

# MINISTRY<sup>®</sup>

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JOURNAL FOR PASTORS

DECEMBER 2009



What does the Bible say about  
**DINOSAURS?**

# THE WORD... FOR THESE TIMES

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## MINISTRY®

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## OUR READERS RESPOND...

### More than just for ministers

A friend of mine [of] many years shares his issues of *Ministry* with me. As a writer/journalist, he knows that I appreciate well-researched and well-written articles of encouragement.

I know that *Ministry* is first and foremost written for those in pastoral ministry. Yet many of your articles can be applied and/or appreciated by the layperson. I get enthusiastic about most of what I read in *Ministry*; but two recent articles I found of special interest: Pastor Bobby Moore's "Making Space for God: Contemplation as Praxis" (August 2009) and L. S. Baker Jr.'s "Covered With Blood: A Better Understanding of Exodus 12:7" (September 2009). Kudos to both for bringing attention to the thoughts and understanding they presented.

It is so refreshing to be blessed with reading material to which I can say, "Thank you for helping me grow as a Christian."

—Betty Kossick, Ocala, Florida, United States

### The baptism of Jesus

I read the article by Miguel Luna on baptism ("Let It Be So: The Meaning and Significance of the Baptism of Jesus"—October 2009) and found it enlightening. However, he could have added the story about Sam Tanyhill, the convicted converted criminal on death row. He desired to be baptized, but there was no way he could be since he was scheduled to be executed. The visiting pastor told him, "Sam, you'll even have to depend on Christ for your baptism." Christ was baptized for those who might find it impossible to be baptized.

—Ron Neall, email

Certainly the meaning and the significance of the baptism of Jesus has been explored and clarified. However, the essential point is given short shrift. The author rightfully takes the Messianic prophecy of Isaiah as an essential component of that ritual at the Jordan. However, that should have been given the primary focus.

Who knows for sure that the thief on the cross was baptized? By John? By immersion? In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit?

Salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ. Whereas our baptism might be faulty or lacking, His is complete. It is upon Christ's perfect fulfillment of the covenant in all of its parts [that] is our assurance. That should have been the centerpiece of the author's argument.

That is why Christ's baptism is so critical to the Christian faith. He was born for us, lived for us, was baptized for us, was tempted for us, died for us, was raised for us, ascended for us, sits on the throne next to the Father for us, pleads for us, and is coming again for us.

—Tom Zwemer, Augusta, Georgia, United States

### Palestine?

Don Leo Garilva, in his article titled "Meeting the Challenges of Life" (October 2009), inaccurately referred to Israel as Palestine. Daniel never lived in Palestine. Nor did Jesus or Paul. In reality, no one has ever lived in Palestine as there never has been a country by that name. The region for a time was referred to as Palestine for anti-Semitic reasons by the Romans, Turks, and British.

Referring to Israel as Palestine is even more inaccurate than stating that Daniel was taken to Iraq.

If authors who write for *Ministry* make this mistake in the future, I hope the editors will catch and correct it.

—Jeff Zaremsky, email

*Editor's note: We appreciate the attention to detail exhibited by this and other letter writers. We checked with our sources and discovered that, historically, there have been several ways to refer to the territory known as Palestine—including that which was mentioned by Dr. Garilva in his article.*

### Keeping the Sabbath holy

I totally agreed with the sentiments expressed by Shawn Brace (see "Keeping the Sabbath Intensely Holy"—August 2009). We, as Seventh-day Adventists, are making the same mistakes as the Israelites: having a list of things to do, but still forgetting to do God's will. It seems that more and more Adventists are buying and selling, going to restaurants, going to the beach, and playing sports on the Sabbath.

His article serves as a constant reminder we need to constantly evaluate how we are to please our God in everything we do.

—Jackie Amich, Miami, Florida, United States

### Pastors need the divine touch

The April 2009 editorial by Willie E. Hucks II ("What Challenges Are You Facing?") was truly inspiring. It reminds me that pastors also need to continually receive the divine touch from on high! In fact, I loved the entire April issue. I look forward to upcoming issues.

—Travis Berance, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago



# Beyond the printed agenda

Each October the Seventh-day Adventist Church conducts its Annual Council. This meeting is the full gathering of the General Conference Executive Committee, composed of approximately 300 individuals from around the world. While the majority of individuals who compose this representative body are church administrators, a significant number of other employees, such as pastors and teachers, and lay members also attend.

Looking at the agenda, it is tempting to conclude that most of the items are routine; and one may even question, *What do some of those items have to do with the life of the church?* In reality, however, these councils focus not only on the current state of the church but its future direction. The meetings start with worship on Friday night, and the wonderful spiritual messages continue throughout the Sabbath. Each of the five days of the meetings starts with worship. After worship on Sunday—the day of the first business session—the first order of business is the reading of the mission statement. This statement reminds us of just why we, as a church, exist.

## Reports and more reports

During the Annual Council many reports are presented. The secretary of the General Conference gives statistical reports and the treasurer gives financial reports. These reports consist of much more than facts and figures. The first gives us a good indication as to what is happening around the world with our membership and the second helps us to understand the present reality of finances, fiscal challenges, and how they are being met. During this meeting, various departments and ministries also share what they are accomplishing. As important as these reports are, I want to focus on four items that made a significant impression on me.

## More people, more cities

Approximately 50 percent of the world's population lives in metropolitan areas. Our cities are becoming larger, with some of them having populations that were thought impossible just a few decades ago. What is the church doing in these cities?

During the Annual Council, one individual shared a report that in a certain city the church was serving a million meals on a particular day. Other reports indicated that the church is making specific plans for evangelism in some of the large metropolitan areas. For example, in one city the plans are to develop a congregation near each subway station so that individuals who have to use public transportation will be able to easily travel to the churches.

## Do we really have that many members?

What is the world membership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church? Our statistics indicate the baptized membership totals approximately 16 million, but people may ask, *Do we really have that many members?* I might ask, *What is the membership of your conference, union conference, or congregation?* The world membership is simply the total of the reports from the local congregations.

Often, we have heard the comment made, *How accurate are these membership lists?* I am encouraged that reports were shared indicating that a number of world divisions have conducted thorough audits of their membership lists, and now their membership lists more accurately reflect reality. For me, it was encouraging to have this reality check; and now, when I hear membership figures, I can be more certain that they are correct.

## More and more church buildings

Seventh-day Adventist congregations, worldwide, worship in a variety

of buildings. Some have large well-built facilities and others worship in extremely modest quarters. Several years ago a plan was presented to provide "One-Day Churches"—structures that can be erected in one day and accommodate up to 200 people. In some parts of the world that would not be permitted due to zoning regulations; nevertheless, to many homeless congregations they are a blessing. So far, over 3,100 have been erected.

## A visit to China

During the Annual Council, it was mentioned that the General Conference president, Jan Paulsen, visited a number of churches in the People's Republic of China. What an encouraging report we heard. At a time when we did not have much contact with our members in China, we have discovered that the church has grown significantly. Today, there are hundreds of thriving congregations—ranging from house churches to churches with several thousand members.

While sometimes the reports at Annual Council seem to be routine and not the most exciting, we still receive a blessing when we listen to what is transpiring in God's church around the world. I was encouraged, and I hope that our readers—whether they are pastors of congregations or leaders of church units—will hold similar meetings in their areas. I have noticed that a number of congregations no longer have what we call year-end business meetings, where reports are shared and plans are discussed. Perhaps it's time to look again at these meetings and ask ourselves if it would not be good to get together to share what is happening and dream together as to what we can do. Those kinds of dreams God will bless and fulfill. ■

Tell us what you think about this editorial. Email [MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org](mailto:MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org) or write to 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904.



# What does the Bible say about dinosaurs?

Some years ago, after I had lectured to Adventist university students and young professionals, a pastor approached me and asked, “Could you please talk to my wife and convince her that dinosaurs really did exist?”

This request was not a joke. The pastor’s wife was a school teacher and she refused to teach her students that dinosaurs had ever existed. Right away, I realized that behind her denial of dinosaurs was a struggle to understand the mystery that perplexes some and fascinates others: how do we explain the past existence (and extinction) of dinosaurs within a biblical context?

Unfortunately, this denial of the existence of dinosaurs has become more widespread than we would like to admit, even taking into account our scientific society with highly advanced research in all fields, including geology and paleontology. These specific sciences seem out of place in our schools and colleges and are hardly considered by our Adventist youth when choosing a profession. As a Christian and a paleontologist, I must daily face the widespread notion of a biological evolution involving millions of years, and I can understand that some people fear becoming involved in a philosophy that may prove to be contradictory to Scripture.

However, it is possible to study fossils, rocks, and evolution without renouncing our faith. If we are to appreciate the beauty and mystery of earth’s Creation and subsequent

history, a great deal depends on how and what our teachers and pastors transmit in our schools and churches. In this article, I outline ways for students, teachers, parents, and pastors to productively think about the place of dinosaurs within a biblical paradigm in a faith-affirming way.

## The museum dinosaur

If you have ever visited a natural history museum, you probably saw spectacular and massive dinosaur skeletons. In other places, you can see animated reproductions of dinosaurs which, in the case of television documentaries, seem to be alive and real. When viewing these animations, the visitor should take into account several details.

First of all, we should accept that dinosaurs did exist for a period of time on earth and that, in certain places, they seemed to be numerous. Paleontologists have found evidence of their existence in sediments on every continent, including Antarctica. This evidence includes bones, eggs, nests, and footprints. These dinosaur footprints and tracks are abundant and cannot positively be associated with any other creature except what we now call dinosaurs.

Secondly, we should be aware that skeletons found in museums are typically not actual bones, but rather replicas. The original bones are too valuable and delicate to be exposed to the general public, and therefore, are usually stored in safe places within the museum. Furthermore, “complete” skeletons in museums

are often assembled from replicas of bones from various specimens, which, on occasions, come from very distant places. This does not mean the skeletons are just cobbled together. Paleontologists are able to piece together the body architecture of dinosaurs even though they might not have all the skeleton elements of the same creature, and thus, the replicas we see in museums are reasonably trustworthy. Some nearly complete specimens unearthed, including the *Tyrannosaurus rex*, are exhibited in Chicago’s Field Museum. The animations seen on television, however, are much more speculative, especially regarding skin color, physiology, behavior, and so forth.

## Dinosaurs disappeared

In the geologic column, dinosaur remains appear in rock layers that paleontologists call Triassic, Jurassic, and Cretaceous. These layers of sedimentary rock, stacked one on top of the other, show specific characteristics, including those of certain fossil species such as mollusks, reptiles, fish, dinosaurs, and microscopic organisms (diatoms and algae, among others) that once filled the oceans. Some paleontologists believe that dinosaurs, as well as other groups of animals and plants, suddenly disappeared as a consequence of a gigantic meteorite impact 65 million years ago. Others doubt this model for a variety of reasons.

Most creationist scientists believe that dinosaurs disappeared,



together with other species, during the worldwide Flood described in the book of Genesis. This scenario could include meteorite activity resulting in gigantic tsunamis, volcanic activity, and the emission of carbon dioxide, sulphides, and other chemicals harmful to plants and animals. Therefore, the idea of a meteorite impacting the earth is not necessarily incompatible with the biblical model of the Flood.

## Dinosaurs and human beings

Much has been written and argued regarding certain evidence that supposedly shows dinosaur and human remains together. The evidence includes what are interpreted to be human footprints together with dinosaur footprints, as well as prehistoric pictures in caves and on pottery where human figures appear together with exceptional

these statements, more than one evolutionist and creationist scientist studied in detail the marks found on the rocks. In that particular place, the riverbed and bank have many marks due to water erosion. We can tell the true dinosaur tracks from the *pseudoprints* due to the marks left on the rocks from the circulating water. With a little imagination, we can make out prints similar to those of almost any animal.



SOME PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT DINOSAURS APPEARED AS THE RESULT OF THE CURSE AFTER ADAM'S AND EVE'S SIN, BUT THE BIBLE DOES NOT SHED ANY LIGHT ON THIS, NOR DOES IT EXPLICITLY IDENTIFY WHICH ANIMALS CHANGED AS A RESULT OF SIN AND ABOUT WHAT KIND OF CHANGES THESE MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

In spite of a lack of consensus among scientists about what made dinosaurs disappear, the media and pseudoscientific press have decided that the meteor impact theory is the only valid explanation. This is far from reality. Dinosaurs did disappear, but we do not know exactly when or why. However, the possibility of their extinction during the Genesis Flood (with or without the associated impact) can be viewed as a plausible scientific hypothesis and deserves consideration.

creatures very similar to current reconstructions of these giant reptiles. However, rigorous scientific study has shown that these features have been misinterpreted.

Let us analyze, for example, the alleged "human" and dinosaur prints found in the riverbed of the Paluxy River in Texas. A few decades ago, some enthusiastic scientists proclaimed that this was sure evidence against the theory of evolution and proof for the occurrence of a worldwide Flood. Intrigued by

Laboratory studies have been done also. If a print is authentic, we would expect to see the layers of sediment in the rock depressed under the print, from the weight of the animal. To test for this characteristic deformation, the scientists cut the print crosswise and observed that no such deformation was present. They concluded that the shape was not a real human footprint but instead the result of erosion, either by nature or by a human forger. Later studies showed that certain "prints"

and drawings had been deliberately placed by fanatic defenders of the human-dinosaur coexistence idea. This kind of unfortunate forgery may have been produced by those who are overeager to present irrefutable evidence to support their belief in Creation and the Flood; others may do it simply to exploit believers in some way or to make money.

On other occasions, disbelievers in the biblical account of history were

well as birds on the fifth day and the rest of the animals on the sixth day. Although reptiles are listed among the animals created, dinosaurs are not specifically mentioned. This should not surprise us, because in Moses' day (the author of the book of Genesis), the word *dinosaur* did not exist, nor was he under the obligation to specifically mention them; he didn't mention numerous other groups of animals as well. For

that much attention. Some people believe that dinosaurs appeared as the result of the curse after Adam's and Eve's sin, but the Bible does not shed any light on this, nor does it explicitly identify which animals changed as a result of sin and about what kind of changes these might have been.

Most creationist scientists believe that dinosaurs disappeared during or shortly after the Genesis

THE FACT THAT DINOSAURS DISAPPEARED DURING A WORLDWIDE CATASTROPHE THAT WE CALL *THE FLOOD* IS A HYPOTHESIS THAT WE SHOULD SERIOUSLY CONSIDER BUT ONLY THROUGH SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, AND THAT'S BECAUSE OF THE SILENCE IN THE BIBLE ON THE MATTER.



the ones to take advantage of the naïveté of these fanatics to create false proof and, thus, cause mockery and rejection among the academic world. Faking fossils and other "evidence" harms the true research among creationist scientists; most of these researchers have learned to be careful in the accuracy of their statements.

### Dinosaurs and the Bible

The story of Creation in Genesis 1 tells of a God who created sea life as

example, Genesis does not mention beetles, sharks, starfish, moss, algae, or any number of other groups of organisms.

The fact that, in the Bible, dinosaurs were not mentioned by name does not prove that God did not create them; nor does the strange appearance that they have in museum replicas. Currently, there are many animals just as strange in appearance as dinosaurs—consider deep-sea anglerfish, platypuses, and kangaroos—and they don't draw

Flood. Again, the Bible does not give us a clue regarding the fate of these animals. The fact that dinosaurs disappeared during a worldwide catastrophe that we call *the Flood* is a hypothesis that we should seriously consider but only through scientific research, and that's because of the silence in the Bible on the matter. The demonstration of this hypothesis should come from geological and paleontological data, not by forcing the Bible to say what it does not say.



Last of all, there are people who think dinosaurs survived after the Flood and disappeared a short while later because they could not adjust to a new environment. This is also a possibility, since some dinosaurs could have been inside the ark, then disappeared during the postdiluvian colonization. The Bible mentions two strange creatures, behemoth (Job 40:15-18) and leviathan (Job 41:1), which some interpret as possible examples of postdiluvian dinosaurs. However, most Bible scholars do not accept this explanation, and the words *behemoth* and *leviathan* are usually translated as “hippopotamus” and “crocodile,” respectively, and therefore, are not related to dinosaurs.

## Dinosaurs and Ellen White

The term *dinosaur* was first used by the British zoologist, Richard Owen, in 1842, to name a group of reptile fossils then recently discovered. The use of the term spread as new discoveries took place throughout Europe and North America. Around the time Ellen White wrote her first statements on Creation, the Flood, science, and faith (in 1864), the term *dinosaur* had already found its way into scientific books and newspapers. However, Ellen White never used this term or any other similar word referring to these extinct reptiles.

In a brief declaration in 1864, she wrote, “Every species of animal which God had created were preserved in the ark. The confused species which God did not create, which were the result of amalgamation, were destroyed by the flood.”<sup>1</sup> This has become a favorite statement for some Adventists who believe it explains fossils with intermediate characteristics<sup>2</sup> and other extinct organisms, including dinosaurs. Many people read into these words what we know as genetic engineering, indicating that in prediluvian times people practiced crossbreeding, including animals and human beings, resulting in strange biological hybrid forms.

However, this interpretation presents various problems. The first rises from the difficulty of defining what Ellen White meant by “amalgamation.” Thorough studies on this statement have not shed a definitive answer, and we conclude that we do not know exactly what the prophet wanted to say in her statement.

A second problem arises in the application of “amalgamation” to real cases in the fossil record. If “amalgamation” meant “hybrid,” how could we recognize them among fossils or among modern day plants and animals? How could we determine which species are hybrid before the Flood, if they actually existed at all? Some have answered this question by saying that hybrid species did not survive the Flood, precisely because God didn’t want them to. But this sort of reasoning is a circular fallacy because the criteria we use to differentiate hybrids (extinction) is precisely the same as we use to define what we would like to differentiate (hybrids). In other words, amalgamations explain their own disappearance, and their disappearance defines what they are.

After the previous statement, she goes on by saying that “since the flood there has been amalgamation of man and beast, as may be seen in the almost endless varieties of species of animals.”<sup>3</sup> In the first place, it is important to emphasize that Ellen White says amalgamations of and not *between* man and animals, as some have chosen to read. Secondly, if amalgamation means intermediate forms, hybrids or strange-engineered creatures, what are the criteria to recognize them? If these were formed after the Flood, they likely became fossils, and others would have survived up to now. How can we differentiate one from the other fossils and living organisms that are not the result of hybrids? Ellen White gives us no clues on that issue.

Further on, in the same text, Ellen White states that she was “shown that very large, powerful

animals existed before the flood, which do not now exist.”<sup>4</sup> In another text, she states that “[t]here were a class of very large animals which perished at the flood. God knew that the strength of man would decrease, and these mammoth animals could not be controlled by feeble man.”<sup>5</sup>

This statement, among others, regarding life before the Flood suggests that the prophet was referring to the existence of a wide variety of animals that did not survive in the ark. However, we are not sure of the meaning of this statement; we do not know what these “very large, powerful animals” were. However, her statements are not really far off from the scientific description of dinosaurs. Biologically speaking, they are somehow confusing, not only because some of them are gigantic, but also their body parts (legs, neck, tail, brain, and so forth) are, in some cases, out of proportion. Even paleontologists do not agree on whether the dinosaurs were warm- or cold-blooded.

The truth is that many people have struggled to find in Ellen White’s statements support for the idea that dinosaurs were not created by God, but rather the result of hybrids before the Flood, and thus, condemned to disappear in the worldwide catastrophe. This might be a possibility, but, after a thorough study of her writings, we find no unequivocal support for such conclusions. We do not know for sure what Ellen White wanted to express, and we should wait until we reach a better understanding of her statements.


## Conclusion

Scripture does not mention the existence of dinosaurs—at least not as we now understand them—neither before nor after the Genesis Flood. Ellen White also does not mention them, and we are not sure of the meaning of her statements regarding “large animals.” Neither the Bible nor Ellen White say *why* they do not mention them.

This is very important, since the fact that the Bible probably does not mention dinosaurs is not evidence that they never existed. What we cannot explain does not necessarily lack existence, but is simply another matter, among others, about which the Bible says nothing and that provides potentially fascinating questions for us to study using the fossil record and other data.

We should teach our students and church members that dinosaurs *did* exist. We have clear evidence: we

have dinosaur bones, teeth, eggs, footprints, and even impressions of their skin. Furthermore, at some point in history they disappeared. Their extinction could have taken place before, during, or after the Genesis Flood. Like the rest of the fossils, the origin and disappearance of dinosaurs are wrapped in mystery. For this reason, they require careful and rigorous study, something Christians with the interest and talent should be encouraged to do. Dinosaurs do not challenge or

compromise our faith in the Bible's teachings. 

1. Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3 (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1864), 75.
2. Intermediate fossils, also known as transition fossils, are those which, according to the theory of evolution, show mixed characteristics between two groups of animals or plants that are considered consecutive in time. An example of this is reptiles that look like mammals, which are considered as an intermediate step in evolution from the first towards the second. These transition fossils are the source of much debate among scientists.
3. White, 75; emphasis added.
4. *Ibid.*, 92.
5. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4a (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1864), 121.



**For more information on dinosaurs, please access the following Web sites:**

**GRI Web site:** [www.grisda.org](http://www.grisda.org)

**SWAU:** <http://dinodig.swau.edu/>

**Discovery Institute:** [www.discovery.org](http://www.discovery.org)

**Access Research Network:** [www.arn.org](http://www.arn.org)

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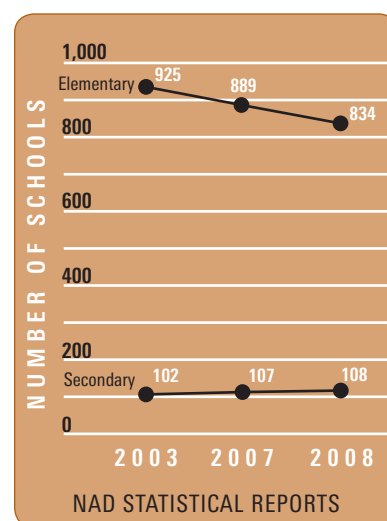
# The critical role of pastors in Adventist education

Church schools have been an integral part of the Adventist Church for more than a hundred years. Ellen White had counseled church leaders, “There should be schools established wherever there is a church or company of believers. Teachers should be employed to educate the children of Sabbath-keepers.”<sup>1</sup> As early as 1853, Ellen White counseled members of the early Adventist Church of the importance of separating children from worldly influences.<sup>2</sup> Not until the 1870s, however, did the Adventist Church begin to organize a denominational school system to educate the children and youth of the church. Church schools were to be instrumental in lifting the “standard of truth” wherever they were established.<sup>3</sup> Today, there are approximately 922 elementary schools, 109 secondary schools, and 15 colleges and universities in the North American Division (NAD) alone. The education ministry of the Adventist Church now embraces 1.3 million students in 7,293 K–12 (kindergarten through twelfth grade) schools around the globe.<sup>4</sup>

## The challenges

Adventist education in the NAD, however, faces many challenges. At the forefront of all these challenges is the declining enrollment in K–12 schools across North America. In 1999, the K–12 enrollment (including Griggs International Academy) was 64,762. In 2007, the K–12 enrollment, including Griggs International Academy, was 58,257. The chart to the right illustrates the changes in enrollment and in the total number of schools in the NAD. One can readily see we are losing more students more rapidly in recent years, and have fewer elementary schools—55 fewer schools in 2008 than in 2007.

According to NAD statistics, the majority of elementary schools in the NAD are small schools established by mission-driven pastors and church members following the counsel of Ellen White to establish a school wherever there is a church or company of believers. The “endangered species” in Adventist education is the small school with a teacher who teaches one or more grades in a classroom and doubles as the principal as well. Scores of



teaching principals in small schools give unselfishly of their time, energy, and even personal resources to help these schools succeed. To hear of school-teaching principals in small schools, who also serve as bus drivers and/or custodians of the school because of necessity, is not unusual.

Two unfortunate consequences of school closures include the loss of employment for many teachers and principals who went into the education ministry as a divine calling,

Years	Number of K–8 Schools	K–8 Enrollment	Number of Secondary Schools	9–12 Enrollment	Total K–12 Enrollment
2003	925	44,229	102	19,317	63,546 (includes Griggs)
2007	889	41,283	107	16,974	58,257 (2,553 were Griggs)
Change	-36	-2,946	+5	-2,343	-5,289
2008	834	35,775	108	13,553	49,328 (does not include Griggs International Academy)

Data provided by the North American Division Department of Education



and Adventist children and young people finding it necessary to attend a public school. In a few instances, Adventist children benefit from attending private schools operated by other Christian churches.

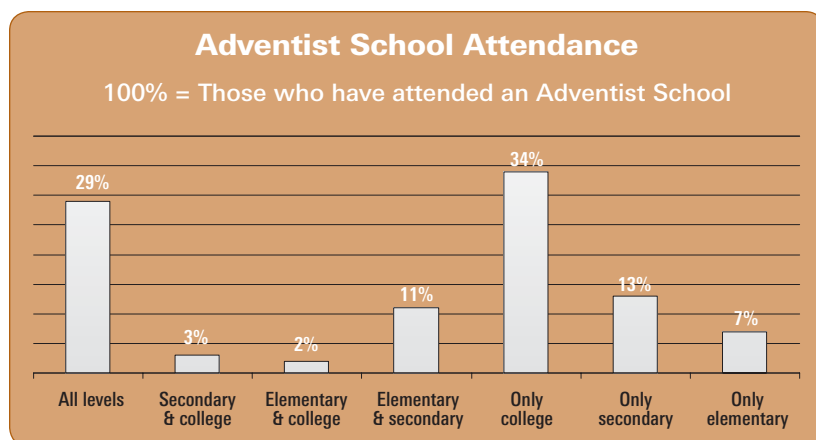
### Reasons for declining enrollment

The reasons for the declining enrollment remain elusive, but the decline could be partly due to the changing face of the Adventist Church itself. According to the recent Demographic Survey of the Adventist Church, conducted for the NAD Secretariat by the Center for Creative Ministry in 2007–2008,<sup>5</sup> there are at least three findings that are significant to Adventist education:

- The Adventist Church is “graying” with 74 percent of families indicating they have no children in the household. Since a percentage of the remaining 26 percent have preschool age children, only one in five Adventist families are potential clients for the Adventist Church school.
- Forty percent of Adventist families surveyed had an annual income of less than \$25,000 per year. When combined with the next income group, a total of 70 percent had an income of less than \$50,000 per year.
- The number of immigrants in the Adventist Church (31 percent) is more than double the percentage of immigrants in the U.S. (12 percent). Many of these families have school-age children but are without the financial means to send them to the church school and must avail themselves of a public school education.

### Pastoral support coveted

Depending on where parents live, elementary school tuition can be as high as \$4,000 per year and day-academy tuition as high as \$8,000 per year. One can easily see the financial challenges for families with several school-age children if they are in the lower income



bracket. Regrettably, Adventist education is rapidly becoming something that Adventist families cannot afford.

A key player in the survival of the small school is the local church or constituent church pastor. While all principals covet pastoral support, regardless of school size, pastoral support truly becomes a matter of survival for the small school. Pastors have always played a critical role in Adventist education, but unfortunately, this, too, is changing.

This Demographic Survey of the Adventist Church<sup>6</sup> report has another somewhat revealing detail: only 29 percent of Adventists have had the benefit of an Adventist K–16 (all levels) education.

An increasing number of pastors have not had the benefit of an Adventist K–12 education or even an Adventist college education prior to coming to the ministry. They may have been educated overseas, and therefore, have not had the benefit of an Adventist K–12 or K–16 education before coming to the Adventist Seminary.

Adventist educators see this as translating into a casual or even nonactive support of the church school.

Susan Vlach, principal of South Bay Junior Academy in Southern California, developed a simple yet powerful way of illustrating the four types of pastors she has worked with over the past 27 years. While this list is subjective and not based on research or empirical evidence,

### Interesting information on the history of Adventist education found in *The Chronology of Adventist Education*, pages 7, 8

**1853** First Adventist homeschool opened at Aaron Hilliard’s home in Buck’s Bridge, New York, with five families “co-operating” the school.

**1857** James White wrote three articles regarding the need for the children of “Sabbath keepers” to separate from the world.

**1872** Ellen White had the first vision on education in January of 1872, resulting in the first comprehensive account on the philosophy and aims of Adventist education found in *Testimonies*, vol. 3, 131–160 and in *Counsels on Education*, 1–30.

**1872** The first denominationally sponsored Adventist Church school opened at Battle Creek, Michigan, on June 3, with 12 elementary and secondary students.

it does provide an interesting way of self-assessment.

### Four types of pastors

An engaged pastor will have the opportunity to participate in the interview and selection process of the best teacher and/or principal who can effectively help fulfill the mission of the church school. No doubt one can expand any of the quadrants in the chart by adding other descriptors to the list. In like manner, one can easily place school administrators and teachers in each quadrant and arrive at a list of ineffective and somewhat effective educators to effective and highly effective teachers and principals. Perhaps this chart can

serve as a springboard for some candid and prayerful discussions as pastors and educators come together to understand how one is being perceived by the other without seeking to assign blame. Conference presidents, like few other administrators in our system, have the authority and ability to facilitate this sort of dialogue.

The educational system as it has been, and as we know it today, will not likely survive without the active and engaged support of pastors. With the support of pastors who see the school as an integral part of the church's mission, the school will more likely continue to grow and be effective in educating and nurturing the children and young people of

the church and be a witness to the surrounding community.

### Ideas for pastoral involvement

The following list, generated by secondary administrators in the Pacific Union Conference several years ago, recognizes the fact that many pastors are strong supporters of Adventist education. The list identifies the different ways pastors have been involved in their church school. I present this list with the hope that it will give additional ideas for even greater involvement of pastors in the local school:

- Promoting "Christian Education Emphasis Day" at church

<b>THE INVISIBLE PASTOR</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimal contribution of time and church financial resources to the school</li> <li>• Rarely promotes Adventist education in the local church</li> <li>• Seldom attends school board meetings</li> <li>• Fails to coordinate a church-sponsored program of financial aid to worthy students</li> </ul>
<b>THE PASSIVE PASTOR</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports the church's portion of the assessed school subsidy</li> <li>• Attends school board meetings sporadically</li> <li>• Distributes school brochures to church members</li> <li>• Shows little commitment to provide financial aid to help students attend the local church school</li> </ul>
<b>THE ACTIVE PASTOR</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accepts school board positions that require time on campus</li> <li>• Promotes Christian education in the church</li> <li>• Helps families find ways to afford Christian education</li> <li>• Subsidizes tuition for needy families</li> <li>• Asks for a missionary spirit regarding school subsidy only in extreme cases</li> <li>• Prays with and for the principal and faculty</li> <li>• Assists school with mission and Community Services projects</li> </ul>
<b>THE ENTHUSIASTIC PASTOR</b>	<p>In addition to all that the active pastor does, the enthusiastic pastor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invites the faculty and staff to a special dedication service at the constituent church</li> <li>• Schedules an annual Education Emphasis Sabbath at the constituent church</li> <li>• Works in concert with the principal to find projects on campus that can improve the school</li> <li>• Helps coordinate fund-raising programs to finance school improvements</li> <li>• Is a visible and recognizable presence on the school campus</li> <li>• Volunteers time to teach religion or other classes as needed</li> <li>• Initiates baptismal classes at the school</li> <li>• Actively promotes the school to everyone</li> </ul>

There are three key differences between the K–12 systems in the NAD when compared with K–12 schools in other world divisions.

First, Adventist schools in many world fields operate as mission schools; they are thriving institutions, many with enrollment in the thousands. These church schools provide the local church, and even the local conference, with monthly operational subsidies. In the United States, this has become quite the opposite, for some K–12 schools depend on subsidies from constituent churches and the local conference to keep their doors open.

Second, Adventist schools in the North American Division seek to primarily serve Adventist families, though they gladly welcome

non-Adventist students as well. In other world divisions, non-Adventist students may comprise as much as 90 percent of the student body. A few years ago, church schools in the NAD kept non-Adventist student enrollment to about 15–20 percent of the total student body; this has gradually changed over the years so that we now have many Adventist schools in the NAD where 50 percent or more of the students are non-Adventist students. Many pastors and school personnel see this as a powerful evangelistic opportunity, a mission field of untapped possibilities. Concerted efforts to evangelize this group, however, are usually absent, even though a significant religious and spiritual emphasis in Adventist schools exists. God-fearing, faith-building Adventist teachers encourage students

through personal testimony and direct instruction to love Jesus and follow Him as a member of the Adventist Church. More than 500 students attending Adventist schools in the Pacific Union Conference are baptized each year. According to the Valuegenesis studies, these students will more likely be active in the Adventist Church as adults and embrace the mission of the Adventist Church as well.

The third significant difference includes a cohesive, distinctly Adventist curriculum that unites schools in the NAD. Even if schools in some jurisdictions are driven by government standards and expectations, they still benefit from the curriculum and other educational and professional growth opportunities provided by the NAD Office of Education.

- Attending school board meetings
- Conducting baptismal classes on campus
- Being involved with students in witness and Community Services activities
- Preaching sermons on the value and importance of Christian education
- Connecting with the youth by co-teaching Bible classes
- Assisting school with recruitment efforts
- Hosting a weekly or monthly pastor-student lunch
- Inviting teachers to participate in worship services
- Being visible on campus for informal talk/study times during lunch or after school
- Visiting parents who are not sending their children to an Adventist school
- Conducting a dedication service for teachers and students
- Embracing Christian education as an integral part and extension of the church's ministry to the children and youth

School administrators, teachers, and pastors have a common mission and are driven by a common goal: preparing people for God's kingdom. The support of pastors is critical to the success of the church school. Does the pastor see the teacher or principal as vital to the church's ministry? Sometimes church school subsidy is viewed as a drain on the church budget and something that takes money away from evangelism, while not recognizing the church school as one of the strongest evangelistic tools the Adventist Church owns. To state the obvious, where else would one find a ministry that goes on five days a week for ten months a year? In the Pacific Union Conference alone, K–12 schools report an average of 500 students getting baptized each school year.

Ideally, the school should be an extension of the ministry of the church—where the pastor, school administrator, and teachers are seen as partners working together for the well-being and salvation of the

children and youth of the church. They should recognize the truth of Ellen White's statement that indeed *"[i]n the highest sense the work of education and the work of redemption are one, for in education, as in redemption, other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."*<sup>7</sup> From this vantage point, church subsidy to the school will inevitably be seen as integral to fulfilling the mission of the church. Pastoral support is vital to the survival of the church school, especially the endangered small school. ■

1. Ellen G. White, "Educational Work," *General Conference Bulletin*, April 1, 1898, [http://egwdatabase.whiteestate.org/nxt/gateway.dll?f=templates\\$fn=default.htm\\$vid=default](http://egwdatabase.whiteestate.org/nxt/gateway.dll?f=templates$fn=default.htm$vid=default) (accessed May 19, 2009).
2. Walton J. Brown, ed. "Chronology of Seventh-day Adventist Education," (Department of Education, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists [n.d.]).
3. Ellen G. White, "Church Schools," *Australasian Union Conference Record*, July 26, 1899.
4. Department of Education Seventh-day Adventist Church, "Education Employment," <http://education.gc.adventist.org/edstats.html> (accessed May 19, 2009).
5. North American Division and Center for Creative Ministry 2008, [www.creativeministry.org](http://www.creativeministry.org).
6. Ibid.
7. Ellen G. White, *Counsels for the Church* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1991), 202; White, *Education* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1952), 30.

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# Justification: Historic journey from the Middle Ages through now

What does justification mean? The standard view in the Middle Ages was that when God justifies a believer, the Holy Spirit injects into the soul a *habitus* or quality that makes the soul intrinsically righteous, having the capacity to perform works that can earn merit with God.<sup>1</sup> The Reformers rejected this view in favor of one of two alternatives. Luther and Calvin recognized justification as a forensic (legal) declaration that Christ's righteousness counted for the believer, while in the same act, the Holy Spirit brings Christ's presence to the heart. Hence, righteousness is both counted and experienced. Later Reformation writers separated the legal declaration from the Spirit's transformation. They regarded justification as forensic only; Christ's righteousness is put to the account of the believer in justification, while regeneration is a separate act of God by which He progressively transforms the heart. These three major views are the subject of this article.

## The Roman Catholic view

Thomas Aquinas (ca. 1225–1274) defined justification as infusion of grace that repairs the soul so that now it has the power to do good works. As a result, believers have the natural ability to perform in a manner acceptable to God.

In his famous *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas wrote,

Man is helped by God's gratuitous will, inasmuch as a habitual gift is infused by God into the soul; and for this reason, that it is not fitting that God should provide less for those He loves, that they may acquire supernatural good, than for creatures, whom He loves that they may acquire natural good. Now He so provides for natural creatures, that not merely does He move them to their natural acts, but He bestows upon them certain forms and powers, which are the principles of acts, in order that they may of themselves be inclined to these movements, and thus the movements whereby they are moved by God become natural and easy to creatures. . . . Much more therefore does He infuse into such as He moves towards the acquisition of supernatural good, certain forms or supernatural qualities, whereby they may be moved by Him sweetly and promptly to acquire eternal good; and thus the gift of grace is a quality.<sup>2</sup>

He continued,

Hence it remains that grace, as it is prior to virtue, has a subject prior to the powers of the soul, so that it is in the essence

of the soul. For as man in his intellectual powers participates in the Divine knowledge through the virtue of faith, and in his power of will participates in the Divine love through the virtue of charity, so also in the nature of the soul does he participate in the Divine Nature, after the manner of a likeness, through a certain regeneration or re-creation. . . .

. . . For grace is the principle of meritorious works through the medium of virtues, just as the essence of the soul is the principle of vital deeds through the medium of the powers.<sup>3</sup>

"In the infusion of justifying grace there is a certain transmutation of the human soul, and hence a proper movement of the human soul is required in order that the soul may be moved in its own manner."<sup>4</sup>

Aquinas held that because grace, a divine quality, is infused into the soul of the believer, the soul, now naturally righteous, has the capacity to perform good works. He emphasizes that the immortal soul within the individual becomes reformed so that it is now righteous.<sup>5</sup>

This Catholic formulation was challenged by the Reformation, and the Roman Catholic answer to the Protestant challenge came at the Council of Trent (1545–1563). The council's decrees express the doctrinal beliefs of official Roman Catholicism. On the question of



justification, its definition “was modeled upon the pattern found in Thomas.”<sup>6</sup> The decree of justification accepted at Trent may be considered in three parts: preparation for, definition of, and increase of justification.

**1. Preparation for justification.** According to Trent, it is not merely a matter of God’s grace leading the individual to repentance, but of the sinner’s own will cooperating with grace, projecting him towards justification. The council taught “that God justifies the impious by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; and when, understanding themselves to be sinners, they, by *turning themselves*, from the fear of divine justice whereby they are profitably agitated, to consider the mercy of God.”<sup>7</sup>

**2. The definition of justification.** Like Aquinas, Trent defined justification as an inner renewal of the soul. “This disposition, or preparation, is followed by Justification itself, which is not remission of sins merely, but also the sanctification and renewal of the inward man, through the voluntary reception of the grace, and

of the gifts, whereby man of unjust becomes just.” This re-creation of the soul takes place at baptism. At baptism “the charity of God is poured forth, by the Holy Spirit, in the hearts of those that are justified, and is inherent therein: whence, man, through Jesus Christ, in whom he is ingrafted, receives, in the said justification, together with the remission of sins, all these [gifts] infused at once, faith, hope, and charity.” Even so, no one can be thoroughly certain that his sins are forgiven and that he is justified, “seeing that no one can know with a certainty of faith, which can not be subject to error, that he has obtained the grace of God.”<sup>8</sup>

**3. Increase of justification.** Thus, according to Roman Catholic theology, justification is never complete for the believer. Trent taught that “they, through the observance of the commandments of God and of the Church, faith co-operating with good works, increase in that justice which they have received through the grace of Christ, and are still further justified.” The justified

person has the ability to do works that are meritorious in the sight of God and that will improve upon his level of justification.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, the Roman Catholic position on justification, as defined by Aquinas and Trent, involved transformation, re-creation, and re-forming of the immortal soul. This was not merely a reiteration of Jesus’ teaching on the new birth. For Aquinas and Trent, righteousness within is a *habitus* or quality injected or infused into the souls of believers so that they are intrinsically or inherently righteous. Righteousness within is not Christ within by the presence of the Holy Spirit, but a quality injected into the soul by the Holy Spirit, so that the soul that is now righteous in nature has the capacity to perform works that are meritorious in God’s sight. This was the theology to which Luther and Calvin reacted so vigorously.

### **Martin Luther’s view**

The two leading sixteenth-century Reformers were Martin Luther (1483–1546) and John Calvin



(1509–1564). On scriptural grounds, both rejected the Roman Catholic concept of justification. They opposed the idea that humans can predispose themselves towards justification, the concept of infused grace, the idea of the transmutation (re-making) of the soul, the notion that justification is never complete, and the teaching that the justified person is capable of doing meritorious works.

Luther and Calvin saw justification as involving two inseparable aspects: (1) the legal or forensic aspect is God's forgiveness of the believers' sins and His crediting Christ's righteousness to their account; and (2) the experiential aspect is Christ's gift of His righteousness to believers by the Holy Spirit. The soul is not re-formed or re-created so that it becomes inherently righteous. The Holy Spirit within believers' hearts is their righteousness. Christ within is the Spirit within is righteousness

within. The indwelling Christ is our righteousness within. The transformation is Christ, by the Holy Spirit, coming to dwell in the human heart, so that His righteousness becomes the believers' righteousness; not by re-creating the soul into an independently righteous entity but by providing righteousness by His righteous presence. Believers remain fallen, sinful human beings, but their fallen natures are now under the control and direction of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Paul Althaus writes in his *The Theology of Martin Luther*:

Luther uses the terms "to justify" [*justificare*] and "justification" [*justificatio*] in more than one sense. From the beginning, justification most often means the judgment of God with which he declares man to be righteous [*justum reputare* or *computare*]. In other places, however, this word stands for the entire event

through which a man is essentially made righteous (a usage which Luther also finds in Paul, Romans 5), that is, for both the imputation of righteousness to man as well as man's actually becoming righteous. . . . This twofold use of the word cannot be correlated with Luther's early and later theology; he uses "justification" in both senses at the same time, sometimes even shortly after each other in the same text.<sup>10</sup>

In his *Disputation Concerning Justification* (1536), Luther wrote of justification as God counting the believer righteous. Thus, as he often did, he emphasized the legal aspect of justification. "To be justified," he wrote, "includes that idea, namely that we are considered righteous on account of Christ."<sup>11</sup>

Luther continues, "He sustains and supports them on account of the first fruit of his creation in us,



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and he thereupon decrees that they are righteous and sons of the kingdom. For we perceive that a man who is justified is not yet a righteous man, but is in the very movement or journey toward righteousness. . . . Therefore, whoever is justified is still a sinner; and yet he is considered fully and perfectly righteous by God who pardons and is merciful.”<sup>12</sup>

comes before doing, and suffering comes before being. Therefore the order is: becoming, being, and then working.”<sup>15</sup>

Luther knew all too well that the imagery of the new birth does not occur in the book of Romans, as the imagery of justification does not occur in John, chapter 3. Yet he identified the two metaphors.

Certainly Luther recognized justification as God’s legal act of forgiving sin and reckoning the perfect righteousness of Christ to the believer. But in the works that evidence his mature theology, he repeatedly wrote of justification as also involving the gift of Christ to the heart. For example, in his lengthy comments on Galatians

LUTHER AND CALVIN SAW JUSTIFICATION AS INVOLVING TWO INSEPARABLE ASPECTS: (1) THE LEGAL OR FORENSIC ASPECT IS GOD’S FORGIVENESS OF THE BELIEVERS’ SINS AND HIS CREDITING CHRIST’S RIGHTEOUSNESS TO THEIR ACCOUNT; AND (2) THE EXPERIENTIAL ASPECT IS CHRIST’S GIFT OF HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS TO BELIEVERS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Yet, in the same work, Luther explained, “Natural motion is our motion, but this movement of justification is the work of God *in us*, to which our propositions refer.”<sup>13</sup> Explaining what is meant by the righteousness of God being outside of us, Luther wrote, “The phrase is grammatical. To be outside of us means not to be out of our powers. Righteousness is our possession, to be sure, since it was given to us out of mercy. Nevertheless, it is foreign to us, because we have not merited it.”<sup>14</sup>

Luther underlined his understanding that justification is a heart experience, not just a legal declaration, by his comment on Romans 12:1, “Up to this point he has taught how to become a new man, and he has described the new birth which makes the new man (John 3:3ff.). But now he is teaching concerning the works of the new birth which anyone who has not been made a new man does in vain and presumptuously. For being

Justification, to Luther, was the new birth. He made the same identification at the beginning of his sermon on John 3: “This chapter stresses above all else that sublime topic: faith in Christ, which alone justifies us before God.”<sup>16</sup> But the term *justification* is not mentioned in John 3. The point is that Luther saw the new birth as justification.

Thus, Luther regarded justification as involving the transforming work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. “Then what does justify? Hearing the voice of the Bridegroom, hearing the proclamation of faith—when this is heard, it justifies. Why? Because it brings the Holy Spirit who justifies. From this it is sufficiently evident what the distinction is between the Law and the Gospel. The Law never brings the Holy Spirit; therefore it does not justify, because it only teaches what we ought to do. But the Gospel does bring the Holy Spirit, because it teaches what we ought to receive.”<sup>17</sup>

2:16, contained in his 1535 *Lectures on Galatians*, Luther wrote, “Therefore the Christ who is grasped by faith and who lives in the heart is the true Christian righteousness, on account of which God counts us righteous and grants us eternal life.”<sup>18</sup> The presence of Christ in our hearts, Luther said, is the reason God counts us righteous and grants us eternal life.

Rejecting the Roman Catholic concept of inherent righteousness of soul for the justified, Luther wrote,

Therefore we, too, acknowledge a quality and a formal righteousness in the heart; but we do not mean love, as the sophists do, but faith, because the heart must behold and grasp nothing but Christ the Savior. . . . Here it is to be noted these three things are joined together: faith, Christ, and acceptance or imputation. Faith takes hold of Christ and has Him present, enclosing Him as the ring encloses the

gem. And whoever is found having this faith in the Christ who is grasped in the heart, him God accounts as righteous. This is the means and the merit by which we obtain the forgiveness of sins and righteousness.<sup>19</sup>

Commenting on Galatians 2:20, Luther wrote, “But so far as justification is concerned, Christ and I must be so closely attached that He lives in me and I in Him. What a marvelous way of speaking! Because He lives in me, whatever grace, righteousness, life, peace, and salvation there is in me is all Christ’s; nevertheless, it is mine as well, by the cementing and attachment that are through faith, by which we become as one body in the Spirit. Since Christ lives in me, grace, righteousness, life, and eternal salvation must be present with Him; and the Law, sin, and death must be absent.”<sup>20</sup>

Some scholars have denied that Luther’s definition of justification includes the gift of Christ to the heart by the transforming presence of the Holy Spirit. But reputable Luther scholars have recognized the balance in his thought between justification as God’s legal declaration and His gift of Christ to the heart.

For example, Althaus comments,

Although faith is not to be considered as a “work” in relationship to our justification, it remains the source and fountain of “good works.” As such it is the beginning of a new righteousness which a man has because he is actually righteous. This is implicit in the fact that faith justifies through Christ, that is, it brings Christ into the heart, or, expressed in other words, it is worked by the Holy Spirit and “brings (this Spirit) with it.” This means—as Luther says in his first lectures on Galatians—that God’s name, his holy, pure, and divine nature as revealed to us in Christ, so joins itself to our heart in faith that it makes our heart like itself. Thus our heart

itself becomes righteous, not only because it is accepted as such through the imputation of Christ’s righteousness, that is, of God’s own righteousness; but it also becomes righteous because God’s Holy Spirit is poured into the heart and he brings love and new obedience to him. . . .

Faith looks only and solely to the Christ for us, toward his righteousness “outside of us”; yet it thereby becomes the presence and the power of Christ in us. One and the same faith in Christ gives both forgiveness of sins and the triumph over sin. In faith a man becomes a new man. Justifying faith means being born again from God. The certainty of God’s forgiving mercy makes me glad in God, and brings the slavish service under the law to an end, works a new, free, and joyful obedience to God’s will, places me in the line of battle against the sin of the old man, creates the readiness to serve someone else in love and to suffer “in love and praise of God.” . . .

The two effects of faith in Christ are: It receives the forgiveness of sins and therewith the imputation of righteousness; it also establishes a new being and makes a man righteous in himself. These two effects of faith are inseparably joined together in Luther’s theology. When he speaks of that righteousness which faith is and gives he sees both together: the righteousness imputed for Christ’s sake, and man’s transformation to a new obedience. “Justification” in the full sense of the word consists in both of these together. The basic and decisive factor is that man is forgiven and receives new worth before God.<sup>21</sup>

Evangelical theologians in recent times have been engaged in a healthy debate on this subject. The recent book *Justification: What’s at Stake in the Current Debates*, edited

by Mark Husbands and Daniel J. Treier, is very revealing with the forensic-only position being seriously questioned.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, a group of Finnish historians have recently established that Luther saw justification as an experiential, spiritual union with Christ. Quite apart from their ecumenical interest, they have come up with an interpretation of Luther that contradicts the traditional forensic-only view.<sup>23</sup>

### John Calvin’s view

John Calvin’s definition of justification is similar to Luther’s. In book III, chapter XI of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin identifies two vital ingredients of justification: (1) the legal element, according to which God forgives sin and credits the righteousness of Christ to the believer; and (2) the experiential element, by which Christ comes into our hearts by the presence of the Holy Spirit.

On the first point, Calvin wrote,

A man is said to be justified in the sight of God when in the judgment of God he is deemed righteous, and is accepted on account of his righteousness; for as iniquity is abominable to God, so neither can the sinner find grace in his sight, so far as he is and so long as he is regarded as a sinner. Hence, wherever sin is, there also are the wrath and vengeance of God. He, on the other hand, is justified who is regarded not as a sinner, but as righteous, and as such stands acquitted at the judgment-seat of God, where all sinners are condemned. As an innocent man, when charged before an impartial judge, who decides according to his innocence, is said to be justified by the judge, so a man is said to be justified by God when, removed from the catalogue of sinners, he has God as the witness and assertor of his righteousness. In the same manner, a man will be said to be *justified by works*, if in his



life there can be found a purity and holiness which merits an attestation of righteousness at the throne of God, or if by the perfection of his works he can answer and satisfy the divine justice. On the contrary, a man will be *justified by faith*, when, excluded from the righteousness of works, he by faith lays hold of the righteousness of Christ, and clothed in it appears in the sight of God not as a sinner, but as righteous. Thus we interpret justification, as the acceptance with which God receives us into his favor as if we were righteous; and we say that this justification consists in the forgiveness of sins and the imputation of the righteousness of Christ. . . .

Hence, when God justifies us through the intercession of Christ, he does not acquit us on a proof of our innocence, but by an imputation of righteousness, so that though not righteous in ourselves, we are deemed righteous in Christ.<sup>24</sup>

On the second point, that justification involves the bestowal of Christ upon our hearts by the presence of the Holy Spirit, Calvin wrote, "In this way, in this meaning, I deny not that Christ, as he is God and man, justifies us; that this work is common also to the Father and the Holy Spirit; in fine, that the righteousness of which God makes us partakers is the eternal righteousness of the eternal God, provided effect is given to the clear and valid reasons to which I have adverted us one with himself, and, therefore, we glory in having a fellowship of righteousness with him."<sup>25</sup>

Calvin seems to have given greater emphasis to the legal (forensic) aspect in justification than did Luther.<sup>26</sup> "Calvin speaks of the believer being 'grafted into Christ', so that the concept of *incorporation* becomes central to his understanding of justification. The *iustitia Christi*

[the righteousness of Christ] on the basis of which man is justified, is treated as if it were man's within the context of the intimate personal relationship of Christ and the believer."<sup>27</sup>

## Justification today

Among theologians and Christian denominations today, a number of different views regarding justification are held. Among the views propagated today are the following: (1) the Roman Catholic position that justification makes the soul intrinsically righteous; (2) the view of Luther and Calvin that justification involves both a legal element and Christ's bestowal of Himself upon the heart of the believer by the presence of the Holy Spirit; (3) the legal-only position that regards justification as solely God's declaration that the righteousness of Christ is counted for the believer who remains unrighteous; and (4) the view that there is no legal aspect to justification, that it is only God's act of making the believer right in heart with Himself.

The evangelicals who argue for legal-only justification are in the tradition of post-Reformation orthodox, scholastic Lutheranism, not in the tradition of the Reformation itself. Despite their attempts to identify themselves with the Reformation, they are being untrue to the understanding of salvation taught by Luther and Calvin. Obviously each new generation must determine for itself from the scripture text what Paul meant by justification. But authors and churches that claim the Reformation as the historical foundation of their concept of the gospel, or claim that their theology is a perpetuation and an advancement of Reformation theology, while they ignore or misinterpret the basic understandings of the magisterial Reformers, are sadly committing

themselves to a distinctly unhistorical position. ❏

1. See Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification* (Cambridge: University Press, 1986), 1:40–51.
2. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, vol. 20, *Great Books of Our Western World*, First Part of the Second Part (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), question 110, article 2, <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/2110.htm> (accessed Oct. 8, 2009).
3. Ibid., question 110, article 4, <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/2110.htm> (accessed Oct. 8, 2009).
4. Ibid., question 113, article 3, <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/2113.htm> (accessed Oct. 8, 2009).
5. See McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 44–47, 63–65, 81, 82, 85–87.
6. Reinhold Seeberg, *Text-book of the History of Doctrines* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books House, 1977), 2:433.
7. Philip Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1919), 2:93; emphasis added.
8. Ibid., 94–99.
9. Ibid., 99–101, 107–109.
10. Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, trans. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 226.
11. *Luther's Works*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann, (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), 34:153.
12. Ibid., 34:152, 153.
13. Ibid., 34:177; emphasis added.
14. Ibid., 34:178.
15. Ibid., 25:104.
16. Ibid., 22:275.
17. Ibid., 26:208.
18. Ibid., 26:130.
19. Ibid., 26:132.
20. Ibid., 26:167, 168.
21. Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, 234, 235.
22. See, for example, "God's declaration in other words, is itself constitutive of that which is declared. God's word is always effective. When it goes forth, it never returns to Him void. So a judicial act for God is never merely judicial; it is itself transformative." Bruce L. McCormack, "What's at Stake in Current Debates Over Justification: The Crisis of Protestantism in the West," in *Justification: What's at Stake in the Current Debates*, eds. Mark Husbands and Daniel J. Treier, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 107.
23. See Tuomo Mannermaa, *Christ Present in Faith: Luther's View of Justification* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005); and Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson, eds., *Union With Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998).
24. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, bk. III, ch. XI, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1559, 1962), 2, 3.
25. Ibid., 10.
26. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 2:36–38.
27. Ibid., 36, 37; see also Wilhelm Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956), 120–139.



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# "But what I have I give you"

Once took a group of campers to the beach, and we saw a coconut floating in the water. We retrieved and opened it—only to discover that it was just husk, without a shell or fruit inside. How disappointed we were; it promised much, but delivered nothing.

Could some ministers be like that coconut? Full of promise but, ultimately, turning out empty? Could they be professing a lot but have nothing to back up that profession?

Let us look at one account from the early New Testament church that guides us to see if we are living up to the potential the Lord has placed in us.

## No silver and gold

The story is found in Acts 3. Peter and John—fresh from the Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit—are changed men, no longer fearful and timid. They now boldly proclaim the gospel, even publicly accusing their leaders of killing Jesus, the Son of God and the Messiah. Their focus? To advance God's kingdom, and no human power seems able to deter them.

As Peter and John walk, they see a disabled man, a beggar who had been born lame and daily plied his sorry trade at the temple gate. Persons on their way to the temple to pray and/or offer gifts were usually generous, particularly because almsgiving was a central part of their religion.<sup>1</sup> They saw generosity as a way to earn favor with God. In their theology, they believed that one's good deeds had to outweigh one's bad deeds in order to be saved.

The sight of the approaching worshipers may have elicited from the beggar the usual, "Alms for the poor! Alms for the poor!" His cry caught the apostles' attention and gave them the opportunity to witness in the name of their beloved Lord and Master.

Note Peter's discernment. Many needy people were at the temple gate. That Peter replied to this beggar implies he had spiritual discernment. Ellen White says this man had "long desired to see Jesus that he might be healed."<sup>2</sup> He missed Jesus, but now, instead, was face-to-face with a representative of Jesus.

The beggar, his situation, and the opening allowed Peter a great chance to witness. Unlike those who dismissed or ignored the beggar, Peter and John looked straight at the lame man. They had compassion for him and directed him to look at them. This is significant. For God to act for us, our gaze must be fixed on Him or on His servants—not on our cares or fears. Paul's point is relevant—"Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1).<sup>3</sup> Peter's words raised the man's expectations. He was sure something good was about to happen. Peter's next words, however, "'Silver or gold I do not have'" (Acts 3:6) must have greatly disappointed him and lowered his expectations.

Nevertheless, Peter didn't stop there. He continued, "[B]ut what I have I give you" (v. 6). With confidence and courage and conviction, Peter witnessed, not only to this man, but to all who were watching. "But what I have I give you"—words that show hope, faith, and confidence.

Peter knew what he had to give, and he willingly, and without hesitation, gave it.

Notice, too, that Peter gave the man, not what he thought he wanted, but what he really needed. He needed healing for his body and salvation for his soul. Money could provide neither; healing and salvation are, instead, gifts of the resurrected Lord. Peter and John met his need, not his apparent wants.

## In the name of Jesus

Peter and John recalled Jesus' words, "'According to your faith will it be done to you'" (Matt. 9:29), and "'I will do whatever you ask in my name'" (John 14:13). All they had was faith in Jesus and His ability to help. That was enough and they acted on it, not to glorify themselves but to glorify God. They, therefore, said, "'In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, walk'" (Acts 3:6).

Notice, Peter didn't say, "In the name of the church, walk!" He didn't heal the paralytic in his own name. The paralytic was healed in the name and power of Jesus.

Taking the man by the right hand, Peter helped him up as his feet and ankles became strong. This man, who had never walked from birth, sprang to his feet and wasn't only walking, but was jumping and praising God. And all because two disciples willingly used such as they had.

## What it means to us

How do we apply this story to ourselves today? The lame man expected something from Peter and John, and they did not disappoint


him. They had something to give, and they gave it. The result was the healing of the man, a witness to Jesus' name and power, conflict with the authorities, and ultimately—the salvation of individuals.

Peter and John used the faith they had. So should we. People expect ministry from ministers, and we shouldn't disappoint them. What

## Talent on loan from God

The world expects something from Christians; God expects Christians to have something to give for He gave us a mission to fulfill. Matthew 25 gives fascinating insight on Jesus' perspective on these things. The parable of the talents says God entrusts each of us with something that we must invest for Him. The

realization that God gave Heaven's best for our salvation. Jesus, God's best, gave His life for us. There's no greater gift. No talent should be withheld from use for such a God.

Peter and John gave what they had—look at the result. Imagine if we were to give of what we have. The question we need to ask is, What *do* we have? 

PETER AND JOHN USED THE FAITH THEY HAD.  
SO SHOULD WE. PEOPLE EXPECT MINISTRY FROM  
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THEM. WHAT DO YOU HAVE? WE ALL HAVE  
SOMETHING TO GIVE, DON'T WE?

do you have? We all have something to give, don't we? We all have at least one talent and that one talent we can invest in God's kingdom.

We need to be willing to invest our gifts for eternity and eternal rewards—the greatest being the reward of seeing souls in the kingdom who are there through our diligent efforts.

What do you have? Samson had a donkey's jawbone. David had a sling and a willing heart. Naaman's maid used her faith and voice to tell of Israel's prophet who could cure leprosy. The widow had only a small jar of oil. Dorcas had a needle, and she used it with dexterity to advance the kingdom. The widow had her mite that she didn't withhold but invested in the kingdom.

Yes, the lesson from the story should be the words of Peter, "But what I have I give you." You can't give what you don't have.

We need to determine just what we have been given by the Lord, and then we should use it for His glory.

parable of the sheep and the goats lists deeds of justice and acts of mercy as the things for which we will or will not be rewarded. Visiting the sick, giving food and shelter to the homeless, visiting those in prison, and other such acts of social justice are crucial to the Christian walk. Those who do these things will be more than fulfilling their calling in Christ.

We need to do more in these areas as Christians generally and ministers particularly. Our voices must be heard for justice and in defense of truth. For instance, we must speak out on issues relating to HIV/AIDS. We must stand against child labor by not buying products made by exploited children. We must support causes defending the defenseless, the exploited, and those on the margins. We must give voice to the voiceless, clothing to the naked, shelter to the homeless, and food to the hungry.

Yet the greatest motivation to use such as we have for God is the

1. Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 126ff; see also William Barclay, *The Acts of the Apostles*, rev. ed. The Daily Study Bible Series (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1975), 32.
2. Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), 57.
3. All scripture references are from the New International Version of the Bible.



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# Bring **the mission** to your **Sabbath service**

**F**or a long time in the history of our church, Sabbath School programs had a world mission emphasis. Fortunately, many of our churches still have this in some form. We have also had another emphasis, variedly called home missionary, lay activities, or personal ministries, usually tucked in between Sabbath School and the worship service.

Somehow, in recent times, both these vital segments have gotten crowded out in many of our churches. Without these weekly reminders of what God is doing through His church locally and around the world, many of our new members and the younger generation do not catch the vision of a worldwide movement and a God who is at work all around us in the lives of the members.

Why not talk with your church board about adding a 15–20 minute segment between Sabbath School and the worship service? Each Sabbath there could be 5–10 minutes of local missions focus and another 5–10 minutes of global missions focus. The personal ministries leader could assist in coordinating the local missions time, and the Sabbath School superintendent could assist in coordinating the global missions time.

## Local missions time

What would the local missions time look like? Here are some suggestions:

- Interview a newly baptized person or provide them time for a personal testimony.

- Interview a ministry leader, such as Pathfinder, Adventurers, Community Services, Bible study coordinator, men's or women's ministry, greeters' ministry, as to what God does through that ministry to change lives.
- Interview a family who has recently joined your church. If they are new to the faith, ask them how they found the truth. If they are transferring members, let them testify to their faith experience.
- Interview someone who gives Bible studies or leads a Bible study group.
- Show a video clip or photos of one of your ministries.
- Have a brief stewardship testimony about how God has been faithful when His gifts are managed the way He has instructed.
- Interview someone about how they learned about the Sabbath, and what a blessing it has been in their lives.
- Interview someone about how God helped them deal with a tragic loss.
- Present an award to a community leader who has made a valuable contribution to the good of society, and have several church leaders pray for the leader's service to God and humankind.
- Talk about upcoming witnessing and evangelism plans in the district.
- Give an update about the literature distribution effort, churchwide outreach for the last

week, or the various Bible studies that are going on currently.

- Invite the congregation to be involved in intercessory prayer with specific objectives.
- Invite worshipers to share what God has done in their lives during the past week or two.
- Involve the church school staff and students in sharing how God has worked in their lives during the week.

## Global missions time


What would the global missions time look like? Here are some suggestions:

- Show a segment from the Adventist Mission DVD. Each DVD has 6–10 segments, ranging in length from 1–10 minutes, sufficient for 6 Sabbaths.<sup>1</sup>
- Have a good storyteller tell a mission story from a book, such as *Singer on the Sand*, *Taught by a Tiger*, *Nyla and the White Crocodile*, *Jungle Thorn*, *Fire on the Mountain*, *Clever Queen*, or any of the other great mission storybooks found in most Adventist church libraries.<sup>2</sup>
- Interview a visiting, returned, or student missionary. Ask them to show pictures for a vespers program later in the day.
- Have a slide or video show of a recent mission trip someone in the church made.
- Use an item from the Adventist Mission Web site, [www.AdventistMission.org](http://www.AdventistMission.org), which

has lots of resources regarding the global mission of the church.

- Pray for God's work in specific countries. The adult Bible study guide carries mission stories and the back page has maps of specific projects for each quarter. Invite the congregation to pray in

The message of the third angel is a world-wide message. It is to go to foreign lands; it is to be preached in the home field. Into cities and towns and villages, into the highways and hedges, the light of truth is to be carried. In all these places there are those

bolder ones in the congregation share, those who are more shy will find courage to tell what God is doing in their lives too. And God's work will be enlarged because of the continued focus on missions—foreign and home—that your church offers. 

WHAT DO WE HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH BY HAVING A  
REGULAR LOCAL AND GLOBAL MISSION TIME EACH  
SABBATH MORNING? TO INSPIRE THE MEMBERS OF OUR  
CONGREGATIONS TO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN SHARING  
THE ADVENT MESSAGE IN THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS,  
COMMUNITIES, CITIES, AND AROUND THE WORLD.

groups of twos or threes for one of these mission needs.

- Send literature to a mission field. From time to time the *Adventist Review*<sup>3</sup> lists requests for literature from around the world.<sup>4</sup> Invite members to bring the items needed so they can be prayed for and sent out the coming week.
- Have a dedication prayer for those going on a mission trip. Do you have someone who is going on a short-term mission trip or a student missionary assignment? Why not invite them to the front to share what special requests they have and ask several church leaders to pray for them?

### What will we accomplish?

What do we hope to accomplish by having a regular local and global mission time each Sabbath morning? To inspire the members of our congregations to actively participate in sharing the Advent message in their neighborhoods, communities, cities, and around the world.

whose minds are receptive, and whose hearts are ready to respond to the appeals of the Spirit of God. These will welcome the truth if they have opportunity to hear. God is waiting for His people to bear to them the message of Him who died—the just for the unjust. He desires to work through men and women who, losing sight of self in Christ, are content to say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>5</sup>

Once you integrate a local and global mission time into your Sabbath morning service you will wonder how you ever got along without it. People will look forward to hearing and sharing what God is doing in their lives and around the world. Children will be inspired to work for God now and decide to be missionaries when they grow up. Guests will witness God at work in your congregation and recognize that even a small church is part of a worldwide movement. As the

1. The DVD is also available for free download at <http://adventistmission.org/article.php?id=32>.
2. Many of these books are also available at <http://www.adventistbookcenter.com/> or elsewhere online.
3. See <http://www.adventistreview.org/>.
4. See, for example, <http://www.adventistreview.org/2004-1539/literature.html>.
5. Ellen G. White, "A Spiritual Awakening," (*Australasian Union Conference Record*, April 15, 1912, par. 4.



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# The challenge of meeting the needs of your church members

An invitation for a pastor friend of mine arrived from the conference president, asking him to schedule an appointment for a consultation at the conference office. Now, this pastor knew that to spend some time in discussion with the president, at his initiation, may not always include a dialogue about something positive. His mind, in a rather fertile state, began wondering, *Was the president planning to ask about his pastoral activities? Would he reproach him for something he had or hadn't done? Might he inquire about something in his personal life?*

He marked the day in his calendar and on that day treaded softly in the direction of the president's office. The president was polite, but this pastor understood clearly by his facial expression that the president was planning to deliver a message of reproach.

A member from one of the minister's churches was also there in the president's office. After rather stoic handshakes and the traditional "So good to see you," they were ready for the discussion of the problem at hand. The accusation? *The pastor had deserted this member's church.* Recently, the board of directors of the conference had voted to downsize the district from twelve churches to six. This, of course, should mean that the pastor would have more time to visit all the scheduled church events in each church as well as call upon the members.

The president sat behind his desk; the accused and accuser facing him. The accused started to think; he had been in the district more than three years and believed his ministry had the approval of the church members. He had aspired to add members to each of the six churches, the leaders of each church were kind, and his family had adapted perfectly. *Whom had he ignored? To whom had he been unkind? Whom had he hurt?*

For two scheduled Sabbaths in one year, the pastor had not been able to worship with the accuser's church body; otherwise he had followed the agenda agreed upon by the church board and himself. The accuser seemed to believe—as thought by the pastor—that missing two Sabbaths meant that he had abandoned that church. This situation seemed to be pointing to something fairly simple: the church group was clamoring for more attention.

## Pastoral ministry compared to a family

Pastoral ministry can be compared to a father and mother with several children. Each child requires undivided attention from their parents, and may practice negative attitudes and exaggerated actions to call for this parental notice. What do these offspring really desire? *Special attention.*

As in a family, the pastor needs to be aware of the needs and desires of each church group. What do they

wish to accomplish in the church setting or in the community? How could they work together in the district to accomplish their goals and dreams for the advancement of the gospel?

However, some church groups seem to monopolize the work, social life, and family of the pastor. They act as though they need their leader's attention and do not seem to be concerned with whether the aims of the church are achieved—just so the pastor shows them the special attention they crave. Because this group wants and may receive the pastor's major attention, another church in the pastor's district might work on their own, tread ahead of the pastor, and override all church goals and planned activities. Really, these two groups may be saying the same thing: we want the special and undivided attention of our pastor.

Listed below are several suggestions for meeting the needs of your church members. Implementing them may result in significant blessings to everyone.

## Have a plan

Yearly planning should include representatives from every church in your district, if possible. In this way, each group feels included and involved. This plan, developed by the group, does not need to be complicated. In fact, the simpler the plan, the easier the assimilation and involvement. Appropriate planning requires work and dedication but results in very agreeable scheduling for the future.



## Do not compare

We sometimes have a tendency to compare the way some church groups do some things well with other church groups that do things resulting in obvious mistakes. Some parents say to their children, "Your brother does this better than you. Why don't you learn from him?" Because no one likes to be compared with another, a different ministry or varied events should be developed. In a similar manner, some church members may say, "That church handles things in an excellent manner. Why can't we do things in the same way?" In a pastoral district, this attitude can produce rancor, rage, a spirit of competition, and a big sense of incompetence. The group negatively influenced by those who compare themselves with another church body may feel humiliated. Pastoral responsibilities include attempting to assure the troubled group that they have needed talents and assets, and helping them discover their strengths.

## Keep a team spirit

Most people feel good about, and love, working together as a team. In your meetings with the leadership of the district, form groups to plan activities for the district, naming some to function as leaders and others as advisors for the groups (for instance, name a leader for women's ministry and another for the youth and Pathfinders). The more unity shown from your team of leaders, the more members of your churches will become involved in the activities of your district. The effects of this kind of unity result in wonderful responses that last for a very long time.

## Visit

Visiting your members in their homes is the best way to become acquainted with the members in your district. The visitation should, however, be scheduled since people

may resist surprises. You should tell them in advance the reason for the visit and suggest a date and time. Then be sure to be there at the scheduled time.

## Appear in church settings

From time to time, you should take part in the active components of the church. For instance, help in the various departments of your

member playing a different instrument. The instruments must be tuned, the team established so that the result of this practice becomes noticed, and with practice, the orchestra will present a great musical concert.

And don't forget, we work for the Supreme Pastor, and He will never let us stand alone. We are objects of His sweet attention, and

*MUST I BE A SUPERPASTOR? NO. YOU JUST NEED TO SPEND SOME TIME WITH EACH GROUP AS YOUR SCHEDULE PERMITS.*

Sabbath Schools as your schedule permits, spend time with the children, attend gatherings of the older people and promote their social occasions, and take part in the young people's service activities. After that marathon schedule, you may wonder, *How can I do everything just mentioned? Must I be a superpastor?* No. You just need to spend some time with each group as your schedule permits.


## Be faithful

Loyalty accounts for a great deal in the life of a minister. You must be faithful to your family, your colleagues in ministry, church organization, and the members of your church. Never demonstrate a lack of respect by an exclusive social relationship with a few members.

## And remember, you are the conductor

Think of your church as one united symphony, with each

He stores our names in the palm of His hand.

" 'I have loved you with an everlasting love; / I have drawn you with unfailing kindness' " (Jer. 31:3, TNIV). 



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***A Life to Die For***, by W. Clarence and Stephen Schilt, Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 2009.

Clarence Schilt worked in pastoral ministry for 42 years. For most of those years, he says he “mostly held the hands of the saints through their pain,” not doing them a lot of good beyond that.

Until five years ago, that is, when he discovered what he calls “the exchanged life.” The exchanged life transformed his life, marriage, and ministry so profoundly that, with the help of his brother, Stephen, he wrote a book about it.

*A Life to Die For* is a book that may, in time, become a classic akin to Scott Peck’s *The Road Less Traveled*. The book’s premise is that anyone wanting to live a Christian life has to die to their old one—a fact few churches emphasize.

But what makes this book really special is the authors’ willingness to make themselves vulnerable as they share riveting stories from their personal lives to make their point. One fascinating anecdote is Clarence’s confession of major pain on



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losing out on a prestigious pastoral appointment to a large church. The church wanted him, but the conference had someone else in mind. Clarence admits, in retrospect, that he wanted this position “for all the wrong reasons.”

In similar fashion, Stephen candidly shares his feelings when his plans for “the good life” were suddenly derailed by the pain of his wife Dee Dee’s kidney failure. He goes on to write how God showed him His plan to replace “the good life” with a better life.

After viewing Clarence’s and his wife Dianna’s DVD, *How to Die Right and Live to Tell About It*, Stephen committed his life to Christ. That

commitment ultimately led him to agree to co-author *A Life to Die For*. “I suddenly realized how truly helpless and hopeless I was,” he writes. “I realized that I didn’t need Christ to *assist* me; I need Him to *replace* me” (38). As for Clarence, he says his marriage was a more joyful experience after he began to experience the exchanged life.

*A Life to Die For* has the potential to change one’s life. It’s an excellent book for midweek meetings, Sabbath School classes, small groups, families, and also contains great sermon material.

—Reviewed by Mike Jones, a retired pastor and former editor of *Insight*.


## A resource for the blind

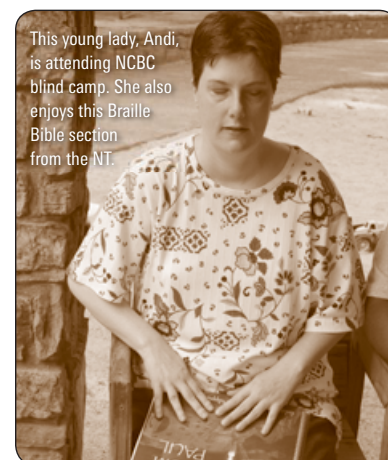
Christian Record Services, a ministry for the blind, based in Lincoln, Nebraska, United States, marked 110 years of service in 2009. Christian Record provides a variety of literature in Braille. The organization also provides other services such as National Camps for Blind Children.

This year also marks the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of Louis Braille birth near Paris, France, who was blinded as a three-year

old. During his teenage years, he developed a code based on six raised bumps that fingers can identify.

Larry Pitcher, president of Christian Record Services, states that “Braille remains the only way totally blind people can truly read the written language.”

Pastors and congregations that wish to obtain resources from Christian Record Services can contact the organization by visiting [www.christianrecord.org](http://www.christianrecord.org), emailing [info@christianrecord.org](mailto:info@christianrecord.org), or calling +1 402 488-0981. 



This young lady, Andi, is attending NCBC blind camp. She also enjoys this Braille Bible section from the NT.



## Family life—the focus in Krakow

**Krakow, Poland**—Krakow, one of the largest and oldest cities in Poland, saw 38 participants attend this year's Certified Family Life Educator's (CFLE) seminar, September 6–11, 2009.

Hosted by **Paul Tompkins**, Family Ministries director in the Trans-European Division (TED), this year's two modules, Theological Foundations and Interpersonal Relationships, were presented by guest lecturers **Roberto Badenas**, Education and Family Ministries director for the Euro-Africa Division, and **Bryan Craig**, retired South Pacific Division Family Ministries director.

**Konstantinos Theofylaktidis**, a CFLE graduate, commented, "These seminars, through lectures, materials, books, and practical trainings in groups, gave me an opportunity to better understand and see the potential of family ministries, [and] these seminars prepared me for practical ministry to people."

**Marek Rakowski**, secretary for the Adventist Church in Poland and local facilitator of this event, expressed his appreciation to Badenas and Craig for their proficient contribution, and to Tompkins for his consistency in organizing these programs each year, addressing topics and current needs as felt in many Adventist homes. He said, "I feel privileged that we were able to host the CFLE seminar in Krakow this year. Our task as Christian counselors is to teach people to build proper relations and oppose evil. I am convinced that this training seminar will prove very helpful for all the participants."

Tompkins concluded, "The CFLE Family Ministries training continues to be very important

in the Trans-European Division. Family issues relate to all cultures and societies, and an informed and skilled ministry in this area has proved to be both effective and well received in the European setting."

[TED Staff/TED News]

## Renaming a library

**Bahia, Brazil**—The **Faculdades Adventistas da Bahia** (North-east Brazil College) celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of their institution by naming the library in honor of Pastor **Jose Mascarenhas Viana**, a native of northeast Brazil who served at the college as a professor of theology. Before his death, Viana also served as associate ministerial secretary of the South American Division and ministerial secretary of several unions in that division.

His spouse, **Vasti Viana** (pictured with their daughter and family members), donated his personal library of more than 2,000 books to the university. [Jonas Arrais]



## Elder's Digest celebrates 15 years

**Silver Spring, Maryland, United States**—The General Conference Ministerial Association, thanks to the visionary leadership of **James Cress**, ministerial secretary for the world church of Seventh-day Adventists, launched a quarterly journal in 1994 for local leaders of district churches designed to provide training and other valuable resources for those who assist pastors in their responsibilities.

*Elder's Digest* began with a circulation of 3,000. During the 15 years since the magazine was launched, under the direction of former editors **James H. Zachary** and **Joel Sarli**, and now under the direction of **Jonas Arrais**, associate ministerial secretary for the world church of Seventh-day Adventists since 2005, worldwide circulation has reached 100,000.

This accomplishment was noted October 13, 2009, during the Seventh-day Adventist Church's Annual

Council in Silver Spring, Maryland. According to Arrais, "more than 100,000 copies are printed each quarter and delivered to more than 100 countries, encompassing all world divisions."

If you are not receiving *Elder's Digest* but wish to do so, please contact your local conference office or go to [www.eldersdigest.org](http://www.eldersdigest.org).

[Willie E. Hucks II]







## Differently genuine

Typically, we fear something new and different for those very reasons. All humans embrace the familiar and routine and resist that which challenges our comfortable, long-established patterns. "After all," we reason, "we have always done it this way; it must be correct!"

When I rode the train nearly two hours north of Sydney to attend a recently planted church, I was not sure what to expect since I had heard many opinions ranging from "everything the wider church needs" to "precarious experimentation that cannot last."

My host, Pastor Wayne Krause, who also serves as director of the South Pacific Division's Center for Church Planting, had noted that I would not need a dress suit since most of the attendees would dress "casual." After three weeks of a difficult travel itinerary, this expectation immediately made the entire venture much more appealing.

Although the church's location, just two blocks from the train station, was close enough to walk, the pastor met me, and we took a quick drive around the community of Wyong on Australia's central coast. Soon we circled back to a large facility that looked more like a warehouse than a cathedral. Signs identified the multi-use building as a district social hall, a Salvation Army Center, and Central Coast Community Church of Seventh-day Adventists (CCCC). The lack of abundant parking was less obvious because of close proximity to transit lines and several nearby parking lots.

Worship services are held first at CCCC with Bible Discovery (Sabbath School) following. Logically, this resonates with the needs of the many young families who attend "Big Church" and allows parents to worship together as a family before their kids become too restless to settle into a sermon/worship setting.

Following worship, the church clearly envisioned the needs of various groups. First, a delightful breakfast buffet greeted all attendees, as fellowship time extended into prayer groups, sharing, storytelling, discussions, and unrushed social and spiritual engagement. The church always provides a noon lunch as well.

Provisions for children included babysitting plus Kids' Church that was carefully themed to the adult study and worship. The youngsters enjoyed the lesson study in various ways, such as small groups, crafts, singing, mission story, and age-appropriate witnessing strategies. I was particularly impressed with the number of community kids who showed up at *their* church. This outreach strategy of high-quality children's programming works because kids bring their parents.

Adult study options included a general lesson study taught that day by the pastor who emphasized the fifteenth chapter of the Gospel of John, as well as the importance of orthodoxy coupled with outreach.

Various fellowship groups offer mutual and interactive support that spills over into other functions throughout the week, such as men's group at the local pub (a location selected for the purpose of interacting with the locals), prayer ministry, and various support groups.

Although the type of music played and sung was not my preference, it showed careful thought and thorough planning integral to worship preparation. Extraordinarily talented individuals, such as the original drummer from the band AC/DC—now a CCCC church member—led the congregational singing. A Bob Dylan song, sung just before the sermon, perfectly matched Pastor Krause's message that followed.

Two young adults, who had scheduled their baptisms, each shared powerful testimonies of their

search for God and commitment to discipleship.

Attractively designed, free-standing banners, detailed CCCC's core values: inspiring worship, gift-based ministry, need-focused evangelism, Christlikeness, community, empowering leadership, process, excellence, passionate spirituality, holistic small groups, multiplication, encouragement, authenticity, love-acceptance-forgiveness, and relevance.

Wayne and Tracey Krause make mentoring a high priority for their ministry. Erika Gemmell, who served a year as assistant pastor, says, "I saw the church function in a totally different way than I'd ever seen before. People became alive as the body of Christ." She adds, "Pastor Krause mentored me and constantly challenged me to determine how I would apply what I experienced there in my future ministry. In the five years since, I have resolved that when a body of believers has a clear and focused mission, we become empowered to use our spiritual gifts for God's glory and to care for each other in His name. My experience clarified my understanding of God's call on my life."

The South Pacific Division should rejoice in this emphasis on innovative church planting. Although some have raised questions about the authenticity of CCCC's approach (primarily individuals who have never actually attended), I was pleased to discover a passion and clarity for both the message and mission of Adventist beliefs. I encourage others to discover for themselves the value of such needs-based ministry that struggles to involve the church community with local society in a way that abandons the *fortress mentality* of isolation from the world and embraces the *force mentality* that engages the world.

I summarize my CCCC experience in two words: *different* and *genuine*! 📧

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