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BAPTISM: Sabbath baptism at Naivasha maximum security prison
PHOTO BY BENSON OCHIENG OBOLA
DEPARTMENTS

WORLD REPORT

“Many Wonderful Things” Happening in Iraq

A new church is built, and ADRA opens an office.

The news headlines coming out of Iraq might be horrific, but a new Adventist church is being built in the north, Adventists are inviting neighbors to Sabbath worship services in Baghdad, and ADRA is opening an office to provide humanitarian relief.

“Many wonderful things are quietly taking place behind the scenes,” said Homer Trecartin, president of the Adventist Church’s Middle East and North Africa Union, who visited Iraq for four days recently.

Iraq has been the subject of prayer for Adventists worldwide amid an outbreak in militant-led violence against minority groups, including Christians. Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the world church, asked for special prayers in August and said no more than 50 Adventists remained in the Middle Eastern country.

Trecartin, who confirmed that about 50 remained on the membership books, said he was inspired to see a small but vibrant church community during his visit.

Adventists who have fled the violence and moved to Erbil, a northern city of more than 1.5 million people in northern Iraq, on Sabbath, Nov. 22.

You Visited Me

The 19-year old stared at me across the open prison desk, his body quivering with tension, eyes wide with fear.

“Pastor,” he pleaded in a whisper, “you’ve got to help me get out of here. I don’t know if I’ll survive.”

The tale tumbled out: an Adventist teenager, drifting into trouble, had committed a felony for which he was arrested. At sentencing, the prosecutor gave him the option of six months in a hard labor camp or a full year in the state penitentiary. Certain he could handle any physical challenges the system might throw at him, my young friend had opted for the shorter “boot camp,” a decision he now regretted.

“If I’m caught so much as not looking in the right direction at line call,” he whispered hoarsely, “I have to carry a wooden railroad tie for six hours—on the run—to meals, to work, wherever I go. If I lay it down, the penalty doubles.”

In any other setting, I would have wrapped my young friend in a tight embrace to remind him physically as well as spiritually that he wasn’t alone, that he still mattered—intensely—to those of us “on the outside.” But the gun-toting guards specifically prohibited hugs, and I had to rely, instead, on carefully-chosen words.

“No matter what you’ve done,” I murmured, “you are still deeply loved—by God, by your family, by me, by your friends. These walls, these fences, don’t change that. We’re praying for you—every day—and we’ll be there when you’re released to pray with you as God builds you a new life.”

I’ve had to say those lines many times through 35 years of ministry. Each time I do, I’m reminded that those in prison are remarkably like those beyond the walls—wrestling with loneliness, grief, guilt, and broken dreams. For all our apparent differences in law-keeping, we are, at heart, people in need of companionship, forgiveness, restoration—and the occasional hug.

As you read this month’s cover feature, pray for that one person in prison whom the Spirit brings to your mind. Then find a way to minister to them—in whatever way you can.

Continued on next page
WORLD REPORT

A few Adventists still live in Baghdad, and they are sharing Jesus with their neighbors, he said. Every Sabbath the church members meet for a worship service filled with friends and neighbors.

“Please continue to keep the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Iraq in your prayers,” Trecartin said.
—Adventist World staff

El Salvador: 4,800 Baptized

Australian evangelist John Carter praised God for the more than 4,800 people who were baptized during a three-week evangelistic series in El Salvador, a Central American country mired in crime and turmoil.

“We were impressed by the spiritual hunger of the people,” Carter said after speaking to a near-capacity crowd of 52,000 people on the closing day of the series in Estadio Cuscatlán, the largest stadium in Central America and home of the El Salvador football team. “Glory be to God.”

The stadium event in the capital, San Salvador, in late November marked the climax of 93 evangelistic campaigns organized by Carter. He teamed up 93 pastors from across Central America with 100 local pastors to hold simultaneous meetings over three weeks.

Former El Salvador vice president Ana Vilma de Escobar, who was among a group of current and former government officials at Carter’s meetings, told the evangelist that he had shared a message about Jesus that her country desperately needed to hear.

“These meetings are just what is needed at this time,” she said.
—Vania Chew, South Pacific Adventist Record, with additional reporting by Adventist World staff

Kenya: 8 Dead in Massacre

At least eight Adventists were among the 28 bus passengers massacred by Muslim extremists

HUGE TURNOUT: Evangelist John Carter speaking to some 52,000 people at the Estadio Cuscatlan stadium in San Salvador, El Salvador, on Nov. 29.

members gather each Sabbath in a rented apartment, where friends, neighbors, and occasionally some refugees join them.”

The number of church members is small, and they live far away from their former homes, but they are actively reaching out to those who are worse off, he said.

Together with George Shamoun, the leader of the Adventist Church in Iraq, the members have used their own money, donations from others, and a special contribution from Adventist Frontier Missions to build toilet facilities in several centers for internally displaced people, to distribute food parcels, and to hand out winter clothes and blankets.

Even more humanitarian work is expected to be carried out soon with the registration of the Iraq office of the church-operated Adventist Development and Relief Agency, or ADRA.

After much work, the Iraq office was registered with the authorities, and it is in the process of bringing in staff and setting up projects to provide even more assistance, Trecartin said.
in northern Kenya on a Sabbath morning, the East-Central Africa Division said.

Al-Shabaab militants stopped the Nairobi-bound vehicle in late November and quizzed passengers to determine whether they were Muslims. Eyewitnesses said those who answered unsatisfactorily were taken aside and shot.

It’s likely that the Adventists on the early-morning bus were on their way to church at the time of the attack.

“Our hearts ache for the families who have lost loved ones, including children, in the senseless and brutal killings,” Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the Adventist world church, said in a statement.

“We cannot understand the horrible actions that have taken place,” he said. “However, the Holy Spirit as the Comforter can bring encouragement and sustenance amid such traumatic tragedy. We have prayed for these families who are suffering great loss.”

Blasious Ruguri, president of the East-Central Africa Division, said he was “tongue-tied” over the “meaningless, devilish” killings.

“I cannot imagine Jesus delaying too much longer!” he wrote in reply to e-mailed condolences from Wilson. “He just needs to come yesterday. Pastor, with this trend of events, this world has become unlivable.”

—Adventist World staff

India: 50 Children Teach

Fifty children gave health seminars and marched with banners in a city in southeastern India as they joined Adventist Church efforts to find a new way to share Jesus in that part of the country.

At a cost of only $200, the students from Miryalaguda Seventh-day Adventist High School shared the Adventist health message with several thousand of the 115,000 people in Miryalaguda, said Robert L. Robinson, administrative assistant to the president of the church’s Southern Asia Division.

“We were experimenting to see if this would be a good approach to begin reaching the cities in the state of Andhra Pradesh with the gospel message,” said Robinson, who attended the event.

By all indications the experiment worked, he said.

The students, wearing blue school uniforms and accompanied by police escorts, gave health lectures at three separate locations recently. They also marched with self-made banners bearing such slogans as “Alcohol Is a Demon Drink” and “Smoking Is Injurious to Health.”

Robinson estimated that 2,000 people heard the lectures and many more saw the march.

The initiative also caught the attention of the local newspaper, which published an article that gave additional attention to its purpose.

About 50 million people live in Andhra Pradesh, the eighth largest of India’s 29 states. Only about 1.5 percent of the population is Christian, with Hindus making the majority of 92 percent.

—Adventist World staff

Uganda: Appeal Over Sabbath

The leader of the Adventist Church in Uganda has made a personal appeal to the East African country’s president to expand religious freedoms to allow Adventists to avoid requirements to work and study on Sabbath.

President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni did not immediately reply to the request, made by John Kakembo, president of the Uganda Union Mission, at a fund-raising drive for a new church in the capital, Kampala. But he praised Adventists as honest.

Continued on next page
World Report

“Let your light shine for others to see so they can praise your Father in heaven,” Museveni said in a speech.

It was not the first time that he has been pressed about the Sabbath. Jan Paulsen, during his time as president of the Adventist world church from 1999 to 2010, raised the issue with Museveni while a local court was considering an appeal by Adventist students against taking university exams on Sabbath. The court did not back the students.

Sabbath observance can be a challenge to many of the 261,000 Adventists who live in Uganda, a country of 36.9 million.

“I have lost six jobs because of the Sabbath,” church member John Nyagah Gakunya said during a recent discussion about Sabbath observance on Adventist World’s Facebook page.

But Gakunya said he was not discouraged. “I remain faithful to God, and I would say it’s not a loss to serve God,” he said. “Honor God, and He will honor you.”

—Samuel Mwebaza, Uganda Union Mission communication director, and ANN and Adventist World staff

By Andrew McChesney, news editor, Adventist World

Muslim Teens Join Adventists in Refusing Sabbath Exams

Teachers speak of a double miracle at an Adventist school in the former Soviet Union.

Muslim students at an Adventist school in the former Soviet Union were so confident that God would intervene to change the day of their state finals from a Sabbath that they stood in solidarity with their Adventist classmates in refusing to take the exams at a public school, even if it meant that they would not graduate.

The teens’ faith paid off.

At the last minute the government of the predominantly Muslim country authorized the exams to be rescheduled, astonishing Adventist teachers who had spent days agonizing about the situation.

Even more remarkably, the authorization came from the office of a deputy minister who had recently forced the Adventist school to remove the word “Christian” from its name.

“The Muslim students decided to stand firm on the principles of not working and studying on the Sabbath that they had learned at the Adventist school, and this was a wonderful decision,” said Guillermo Biaggi, president of the Adventist Church’s Euro-Asia Division, whose territory includes most of the former Soviet Union.

“God not only inspired someone in the government to change the day for the exams—He also inspired the students and awarded their trust in our Creator and Redeemer,” he said.

The story about the Sabbath exams emerged at recent year-end business meetings conducted by the Euro-Asia Division. Adventist World is not identifying the school or its location, to avoid complicating its work.

“The Only Hope Left Was God”

The school, which teaches 280 students aged 6 to 17, experienced a difficult 2013-2014 academic year as it faced various challenges from the authorities and other people unhappy with the presence of a Christian school in a Muslim country, school and church leaders said.

But nothing prepared the teachers for a surprise Education Ministry decree saying that final exams for ninth and eleventh graders nationwide would be held on Saturday.

The teachers began to pray. A few of the school’s eleventh graders came from Adventist families, but the majority were Muslim. None of the ninth graders were Adventist.
Every attempt to delay the exams by a day, to Sunday, seemed to fail. No local education officials wanted to shoulder the responsibility of authorizing the change. The school principal sent a letter to an Education Ministry official who promised to help, but he didn’t reply.

“The only hope left was God,” the principal said in a statement provided by the Euro-Asia Division.

She gathered the students together to explain the situation. She said the school was still trying to reschedule the exams but could not promise success. She also said she had made arrangements with a nearby public school to offer the exams to those who wished to take them.

“This gave each student the opportunity to make his or her own decision, knowing full well the consequences of the decision,” the principal said.

Eleventh graders who failed to take the exam would not graduate. Eleventh grade is the last class before graduation from high school in the former Soviet Union.

“That’s Impossible!”

Just two days before the exams the principal suddenly received a phone call from the Education Ministry. The caller, an administrative assistant to a deputy education minister, said that her boss had written a reply to the principal’s seemingly lost letter and that the school could send someone to pick it up.

The principal said she lost all hope with the phone call, because the deputy education minister was the same person who had forced the school to change its name a few weeks earlier.

And that wasn’t all.

“Before the phone call, we had hoped that maybe we could give the exams on a different day and not be noticed by the education officials,” she said. “But now that the government had given an official response, it would be impossible to conduct the exam unnoticed.”

The principal was in for a shock. She recalled that when she tore open the letter from the ministry, she exclaimed, “That’s impossible! How the Lord is good!”

It turned out that the deputy education minister had left his office on an extended business trip, and the school’s request had been passed on to another ministry official, who had authorized the exams to be given on Sunday.

The principal eagerly shared the news with the students. But when they showed little emotion, she thought that they had misunderstood her and repeated the story. Then one of the students broke the silence with an explanation that the principal found even more incredible than the government’s last-minute permission to reschedule the exams.

The student said: “We never had any doubt that God would help resolve the situation.”

The principal said: “We never had any doubt that God would help resolve the situation.”

The principal found out that none of the students had signed up to take the exams at the public school on Sabbath. As she spoke with them, she learned that they had seen so many manifestations of God’s power during the difficult school year that they had decided God would not abandon the school over something as simple as Sabbath exams. The Muslim students had decided to join their Adventist classmates in standing faithful to the biblical Sabbath.

“Children from non-Adventist families saw how God is leading our school and believed with all their hearts that the problem would be resolved,” the principal said. “It was only we, the Adventist teachers, who were distraught with worry.”
Christ is our righteousness and only hope as we rapidly come to the close of earth’s history. Jesus is coming soon!

In preparation for Christ’s coming, we, like ancient Israel, are called to follow God’s counsel in 2 Chronicles 7:14—to humble ourselves, pray, seek God’s face, and turn from our wicked ways. We are invited to humble ourselves before Christ, realizing it is only in Him that we can truly “live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28).

Some critics have accused Seventh-day Adventism as teaching or promoting legalism—righteousness by works. Nothing could be further from the truth. The voices of Seventh-day Adventists should be the strongest in proclaiming that salvation is through Christ and Christ alone! God’s act by which He pronounces us righteous through the death of Christ for us—justification—and God’s act by which He transforms us into the likeness of Christ—sanctification—cannot be separated, for together they constitute the fullness of Christ our righteousness.

His Plan, Not Ours

At times, there seems to be confusion about justification and sanctification and how they relate to each other and our salvation. Some promote justification to the exclusion of sanctification and arrive at “cheap grace.” Others focus almost exclusively on sanctification and arrive at “perfectionism” or legalistic salvation by works. But God’s all-encompassing righteousness involves the completeness of both justification and sanctification. It’s His plan, not ours. It’s His way of bringing us into an immediate and long-term relationship with Him in preparation for spending eternity with Him.

Paul declares in Ephesians 2:8-10 that we owe everything to Christ: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone would boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” God declares us righteous through the sacrifice of Christ. When we accept this gift, we are declared perfect in the eyes of God. As we humbly submit to Christ’s control over our lives, His power then begins to sanctify us. This entire change is the all-encompassing righteousness of Christ.

Not Self-Centered Legalism

This is not a call for self-centered legalism but a direct call for righteousness by faith in God. Drawn by the Holy Spirit, we accept Jesus into our lives, and Christ begins changing us into His likeness so that we become more and more like Him. This is why drunkards become sober; loose-living people become moral; mean-spirited individuals become peacemakers; self-centered people become self-less, generous benefactors. This is why the unconverted become converted—all due to the power of God which begins producing the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.

The provision for this right relationship is described in one of the most powerful verses of the Bible: “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21). God, the Father, provided His perfect Son as a sacrifice for our sins that we would be able to be covered by the perfect righteousness of Christ. This is the “born again” experience Jesus proclaimed in John 3:3, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Born Again

This born again experience makes us entirely new persons. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation: old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Cor. 5:17). Through the leading of the Holy Spirit, as we confess our sins and fall at the foot of the cross, we are cleansed of our sins and re-created into the image of God (see 1 John 1:9).

This is God’s all-encompassing righteousness—we are saved by grace and we live by faith—all through Jesus Christ! We can proclaim with Paul, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).
When we accept Christ and His righteousness, we also follow Him in believing and accepting His beautiful truths revealed in the doctrines of the Bible—all centered in Him. In Titus 3:5-6, Paul indicates that it was "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit." He further states “that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works (vs. 7-8).

The good works are the manifestation of the sanctifying power of Christ. The Holy Spirit works in us to make us more and more like Christ. We are totally dependent upon our relationship with Christ for sanctification. That is Christ’s righteousness.

**Christ’s Righteousness**

The Spirit of Prophecy gives us deep insights into the Biblical truth of Christ’s righteousness, especially in the marvelous little book, *Steps to Christ:*

“We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. . . . He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. . . . More than this, Christ changes the heart. . . . You are to maintain this connection with Christ by faith and the continual surrender of your will to Him; and so long as you do this, He will work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. . . . So we have nothing in ourselves of which to boast. . . . Our only ground of hope is in the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and in that wrought by His Spirit working in and through us” (pp. 62-63).

No wonder Paul proclaims, "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:14-16).

**The Work of a Lifetime**

No Seventh-day Adventists should think of themselves as better than anyone else or accuse others of not being holy or perfect. We are all sinners at the foot of the cross in need of a Savior who provides for us His righteousness.

As we consecrate ourselves to Christ and allow Him to work in us to stay close to Him and His Word, we can then better understand these inspired words: "Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own" (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 69).

Christ’s character is reproduced in our lives as we lean completely on Christ alone. We must daily allow the Holy Spirit to change us more and more into the likeness of Christ. This is the work of a lifetime. We are to ask for Christ’s character in our lives as we learn practical obedience to His Word through His power.

We aren’t to work toward what may be termed “perfectionism,” reflecting a legalistic checklist. Nor should we point out the faults of others or bring strife into the church with accusations that we are more righteous than others.

“No one who claims holiness is really holy. Those who are registered as holy in the books of Heaven are not aware of the fact, and are the last ones to boast of their own goodness. None of the prophets and apostles ever professed holiness . . . The righteous never make such a claim. The
more nearly they resemble Christ, the more they lament their unlikeness to Him” (True Revival, p. 62).

His Grace

So how should we understand the plan of salvation in these last days of earth’s history? Cheap grace won’t do it. It denies the power of the Holy Spirit to change the life day by day to become more and more like Christ. Legalism won’t do it. It blocks the only way to salvation—total dependence on Jesus Christ, our only way to salvation. A higher critical approach won’t do it. It destroys the very miracle of conversion and sanctification, and strips God’s salvation of its power to change lives.

It is only Christ’s all-encompassing righteousness of justification and sanctification that will save, change, and nurture us into true disciples of Christ. It is something that Jesus does both for us and in us. Through His grace, we can have divine power and His character as we are made more and more like Him.

We are told in the Spirit of Prophecy that righteousness by faith is the very core of the three angels’ messages. What a privilege to urge people to turn back to the true worship of God acknowledging His all-encompassing righteousness and salvation. The culmination of Christ’s saving grace and righteousness will be to welcome Him at His second coming—proof to the world of His justifying salvation and ability to change our lives through His sanctifying power.

What a day that will be!

Ted N. C. Wilson is president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In most parts of Angola even the humblest building takes a lot of effort. The Morro 50 Adventist Church building is a framework of sticks filled with carefully placed rocks for walls. To make this creative little shelter, church members walked for miles to the mountains and carried rocks back to their community.

The current church is a safety hazard in more than one way. There are 250 members here. Any mother would wonder about rocks falling out of the walls, but one Sabbath proved even more dangerous. As the pastor stood preaching, two venomous cobras dropped out of the ceiling and onto the church floor.

Would you stay put at church after a cobra fell into your midst? In Angola they do. These people are accustomed to danger, to struggle. Decades of war wiped out Angola’s infrastructure years ago. Foreign countries fighting for control of the oil-rich region poisoned the land, so hardly anything grows. A whole generation of men was killed in the fighting. The country is eighth in the world for infant mortality. But Angolans push on.

This rock church building has been knocked down by the wind three times in the past 12 years. The members rebuilt. Sitting on hot metal pews made from discarded railroad ties, they prayed for a better way. They prayed for someone to help them.

In August, Maranatha Volunteers International constructed a One-Day Church for the Morro 50 congregation, thanks to the generosity of hundreds of donors. The Morro 50 congregation finally has a real church. This place of hope is a safe place for families to meet and worship God.

The people of Angola have done their part. They have sweated and prayed, built and rebuilt, and reached out to tell others of God’s love. Maranatha is there to help with the next step: building churches.

ASI and Maranatha Volunteers International fund and facilitate One-Day Church and One-Day School projects. Since 2009 more than 1,600 One-Day buildings have been built around the world. Carrie Purkeypile is a project planner for Maranatha Volunteers International.
Monterey, California, Adventists Host Dental/Health Fair

Approximately 50 individuals participated in a combined dental and health fair at the Monterey Peninsula Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Central California Conference on August 31, 2014. Eight dentists, three physicians, one nurse, one podiatrist, and two dental hygienists participated in what is expected to be an annual event. The dentists provided a wide range of services, including dental fillings, teeth cleanings, examinations, and extractions.

The volunteers provided approximately $15,000 in free dental services to 39 patients. The church’s Fireside Hall was transformed into a temporary dental clinic, complete with lawn chairs that served as dental chairs, temporary lighting, and various pieces of dental equipment.

“One of the goals in putting on this free dental and medical clinic was not only to meet the needs of the people in our community, but to let them know that we are a worldwide church that cares for people around the globe,” reported Gary Ford, church pastor. Patients received a brief introduction of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. “Several people commented that they were very impressed with what we were doing and had no idea that we did this kind of work,” he said.

“I am 44 years old, and have never heard of the Seventh-day Adventist Church before,” said one patient. “I didn’t even know that you guys existed.”

“It was a beautiful sight to see the health and dental professionals and their colleagues, some of whom were nonmembers, working together to provide health and dental care for the community,” remarked Ford. “I know that lives were touched by this experience. This one-day event has made a difference in many ways to our church and to the community.”

The Weimar Center for Health and Education, which provided an introduction to its NEWSTART program under the direction of Don Mackintosh, assisted the medical and dental teams. About 30 students assisted in the organization of the clinics and provided clerical help. The medical and dental personnel presented a question-and-answer period on several health and wellness topics. Attendees also enjoyed a raw food demonstration with samples of the various preparations. Michele Cremonese, a local restaurateur and owner of Bignoli Fresh Pasta, provided a nutritious lunch for workers in the clinic.

Seven persons attending the clinic have requested Bible studies. Internist Ken Mindoro coordinated the entire event with the assistance of dentist David Shin. “We feel that the fair was successful and are looking forward to presenting similar outreach programs to our community in the near future,” says Shin.

—Donald R. Kellogg, Central California Conference

Your Best Pathway to Health:

April 8-10, 2015

At least 1,500 volunteers are needed to serve 6,000 residents in San Antonio, Texas, host city for the 2015 General Conference session. The organizers and partners who brought Bridges to Health to the San Francisco Bay Area in 2014 are preparing to serve twice as many in San Antonio with a wide array of medical, dental, and vision services. To register, find more information, and watch an informational video, visit PathwayToHealthVolunteer.org
Adventists Help Communities Affected by Wildfires

In September 2014 two wildfires ravaged parts of northern California: the King Fire in El Dorado County and the Boles Fire in Siskiyou County. In each of these areas, local Adventists stepped up to help their neighbors and communities.

On Sunday, September 14, less than 24 hours after the King Fire started, the head of the Sacramento-area Red Cross telephoned Camino church pastor Craig Klatt and asked to use his church as an evacuation shelter. "Within an hour we were invaded by trucks loaded with all of the supplies needed to totally operate a small town," said Klatt.

For the next two weeks the Red Cross provided shelter for dozens of people, including some with special needs, such as those with breathing problems or small children. They also served meals to 100 people at a time: those staying at the church and others who were lodging nearby with friends. About 50 dogs and cats were cared for in the church courtyard until the smoke got so heavy they had to be moved elsewhere. When evacuees were allowed to go home, they were given food to help them during the first few days.

Local fire, police, and government officials used the church for morning and evening community briefings that were attended by evacuees, other community members, and the media. At the end of the first meeting Klatt was introduced, and someone shouted, "Pray for us!" The incident commander told Klatt, "Go ahead," and he was able to pray for everyone involved.

After that first meeting, a sheriff’s department representative expressed his surprise at the civility and calm displayed by the attendees—despite their stress, which he credited to people’s respect for the church. “He told me that they just might have to hold all future briefing meetings in churches,” said Klatt.

By the time the Red Cross shut down its operations at the facility on September 26, church members learned that their immediate community had been spared, including the homes of those who had taken shelter at the church.

Shortly after the fire, Klatt attended an El Dorado County Board of Supervisors meeting. “They took the opportunity to express their deep gratitude for the way that our church stepped up to help meet the challenge,” said Klatt. “One of the board members told me, ‘I want to thank you and your church for representing the other churches and God so well in our community.’”

The Boles Fire, which began on September 15, destroyed about 150 residences. When those who had lost their homes were allowed to visit their properties for the first time, they were accompanied by chaplains and counselors. One of them was Yreka church pastor Enoch Brownell, who serves as a volunteer chaplain for the Siskiyou County Sheriff’s Office. There wasn’t much Brownell and the other chaplains could do, after distributing cold water and work gloves.

“It was a ministry of presence, just being there,” he said.

Brownell discovered that many victims of the fire were interested in looking for very small items, such as melted coin collections, and they were in need of “sifting boxes” to sort through the ashes. So Yreka church members of all ages gathered in the church/school gymnasium to create 50 sifting boxes. Made from materials donated by a local store, each box consisted of a simple wooden frame and wire-mesh screen.

Church members were glad to find a useful way to help their neighbors. “Even though it was a small project, it was really nice for the church members to know they were doing something that was needed,” said Brownell.

Students from Yreka Adventist Christian School also helped. So many donations came in for the fire victims that the community was overrun with clothing and other items. The school’s fifth through eighth graders and others spent several hours at a warehouse helping to organize the donations. Girls sorted clothes by size so that people could easily find what they needed.
and boys organized boxes of toys. “It was really good that we showed up,” said their teacher, Mary Korcek. “The task was so overwhelming.”

Members of the Mount Shasta church discovered first hand the Boles Fire’s devastation when a family in their church lost their home in the blaze. The church helped, and continues to help, the family get what they need to resume their lives. Church members also served their fellow Christians by giving the members of a local Methodist church a break on a Sunday so that they could attend their church’s worship services. All day Sunday Adventists took over the work going on in the Methodist church gym, organizing clothes, shoes, food, and toiletries.

Mount Shasta church pastor Jim Crabtree has been impressed by the dedication and commitment of the various Christian churches in his area. “The entire Christian community up here has just been outstanding,” he said. “People that give and care are really a delight for the soul.”

—Julie Lorenz, Northern California Conference

Clearlake Homeless Ministry: A Blessing to All

Pacific Union College (PUC) students have many opportunities when it comes to making weekend plans: vespers services on Friday, hikes on campus trails, trips to the ocean, and Student Association gatherings on Saturday night. For many students, service to others through Clearlake Homeless Ministry is an essential part of each weekend.

After Sabbath church services and lunch, students hop into vans and make their way to Clearlake, a small town 40 miles from PUC. This outreach began in fall 2012 when senior theology major Gresford Thomas saw a need in the Clearlake community.

Each Friday afternoon volunteers pack nonperishable food into bags to hand out at Redbud Park. The bags are filled with a variety of supplies, including donations from the school cafeteria and from Gott’s, a local restaurant. The ministry also makes calls for seasonal items, including coats and tarps in winter.

The team is led by Cristian and Shelina Villegas, who visit Clearlake each week to make sure the needs of those who are homeless are met. “We’ve become great friends with them now and are introducing them more and more to the love of God each time we visit,” says Cristian. “It’s a mutual blessing each visit.”

For some time the blessing has included a warm meal as well as the bagged supplies. Vola Andrianarionana, professor of physics, and his family began cooking a warm meal to share. Instead of handing out the bags and leaving, the students stay and visit with those who are homeless while they eat together. “There is something special when people eat together,” says Gilbert Abella, the ministry’s sponsor and a librarian at PUC. “Beyond the food, they value the kindness and respect.”

Angel Castillo, a junior, values the opportunity to learn from those in different circumstances. “We receive more than we give them, and we can learn so much from the experience.” Castillo stressed that the ministry’s main focus is to befriend those who are homeless and feed them, to plant the seed and introduce them to Jesus. “It’s important to not feel fully responsible for these people,” he explains.

Jonathan Goorhuis, a senior who has been involved with the ministry in Clearlake since it first began, calls the ministry a good opportunity for students. “It taught me how to treat everyone,” Goorhuis says.

Abella had nothing but praise for the PUC students involved in Clearlake Homeless Ministry, remarking that the students provide those they serve an example of what it is like to live God’s love. “The love that they have received has touched their lives and inspired them,” he shares.

—Amanda Navarrete, Pacific Union College

PERSON TO PERSON: A PUC student visits with a woman who came to Redbud Park for the food, but stayed for conversation.
Approximately 220 medical and nonmedical volunteers recently transformed the San Diego Academy gym into a temporary clinic, treating 274 individuals in need of medical and dental procedures.

Paradise Valley church, in collaboration with other local Adventist churches, hosted the free clinic held by the Adventist Medical Evangelism Network (AMEN). The event also included participation from Friendships for Hope, Loma Linda University School of Dentistry, and Weimar Center of Health and Education.

Will James, senior pastor of Paradise Valley church, and his wife, Peggy, Community Services director, were thrilled when AMEN contacted them. “We had been praying for something like this to happen in our area,” said Peggy.

While AMEN readied the personnel and equipment for the clinic, members of area Adventist churches advertised it by handing out flyers. Local church members and volunteers helped with registration, meals for volunteers, music, setup, and cleanup.

The event started on Friday afternoon, October 24, 2014, immediately after school let out. Between 2:00 and 5:00 p.m. patients registered and the medical staff conducted triage to determine the urgency of medical and dental treatment. Patients were given appointments on Sabbath or Sunday based on this assessment.

Mark Finley, one of the AMEN’s founders as well as assistant to the General Conference president, spoke to volunteers at vespers on Friday evening. He told of the founding of nearby Paradise Valley Hospital 110 years ago, noting that Ellen White emphasized meeting both physical and spiritual needs.

The following morning medical and nonmedical volunteers met for Sabbath school and orientation led by Mark Ranzinger, former president of the AMEN board. For the Sabbath worship service Finley preached at the Paradise Valley church about the good Samaritan.

The priest had his head filled with theology and passed by the man in need without paying him any mind, Finley said. The Levite stopped, but considered the cost of helping too high. The Samaritan came near and ministered to him.

“It isn’t just what we believe,” said Finley. “All doctrine is about making us gentler and more loving individuals.”

When the clinic opened at 1:00 p.m., the medical and nonmedical volunteers were in full “Samaritan” mode. Everyone made an effort to share the love of Christ through whatever part they were given to perform.

The event concluded on Sunday. The clinic was open from 7:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. By the end of the weekend, 274 individuals had been seen, and more than 300 procedures had been performed, most of them dental, including 13 crowns made on the spot.

“Almost 11 years ago a group of physicians and dentists met with Mark Finley,” said Todd Guthrie, orthopedic surgeon and president of AMEN. “We asked ourselves what we could do to facilitate evangelism in our field.”

Their original purpose was to seek ways in which to reflect Jesus’ model...
Danny Kwon, executive director of AMEN, has been instrumental in developing AMEN clinics. Several years ago he attended a clinic by Remote Area Medical (RAM), a philanthropic organization that organizes large, free clinics in the United States.

As a result of his inspiration, this was the eighth clinic organized by AMEN in less than two years. The emphasis has been not only on bringing free treatment, but also on showing the love of God in effective, large-scale ways.

“When you help someone with a medical or dental problem, or even if you just listen to them, you’re showing them a glimpse of God,” said Kwon.

And it was certainly more than just words for the leaders in attendance. Guthrie was continually fielding medical questions and directing volunteers. Kwon ensured that everything was running smoothly and that volunteers knew where they should be. Finley circulated among people waiting for dental or medical service, engaging them in conversation, offering encouragement, and sometimes praying with them.

Students from the Loma Linda School of Dentistry saw many patients, not just performing procedures, but listening, smiling, talking, and praying with them. Volunteers from the Paradise Valley church and other local congregations engaged with people who came from their very own communities, showing them the love of Christ.

One member of Paradise Valley church, Gloria Ruff, was thoroughly impressed with the clinic. She had been fearful of undergoing a dental procedure. But after praying about it, she worked up the courage to go ahead with it.

“When I was being seated to have my teeth cleaned, a group of gentlemen started playing guitar and singing hymns. I think it took the nervousness away… The Lord is present here,” she said.

AMEN leaders hope this idea catches on. They are willing to help other churches and congregations host their own events. “I would love to see hundreds of these types of clinics done by our conferences and churches,” said Kwon. “If we could do this all across America, it would present God’s love and power in a very tangible way.”
"I don’t miss any programs, and I love the songs that fill my spirit with love for God. Thanks for filling our homes with a bit of love and peace."

Listener in the Americas
**Privilege**

*By Daniel Weber*

Privilege: a special right, advantage, or immunity granted or available only to a particular person or group of people.

Recent events in the United States have caused the term privilege to be used a lot in media reports. Statements from leaders of various ethnic groups mention privilege. Those who have been made to feel that they have less worth than other groups in society are talking about privilege.

I have to be honest: I represent one of these “privileged” groups. I can’t help it; I was born into this group, and I will likely die this way.

I was discussing this with a close friend and colleague, and his comments made me stop and think. He shared how these events brought back memories of being called names as a boy because of how he looked, his family’s ethnic background, the color of his skin. I couldn’t relate, not even a little bit. And it bothered me. A lot.

I have friends from many different ethnic and racial backgrounds, and I consider myself fortunate for having the vision to accept people for who they are, not how they look. But I also have to be honest: At times I’ve let feelings of resentment and anger bubble to the surface. I have felt frustration when someone of a different ethnic group, a complete stranger, cuts me off in traffic, or violates my self-perceived personal space.

I remember one time in my life that I felt completely out of place. I was gathering stories in Asia. My itinerary took me to Dhaka, Bangladesh, an immense city, one of the most densely populated cities in the world. One afternoon I decided to take a stroll up the street on which the compound where I stayed was located. I may have been the only White person for miles. The sidewalk was tightly packed with men in long white robes, and women covered in black that showed only their eyes. I felt as if every eye was on me as I made my way along the path. My physical stature made me stand head and shoulders above the crowd. Part of me wanted to crawl into a hole and hide. For the first time in my life I felt uncomfortable about who I was.

At that point my human nature took over, and I did what we should all do in these situations: I smiled. I looked the next person in the eye and smiled. The person smiled back. I was shocked. That’s all it took. My smile showed my respect, and their smile told me I was welcome in their community. The rest of my walk was a joy.

Here’s another definition of privilege: something regarded as a rare opportunity. As Christians, we should look at the world through rose-colored glasses, losing sight of all the different colors and focusing on the opportunities God places before us. What defines us as Christians should also provide us with guidance about how to live our lives.

Christ accepts us as we are. He loves us and forgives us despite the mistakes we make, no matter the color of our skin, where we live, or where we were born. God made us in His image, and that’s something about which we should all be proud. He is White, Black, Red, Yellow, and Brown. His hair is straight, curly, even bald. He is tall or short, rich or poor. He is reflected in everyone on this planet. How can we not respect those He has created? To not respect them is to disrespect Him.

I’m praying for those affected by the current turmoil on the streets, alleys, and homes of my homeland. I’m also praying that my life will be the start of something new; that maybe I can be the spark of a wave of respect, acceptance, and love in this world; that I accept the challenge of the privilege of being a child of God; that it starts with me, not my neighbor.

It starts with a smile as we accept the privilege and opportunity of being Christians. ■

Daniel Weber is communication director for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America.
Adventists Urged to Study Women's Ordination for Themselves

I am responding to Andrew McChesney’s news article “Adventists Urged to Study Women’s Ordination for Themselves” (November 2014). I read with incredulity a summary of Position 3 of the TOSC. It alluded to the biblical account of God giving Israel its first king as a reason we should ordain women to the gospel ministry.

Let my try to understand the logic: It was God’s order, plan, and will that His holy people be under the leadership of His divinely ordained judges and prophets. The people, however, had a desire to be like the surrounding nations and be led by kings instead. God told Samuel that in asking for a king, they were rejecting not Samuel as their leader, but God Himself. God yielded to Israel’s yearning for royalty; and they soon experienced the bitter fruit of autocratic abuse.

What does this Position 3 suggest? We are told that, yes, it is acknowledged that according to God’s order we are to ordain only males to leadership in the church, but since God gave in to Israel’s request for a king in the place of His ordained prophet, we should give in to the divisions of our church, which ask to ordain women as their leaders in the place of God-ordained men.

The Work of a True Prophet

As William Fagal said in “The Work of a True Prophet” (November 2014): “We can expect opposition to a true prophet.”

Under the section “The Method God Uses,” “impressions” and “dictation” were discredited because they were not visions. Most of the Torah, the Books of Moses, were from dictation. David was given the pattern of the Temple “with God’s hand upon mine” (see 1 Chron. 28:19) giving him the written instructions.

God does not leave us to the mercy of human intellect and then command us not to go to the right and left of it, as He told us through Moses and Joshua. God is giving several people in our day words through dictation to be written and placed on the Internet, etc., and that is the Spirit of Prophecy that God continues to use to guide and warn.

We should be careful not to cancel out other prophets than “our own,” because all things are tested by the Bible, not by our prophet. In any case, just because we have a true prophet does not mean that a church is following that prophet or the Bible. God said this is a time of great deception—we must be careful to be true to the written Word of God in the entire Bible.

We’re Talking Miracles

I have questions after reading Ted N. C. Wilson’s article “God’s Authoritative Voice” (October 2014).

Even though the biblical creation story is an essential part of my faith, I am uncomfortable with creationism as a science because it appears to pick and choose from the evidence in nature to bolster its position. Creation science starts with an answer and looks for evidence to support that answer.

Selective perception is an ironic danger for Christians who really believe that “the truth will set you free” (John 8:32, NIV). If the evidence is there, it will eventually come out. Trying to prove the biblical creation story with science is about the same as trying to scientifically prove the virgin birth, Jesus walking on water, the feeding of 5,000 with five loaves of bread, and the possibility of life after death. We are talking about miracles.

Wilson’s article seems to encourage teachers and preachers in our church to begin with conclusions and seek evidence to support those conclusions, and ignore the inconvenient evidence that may challenge our thinking. I was an Adventist teacher for 26 years, and I always encouraged my students to think, ask questions, and not be afraid of evidence.

I believe, but I do not have answers to all of my questions.

—Mike Austin, Littleton, Colorado
I’m 60 years old and have been diagnosed with prostate cancer. The doctors say mine is early-stage, and my prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test result was only 15. I’ve been recommended to undergo a radical prostatectomy. What is your opinion?

Not all prostate cancer is equally aggressive, and pathologists will come up with an aggression score called the “Gleason score.” Highly aggressive tumors require aggressive treatment. Older men over 75 years of age might well die of causes other than prostate cancer, and this situation has to be weighed against potential risks. This has led to the concept of “watchful waiting.” Persons in the 65- to 74-year-old age group are a little more difficult to advise. Seeing that you are young (60), we’re of the opinion that you’re being offered appropriate advice.

We found a recent article that studied the benefits of radical prostatectomy over the long term, and compared it with watchful waiting. This Scandinavian study followed 695 men from between 1989 and 1999, through 2012. This period of up to 23 years of follow-up permitted the two groups—347 men in the surgery group and 348 men in the watchful-waiting group—to be studied.

Two hundred men in the surgery group died, and 247 in the watchful-waiting group died. Deaths due to prostate cancer were 63 in the surgery group, and 99 in the watchful-waiting group.

This study shows benefits of the surgery; however, the benefits were more in the younger men. The outcomes in the older men in the watchful-waiting group who never required palliative treatment provided support for the concept of active surveillance in adequately selected groups. In this study the overall long-term disease burden is a reminder that factors other than survival need to be considered when counseling individual men with prostate cancer.

We do agree with your medical/surgical team and believe your chances of cure to be quite high with surgery. You might be offered additional measures, or even the very precise robotic surgical approach.

Though side effects are certainly common and not to be minimized, your survival, even with some side effects, could be vastly superior to the alternative of nonevidence-based approaches, including not being treated at all.

My chocolate drink was hot, too hot to drink. So I just held it in my hands, using the warmth to defrost my fingers. Some classmates and I were downtown in the city working on our photography assignment. I had ducked inside a coffee shop to warm up and wait for my friends who were still outside snapping pictures. I watched the icy wind tugging at their hats and vaporizing their breath while I held my hot chocolate. In a few minutes they joined me by the window, but they acted uncertain, whispering among themselves. Then they turned to me.

“There’s a homeless guy out there. He’s all hunched against the cold. If we buy him something warm, would you help take it to him? We’re afraid to go by ourselves.”

“Sure,” I said.

Hot chocolate and cookies were purchased, and we tried to come up with a relevant Bible verse to write on a napkin. Eventually we gave up and headed out with the treats. Most of us stood back while two of us approached the man—we didn’t want to intimidate him. He accepted the warm drink graciously.

We shot the rest of our rolls of film and went home to our warm beds feeling like good Samaritans. We’d done a good deed.

Several months passed before I was downtown again, and I had forgotten about that freezing night by the coffee shop until I saw him. It was the same man. Same matted hair, same drab clothes, and same spot on the bridge. I was shocked. This was the same person for whom we had bought the hot chocolate. What was he doing here? All the stories I’d read about good Samaritans ended with the helped person’s life changed and the good Samaritan enjoying warm fuzzy feelings. This just didn’t feel right.

The Rest of the Story
The person who caused Jesus to tell the parable of the good Samaritan was a lawyer asking the Master what he had to do to “inherit eternal life” (Luke 10:25). In return, Jesus probed the lawyer about the law. The man quoted Deuteronomy 6:5: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength.”

By Anna Bartlett

Loving your neighbor means more than doing good deeds.
“Right answer,” Jesus responded. “Do those things, and you will live.”

But the lawyer asked for clarification, so Jesus told the story of a traveler who gets robbed, beaten, and left for dead by the side of the road. Several well-meaning Jews saw the injured man as they traveled the same road, but chose to pass him by. Then a Samaritan saw the injured man and immediately provided help (Luke 10:30-33). The Samaritan cleaned the man's wounds and put ointment on them; yet he didn't just patch up the person and left him; he helped the hurt man get up, put him on his own animal, and continued his journey with him. When they eventually arrived at an inn, once again the Samaritan did not abandon his friend but paid the innkeeper to look after him until he would return (verse 35).

Jesus then asked who in the story had treated the injured person right. The lawyer answered that it was the one who had shown mercy to the individual. "Go and do likewise," said Jesus (verse 37).

**More Than a Drive-by**

Jesus did not only answer the lawyer's question on how to live in a way that will fit us for heaven in the parable of the good Samaritan. He also showed us how we can be available for people in need.

Before Jesus even started the story He reinforced what the lawyer already knew. In order to truly connect with others, we must first be connected to God. Once we recognize our desperate need of God, we can then share (a glimpse of) God's love with others. Purposefully using a non-Jew, a Samaritan, as the centerpiece of His story, Jesus showed His audience that their version of loving others was broken.

When the good Samaritan saw someone in need, he stopped what he was doing and provided immediate help. However, this wasn't just a drive-by act of charity. The good Samaritan didn't just help his neighbor with his immediate need and leave him in the dust. He picked up his neighbor and brought him along for the journey.

The good Samaritan also made a long-term investment in his neighbor. He expended time and resources to make sure his neighbor was OK, then brought him to an inn, where he continued to care for him.

When the good Samaritan was confident that his friend wouldn't die if left unattended, he entrusted him to the care of the innkeeper. But the story doesn't end there. The good Samaritan didn't abandon his neighbor to the wiles of those around him; he paid the innkeeper to look after him, and told the innkeeper that he would be checking in to make sure his neighbor was OK and healing properly.

All around us are victims of Satan's attacks. Like some protagonists in Jesus' story we often just look and pass them by. Sometimes, following an evangelistic series, those who are baptized into the church don't stay very long after the series is over because they feel left behind. One small negative experience can cause those "babes in Christ" to give up if there isn't someone to support them on their journey.

The good Samaritan does more than just help somebody get up. Connected to Christ, he is willing to walk with others all the way. He does more than just see injured people; he meets their immediate needs and helps get them back on the path to salvation. He develops relationships with people and looks after them. He brings them into the company of others and checks back in to make sure they are healing. A good Samaritan becomes a friend and sticks around until those who are hurting can stand up and continue the journey. A good Samaritan friends people to Christ.

**After the Hot Chocolate**

After I returned home from seeing the man outside the coffee shop for a second time, my mind flooded with all the things I could possibly do to help him. But I realized that my ideas were targeting only his immediate needs. I didn't even know this man or his story. Suddenly it clicked: I understood that in order to make a lasting difference in the lives of individuals, I would have to do more than just do good deeds. I would have to befriend people and minister to them, bringing them into my life and to the Savior.

The next time I see someone in need, I want to be a true good Samaritan. Someone who doesn't see people and passes them by, but who offers her utmost to help and brings them along on a journey—a journey that continues beyond the hot chocolate.

Anna Bartlett was one of the 2014 summer interns at Adventist World.
I have always been fascinated by stories. Not necessarily by the stories themselves, but rather because there is always something exciting to find if one reads between the lines. What lies behind the character’s course of action; what are the unspoken consequences of a particular decision; what is the author not telling us, but expecting us to understand? As much as I enjoy happy endings, unanticipated, strange endings intrigue me more, because I have to stop and think about the twist of the story that led to such a surprising finale.

When it comes to life on earth, a real saga you and I play a part in, we encounter the most fascinating story of all. There is much more to the conflicts and issues concerning humankind than we notice at first glance. To understand why people suffer, why there are so many different conceptions of what truth is, why our worst struggles are often within us, we have to understand the story behind the story.

The War

It all began in the heart of an angel in heaven. It’s a mystery how sin could appear within a perfect being living in a perfect place. But since God’s government is administrated on the basis of love (1 John 4:8; Matt. 22:37-40), all His subjects must have the freedom to worship God because they love and fully appreciate Him and His character. Unexplainably, Satan began to pride himself in his magnificence, which then developed into a wish to become like God (Isa. 14:13, 14; Eze. 28:12-19). This was an affront to God’s law, which is “holy, righteous and good” (Rom. 7:12). In doing so, he was casting doubts on God Himself. Why do God’s subjects need to obey the law? Is God really a God of love? How can God be both loving and just at the same time? With such suspicions propagating through heaven, harmony was disrupted, and serious measures had to be taken.

“Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven” (Rev. 12:7, 8). God certainly had the power to destroy Satan then and there, but that wouldn’t have solved the problem. The questions concerning God would still be hovering in some hearts, and the foundation of love of God’s kingdom would have been replaced by fear. The best solution was to let the universe witness the practical consequences of evil.

The moral war between God and Satan intensified when Adam and Eve sinned. By eating the forbidden fruit, they doubted God’s word and His authority, thus declaring their independence from God (Gen. 3:1-6). This permitted Satan to seize the dominion of earth (John 14:30), and so, turned humanity into God’s enemies. The battlefield moved to this earth, where from then on the devil has worked diligently to misrepresent God, causing endless pain and suffering, spreading lies, and inducing all the immorality we see around us. But just as in every good story, there’s a protagonist and an antagonist, God was also their place in heaven” (Rev. 12:7, 8).
active in the story of the Great Controversy, a spiritual, moral battle that impacts every aspect of life on earth. God had a strategy, and He fought back.

The Strategy

How should God’s love be reconciled with His justice? How could He save sinners without letting sin go unpunished? Though it seems like an impossible task, every single part of God’s strategy was ingeniously thought out. Even before the war began, the plan of salvation was already set in the heart of God (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 6:19): the death of Jesus Christ would be the ultimate act of love, making it possible for rebellious sinners to be reconciled with God, and, at the same time, proving the legitimacy of God’s law.

But the war is not limited to the cosmic level. It is also a battle within the hearts of people. Our natural, sinful mindset is opposed to God and His law (Rom. 8:7). But the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of those who accept Christ breaks the power of Satan. “Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12; cf. Rom. 3:21-26). Throughout earth’s history we hear, read about, and encounter men and women whose lives have been changed by the touch of divine love. This doesn’t mean that we are fully free from the bondage of sin; on the contrary, it creates a miniature conflict within us (Gal. 5:17), making it imperative that we submit ourselves to God on a daily basis (James 4:7).

The Victory

When Christ died on the cross, Satan’s evil character was made plain to the entire universe. God’s plan of salvation was firmly established and His character confirmed (John 12:31, 32; Rom. 3:25, 26). Jesus’ cry of victory still resounds to this day, and will continue to echo through all eternity: it is finished! “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters . . . has been hurled down” (Rev. 12:10).

But the story did not find its end yet. It was still necessary for the contrast between the victorious Christ and the evil prince to be brought to light.5 Still, God revealed to us the ending beforehand. Satan will be destroyed, and the entire universe will serve God out of love.

There is, however, a twist to this story: while we know the ending of the big story, for you and me it is open-ended. Though we are active participants in the story, no author, no narrator, not even God, can determine whose side we will be on when the time comes. It depends entirely on us. Have you made your decision?

2 Ibid.
3 Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from Scripture in this article have been taken from the New International Version.
4 Ibid., pp. 498, 499.

Keldie Paroschi is a third-year theology student at Brazil Adventist University in Engenheiro Coelho, São Paulo. She enjoys reading and being around good-humored people.
The day of his appeal had come. Amani,* a condemned man, called his attorney and asked him to go with him before the judge. His attorney refused, telling Amani that his case “was hopeless.”

As Amani hung up the phone his thoughts drifted back a few months to a small, dirt-floor courtyard where he, along with 60 other condemned men, listened while I shared with them the gospel message. Amani then gave his life to God. The officers allowed only 12 of them to be baptized; Amani was one of them.

Trusting in God, Amani now stood before the judge alone. After reviewing the inmate’s folder page by page, the judge looked at him and said, “You are free to leave.” Shocked, Amani walked out of the courtroom, expecting to be arrested as soon as he stepped outside; but there was no one there to arrest him. Amani was free to begin a new life!

Since then, two more of the death-row inmates who accepted Christ as their Savior have been released, and word has spread that “the God of the Adventists” is able to set you free. The real story, though, is not how God has the power to release inmates from earthly prisons, but how He has opened doors to the Kenya prison system so the message of His love could enter and set prisoners free from the bondage of sin.

In 2004, inmates in Kenyan pris-
ons had three denominational options for chaplain support. Ten years later they now have a fourth option: Seventh-day Adventist.

In 2011 Isaiah Osugo, the commissioner general of Kenya prisons, directed that an Adventist chaplain be assigned to each of the country’s 107 prison facilities. This unprecedented step was in response to the more than 14,000 inmates who have been baptized into the Adventist Church. The ministry was started 10 years ago by Benson Ochieng Obolla and the King’s Messengers. My wife, Marvel, and I, then at the Baltimore First Seventh-day Adventist Church in Maryland, United States, have been privileged to participate.

From Music to Ministry

In 2004 the King’s Messengers of Kenya, an Adventist volunteer musical evangelism group of about 15 college-age young people, were invited to sing at the Prisons Staff Training College in Ruiru, Kenya. While there, the King’s Messengers learned about 250 Adventist inmates awaiting trial at the Nairobi Remand Prison.

Kenyan prisons were built during the early 1900s, before Kenyan independence, so they lack modern amenities. Most of the toilets are open latrines. Soap and water for bathing and other needs are limited. The prisons are overcrowded, which means sleeping accommodations are inadequate. The inability to segregate sick inmates combined with little access to medical care results in increased health problems.

Before 2002, prison visitation was not allowed in Kenya—not even for family members. Restrictions have been eased, however, and the performance of the King’s Messengers at the Prisons Staff Training College made a positive impression. Through connections made with 4,000 prison officers assembled for training, Benson Ochieng Obolla, music director for the King’s Messengers, made arrangements to visit and bring food and soap to the 250 Adventists in the prison in Nairobi.

To the surprise of Obolla and the King’s Messengers, when they arrived at the Nairobi prison, 3,000 inmates had assembled to hear them sing. Seeing the poor conditions and lack of basic necessities the prisoners had to contend with created within the King’s Messengers a desire to minister to all the inmates.

Recruiting Reinforcements

The desire to help inmates in Kenya was carried with Leon and May Earl in 2008 to the Baltimore First Seventh-day Adventist Church, where I then served as pastor. A native of Kenya and cousin to Obolla, May was personally familiar with prison conditions; one of her brothers had died in a Kenyan prison. When she discovered my interest in evangelism, we immediately began planning an evangelistic campaign in Kenya.

In 2009, we partnered with the King’s Messengers and made our first trip to Kitale, where we held an evangelistic
series inside the prison compound. To our surprise, not just a few but all 1,500 inmates came out to listen. They stood in the hot sun all day and missed lunch in order to hear the message. After an appeal, 218 of the inmates chose to give their lives to Christ. These inmates were given a copy of the 28 fundamental beliefs of the Adventist Church and were connected with local church members for Bible studies.

While the prison Bible studies were being held, we conducted a two-week evangelistic series in the city, where another 60 decisions were made for Christ. After two weeks we returned to the prison and invited those who had studied and wanted to be baptized to come forward. We hauled in water from a nearby pond for the small, portable swimming pool that served as a baptistry, as there was no water in the prison. The water in the baptistry was only knee-deep, so I knelt down and had the inmates sit so I could immerse them.

In 2011 we again worked with the King’s Messengers, but this time at the Kisumu and Kodiaga prisons. We repeated our pattern of speaking to the prisoners and holding a two-week village campaign. I spoke to the maximum-security group while Leon spoke to the medium-security group. My wife, Marvel, and May spoke to the women. While at Kodiaga I was also permitted to talk with the 60 prisoners on death row, and 30 of them accepted Christ as their Savior.

I baptized one man who was confined to a stretcher. He was physically unable to come outside to listen to the messages, but he had heard them through the sound system inside the prison. He asked to be carried out for baptism. At first it was thought to be too much trouble. But when I overheard the situation being discussed, I asked the officers to please bring him out. They did, and I baptized him—stretcher and all. That man has since been released.

Upon his release the King’s Messengers provided him with a wheelchair.

Because of the great health needs, we also hosted a medical clinic run by a doctor and nurses from the University of Eastern Africa Baraton, the Adventist school near Eldoret. The clinic treated more than 700 inmates and uniformed staff. Because of the King’s Messengers’ work, about 400 inmates were baptized. The prison commander then gave permission for an Adventist church to be built inside the prison, a place in which the inmates could worship.

Making Prison a Better Place

The Kenya prison system’s objective now is to reform inmates so they leave better citizens than when they entered. Prison officers have said that “inmates who surrender their lives to Christ have become more law-abiding and easier to handle.” One young man had been an inmate at Naivasha prison for 21 years. When he first came, they put him in isolation because he was so difficult to deal with. He caused fights with the other inmates and was disrespectful to the guards. But after he found Christ as his Savior, his life changed so dramatically that he was later released. The change in prisoner behavior has shown prison officers that when inmates have a relationship with God, it makes the prison a better place for everyone. Officers view the King’s Messengers as working together with them to achieve a common goal.

But not everyone has been happy. As the work progressed, established chaplains became upset that so many inmates were becoming Adventists. They began to oppose the King’s Messengers coming to the prisons. They tried to discourage the group by having the electricity turned off during their visits so that the sound system wouldn’t work, filing protests against them with the officers in charge, and other such annoyances.

Obolla, however, refused to be intimidated by the opposition of the established chaplains, and God worked to remove the obstacles that stood in the way, and continued to open prison doors. The King’s Messengers have now ministered to 75 of the 107 prisons in Kenya.
Kenya, which house as many as 5,000 to as few as 150 inmates. We continue to encourage Obolla and the King’s Messengers as best we can, providing baptisteries and funding from church-member donations when possible.

Training Chaplains

Chaplains in Kenya, including the newly appointed Adventist chaplains, are government employees. Osugo required that the chaplains be selected from within the current prison staff. Seventy-three Adventist chaplains, both men and women, have so far been appointed. However, they had been trained and were working as prison officers, not chaplains. So, working together with Obolla, we held a two-week prison chaplain training session at the Naivasha maximum-security prison compound in April 2014. This was funded by the Baltimore First Adventist Church of Maryland and the Carrollton Adventist Church of Ohio.

More than 100 people, including the 73 newly minted prison chaplains, assembled for classes. Topics included Seventh-day Adventist beliefs, church history, conflict and stress management, Bible study, family life, and simple health remedies and principles. In addition to our United States team, Adventist pastors Kennedy Ombati, head Adventist chaplain at Kenya prison headquarters; Inspector Alexander Tarus, chaplain in charge of

The First Prison Church

The Kodiaga Maximum Security Prison Seventh-day Adventist Church, approved by the Kenya prison system in 2011, was opened and dedicated July 18, 2014. This is the first church building constructed inside a Kenyan prison. During construction Obolla was asked if he could build a roof over the latrine. Obolla took one look at the old open latrine and told the commander, “No!”

Instead, he offered to build a new facility—a closed system with flushable toilets and showers. The church and toilets were completed at the same time, and the facility was turned over to the inmates and commander. Church leaders from the East-Central Africa Division, the West Kenya

Ben Boggess, retired pastor of the Baltimore First Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ellicott City, Maryland, United States, and his wife, Marvel, a retired nurse and teacher, now live in Carrollton, Ohio.
Sunday, June 23, by invitation, I visited the prison, in Salem, Oregon, in company with Brother and Sister Carter, and Sister Jordan, who took me there in her carriage. The superintendent and warden of the prison were introduced to me. When the time arrived for service we were conducted to the chapel, a room made cheerful by an abundance of light, and pure fresh air. At a signal from a bell, two men opened the great iron gates by means of a lever, and the prisoners came flocking from their cells into the chapel. The doors were securely closed behind them, and for the first time in my life, I was immured in prison walls.

The Stories They Could Tell

I had anticipated seeing a set of repulsive looking men. In this I was disappointed; many of them seemed to be intelligent, and some appeared to be men of ability. They were dressed in the coarse, but neat striped prison uniform, their hair smooth, and boots brushed. As I looked upon the varied physiognomies before me, I thought: To each of these men has been committed peculiar gifts or talents for use, and not for abuse. All before me, from those who had occupied conspicuous and important positions in the world, and in the church, even those who had been most lowly and obscure have been entrusted with some talents, whether of wealth, station, influence, kindly sympathies or affections, they were given from the heavenly treasury, and were to have been used for the glory of God, and the benefit of the world.

The men before me had despised the gifts of heaven, and had abused, and misapplied them. Some of the convicts manifested a forced unnatural cheerfulness. But many, especially the older men, looked exceedingly sad and melancholy. Before me were youths of tender years, and the hardened, gray-haired sinner, all under the bondage of the law, because they had transgressed its statutes.

As I looked upon young men of eighteen to twenty and thirty years of age, I thought of their unhappy mothers, and of the grief and remorse which was their bitter portion. Had they done their duty by their children? Had they not indulged them in their own will and way, and neglected to teach them the statutes of God, and His claims upon them? Many of those mothers’ hearts had
been broken by the ungodly course pursued by their children.

**Conquering Love**

When all the company were assembled, Brother Carter read the hymn. All had books, and joined heartily in singing. One, who seemed to be an accomplished musician, played the organ. I then opened the meeting by prayer, and again all joined in singing. I spoke from the words of John: “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore, the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God: and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”

I exalted before them the infinite sacrifice that the Father made, in giving His beloved Son for fallen men, that they might through obedience be transformed, and become the acknowledged sons of God. The church and the world are called upon to behold and admire a love which thus expressed is beyond human comprehension, and even amazed the angels of heaven. This love was so deep, so broad, and so high, that it filled the holy angels with amazement, and language in which to describe it, failing the inspired apostle, he calls upon the church and the world to behold it—to make it the theme of contemplation, and of admiration. . . .

When the world was filled with iniquity God lifted up His standard against Satan by sending His Son to the world in the likeness of sinful flesh. Christ bridged the gulf that sin had made, which separated earth from heaven, and man from God. . . .

**Hope for All**

Jesus came from heaven to earth, assumed man’s nature, and was tempted in all points like as we are that he might know how to succor those who should be tempted. Christ’s life is for our example. He shows, in His willing obedience, how man may keep the law of God, and that transgression of the law, and not obedience of it, brings him into bondage. The Savior was full of compassion and love; He never spurned the truly penitent, however great their guilt; but He severely denounced hypocrisy of every sort, He is acquainted with the sins of men, He knows all their acts, and reads their secret motives; yet He does not turn away from them in their iniquity. He pleads and reasons with the sinner, and, in one sense—that of having Himself borne the weakness of humanity—He puts Himself on a level with him. “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though . . . red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” . . .

But the influence of a gospel hope will not lead the sinner to look upon the salvation of Christ as a matter of free grace, while he continues to live in transgression of the law of God. When the light of truth dawns upon his mind, and he fully understands the requirements of God, and realizes the extent of his transgressions, he will reform his ways, become loyal to God through the strength obtained from his Savior, and lead a new and purer life.

Those who overcome in the name of Jesus will stand about the great white throne, with crowns of immortal glory, waving the palm branches of victory. They will be sons of God, children of the heavenly King, their lives running parallel with the life of God. The joy of the Lord will be their joy, and no shadow will ever darken their heavenly home. Said Christ, “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” While mercy lingers, I beseech you to make the most of the probationary time left you, in preparing for eternity, that life may not be an utter failure, and that in the time of solemn scrutiny you may be found with those who are accepted of God, and are called the sons of God.
Why would an elderly woman walk several miles to bring her computer to an evangelistic site in Peru? Because a group of 15 computer science students traveled to Peru in May 2014 to participate in a two-week mission project. Accompanying the computer students were two nursing students and three faculty and staff from Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee, United States, as well as a volunteer doctor from Texas.

Besides conducting evangelistic meetings and operating a medical clinic, our vision was to add an unusual element to the project. Computer science students would carry donated laptops to Peru and set them up as learning laboratories for two of our sister Adventist schools: Colegio Adventista José Pardo in Cuzco and Escuela Adventista de Sicuani. But we also wanted to do more for the people there, so we contacted church leaders at Southeast Peru Mission in Cuzco for ideas.

And ideas they had. By the time we returned from the trip, our students and faculty had taught English; conducted Week of Prayer meetings; held four evangelistic campaigns, including one at the local prison; staffed medical and computer repair clinics at each of the campaign sites; preached at area churches; and presented multiple English and computer science technical workshops at three local public and private colleges. The people—especially the children—responded well to our student leaders.

Two Unique Ministries

Two new ministries in particular were well received: the computer clinics and the college lecture series. In this way God could utilize the team’s particular talents in the area of computer technology. That’s the reason the elderly woman—along with many other local residents—brought her computer to our evangelistic campaign site: so the students could “revitalize” it. Using state-of-the-art software, they removed viruses and malware, performed a variety of optimizations based on the specific needs of the client, and installed anti-virus software for future protection. In most cases computers running painfully slow or not at all were returned to their owners rejuvenated and working speedily.

Faces beamed when they saw new life come back into their old, outdated computers. For many of these people their computer represented a major investment, and it was distressing to them to see that investment break down or become unusable because of its age or malware. They so much appreciated the students’ work that some stayed for the evening meetings.

Computer Lectures

Shortly after arriving in Sicuani, local church leaders asked the team if we would be willing to present one or two lectures on computer science topics at a local college. Our team quickly narrowed down potential topics, identified willing presenters, and readily assented to the request. Within a short time, however, these “one or two presentations” blossomed into a full-fledged lecture series with a formal certificate awarded to those who attended faithfully.

Three lectures were given daily at each college. Two of them covered such topics as personal and corporate security, user interface design, process management, test-driven development, and business ethics. The local pastor, however, presented the third lecture, which focused on physical, social, and spiritual values, such as family, health, friends, dating, and marriage.

Three Southern students and two faculty members prepared and presented the daily computer science lectures.
Even though it was short notice and the challenge pushed the group to their limit, they managed to develop meaningful, professional-looking, and Spanish-translated PowerPoint presentations that were well received. Our faculty and students gave daily 40-minute lectures to 50 to 100 college-level listeners.

“After this experience, I have much less fear of public speaking,” one student told me later.

Not only did the team produce high-quality lectures using a limited Internet connection and a frustrating lack of available laptops, but judging by the enthusiastic response from the listeners, the Lord blessed the presentations and made them understandable, meaningful, and useful. Much of the presented materials was also made available online for students to download.

An Entering Wedge

The computer science lectures, though, were merely a wedge by which God could reach the students at a deeper level through the ministry of the local pastor. Our lectures opened the door to these public institutions so that the pastor and the Holy Spirit could work there. This realization made our experience even more rewarding. God directly used our technical skills and knowledge to proclaim His good news to these precious souls. As a direct result of the lecture series, more than 120 public school students expressed to the pastor a desire to study the Bible with him.

The computer repair clinics and college lectures were new areas of ministry for us, and we initially had many questions about how they would work. Would people bring their computers to the evangelistic sites? Would we be able to fix their problems? Would our work do any good in the grand scheme of things? The answer was yes. People brought not only laptops but desktop PCs and large monitors as well. God blessed our efforts, and we were able to fix and optimize most of the computers that came to us. Almost all those we helped expressed a sincere thankfulness for our assistance, and those who also stayed for the evening meetings were doubly blessed.

The Left Arm of the Gospel

Medical ministry is described as the “right arm” of the gospel, but I wonder if computer ministry today might not be an important part of the “left arm.”

Increasingly, even in developing countries, people who own computers need and value our help. We are told that “the Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’” Could computer ministry be a modern-day outreach opportunity to show people that we care, to help them in need, to win their confidence, and to lead them to Christ?

Perhaps one day in the not-too-distant future, computer science students and their skill-specific ministries will become a standard and integral part of our short- and long-term mission projects all around the world—Computer Crusaders for Christ. I sincerely hope so.


Michael Dant is a professor in the School of Computing at Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee, United States.
Small Church, Big Heart

Idaho church members stretch boundary of compassion.

PRAISING GOD: The 12 children baptized as a result of attending the Jerusalen school pose with the Meridan church team. Team members from left are Calvin Carroll, Hudson Logan, Beverly Logan, Chuck Bobst, Elaine Bookter, Sherman Bookter, the local pastor who baptized the children, and Mary Carroll.

By Sandra Blackmer
When 12 students from the Adventist-run Jerusalen Elementary School in Iquitos, Peru, were baptized August 22, retired Pacific Press Publishing Association employee Chuck Bobst felt God was affirming the difficult decision he had made seven years before.

After an initial mission trip to Iquitos with the People of Peru Project in 2006 to establish a crisis center there, Chuck had chosen to shift his focus to helping children and their families in less-affluent areas of the jungle-surrounded community. He subsequently founded Bridge the Gap, Inc., a nonprofit mission organization.

Chuck says. “It’s housed in a local Adventist church building.”

Meridian members, others from Pacific Press in Nampa, Idaho, and local businesses help pay school expenses, often including the cost of uniforms and books, for 27 of the students. About 90 kids are currently enrolled in grades 1-6.

**Going to School Hungry**

Many children in Iquitos have needs even more basic than education that must be met, such as having enough to eat.

“The teachers were telling us that the kids weren’t paying attention and often falling asleep in class because they were hungry,” Chuck notes. “So we started feeding them. After that, their grades went up, on average, a whole letter grade!”

**MISSION MOMENTS**

*Out of Control*

I have been in Poland for a little more than three months now. In the grand scheme of things it is not much time, but I have already learned and experienced so many things. One of the biggest lessons I have learned is that we really have to “let go and let God.”

Back in the States I really loved to have full control of my life. This is something I did not fully realize until I got here. In Poland I literally cannot do everything by myself. The control I so loved before has to be released. I have learned that it is OK to lean on others for help. Most important, I learned that I can’t do anything without God.

**MERIDIAN TEAM:** The Meridian church members who traveled to Peru stand with their interpreters. (Back/from left): Hudson Logan, Beverly Logan, Mary Carroll, Calvin Carroll, Sherman Booker, Elaine Bookter, an interpreter. (Front/from left): An interpreter, Chuck Bobst, an interpreter.
“Children need to go to school with a full stomach, or else they can’t learn,” adds team member Calvin Carroll. “So now they get a good breakfast at school and also a snack later in the day.”

A principal, together with six full-time and two part-time teachers—all Adventists—guide the children daily, not only academically but spiritually as well. About half the student body is Adventist.

“It’s a true mission field,” Chuck says.

Unfortunately, the school’s future is precarious because the church in which it’s housed is available to them only short-term. A new facility will soon be needed, and the cost to the small-church team is daunting.

“We’re not sure where the money to build or purchase a new school will come from,” Chuck notes, “but we’re trusting that the Lord will provide. He’s done it so far, so we’re praying that He’ll continue to do so.”

Helping Families

Each year the Meridian church also selects four or five new families in Iquitos to sponsor, and various members travel there to meet the families and assess their needs. They provide them with basic necessities, such as mattresses, propane “camp” stoves, clothes, and food, such as rice and beans. For some they pay to bring water or electricity to the homes. They also help families become more self-sufficient by giving them such items as a refrigerator, from which they can sell refrigerated goods to passersby.

With a poverty rate of 30 percent in Peruvian urban areas and more than 60 percent in rural regions, finding families in need isn’t difficult. Many live in tiny makeshift wooden or mud shacks set on stilts and topped by thatched roofs that don’t always hold up well during rainy seasons. Annual flooding as well as a lack of clean water, adequate health care, and available jobs are daily challenges. Many households supplement their meager incomes by selling fish, produce, soda, candy, and other items in small concession stands in front of their homes.

The team feels their efforts to make a difference in the people’s lives there don’t go unnoticed.

“One mom we helped named Pilar just hugged and clung to us; she was so overwhelmed by everything...”

“Many children in Iquitos have needs even more basic than education, such as having enough to eat.”

SIMPLE HOMES: Many Iquitos homes are made simply of wooden slats supported by stilts for flood protection.
we did for her,” says Elaine Bookter, one of this year’s team members, who, together with her husband, Sherman, is also picking up the tab for Pilar’s 7-year-old daughter’s school tuition. “There were two children and the parents in the house, and there was only one single bed but no mattress. They were sleeping on wood slats. So we bought them a mattress.”

“The people are so grateful and so generous,” adds Sherman. “They look for anything they have, things hanging on their walls, to give you. They have hardly anything in material possessions, and they’re looking for something to give me! Their generosity just touched my heart.”

Team member Beverly Logan agrees with Sherman’s evaluation. “There’s so much need and yet so much love,” she says. “Just such an open, innocent, generous love.”

One Meridian church-sponsored family lost their farm when a flood destroyed it in 2012. They lived in a church’s Sabbath school room until Bridge the Gap arranged to provide them a home. When this year’s team visited the family, they found that they had an 8-day-old baby, “but not one piece of furniture in the whole...
Beginning Your Spiritual Journey is designed to support the entire discipleship process, and is primarily for those just starting out on the path to discipleship. It highlights six important possibilities for a new believer’s life with Christ.
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Providing for all these needs is “definitely a heavy load to carry,” says team member Hudson Logan, “but the Lord is providing. It’s a privilege to help them.”

When people ask Chuck “Why are you doing this?” he describes that as his “golden moment.” It gives him the chance “to explain that it’s because we’re all one big family and we all love the Lord. It’s only because of circumstances that I have what I have and they have what they have. It’s one of my favorite opportunities to witness.”

The people he helps, however, witness to Chuck as well. He remembers a particular family to whom he gave a month’s worth of rice and beans, and right away they began dipping it out and sharing it with their neighbors.

I woke up with a headache. It was Sunday morning, and I decided that was good enough reason to stay in bed a little longer. I had been invited to help with a children’s ministry. But I didn’t know what it would be like, what I would do, or the language. I didn’t really want to try, being the shy person I am. The headache was a good excuse not to go, right? Wrong.

I came here to serve, and what did I do? I stayed in bed for a few more hours. That’s not why I came to Malawi.

Weeks later I asked if I could go and help. Sunday morning came, and a group of us went out to a little village filled with children whose families don’t have money to feed them. We sang songs, told them a Bible story, gave them pictures to color, fed them, and played a game.

I was asked to organize the game, and I hadn’t come up with anything cool. So duck, duck, goose it was! I have never ever seen kids have so much fun with that game. Their joy was contagious, and I felt myself relax and enjoy it just as much as they did.

Why are some people blessed with so much, while others have so little? It isn’t fair. Yet sometimes I wonder if I am the “poor” person here. They find joy in such simple things, and are so thankful for the smallest things, while I find myself always wanting a bigger, better barn.

Working with people here has taught me a lot, from the importance of simple kindness to being thankful for what I have. And by the grace of God, the children we help might come to know and love Him too.
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“I just cried. I couldn’t believe it—that they had that kind of compassion,” he says. “They didn’t have a house, they didn’t have anything, but they were sharing what they had.”

Nursing Support

The needs also include physical ones. Team member Mary Carroll, a nurse, spent many hours in the local hospital with Delila, the mother of one of Meridian church’s sponsored kids. Delila was suffering with a severe health issue and needed treatment, including a surgical procedure, to correct the problem. Not only did the team fund the medical care, but Mary also provided transportation and emotional support.

“I spent a lot of time waiting, but I was really glad we could be there to help her,” Mary says. “She’s now doing very well.”

Looking Back

Reflecting on why she and the other team members are helping the people of Iquitos, Beverly says, “We’re building friendships for eternity. We’re there for just 12 days, but we get to meet and help these wonderful people. “In church the last Sabbath that we were there, the driver we hired, Fernando, sang a song titled ‘I’ll Meet You in Heaven.’ I thought, How appropriate! We’ll never see some of these people again until we meet in heaven. But we now have this bond we developed in the short time that our paths crossed. That’s worth everything.”

To learn more about the Meridian church Peru project, contact Chuck Bobst, president, Bridge the Gap, Inc., at chuckbtg@gmail.com.

1 www.peopleofperu.org
2 www.peruviantimes.com/30/perus-poverty-rate-drops-to-30-8-percent-inei/15436/

“...A new facility will soon be needed, and the cost to the small-church team is daunting...”

Sandra Blackmer is an assistant editor of Adventist World.
The story of Annie Smith’s life is one of both tragedy and triumph. Her life was cut short, but she died with a firm belief in Jesus and the “blessed hope” for eternal life after the resurrection. Her triumph was her assurance of salvation and eternal life; her tragedy was in contracting pulmonary tuberculosis, which meant almost certain death before the days of antibiotics. She died at 27 years of age, ending a promising career as the most important poet of early Adventism, years before our church was named or organized. She will live on forever in the world of music since three of her hymns were included in *The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*.

**Annie Finds the Truth**

As a teenager Annie Smith accepted William Miller’s teaching and became a devout “Millerite.” When Jesus did not appear on October 22, 1844, she devoted her time to her studies and her poetry. In 1851 her mother suggested she attend one of “Father” Joseph Bates’s lectures while she was away visiting friends in another town. She was not really interested until she had a dream in which she saw a tall, elderly man lecturing and using a chart. To “please mother,” she attended the meeting, arriving late and taking the only seat left. After the meeting Bates met Annie for the first time and told her that he also had had a dream that she would be there. In a short time Annie was converted to the truth of the seventh-day Sabbath, the sanctuary doctrine, and the third angel’s message. She remained an absolute believer in that faith the rest of her life.

With her newfound faith, she started sending poems to the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* at Saratoga Springs, New York. James White, editor, quick to recognize literary talent, asked her to come and work at the *Review* office. She declined because of poor eyesight, but James and Ellen White, in dire need of help, replied “come any way.”

Upon arrival from her home in New Hampshire, she was prayed over and her eyesight was completely restored. Her work at the *Review* involved proofreading and copy editing, a job she handled quite efficiently. Though she worked at the *Review* for only a couple of years, this 23-year-old young woman contributed 45 poems to the *Review* and to a new periodical, the *Youth’s Instructor*. She also was a prolific hymn writer for the Adventist cause. She borrowed the tune from a popular hit called “‘Tis Midnight Hour” and turned it into the beautiful hymn “How Far From Home?” (number 439 in *The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*). Another of her popular hymns today is “I Saw One Weary” (number 441), in which she wrote specially about Joseph Bates and James White. The third person in that hymn she described could have been J. N. Andrews, or her brother, Uriah Smith. Historian Arthur Spalding is convinced that in the third stanza she was writing about herself and simply substituted the “he” for “she.” At any rate, the “blessed hope” of the Second Coming was always on her mind. She did a prodigious amount of writing in the four years left in her life and could have possibly surpassed Frank Belden, Ellen White’s nephew, as the most important hymn writer for our young denomination, had she lived to old age.
An Example of Her Talent

As an example of her poetic talent, Smith wrote a poem upon the death of Robert Harmon, Ellen White’s brother, who was fully converted before he passed away. Hymn no. 494 in the old Church Hymnal was first printed in the Review and later set to music as “He Sleeps in Jesus.”

“He sleeps in Jesus—peaceful rest—
No mortal strife invades his breast;
No pain, or sin, or woe, or care,
Can reach the silent slumberer there.

He lived, his Savior to adore,
And meekly all his sufferings bore.
He loved, and all resigned to God;
Nor murmured at His chastening rod.

‘Does earth attract thee here?’ they cried,
The dying Christian thus replied,
While pointing upward to the sky,
‘My treasure is laid up on high.’

He sleeps in Jesus—soon to rise,
When the last trump shall rend the skies;
Then burst the fetters of the tomb,
To wake in full, immortal bloom.

He sleeps in Jesus—cease thy grief;
Let this afford thee sweet relief—
That, freed from death’s triumphant reign,
In heaven will he live again.”

On a more romantic note, there is reason to believe that Annie was interested in John Nevins Andrews, but he ended up marrying another. If her heart was broken, she didn’t have long to sorrow, for after two years at the Review she returned home fighting a losing battle with tuberculosis, or consumption, as it was commonly called. Tuberculosis was a scourge during the nineteenth century, and both Annie Smith and John Andrews succumbed to it.

Annie Smith deserves to be called our denomination’s first important poet and hymn writer. On returning to her home, she wrote as much as her health would permit and collected her poetry those last few months of her life. She gave this collection to her brother, Uriah, who later became famous in Seventh-day Adventist circles as editor of the Review, as well as a writer and a teacher. Uriah printed the collection only a few days before she died. It is entitled Home Here, and Home in Heaven.

So Much in So Little Time

As young as she was, with only two years to establish herself as an artist, poet, songwriter, and editor, Annie Smith made an important and singular impact upon the later Seventh-day Adventist Church. For instance, when the General Conference first organized our church at Battle Creek, Michigan, on May 21, 1863, the delegates chose to sing Annie Smith’s “Long Upon the Mountains” (no. 447), which meant so much to those attending the conference of our newly formed church.

Today, after 150 years of our church hymnology, we may state that Annie has left a legacy that will go on forever. Her hope was in the return of Jesus and His salvation for all the faithful. The last stanza of the hymn “Long Upon the Mountains” could be a fitting epitaph for the young woman who lived and died with the “blessed hope” in her heart:

“Soon He comes! With clouds descending;
All His saints, entombed arise;
The redeemed, in anthems blending,
Shout their vict’ry thro’ the skies.
O, we long for Thine appearing;
Come, O Savior, quickly come!
Blessed hope! Our spirits cheering,
Take Thy ransomed children home.”

Annie Smith has won a place in our hearts and in our history. As our pioneer poet and musician she reinforced James White’s love of music and made it an integral part of the Seventh-day Adventist educational system. Seventh-day Adventist interest in music and hymn singing no doubt starts with James White and Annie Smith.

Annie died on July 26, 1855, and is buried in the family cemetery at West Wilton, New Hampshire.


Nathan Thomas is professor emeritus of history, Pacific Union College, Angwin, California.
Second Samuel 24:1 says, “Again the anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and he incited [sut] David against them, saying, ‘Go and take a census of Israel and Judah.”’ According to 1 Chronicles 21:1, “Satan rose up against Israel and incited [sut] David to take a census of Israel.” I will examine the use of the term satan in the Old Testament, some terminological connections with other passages, and finally suggest a possible way to harmonize these passages.

1. Use of the Term Satan: The Hebrew word satan means “adversary, opponent” and is used to designate human beings who act as adversaries or opponents of others (e.g., 1 Kings 11:14, 23). It also designates the angel of the Lord, who functioned as an adversary to Balaam (Num. 22:22). Obviously, this is not a demonic figure. The noun is also found in Job 1:6 and 2:1 and in Zechariah 3:1 for the adversary of God’s people. Scholars usually argue that when the noun satan is accompanied by a definite article (“the satan”) it refers to a function (“an adversary/opponent”) and is not a proper noun (“Satan”). Since the term without the article appears only in 1 Chronicles 21:1, it is considered a proper noun (“Satan”). But other scholars have argued that it is precisely when the noun is accompanied by the article that it functions as a proper name. One could wonder whether this debate is that important.

2. Linguistic Connections: There are clear linguistic connections between Job 2:1, Zechariah 3:1, and 1 Chronicles 21:1. In Chronicles Satan “stands” (’amad) against Israel and incites (sut) David to sin. The use of the verb “to stand” (’amad), together with the noun satan, is found in Zechariah 3:1, establishing a connection between the two passages. In both cases satan opposes the servant of God. The verb “to incite” (sut) appears in conjunction with the noun satan in Job 2:3, also establishing a connection between these two passages. In Job he incites God against Job, and in Chronicles he incites David against God. The author is aware of the usage of the term satan in the other passages, and his use of the term satan (“Satan”) most probably reflects the meaning of the term in the other two books. In other words, he is not contrasting his use with that of the other passages; the presence or absence of the article is irrelevant. The Old Testament describes a being who opposes God and His plans for His people (e.g., Gen. 3:1-5; Lev. 16:8-10, 20-22; Isa. 14:12-14; cf. Rev. 12:9).

3. The Narratives in Chronicles and Samuel: The role of satan is quite clear in the three passages we have discussed. First, he is the adversary of God’s people, opposing the divine disposition to forgive them (Zech. 3:1). He even opposes the way God rules His kingdom (Job 1:6; 2:1). Second, he incites people to disobey God. Third, he wants evil things for God’s people. He is unquestionably a divine archenemy. According to Chronicles, Satan stood against Israel as the enemy and incited David to take a census, knowing that as a result people would suffer.

Why is taking a census a national sin? Different types of censuses were taken in Israel without any penalty (e.g., Ex. 30:11-16). Perhaps, as many have suggested, the difference here is that this is a military census taken without divine approval that expressed reliance on human military power. It was a breach of Israel’s covenant with the Lord.

If this is the case, the differences between 1 Chronicles and 2 Samuel are insignificant. The wrath of the Lord, mentioned as the cause for the census, is clarified as God allowing Satan to incite David to take the census. In His anger God does not intervene to protect David. Nevertheless, God is still the sovereign Lord who authorizes the action of Satan and brings the plague to an end. He uses this experience to lead David to find a place for the building of the Temple. He does not give Satan complete control over His people (see Job 1:12; 2:6).
Ours is a society of hero worship. The idols of the twenty-first century are sports stars, pop musicians, Hollywood icons, and multimillion-dollar business executives. But as we seriously consider it, one generation’s stars fast become distant memories. The shining lights on the billboards of this world fade fast. Wearing a T-shirt advertising “Superhero for Hire” is as close as most of us will get to being real heroes.

In this month’s Bible lesson we will study two biblical heroes worth following, and One who stands head and shoulders above all others. Their legacies have endured for millennia, and shine bright with each passing generation.

Daniel and Joseph are two examples of the way God blesses those who trust Him unreservedly, commit their lives to Him completely, and follow His guidance, wherever He leads, willingly. But even their dedication falls short of the ideal set by the living Christ, who reveals what it means to be truly committed to the Father’s will.

1 How did Daniel distinguish himself in Babylon from the rest of the Babylonian youth? Read Daniel 1:8 and compare Daniel’s attitudes as a teenager with those at the end of his life in Daniel 6:4, 5, 10.

A study of Daniel’s life reveals his unswerving loyalty to God. From the time he was taken as a teenager and brought to Babylon as a captive, until his encounter with the political princes of Persia at the end of his life, Daniel maintained his absolute, unbending commitment to the God of heaven.

2 How were the temptations of both Joseph and Daniel similar? Read Daniel 1:5, 8 and Genesis 39:7-9. Notice the similarity of their responses as well. Both Daniel and Joseph faced fierce temptations that appealed to their fleshly desires. But both made resolute, unwavering decisions. They followed the counsel given later in the book of James: “Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

3 Although Joseph ended up in prison, and Daniel excelled at the head of his class at the University of Babylon, what blessing did God give both these stalwarts of faith? Read Daniel 1:9, 17-20 and Genesis 39:21-23.

4 Read Proverbs 3:1-10, and list all the promises God makes to those who are faithful to Him. How many promises do you find? In what areas of your life do they relate?

Both Daniel and Joseph faced enormous challenges in their lives. They both went through trials and experienced difficulties. But the blessings of God upon their lives far outweighed any challenge or difficulty they faced.

5 How does Daniel and Joseph’s loyalty to God find a later example in Jesus own life? Read and compare John 8:29, Matthew 26:39, and Hebrews 10:7 to discover a powerful insight on living the Christian life.

Jesus was totally committed to doing the Father’s will. His surrender to the Father’s will was uncompromised. This one basic decision is the key to living a victorious Christian life. The fundamental question is “Am I totally committed to doing the Father’s will when it conflicts with my own?”

6 What promise did the Father give to Jesus because of His humble obedience and submissive spirit in doing the Father’s will at any cost to Himself? Philippians 2:8-11.

7 What promise does Jesus Himself give to all who “forsake all” and follow Him unreservedly? Mark 10:29, 30.

Like both Joseph and Daniel, we too will face challenges when following Jesus. But the blessings of God upon our lives will be abundant. We will have the joy of His presence here, the knowledge of His daily guidance, the certainty of His provision for all our needs, and the glorious good news of eternal life through the salvation He so freely provides. That is something worth living for.
Letters

Women’s Ordination
I am writing regarding Andrew McChesney’s article “Adventists Urged to Study Women’s Ordination for Themselves” (November 2014). I read the article with interest; and I was surprised by information in two paragraphs.

First, the Position 2 section asserts that Junia was a woman; however, it hasn’t been confirmed.

Second, in the Position 3 section, God’s exception of granting Israel a king is mentioned. Because of their choice Israel sank into apostasy and were overthrown by Babylon. Not a very cohesive argument for women’s ministry. Are we being led down the same path?

Graeme Dodd
Gawler, South Australia, Australia

Trending on Twitter
I have loved how the children of God in South America are so serious and passionate about God’s work (see “South American Adventists Make Bible a Hot Topic on Twitter,” October 2014). May God bless them abundantly. May we be moved to do the same, if we are not doing so yet.

Joel Mutungi
Kigali, Rwanda

Faith in a Shop Window
I’m writing about the news article “Britain: Faith Showcased in Shop Window” (October 2014). Yes, we can be creative and Christian at the same time. My prayer is that the youth would step up and use their gifts to create and innovate evangelism such as seen here, in an addition to what we already have.

We live in a postmodern age, and we need to explore new and relevant ways to reach this mindset. Praise God for this creative effort!

Winston Lee
via e-mail

World Health and Colon Cancer
Peter N. Landless and Allan R. Handysides always write interesting and informative World Health columns. As an ardent reader of Adventist World, I cannot help reading this column; each article is both educational and inspirational.

The article “Colon Cancer” (August 2014) is truly an eye-opener! At a frightening rate, many people (even non-alcohol consumers) are being diagnosed with colorectal cancer.

There is no doubt that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is blessed with an incredible health message. Indeed, God intended that we should “prosper... and be in [good] health” (3 John 2).

Devon L. Sanderson
Wilmington, Delaware, United States

Adventist World Language Editions
Greetings! I enjoy reading Adventist World. I have a question: In how many languages is the magazine printed?

Bheki Nyathi
South Africa

Prayer & Praise

Please pray that I pass my fourth-year accounting exams so that I may be allowed to enroll in the master’s degree program. I’ve been offered a scholarship; I need guidance from the Lord.

Nelson, Malawi

Please pray for me. I have many problems, and I am awash with tears. But I believe Jesus will not let me suffer until the end of days. I know God is able to help me.

Benson, Kenya

I am desperately in need of help. Please pray that the devils in my life are driven out. My church has prayed for me for many years. I think I need help from someone with experience in this area.

Joyce, Sweden
Adventist World is printed in English, Korean, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Indonesian, and German. In early 2014 the magazine launched several more editions of its smaller format, Adventist World Digest, bringing the total of digests to 20; with four more languages being added by this month, Feb. 2015. Our Web site is readable in 12 languages. So one can read Adventist World content in at least 32 languages. Visit our homepage at www.adventistworld.org to learn more.

—Editors.

In Appreciation
I am new to Adventism, and I like Adventist World. I especially enjoy the articles on Bible study and the Bible Questions Answered column.

D. Jones
Bonnyman, Kentucky,
United States

Thank you for the wonderful work you are doing through this publication. It helps us get information from our fellow brothers and sisters.

Christine Nabunjo
Kampala, Uganda

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I’d like to take my 10-year-old to the South Pacific Pathfinder camporee, but I have no money. We need a miracle; please pray for us.

Jini, Australia

Please pray for the people in my village.

Pilla, India

Please pray for my sister. Thieves stole a large sum of money, and we hope it will be recovered. Also pray that I find employment. I graduated in 2011 and am looking for a job.

Angela, Zambia

My mother is hospitalized with a pulmonary embolism. Please pray for her.

Marie, France

The Place of Prayer: Send prayer requests and praise (thanks for answered prayer) to prayer@adventistworld.org. Keep entries short and concise, 50-words or less. Items will be edited for space and clarity. Not all submissions will be printed. Please include your name and your country’s name. You may also fax requests to: 1-301-680-6638, or mail them to Adventist World, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600 U.S.A.
60 Years Ago

On February 2, 1955, Roy S. Cornell, a medical doctor, arrived in Benghazi, Libya, to establish a Seventh-day Adventist medical work. He served as chief surgeon at the government hospital. Shortly after his arrival, Cornell supervised the renovation of a war-damaged hotel for service as an Adventist hospital. In addition to overseeing renovations and assembling a staff, Cornell served as a medical advisor to the Libyan government.

Benghazi Adventist Hospital officially opened its doors on May 21, 1956, with 32 beds. Tragically, Dr. Cornell contracted acute paralytic poliomyelitis (polio) in 1957, which left him completely paralyzed.

The hospital opened a School of Nursing in 1964, and was one of the few foreign organizations allowed to own property in Libya. In 1969, following the “Libyan Revolution,” Benghazi Adventist Hospital was nationalized. In 1977 the General Conference received a settlement from the Libyan government for US$1,290,963.

Grains and greens aren’t the only places to find dietary fiber. The following foods are rich in fiber, potassium, and magnesium:

- potatoes
- cauliflower
- turnips
- corn
- parsnips

Source: Men’s Health
Soon, we will all get together!

Be part of the General Conference session in San Antonio, Texas.
(July 2-11, 2015)

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Get stories and pictures on our Facebook page, and tweets on Twitter.
Senior Independent Living at its Best

FLETCHER PARK INN

What the Bauers and Bostians Found at FPI

David and Marilyn Bauer are enjoying the mountain vistas, walking trails, and engaging in new friendships in this warm and welcoming community.

“After 26 winters at Andrews University, we love all four moderate seasons at Fletcher Park Inn. Plus, there’s an Adventist hospital, bakery/health food store, and Fletcher’s 2200 member fitness center - all within walking distance of our villa!”

The Bostians built their new mountain home at Fletcher Park Inn where they’re developing new friendships, Dottie is swimming her miles and Don is reading his books - leaving the yard work to others.

“We chose Fletcher Park Inn because quality independent retirement is affordable - especially the 90% Return of Capital! We can walk to Fletcher’s new Yogurt and Vegetarian Café, our Adventist church and Fletcher Academy. Who could’ve imagined?”

Call Linda at (800) 249-2882 for more information about enriching your “senior moments” at FPI and to schedule your visit. Ask about our 90% Return on Capital program.