

From the G.C. President

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O DATELINE ANDREWS UNIVERSITY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY: Last weekend I joined the Andrews University Seminary faculty and their families for their annual retreat held this year on Gull Lake, near Battle Creek, Michigan. Pastoral training, diversity versus pluralism, the document on “Total Commitment to God,” and a wide variety of issues relative to the state of the church, were all on the agenda during 9+ hours we spent in dialogue. It was an inspiration for me to become better acquainted with this dedicated, superbly qualified, group of pastors/teachers/scholars who truly want to help their students not only learn about but have a personal encounter with Christ.

A few pictures from the retreat as well as the script of my Sabbath sermon can be found in the World Wide Web under the “travel highlights” section of the G C Presidential Home Page at <http://www.adventist.org/GC/Presidential>

O TELE-EVANGELISM WORKS IN PERU: Up to 15,000 baptisms are anticipated from a locally produced, low budget television Bible study project in Peru.

Pastor Raul Gomez, Peruvian Union President, was excited about using Net 96. But the churches in his field were not equipped with downlink equipment, and they didn't have the time and money to prepare before the series started. So they designed their own Tele-Evangelism event. A local evangelist began broadcasting an 8-week series of Bible studies every morning at 6:30 a.m. on nationwide television. Members organized small groups of neighbors and friends to meet each morning. Thousands of others watched at home alone.

Leaders estimate, based on the number who registered for seminar materials, that 200,000 people participated in the seminar series. As of last Sabbath 5,000 have been baptized and it is expected this will reach 15,000 by the end of the year. They would like to extend the series for a few more weeks but have been unable to underwrite the cost of US\$4,000 per week.

O GLOBAL MISSION PIONEERS IN INDONESIA:

✓ Calvin Timbangcango, a village chief and protestant pastor in Kalimantan, first accepted the Sabbath message from Global Mission Pioneer Augustina Pasuang, then he accepted the messenger! After he was baptized, the two were married. Today they have a congregation of 44 members in that previously unentered area.

✓ Ferry Ongkowijoyo was raised to despise Christians. But after being imprisoned for vandalizing Christian stores and churches he met a protestant preacher who, from the Koran, introduced him to Jesus. One month before graduating from a protestant Bible school, Ferry learned about the Sabbath from Augustina Pasuang and was baptized although his parents disowned him. Now Ferry is a Global Mission pioneer and has raised a congregation of 30 members.

✓ Abdul Wahid, a Muslim, kept Friday holy but wondered why since Sabbath keeping is taught in the Koran. When an Adventist pastor introduced him to the Sabbath he knew it was right. After his baptism he too became a Global Mission pioneer and he has established a congregation of 16 people, all of whom were Muslims.

Off the Back Burner

Segment #85: Another of Satan's lies, made evident as we discover the Great Controversy Theme in Ellen G. White's *Steps to Christ*, is that God is a Severe Judge, not a Loving Father (see SC:11). Instead God, our Loving Father, stands at the door of His home, glad for those who trust Him and remain in the household, but always with outstretched arms and far-seeing eyes for the prodigal who has not yet returned. “He is wooing by His tender love the hearts of His erring children” (SC:35). When they refuse the Father's love, stubborn children do not then see the icy face of an offended parent and expect the whip of anger—they will see only tears, only the words, “How can I give you up? How can I hand you over?” (Hos. 10:8) “So I gave them over to their own stubborn heart” (Psa. 81:12).

In the end, rebels who have spurned the outstretched arms of love and power will say, “We have destroyed ourselves by our determined rejection of His love” (SC:34).

Indeed, rebels do not live forever. Only those who have turned the rebel thought into loving submission to their Great Friend, only “those who have overcome Satan, and through divine grace have formed perfect (happy compliance with known duty) characters” (SC:126) will be among the redeemed. God's merciful plan to bring an end to rebellion—the cause of sin, sorrow, and death—has been so clear that no one will be surprised and have occasion for further questions.

Rebels will one day declare that God is right and Satan wrong (Phil. 2:10, 11). They will confess that they have rejected all the peace overtures that God extended to them, time without number (1 Tim. 2:4; Tit. 2:11). What an awful moment, to see the tears in the face of your greatest Lover, and then to fully realize that the controversy is over, and that the “wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). Death, eternal death, not “sleep” like all other men and women have experienced.

Ellen G. White is crystal clear that Jesus, “in the agony of Gethsemane, the death of Calvary, . . . “paid the price” for EVERYONE'S redemption (SC:13). But not everyone wants to believe that sin is that awful—they distrust God. For the rebel, that God-forsaken bleakness of Calvary is a foretaste of his or her last thought before God, the Loving Father, turns His head and His presence becomes a “consuming fire” (Heb. 12:29; Rev. 20:9). How unnecessary will be the death of God's children who refused to trust Him!