**Dead Sea Scrolls online**

The famous Dead Sea Scrolls, which contain at least fragments of most of the books of the Old Testament, were first discovered in 1947. The Great Isaiah Scroll, which is 24 feet long, is the only complete ancient copy of any biblical book in existence. It has been dated to around 125 BC. For many years, scholars have been able to view the Dead Sea Scrolls only at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. However, Google has cooperated with the museum to make the Great Isaiah Scroll and four others available online. They were photographed with an ultra-high resolution, 1,200-megapixel camera, which is nearly 200 times more detailed than the average consumer camera. Google plans to make other scrolls available online in the near future.—*The Christian Science Monitor*

**Canadian students help Ghanian women**

Since 2009, three students from Redeemer University College (RUC) in Ancaster, Ontario, have assisted with a literacy program in Ghana that helps local women learn how to read. Recently, the Canadian International Development Agency gave a CAN$186,500 grant to the college that will make it possible for RUC students to continue teaching literacy and to teach business skills as well. Two students were sent to Ghana in September 2011 for three months, and two more will be sent each quarter beginning in January and May 2012. Mary Ashun, an assistant professor of education at the college, says that the women in Ghana “don't want us going down to deliver what they need—they know what they need. They just need a helping hand to get started. The students are there as facilitators.”—*ChristianWeek*

**Church or jail**

The city in Bay Minette, Alabama, came up with a unique offer for some first-time misdemeanor offenders convicted of a nonviolent crime: do jail time or church time. Those who chose church time would be required to attend church weekly for a year and report their attendance to the pastor and the police department. After a year of faithful attendance at the church of their choice, the charges would be dropped. Atheists could choose community service. The idea originated with area churches, 56 of which agreed to participate in the program. However, it drew the ire of the American Civil Liberties Union, which threatened to sue on the grounds that, if carried out, the program would flagrantly violate the principle of church-state separation.—*WKRG.com*

**Divorce rate is down**

In 1981, the percentage of American couples who divorced reached a peak of 5.3 per 1,000 people. By 2010, that figure had dropped to 3.6 divorces per 1,000, about the same as in 1970. Several factors are contributing to the decline. Ten times more couples live together without marrying than in 1960, so no divorce is necessary when they split. Also, the marriage rate has dropped by almost 30 percent in the past 25 years, and those who...
do marry are waiting about five years longer to do so. Some experts suggest that the growing number of women who are entering the work force increases the family’s financial stability and may reduce marital tensions over money.—CBS News

Churches hiring nurses

A growing number of churches are hiring nurses to encourage their members to eat better and exercise more often. These nurses also help those with chronic health problems to better manage their conditions. Health officials are encouraged by the trend. “Health care should not be like a body shop where we just take our vehicle in to be fixed,” said Susan Chase, associate dean for the graduate program at the University of Central Florida College of Nursing. “It’s a matter of body, mind—and spirit. We have to address all of that in order to prevent disease and help people to heal.”—Orlando Sentinel

Don’t say “God bless you” in school!

When students in the health class at Wood High School in Sacramento, California, started saying, “God bless you,” anytime another student sneezed, the teacher, Steve Cuckovich, docked their grades 25 points. Responding to the uproar from parents, district superintendent John Niederkorn said that the issue is whether the students’ remarks constituted freedom of speech or classroom disruption. Cuckovich agreed to use less draconian ways to discipline his students.—NYDailyNews.com

New Books

Title: Pictures of Jesus In the Stories He Told by David B. Smith

Even in today’s media-crazed world, we appreciate a well-told story. Among the best-loved stories in Scripture are the parables of Jesus: the sheep and the goats, the lost coin, the wedding feast. Through these and others, Jesus introduced His kingdom – a new order in which evil is defeated, brokenness is healed, and love prevails – in ways that His followers could understand. These vibrant accounts of daily activities made His kingdom accessible to all who would listen.

Here’s a sample of the retold parables.

- “Buying a Farm from Jed Clampett”
- “Year-End Report of the Ten Mutual Funds”
- “The Girls Who Missed the Wedding”

Through Pictures of Jesus, you will glean deeper insights into the stories Jesus told, and will come to know in a refreshing new way the One who told them.

Price: $16.99
For as long as we can remember and even before, the refrain “Jesus is coming soon” has sounded in churches around the world. Its theme is central to our message as a church – embedded in our very name – Seventh-day Adventist! Yet, still we wait. If we step back for a moment and take a panoramic view, we see Adam and Eve waiting for the Promised One. They, too, must have wondered at the delay.

How encouraging are these words: “God’s purposes know no haste and no delay” (The Desire of Ages, 32). Moore concludes, “We need to apply those words to our situation. Paul said that ‘when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son’ (Galatians 4:4). We can be sure that when the time has fully come again, God will send Jesus back to take us home!”

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As Quoted

“The Christian activist right is the largest, best-organized and, I believe, the most powerful force in American politics today. No other political group comes even close.”

Democratic political strategist Rob Stein, in briefings to left-leaning wealthy donors. Los Angeles Times
The Final Sign

Luke points to **COSMIC SIGNS** that will be visible in the sky as the unmistakable sign of the nearness of Christ's coming. In contrast, stands the cry of nearness by false prophets, based on **EARTHY SIGNS**.

Increasing calamities are surely precursors to the second advent but it's important for people to understand that false christ's and false prophets will use these same signs to validate their claims.

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Economic Crisis and Your Future

The Great Recession, as it's being dubbed, continues to gnaw at the wallets and psyche of the average American. Times are tough and the outlook for many is anything but bright.

Economic Crisis and Your Future urges people to entrust their well being to Jesus. The day will come when no man can buy or sell and complete dependence on Christ will be the only way to survive. In just a few paragraphs this Pocket Signs brings hope for the future and puts the economic crisis in perspective.

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