

Revival & REFORMATION

The Official “United in Prayer” Weekly Blog and Prayer Requests
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This is for my good—really?

By Pavel Goia

Many years ago, my wife, Daniela, and I ran a very profitable business in Romania. We had a comfortable life, with all the necessary means, influence, and friends. Countless times we helped those in need, assisted the church, and carried out charitable activities, and we were “humbly” proud of it.

When God called us into pastoral ministry, we gave up the business, unusually large income, and comfortable life. We did that joyfully and in faith, considering it a sacrifice for God. We said we had no merits, yet quietly regarded our sacrifice as an act of faith and considered ourselves prepared and ready for service. We expected great things to follow.

A few years later, through a series of unexpected circumstances, God led us to the United States. This second sacrifice was greater for us than giving up the business—leaving our house, family, and friends and going to a new country, knowing extremely limited English, without financial reserves or support, on a student visa. We had no friends; no money for food, clothing, utilities, or other necessary things; and no car; shortly thereafter, we became very discouraged. I was especially frustrated when I could not fully understand my teachers and classmates while trying to learn Greek and Hebrew in English.

With very little food and many bills to pay, we prayed desperately, yet there was no immediate answer.

We had given up everything, envisioned great things happening, yet we experienced extreme disappointment. We could not understand what was going on or the reason for it. Was God there, was He working? There was no light or hope in sight.

As we look back, we now know that God was in control the whole time. He had a plan, and at every step, through every detail, He was actually working for our benefit. We learned more about real faith, full surrender, and total dependence on God. We also learned to understand people in trials, to love them, listen to them, care for them. We experienced and learned to appreciate humility; genuine, persevering prayer; and many other precious Christian characteristics.

In the same manner and on a much larger scale, the Seventh-day Adventist Church was born from what seemed to be a crisis. I cannot imagine the disappointment of the pioneers. Giving up everything, preaching and believing that the Second Coming was imminent, looking up with excitement and anticipation for Jesus’ return, and yet, when the expected period ended, they saw nothing happen.

Nevertheless, what they considered a crisis, a disappointment, not only developed them through crucial lessons but was the very means God used for their salvation. The event that perplexed the pioneers actually marked the antitypical day of atonement—the beginning of the investigative judgment and of Jesus’ work as our Intercessor, High Priest, and Advocate, the single way to salvation.

Likewise, after the cross, the disciples considered Jesus' death their greatest crisis. But that was, in fact, the greatest news and the very means God used for their salvation. Without the cross there would have been no hope for them or anybody else. In the Old Testament, the Day of Atonement—the judgment day—was the best possible news. The sacrifice of the lamb was the single way to forgiveness and eternal life. The very events we envision as a crisis, God uses for our benefit and to prepare us for a life of service.

Revelation 10 teaches us that there is a distinctive, bittersweet identity that characterizes God's church in the final period of earth's history. There is also a distinctive identity that characterizes each of God's children. While "the faith of individual members of the church will be tested as though there were not another person in the world,"¹ it is also true that "God knows His people perfectly, and He treats each one as though there were not another person for whom He gave His dear Son."²

It is the trials that make pure gold; but God knows just how much we can bear. And just as Jesus is preparing a place for us, even so He is preparing us for that place.

Pavel Goia is an associate of the Ministerial Association of the General Conference and editor of Ministry Magazine. This was originally published in the Ministry Magazine and is reprinted with permission.

Endnotes:

1 Ellen G. White, *Last Day Events* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1992), 260.

2 Ellen G. White, *Steps to Jesus* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1997), 100.

World Church Prayer Requests

September 16-23, 2018

- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Please pray for our Brazilian members in Kakegawa, Japan as they seek to reach out to other Brazilian immigrants and to their Japanese neighbors. They have secured a former karaoke entertainment center, which now serves as a church and Life Hope Center.
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Strategically located in a tourist hotspot in Israel, the Haifa Life Hope Center offers a range of activities from children's cooking classes to Bible art exhibits, concerts, table games, Bible classes, and more. Please ask God to pour out a special blessing on this center and those who come.
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Please pray for the upcoming 4th Quarter Day of Prayer and Fasting taking place on October 6th. Pray that many will join this united prayer effort as we focus on praying for "the least of these." For information and prayer materials, click here: <https://www.revivalandreformation.org/resources/all/prayer-and-fasting-days>
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** General Conference staff, partnering with AMEN (Adventist Medical Evangelism Network), are planning a special health clinic for the Silver Spring, Maryland community. Please continue to pray for the volunteers, physicians, and clients who will participate in the health clinic on October 7th.