Message from the President

Janet and I had the incredible joy of being present for the birth of our second grandson in September. What an amazing Creator/Designer God we worship and serve! (By the way, we feel Sean Michael must be the smartest, sweetest, and cutest baby boy ever, right next to his big brother Daniel!)

Watching a pregnancy develop and a baby come into this world has to be one of the most convincing arguments against the theory of macro-evolution by natural processes. If God says He created all life in six literal 24-hour days and then rested on the seventh day, I believe Him!

This all reminds me of a story written by a friend of mine, Kermit Netteberg.

Once upon a time there was a very strange wolf. He liked sheep so much that he wanted to become one. But whenever the wolf would try to join a flock of sheep, the sheep would run away, bleating as though they were about to be killed.

The wolf was very discouraged. Then one day he found a sheepskin. “I’ll put it on and then the sheep will accept me,” he thought. He slipped his wolf body into the sheepskin. It was too small, his legs were pinched and his back twisted. When he tried to walk, he’d fall. “This is going to take some getting used to,” he thought. “I’m not good enough to join the flock right now. I’d better practice walking so I won’t look like a phony.”

He fell many times before he mastered the peculiar both-legs-hop of sheep. Finally, he felt he was good enough to join the nearest flock.

He casually sauntered over and stopped at the flock’s edge. He noticed they were eating grass. He’d never tasted grass. “I might as well find out what it tastes like, since I want to be a sheep,” he reasoned and tore off a mouthful.

He almost gagged.

He looked around at the other sheep, but they all appeared to be enjoying the grass. Wanting to make a good impression, he gagged out, “Hey, this must be the best grass I’ve ever eaten.”

Startled, the sheep backed away. One of the older sheep said, “He surely doesn’t sound like a sheep to me.”

This made the wolf sad because he was trying his best to be a good sheep. He decided to keep his mouth shut and stay close to the edge of the flock.

Noon came, and the sun grew very warm. The sheepskin, which looked so inviting in the morning, grew very confining and very hot. Sweat began to run down his face and shanks. But he didn’t mind. He knew he had to make a few sacrifices in order to become a sheep.

The afternoon sun grew even hotter. His zeal to become a sheep flagged. He wanted to make a few changes. “I’m mighty hot,” he complained. “I could sure use a tall, cooling drink about now.” This time no one said he didn’t sound like a sheep.

The strange wolf stayed the whole day. In the evening he hopped in his best sheep hop to the...
For 27 years, the Mountain View Japanese Adventist church family has operated the Saniku Gakuin Japanese School. And for as many years, they have tried to share God with the parents of the students.

A huge breakthrough happened this past September! The first evangelistic outreach series was held for the parents of Saniku students.

“We were so happy to have our first school evangelistic series. I was praying for at least 10 people to attend, but God more than surpassed my expectation and sent many more. On the last night total attendance was about 90 people packed into the school media center,” says Nobuko Shiraishi, church member and Saniku School board chair.

The outreach began on September 3 with a practical Bible-based seminar on health given by our Japanese Bible worker Atsushi Yamamuro. The second seminar on mental health was presented by Hiroshi Tabuchi, currently a doctorate candidate at Loma Linda University and experienced in years of counseling in Tokyo. His topic was “The Counseling Mind: Key Methods for Bringing up Children.”

Finally, a well-received, three-part series titled “What is the purpose of life?” was taught by Pastor Masumi Shimada, director of education for the Japan Union. “I was personally really thankful how Pastor Shimada reassured every one of God’s love and acceptance,” Shiraishi says.

Saniku School parents request Bible studies, 10 in Japanese and five in English. That is a major breakthrough!” says Mark Duarte, church pastor. “The students have a daily Bible class, but reaching the parents is the greatest challenge.”

In their secular and materialistic society, most Japanese claim no religion. Though Buddhism is an imported religion there, it has a much longer history and much of what is considered Japanese tradition finds its origin in Zen Buddhism or in the Country’s indigenous religion of Shintoism.

It takes the average Japanese person three-10 years to make a decision to become Christian. When sent by their companies to live overseas, they are more open to other religions than when in the tightly culture-regulated society in Japan.

The school, which began at the church with only one teacher and student, grew rapidly and now is a full-fledged school in compliance with the Japanese government Ministry of Education. The present enrolment is 430 students in K-ninth grades.

“They are children of Japanese ex-patriots who are sent to work in the Silicon Valley by various companies like Sony, Toshiba, Sanyo, and Fujitsu. Since they eventually have to return to Japan, their children need to maintain their Japanese education,” Duarte explains.

School staff and church members prayed and worked together to make these meetings a reality. Members of the San Francisco Japanese church also attended in support. In survey responses, attendees expressed high interest in more seminars on education, healthful living and parenting. Adds Duarte, “This is so wonderful, a result of many, many prayers.”
Amanda Goad and Ricky Camacho, new graduates from Souls West, the Pacific Union’s two-year College of Evangelism located in Scottsdale, Az., joined the CCC GLOW* leadership team in September. Though there was no money for a salary, each signed on for nine months – to work for practically nothing.

“When life is not about income, it is about expenses,” Camacho says. “GLOW is such an opportunity to activate church members. Anybody can do it.” He is passionate about advancing Jesus’ second coming. “The Holy Spirit won’t be poured out in the last days until most of the church is working.”

They are supporting themselves by selling books door-to-door three days a week. “Our project goal is to bring in $100 a day,” Goad says, quickly adding, “You can’t go out saying I need this to pay the bills. I pray, ‘I know You [God] will take care of me. Who do You want me to meet?’” Camacho agrees. “God is faithful in canvassing. I believe he will provide for what I need.”

From the GLOW ministry, they receive free Magabooks so 100 percent of sales are theirs, a $200 monthly housing allowance, some mileage, and some cell phone expenses. Goad is sharing a studio apartment with Heidi Bryant, assistant director of the Literature Evangelism department. Camacho is sleeping on a mattress on the living room floor in Nelson Ernst’s apartment. Ernst is director of GLOW.

Sabbaths and Sundays Goad and Camacho are in churches, working with members door-to-door. In their extra time, they help out as needed for other GLOW ministry needs.

Camacho, 24, from Madera, Calif., turned down full-time employment at La Sierra University and several full-time Bible worker positions to work in Central. In 2004 he was attending Fresno City College studying film production. Then his father was killed. “My priorities really changed,” he says. “I want to be ready to see my dad [when Jesus comes] and to prepare others. GLOW is such an opportunity to activate church members.”

For the past five years, Camacho has worked in the summer Student Literature Evangelism program. “It was a real struggle to go to Souls West because my mom was on dialysis. But she has a new kidney now,” he says. His four brothers and one sister helped out a lot.

Goad, 20, from Bisbee Arizona, learned about Souls West while attending Thunderbird Academy. “Actually, I thought I would never do door-to-door canvassing because I was so shy. Then someone said to me ‘It is only 10 weeks out of your life, and you are doing work for God, and making money for school,’” she says. “It was hard and challenging and I needed that in my Christian walk.” That was five years ago and now she is hooked. “It [literature work] is what I feel God has called me for.”

Though her parents wish she was closer to home, they are very supportive. “Dad calls and prays with me once a week,” Goad says. “There will always be Bible worker opportunities, but working with GLOW is such an opportunity.”

*GLOW – Go Light Your World is an adult literature ministry for local churches. For more information, go to goglow.org.

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More than 80 people attended a one-day Bible worker training on September 29 at the Central California Conference office in Clovis. Strongly emphasizing laying involvement, local church Bible workers were encouraged to bring their active church members. More than half the group were local church members.

"This was our biggest Bible worker training event ever," says Karen Hamilton, field Bible worker coordinator. Currently 44 Bible workers are in local churches supported by the local church and the Camp Meeting Evangelism Offering.

The full day had one topic: Building a team to build God's kingdom in your community. How to mobilize, coordinate and utilize all the diverse gifts of your church members was presented by Bible worker Benjamin Bernard and Pastor Manuao Mauia from the South San Francisco and San Jose Samoan churches.

Bernard shared about the dramatic growth of members actively involved in evangelism (from 30 to more than 100) and the successful evangelistic series preached by Mauia resulting in 33 baptisms. The San Jose Samoan church just completed the same growth model. On Sabbath September 26, 16 new members joined the church, increasing membership by 50 percent.

It’s a new paradigm for outreach here. “When evangelism took place, the members dropped their work, asked for leave and came together to serve God full-time,” explains George Johnson, special outreach projects director. “You don’t just show up in the evening. Between 18 to 36 members did the intensive daily work during the Samoan meetings.”

“IT was a very productive day,” Johnson says about the training. “Seed was planted that will result in a change in strategy from a lone ranger approach by pastors and Bible workers to an approach that includes many members using their gifts for God in all the areas of need. It’s a multi-level approach.”

In Desire of Ages, p. 668 there is a beautiful description of the new heart experience our Savior has for each one of us. “All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses.”

I want to live every moment through my wonderful Creator and Redeemer! Let us pray for each other as we share this journey together.

Your brother in Jesus,