**Review & Herald and Pacific Press Publishing Houses Begin to Negotiate Merger Mandated by Denominational Leaders:** Efforts are now afoot to consolidate the two largest Adventist-owned publishing houses in North America. How will this play out, given Spirit of Prophecy counsel and today's declining publishing market?

**Unfolding the Revenue Stream at Loma Linda University Medical Center:** Adventist health care institutions have fielded their share of hard questions about the high salaries some executives accept from resources of the church's system. Within that context and the high cost of medical care in the US today, how does a "teaching hospital" like Loma Linda Medical Center (LLMC) fare in comparison with similar institutions?... *(featured earlier this week in a Special AT Update bulletin)*

**Singer and Evangelist Joe Melashenko is Dead at 91:** As paterfamilias of a dynasty of musically gifted Adventist pastors and evangelists, Joe Melashenko was known as the ever-debonaire grandfather figure whose rumbling bass resonated as the broadcast voice of God to many generations of Americans. He passed quietly to his rest last week....*(featured earlier this week in a Special AT Update bulletin)*

**Samoa, the International Dateline Shift, and the Seventh-day Sabbath:** Imagine a joint announcement by the US and Canada that to facilitate economic relationships with countries on the Pacific Rim, the final Friday of December, this year, would be eliminated (along with its date on the calendar) and Americans and Canadians would henceforth place themselves on the same side of the International Dateline as Siberia. Something like this occurred about 18 months ago in the South Pacific, causing a great deal of hullaballoo about which day is now the true Sabbath....

**Help! What is God?:** Guest blogger Ron Nielsen may need some spiritual help. How do we identify and communicate an invisible Presence who seems divorced from our frame of reference? If in searching after God He can be found, how will we know when we have found Him?...

**Care for Others and Spiritual Growth:** "No amount of special asceticism can equal the amount of spiritual growth and human
maturity that comes with care for others," writes devotional blogger Debbonaire Kovacs, quoting from "The Monastery of the Heart." In a world where thought leaders increasingly regard altruism as an irksome fly in the ointment of edifying self-interest, can this possibly be true?...

**Glorifying Sin:** Why do some powerful Adventist preachers engage in profound verbal hijinks to extole the power and gore of sin? Columnist Preston Foster says such preaching may please the Adventist crowd, but is it really the crux of the gospel in the wake of Calvary?...

**FEATURES**

(Features available to subscribers and those with 30-day trial subscriptions. Please click here to sign up for 30-day complimentary trial subscription, if you are interested in exploring content available only to subscribers.)

**Engaging the Next Generation of Adventists:** New and encouraging data is now emerging about the "Millennial" generation in the Church, but there are challenges ahead, reader beware...(excerpt from summer edition of Adventist Today, to be mailed July 1).

**The Love:** Poet Autriche Niyongere concentrates in this poem on the immense unworthiness felt by the soul who confronts for the first time the cosmic vastness of the love of Christ....

**Jaime Jorge 25th Anniversary Gala Draws Crowds:** It seems only a few years ago that the melancholic, handsome visage of Cuban violinist Jaime Jorge broke the surface of upper-echelon Adventist musicianship, and today he travels the world evoking the gospel message with a virtuoso's instrumental touch. He was joined recently by other prominent Christian musicians to celebrate the 25th anniversary of his ministry....

**Victory Over the Beast: Living in the Judgment Hour:** Is God, like Santa, making a list and checking it twice to find out who’s naughty and nice? Or has He already given us a new identity through Christ’s atonement, and is He now “so committed to saving you that He watches over you day and night”? What difference should the two views make in your daily...
life? Featuring a new chapter in "Victory Over the Beast" by Ervin Thomsen....

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Review & Herald and Pacific Press Publishing Houses Begin to Negotiate Merger Mandated by Denominational Leaders

Submitted: Jun 26, 2013

By Adventist Today News Team

Last week the boards of the two main publishing operations of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination authorized their presidents to enter into negotiations that will lead to a merger. The process will also make the new publishing house an institution of the North American Division, not the General Conference. Review & Herald Publishing Association (R&H) in Hagerstown, Maryland, is the oldest organization in the Adventist movement, beginning with a small periodical launched in 1850 by James White. Pacific Press was launched in 1874 in California when that state was a mission field for the small denomination.

The boards first met jointly with the officers of the General Conference and the North American Division officers on Wednesday morning to review an analysis of the publishing institutions and related distribution systems. This analysis is the result of the work of several commissions and groups that over the past several years have studied the challenges and opportunities arising from rapid technology changes in publishing as well as changes in how society accesses information. "The bottom line is that these two institutions are no longer sustainable," a source familiar with the studies told Adventist Today.

The boards of both institutions then met separately Wednesday evening, and each, by overwhelming majority votes, expressed agreement to consider a yet-to-be-developed merger proposal, stated a bulletin from the Adventist News Network (ANN), the denomination's official news service. In addition, each board authorized its chair and president to represent the institution on a taskforce assigned to negotiate the details of the merger.

The plan must be approved by six groups all together. First the GC and NAD administrative committees must approve the plan. Then it must be voted by the two boards and the constituency sessions of the two publishing houses. This is where previous attempts at merger have foundered.

Pastor Ted Wilson, GC president, affirmed the importance of "publishing and distributing materials to advance the proclamation of the gospel" and stated, "We believe that restructuring the two ... institutions could serve even more effectively the future needs of the church, especially in North America as well as ... the world."

Over the past two years, the NAD has been developing a comprehensive approach to all forms of media witnessing initiatives, and as an adjunct to ... other media platforms is a prominent component of this strategy," said Pastor Dan Jackson, president of the denomination in North America. “A publishing house closely linked to church infrastructure and intimately involved with planning, implementation and coordination of witnessing and nurture programs is a key component in accomplishing our
mission objectives."

Neither publishing house receives regular operating subsidies from the GC or the NAD. Both publishing houses have had greater income than expenses in recent years. At the same time each institution has much greater capacity than it ever uses. In fact, most publishers no longer own printing equipment and purchase such services from the large number of commercial suppliers.

The R&H owns four large printing machines, a Harris M-300, a Harris M-120, Heidelberg 102 Speedmaster and Heidelberg GTO, according to its official web site. Pacific Press owns a Harris M-200 and a MAN Roland 700, also according to its official web site. In addition, both institutions have a full array of plate-making, binding and cutting equipment for the production of magazines, paperbacks and hard cover books. This totals nearly 40 large, expensive machines capable of a much larger output than the combined circulation of all the products at both institutions.

Both institutions have over the years done some printing and production work in addition to its own products, including materials for organizations that are not affiliated with the denomination. Where to draw the line on commercial work has long been a topic of controversy among publishing house employees and other church members.

The official history of the R&H on its web site recalls how in the 19th century "the company focused more and more on the bottom line, workers lost sight of their Christian principles" and Ellen White, one of the denomination's cofounders, had visions of fire over Battle Creek, where the publishing house was located at the time. "She had warned the ... managers to pay their workers fair wages, not skimming so much for themselves, and to pay authors their due royalties. Her warnings were ignored." In 1902 the R&H building burned and the following year it relocated to Takoma Park, Maryland, as did the GC.

R&H moved to its present location in Hagerstown, 65 miles out the edge of the Washington suburbs, in 1983. It owns 127 acres along Interstate 70 and the building itself covers six acres. Pacific Press began in Oakland, California, and later moved to Mount View, another San Francisco Bay area suburb. It is now located in Nampa, Idaho, a suburb of Boise, where it has 61 acres and a building larger than three football fields.

R&H has 170 employees and Pacific Press 280, as well as more than 400 independent sales representatives called "Literature Evangelists" who make presentations of children's and health products in homes. It operates five Home Health Education Service entities to support the sales personnel, providing inventory, shipping, credit and billing functions. It also owns and operate 24 Christian bookstores across the U.S. and Canada.

Historically, the Adventist Church has operated several publishing houses in North America. In addition to the two that remain today, in the 1890s Southern Publishing Association was established in Nashville, Tennessee, to support a new strategic initiative to introduce the Adventist faith in the American South and meet the needs of African Americans still suffering from generations of slavery and an Apartheid-like legal regime in the southern states. In 1983 Southern merged with R&H due to many of the same concerns under consideration today.

Each of the publishing houses "must make important decisions regarding its vision for the future and the investment of capital to maintain efficiencies in publishing and printing processes. Such decisions will have far-reaching impact," the ANN bulletin stated, evidently paraphrasing the study that the group saw but has not been released. "In light of present surplus manufacturing capacity it is [better] for the two organizations to plan for the future as one unit rather than separately and to be directly connected to" the NAD.

ANN quoted the presidents of both institutions in support of the merger concept. "It is a strategy in response to 21st century realities," said Dale Galusha, president of Pacific Press. Mark Thomas, president of R&H, added, “Commercial and private publishing houses today are finding it necessary to redesign their business plans. We need to be proactive in addressing a rapidly changing publishing environment.”
The quotes referenced a "case statement," evidently a second document distributed at the meeting which has also not been released. Adventist Today is seeking copies of both of these documents.

The next step will be for the taskforce with representation from the GC, NAD and the two institutions to prepare a blueprint for merger. It is expected that a report from the taskforce will be presented to the two institutional boards by late September 2013. Each board will then have the opportunity to determine its response to the merger proposal.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church operates 63 publishing houses worldwide, each operating under its own governing board. These institutions publish materials in hundreds of languages and operate under many different market conditions. A large share of the publishing output is consumed internally by local churches and members, including such things as the Sabbath School materials, yearly devotional books, magazines for church members, etc. The majority of the customers that deal with the bookstores operated by the denomination are church members purchasing materials designed for an internal market.

A smaller portion of the publishing output is consumed by non-members. How much of this is sold through home visits by Literature Evangelists and door to door distribution programs is not clear from the available information. One of the most widely-distributed products is *The Bible Story*, a collection of 411 stories for children published in 10 volumes and covering the entire span of the Old and New Testament. More than 42 million copies have been sold of this product developed in the 1940s and 1950s by Arthur S. Maxwell who spent much of his life working for Adventist publishing houses.

A source familiar with the situation told Adventist Today that Ellen White cautioned against merging the publishing houses. When mergers were discussed in the 1980s this argument was used to prevent the course of action now being recommended by the GC and NAD leaders. In fairness, it needs to be pointed out that the context is far different today than it was when White wrote these cautions in the late 19th century.

One of the options that will likely be discussed by task force planning the merger is to sell both of the facilities owned by R&H and Pacific Press, and secure a new facility in the middle of the continent where the cost of doing business will be less. Part of the problem is that neither institution has kept up with new technology in the publishing industry, the source told Adventist Today.

"I don't think it is a good idea because if they merge the publishing work would go into the hands of just a few people," the source stated. The competition of two or more publishing houses is not bad for any business.

J. David Newman, editor-in-chief at Adventist Today, made a similar observation. He believes that there would be cost savings if the printing and manufacturing operations were merged, but "we need to separate editorial boards and book committees." In the 1980s he predicted that the merger of *These Times* published by Southern Publishing Association with *Signs of the Times* published by Pacific Press would ultimately result in a lower circulation than the combined circulation of the two periodicals, which has proved to be true. The two publications were able to reach a wider audience than the merged journal.

The closure of the current operations in Maryland and Idaho will cause some dislocation such as a loss of local church members, families with children in local Adventist schools and various kinds of community involvement. Employees near retirement may be negatively impacted by having to move or find new employment. "But these kinds of inevitable negatives must be weighed against improvements in both the missional capacity of the new institution and the increased cost effectiveness," a retired church administrator pointed out.

An Adventist member (not a denominational employee or former employee) who works in the publishing industry, but does not care to be identified, said, "The real question is whether we have people in key management positions who really understand the new technology and what is happening across the board with all publishers? Do we have personnel with significant experience outside the cloister of Adventist publishing institutions?"

Paper media is undergoing tremendous change in America as the various kinds of electronic media become more widely used...
and "the new normal" for younger generations. Only *Time* is left of the major weekly print magazines that dominated American readers for generations. More and more local newspapers are shifting to electronic distribution or dealing with reduced print circulation. The distribution of E-books is booming while the production of paper volumes is static. A growing percentage of young adults believe that to use paper products, which requires the harvest of trees, is unethical when the same material can be consumed in an electronic format.

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Unfolding the Revenue Stream at Loma Linda University Medical Center

Submitted: Jun 24, 2013

By T Joe Willey

Second in a Series on the Finances of Adventist Health Care Institutions

"Private nonprofit hospitals enjoy government-conferred advantages, including exemption from corporate income and property taxes, access to tax-exempt bond financing, and eligibility for private donations. Until the end of the 19th century, U.S. hospitals were almost exclusively donative institutions. Before that, the more affluent received care in physicians’ offices and at home." -- Frank A. Sloan, Handbook of Health Economics (Elsevier Science, 2000)

When Jerry Fields (not his actual name) experienced loss of motor control in his right leg he wondered if it was from cancer in his spine. Then one night he sat bolt upright in bed at three in the morning. The bottoms of his feet were itching and he couldn’t move his toes. Maybe he had a brain tumor, he worried. He was afraid to go to a doctor. His fears took on more personalities than the state hospital for the insane. After a couple of months he no longer felt safe driving his eighteen-wheeler truck on the Interstate. It was the dispatcher at the trucking company, out of kindness, who convinced Jerry to go see a doctor, if he wanted to keep his job.

The doctor ordered an MRI scan of his lower back and reassured Jerry to stop worrying until he knew for sure what the problem was. Worrying never fit Jerry right.

A few days later the doctor’s assistant called to make an appointment for Jerry to see a neurosurgeon. It was a simple obstruction, not a tumor. The MRI showed a small osseous “bubble about the size of a pea” growing slowly around the exit point of one of his lumbar motor nerves. This pea-sized foreign body was pressing against the nerve to cause the tingling, weakness, and pain in Jerry’s leg. The procedure to remove the growth involved minimal invasive surgery. It could be done as an outpatient procedure by inserting a scope into a small incision in his back and chipping away the growth.

A week later Jerry entered the hospital at six in the morning and two hours later was wheeled into the operating room. As he came through the door he saw a nurse standing over him ready to inject a sleep-inducing drug into his drip line. After that he did not remember anything. By noon he was awake; a bit groggy and unable to urinate. The neurosurgeon came by the recovery room and told Jerry that within a week he could return to work if there were no complications.

Back home he was soon feeling great and wondered why he had let fear like a scarecrow shadow his mind for so long. Later, while sitting on the porch with his grandchildren and watching them play in the front yard, he became fascinated with his own toes.

The hospital bill related to his lumbar surgery was $39,734. This did not include the surgeon’s bill for $3,200 and $1,400 from the anesthesiologist. The total for this minimal invasive surgery came to $44,334 — more than the down payment for his home. Fortunately, Jerry was covered by Blue Shield health insurance. Jerry paid a $500 deductible and Blue Shield negotiated the hospital bill to $6,200.

After passing through the experience Jerry believed what people were saying about the health care industrial complex costing more than three times what the military-industrial complex spends in Washington. Another view is that of the economists who say that hospitals need a substantial margin to maintain the essential public services which communities depend on. Hospitals
have to cope with cost shifting and higher rates for insured patients. Obviously, there is more to the story.

In a nutshell, the operation of a hospital is capital intensive. Put another way, hospitals are engaged in a high-velocity money business. Diagnostic equipment, instruments, devices and supplies are expensive, generally with a short half-life. Also, nearly every aspect of hospital operations is government regulated. And the level of regulations is increasing (e.g. The Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act). Government payments for health care often fall short of actual costs and therefore represent a “cost” that is increasing. A portion of the cost of caring for Medicare and Medicaid patients must be passed on to fee-for-service payers whose rates are negotiable.

Also, hospitals are labor intensive. The cost of hospital workers represents nearly two-thirds of the total expenses. In addition, the makeup of the workforce is changing. There are long-term shortages of qualified and certified personnel. Recruitment of skilled workers means competitive pay rates. To top it off, pressures are mounting from the government to provide more charity for the uninsured and poor while at the same time to improve quality, accountability, transparency, efficiency and affordability.

Nonprofit Tax-exempt Hospitals

According to the American Hospital Association there are 2,903 not-for-profit hospitals in the country. These “nonprofit hospitals,” as I shall refer to them, represent approximately 60 percent of all U.S. hospitals. The primary advantage for nonprofits is that they pay no property or sales taxes and are able to acquire capital at low interest rates (usually through the tax-exempt bond markets). Nonprofits are often affiliated with religious groups or a particular faith is a key feature of their identity. Another 20 percent are public hospitals (belonging to some government) and the rest are for-profit hospitals.

The nonprofit status began during the infrastructure boom of the 1950s and 1960s when the Federal government offered subsidies to build hospitals. Getting the money required the hospitals to acquire a nonprofit status and promise to provide “community benefits.” The IRS standards allow broad latitude as to what is defined as a community benefit. In addition, hospitals, particularly ones run by a religious denomination, were somewhat better protected from litigation under the “doctrine of charitable immunity.” although this shield is another thing that is changing. The fundamental nature of the nonprofit hospital has evolved. Consolidations have taken place with excess revenues in the millions and many are now run by professional administrators using sophisticated computer models and consultants from the for-profit world. Today, many hospitals appear to run like large profit-making corporations, even though their intent is nonprofitability.

In an upcoming article in this series we will discuss how much “community benefit” Loma Linda University Medical Center (LLUMC), and a few other teaching hospitals provide to meet the standards for tax-exempt status and how it is accounted for. This is one area where nonprofit hospitals have drawn the ire of the public. There are a growing number of class action lawsuits against hospitals that fail to meet their charity care requirements because of aggressive debt collection practices against uninsured patients or the use of the facilities of a tax-exempt hospital to derive profits by physician groups. We will come back to this topic in the future.

Nonprofit hospitals come in three forms. They can be operated by a community, a government or a faith-based organization. LLUMC is a faith-based hospital affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The church does not directly operate the hospital since LLUMC is recognized by the IRS as a separate 501(c)3 organization with its own members (stakeholders identified in the bylaws) who elect the board of trustees. There are some occasions when the administration may attempt to legally claim religious exemption to certain laws that govern labor relations. [1] And even though LLUMC receives all of its service fees from the government, private insurance, related parties and donations, and is a teaching hospital with a commitment to scientific and research activities, its religious affiliation with the Adventist Church makes it a unique institution.

LLUMC is incorporated as a charitable organization under California’s Nonprofit Benefit Corporation law. The law requires religious corporations to not make any distribution of assets to members at any time (e.g., siphoning off charity’s excess revenues) and not lobby to influence legislation. The law allows LLUMC to discriminate in its hiring practices. For instance, the corporation can place only members of the Adventist Church in positions as executives and pastoral care personnel under
the immunity provided by the California statute.

Furthermore, the California law allows LLUMC as a denominational institution to apply its religious doctrines, tenets and teachings in all positions connected with the provision of health care. [2] But it is quite likely that a patient can leave the hospital after inpatient or outpatient care without knowing the fundamental beliefs of the Adventist Church. Many staff physicians and the majority of the employees, including nurses, are not members of the church. Contrary to what you may have heard, there are many instances when staff and chaplains extend a spiritual hand to patients during their time of distress.

LLUMC’s parent company is Loma Linda University Adventist Health Sciences Center or LLUAHSC. The name was recently shortened to Loma Linda University Health. The LLUH board determines policies, salaries, and other matters for LLUMC. The board is composed of 20 members, all of whom are Seventh-day Adventist. Half are Union Conference presidents, officials or administrators of the denomination. They include Pastor Ted Wilson, president of the General Conference, and Pastor Lowell C. Cooper, a General Conference vice president who is chairman of the board. Another 16 denominational officials serve as board advisors. The actions of the board are published and consist mainly of progress reports, information about Federal and state initiatives in health care and new appointments. Dr. Richard H. Hart is president and chief executive officer of LLUH. Ruthita Fike is CEO and vice president for medical affairs of LLUMC.

The stated mission of the hospital “is to continue the healing ministry of Jesus Christ, ‘To Make Man Whole,’ in a setting advancing medical science and to provide a stimulating clinical and research environment for the education of physicians, nurses, and other health professionals.” [3] Many faith-based institutions like LLUMC refer to some type of religious heritage and ministry of healing.

Revenues and Expenses

The report that follows explains the revenues and expenses of LLUMC. We will use audited financial statements, the IRS 990 tax report and a few other sources such as U.S. News and World Report. No single calculation tells the whole story of a hospital’s performance. We will simply take a broad view of revenues and expenses to show the hospital’s ability to create value and other assets. So we are not looking for trends or creating financial ratios that might provide deeper insights. [4]

For comparison purposes (to make the story more interesting) a snapshot will be made of the revenue (related to patient services) and expenses from a few other teaching medical centers, including UCLA, Stanford University, The Mayo Clinic, Baylor University, Massachusetts General (Harvard University) and The Cleveland Clinic. You see that all of these teaching medical institutions are afloat in money. [5]

How different is the Adventist brand name from these other teaching institutions when looking at the balance sheet? To begin, we will look at the input side in Table 1. The first column displays the number of licensed beds, and there may be some inaccuracy in these numbers because of consolidations. The "patient" column is the percentage of satisfied patients summarized from ten survey questions administered by The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services after they have left the hospital. [6]

In this list of teaching hospitals, LLUMC certainly has a good reputation in the community and many would even say a great reputation. According to U.S. News & World Report, LLUMC was ranked number one among the 41 hospitals in Riverside and San Bernardino counties. This was the third time in a row that LLUMC achieved this ranking. The hospital serves a metropolitan area encompassing more than four million residents, many of whom are vulnerable and medically underserved. They turn to LLUMC as a safety net for healthcare. UCLA was ranked number one for the entire state of California and Massachusetts General ranked number in the nation. Table 2 displays the revenues and expenses for these institutions as reported on the IRS 990 forms for 2011.

LLUMC purchased the membership interests of physician investors in a new 106-bed hospital in Murrieta, California, for
$39 million and this expenditure reduced excess revenues to 2.05 percent. The salaries of the CEO of each institution are shown in the last column.  

**The Medicare Component**

Medicare is a national social insurance administered by the Federal government. This program provides access to health insurance for Americans over sixty-five and younger individuals with disabilities. It pays for about 47 percent of all provided care in America. Medicaid is a health program for families with low incomes. This is the largest source of health care funding for the poor in the United States. Individuals who appear at LLUMC for treatment and are at 200 percent of the poverty line (defined by the Federal government) are eligible to participate in the program which is jointly funded by the state and Federal governments. Patient revenues for these two programs are shown for LLUMC in Graph 1. The government programs make up a significant part of LLUMC revenues. Graph 1 also includes the private insurance contributions and revenues from self-pay by uninsured patients.

If you add up all the highly inflated charges in the charge master from Stanford Hospital provided in the giant spreadsheet by Medicare it shows that Medicare only accounts for about 18 percent of the revenues for this teaching hospital. In 2011, the audited statement from Stanford showed a combined revenue from all government programs of only 23 percent, but 65 percent from managed care health insurance programs and another 11 percent from the uninsured. There are differences in revenues among the teaching hospitals in this report which can be the results of many different influences, including adverse populations, community affluence, hospital policies, electronic health record technology, etc.

For comparison purposes, Graph 2 shows the same information for Baylor University, UCLA Medical Center and The Cleveland Clinic. The government component (Medicare and Medicaid) is nearly equal in all three teaching hospitals, and slightly less than the national average. (Nationally, Medicare pays for 47 percent of patient care.) The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid contract with “fiscal intermediaries” to oversee billing and payments to hospitals. Consequently there are extensive auditing hoops each hospital has to pass through to get the reimbursements.

Teaching hospitals like LLUMC train future health care professionals, including physicians and nurses. These unique institutions also conduct research and improve diagnostic and treatment methods. Highly specialized services are concentrated in teaching hospitals. Patients with complications are often transferred to these hospitals. In general, teaching hospitals account for more than 50 percent of the overall cost of uncompensated hospital care and 50 percent of all Medicaid hospitalizations. As the economy worsens and health-care funding shrinks, these trends place more burden on these hospitals to provide for the low-income population. Teaching hospitals directly employ 2.7 million people and are often the largest employer in a community. There are 13,181 employees at the LLUMC. [8]

Special payments are given by Medicare to cover the costs of the educational and research role of these institutions. Medicare is the largest single program providing support for post-graduate medical education (not students in medical school). These Medicare payments are based on numbers of residents and interns during a base period at each institution. In 2011, a total of $3.2 billion was directed into graduate medical education (DGME) and another $15 billion directed into related, indirect costs of medical education (IME) based on the ratio of residents to hospital beds. [9] These payments are based on historical costs and directed to the institution, not individual residents. Beyond this brief description the program gets complicated. [10] In addition, because of its unique role in basic and clinical research, the National Institutes of Health award over two billion in research funding to teaching hospitals.

**The Expense Side of the Ledger**

We would like to think of hospitals in terms of compassion, patient care and dedication to community benefits. In fact, they are
like businesses concerned with obtaining revenues to match expenses and looking for excess left over to improve patient services, etc. Graph 3 displays the major categories of expense for LLUMC. Related categories were combined in some instances and other less significant expenses left out.

Conclusion

At least one conjecture can be made from the financial information presented here. The community has a possible impact on the revenues and excess earnings of nonprofit hospitals. As an example, Stanford University Hospital uses a higher charge master than the other teaching hospitals. [11] In the 100 most common DRG procedures at Stanford, Medicare payments only represents 17 percent of the possible payments listed on the table supplied by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. According to the 2011 data in this report, Stanford is the smallest teaching hospital with 477 beds compared to 815 at LLUMC (although there are other hospitals affiliated with Stanford). Yet Stanford generates $2.1 billion compared to LLUMC at $1.2 billion. Stanford shows the highest performance at 16.55 percent. Stanford's government reimbursements are the lowest at 22.59 percent and compare to 62 percent at LLUMC. The majority of revenues at Stanford come from managed care (with an inflated chargemaster) representing 65.57 percent after discounted fees for services. By keeping revenues up and expenses down Stanford in 2011 created an excess of $415 million compared to $24 million at LLUMC. These results may simply reflect less aversive populations in the Bay Area. The uninsured patients who were able to self-pay for medical care was higher at Stanford (11.45 percent) than at LLUMC (8 percent). Baylor University had even higher revenues from self-pay patients than either Stanford or LLUMC. One observer quipped, "clearly LLUMC is performing as a nonprofit, benevolent corporation as expected by the government."

One thing is clear, “Each nonprofit hospital has its own values and challenges” in the complex world of delivering health care. Many of the forces and influences involved are difficult to manage.

_T Joe Willey is the author of the recent Adventist Today article titled "Million-dollar Salaries in Adventist Healthcare" and "Tax-exempt Bonds and Secularization in Adventist Education."

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1. www.aaup.org/sites/default/files/loma-linda-university.pdf. 2. Arriaga v. Loma Linda University, 10 CAL. App. 4th 1556 (1992). See also Catholic Charities of Sacramento, Inc. v. Superior Court for the State of California in and for the County of Sacramento. Third Appellate District, Case No. C037025. 3. See the 990 Form filed with the Internal Revenue Service for 2011. 4. From 2000 to 2008 LLUMC’s revenues grew approximately forty-five percent. 5. Baylor University Hospital replaced USC Keck in this series because USC medical school is consolidated with the university financial statements. 6. Studies reported in the New England Journal of Medicine have been unable to identify significant relationship between patient satisfaction and quality of clinical care. (October, 2008). 7. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services of the Department of Health and Human Services. Ratio obtained by adding up Medicare payments and the charges for the 100 common procedures. 8. Becker’s Healthcare. 10 things to know About Loma Linda University Medical Center. July 25, 2012. 9. In Loma Linda University Medical Center v. Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary United States Department of Health and Human Services Case 1:08-cv-01520-HHK. Filed 02/06/2010 the medical center was given the opportunity through summary judgment to apply for funds that apparently were improperly filed or overlooked with the fiscal intermediary. The court determined that LLUMC’s failure to properly file claims was a likely flaw in the Provider’s internal process to ensure timely billing (In LLUMC v. Blue Cross Blue Shield Association/United Government Services. Dated May 9, 2008). 10. AAMC. Medicare Payments for Graduate Medical Education. What Every Medical Student, Resident, and Advisor Needs to Know. January, 2013. 11. T Joe Willey. “To Make Man Whole” But It May Cost an Arm and a Leg. Adventist Today.
Singer and Evangelist Joe Melashenko is Dead at 91

Submitted: Jun 22, 2013

By AT News Team

In 1948 the Canadian son of immigrants from Russia joined the King's Heralds quartet as their bass. He was music director for George Vandeman for many years and an evangelist with the Voice of Prophecy media ministry for more than two decades. H. M. S. Richards called him the “basso profundo in excelsis.” He passed away Friday morning (June 21) at age 91, his son Lonnie Melashenko, retired director of the Voice of Prophecy, has told Adventist Today.

"He left like he lived," Pastor Melashenko said of his father. "Quietly. Graciously. With gentle dignity. Without demands or harsh words or even a frown, he surrendered himself, a tired, frail, humble gentleman; into the waiting arms of his Savior."

Growing up on a farm in Saskatchewan, Joe milked a dozen cows by hand twice a day and would sing to pass the time. By his early 20s, he had won numerous amateur hours and talent show awards. He was heard on coast-to-coast radio in Canada as the "Voice of the Deep."

With his wife Anne, Joe had five sons – Lonnie, Joedy, Dallas, Eugene and Rudy – and taught them to sing at an early age. The family has performed together countless times and the sons have become Seventh-day Adventist ministers. Joe spoke both Russian and Ukrainian fluently and one of the great thrills of his life was returning to the former Soviet Union to preach in an evangelism campaign.

"Jeannie and I are weeping, but we thank God for 'The Blessed Hope' without which we would be most miserable," stated Pastor Melashenko. He thanked God for his father's long life in testimony to this hope. Memorial services for Elder Joseph Melashenko will be held at the Paradise Seventh-day Adventist Church in northern California on Sunday, July 21, at 4 p.m.

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Adventist Today

Samoa, the International Dateline Shift, and the Seventh-day Sabbath

By Andrew Hanson

THE EVENT

On midnight, (10:00 GMT) as December 29, 2011 ended, Samoa and Tokelau “fast forwarded” to December 31. In other words, these countries chose to “move” from the United States side of the International Date Line to the New Zealand and Australia side to benefit trade and tourism. That meant that the seventh day of the week was now Sunday. What were the Adventists on Samoa and Tokelau to do?

THE INTERNATIONAL DATELINE

Imagine you are looking at a globe map of the world. Imagine that your reference point is the Chatham Islands—just east of New Zealand. If your globe is like mine, you will notice a red line that jogs west and south to join a dark, broken line that indicates a 180° longitude meridian that ends at the South Pole.

If you follow the red line north from the Chatham Islands, you discover that it rejoins the meridian in the vicinity of the Tokelau Islands until it jogs west around the Aleutians and east between Russia and Alaska. (The Meridian begins and ends at the Poles as does that red line.) It’s imaginary and exists only as a figment of the world’s imagination, but it’s very important. It’s the International Date Line (IDL).
The International Date Line is the imaginary line on the Earth that separates two consecutive calendar days. The date in the Eastern hemisphere, to the left of the line, is always one day ahead of the date in the Western hemisphere. It has been recognized as a matter of convenience and has no force in international law.

Without the International Date Line travelers going westward would discover that when they returned home, one day more than they thought had passed, even though they had kept careful tally of the days. This first happened to Magellan's crew after the first circumnavigation of the globe. Likewise, a person traveling eastward would find that one fewer days had elapsed than he had recorded, as happened to Phileas Fogg in "Around the World in Eighty Days" by Jules Verne.

The International Date Line can be anywhere on the globe. But it is most convenient to be 180° away from the defining meridian that goes through Greenwich, England. It also is fortunate that this area is covered, mainly, by empty ocean. However, there have always been zigs and zags in it to allow for local circumstances. http://aa.usno.navy.mil/faq/docs/international_date.php

PRINCIPLES AND CONSIDERATIONS

The Biblical Research Committee of the South Pacific Division was asked by Transpacific Union to make an assessment of principles and practices for Sabbath keeping in the Pacific in relation to the dateline.

This statement is the result of wide consultation. The Biblical Research Committee has listened to and received advice from a number of sources, such as theologians both inside and outside the Division, Transpacific Union administration and members; and submissions have been received by, among others, William G. Johnson, Bruce Roberts, Ray Coombe, Paul Cavanagh, and David Hay. The issue has also been presented and discussed at the Pacific Islands Administrators Counsel, among others.

THE FIRST OFFICIAL STATEMENT

The Executive Committee of the Samoa Tokelau Mission (STM) has taken an action at the recommendation of the South Pacific Division (SPD) that the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Samoa will not recognize the new reckoning of days after the IDL shift with regards to the seventh day, and will instead continue to follow the sequence and reckoning of days on the Eastern side of
the IDL. This means that while Christian Churches in Samoa will recognize the first day of the week in the new weekly cycle as Sunday (their day of worship), Adventists will treat the same day as the Sabbath.

**Practical Reasons Given For This Decision**

Remember that early Adventist pioneers also worshiped with Sunday-keepers when Sunday was the true seventh day prior to 1892, and since Chief Malietoa corrected that situation, Adventists in Samoa have been worshiping on the seventh day of the week (now Saturday) for over 120 years as a part of their Adventist identity. Why would we change now and break the weekly cycle just because the name of the day has changed?

This decision must also consider the impact and implications for Sabbath observance in American Samoa. American Samoa is also at this time part of the Samoa and Tokelau Mission. Although standing as a separate territory and political entity they are our brothers and sisters in both culture and spiritual family. Their views and feelings about this change should be considered also.

It is inconceivable that two countries and people so closely located geographically and under the same daytime should be worshiping on different days without a setting of the sun between them! Common sense demands that Adventists within the Samoan group of islands should be worshiping together on the same day. How could a sunny Sabbath in Pago Pago not also be the Sabbath in Apia, just because the Samoan government has drawn a line between Upolu and Tutuila so the day is called Sunday instead of Saturday? Surely Adventists in both nations should be worshiping together on the same seventh day.

Without exception Adventists in countries located east of the 180th meridian, are providing a united witness in observing the 7th day Sabbath on the same day of Western Hemisphere ‘day’ sequence. As the Sabbath arrives and is welcomed at the eastern boundary of each country it continues on crossing lines of longitude in a 24-hour period and finally farewells the Sabbath at the next sunset.

Even in countries following Eastern days, Adventist faithfully observe Sabbath according to the 7th day of Western days. Take for example the two independent countries of Tonga and Samoa: In these two nations Adventists observe the 7th day Sabbath on the same day even though there is a difference of one day—Sunday on Tonga is Saturday on Samoa.

A similar situation exists in the eastern islands of Kiribati: on the Phoenix Islands and on the Line Islands. Adventists observe the 7th day Sabbath on the 7th day Western order of days.

On the islands of Wallis and Futuna, situated near the 180th meridian on its eastern side, Adventists do the same: worship on Sunday, the 7th day of Western day sequence. Each Pacific country and territory situated east of the 180th meridian is, at this time, observing the 7th day Sabbath according to Western days. These are: Tonga, Niue, Wallis and Futuna, Samoa, American Samoa, Tokelau, Kiribati, Cook Islands, French Polynesia, Hawaii, Pitcairn.
So every Adventist living in the Pacific islands east of the 180th meridian, observes the same 7th day Sabbath as sunset arrives in their location—a powerful and impressive witness for the unified observance of the 7th day Sabbath of the Bible. Of course, any change under such circumstances would create serious pastoral problems.

("The Seventh-Day Adventist Church In Samoa and The Change Of The International Date Line," A paper by Pastor Neone Okesene, November 2011)


NOTE: This online source no longer exists. (1)

This argument was also supported by a paper compiled by David Tasker from materials prepared by Pastors Paul Cavanagh, David Hay and Ray Coombe with input from the ministers and elders of Samoa:

Notice how the Sabbath day progresses on our round world. The Sabbath begins in the Eastern hemisphere at the dateline, so the first countries to welcome the Sabbath each week are NZ, Fiji, then Australia. Then the Sabbath enters Asia, the Middle East, Europe and USA. Finally the Sabbath enters the Western end of the Pacific island by island until the last churches to usher in the Sabbath are those in Samoa, Tonga, Wallis and Futuna. So the island nations in the Western hemisphere that are closest to the IDL close the Sabbath each week for the world. http://adventist.org.au/samoa-dateline-change-2011

NOTE: The online source cited here no longer exists.

Theological Reasons Given for This Decision: A Summary

God has allowed this challenge to come upon the church for a reason. The church needs to humble itself before Him and be ready to see how He plays this drama out. In the process the church needs to know what it stands for and needs to give a united witness to the world. We must share with the community what God has revealed to us.

Calendar change opens up new opportunities for us as a church: to demonstrate our faithfulness to the Word of God in a world where everything else fluctuates and changes; to show that our Christian faith impacts on all areas of our lives; to develop new approaches to evangelism in our own communities; to renew our commitment as a church to the observance of the Biblical Sabbath; to deepen our understanding of our Adventist identity.


NOTE: This online source no longer exists.
A Minority Opinion

It is the conviction and contention of this paper that the situation facing the Church in Samoa over the changing of the dateline is not about what is right or wrong theologically. The paper strongly contends that the Sabbath is the same on either side of the dateline; that Samoa's alignment to the west of the dateline does not constitute a change in the Sabbath: that the Sabbath the Church will keep on the western side in the new reckoning is no different from the Sabbath that they were keeping on the eastern side under the old reckoning. This contention is possible because of the closeness of Samoa to the IDL and the choice this allows for alignment.

Changing the dateline does not change the Sabbath; it simply changes the side of the IDL where one will celebrate the Sabbath. (Adventist Pastor Neone Okesene)

http://www.circleofcourage.org.nz/ride/journals/neone_okesene

NOTE: The preceding online source no longer exists; however, this one does: http://sabbathissues.org/2012/06/arguments-for-keeping-sunday-as-sabbath-in-samoa-examine/.

THE FIRST SPD DECISION: RATIONAL AND PRACTICAL

In the opinion of this author, the first SPD decision to ignore the Dateline shift was carefully and thoughtfully considered and makes sense, rationally and practically given the doctrinal assumptions that undergird Adventist theology. However, these “reasons” are predicated on a naïve historical assumption about the sacredness of a specific twenty-four hour Sabbath.

THE SABBATH'S HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A Catholic Comments

Patrick Madrid, Catholic conservative made the startling comment on EWTN, Global Catholic Radio Network on Jan 5, 2006 when answering a question about the Catholic Church changing the day of worship from Saturday to Sunday:

...There was a distinct break between the Old Testament requirements...dealing with the Sabbath worship.... [Christians] wanted to show that Christianity was distinct from Judaism...The other thing that we should remember, too, is that our calendar that we follow, including Seventh-day Adventists, is not only a calendar that was devised by the Catholic Church, but also it is a calendar that's based upon the solar year, not the lunar year and the Jewish calendar that was observed in the time of Christ follows a lunar calendar... So the great irony is that even the Seventh-day Adventists themselves are not worshiping on exactly the same Sabbath day as the Jews of the time of Christ. http://www.4angelspublications.com/articles/catholic_scholar.php

The Lunar Calendar

The Samoa Dateline Dilemma shows that one cannot use the International Date Line in determining the Sabbath. In fact, the Old Testament Sabbath does not use the modern Gregorian Calendar: The calendar used by Moses was based upon the phases of the Moon, not a continuous weekly cycle. (2)
The Old Testament calendar starts every month on New Moon Day, and the Sabbaths are always in the same place: The 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th of the month. This is why the feast days in Leviticus 23 have a Sabbath on the 15th of the month, and why the words "New Moon" and "Sabbath" often occur together in Scripture.

The Moon is the clock which orbits the round Earth and provides the reference for Biblical time. If this reference is ignored, then an arbitrary man-made marker (such as the International Date Line) has to be substituted.

The Sabbath is introduced in the Biblical book of Genesis. Note that does not say "count every seven days", but rather:

Genesis 1:14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for SEASONS, and for days, and years.

“The word for SEASONS is Strong's #4150, 'religious festivals'. Notice that Genesis 1:14 says that the "religious festivals" are designated by the "lights in...heaven". Psalm 104:19 identifies the light as the Moon.

The Sabbaths and Feast Days are linked by the Fourth Commandment as recorded in two different Bible books: The Fourth Commandment in Exodus 20 clearly references the seventh day Sabbath based on Creation; The Fourth Commandment in Deuteronomy 5 clearly references the seventh day Sabbath based on the deliverance from Egypt, which occurred on the evening of the Sabbath of Unleavened Bread.

Note that the Sabbath commandment in Deuteronomy 5:12-15 does not mention Creation, but rather the Exodus from Egypt, which happened on the 15th, at night. To repeat, the seventh-day Sabbaths are always in the same place: The 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th of the month, and they use the same calendar as the Feast Days—the Lunar Calendar.

The format of the Biblical Month.

Note: Moon phases are approximate, and are shown for the Northern Hemisphere; If you're south of the Equator, they are reversed.

The reason most Jews today keep Saturday is the same exact reason that most Christians keep Sunday—because of Constantine's calendar change, and the persecutions by which he enforced these changes. Prior to this, in 46-45 BC, Julius Caesar (the Julian Calendar) had separated the months and weeks from the Moon and made a continuous eight day cycle, but he did not enforce it on other nations living within the Empire.
In AD 321, Constantine created a compromise calendar. He blended the Hebrew idea of a seven day week with the Julian concept of a continuous weekly cycle, and added the veneration of the "sun god" from Mithraism to create the Roman calendar used today. He enforced his calendar upon the entire Roman Empire with military power.

Because of these changes which were being enforced by persecutions across the Roman Empire, the Jewish Sanhedrin met for the last time around AD 350, and modified their calendar to the form used by most Jews today, in which the Sabbath is on Saturday. Other Feast Days are determined using a form of the Lunar calendar.

Constantine's calendar was modified slightly by Pope Gregory into the calendar used today. However, the true Calendar ordained at Creation, according to Genesis 1:14 and Psalms 81:3, is based on the phases of the Moon. Therefore, neither Saturday nor Sunday is the Old Testament Sabbath, and the International Date Line is not involved at all.

This situation in Samoa is a tiny foreshadowing of what is coming. If the proposed New World Calendar is adopted, and the 364-day perpetual year is implemented, then the extra "blank" day (called "World Day Holiday") will disrupt any continuous seven-day cycle. At that point, the whole world will face a situation where the day that "should have been" Saturday or Sunday will fall on a different day. http://sda-samoa-dateline-sabbath.info/

NOTE: This online source no longer exists.

IN SUMMARY

Samoa’s dateline shift has and will continue to be a starting point in a discussion of the Sabbath. Sadly, we as Seventh-day Adventists have traditionally venerated specific Sabbath hours and attempted to persuade other Christians to honor our Saturday Sabbath upon threat of eternal condemnation. While the observance of a seventh day Sabbath is an undeniable blessing, it should be considered a traditional observance, not a fundamental doctrine.

It seems reasonable to conclude that Seventh-day Adventists could reasonably defend the Sabbath as a day of worship in a seven-day worship cycle. Our name proclaims it, and a “day of rest” is good for human beings, spiritually and physically. That we choose to end that cycle at sunset on the sixth day is our way of honoring our Judean-Christian heritage. Our fellow Christians who honor Sunday, honor the resurrection, the legacy of their catholic-Christian faith. Isn’t honoring God the important thing? Isn’t squabbling about which “seventh day” in the weekly cycle a divisive issue that only serves to create ill will between Christian believers? Why not give the Apostle Paul the last word?

“One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord.” (Romans 14: 5 & 6)

Author’s Note
I have quoted extensively from blogs and posts originating from Samoa and Australia. I did not paraphrase unless clarification was called for. Obviously, this article does not include all the Internet chatter. Perhaps the most extensive discussion of this issue by laymen and women occurred on the Spectrum Blog (http://spectrummagazine.org/blog/2011/12/30/today-did-not-exist-some-adventists).

Four hundred twenty-six comments provide a wide-ranging and representative sample of Adventist lay opinion regarding not only the official response to Samoa’s decision to join Australian and New Zealand on the west side of the International Date Line, but the justification for the foundational Adventist belief in the sacredness of the seven day sequence of Sabbath hours has been formally endorsed by the GC (http://www.adventist.org.au/samoa-dateline-change-2011).

**Reflections**

The idea of a Sabbath is as old as the Biblical creation story and as modern as Samoa’s decision to bend the dateline. In the first century, many members of the primitive Christian church assembled on Sunday, “The Lord’s Day”, to break bread. By the second century, its observance of Sunday as Sabbath was universal. Christians had chosen to celebrate the most important event in human history, Christ’s resurrection, and not the Jewish Sabbath’s “Feast of Creation.”

Seventh-day Adventists refer to the first Christians as our spiritual ancestors because they believed it was important to set aside one day of the week as a day of worship. That day, for practical reasons, was based on a universally accepted calendar, just as the decision to honor a continuous morning and evening Sabbath is a practical solution for Sabbath keeping Adventist believers in close proximity to the IDL.

When early Christians met for worship was not a doctrinal concern of the Apostle Paul. In fact, he argued that worshiping the Lord was what mattered; the day and/or time was a matter of personal conviction.

Designating an officially legislated period of time between two contiguous evenings as a specific God ordered Sabbath on a planet orbiting around a sun, fails to take into account the IDL and regions near the poles where this “sacred day” can only be determined by secular means. In addition, the Apostle Paul would condemn this fiat as destructive of Christian unity.

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(1) The explanation for removing this and other online information regarding the IDL is speculative. However, it should be noted that the South Pacific Division’s original decision to ignore the IDL shift, was hotly debated. As late as July 23, 2012, there is evidence that this decision was under review. Previous announcements could not be considered official, and a reversal of the SPD decision was being seriously considered.

What I am attempting to demonstrate is that the online sources no longer exist because the church wanted to eliminate evidence that the official sources the SPU used to justify their initial decision were being questioned. Note the names of the people and...
organizations that initially went on record as supporting the original decision:

This statement is the result of wide consultation. The Biblical Research Committee has listened to and received advice from a number of sources, such as theologians both inside and outside the Division, Transpacific Union administration and members; and submissions have been received by, among others, William G. Johnson, Bruce Roberts, Ray Coombe, Paul Cavanagh, and David Hay. The issue has also been presented and discussed at the Pacific Islands Administrators Counsel, among others.

Claims were made that the men and organizations that supported these “official” documents were attempting to deceive members; that they acted without official GC approval. Note the following:

No Endorsement Given To Samoa Church for Sunday Worship

July 23, 2012

Source: eventpolynesia.com

Press Release – Event Polynesia

No Endorsement Or Support Was Given To Samoa Church To Worship On Sunday Source: The debate of which day is the ‘seventh day’ Sabbath in Samoa has taken another twist with confirmation from the Seventh-day Adventist world…. No Endorsement Or Support Was Given To Samoa Church To Worship On Sunday.

The debate of which day is the ‘seventh day’ Sabbath in Samoa has taken another twist with confirmation from the Seventh-day Adventist world headquarters in America, there is no documented action by the General Conference endorsing or supporting the action of the Samoa SDA administration to change its Sabbath day of worship to Sunday.

The current Samoa Sabbath dilemma in fact has come about because the SDA leadership in Samoa and the Pacific region failed to accept that the Samoa government implemented a lawful and legitimate shift in the International Date Line, effectively moving Samoa to the same side as New Zealand and Australia for trading purposes.

While most Christian churches in Samoa also call Sunday the Sabbath commemorating the day of Jesus’ resurrection on the first day of the week, Seventh-day Adventists keeps the Sabbath on the ‘seventh day’ of the week which is Saturday like everywhere in the world.

In order to facilitate the IDL adherence change, Samoa missed one day resulting in a ‘one off’ 6 day week. This experience is normal when crossing the IDL from the American to the Asian side. Friday 30th December 2011 in Samoa did not vanish into thin air as promoted by the local church administration whereby making Sunday 1st January 2012 the ‘seventh day’ of the weekly cycle in Samoa.
What happened in December 2011 was not a calendar change, nor was there any name change. What is confusing is the notion being promoted by the local administration and the South Pacific Division (SPD) regional office in Australia, “The practical result in terms of Sabbath keeping is that Sunday not Saturday has become the seventh day of the week.”

In fact, understanding which day is the ‘seventh day’ of the week is quite simple, contrary to a statement in a public notice from the Samoa Tokelau Mission that was published in the local Samoa Observer newspaper 1st July saying, “The subject to the change to the IDL and resulting implications for the weekly cycle and for Sabbath keeping is a complex one”; Simply, Sunday is still the ‘first day’ of the week and Saturday is still the ‘seventh day’, both before and after the IDL change in Samoa like everywhere else in the world.

In its presentation last year to promote Sunday Sabbath worship to Adventists in Samoa, the statement formulated by the SPD “The present practice of Sabbath keeping in the Pacific Islands around the dateline be maintained” was said to have been endorsed by the General Conference. The statement refers to the current situation where SDAs in Tonga, Kiribati and recently Wallis and Futuna worship on Sunday; the later countries due to the precedent set in Tonga.

With the confirmation that the General Conference did not endorse or support the change to Sunday worship in Samoa, nor endorsed or supported the view being promoted by the SPD of Sunday keeping for those Island States in the Pacific around the IDL, the motives behind the South Pacific Division’s actions to deliberately mislead is now being questioned.

The General Conference has since referred the Samoa Sabbath issue back to the Pacific regional office to be further discussed. A meeting is scheduled 2 August in Australia to be attended by senior Samoan ministers from Samoa, New Zealand and Australia and SPD executives with the hope of finding a way forward.

Today, church members from 21 Seventh-day Adventist churches around Samoa have returned to keeping the ‘seventh day’ Sabbath on Saturday, joining Adventists in American Samoa and the rest of the world.

Providing the “expired” links along with the names of the pastors and church officials who wrote these documents is my attempt to authenticate the fact that they once existed and were the “official” justification for the 2011 decision to ignore the dateline shift; that the final document supporting the original decision was issued months after the dateline shift occurred provides support for the idea that some official church entity at least considered the notion that the sacredness of the seventh day in an existing seven day cycle might not be justification enough to establish its holiness.

(2) Adventist theologians are not convinced. “The origin of the biblical Sabbath is definitely connected with the creation week. It was instituted by God three days after the creation of the moon (Gen. 1:14; 2:2), not the seventh day after the first day of the month.” Angel Manuel Rodriguez, Director of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference, BIBLE QUESTIONS, Adventist World, August, 2008.
Note: The following references were supplied by http://www.letusreason.org/7thad18.htm.

Didache 80-90 A.D. "And on the day of our lords resurrection, which is the Lord’s Day meet more diligently."

Ignatius 110 A.D. wrote in his epistle to the Magnesians 9…” If they who were concerned in old things, arrived at a newness of hope, no longer observing the Sabbath, but living according to the Lord’s day, by which our life sprung from him and by his death (whom certain persons deny)…we have been made his disciples, let us live according to Christianity."

Barnabas 120A.D. "Wherefore, also, we keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day, also, on which Jesus rose again from the dead."

Justin Martyr 140 A.D. "Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness, made the world; and Jesus Christ our savior, on the same day rose from the dead."

(4) “One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord” (Romans 14: 5 & 6).

(5) The Christian community must “stop passing judgment on one another”, must “not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister”, must “make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification” (from Romans 14).

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Help! What is God?

By Ron Nielsen, MD

Hello, are you a Christian? Please, can you help me? I used to be a Christian; maybe I still am. I don’t know. I am not sure. It’s not that I don’t believe anymore; it’s just... I don’t understand any more. I used to believe in God; at least, I thought I did. They told me that if I made a 100% commitment to God and followed His will completely, God would send the Holy Spirit into the world and there would be a mighty revival that would spread throughout the world. The Gospel would be preached to the whole world, and Jesus would come back soon, in my lifetime.

I lost my father as a child, suddenly. As a teenager, I still wanted a father, and I wanted to go home to heaven. I wanted to see my dad again, so I made that commitment. I gave my life to God. For forty years I never considered what I wanted to do. I constantly carried on a dialogue in my head with God, and I always did what God wanted me to do, well, almost always. There were a few things that I just couldn’t do. It wasn’t because I didn’t want to, or didn’t try. I couldn’t. For forty years I fasted and prayed, and couldn’t. Jesus was supposed to save me and give me strength. He seemed to be helping others. Why not me? Doesn’t he love me too? Doesn’t he want me?

Now decades later, I feel the end coming nearer. But where is God? Where is the revival he promised? Why hasn’t Jesus come? I did my part. Why hasn’t God done his? Where did he go? If he doesn’t hurry, I am going to die without ever having seen my father again. Who is God? I thought I knew. I guess I didn’t. Do you?

For that matter, who am I? I don’t even remember. What do I like for breakfast? Do I prefer baked potatoes for dinner, or yams? Do I like my job? What do I like to do for fun, would I rather go to the mountains for a hike or to the lake for a swim? Do I love my wife? I have no idea. I have made so many decisions because that is what I thought God wanted that I don’t even know what I want anymore. When you are 100% committed to God, I believe those aren’t questions you ask. What you want just doesn’t matter. But how can God love me if there is no me to love? How can I be 100% committed to God and do only what God wants me to do and still exist as a person? It seems so tragic to think about dying, having never lived, having never thought about or done anything I wanted. Yes, I have done lots of fun and interesting things, but it wasn’t me really. I thought it was God. I thought it was what God wanted.

Do you know who God is? Can you help me find him? I thought I knew him. I had certain expectations that in retrospect were apparently wrong.

As a child, I thought that God was the one that would protect you and take care of you. If something was going to hurt you, God would intervene. But now that I think about it as an adult, I don’t ever remember seeing him do it. Maybe he did it in a little way, like when my aunt almost died in a car accident, but didn’t. But not in a big way. Never did God act in a way that I could really be sure wasn’t just the result of wishful thinking or chance. If your definition of God is the God who routinely intervenes supernaturally in physical and social laws to prevent harm, then I can tell you with (how many people are in the world, 7 billion?) with an accuracy of 0.143x10^-8 that that type of God doesn’t exist, at least not here and now, in this world, the one that you and I live in every day.

I used to think that if you prayed, God would heal you, especially if you had faith. As a palliative care physician working in the intensive care unit, how many families have I watched pray that prayer? How many have pleaded with me to hang on just a little longer, certain that God could even now work a miracle? How many people have prayed that prayer during my lifetime? Surely at least ONE of the families must have had enough faith. And yet, not just me, but none of my colleagues in any hospital in my
lifetime has ever seen that prayer answered, at least not in a definite way that you could be certain of. Yes, sometimes patients surprise you, but sometimes patients do better than expected. Is that really God? One scientific study showed that if patients were prayed for, but didn’t know they were being prayed for, there was no statistical difference in outcomes; however, if the patients knew they were being prayed for, they did worse. Really? I don’t get it.

Some people define God as being unknowable. He is the creator, the first cause, the omnipotent and omniscient one who is beyond our understanding. Maybe. I am willing to believe, but how do you distinguish this god from some yet-to-be-discovered natural law? I can’t tell the difference. Can you? I had a friend once observe that if you can’t tell the difference, it doesn’t matter.

Other people say no, God is intimate. If you will believe, you will know. You will experience him. He will talk to you. He will respond to you. You will know because of your relationship.

I thought I had a relationship. One time as a teenager, I thought an angel bumped the bed when I was praying. Later I discovered that I occasionally experienced an involuntary muscle jerk or contraction just before falling asleep. After going through the ABCs of prayer, it seemed like God was answering my prayers, but after several years, it became predictable, almost a joke, that God would answer my prayer three days after the deadline had passed. Prayer started to feel so abusive that I figured it would be better to assume that God knew what I needed and would do what was right.

That little voice in my head that I carried on conversations with, was that God? How can I tell the difference between that God and what the psychologists describe as the internal dialogue that we all carry on constantly between our conscious and unconscious minds? I am not sure I can tell the difference. Maybe I wasn’t doing God’s will after all. Maybe I was really doing what my unconscious mind wanted me to do, and I just thought it was God. That’s scary. On the other hand, maybe I really had a life after all. But then, if I am really doing what I want rather than what God wants, how is that different from Satan’s rebellion? How can you exist as a person with a truly independent will and not become like Satan? It seems that if you never do anything except what God wants, you will never become someone truly unique. There is no way to distinguish your unique, independent thoughts and will from those of God. Again, I don’t get it. Can you help me?

I want to have a relationship with God, but what does that mean? If I have a relationship with God, how would I know? I don’t want to start another relationship with the wrong expectations. What can I honestly expect from God? Is there anything that reliably demonstrates God’s presence, something that every believer can put a finger on and say with certainty, “Here. This is God”?

Help!

_______________________ Join in the discussion:

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Care for Others and Spiritual Growth

Submitted: Jun 26, 2013

By Debonnaire Kovacs

Joan Chittister’s book, The Monastery of the Heart, which we’ve been exploring in this devotional series, is an exploration of the Rule of Benedict in order to see that the principles of godly spirituality which it espouses are available to all humans, not just to those in physical monasteries and convents. Jesus clearly taught and demonstrated that we are to live our lives in the world, though not of it, seeking to act out the love of God to all who come in our way.

This chapter, “Loving Service,” is a particularly touching one. It speaks of the special care which Benedict required monastics to give to the elderly, infirm, and young. We have already seen in past chapters that the Benedictine model is different from many medieval monasteries in its decision to seek the middle ways rather than demanding extreme asceticism, self-punishment, and so on, such as Martin Luther experienced in his Augustinian order. Chittister writes:

There is in Benedictine spirituality
a deeply compassionate heart
that neither glorifies the suppression
of human feelings
nor denies the reality of human needs.

Nowhere is that clearer than in
the attention the Rule gives
to the needs of the elderly, the sick,
and the children of the monastery.

Already we see a difference—how many monasteries would have had any children in them? Benedictines, then and now, are required to offer hospitality to all who come to them, believing that is what God, in Hebrews 13:2, had in mind.

She goes on:

We are here to enable one another
to go further.
We are here to learn from the insights
of the other.
We are here to bring all of humanity
to fullness of life.

The Rule is clear about the lengths
to which a Benedictine goes
to sustain the elderly,
to heal the sick,
to support the young in the community. . . .

Suffering is not glorified in this Rule;
Loving care is its norm. . . .

No amount of special asceticism
can equal the amount
of spiritual growth
and human maturity
that comes with care for others.

I believe that “we” in the first line of this passage means me. Means you. Means all of us who claim to follow the Way of the Christ

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Glorifying Sin

By Preston Foster Sin is bad. Agreed?

So why do we preach about it so much? Why do so many Adventist Christian preachers act as though sin is the strongest, most irresistible force in the world?

Sin is more than bad; it is horrific. It breeds sickness, death, pain, unease, strife, hunger, war, and everything else we know to be negative and destructive. Sin is most importantly, an insult to God and a transgression of His law. People who are cognizant of sin, know it, by definition, to be a bad thing.

Ironically, it is in church where sin is often glorified. This glorification is not intentional. Preachers and teachers rail against sin, intending to turn people away from it. Ministers work hard to persuade people to repent and reform their ways. Sin is zealously framed as a powerful force that must be repelled by a conscious decision (which is true). Many preachers seek to do so by warning others about the penalties of sin: hell fire, eternal death, and the loss of The Kingdom of God. However, in the process of warning their flock away from sin, many pastors inadvertently elevate it, making sin (and the avoidance of it) the focal point of the Christian experience.

Sin has become the primary theme of many sermons. In “calling sin by its right name,” many forget to identify it as a conquered foe. Many preachers establish their bonafides as messengers of the Word by “risking” political correctness and “naming the names” of sin. Many congregants feel that their pastor is “really reaching” when he or she itemizes sins that are either foreign, well hid, taboo, or under debate in their church. The more detailed the description of the sin, the louder the “Amens” are likely to get. In my culture, the preacher is likely to say something like “You’re going to get quiet on me now,” or “You won’t like this part of the sermon.” This is somewhat disingenuous, as what follows is likely to evoke a more enthusiastic response from those who believe this is what preaching should be about.

The point of emphasizing sin is to heighten the hearer’s awareness of misdeeds, to encourage them to change their behavior and, in doing so, to change their lives. This tactic works, at least for a time, for some of those who have been committed to a life of sin. Guilt is an effective, but temporary antidote. Regarding sin, self-effort is, in the long-run, always futile.

If the underlying purpose in preaching about sin is to establish their bonafides in declaring the gospel, many preachers are coping out. It takes more power and more faith to preach that sin has been overcome than it does to identify and condemn it. It is more of a challenge to convince people that they are no longer slaves to sin than it does to scare them into understanding
that if they linger in sin, they are going to hell. There is more power in preaching the gospel than there is in condemnation. Should we not preach that sin is already conquered? Isn’t “good news” that sin has no power over those of us who have accepted Christ?

“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord,” (Romans 6:3-11NKJV).

Why dwell on something that is, to believers, dead? When something is dead, it has no power -- unless one chooses to memorialize it and, thus, empower it, (1 Corinthians 15:56).

If the point in preaching about sin is to persuade people to stop sinning, why not preach about the cure for sin? The cure for sin is not self-effort or works, but grace (Romans 6:14). Grace is received through faith in Christ, who defeated death on The Cross. Through His death for our sins and His Resurrection (proof of His victory over sin, per 1 Corinthians 15:17), we can, now, receive His righteousness. That Spirit-led righteousness is the power we can employ over sin and sinful desires (Galatians 5:16-18). Sanctification need not take a lifetime. For those who accept Christ as their Savior, our sanctification occurred at the Cross (Hebrews 10:9-10, KJV).

A few good sermons could be found in that message.

_______________________ Join in the discussion:

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Engaging the Next Generation of Adventists

Submitted: Jun 28, 2013
By Monte Sahlin

Converts drop out of the church, not young people raised in the faith. At least that is the way oral tradition has it in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist movement. This idea still hangs on as a widely believed myth, despite the fact that at least since the 1980s research has shown that young adults raised in Adventist families are more likely to drop out than are adult converts.

The most recent studies indicate that about half of the teenagers who grow up in Adventist families in North America have left the church by their mid-20s. The statistical impact of this reality is made more acute by the fact that there are fewer young people and a larger share of older people each year in the Adventist population. Changing demographics make this even more acute among white and native-born Adventists than among ethnic minorities and immigrants.

Concern about holding onto the next generation was a founding reason for *Adventist Today* and continues to be one of the top-ranked topics in a recent survey in which readers were asked what subjects the magazine should cover. In 1950 the General Conference was already concerned enough about this issue that it conducted the first major survey of families in the North American Division. Since that time many other studies have been completed, and two Adventist scholars—Dr. Roger Dudley at Andrews University and Dr. V. Bailey Gillespie at La Sierra University—have done major work in this field, resulting in 14 books. (See the Sources list at the end of this article.)

There are indications from comparing the Valuegenesis 1 and 2 data that today’s young adults—the Millennial generation—have more denominational loyalty and greater faith maturity than did the prior generation, somewhat disrespectfully labeled “Gen X.” A direct comparison with the Baby Boomer generation—parents of the Millennials and today’s middle-aged cohort—is not possible because there was no Valuegenesis survey when they were in academy. Those who have studied the Baby Boomer generation say that it is more cynical and questioning than the Millennial generation, more individualistic and less supportive of large organizations.

It is no surprise, now that most of the pastors and church administrators in the Adventist Church in North America are Baby Boomers, that massive campaigns like Harvest Ingathering, Mission 72, and the Five-day Plan to Stop Smoking have come to an end. “It’s like herding cats,” a union conference president said to me a couple of years ago, reflecting on his years of leadership with colleagues who were mostly Baby Boomers.

There are signs that with today’s young adults the church is turning a corner, headed “back to the future” in some ways. The percentage of Adventists who express a strong assurance of salvation
in Christ has grown significantly since the survey question was first asked in 1980. Support for most of the core doctrines of the Adventist faith is stronger among today’s young adults in Valuegenesis 2 than it was in Valuegenesis 1. Out of the 11 items that form the Faith Maturity Index, the Millennial generation scores higher than Gen X on seven items and somewhat lower on four items.

Millennial-generation Adventists evidently have a much stronger relationship with the church than did Gen X and, very likely, their parents’ generation (the Baby Boomers). They have a much more positive attitude about the congregational climate of their local church than did Gen X . They also evaluate the youth ministries of the church much more positively than did Gen X. They rate higher on all four items that measure denominational loyalty. Interest in volunteer service is at an all-time high, especially in humanitarian projects and urban ministries.

Today’s young adults were just as orthodox as the previous generation on six of nine items that measured theological orthodoxy in Valuegenesis. But there are three doctrines about which contemporary young-adult Adventists seem to be saying, “You lost me.” On these three items, the Millennial generation is markedly less likely to register agreement than were Gen X respondents. The majority of Adventists in the Millennial generation do not agree that “the Seventh-day Adventist Church is God’s true last-day church” (the Remnant), that “Ellen White fulfilled the predictions that God would speak through prophecy in the last days,” or that “the investigative judgment began in 1844.”

A large number of those who did not agree to these doctrinal statements say they have not made up their minds, while a smaller number disagree. So the theological outcome for this generation is not settled. It is possible that the majority will shift to full acceptance of one, two, or all three of these church teachings. The percentage of support in surveys may also be shifted by the fact that those who are uncertain leave the denomination and are no longer included in future research. If new ways of presenting and explaining these doctrines are developed, then the former outcome is more likely. If traditional presentations are simply pushed harder, then the latter outcome is more likely.

Dudley tracked a random sample of 1,500 young people from Adventist families with annual surveys for 10 years, from ages 15 and 16 through ages 25 or 26. This major piece of research provides a more accurate and detailed look at the issues related to passing faith from generation to generation than any study done by any Protestant denomination in the United States. It was funded by the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists and conducted by the Institute of Church Ministry at Andrews University. The sample included youths from across North America.

The study found that by their mid-20s, nearly 55 percent of the young people had dropped out of
the Adventist Church, although some of these still considered themselves to be Adventists. “What is the major theme these [young people] are trying to tell us? They are hungry for relationships and are not finding them in the church. Very few have ever complained about the doctrines of the church. In fact, many affirm them. … But they want something more than cold teachings or rules of behavior. They long for people in the church, especially adult leaders, to care about them. And most of all they seek a relationship with Jesus.” Dudley concluded, “I would like to suggest that we need to perceive and teach religion as a set of relationships rather than as a list of commands and prohibitions.”

Changing Models of Conversion
Research reveals three models of conversion: (1) sudden conversion, such as Paul’s experience in Acts 9, is dramatic but clearly uncommon, although it is often seen as paradigmatic; (2) unconscious or lifelong conversion is what happens with most young people born to Adventist parents. They often cannot remember a time when they were not believers. They cannot recall any dramatic turning point; (3) gradual conversion is the typical process by which adult converts come into the Adventist faith. They experience a time of growth that eventually results in a choice to embrace the religion. “Gradual conversion is more intellectual,” Dudley states. “The prospect studies religious material, asks questions, seeks answers, and makes a deliberate decision.”

The majority of Adventists in North America are now people who were born into Adventist families. This is a significant change from a few decades ago, when most were adult converts. The unconscious, lifelong model of conversion has largely replaced the gradual conversion model in the experience of today’s young adults. This has resulted in a phenomenon often labeled “cultural Adventists.” There are many young adults who feel themselves fully part of the Adventist community while at the same time without a definite conversion story and having doubts about one or two official teachings of the denomination.

Labeling these young adults as “cultural Adventists,” hinting that their faith is not entirely legitimate or authentic, will not likely bring them closer to the church or convince them of more orthodox interpretations. And it is a mistake to assume that they are “liberal.” In fact, there are likely as many of these among younger conservatives as liberals.

The Valuegenesis research has found that a key element that helps young people stay with the faith is a climate that encourages thinking. Perhaps this is the way in which the gradual conversion is made accessible to “cultural Adventists.” Dudley used the items that defined a “thinking climate” in the Valuegenesis studies to ask young adults about their local church. He found that 40 percent said their church “expects people to learn and think,” 35 percent said “most members want to be challenged to think about religious issues and ideas,” 34 percent said “I learn a lot” at church, 31 percent said their church “challenges my thinking,” and 28 percent said
“it encourages me to ask questions.” - In other words, about two-thirds do not experience a thinking climate at the church where they attend. This is part of why the dropout rate is so high.

Changing Concepts of Organization
Young adults today do not understand the concept of membership used by the Adventist Church, which originated about 500 years ago in the Reformation. Membership involves an ownership stake in the denomination and participation in governance processes. A vote by a local congregation is the ultimate source of decisionmaking, although in the Adventist denomination that has been hedged to a large degree with a polity that is more presbyterian than congregational.

Made aware of this reality, many young adults say that they don’t want to be part of a governance process. They are unwilling to participate in votes to approve baptisms or drop members. “Those should be private choices,” many say. In fact, pastors say that there are a growing number of requests for baptisms to be private events with only family and invited friends present.

Young adults expect the pastor and elders to make leadership decisions, and they vote with their feet when the leaders get it wrong. In other words, they behave more like consumers relating to a business than villagers at a town hall meeting. They are willing to take responsibilities that are clearly delegated to them by a leader, but not on the basis of standard job descriptions or vague assumptions rooted in tradition. They want specific, tailored assignments in writing. One indicator of how widespread these attitudes have become is the fact that since the 1990s, the North American Division has published a resource that gives pastors the tools to develop documents of this type.

One consequence of these changing attitudes about organizational behavior is that the median age of the Adventist church members who have key roles in church governance has increased. Relatively few members under age 40 sit on church boards. “It is rare that the majority of the people on a school board are young enough to have school-age children,” a conference education superintendent told me. “There are school boards that have no one in that age group.”

At several levels of the denomination, there are requirements that young adults be included among the delegates to constituency sessions, but often the required percentages are not met. “It is very difficult to meet these guidelines,” a conference officer said to me. “Young adults see it as a waste of time.”

The Millennial generation prefers an organization that affirms initiative and empowers small teams. It has been called “intrapreneurship” in the business world—turning loose many small enterprises within the larger framework of a big corporation. The ideal of the Baby Boomer
generation (the parents of the Millennial generation) was the “free agent,” or making one’s living as an independent contractor, not an employee. The Millennial generation is less individualistic and more supportive of large institutions than were their parents, but they expect large institutions to personalize operations and function through many small, autonomous projects.

The Adventist organization is built more like the old General Motors than today’s high-tech startup. Unlike the Baby Boomers and Gen X, today’s young adults will not fight the system. They simply participate selectively and turn their back when it doesn’t fit their style. The good news is that inter-generational conflict has largely disappeared in the church. The bad news is that there isn’t much of a younger generation there to get into conflicts with.

What We Must Do
1. Empower initiatives by young adults instead of asking them to serve on church committees and boards. Let the young adults in your congregation or organization develop the approach to their generation. If your local church has a half dozen or a dozen people under 35 years of age, ask them to come together as a task force and delegate to this group the authority and funding to develop a way to engage more young adults. Stay out of their debates and decisions. Protect the autonomy of the group. Be affirming and supportive.

2. Provide information and foundations for new generations. Young adults are often hungry for objective, balanced teaching about biblical principles, the Adventist heritage, and practical skills, so long as we respect the fact they will adapt this to the culture of their own generation. Good mentors help people grow and stand on their own feet. Today’s young adults are quick to spot bad mentors who are biased, opinionated, overly directive, and prescriptive.

3. Free up the young adults we are hiring as pastors. Too many of them lament that they are babysitting dying congregations. Almost all of them have a dream in their hearts to plant new missions that reach their own generation. We are missing the opportunity to start a new generation of local churches and ministries. It would be a great plan if church boards would raise the money needed to hire a retired pastor as a part-time associate and to tell their young pastor to use the freed-up time and energy to plant a new congregation or start a new ministry in the community.

4. Give young adults opportunities to embody their faith in creative and humanitarian projects. What we have traditionally called ministries of healing and compassion—more often called social justice and environmental stewardship today—are the most highly valued ways for Millennial-generation believers to experience Christ and to express their faith. These values intersect powerfully with the wholistic message of the Adventist Church, in which “the state of the dead” really says more about the state of the living and the quality of life than where one goes after dying. An important dimension of this is found in the arts, music, and drama. If we do
not provide these opportunities in the context of Adventist faith, they will find it elsewhere.

5. Focus on hope and not on sin. Surveys show that today’s young Adventists have a good knowledge of what they should not do. It may or may not keep them from doing those things, but preaching about it will only alienate them, not change behavior. The most powerful influence for living a moral life is a life that makes a positive contribution in the world and that demonstrates the practical impact of “the hope that is in Jesus.”

6. The most important thing you can do to engage new generations is to make friends with young adults. This requires friendships of sufficient quality that real conversation and sharing takes place. Your listening skills are most important. Especially in the beginning, spend your time listening and expressing interest in your young friend’s life and goals. The time will come when he or she will ask questions. Then, be honest and authentic; be open about your mistakes and doubts. Most of all, affirm in practical ways how important your relationship with Jesus is to your life. Be prepared to tell real stories about how you have lived out your faith in your profession, through the arts, through volunteer service, in the wider world, and in your family life. But don’t tell those stories until you are asked a question that demands it.

Bottom Line

The Seventh-day Adventist Church today is largely embroiled in the issues of the middle-aged Baby Boomer generation—a generation that thinks it is “forever young” even as it enters the senior citizen category. We are consumed with institutional survival, conflicts that should have been settled decades ago, and trying to compensate for old wounds. The Baby Boomer generation is deeply polarized. Every small rewording of policy or doctrine becomes so important that grace and tolerance are thrown out the window. Baby Boomers fight over theology so obscure that in the entire history of the Adventist movement, the issues have never been resolved and probably never will be, even if some vote prevails.

At the same time, the Baby Boomer generation of Adventists is ignoring the demographic realities around them and the trends among younger people. They have not really come to terms with the fact that half of their own generation born into the Adventist faith has walked out. They are largely unwilling to accept the reality that most people don’t care about the issues that cause such vehement conflict.

Adventist Today began 20 years ago with the goal of relating the Adventist faith in contemporary terms to new generations. Foundational to this is an honest, open discussion of the facts. As an independent journalistic enterprise, Adventist Today is beholden only to its subscribers and donors. Its commitment is to Jesus Christ and his mission, not to other organizational interests. It is faithful to the heritage of James and Ellen White and the other young adults around them in the 1850s who invented the Seventh-day Adventist denomination—a faith rooted in “Scripture and
reason,” in the words of James White. That heritage includes giving new generations the opportunity to reinvent the faith as the Holy Spirit leads them. Without such renewal, the faith will begin to die.

Sources


Additional research on this topic is available from the Center for Creative Ministry at www.creativeministry.org or at 800-272-4664. The Center for Youth Evangelism at Andrews University provides a wide range of resources and supports the Church of Refuge (COR), a network of local churches committed to welcoming and affirming young adults. More information is available on the COR Network Facebook page or at 269-471-8380.

Monte Sahlin is a Seventh-day Adventist minister in the Ohio Conference. He has written more than 75 research monographs and 21 books, as well as many journal articles. His article, as it appears in the print issue of Adventist Today, contains several graphs not shown in this linked edition of the article. We hope to add those graphs when they become available to Web site editors.

2 ibid., p. 83.
3 ibid., p. 90.

Objectives of Adventist Today
1. Serve as an independent news source for the Adventist community.
2. Provide a “free speech area” in the Adventist community.
3. Engage new generations of Adventists and encourage them with resources that enable them to make sense of their faith in the current context in which they live and work.
4. Publish responsible opinion on major issues facing Adventists that reflects a full range of views and perspectives.
5. Pursue stories that the official denominational media tend to ignore or do not report fully.
6. Support a Christ-centered, grace-oriented, progressive, compassionate and hopeful expression of contemporary Adventist faith.
The Love

By Autriche NIYONGERE

The love that has surprised my heart and mind fully
Has been the love that I have struggle to understand fully
The contrast was really and genuine I could see the gap
I knew such is not found in me but to possess it is what I wanted to grasp

How could I receive it in abundance when I was unprepared to share it
My heart grew cold while flourishing the ego in me and nothing seemed to shame it.
Loving the unlovable is the theme which spelled the impossibility
Forgetting that it was actually a call for my responsibility

My eyes are wet with tears after acknowledging that such love I did not deserve
Yet my Savior who happen to be your Savior gave it to us all without reserve
But shame on us who failed to live as though we had experienced or heard of it
The first love and the excitement we experienced at first, we could hardly think of it

I was foolish and ignorant for having let down the one who loved me with his life
I valued and cherished that which in return brought misery and pain to my life
How I which I knew became the song of my mind, regretting everything in all things
When my Savior’s love had promised to be to me and for me everything in all things
Jaime Jorge 25th Anniversary Gala Draws Crowds

Submitted: Jun 26, 2013
By Debbonaire Kovacs

On November 25, 2012, at the Collegedale Community Church near Chattanooga, Tennessee, excitement flooded the air as 1000 people found their seats. The event, a concert celebrating Jaime Jorge’s 25 years in ministry, was sold out. Some tickets had also been given to VIP members who supported the effort and Jorge’s ministry with finance, friendship, or time. Attendees didn’t come only to hear Jorge’s virtuoso violin, however. The names that shared billing with him were bright ones: Larnelle Harris, Michael Card, Kirk Whalum, John Stoddart, Jennifer LaMountain, Sam Ocampo, Reinaldo Macias, and Jorge’s mother, Mayda, and sister, Maydele.

Born in Cuba to a mother who was an accomplished musician, Jaime began playing violin at five. He credits his mother (and her insistence on practice!) with much of his musical success, and his pastor father with the development of his deep spirituality and faith. When he was ten, his family came to the United States, and the boy began studying with Cyrus Forough, an internationally famous Iranian violinist who had studied with Arthur Grumiaux, David Oistrach, and Josef Gingold. Jorge began to follow in these illustrious footsteps, playing in both North and South America, Europe, Asia, Australia, and Russia, sometimes before heads of state and other government officials. According to http://dialogue.adventist.org/articles/17_1_batten_e.htm, “He averages more than 75 concerts annually, performing for over half a million people each year—sometimes as many as 44,000 in a single performance.”

There were only 1000 at the church that evening, but Jorge’s assistant, Kim Neal, reports that “Jaime said afterward it was the best night of his life!”

Attendees agreed. Neal herself said, “The energy that evening was high and most of the 16 songs received standing ovations. It was an incredible event to plan and then attend.”

Dan and Dawn Heilbrun, who also attended, gave Adventist Today permission to print their tribute in full:

We live in Seattle and when Jaime asked us to come to the concert we knew it was something we couldn’t miss. We have been to many of Jaime’s concerts over the years but when we saw the intense preparation he was putting into this concert and heard about the lineup of musicians that would be there, there was no doubt in our minds we had to come. We were so blown away by the concert, it literally exceeded every expectation we had. We love music and have been to a diverse genre of concerts over the years and this was by far the most impressive performance! The concert was
Brilliant!! It’s hard to pin down our favorite moment. There were many standing ovations, but with Kirk Whalum, Larnell Harris, Michael Card, and others, WOW, seriously hard to pick a favorite, but when Jaime and Sam Ocampo did their duet I think it was the biggest standing ovation of the night and definitely one of our favorite moments. Jaime is the ultimate professional and we know that whatever he decides to do, he does through God’s grace, with humility, and will be something very special. It will be hard to top this concert, but keep an eye on him in the upcoming years because he has other very exciting plans!

AT asked how the Heilbruns knew Jorge and learned that the couple had met him in 2005 at a concert he did in Puyallup, WA and invited him home to eat. They’ve become close friends since then.

Neal said the event had taken six months to plan, and in the end, people were turned away because the house was full and tickets were gone. Fortunately, there is a DVD available which not only contains the concert, but also a documentary. It’s called Jaime Jorge Live! and is available on his website, below.

To learn more about Jaime Jorge, his music, this concert, or his life story:
www.jaimejorge.com
and various clips on www.youtube.com
Victory Over the Beast: Living in the Judgment Hour-1

Submitted: Jun 26, 2013
By Ervin Thomsen

*Living in the Judgment Hour - I
Our Identity as Heirs*

You have no doubt heard this jingle about Santa Claus: “He’s making a list, and checking it twice—gonna find out who’s naughty or nice.” Perhaps in the recesses of your mind you may subtly believe that these words apply not only to the activities of Santa Claus in preparing for Christmas, but also to the way God conducts the end-time judgment. It is my hope that as you read this chapter that you will discover that there is far more to the judgment than just investigation.

You can think of the judgment in terms of God continually checking up on you to catch you in a sin, so that in the final judgment He can hold that sin against you and thus keep you out of heaven. Or, you can think that because of Christ’s atonement, God has now given you a new identity as His very own precious child, and that He is so committed to saving you that He watches over you day and night. In a previous chapter of this book we discovered that when Jesus Christ upon His ascension was enthroned as the rightful King and Judge of the entire universe, He was also given authority to begin dispensing the benefits of His covenant, His last will and testament, to those who have become heirs because God has adopted them as His very own children.

In this chapter we will explore how to avail ourselves of all of these covenant benefits available to us as heirs. Living in the hour of His judgment will then take on altogether new dimensions of positive excitement and joyful assurance as we realize how much God in Christ has done, and will keep on doing, in order to keep us safe and secure as His very own. Jesus said, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than I am; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand” (*John 10:27-29*).

*The Security of the Everlasting Gospel*

As we are now living in the judgment hour, awaiting the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ, how should we then live? In fear and trembling that Satan might attack us with some most cunning deceptions for which we would be totally unprepared? Or, should we focus on the unfolding signs of the times, believing that our alertness to news about impending events would be the preparation most necessary, particularly news describing end-time calamities, derived from newspaper articles and headlines. When I practiced this in
my pastoral ministry, needless to say, my preaching often took on the flavor of tabloid journalism. Rarely, if ever, did it lead to lasting life changes. Often I would mistake the resulting (temporary) excitement for revival. But when the excitement subsided, so did the “revival.” And then I needed to find more “breaking news” to jump-start the process all over again.

Based on my personal journey in uncovering the experiential truths of the book of Revelation, I now submit that our successful resistance against last-day deceptions is found in our acceptance of the completeness of the everlasting gospel (Revelation 14:6). “The very best preparation you can have for Christ’s second appearing is to rest with firm faith in the great salvation brought to us at His first coming. You must believe in Christ as a personal Saviour” [1]. When we trust in the saving sufficiency of Christ’s atoning work and all its accompanying covenant benefits for us as believers and heirs (which we actually are), God will then build into our lives an impenetrable immunity and resistance to all of Satan’s end-time delusions.

The Sanctuary – the Center of Christ’s Atoning Work

As we await the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ, most naturally we should now focus our attention on Jesus and His work for us, which makes possible His work in us. “The sanctuary in heaven is the very center of Christ’s work in behalf of men...It opens to view the plan of redemption, bringing us down to the very close of time, and revealing the triumphant issue of the contest between righteousness and sin.” [2] “The intercession of Christ in man’s behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross.” [3]

As the apostle Paul in the letter to the Ephesians pondered all the accomplishments of Christ’s atoning work, he literally stumbled over himself, particularly in chapter 1, to find words adequate enough to express what God has made available to every believer. His prayer was that “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places...” (Ephesians 1:17-20).

Consider the following benefits as described by the apostle Paul in His letter the Ephesians, and then ask yourself – “Have I really availed myself of all of these? Or am I still working on my salvation as a do-it-yourself project where, if I do my part, God will then do His part?”

- **Access**: Through Him we have access by one Spirit to the Father (Ephesians 2:17).
- **Adoption**: We are adopted as His children by Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:5).
- **Acceptance**: We are accepted in the Beloved (Ephesians 1:6).
- **Blessings**: God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 1:3).
• **Boldness:** We have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Christ ([Ephesians 3:12]).
• **God takes delight in us:** It pleased God to save us (1:5, 9).
• **Equipping for service:** He has given us spiritual gifts to build up the church ([Ephesians 4:7, 11, 12]).
• **Faith:** Faith is God’s gift to us ([Ephesians 2:9]).
• **Forgiveness:** In Him we have forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace ([Ephesians 1:7]).
• **Inheritance:** In Him we have obtained an inheritance ([Ephesians 1:11]).
• **Life:** He has raised us up and made us alive. ([Ephesians 2:5, 6]).
• **Redemption:** In Him we have redemption through His blood ([Ephesians 1:17]).
• **Peace, reconciliation, and unity:** He is our peace, who has broken down the wall of division between people and has made us one in Christ (2:11-18).
• **Position:** He has positioned us with Christ above all principalities and powers ([Ephesians 1:2]) and He seated us with Christ in heavenly places ([Ephesians 2:6]).
• **Salvation:** By grace we have been saved through faith ([Ephesians 2:8]).
• **Sealed:** When we believed He sealed us with the Holy Spirit of promise ([Ephesians 1:13]).

Christ’s work in the heavenly sanctuary arouses the attacks of the beast, the antichrist. By the term “beast” I mean not only the historical beast of the Dark Ages and its latter-day resurgence, but also anything which is the substitute or replacement for the redemptive and mediatorial work of Jesus Christ in the heavenly temple. This beast “opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.” Is it possible that we may be joining the beast in his blasphemous work when we doubt, and thus attack, the sufficiency of the righteousness of Christ and even our own position of being seated with Christ in “heavenly places”? Notice that these attacks are directed at those who dwell in heaven; this is not speaking about angels, but about our being legally positioned with Christ in heavenly places ([Ephesians 1:2; 2:6]). And what better way to attack the sanctuary than to twist the truths of God about the completeness of Christ’s atonement into lies?

Have you ever heard, or personally believed, any of these versions of Satan’s lies or half-truths?

• that the righteousness presented by Christ in the Most Holy place of heavenly sanctuary is not sufficient to make you acceptable before God.
• that our being seated with Christ in heavenly places is only make-believe.
• that too much assurance can lead to complacency and carelessness.
• that our justification through faith in Christ is merely legal fiction, a temporary acquittal until we can produce in our lives a perfect righteousness evidenced by our perfect performance through the power of Christ. It is really all up to us!
• that the testimonies of the witnesses in heaven’s courtroom are lies ([Revelation 5:7-14]). Would God allow lying witnesses in heaven’s courtroom? Witnesses in any courtroom are only admitted when they promise to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Upon Christ’s ascension, these witnesses declared that Jesus Christ is worthy of worship and all the beings, the jury, in the entire universe declare in worship and praise their enthusiastic agreement. Do you in your private and corporate worship declare with joy your satisfaction in the completeness of Christ’s atoning work? “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain!”
The promises and assurances of victory flowing from Calvary’s cross are made available by faith alone in Christ alone. Please read the following assertions from the writings of Ellen G. White, and ask yourself - Is the language employed here merely Christian pep talk, or does it emphatically declare God’s truth about the sufficiency of the atoning work of Christ at the cross?

“The time had come for the universe of heaven to accept their King. Angels, cherubim and seraphim, would now stand in view of the cross. . . . The Father accepts the Son. No language could convey the rejoicing of heaven or God’s expression of satisfaction and delight in His only begotten Son as He saw the completion of the atonement.” [4]

“The Father demonstrates His infinite love for Christ, who paid our ransom with His blood, by receiving and welcoming Christ’s friends as His friends. He is satisfied with the atonement made. He is glorified by the incarnation, the life, death, and mediation of His Son.” [5]

“He [Christ] planted the cross between heaven and earth, and when the Father beheld the sacrifice of His Son, He bowed before it in recognition of its perfection. ’It is enough,’ He said. ‘The Atonement is complete.’” [6]

“The thought that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, not because of any merit on our part, is a precious thought. The enemy of God and man is not willing that this truth should be clearly presented, because he knows that if the people receive is fully his power will be broken.” [7]

**The Covenant Blessings Available to Every Believer**

Because Christ’s last will and testament, the covenant, was probated and found valid in heaven’s open courtroom before the witnesses assembled from both earth and heaven, as described in Revelation chapter 5, Christ has now been found worthy, or judicially qualified, to start dispensing these benefits to His people – a solid cause for the blessed assurance that we are indeed “heirs of salvation, purchase of God, bought by His Spirit, washed in His blood.”

There is far more to the second and third angel’s message than an exposure of the sins of Babylon and the beast as they occur in others, whether they be political or religious movements. To focus on the sins and heresies of others can easily lead us to the practice of “salvation by comparison,” somehow believing that our correct theological comprehension of Bible truths will give us a distinct advantage and superiority over others. Successful living in the judgment hour is to take advantage of *everything* God has to offer us through the sacrifice at Calvary’s cross and enthronement of Jesus Christ in the heavenly places as announced in the 1st angel’s message.

“This message [the third angel’s message] was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in
obedience to all the commandments of God. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, _that He may dispense rich gifts unto men_, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel’s message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure. The uplifted Saviour is to appear in His efficacious work as the Lamb slain, sitting upon the throne, _to dispense the priceless covenant blessings_, the benefits He died to purchase for every soul who should believe on Him. John could not express that love in words; it was too deep, too broad; he calls upon the human family to behold it. Christ is pleading for the church in the heavenly courts above, pleading for those for whom He paid the redemption price of His own lifeblood. Centuries, ages, can never diminish the efficacy of this atoning sacrifice. The message of the gospel of His grace was to be given to the church in clear and distinct lines, that the world should no longer say that Seventh-day Adventists talk the law, the law, but do not teach or believe Christ.” [8]

You can live in the judgment hour, either in fear of the judgment, or in the “fear of God.” The “fear of God” enables you to approach the judgment without fear, because the Judge sent His own Son to die for your sins and to be your Advocate. To fear is to focus on self, your helplessness and unworthiness, and wonder, “How will I ever make it?” Fear is really one of the most self-centered emotions there is. To live in the healthy “fear of God” is to focus on the unfathomable love of God as you let go of the fear of judgment, fear of the future, fear of failure, fear of rejection, and fear of punishment as you with gratitude in worship exclaim, “Thank God for Jesus, my Advocate!” _Without_ Jesus we will always wonder, how will we ever be saved? _With_ Jesus you will in wonder exclaim, how will I ever be lost? We can live as ex-convicts, temporarily placed on probation (Satan’s lie) by a judge who’s got a list that he is checking twice to see who has been naughty or nice; or, we can live as fully acquitted and adopted children of the Judge, who is also our Heavenly Father. Because He has legally adopted us, we are now legitimate heirs!

Christian author Norman Bowman wrote the following, contrasting two ways of living and thinking about the end of the world. Would you ask yourself, which column most closely represents your present experience, and is that experience really based on the rich promises of God’s covenant, or is it based on looking at self?

**Two Ways of Living in the Judgment Hour**

| “Holding on to holiness” | _Holding on to wholeness_ |
| “Gripping it tight the day” | _Giving thanks for freedom_ |
| “The rules came down” | _To forgive and be forgiven_ |
| “Spelling out the texts” | _And allowing love_ |
| “That make one pure” | _To bridge the brokenness_ |
| “Laying down the mind” | _Filling empty hours_ |
Waiting for the end of time  With reverence
With white knuckles  Living the time of our lives
And a quivering chin  Holding on to wholeness
Scared to death  With open arms and open minds
Unto death.  Free to live
Into death  Walking with confidence
That we’ll be caught  That tomorrow’s needs
With our bags unpacked  Will be met tomorrow
When God’s big ship comes in.  For those who live faithfully

or -
Holding on to wholeness
And letting grace come in.” [9]

Life Applications

Questions to Ponder

1. Do you currently live with a solid assurance of salvation?

2. What is the source of that assurance? Your own performance or the performance of Jesus Christ as your Savior and Substitute?

3. What are some possible causes for the lack of assurance (if any) in your life?

Replacing Lies with Truth

“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth” (John 17:17).

Replace the lies or half-truths of the enemy with these truths that will set you free:
Lies or half-truths

Too much assurance regarding my salvation is dangerous because it can lead to complacency and carelessness.

I really need the motivation of more fear to keep me on my toes.

Write out any other half-truths or lies that you have believed, and replace such with God’s truths

Truths

My assurance is never in myself, but only and always in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The love of Jesus is stronger than any fear, and overcomes all man-made fears.

Endnotes:

[1] Ellen G. White, Our High Calling, 368.

Note: If you are enjoying these chapters and wish to have Dr. Thomsen come to do a seminar at your church or organization, please visit www.streamofhealing.org.