

The Sabbath Watchman

March-April 2015



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Untempered Mortar

"Because, even because they have seduced My people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar." Ezekiel 13:10.

As the world slides from immorality into chaos and war, religious and political leaders are moving behind the scenes and in public, trying every means they can think of to contain smoldering discontent and flaming hatred. The ultimate weapon they have to use in the face of force is more force. But as men and women desert integrity and moral accountability for entertainment and pleasure seeking—or some cause that demands radical participation—what holds them back from following the lower passions? You can build a wall to try to keep out drugs and mafia gangs, but if there are no inner principles to guide motives and minds, where will people turn to find meaning in life?

"Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." Jeremiah 17:5. That is, in fact, where people are turning. However, true, lasting reformation—positive change—can happen only through a relationship with the TRUE God. People want change, and it is desperately needed; but lasting change must come from within. Those without a living connection with the living God don't know how to do anything other than resort to force, fear, and superstition to sustain their dominions. And that is the mark of earthly potentates who are moved and maintained by powers from below—sustained by Babylonian constraints. It has been said, "Laws are made for the lawless." "Locks are for honest people." More than encouragement is needed. Everyone needs God, and He is giving a lot of reasons for people to turn to and believe in Him. As the signs and science of the times are crying out, anyone who accepts the light of His great gift of love will be shielded, while the headstrong, self-willed, and self-made will succumb to their own passions, for the only power that can resist the movements that are coming is that which comes from Christ.

The world's answer to chaos will be a collective demand for Babylonian restraint. Meeting force with force will end in persecution first and destruction next. The untempered mortar of an ecumenical Sunday law is on its way; in fact, most people are going to accept that as the only solution for increasing violence in society. They may not even call it a "holy rest" day. Indications are that it will be called a family day, earth day, or peace day. But it is coming. People in the know say that the law is already written—"all that's needed is someone with the courage to push it through."

In this issue, you will find some of the ways God is working, even with evolutionists, as well as believers of other faiths, who recognize that evolution is a failed idea. The theory of microbe to man does not explain much about anything. What it proves is man's determination to live and die without God and eternal rewards.

Therefore, those who love God must make united efforts to reach the ends of the earth. As you read the President's report and the report of the Special Sabbath School Offerings, keep that in view. Notice the direction taken. Let every reader join in the prayer of Jesus that His disciples may be one while they are in the world but not of the world. Each of us has a responsibility to honor God and be faithful stewards of His means and grace. There is still a great amount of service to perform, resources to be gathered, training to be done, and miles to go before we go home.

How small is a single cell? We can't see into it without a microscope; and yet the more we see, the more there is to see, and the more amazed we are. Little things do great wonders when they work in concert. Shall we each not take a lesson from God's created works?



Little things do
great wonders
when they work in
concert.

The Sabbath Watchman

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Beacon of hope, faith, and truth in a confused world.

We believe:

- The all-wise, loving God created all things in the universe by His Son, Jesus Christ; He is its Owner and Sustainer.
- He met the challenge to His loving leadership and authority by reconciling the world to Himself through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, the Word made flesh.
- The Holy Spirit, Jesus' representative on earth, convicts of sin, guides into truth, and, when abiding in man, overcomes all unrighteousness.
- The Bible is the record of God's dealings with mankind and the standard of all doctrine; the Ten Commandments are the transcript of His character and the foundation of all enduring reform.
- His people, in harmony with God's Word and under the direction of the Holy Spirit, call all men everywhere to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus.
- Bible prophecy reveals that earth's history will soon close with the visible return of Jesus Christ as King to claim all who have accepted Him as the world's only Redeemer and their Lord.

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Midterm Report on the State of the Church (2012-2015)

By Idel Suarez, Jr.
General Conference President

"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing." Matthew 24:45, 46.

Here, by God's grace, I wish to give you a glimpse of what has transpired since the beginning of this administration in June 2012. First of all, I thank God for the providence He has exercised toward all my co-workers at the General Conference headquarters and around the world. May the Lord continue to sustain and bless all who do their part to carry the weight of the work which takes place at the General Conference from day to day, as well as the Division leaders and department heads who have contributed much to educating the unions, fields, and churches. Their work is very much appreciated.

With God's blessing and united effort, the thrice-repeated gospel commission has been carried out in ten new countries in the past 2½ years. These include North Korea, Iraq, Yemen, Lebanon, Guinea Bissau, Senegal, Lesotho, Vietnam, Congo Brazzaville, and French Guyana. During this same period, land and/or buildings have been acquired in Ghana (a new headquarters and parsonage, which has already served

as a missionary training school), Liberia (a new headquarters and parsonage), Sierra Leone (a new headquarters and parsonage), Gambia (a new headquarters, parsonage, and health center), Cuba (a new church building), Sudan, and Bangladesh, the last two having acquired plots of land.

Movement of missionaries

Many families have been transferred across and between continents in the effort to breathe new life into languishing unions and fields. As the proverb says, "a new broom sweeps clean." Grouped by continent, here are most of those who have transferred.

AFRICA: Pastor Elijah Zwane moved from South Africa to Madagascar, and Pastor Benjamin moved to Lesotho. Pastor Golden Kayawa Hingabantu transferred from Zambia to Liberia. Pastor Jacobo Martinez relocated from Malawi to Mozambique. Pastor Bright Fue transferred from Tanzania to Uganda. Pastor Libamu Jaleta

was moved from Ethiopia to Malawi. Pastor Luis Alvarado of Nicaragua now labors in Angola. Pastor Mohammed Inusah left Benin for Senegal. Pastor Alfred Ngwenya of Zimbabwe is now laboring in Swaziland. Elder Judicael Mutatayi was released from South Africa to work in his native Congo. Pastor Sevith Moyo moved from Kenya to Congo. Pastor Leonardo Jastiva from the Philippines is now assisting the work in Ethiopia. Pastor Andrew Mangwe has moved from South Africa to Botswana.

LATIN AMERICA: Pastor Luis Fernandez of Venezuela now serves in French Guyana. Pastor Bernardo Leon, also from Venezuela, has begun work in Panama. Pastor Esau Lopez was moved from Guatemala to Brazil.

ASIA: Pastor Gerson Galicia relocated from the Philippines to Mongolia. Pastor Peter Manyago, also from the Philippines, is going to Vietnam.

EUROPE: Pastor Yapci Trujillo has moved from Spain to Holland. Brother Fernando Leon is being moved from Germany/Italy to Spain.

CARIBBEAN: Pastor Teofilo Palacios of Ecuador is now serving in Curaçao. Brother Enrique Edison of Venezuela now serves in Suriname.

There are still other missionaries in transition. A few have completed their terms of service abroad and have returned to their home countries. We thank Pastor David Gwina, who has returned home to Zimbabwe after serving in Sierra Leone during some very difficult times; Elder Woonsan Kang, who has moved from the U.S.A. back to South Korea; and Pastor Emmanuel Chileshe, who retired and returned to Zambia after many years of service in South Africa. May God bless all these brethren and their families for their unselfish service and sacrifice!

There are many Macedonian calls that still need to be answered, and God is looking for more pastors to labor for souls in places such as the Dominican Republic, England, France, and Lebanon.

New outreach to Adventists

Through God's providence, an opportunity arose to participate in and present two official

research papers at an Adventist Symposium on "The Impact of World War I on Seventh-day Adventism," held at Friedensau Adventist University in Germany. The event took place May 12-15, 2014. Surprisingly, 16 Reformers in total were present and met together in the same room where 16 Reform pioneers met with A.G. Daniells and other members of the Adventist General Conference Committee back in 1920. This was the first encounter between Adventists and Reformers since 1920. We were able to present our viewpoints and even answer questions for nearly two hours. Brother Woonsan Kang and Pastor Antonino Di Franca, a past General Conference President, presented a paper on "Pacifism, Nonviolence, and Conscientious Objection—the Reform Movement Position." I presented a paper titled "The Reform Movement Perspective on 1914."

At the meeting in Friedensau, leaders of the German Unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church officially asked forgiveness from the Reformers for participating in World War I and for denouncing the Reformers and having them "pursued by the [government] authorities." In addition, the response to the written statement of the SDA Church in Germany, "The International Missionary Society SDA Church Reform Movement 7-Point Statement Concerning the Confession and Apology of the SDA German Unions," was widely circulated in Adventist circles. This document was published in the July-August 2014 issue of *The Sabbath Watchman*.

There are many Macedonian calls that still need to be answered.





New incorporation

In accordance with the resolution of the delegates to the World Assembly, who met in 2007 in Mexico, the world headquarters was transferred from Los Angeles, California, to Cedartown, near Atlanta, Georgia. Now the organization's registration has been transferred as well. We can no longer be sued in California; any future suit against the organization must be made in the State of Georgia, which is more favorable to churches, since it is part of the "Bible belt." The California deregistration of the corporation was not an easy process, but by God's grace this was accomplished without spending any funds on attorneys.

Symposia

Brethren of the divisions and General Conference have joined me in conducting pastoral and health symposia in Trujillo, Peru, for South American leaders with 9 countries represented; in Kalomo, Zambia, for southern African leaders with 14 countries represented; and in Kandy, Sri Lanka, for Asian leaders from 8 countries. It was truly an enjoyable experience to share the International Youth Conference held in Copan, Honduras, in January 2014 with Pastors Joel Barnedo, Danilo Monterroso, and Martin Lagunas, and to join in the international health conference and symposium held in Armenia,

Colombia, with Dr. Roland De La Paz of the Philippines and physicians from four countries. This was the result of the planning done by the General Conference Medical Missionary Board in 2013 in Cedartown.

Last, but not least, from Wednesday, July 30, to Monday, August 4, 2014, a wonderful Centennial Commemoration was held at the General Conference headquarters, praising the Lord for His faithfulness in preserving this Reform Movement for 100 years. More than 30 pastors and 330 participants were present from 33 countries. Two people were baptized, reminding us of the 2 percent of Adventists who were faithful to God during the Great War. The presentations were translated and recorded. Pastor Noe Chappa, with the help of Brother Omar Monterroso, produced 5 DVDs capturing some of the events of the Commemoration, and they are available for purchase and duplication. Before this, the local church members worked very hard to remodel the headquarters. Many also opened their homes to the visitors.

Two very important dates should also be commemorated: July 16, 2015—the centennial of Sister Ellen G. White's death—and October 31, 2017, the 500-year anniversary of Martin Luther's significant act in placing his 95 theses on the door of the Wittenberg Chapel in Germany.

I pray that God will continue to bless the General Conference and this Reform Movement for His honor and glory. **SW**



The Alchemy of Chance

The elusive process of evolution in Neo-Darwinian theory



Darwinian theory is “A theory of biological evolution developed by Charles Darwin and others, stating that all species of organisms have developed from other species, primarily through natural selection.” “Natural selection is the process in nature by which ... organisms that are better adapted to their environment tend to survive longer and transmit more of their genetic characteristics to succeeding generations than do those that are less well adapted.” –www.thefreedictionary.com.

Neo[new]-Darwinian theory enlarges the Darwinian theory to include how genes and mutations are thought to play a part in this process: “Some beneficial mutations provided new adaptations to new or changed environments, thereby producing new kinds of organisms. In order to get *extra* new information that was needed to build more complex organisms, existing genes must have been duplicated and then mutated into something useful....

“This theory makes numerous predictions that are all falsified by molecular biology data. The lack of any alternative source of the required new information thus constitutes a fatal weakness in neo-Darwinian theory. See Bergman, J., ‘Does gene duplication provide the engine for evolution?’ *Journal of Creation* 20(1):99–104, 2006.” –www.creationontheweb.com/images/pdfs/tj/j20_1/j21_3_111-117.pdf.

According to the theory, “This error-ridden process was not very efficient and it left behind in our genomes lots of ‘genetic fossil junk’....

“Neo-Darwinian molecular taxonomists routinely use this ‘junk DNA’ as a ‘molecular clock’—a silent record of mutations that have been undisturbed by natural selection for millions of years because it does not do anything. They have constructed elaborate evolutionary histories for all different kinds of life from it. How wrong this has proved to be!...

“The traditional understanding of DNA has recently been transformed beyond recognition. DNA does not, as we thought, carry a linear, one-dimensional, one-way, sequential code—like the lines of letters and words on this page. And the 97% in humans that does not carry protein-coding genes is not, as many people thought, fossilized ‘junk’ left over from our evolutionary ancestors. DNA information is

By Larry Watts

“The traditional understanding of DNA has recently been transformed beyond recognition.”





“At a time that calls for scientific vision, scientific inquiry’s been hijacked by an industry of greed, with evolution books hyped like snake oil at a carnival.”



overlapping-multi-layered and multi-dimensional; it reads both backwards and forwards; and the ‘junk’ is far more functional than the protein code, so there is no fossilized history of evolution.... Moreover, the vast majority of its content is metainformation—information about how to use information. Metainformation cannot arise by chance because it only makes sense in context of the information it relates to. Finally, 95% of its functional information shows no sign of having been naturally selected; on the contrary, it is rapidly degenerating! That means Darwin was wrong—natural selection of natural variation does not explain the variety of life on Earth. The best explanation is what the Bible tells us: we were created—as evidenced by the marvels of DNA—but then we fell and now endure the curse of ‘bondage to decay’ by mutations.” —www.creationontheweb.com/images/pdfs/tj/j20_1/j21_3_111-117.pdf.

For those who want to know more, go to the web address above and read a complete explanation by Alex Williams, “Astonishing DNA complexity demolishes neo-Darwinism.”

Another author, an evolutionist, wrote a book about 16 evolutionists who met in Altenberg, Australia, in July 2008 in an attempt to discover “the elusive process of evolution.” In her book, *The Altenberg 16*, Suzan Mazur presents an “Exposé of the Evolution Industry” (North Atlantic Books, Berkeley, CA, 2010).

She writes: “In short, it’s a modern day quest for the holy grail, but with few knights. At a time that calls for scientific vision, scientific inquiry’s been hijacked by an industry of greed, with evolution books hyped like snake oil at a carnival.

“Scientists agree that natural selection can occur. But the scientific community also knows that natural selection has little to do with long-term changes in populations.” —P. v.

Speaking frankly and honestly, Mazur continues: “While the Altenberg 16 have roots in neo-Darwinian theory, they recognize the need to challenge the prevailing Modern Synthesis, because there’s too much it doesn’t explain.” —P. vii.

“A wave of scientists now questions natural selection’s role, though fewer will publicly admit it.” —P. 20.

Here are a few quotations in the book from scientists at the 2008 conference:

Stanley Salthe: “Oh, sure, natural selection’s been demonstrated.... The interesting point, however, is that it has rarely if ever been demonstrated to have anything to do with evolution in the sense of long-term changes in populations.... Summing up, we can see that the import of the Darwinian theory of evolution is just unexplainable caprice from top to bottom. What evolves is just what happens to happen [ellipses in original].” —P. 21.

Jerry Fodor: “Basically I don’t think anybody knows how evolution works.” —P. 34.

Antonio Lima-de-Faria: “Darwinism and the neo-Darwinian synthesis, last dusted off 70 years ago, actually hinder discovery of the mechanism of evolution.” —P. 83.

Scott Gilbert: “Do I think natural selection should be relegated to a less important role in the discussion of evolution? Yes, I do.” —P. 221.

Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini: “The point is, however, that an organism can be modified and refined by natural selection, but that is not the way new species and new classes and new phyla originated.” —P. 314. —www.creation.com/review-altenberg-16. You can follow the URL and read a full review of the book.

The definitions of Darwinism and Neo-Darwinism at the beginning of this article mention nothing about the origin of life. Natural selection cannot operate until after life has begun, but evolutionists rarely mention that, because they have only theories that cannot be proven or disproven, because the operations they describe as possibilities for life cannot be repeated or observed. Therefore, any ideas about how life originated must be classed as “religion.” What modern science has revealed through investigation and observation is the breathtaking complexity of the simplest of known self-reproducing life forms. To explain away their difficulties with Darwinian theory, evolutionists are now offering unknown processes of “self-assembly” and “self-organization,” adding terms like “plasticity” to explain the existence of life on earth.

It is an unshakable fact that real science provides compelling evidence against evolutionary explanations, but most people are unable to “see”

that evidence even when it is hitting them in the face. For example: Vision arose more than forty separate times (according to the theory), and a complex eye like we humans have had to originate at least five separate times. Such complexity cannot be explained. Ironically, the more such anti-evolutionary evidence increases, the more evolutionists tout the incredible power of some evolutionary mechanism yet to be discovered.

Another example: Classical Darwinians sought to identify ancestors and used their chosen theory to predict how the evidence for evolution would be found in the rocks; but after 120 years of research, their illusion has collapsed. No clear-cut ancestors and lineages can be systematically discerned in the geologic column. To cover the failure, the theory of punctuated equilibrium arose in an attempt to explain away this central failure of Darwinism. This is one of the three profound anti-evolutionary patterns that evolutionists are forced to acknowledge. The other two are (1) the absence of change in species throughout the fossil record (fossils of animals in the rocks appear the same as what are found alive today if that species is still around; there is no change in the creatures over the supposed millions of years); and (2) the systematic existence of large morphological gaps between life forms (i.e., the systematic absence of gradualism; there are no links, missing or otherwise), which the evolutionist Stephen Jay Gould famously called, “the trade secret of paleontology.”

The Wikipedia article on German-speaking Moravian scientist and Augustinian friar Gregor Johann Mendel (1822-1884) states that he is considered “the founder of the modern science of genetics. Though farmers had known for centuries that crossbreeding of animals and plants could favor certain desirable traits, Mendel’s pea plant experiments conducted between 1856 and 1863 established many of the rules of heredity, now referred to as the laws of Mendelian inheritance.” —en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gregor_mendel.

“By experimenting with pea plant breeding, Mendel developed three principles of inheritance that described the transmission of genetic traits even before anyone knew genes existed. Mendel’s insight greatly expanded the understanding of genetic inheritance and led to

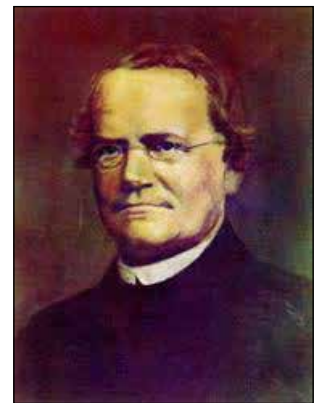
the development of new experimental methods.” —Ilona Miko, Ph.D., *Gregor Mendel and the Principles of Inheritance*.

If the discoveries of this contemporary of Darwin had been made more prominent, real science would have seen the real color of Darwin’s theory as something less than gray. Mendel’s experiments showed that inheritance is according to mathematical laws, not according to some alchemy of chance. (Alchemy was the medieval forerunner of chemistry, based on the supposed transformation of matter. It was concerned particularly with attempts to convert base metals into gold or to find a universal elixir, the idea being that if one keeps doing the same thing over and over again enough times, the outcome should change.)

Mendel was not alone in this research. Karl von Baer (1792–1876), born in Estonia of German parents, grew up to be a prominent professor of science at Königsberg University, in what was the capital of the German province of East Prussia, which then bordered on Estonia. He taught there for nearly two decades, later lecturing extensively in St. Petersburg, the capital of Russia at the time. Von Baer’s laws of embryology explain the “anti-evolutionary” patterns of embryo development, which proceed from most-generalized characteristics to less-generalized, and finally to their most specialized characteristics, as an embryo grows.

Put simply, as a given embryo develops, it quickly displays the characteristics of its phyla, followed by the characteristics of its Linnaean class, then its order, family, and so forth. This sequence from generalized to specialized is quite awkward for evolutionists to explain. When faced with the issue of explaining this sequence, they repeat their Recapitulation Theory, which “requires highly peculiar mechanisms, for which there exists no serious experimental demonstrations. Nonetheless, evolutionists widely promoted those recapitulation mechanisms as real, and foisted it all off on schoolchildren, even for many decades after evolutionist researchers privately knew it was false. Though recapitulation thought was finally expunged by Stephen Jay Gould (in his 1977 book *Ontogeny and Phylogeny*), it is still widely held today—because

Mendel’s experiments showed that inheritance is according to mathematical laws, not according to some alchemy of chance.



Gregor Johann Mendel



The world is
without the God
of the Bible, the
Creator of Genesis,
and the Redeemer
of the Gospels.

evolutionists possess no better answer. The central evidence for ‘recapitulation mechanisms’ is the anti-evolutionary evidence from embryology.” –Walter J. ReMine, www.creation.com/review-altenberg-16.

Human wisdom leads only to darker and darker alleys. Truly “the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.” But we are not to answer “a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him.” 1 Corinthians 1:25; Romans 1:22; Proverbs 26:4. It is much better to ask for proof for what scientists believe—to challenge the evolutionist to give evidence for his “facts” if they are indeed facts.

One young lady did just that with her college professor. She simply went to him privately (after much prayer and doing her own research) and kept asking him to explain the unexplainable. Without confrontation, and with a sincere desire to get real answers if he could give them, she patiently and kindly asked her professor for answers. Eventually he began to hear what he was saying, and what he heard didn’t make sense. It was then that he began to seriously question the God-banishing establishment line and took a new look at what he had been teaching. That honest look started him on a path of real discovery. He eventually accepted Christ as his personal Saviour and now uses his knowledge to bring others to the truth of human origins.

If you have ever watched any debates between creationists and evolutionists, you will notice that they center in two different areas: Creationists usually hammer on origins, or how life arose in the first place. Evolutionists avoid origins but tout the amazing development and variety of life that has “evolved” over eons of time through the mechanisms of natural selection. The law of biogenesis (attributed to Louis Pasteur [1822-1895], another contemporary of Darwin) states simply: “Life only comes from life.” But evolutionists assume a great deal about origins, and that great assumption is that everything is here by chance—even life. This idea of chance is completely outside of the scientific method. The scientific method searches for predictable outcomes that can be repeated, and

that means there is some scientific law involved. Evolution is based, therefore, on the violation of such law. What it is saying is that life developed—amoeba to man—over millions of years by millions of violations of the laws of inheritance. Therefore, evolution is anti-law.

Jesus said that in the last days the love of many would wax cold because iniquity would abound. The word in Greek for “iniquity” in Matthew 24:12 is *anomia*, which literally means “without law.” That is why some versions translate the verse from Greek as, “And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.” –*New King James Version*.

Looking at the world today, it can truly be said that there is little love and a lot of lawlessness. The world is without the God of the Bible, the Creator of Genesis, and the Redeemer of the Gospels. Why? Because, they say, we are here by chance. We have come from nothing, and therefore our destiny as a race is oblivion. We are without hope and without God. Ephesians 2:12. What, then, do the young people have to live for? “Let us eat and drink [and be merry]; for tomorrow we die.” 1 Corinthians 15:32.

But the God of creation is still speaking through His created works. They declare with increasing volume and clarity that we are “fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.” Psalm 138:14.

Everything with which we are surrounded is a sign of the times and gives us reason to trust that God will reveal Himself even more fully in His created works. While “science” is finding out “about” God, those who have a hope will also be a revelation of Him that grows brighter by the day.

“To stand in defense of truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us, to fight the battles of the Lord when champions are few—this will be our test. At this time we must gather warmth from the coldness of others, courage from their cowardice, and loyalty from their treason. The nation will be on the side of the great rebel leader.

“The test will surely come....

“Which side will you be on?” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 136, 137. **SW**

ASLEEP IN JESUS

BROTHER SIMON SCHMIDT



was born on March 15, 1926, in Dobring, Romania, the youngest of five children. He had to leave home at the age of 17 and was able to see his dear parents again only after many years. He spent difficult times in England and Germany, but in His great mercy God protected him and preserved his life. He was introduced to the Bible and the Christian faith by his grandmother and his mother.

In 1949-50, Brother Schmidt came in contact with the Adventist message, which he took to heart; and he was baptized with conviction and joy on a Friday in October 1950 during a conference of the International Missionary Society in Esslingen. From that time on, he preached the Advent message without ceasing. In September 1949, he had met his future wife Lore, and they were married on December 20, 1951. They spent happy years in Germany, after which the General Conference asked them to go to Denmark to proclaim the gospel message. Brother Schmidt was ordained to the ministry in Denmark, and from there missionary trips took him to Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Estonia over the years. The couple spent eight and a half years in Scandinavia.

Then the General Conference called them to continue their work in Africa, and they responded with conviction. For eleven years, South Africa was their home, and missionary journeys took them to other countries, including Swaziland, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, and Zaire (Congo), all the way to the equator. A good number of souls believed the good news and were brought to the Lord in baptism. Brother and Sister Schmidt worked in the deep jungle, often at great risk from wild animals, robbers, and diseases; but the Lord protected them marvelously.

Once, when five souls were being baptized in Zimbabwe, as Brother Schmidt was in the water, crocodiles made themselves felt, but the baptism was carried out as usual. When he came out of the water, a brother asked him, "Were you not afraid of the crocodiles?" His answer was, "I am acting on God's behalf, and nothing can happen to me."

At another time during a missionary trip in Africa, a commando lay in wait to attack and kill him if he stopped. However, he recognized the planned ambush and drove on by. The Lord in mercy saved him from the deadly attack.

In the summer of 1972, Brother Schmidt was elected as secretary of the General Conference and returned to Germany, serving two terms, from 1972 to 1978 and from 1978 to 1983. He traveled to the Balkans, Australia, Philippines, and other Asian areas, where he had the wonderful opportunity to acquaint people with the gospel and the soon coming of Jesus. How great it will be to see in the new earth people who were converted through his selfless work for the Lord.

Even after retiring in 1987, he continued to be active in visiting the churches and isolated brothers and sisters, serving them with God's word and encouraging them to walk faithfully in the path of faith. Brother and Sister Schmidt were grateful to the Lord that they reached their sixtieth wedding anniversary on December 12, 2011. They spent a total of 63 years together, which is not possible for many!

A few days before his death, Brother Schmidt suffered a sudden heart attack. Despite medical intervention, he fell asleep at about 3:30 a.m. on Monday, October 13, 2014, having peace with God and his fellowmen and in the hope of eternal life. Saying "Good-by" to his wife, he said, "I have peace with God, Lore; be faithful to the Lord, and follow the Saviour."

He was buried with the wonderful hope of a joyful reunion in the home above with our heavenly Father and Saviour, whom he loved so much and about whom he could tell many people. A person who was present at the funeral commented, "You are like a big family. You are committed Christians. What you preach is true."

As we remember our dear brother and co-worker, let us remember the wonderful promise: "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Daniel 12:3.

—The brethren of the General Conference

The Gifts of the Gospel Church

By James White
Abridged by Larry Watts

"And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."
Ephesians 4:11-14.

Selected portions from a longer article written in 1851. The full text is available in the book, *Pioneers and the Spirit of Prophecy*, available from IMS Publishing Assn.

When the design of the gifts is clearly seen, then the importance of this subject will be understood. They were given for the perfecting of the church of Christ. When the apostolic church was pure and holy, having just learned the gospel from the great Head of the church, and having been baptized with the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, the gifts of the Spirit were given to it for the believers' edification and profit. And we have no Scripture evidence that the gifts were designed for a limited portion of the gospel age, to be taken away from the church in a few years; but the proof is abundant that they were designed to exist in the church as long as the saints in their mortal state needed the teaching of the Bible and the Holy Spirit.

It is universally admitted that a portion of the gifts exist in the church at this day, such as "the word of wisdom," and "the word of knowledge," and no one denies that "pastors" and "teachers" were to be in the church until its perfection. Then if a portion of the gifts were to remain in the church, why not all of them remain? Why should the professed church of Christ pick out from the catalog of gifts, so freely bestowed by the great Head of the church, those that suit them best, and trample the others in the dust? It is sometimes asserted, by those who oppose the operations of the Spirit of God, that the gifts were designed for the apostles alone; but if this is true, then the church of Christ has been destitute of "the word of wisdom," "word of knowledge," and the gift of "faith" for about 1,800 years, and those who have professed to be "teachers" and pastors" have assumed a calling which ceased to exist at the death of the apostles. It is therefore very evident that all the gifts run parallel with each other, none of them ending

before the rest, and that they were to extend quite through the gospel age.

The gifts were given for "the perfecting of the saints," and as the church is in an imperfect state, they are all needed. They were to be employed for this purpose "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." The church has never yet reached this state of unity, knowledge, fullness and perfection; therefore the gifts should not be dismissed, until the object for which they were given is gained. It is admitted that they were necessary for the infant church in the days of the apostles, in confirming the covenant with "signs and wonders," and "gifts of the Holy Ghost." But let it be remembered that Paul's instructions, relative to the gifts, were given full twenty-five years after the week of confirmation, and the beloved John had his visions in the isle Patmos twenty-six years later still; therefore, none should assert that the gifts of the Spirit were given merely to confirm the covenant. They were then necessary for that object; but they are tenfold more necessary now to bring together the scattered members of the body of Christ, and to perfect the church to stand in the great day of the Lord, and to be changed to immortality when Christ comes in His own and His Father's glory. If the apostolic church needed the gifts to enable them to stand in their peculiar trials, how much more are they needed in the perils of the last days, to prepare the church to stand firm in the time of trouble "such as never was."...

It has too often been the case that when the Lord has bestowed any great spiritual blessing, or gift, upon any of His humble children, that the church, instead of carefully watching over

them to see that they still kept humble, has heaped upon them compliments and flatteries, which in most cases has exalted and ruined the brightest lights set in the church....

But shall we sink in this mire of unbelief, and reject or prize lightly the gifts of God's Spirit because some have made a bad use of them? God forbid. Men in their blindness and folly have dishonored every precious truth in the Bible, yet we shall not do well to think less of the Scriptures, or any portion of them, because many have made a bad use of them. Rather let the servants of the Lord preach the whole truth as revealed in the Word....

The gifts of the Spirit should all have their proper places. The Bible is an everlasting rock. It is our rule of faith and practice. In it the man of God is "thoroughly furnished unto all good works."...

Every Christian is therefore in duty bound to take the Bible as a perfect rule of faith and duty. He should pray fervently to be aided by the Holy Spirit in searching the Scriptures for the whole truth, and for his whole duty. He is not at liberty to turn from them to learn his duty through any of the gifts. We say that the very moment he does, he places the gifts in a wrong place, and takes an extremely dangerous position. The Word should be in front, and the eye of the church should be placed upon it, as the rule to walk by, and the fountain of wisdom, from which to learn duty in "all good works."...

The latter rain is coming, and God is waiting to be gracious. The refreshing will come from the presence of the Lord, and it should be our concern to be ready for it, so as to share it largely....

As God has ever distributed His spiritual blessings according to the necessities of His people, it is rational and right to conclude that the abundant manifestations of the Holy Spirit, mentioned by the prophet Joel and the apostle Peter, were designed for the "remnant," just before they enter the "time of trouble such as never was," the "great and terrible day of the Lord." Before the world was drowned with the flood, God interposed and Noah was instructed to prepare the ark. The divine power moved upon the beasts, cattle, fowls, and creeping things, and they, two by two, moved along into the ark with Noah and his family "and the Lord shut them in."

And can we believe that the saints are to pass the perils of the last days, the time of trouble such as never was, unaided by the power of the Spirit? Certainly we cannot. He whose ways are equal, and who knows our wants, will pour out His Spirit, according to the prophet Joel, and will impart strength to the meek, to enable them to "stand in the battle in the day of the Lord." Those who "seek meekness" and "righteousness" will be hid in the day of the Lord's anger. Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:14-22; Ezekiel 13:5; Zephaniah 2:3. —*Review and Herald*, April 21, 1851. **SW**

He whose ways
are equal, and who
knows our wants,
will pour out His
Spirit.

"God has given me light regarding our periodicals. What is it? He has said that the dead are to speak. How? Their works shall follow them. We are to repeat the words of the pioneers in our work, who knew what it cost to search for the truth as for hidden treasure, and who labored to lay the foundation of our work. They moved forward step by step under the influence of the Spirit of God. One by one these pioneers are passing away. The word given me is, Let that which these men have written in the past be reproduced. And in *The Signs of the Times* let not the articles be long or the print fine. Do not try to crowd everything into one number of the paper. Let the print be good, and let earnest, living experiences be put into the paper." —*Review and Herald*, May 25, 1905.

Reformation plus 500



“Stealthily and unsuspectingly she is strengthening her forces to further her own ends when the time shall come for her to strike. All that she desires is vantage ground, and this is already being given her. We shall soon see and feel what the purpose of the Roman element is.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 581.

Catholics and Protestants to commemorate Reformation Anniversary in 2017

In front of the town hall in Wittenberg, Germany, is a large world globe with oceans as mirrors and landmasses in red. On it is written: “Reformation 2017”—the 500th year since Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the church door there. Something big is in the works!

Rumors are flying that Pope Francis will accept or has already accepted the invitation of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) to attend the anniversary celebrations. Nikolaus Schneider, Chairman of the EKD, has already met with the Pope, who “underlined how important it is for him that we, as churches, walk together on the path of testifying the faith in this world.” Schneider remarked that his conversations with the Pope contributed to building trust.¹

During the 1540s, the Catholic Church began a Counter-Reformation in response to the Protestant Reformation. But in the last decades things have changed drastically. “One could almost say that the Catholic Church has set out from the path of the Counter-Reformation onto that of the Co-Reformation.... I would appreciate if this were not only happening in the leadership of the churches.... But everybody must change and get on the move. It remains to be clarified how much unity is necessary.” Gerhard Feige, ecumenical officer and Bishop in Magdeburg, Germany.²

Steps to church unity

In the 2014 Charismatic Evangelical Leadership Conference hosted by Kenneth Copeland in Fort Worth, TX, Tony Palmer, a now deceased Anglican bishop said: “The protest is over,” and encouraged all Protestants to unite with the Catholic Church. The audience of many charismatic Christian leaders seemed to embrace this message.

Some Protestant churches have stopped protesting, and the Catholic Church and the Lutheran Church signed a joint declaration on the doctrine of justification by faith in 1999 in an open attempt to narrow the theological divide between the two faiths.³ “The awareness is dawning on Lutherans and Catholics that the struggle of the sixteenth century is over. The reasons for mutually condemning each other’s faith have fallen by the wayside. Thus, Lutherans and Catholics identify five imperatives as they commemorate 2017 together.”

“In 2017, we must confess openly that we have been guilty before Christ of damaging the unity of the church. This commemorative year presents us with two challenges: the purification and healing of memories, and the restoration of Christian unity in accordance with the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Ephesians 4:4-6.”

All Christians are invited to candidly and critically study this report, and join in “the way to a deeper communion of all Christians.”⁴

It is clear that 2017 marks an interesting year for the Catholic Church. First of all, the Catholics



will commemorate the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation. Secondly, it marks fifty years of Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue.

In the past, many Reformers, including Lutherans, believed the papacy to be the antichrist. But if you ask many Christians today who the antichrist is, few believe as did their spiritual forefathers. That is perhaps because few seriously study their Bibles with a grammatical-historical approach, as did the Reformers. Instead, they have accepted a view of the scriptures invented in the late sixteenth century by the Jesuits which put the reign of the antichrist in the future. But Bible prophecy in its simplest form points to only one entity as that power—the papacy. (See Daniel 7 and Revelation 13.)

It is predicted that the world will wonder “after the beast.” Ever since Pope Francis was elected, he has quickly captured international attention, as reported in the news under headlines such as these:

“Can Pope Francis heal the deep divisions in Christianity?”

“Francis continues to take the world by storm”

“Pope Francis is only leader respected enough to end today’s wars”

“Pope’s Diplomatic Miracle ends the U.S.-Cuba Cold War”

And another headline stirs the Protestant world: “Pope calls for end to fundamentalism.” Barack Obama called Pope Francis “a moral leader in word and deed,” and *Time Magazine* listed him as the world’s most influential person of the year.⁵

Wittenberg is preparing for the celebration of the Reformation anniversary.

Annual Topics for the Luther Decade

2008—Opening of the Luther Decade

2009—Confession

2010—Education

2011—Freedom

2012—Music

2013—Tolerance

2014—Politics

2015—Image and Bible

2016—One World

2017—Reformation Anniversary⁶

These topics show where the emphasis is and where it is not. Revelation chapters 12, 13 and 14 are for all of us: “Choose you this day whom ye will serve.” Joshua 24:15. One group will be following the beast, and the other will keep *all* of God’s commandments. Let us watch, pray, and work, for our redemption is nearer than when we first believed.

All that is left of the place in Worms where Luther stood and was condemned in 1521 is a plaque which says (in German): “Here stood Martin Luther before Kaiser and kingdom.”

This is the most famous part of his speech: “Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Holy Scriptures or by evident reason—for I can believe neither pope nor councils alone, as it is clear that they have erred repeatedly and contradicted themselves—I consider myself convicted by the testimony of Holy Scripture, which is my basis; my conscience is captive to the Word of God. Thus I cannot and will not recant, because acting against one’s conscience is neither safe nor sound. [Here I stand; I can do no other.] God help me. Amen.”

But the Wartburg Castle, which kept him from the wrath of the church, still stands. These are reminders of what God does in His quiet way to reveal what is blessed and what is damned. Our God is a God of truth, and truth is eternal. Those who covenant with truth even at the cost of their earthly lives will stand in God’s presence.

“Christ is coming the second time, with power unto salvation. To prepare human beings for this event, He has sent the first, second, and third angels’ messages. These angels represent those who receive the truth, and with power open the gospel to the world.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 978, 979. (Thanks to Henry Dering for this update.) **SW**

¹ <http://www.luther2017.de/en/24479/evangelical-church-germany-invites-pope-francis-reformation-anniversary?contid=24617%E2%80%A82>

² <http://www.luther2017.de/en/23547/ecumenical-officer-bishop-catholic-church-can-join-little-bit-celebration-reformation-annivers?contid=24617>

³ http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/lutheran-fed-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_2013_dal-conflitto-alla-comunione_en.html

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ <http://poy.time.com/2013/12/09/top-ten-finalists-for-person-of-the-year/>

⁶ <http://www.luther-bauhaus-gartenreich.de/en/luther-2017.html>





Caffeine as a Stimulant

By Lisbeth Hunger

“Instead of slowing down because of the adenosine level, the cells speed up.”

Imagine your situation one evening. You’re tired, exhausted from the day’s work, and you want to relax and find a quiet moment; but then someone calls you to do the heaviest task of the day. You have to completely reverse your natural desire to find a comfortable chair, relax, get a snack or drink, take out your cell phone, open your Facebook page, read the news or the Bible, relax your mind and body, and go to bed.

This is an illustration of the body’s normal state before the introduction of caffeine and then what happens when the substance is ingested—it is compared to suddenly having to perform the hardest work of the day.

What does caffeine do? First, a little background: “Adenosine is a chemical that is present in all human cells.” It promotes sleep and slows down nerve activity; it causes blood vessels in the brain to dilate and to increase oxygen intake during sleep.

“To a nerve cell, caffeine looks like adenosine. Caffeine binds to the adenosine receptors. However, in contrast to adenosine, it does not decrease the cell’s activity. As caffeine utilizes all the receptors adenosine binds to, the cells can no longer sense adenosine. As a result, instead of slowing down because of the adenosine level, the cells speed up.” Instead of opening the brain’s blood vessels, it causes them to constrict.

Cells speeding up in activity is recognized by the body as an emergency, and it releases the hormone “adrenaline,” which causes a number of side effects.* Instead of relaxing your cells, they get the heaviest work of the day!

When consumed at night, caffeine robs a person’s body of rest. The Bible points us to true rest and happiness: “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” Romans 14:17.

Caffeine is a central nervous system stimulant. This system includes the brain, the spinal

cord, and all the other nerves of the body. Even though caffeine has the power to keep a person awake, alert, and focused, its effect shows up in jitters and shakes, poor quality sleep, fast heartbeat, uneven heart rhythm, high blood pressure, headaches, nervousness, dizziness, dehydration, and ultimately dependency.

After consumption, caffeine reaches its peak level in the blood in one hour and keeps that intensity for four to six hours. Whether it is consumed in food, drink, or medicine, it changes the way the brain and body work; and it changes how a person behaves and feels.

Statistics indicate that:

- At least 68 million Americans drink three cups of coffee every day.
- About 30 million Americans drink five or more cups of coffee every day.
- Over 21 million Americans drink six or more cups of coffee every day.
- It is believed that some 3 out of 4 regular caffeine users are “addicted” to the substance.
- Consuming as little as 200 mg of caffeine a day can lead to addiction and altered chemistry in the brain.

Around 5 grams of caffeine can be fatal. This is the equivalent of 30-40 cups of regular coffee.

“For healthy adults, the FDA has cited 400 milligrams of caffeine a day—about four or five cups of coffee—as an amount not associated with dangerous or negative side effects.” Although this is considered safe, it is double the amount that can make a person become addicted.

Now, you might say, “I’m safe. I don’t drink coffee.” The coffee bean is not the only source of caffeine. Caffeine is also contained in tea leaves, kola nuts, cacao beans, guarana, yerba mate, and yoco bark. These ingredients are found in products including coffee, tea, chocolate, soda, sports beverages, energy drinks, capsules, tablets, pain relievers, aspirin, and many medicines, powders and energy shots.

It is shocking to learn that food manufacturers add caffeine (which comes in a white crystalized form) to many food substances to achieve a stimulating effect after one consumes a product, causing a person to crave it. Caffeine is common in chewing gum, jelly beans, waffles, different types of water, syrup, marshmallows,

sunflower seeds, and many other snacks. It has even been advertised that one serving of an instant oatmeal package has as much caffeine as a cup of coffee. Since 200 mg is considered a safe, small amount, you won’t find it on the list of ingredients. But chewing one pack of gum is equivalent to drinking four cups of coffee—400 mg caffeine. Furthermore, it accumulates in the body over time, depriving it and the nervous system of rest and causing many side effects and health problems.

Let us protect our families from such a substance and be alert. As Michael R. Taylor, Commissioner for Foods and Veterinary Medicine at the FDA, says: “We’re particularly concerned about children and adolescents and the responsibility the FDA and the food industry have to protect public health and respect social norms that suggest we shouldn’t be marketing stimulants, such as caffeine, to our children.”

Personally, growing up in Switzerland, I was served a lot of chocolate as a child—not so much at home, but wherever I went. I got chocolate presents, and I loved to eat them. When I earned my own money, passing by the kiosks, I felt tempted to buy a chocolate bar. I knew it was not the healthiest product. It took me years before I found out that chocolate is as bad as coffee in its caffeine content. I stopped buying chocolate, but I still ate it when it was offered to me. However, the chocolate presents became too many, so I decided to stop eating chocolate altogether. I don’t regret the decision, and I’m glad that God has supplied other delicious alternatives which we can substitute for products containing caffeine.

It is best for us to go back to the natural resources God provided in nature, be wise in choosing healthful food, and improve the creativity and variety of foods as we prepare meals that give joy, peace, and health.

Caffeine troubles one’s heart and causes anxiety, but God says: “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” John 14:27. **SW**

*Information for this article is taken primarily from two articles available on the Internet: <http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm350570.htm> and <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/285194.php>.

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Report of Special Sabbath School Offerings

The General Conference wishes to express its gratitude to every member and friend who has given generously for the various Special Sabbath School Offerings. We also want to thank all the field and union treasurers who faithfully submit their "Calculation of Contributions to the General Conference" report in the month after the end of every quarter. This allows the activities of the General Conference—especially in new and needy countries—to run smoothly and be timely.

The table at the right shows by date the Special Sabbath School Offerings gathered as well as the expenditures from June 1, 2012, through February 28, 2015. Only those that had undisbursed balances on June 1, 2012 (beginning of the current General Conference administrative term), appear on the list (see the column labeled "Balance 6/1/2012").

Additional Special Sabbath School Offerings will be coming in from fields and unions on their reports for past quarters, and these amounts will be incorporated into future issues.

If there is a minus sign (-) in front of a balance, it means that more money was expended for that beneficiary than was gathered for the offering. Generally this is when real property (land and/or buildings) is purchased. If the opportunity to purchase a suitable property arises somewhere, the brethren want to take advantage of it immediately, so they advance the funds for the project, anticipating that gifts will come later to cover the outlay of funds.

Furthermore, some countries require that an organization such as ours have a church building before it is allowed to

register and operate; this is especially the case in countries with a Muslim majority or government.

If not enough offerings are received to complete a project and bring the balance to zero (\$0), offerings received in discretionary funds, such as the

Foreign Missions Fund, the Sabbath School Fund, or the Week of Prayer Fund, may need to be used. Individuals, fields, or unions that wish to make donations to complete projects may do so. Pictures of some of the buildings that have been purchased in different countries are shown on the following pages.

As funds become available for Special Sabbath School Offering beneficiaries to use, consultation is ongoing with their field or union committee to (1) decide on specific projects, (2) assess the best time and way to transfer the funds, and (3) be sure the money can be safely transferred without loss.

SPECIAL SABBATH SCHOOL OFFERINGS (U.S. DOLLARS)

Offering Date	Beneficiary	Balance 6/1/2012*	Income	Expenditures	Balance 2/28/2015
2004/07	Bangladesh	5,152.01	0	14,803.87	-9,651.86
2004/10	Madagascar	4,033.01	0	4,033.01	0
2005/04	Malawi	9,230.33	202.79	9,433.12	0
2006/01	Pakistan	12,226.63	0	12,226.63	0
2006/04	Kenya Miss. School	9,577.93	860.00	10,437.93	175.72
2006/10	Seychelles	20,572.35	0	20,572.35	0
2007/01	Nigeria and Chad	2,805.08	0	0	2,805.08
2007/04	Mozambique	645.69	0	645.69	0
2007/07	Angola	22,764.79	0	766.27	21,998.52
2007/10	Turkey	31,873.33	12.94	11,319.19	20,567.08
2008/04	Mongolia	19,619.76	0	6,509.80	13,109.96
2008/07	South Pacific Islands	26.44	0	26.44	0
2009/01	Ethiopia	41,125.66	42,174.79	29,016.00	54,284.45
2009/04	GC Youth Dept.	0	805.00	805.00	0
2009/07	Papua New Guinea	83.57	241.76	325.33	0
2009/10	GC Ministerial Dept.	0	601.50	601.50	0
2010/01	Liberia	-25,130.74	2,095.00	11,901.60	-34,937.34
2010/04	GC Multimedia Dept.	0	92.04	92.04	0
2010/07	Cuba	2,218.70	4,435.62	14,043.96	-7,389.84
2010/10	Japan	494.25	2,576.04	3,070.29	0
2011/01	Nepal	36,835.97	2,519.96	7,085.70	32,270.23
2011/04	South Sudan	40,666.42	6,173.83	15,356.00	31,484.25
2011/07	Togo	32,763.85	5,555.71	5,641.06	32,678.50
2011/10	Bolivia	32,555.70	3,793.06	36,348.76	0
2012/01	Haiti	6,449.44	32,642.63	39,092.07	0
2012/04	Norway	295.00	37,318.31	0	37,613.31
2012/07	Primary Schools		31,444.26	31,444.26	0
2012/10	Romania		36,672.34	36,672.34	0
2013/01	GC Canvassing Dept.		40,457.91	43,443.38	-2,985.47
2013/04	Arab Countries		35,652.03	8,316.73	27,335.30
2013/07	West Africa		53,662.22	65,896.12	-12,233.90
2013/09	GC Family Dept.		24,040.93	24,040.93	0
2013/11	Myanmar		33,336.21	4,100.00	29,236.21
2014/01	United Kingdom		28,402.43	0	26,402.43
2014/03	Asia Miss. School		32,521.90	0	32,521.90
2014/05	GC Missionary Ministry		21,727.20	21,727.20	0
2014/07	Sri Lanka		19,711.52	19,711.52	0
2014/09	Gambia/Senegal		17,630.89	45,725.90	-28,985.01
2014/11	Belize		23,416.85	23,416.85	0
2015/01	Sierra Leone		1,954.82	49,000.00	-47,045.18

*Balances carried over from the previous General Conference administrative term as of June 1, 2012.



Church constructed in Malawi with Special Sabbath School Offering funds

In some cases, the field or union leaders will ask the General Conference to credit the funds directly to their account with the General Conference so no bank transfer is necessary. The treasurer in that country then submits the quarterly reports of tithes and offerings for the General Conference, and the credit in their account is used to make the payment for them. The field or union can then use funds they set aside for the General Conference for their projects.

Following is some information about each Special Sabbath School Offering appearing on the list. Future issues of *The Sabbath Watchman* will continue to carry periodic updated reports about the Special Sabbath School Offerings. You can watch for your favorite projects and help them along. After the projects associated with a given special offering are completed and the balance becomes \$0, the fund may still remain open for up to ten years.

BANGLADESH. Land has been purchased for a church building. More money was sent than had been collected. Donations can be made for past Special Sabbath School Offerings. If you do this, give a clear description of what the donation is for so it may be properly applied.

MADAGASCAR. Purchase of a headquarters building was supported by the Special Sabbath School Offering. The field plans to use the remaining funds to do

some remodeling on the building so the missionary family that is transferring from abroad can live there.

MALAWI. A headquarters building was purchased for the southern field, and funds were disbursed for construction of a building on another plot in the northern field.

PAKISTAN. Funds have been disbursed for the purchase of a headquarters property, but only half of the price was paid; additional means will be needed to



BAMI graduates, November 23, 2014, Nairobi, Kenya



Believers outside the headquarters building in early January, when Pastor Parmenas Shirima introduced Pastor Elijah Zwane and his wife, who will be working in Madagascar

complete the purchase. Pakistan is a Muslim country.

KENYA MISSIONARY SCHOOL

The offering was disbursed to upgrade the facilities at Bethel Adventist Missionary Institute (BAMI) in Nairobi, and further repairs are needed. Contributions may also be made to provide scholarships for the students' travel and fees.

SEYCHELLES. The funds have been disbursed for land, building costs, and remodeling.

NIGERIA AND CHAD. Support for these two countries is being supplied from other funds; the balance shown will be used for various special projects and the advancement of the work.

MOZAMBIQUE. The special offering has been fully disbursed for purchase of a headquarter-

News to inspire

ters building in the capital city of Maputo and also a plot of land in the northern part of the country.

ANGOLA. Disbursement of the funds received for this offering

building is already available for worship services and missionary activities.

SOUTH PACIFIC ISLANDS. The offering for the South Pacific Islands has been fully disbursed.



Work continues on the headquarters building in Mozambique

is waiting for the registration of the organization to be completed. The field is working on a number of projects.

TURKEY. This Muslim country presents special challenges to the advancement of God's cause. Support will continue to be sent for the workers there until it is possible to safely purchase property.

MONGOLIA. A missionary from the Philippines is transferring to Mongolia to help place the work on a solid foundation. A

A report of the projects carried out will appear in a future issue of *The Sabbath Watchman*.

ETHIOPIA. This country is relatively new in the Reform Movement and has many members. Means from other funds have been used to help the Union pay its workers. The need is for a headquarters building, but the amount in this fund is insufficient to purchase suitable property near the capital city, for which at least an additional US \$100,000 is needed. Countries of the

African Union have their embassies in Addis Ababa, so land and buildings are expensive there. Another Special Sabbath School Offering is planned to obtain additional funds for a building.

GENERAL CONFERENCE YOUTH DEPARTMENT. The funds collected were disbursed to the Youth Fund to help finance seminars, conferences, the General Conference Youth Department website, and youth activities.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA. This offering has been completely disbursed. A report for *The Sabbath Watchman* is being prepared by the Oceania Division concerning the uses of the Special Sabbath School Offering and the activities in the South Pacific Islands.

will help cover the investments already made.

GENERAL CONFERENCE MULTIMEDIA DEPARTMENT. Although all of the funds received for the special offering have been disbursed to the Multimedia Department, the work is increasing and will require additional funding.

CUBA. A building was secured for a chapel, but the believers do their work very carefully under restrictions and persecution. Funds spent over the amount gathered may be covered by additional gifts or allotment of discretionary funds.

JAPAN. A small chapel was purchased, and the believers are gathering there for worship.



New chapel in Cuba

GENERAL CONFERENCE MINISTERIAL DEPARTMENT. The funds collected in the previous administration were disbursed to the Ministerial Department Fund for its activities.

LIBERIA. A building was purchased during the previous administration for the headquarters and living quarters. A farm was also purchased, and funds were disbursed for repairs to the buildings. This country has suffered a lot under the Ebola virus, and the missionaries carry great responsibilities. Additional gifts

NEPAL. A team from neighboring India is going to travel to Nepal in April and spend time helping to develop the projects and provide general support.

SOUTH SUDAN. Land has been purchased, and a building is needed. The economic and religious situation in this country has to be considered in determining how and when the funds can be used. But the worst part is the civil war that makes it very difficult to work in the country.

TOGO. The work is being helped by missionaries from Bethel



Building in Liberia purchased with Special Sabbath School Offering funds



Brother Simon Beaubrun views the chapel construction at Saint Marc, Haiti

Adventist Missionary Institute (BAMI) of Nairobi, Kenya. Various alternatives are being considered for purchase of a headquarters building.

BOLIVIA. Offerings for the headquarters building and church have been disbursed. The believers are working hard to complete this building, and they are very close to doing so.

tions in Saint Marc. A donation of land in Port-au Prince was also received.

NORWAY. These funds are available to be used for projects to open the work in Norway. It is anticipated that the European Division will soon provide direction concerning how these funds can best be put to work in this Scandinavian country.



The headquarters building in Bolivia is nearing completion

HAITI. Ongoing support continues for Haiti from the special offering and others. In Cap Haitien, a building was purchased to be remodeled into a chapel. Land was obtained in Fond Michel, and a chapel is being constructed. Another chapel was recently built with much labor and private dona-

PRIMARY SCHOOLS. The funds have been disbursed to the General Conference Education Fund to assist functioning primary schools, to help complete a school in El Salvador, and to assist in the start of another school in Nicaragua. Schools have also been given assistance from this fund in Tanza-

nia, Rwanda, and Guatemala, in addition to Cedar Christian School in Cedartown, Georgia.

ROMANIA. See the report on the next page from Romania, in which they tell about the

gifts gathered for this important department.

ARAB COUNTRIES. Interest in the message of salvation has been awakened in several Arab countries. The funds gathered so far



Church built in Cluj, Romania (Bogata de Sus)

two beautiful churches that were built in the country with help from the Special Sabbath School Offering.

GENERAL CONFERENCE CANVASSING DEPARTMENT. The funds have been disbursed to the General Conference Canvassing Department for training activities. It is

are being used for outreach. Members have already been baptized from Iraq and Yemen. Contacts have been made and Bible studies are being held with people in Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan, as well as with those who were baptized, who are also contacting others.



Headquarters and missionary school in Accra, Ghana (West Africa)

expected that reports not yet received from fields and unions for the period when these offerings were gathered will be received and thus increase the

WEST AFRICA. A building was purchased in Accra, Ghana, for the headquarters and missionary school. The first class of missionaries has graduated from

News to inspire



Believers at the headquarters chapel in Banjul, Gambia

the Gilead Adventist Missionary Institute (GAMI).

GENERAL CONFERENCE FAMILY DEPARTMENT. The gifts were disbursed to the General Conference Family Department Fund, and more funds are expected to be received.

MYANMAR. The former Burma has been blessed by training in outreach provided by ministers sent from the Philippines. Myanmar has several different

especially difficult, because the country has a leftist and extreme Buddhist government.

UNITED KINGDOM. The believers in Great Britain wish to obtain a place of worship, so it is hoped that more funds will be reported soon for this purpose.

ASIA MISSIONARY SCHOOL. The funds from this Special Sabbath School Offering will be disbursed to the Philippine Union to establish a missionary school



Headquarters building under construction in Sri Lanka

languages, making the preaching of the message very difficult. Some funds from this offering have been used to cover translation work, and more will be used to purchase property after registration of the church is complete. Registration is

for the Asian countries. The school will be held in a rented facility, and most of the students will be sponsored. In addition to payment of their travel and school fees, funds will be used to furnish and equip the school and to pay the instructors.

GENERAL CONFERENCE MISSIONARY MINISTRY. The gifts that have been received so far have been disbursed to the General Conference Publishing Department for the development of lay missionary materials.

SRI LANKA. A headquarters building and chapel have been erected and supported by the funds disbursed from this special offering.

BELIZE. The work in Belize is being advanced by missionaries from Guatemala. The funds that have been received will help complete construction of a building that has been started and repay the loans obtained so the chapel could be built.

SIERRA LEONE. A building for the headquarters and missionary living quarters has already been purchased in Sierra Leone. May



The chapel building in Belize that needs to be completed

GAMBIA AND SENEGAL. Although the work is very new in these countries, a building was purchased to house the headquarters, a place of worship, and living quarters for the missionary family. More funds are expected to be received in support of the projects in these two countries.

the gospel reach many souls in this West African country that has suffered so much under the Ebola virus. The gifts received will reimburse the funds that the General Conference advanced for this building.

We pray that this report will be a blessing and encouragement



Headquarters building in Sierra Leone purchased with special offerings

to the givers and to all who received God's bounties. The Master will come soon, and we will each of us give an account of our service. May His words of blessing be heard, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matthew 25:34.

Gratitude from Romania

Dear brothers and sisters,

We greet you with 1 Chronicles 16:8-10: "Give thanks unto the Lord, call upon His name, make known His deeds among the people. Sing unto Him, sing psalms unto Him, talk ye of all His wondrous works. Glory ye in His holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord."

morality here may not have gone down as much as in other more developed European countries, this country is just a step behind, hurrying to catch up in wrongdoing and offenses against God. That is why the growth of the church is slow and sometimes even going down. But still, despite so many disappointing things, we have not just one piece of good news, but two!

About ten years ago, we began working in a new field, Bogata de Sus, in central Romania, which eventually brought fruit and grew strong. Therefore, we saw the need to have a church building in that place. The plans were made, but we lacked the funds. We were not discouraged but went forward, trusting the Lord. Now we have a very nice building that was built from the summer of 2011 to the summer



Believers on Sabbath during evangelistic meetings conducted by Pastor Jose Giner in February and broadcast from Tamara Canzonieri, Romania

this time, but finally we had the privilege of dedicating the building in September last year.

Now we are happy and thankful for the new buildings that we have, but at the same time we still have some debts to pay. We are confident that the Lord will help solve these problems just as He did with the first ones, and we look forward to filling the need for other such projects.

All of the pictures may be seen on our Facebook page

at <https://www.facebook.com/asociatia.smiatzsmr>.

We thank everyone who supported these projects financially, or with their volunteer skills and dedication, or by prayer. All of these means were and still are greatly needed. We praise the Lord for sending His helpers to share His blessings with us. May God bless you richly as you continue to serve Him until we meet in glory!

—The Romanian Field



The new church in Costeiu, Romania, dedicated in September 2014

With God's help and blessing, we send all of you our thankfulness and gratitude for the Special Sabbath School Offering that was gathered for Romania on October 6, 2012. We want to give you some details about the work in Romania and how these special funds have been used.

As each day brings us nearer to the end of time, the world is becoming worse and worse. Although the spirituality and

of 2012. The dedication was held in late summer 2012.

At about the same time, we faced an urgent need for a church in the western part of the country, Costeiu, for the building that had been rented was no longer available. This time we started with empty pockets, for the first building was just being finished. Still, trusting in God and His help, we went forward. The construction took longer

"The humblest child of God may act a part in this grand work. They should have the privilege, even if it requires self-denial and self-sacrifice, to contribute according to their ability. The education of youth should be of a different order than that which has been in the past. The word of the Most High, who is infinite in wisdom, will, if carefully studied, become enlarged and continually enlarging in light and interest. The welfare of children and youth in all parts of the world demands far more in their interests and welfare than has been given them.

"The religious affections need to be educated and trained and enlisted in revealing the principles of the Word of God by being brought into practical life, and will evidence in gifts and offerings made to extend the knowledge of the truth. We have the last message of warning, the last call of mercy, to give to our world, and this message will be far-reaching in its influence. And if we have an abiding Christ, our words and works will tell in its beneficial action upon ourselves, and be an active agent in the saving of souls and in glorifying God." —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 16, p. 264.

Love and Holiness

Do we love what God loves?

By Roland De La Paz

God is love. God is holy. Everything that pertains to God is holy, and no one will see Him if he or she is not holy. Holiness is a very important part of our salvation.

On the other hand, there is an adversary who wants us to live our lives just as we want, to please ourselves, and to enjoy the things that keep us away from God so we do not strive for holiness.

In our present time, there are many devices that the enemy uses to keep us away from God. Amusement is very popular with the youth. Satan uses worldly music to amuse us so that eventually we will not be satisfied with the hymns and sacred music that uplift us spiritually. He also uses technology in the form of gadgets to connect us to the Internet where we may see everything—both holy and unholy things. Unfortunately, the majority of what can be seen on the Internet is not what God wants us to see to come closer to Him. Satan also wants the youth to have unholy relationships that destroy the purity of Christian fellowship.

God wants us to seek constantly the highest culture of mind and soul. He wants to imbue us with pure aspirations and cultivate in us a love for things that are honest and pure and holy. He wants us to seek constantly to improve our talents and abilities so we may do things as perfectly as possible, speak words with grace, and meditate on sacred, perfect things.

Guard the avenue of your souls, dear youth, and “finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” Philippians 4:8.

May God continue to bless our young people, who are the hope and strength of His church. **sw**