
And bid our hearts arise;
Earth's basis shook, confirms our hope;
Its cities' fall but lifts us up,
To meet thee in the skies.

A Pilgrim And A Stranger
1. I'm a pilgrim and I'm a stranger;
I can tarry, I can tarry, but a night;
Do not detain me, for I am going
To where the fountains are ever flowing,
I'm a pilgrim and I'm a stranger, &c.

2. There the glory is ever shining!
O, my longing heart, my longing heart is there;
Here in this country so dark and dreary,
I long have wander'd forlorn and weary.

4. Farwell, dreary earth, by sin so blighted,
In immortal beauty soon you'll be arrayed!
He who has form'd thee, will soon restore thee!
And then thy dread curse shall never more be:
I'm a pilgrim, and I'm a stranger,
Till thy rest shall end the weary pilgrim night.

The Fall of Babylon
1. Hail the day so long expected,
Hail the day of full release;
Zion’s walls are now erected,
And her watchmen publish peace;
Throughout Shiloh’s wide dominion,
Hear the trumpet loudly roar,
Babylon is fallen, is fallen, is fallen,
Babylon is fallen to rise no more.

2. Come “my people” and forsake her,
Cast away our slavish fears’
Hear the voice from heaven proclaiming
It’s the end of all her years.
Raise your voices she is fallen,
Lift your banners up on high,
Babylon is fallen, is fallen, is fallen, &c.

[My observations on the 1849 hymnal: The hymns are doctrinal, state the transitory nature of this world, describe the believer’s isolation, or express their hope for a better land. No hymns promote outreach, care for others, saving the lost, going to the world.]

Samples from the 1852 Hymnal

Come To Reign
List again;--the low earth sigheth,
And the blood of martyrs crieth
From its bosom, where there lieth
Millions upon millions slain:
“Lord, how long, ere thy word given,
All the wicked shall be driven
From the earth by bolts of heaven?
Jesus come—oh! come to reign.”

Kingdoms now are reeling, falling,
Nations lie in woe appalling,
On their sages vainly calling
All these wonders to explain;
While the slain around are lying,
God’s own little flock are sighing,
And in secret places crying,
“Jesus come—Oh! come to reign.”

Here the wicked live securely,
Of to-morrow boasting surely,
While from those wh’re walking purely
They extort dishonest gain;
Yea, the meek are burden’d, driven;
Want and care to them are given,
But they lift the cry to heaven,
“Jesus come—Oh! come to reign.”

Despised Pilgrims
1. What poor despised company
Of travelers are these,
Who walk in yonder narrow way,
Along the rugged maze?

2. Ah, these are of a royal line,
All children of a King….

3. Why do they then appear so mean,
and why so much despised?
Because of their rich robes unseen,
The world is not appriz’d

4. Why do they shun the pleasing path,
That worldlings love so well?
Because that is the road to death,
The open road to hell

5. What, is there then no other road
To Salem’s happy ground?
Christ is the only way to God,
No other can be found.

The Exile
There is a land, a better land than this—
There’s my home, there’s my home!
A land of pure, unbounded, perfect bliss—
There’s my home, there’s my home;
A captive on this desert shore,
I long to count my exile o’er,
And be where sorrows come no more:
There’s my home, there’s my home.

Far, far I am from my own happy shore—
I would go, I would go.
But yet my days of exile are not o’er:—
I would go, I would go.
I would not stay though earth were mine;
Though all its treasures for me shine,
A captive here I still should pine—
I would go, I would go.

I Walk Alone
1. I WALK a lonely pilgrim here
O’er life’s uneven way;
But my aching heart keeps hoping on
For the bright, the better day.

2. I walk alone and oft am sad,
And falls the briny tear;
My heart is grieved with trials sore,
And pressed with many a care.

Harvest Home
1. THOUGH in the outward church below,
The wheat and tares together grow;
Jesus ere long will weed the crop,
And pluck the tares in anger up.
For soon the reaping time will come,
And angels should the harvest home.

2. Will it relieve their horrors there,
To recollect their stations here;
How much they heard, how much the knew
How much among the wheat they grew?
For soon the reaping time will, &c (sic)

No! This will aggravate their case,
They perish'd under means of grace,
To them the word of life and faith
Became an instrument of death
For soon the reaping time will, &c.

Will You Go?
WE'RE going to see the bleeding Lamb,
Will you go? Will you go?
In rapturous strains to praise his name,
Will you go? Will you go?
The crown of life we there shall wear
The conqueror's palms our hands shall bear,
And all the joys of heaven we'll share,
Will you go? Will you go?

Ye weary, heavy laden, come,
Will you go? Will you go?
The Lord is waiting to receive,
If thou wilt on him now believe,
He'll give thy troubled conscience ease,
Come, believe! Come believe!

Hymn 8
OUR bondage it will end by and by, when he comes
Our bondage it will end when he comes,
And from Egypt's yoke set free,
Hail the glorious jubilee,
And to glory we'll return by and by when he comes,
And to glory we'll return when he comes.

Though our enemies are strong, we'll go on,
Though our hearts do sometimes fear,
Lo Israel's God is near,
And the fiery pillar moves, we'll go on, &c.

Hymn 12
OH, no, we cannot sing our songs,
Our glad and cheerful lays;
Our sorrowing harps refuse their strings,
To Zion's joyful strains.
They bid us be in mirthful mood,
And dry these tears so sad;
But Judah's hearths are desolate
And how can we be glad?

Hymn 30
I LOVE this pure religion,
Soldiers of the jubilee;
I love this pure religion,
Soldiers of the cross.

Remember me while toiling here,
Soldiers of the jubilee
Remember me while toiling here,
Soldiers of the cross.

We'll preach a coming Saviour,
Soldiers of the jubilee;
We'll preach a coming Saviour,
Soldiers of the cross.

[My observations about the 1852 hymnal: Like previous hymns these are doctrinal, state
the transitory nature of this world, describe the believer’s isolation, or express their hope for a better land. No hymns promote outreach, care for others, saving the lost, going to the world.

Samples from the 1886 Hymnal

No. 381
1. GOD’S holy law, transgressed,
Speaks nothing but despair;
Burdened with guilt, with grief oppressed,
We find no comfort there.

2. Not all our groans and tears,
Nor works which we have done,
Nor vows, nor promises, nor prayers,
can e’er for sin atone.

3. Relief alone is found
In Jesus’ precious blood;
‘Tis this that heals the mortal wound,
And reconciles to God.

4. High lifted on the cross,
The spotless Victim dies
This is salvation’s only source
Whence all our hopes arise.

No. 1023
1. Let party names no more
The Christian world o’erspread;
Gentile and Jew, and bond and free,
Are one in Christ, their Head.

2. Among the saints on earth
Let mutual love be found
Heirs of the same inheritance
With mutual blessings crowned.
3. Thus will the church below
   Resemble that above
   Where streams of pleasure ever flow,
   And every heart is love.

4. And till we reach that place,
   Our daily prayer shall be
   That we may dwell before thee Lord
   In love and unity.

No. 1032
"Go, preach my gospel," saith the Lord,
Bid the whole world my grace receive;
He shall be saved who trusts my word,
And they condemned who disbelieve.

No. 1038
Go, messenger of peace and love,
To people plunged in shades of night;
Like angels sent from fields above
Be thine to shed celestial light.

Go to the hungry, food impart;
To paths of peace the wanderer guide;
And lead the thirsty, panting heart,
Where streams of living water glide.

O, faint not in the day of toil,
When harvest waits the reaper’s hand,
Go gather in the glorious spoil
And joyous in his presence stand.

No. 1042
Convert and send forth more,
To spread thy truth abroad;
And let them speak thy word of power,
As workers with their God.

No. 1048
The vineyard of the Lord
Before his laborers lies,
And lo! we see the last reward
Which waits us in the sky.

No. 1053
Ho! Reaper’s of life’s harvest,
Why stand with rusty blade,
Until the night draws round thee,
And day begins to fade?

Thrust in your sharpened sickle,
And gather in the grain;
The night is fast approaching,
And soon will come again.

The Master calls for reapers,
And shall he call in vain?
Shall sheaves lie there ungathered,
And waste upon the plain?

No. 1058
In the vineyard of our father
Daily work we find to do;
Scattered gleanings we may gather,
Through we are but young and few;
Little clusters, little clusters
Help to fill the garners too.

No. 1068
Brother, you may work for Jesus;
God has given you a place
In some portion of his vineyard,
And will give sustaining grace.

He has bidden you to labor
And has promised a reward—
Even joy and life eternal
In the kingdom of your Lord.

No. 1069
Hark! the voice of Jesus calling,—
"Who will go and work today?"
Fields are white, the harvest waiting,
Who will bear the sheaves away?

Loud and long the Master calleth,
Rich reward he offers free
Who will answer, gladly saying,
"Here am I, O Lord, send me"?

If you cannot cross the ocean
And the heathen lands explore,
You can find the heathen nearer,
You can help them at your door;
If you cannot speak like angels,
If you cannot preach like Paul,
You can tell the love of Jesus,
You can say he died for all.

Samples from the 1908 Hymnal, "Christ in Song"

No. 817, Our Exiled Fathers (Rev. Leonard Bacon)
O god beneath thy guiding hand, Our exiled fathers crossed the sea; and when they trod the wintry strand, With pray’r and psalm they worshiped thee.

Truth, freedom, justice, faith in God, Come with those exiles o’er the waves; And where their pilgrim feet have trod, The God they trusted guards their graves.

And here thy name, O God of love, May we, their children, still adore, Till these eternal
hills remove, And spring adorns the earth no more.

**N. 818, Brotherhood of Men (J. S. Dwight)**

God bless our native land! May Heaven’s protecting hand Still [guard (sic) our shore. May peace her pow’r extend, Foe be transformed to friend, And all our rights depend On war no more.

May just and righteous laws Uphold the public cause, And bless our name; Home of the brave and free, Stronghold of Liberty, We pray that still on thee May rest no stain.

And not this land alone, But by they mercies known From shore to shore; O that all men would see That they should brothers be, And form one family, Thy wide world o’er!

**No. 809, What Is the Chaff? (I. Watts)**

What is the chaff, the word of man, When set against the wheat? Can it a dying soul sustain, Like that immortal meat?

Thy word, O God, with heav’nly bread Thy children doth supply; And those who by thee are fed, Their souls shall never die. [Bold mine]

**No. 819, Let us Work Too (F. E. Beldon)**

The Lord worketh, let us work too; In his vineyard there’s much to do, And Souls perish for need of you: The Lord worketh, let us work too.

They world moveth, let us move too, The sun’s glory that we may view. From night turning to day–dawn new: the world moveth, let us move too.

The wrong speaketh, let us speak too; The worst error is bright with dew: Shall truth slumber the whole day thro? The wrong speaketh, let us speak too.

The Christ liveth, let us live too, From death waking, his work to do, With hearts loving and pure and true: The Christ liveth, let us live too.

**No. 813, Above These Shades (Anne Steele)**

O could our thoughts and wishes fly, above these gloomy shades; To those bright worlds beyond the sky, Where sorrow ne’er invades!
There, joys unseen by mortal eyes, or reason’s feeble ray,
In ever blooming prospect rise, Exposed to no decay

No. 596, Buy Up the Opportunity (J. R. Clements)
Buy up the opportunity, O Christian, buy today! For Heaven’s ageless mansions buy, buy treasures while you may.

Buy up the opportunity, It may not long remain! The evil hosts are bidding, too, These precious souls to gain.

Buy up the opportunity, Pay any price to win!
With Heaven’s legions watching you, To falter will be sin.

Buy up the opportunity, At home; in lands afar; Go quickly! Find the jewels rare,—
each soul a glowing star.

Chorus: Buy up the opportunity, The souls from whom Christ died, Buy up the opportunity, Buy for the Crucified.

No. 548, Where Are the Reapers? (E. E. Rexford)
O where are the reapers that garner in The sheaves of the good from the fields of sin? With sickles of truth must the work be done, And no one may rest till the “harvest home.”
Go out in the highways and search them all; The wheat may be there, though the weeds are tall;
The fields are all rip’nng, and far and wide The world now is waiting the harvest tide; But reapers are few, and the work is great, And much will be lost should the harvest wait.
So come with your sickles, ye sons of men, And gather together the golden grain; Toil on till the Lord of the harvest come, Then share ye his joy in the “harvest home.”
Chorus: Where are the reapers? O who will come And share in the glory of the “harvest home” O, who will help us to garner in The sheaves of good from the fields of sin?

No. 570, Hold On (J. P. Ellis)
If your hand’s on the plow, hold on, hold on; Tho’ the soil may be sterile and hard,
The plowshare will make the fallow ground break, And the plowman will have his reward; Earth’s bosom will sparkle with emerald green, And its grain will be golden king;
The reapers will come, with loud “Harvest Home,” and the gleaners will joyfully sing.
No. 715, Sow In the Morn (W. F. Lloyd)
Sow in the morn thy seed; At eve hold not thy hand; To doubt and fear give thou no heed;
Broadcast it o’er the land.
Then, when the glorious end, The day of God, shall come, The angel reapers shall descend,
And heav’n shout “Harvest Home.”

No. 718, The World Is Very Evil (J. Neale)
The world is very evil, The times are waxing late; Be sober and keep vigil; The Judge is at the gate,—The judge who comes in mercy, The Judge who comes in Might,—Who comes to end the evil, Who comes to crown the right.

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What Kind of Leading Do We Really Want?

Submitted: May 15, 2013

By Debbonnaire Kovacs

Chapter 10 in The Monastery of the Heart is called “Direction and Counsel.” In our group, it seemed that last week’s “Mutuality” struck stronger chords, but this one resonated in me. It could be in part because I’m, as I like to say, “SDA to my DNA.” One of my great-grandfathers heard Ellen White speak when he was a boy. All the branches of both sides of my family tree for 4–5 generations back were Adventist. Not all still are, but our family reunions are still largely Adventist or shaped by Adventism. (Those who eat pork, for example, don’t bring it!)

For myself, I am beyond blessed to be able to say that I was raised in a Christian Adventist home. I didn’t know until I went to Atlantic Union College that some kids were told Jesus would love them IF. I was taught that God (all three of Him (and not male)) loved everybody, everywhere, all the time, no matter what. It was later (when I was 18, to be exact, thank you, Uncle Morry Venden!!) that my mother and I truly understood salvation by grace alone, but we knew, as we struggled along trying to be good, that God loved us! LOVED US!! AND YOU, TOO!!

In more recent years, I’ve learned a lot about other forms of faith, both Christian and non-Christian. They have things to teach us; we have things to teach them. The more I learn, the more Adventist I am. (Yes, really.) Adventist theology makes more sense to me, despite our family bickering and sometimes appalling blindness, than any other theology I’ve found.

So. Here I am, SDA to my DNA, and here’s a quote, without comment, from this chapter:

The complacent community asks itself no difficult questions that might require new efforts
to answer. The comfortable community opens no new or challenging paths that might bring down criticism on the system in which they exist. The self-satisfied community carves out no new directions, risks no new questions, that might disturb the sleepy apathy that comes to anyone over time. The placid community foregoes its prophetic role to live the God-life in the midst of the profane and chooses instead leaders who maintain the system in the spirit of the past, but do little or nothing to stretch it to the full height and breadth and depth of itself.

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Dr. David Wilbur: Power and Illusion: Religion and Human Need: Part 12

Submitted: May 16, 2013

By Ervin Taylor

This is Part 12 of the summary of Dr. Wilbur’s book. It should be emphasized that all of the text in this series of blogs in bold font in the body of the text of the chapter summary has been kindly provided by Dr. Wilbur. If there are any of my own comments, they will follow in regular type.

Summary for Chapter 11: Possible Sources and Shaping Factors for Religion

Archaeologists find artifacts of religion that long predate writing. Our first written records include many stories about the actions of the gods including the Epic of Gilgamesh, the Iliad and the Odyssey, the Vedas, and the Tanakh (Hebrew Scriptures). Religion has had an important place in every culture/civilization of which I am aware. The religious think that some or the Only God started their particular religion but skeptics look for a common cause for all in the human world. Of course every religion in recorded history was building on some prior religious foundation.

Some Reasons to Consider Natural Origins for Religion

Religion is both diverse and almost universal. The claim that one is true and all the others false requires great hubris. This asymmetry seems more absurd as one grows older and more experienced in a variety of groups and cultures. The claim however justifies the creation of a bonded “in-group” united by supernatural belief against an evil external world.

Religious diversity might be explained by one God who loved diversity or by many Gods who each created his preferred religion or lastly by the powerful human mind interacting with its complex environment. Religious thought and behavior might have given an evolutionary survival advantage to groups or individuals and therefore supported the development of a
biological propensity for such belief.

Do We Have a Biological Tendency to Religious Belief?

It seems that most human minds have a natural or built-in tendency to believe in a kind, all knowing, supernatural power who cares for them. This is shown by the remarkable worldwide success of the religious acculturation of children. The vast majority of them stay in that religious tradition to which they were directed as children.

Our need to have a confident and God-like power looking out for us may also fuel major support for messianic politicians such as Julius Caesar, Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Mao, Castro, Chavez and sometimes US Presidents, as all promise some earthly Utopia.

Common Individual Experiences of the World

The Biologic and Psychologic Drives for Life and Immortality: Studies of young children suggest that we have an innate belief in some sort of personal continuity at death. Religions often teach that our real home is elsewhere after some preparatory existence here. They thus support our belief in a personal survival beyond death here and this makes them seem intuitively plausible.

The Tendency to Anthropomorphize and Rationalize: We easily anthropomorphize both the animate and inanimate world around us giving it names and motives. This is supported by a protective subconscious drive to detect agency in our surroundings. It may also support some form of animism (belief in spirit beings).

We are also rational animals, seeking to better understand our environment, and one direction this may take is to seek to find some single unifying principle behind every aspect of our world—perhaps a God.

Awe and Natural Piety: The vastness, beauty and complexity of the universe have lead many people to think there must be some awesome mind or consciousness which created it.

Cognitive Factors Shaping and Supporting Religion

The Ubiquity of Theory: We navigate our world using a large number of mental models of how its components will behave in particular situations. Finding something that doesn’t fit with our experiences may lead us to invent a new supernatural or magical model.

The Place and Power of Dissociative Experiences: An array of visions, dreams, trances, and glossolalia (“speaking in tongues”) may be found in the current and past religious world.
These have inspired the founders of most religions and for some religions they are a regular experience of the believer. They are brought on by a large array of chemical and experiential exposures. Many people interpret them as powerful and memorable experiences of the divine.

The similarity of these experiences in a wide range of religious traditions and with a great variety of inducing factors suggests they are a property of human minds—not of divine interventions.

The Power of Imagination: The ability of the human imagination to create believable alternate realities is widely appreciated. We see it in the play of children, the daydreams of adults and the vast literature called fiction. The power of the human imagination thus seems quite adequate to give us all the details of a supernatural realm.

Neuroscience and Religion

Minds are continually scanning their environment for other intentional agents and for survival reasons tend to be overly sensitive to evidence. This supports interpretations of our environment in terms of intentional, even supernatural agents. We usually think employing ontological categories so that when we conceive a God we generally put Her in a grouping called “person” with all of the associated relational baggage that brings.

The Effects of Our Manner of Rearing

We are a species whose newborns are highly dependent with maturity coming only after a long period of slowly increasing independence. This long childhood need may condition us to be eager for a powerful protective ally the rest of our lives. Religion usually promises this.

The Plasticity of the Record both Oral and Written

The ancient texts that many religions appeal to are filled with stories that were initially orally transmitted myths and legends relating to prominent human figures. Such stories may appear within a generation or two of a person’s death. The problems of verification, the evolution of oral tradition with time, the evolution of written language over longer times (centuries) and the problems of translation all contribute to uncertainty in how to use ancient religious texts.

The Many and Possible Gods

“We men have made our gods in our own image.” Hesiod, Works and Days
The monotheisms tend to support a belief in a God of unlimited power and knowledge along with at least qualified good intentions toward humans. There are many other possibilities. Considerable philosophical effort has been unsuccessfully expended in proving His existence.

Final Comments

“The reality would seem to be that multiple human forces, both individual and communal, have worked over time to create these complex and nuanced traditions with their many strands, their functional overlap, their dependence on prior traditions, and their heroically defended differences.”

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Why Does Life Have to Be so Hard?

Submitted: May 13, 2013

By Katelyn Pauls

Why do things have to hurt? Why do we have to feel lonely or sad or broken or distressed? Why do relationships end? Why do people shut others out? These are just a few of the questions running around in my head. Some of them I have had to deal with regarding the way I treat others. Some of them I have to deal with regarding the way people have treated me. And right now some of them are being decided in someone else’s mind and I have no control over the answers. And it hurts. A lot.

It hurts me to think that I might have done this to someone in the past. If that was you, I apologize with my whole heart. Now I know how it feels and I wouldn’t wish it on anyone. Sometimes, the decisions I think would be the easiest, end up hurting the most in the end. The easy way is not always the best way out. I’ve learned that. Most of the time, I’ve missed something worthwhile because it wasn’t the easiest to obtain.

I have a quote that I love by Thomas Paine, “What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly.” I guess that this quote can be applied to relationships also. If we don’t have to work for it and sweat over it, it probably won’t mean much to us. We won’t really care about it much. But the relationships that are built on sweat and blood and tears will probably last longer and be so much more fulfilling.

In the midst of this, I think I have discovered one of the purposes of this trial. I’ve received a message many times in the last two days that I think is the whole reason I needed to experience these feelings. God’s love is most important. God’s faithfulness to us should be enough. We don’t need human approval or acceptance. In fact, our quest for those may hinder us in our walk with and work for God. Ellen White suggests in Ministry of Healing that instead of taking our problems to humans, who can only be so wise and comforting, why don’t we take our problems to the ultimate Comforter, the One who knows everything and can help us more than any other?
Of course, many things are easier said than done. But, there is hope. Also in Ministry of Healing, Ellen White writes that God tries those whom He sees something precious in. He knows that I will come through this trial. If nothing else, my relationship with Him will be strengthened. And that is as important a lesson as any other I could learn. Yes, this hurts and I don’t like it. But if God didn’t see anything good in me to bring out and refine, He wouldn’t send me through this trial. My job is to trust Him that everything will work. He knows what He’s doing. He is the Potter and I am the clay.

Join in the discussion:

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150th Anniversary Not Unmixed Joy

Submitted: May 15, 2013
By Debbonnaire Kovacs

On May 21, 1863, the fledgling Seventh-day Adventist denomination organized its General Conference. One hundred and fifty years! Most organizations would have long ago begun planning a year-long party to celebrate such an event. We, on the other hand, are a little conflicted about our 150th anniversary. After all, we weren’t supposed to still be here.

On one of the church’s main websites, http://www.adventist.org/150/, the following is posted:

Our 150th anniversary is not a time for parties or celebration — those who founded the General Conference in May 1863 would have undoubtedly been deeply disappointed to know that their descendants would still be on earth in 2013. This important anniversary is rather a time for reflection; for repentance; for thanksgiving; and for renewed commitment to the purpose for which God called this movement into being.
The worldwide church has designated Sabbath May 18, 2013, as a day of prayer, remembrance, and recommitment to mission. Each local congregation is encouraged to find appropriate ways to mark the "sesquicentennial" of Seventh-day Adventists being united for mission, including a focus on their local church history. Throughout our 150th year, individual Seventh-day Adventists can also be inspired by our history.
This important anniversary should prompt us to reflect on how God has led His remnant church "and His teaching in our past history" (Life Sketches , 196). We should both thank Him for miraculous leading — and reflect on what we have done, and not done, that grieves our God, and repent. It is a good time to commit ourselves, both individually and corporately, not just to "a revival but [to] a reformation", as Ellen White urged (R&H, July 15, 1902, p. 7). It is time to pledge ourselves anew to preaching "the everlasting gospel … to every nation, tribe, tongue and people" (Rev. 14:6).
As we reflect on 150 years of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, it is time to recommit ourselves to the prophetic destiny of the Great Second Advent Movement.

Some eyes outside our church have taken note of these mixed emotions. On www.religionnews.com, run by Religion News, LLC, which is based at the University of Missouri School of Journalism, reporter Dan Burke (who now co-edits CNN’s Belief Blog) wrote an article entitled “As They Turn 150, Adventists Still Pray for the Apocalypse.”

Burke begins by citing the world-wide growth and prosperity of the church, and notes that we are not exactly celebrating this success on the occasion of our anniversary. “By Second-Coming standards,” Burke writes, “the church’s long life could be considered a dismal sign of failure.”

He goes on to quote some church authorities:

“If you took a time machine and visited our founders in May 1863, they’d be disconcerted, to say the least, that we’re still here,” said David Trim, the church’s director of archives and research. .
“It’s almost an embarrassment to be celebrating 150 years,” said Lisa Beardsley-Hardy, the church’s director of education. “But it’s also an affirmation of faith in Christ’s return.”

“In one kind of way it really is a sad event,” said Michael Ryan, a vice president at the church’s General Conference, its top governing body. “We’re a church that by its name believes in the Second Coming of Christ, and we have been hopeful that long ago Christ would have come and taken the righteous to heaven and this world would have ended.”

Burke’s article contains a concise history of the denomination and its present growth rate. He points out what may be one of our greatest strengths: “Jesus told Christians to occupy themselves until he returns – advice that Adventists take to heart.” And he goes on to speak of our ever-growing, global work in health and well-being. “Adventist growth is especially intense in Latin America and Africa, where people are attracted to the faith’s blend of ethereal optimism (Jesus is coming soon!) and earthly education (Eat your vegetables until he does.)”

Not a bad doctrine!

To read the full text of this interesting article, please visit http://www.religionnews.com/2013/04/10/as-they-turn-150-adventists-still-pray-for-the-apocalypse/
As they turn 150, Adventists still pray for the apocalypse

(RNS) Over the past 150 years, Seventh-day Adventists have built one of Christianity’s most inventive and prosperous churches, all the while praying for the world to end as soon as possible.

A small band of believers has mushroomed to more than 17 million baptized members, including 1.2 million in the U.S. Nearly 8,000 Adventist schools dot dozens of countries. Hundreds of church-owned hospitals and clinics mend minds and bodies around the world.

You might expect Adventists to celebrate their success while marking their church’s 150th anniversary this May. There’s just one problem: the church wasn’t supposed to last this long.

Back in the 1860s, the founders of Seventh-day Adventism preached that Jesus would return – and soon. That’s why they called themselves “Adventists.” By Second-Coming standards, the church’s long life could be considered a dismal sign of failure.

“If you took a time machine and visited our founders in May 1863, they’d be disconcerted, to say the least, that we’re still here,” said David Trim, the church’s director of archives and research.

Current Adventists aren’t exactly excited about the anniversary, either.

“It’s almost an embarrassment to be celebrating 150 years,” said Lisa Beardsley-Hardy, the church’s director of education. “But it’s also an affirmation of faith in Christ’s return.”

Adventist leaders have slated May 18 – the Saturday before the 150th anniversary – as "a
day of prayer, remembrance and recommitment to mission.” On May 21, Adventists will hold a small ceremony at church headquarters in Silver Spring, Md. Don’t expect balloons or birthday cake.

“In one kind of way it really is a sad event,” said Michael Ryan, a vice president at the church’s General Conference, its top governing body.

“We’re a church that by its name believes in the Second Coming of Christ, and we have been hopeful that long ago Christ would have come and taken the righteous to heaven and this world would have ended.”

But Jesus told Christians to occupy themselves until he returns – advice that Adventists take to heart.

Ryan, the church’s director of strategic planning, said he eagerly anticipates projects to open health centers in poverty-stricken communities and a 26-story hospital in Hong Kong. Besides worshipping on Saturday – the biblical seventh day when God rested – Adventists may be best known for their healthy lifestyles. Studies show they live about 10 years longer than their neighbors.

Of course, most Christian churches preach the Second Coming, and nearly half of Americans believe Jesus will return in the next 40 years, according to a 2010 poll conducted by the Pew Research Center. But few American churches have been built on the ashes of apocalyptic dreams.

Adventism was founded in the aftermath the Great Disappointment, which dashed the hopes of some 50,000 followers who expected Jesus to arrive in 1844. Some had sold their possessions and let their fields lie fallow. The celestial letdown drove a few insane, crushed under the weight of what social psychologist Leon Festinger would later call “cognitive dissonance.”

But the movement did not disintegrate, as Festinger argued. Instead, early Adventists like James and Ellen White adjusted their beliefs. Something of divine import had happened in 1844, even if it wasn’t the Second Coming, they taught.
Meanwhile, Adventist leaders brought dejected believers together, feeding the hungry and bonding over their shared disappointment. While keeping their ears perked for Gabriel’s horn, Adventists also turned an eye to earthly time, setting Saturday as their Sabbath and preaching the value of healthy living.

Over time, Adventists’ social bonds and distinctive doctrines “led to the creation of a church which survives and prospers today as one of the fastest-growing denominations in Christendom,” writes Stephen O’Leary, a scholar at the University of Southern California.

When those doctrines sail against cultural winds – as when Adventists are forced to work on Saturday, or famous members back Creationism – church solidarity strengthens, scholars say.

Adventist growth is especially intense in Latin America and Africa, where people are attracted to the faith’s blend of ethereal optimism (Jesus is coming soon!) and earthly education (Eat your vegetables until he does.)

“It’s a religious movement whose belief system compensates for both human needs and human longings,” said Edwin Hernandez, a research fellow at the University of Notre Dame’s Center for the Study of Latino Religion.

But some Adventists worry that the church’s modern success may bring Adventism full circle: a movement haunted by the hereafter becomes preoccupied with the present.

Adventism thrives because of the urgency of its message, argues church historian George Knight. Countless missionaries have crossed the earth to warn of Jesus’ imminent arrival. “When that vision is gone,” Knight writes, “Adventism will become just another toothless denomination that happens to be a little more peculiar in some of its beliefs than others.”

But Adventist leaders say the apocalyptic pull is still strong at church headquarters, especially during planning sessions. “I see that in our education system,” said Beardsley-
Hardy. “Not wanting to over-invest in building because Jesus is coming.”

Beardsley-Hardy said she feels the same tension in her personal life. Should she sock away extra money in her retirement account, she wonders, or gratify immediate needs?

As a child, Beardsley-Hardy said she was convinced that every passing thunderstorm heralded the Second Coming. Now 54, with two grandchildren, she said that sense of urgency is returning.

“‘I’m getting back to waiting,’ Beardsley-Hardy said. ‘But I’m kind of glad the Lord has tarried.’
Victory Over the Beast, Chapter Six: Give Glory to Him

Submitted: May 15, 2013
By Ervin Thomsen

Give Glory to Him
It is not All about Us

*Fear God and give glory to Him for the hour of His judgment has come.*”
*Revelation 14:6*

The phrase “give glory to Him” is the second of the three responses to the everlasting gospel, the two others being “fear God” and “worship Him.” As you study closely these responses, you will discover that these are not just randomly-chosen words designed to generally amplify the theme of worship, but these are actually heaven-inspired words and phrases designed to alert us to and guard us against the specific end-time deceptions of both Babylon and the beast.

· To *fear God* is a healthy fear, which enables us to remove from our lives all unhealthy fears, so we can face the end-time judgment unafraid and with joyful confidence because of the sufficiency of the saving work of Jesus.

· To *give glory* to God is the antidote for the core sins of Babylon—pride, self-sufficiency, and self-centered living.

· To *worship Him* as the Creator and the Redeemer Lamb is the antidote to the worship of the beast.

Whereas in times past the word “glory” was often connected with the splendor and majesty of God, exhibited especially in His character, today this word has become a very misunderstood and even abused word in the English language. Often the word “glory” and its derivatives are used in some very trivial ways to describe perhaps our temporary satisfaction and exhilaration with a “glorious dessert” or “a glorious vacation,” a narcissistic focus of immense and intense reveling in our own experiences—as long as they are good experiences, of course.

We need to start looking at the meaning of “glory” from God’s point of view. To “give glory” is the attitude of placing high value on something we possess, and of which we gladly talk to others in the hope of gaining their esteem or favorable opinion. Giving glory is the joyous recognition of God’s supremacy, sufficiency, and sovereignty for all our needs. To give glory to Him is to brag about Him.

**God’s Glory Is His Character**

God expresses the glory of His character in His covenant. In the everlasting covenant He makes known to us His holy intent to save sinners in a way that does not disgrace His perfect character, but rather upholds it and brings Him maximum glory. God’s glory is not just shown in His infinite compassion and love, but it is also found in His justice and holiness. He is a God of
absolute justice - 100 percent, but He is also a God of infinite love - 100%. Every trait of His character is perfect - 100 percent. If not, He would not be a perfect and Holy God, and He would cease to be a God worthy of our total worship and adoration.

God’s glory resides in His own person and it is manifested in His character. God is jealous for His own glory, for He has said, “My glory I will not give to another” (Isaiah 42:8). This jealousy for His own glory is not, as Satan would have it appear, a selfish trait of His character, for if God did not contend for His own glory, the moral and spiritual health of His entire universe would be imperiled.

God’s glory is seen in the perfect display, union and harmony of every trait of His character, often referred to as His holiness. God never denies one trait of His character in order to make room for the display of another trait of His character. God never has to say, Oops! I think I have been pouring out too much of my justice, so, therefore, I had better compensate by an extravagant outpouring of some extra dosages of love and compassion. Ellen White writes of this tension, noting that God’s “love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy. Justice is the foundation of His throne, and the fruit of His love. It had been Satan's purpose to divorce mercy from truth and justice...But Christ shows that in God's plan they are indissolubly joined together; the one cannot exist without the other.”[1]

God's Glory: The Expression of What He Values Most

We express our personal values by what we rate as the priorities of our lives...vacations, travel, music, food, people we like, political parties, religious preferences, et cetera. Likewise, we also make statements of our values in what we despise, what we criticize, what disgusts us. When we say, I can’t stand selfish people, thieves, liars, adulterers, et cetera, we are thereby making statements of our personal values.

Why God Must Judge Sin to Maintain His Own Glory

All of God’s acts of judgment, including His final judgments in the book of Revelation, are necessary because of Who He is. The reason for giving glory to God is found, as the first angel’s message declares, because “the hour of His judgment has come” (Revelation 14:7). The necessity for the judgment arises out of God’s glory, exhibited in His character.

So often we have, as believers, focused on the thought that Jesus died primarily for us to save us from our sins. But this is only partially true, as we see a far greater picture of the issues at stake in the great controversy between Christ and Satan. Sin is not just about breaking the law, but it is more about our core dysfunction of “coming short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23), because sin damages us, and reduces the glory of the image of God in us.

God Has Expressed His Glory in the Person of His Son

“For it is God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6).
What does God value the most? What does Jesus Christ value the most? When facing death, people will often in their final hours speak freely about their greatest values. There will be expressions of love and endearment between spouses, and between parents and children. The night before His crucifixion, Jesus prayed, “Father, the hour has come, glorify Your Son, that Your Son may also glorify You….I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with you before the world was” (John 17:1, 2, 4, 5). This glory was displayed at the cross.

God Displayed His Glory in the Cross of Christ

Jesus once prayed, “Father, glorify Your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, saying “I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.” Moments later Jesus explained it like this. “Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.’ This He said, signifying by what death He must die” (John 12:27, 28, 31-33). Christian writer, Matt Perman observed this element of God’s glory in the death of Christ.

“Christ’s death not only shows the infinite worth of God’s glory, but the greatness of His love for us. But it must be understood that we are not at the center. Christ did not die for us because we are of infinite value, but because God’s glory (which we have attacked) is of infinite value. God loves us because that is the kind of God He is—it is His nature to be loving. And the goal of His saving love is, “that we should be to the praise of the glory of His grace” (Ephesians 1:6). The cross demonstrates the infinite worth of God’s glory since Christ was willing to go to such great lengths to uphold the value of His Father’s holy name. It shows that God the Father is an all-glorious God who refuses to settle for anything less than being all-glorious, and that God the Son loves His Father infinitely and, therefore, places infinite worth on His glory”[2]

When was Jesus glorified the most? Was it on the Mount of Transfiguration? Was it at His baptism? Was it when He fed the multitudes and healed the sick—events that publicly declared the success and popularity of His ministry? No, it was when He died on Calvary’s cross in order to uphold His Father’s glory. The cross is a revelation of God’s glory because it is a revelation of His judgment on sin which is also a revelation of His love. To give glory to God is to embrace the cross where God embraced us in a way that is totally consistent with His glorious character.

The message, “Give glory to Him for the hour of His judgment has come” (Revelation 14:7) is heaven’s call to consider that the ultimate purpose of the plan of salvation is not just our rescue from the discomforts of earth to the infinite glories of heaven, but it is to do it in such a manner that God will ultimately be glorified.

“But not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. God's wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which "angels desire to look," and it will be their study throughout endless ages. Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love.
In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which "seeketh not her own" has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto.”[3]

The cross highlights the glory of God, for while it exhibits the horrors of the gravity of sin it also exhibits God’s immense love for sinners. “The exceeding sinfulness of sin can be estimated only in the light of the cross. When men urge that God is too good to cast off the sinner, let them look to Calvary.”[3] And Oswald Chambers notes that the cross shows us that “what the world needs is not a little bit of love, but a surgical operation.”[4] There is no other way except through the cross to radically deal with our self-focused preoccupation with ourselves.

**Giving Glory to God—It Is Not All about Us**

Some Christians will often quote 1 Corinthians 10:31, “therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God,” but sometimes they misapply it, somehow believing that their performance of programs of religious activities, even evangelism, is the primary way of giving glory to God. Thus a lot of Christian work and behavior, done under the apparent legitimacy of trying to finish the work, is not necessarily about giving God glory, but about exalting ourselves through our successful performance of God’s work. A most subtle deception is that of working for God, but using motivations and methods that are not godly. In the final judgment, such people will declare, “Have we not in your name done many wonderful things?” (Matthew 7:22, 23).

Notice that the message of the fourth angel of Revelation 18:2, is a message that lightens the earth with the glory of God. If this is so, then this message should be a decisive blow to all our personal pride and self-sufficiency. This message will be a call to come out of the bondage of ourselves to ourselves because “there is nothing so offensive to God or so dangerous to the human soul as pride and self-sufficiency. Of all sins it is the most hopeless, the most incurable...What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself”[5] If you attempt salvation by any other method than the cross of Christ, you will only deal with outward behaviors. The core of sin, pride, still remains. It is like treating skin cancer with Band Aids, and considering it just a bad case of acne.

**How to Give God Maximum Glory**

If the glory of God is your highest aim and greatest pursuit as you are motivated by His glorious gospel, you can be absolutely sure that you will not be taken captive by the last-day devices and deceptions of the enemy. It is when we have believed the gospel, accepted the covenant benefits of salvation that flow to us from Calvary’s cross, and have learned to cherish and enjoy the personal presence of Jesus that we will be most secure in Him.

Here then are some practical ways of giving glory to God in the hour of His judgment.

**We give God maximum glory…**
when we allow heaven’s court-appointed attorney, Jesus Christ, to represent us in the judgment. If we try to manufacture our own alibis, we will only lose, and further damage God’s glory.

when we refuse to give in to all unhealthy fears, rather than resting securely in the knowledge that there is no fear in love.

when we abandon all pride and self-sufficiency, the core principles of Babylon’s do-it-yourself-religion.

when we choose to live by the principles of the Lamb, rather than programming our lives by the principles of the beast.

when we learn to wait on God’s timing in our lives, rather than letting a spirit of impatience rule our lives.

when we let Jesus Christ be our Savior, rather than trying to save ourselves.

when we are most satisfied in Him.

So if you truly want to glorify God through the undiluted three angels’ messages, then consider this: The greatest amplification of the three angels’ message will come, not by the repetition of our doctrinal distinctives, or even more successful evangelism, or any other Christian work, but by looking for all the possible ways of giving glory to God, through personal testimonies that with credibility exalt the life-transforming power of the gospel over all sin, especially the sin of pride.

God’s Glory in the Church: the Practice of Unity

Just as there was complete unity and love between Father, Son and Holy Spirit before the world was created, so God desires that His church shall experience a similar unity and love with Him and with other Christians. God’s glory is His character, and He wants to exhibit through His followers His character (His glory). Their unity and love for one another will be the same kind of glory (unity and love), which existed between Father, Son and Holy Spirit before the world began.

“And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I am glorified in them. I pray also for those who will believe in me...that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one. I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved me” (John 17:10, 22-23).

In some congregations, through the initiatives of a few well-meaning believers, there have been attempts to bring about revival through a stricter enforcement of church standards. If you are totally honest with yourself, have you ever noticed that many of the issues that divide local congregations may often be personal pet idols and pet ideologies disguised as righteous causes? Do not confuse as unity any enforced conformity in all areas of faith and practice. An old saying goes like this: In essentials—unity; in non-essentials liberty—in all things, charity.

Do we believe that it is the accuracy of the exegetical faithfulness of Scripture, or the logical
connectedness of our doctrines, though important, that will be the primary means of attracting and retaining new believers in our churches? Rather, it is our unity and love for one another that are the key ingredients for the completion of the gospel commission. “The last message of mercy to be given to the world is a revelation of His character of love...Our unity and love for one another are the credentials by which we testify to the world that God has sent is Son to save sinners...In proportion to our unity with Christ will be our power to save souls.” [6]

What are the sources of our personal glory? Will it be our personal achievements in holy end-time living? Will it be our adherence to church standards in hope that other believers will applaud our behaviors? In the Westminster Confession[8], the question is asked, “What is the chief end of man?” and the answer is “To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.” We glorify what is of highest value to us. What was of highest value to the apostle Paul? Was it his religious achievements, and his hard work of evangelism? Notice here his own appraisal of what really mattered to him.

· “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world (Galatians 6:14 KJV).

To Paul, the cross became God’s scalpel to perform surgery for the removal of his pride.

· After a listing of all his religious pedigrees and accomplishments, including what Paul considered his perfect law-keeping, he said, “But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death” (Philippians 3:11).

In light of all this, what is, or should be, the source of our greatest joy? Our attainments in Christian living, the results of our religious work and evangelism, the numbers of baptisms? Far too much of our joy is circumstantial—it is dependent on our performance and the feedback of others. The story of told of a pastor who at the close of his sermon also announced that he was being transferred to another church. At the door, a little old lady expressed her dismay at this by asking, “How will the church ever do without you?” In a most sincere attempt to deal with any personal issues of pride, the pastor replied, “Well, the conference will send you a better pastor next time.” And the little lady quickly retorted, “But that is what they said the last time!”

In His farewell remarks to His disciples, His last will and testament (John 13:31—17:26), Jesus promised a different kind of joy, not based on circumstances.

· “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full” (John 15:11).
· “Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full” (John 16:24).
· “…these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves”
Christian writer and pastor John MacArthur notes that “joy does not necessarily always make sorrow, discouragement, pain, and failure go away, but Christians can experience supernatural joy even in the midst of those things. In fact sin is ultimately the only thing that can steal Christians’ joy. When our joy begins to fade, it is a sure sign of encroaching sin or unbelief. What can we do in times like that? Get down on our knees and confess the sin in our lives. We need to pray with David, ‘Restore to me the joy of Your salvation’ (Psalm 51:12).”[7]

To “give glory to God” as our joyful response to God’s everlasting gospel, is exactly what is most needed in our lives. Such joy, motivated and internalized by the cross of Christ, will enable us through the power of Christ to overcome all pride and self-sufficiency, the core sins of both Babylon and the beast. God is most glorified when we are most satisfied in Him.

**Life Applications**

**Questions to Ponder**

1) Why is pride the most deceptive, hopeless, and incurable of all sins?

2) Why is it that we are often so well able to identify the sin of pride in others and not in ourselves?

3) Is it ever possible to believe that you are giving glory to God, when in reality you’re trying to impress people with how “good” or how “godly” you are? Have you ever hoped that people would notice your good works, and how did you feel if you did not receive the feedback of their applause?

4) Identify some areas in your life where you thought you were giving glory to God, but you have now begun to wonder if there was not a great deal of self and pride mixed in?

5) What are the unlimited possibilities before us when we totally focus on giving God glory? Read John 14:12-14.

6) Would coming face-to-face with the glory of God be a good experience for you, if in such an encounter you were overwhelmed by a sense of your sinfulness and total depravity? Read Isaiah 6:1-6.

**Text to Remember**

*God forbid that I should glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world* (Galatians 6:14).

**Truths versus Lies:**

Let the truths of God replace the lies of the enemy, to enhance your immunity against all
of Satan’s deceptions.

**Lies or half-truths**

The harder you work for your salvation, the more glory God will receive because you will impress both Him and others with how much you do.

Look out for yourself because no one else does.

Religious pride is a lot better than worldly pride.

Live to impress God and others by how good you are and by how much good you do.

**Truths**

When you receive His salvation as a free gift You will give Him maximum glory.

You can totally depend on Jesus, because He’ll never let you down.

All pride is deadly, and before God comparisons with others do not count.

There is no need to impress God or others with how good you are, because He has loved you with an everlasting love before the foundation of the world.

**End Notes on Chapter 6:**