ADVENTIST
Review

February 8, 2001

World Edition

Changing Times in Great Britain

Adventists reach out to a secular society.

LETTERS

Look for a Church With Three Men Preaching

Thank you for the story "Look for a Church With Three Men Preaching!" by Roger W. Coon (Dec. 14, 2000). There are many such stories in our history; for example, the story of the Davis Indians in South America that probably many of our members have never heard. How about publishing a series of these stories?

—W. Randal Clegg
YUCAIPA, CALIFORNIA

I've never e-mailed a magazine before. I don't recall even looking up the *Adventist Review* on the Internet before, either, and I must confess I throw away most of the *Reviews* I get without reading them.

But congratulations, I enjoyed reading "Look for a Church With Three Men Preaching!" so very, very much that I just had to look it up on your Web site; and when I discovered how easy it was to e-mail it to a friend, I just had to do that, too. My friend is a young Ethiopian man serving as a missionary in Korea, and I know he will be absolutely thrilled to read this wonderful account of his country's Adventist history in the *Review*. I sent it despite my belief that he probably already knows the story well.

—Ken Despres
VIA E-MAIL

The Church's Assignment

I hope Ben Maxson ("The Church's Assignment," Dec. 14, 2000) does not have the Seventh-day Adventist Church or me personally in mind when he writes: "Yet today Christianity has lost its vitality, squandered its power, and become a cultural reflection of the world around it."

—Albert Dittes
PORTLAND, TENNESSEE

What a fantastic and absolutely right-on article written by Ben Maxson in the December 14 *Review*. "The Church's Assignment" was on target and timely, and it speaks of what our Lord did 2,000 years ago. One has to wonder why we have not seen this before. If only our members would take this article to heart and put "discipling" into play, we could stem the flow of newly baptized members leaving our churches, some of whom never return.

I have lived within the Colorado Springs area for 20 years and assisted with five evangelistic efforts, several cooking schools, a Revelation Seminar or two, and three or four five-day [stop-smoking] campaigns, as well as cosponsored an outreach ministry called LifeSource, and it hurts my heart to see those who've attended outreach events come to church and leave almost as fast as they came. Making disciples worked for our Lord; therefore, it must work for us.

Several months ago my wife and I visited Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska, and took in their worship. Greg Nelson basically preached on this subject and ended his morning worship by announcing that a new weekly class was forming called Fishing 101. We have gone so far from our Lord's basics that we all need this type of instruction.

I ask the same question of all of my Adventist brothers and sisters as Maxson asked: "*Will we grow as the body of Christ, or will we deteriorate into institutional fossilization—destined to a brief moment of glory that fades into the organizational anonymity of one more fragmenting structure?*" It's time, as Maxson puts it, to make disciples.

—Douglas B. Briggman
COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO

A Comment

Argument is counterproductive, but may I comment? In the December 14, 2000, *Review* a reader wrote a letter to the editor, upset about the beast pictured laboring on the September 14, 2000, *Review* cover.

It is commendable to be kind to animals, but please don't forget the effects of sin. Men and women "breaking their backs" working in the field planting rice or picking tomatoes, or women laboring for hours scrubbing floors or in childbirth, are the result of sin (Gen. 3:16-19). There are many things to be upset about, but we must praise Jesus, because He has a plan to take us out of this world soon. He labored when here, and we are expected to work. God knows how much we want heaven to come for animals and humans.

—Larry Ward
ARCADIA, INDIANA

Jewelry—Revisited

Angel Manual Rodríguez's chapter on Adventists and jewelry (*Adventist Review* Web exclusive coverage in November 2000), and the review by Roy Adams (Nov. 9), were careful and closely reasoned. I appreciate the sophisticated yet digestible theological essays. They are true to our church's traditional understanding, yet admit of nuances and intricacies.

Jewelry is one of those topics that means more to younger Adventists (high school- and college-age) than older Adventists, such as me. Because it is so culturally sensitive, it makes sometimes for rather heated conversations. I wish references to modesty and simplicity were enough. I no longer wear a wedding band, because I work for the church and find it unnecessary in our "ecclesiastical" work setting. My wife, on the other hand, continues to wear a wedding band because it has proven socially expedient in her work setting in the financial services industry.

However, my colleagues at the state legislature—where I also work—often ask my staff: "How's David and his wife? Are they OK?" There at the capitol married men who don't wear wedding bands apparently send messages entirely different from what our church would expect.

It was this understanding—that the very same act can be interpreted in contrasting ways—that led to the following statement by our church leaders a few decades ago:

"In some countries the custom of wearing the marriage ring is considered imperative, having become, in the minds of the people, a criterion of virtue, and hence is not regarded as an ornament. Under such circumstances we have no disposition to condemn the practice" *(Church Manual* [1971], p. 212).

I would add that customs can also be workplace- and profession-specific—not just country-specific—and I look forward to the day that such customs will no longer divide our members. In that day we can simply lay our crowns at our Lord's feet and adorn Him with joyful hallelujahs as we walk the streets of gold.

—David Pendleton
HONOLULU, HAWAII

I may be wrong, but ever since humankind sinned, we have been trying to get back that something we instinctively know is missing. It seems that the closer we get to our Creator, the less artificial we are. All through the Old Testament it seems as if people who were to meet God either were commanded or instinctively knew to take off their jewelry.

When so many are suffering from malnutrition, how dare we spend extra money on decorating these bodies that won't survive this world.

This is a man's issue as well. When a $29 watch will keep time as well as a several-hundred-dollar watch, what justification do we have in spending the difference? Are we eager to go home, or do we follow cunningly devised fairy tales?

—Peter Resz
VIA E-MAIL

I wonder how we can relate this issue of jewelry to the question of eternal salvation. I believe everyone has the right to their opinion on this matter. Like many other issues within the church structure, these issues are perhaps best left on the back burner. Arguments about these peripherals take up an enormous amount of time and energy that rightly belong to the cause of evangelism. New believers need to focus on their relationship with God, and nonbelievers really don't care who wears what, when, or how. Let us share the love of Jesus, and the rest will take care of itself.

—Kenneth W. Gale
BRISBANE, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA

ADVENTIST Review

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COVER PHOTO © PHOTODISC

ADVENTIST Review

"Behold, I come quickly . . ."

Our mission is to uplift Jesus Christ through stories of His matchless love, news of His present workings, help for knowing Him better, and hope in His soon return.

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The Cry for Help

ROY ADAMS

One Sabbath afternoon back in 1998 I sat with thousands of others in a stadium in Harare, Zimbabwe, during the eighth assembly of the World Council of Churches as a Roman Catholic bishop from Sudan poured his heart out. Speaking about the crisis in his country, where Christians were being enslaved and murdered, he pleaded with the international religious community for help. He was heading right back to the front lines of danger, and the thought had to have crossed the mind of everyone listening: *What can* I *do to help?*

That same question haunted me after my editorial "Freedom to Worship" (Jan. 11) came out. *So you've written the editorial,* I thought to myself, *and it has gone far and wide perhaps. But is that where it ends? What do you plan to do about it? What do you want others to do?* Hence this follow-up.

Ambonese Christians tend to a wounded resident during fighting in Ambon, Maluku province, northeast of Jakarta, Indonesia, in this August 10, 1999, TV image.

PHOTO © 1999 AP PHOTO / APTN

To Stand in Solidarity

I'm not talking here about what "the church" should do. My focus rather is on what *you and I as individual Christians* can do. Some of these situations are so sensitive and complex that official intervention on the part of the church could easily complicate life for our fellow leaders and believers on the ground—perhaps even jeopardizing their physical safety.

But such obstacles do not come into play when we act as individuals, guided by Christian principles. When I write a letter to my local paper, I don't do it on a church letterhead. When I write to a secular publication, I identify myself as "Roy Adams," with my home address. When I call my political representative, I'm speaking for myself alone. And when I contact the embassy of a foreign country to give a compliment or lodge a complaint, I do what I can to make such contact untraceable. But all the while I'm guided by my Christian convictions and commitment. In each case I suspect the church would be proud of my actions if they came to light. Yet in proceeding on my own, I ensure that if, however well-meaning, I blow it, the church suffers no damage.

How much time does this sort of thing take? Less time in a year, perhaps, than I spend watching my favorite team play ball in a single week. Is that too much—when fellow believers are being tortured and killed? I'm hopeful that at least a tenth of those reading this might join me in this effort. Pick a country in which religious freedom is under threat, and concentrate your efforts there. Irrational or abusive letters or calls are counterproductive. But well-reasoned, respectful approaches will have impact. Many governments still care about their image and standing in world opinion.

But let's not sweat the small stuff. As anyone who's been keeping their ears to the ground knows, people are being tortured today for their faith, hacked to death by machete, set ablaze by murderous gangs, shot in cold blood. In the face of such atrocities, some of the stuff that exercise us and consume our time in some places do not even register. Let's give attention to the big items.

And Let's Not Forget

Can the liberty we enjoy in some countries put our souls in mortal danger? On a visit to Colombia, as I listened to hair-raising stories of dedication and commitment during the dark days of the 1950s, I wondered whether a little opposition and hardship might not be exactly what we need to wake us up in some places.

I prefer peace. But I think we have a problem if we suppose that tranquility is to be sought at all cost, or that suffering is an alien experience in the Christian life. Addressing this attitude, Peter said to believers: "Do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, *as though something strange were happening to you*." "Rejoice," rather, he said, "that you participate in the sufferings of Christ" (1 Peter 4:12, 13).*

In the words of Hebrews 11: "Others were tortured. . . . Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated. . . . They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground" (verses 35-38).

Let's each ask ourselves: Do I know what it means to put my life on the line for Christ? And while we work for freedom, may we never forget that suffering—even death—might be our lot.

* Scripture references are from the New International Version.

Promises, Promises

STEPHEN CHAVEZ

Love is in the air. February is when print ads and store displays here in the United States turn all shades of pink, red, and white to get us into the mood to buy Valentine's Day cards and gifts for our sweethearts. We are, after all, a romantic society; we love to be in love.

The problem is how we define "love."

For too many people, love is candlelit dinners, walks on the beach at sunset, a tender embrace, a lingering kiss. This is certainly the way it looks in Hollywood, where television and movie stars jump from relationship to relationship, and million-dollar weddings begin marriages that last about as long as a politician's promise.

In Hollywood love is something you "fall into," almost by accident ("Oops, I couldn't help myself; I just fell in love"). And by the same token, love is something you can easily fall out of ("Uh, I don't know; we just grew apart, I guess").

The truth is that Christians have no business looking to society in general, or Hollywood in particular, for inspiration about what it means to be in love. Media personalities only rarely reflect the standard of love and commitment that Christianity stands for. And even among Christians there are too many who stay in a marriage only as long as they find it "convenient."

Marriage is not a life sentence for which you get "time off for good behavior." Marriage is a lifetime commitment with someone who shares your affections, values, and life goals. Having a successful marriage is not changing your partner, but reflecting God's unconditional love to him or her as often as you can, in as many ways as you can.

Yet many couples apparently can't see the marriage for the wedding. Detailed plans and fantastic amounts are spent to ensure an "ideal" wedding, but practically no thought or energy is given to being the type of person who will be the answer to his or her partner's dreams after the ceremony is over.

And there are many who apparently don't know the meaning of the word "vow." *Sure, I promised to love him in sickness and health, but I never promised to pick up his dirty underwear.* Or: *So I promised to love her for richer, for poorer; but I didn't promise that I wouldn't leave dirty dishes in the sink.* Or: *I can't wait until "death do us part." I want out now.*

A good marriage just gets better.

The great tragedy for people who mistake love for Hollywood-style romance is that they never know what true marital love is all about. As someone who has been married to my best friend for nearly three decades now, I can say that a good marriage just gets better.

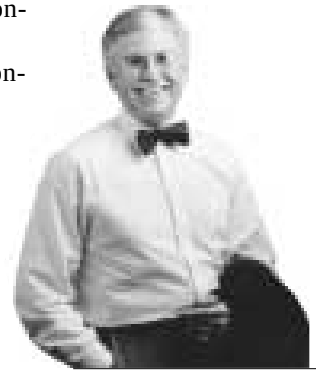
But marital joy doesn't happen without a whole lot of work, nor does it happen without having to face some challenges and obstacles along the way. But each obstacle overcome, each challenge met, makes for a more fulfilling, more satisfying relationship.

I know we don't live in a perfect world, I know that some marital situations are all but intolerable, and I'm not one who says that divorce is always unnecessary.

But there are too many situations in which marriage partners, blinded by their individual selfishness, bail out of a relationship without honestly giving it their best effort. The results—especially if there are children involved—are wounds that never heal, scars that never fade.

True love between a husband and wife is not a fantasy; it's not subject to external factors such as wealth, beauty, luck, excitement, or lack of it. True love is the result of a conscious decision by each partner to love, honor, and protect the other physically, emotionally, and spiritually. It's extending the golden rule—"Do to others what you would have them do to you" (Matt. 7:12, NIV)—to the most sacred, most intimate human relationship there is.

Solid marriage relationships are the building blocks on which successful families, churches, schools, and communities are built. It's where the characteristics we value as a society—love, loyalty, honesty, and cooperation—are demonstrated at the most basic level.



A committed marriage relationship has passion, excitement, tenderness, and romance. But it also has the comfortable feeling of familiarity and durability, based on the unconditional love found only in a relationship with God, the faithful lover's ultimate role model.

GIVE & TAKE

ADVENTIST LIFE

Illustration by Terry Crews

Leonda George, who works with Adventist Frontier Missions, had been in the Philippines only a few months and was still learning the language when one of the Filipinos she had befriended got sick and had to go to the hospital. Fearing for his life and not wanting him to die without having a chance to accept Jesus, she tried to recall the words she had been learning. The Filipino looked at her strangely when she asked him if he would like to invite Jesus into his heart.

Later Leonda learned that she had asked him if he would like to invite Jesus into his intestines.

—Stacy Hooker, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

When my 3-year-old great-grandson, Joshua, came to stay with me I offered him a Jelly Baby. He declined, saying: "No, thank you. I'm a vegetarian!"

—Lily Owens, Paignton, Devon, United Kingdom

Recently a cousin of our 4-year-old nephew Austin had to go to Poland to receive some special medical treatment. Austin's parents told him that Poland was very far away. Trying to figure out just how far away Poland really was, Austin finally asked: "Is Poland farther away than God's house?"

—Dave and Debra Ketelsen, La Grange, Kentucky

DREAM CENTER

Fast-food restaurants are a planet-wide phenomenon. But their success has increased global deforestation and has contributed to a great number of early deaths.

It is time—past time, actually—for vegetarians in general and vegans in particular to reclaim their natural heritage, to better both the planet's and its inhabitants' ecologies. To this end, I suggest starting inexpensive vegetarian (vegan preferred) restaurants, called Seconds on the House.

Photo © Image Club

Modeled after a combination of fast-food/military chow lines, only two or three main courses, and several side dishes, would be served at each meal. But there would be variety over time. People could buy discount cards in advance for multiple meals.

Supervised by a vegan registered dietitian, each meal would be nutritionally complete. In the United States funding for the first restaurant could come from the Small Business Administration, which provides up to 90 percent of a loan of up to $750,000. Unlike today's fast-food restaurants, our tasty food would also be good for you!

Good for You Vegan Eateries, Inc., would help lead the way toward healthy eating (and living) on Planet Earth.

—Raymond Avrutis, Washington, D.C.

QUOTES

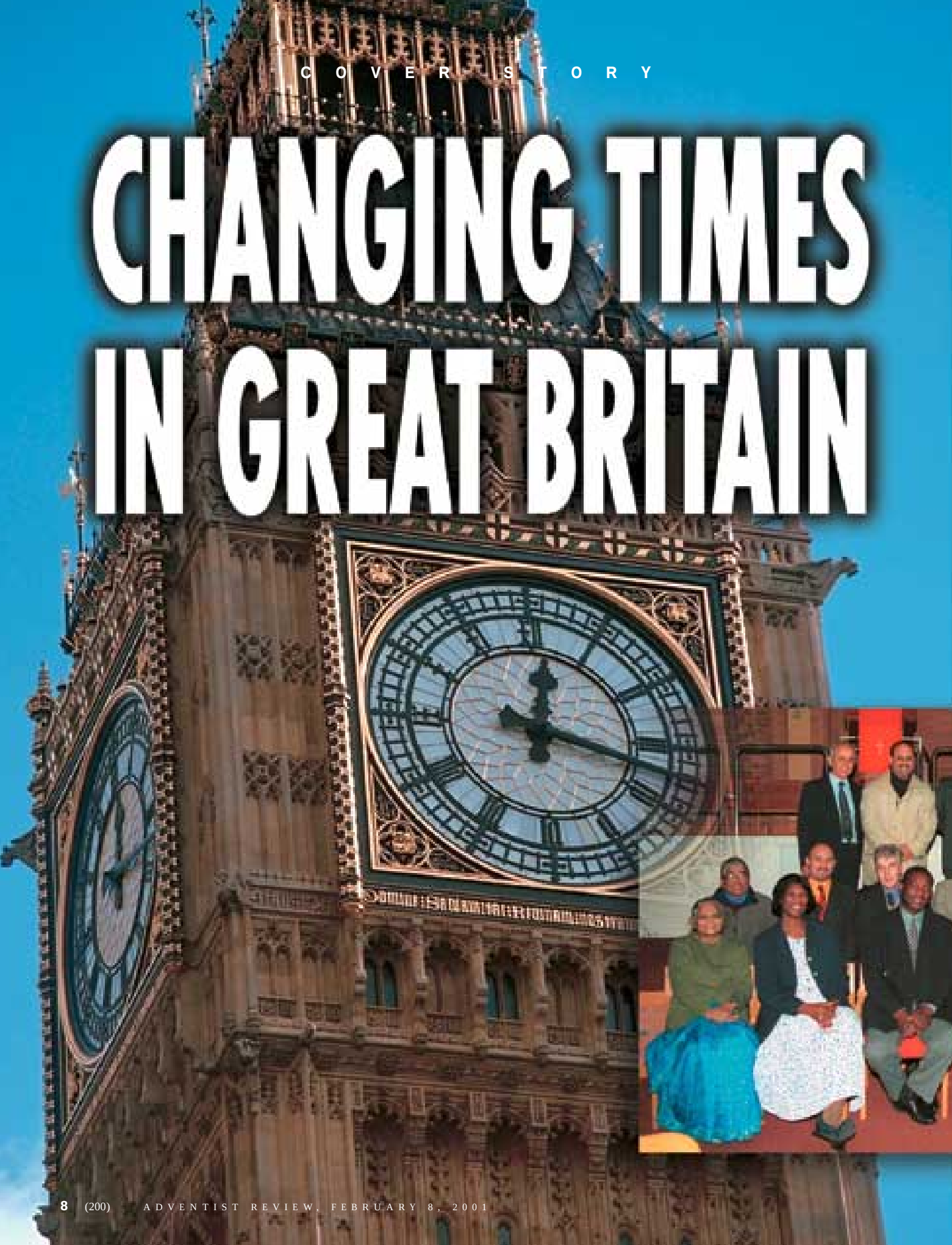
"When the love we have in our hearts matches the prayer we have on our lips, the world is blessed!"

—Pastor Raymond Khachatourian, during his recent sermon entitled "When Your Lips Are One Place but Your Heart Somewhere Else," at the Rialto, California, church

"I must be what I want my neighbors to be."

—Pastor Curtis Morton during a sermon at the Fayette Seventh-day Adventist Church in Fayetteville, Georgia

CHANGING TIMES IN GREAT BRITAIN



BY WILLIAM G. JOHNSSON

BACKGROUND PHOTO © PHOTODISC / FLAG © CLIPTURES™ DREAM MAKER SOFTWARE

ST. ALBANS, U.K.: AFTER MANY YEARS I have come back to Britain. "This sceptr'd isle, this . . . demi-paradise," Shakespeare called it in a burst of feeling, and my heart resonates with his. No point in trying to hide it: I am a confirmed Anglophile.

I have come to report on the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, my church, here. There'll be no sightseeing or sitting around nibbling cucumber sandwiches: just five days crowded with travel, interviews, and preaching appointments. The good people from the British Union Conference and the Trans-European Division, which is headquartered right here in St. Albans, have put together a packed itinerary.

Why choose Britain for another report? Not because the work of the church is big here. It isn't, never has been. After 120 years Adventists have just passed the 20,000 mark for the whole union—England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland.

But we *have* reached that point, and that is significant. Sad to say, in several countries of Western Europe Adventists are declining in numbers under the impact of rampant materialism and secularism. But not here.

WARM HEARTS: On a cold, blustery Sunday afternoon workers from the North England Conference gathered at the Camp Hill church in Birmingham to relate experiences. Conference president Egerton R. Francis sits to the right of editor William Johnsson.

I want to find out why. I want to see how Adventists in Great Britain are maintaining their identity, how they are endeavoring to reach the society around them with the three angels' messages.

There's another area I intend to probe. The racial makeup of the Adventist Church here has changed dramatically, and I want to try to catch the dynamic—how people get along with each other, how they have handled and are handling the changing times.

In the church as in society, the race card is explosive. The media usually play it for confrontational energy or else don't touch it. But at the *Adventist Review* we seek to deal with it openly, honestly, and accurately, always with a redemptive purpose. The Adventist world church is an incredible family—one people under God drawn from Red and Yellow, Black and White, and all precious in His sight. We are a people on the move, not only toward the New Jerusalem but to the restoration of the image of God corporately, learning how to affirm the dignity and respect that every child of God—regardless of race—deserves.

This visit will focus on England, where Adventists are growing and the racial dynamic is primarily at work. I will have to skip the "missions"—Wales, where we have some 400 Adventists, Ireland with about 300, and Scotland, where membership has dropped below 300. Scotland saddens me most of

SAFE HANDS: Pastor Cecil L. Perry has presided over the Adventist Church in Great Britain since 1991.

all: 11 years ago Dr. Wayne McFarland and I teamed up in public meetings in Aberdeen. We gave it our best shot, met wonderful people, but the results were meager.

So here I am, walking the streets of St. Albans, trying to stretch muscles after the all-night flight across the Atlantic in a sardine can, and to cope with jet lag. Half closed as my eyes are, I cannot help noticing the beauty of English gardens, even in this cold season. This is still a *civilized* country, even if they now drive ferociously on the M-1 motorway.

I come upon an electric-powered vehicle marked "The White Stuff." A man trundles cartons and bottles of milk to and fro, leaving them on doorsteps. How long since milk came to my door with the morning paper?

There are banners announcing the Guy Fawkes fireworks at the park. Guy Fawkes? Shades of yesteryear. As a boy in Australia I looked forward to the bonfire, fireworks, and burning the "guy" each year on Guy Fawkes Day, part of a tradition carried over the seas with the settlers who came from the old country. The late Mr. Fawkes was a character who plotted to dynamite the British Parliament in 1605. His scheme was uncovered, but he started something that endured.

And so I reflect as I walk the streets, hands in pockets and wondering how people keep warm: What does Guy Fawkes say to the English character? This society of tea and crumpets, of polite conversation and genteel behavior, this country that gave us the mother of parliaments—how come it celebrates a chap who tried to blow the whole thing up? I will leave that to the psychoanalysts.

But the times they are a-changing—at least in some respects. England has been notorious for bad weather and bad food. Soon both stereotypes may have to be set aside.

It's still cold and it still rains a lot (which means that the English countryside is still wonderfully green), but it is slowly getting warmer. Instead of the light, misty showers you associate with England, you may get really hard rain with floods over large areas of the country. They say it's all part of global warming—an idea with popular appeal here.

Once the Brits conquered India; now India has conquered them. Roast beef and cabbage have yielded to rice and curry. Indian restaurants are everywhere, and even McDonald's and Burger King have been forced to introduce curry selections in order to stay alive. And everywhere you see "balti houses"—*balti* being a new combination of rice, curry, and roti developed in recent years in Britain.

The saddest change in Britain relates to religion. Across the land the Anglican churches are empty, except for a few old people who still try to keep faith alive. In this land that witnessed the revival of John Wesley, only 7 percent of the population attend any church. Christian values of conduct and marriage have been replaced by amoral living flaunted by the media. A leading figure of the BBC unashamedly tells of the 250 men with whom he has had sex. Leading scholars at Oxford and Cambridge argue for a universe without God and cast scorn on faith.

Although the churches look old, decaying, empty, pubs are everywhere. They have become the heart of social activity. Friday nights the populace goes pubbing, sleeps late Sabbath morning, and reserves Saturday night for clubbing—dancing, drinking, and socializing.

How is Adventism doing in this environment?

GROWING CHURCH: Under the direction of Pastor Alan Conroy (standing), volunteers dug out a cross-shaped baptistry as they restored the sanctuary of the Lemington Spa church.

LONDON: The Holloway church, located in the heart of London, is full to the gills this Sabbath morning. I look out over a congregation of women, men, young people, and children. A wonderful male choir in the loft behind me lifts the spirits of the people to the throne of God.

I felt tired when I arrived here from St. Albans. It was a long day yesterday, starting with a visit to the union headquarters in Watford and ending with a service in the Balham church in London. Even though it was Friday night, some 500 or more worshipers came out, packing the church and with some standing along the sides. It was midnight before I got back to my lodging at St. Albans.

But the mood in Holloway energizes me. The enthusiasm, the spirited singing, the eagerness, and the joy seep over me, and the weariness rolls away. It's 12:00 before I stand up to preach, but by then I have been revived and speak without hindrance. The people follow attentively and respond with

PHOTOS BY JOHN SURRIDGE

amens; I keep catching the eye of a boy of about 12 toward the front on the right side, and every time I notice him his face is shining. I sit down and glance at my watch—1:00! I have preached for an hour!

This is Adventism in London. We have some 55 churches and companies in this metropolis, and about 10,000 members. This evening I will be at the Brixton church, like Holloway a congregation of 700-800. That church, they tell me, was once an Anglican church with a dying congregation. Meanwhile the Adventist congregation nearly was overflowing its meeting place. So the two congregations swapped churches!

Yesterday I visited the Advent Centre in the heart of London. Strategically located close to the Underground (and, incidentally, just a block from Cato Street, where Guy Fawkes hatched the gunpowder plot), the center was formerly a synagogue. Senior pastor Jonathan Barrett gave a tour of the four-level facility and described the various programs that take place in it: worship, concerts, seminars, youth meetings, and so on. The English service takes place in the former synagogue meeting area; the congregation of about 200 is made up of 40 nationalities and welcomes many visitors every week. Downstairs a Portuguese service has some 130 worshipers, and elsewhere in the building you can also find on Sabbath a Spanish meeting with 80, and even an Ethiopian group in the afternoon.

Bought with funds made available from the sale of the New Gallery, the center cost £3.5 million ($5 million)—a heavy price, but perhaps a bargain in light of its marvelous location and facilities.

I was very pleased to see this Adventist presence in the heart of the big city. And especially happy to learn that because of demand for its use, the conference employs staff just to coordinate events. My sense is that a variety of new endeavors can be attempted here in reaching out to the people of this metropolis.

For this is the challenge: Of the 500-odd people who come to worship in the various services each Sabbath, only 10 or a dozen are English. Adventism is attracting a response among those who migrate, come to study, or are just passing through; on the indigenous population it's having minimal impact.

And that is true not for just the Advent Centre, but for all our churches in London. The vast proportion of our members today are of Afro-Caribbean origin. As I look out over the congregation at Holloway, I observe only nine or ten White faces in the large congregation. The Balham church last night presented a similar scene. Among the 10,000 members in London, fewer than 300 are *English* English.

It was not ever thus. Fifty years ago churches such as Holloway, Balham, and Brixton were White.

During the past half century the Adventist Church in London and, indeed, throughout England has undergone a racial metamorphosis—from overwhelmingly White to predominantly Black. Although in the general population the English account for about 90 percent, in the Adventist Church they are only 25 percent or less.

How did this change come about? How did Adventists adjust to it as it was taking place, and how are they handling it today?

It's time for a little history lesson.

In 1948 the ship *Empire Windrush** brought the first wave of African Caribbean immigrants to Britain. They came seeking opportunities for work, study, and career advancement; many others followed throughout the 1950s.

INTENSITY: At the Holloway church in London, Sabbath school grabs the interest of both adults and the children's divisions.

These were the days when citizens of Britain's former colonies had the right to come and go freely, and many, exercising their right, flowed into Britain from the Commonwealth nations of the Caribbean, India, and Pakistan. But the migration ceased abruptly in 1962 when the British Parliament passed legislation restricting access.

This relatively brief period of

immigration—only 12 years—would radically affect the racial makeup of the Adventist Church. Like immigrant groups elsewhere, the newcomers encountered prejudice in the larger society. But for the Adventists among them the church provided a home, a refuge, a sanctuary. The Holloway congregation in particular became an early place of fellowship for the strangers from the Caribbean. They in turn could invite others of their race who were not of their faith to this welcoming denomination. The Adventist Church in Britain grew fast, doubling in membership between 1950 and 1970.

With the increase in the numbers of the Black (principally Afro-Caribbean) Adventists, tensions arose in the church in Britain. The newcomers brought with them cultural differences that impacted worship: They were more exuberant and expressive, accustomed to punctuating sermons with amens and other verbal expressions, much less bound by the clock in starting and closing services. They wanted pastors who could lead them in worship in the mode that was right for them, and Adventist schools for their children. And they sought a voice in the administration of the church.

A group of Black laypeople began to meet informally to discuss ways of remedying the situation. Known as the London Laymen's Forum, they eventually made representation to the leaders of the church but received no satisfaction. As the situation continued to deteriorate, General Conference president Robert Pierson and vice president G. Ralph Thompson intervened personally. Many hours of debate and prayer led to the formulation of what became known as the "Pierson package." It directed the church to adopt integrated leadership at both union and conference levels, and to place calls for experienced "top drawer" Black pastors who had leadership potential.

Thus in 1979 several pastors from the Caribbean were called to serve in Britain. Among them were Dr. Silburn Reid, who was soon elected president of the South England Conference, Pastor Cecil R. Perry, and Pastor Donald W. McFarlane. Eventually Cecil Perry became president of the union (in 1991), and Don McFarlane president of the South England Conference. The president of the North England Conference is Pastor Egerton Francis; thus now the three presidents—union and the two conferences—are Afro-Caribbeans.

The church continues to grow, but not among the indigenous population. "Britain is a traditional country, and some look on our church as American, alien to the culture," Pastor Perry told me. He also listed the peculiarity of our message, the anti-Christian tone of society, and the Sabbath (sundown comes midafternoon in the winter) as obstacles to growth.

Two days ago I met with a group of White pastors called together by the leaders of the South England Conference. During the course of a two-hour conversation marked by frankness and strong exchanges, they laid bare their hurts and frustrations.

They emphasized that at the personal level Black and White pastors and members get along fine. However, the cultural differences expressed in worship make it difficult for the White pastors to bring new White people into the church. The White work is dying before their eyes, and they feel sad and frustrated. And they have to deal with the criticism, actual or implied, that if they only worked harder they would enjoy the same success as the Black pastors have.

But Pastor Robert Vine, pastor of the Stanborough Park church, the last large White church left, noted: "The church we've got is Christ's church. We might like it to be this way or that, White or Black, but this is the church He has given us."

BIRMINGHAM: The sky is dark and the wind whistles as we speed north along the M-1 motorway toward Birmingham. By the time we arrive at the Camp Hill church a cold rain is falling, and we scurry across the parking lot to the church door.

Inside a group of pastors and their spouses from the North England Conference have gathered to talk with me about the progress of the work in their field. I am impressed that they would give up their Sunday afternoon and come out in such bad weather.

The conference has about 6,000 members—the work has grown slower here all along. To ministers battling the secular society it must seem as though they are making little or no headway; however, as first one then another begins to share good things that are happening in their parish and new ideas they are trying out, the meeting takes on a highly affirming and encouraging tone. The big picture shows that the work in the north is moving ahead in spite of many obstacles.

Pastor Dalbir Masih tells about the establishment of a new church in the West Midlands. Named the Breath of Life, it has no connection with the television program of Dr. Walter L. Pearson, Jr. He has also helped old people find a home: The Advent Garden consists of nine bungalows, with another 15 in progress.

Dalbir was one of my students when I taught at Spicer College, and it gives me great satisfaction to see his contribution to the work in Britain. In addition to his pastoral responsibilities he is church growth coordinator for work among people of Indian origin. Dalbir was honored by the government of India by being asked to chair the committee that planned the jubilee celebration in Britain of India's independence.

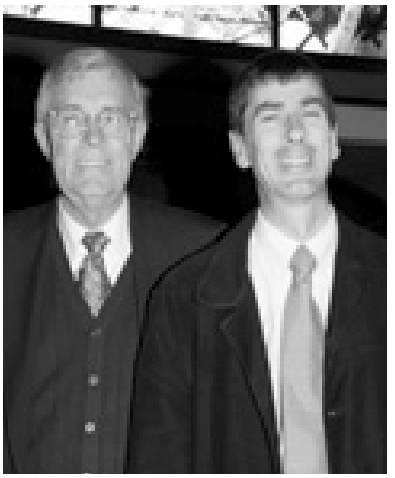
Pastor Jude Jeanville describes the evangelistic effort in his Wolverhampton church. Instead of inviting a speaker from the United States, as is frequently done here, he did the preaching himself; 15 people were baptized. The Wolverhampton church has built a large new community center (£220,000 = US$300,000) and started a "school of further education." Church members raised half the funding, with the remainder coming from

BACKGROUND: Icons of Christianity, many of Britain's large churches are today nearly empty.

local government and European sources. The center has had a big impact on the community.

Obviously, a number of pastors in Britain are seeking new ways to put the Adventist Church on the map. Jude's efforts reminded me of what Pastor Eddie Hypolite told me when I met him at the Brixton church Sabbath evening. He has developed a workshop, How to Be a Player, aimed to help Black men and youth find their identity. At the request of local authorities he gives the workshop at schools and prisons, helping inner-city youth cope with drugs and home and school problems.

What can a church of only 10 members do for outreach? Cedric Vine, son of Robert Vine and in his first year of ministry, relates how he mobilized them behind a Vacation Bible School-like program called The Fit Chicken Club. They have 40 children ages 5-14 attending from the community.



FOCUS OF FAITH: Strategically located in the heart of London, the Advent Centre, with Pastor Jonathan Barrett (right) as leader, offers a variety of spiritual activities.

I learn that the North England Conference, concerned about the decline in White membership, appointed Pastor Paul Haworth as coordinator for "indigenous evangelism"—that is, to target the English English. The South conference has done likewise; Pastor Dalbert Elias carries this responsibility.

And, with all the struggles of the White work, there is one shining example of progress. I saw it this morning on the way to Birmingham. We turned off the M-1 and made our way to Leamington Spa, where we found Pastor Alan Conroy standing outside a unique Seventh-day Adventist church, one with a figure of St. Peter in the front!

Conroy glowed as he shared the story of the congregation. Some 10 years ago Adventists had no church here, only a group of 10-12 members who wanted to start a fellowship. Then, six years ago, the Youth Mission went on sale. Built in 1828 as a Roman Catholic church, it had passed through various hands. Now it was being offered at a bargain price of £68,000 (US $100,000), but it needed massive work to make it usable—roof caving in, walls to be plastered, floor replaced, and so on.

With the community taking note and large press coverage, the Adventists set about to restore the building, which is centrally located and known to everyone. During a six-year effort all members got involved, regardless of age. They first renovated an upstairs room as a meeting place for worship, then started on the main hall.

Although members donated their labor, sometimes working 14 hours on Sundays, there were substantial costs for materials, such as the restoration of the broken-out windows in the original glass and pattern. But, said Conroy, without any fund-raising drive the money came in—£275,000 (US$400,000) in all. He estimates the value of the renovated building, which won a Millennium Award for the restoration effort, at £500,000 (US$728,000).

"Today is the first Sunday in six years that I'm not here in my overalls," said Conroy. "If you want people to volunteer, better be there yourself." The church was dedicated just the previous Sabbath, with various dignitaries in attendance.

Conroy told me that many White Adventists who had dropped out of church drive up to 50 miles (a long way for Britain) each Sabbath. The service, which seeks to be, in his words, "modern, contemporary, relevant," offers a ray of hope for the White work in England.

HEATHROW AIRPORT: After five days at breakneck pace, time to reflect on what I've seen and heard. Only the Lord knows the complete scene—I cannot claim more than impressions built on the images and vignettes experienced during this whirlwind visit.

I feel tired but exhilarated. This union that, though small in numbers, has contributed so much to the life of the world church—people such as Edward Heppenstall, W. E. Read, W.G.C. Murdoch, E. E. White, "Uncle Arthur" Maxwell, G. D. Keough, and others—has great vitality today. The immigrant groups who now heavily outnumber Whites have helped the church grow, perhaps have kept it from dying out. They have brought energy, dynamism—and wonderful music. Their choirs—the London Chorale and the Croydon Seventh-day Adventist Gospel Choir—are nationally and internationally acclaimed, helping to break down prejudice against the church. Likewise the John Loughborough School in London has attracted large and favorable media coverage.

Yes, the church has changed, is changing. Yes, the secular society presents a huge mountain of resistance to the gospel. Yes, race relations bring some tensions and frustrations.

But these powerful forces have not dynamited the Adventist Church. Jesus is leading a people, calling out a people in Britain. He is the Lord of the harvest, and by His grace it is ripening in our day.

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*For the historical background in this section I have drawn upon two publications produced by the British Union Conference: *The Story of Seventh-day Adventists in the British Isles, 1902-1992,* and *A Century of Adventism in the British Isles*.

William G. Johnsson is editor of the Adventist Review.

A Hungry Dog, a Lost Sheep, and the GOOD SHEPHERD

An unusual lesson in compassion and cross-cultural sensitivity

BY ZDRAVKO STEFANOVIC

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW CONTAINS an episode from Christ's life that, probably better than any other, teaches how the divine acceptance can break down all barriers. To read this story and not be touched by its sharp message means to miss one of life's most important truths.

Chapter 15 of Matthew first tells of one of the many controversies between Christ and His learned opponents who bothered to travel from Jerusalem all the way to Galilee in order to lay a trap for Him. Looking for some rest, Jesus had left Galilee and withdrawn to a Gentile territory. Here a Canaanite woman found Him. She pleaded with Him to heal her daughter who was seriously disturbed by demonic powers, and for a while Jesus pretended to be indifferent. He remained silent. But when His disciples urged Him to dismiss her, He proceeded to do a test. "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel," he said to the woman (verse 24, NIV). The scope of My mission is the land of Israel.

At this the woman threw herself at His feet, pleading earnestly for help. But her appeal was met by what, on the face of it, seemed the harshest response on the part of Christ. "It is not right," He said, "to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs" (verse 26, NIV).

But Christ's answer neither confused nor intimidated her. If the bread does not belong to the dogs, she said in effect, then crumbs may be sufficient.

Amazed, Jesus commended the woman's great faith. The religious elite from Jerusalem might have learned the essence of faith in God from this Gentile woman. Her daughter was healed.

To appreciate better the divine acceptance of this woman and her strong faith, let's take a closer look at the three main characters in this story.

1. The Woman

Before coming close to Jesus, who was the solution to her problem, the woman faced at least four barriers.

The first was the *gender* barrier. She was a woman. We've all heard of some of Jesus' male contemporaries who every day uttered prayers of thanks to God for the fact that they were born male. On one of my trips to the Middle East a local person told me that whenever I'm asked how many children I have, I should give the number of sons only, "since," he said, "girls do not count in our culture."

The second barrier was *racial*. The woman was Canaanite, a member of a community that was excluded from any share in the heritage of Israel. A number of Jesus' compatriots divided the whole world into two groups of people: those of their race on one side ("us"), and the Gentiles on the other ("them").

Closely related to race was the third barrier, the *religious* one. The woman was of pagan background. Only a member of God's people could be considered clean. Just to go to a Gentile territory meant risking becoming unclean. Terms such as *Gentile dogs* were not considered to be out of place.

In the fourth place there was the *social* barrier. The woman was most probably a widow taking care of her daughter and had come to Jesus begging for help. In contrast to God, who claimed to be the protector of orphans and widows, there were many people in Christ's time who considered

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHEN SCHILDBACH

less fortunate members of society as cursed by God. Remember that in those days there were no Social Security, no retirement plans, no government aid to provide assistance to the poor and destitute.

If you were asked to choose to face one of these four barriers, which one would you choose? Any one is bad enough. But facing this woman were all four barriers. How could she be accepted?

Her desire to come to Christ, however, was greater than any obstacle that she faced. She would put all her trust in the divine acceptance she so clearly read on Jesus' face. And her faith was greatly rewarded. Commenting on that faith, Ellen G. White wrote: "The blessings of salvation are for every soul. Nothing but his own choice can prevent any man from becoming a partaker of the promise in Christ by the gospel." [1]

This is a precious lesson for all to learn. To be or not to be accepted by Christ depends on us and on our attitude. We may not be hungry or unclean by our own choice, but it is our own choice whether we will remain hungry or unclean.

2. The Disciples

The disciples of Jesus showed no sympathy or appreciation for this individual. Though called to be apostles, their attitude showed that they were still far from God's expectations. Veiled before their eyes were this woman's real face and her pure faith in God. To them she was just a woman, but they failed to see her also as a loving *mother*. They saw her as a Canaanite, but not as a genuine *daughter* of the faithful Rahab. They saw her as an unclean Gentile, not as a *saint* who worshiped Christ. They never expected that a widow begging for crumbs would turn into a *champion* with arms full of loaves.

Why did the disciples react the way they did? Most probably they were blinded by influences from outside. First, there was this obsession on the part of the elite to distinguish between clean and unclean, a distinction they applied to people as well. Then there was the crowd's unquenchable thirst for a higher social status. But both the hungry dog and the lost sheep stood in need of help—the help of a Saviour. Both needed the Good Shepherd to care for their needs. The difference lay in the fact that the dog knew it was hungry, while the sheep did not know it was lost.

Just to go to a Gentile territory meant risking becoming unclean. Terms such as Gentile dogs *were not considered to be out of place.*

Says Ellen White: "Jesus longed to unfold the deep mysteries of the truth which had been hid for ages, that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs with the Jews. . . . This truth the disciples were so slow to learn, and the divine Teacher gave them lesson upon lesson." [2] We are so slow to learn, aren't we? So many of us think that Jesus will come even before the gospel is preached in the whole world. But God is patient. He is still giving us "lesson upon lesson."

3. The Good Shepherd

Jesus' attitude in this story is at first puzzling. But through His person and His acts He eventually revealed where He stood. It's true that He was a Jewish son; but He was also the Saviour of the nations. The person standing before Him was a woman; He was the Lord, the son of David; yet He knew that His great-great-grandmother (way back) was a Moabite *woman*. He was the Messiah, the grandson of Jesse, and this woman was a Gentile; yet at His birth *Gentile* astrologers welcomed Him as their king. The woman was considered unclean; He was the Holy One from God; yet His great-great-grandmother was a *Canaanite* "innkeeper." The woman begged for crumbs from Him who was the Bread of Life; but when Jesus was an infant, His family were *refugees* in Egypt.

As He faced this Gentile woman, this international Saviour (who just happened also to be Jewish) acted in a most unusual way, graphically giving His disciples a crash course in cross-cultural awareness, deeply rooted in His Father's loving heart. In this woman He saw His child who longed for acceptance. He helped her and also commended her faith. Thus He removed all barriers. Says Ellen White: "Caste is hateful to God. He ignores everything of this character. In His sight the souls of all men are of equal value." [3]

The kingdom of God as preached by Jesus and the writers of the Bible is for all who believe. The divine acceptance is available to all. In God we're all of equal value, and we can be redeemed by the precious blood of the Lamb. If the Good Shepherd was willing to accept a hungry dog and some lost sheep, He is ready to do exactly the same for us today.

And no barrier can stand in the way, if only we believe in Him.

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[1] Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 403.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 402.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 403.

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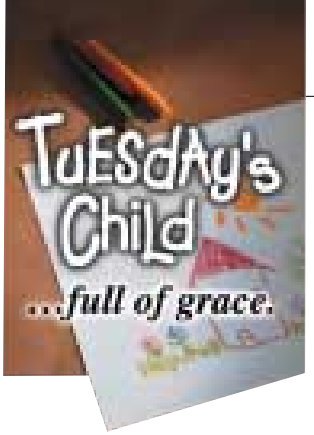


RENÉ ALEXENKO EVANS

Operation Rescue

And in breaking news at this hour, two men are trapped inside a cave in McMinnville County," said Sheila Martin, the TV news woman. "Tonight's dropping temperatures mean rescuers will be working against time to save the men, who are reported to be cold, wet, and exhausted. More now from our on-the-scene reporter, Amos Smith. Amos, what can you tell us?"

Derrick turned up the volume on the TV to hear the rest of the report.

"Well, Sheila," said Amos, the on-the-scene reporter, "three young men, all in their 20s, went caving today in McMinnville County. The cave they were exploring had a steep drop of about 30 feet. They tied a rope at the top so they could climb down and then back up when they were ready to go home. But apparently today's exploring left two of them too tired to climb back up the rope. One of the men did make it to the top, and he went for help."

"What kind of situation exists for the rescuers?" asked the news woman.

"Well, Sheila, McMinnville County rescue personnel tell me this is a tricky situation," Amos said. "The opening to the cave is a half mile off the road, and the men are said to be a mile inside the cave. These men are wearing only shirts and jeans, and they're soaked clear through. It's below freezing out here now, so rescuers are facing a race against time before the men freeze to death. Their friend who made it out said they're too weak to assist in their rescue. It will be up to the rescuers to find them and get them out before it's too late."

"Thanks, Amos," said Sheila, the news woman. "In other news tonight . . ."

Derrick turned off the TV.

"That sounds bad," he said.

"It does sound bad," said Dad. "Those two men are lucky their friend was able to climb out and get help."

"Do you think they'll get to them in time?" asked Derrick.

"McMinnville County rescuers are used to this kind of problem," said Dad. "There are lots of caves in that area, and they train for this kind of rescue. They know right where the men are; that's a big help. They won't have to waste time trying to find them. And they'll certainly bring dry clothes, blankets, and hot drinks with them to help the men warm up quickly as soon as they get them out."

"They wouldn't stand a chance without those rescuers, would they?" asked Derrick softly.

"No, son, I don't think they would," said Dad. "They need someone to come get them."

Family Time

On Tuesday (or whichever day you choose), invite your family to worship God with you.

☛In the story you just read, who or what represents you? Who represents Satan? God?

☛Read a Bible story in 1 Samuel 14:1-23. Who saved Jonathan?

☛Ask the adults in your family if they have ever been rescued from danger. How did they feel about whoever saved them?

☛Why do you think rescue people do what they do? Why do you think God does what He does?

☛Sing these words to the tune of "London Bridge Is Falling Down":

"God rescues me from Satan, from Satan, from Satan. God rescues me from Satan because He loves me."

☛Thank God for being the rescuer who always knows where we are and who always knows how to save us from Satan.

PHOTO © PHOTODISC

New International Media Center to Be Established in Europe

BY RAY DABROWSKI, GENERAL CONFERENCE COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR

Euro-Africa Division officials report that plans are under way to establish a modern media facility for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Europe.

Already two land parcels have been purchased near Darmstadt, Germany, where a new facility will be built to house a studio for film, video, and audio recording, as well as audio and video cassette production, says Martin Haase, division communication director. "Today Christianity needs to look at new and effective ways of communication with modern society. My church is keen to use such methods to present the gospel message.

"Methods of yesterday are nostalgic. Some are still good, but society requires different sources of communication and of a different quality. As a church we look at maximizing resources for communication in a comprehensive way," he said.

The Euro-Africa Division, one of the church's 12 world divisions, has analyzed positive results of new media productions in their evangelistic outreach. The core communication program will be built around the Stimme der Hoffnung (Voice of Hope) center in Darmstadt, which partners with Adventist World Radio and Adventist Global Communication Network, an international satellite broadcasting entity of the Adventist Church worldwide. Haase believes that bringing together several church departments will contribute to an effective synergy.

"Since the NET '96 satellite outreach series all interested churches in our part of Europe have in the Stimme der Hoffnung a reliable partner for the preparation and maintenance of satellite technology," Haase explains. The current facility has for many years produced high-quality shortwave programs in its own studios and dubbed video and audiocassettes in different languages, as well as recorded audio books and other publications for libraries for the blind. The center is also experiencing success with the Discovery Bible correspondence course.

> *Society requires different sources of communication and of a different quality.*

"In the countries comprising the Euro-Africa Division our church is experiencing a new day in church growth. This media center is to become a modern instrument for our evangelism," says Ulrich Frikart, president of the Euro-Africa Division.

"Today the world of communicating news and information requires changes in the way we do communication in the church," said Haase, who comes to his new responsibility with experience in management consulting and employment of new technologies. "With the present facilities, the growing needs in the realm of the media potential can be met only in a limited way. We are excited to be going ahead with this project."

The project is being realized by a special budget appropriation from the General Conference as well as private funding. "We are a part of a world family. We all share in our common global resources. We hope to contribute further through the ministry of the center to reach our common goal as a family of God," Haase says. "We need this urgently, considering our limited budgets and the growing requirements of quality," he adds.

Construction of a new building for the studios and editorial staff is planned in a first phase on a 35,500-square-foot (3,300-square-meter) property, to be expanded in a second phase on the neighboring 30,000-square-foot (2,800-square-meter) property. The new complex will house an Internet center of the Euro-Africa Division, with training rooms, and a multilanguage telephone response center with secretarial and translation services.

Design and operational details for the facility have not yet been finalized, although the groundbreaking ceremony has already taken place.

New Challenges

One of the challenges faced by the international congregation is resource sharing for a culturally and linguistically diverse church. "The center will be open to a multilanguage production. It is important in communication ministry to think globally and cross-culturally," Martin says.

Seventh-day Adventists in Europe, who are administered also by two other European divisions of the church (Trans-European with headquarters in St. Albans, England; and Euro-Asia, with headquarters in Moscow, Russia), operate several successful media facilities, including studios for radio and satellite broadcast programming.
—*Adventist News Network*.

Record Baptism in Mongolia

BY DALE TUNNELL, WHO COORDINATES THE ADVENTIST CHURCH'S WORK IN MONGOLIA

December 16, 2000, will go down in history as the largest Adventist baptism in Mongolia to date, with 38 baptisms and four professions of faith.

Ages of the candidates ranged from 11 to 65. The 11-year-old boy was told that he couldn't be baptized, but he responded, "I just have to be baptized with my father." Mother, father, and son were accepted into membership after the parents consented to the son's baptism.

The event concluded a 10-day reaping campaign in the city of Darhan, with evangelist Carlos Martin presenting and Pastor Bold Batsukh translating. Excitement ran high as this Sabbath approached. Attendance had been between 400 and 900 every night. During the week's appeals more than 300 adults expressed their desire to give their lives to Jesus and be baptized. When the final call was made, 50 people made the commitment to be baptized and join the Adventist Church, but some were unable to participate in the Sabbath afternoon baptism. With the homemade baptistry in place, more than 150 people crowded into a room that seats 80. We sang, prayed, listened to the choir, and enjoyed Elder Martin's review of Christian beliefs as buckets of water were carried to fill the baptistry with warm water.

Martin personally spent more than 400 hours preparing the nightly meetings, and other staff members worked at least that many hours. He had searched the Internet for Mongolian pictures, in addition to taking many pictures with his own digital camera, to make this series appealing to the Mongolian people. Everything was translated before he came to Mongolia. He arrived ready with three computers and three video projectors to share the gospel in a powerful way.

Representatives from established groups that meet in five different areas of Mongolia attended. Some came as a support team for the evangelistic effort, while others came to be a part of the baptismal service.

In 2001, evangelistic meetings are planned for six towns where 1000 Missionary Movement and Gospel Outreach teams are now working.

NEWSBREAK

Soviet Violence Elicits Concern of Church Leaders

Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders are expressing concern over a trend toward intolerance and persecution aimed at Christians in the central Asian countries of the former Soviet Union.

Responding to news that two bombs damaged churches in the capital city of Dushanbe, Tajikistan, John Graz, director of public affairs and religious liberty for the General Conference, says, "It may be a kind of warning from extremist groups to gain attention."

A bomb destroyed two buildings annexed to the Orthodox Church of St. Nicholas and blew out windows in the Sunday school and baptistry. Another bomb blew windows out of the Adventist church. The explosions occurred minutes apart on December 31, 2000.

In this impoverished country, the target of violence and terrorism, churches are not necessarily safe harbors. Last October a Korean Christian mission suffered a bombing that killed seven and injured 50.

Graz expresses the regret that such actions "put a lot of pressure on Christians" and that acts of aggression to destroy and persecute people are committed through religion. He adds, "We are concerned because we see a trend toward violence in some states of the former Soviet Union, and we hope that the governments and the international communities will act on behalf of human rights to send a clear signal that this behavior cannot be accepted."

This past year churches were destroyed and Christians threatened in the nearby country of Turkmenistan. Among the destroyed churches in Ashgabat was the only Adventist house of worship in the country.

Bible Lessons Bring 9,300 Baptisms in Uganda

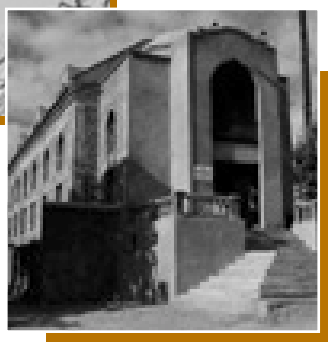
More than 9,300 persons were baptized as a result of the Building a Happy Home Bible lessons last year in Uganda, reports Witson Mwamakamba, publishing director of the Eastern Africa Division.

The announcement of the baptisms was made January 6 at the Nakivubo National Stadium in Kampala during an evangelistic series. More than 40,000 persons attended the daylong meetings at the stadium.

Literature ministry played an essential part of Uganda's evangelism thrust, Mwamakamba says. Literature evangelists distributed 20,000 Bible lessons in and around Kampala, and 3,000 Bibles were distributed at the meetings.

Global Mission Prayer Ministry

Please pray for: Church leaders and laypeople in Turkmenistan.



MAP © CARTESIA

Seventh-day Adventists and other religious groups in Turkmenistan have been suffering ongoing persecution for their beliefs. In November 1999 an Adventist church (pictured) in Ashgabat, the capital of the country, was bulldozed by order of government authorities. Then in October 21, 2000, Pastor Pavel Fedetov was arrested while holding Sabbath services in a private home. Police warned church members to cease all services in their homes or risk losing their apartments.

John Graz, director for public affairs and religious liberty for the Adventist Church worldwide, says that it is all too easy to take religious freedom for granted in countries in which the right to worship is guaranteed. "In many countries—from Turkmenistan to Eastern Indonesia to Myanmar—individuals who defy the dominant religious culture or who disobey antireligious laws risk their homes, their freedom, and even their lives," Graz told Adventist News Network.

There are fewer than 100 Adventists in this central Asian republic of 5 million people.

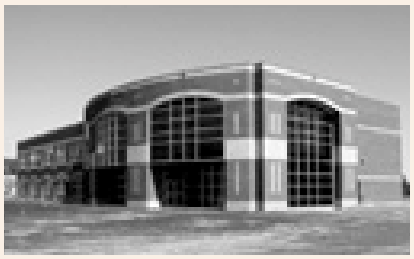
For information on joining the Global Mission prayer ministry team, visit www.globalmission.org or call 1-800-648-5824.

NEWSBREAK

During the Sabbath services 9,545 persons graduated from the Secrets of a Happy Home Bible lessons, which taught all the essential Adventist doctrines and beliefs. Some 530 couples renewed their marriage vows, and 17 couples were married. The Kampala series was the result of a cooperative effort of 56 literature evangelists, 24 pastors, 46 teachers, and hundreds of lay members, reports General Conference publishing director José Campos, who gave the Sabbath morning message.

OC Opens Business and Technology Complex

On January 9, officials at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama, held grand opening ceremonies for the school's new $4 million business and technology complex.



The two-story complex is the first newly constructed facility on the campus within the past 11 years, according to Tim Allston, college spokesperson. The 40,000-square-foot structure includes offices and classrooms, a computer laboratory, conference rooms, and auditorium. The building is the first stage of a 20-year, $84 million master plan to restructure the 104-year-old college into Oakwood Adventist University by July 1, 2003.

Are You a Whitecoat Volunteer?

All U.S. Army servicemen who participated in Project Whitecoat between 1954 and 1973 in Fort Detrick, Maryland, are invited to a special reunion in San Antonio, Texas, March 16-18, 2001. San Antonio is where the Whitecoat servicemen took their basic training.

The U.S. Army wants to contact all volunteers who participated in the project so that they may receive their certificates of appreciation and medals from the U.S. Congress, the U.S. Army, and the General Conference. Project Whitecoat was recently featured in the History Channel documentary "Suicide Mission—Human Guinea Pigs."

Whitecoat volunteers or other persons with information about participants may write Whitecoat liaison Frank Damazo at 700 Montclaire Ave., Frederick, Maryland 21701; call (301) 662-4502; or e-mail thedamazos@aol.com.

The Numbers Game

SALLY LAM

At a team-building session we were asked to number off in twos, and I happened to be No. 2. Soon after, the leader instructed us to choose a name and a slogan for the group. Within a minute this was quickly resolved when one person suggested, "How about this for a slogan: 'We Are No. 2.'"

Everyone nodded in agreement. Another piped up: "How about 'Whoa! We're No. 2'?" An English teacher doubted whether it should be "we are." Should it be "we're"? I insisted that it was "we *are*," not "we're." Our slogan was supposed to emphasize the fact that we *are* No. 2 and not No. 1.

Was being No. 1 so important after all? Wasn't No. 2 just as good?

In a competitive society such as Hong Kong's, a bustling metropolis in which every human being is focused on making the most money in the shortest amount of time, being No. 1 is certainly a top priority.

In a society like Hong Kong's, being No. 1 is a top priority.

Mei-Lin grew up in such a world. For a big part of her life she was told that being No. 1 was vital for success. The Lord gave her a good head start: she was born No. 1 in a family of six—four girls and two boys. As No. 1 daughter, as well as the firstborn, she was empowered with authority commensurate with the responsibility of leader of the "horde." Her parents, typical Chinese, believed that the first child is a natural leader for the rest of the family, as well as a role model and example. A Chinese expression was drummed into her psyche: "A bad older child will lead the rest of the siblings astray."

In school Mei-Lin played the numbers game even more seriously. Being No. 1 in class meant a lot to her parents, and Mei-Lin only twice came in second: once in elementary school and once again in secondary school. Imagine her parents' pride when she finally made it to the pinnacle of the pyramid by graduating as valedictorian of her class in her final year, at the top of the heap of 200 students.

At college the game intensified—making a 4.0 GPA every quarter became Mei-Lin's obsession; anything short of an A meant failure and defeat.

After college, as a young professional, Mei-Lin was exacting of herself, setting high and often unrealistic standards. By the time she reached 40, migraine headaches, gastric attacks, and insomnia were just some of the by-products of the anxiety that plagued such a must-win attitude.

As a devout Christian, Mei-Lin loved the text "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48), and she pursued human perfection with a penchant. She was often critical of those who held on to apparently low standards, and she wondered if she was wasting her time working in a Christian school that catered to students who were not among Hong Kong's high achievers. Nonetheless, she felt a calling to stick with her teaching job, which she did well.

But the Lord had His eyes on Mei-Lin and watched her progress with much interest. He patiently led her to assume heavier and heavier responsibilities, at which she was often made to feel totally inadequate. In numerous situations in which she had nowhere else to turn, she learned to cast all her cares on her heavenly Father.

Spending time in the early mornings feeding on God's Word and praying for strength to face each challenge, Mei-Lin was soon led to the awareness that all things are possible with God.

The perfection the Bible talks about is not human perfection, but God's perfection. If we will just learn to let go and let God, He will accomplish far more than we can ever hope or imagine.

As Mei-Lin's faith grew with an eagerness to do God's will, while daily seeking to align with the mind of Christ, the numbers game faded into insignificance.

At the foot of the cross the numbers game is no longer valid. Numbers do not matter; we are all equal in the sight of God. Winning will have no meaning in heaven as we leave behind this earthly element of human existence. It's more important to seek God's approval. It's all right to be No. 2 or even No. 452.

With the perfection available from our heavenly Father, our duty is to be the best No. 2 there is.

Sally Lam is president of Hong Kong Adventist College.

Health Yourself

Eight ways to wellness

BY TERRY L. BUTLER

BE HONEST. WE'D ALL LIKE BETTER HEALTH. The top three items on most people's wish list are: money, happiness, and health.

And when it comes down to that last centimeter of rope, most would give up the money if we were guaranteed the other two.

Has the latest health wave passed you by? Compared with 10 years ago, are you practicing more positive health behaviors? Do you have a greater understanding of health? Are you reaching your potential of wellness in every dimension of life?

During the past 150 years Western society has experienced three waves of a health revolution. All have helped improve health and prolong life. First came public health and its emphasis on hygiene and sanitation. The next wave, earlier this century, advanced clinical medicine, surgery, and drug therapy. The final wave, which began about 30 years ago, is about health promotion. The World Health Organization (WHO), with its theme "Health for All by Year 2000," energized individuals and communities into disease-prevention and health-promotion activities.

But there's a fourth wave now breaking that will push the boundaries on life-enhancement and longevity, with behavioral strategies and gene technology.

It seems we don't have a monopoly on the "Adventist advantage" in health anymore, as many in the community surf ahead of us. In some Adventist circles we're still surfing on the first wave. Some have barely gotten their feet wet.

Health factors	Level of personal choice
Genetics	None
Environment	Some
Lifestyle behaviors	Most—all

Others focus on Ellen White's statements on natural remedies: "Pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, trust in divine power—these are the true remedies." [1] But there is much more than that to what she says. Read all of *The Ministry of Healing* for the big picture.

Remember, there are three main factors contributing to health—genetics, environment, and lifestyle (see box)—and all influence our potential for health.

How you live, your personal choices, and what you do to your mind and body significantly impact your health. You can "health yourself." Well, not entirely, but to a significant extent. But that doesn't happen without some effort.

In reconsidering natural remedies we need to see the big picture and the two key principles of positive choices and balance. "Natural" remedies involve personal choices available to all—we all have eight behavior choices that, if used positively, can:

- Reduce the risk of disease
- Promote health and wellness
- Enhance and prolong life

1. Eating and Drinking

We spend three or more hours each day focused on putting stuff into our mouths. That's important, but there's danger of going overboard on this one. Balance is needed. While we don't live to eat, we shouldn't neglect eating to live. There are better choices and poor choices.

Nutrition research is coming full circle on this—to the first reported human feeding study in history. Daniel and his three friends on a diet of vegetables, legumes, and water for 10 days were healthier, fitter, and wiser than their counterparts on the control diet (see Dan. 1:8-21).

The latest health discovery of science is a naturally occurring substance packaged with all the essential nutrients, and better than any other supplement in the market—whole-plant food.

Scientific studies are accumulating, reinforcing the evidence regarding the health benefits to be gained from a plant-based diet: that is grains, legumes, vegetables, fruit, and nuts. There's little question now that a varied, balanced, and caloric-sufficient plant-food diet is healthier than a flesh diet. That's why more and more people are turning to the vegetarian option.

A varied diet of cooked and raw plant food is high in nutrients, phytochemicals, fiber, and essential mono- and polyunsaturated fats. However, vitamin B_{12} is not found in plant foods, so vegetarians should include either some dairy products or a food supplement containing B_{12}.

A report on cancer released in 1997 gives 15 recommendations for the reduction of the incidence of cancer by up to 30-40 percent. The major emphasis is related to eating plant foods, maintaining a healthy weight, doing physical activity, and limiting fatty foods, meat, and alcohol consumption.[2]

2. Activity

Some 55 percent of Australians and New Zealanders are overweight. The problem derives from too much sitting and too many calories. Frankly, we're too soft, flabby, and lazy. We don't need to be Olympic athletes, but we do need to move about more. Daily activity reduces disease risks, enhances mood, invigorates the intellect, reduces stress, and promotes relaxation.

A good formula is:

- Activity every day
- Stamina-building aerobic exercise three to six days per week
- Suppleness and stretching exercises three to four days per week
- Strength-building exercises two to three days per week

3. Environment

The wise use of nature's resources is vital. Seventh-day Adventists should be at the forefront in this area, to maintain a clean and sustainable environment. Our life resources of air, water, light, and food depend on it.

We all know the importance of hygiene, cleanliness, and sanitation. We all want pure, clear air and water. Our mandate from God is to "keep and tend" His garden—our earth.

4. Rest and Relaxation

Life happens at a mad, busy pace, and the stresses of modern living burn us out. We need eight to nine hours' sleep each day, regular daily times for relaxation, and the Sabbath day's rest. Take heed of the counsel of Jesus to "come apart and rest awhile" (see Mark 6:31).

5. Risk Behaviors

All of life's challenges, pleasures, and adventures have an element of risk. God wants us to enjoy life, but there are some behaviors that pose unacceptable risks for ourselves and others. They have a predictable negative effect. These include: dangerous driving, drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes, using drugs, inappropriate sexual activity, playing with firearms—even swimming outside the flags.

God's laws and human laws exist for our benefit. The best way to reduce risks is to choose positive, life-enhancing behaviors.

6. Attitude

"For as he thinks in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7, NKJV). There's a very close mind-body-spirit connection. Our thoughts, beliefs, perceptions, and senses feed and mold our behavior.

This is where the positive pays off; cynical, critical, negative, and pessimistic attitudes lead to depression and destruction. In contrast to these, cheerful, encouraging, positive, and optimistic attitudes produce enjoyment and growth. "A merry heart does good like a medicine," said the wise man (Prov. 17:22, NKJV).

7. Relationships

Humans were created for companionship. We need the nurture and support of family, friends, and community for happiness and health. Selfishness leads to the breakdown of family and social structures. But when love is the motivating factor in relationships, there is vibrancy and growth.

8. Faith

Without faith it's impossible to really live. The faith reliance on God gives meaning, purpose, and value to all the other aspects of living. It's only through God's special spiritual gifts of faith, hope, and love that we can truly experience wholeness and abundance of life.

Take a moment to check yourself against these choices. How high do you score for each in terms of balance and being positive? Are you enjoying your potential of wellness? And what changes in your lifestyle would you like and need to make in order to health yourself?

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[1] Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 127.

[2] "Food, Nutrition and Prevention of Cancer. A Global Perspective." World Cancer Research Fund, 1997.

Terry L. Butler is director of the Adventist Health Department of the Trans-Tasman Union Conference.
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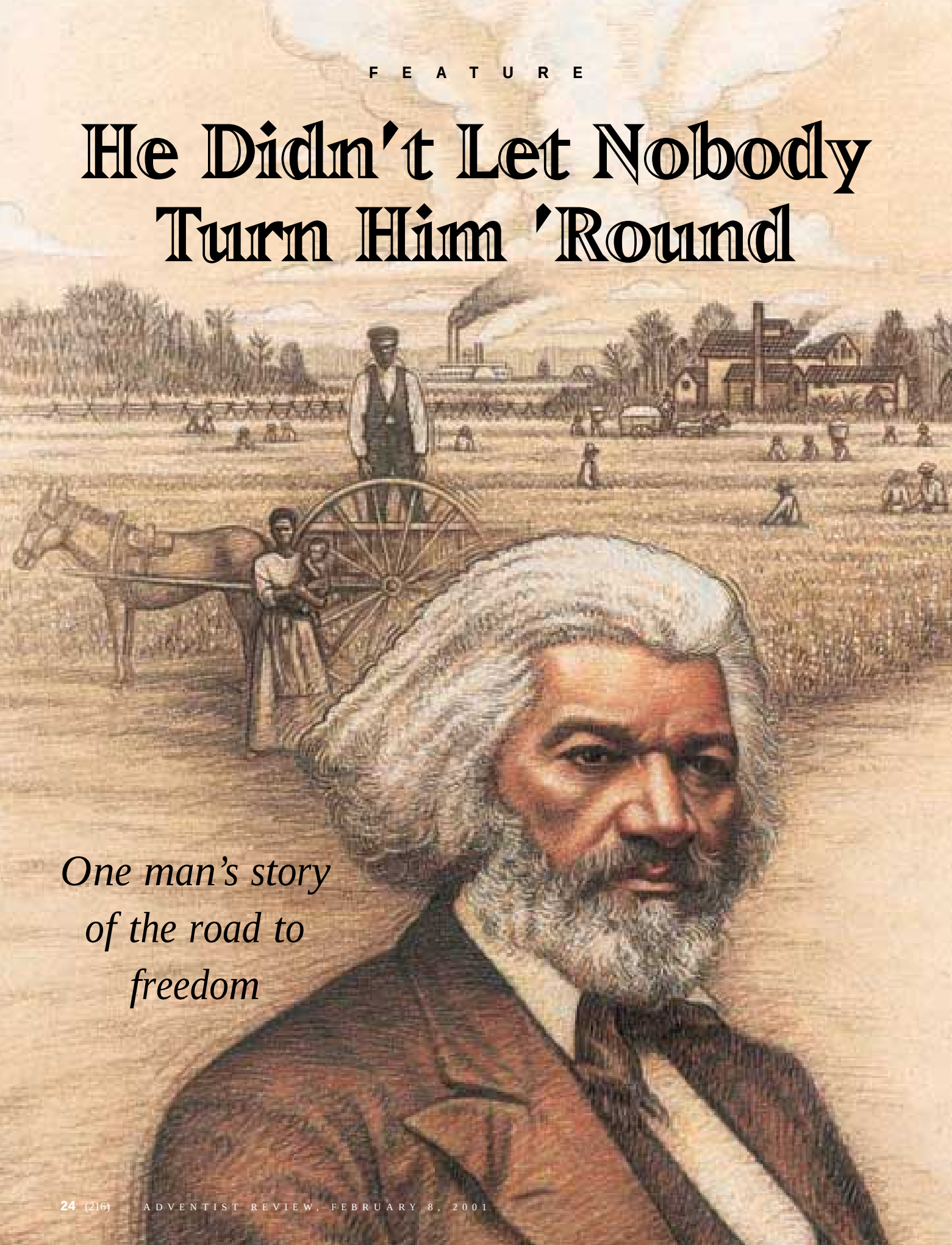
FEATURE

He Didn't Let Nobody Turn Him 'Round



One man's story of the road to freedom

BY DONALD F. BLAKE

FEW VOLUMES ON THE shelf of American literature provide us with so thorough an understanding of African-American experience before the Civil War as Frederick Douglass's moving autobiographical account. The man who would become one of nineteenth-century America's most respected citizens knew the painful side of America's story from personal experience, and wrote about it with deep passion and great skill.

Born a slave in Talbot County on the eastern shore of Maryland, Frederick Douglass gives his readers a vivid description of both the landscape and the slaveholding culture that shaped his early life. Douglass bluntly tells his readers not to expect him to say much about his family of origin—genealogical trees did not flourish among slaves. He never met a slave in that part of the country who knew his own age with any degree of certainty, and such questions, when put to the slave masters, were regarded as evidence of an impudent curiosity.[1] By relating his birth to other known events, Frederick placed his birth date as February 1817.[2] Christened Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey, he later changed his surname, first to Stanley and then to Johnson before adopting the name Douglass in 1838.

As a young child, Frederick was sent to Baltimore to live with the Hugh Auld family, relatives of his owner, an experience he regarded as one of the most fortuitous of his life. "Viewing it in the light of human likelihoods, it is quite probable that but for the mere circumstances of being thus removed, before the rigors of slavery had fully fastened upon me, before my young spirit had been crushed under the iron control of the slave driver, I might have continued in slavery until emancipated by the war."[3]

Growing in Faith

During the seven years in Baltimore Frederick learned to read and write. It was there that he also developed his first comprehension of the system of slavery and how it bound him and more than 4 million Black Americans in a soul-crushing and debilitating condition. There he made up his mind that he would one day escape. In Baltimore Frederick also found God for himself. His spiritual mentor, Uncle Lawson, helped Frederick to trust the biblical promise that if he asked for anything in faith, not wavering, God would grant it. The young slave believed that freedom was definitely something worth asking for.

In 1833 Douglass went to live in St. Michaels, Maryland. He dates his move by two dramatic events: it was the year after the first cholera epidemic in Baltimore, and "it was also the year of that strange phenomenon when the heavens seemed about to part with their starry train. I witnessed this gorgeous spectacle," he writes, "and was awestruck. The air seemed filled with bright descending messengers from the sky. It was about daybreak when I saw this sublime scene. I was not without the suggestion, at the moment, that it might be the harbinger of the coming of the Son of man, and in my then state of mind I was prepared to hail Him as my friend and deliverer. I had read that 'the stars shall fall from heaven,' and they were now falling. I was suffering very much in my mind. It did seem that every time the young tendrils of my affection became attached they were rudely broken by some natural outside power, and I was looking away to heaven for the rest denied me on earth."[4]

To many Protestant Christians this event, known as the "falling of the stars," was the direct fulfillment of predictions made in Scripture. Jesus had promised that prior to His second coming the stars would fall from heaven (Matt. 24:29; Mark 13:24, 25); and John the revelator's prophecy of the seven seals revealed that at the opening of the sixth seal, the stars would fall from heaven "even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind" (Rev. 6:13).

Douglass's record of his emotional, positive response to this stellar phenomenon is remarkable—a testimony to his spiritual maturity at age 16. It also suggests Douglass's thorough familiarity with the Bible and pictures him in a personal, even intimate relationship with his Lord. Frederick's eyewitness account of this memorable celestial display is one of the most accurate and detailed on record.

Turning Point

Because his owners had noticed his insatiable desire to learn, Frederick became a pawn in the White family's internal squabbles and was later sent to the farm of Edward Covey, a man noted for his ability to break the will of slaves. After six months of Covey's mistreatment the young slave determined to resist, fully aware of the possible consequences.

One Sunday morning Covey "jumped" Douglass in a barn—and Frederick fought back. It was a long, brutal struggle. "The battle with Mr. Covey," he later wrote, " . . . was the turning point in my 'life as a slave.' I was a changed being after that fight. I was nothing before—I was a man now . . . with a renewed determination to be a free man. . . . After resisting him, I felt as I had never felt before. It was a resurrection from the dark and pestiferous tomb of slavery, to the heaven of

ILLUSTRATION BY RICK POWELL

comparative freedom. . . . This spirit made me a free man *in fact*, though I still remained a slave *in form*." [5] He still remained a slave on Covey's estate, but the overseer never again attempted to whip him.

In January 1834 Douglass moved again, this time to the home of William Freeland. He describes his treatment under Freeland as "heavenly" compared to that of Covey. Through the urging of Henry and John Harris, fellow slaves owned by Freeland, Douglass opened a "Sabbath school" to teach other slaves how to read and write. "I held my Sabbath school at the house of a free colored man. . . . I had at one time over forty scholars . . . mostly men and women. I look back to those Sundays with an amount of pleasure not to be expressed. . . . The work of instructing my fellow slaves was the sweetest engagement with which I was ever blessed. We loved each other, and to leave them at the close of the Sabbath was a severe cross indeed." [6]

"It was necessary to keep our religious masters . . . unacquainted with the fact," he wrote, "that instead of spending the Sabbath in wrestling, boxing and drinking whiskey, we were trying to learn how to read the will of God. . . . My blood boils as I think of the bloody manner in which Messrs. Wright Fairbanks and Garrison West, both [nearby White Sunday school] class leaders, in connection with many others, rushed in upon us with sticks and stones, and broke up our virtuous little Sabbath school at St. Michaels—all calling themselves Christians." [7]

Foiled Freedom

As 1836 dawned, Frederick Douglass made a New Year's resolution that the year would "not close without witnessing an earnest attempt, on my part, to gain liberty. This vow not only bound me to make good my own individual escape, but my friendship for brother-slaves was so affectionate and confiding that I felt it my duty, as well as my pleasure, to give them an opportunity to share in my determination." [8] Frederick described his plan to four young men who all willingly agreed to participate. Their plot was discovered, however, and instead of escaping to freedom, they were dragged to jail.

"Could the kind reader have been riding along the main road to or from Easton that morning, his eye would have met a painful sight. . . . Five young men guilty of no crime save that of preferring *liberty* to *slavery* . . . on their way to prison." [9] Providentially, none of the young escapees was killed for the attempt; in fact, no one was even flogged. The four were released in a few days, and Douglass about a week later. Though threatened, they weren't sold to Southern slave traders, as frequently happened to other slaves recaptured during escape attempts. Ultimately all five ended up back under the control of their owners.

The failure of this first attempt at

freedom didn't dim Frederick's desire, however, and he continued to search for another opportunity. On Monday, September 3, 1839, disguised as a free Black sailor, he left Baltimore on a train, never again to return as a slave.

Douglass published his story in the North for the first time in 1845, at age 27. After publication he grew concerned that some readers might conclude that he opposed all religion, because of the ways in which he had attacked some aspects of Christianity. He added an appendix to later editions, clearly detailing his beliefs: "What I have said respecting and against religion, I mean to apply to the *slave holding religion* of this land, and with no possible reference to Christianity proper; for between the Christianity of this land, and the Christianity of Christ, I recognize the widest possible difference—so wide, that to receive the one as good, pure, and holy, is of necessity to reject the other as bad, corrupt, and wicked. . . . I can see no reason, but the most deceitful one, for calling the religion of this land Christianity. I look upon it as the climax of all misnomers, the boldest of all frauds, and the grossest of all libels. . . .We have men-stealers for ministers, women-whippers for missionaries and cradle-plunderers for church members. . . . Here we have religion and robbery the allies of each other—devils dressed in angel's robes, and hell presenting the semblance of paradise. . . . I hold it to be strictly true of the overwhelming mass of professed Christians in America. . . . They love the heathen on the other side of the globe, . . . while they despise and totally neglect the heathen at their own doors." [10]

Rising Above It

The richness of Douglass's later life and his significant contributions as an abolitionist publisher, orator, writer, and statesman take on even greater meaning in light of his early experience. Knowing keenly the feelings of the oppressed, this Black American walked with kings, counseled presidents, and dined with aristocrats—and did so with great dignity and grace. He never allowed himself to be pulled down to the level of his detractors. He "didn't let nobody turn him 'round."

On the tenth anniversary of his escape Frederick Douglass penned a letter to his former owner that suggests just how deeply the spirit of Jesus had affected him: "I entertain no malice toward you personally. There is no roof under which you would be more safe than mine; and there is nothing in my house which you might need for your comfort, which I would not readily grant. I should esteem it a privilege, to set you an example as to how mankind ought to treat each other. I am your fellow man, but not your slave." [11]

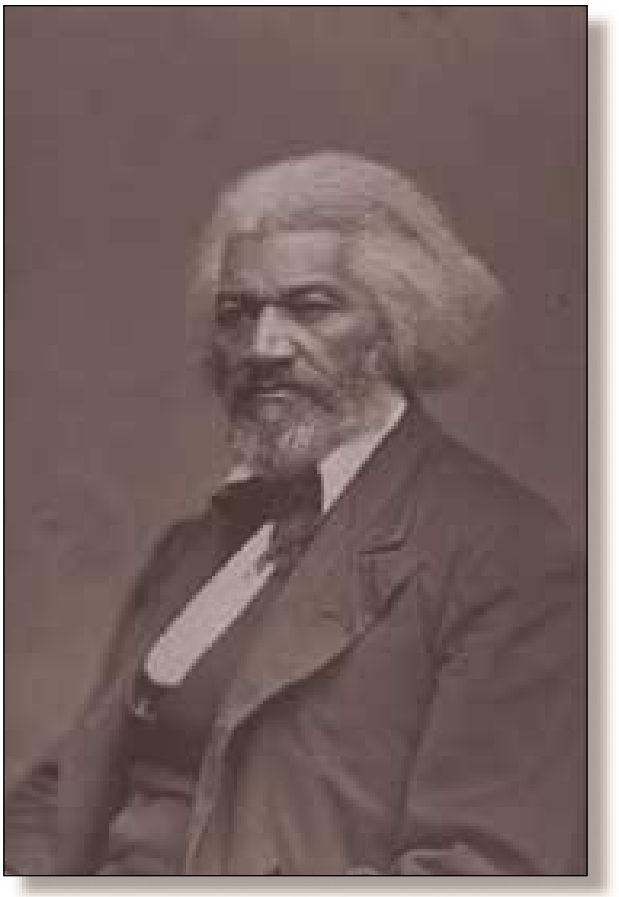


PHOTO: DIGITAL STOCK

Instead of escaping to freedom, they were dragged to jail.

Today Frederick Douglass is celebrated as one of America's most eloquent advocates for the equal worth and dignity of all people. His story reminds us that a commitment to gospel values will never let us rest easy while others for whom Christ died still struggle under physical, economic, or spiritual oppression.

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[1] Frederick Douglass, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass. Written by Himself* (New York: Collier Books, 1892), p. 27.

[2] At least one major biographer places that date as February 1818: William McFeeley, *Frederick Douglass* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1991), p. 3.

[3] Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave. Written by Himself*, ed. Benjamin Quarles (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1960), p. 75.

[4] Douglass, *Life and Times*, pp. 103, 104.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 143.

[6] ———, *Narrative*, p. 114.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 113.

[8] ———, *Life and Times*, p. 156.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 170.

[10] ———, *Narrative*, pp. 155, 156, 157, 159.

[11] Philip Foner, *The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass: Early Years, 1817-1849* (New York: International Publishers, 1950), p. 343.

Donald F. Blake is a lifelong Seventh-day Adventist with a consuming passion for Christian education and for community development through service. He writes from Bloomfield, Connecticut.

ANGEL MANUEL RODRÍGUEZ

The Battle Over "Armageddon"

Could you tell me the meaning of the word "Armageddon" in Revelation 16:16? I keep getting different answers.

You will continue to hear different opinions, I'm afraid. Sometimes we confront biblical information that is ambiguous and subject to several possible interpretations, making it difficult to interpret the one that expresses for certain what the biblical author intended to say. In those cases we simply have to examine the possibilities, identify those that are compatible with the immediate context, and accept our limitations as interpreters by acknowledging that lack of information gives us several ways of reading a particular passage. The meaning of "Armageddon" is one of these situations.

Please, do not be dogmatic.

I will comment briefly on the components of the name, and then on the two main possible interpretations of it.

1. Components of the Name: The noun Armageddon, written in Greek as *Harmagedon*, designates the place where the forces of evil gather to fight the Lord. The text states that it is a Hebrew name. Hence, most interpreters find in the name the combination of two Hebrew words. The first is *har*, which in Hebrew means "mountain, mount." But the second part of the word, *magedon*, is the bone of contention. Is there a Hebrew word that corresponds to the Greek spelling?

2. Mount of Megiddo: The traditional solution has been to find in the term *magedon* a reference to the ancient city of Megiddo in Israel. The name of that city is spelled in the Greek translation of the Old Testament as *Mageddo* (Joshua 17:11) or as *Magedon* (2 Chron. 35:22), the same spelling we find in Revelation 16:16. The same spelling would support this interpretation. The problem is that we do not find in the Old Testament the noun Megiddo preceded by the term *har* ("mountain"). There is no such place as Har-Magedon.

Some have attempted to partially solve the problem suggesting that "mountain" refers to the mountain that was in front of the city of Megiddo, namely, Mount Carmel. That was the mountain on which Elijah confronted the prophets of Baal and the Lord revealed Himself as the true object of worship. In context that would mean that Armageddon is Satan's last attempt to become the sole object of worship on Planet Earth. That function of the name nicely fits the message of Revelation, but the explanation of the name itself is far from certain.

3. Mount of Assembly: The other main possibility is to find in *Harmagedon* a reference to Isaiah 14:13, where we find the Hebrew phrase *har mo^{c}ed*, usually rendered "mount of assembly." The main problem here is again a linguistic one. The *g* of *magedon* is absent from *mo^{c}ed*, as well as the ending *on*. The vowels are not exactly the same, but that is not a major problem, because the Hebrew script did not have vowels. The *g* is not a major problem.

Confused? Let me explain. The raised *c* in *mo^{c}ed* represents a sound absent in English and Greek languages. When writing Hebrew names the Greeks tended to use the letter gamma (English: *g*) to represent it. Therefore, *maged* could be the way *mo^{c}ed* was written in Greek. Are you still with me?

What about the *on* ending (Armagedd*on*)? It is argued that the ending was added to the Hebrew word in order to make the noun sound like a Greek word. Possible, but we cannot be absolutely certain that John had that in mind when he used the word "Armageddon."

However, that interpretation of the term nicely fits the context. Isaiah 14:13 describes Lucifer's intention to sit enthroned on the "mount of assembly," that is to say, in God's heavenly dwelling, as if he were God. Revelation uses that language in order to demonstrate that Lucifer has not given up his plans and that he will try again to occupy God's place on this planet. The battle of Armageddon is Lucifer's last attempt to occupy the mount of assembly, to be like God.

Even though we have two different interpretations of "Armageddon," they both reach basically the same conclusion concerning the message encoded in that term. They're both compatible with the message of the book of Revelation. Therefore, one could chose one over the other and still agree in terms of its meaning in the book. So please, do not be dogmatic.

Angel Manuel Rodríguez is associate director of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference.

"I Was Filled With a Profound Sense of Peace"

ANDREA STEELE

WITH HEAVY heart and trembling hands, Rita opened the desk and reached in to remove the revolver lying there—the revolver she planned to use to kill her daughter.

But something happened to stay her hand: The clock radio on the desk came on, and Rita heard someone say, "In the midst of suffering and pain, Jesus understands, because He suffered just as people do."

Her heart pounding, Rita sat down in a chair and kept listening. "It seemed as if the voice was directed at me personally," she later told the staff of Radio La Voz de la Esperanza, Juliaca, Peru.

The program ended, and Rita said she was filled with a "profound sense of peace." She called the station and asked urgently for a visit. Two staff members went to her home and heard this heartbreaking story:

"I'm a single parent, and my work keeps me away from home a lot. As my daughter grew up, she got in with the wrong people and into trouble. Then we learned she had AIDS; she is now in the terminal stages of the disease. I have been so depressed and despairing of her condition, I decided to kill her to end her pain, and then kill myself. But your program has changed all that. Please, help me know what to do."

This radio station in Peru is one of more than 40 Adventist local stations linked through Adventist World Radio's (AWR) Spanish satellite network. Each station contributes programming, which is then shared with all the other stations via satellite. Managers of these stations are reporting hundreds of stories of changed lives. Here's what happened to Rita's family.

CHANGING LIVES: More than 40 Spanish-speaking stations share programming through Adventist World Radio's satellite distribution network in the Americas. Ronny Mercado is speaker for the Bolivian Adventist radio station network. Another network distributes programs in Portuguese to stations in Brazil.

After hearing Rita's story the staff members prayed with her. Then they went with Rita to visit her daughter, Carmen. They prayed with her and comforted both of them. The women agreed to study the Bible to learn about the love of God, His concern for those who are suffering, and the promise of salvation.

Before Carmen died, she accepted Jesus as Saviour and looked forward to His coming. Rita was baptized soon after. "The Bible tells me that 'the dead in Christ shall rise first,'" she says [1 Thess. 4:16], "and I can hardly wait to meet my daughter—whole again—when I meet Jesus."

"This is what AWR's radio ministry is all about—changed lives," says Don Jacobsen, president. "Radio station managers in the Americas have told us of men in prison who have accepted Jesus, of former Adventists restored to hope and faith, of families reunited—all through the wonder of radio ministry."

A letter from a listener in Chile shows why the programming is making such a difference: "Your program is what I've searched for. It's constructive, natural, and sensible without the fanaticism that I find on some Christian radio. I'm attending an Adventist church now. I know I have to conquer day by day, and I can do that only with the help of Jesus."

Pray for listeners in the Americas who are hearing about the miracle of Jesus through radio.

Andrea Steele, former associate director of public relations for AWR, lives in Cooranbong, Australia.

ROBERT G. WEARNER

Sons and Daughters of the King

Under the bright sunlight of the high Andes the colorful parade of the solstice ceremony passed down a street in Cuzco, Peru. It was a reenactment of the annual festival of rebirth after the shortest day of the year. The central figure was the Inca himself, who claimed to be the *son of the sun* god. Dressed in the typical dress of their clans, thousands of his subjects marched to show him honor.

As I watched, entranced, I reflected on what *sonship* is all about. I began to compare the ancient concepts of the Incas with the teachings of the Bible.

Manco Capac, the first Inca king, called himself *son of the sun*. He and his successors formed an empire high in the Andes of Peru, South America. Claiming divine authority from the sun god, they ruled their subject peoples with an iron hand. Their capital, Cuzco, became a center of sun worship, with temples and palaces filled with objects of gold and silver.

Begun in the early 1400s, the Inca conquests eventually covered 700,000 square miles with 12 million people as subjects. The empire stretched up to present-day Colombia and down to present-day mid-Chile. Runners relayed messages over 15,500 miles of roads and suspension bridges to maintain communications.

Every year in June the Inca put on a big celebration of their king's power in a winter solstice ceremony called the *Inti Raymi*. In colorful costumes subject peoples brought their gifts. The Inca king felt secure as *son of the sun*.

In 1532 Spanish conqueror Francisco Pizarro invaded the Inca empire. With a small army of some 167 men on horseback, the Spanish general killed the king, Atahualpa, and the proud empire of the *son of the sun* collapsed. Within a few months the capital, Cuzco, fell to the Spaniards. Catholic priests branded the solstice ceremony as idolatrous. For centuries records of Inca ceremonies remained hidden from view.

Beginning in 1944, probably with the tourist dollar in view, Cuzco authorities decided to revive the June solstice ceremony. Studying ancient drawings of the Inca, they look each year for a man who is able to impersonate the Inca as "king for a day"—a man with a certain shaped nose and a certain height and weight. The man chosen in 1999 was a teacher in a local university. I saw him lead the parade on June 24, 1999, with all the pomp and circumstance of the original Inca.

In sharp contrast to the exclusiveness of a hereditary king who alone claimed to be *son of the sun*, Jesus Christ offers *sonship* to all. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God" (John 1:12). Sons and daughters of the heavenly King. What an honor. What a privilege.

The apostle Paul assures us that God's Spirit will keep us in that wonderful relationship: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). In verse 19 the apostle repeats the term *sons of God*. "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." As His children, we are to look forward to the end of the sufferings of this present age with eager anticipation. All creation "groaneth" in pain awaiting the hour of deliverance (verse 22). That must be a reference to the second coming of Jesus. If "all the sons of God shouted for joy" when Planet Earth was created (Job 38:7), certainly we should display the same emotion in anticipation of its re-creation.

The apostle Paul again uses the term *sons of God* in his letter to the Philippians: "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation" (Phil. 2:15). Our Father expects His sons and daughters to live earnest Christian lives in this evil age.

We turn to the apostle John for a final word. In wonder and amazement the apostle John exclaims, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1 John 3:1). Let's never forget the thrill of being sons and daughters of the eternal King.

Robert G. Wearner, born of missionary parents in China, served, among other places, for 20 years in South America. He is now retired and writes from Ooltewah, Tennessee.