

The Sabbath Watchman

September-October 2015

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Magnify the Word

In Hebrew Scripture, the God of heaven has several titles: *Adon*, *Adonai*, *Adonim*, *El*, *Eloah*, *Elohim*, *Elyon*, *Jah*, and *Shaddai*. We don't usually see those words, because translators properly render those titles simply as "God" or, as in the case of *Shaddai*, "the Almighty" (48 times). Similarly, but not for the same reason, His name, written in Hebrew as four consonants (YHWH—the English transliteration), is usually translated as "Lord." ("Jehovah" is found in the *King James Version* in Exodus 6:3; Psalm 83:18; Isaiah 12:2; 26:4.) Translators do not usually translate names (even if they have a literal meaning) but render them phonetically or transliterated. But in the case of God's name, something else happened.

The four-letter name YHWH is God's name in Hebrew. It is found about 6,800 times in the Old Testament. For various reasons, Jewish rabbis around the time of Christ decided that the name was too holy to be spoken out loud, especially when non-Jews were present. That idea expanded to forbid its use altogether, and the title *Adonai*, meaning "Lord," was substituted for YHWH. Over time the correct pronunciation was thought to have been lost, but modern research has shown that the correct pronunciation of YHWH is Je-ho-vah', with the accent on the last syllable. Therefore, criticism of the use of that name is unwarranted.

Nevertheless, God's name should always be spoken with reverence, for "holy and reverend is His name." Psalm 111:9. It was considered so holy by ancient scribes that when they copied a new version of the Scriptures they would stop to wash their hands and pray before writing it. Yet, as holy as His name is, His word is even more so—"Thy word above all Thy name." Psalm 138:2.

From this we can safely say that there is nothing more holy than God's word. When we understand this, the words on the front of many Bibles, "Holy Bible," mean something very profound. There is NOTHING above the word that can give authority to it, for it is THE authority! In the beginning, the Word created the world. "He commanded and it stood fast." Psalm 33:9. In the wilderness, Jesus said, "It is written,..." and overcame the evil adversary. The word is powerful—so powerful that it created the church. The church did not, as some would have us believe, create the word.

While the church is to be the depository of the word, the church has no right to change or modify that word. Revelation 22:18, 19. It is a sacred trust from Heaven. The basic issue at the beginning of time, as well as in every reformation that has ever occurred, was faithfulness to the word. This was the case for the Reformation of the sixteenth century. Does the church hold the power to decide what is in the word, and therefore have the right to interpret and change it, or does the word determine and define the church? True Protestants believe the latter.

In this issue of *The Sabbath Watchman*, there is more on this subject. As you see the actions of powerful individuals headlining the news, ask the question which Christ was asked, "By whose authority doest Thou these things?" Mark 11:28. A person's statement about God's word will tell you something about whether or not he or she is in harmony with Heaven. As we treat the word, so we would treat Christ if He were here!

*"I will worship
toward Thy holy
temple, and praise
Thy name for Thy
lovingkindness and
for Thy truth: for
Thou hast magnified
Thy word above all
Thy name."
Psalm 138:2.*



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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Predictions for America



By Idel Suarez, Jr.

My youngest daughter, Shiloh, came home after a field trip holding a large newspaper reprint in her hands and saying, “Papi, I have a gift for you.” The gift was a replica of the first issue of the *Cherokee Phoenix*, dated Thursday, February 21, 1828. It was a paper issued by the Cherokees in Georgia before the terrible journey on what is today called “The Trail of Tears,” when the tribe was forced to leave their homes, businesses, and lands behind, and travel west to Oklahoma.

Today newspapers have taken on a new dimension. The news is not only available in print, and on radio and TV, but also digitally on the web with interactive participation from readers through blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media.

Yet today’s news is always a retelling of past events. What people, leaders, and religious followers have always desired is to know about tomorrow’s news, people, events, and places. A revelation of predictions of the future in print is what would shake the world.

A few weeks ago, looking for a particular book in the library, I came across a book by Will Durant. I checked it out and was surprised to read some of his predictions for the future and his analysis of life. Although I do not espouse some of his liberal tenets, he mentions a few things that appear to run parallel to the Adventist understanding of the holy Scriptures, the testimony of Jesus, and the events of the last days.

Some of the ideas in the book regarding the future of the United States are in line with

traditional Adventist eschatology—end-time-prophecy teaching. Furthermore, probably unknowingly, the book corroborates many of Sister Ellen G. White's statements. Sister White referred to herself as an end-time messenger of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Who was Will Durant?

Will Durant (1885-1981) was a respected American historian and philosopher. He was a winner of the Pulitzer Prize (1968), the most famous award granted to talented authors, and of the Medal of Freedom (1977), another recognition awarded to those who promote freedom and democracy. With his wife, Ariel, he authored *The Story of Civilization*, an eleven-volume series on World History.¹ He traveled extensively, was married for nearly 68 years to the same woman, and lived a long life. His last published work, *Fallen Leaves: Last Words on Life, Love, War, and God*,² was published in 2014, three decades after his death in 1981 at the age of 96.

There are several fundamental predictions which Durant made about America in *Fallen Leaves*. Each prediction is pertinent to our day in the light of Bible prophecy.

The birth of American Rome

Durant speaks of "the coming control of American life by the Catholic Church. That Church already controls South America, and it is powerful in Mexico and French Canada. In the United States its future ascendancy is guaranteed."³

"What kind of men will those triumphant priests be? Will they be as tolerant as Leo X and Benedict XIV, or as dogmatic and domineering as Gregory VII and Innocent III? Today the Catholic hierarchy is intolerant where it is supreme...."⁴

The Scriptures speak of a time when the Roman Catholic Church will regain its lost influence, referred to as the "deadly wound" which was "healed." The Bible further states that the whole world will follow after the beast, yet one country above all others will give its power to the beast. That country in Scripture is represented as the beast with "two horns like a

lamb," which speaks like "a dragon." In Adventist conservative circles, that beast is believed to be represented by the American bison and symbolizes the United States of America. At the end of time, America "causeth the earth" to "worship the first beast," the Roman Catholic system, and gives America's power, or authority, to that first beast.

"And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." "These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast." Revelation 13:11,12; 17:13.

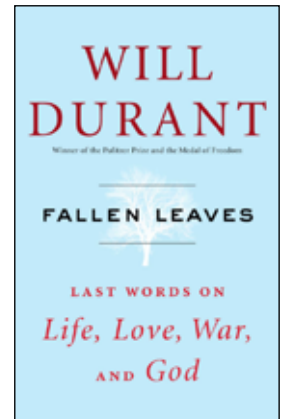
Alonzo T. Jones, the great preacher of righteousness and professor of history, spoke of three phases of Rome: Pagan Rome under the Caesars, papal Rome under the pope, and American Rome under apostate Protestantism influenced by Papal Rome.

Sister White's writings concur with those of Durant, mentioning the same two popes, Gregory VII and Innocent II, and the coming Roman supremacy in America. Sister White wrote:

"The principles of Gregory VII and Innocent III are still the principles of the Roman Catholic Church. And had she but the power, she would put them in practice with as much vigor now as in the past centuries."⁴

"Rome is aiming to re-establish her power, to recover her lost supremacy. Let the principle once be established in the United States that the church may employ or control the power of the state; that religious observances may be enforced by secular laws; in short, that the authority of the church and state is to dominate the conscience, and the triumph of Rome in this country [United States] is assured."⁶

Look at America today. Has it become more Catholic over the years, or not? America has three branches of government in Washington, DC, which govern the nation. Each is now under Catholic influence. In the Executive branch, the Vice President, Joseph Biden, is a Roman Catholic. In Congress, John Boehner, who serves as the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the most influential congressman and third highest



"In the United States its future ascendancy is guaranteed."

position in the nation, is a Roman Catholic. In the Supreme Court, Chief Justice John Roberts is also a Roman Catholic. As matter of fact, of the 9 justices who sit on the highest court of the land, there is not one Protestant or evangelical; six justices are Roman Catholics, and three are Jewish.

The Pew Research Center, in reporting on the 113th U.S. Congress, showed that of the 533 members of the House of Representatives, 163, or 30%, are Roman Catholic. Back in 1961, there were 100 Roman Catholics, or 18%, in Congress' lower house.⁷

Thomas Bokenkotter, in his book *A Concise History of the Catholic Church*, observes that the growth of Catholicism in America is the "envy of the Catholic world."⁸ "No missionary territory in the nineteenth century registered more sensational gains than the Catholic Church in the United States. Thanks to the massive influx of Catholic immigrants,... the growth of the Catholic Church far outstripped the nation's growth."⁹

What does the papacy really want? Two of the past three popes have declared their wishes in print and in very clear terms. Pope John Paul II, in his encyclical letter titled *Dies Domini*, paragraphs 66 and 67, stated:

"Sunday rest [is] a worker's right which the state must guarantee."

"In our own historical context there remains the obligation to ensure that everyone can enjoy the freedom, rest and relaxation ... of Sunday."

"Therefore, also in the particular circumstances of our own time, Christians will naturally strive to ensure that civil legislation respects their duty to keep Sunday holy."¹⁰

Recently, his successor, Pope Francis, in his encyclical letter titled *Laudato Si*, paragraph 237, reiterated the need for all on this planet to observe Sunday as a day of rest:

"Sunday, like the Jewish Sabbath, is ... the day of the Resurrection, the 'first day' of the new creation ... and so the day of rest, centered on the Eucharist.... The law of weekly rest ... motivates us to greater concern for nature and the poor."¹¹

While Pope John Paul II argued that the state needed to enforce a Sunday law to protect the worker's right to rest and relaxation, Pope Fran-

cis has now added another reason for a Sunday law; namely, to protect the environment, nature, and the poor.

Let us recall that Sunday observance originated not in Jerusalem, not with Jesus, not with the apostles, but in Rome after the death of the last apostle.¹² Sunday observance has ever been the child of the Roman Catholic bishops.

Philip Melanchthon, addressing the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V on June 25, 1530, in Germany at the Diet of Augsburg, read the Confession of the Reformation and provided him with a printed copy declaring that Sunday observance is not in the Ten Commandments, but was introduced by Roman Catholicism as proof of its authority.

"They [Roman Catholic bishops] refer to the Sabbath-day as having been changed into the Lord's Day, contrary to the Decalog, as it seems. Neither is there any example whereof they make more than concerning the changing of the Sabbath-day. Great, say they, is the power of the Church, since it has dispensed with one of the Ten Commandments!"¹³

No wonder Sister White wrote: "The enforcement of Sunday observance [is] a custom which originate[s] with Rome and which she claims as the sign of her authority."¹⁴

Repetition of the French Revolution in America

In his book, Durant claims that "America ... may repeat in the next century [21st Century] the crisis of France in 1792—a government unable to meet its obligations despite the discouragingly high taxation of its people, while vast areas of ecclesiastical property enjoy tax-free status."¹⁵ It was in 1792 that the notorious French Revolution erupted and convulsed not just France, but eventually all the rest of Europe.

In Revelation 11, the Scriptures foretold the French Revolution, calling it the "second woe." Allegorically, France was referred to there as the "street," or "plaza," of the "great city." The great city is Rome and symbolizes the Vatican. The street, or plaza, is the largest landmass country in Western Europe; namely, France. It was France that established the papacy and

While Pope John Paul II argued that the state needed to enforce a Sunday law to protect the worker's right to rest and relaxation, Pope Francis has now added another reason for a Sunday law; namely, to protect the environment, nature, and the poor.

later inflicted a mortal wound on the papacy's authority and power. France is also referred to as Sodom, Egypt, and Jerusalem, because of France's immorality in fashion and marriage, atheism as promoted by its philosophers like Voltaire, and persecution of the Huguenots, Albigenses, Waldenses, and other Bible-believing Christians. It was France that made war against the two witnesses—the Old and New Testaments—and burnt them in its plazas in Paris. The beast from “the bottomless pit” was the “Reign of Terror” in France.

“My two witnesses ... shall prophesy.” “And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.” “The second woe is past;...” Revelation 11:3, 7, 8, 14.

Sister White made a similar prediction, demonstrating that the current socio-political events in America shadow the occurrences in France which led to the French Revolution. Are we repeating those steps in America that will bring on another civil war?

“The centralizing of wealth and power, the vast combinations for the enriching of the few at the expense of the many; the combinations of the poorer classes for the defense of their interests and claims; the spirit of unrest, of riot and bloodshed; the world-wide dissemination of the same teachings that led to the French Revolution—all are tending to involve the world in a struggle similar to that which convulsed France.”¹⁶

Besides the slaughter of clergy and royalty, and the public burning of Bibles, the proponents of the French Revolution instituted new laws seeking to improve the lot of the average worker and the political state of the country. France experimented with a new day-of-rest law. It disrupted the weekly seven-day cycle dating from creation and instituted a ten-day cycle. Workers would now have one day off after 9 days of common labor. The experiment failed! It lasted from October 24, 1793 to January 1, 1806, when Napoleon abolished the new weekly cycle.¹⁷ Some interesting details

on this ten-day cycle are as follows:

“The year was not divided into weeks, instead each month was divided into three *décades* of 10 days, of which the final day was a day of rest. This was an attempt to de-Christianize the calendar, but it was an unpopular move, because now there were 9 work days between each day of rest, whereas the Gregorian Calendar had only 6 work days between each Sunday.”

“The ten days of each *décade* were called, respectively, Primidi, Duodi, Tridi, Quartidi, Quintidi, Sextidi, Septidi, Octidi, Nonidi, Decadi.”¹⁸

France paid a terrible price for overthrowing the restraints of God's holy law. Historians refer to the time of the French Revolution as the “Reign of Terror.” Thousands met their end under the guillotine.

“Would we know the result of making void the law of God? The experiment has been tried. Terrible were the scenes enacted in France.... It was then demonstrated to the world that to throw off the restraints which God has imposed is to accept the rule of the cruellest of tyrants.”¹⁹

Union of churches and creeds in America

Durant predicts that there may come a grand union of churches, creeds, and sects in America and Europe to usher in a new time of peace and safety. The ethics but not the precepts of Christ would be taught.

“We picture a great union of creeds and sects preaching the ethics of Christ, a church vigorous with its new consolidated strength, ready to meet the competition of bizarre cults and nationalistic infatuations, a church gathering into one fellowship all the racial groups in America and Europe, offering a moral code that would help men to raise themselves out of the corruption and violence that threaten to consume our civilization.”²⁰

The Holy Writ foretells one final confederacy against God's law—one final ecumenical move-



France paid a terrible price for overthrowing the restraints of God's holy law.

ment under the leadership of the papacy. The psalmist foretold this confederacy. "For they have consulted together with one consent; they are confederate against Thee." Psalm 83:5.

As one peruses the daily religious news, it is obvious that the papacy is making great strides in uniting all Christian sects under its umbrella. For example, Pope Francis recently met with a delegation of Czech church delegates and apologized for the terrible death which Jan Huss, the great reformer of Bohemia (now the Czech Republic), suffered for his

Protestant teachings. Pope Francis stated that "we can move forward together on the path of reconciliation and peace." He expressed his "deep regret for the cruel death imposed" on Huss.²¹ Pope John Paul II even went so far as to say that the Inquisition was a historic error.

Sister White foretold that the papacy would make many apologies to gain entrance into the

hearts of rulers and the common people. "The Roman Church now presents a fair front to the world, covering with apologies her record of horrible cruelties. She clothed herself in Christlike garments; but she is unchanged."²²

The union of churches in the last days will be a confederacy tolerating differences in creeds but uniting on the ethical teachings of Christ to serve as a bulwark, or barrier, against the general corruption seen in society.

"But there has been for years, in churches of the Protestant faith, a strong and growing sentiment in favor of a union based upon common points of doctrine. To secure such a union, the discussion of subjects upon which all were not agreed—however important they might be from a Bible standpoint—must necessarily be waived."²³

"When the leading churches of the United States, uniting upon such points of doctrine as are held by them in common, shall influence the state to enforce their decrees and to sustain

their institutions, then Protestant America will have formed an image of the Roman hierarchy, and the infliction of civil penalties upon dissenters will inevitably result."²⁴ Religious liberty, which has long been upheld in the land of the free and the home of the brave, will cease. Its Statue of Liberty holds a flame of hope that will go out.

Sister White stated two primary motives driving the union between Sunday-keeping Protestants and papists. First, it would be to unite all religions in a "grand movement," a great awakening to convert the world. "Papists, Protestants, and worldlings will alike accept the form of godliness without the power, and they will see in this union a grand movement for the conversion of the world and the ushering in of the long-expected millennium."²⁵

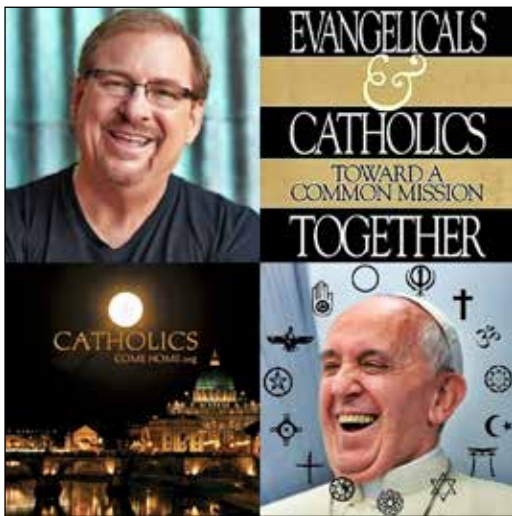
Ironically, the Holy Office of the Roman Inquisition changed its name and became the forerunner of ecumenism. "In 1965, Pope Paul VI ... renamed it the *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith*."²⁶ What the Roman papacy once sought to accomplish through torture is now being sought through diplomacy and seemingly democratic procedures—to regain the papacy's lost influence and bring back the separated brethren.

The second major motivation for Sunday-keeping Protestants and Catholics to unite under a common creed is to curb corruption and improve morality.

"Yet this very class put forth the claim that the fast-spreading corruption is largely attributable to the desecration of the so-called 'Christian sabbath,' and that the enforcement of Sunday observance would greatly improve the morals of society. This claim is especially urged in America..."²⁷

A Sabbath hope in the midst of turmoil

Jesus Christ stated that there will be Sabbath-keepers throughout history, even up to the final day of earth's history. "But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day." Matthew 24:20. He was the great Prophet of Nazareth of Galilee. Matthew 21:11. He compared the siege and conquest of Jerusa-



"The Roman Church now presents a fair front to the world, covering with apologies her record of horrible cruelties. She clothed herself in Christlike garments; but she is unchanged."

lem with the end of the world and referred to Rome as the “abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet.” Matthew 24:15. Jesus called the Romans “Gentiles” in the physical and spiritual sense. Luke 21:20. Daniel makes three references in his book to the abomination of desolation, the three phases of Rome—pagan, papal, and American Rome. Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11.

The pagan and papal phases each took the city of Jerusalem. First, pagan Rome overthrew Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and again in A.D. 135. Second, Rome overran Jerusalem as papal Rome in 1100 under the banner of the Roman Catholic Crusaders to carry out the wish of Pope Urban II.²⁸ The third time is in the near future.

Jesus promised that for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. Matthew 24:22. And through His messenger He gave clear instructions about what to do when the national Sunday law is enacted in America.

“As the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman armies was the signal for flight to the Judean Christians, so the assumption of power on the part of our nation in the decree enforcing the papal sabbath will be a warning to us. It will then be time to leave the large cities, preparatory to leaving the smaller ones for retired homes in secluded places among the mountains. And now, instead of seeking expensive dwellings here, we should be preparing to move to a better country, even a heavenly.”²⁹

Daniel added a blessing to those who wait and are eyewitnesses to the last phase of the great battle between good and evil. “Blessed is he that waiteth.” Daniel 12:12. God’s faithful people will overcome by “the blood of the lamb, and by the word of their testimony;...” Revelation 12:11. They will be cleansed, perfected, and glorified by the grace of God in the midst of the last great tribulation and appear as the congregation of the firstborn, Jesus Christ. Daniel 12:10; Hebrews 12:23. The more the saints face conflict for the sake of Jesus, the greater will be their joy as they triumph and the more help they will receive from above. In the end, they will be like Jesus, they will be with Jesus, and Jesus will live in them forever.

The Saviour said, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In

the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” John 16:33. Even as He overcame, God’s people will overcome by His grace. **SW**

- ¹ Will Durant and Ariel Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, vols. 1-11 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975).
- ² Will Durant, *Fallen Leaves: Last Words on Life, Love, War, and God* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2014).
- ³ *Ibid.*, p. 49.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 50.
- ⁵ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (1888) (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1950), p. 581.
- ⁶ *Ibid.* Throughout this article brackets are not in the original text but implied based on the context.
- ⁷ Pew Research Center. *Faith on the Hill: The Religious Composition of the 113th Congress*. Updated January 2, 2013, accessed on July 27, 2015, <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/11/16/faith-on-the-hill-the-religious-composition-of-the-113th-congress>.
- ⁸ Thomas Bokenkotter, *A Concise History of the Catholic Church*, rev. and expanded. (New York: Image Books Doubleday, 1990), p. 328.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰ Pope John Paul II, *Apostolic Letter of the Holy Father Pope John Paul II, Dies Domini: On Keeping the Lord’s Day Holy* (Boston, Pauline Books and Media, 1998), pp. 72-75.
- ¹¹ Francis, *Encyclical Letter Laudato Si of the Holy Father Francis on Care for Our Common Home* (Rome: Vatican Press, 2015), pp. 172-173.
- ¹² Samuele Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday: A Historical Investigation of the Rise of Sunday Observance in Early Christianity* (Rome: The Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1977).
- ¹³ Phillip Melancthon, *The Augsburg Confession [1530]*, in F. Bente and W.H.T. Dau, trans., *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), 37-95. Accessed on July 27, 2015, www.thereformation.info/images/augsburg.pdf.
- ¹⁴ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 573.
- ¹⁵ Will Durant, *Fallen Leaves*, pp. 50-51.
- ¹⁶ Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1952), p. 228.
- ¹⁷ Accessed August 29, 2015, www.webexhibits.org/calendars/calendar-french.html.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁹ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 584.
- ²⁰ Will Durant, *Fallen Leaves*, p. 55.
- ²¹ Lydia O’Kane, *Pope meets Czech Church delegates on Jan Huss anniversary*. Radio Vaticana News, June 15, 2015. Accessed June 23, 2015, http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2015/06/15/pope_meets_czech_church_delegates_on_jan_hus_anniversary/1151594.
- ²² Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 571.
- ²³ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 444.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 445.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 588-589.
- ²⁶ *Encyclopaedia Britannica, Micropedia*, 15th ed., vol. 6, s.v. “Inquisition,” pp. 328-329.
- ²⁷ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 587.
- ²⁸ Nick Inman and Ferdie McDonald, eds., “The History of the Holy Land,” Jerusalem, Israel, Petra and Sinai (London: DK, 2014), p. 52.
- ²⁹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), pp. 464-465.

The more the saints face conflict for the sake of Jesus, the greater will be their joy as they triumph and the more help they will receive from above.



Little Zacchaeus

Short of stature

The New Testament contains the story of a man who had a lot of money but was very short of stature. This made it impossible for him to be able to see Jesus in the crowd. Luke 19:2, 3. It was an impediment to this man's being able to meet the Master.

By Jose V. Giner

After Adam sinned, the land was still full of treasures, but his spirituality had been diminished, so he could not see God.

If we go back to the wonderful days of Eden when God created the first human couple, we find spiritual similarities. Adam was tall in stature and possessed all the treasures of the earth; while he was obedient to God, he enjoyed direct communion with his Maker and His holiness. It was beautiful for him to open his eyes every morning and see the beautiful meadows, lush vegetation, and abundant, varied fauna. He could interact with his environment and gave names to the animals (Genesis 2:19); he knew their habits and lived in perfect harmony with each one. There was nothing to mar his and his wife's happiness; everything contributed to their physical and spiritual wellbeing.

But, unfortunately, this couple fell into sin, causing face-to-face communion with the Eternal One to cease. Although God let Adam live for nearly a thousand years, physical degeneration slowly carried him to old age and the grave. Pride, hatred, indifference, selfishness, anger, bitterness, disobedience, unbelief, and many other evil traits became part of human nature after the sin "virus" of the worst kind was introduced. I do not know exactly how much time passed before the next tragedy struck Adam and Eve. Their son Cain became the first criminal in history when he killed his brother, Abel. The blood of this faithful son of God testified of the terrible consequences of sin and became the harbinger of what would come upon mankind. Crime, destruction, and death could be seen on the horizon.

What a paradox! After Adam sinned, the land was still full of treasures, but his spirituality had been diminished, so he could not see God. What good is all the money in the world if we cannot have a personal relationship with God?

What good are fame, power, titles, and honors if we cannot see Jesus? As the prophet Amos saw the spiritual condition of the people of Israel declining, he exclaimed, "Who will raise up Jacob? Because it is small." Amos 7:2.

Yes, Zacchaeus was small, speaking of him spiritually, in his capacity as chief of the publicans, for he had enriched himself by extorting money from his countrymen. He had no scruples as a tax collector in charging more than he should, and probably in many cases the result was people who were crushed and made to mourn and suffer by those who collected taxes for Rome, the empire that oppressed the Jewish nation. He was rich, yes, but despicable, wretched, and heartless. He no doubt had a nice house, with land and servants; but he was not happy, because no one can be happy apart from Christ.

It is interesting to consider the fact that in our modern society those who are considered "big" are really small in God's eyes, while those who in men's eyes are small and insignificant are welcomed by God. For example, people talk a lot about athletes, actors, and famous billionaires who can record exorbitant amounts of money in their personal coffers; and the media gives them special treatment and prominence. But if you look closely, you will see that many of them have disorderly, empty lives often marred by addictions and reprehensible behavior, making them more worthy of pity than admiration. But their fortunes make them great in the eyes of the world. The trend of the world is to demean human value and glorify vice, misery, and passion. "The whole world lieth in wickedness." 1 John 5:19. This is why John the evangelist urges Christians to separate from the norms of those in the world who live without seeing God. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." 1 John 2:15-17. Also noteworthy is the fact that we can be great in the eyes of the Lord even when we are more miserable than anyone else. Recall the parable of the Pharisee who saw himself as worthy of divine favor, while the publican would not raise his eyes to heaven because he felt so miserable and unwor-

thy. But the Pharisee was condemned, while the publican was justified and forgiven, according to Luke 18:9-14.

A heart that yearns for change

Zacchaeus was seen as a publican of the worst kind, unscrupulous, and greedy for wealth; but his heart was not hardened to the point of being unable to be penetrated by a tiny ray of divine influence. How often we misjudge people and either add to or delete from them certain attributes according to our own imaginations! It is true that a person who has done or is doing something wrong is a slave of evil. But it does not mean that he does not want to get out of the hole he is in; all too often people just don't know how to do this. That is why Jesus came to this world: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19:10.

This man lived in a populous city, Jericho, a trading center where different cultures and situations converged. Whenever traveling caravans arrived, it was a reason to celebrate. Priests, Roman officials, and soldiers lived there, along with foreigners and the hated publicans, leeches that sucked every last drop of blood.

Now Zacchaeus received the news that Jesus of Nazareth was coming to Jericho. The fame of the great Master was known in the city of Zacchaeus. Jesus was said to have favored the poor and defended the cause of the marginalized, preached equality and respect, performed miracles, given second chances for restoration, and forgiven sins, truly healing the human soul. Zacchaeus did not want to miss this opportunity, because he was not happy and wanted to change his life. Is not this the situation of millions of human beings in the world?

In pastoral ministry, one finds many people who express the desire to change. "I have a character that I do not like—a person I know called me a creep. I hate being like this! I would like to change, but I don't know what to do and if there is even a chance for me." This desperate cry, despite what many may think, touches the heart of God, our Creator.

The devil has sought to distort the image that people have of God. The Creator has been and

Zacchaeus did not want to miss this opportunity, because he was not happy and wanted to change his life.

is presented as a relentless being, just waiting for the slightest flaw to appear in humans so He can destroy them. A large number of churches have contributed greatly to this misconception by teaching things that have no basis in the Bible—that all the illness and misfortune that happens to us are divine punishments; that God has prepared a fiery hell where those who disobey Him will burn for eternity; that the dead can speak to the living; and many other such teachings.



In the time of Zacchaeus, a Jewish teaching had misinterpreted some of the guidelines of the Old Testament, so that Jesus said the rabbis had “made the commandment of God of none effect” by their traditions. “But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” Matthew 15:6, 9. The apostle Paul also called these things “doctrines of men” (Colossians 2:22) and “doctrines of demons” (1 Timothy 4:1), referring to the time of the end. But Zacchaeus knew at least one thing was certain—that his sins had alienated him from God; and, he deserved condemnation and death.

The sycamore tree

No doubt Zacchaeus, a Jew, felt the weight of his guilt in his mind, because he knew the Jewish faith; he was distressed to think that his life was meaningless and that in the end the same tragic destiny awaited him. In this situation, the hope was conceived that perhaps Jesus could be his solution. Zacchaeus had heard of Jesus and His teachings and clung to the thought that he could see Him and have a personal meeting with the Teacher of the good news; the desire to live a better life was stronger than the defeatist thinking that his case had no solution. His longing for salvation was stronger than his impediments, such as his small stature and his unworthiness. He resolved to do everything possible to see the face of Christ. Zacchaeus looked around and saw a sycamore tree; he would climb it to see the Master.

The sycamore tree is a type of fig tree that grows in Israel; it can measure up to sixty feet high and eighteen feet wide. Like all other fig trees, the sycamore contains latex. Almost every-

thing in the tree is usable. The wood is used to build coffins; the leaves and fruit provide food for people and livestock, as well as treatment for various diseases. In the famous *Dioscorides* (book of botanicals), it says that fig extract is used as an antidote for the venom of snakebites.

On one of the occasions when I visited Israel, I saw a sycamore tree in Jericho. I tried to imagine Zacchaeus climbing such a tree, attempting to see Christ. Probably this action by the chief tax collector generated mockery and laughter, but Zacchaeus did not care as long as he could see Jesus. Are we willing to look for Jesus as Zacchaeus did, despite all the teasing and obstacles that we encounter on our way?

The meeting with Christ

Arriving at the place where Zacchaeus had climbed the tree, Jesus stopped and said, “Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.” Luke 19:5. Was it a coincidence that Jesus passed by that place? No! Jesus went to meet Zacchaeus, because he lived in chains of darkness and wanted to be set free.

When Adam and Eve sinned, they hid because they were afraid. But God went to meet them, searched for them, and offered the plan of redemption. This is our God. A fallen man or woman is not the object of the Lord’s condemnation but, on the contrary, the object of His immeasurable love: “I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.” Jeremiah 31:3. Thousands of people who are discouraged and weighed down by their sins, living life with nothing on the horizon but death, can go to the cross of Calvary to meet Christ, the hope of glory. Colossians 1:27. On Calvary Christ won the victory that is offered today to all human beings so that all who believe in Him may be forgiven and live forever. The bite of Satan, that old serpent, is completely neutralized by the blood of Christ. His grace is available today to every Zacchaeus in the world, so that by receiving Christ in his heart he may obtain the power of the Holy Spirit to be able to overcome sin. Are we not all actually like Zacchaeus, sinful men and women in need of a meeting with

A fallen man or woman is not the object of the Lord’s condemnation but, on the contrary, the object of His immeasurable love.

Jesus? How can our chains be broken? By faith in Christ: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 5:1. Let us go to Jesus today. Let us seek Him as did Zacchaeus.

"And he made haste, and came down, and received Him joyfully." Luke 19:6. Zacchaeus was a little, hateful man, hated by his people, and degraded; but by seeking and finding Jesus, he accepted His call and came down to meet Him. Zacchaeus was never bigger than when he decided to put his life, his home, and his possessions at Jesus' feet. "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." Luke 19:8. The sign that Zacchaeus was no longer the same man was his decision to change his life. This is true repentance—changing the way one thinks and acts. The Greek word *metanoia* (repentance) means a change of mind, of life—in reality, conversion. As the consequence of the decision Zacchaeus made, his life started to make sense and have depth, focus, usefulness, and fulfillment. "And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19:9, 10.

Conclusion

Only in Christ can we experience true happiness, peace in our souls, and deliverance from our guilt and spiritual chains. It is a terrible mistake to think that we can get rid of our unworthiness and spiritual smallness without the grace of Christ. There are many antichristian attitudes today, including the idea that man can get rid of his misery through the power and capabilities that he possesses within himself. Atheism points in this direction, and religions also present Christ mostly as a charismatic Leader at the same level as other human leaders of major religions.

We must add to the list those Christians who teach that one's own works recommend him to God; that is, that the "doing" is a means of gaining heaven. Contempt of Christ closes the way to salvation established by Heaven. Let us rise above the degradation of sin through Calvary—by accepting Christ as our personal Saviour. Will we seek Jesus today? Do we love Him? Do we trust in His merits? Will we give Him all of our burdens? Will we invite Him into our homes? So be it. God bless you. **SW**

The sign that Zacchaeus was no longer the same man was his decision to change his life. This is true repentance—changing the way one thinks and acts.



The Map of Truth

"There is a world to be warned, and every effort must now be made to exalt the truth.... The great Teacher held in His hand the entire map of truth. In simple language He made plain to His disciples the way to heaven, and the endless subjects

of divine power. The question of the essence of God was a subject on which He maintained a wise reserve, for their entanglements and specifications would bring in science which could not be dwelt upon by unsanctified minds without confusion....

"The open path, the safe path of walking in the way of His commandments, is a path from which there is no safe departing. And when men follow their own human theories dressed up in soft, fascinating representations, they make a snare in which to catch souls. In the place of devoting your powers to theorizing, Christ has given you a work to do. His commission is, Go throughout the world and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." —*The Upward Look*, p. 148.



Hypnotism and Television Viewing

By Linda Kolyn

In most homes in America, there is a device that puts people into a type of hypnotic trance—something that they focus their eyes on, that flickers every few seconds, and that can produce a hypnotic-like trance. More than 96 percent of American homes have at least one of these devices.

What is this device?

From its first introduction to an innocent public in 1939, television watching has become the number one “leisure activity” in America. Up to 97 percent of the population engages in watching television.

How does television work?

The classic setting for television (TV) watching and video watching is similar to the typical environment that is used to induce hypnotism—a darkened room, a flickering light (the TV set) as a single focus, and freedom from all outside diversions.

In the hypnotized state, an *alpha* brain pattern is operative, during which one does not criti-

cally analyze information that comes to him. In this state, an individual’s brain automatically records information and suggestions without interpretation and without frontal lobe filtering. A flickering light that trains the eyes to focus in one place has been noted to easily induce a hypnotic state. As a person continues to focus on the flickering light, he does not critically analyze the information being received. None of the information is filtered according to his sense of values or moral worth; *his reasoning powers are bypassed. The frontal lobe has been short-circuited.* To compromise this control center of the brain, even temporarily, is dangerous. In terms of brainpower and brain functioning, the worst thing one can do is sit and watch television.

Does what a person watches make any difference in his mind and character?

Yes. The content has a powerful effect on one’s mind; the medium also appears to have profound mental effects. The television medium is, in itself, usually detrimental. This is due to the camera-switching action in most television and video productions and the “rapidly chang-

As a person continues to focus on the flickering light, he does not critically analyze the information being received.

ing scene of reference." The average television program changes its scene of reference every three to five seconds.

Several doctors have gone on record to report the negative effects of watching television. A certain Dr. Morris cites television's rapid change of reference as contributing to a hypnotic-type effect. Dr. Herbert Krugman, a brain wave researcher, concludes: "Television is a communication medium that effortlessly transmits huge quantities of information, not thought about at the time of exposure."

Watching television also produces the effects of artificial stimulation. Alvin Toffler details these effects: "Constant stimulation of the senses shuts down the analytical processes of the mind and ultimately shuts down the ability to think and face life rationally. This leads to escape techniques and adaptive responses which tend to involve withdrawal, apathy, and rejection of disciplined thinking when faced with difficult duties and decisions."

Warnings about hypnotism

The Spirit of prophecy warned about hypnotism. "Be cautious in regard to what you read and how you hear. Satan is waiting to steal a march upon everyone who allows himself to be deceived by his hypnotism." —*Medical Ministry*, p. 102. What is this saying? Hypnotism is from Satan. Satan is the great enemy and adversary who is doing all in his power to prevent every person from reaching heaven. Will his hypnotism always be practiced in the same way as in the past? "In the future, Satan's superstitions will assume new forms. Most seducing influences will be exerted; minds will be hypnotized." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 293.

What should we, as the people who preach in Zion, do about Satan's hypnotism? "The hypnotism of Satan must be shown in its true bearing." —*The Upward Look*, p. 251.

If watching television and videos constitutes hypnotism, and hypnotism is from Satan, are television and videos from Satan? The answer is yes. As the people of God, we need to remove television watching from our lives. "Cut away from yourselves everything that savors of hyp-

notism, the science by which satanic agencies work." —Letter 20, 1902; *Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 350.

"Satan will counterfeit the miracles that will be wrought. God's tried and tested people will find their power in the sign spoken of in Exodus 31:12-18. This is the only foundation upon which they can stand securely.... We are not to tamper with mesmerism and hypnotism—the science of the one who lost his first estate and was cast out of the heavenly courts. The science of a pure, wholesome, consistent Christian life is obtained by studying the word of the Lord." —*Medical Ministry*, pp. 110, 111.

Based on these testimonies and the other evidence mentioned in this article, we should not watch worldly television and videos. We should even be careful about the quantity of godly videos that we watch. We should also witness to our friends, family, and work colleagues about the powerful hold that television can have upon them.

What does medical science say? Does television have a positive influence? Consider the following:

Television strengthens negative qualities in children and adult watchers

Especially mentioned in the research is MTV, which has been shown to increase violence. Research has demonstrated that 22-34 percent of violent male criminals who are serving time for crimes such as murder, rape, and assault, admit to having consciously *imitated crime techniques* that they learned from watching television.

As society in general is becoming more violent from TV watching and competitive sports, are we getting closer to the great battle of Armageddon, the battle between good and evil, Christ and Satan?

Television watching also affects children's health

The metabolic rate of children ages 8-12 during television viewing was significantly lower than when the children were at rest and doing nothing. A lower metabolism, combined with the

"Satan is waiting to steal a march upon everyone who allows himself to be deceived by his hypnotism."

highly processed snacks eaten during hours spent in front of the TV set, places children at high risk of obesity. Children watch 26 hours of TV weekly, on average, and childhood obesity now affects one out of four children.

Television also affects one's ability to detect when someone is lying

Of television viewers, 52 percent of the people detected a lie (similar odds to flipping a coin). Of newspaper readers, 64 percent detected a lie, while 73 percent of radio listeners detected it.

Television has been proven to be addictive

In a 1976 survey and trial conducted by the *Detroit Free Press*, the results of a one-month trial were amazing. When television viewing was removed, family members manifested actual withdrawal symptoms, including insomnia and headaches.

Television itself has been shown to affect the frontal lobe development of children

Parents' spending long hours in front of the television had an effect on the frontal lobe development of their children. Such parents had less involvement with their children, and this related directly to two other frontal lobe robbers—alcohol and tobacco. Researchers from Louisiana State University Medical Center in New Orleans demonstrated this when they studied over 2,000 fifth and sixth graders for three to four years. Children who reported that their parents spent more time with their children and communicated with them were less likely to use alcohol and tobacco. Those children were also less likely to choose friends who used such substances.

Television is used as an escape

Generally escapism occurs at a mental level and is, indeed, an attempt to block out a stressor. Stressed persons tend to remain in the presence of the stressor but turn to a mind-altering escape to help forget about the stressor's presence. Such an escape can be as diverse as watching televi-

sion or taking a mixed drink. Even in its most beneficial form, television watching takes time away from activities such as exercise that could enhance coping reserves and diffuse stress.

Television viewing is also one reason why North Americans do poorly in the sleep department

The more television a person watches, the less time he has for sleep. This is particularly a problem for American youth. Many of them are not getting enough sleep because of their liberal diet of TV. "Behold, is it not of the Lord of hosts that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity?" Habakkuk 2:13.

But what about television news?

Television news is designed to be entertainment. *The Detroit News* analyzed forty TV news broadcasts on four stations in December 1996 and January 1997. "Crime was by far the most common type of story on each station." "Disaster stories—accidents, floods, blizzards"—were second.

In Bombay, some residents rebelled against TV in a dramatic way. Hundreds of people, tired of televised violence and sex, hurled their TV sets out their windows in December 1994. Each family reported that their family life improved as a result.

There are many other sources of information one can access to find out what is going on in the world, without needing to resort to the television set. These sources include newspapers, news journals, weekly news magazines, computer websites, and online services. Television is, in reality, an entertainment box. The network news producers themselves have stated openly that they consider television as entertainment.

Exactly the opposite of this, exercising the brain expands it. "The understanding adapts itself to the dimensions of the subjects with which it is required to deal. If occupied with trivial, commonplace matters only, never summoned to earnest efforts to comprehend great and eternal truths, it becomes dwarfed and

Parents' spending long hours in front of the television had an effect on the frontal lobe development of their children.



enfeebled. Hence the value of the Scriptures as a means of intellectual culture.” –*That I May Know Him*, p. 8.

“The Bible, just as it reads, is to be our guide. Nothing is so calculated to enlarge the mind and strengthen the intellect as the study of the Bible. No other study will so elevate the soul and give vigor to the faculties as the study of the living oracles.... As the mind is brought to the study of God’s Word, the understanding will enlarge and the higher power will develop for the comprehension of high and ennobling truth.” –*Mind, Character, and Personality*, p. 93.

Eight and a half decades after David Sarnoff, President of RCA, unveiled the first television at the 1939 World’s Fair, we should ask, “What is television doing to our country? More specifically, what is television doing to me?”

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 3:18.

Think about this: “By beholding we become changed. If you allow your mind to dwell upon the imperfections and moral deformities of others, you will be changed into the same image. You will become deformed in character, and mentally one-sided and unbalanced. Let the mind dwell upon the perfect life of Christ. If the thoughts are centered upon Him, and the conversation is on the heavenly themes, you will be ‘changed into the same image from glory to glory.’ You will become ‘partakers of the divine

nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.’” –*Signs of the Times*, May 8, 1884.

In summary, the sixteen most harmful effects of watching television include the following:

1. It produces a hypnotic effect, bypassing frontal lobe filtering
2. It reduces interest in reading and learning
3. It weakens brainpower
4. It encourages poor lifestyle habits
5. It encourages obesity
6. It increases daydreaming
7. It weakens creativity
8. It may reduce one’s powers of discrimination
9. It trains people not to react to situations, including critical ones
10. It influences viewers to regard violence lightly
11. It makes children irritable
12. It increases aggressiveness
13. It is addictive
14. It reduces time available for productive achievement
15. It steals time from family interaction
16. It adversely affects spirituality **SW**

References and statistics in this article are found in *Proof Positive: How to Reliably Combat Disease and Achieve Optimal Health Through Nutrition and Lifestyle*, by Neil Nedley, 1999. The complete version of this article can be downloaded from [www. LitigateToWin.ca/Videos & Downloads: Hypnotism and Television](http://www.LitigateToWin.ca/Videos%20and%20Downloads:Hypnotism%20and%20Television).

“By beholding we become changed. If you allow your mind to dwell upon the imperfections and moral deformities of others, you will be changed into the same image.”





By Evelyn Holmstroem

Snap! Crack! Pop!

We live in the country, and so do some of our grandchildren. Even though we have lived in this environment for several years, we have not yet tired of seeing deer almost daily, hopping and scurrying rabbits quite often, coyotes once in awhile, and foxes now and then (including one that jumped out of a tree). We have seen two bobcats, a skunk, three scrambling raccoons late one night, and a multitude of birds most of the year. But one animal we thought we would never see.

One day three of my grandchildren, two of their dogs, and I walked out through the gate of their property to the home of a neighbor, "Mrs. Dorothy," then turned around and went back. As we went through the gate, eleven-year-old Mikey announced that he and nine-year-old Davey wanted to take a different road home. "I'll meet you at the house, Grandma," Mikey said. I thought about it for a moment, then said that almost-six-year-old Megan and I would go with them. We ran across the grass to the other road.

The children got ahead of me as I walked slowly, enjoying the trees and bushes and quietness. However, as I looked to my left, down at a pile of metal, I heard a loud noise: Snap! Crack! Pop! Snap! Crack! Pop! What could it be? And where was the noisemaker?

Suddenly I saw a large creature at the very top of a pine tree about 150 feet away. In the few seconds I looked at the thrashing animal, I thought its face looked somewhat like a fox. But the creature was much too large to be a fox. The moment I realized what it was, I left!

Catching up with Mikey and Davey, I saw their large eyes. Mikey had already taken charge. "Grandma! There's a mountain lion! Walk! Don't run!"

"Where's Megan?" I asked.

Mikey pointed at the top of an embankment to the right. Megan appeared among the manzanita bushes. "Megan," commanded Mikey. "There's a mountain lion. Walk. Don't run. Get back to the house."

"Where are the dogs?" I asked next.

"I don't know," answered Mikey. "Let's just get home." Megan stayed close to us until we could jump over to where the embankment leveled off. "Lord, please keep us safe," we prayed all the way home.

At the house, we found that the dogs had beaten us back. We then compared stories. The boys had not actually *seen* the mountain lion; they had only heard the loud branch-breaking—and heavy panting. Megan had not seen or heard anything except our excited questions and instructions.

When Daddy Tom and fourteen-year-old Andy came home later, we told our story. They went down to the pond by the property gate and looked all around with a flashlight. Andy dug up one of the many footprints they saw. At home they compared it with an animal footprint chart. Yes, indeed. Our animal visitor was a mountain lion. Tom surmised that we—actually, the dogs—scared the mountain lion so badly that it ran to safety!

That mountain lion reminds us of a well-known Bible text, in 1 Peter 5:8. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." We certainly were sober as well as vigilant. We heard no roaring, just that Snap! Crack! Pop! How grateful we are that the lion we saw did not hurt or devour any of us. We thank God for being with us *all* the way home. **SW**

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Peter 5:8.

Highlights

Centennial Symposium on the Spirit of Prophecy

THURSDAY, JULY 30, TO SUNDAY, AUGUST 2, 2015
GENERAL CONFERENCE HEADQUARTERS
CEDARTOWN, GEORGIA, USA



By Barbara Watts

Believers from many parts of the world assembled at the General Conference headquarters to remember the mission and life of Sister Ellen G. White and to be reminded of the special role in God's church of the gift of prophecy. Many others wanted to attend this event, but they experienced difficulties in obtaining visas. Therefore, the live broadcasts and recorded videos of the presentations were and still today are a special blessing to all who wish to enjoy the blessings from Heaven's storehouse of infinite goodness.

To access the videos, go to "www.sda1844.org/Multi-media/Symposium-Spirit of Prophecy." A list of the videos will appear, and you can click on the presentation you wish to watch. As you view these

videos alone and with others, our prayer is that the Holy Spirit will impress your mind with many spiritual truths.

We also pray that the highlights presented here will inspire you in your Christian walk and experience. All praise be to God on high for His gracious goodness in making us partakers of His holy principles and word!

Thursday, July 30

The attendees came together early on Thursday for **MORNING DEVOTIONS**, as Elder Pedro Ruiz, from Guatemala, read Revelation 10:5, 6. The Angel here is Jesus, who swears "that there should be time no longer." The Bible's prophecies have been fulfilled one after another, and we can see that we are living at the time of the end. Therefore, one

might think that all the prophecies have been completed, but that is not so, for the gospel has not yet been preached in the whole world. Matthew 24:14.



Elder Pedro Ruiz

The prophecy in Revelation 10 shows Jesus as having one foot planted on the sea and the other on the earth, indicating that the gospel will reach every place, including the islands. There are very few places on earth that have not heard the gospel.

The question is, Are we putting forth efforts to spread God's word? Jesus will come only when all have had the opportunity to hear the gospel and make their choice concerning it. In Revelation 22:12, Jesus says, "Behold, I come quickly." Just as believers like Anna and Simeon had the great desire to

see the Messiah and had been promised by the Holy Spirit that their desire would be fulfilled, so Jesus desires to come, and His desire will also be fulfilled. When His character, His deep goodness and spirituality, is seen in His people, He will come. That means our dedication to Him requires our undivided attention. Christ's purpose is that all be saved, and His greatest joy is to see the purchase of His sacrifice in His eternal kingdom.

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After breakfast, Elder Idel Suarez, Jr., from the U.S.A., **WELCOMED** everyone present in person and online and gave highlights of Sister Ellen G. White's life, including the following:

- She wrote 25 million words by hand, including 4,600 periodical articles and 150 books—100,000 pages in all
- She had four children, one of whom died at the age of 16 (Henry); and another, at just three months (Herbert)
- She was married for 35 years; her husband, James, died at the age of 60 when she was 53
- She wrote every day, often getting up at 1:00 in the morning
- She read a lot and borrowed ideas from other authors, sometimes without giving them credit, which was standard practice at that time; if she read something that matched what she saw in vision, she copied it, just as the Bible writers copied from one another
- The Bible's characteristics of a true prophet were seen in her life
- She emphasized that the Bible is the source of all truth
- She was shown hidden things in individuals' lives and sent letters of counsel to many people



- She wrote about reformation needed in the ranks of Adventists in the 1800s
- She said that if reformation did not come, the sanitarium and publishing house would burn down; fifteen primary Adventist institutions did burn down

Most of Sister White's father's family believed the Advent message and were cast out of the Methodist Church. This is how reformation has occurred in virtually every age, as opposed to rebellion, which occurs when a strong leader leaves an organization with a band of followers. Elder Suarez reviewed the printed Symposium Program and concluded with the story of a sister's family during World War II whose house suffered a bomb crashing through three floors without exploding. The bomb destroyed a box of potatoes, but a box of Sister White's books right next to the potatoes remained undamaged. Praise God, who watches over His own!

Inspiration and Interpretation

The first of the four Thursday morning presentations began with Elder Parmenas Shirima, from Tanzania, speaking about **"THE NATURE OF INSPIRATION."** In the holy Scriptures, the writers often stated, "Thus saith the Lord," or "The word of the



Elder Parmenas Shirima

Lord came unto me,..." God employed a variety of means to inspire the writers of the Bible and others of His servants—visions, dreams, a special spirit of understanding, and insight into God's mysteries. He guided others to record events and history. In every case, the human personality was active, with the thoughts being imparted by the Holy Spirit and the words being those of the human instrument. This is how the Spirit of prophecy has always functioned.

Predictive prophecy is described in Scripture as attesting to the validity of divine inspiration. In fact, God referred to this and challenged idol worshipers to prove the genuineness of their prophets' claims through the fulfillment of their prophecies of the future. "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him." Deuteronomy 18:22.

Daniel 10:7-10, 16-19 and Numbers 24:3, 4, 16 describe two different circumstances in which inspiration was active. After the prophet Daniel heard a voice that others did not, he lost his strength, was as in a deep sleep, and then was supernaturally strengthened and sustained. In a similar manner, Balaam saw a vision of the Almighty, having his eyes open but being unaware of his surroundings.

Jesus promised to send the Spirit of truth in every age as the great gift that would guide His people into all truth. In Acts 2:17, 18, the apostle Peter quoted God's promise in Joel 2:28, as being fulfilled at Pentecost. Both then and at the end of time, His Spirit was and will be poured out on all flesh, and many will prophesy. Through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the testimony

of Jesus is shared with all who wish to be part of His everlasting kingdom. Every person can keep God's commandments and do His will through the activity of the Holy Spirit, the Presence of Jesus in the human heart and mind.

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The next topic, **"HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLES OF THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY,"** was presented by Elder Larry Watts, from the U.S.A., beginning with (1) Study the general teaching. Seek to understand what the words are saying within the context of their setting in the Scriptures and the time when they were spoken or written. Go



Elder Larry Watts

to the mountain with Jesus, sit down, and pay close attention to what is being said, as did the disciples. Jesus was very careful and efficient in teaching His followers what they needed to understand, and His words have eternal value. Next, (2) consider time and place. What did the speaker or writer believe? And, finally, (3) look for basic principles and apply them within your circle of influence.

The following principles are inherent in the Ten Commandments: (1) Order, (2) Life comes only from life, (3) Grow or die, (4) Rest and restoration, (5) Loyalty and respect for authority, (6) Cause and effect, (7) Purity

and simplicity, (8) Excellence, (9) Honesty and integrity, (10) Gratitude and positive thinking.

A "Thus saith the Lord" is the lamp and light on the path to the heavenly home. The eternal principles remain unchanged, because God's character is eternal and man's nature has not changed. Circumstances may change, but "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Proverbs 4:18. "The Bible must be studied in order that you may properly estimate your progress, and understand your obligations.... The principles of God's law must become the principles of your life and the motive power of all your actions. The impulses of your heart must be regulated by the gospel of the Son of God, and your character must be fashioned after the divine Pattern.... There should be a determined resistance of evil in the strength of Christ. Forgetting what is behind, we should press toward the mark with all diligence. The truth must be stamped upon the soul, woven into the character, until the life is sanctified through the power of God." —*Review and Herald*, May 1, 1888.

The testimonies consistently point to God's word, the central theme of which is redemption, restoration of the divine image in the human soul, and man's uplifting. "He who grasps this thought has before him an infinite field for study. He has the key that will unlock to him the whole treasure house of God's word." —*Education*, p. 126. Nothing is above the word; it is the ultimate authority. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." 1 Peter 1:22.

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Elder Douglas Francis, from Sri Lanka/India, presented the topic **"PLAGIARISM AND LITERARY BORROWING."** Borrowing, in the literary sense, means to take and use something that does not belong to oneself. Sister White is accused of plagiarism because



Elder Douglas Francis

she drew on the writings of others. However, there are four reasons for her doing this: (1) She felt an inadequacy in trying to put divine thoughts and scenes into human language, so when she found fitting phrases in what she read by other Christian writers, she thankfully used those thoughts and scenes (and her writing was for the purpose of presenting the gospel, not for personal gain); (2) within the context of the visions, she needed to fill in geographical, historical, chronological, and other details that could be found in books, (3) the Lord led her to wonderful works by others who had in the past written gems of truth drawn from nature and life experiences; sometimes references to these were given; sometimes, not; (4) writings of her fellow workers were incorporated wherever it was a blessing to do so.

Christ set the example in this. "Christ was the originator of all the ancient gems of truth. Through the work of the enemy these truths had been displaced. They had been disconnected from their true position, and

placed in the framework of error. Christ's work was to readjust and establish the precious gems in the framework of truth....

"Christ Himself could use any of these old truths without borrowing the smallest particle, for He had originated them all. He had cast them into the minds and thoughts of each generation, and when He came to our world He rearranged and vitalized the truths which had become dead, making them more forcible for the benefit of future generations. It was Jesus Christ who had the power of rescuing the truths from the rubbish, and again giving them to the world with more than their original freshness and power." *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 13, pp. 241, 242. Furthermore, "... There is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us." Ecclesiastes 1:1, 10.

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After a break, opportunity was given for **QUESTIONS** to be submitted for the morning's presenters to comment on. Elder Idel Suarez, Jr., explained that Sister White asked for re-baptism and was re-baptized by her husband, Elder James White, when both of them accepted the Sabbath truth, which she at first resisted when she heard about it from Joseph Bates.

Elder Suarez also answered a question concerning Sister White's eating flesh meat. When Sister White was sick in 1863, she began to eliminate meat from her diet. A Catholic lady first spoke to Sister White about the dangers of pork and meat. However, she continued to eat fish and poultry until she eliminated all flesh food in the 1890s.

Responding to a question whether Sister White had visions for the present or for the future,



Accompanying the congregational singing—Anna Petkov and Damaris Hunger, flutists, and Sister Karola Kraenzmer, pianist

Elder Larry Watts stated that principles have both a present and a future application. Sister White's work was one primarily of confirmation—upholding the sacred word—and God's purpose in all of this is to sanctify His people.

Another question addressed to Elder Watts was what hermeneutical principle can be applied to the Christmas tree. The answer was that Sister White took the Christmas tree idea and in essence said, "If you need to have a Christmas tree, do this with it." She sought to teach the opposite of what was being done. In that context, the responsibility of each of us is to learn to give to others, not to get from others.

Elder Parmenas Shirima commented on a question concerning the difference between divine and human inspiration. Concerning Sister White, there is documented medical, scientific, and eyewitness evidence of miraculous manifestations in her life and work; furthermore, her teaching agreed with the Bible and what other prophets taught. By contrast, human inspiration is from earthly sources and sometimes has adverse effects—bad results. Sister White never assumed the title of prophetess, especially

because others who claimed to be prophets often taught contrary to God's word. Her work encompassed a good deal more than that of a prophet.

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At noon, Brother Addin and Sister Lorena Ajucum, from Puerto Rico and Colombia, provided data concerning the **"HISTORY OF TESTIMONIES FOR THE CHURCH."** This series of books originated as pamphlets written



Brother Addin Ajucum

over half a century (1855-1909) as present truth in a simple form that people could understand. They include practical instruction, doctrine, and counsel from the sacred word. The historical background of the various testimonies was shown in a chart that also outlined what was hap-

pening at the time and what the purpose of each message was.

Sometimes a pamphlet was actually a personal appeal to an individual person, but the principles applied to that individual case provided valuable instruction for others who read the pamphlets and wanted to learn from them. Thus, all of the testimonies gave correction, counsel, and encouragement. There are nine volumes in the series; and whenever the individual testimonies as pamphlets were assembled into a book, an introduction was added to give the background of the writings. The main message in the *Testimonies for the Church* is that Jesus is all and in all.

The Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy

After lunch, Elder Joel Barnedo, from the Philippines/U.S.A., presented the topic **“THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY IN THE BIBLE.”** The Spirit of prophecy is the Holy Spirit working through human beings on earth. The first mention of Him is in Genesis 1:2, where He is presented as a Co-worker of the divine Powers. He is found over and over again down through the Old Testament and appearing as light in the form of a dove over the Saviour at His baptism.

God’s purpose is to re-populate heaven by giving to the redeemed the places occupied by the angels who fell under the control of the great adversary. With this purpose in mind, the Holy Spirit has given instruction and inspiration to the prophets for the people. God appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in vision. After the prophet Malachi, there were no prophets for some 600 years. But the Holy Spirit worked mightily with John the Baptist and others in the New Testament. After that, even though there were few prophets



Elder Joel Barnedo

during the Middle Ages, those who searched for God were found of Him even when truth was suppressed.

The gift of prophecy was strong in early Adventism as young people burned with the God-given desire to preach the gospel. It is no different now. We are privileged to be able to share the testimony of Jesus and to preach Christ in His law, in health, in prophecy, and in experience. “In ancient times God spoke to men by the mouth of prophets and apostles. In these days He speaks to them by the testimonies of His Spirit. There was never a time when God instructed His people more earnestly than He instructs them now concerning His will and the course that He would have them pursue.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 147, 148.

Sister White testified to the centrality of the Bible, which has two golden threads—the love of God in Christ and the holiness of the word. Bring Christ first before anything else.

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Next, the topic **“ARE THE WRITINGS OF ELLEN G. WHITE ONLY HOMILETIC?”** was presented by Elder Tzvetan Petkov, from Sweden/U.S.A. The word “homiletic” pertains to preaching or teaching. During the meetings in 1920 between some of the Seventh-day Adventist General

Conference Committee members and the representatives of the Seventh-day Adventist Reform Movement, Elder A.G. Daniells was asked the question by the Reformers, “What is the position of the General Conference toward the testimonies of Sister White? Are they inspired? Yes or no?”

Elder Daniells’ answer was that Sister White never said that her words were inspired, that she always warned people not to accept her answers as the final decision. Great care needs to be exercised when one is dealing with messages conveyed by the Holy Spirit. “Inspiration acts not on the man’s words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and



Elder Tzvetan Petkov

will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God.” —(Manuscript 24, 1886, written in Europe in 1886).

In 1 Corinthians 7:6, 10, 12, the apostle Paul differentiates between God’s word and man’s ideas. In searching the messages of the holy Scriptures and the inspired writings, there are guidelines to be followed, such as consideration of the context,

principles of interpretation, and even the difference between the gift of a prophet and the office of a prophet, the latter being one who is chosen by God.

The purpose of Sister White’s writings includes the following: Warning, reproof, counsel, impressing minds and hearts, simplifying things that are hard to understand, arousing people’s thoughts, exalting the holy word, bringing back the light that has been lost, calling attention to present truths, and making God’s word plain and pointed. Thus, all who read the messages are responsible for their own choices and will be without excuse in the day of reckoning. The warning is clear: “Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper.” 2 Chronicles 20:20.

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Elder Pablo Hunger, from Austria/U.S.A., discussed the **“RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BIBLE AND SPIRIT OF PROPHECY,”** beginning with 2 Peter 1:19: “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.” By definition (Revelation 19:10), the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy. The Scriptures stress the importance of the work of the prophets. The platform of truth consists of the God’s holy law and the testimony of Jesus.

Sister White wrote these precious words: “I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice. By that Word we are to be judged. God has, in that Word, promised to give visions in the ‘last days’; not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of His people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth.” —*Early Writings*, p. 78.

The importance of the Bible can be summarized as follows: It is the rule of faith and practice, infallible, the test of experience, the inspired word of God, the will of God, and the highest education. It is for all ages and all classes and contains the truth. Those who are wise will cling to



Elder Pablo Hunger

the Bible, obey the sacred precepts it contains, and find comfort and guidance for everything in life.

If the Scriptures are all these things, then why are the testimonies needed? This has to do with human nature, particularly man's tendency to forget God and His word. The testimonies are given by our loving God as a gift at the end of time to exalt, attract, and call attention to Bible truths that have been neglected, to simplify the sacred word, to arouse and impress minds, to emphasize general Biblical principles, and to give details concerning and examples of those principles.

This is similar to some prophetic books mentioned in the Bible but not included in the canon (such as Jasher, Jehu, Nathan and Gad, Ahijah and Iddo). They were written to meet a specific need at a specific time. The same can be said for the writings of Sister White. Let us heed every message from the Spirit of prophecy.

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Another opportunity was given for the attendees to ask the presenters **QUESTIONS**. Elder Douglas Francis was asked if materials Sister White used from other authors are included in the books that are available today. The answer is, Yes.

When Sister White recommended that the book *Daniel and the Revelation* be read, was she referring to the book by Uriah Smith? Again, the answer is, Yes, she recommended his book.

A third question asked of Elder Francis was, "Is there any difference between books by Sister White published during her life and those released after her death?" The response was that compilations of her writings need to be read with care, because the selection and order of statements, subheads, and comments were done by others. Furthermore, comments about common things should be understood as not inspired.

Elder Tzvetan Petkov was asked to comment on the service of women in connection with the activities carried out by Sister White. The Old and New Testaments present a balance in that women are never shown as priests but serve in other capacities such as judges and prophetesses. Both women and men are chosen as teachers in the church today.

One additional question was addressed to Elder Petkov: "If Sister White did not claim to be a prophetess, why do we call her one?" In the Old Testament Deborah was called to the position of judge, but she was also a prophetess. While Sister White said that the title God gave her was "messenger," she filled other roles, including prophetess, writer, teacher, preacher, and medical advisor.

The question was asked, "Did Sister Ellen G. White have an adopted daughter?" Elder Petkov responded by pointing out that

Sister White helped about 65 young people, without formally adopting them. She provided for their care and education.

Elder Hunger was asked to comment on the question, "If the work of the Holy Spirit is to open minds to the Scriptures, why are the testimonies needed?" The reply was that the books and materials are another way to reach people, just as the prophets in the Scriptures were sent out to preach and to emphasize the importance of particular principles. The Holy Spirit is needed at all times and in every case.

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The final presentation of this busy, blessed day was an evangelistic service presented by Elder Douglas Francis, **"THE GREAT VISIONS OF ELLEN G. WHITE."** To introduce this topic, Elder Francis read a statement from *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 67, where Sister White wrote: "In these letters which I write, in the testimonies I bear, I am presenting to you that which

cherished. The first one occurred when Sister White was 17 years old, in December 1844, known as "The Path," which showed God's people traveling an increasingly narrow path high above the world. This vision can be found in *Life Sketches*, p. 64. The lesson is for all: "If they kept their eyes fixed on Jesus, who was just before them, leading them to the city, they were safe." This vision is especially an encouragement to the young people to devote their talents to the Lord and His service, for Sister White was very young when this vision came to her.

A year later, an inspiring vision of the new earth was given to her. This is recorded in *Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White*, pp. 62-64.

The circumstances of another vision, known as "The Randolph Vision," which lasted for four hours, are recorded in *Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White* (1880), pp. 231-234. This event, which occurred in



Brother Shannon Francis and Elder Larry Watts in the broadcast booth

the Lord has presented to me. I do not write one article in the paper expressing merely my own ideas. They are what God has opened before me in vision—the precious rays of light shining from the throne."

There are three visions that are especially well known and

the winter of 1845-46, is well known because that was the time Sister White held a huge family Bible above her head with her left hand while in vision, turning the pages with her right hand and quoting Bible verses.

Other visions were given to Sister White on the following

subjects: The heavenly sanctuary, the sealing, the open and shut door, modern spiritualism, the shaking, the great controversy, the Civil War, and health reform. From a young age, Sister White sacrificed her life to warn and encourage people to seek the heavenly treasure. Elder Francis encouraged everyone to read all of the visions, to pray earnestly without ceasing, and to cultivate one's personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

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A book table set up in the cafeteria by IMS Publishing Assn., the General Conference publishing house, offered books and materials for sale.

Friday, July 31

The **MORNING DEVOTION** was given by Elder Humberto Ajucum, from Puerto Rico. After reading Ephesians 4:13, "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," he handed out copies of Chapter 13 from *Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 109-111, titled "Importance of Receiving the Holy Spirit." This chapter relates an impressive dream given to Sister White, in which "a sentinel stood at the door of an important building, and asked everyone who came for entrance, 'Have ye received the Holy Ghost?' A measuring-line was in his hand, and only very, very few were admitted into the building. 'Your size as a human being is nothing,' he said. 'But if you have reached the full stature of a man in Christ Jesus, according to the knowledge you have had, you will receive an appointment to sit with Christ at the marriage supper of the Lamb; and through the eternal ages, you will never cease to learn of the blessings granted in the banquet prepared for you.'"

Part of this chapter was read, and everyone was encouraged to read all of it and earnestly request the presence of the Holy Spirit in his or her life. Every habit, system, form, and attitude that does not contribute to the strengthening of one's spiritual life needs to be recognized and put away. Jesus said, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Matthew 11:29. God's children will have hearts full of faith that works by love and also the mind of Christ.

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After breakfast, Elder Idel Suarez, Jr., spoke to the assembled congregation about **BAPTISM** and presented three children of two ministers for the public examination preceding baptism. "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us

a condition for entrance into the synagogue. Baptism is a similar ordinance, not a sacrament, meaning that it is a symbol of being cleansed from sin and coming into Christ and His spiritual kingdom; but it has no salvific value or merit in and of itself.

After one has made a covenant with Jesus through baptism, when he is tempted to sin, his mind turns to his pledge of loyalty to God—"I cannot do that, for I have been baptized and washed from sin." This is one of many ways in which baptism is a great protection.

This ordinance is also a symbol of being married to Jesus. When we first believe in Jesus, it is like conception, and then baptism is a symbol of being born—born again. Babies are born in water, and Jesus gave baptism by immersion in water as a condition of entrance into His

of God; pledged themselves to labor earnestly for the salvation of sinners." —*Messages to Young People*, p. 317.

The three baptismal candidates, Damaris Hunger, Cadmiel Hunger, and Jo-Anne Francis, were called to the front to publicly affirm their understanding of and commitment to the principles of sacred Scripture. They were baptized in a small river, with Elder Pablo Hunger performing the ceremony for his daughter and son and Elder Douglas Francis doing the same for his daughter. These young people were accepted into church fellowship at the baptismal site and were warmly greeted by all who witnessed this wonderful event.

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Before dinner, Sister Raquel Orce presented the subject of "**SPIRIT OF PROPHECY MEDICAL AND SCIENTIFIC VALUE.**" Up to this point, the presentations covered mostly doctrinal and spiritual aspects of the Spirit of prophecy. However, in the Scriptures God also gave promises concerning the health of His people, including this one: "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee." Exodus 15:26.

Sister White wrote about health matters that are today confirmed by medical and scientific studies, and quotations from medical journals were shown side by side with what had been written by God's servant decades before, including:

- The importance of prenatal care
- The dangers of tobacco
- The relationship between what a person eats and his health, including cancer



© JoAnne Francis

The three baptismal candidates: Damaris Hunger, Jo-Anne Francis, and Cadmiel Hunger

(not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 3:21. This Scripture says that baptism saves us. How is that? The *mikvah* is a Jewish ritual of cleansing that is carried out for various reasons, and even every day, in addition to being

kingdom, a process of adoption in which one receives the same rights of inheritance as a natural-born child.

At the same time, "Those who have taken part in the solemn rite of baptism have pledged themselves to seek for those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand



Sister Raquel Orce

- Electrical currents in the brain and nervous system
- The link between fats and cardiovascular disease
- The necessity of good circulation, especially exercise and fresh air
- The connection between alcohol, tobacco, and the “addictive mind”

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A concert presented by the students of Cedar Christian School preceded the evangelistic service by Elder Joel Barnedo, titled **“ELLEN G. WHITE’S MESSAGE TO YOUNG PEOPLE.”** “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth...” Ecclesiastes 12:1. The time of youth is unique and important, for that is when decisions are made that can influence one’s life forever. Parents were especially encouraged to (1) take their families to conferences and (2) invite ministers home. (3) There the children should be taught to love the ministers. (4) Parents should always see that their young people attend the church youth meetings and (5) do outreach activities with the family. The hope of God’s church is the young people, so everyone should be extremely careful always to encourage them. Parents were also urged never to give up—“God will make it hard for our children to be lost!”

There are many lines of opportunity in which young

people can find joy in serving others, including nursing, canvassing, giving Bible studies, ministry, medical missionary service, and evangelism. The secret to success is to “follow on to know the Lord” (Hosea 6:3) and always to seek to improve. God’s word contains wonderful principles that strengthen every effort to draw the youth closer and closer to God. Consider the following worthy aims:

- Faithful integrity
- Complete consecration
- Asserting one’s liberty in Christ
- Complete surrender to the divine Mind
- Continual relationship with God
- Daily advancement
- Firm decision

Elder Barnedo made an urgent call to the young people to join forces with God and labor as canvassers and evangelists.

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The **SABBATH OPENING service** was preached by Elder Uldarico Alejos, from Peru/U.S.A. God made everything perfect and to provide joy; this is especially true of the holy Sabbath, for when we love something, we want to share it. God does not want His people to go around with sad faces, lamenting the fact that they cannot do this or that.

It seems as if some Christians feel like they are jailed, like wild animals in cages in a zoo. But what about having a cage of joy? Everyone needs to think about how he lives and moves and ask God to give him great spiritual ideas and worthwhile endeavors. “Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.” Romans 12:11-13. Let us be grateful for everything God gives us and

also for everyone around us. Let us particularly be happy that we are privileged to serve the Lord and spend every Sabbath day with Him.

Sabbath, August 1

Sister Rachel Austria, from Philippines/U.S.A., presented the **MORNING DEVOTIONAL**, showing the relationship between the writings of Sister Ellen G. White and the Bible. The Bible says, “... The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy.” Revelation 19:10. The Spirit of prophecy encompasses all divine communication. “The word of God is the great detector of error; to it we believe everything must be brought. The Bible must be our standard for every doctrine. We must study it reverentially. We are to receive no one’s opinion without comparing it with the Scriptures. Here is divine authority which is supreme in matters of faith. It is the word of the living God that is to decide all controversies.” —*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 201.

Because people have too often left the “greater light” lying on the bookshelf, God gave “a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light. Oh, how much good would be accomplished if the books containing this light were read with a determination to carry out the principles they contain! There would be a thousandfold greater

vigilance, a thousandfold more self-denial and resolute effort. And many more would now be rejoicing in the light of present truth.” —*Colporteur Ministry*, pp. 126, 127.

The analogy was given of the inspired writings being like a telescope, which does not create stars but helps the viewer see what has already been created by God. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” 2 Timothy 3:16.

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The **SABBATH SCHOOL**, under the leadership of Elder Pablo Hunger, included a health minute, presented by Sister Linda Suarez, from the U.S.A., about the characteristics of garlic and how to obtain its benefits, as well as a missionary minute, given by Elder Pedro Ruiz, who stated that every church should have a working plan for every member to perform service of some kind.

The Sabbath School Lesson, titled “Man’s Origin,” emphasized that this world is a unique creation revealing God Himself. The Greek word *logos* means not just “word”—as in Psalm 33:6: “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth”—but also ideas, concepts, power, and His divine nature.



The Spanish Sabbath School Lesson was taught by Elder Ananías Hernandez, from Guatemala

We will be protected from fables by keeping everything in perspective, for God is in the process of restoring all that was lost through sin. An experience/relationship with Him will create His image in man and supply him with vision, purpose, and strong confidence in God.

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The sermon, given by Elder Idel Suarez, Jr., was titled **"THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS IN THE FINAL CONFLICT."** In their 2010 book *The Lessons of History*, Pulitzer-prize-winning historians Will and Ariel Durant wrote: "This I have learned"—that a wise man can learn from another man's experiences, but a fool cannot learn even from his own experiences. Current trends in society are deeply troubling, especially in the U.S., for, as Socrates, the father of western philosophy, stated, "The excess of liberty, whether in states or individuals, seems only to pass into excess of slavery."

The book of Acts tells about Paul and the apostles. God's people today need to study this book of the Bible, for the history that is recorded there will be repeated. One can see the life of

Jesus in the experiences of Peter and Paul. On one side, there was religious intolerance—not the freedom of religion we still have today. On the other hand, the veil between the visible and invisible worlds fell away, for the apostles had direct conversations with the holy angels, and the Holy Spirit spoke to them. This was also seen in God's communication with Cornelius, the Roman centurion, and Philip. Some among God's people have occasionally experienced such

communication, but the strength and frequency will increase as Jesus' coming nears.

The final conflict will be both fascinating and difficult, but God's people will overcome, as did the early Christians, with the angels and the Holy Spirit supporting every missionary outreach. According to Acts 4:4, during the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, many accepted Christ—as many as 5,000 men at once! Prisoners were converted, and the families

of kings and queens, and even those in Caesar's household, believed.

But there is a very strong warning in *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 218: "Those who have only a superficial understanding of truth will not be able clearly to expound the Scriptures, and give definite reasons for their faith. They will become confused, and will not be workmen that need not to be ashamed. Let no one imagine that he has no need to study, because he is not to preach in the sacred desk. You know not what God may require of you. It is a lamentable fact that the advancement of the cause is hindered by the dearth of educated laborers who have fitted themselves for positions of trust."

Confusion is an attribute of Babylon. God will make sure His faithful followers understand the message—the testimony of Jesus—when they spend time searching the Scriptures, and they will overcome by the blood of the Lamb. But what will you do if demons appear as extraterrestrials or angels? Will you be able to withstand the evil? Paul himself wrote: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach



The Sabbath blessing



These young people and children responded to the call at the end of the Sabbath service to dedicate their lives to Jesus Christ

any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Galatians 1:18. God's word will stand. The question is whether we will stand on the word.

A call was made for all who wanted to make their covenant with Jesus Christ, and eighteen young people came forward. May God give a special measure of His Spirit to all, especially the youth.

Ellen G. White's Life

After lunch, Elder Pablo Hunger presented a **"LIFE SKETCH OF ELLEN G. WHITE"**—in his words, "a fast journey through the life of Ellen G. White" with pictures, dates, and significant events. In fact, not just this one, but many of the presentations, included illustrations in PowerPoint. To receive the full blessing of these illustrations, everyone is encouraged to view the videos available on the General Conference website at "www.sda1844.org/Multimedia/Symposium-Spirit of Prophecy."

A summary of Sister White's early life included her being raised in a godly Methodist family in the state of Maine, a severe accident that she suffered at the age of 9 that nearly cost her her life, the development of the Advent Movement, and the great disappointment Adventists suffered when Jesus

did not come in 1844 according to their expectations. Sister White's response to the call to be a messenger for God's people in the last days, in cooperation with her husband and family, played out on the background of poverty, hard work, hours and hours of writing, sickness, mistrust from brethren in the faith, and victories won through the power of God, even in the face of what appeared often to be certain defeat. But those pioneers of the Advent Movement which we represent today were carried in faith by the God of heaven, who is still in charge of His spiritual kingdom on earth.

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Elder Douglas Francis followed with **"ELLEN G. WHITE'S DREAMS BEFORE BEING CALLED,"** telling about two important dreams that were given to Ellen Harmon when she was very young. Being naturally sensitive and timid, she struggled with her feelings and often felt lost. Some of us may have similar feelings when we truly want to go to heaven. However, it is good to consider that if we are afraid that we will lose out, then that is a sign that we really don't want to lose out, in which case we need to go to Jesus and plead with Him as did young Ellen.

The book *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White* is both inspiring and instructive, and Elder



Very nice musical specials were sung and played by Sefora and Teofilo Palacios Peña, some being original music

Douglas encouraged everyone to read it. On page 32, Sister White described her intense struggle with her feelings of being a sinner and longing to be accepted by God, as well as with the concept of the fires of an eternally burning hell, something that she had learned in the Methodist Church and that is still taught in Catholic and most Protestant circles. The dream she had about the temple and the lamb, which ended without her being comforted, was followed not long afterward by a dream of seeing Jesus after climbing a steep staircase; thus she gained hope and was filled with gladness, reverence, and love. In the second dream, Ellen was told to leave her possessions behind when she passed through the door to see Jesus. Then, when she left, she was told to pick up her things again. This is very

applicable for us today. We don't need any possessions to see Jesus. And since events around us show that His coming could be very soon, we are encouraged to use our divinely entrusted time, talents, and possessions to glorify God.

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The subject **"GOD'S MIRACLES IN HER LIFE"** was presented by Elder Tzvetan Petkov. Mark 16:17, 18 says that "signs shall follow them that believe," and that in His powerful name evil would be overcome and blessings would flow out to those in need. While it is true that miracles can be counterfeited by the great adversary and therefore are not to be trusted as indicating whether or not a person is of God, nevertheless God is all powerful and will help His faithful people.



Youth Choir

In Sister White's life, there were many experiences of divine action in her behalf, including her life being preserved following the terrible injury she suffered as a child, answers to prayer, protection from harm on many occasions, visions, dreams, the imparting of prophetic and scientific knowledge, healing of diseases and maladies, and daily providences clearly revealing God's care.

Jesus performed many miracles on earth. According to John 2:11, some believed in Him and marveled at the miracles He did through connection with His Father. But in John 12:37-40, Jesus' disciple relates clearly that "though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him" and why that was so. Today we are also surrounded by miracles. Do we have eyes to see them? Do we want to believe in Jesus? Faith in Him is the key to life.

&

Elder Larry Watts explained about "**ELLEN G. WHITE'S HEALTH**," showing that especially in the first half of her life she suffered a lot from weakness and illnesses, including even a stroke and cancer. Early in her life as the Lord's messenger, she told Him of her fear that she would become proud. Her prayer was answered when the Lord told her that, in the event of such danger, God would place sickness upon her to keep her humble.

There was a time in Australia when she was in such great pain for weeks that she couldn't even find a comfortable position so she could sleep. But, amazingly, she expressed her gratitude to God for the entire time she suffered because (1) it made her better able to understand how others felt who suffered similarly, and (2) during that time she had such close communion with Jesus that she looked back

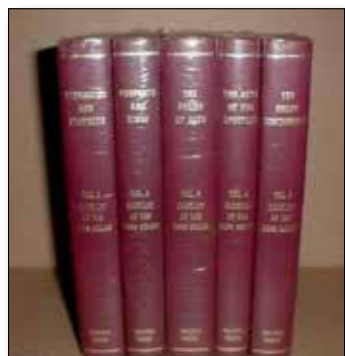
on the experience as one of the most wonderful of her life!

Certainly she had learned, as did the apostle Paul, "in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." Philippians 4:11. It is very valuable for all of us to trust God always—in supposed good days and bad—and to know, as did these two messengers of God, "that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28.

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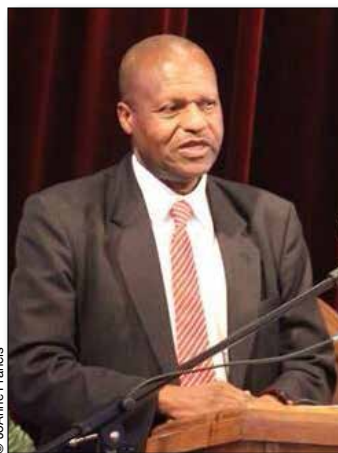
For the evening's evangelistic service, Brother Prudent Katide, from South Africa, discussed "**THE GREAT CONTROVERSY**," both the book by that title and the epic battle between Christ and Satan. The book, the fifth and last in the "Conflict of the Ages Series," written by Sister White, covers the last two millennia of this world's history and reaches to the close of time. It lays out God's view of sin and His infinitely wise plan for freeing those who are ensnared by the powers of evil.

One of Sister White's favorite texts was 2 Corinthians 4:7: "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not



Conflict of the Ages Series

of us." She understood the battle she had to face and saw herself as a feeble messenger of the Lord just trying to do her duty. According to Jeremiah 45:1-5, one way the Lord works to help



Brother Prudent Katide

man in the great controversy is by keeping him humble so the power of God is what is seen, not man. James White and a number of staff members helped Sister White by taking her writings and putting them into readable form, after which she reviewed everything. Still today, God wants to work with thinking people, not robots. Jesus, the Word, the embodiment of the sacred Scriptures, came in the flesh. All that is asked of God's weak, feeble people is to faithfully do their duty.

The Holy Spirit does not stop communicating light to individual minds, and He leads all who see themselves as weak, feeble instruments to realize that they are part of the battle, which will increase in intensity to the close of time. Satan will work with all power and lying wonders while Jesus is preparing a people who will be prepared to stand before Him at His coming.

Horrific events of the past, such as the fall of Jerusalem, the French Revolution, the Inquisition, world wars, and strife in the world today, will be overshadowed by the intensity of approaching events. Satan's deceptions are subtle, and his assaults are more determined than ever before. Sadly, the Protestantism of the Reformation has succumbed to the other "isms" at work today—paganism,

humanism, atheism, capitalism, communism, and ecumenism—all of which attempt to tear God from His throne. Intense smoke is coming from the bottomless pit, clouding people's minds and blinding the world so they cannot see Jesus. See Revelation 8 and 9.

The dragon, the beast, and the false prophet will target God's people, but those who stand faithful will have their dependence in God and give the final warning. There will be no middle ground in the great controversy, and God will have the last word!

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The Sabbath closing service, presented by Elder Parmenas Shirima, was titled "**THE DESIRE OF AGES**," the third and middle book in the "Conflict of the Ages Series." This book focuses on Jesus' first coming, life, mission, sacrifice, resurrection, and ministry as man's great High Priest. In this book, John 3:16 is quoted 118 times. The life of Jesus was Sister White's favorite topic. In a letter to Elder O.A. Olsen, president of the General Conference, she expressed her feelings of inadequacy to write about such exalted subjects, saying that she did not know how to present these subjects with living power. But this book is acknowledged, even by non-Adventists, as one of the most beautiful books ever written on the life of Christ. This book includes things she had written previously about Jesus, and the materials that were not included went into other smaller books that are also very inspiring—*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, *Christ's Object Lessons*, and *The Ministry of Healing*.

Everyone is urged to be familiar with these books, for they contain a wealth of inspirational principles and divine thought. Jesus is the Saviour of the world, not of just a certain

group of people. Our prayer should be, "Lord, give me the Spirit of Jesus."

Sunday, August 2

The **MORNING DEVOTION** was opened by Elder Aureliano Diaz, from Honduras, with Isaiah 60:1, 2: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee." In chapter 6:8, the Lord asked who would carry His message to others, and the prophet's response was, "Here am I; send me." The Lord asks us this same question: Who will go and save lost souls in the world? When we respond, it should not be from a sense of obligation but heartfelt—we want to go!

Elder Diaz told a very nice story about opening a new field in his country. He and another brother worked for several months in one place, and eight people accepted the gospel message, were organized as a branch Sabbath school, and prepared for baptism. One day Elder Diaz received a call, and the person on the phone said, "A pastor came and said you lied!"

The caller then said that, of the little group, two had gone with the other pastor; and the rest, to the world. Elder Diaz stated that he wanted to speak with that pastor. Arrangements were made, and eventually a meeting was arranged for a discussion. News traveled fast among various interested people that two pastors were going to do battle over the Sabbath/Sunday issue. So many people wanted to attend the meeting that it had to be moved to a field. As the pastor opened the meeting with singing and prayer, Elder Diaz prayed as he had never prayed before, for the eight souls and all the others

from the town who were present. The Lord gave Elder Diaz strength as he introduced himself as the pastor of the SDA Church, Reform Movement, and then presented a study about the two laws, giving the other pastor and the man who had called Bible verses to read. There was silence as the verses were read, and at the end when questions were invited, no one asked anything.

The pastor came to Elder Diaz and said, "I congratulate you on your presentation; now the matter is clear to me. Thank you. The Lord has used you." Now there is opportunity to present more such messages. In a few months, the fourth church in that area will be dedicated. Everyone was encouraged to stand up and go to work, for the Lord and His angels are waiting to help.

Her World, Family, and Homes

After breakfast, Sister Linda Suarez provided a picture of what society was like in the United States in the 1800s, when the early Adventists lived and worked. The title of her presentation was **"THE WORLD OF**



© JoAnne Francis

Sister Linda Suarez

ELLEN G. WHITE." Born during the time known as the Second Great Awakening, Sister White lived through the administrations of 23 U.S. Presidents, most of whom believed in God.

When she died, the U.S. was on the verge of becoming a superpower. It was typical in those days for camp meetings to be held, with people staying in tents and prayer and confession being made during the meetings.

Some new religious denominations arose at that time, including the Church of Christ, Mormons, and Seventh-day Adventists. Churches were at the forefront in trying to solve social problems through Christian temperance. The Methodists, of which the Harmon family was a part, sent spiritual men known as Circuit Riders from farmhouse to farmhouse to minister to families, and this was appropriate, because at that time 92.8 percent of the people lived in rural areas (today that has fallen to 20 percent). In small communities, people helped one another and joined in, for example, barn raising, quilting bees, and cooking bees.

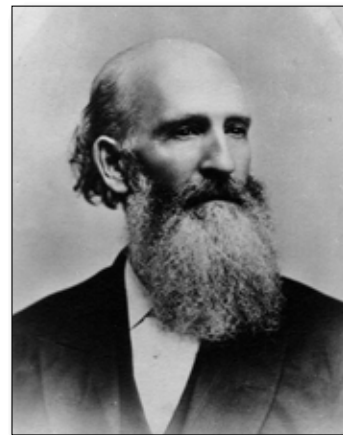
This was also the time when there was strife between immigrants and native Americans, and more than 30,000 Indians were killed in forty battles. There were conflicts over slavery, and abolitionist societies worked not just to free slaves but also to open people's eyes to the injustice of the terrible practice of enslaving men's souls. Sister White wrote that the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which required escaped slaves to be returned to their former owners, was in direct opposition to the teachings of Jesus. This was clear, for God is no respecter of persons and wants all to prepare for the heavenly kingdom.

Tensions came to a head in the Civil War, in which, Sister White wrote, God's people could not engage, for there would be a continual conflict between the truth and worldly men's ideas. The war was a terrible drain on the country, and many people wanted to do something about

it. Eleven denominations met and pushed for the Congress to pass a national Sunday law, which did not happen. Still, during this time, Adventists paid fines and spent time in jail and on chain gangs for working on Sunday. Many problems from that time are still in existence today, including racial tensions and rumblings of a Sunday law. Amid all these things, Sister White's attitude was one of firm faith, and on her deathbed she said, "I know in whom I have believed."

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The next presentation, by Sister Raquel Orce, was about **"ELLEN G. WHITE'S FAMILY LIFE."** In her family and married life, Sister White had many difficulties. For starters, she was only 18 years old and James White was 25 when they married in 1846. They had a common belief, hope, and



Elder James White

objectives, so their union was an objective one, based on rational considerations. They had absolutely nothing when they got married, and they lived for some time in other people's homes. James White's hard work ethic was proverbial, and it was only through rigid economy, self-denial, and God's grace that the two of them survived.

Their marriage was not perfect, for their personalities were quite different, with James



James White built this home in Battle Creek, Michigan, in 1856

White often working from dawn to dusk without stopping and generally insisting on doing everything himself, to perfection, which led to exhaustion and his weakened health, including three strokes. He was an excellent organizer and served three terms as president of the General Conference of the early Seventh-day Adventist Church. When he became very ill, a farm was purchased so Sister White could nurse him back to health. He died in 1881 at the age of 60 from his final stroke.

The Whites had four sons, with the firstborn dying of pneumonia at the age of 16 and the lastborn dying when he was just three months old. Sister White suffered greatly at having to leave her children in the care of others so she could travel and speak; but the work of God took priority, and He sustained her in many marvelous ways. Over the many years, a number of orphans were also helped by the White family, and other Adventist families were enlisted to raise these children.

The different personalities of the two middle sons, William and Edson, caused disagreements between the parents, but in the end both sons were staunch Adventists and great helpers in the cause of God. Sister White loved them deeply and had a very strong relationship with them.

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Elder Idel Suarez, Jr., gave a presentation about **"HER THREE HOMES,"** for the final presentation of the Symposium.



Sister White lived at Sunnyside, in Cooranbong, Australia, for four years

Although the Whites lived in more places, three homes were prominent.

James White built a home for the family in Battle Creek, Michigan, when he was 34 and Sister White was 28; their three sons were eight, six, and 18 months at the time. The family lived in this home for seven years, from 1856 to 1863. James White then earned \$4 a week. This is the only home where all four children lived together, and two of them died here. The home had a wood stove, and water had to be brought to the house. Eventually a cistern was built under the house, and a pump was installed

to bring water into the house. Both James and Ellen White suffered strokes when they lived in this house.

Sister White had Sunnyside, in Cooranbong, built on sixty acres in Australia. She lived there for only four years, from 1896 to 1900, with her son William and his family. William had twin sons there, and he named them after his two brothers who had died. Sister White called this her wilderness home. In addition to ten to sixteen people living in this house, couples would come there to get married, and patients who needed care would also find a place of comfort and refuge. There was a fireplace in every room, and the large dining-room

typing her manuscripts, after which she reviewed their work and corrected and approved everything.

In 1900, Elmhaven, in St. Helena, California, was purchased for \$5,000 from a wealthy contractor. This included the land and gardens, the house, and all the furnishings. This place was a great blessing to Sister White in the last years of her life (1900-1915). The St. Helena Sanitarium could be seen on the hill above the house. It is said that at this home morning worship was short, but evening worship lasted for 1½ to 2 hours, for everyone prayed, including all of the children. A staff of assistants supported the activities of the home, including care of the house and gardens, cooking, and literary responsibilities. Today Elmhaven is open to the public and is visited by people from all parts of the world.

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The Symposium came to a **CLOSE** as Elders Douglas Francis and Pablo Hunger spoke some final words of gratitude and encouragement. Elder Francis explained that he had an Asian perspective on what had been studied during these days; the English colonized India, where Brother Francis grew up, and therefore English was the literary language. It was a great blessing to the Indian people to be able to



Elmhaven, in St. Helena, California, was Sister White's residence from 1900 until her death in 1915

read the writings of Sister White in the original language. To this day, they are grateful for the gift that was given to them.

Going forward, each of us is personally challenged to come up “to the help of the Lord against the mighty” (Judges 5:23). Sister White wrote: “The work that lies before us is one that will put to the stretch every power of the human being. It will call for the exercise of strong faith and constant vigilance. At times the difficulties that we shall meet will be most disheartening. The very greatness of the task will appall us. And yet, with God’s help, His servants will finally triumph. ‘Wherefore,’ my brethren, ‘I desire that ye faint not’ (Ephesians 3:13) because of the trying experiences that are before you. Jesus will be with you; He will go before you by His Holy Spirit, preparing the way; and He will be your helper in every emergency.” —*Selected Messages*, book 2, pp. 407, 408.

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our

Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man.” Let us all together be centered in Jesus Christ. “Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.” Ephesians 3:14-16, 20, 21.

Elder Hunger read again the powerful promise of 2 Chronicles 20:20: “Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper.” He read the following story from *Gospel Workers*, pp. 31, 32: “John Welch, a minister of the gospel, felt so great a burden for souls that he often rose in the night to send up to God his supplication for their salvation. On one occasion his wife pleaded with him to regard his health,

and not venture on such exposure. His answer was, ‘O woman, I have the souls of three thousand to answer for, and I know not how it is with them.’

“In a town in New England a well was being dug. When the work was nearly finished, while one man was still at the bottom, the earth caved in and buried him. Instantly the alarm was sent out, and mechanics, farmers, merchants, lawyers, hurried breathlessly to the rescue. Ropes, ladders, spades, and shovels were brought by eager, willing hands. ‘Save him, O save him!’ was the cry.

“Men worked with desperate energy, till the sweat stood in beads upon their brows and their arms trembled with the exertion. At length a pipe was thrust down, through which they shouted to the man to answer if he were still alive. The response came, ‘Alive, but make haste. It is fearful in here.’ With a shout of joy they renewed their efforts, and at last he was reached and saved, and the cheer that went

up seemed to pierce the very heavens. ‘He is saved!’ echoed through every street in the town.

“Was this too great zeal and interest, too great enthusiasm, to save one man? It surely was not; but what is the loss of temporal life in comparison with the loss of a soul? If the threatened loss of a life will arouse in human hearts a feeling so intense, should not the loss of a soul arouse even deeper solicitude in men who claim to realize the danger of those apart from Christ? Shall not the servants of God show as great zeal in laboring for the salvation of souls as was shown for the life of that one man buried in a well?”

All were urged to take these thoughts home with them and to hurry to find souls. Elder Idel Suarez, Jr., then closed the Symposium by thanking all the presenters, assistants, musicians, kitchen staff, chapel monitors, and participants for their labor and attention. Let us all continue to learn more about and share the testimony of Jesus Christ. **SW**



Group after the baptism

Ellen G. White's Words

concerning the writing of *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan*

Through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the scenes of the long-continued conflict between good and evil have been opened to the writer of these pages. From time to time I have been permitted to behold the working, in different ages, of the great controversy between Christ, the Prince of life, the Author of our salvation, and Satan, the prince of evil, the author of sin, the first transgressor of God's holy law. Satan's enmity against Christ has been manifested against His followers. The same hatred of the principles of God's law, the same policy of deception, by which error is made to appear as truth, by which human laws are substituted for the law of God, and men are led to worship the creature rather than the Creator, may be traced in all the history of the past. Satan's efforts to misrepresent the character of God, to cause men to cherish a false conception of the Creator, and thus to regard Him with fear and hate rather than with love; his endeavors to set aside the divine law, leading the people to think themselves free from its requirements; and his persecution of those who dare to resist his deceptions, have been steadfastly pursued in all ages. They may be traced in the history of patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, of martyrs and reformers.

In the great final conflict, Satan will employ the same policy, manifest the same spirit, and work for the same end as in all preceding ages. That which has been, will be, except that the coming struggle will be marked with a terrible intensity such as the world has never witnessed. Satan's deceptions will be more subtle, his assaults more determined. If it were possible, he would lead astray the elect. Mark 13:22, R.V.

As the Spirit of God has opened to my mind the great truths of His word, and the scenes of the past and the future, I have been bidden to make known to others that which has thus been revealed--to trace the history of the controversy in past ages, and especially so to present it as to shed a light on the fast-approaching struggle of the future. In pursuance of this purpose, I have endeavored to select and group together events in the history of the church in such a manner as to trace the unfolding of the great testing truths that at different periods have been given to the world, that have excited the wrath of Satan, and the enmity of a world-loving church, and that have been maintained by the witness of those who "loved not their lives unto the death."

In these records we may see a foreshadowing of the conflict before us. Regarding them in the light of God's word, and

by the illumination of His Spirit, we may see unveiled the devices of the wicked one, and the dangers which they must shun who would be found "without fault" before the Lord at His coming....

The great events which have marked the progress of reform in past ages are matters of history, well known and universally acknowledged by the Protestant world; they are facts which none can gainsay. This history I have presented briefly, in accordance with the scope of the book, and the brevity which must necessarily be observed, the facts having been condensed into as little space as seemed consistent with a proper understanding of their application. In some cases where a historian has so grouped together events as to afford, in brief, a comprehensive view of the subject, or has summarized details in a convenient manner, his words have been quoted; but in some instances no specific credit has been given, since the quotations are not given for the purpose of citing that writer as authority, but because his statement affords a ready and forcible presentation of the subject. In narrating the experience and views of those carrying forward the work of reform in our own time, similar use has been made of their published works.

It is not so much the object of this book to present new truths concerning the struggles of former times, as to bring out facts and principles which have a bearing on coming events. Yet viewed as a part of the controversy between the forces of light and darkness, all these records of the past are seen to have a new significance; and through them a light is cast upon the future, illumining the pathway of those who, like the reformers of past ages, will be called, even at the peril of all earthly good, to witness "for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."

To unfold the scenes of the great controversy between truth and error; to reveal the wiles of Satan, and the means by which he may be successfully resisted; to present a satisfactory solution of the great problem of evil, shedding such a light upon the origin and the final disposition of sin as to make fully manifest the justice and benevolence of God in all His dealings with His creatures; and to show the holy, unchanging nature of His law, is the object of this book. That through its influence souls may be delivered from the power of darkness, and become "partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," to the praise of Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us, is the earnest prayer of the writer. —*The Great Controversy*, pp. x-xii.

New church in Lilongwe and activities in Malawi

"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase." 1 Corinthians 3:6.

Pastor Libamu Jaleta, the missionary who transferred recently to Malawi, sent some pictures showing the progress of the work in this landlocked country in southeast Africa. Pastor Libamu is originally from

Ethiopia. He was transferred by the General Conference to Malawi with his family to support the work.

By the grace of God, the church in Malawi is flourishing. Despite hardships, such as the flooding at the beginning of this year, their membership continues to grow, and the churches continue to thrive.

Let us continue to support God's cause with our prayers and monetary gifts.



Baptism in June 2015—Malawi



Baptism in June 2015—Malawi



Youth camp participants in Malawi



Conference group in Malawi



Believers in a new church in Lilongwe, Malawi

Historic moment in Benin

"The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad." Psalm 126:3.

The Benin Field Committee sends greetings to all brethren in the whole world, as well as to the General Conference, and would like to share their great joy that the church in Benin is now registered. We praise the

Lord for this historic moment and for rewarding the patient efforts of the brethren.



The believers in Benin are very grateful to God for completion of the church registration



Study group in Namibia

Baptisms in Namibia

God is blessing His work in Namibia. Following Bible studies and seminars, four souls were baptized in June in the Zambezi River, which flows along the eastern border. May the Lord give each of us a great desire to labor earnestly for the salvation of souls.

“Big Brother” conference in Cameroon

Luke 10:2: “Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord

of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into His harvest.”

Cameroon began implementing the “Big Brother Plan” in their local churches. After praying for relatives and friends for three months, including creating prayer groups, a conference was organized, to which the souls for whom they had been praying were invited to testify of the result of the group prayers during the three-month period. After the message was presented, eleven souls opened their hearts and responded to the call.

Every church is encouraged to reach out by means of the



Cameroon group at the “Big Brother” conference

Big Brother Plan. Materials in English and Spanish can be requested from the General Conference at info@sda1844.org.

Rain and flooding in Myanmar

The brethren in Myanmar have written to us about the heavy monsoon rains in the past month that have affected twelve out of Myanmar’s fourteen states.

Now he is homeless. Because of heavy rain, the food supply is stopped and mothers are lining up to buy a little rice for the whole day.” Our brethren are asking for prayers that the Lord may send somebody to help them.

Please remember the Disaster Management Fund set up by the General Conference and the Good Samaritan Department. Emergency help will be advanced from this fund as



Devastation resulting from the floods in Myanmar

According to the information received from our brethren on August 2, 2015, “there is a terrible flood in Myanmar. Many people are homeless—without clothes and food—and they are dying. Food prices are increasing more than five times.”

A day later, we received the following message: “In this day the whole of Myanmar is suffering a terrible disaster. Most of the country is flooded. There are landslides in many places. All the roads are damaged. Many people are homeless, and they have no food, no clothes, and no drinking water.”

On August 12, we were notified that because of landslides, “one of our members lost his house.

needed. May the Lord bless every cheerful giver.

—The Good Samaritan
Department of the
General Conference



A miraculous escape following the floods in Myanmar

News from Vanuatu

Praise to our Lord Jesus Christ for His wonderful providence and blessings. We know that He works things out in His own way for the good of those who fear Him.

For two weeks, I have had the wonderful opportunity of visiting the islands of Vanuatu to open the way for establishing our mission in this island nation.

Vanuatu is still recovering from the effects of cyclone Pama, the evidences of which could be seen in the villages. Yet the Lord has continued to bless the island with the growth of vegetation and, of course, restored gardens and food supplies. It was fortunate that some islands of Vanuatu, such as Santo, which is the largest island, were not as severely affected as Efate, where Port Vila is situated. There were still local food crops available for the main urban center.

I spent some time on the Island of Epi, which lies north of Efate. It takes eight hours to travel by boat from Port Vila to reach the island, or 30 minutes by plane.

Brother Don William has fully accepted the message and is ready to be baptized. He has a coconut plantation for copra production, peanut farms, and vegetable gardens. He also is responsible for a church group on his land, consisting of more than 50 members. Despite the remote location of this area, we now have more than fifty candidates for baptism. Truly the Lord has opened doors on this island, with people coming to the truth.

I want to thank the Lord for this experience and for His loving care and guidance on this missionary trip, and I also wish to thank the Union office for all the financial and spiritual assistance

as well as the spiritual support of all our brethren at large.

May we continue to seek for the heavenly promise of the latter rain to strengthen the work so it may be completed soon and we can be gathered home!

—Sanaila R. Kenivale

Conference in Fiji

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.” Exodus 34:27.

Indeed, God is making a solemn covenant with His true people!

The Fijian brethren experienced another example of God’s wonderful providence during our recent spiritual conference. Not only did we have the opportunity to be visited by our Union leader, Elder Anton Salavyov, but also to witness the baptism of the first Ni Vanuatu brethren here in Fiji.

Members from other branches of the church outside of Suva all gathered together at the Suva church, where Elder Salavyov held the meeting on various topics from Friday to Sunday.

He presented clear, detailed historical information in regard to the Biblical development of Adventism, which is going through the same bitter experiences as did ancient Israel.

Additionally he clarified the present prophesied reality in which many believers could be deceived easily by misunderstanding. The Bible states clearly that God has only one temple, one altar, one Jerusalem, and one bride. He has only one church and only one flock with sheep who are in the process of being united in one body by recognizing Christ’s voice of truth and purity.

On the other hand, the prophetic word of God shows that another unification process will unite all the fallen churches and groups into “one great city of Babylon,” “MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.” Revelation 17:5.

There was not enough time for us to complete all that we needed to, but we received what was sufficient! It was a relief to most of us, especially since our local people had questions regarding the separation of the Adventist movements. This occasion also re-established our members’ confidence in the truth.

On Sunday, June 28, Brother Don William from Vanuatu renewed his covenant with the Lord and was baptized by Elder Salavyov at the Suva seashore. Holy communion and the feet washing followed afterward, and then we all shared a wonderful lunch.

The brethren gathered together again on Sunday evening, and Elder Salavyov informed the members of the decision of the Union to ordain Brother Sanaila Ravia as an elder for the work not only in Fiji but also throughout the region. All the members were in agreement, and the ordination was performed.

Elder Salavyov reminded us of the need for cooperation and unity with the Holy Spirit in the Lord’s work. We cannot do the work unless we are led by the Lord, and it is our responsibility to secure that close essential connection with Christ!

We bid Elder Salavyov and Brother Don farewell, parting with the full blessing of the Spirit of God to continue the work until we shall meet again!

NOTE: The items from Vanuatu and Fiji are from imspacific.org. Thanks to the Oceania Union.



Brother Don William was baptized at the Suva seashore in Fiji



Conference group in Fiji



*Elder Pablo Hunger with his oldest daughter
and son after their baptism*

A Sacred Moment

“In consenting to the baptism of their children, parents sacredly pledge themselves to be faithful stewards over these children, to guide them in their character building. They pledge themselves to guard with special interest these lambs of the flock, that they may not dishonor the faith they profess.

“Religious instruction should be given to children from their earliest years. It should be given, not in a condemnatory spirit, but in a cheerful, happy spirit. Mothers need to be on the watch constantly, lest temptation shall come to the children in such a form as not to be recognized by them. The parents are to guard their children with wise, pleasant instruction. As the very best friends of these inexperienced ones, they should help them in the work of overcoming, for it means everything to them to be victorious. They should consider that their own dear children who are seeking to do right are younger members of the Lord’s family, and they should feel an intense interest in helping them to make straight paths in the King’s highway of obedience. With loving interest they should teach them day by day what it means to be children of God and to yield the will in obedience to Him. Teach them that obedience to God involves obedience to their parents. This must be a daily, hourly work. Parents, watch, watch and pray, and make your children your companions.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 93, 94.