Editor’s Comments: The following article is an edited abridgement of the last chapter of the book, Two Beasts, Three Deadly Wounds, and Fourteen Popes (2001 edition). These words were penned in the days immediately following the unprecedented attacks on America ten years ago.

The shockwaves of September 11, 2001, extended throughout America and beyond, to shake the entire world. The coordinated attacks upon both towers of the World Trade Centre in New York, the Pentagon building in Washington, D.C., together with a fourth planned attack upon an unknown target, which ended in the crash of United Airlines Flight 93 at Newark in rural Pennsylvania, were an augury of worldwide preparation for war, economic ruin, unprecedented security measures, massive grief, growing fear, and doubt that this world would ever be the same again.

What is chilling was the rapidity with which the United States had been able to form a worldwide coalition of nations against a foe – terrorism – which is as elusive as it is terrifying. Usually such decisions require careful governmental analysis and discussion, considerations of popular sentiment, national interests, economic impact, diplomatic issues, national consequences, and a plethora of matters impacting the welfare and interests of the nation.

Ignoring such a careful, wise, considered approach to decision-making, nation after nation had rallied behind the American banner in its call for a prolonged war on terrorism, a war declared so rapidly that it cannot be doubted that American decision makers possessed minimal information upon which to develop that course of action which would best serve its aim to defeat terrorism.

Could it be that Revelation 13 is on the verge of fulfilment? The Bible plainly sets forth that the two great powers at the end of time, the Vatican and the United States, will lead the nations of the world into enforcing a universal death decree. This death decree will be aimed not against terrorists, but against humble followers of Scripture who desire to worship God in the beauty of holiness on His holy seventh-day Sabbath. This fact bears the credentials of Scripture.

It had been demonstrated that it has been a simple matter, when economic ruin and massive loss of life are threatened, for America to command the support of the weaker nations of the earth, nations of all religious persuasions, and some nations it formerly saw as its deadly enemies.

Let us learn from recent history. In the 1920’s and early 1930’s, Germany experienced ruinous economic inflation: a mere postage stamp of the era cost 20 billion marks. In this crisis, the middle class lost their affluence. One man promised to reverse the national financial ruin at the price of the revocation of liberty. His name was Adolf Hitler. Many Germans willingly paid that price, and millions of men, women, and children lost their liberties and their lives.

Today around the world, there are again cries for restoration of a departed prosperity. Some are crying that they know they may have to forfeit some of their liberties in order to restore security and earthly comforts.

“Americans are determined to try [to win the war against terrorism] if it means sacrifice and loss of civil liberties.” The Age, September 19, 2001 (Melbourne, Australia)

Perilous are such concessions! Liberty must be prized as an inalienable right accorded to us by God. To forfeit it is to ruin all the very best in our world.

Unless these calls are withdrawn and the citizens of the world prize liberty as they ought, we will be
plotting the course for the fulfilment of Revelation 13.

Already the President of the United States has issued an ultimatum, not to American institutions alone, but to the financial institutions of the world, that America will enforce sanctions against anyone that undertake transactions of which the United States does not approve (as reported in *The Age, September 27, 2001*).

President George W. Bush’s clamp-down on terrorist finances demonstrate America’s will and authority to implement such economic boycotts against those of its choosing. The Papacy has chosen its ally well!

In the current crisis, American citizens have demonstrated an alarming preparedness to yield some of their liberties in the face of challenges to their personal security and prosperity. *The Australian, September 18, 2001*, reported that

> “Attorney-General John Ashcroft said the Justice Department would ask Congress for greater power to detain non-US citizens [and] wire-tap telephone calls.”

*The World Net Daily, September 27, 2001*, reported:

> “With Congress hotly debating whether to grant sweeping police powers to federal law enforcement agencies in the name of combating terrorism, two attorneys who have studied presidential directives in depth are concerned that civil liberties will take a beating from the executive branch as well as the legislative — and no one would realize it until it was too late.

> “On September 14, President Bush...issued a proclamation declaring a state of national emergency and reinforced it the same day with an executive order (EO 13223) calling the Ready Reserves of the Armed Forces to active duty.....

(Editor’s Comments: The following paragraph has been added from the internet article —

> “‘There’s no question that historically the liberties of a people are at greatest risk in times of war, because it is in times of war that people are willing to sacrifice liberty for security and for their country,’ [constitutional lawyer William Olson] warned. ‘The American people are particularly vulnerable to this because we are so trusting of our government and are patriotic in a good sense. But I wish we could season that patriotism with a healthy vigilance against our own government to defend liberty.’”)

General Colin Powell, Secretary of State (2001—2005), declared that

> “…everything, including the ban on killing foreign leaders, would be reviewed.” *The Australian, September 18, 2001*

In this thought, there were bipartisan cries in Congress.

> “We must have the authority to assassinate people before they can assassinate us.” *Ibid.* Senator Graham (Democrat, Florida)

In this call, Senator Graham was joined by Republican Senator Richard Shelby.

President George W. Bush’s words to the other nations of the world, “Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists” brooked no neutrality.

What the terrorist crisis has demonstrated is that three essential conditions necessary for the fulfilment of Revelation 13: 15 – 17 have been in place during this crisis:

— A willingness to deprive citizens of some of their civil and religious liberties.

— An ability of the United States to marshal worldwide support, cutting through religious divides, for its policy against those it deems to be responsible for disasters causing loss of both lives and economic prosperity. Only thus will the death decree (Revelation 13: 15) become universal (“all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond” – verse 16).

— A worldwide economic boycott (“no man might buy or sell” – verse 17) can only be implemented when other nations comply with America’s wishes to deprive its enemies of the means to buy and sell.

In the current crisis, the United States has demonstrated its capacity to meet these conditions. America is well positioned to fulfil the role which God has foretold. The final events of this earth’s history culminating in Christ’s second coming are imminent.

May God provide wisdom to national leaders, and to each citizen of every nation. What the immediate future holds may be uncertain, but the ultimate outcome is determined, for God revealed these events for our guidance. May we, each one, in serving Christ full-heartedly, make no move which will imperil the liberties and rights of ourselves and of others.

Most of all, may we meet in heaven: for God’s grace is more than sufficient for the coming crisis. Let us be found among God’s saints, remembering that:

> “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” *Revelation 14: 12*

(Editor’s Comments: An updated version of this book, retitled *Two Beasts, Three Deadly Wounds, and Fifteen Popes*, is available from Remnant Ministries for A$25 plus postage.)
On June 20, 2011, a new movement was launched in Europe to advocate and promote Sunday as a non-working day for all Europeans. With its headquarters located in Brussels (the capital city of Belgium), the European Sunday Alliance combines the influence of labour unions, the network of civil society organizations, and the potent backing of various religious organizations to campaign for a change in European law that shall enshrine Sunday as a day of rest in every nation within the European Union.

In its founding statement, the European Sunday Alliance

— “invites all civil society (family, sports, etc.), national and local Sunday alliances, the trade union movement and socially responsible employers, the churches and religious organisations to join this Alliance and take action to promote the protection of work-free Sundays and decent working hours."

— “calls on all democratic political parties to support its action and take the necessary steps through democratic institutions and media to promote the protection of work-free Sundays and decent working hours.”

Some organizations that compose the European Sunday Alliance include:

— The Austrian Sunday Alliance
— The German Sunday Alliance
— Conference of European Churches
— Catholic Pastoral Care Operation (Germany)
— Catholic Employee Movement of Germany
— Solidarity (Poland)
— Uni (Global Union) Europa Commerce
— French Confederation of Christian Workers
— Food Workers Union (Denmark)
— Union of Commercial and Office Employees (Norway)

Some organizations that comprise a part of the official list of supporters of the European Sunday Alliance make for very interesting reading:

— European Trade Union Organization
— Federation of Catholic Family Association
— Jesuit European Office
— Catholic Youth Network in Europe
— Central Committee of German Catholics
— Protestant Church in Germany, Brussels Office
— Commission of German Bishops
— Network of Evangelical Youth in Germany
— Commission of the Bishops’ Conferences of the European Community

The preponderance of German organizations supporting the European Sunday Alliance reflects the overwhelming desire of the current German pontiff, Benedict XVI, to exalt Sunday as a day of observance throughout Europe and around the world.

“At an outdoor mass attended by an estimated 200,000 people, he [the Pope] called for the rediscovery of the religious meaning of Sundays as an antidote to the ‘rampant consumerism and religious indifference’ that was making the modern world a spiritual desert.” *The Guardian, May 30, 2005* (London, England)

“Pope Benedict XVI called on Catholics yesterday to keep the Sabbath [Sunday] a day set aside for reflection on their faith and the fate of the planet and not surrender it to ‘the mad rush of the modern world.’ On the last day of a trip to Austria, the Pope said, ‘Give the soul its Sunday, give Sunday its soul.’” *The Edmonton Sun, September 10, 2007* (Edmonton, Canada)

On June 6, 1975, a national referendum was held in Britain to determine whether the United Kingdom should maintain its membership in the European Economic Community (then known as the Common Market). The United Kingdom had joined the forerunner of today’s European Union on January 1, 1973, following its acceptance of the accession treaty in January 1972 and passage of the European Communities Act in October 1972, under the Conservative government led by Prime Minister Edward “Ted” Heath (1970 – 1974). Shirley Williams, Minister for Prices and Consumer Protection in the second Wilson Labour Government (1974 – 1976), who later became the co-founder of the Social Democrat Party, urged the British public to vote yes at the referendum with these words:

"We will be joined to a Europe in which the Catholic religion will be the dominant faith, and in which the application of the Catholic Social Doctrine will be the major factor in everyday political and economic life." *www.politics.ie: Why No Irish Christian Democrats?* December 2, 2010

The observance of Sunday is an integral component of Catholic Social Doctrine and its religion. The change of the Sabbath, which Rome declares to be the mark of its authority, is being used as an instrument to harness the working force of Europe into compliance with Catholic Social Doctrine under the guise of “family time”, “protection of the health and welfare of the worker”, and “social and cultural cohesion.” Yet, as this Roman Catholic priest in the nineteenth century so perceptively observed, the passing of laws enforcing abstinence of work on Sundays is to offer a token of submission to the authority of the Church of Rome.

“Strange as it may seem, the state, in passing laws for the due sanctification of Sunday, is unwittingly
acknowledging the authority of the Catholic Church, and carry out, more or less faithfully, its prescriptions.” American Catholic Quarterly Review, January 1883, p. 139. “The Observance of Sunday and Civil Laws for its Enforcements.” John G. Shea.

Rome’s unceasing efforts in Europe to persuade governments to pass Sunday laws are bearing fruit in that ancient continent.

“The Croatian government has passed a law forcing shops to close on Sundays [effective January 1, 2009] in a concession to the Roman Catholic Church. The church has campaigned for years for Sundays to be devoted to family or Mass in Croatia, which is almost 90 per cent Roman Catholic.” ABC News (America), July 15, 2008

Sunday closure laws have always borne remarkable similarity in their punitive measures and scope of enforcement wherever they have been enacted. One can cite examples such as in Fiji after the first military coup in May 1987, when the opening of shops, playing of sports, and engagement in “unessential” travel was prohibited on Sundays. Such laws, enacted for “the good of society,” carried heavy penalties for all violators, and granted precious few exemptions to those who could not conscientiously comply with them.

Whilst the Bible declares that America will lead the world in the worship of the papal power with the enforcement of the mark of the beast (Revelation 13), we are witnessing yet another significant development in Europe that shall surely prepare the “old world” to fulfil its role in the last days.

“In the last conflict, the Sabbath will be the special point of controversy throughout all Christendom. Secular rulers and religious leaders will unite to enforce the observance of the Sunday; and as milder measures fail, the most oppressive laws will be enacted. It will be urged that the few who stand in opposition to an institution of the church and a law of the land ought not to be tolerated, and a decree will finally be issued denouncing them as deserving of the severest punishment, and giving the people liberty, after a certain time, to put them to death. Romanism in the Old World, and apostate Protestantism in the New, will pursue a similar course toward those who honour the divine precepts.” The Great Controversy, p. 444 (1884 edition)

Surely it is time for every person claiming to be a Seventh-day Adventist to acquire a lasting experience with Christ and a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures that shall fortify them for the trying days ahead. Only those who have done so shall be among the number of whom it will be said, “Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

Biblical Guidelines On Marriage
By Nikolai Millen (Office Clerk, Remnant Ministries)

According to Holy Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy, marriage and the Sabbath are the two most sacred institutions which our loving Creator and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, brought into existence about 6,000 years ago.

From the very beginning, the enemy of Christ, Satan, has relentlessly attacked marriage and the Sabbath. After Adam and Eve fell into sin, they took from the Garden of Eden two institutions: marriage and the Sabbath.

The Marriage Codex of the Bible is written in the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians, chapter 5, verses 21 - 33.

Verse 21: “Submitting yourselves”: This general principle of conduct leads naturally to the thought of the following passage where it is given specific application. Submission, humility, and subjection are essential characteristics of the believer. Before God and one’s fellowmen, self is to be brought low. Often the demands we make of one another, even of our rights, are contrary to the spirit of loving ministry, which is the spirit of the gospel. In addition to submission to superiors in age and authority, and respect for those we consider equals, there is also a Christian submission due to those who may be considered inferior in position. This submission reveals itself in consideration, charity, and respect for the personality of all God’s children.

In this general statement of principle, the apostle has prepared the way for the detailed instruction he is about to give. He proposes an area in which the spirit of submission is to find full expression, if the relationship involved is to be conducted in a Christian fashion — that of the union between husband and wife.

Verse 22: “Wives, submit yourselves”: Paul ascribes to women a position of subordination in relation to their husbands. The ethics of Christian relationships within the family are clear once it is seen that deference and subordination do not, in any sense, imply inferiority. The submission enjoined upon the wife is of the kind that can be given only between equals. It is not a servile obedience, but a voluntary submission, in which the man was qualified by his Maker to be the head. Every community must, for purposes of organisation and existence,
have a head. Even in our free age of insistence on the equality of men and women, the man who does not assume the leadership of his family in love is regarded with something akin to contempt by men and women alike. This principle of submission is permanent, but its specific application may vary from age to age according to custom and social consciousness.

“Own husbands”: This is said, not by way of contrast with other women’s husbands, but to emphasize the holy relationship of possession upon which the submission is founded.

“As unto the Lord”: The wife should see in her relationship to her husband a reflection, or illustration, of her communion with Christ.

Verse 23: “The head”: The headship of the husband consists in his ability and responsibility to care for his wife in the same way that Christ cares for His church.

Verse 25: “Love your wives”: The response of the husband to the wife’s submission is not to command but to love. That immediately makes a partnership out of what otherwise would be a dictatorship. A true husband never utters rude commands. His love will find expression in a variety of ways. It will be given in words of understanding, consideration, and affection. The husband will properly provide for the wife’s temporal support; he will do everything possible to assure her happiness; he will give her every token of honour.

“Gave Himself”: The supreme test of love is whether it is prepared to forgo happiness in order that the other might have it. In this respect, the husband is to imitate Christ, giving up personal pleasures and comforts to obtain his wife’s happiness; standing by her side in the hour of sickness. Christ gave Himself for the church because she was in desperate need; Jesus did it to save her. Likewise the husband will give himself for the salvation of his wife, ministering to her spiritual needs, and she to his, in a spirit of mutual love.

Verse 28: “As their own bodies”: Not because self-love is the highest ideal, but because husband and wife are one body, one flesh. As a man protects his own body from danger and discomfort, so he will give his wife equal consideration.

“Loveth himself”: This is because their interests are the same, their ideals correspond, their spiritual goals are identical. When he promotes her welfare, he is promoting his own. Kindness begets kindness.

Verse 31: “One flesh”: Male and female are complementary, making together, as it were, one perfect being. Any serious contemplation of this thought would prohibit the frivolous manner in which many marriages are contracted, sometimes with the deliberate intention of divorce if they should not work out. God intended that marriage should be a lifelong association, and any society that treats lightly the institution has within it the seeds of its own destruction. The family is too fundamental a unit of society to be tampered with. Christ also desires His union with His people to be everlasting.

Verse 33: “Reverence”: Paul does not mean cringing fear; that would be out of keeping with the counsel he has given. This honour and respect that is urged in no way eliminates love on the part of the wife. It means that God’s natural order in the family should not be subverted, and that the special function of leadership that God has laid upon the husband should be regarded. Where there is mutual love and respect, questions of domination or alienation will not arise.

In conclusion, it is fitting to insert here these timely words written by Ellen G. White concerning the duty of husband and wife, and that of the family unit, to practice true home religion that shall prepare them an entrance into God’s glorious kingdom.

Husband and Wife:

“If we are doers of the Word, we shall take heed to the voice of God and bear our cross after Jesus, hourly subduing self. The law of God must be written in the heart, or we will never practice its holy precepts. We must have the Spirit of God, or we can never have harmony in the home. The wife, if she has the Spirit of Christ, will be careful of her words; she will control her spirit, she will be submissive, and yet will not feel that she is a bondslave, but a companion to her husband. If the husband is a servant of God, he will not lord it over his wife, he will not be arbitrary and exacting. …

“If the will of the Lord is carried out, the husband and wife will respect and love each other, and everything that would tend to mar the peace and unity of the family circle will be repressed. Kindness and love, the spirit of tenderness and forbearance, will be cherished.

“The love we give to others will be reflected back upon us. That which we sow, we shall reap. If Christ is formed within, the hope of glory, the husband and wife will not talk of their unsuitability to each other. If Christ abides in the heart of the wife, she will be submissive. If Christ abides in his heart. If one errs, the other will exercise Christlike forbearance, and not draw coldly away.

The Family Unit:

“If the Word of God is obeyed, the home will be the centre of the highest kind of missionary work. But those who are at a disagreement in the home life do not practice the words of the Lord, and will never be fit to enter the heavenly mansions, unless they are transformed by the grace of Christ. If the Lord should permit them to enter heaven, they would not be happy, for they would find something that would not please them. Someone would be in heaven whom they had never loved on earth, and they would want
them banished from the place of bliss. If we are sanctified, refined and made meet for the society of the saints in this life, we shall be fitted for heaven. If we manifest the character of Christ here, we shall have a heaven to go to heaven in, and shall be cheered by glimpses of our eternal home, which Jesus has gone to prepare. ...

“I have been shown that home religion is the great need in every family. The home circle should be the centre of the purest and most elevated affections. There peace, harmony, affection and happiness should be cultivated every day. There the precious plant of love should be carefully cherished that it may not die. Every plant that Satan has planted --- jealousy, anger, envy, evil surmising, evil speaking, impatience, fretfulness, prejudice, vanity, covetousness and selfishness --- should be rooted up without delay....

“Whatever will make the character lovely in the home will make it lovely in the heavenly mansion, and by your home life Jesus will measure your religious life. The grace of Christ can make your home a place of peace and rest; but unless you heed His Word and cherish His Spirit, you are none of His. God requires you to be sanctified wholly in your home life. The religion of Christ is not a religion to be reserved for certain places and occasions, and then laid aside at home. The truth as a sanctifier is needed more in the home than in any other place. Every thought, every impulse, every word and deed, is to be sanctified by the power of the truth.” Manuscript Releases, volume 13, pages 77—80 (Letter 18b, 1891)

This article draws from 6BC, pp. 1035—1038.

**Last Nations to Prohibit Divorce**

Report from Philippine newspapers

During his time in the Philippines, Brother Elvis Placer came across this interesting news item from the local press:

“**Valetta, Malta:** The Philippines is now the only sovereign state outside the Vatican where divorce is not allowed.

“Malta’s parliament on Monday (July 25) adopted a law authorizing divorce. The law is now set for formal approval by the president and likely to come into force in October in this overwhelmingly Catholic nation....

“The Mediterranean island state, which has a [Catholic] church every square kilometre, is the only European Union member to ban divorce.”

The Philippine Star, July 27, 2011

“The Roman Catholic Church... looms large over the archipelago where 95 per cent of the population is Catholic.... Valetta’s Archbishop Paul Cremona had warned churchgoers in a letter that they faced a choice [at a non-binding referendum held in May over this issue] between building and destroying family values.

“In addition, priests reportedly threatened to refuse communion to those who voted ‘yes’ [53 % voted affirmatively]. Abortion is still banned in Malta.

“Legal separation is widespread in Malta but marriages currently can only be annulled by the Catholic Church’s Ecclesiastical Tribunal in a complex and rare procedure that takes around eight years.”

The Philippine Daily Inquirer (International Section), July 27, 2011

**France’s 1792 Divorce Law Mirrors Our Times**

Perspective from the Spirit of Prophecy

“France presented also the characteristics which especially distinguished Sodom. During the Revolution, there was manifest a state of moral debasement and corruption similar to that which brought destruction upon the cities of the plain. And the historian presents together the atheism and the licentiousness of France, as given in the prophecy:

“Intimately connected with these laws affecting religion, was that which reduced the union of marriage—the most sacred engagement which human beings can form, and the permanence of which leads most strongly to the consolidation of society — to the state of a mere civil contract of a transitory character, which any two persons might engage in and cast loose at pleasure. . . . If fiends had set themselves to work to discover a mode of most effectually destroy-
Since the end of the Second World War, there has been a decided, alarming change in the moral values of Western society. Until the Second World War, morality in the Western world was, to a large extent, consistent with Christian biblical principles. Even those who lived in immoral relationships rarely tried to defend their anti-social behaviour. Premarital sex, extramarital sex, homosexual, and lesbian relationships, and divorce were at least seen in a negative light.

By the time we reached the twenty-first century, to a major extent, this had vanished. Those who still held strongly to Christian morality were categorized as narrow-minded, void of love, and exercising bigotry. Instead of designating these practices and behaviours immoral, they were now accepted as alternative lifestyles. If this was limited to only those who are practicing these sins in the secular world, it might be understandable, but this has greatly influenced many so-called Christians who believe it is what God would desire us to accept. Before going further, I explain that we should not despise those living in sin. We should seek to “put our arms around them” and encourage them to live a life in harmony with the godly principles which have, in the past, protected marriage, family life and society.

In the Los Angeles Times, May 15, 2011, there was an article written by a Presbyterian minister entitled, “A More-inclusive Church.” Most of us have come to understand that the word “inclusive” today means accepting the immorality that may be found in the world and in the church. This ordained minister pastors a church in West Virginia. He once had held to the Christian biblical principles of morality, but some time ago he was faced with the fact that his church had elected a known-lesbian to be one of the elders of the church. In the end, the majority of members came to the conclusion that they had been incorrect in their previous stand, and that the stand of the Presbyterian Church had been wrong.

All but a few members came to the agreement that Christ would approve them ordaining this lesbian as an elder of the church. Following her ordination, she was given the title of Elder. The pastor reported that this decision brought many of the estranged Christians in the area back to the church, and he spoke of great growth in the church membership. However, there were members of this church who refused to continue to worship in that church and withdrew their membership. It was implied that these members were not Christ-like.

Certainly, Christ gave us the example of His love for the immoral. The stories of Mary Magdalene, the woman caught in adultery, and Rahab give us an example of Jesus’ love and compassion. He was the perfect example. Christ loved the sinner, but He also hated the sin. His words, “neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more” (John 8: 11), sums up the Christ-like principles in dealing with immoral behaviour.

Jesus’ compassion for the sinner is the reason why He died on Calvary. Not only did He have compassion for the sinner, He earnestly entreated the sinner to “sin no more.”

Many congregations in our beloved Seventh-day Adventist Church have abandoned the principles of Jesus. They may express a great “love” for the sinner and so they should! But they condone the sin or ignore it. What a contrast from the principles of Christ. Christ provides the grace and power to overcome the sin and restore the character of the repentant one.

There is no one who can be truly content in living a life of sin. It brings guilt and disharmony. It hurts other people and by example it leads others in the way of Satan. Some of our churches openly endorse lifestyles of members practicing immorality.

No true Seventh-day Adventist, no true Christian can ignore, condone, or endorse a lifestyle which is clearly against the Word of God. Let each one of us ask daily for the power and strength from Christ to live the life of a moral Christian, and that we will also help others to the victory Christ gives over all sin. May this be the blessing of every reader.
The heading of this article comes from the title of a documentary film (not yet released) that will explore the issue of homosexuality within the ranks of Seventh-day Adventism. This film is being produced by a husband-and-wife documentary team, Stephen Eyer and Daneen Akers, who identify themselves as part of the Adventist church family.

In their words, their “axe to grind” in creating this documentary is:

“Our critique, if you want to call it that, is simply that there exists a barrier of entry for those who are classified as ‘wilful sinners’ — in this case, gay and lesbian members who make the personal choice to be in relationships, rather than live celibately.”

Living in San Francisco (which is widely acknowledged as the gay capital of the world) and having befriended former and current members of the Adventist church who adopt a homosexual, bisexual, and transgender lifestyle, Stephen and Daneen declared that it all helped to broaden their perspective on how such people should be treated by the denomination. They were also instrumental in organizing an activist group called “Adventists Against Prop 8”, which opposed the effort of a number of Adventist leaders in supporting a Californian initiative to remove civil marriage rights from same sex unions (voted by the electors at the 2008 American presidential election).

Stephen and Daneen presently attend Second Wind, a church in San Francisco which was established and is pastored by Greg and Shasta Nelson. Formerly employed by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Greg and Shasta were disfellowshipped from the denomination [and in the case of Greg, defrocked from the ministry] for adultery. Greg and Shasta began their new church, which meets every Sabbath in an informal environment suited for the secular attendee. Some active gay and lesbian San Franciscanians attend their fellowship on a regular basis. Greg and Shasta had given a public interview with the editor of the now defunct internet journal, Progressive Adventism, publicly acknowledging the sin of infidelity against their respective original partners. They also spoke about their non-traditional methods in reaching the unchurched citizens of their city.

Upon being informed of the name and purpose of this documentary film, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists issued the following statement to the producers through their lawyers:

“Your use and modification of the SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST mark in this manner is without permission of the GCCSDA [General Conference Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists] and/or the church, and is likely to cause dilution by blurring the distinctive qualities of the SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST mark and by tarnishing the reputation of the mark. Your use of the mark in this manner is also likely to cause confusion among consumers who may mistakenly believe that the Church has authorized or approved your use of the SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST mark.” Box Turtle Bulletin, June 23, 2010 (a LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender] news and analysis website).

The production of Seventh ‘Gay’ Adventists is the latest development in a line of events involving homosexuals within Adventism that are influenced by the international gay liberation movement. Its current modern existence can be traced back to June 1969, when homosexuals rioted on the streets of New York City in protest against police raids on gay patrons of the Stonewall Inn, which secretly catered for its gay clientele. The riots sparked the beginnings of a vigorous campaign by the gay community to have their lifestyle accepted by conventional society as normal sexual practice.

In 1971, a North American pictorial magazine carried a major essay on the aggressive activism of the gay liberation movement within the United States. The title of the article was, “Homosexuals in Revolt: The Year that One Liberation Movement Turned Militant.” The spirit of this campaign was aptly expressed by a veteran activist and leader:

“The homosexual proved [at the 1969 Stonewall riots] that he could shove back and, believe me, until we get what we want, we are going to keep on shoving back.” Life, December 31, 1971, p. 63

Two years after the 1969 Stonewall riots, homosexual lobby groups were established in many parts of America, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand. Many of them are still active today, wielding a powerful influence upon the political decisions that are...
Two examples of this from America will be given towards the end of this article.

Life magazine also made mention of a church that was established in October 1968 by a former Pentecostal minister, Troy Perry. Initially his congregation numbered only nine worshippers. By December 1971, his Metropolitan Community Church in Los Angeles had swelled to over 800 people, predominately homosexual, with a further 20 churches scattered across the American continent. Even at that time, a number of gay ministers, including Troy Perry, were conducting same gender marriages in their churches, although such unions were not recognized by the state.

In 1976, Seventh-day Adventist Kinship Interna-

tional was formed to support former and current church members who were gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender. Perhaps not ironically, the New Theology was making strident inroads into the thinking of many Adventists in Australia and America at that time. Both the New Theology and Kinship share the same philosophy about the impossibility of man to overcome all sin in this life, even by the power of God. Kinship plainly declares its position regarding the gay lifestyle:

“Kinship is not a ‘change’ or ‘ex-gay’ ministry and is not associated with any such organizations. Kinship believes that LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered] people are created as God intended and should not be subjected to mistreatment or discrimination.” SDA Kinship website

An internet support network for LGBT Adventists has made this statement in regards to the orientation of the gay person:

“We understand that same-sex attraction is real and not just a chosen behaviour. Whether they are caused by heredity, prenatal influences, environment, or a combination of these factors, they are an integral part of an individual and are morally neutral.” GLAD-ventist website

All of these LGBT Adventist networks advocate that:

— God loves and accepts gays and lesbians as they are.
— The Bible does not "condemn, or even mention homosexuality as a sexual orientation."
— Ellen White's writings do not "parallel any of the Bible texts which are often used to condemn homosexuals."
— An adult's sexual orientation is unchangeable.

Consequently, it is not surprising that the following statements should now appear before the eyes of our people, and our youth in particular:

“There is no definitive answer within Scripture that leads to a conclusive assessment that God condemns homosexuality – any other assessment than that lacks intellectual integrity and clearly stems not from biblical hermeneutics grounded in God’s grace and love for humanity, but rather only projects the ignorance and bigotry of those who advocate a stance that homosexuality is sin. It is bigoted precisely because there is no conclusive evidence – biblical or extra biblical – to defend the position that homosexuality, as understood today, is a sin.” Spectrum blog, December 27, 2007. “Gay Theology Without Apology”, Raymond Thompson

“We envision a Seventh-day Adventist church body in which straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered members truly exemplify the love of God in their relations with each other -- loving unconditionally without demanding proof that others are ‘worthy’ of love. For God loved us unconditionally, unworthy as we are.
“To this end we wish to foster understanding and dialogue to help reduce the fear of homosexuality that is too often evident in Seventh-day Adventist churches and to replace it with an active love that finds its source in the heart of God.

“We are not qualified to judge what is sin in another person's life -- particularly when it comes to intimate human relationships -- because sin is a matter of the heart (James 4:17) and only God can see what is in a person's heart. Thus Christ's parable of the tares and the wheat cautions us against being too enthusiastic about rooting sinners out of the church.” GLAdventist website

Should the above paragraph include “intimate human relationships” that exist between unmarried couples, or between couples secretly carrying on an affair? What about in incestuous ties between siblings, cousins of varying degrees, and other family members --- some of whom claim to have very warm, loving and affectionate relationships? How far is the author prepared to go with the notion that we cannot judge what is sin in a person's life? Does the Bible contain moral absolutes to govern our conduct, or only cultural and time-limited guidelines that can be dispensed with in our post-modernist world? With this faulted kind of reasoning, should we be surprised to see immorality abounding within our midst, being resisted only by a small minority who accept the word of God as the authoritative rule of life?

The love of God towards fallen humanity, profound and unfathomable as it is, beyond our comprehension and description, is presented in these statements without any reference to His laws governing human sexuality. The rationalization of verses in the Bible that have been traditionally understood to condemn homosexuality, offering new interpretations to those passages to promote beliefs that are compatible with their sexual inclinations, appears to be a consistent pattern of many within Christendom who justify their gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered status.

The Spirit of Prophecy has this to say about the love of God:

"God is love….But the love of God does not lead Him to excuse sin. He did not excuse it in Satan; He did not excuse it in Adam or in Cain; nor will He excuse it in any other of the children of men. He will not condone at our sins or overlook our defects of character. He expects us to overcome in His name. Those who reject the gift of Christ's righteousness are rejecting the attributes of character which would constitute them the sons and daughters of God. They are rejecting that which alone could give them a fitness for a place at the marriage feast.” Christ's Object Lessons, p. 316

“The Bible is interpreted in a manner that is attractive to the unrenewed heart, while its solemn and vital truths are made of no effect. A God of love is presented; but His justice, His denunciations of sin, the requirements of His holy law, are all kept out of sight. Pleasing, bewitching fables captivate the senses of those who do not make God's word the foundation of their faith. Christ is as verily rejected as before; but Satan has so blinded the eyes of the people that the deception is not discerned.” The Great Controversy, p. 405 (1884 edition)

Some Adventist institutions of learning are selling books and literature that justify and promote the gay lifestyle. One such example is set forth below:


During his time as professor of psychology at La Sierra University, Steve Daily wrote his observations about homosexuality in his book (which was endorsed by Desmond Ford as "a treasure trove…it shines out for its accurate analysis, honesty, heart, and Gospel"): "It is not essential for Adventists, or Christians in general, to agree about what is right or wrong concerning homosexuality." Adventism for a New Generation, p. 296. Better Living Publishers. Clackamas, Oregon. 1993

"The belief that fallen human beings can perfectly keep God's law is also declared to be a lie in Scripture." Ibid, p. 134

It is highly appropriate to add here what Martin Luther declared about the universities of his time which did not uphold the Bible as the rule of life:

"I fear much that the universities will be found to be great gates leading down to hell, unless they take diligent care to explain the Holy Scriptures, and to engrave them in the hearts of youth. I advise no one to place his child where the Holy Scriptures are not regarded as the rule of life. Every institution where the word of God is not diligently studied, must become corrupt." The Great Controversy, p. 116 (1884 edition)

We have been forewarned by the Lord's messenger that in this crisis hour of the Omega of Apostasy, in which the enemy of souls is bringing his style of reformation into the church, that

"our religion would be changed.” Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 2, p. 54
Individual Adventists such as Stephen Eyer and Daneen Aker; support organizations and forum groups such as Kinship, Advent Circle, GLAdventist, Gay Adventist Support Forum, GayAdventist.com; liberal publications such as Spectrum and Adventist Today; and an increasing proportion of laity, ministers, and teachers, are all engaged, in varying degrees of intensity, to alter the thinking (and religion) of the church towards homosexuality, bisexuality, and transgender-sexuality. This reflects the unceasing campaign currently waged by the worldwide gay movement to persuade governments to legislate laws that would force the community to accommodate their sexual preferences. Two very disturbing examples from America reflect the lowering morals and radical agenda of the international gay movement today:

— (California) Proposal for LGBT people to be portrayed in schools as role models:

“Lawmakers in the state of California are proposing a law that would require schools to portray lesbians, homosexuals, transsexuals and those who have chosen other alternative sexual lifestyles as positive role models to children in all public schools there.

[The proposed law] is sponsored by [Californian] state senator Mark Leno, [who is] openly homosexual...

[An internet activist society opposing this measure] SaveCalifornia.com…warned ‘children as young as kindergarten will be taught to admire homosexuality, same-sex marriages, bisexuality, and trans-sexuality.’

“Children will be enticed into political activism in support of everything pushed by ‘lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex [conjugal relationships involving people possessing genitals of both sexes] and questioning’ political groups, as the bill requires ‘particular emphasis on portraying the role of these groups in contemporary society.’"

“Further, it would require that ‘teachers will be made to positively portray homosexuality, same-sex marriages, bisexuality, and trans-sexuality … because to be silent opens them up to the charge of ‘reflecting adversely [to these lifestyles, punishable by law]…. textbooks, teachers and school boards will be forced to promote homosexuality, same-sex marriage, bisexuality, trans-sexuality, sex-change operations, cross-dressing as positive role models.”

**“This is radical, in-your-face sexual indoctrination that parents genuinely don’t want and children certainly don’t need,’” the statement [from SaveCalifornia.com] says.” WorldNet Daily, June 23, 2011

— (Maine) Proposal for schoolboys calling themselves girls to use toilet facilities of the opposite sex:

“A Christian organization in Maine is asking its constituents to protest a state proposal that would give boys who call themselves girls full access to girls’ restrooms, locker rooms and cheerleading squads.

“The Christian Civic League of Maine said in a statement the ‘l’atest demand by the homosexual lobby is quite intolerable, having sunk to the level of an impossible absurdity.’

“The Maine Human Rights Commission proposed a set of guidelines that would require schools ‘to allow young children to have access to facilities of the opposite sex. Under the proposed guidelines, boys who self-identify as female will have access to girls’ sports teams and cheerleading squads, girls’ bathrooms, and girls’ locker room’...

“Although the recommendations are offered to public schools, colleges, and other educational institutions in the form of guidelines, schools which violate the guidelines will be brought before the commission, and may be subject to further legal action,’ the family organization warned.” World Net Daily, January 25, 2010.

(Reports from World Net Daily written by Bob Unruh)

With feelings and attitudes totally devoid of hatred, ridicule, abuse, bullying, persecution, and discourtesy, and fully actuated by Christian love and genuine concern for the welfare of those who think, act, and believe differently from us, we must take an uncompromising, decided stand for the moral law of God as clearly expressed in Holy Writ. The low moral state of today’s society — acceptance of solo sex, pre-marital sex, homosexuality, bisexuality, trans- and some deviant sexual practices (such as sadomasochism) — has made its presence felt in the church, affecting our impressionable young people (and mature adults) with a set of values that are foreign to the pure principles of heaven. We are told by the messenger of the Lord:

“Let your affections and your sympathies entwine about God, else your impulses will become impure, your character will be defective, your heart estranged from God. Whoever touched or handled that which taints and corrupts. These things steal the heart away from God. The soul withers and becomes deformed, remains pure breathing the atmosphere of that which is set apart for God. Whoever touched or handled that which taints and corrupts. These things steal the heart away from God. The soul withers and becomes deformed, because the tent is pitched too near Sodom to breathe the pure atmosphere of heaven.” Testimonies on Sexual Behaviour, Adultery, and Divorce, p. 162 (Letter 8, 1888)

“Shall the vines of Sodom and Gomorrah be permitted to grow in the garden of the Lord? Will the terrible judgments of God be visited upon those who know the truth, because they have not formed characters
after the divine example? Will God be obliged to say
of His people today, as He said of Israel, 'I had plant-
ed thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: How then
art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange
vine?' Let us subdue self. Let us overcome every evil
trait of character. Then the grapes of the Lord will
once more grow on the once-flourishing vine, which
will no longer bear the grapes of Sodom and the clus-
ters of Gomorrah."  *Manuscript Release, volume 3,*
*p. 359* (Letter 141, 1902)

"Impurity is today widespread, even among the pro-
fessed followers of Christ. Passion is unrestrained;
the animal propensities are gaining strength by indul-
gence, while the moral powers are constantly becom-
ning weaker. . . . The sins that destroyed the antediluv-
ians and the cities of the plain exist today --- not
merely in heathen lands, not only among popular pro-
fessors of Christianity, but with some who profess to
be looking for the coming of the Son of man. If God
should present these sins before you as they appear
in His sight, you would be filled with shame and ter-
ror." *Testimonies for the Church, volume 5,* p. 218

One can find the following statement on the Ad-
ventist gay support website, GLADventist:

"We believe that the unconditional love of God draws
us to Him and empowers us to change more effec-
tively than exhortation or condemnation."

The ministry of reproof is rejected by many peo-
ple across all segments of Adventism, notwith-
standing the Biblical exhortation to rebuke and ex-
hort with all authority. Mingled with tears in His
voice and feelings of unutterable love and compas-
sion for the erring, Christ did not withhold Himself
from declaring the plain words of truth, even at the
risk of death.

"The righteous zeal manifested by Christ for the hon-
our of God as the supreme Ruler, the unsparing de-
nunciation of sin, the unmasking of the hypocrisy of
those who made a pretence to piety, and thus de-
ceived the people, the heavenly loveliness of His own
unblemished character, aroused the enmity of the
world against Him, who hated nothing but sin. He
warred against lust and hypocrisy, and this stirred up
against him the most bitter hostility. The serpent him-
self came to the assistance of his seed, and evil an-
gels and evil men conspired together in a confedera-
cy of apostasy to destroy the Champion of God, and
to make void the law of the Most High." *Signs of the
Times, July 11, 1895*

To stand for God’s truth in the midst of deep
apostasy in the church and open revolt in the world,
with a heart filled with genuine love for the erring
and enmity against sin, is no easy attainment. In
Christ alone can we find the perfect example on
how to minister to the sinner with words of unadul-
terated saving truth, spoken in a spirit free from
haughtiness, pride, sarcasm, ridicule, and destruc-
tive criticism. Only as we are clothed with Christ’s
righteousness will it be possible to stand pure in a
corrupt world, unsullied in an environment of com-
promise within the church, and be aided by the
Spirit of God to help the erring sinner to possess
that same communion with God which will empower
him to overcome every sin --- including his personal
sexual sins.

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit
the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither forni-
cators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate,
nor abusers of themselves with mankind
[homosexuality], nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunk-
ards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the
kingdom of God.

"And such were some of you: but ye are washed,
but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the
name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our

*Latest newsflash:* A new video has just been
released for public viewing by the producers of
*Seventh ‘Gay’ Adventists*. The film is entitled,
*It Gets Better (for Adventists too)*. On this film,
six homosexual young people testified about their
struggles to find acceptance of their sexual orienta-
tion inside the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The video has become a world-wide phenome-
non, receiving support from individuals and organi-
izations like American President Barack Obama, the
University of Michigan Law School, Microsoft,
Google, and the Chicago Cubs (professional base-
ball team).

The film is part of an ongoing campaign by sup-
porters of the gay movement within the church to
effect a change in Adventism that is not dissimilar
to what has already happened in certain other de-
nominations (like the Anglican Church, the United
Methodist Church, and many reformed churches in
Europe). Some churches, like the Moravian Church
in 1974, and the United Church of Canada, have
already declared that active gays and lesbians are
full and participating members of the Christian com-
community. Interestingly, the Metropolitan Commu-
nity Church, founded by homosexual minister Troy Per-
ny in October 1968, is now a worldwide organization
and considered to be a mainstream denomination
within Christendom. Acceptance of homosexuality
as a valid sexual orientation and practice constitute
the core of its values and mission.

The ordination of active homosexuals to the min-
istry in various churches within the Western world
shows the future that lies ahead of the denomina-
tion if time was to continue much further. The issue
of gay rights, like the strong effort to ordain women
into the gospel ministry, promises to engender con-
troversy within the church for a very long time.
Burden of James White

This year marks the 130th anniversary of the death of James White. He passed away on Sabbath, August 6, 1881. He was only 60 years old.

Right up to the time of his death, he had an unceasing burden for the work of God, especially with the institutions he had established in Battle Creek. Some weeks before he died, he expressed his heartfelt concerns to his wife Ellen with these words:

“My life has been given to the up-building of these institutions. It seems like death to leave them. They are as my children, and I cannot separate my interest from them. These institutions are the Lord’s instrumentalities to do a specific work. Satan seeks to hinder and defeat every means by which the Lord is working for the salvation of men. If the great adversary can mould these institutions according to the world’s standard, his object is gained. It is my greatest anxiety to have the right man in the right place. If those who stand in responsible positions are weak in moral power, and vacillating in principle, inclined to lead toward the world, there are enough who will be led. Evil influences must not prevail. I would rather die than live to see these institutions mismanaged, or turned aside from the purpose for which they were brought into existence.” Testimonies, vol. 1, p. 106

Errata and Explanation

Concerning July/August Remnant Herald

Errata:

P. 2198: “Manilla Evangelism”

The capital city of the Philippines was incorrectly spelt in the title, with an extra “l” added by mistake. The heading should have read, “Philippine Evangelism”. The town of Manticao (estimated population of 8000) is located 776 kilometres south-east of Manila, on the island of Mindanao (the largest of the 7103 islands in the country).

The second sentence in the statement began with these words, “This series was behin on June 5...” It should have read, “This series began on June 5….”

P. 2201: “The Middle Road”

Left column, last paragraph: the number 0 was accidently placed near the beginning of the word "moderation".

Right column, second paragraph: “...destined for heaven” — “for” was misspelt with an “e” at the end.

Right column, second-last paragraph: a sentence began, “Thee stances...” when the opening word should have read, “These stances…”

Right column, final paragraph: the line began with two parentheses instead of one.

Explanation:

Some readers may have felt that a few articles in the last paper were quite lengthy. Two in particular, “Far Reaching Implications and Long Lasting Consequences” and “Anniversaries of Significance – Part Two” needed to be as long as they were to finish up their on-going series, lest they were to continue for a third part in another edition. We will endeavour to keep all our articles shorter, wherever possible.

Forthcoming Meetings

As referred to in the May—June edition, Brother Evan Sadler, from Hope International (New Zealand), will be accompanied by Brother Elvis Placer to speak in the following places:

Sabbath, Sept. 3 Darwin
Monday, Sept. 5 Hervey Bay
Tuesday, Sept. 6 Rockhampton
Wednesday, Sept. 7 Mackay
Thursday, Sept. 8 Townsville
Sabbath, Sept. 10 Cairns

The theme of the meetings will be “The History of Protestantism.”

At the time of printing this edition, notices will have been sent out to all our contacts in Queensland and the Northern Territory, informing them of the times and venues where the meetings will be held.

For further information, you may contact Brother Placer either by e-mail, telephone, or mail (see details in the next column).

NEW CONTACT DETAILS FOR THE EDITOR

The new e-mail address for the editor is ep@rh.org.au. No e-mails are being transferred from the old address (ep@highwoodcollege.org) to the new one.

The new telephone number is (03) 5963 7080 [international: +61 3 5963 7080].

Personal mail can be posted to Elvis Placer at 291 Maroondah Highway, Narbethong, Victoria 3778 Australia.
Report on the Philippine Mission (Part 1)
By Elvis Placer

Brief Snapshot of the Philippines:
— Population (June 2011): Approximately 95 million; annual growth rate 1.8%.
— Religious Demography: 81% Roman Catholic; 11% Protestant; 5% Islam; 3% other.
— Poverty Levels (2006): 23% of population (20 million) living below US$1.25 per day; 44% of population (40 million) living on less than US$2 a day (Australian Government: AusAid)
— Seventh-day Adventist Membership (2009): 4,321 churches; 674,816 members

Location of Evangelistic Mission:
Manticao (approximately 8000 inhabitants) is located in the province of Misamis Oriental, on the northern part of the largest island in the country, Mindanao. The town is located midway off the main road that runs between two larger cities, Cagayan de Oro and Iligan. An Adventist presence has been visible in Manticao since 1947, with the founding of the local Visayan church, and the establishment of Mountain View College (subsequently renamed Manticao Mission Academy following the college’s relocation to another part of the island in 1952). Fourteen Adventist churches are located within a ten-kilometre radius of Manticao.

Brief Report on the Evangelistic Mission:
Several months before my family and I arrived in the Philippines on June 2, plans were laid to conduct an evangelistic outreach in Mindanao. The lay minister whom I had befriended six years ago, Antonio Duroy, Jnr., initially thought the mission would be held in Cagayan de Oro City (over 550,000 inhabitants). Upon further discussions he had with lay workers and fellow ministers, the decision was made to hold the series instead in Manticao. The last time a mission program was conducted there occurred in 2006.

Financial support for the mission, amounting to A$6500, came from the Bayswater Seventh-day Advent Fellowship, which meets every Sabbath in Box Hill, Melbourne, Australia. The money was used to pay for a number of expenses, including:

(a): banners advertising the meetings, which were displayed in front of fourteen Adventist churches within the vicinity, as well as in front of Manticao Mission Academy. A huge banner was displayed inside the church where the meetings were conducted (the Manticao Visayan Seventh-day Adventist Church).

(b): monthly wages for fourteen lay workers who were conducting Bible studies to interested folk for many weeks prior to and including the period of the mission program.

Private donations from Melbourne and Vanuatu were also received to support the mission, which was spent on buying food and essential items for some of the needy people attending the nightly meetings.

The Manticao Visayan Seventh-day Adventist Church offered its support by giving 400 pesos a day (almost A$10) to defray our expenses for food. Additionally a number of members from the Visayan church provided the lay-workers with free accommodation and victuals as part of the church’s contribution towards the outreach program.

Remnant Ministries provided its support by supplying a large quantity of various books authored by the Standish brethren, which were distributed to a number of credentialed ministers working in the Northern Mindanao Conference, the fourteen laymen who conducted Bible studies, theology students at Mountain View College in Valencia, many students at Manticao Mission Academy, and some laypeople living in the Manticao area.

Other books donated by a brother from Warburton, Australia, were also shipped ahead of time to the Philippines for general distribution. One of the books which was well received was written and published by the late D. C. Stewart in late 1984 (reprinted in 2004 by Leaves of Autumn Books, Woori Yallock, Australia), Christian Education? A copy of this book was given to every faculty member of Manticao Mission Academy.

The theme for the entire series was NOW IS THE TIME. The subjects covered in the thirteen nightly power-point slide presentations were:

“The Signs of the Times”, “The Stones Are Crying
Almost every nightly meeting was preceded by a 30 minute power-point health lecture, delivered by my wife, Mae Loune Placer (who was born in the Philippines). On one occasion, together with my wife, our only child Abigail (8 years old) gave a slide presentation on interesting facts about God’s wonderful animal creation.

Every nightly presentation I gave was translated into the local Visayan dialect by Pastor Proferio Lagunday, Jnr., who is the Youth Director of the Northern Mindanao Conference. It was his first attempt to publicly translate discourses from English into the local dialect. He did an admirable job to convey the message to the people, most of whom could not speak much English.

The number of people attending the meetings remained fairly constant every night, almost filling the inner sanctum of the church to capacity. Notwithstanding the local fiesta that fell on the night the presentation on the Mark of the Beast was given, and also the torrential rain that fell at times prior to, during, and after the nightly meetings (June is the wet season in the Philippines), the people kept on coming.

As very many people in the Philippines cannot afford a car, those who went to the mission program either came by foot, motorcycle, or herded together in large numbers on jeepsneys (piling themselves even on the roofs of the vehicles). The road in front of the church was parked with all kinds of vehicles, which became a bustle of noise and activity after the conclusion of every meeting!

It was confirmed that there were 173 Roman Catholics who attended every session of the program, in addition to Protestants and Adventists who came along as well. Amongst the 173 Catholics was a former member of the Knights of Columbus, who attained to the highest degree within that order. He confirmed with me that he had taken the oath which required Knights of Columbus members to kill Protestants when necessary to defend the Roman Catholic faith. He had undergone Bible studies with a Seventh-day Adventist layman for a year prior to my arrival there: he said the evangelistic meetings confirmed his faith in the message the Lord has given to the Advent people.

There were a sizeable number of attendees who had nothing to eat by the time they came to the presentations. In sympathy for these folk, it was decided to purchase food, blankets, plates and cups to give to some of these people every night. One night, when a box of bananas and potatoes was passed through the aisle, many people, including children, eagerly seized the commodities until the box was completely empty before it reached the end of the aisle.

Out of four Sabbaths that were spent in the Manticao Visayan church, I delivered the Divine Service on three of them. All the neighbouring Adventist churches were closed on the first three Sabbaths in June, so that the members could attend the large Visayan church, which is undergoing reconstruction at this time. It has about 400 people on the membership books, although approximately half that number attend the church on a regular basis.

On the last day of the crusade, Sabbath, June 19, for the first time I got to see all the people who had expressed their interest to be baptized —110. They were all baptized in the sea about a kilometre and a half from the church. A few others were also immersed in the sea in subsequent weeks to bring the total number baptized from the mission to 115.

(Report will continue in the next edition)
The National Debt Clock, located near Times Square, New York City, accurately records the mounting debt of the American federal government (presently over US$14.6 trillion). Last August, a last-minute agreement was reached by Congress that will see the debt level raised by US$2.4 trillion over the next twelve months. While America has avoided a default on its credit payments, yet the agreement could not prevent a downgrade of its AAA credit rating by Standard & Poor’s — a perfect rating it had held for 70 years. Consequently, world financial markets are very pessimistic about the present state of America’s fickle and vulnerable economy.

In 1980, during the final months of the administration led by President Jimmy Carter, the national debt rose to US$1 trillion. The figure was reached at a time when the nation’s economy was in deep recession, and the country was grappling with a serious energy crisis.

In February 1981, a few weeks after his inauguration, President Ronald Reagan delivered a speech before a joint session of the Congress to outline his program for national economic recovery. In his address, he gave an illustration to demonstrate how big the national debt was at that time:

“A few weeks ago I called such a figure --- a trillion dollars --- incomprehensible, and I’ve been trying ever since to think of a way to illustrate how big a trillion really is. And the best I could come up with is that if you had a stack of thousand-dollar bills in your hand only 4 inches high, you’d be a millionaire. A trillion dollars would be a stack of thousand-dollar bills 67 miles [107.8 kilometres] high.” Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Program for Economic Recovery, February 18, 1981

The national debt level escalated as the years went by to record these staggering figures, as illustrated at the top of the next column:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>National Debt (Trillion USD)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>US$1.0 trillion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>US$2.2 trillion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>US$4.1 trillion</td>
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<td>1995</td>
<td>US$5.0 trillion</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>US$6.0 trillion</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>US$11.8 trillion</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>US$13.0 trillion</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>US$14.6 trillion (as of August 2011)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Source: US Department of Treasury]

If one was to stack up a pile of thousand dollar notes to reach the current national debt level, it would be 978 miles (1575 kilometres) high — which would touch the outer limits of Earth’s atmosphere!

The national debt increases by US$6 million every 15 minutes!

The total American debt (government, business, and private) currently stands at over US$56 trillion. To reach this figure with a stack of thousand dollar notes, it would be over 4000 miles (6440 kilometres) in height!

How high can it go before the whole thing topples over?

By the end of this American fiscal year (September 30), the federal government is projected to have spent over US$420 billion on interest payments for the national debt!

The speed in which the Global Financial Crisis infected the world three years ago underscores the vulnerability of the present international economic order. Former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown declared at that time that the economic downturn would be seen in the future to be the “birth pangs of the new world order.” Sky News (Britain), November 11, 2008

The apostle James foretold that the time shall come when people will throw away their riches and their money, which will have become valueless (see James 5: 1—3). Ellen White amplified this prediction even further with these words:

“The very means that is now so sparingly invested in the cause of God, and that is selfishly retained, will, in a little while, be cast with all idols to the moles and to the bats. Money will soon depreciate in value very suddenly when the reality of eternal scenes opens to the senses of man.” The True Missionary, January 1874

May the current financial crisis stir us to use our money more liberally to share God’s message!