Only as we are clothed with the robe of Christ’s righteousness (His good works) and stand on His word, only as we overcome by His blood and follow Him wherever He goes, will we know what it means to have the faith of Jesus, a faith that saves us completely, entirely and eternally by His grace. And having this faith makes commandment keeping an act of pure love. Amen!

There is a tension between law keeping and saving faith. Notice how Revelation 14:12 reads with emphasis on the AND.

“Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God AND to have saving faith.” (Revelation 14:12, NAS).

For thousands of years God’s people kept His commandments, but when Jesus Christ was born as the Son of God and Savior of the world, they refused Him. Now, millions who place their trust in Jesus have salvation, yet, for most, keeping God’s commandments is “not necessary.”

This description of God’s people in Revelation 14:12 is the summation of all the previous ones. It is the final mission.

When the gospel is preached as a witness to all nations, then souls will be saved. For Jesus Himself said, “if you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15, NKJV).

“Here,” says the angel in Revelation 14:12, are those who embrace the tension. They have the patience to endure it. This leads them to keep the commandments of God AND to have saving faith.

Years ago, I read a book about the faith of Jesus in the context of keeping God’s commandments (a description of God’s people found in Revelation 14:12). Not having a photographic memory (and age working against me), I don’t remember much of what I read, but there was one line I never forgot because it changed the way I understood faith—“faith does not make facts, faith lays hold on facts.”

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Do you see the tension arising from this verse?

For thousands of years God’s people kept His commandments, but when Jesus Christ was born as the Son of God and Savior of the world, they refused Him. Now, millions who place their trust in Jesus reject God’s commandments, or at least one or two of them (number two, forbidding images, and number four, regarding the seventh-day Sabbath).

“What,” says the angel in Revelation 14:12, are those who embrace the tension. They have the patience to endure it. This leads them to keep the commandments of God AND to have the faith of Jesus. They are obedient, 100 percent true to God’s law, yet they know, by personal experience that their obedience to the law cannot save them. Therefore, they place their entire weight upon the “faith of Jesus.” Yet, knowing that they are saved by laying hold upon the facts of what God has done for them in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, they still keep God’s commandments. Not in order to be saved, for their faith is in Jesus alone for salvation, but because they are saved. For Jesus Himself said, “if you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15, NKJV).

This description of God’s people in Revelation 14:12 could be considered the summation of all the previous ones.
On the 28th of February Light Bearers Ministry (LBM) received a special visit from Elder Gilberto Araujo, Vice President of the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division (SID). He came to thank us for the 50 containers of literature that have been sent to his division in the last quinquennium (5 years), to give us a first-hand report of the success and value of this literature in reaching souls, and to ask for 100 more containers for the next quinquennium. It was an eye-opening interview and one that we knew must be shared with all our supporters.

LBM: Elder Araujo, how many countries compose your Division?
GA: A total of 23, including Angola, Botswana, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
LBM: That is a large territory with a massive population. What kind of growth has your Division experienced over the last few years?
GA: For the last two years (2009 and 2010) the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division is the fastest growing Division in the Adventist Church (percentage of growth per ratio of population). Last year we baptized about 200,000 new members!
LBM: Praise God! So what is the current membership?
GA: We now have a total of 2.6 million members.
LBM: And what are your plans for the near future?
GA: We are aiming for 500,000 new members in 2011.
LBM: What part has Light Bearers Ministry played in this phenomenal growth?
GA: We are sure that if Light Bearers Ministry was not helping us with the many millions of pieces of literature you send us, we would not be in this position. In many countries, one of the best ways to reach people is with printed Bible lessons. Light Bearers Ministry played in this phenomenal growth.

LBM: But how many countries compose your Division?
GA: A total of 23, including Angola, Botswana, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
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