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'Me & My Maker'

– 'Experiencing the Joy' is a collection of 42 short drama clips in a variety of styles dealing with Adventist beliefs in a creative approach and asking current questions. Each video is designed to accompany a chapter from the book ‘Experiencing the Joy’ but can also stand alone as a resource for small groups, youth programmes and sermon starters.

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New Principal Appointed at Newbold College

08 May 2011 St Albans, UK [Miroslav Pujic, tedNEWS] In its meeting on Sunday, the 8th of May, 2011, the Newbold College Board appointed Dr Philip R Brown from Australia to serve as the new principal at Newbold College. Brown is currently a vice-president at Avondale College in Australia, with particular responsibility for learning and teaching. He brings exceptional academic qualifications including an earned doctoral degree with specialisation in educational administration and leadership, which underpins all the qualities required in fulfilling the key responsibilities of this senior position. He is the 31st principal in Newbold's 110-year history.

Dr Brown brings to this position a strong awareness of contemporary higher education issues, a practical understanding of Adventist Christian higher education challenges, and an empathetic and vital interest in students and their needs as they prepare for Christian service. He wishes to make a positive difference for students and staff. Based on his wide and varied experiences in the education area, he is committed to team-work and fostering a healthy team spirit and staff morale, in order to dynamically promote the growth and development of Newbold College.

Dr Brown received his Bachelor of Education from Avondale College in Australia, two Master Degrees in Commerce and Educational Administration from the University of New South Wales, Australia, a Master of Tertiary Education Management from the University of Melbourne, Australia, and, finally, in 1997, his Doctorate in Education from La Sierra University, USA.

On his appointment, Dr Brown says: "I have a strong commitment to the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, coupled with knowledge of and sensitivity to the unique needs of higher education in Europe. In particular, I have enthusiasm for furthering Newbold's vision, mission, values and contribution to the Adventist identity in the modern world."

"Through our research we found that Dr Brown has an excellent grasp of higher education issues", says Dr Bertil Wikander, the College Board chair and the President of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Trans-European Division, commenting on the appointment of the new principal, and continued "He is also strategic and knows how to work hard to make things happen and manage change. We heard very positive comments on his management style which characterises integrity, professionalism and a balance between project-task and people-focus in providing direction and inspiration. We believe that Brown's spiritual focus, knowledge, skills, and wide-ranging educational experiences will bring growth to the College in numbers and spiritually. We wish him and the Newbold staff God's blessings as they begin this new and critical phase of the college's history." concludes Wikander.

Dr Brown succeeds Dr Svein Myklebust from Norway who has served as acting principal since December 1, 2010. The Newbold College Board expressed their gratitude and appreciation for his good work during the interim period and recognised that it was a challenging time which Myklebust has managed to lead in a balanced, fair, and successful way.

Newbold College continues to have a key role in preparing ministers for pastoral leadership within the countries of the TED and runs a variety of degree programmes that benefit young people from all countries in the TED and also the rest of the world. The College is central to the Trans-European Division in implementing its strategic objectives and for the growth and Identity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, particularly in its European context. It is an institution that consolidates faith, equips youth with the tools for exploring truth, and provides a burning passion for mission and service. [tedNEWS]

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Royal Wedding Endorsement by Jamaica's Governor General

05 May 2011, London United Kingdom [Derek Morrison, BUC NEWS] Pomp, pageantry and praise – not just at last Friday's Royal Wedding at Westminster Abbey, but continued the next day at a special Day of Fellowship at Hampstead Adventist church with Sir Patrick Allen, Governor General of Jamaica.

Themed 'The Royal Wedding', the day's proceedings featured stirring and appealing musical input from the London Male Voice Choir, the Millennium Brass Ensemble, and 14-year-old Tennae Drysdale. A well-ordered procession and guard of honour mounted by Pathfinders contributed to a sense of splendour and occasion. With well over 500 people packing the sanctuary for the extended morning service, local minister Humphrey Walters delivered the morning's address based on the parable of the wedding garment, taking his cue from the royal wedding service.

Sir Patrick Allen, former President of the West Indies Union Conference, and now Governor General of Jamaica, was special guest for the day. He had attended the Royal Wedding on Friday but, he informed us, like any dedicated Adventist, looked forward to worshipping on Sabbath in church with his brothers and sisters in the Lord. Addressing a packed out congregation, Sir Patrick remarked that he appreciated the sacredness of Friday's wedding service and hoped it would help in encouraging young people to continue to uphold the institution of marriage.

Even though he has been Governor General for two years, he is still defined by many people he meets as a minister of the gospel, Sir Patrick dislosed to us. This, he says, gives him the opportunity to witness regarding his faith. He shared an example that while at the wedding he was asked about the significance of being an Adventist, and was quizzed on whether his duties as Governor General ever clashed with his Sabbath-keeping. He was able to explain that there was no inevitable conflict; that he is happy being an effective Governor General and, at the same time, a faithful Sabbath-keeping Christian. Requesting the prayers of the church, he conceded that if he were ever to turn away from the faith, everyone in Jamaica, Adventist or not, would be disappointed in him.

Key issues being championed by him and his wife, Sir Patrick informed us, revolve around the family, education and youth affairs. These, they are seeking to address from a holistic standpoint that embraces mental, spiritual, social, emotional and physical considerations. He has used his high position to implement a programme that is tagged the "I believe" initiative, where young people are empowered to find good values and use their God-given talents to build a good nation and serve God and country. Sir Patrick concluded his address by challenging us to do good, stating: "We will only pass this way but once; any good deed we can do, let us do it now, because we will not pass this way again."

Accompanying him on the day were BUC President, Pastor Don McFarlane, as well as former BUC President Pastor Cecil Perry. Also in attendance were SEC representatives, along with a number of pastors. [tedNEWS]

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Nine Young People Baptised in Iceland

03 May 2011 Reykjavik, Iceland [Eric Guðmundsson, tedNEWS] Baptisms are not really about numbers and they should be used only carefully as a measurement of church growth. We all know that baptism as such is only one of many contributing factors to a thriving, let alone a blooming church. Recently, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Iceland could celebrate nine baptisms within two weeks. This may not sound so spectacular in regions where hundreds are baptised even in one day but here in Iceland, it certainly does.

Therefore, I would like to tell the story of three siblings within this group. Signur Ella, Jon Thor and Anna Mary live in a village in Western Iceland. In their town, the three kids, along with their parents are the only Seventh-day Adventists. Even though the main road system in Iceland has now been tarmaced for many years, that does not mean that you can get wherever you like, especially during the winter months. Therefore this family has not the possibility to attend church with fellow Adventists on a regular basis. Even in good conditions, a visit to the church would be an about five hours’ roundtrip amounting to a distance of 360 kms (220 miles). This means that the youngsters have always attended school and most other activities outside of the community of the Adventist church.

Through the years the family has though attended camp meetings and other Adventist activities, especially in the summertime and last year the youngsters joined the Icelandic pathfinders group at the “Faithbook” camporee in Finland. Recently we have established a regular online streaming of our services in the Reykjavik church. This gives our family in Western Iceland along with many others who live in remote areas, or others who are unable to attend church due to other reasons, the possibility to celebrate the Sabbath with their fellow believers in Reykjavik.

Preparation of the baptismal ceremony is quite a challenge when you don’t have the opportunity to meet on a regular basis. Only three of the nine who were baptised were in fact able to have their weekly Bible study with their pastor. For the others, special arrangements had to be made. We had fewer sessions, but they were longer each time. This arrangement gave us the possibility to get to know each other well on a personal basis. In my opinion, baptismal classes are very much about establishing a life-long mutual relationship of trust and fellowship in Jesus, rather than transmitting knowledge or information.

“It is only 20 months since I have started my work as a pastor. Before, I have been a teacher on various age-levels”, says Manfred Lemke pastor who did the Bible studies with this group, and continued: “For me, the baptismal preparation has been the highlight of my work. The skills and experience acquired during my former occupation have now their true ‘locus’, which is teaching about Jesus. Whereas many of the daily tasks of pastoral work have been new and challenging, the sessions with these lovely young people have always been a source of joy for me.”

Pastor Lemke continued to explain his feeling while he was standing in the baptistery with these young people. “When I finally stood in the baptistery, awaiting the first youngster to join me, I felt how little I was. Would I find the right words to say? Would we do right? Would all go well? There are so many things that can go wrong, so many things to worry about. But, at that moment, there was no feeling of worry. The strength we felt was supernatural, the words spoken were given by someone else”, concluded Pastor Lemke.

It is this moment that gives us hope. There is a future, a good future with good young people. In a such moment we feel both strong and weak, strong because we know we are not alone in this, and weak because we feel how utterly dependent we are upon the grace and guidance of our almighty God.

What does it mean for the Church in Iceland to have nine young people baptised in the spring days of 2011? Well, in a church where growth is an issue, this gives us hope. This is particularly important for the elderly who have seen another time where the church grew rapidly and they are yearning for a revival. But the real meaning or fruits of these baptisms will only unfold in the years to come.

Will they find their way in the church? Will the church find a way to integrate them and give them the feeling of belonging and support? Will they be strong enough to withstand the pressure of their peers to live a ‘normal’ life? All this is a question of relationships. My prayer for these young and beautiful persons is that they may always work on their relationships in order to keep them good and let them grow. Above all their relationship with God, but also their relationship with their travelling companions through life. [tedNEWS]

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Angélique Hornis Receives a Royal Decoration

03 May 2011 Emmen, The Netherlands [Wim Altink, tedNEWS] On Friday 29 April 2011 Mrs. Angélique Hornis van der Horst received a Royal Decoration and thus became a member of the Order of Orange Nassau. She received a ribbon which was pinned up at the Grote Kerk in Emmen. Angélique is a member of the Adventist church in Emmen and despite her disability caused by rheumatism, she places herself above it for the cause of her fellow men.

“When I was 21 years old, I consciously decided to become a Christian. It has always been my desire to share with others the message of Jesus as the Saviour of this world, I am trying to show it by my way of living but also whenever I have an opportunity, I would talk about it, too. God deserves all the honour because He has given me the strength to do it. This faith is my support and I am a happy person,” said Angélique in her speech this morning.

In the ‘80s there were a few attempts to establish local radio stations and finally, the Loka Radio in Emmen went on air. It is here that Angélique quickly found a spot in the programme called Kerk Lokaal that was broadcasted on Wednesday evenings. “In a team of devoted Christians, I was given the opportunity to provide a slight input of the faith by which I lived”, said Angélique during her speech in the Grote Kerk. And she continues: “Now after 22 years, RTV has developed into a fully grown local broadcasting company of which we can be proud of. In this organisation I have the privilege to be a small radar within. Together with a group of pleasant colleagues, some young and some older, I am able to reach Emmen and the southeast corner of Drenthe with an important message”.

Pastor M. de Reus, a local church pastor from Emmen, was present during the ceremony and congratulated Mrs Hornis on behalf of the Union Church Board from The Netherlands Union. Pastor Wim Altink, the President of The Netherlands Union, has complimented her over the phone and spoke with appreciation of her example of being a Seventh-day Adventist believer who is socially involved with the community.

For many years within the Adventist church in The Netherlands, Angélique has been very active as a speaker for the divine service on Saturday mornings. Furthermore, she was an active member of the local Personal Ministry. On a local level she takes upon herself the work for community growth, catechism and youth work.

Angélique and her husband Martin, live in Emmen, The Netherlands with their four sons.[tedNEWS]

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Tragic Accident Involving Nile Academy Students

28 April 2011, Cairo, Egypt [I[eoNEWS] A tragic accident happened on Wednesday, 27 April 2011 when a mini bus carrying fifteen students from Nile Union Academy in Egypt crashed, resulting in the death of one student and serious injuries to the others. The group of students were returning back from their Easter holiday break travelling from Zezag, a village in Upper Egypt, when the driver of the mini bus fell asleep and lost the control over the vehicle. The bus rolled over several times on the road until it finally stopped. One young man, a senior student, died as a result of injuries caused by the accident and yet, another is in a critical condition needing an expensive operation. The rest of the group, including the driver of the bus, has suffered serious injuries and broken bones.

Unfortunately, the Nile Union Academy has been experiencing serious problems in the past few months. Due to the revolution that broke out in Egypt about three months ago, the school had to close for three weeks. The expatriate staff had to leave the country and there was fear for the welfare of the local staff that remained on the school compound. ‘By God’s grace, everything settled down peacefully, the staff returned to Egypt, and things started up again as normally as possible,’ says Gladys Decker, a teacher at the Nile Union Academy.

But couple of months later, one of their senior students, went home for the weekend and never woke up from her afternoon nap. A well-loved Sudanese girl, who easily broke down the radical boundaries between Egyptians and Sudanese, died so unexpectedly.

The seriousness of these tragic events has naturally shaken the staff as well as the students at the Academy that are now trying to cope with the consequences. However, Mrs. Decaker finds encouragement in the words of Apostle Paul: ‘We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed,’ 2 Corinthians 4:8,9 (NIV) and she continues: ‘we do not lose heart... though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.’ 2 Corinthians 4:16

The Nile Union Academy is the premier Seventh-day Adventist boarding academy in the Middle East and North Africa that has been operating for the last 56 years boarding Egyptian and Sudanese students. For more information on the Academy, please visit their website Nile Union Academy. [I[eoNEWS]

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Gentle Voices Has Won the Finals

28 April 2011, Rotterdam, The Netherlands [Madelon Comvalius, tedNEWS]
The Dutch gospel vocal group “Gentle Voices” from the Adventist churches Rotterdam North and Rotterdam South wins the finals of The Sing Off programme on SBS6 on Saturday 16 April 2011.

The Sing-Off

In the past weeks, SBS6 has been broadcasting the music programme, The Sing-Off. The participating groups in their unique format not only sang, but all instrumental sounds and beats were created by their voices. After a thrilling finals show, by which a great deal of singing was performed without musical arrangement, the six men of the vocal group ‘Gentle Voices’ at the end ousted the vocal group ‘Sharp’. By winning the acapella contest, they also won a record deal with Sony Music and they were invited to perform with the popular Dutch group ‘De Toppers’.

The Rotterdam based gospel group ‘Gentle Voices’ came to existence in 1999. It started out as a quartet, founded by two cousins Earl and Lionel and later on it grew to a sextet: 6 cousins who, surrounded by music in their homes, were taught music at a very early age.

The adventist churches in The Netherlands have had a lot of vocal groups in the past years; however, ‘Gentle Voices’ makes an enormous break-through with this artistic victory. Wim Altink, the President of the Adventist Church in the Netherlands recognises their success: “This award is also a recognition for the diverse talented vocal groups within the Adventist church in the Netherlands. ‘Gentle Voices’ has now experienced a breakthrough and is able to perform in a wider arena. We feel proud about this special opportunity which ‘Gentle Voices’ has to witness of our good Lord.”

‘Gentle Voices’ is a congenial group of young men with a message. Not only do they want to reach a large group of people with their gift of singing, but their motivation is to reach people with creativity and harmony. “We thank our Lord for the talents in which He bestowed us,” says Earl, the creator this group. And he continues: “In the future, we would like to stay as one vocal group and be a witness for Him.”

To watch Gentle Voices please click here [tedNEWS]

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tedMEDIA Productions Website Launched

27 April 2011, St Albans, United Kingdom [Jemina Da Silva Macedo, tedNEWS]
As of this moment, tedMEDIA Productions, media unit of the Trans-European Division’s Communication Department has gone live. Complete with all their productions to date, the website also allows you to get to know the team, gives updates on current projects, behind the scenes photos and footage and of course, allows you to view any one of their numerous clips and episodes.

'The tedMEDIA Productions website is packed with media resources that can be accessed and used in all aspects of ministry. From Bible studies to sermon starters, programme fillers to small groups — there are resources for every occasion,' says Miroslav Pujic, TED Communications & Media Ministries Director. "The website allows everyone to use the material we are producing to further the nurture of current members as well as using the internet as a way of reaching postmodern thinkers and fence sitters."

The flavour of the website is high-tech and professional and includes a variety of clips and programmes, including a 15 day 'Get Active' challenge with Patricia Ferreira-Lopez, as she attempts a range of new sports, encouraging the health message; inTUNE music videos; 'Experiencing the Joy' drama illustrations; talks with Cliff Goldstein; real life testimony stories; and reports and programmes from 'Mind the Gap' and 'Evidence'.

'Media is becoming more and more part of our everyday lives and it’s important that we harness it and use it to our advantage,' says Pujic. 'Now that we’ve created it, it’s up to you to use it — so get online now and see what’s on offer!' To take a look at the new website and the resources currently available, go to www.tedmedia.org [tedNEWS]

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I-CHANGE, U-CHANGE, WII-WERE-CHANGED

27 April 2011, Telford, United Kingdom [Victor Hubert with Catherine Bolendeau and Peter Jeynes, BUC News]

The crescendo of the Michael W Smith song filled the hall at Telford International Centre. "Crucified, laid behind a stone. You lived to die, rejected and alone..." It reflected the emotional intensity in the air as 500+ young adults found themselves challenged and inspired by the power of the resurrected Christ, at the BUC Youth Congress, organised by Des Bolendeau, BUC Youth director.

Throughout five days over the Easter weekend they listened to five specialists in Youth Ministry – all from different backgrounds – who led them on a journey designed to help them think of change, not just in themselves, but in their communities.

James Black, Director of Youth Ministries for the North American Division was the Thursday night keynote speaker. "Yours is an awesome theme," he stated, a serious theme for this day and age: 'I-Change, U-Change, WII-Chance.' After noting how God had needed to humble him early, coming as he did from the gang violence of the streets of Atlanta, Georgia, he then entertained and inspired the youth with the story of the transfiguration of Jesus in Matthew 17, noting how the three disciples on the hill top needed humbling: "If you want to be the change you've got to recognise the voice of God," he noted. At the same time, the nine disciples in the valley did not realise that they were to be an agent of change for the young boy who needed healing. They needed to learn that "when you are picked to be the change you need to let Jesus do the changing." He also noted that to be the change for others you have to be the "go-to person" noting the beautiful words of Jesus, "Bring the boy to me."

There were a lot of "go-to persons" at the weekend. On Friday and Sunday afternoons they could be found singing in Nursing Homes and in a nearby park, or knocking on doors sharing their faith via surveys and gaining contacts and Bible study interests to be followed up by members of the Telford Adventist church. The choir singing in the park was so enthusiastic that on both days a number of youth who had come to sunbathe joined in with the singing, some of them asking deep questions and sharing their hurts and struggles.

A Passion Play, especially commissioned for the event, was performed in the hall on Sabbath afternoon, then taken out to the park on Easter Sunday, where again people were able to ask questions about the true meaning of Easter.

The Easter theme of the preaching was particularly emphasised by two of the guest speakers. On Good Friday, Tim Gillespie made no apologies for his strong Easter message. As Young Adult pastor of the Loma Linda University church, he used both humour and pathos to convey the seriousness of what Jesus did on the cross for us. "The worst day ever was the most important day ever," he stated, then both in his Friday and Sunday evening sermons rejoicing that Jesus "exploded a tomb".

Resurrection day he called "a day of celebration", stating that "today God started His rebellion on the planet... the world has changed. Death has been overcome." Looking at Romans 5:1 he then challenged those who feel unsure of their salvation that the words, "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us," give us a wellspring of joy from which we can live our lives.

That "wellspring of joy" had already been demonstrated in the storytelling skills of Dick Duerksen from Maranatha Volunteers International. On Friday night and Sunday morning you could hear a pin drop in the hall as he enraptured his audience with tales of God's grace in Malakula, in Peru, in Neubuchadnezzer's Babylon – and in the story of our own lives. On Sunday morning he presented a one man monologue of the story of Peter, showing how this brash disciple thought he would teach Jesus, but how Jesus had, in reality, taught him. Peter learnt, "it's not about me, it's about Him!"

In a double presentation, David Asacherick, the co-founder of ARISE, a ministry training centre in California, focused on the dilemma of Paul in Romans 7, "O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death," and the solution that is found in Jesus Christ. In the dichotomy of desire and action in chapter 7, and groaning and struggle still to be found in chapter 8, David demonstrated that Paul is "not minimising suffering, but is maximising glory". He added that "while we exist in this groaning position between what could be and what is", that we can rejoice in that while "I'm not what I want to be – I'm not what I used to be". In a third presentation he focused on Acts 15 seeking to demonstrate what is essential and core in our belief system.

Sabbath morning gave opportunity for two sermons. James Black returned to the pulpit to focus on "How do I become the change?" "How do we deal with the issue of glorifying God when modern life aims at success?" he asked. His response was that "we have to aim to be significant, not successful." Using many illustrations, including from his own life he stated, "My degrees mean nothing unless I effect change."

Despite suffering from jet lag and a very sore throat, Adventist World Church Youth director, Gilbert Cangy, also shared a powerful Sabbath morning message, sharing that, despite being raised by missionary parents, at one time in his life he, "went against every value that he stood for". Having left his church and his family, he had an emptiness in his heart. He prayed, "If you are real then you can do something for me." God answered. Gilbert said, "I thought I had to change before Jesus could accept me," but having learnt an important lesson he then used Jesus' family tree in Matthew 1 to show that "there is nothing you can do to make Him close the door."

Talking of Rahab the prostitute he said, "We don't hang around that kind of person – but Jesus does." He did the same with Matthew, the young tax inspector. "Who is the real Jesus – He is the one who transforms people... like us" he stated, concluding, "We can't talk about the gospel – we have to live the gospel."

While having five guest speakers for a five day event, the diversity of thought and content was well appreciated, and the
preaching was well balanced by two praise teams from the South England Conference and the Welsh Mission, a stunning variety of quality music from across the British Isles, including what came to be a well-loved theme song written by 21-year-old Yvonne Bauwens of the Crieff church, "Chance to Change". There was also a choice of 19 workshops, a time to question and discuss with leaders – and of course, the all important social time, networking and making new friends.

Tears, prayers and a powerful testimony ended the Congress. Tim Gillespie narrated the story of a friend who opened up a thrift store that impacted on the local community after he allowed God to change his life. "I've never experienced anything like this before," said Samantha, a guest at one of the local hotels who was invited to the closing ceremony by Pastor Nathan Stockland. She commented on the relevance of the message for her life and on the dynamic music.

BUC Youth director, Des Boldeau, received a standing ovation when Paul Tompkins, TED Youth director, presented him with a special certificate for his years of service along with a special gift, given by on behalf of the Youth directors from around the Union. Tears, appreciation, and a shout to the youth was the surprise response from Des Boldeau. "I have been privileged to work with several generations of young people, and I thank God for what He has allowed me to do over the past 11 years," he said wiping away the tears. In thanking the guest speakers Des stated, "This Congress has set a precedent for change. This change must continue – and continue in our lives." That in itself was clearly seen in response to times of prayer and dedication. i-Change, u-Change, wii-All-Changed.

A selection of photos and videos from i-Change are all linked from the BUC Youth Congress website. In-depth interviews with each of the guest speakers can be seen on the News and Features section of the Hope TV UK website. [tedNEWS]

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La Sierra field biologist takes home new species of gecko

Imagine this: High on adrenaline, you battle chokehold vines, scorching heat and leeches while crawling uphill through a remote Malaysian jungle with a reputation for ghosts and poisonous snakes. You're the first known person to ascend this cloud-laden summit.

You're not in search of a lost civilization -- this isn't the script for the next Indiana Jones movie. Instead, your eyes are peeled for an elusive new species of Southeast Asian forest gecko.

"No one really wants to go there," says Seventh-day Adventist field biologist Lee Grismer, who recently returned from the trek to his Temecula, California home, gecko in tow.

The 55-year-old herpetologist and his team are credited with discovering 80 new species of reptiles and amphibians during his 15-year career in the biology department of church-run La Sierra University.

One is a frog with almost transparent skin, turquoise bones and green blood, discovered during a previous expedition in Cambodia. That trip, Grismer says, ended in a veterinarian's office, where he swallowed potent canine worm pills to combat a nasty intestinal parasite he'd acquired.

The latest is a forest gecko. Grismer describes it as a "long, spindly looking lizard," with a triangular head and yellow eyes.

Identifying a new species doesn't end with discovery, Grismer says. While he says he immediately knew the gecko was a new member of a group of Southeast Asian lizards he's previously studied, he now has to convince the scientific community. This requires anatomical measurements, color-pattern analysis, scale-counting and sequencing DNA from liver tissue. Then, the gecko can join the 36 new species of lizard his lab has identified in Malaysia during the past six years.

During his trips to countries such as Malaysia, Grismer works closely with local officials and scientists, says James Wilson, chair of the biology department at La Sierra. "[Lee] is highly regarded by his colleagues and respected in the countries where he conducts his studies and collects samples," Wilson says. Grismer is the sort of guy who walks through the jungle and sees "what others don't," Wilson adds.

Grismer says his earliest memory is of chasing a lizard. "I just remember that animal looked so fascinating and mysterious and primeval to me. When I'm in these jungles and see some new lizard on a tree, I get that exact feeling. Looking at a piece of natural history that remained hidden for however many years, that's a rush," he says. "I'm blessed."

Recapturing that "rush" is only part of what drives Grismer, he says. He's also deeply concerned by what he describes as "biodiversity decrease." With compromised habitats driving many species to the brink of extinction, the discovery of new species becomes vital, he says.

Discovery often leads to government conservation of the new species' habitat, Grismer says. That protection extends to "the rainforests, the other species and the small communities that depend on the rainforest to survive and make a living," he says. "So the implications are tremendous."

In between the four or five expeditions he leads per year, Grismer teaches general biology courses and upper-division herpetology classes at La Sierra. "I can't wait to get back out into the field," he says.

"My [human anatomy] students always ask me these in-depth medical questions, and I go, 'Listen guys, you're talking to a grown man who chases lizards, I teach anatomy to pay the bills,'" Grismer says.

After a lecture and book signing tour in Malaysia and Singapore beginning in June, he'll be back where he's most comfortable in August. "buried in the jungle, two weeks away from anything that even remotely resembles human habitation," he says.

"I like being places where every decision you make really matters," Grismer says. "There's nothing quite like it."

27 April 2011, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States [Elizabeth Luchtefinger/ANN]
The Trend Toward Integration of Spirituality and Leadership

My first visit to the annual International Leadership Association Conference was in October of last year in Boston, Massachusetts, USA (the next is in October in London, England). What I discovered was a trend much further advanced than I would ever have imagined. Religion and spirituality was fully integrated into this traditionally secular conference which is dedicated to a “deeper understanding of leadership knowledge and practices for the greater good of individuals and communities worldwide.” Leadership specialists are embracing the reality that leadership is a process that invites, nurtures and leads the spirit of man. The spiritual nature of leadership, both religious and non-religious, is being embraced as a necessary component and has gained a place among the disciplines that have traditionally comprised formal leadership studies. The conference featured one formal presentation on an emerging model referred to as Transcendent Leadership which assumes a natural merging of the spiritual and the scientific in effective leadership in the 21st century.

So what does this trend in leadership studies have to say to those of us called to serve as spiritual leaders in the context of the church? Is it possible that biblical spirituality may be the most significant aspect of leadership effectiveness for the Christian pastor or teacher? The Word has much to say regarding the spiritual component of living but does it specifically address the issue of leadership? What qualifies a person with the title of pastor or Christian teacher as a spiritual leader?

Robert Frying explains the title of his recent book, The Leadership Ellipse: Shaping How We Lead by Who We Are, by urging that we live our professional or vocational lives around two points—spirituality and leadership rather than one (spirituality) and another (leadership) as though they are separate realms; in doing so our life pattern becomes an ellipse rather than two circles that may or may not intersect. Spirituality is integral to Christian leadership.

The Holy Spirit is the equipper of the church and the source of authentic Christian spirituality. In Romans 12:2 the apostle mentions “rule” or “lead” as one of the unique competencies given by the Holy Spirit to certain ones in the church but does that indicate that only those with the specific gift of leading or ruling are able to contribute to the process of leadership? Actually leading is presented as only one of many competencies granted to the Church. The gifts in each of the three passages dedicated to spiritual competencies are embedded in a discussion of unity and oneness. The metaphor of the Body would suggest an interdependent organism of parts and systems that function in a coordinated and sympathetic manner toward the end of healthy and productive behaviour. As such, leadership names the integrated process of all competencies rather than just the output of a few that have the gift or gifts necessary to positional leading.

As such, spiritual leadership is something that every member contributes to though some do so in a highly visible manner while others contribute with little or no visibility. The Holy Spirit is the source of our individual and collective competence in pursuing the mission of the church.

But the necessary components of leadership, whether spiritual or not, reach beyond competence and embrace attitude and character as well. All three passages that address the spiritual nature of gifts (competencies) embed the topic in a context of Christ-like behaviour. The prime characteristics of the Fruit of the Spirit recorded in Galatians 5:22 are addressed in Romans 12 where Paul mingles character related behaviours with the spiritual competencies and concludes the chapter from verse 9 onward with counsel regarding behaviour that gives evidence of the Fruit of the Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 and all of chapter 13 provide a spiritual character context for the practice of these competencies. Finally Ephesians 4:11-16 provides a similar preface to the presentation of the spiritual competencies and follows them with a pointed discussion of the need for spiritual behaviour as we practice them.

The two essential elements of spiritual leadership are both provided by the grace of the Spirit of God—Gifts for competency and Fruit for Christ-like character. Added to these two components is the active presence of spiritual authority. The Gospel Commission offers spiritual authority to every believer as the necessary empowerment that enables all to lead in the context of their unique spiritual giftedness. These three elements are available as part of the providence of God for every believer who chooses to walk in the Spirit.

All who lead in the name of Jesus need to capitalize on the availability of all three of these spiritual elements. Our own spiritual growth must be nurtured and refined if we are to emerge as effective leaders. This requires discipline and commitment to the value we place on the centrality of God’s Spirit in our lives and leadership ministry. The spiritual nature revealed in our character provides the vehicle of credibility that carries our competencies into operational ministry. Spiritual behaviour provides a relationally healthy and inviting context that when present maximizes the impact of all ministry efforts. If character fails then the competencies will stand as useless regardless of the education and training that have honed and developed them. Finally, we need the influence of generative authority that comes not from a self-serving heart but from a Spirit-filled desire to leave all people better than we found them. Without these essential spiritual elements we are left with an impotent presence that lacks effectiveness. Holistic biblical spirituality is being sought by many outside of our community of faith and is our only qualification as spiritual leaders.

1 http://www.ila-net.org/
5 Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:8-15.
6 Matthew 28:16-20
7 http://www.ted-adventist.org/features-and-analysis/the-trend-toward-inte...
Finding Meaning, Significance, Community, Direction and Excitement

In the first part of Leadership as Relationship, we compared what followers’ want and leaders do. We discovered that there are many points on which followers and leaders agree. The common ground falls into five interesting categories – meaning, significance, community, direction and excitement. Remembering that leadership is relationship, it makes sense to begin our work in these areas of agreement.

The question now is how do we go about creating an environment in which this becomes a reality. Where do we start? Most organisations, from congregations to multinational organisations, make some formal attempts to create meaning, significance, community, direction and excitement. What do we already have in place? Although there are far more, let’s examine a cluster of four opportunities: mission, vision and values; strategic planning; hiring and evaluations; and social gatherings. This is not new; there are no headlines in this list. In fact, they are the standard list used by administrators and managers everywhere. They may be a tired and worn-out quartet but what would they look like if re-energized?

The secret to rejuvenation is in reframing the task. By looking at the task in a new way, by giving it a new purpose or by turning it upside down, leaders see new relationships and opportunities. How can we take the administrative tasks and routine touchpoints inherent in our leadership positions and create exciting and imaginative ways to respond to the very things followers want? How can we reframe these tasks so that we can create meaning, significance, and purpose?

Mission, vision, values. Although their power may have in the past disappointed us, the very purpose of this trio is to create shared meaning. How can they be rejuvenated? What if the goal was to create a sense of mission rather than write a formal mission statement? What would happen if the emphasis shifted from preparing ‘statements’ to engaging everyone in creating an active on-going narrative? What if we shifted the focus to collecting stories instead of printing a paragraph? Stories would keep the mission current with retelling. “Our organisation is like…” Everyone could add new stories to the developing narrative.

Likewise, vision statements, rather than statements of goals evaluated once a year, would be replaced by a set of questions that guide decision-making throughout the year. The operational question becomes, how will we want to do this tomorrow? Each task becomes an opportunity to practice the future now. Strategic planning. The purpose of planning, and particularly strategic planning, is to set direction. When done imaginatively it can also give individuals a good sense of how their efforts contribute to the whole, or in other words, create significance and excitement. As with many processes, strategic planning has suffered not from visions of grandeur but from the tyranny of details and minutiae. The challenge is to find something that replaces traditional strategic planning. What would happen if a set of questions replaced the traditional targets and goals? A sense of direction would emerge, and, rather than focusing on a solution designed in the past with the data then available, at each decision point we would be guided by strategic questions. The decisions would then be made in ‘real-time’.

Hiring and evaluations. If we think of leadership as relationship, then the points of contact at hiring and evaluation become central to creating a sense of significance. We may have overlooked these moments as important relationship building opportunities. In what ways can we restructure our conversations at these critical moments so they result in active coaching and helpful individual feedback? How can we move from ‘telling’ (typical orientation and evaluation responses) to 'experience' (an on-going activity)? Of course, this takes more time and effort. But relationship requires active on-going involvement. For meaning to emerge, engagement must be mutual, stories shared, and feedback frequent.

Social gatherings. Bringing people together promotes connection and builds a sense of belonging. As community gathers, it also provides opportunities to create overall meaning and significance and to affirm individual and group efforts. But meeting without purpose can be counterproductive. How can we make every meeting or gathering count? How can our public and private gatherings build bridges between diverse groups and individuals? How can we change the way we gather in committee meetings and move away from simply conducting business to the imperative of creating the future?

The short list is an easy one. Share stories, Ask questions. Give affirmation. Stories connect persons with history, place and aspirations. Questions such as “what do you bring to the organisation and what will you add to the project provide opportunities for the individuals to give something back to the organisation. Affirmations create connections and give added meaning.

Leadership as relationship is best served by shifting the emphasis from ‘telling’ to ‘sharing’. From a focusing on a fixed ‘strategic point’ to developing a ‘sense of direction’, and from simply ‘conducting business’ to ‘creating the future’. The relationship develops by creating a ‘sense of mission’ rather than a ‘mission statement’, a ‘guiding vision’ rather than a ‘vision statement’, and collecting stories rather than lists of words. It remains dynamic and alive with guiding questions rather than remaining static with historically definitive statements. In other words, leadership as relationship can create a dynamic environment for those in the organisation to find meaning, significance, community, direction and excitement.

By David S Penner, PhD, Director of the doctoral leadership program, Loma Linda University
Reflections on Seventh-day Adventist Leadership

There is a growing awareness in the Seventh-day Adventist Church that Leadership Development is very important and that, not only are pastors leaders, but they are the most important leaders in the Church – I use “pastors” in a broad sense here, including all believers who in some way “lead the flock”.

What is required of a Seventh-day Adventist church leader today? What should a leader be like? What should a leader do and how? How does a leader grow and develop his/her gifts for leadership, which Paul makes reference to in Romans 12:8?

Today, leadership is difficult, demanding and exhausting. Leaders face new challenges and more decisions at a faster pace. We are expected to make quick choices, prioritize what is most important, delegate that which we don’t have time to do, and maintain checks and balances by working effectively in teams.

The matters we were trained to deal with are no longer there. The rapid cultural change has led to a crisis in leadership. One Christian author says that “the major challenge for leaders is not only the acquisition of new insights and skills, but also unlearning what they already know. Today’s leaders need the courage and ability to risk their false sense of confidence and to surrender their predetermined, “wired” responses, and outdated and inaccurate mental maps.”

We are being challenged to change, learn, and grow as an on-going commitment in life. How do we do that?

It helps to begin with a general definition of “leadership”. There is much talk of various “leadership styles” these days. But more important than style is substance. We need to know what leadership actually is before we can know the best style in which to do it.

The definition I propose has been proposed by Edwin Locke and captures the essence: “Leadership is the process of inducing others to take action toward a common goal”. With this starting-point, leadership includes four parts:

1. Leadership is about relations:
   Leaders must know how to inspire and relate to their followers. If you have no followers, you are not a leader.

2. Leadership is a process:
   Leaders must act and set events in motion. Just holding a position of authority does not make you a leader.

3. Leadership is persuasion:
   Leaders induce or persuade followers to take action. Leaders influence followers by inspiring their trust, acting consistently, and motivating them by words and deeds. Examples of the tools of leadership are: legitimate authority, setting an example, setting goals, team-building, and communicating a vision.

4. Leadership is purpose-driven:
   Leaders act in order that the organisation achieves its mission.

According to this model, church leadership may be defined as “the process of activating church workers (members, volunteers, employees) for the mission of the Church”.

This leadership has a fundamental spiritual dimension. Every area includes cooperation with God and following God. Leaders count on God to change people in order to achieve God’s purpose. This happens by the leader’s and his followers’ faith and by the power of the Holy Spirit working in them. Because of that, we say that our work as leaders is “God’s work”.

This spiritual dimension comes across very strongly in J. Robert Clinton’s definition of leadership: “A Christian leader is a person with a God-given capacity and the God-given responsibility to influence a specific group of God’s people toward God’s purpose for the group.”

Spiritual leadership must impact visible reality. If it is not happening through the leader’s actions of persuasion and an active response to them by his followers, it becomes a “spiritualised” leadership which remains in the leader’s heart, takes place in his office, and is seen at best in his spiritual attitude. There is such leadership in the church. I am not impressed by it. This is leadership that abdicates from its responsibility with the excuse of leaving all things to God.

As a ministerial secretary, I once visited a pastor. I asked him to show me his plan for his work. He said: “I intentionally do not have a plan, because I feel I need to leave space for the Holy Spirit to do his work.” This man’s ministry was highly unproductive, although he prayed day and night. His problem was that he was self-centred and therefore irresponsible. He prayed to God about himself, not his responsibility or the people he was to lead. And nobody else in his team, or in the conference, knew what he was doing and why. Others could not relate to his work. He remained a lonely leader with no followers, although he was very “spiritual” in one sense. He longed for God. But he was not a spiritual leader, because he misunderstood true spirituality. He did not see that true spirituality is always action-oriented. It impacts the real world. It impacts God’s people and those who seek him.

Another time, an elected president was invited to sit with the nominating committee and give advice on the candidates to be nominated to form his team. He declared: “I can work with anybody, because I am open-minded and it is God’s work, so he will do it. You may choose whoever you like.” Of course, everybody in the committee thought highly of this man’s tolerance and great faith, while incapable and totally unsuitable persons were nominated to make up his team! Five years later, after conflicts, lack of quality work, and no good team spirit, he was not re-elected because, although being considered a spiritual man, his leadership lacked efficiency. He failed to take responsibility for carefully selecting his team. Why? Maybe he feared personal conflicts, the danger of exposing his personal preferences for or against
people, and the politics in his church, and resorted to a spiritualising attitude which always means failure in taking responsibility for the real world.

Of course, there are specific situations when we can do nothing but asking God to intervene, when we are desperate and there are no options. But we must be careful not to abide from our responsibility too soon. God has chosen to work through us, and we must do our work well, so that he can add his blessing to what we do.

In Leadership for Dummies (1999), it is underlined as the first and fundamental characteristic of a leader that there is a willingness to assume responsibility or ownership. Spiritualised leadership is not good enough. Why? It abdicates from its responsibility and authentic faith in God. Such leadership was the repeated temptation Jesus resisted from the Devil, namely, testing God by abusing his leadership role. Jesus said: "Don't put God to the test by abusing your position", which implies that we must not abdicate from our responsibility and say that God will fix it. Such behaviour means, in fact, that we bury our God-given talent in the ground. It is not leadership for the real world. We know that God performs miracles and that he has all the power in the universe. But we also know that we have been asked to use our brains and abilities and gifts to serve him faithfully and that, if we do that, God will add his blessing to it. And this is particularly important in light of Seventh-day Adventist leadership values.

In Adventism, based on instruction from Ellen White, the biblical view of man and the biblical view of work are of central importance. We say that man is not merely a spiritual being but a being in whom harmonious growth depends on an interaction between spiritual, mental (intellectual and emotional), physical and social dimensions. And, as far as work is concerned, it is God's way of forming our character, developing it and refining it, in order to bring glory to the Creator. Something happens to us when God's power, God's gifts, and God's will are allowed to pour out through us to the world. We change. We become like the Creator. We learn to create new things, and new things do not occur without change and growth. Spiritualised leadership fails to allow us to grow, which is God's plan for us.

It is therefore an essential Adventist value that the spiritual dimension does not function in isolation from the human effort and its impact in the real world. Our ideal of spiritual leadership, therefore, is being so close to God in our faith that we hear his voice, act according to his will, and seek to achieve his purpose, so that God is performing his acts through us. This will only work if we are humble and see ourselves as God's servants. "Servant leadership" is therefore a better term than "spiritual leadership", because it draws attention to both our attitude and actions as leaders.

Before I proceed, let me prevent a misunderstanding. Just as there are leaders who spiritualise their work, putting all responsibility on God and doing little or nothing themselves, there are of course those who fail by the opposite extreme, i.e., by seeking to do everything themselves and not relying on God at all. God does not enter into their strategies, job descriptions, committees, decisions, conversations and speeches. While working in the church, they see God and his mission as a decoration, a romantic atmosphere which is put on at times, but when that is over the "real work" begins, and that is the human effort.

This is so obviously mistaken for us that I don't need to spend time here on the obvious dangers of such a view. Emphasising the human effort and forgetting that we are doing God's work is to fail as leader. Failing in this way is the great temptation for the gifted, well-educated, and hard working leader. There is only one remedy for it, and that is the gift of Christ's humility (see Philippians 2:3-11).

Another factor leading to this kind of failure in leadership is where the leadership culture is governed by the concept of dictatorship, i.e. the strong and absolutist leader who concentrates all power and initiative to himself. Ultimately, this leadership is based on fear and an enormous misunderstanding of who you are -- you think you are better and more perfect than you really are. Jesus taught us in clear words to shun such leadership:

"Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.' " (Matthew 20:25-28)

The system of leadership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church is therefore not the presidential system but the committee system (see TED Working Policy O 05).

"The fruitage of [the Seventh-day Adventist concept of church] is a representative and constituency-based system. Its authority is rooted in God and distributed to the whole people of God. It recognises the committee system. It provides for shared administration (president, secretary, treasurer) rather than a presidential system. It recognises a linkage of entities (church, conference, union, General Conference) that binds the believers together in a universal fellowship. It assures essential unity of purpose and mission. While the integrity of each entity is recognised (church, conference, union), each is seen to be a part of a system which cannot act without reference to the whole."

Adventist leaders, therefore, are team leaders and lead so that the whole church is recognised and benefits from their leadership.

Another reason for team leadership is that the leader does not have all knowledge and wisdom. A leader must humbly see his/her own limitations. What the leader lacks can be compensated for by his/her team.

In order to work in a team, the leader needs to have a sound self-esteem and dare to be open. Prestige and position in the system becomes irrelevant in the midst of team work, although, of course, in the end some people have a formal responsibility for what takes place.

A decision will be better founded and have greater success if we have taken the time to involve the team around us, before we go to action. That is why consensus is a virtue in church leadership. It is based on Philippians 2:1-5 which notes the model of Jesus Christ as the greatest human for us.
Philippians 2:1-5

"If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus..."

In order for leadership to work, therefore we must be deeply connected with the spirit of Jesus Christ. Our devotional life is the key to such leadership. So, care for and cultivate your faith!

In conclusion, applying our model of church leadership helps us see that, by our faith and through the power of the Holy Spirit, we perform leadership in four ways in the church:

1. Church leadership is about relations: Leaders achieve the mission of the church by inspiring, elevating and leading the people in their organisation, so that they do their assigned work exceptionally well and with joy. This requires an organisation, where it is clear to everybody what their role is — an organisation which is dynamic, flexible and effective enough to accomplish the mission. It also requires a culture, where Seventh-day Adventist values and particularly the value of mission set the tone. Adventist leaders, therefore, need to be effective organisers, peacemakers, and builders of Adventist church culture.

2. Church leadership is a process: Leaders take action and something happens. They change people and the organisation through their actions. Leadership is not static but dynamic. It strives for excellence and constantly asks if there is a better way to do what we do, in order to achieve the mission. God is active in this process. It is therefore an Adventist tenet that "we must walk in the increasing light".4 This requires that we see ourselves as leaders functioning as agents of change. God’s change.

3. Church leadership is persuasion: Leaders persuade or induce their followers to act, by various means, for example, by their legitimate authority, by how they manage relationships and conflicts, by the example they set, by goal-setting, encouragement and evaluation, re-organisation, team-building, and by communicating a vision. In all of these activities, the leader draws on his personal faith and draws on his biblical values. This requires skills in transparent communication, ability to inspire others, and being a team leader.

4. Church leadership aims at the mission of the Church: Leaders need to define what this mission is and what it means to themselves and the organisation they lead.

The way God has defined the church’s mission is essential. We find that He has allowed variety in the wording of our mission. Various biblical authors at various times say it in various ways. Jesus taught his disciples a mission to the world which we have in at least four versions, in Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-18, Luke 24:45-49/Acts 1:8, and John 14-17. Luke then describes the fellowship of the first church in Acts 2:42-47. The mission of the church comes out in numerous instructions on church order in Paul’s writings. And it has a special significance for Adventists in John’s apocalyptic vision in Revelation 14:6-13, where we have found our eschatological mission defined.

But even today, we say it in different ways. The General Conference says it in one way. The Trans-European Division says it in another way. Unions, conferences, churches and institutions say it in yet other ways.

So, obviously, a mission statement can be worded in different ways, although the mission remains the same. The choice of statement reflects what the leader and his team feel should have priority at a specific point in time. For us as Adventist leaders, however, I have found no better wording than the one written by Ellen White in The Acts of the Apostles (p. 9):

"The church is God’s appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God’s plan that through his church shall be reflected to the world his fullness and his sufficiency. The members of the church, are to show forth his glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be manifest ... the final and full display of the love of God.”

If we believe this, a Garfield cartoon becomes pertinent (see adjacent box).
improve? This will be of great importance as we implement our new strategic plan Tell the World

The TED Tell the World Strategic Plan 2010-2015 is a serious commitment to

- Reach Up by renewing my own faith
- Reach Out by communicating the hope of Jesus Christ within my sphere of influence
- Reach across to embrace and protect the quality and health of my family of faith

If you would like to get hold of the TED Strategic Plan 2010-2015, please contact your union president (in the TED) or write an elm to: eupic@ted-adventist.org

The leader needs to have God’s mission for the world in his/her heart, apply it to his/her work, and communicate it to the followers. This requires a rich personal devotional life, including prayer, Bible reading, fellowship, and witnessing. It requires the skills of a visionary, a strategist, a goal setter, a decision maker, one who is able to show the direction and keep the organisation focused on God’s mission. If you don’t have these skills, build a team of people who have them, pray together and listen to each other. And God will speak through His spirit and lead you all the way!

By Dr. Bertil Wiklander, the President of the Trans-European Division
King James Bible's 400-year reign

05 January 2011 Washington DC, USA [Mark A. Kellner - The Washington Times] Its cadence is found in the speeches of Abraham Lincoln and the lyrics of Paul Simon. Renowned narrator Alexander Scourby and country music legend Johnny Cash have recorded spoken versions of the text. It's estimated that 1 billion copies have been printed since the first volume rolled off the press in 1611.

The King James Version of the Bible, also known as the "Authorized Version," marks its 400th anniversary in 2011, and by any measure, it has had a lasting impact on the world and on the language into which it was sent. The "authorized" moniker comes from a title-page declaration that this Bible was "authorized to be read in churches."

"The sheer poetry of the King James Version, not to mention its almost half-millennia of absolute authority, militates against its slipping into obscurity any time soon," declared Phyllis Tickle, longtime religion editor at Publishers Weekly magazine.

Even noted atheist Richard Dawkins has praise for the volume: "You can't appreciate English literature unless you are to some extent steeped in the King James Bible. There are phrases that come from it — people don't realize they come from it — proverbial phrases, phrases that make echoes in people's minds," he said in a video released by the King James Bible Trust, the British organization that is one promoter of the 400th-anniversary celebrations due next year.

"Not to know the King James Bible is to be, in some small way, barbarian," Mr. Dawkins added.

Indeed, many of its phrases have entered everyday use, among them: "my brother's keeper," "salt of the earth," "give up the ghost," "scapegoats," "an eye for an eye," "casting your pearls before swine," "scarlet woman," "writing on the wall" and "the blind leading the blind."

"A house divided against itself," Lincoln's signature sentiment, was translated that way 250 years before Lincoln was elected president.

Geoff Morin, communications director for the American Bible Society, whose New York headquarters will host a King James Bible exhibit next year, called the King James "still relevant!" in the age of Twitter and Facebook. "It was the Bible staring Thomas Jefferson in the face," Mr. Morin said. Its words, he added, were "in the speeches of Abraham Lincoln. It's the language we still use today. It's part of the American psyche, of how we see ourselves as a nation."

But before the KJV — as the version is known by many readers and scholars — came into America's consciousness, it had to arrive on the scene at all. That happened following a contentious 1604 meeting at Hampton Court palace, when a young James VI of Scotland, newly crowned as James I of England, was trying to iron out differences between the Church of England and a dissident sect known as the Puritans.

Putting the Scriptures into English could be a dangerous practice: 16th-century translator William Tyndale was executed. After Henry VIII broke with the Roman Catholic Church, and established the Church of England under the monarch, there were some efforts to approve a complete English-language Bible.

Henry authorized production of what came to be known as the "Great Bible," while the 1583 "Bishop's Bible" followed during the reign of Elizabeth I. In Geneva, English-speaking exiles who opposed Mary I's moves to reconcile with Rome produced the "Geneva Bible," whose translation and margin notes took a decidedly anti-monarchist and anti-clerical stance.

The Hampton Court Conference was drifting into sectarian arguments, historians note, when Puritan leader John Rainolds (also spelled Reynolds), took the bold step of addressing James and asking for a new translation of the Bible, since the previous Bibles "were corrupt and not answerable to the truth of the original."

By almost all accounts, James was delighted: He didn't like the Geneva Bible, and the earlier versions weren't fully up to his standards of scholarship. As a boy, James had immersed himself in Greek and Latin, among other intellectual pursuits. He hardly had known his parents and was installed on the Scottish throne while just a year old with a regent in charge.

It took seven years to create the volume known as the KJV. And while the title page stated it was "newly translated out of the original tongues, and with the former translations diligently compared and revised," the actual work drew more on an earlier English version, said Larry Stone, a former vice president at Thomas Nelson Publishers and author of "The Story of the Bible," a new history of the Scriptures published to coincide with the anniversary.

The translators "were told to follow the 'Great Bible,'" Mr. Stone said in a telephone interview, "and they would compare the translation of the 'Great Bible' with the Greek and the Hebrew. If they wanted to change the wording, it would change for several reasons; either the 'Great Bible' translation was not accurate, or they could say the words better."

And because the 'Great Bible' drew on Tyndale's translations, the 16th-century "thou" and "thee" entered into the King James Version, even though they were long departed from common usage.

Would James I, the only English monarch to ascend the throne as a published author, be happy his eponymous Bible has survived this long?

"I actually think he would be somewhat pleased, because of its longevity," said David Teems, author of "Majestic: The
King Behind the King James Bible," a 2010 biography of the monarch and his most famous book.

A strong believer in the "divine right of kings," Mr. Tooms explained, James was determined "his Bible would reflect his reign, unite realms of Scotland and England. His desire was to unify, and to unify all of Christendom."

While that didn't happen, the impact of the KJV is without question: It quickly displaced the Geneva Bible as the Protestant standard in the English-speaking world, and was often the primary "reader" for generations.

Evangelists from Charles Finney to Billy Graham preached from it; Paul Simon derived the phrase "workman's wages" in his song "The Boxer," from reading I Timothy, he once told Rolling Stone magazine.

Author Joe Kovacs, whose 2009 "Shocked by the Bible" explored the lesser-known stories and facts of the Bible text, said he chose the King James to quote in his book because "It's the most well-known and frequently quoted translation."

Beginning in November, Thomas Nelson Publishers, which sold 329,000 printed copies of the King James Bible between July 2009 and July 2010, has mounted a major campaign to promote the text, with a website, www.kjv400celebration.com, and national marketing campaigns.

The firm also is working with the History Channel to promote the anniversary.

"To me, the 400th anniversary, is not just about KJV, but about the Bible. The fact that it is a historic milestone gives us the opportunity to go beyond and look at the impact of Scripture. It's not a translation story; it really is a Bible story," said Carla Bailerini, Nelson's bible group marketing vice president.

Despite the language changes and continued research of the past four centuries, the King James Version retains a great deal of authority, said Alister McGrath, head of the Center for Theology, Mission and Culture at King's College in London.

"The KJV is a surprisingly reliable translation, even though some minor translation changes are necessary on account of advances in our understanding of the manuscript tradition over the last 400 years," said Mr. McGrath, whose 2001 "In the Beginning" was a history of the KJV's development.

However, "the day of a single dominant biblical translation is past," he added. "In many ways, the KJV held a monopoly in English from about 1700 to 1950, as no other translation was seen as being significant over that period. Nowadays, there are multiple [English language] translations."

That may be the case, but there may be life in the older text yet: Compare its "Give us this day our daily bread," found in Matthew 6:11, to the rendering in "The Message," a popular modern version: "Keep us alive with three square meals." [teoNEWS]

This book cover is from a commemorative reprint of the 1611 King James Version of the Holy Bible. The King James Bible will celebrate its 400th anniversary in 2011.

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The Story of the King James Bible - Audio

The Commission
The Translation
The Legacy

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