

# Ria's Corner, # 1 of 2019

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March 28, 2019

Our most precious loved ones and faithful friends in the Lord,

Rejoice with Edwin and me that he turned 89 on Sabbath, March 9. We were elated to have precious guests with us, especially my Korean student, Becky Jo Baeg, whom I had taught English when I did a stint at the local library as part of the prerequisites for my master's degree in 2003. She has been a constant friend since that time, but on Sabbath we were so happy to be together that we held hands during the divine service! Her husband kindly accompanied her, though he says he does not believe in Christianity. We also had Norma and Victor Fleitas, precious and generous friends, to make our joy complete. Of course, our lovely Mission Hope family provided delicious food and Edwin got sung to in English, Spanish (Las Mañanitas), Korean, and Afrikaans—by me! Casey Lao, whose parents are from the Philippines, whom we have treated as a granddaughter since she was a baby but who is now a registered nurse, provided two huge cakes and three balloons. She should have sung for Edwin in Tagalog, come to think of it. But she was born in the United States, although she recently served for a year as a medical missionary to the Palawan people in the Philippines.

The proofreading of Edwin's Esperanto epic, *La Konflikto de la Epokoj* (The Conflict of the Ages), has just been completed, and the Belgian publisher has placed an order with its printer in the Czech Republic to turn it into a book. With its hard cover and lovely dust jacket in full color, it will be a delight for the eyes. Since this will be the first printed Adventist message book in Esperanto, we are already praying for poetry lovers to get to know Jesus as a result of reading it.

I am very grateful to report that my surgeon does not want to see me again, because my femur is completely healed. Praise the Lord!

Edwin does not like me to write about our financial difficulties at all and said he was going to eliminate all such material when editing this letter. However, we reached a compromise by providing more background about our financial situation.

In South Africa, we were much better off than we are here. We owned two properties, each with a solid brick house. Both were fully paid off. The first was a farm of more than sixty acres. Diadone, as we called the farm, was Ria's dream come true. It had six bedrooms in which often slept guests, some for extended periods of time. The outbuildings consisted of a three-car garage, servants' quarters, etc. Ria had a complete pottery studio, and created a huge park-like flower garden. We also planted an orchard of 200 deciduous and semi-tropical fruit trees. Additionally we grew 1,000 prickly-pear plants of several varieties, some of which had already grown into trees and were bearing delicious fruit, which was highly prized in South Africa. We also owned a town property. As college teachers, we earned enough

money to travel to Europe three times. At our retirement, we thought we could, apart from substantial pensions, earn good money as fruit farmers.

But suddenly the worsening political situation of the late 1980s shattered our dream. A radical party known as the Pan Africanist Congress, espousing Black Nationalism and Socialism, wanted to drive all white people off their farms by violent means. One of its slogans was “one settler—one bullet!” Terrorism reared its ugly head. Land mines blew up people in cars on unpaved roads. (The one that led to our farm extended for 3 km/2 miles from the highway!) On several farms around and close to us, the occupants were physically attacked or killed in horrible ways. Incidentally, this is still happening to a distressing extent. More than 20,000 farmers have to date been brutally murdered.

We did not want to be killed on our own land. This was the main reason for leaving our beloved farm and immigrating to the United States. With some difficulty, we sold both our properties. Unfortunately, when we repatriated our money, an increasingly unfavorable exchange rate caused us to lose 50 percent of its value. This was one of the reasons why, when we bought a mobile home in the United States, we could make a down payment of only 20 percent and incurred a considerable debt.

God had his own reasons why we had to come to America, for which we will always be grateful. He had a job for Edwin to do. Here he was to write his books on prophecy, especially *The Truth About 666 and the Story of the Great Apostasy*. Unbeknown to us, some of our leading scholars— Influenced by non-Adventist writers—were undermining Uriah Smith’s Historicist interpretation that the 666 in Revelation 13:18 referred to *vicarius Filii Dei*, an ancient title of the papacy.

We remain deeply thankful to all who support our ministry with their love, prayers, book orders, words of encouragement, and occasionally—as the Lord touches somebody’s heart—a donation. We still marvel how the Lord enabled me to graduate with a Master’s degree in the Teaching of English as a Second Language at the age of 68, and then gave me the courage and strength to teach at the same local university for another eight years, where I was extremely happy. So I retired for a second time at the age of 76. This enabled the two of us to receive a very modest Social Security, of which a substantial amount is subtracted to pay for Medicare, without which we would have been sunk totally.

Unfortunately, Edwin—who also lectured at the university—was knocked off the labor market by congestive heart failure before he could in his own right qualify for Social Security. But this did enable him to write the rest of his books on prophecy instead of twiddling his thumbs while I worked.

In all of this, the Lord has been very good to us indeed. But now that we are both in retirement we need to sell books to augment our local and South African pensions. The latter keep on being affected by an unfavorable exchange rate. Sometimes the two together reach as high as \$1,000.00, but at times they have shrunk to \$425.00. With the instability of the South Africa Rand, which tends to become worth less and less, our pensions are not dependable, but we thank the Lord that they are still being paid.

You can see, therefore, that your help, however small, can make a huge difference in our situation. Every month a miracle takes place in the bottom of the barrel, so we can meet our most basic expenses, except when I leave the garden sprinkler on the whole night and incur a huge water bill! But there is no money for extras such as clothing. Then we thank the Lord that we grew up poor and do not mind buying at thrift stores and on flea markets, when something needs replacing. Without your help as God impresses hearts our ministry for him would, humanly speaking, be impossible.

The best way of supporting us and our ministry is to help us sell our books. It is particularly perplexing that we are finding few buyers for *Cristo y Anticristo en la Profecía y la Historia*, the Spanish translation of Edwin's *Christ and Antichrist in Prophecy and History*. (The latter has gone through two editions and sold so well that only a very few copies still remain.) This is very strange. The United States has the second largest Spanish-speaking population in the world, even more than Spain! The largest is Mexico. To send *Cristo y Anticristo* over the border to other countries is, however, expensive because books have to go by airmail.

On the other hand, we have many Spanish churches in this country, which surely represent a substantial market, for many of their members are not proficient in English. But we have not been able to make a break-through. Please advise us as to what we should do. In the meantime, we have been giving these books away as presents. We donated a considerable number to the work in Cuba.

Regarding that country, several communications have recently reached us about the work that Seventh-day Adventist agencies have been doing or have attempted to do there. This has brought us great joy. We praise the Lord constantly that we could visit that beautiful island in 2014 and still observe the ever-growing, great success of the World Youth Group, started by Henry and Arleen Stubbs about twenty years ago. We believe we are now beginning to see, again, Acts of the Holy Spirit of God working through them to bring in lost souls. Henry reported that more young people came forward to work in unentered cities on the island. He had not yet planned on the 91 medical missionaries who are now offering their services! For every two missionaries a house has to be bought, where a house church is organized. An amazing thing happened recently in Catalina, where Satan managed to cause chaos. If you would like to read about that, please contact Henry at [henry.stubbs@gmail.com](mailto:henry.stubbs@gmail.com) or his wife Arleen at [Godisarleensrefuge@gmail.com](mailto:Godisarleensrefuge@gmail.com).

At present, Cuba has a population of more than eleven million people. Most of them are very poor but, remarkably, about one in every eleven is a university graduate. The same is true of our 30,000 Seventh-day Adventists there. They are, in fact, our most literate and best educated believers in Spanish-speaking Latin America.

The Communist regime has, however, placed serious restrictions on our work. Preaching services and evangelism are limited to existing churches. These can be renovated but not enlarged, and others may not be built. That is why Henry's ministry buys houses for its workers who do medical missionary work in poor towns. These volunteers are each paid about \$25.00 per month, so Edwin and I feel so privileged to support two of them.

A recent example of what happens when an evangelist tried to labor in another way is provided by what has happened there in March 2019. Permission had been obtained for Carter Report Cuban evangelist Pedro to conduct a series in a public hall. This was wonderful news, and the meetings were widely advertised! But suddenly, at the last moment, a Communist leader cancelled that permission. Fortunately, our people were able to move their venue to a church building a mile away.

The Communist official also thought he could benefit from the evangelistic advertisements that were supposed to bring people to the hall. He organized a concert with a prominent Cuban singer. But suddenly that evening a violent tornado tore the roof off, the lights went out, the heavy glass chandeliers shattered on the heads of screaming people. And at that point, to make matters even worse, robbers armed with knives rushed in among them.

Meanwhile the Seventh-day Adventists were worshipping peacefully nearby, and fifty-three souls gave their hearts to the Lord Jesus.

For the time being, we are a bit skeptical about other attempts to worship in halls or to build churches or chapels. The World Youth Group with its houses is, however, successful. What is more, and very important, is that it cooperates well with our Union Conference, which asked for its pastors to receive similar training to that of the medical missionaries.

To show how serious God is about Cuba, another ministry, led among others by Pastor Russell Thomas, which has been setting up printing presses in various African countries, recently went there for eight days to check the SDA printing setup, without knowing about Henry's work. Pastor Thomas and his friends are planning to buy five good used presses to send to Cuba, with the intention of even printing Bibles there! The Union was amazed at receiving such a gift free of charge and therefore offered to pay for the shipping. It was our great joy to put Pastor Thomas in touch with Henry. Isn't God good? Supporting ministries should be helping one another. This makes me think of the early Church, when people worked together so well, without competition for funding.

Until recently, a precious sister, who does promotional work, designed and printed material for us free of charge, since she is also a deep Christian and a missionary at heart. But now, due to the sickness and death of her mother, who was deep into Alzheimer's, she had to neglect her work to some extent. Once the precious mother died, she developed medical problems which further undermined her business. Please pray urgently for her. Also, if you know of anybody who needs any promotional work done, please contact her direct at [Norma@rgvpromos.com](mailto:Norma@rgvpromos.com).

Edwin and I thank the Lord that our ministry is a small cog in the huge business of saving souls for eternity. We firmly believe in well-researched books and articles which will stand the test of time and work until Jesus comes. "The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God" is our motto. After all, the Lord only expects truth since of the redeemed it says "in their mouth was found no guile". Our ministry seeks to glorify God only and we do not wish to go beyond where He leads. We try to refrain from finger-pointing, thereby becoming accusers of our fellow believers. That is the work of Satan, the accuser of the brethren. Nor do we believe in gimmicks of a sensational half-true nature to extract

money from readers. We lean heavily on the Everlasting Arms and thank the Lord for each new day but pray for the wisdom and strength to carry His banner high, faithfully to the end.

That the *Truth About 666 and the Story of the Great Apostasy* is making its way into the bloodstream of the Church recently became apparent when we received word from South Korea from Dr. Koot van Wyk. He provided a link that showed learned Korean believers, including the retired president of Samyook University, discussing Rev. 13 on Youtube. He referred to and showed pictures of this book as well as Edwin's photo. He spoke eloquently about the number 666 representing *Vicarius Filii Dei* and how it is calculated. In one week this presentation was viewed by more than 10,000 people!

We are delighted to report that Dr. Gerard Damsteegt, who recently retired from the Seminary at Andrews University, and his wife Laurel are on board to help with the sale of *The Truth About 666*, which he highly recommends.

About the same time, a Youtube presentation on the same lesson appeared by Pastor Robert Costa in Spanish. He suggested that people should read Edwin's *Truth About 666 and the Story of the Great Apostasy*. Robert is our loyal friend, the Director-Speaker of *Está Escrito*, and works for the General Conference as Mark Finley's successor to foster world evangelism. He constantly flies all over the planet to conduct reaping efforts. But please pray for him. Satan often attacks him. Recently he was very ill for a few weeks with pneumonia.

That reminds me of our special fan and friend in The Netherlands, Hans Moolenburgh, M.D., who sadly recently passed away at age 93. He was the author of 17 books about various medical controversies and also one about prophecy. He also asked patients about seeing angels, which many of them admitted they had seen. That book became a best seller, followed by another on more experiences and comments of his readers. But his last book concerned grieving the loss of his dear wife An, who died about a year ago. He confessed to me that he suffered much, but was privileged to know that for her further pain was spared! He loved Edwin's *Truth About 666*, which he sat glued to all day, though he was not an Adventist. His dear wife An had bought it for him for his 89th birthday. He encouraged me when I mentioned the relatively slow sale of the book by saying: "Ria, rather sell one book and save one soul, than a thousand that are not read!" We miss his interesting letters terribly.

In the light of the great unfinished work before us, we thank the Lord that we have been able to join hands with a few wonderful ministries since coming to this country and to cast in our few pence. We rejoice wherever the truth is proclaimed by Adventist World Radio, Adventist Frontier Mission, Laymen's Ministries, Amazing Discoveries, Gospel Outreach, Pioneers, etc., just to name a few.

Satan is very angry and lashing out like a wounded lion at all who dare to work for the Lord. He is persecuting believers in China, where the more they are persecuted, the more they grow. In India, it is dangerous to convert to Christianity. In both India and China, churches are being destroyed. But in India a group of young people found abandoned Adventist churches, cleaned them up and started holding meetings! Praise God for the young people who will be taught of God to become a race of Enochs! We know Sabbath-keepers will soon also be persecuted right here and all over the world. Are we ready for it? Dr. Conrad Vine,

the President of Adventist Frontier Missions, recently sent us a letter in which he urged us all to be prepared for that time.

While Edwin was in Michigan for the Dan. 11 seminar, the second last week in October, he had a wonderful time, meeting old friends and making new ones. On that Sabbath Dr. Vine preached about the results of false interpretations of prophecy. He told about the sad outcomes of several such, like David Koresh who died horribly in a Waco, Texas, inferno set off by bullets from agents of the state. We can also think of the Heaven's Gate people who committed suicide when the planets were so-called in the right alignment! Then Dr. Vine mentioned that he was quoting from Edwin's *Use and Abuse of Prophecy*, and asked him to stand up and be acknowledged. He proceeded to preach from Edwin's "Seven Keys for Unlocking the Mysteries of Revelation." In fact, Dr. Vine likes all of Edwin's books, but this book he ordered for each of their many career missionaries for Christmas! I hope they also enjoy it.

Since my fall in the kitchen, breaking my femur, on August 30, I thank the Lord frequently for the husband He gave me more than 64 years ago. I married Edwin when I was only 18. He was 24 and quite keen to settle down. I could not have wished for a better husband, especially now when he in spite of age and back pain insisted on daily visiting me at the hospital and rehabilitation center because he felt so lonely! Without a slightest impatience he gets up in the middle of the night to help me deal with pain and massage away the cramps in my right leg. Through the years he has helped me to understand the love of God much better than I did as a child. Marriage, in spite of all its human frailties, is a Godly miracle, instituted right in Eden. God said it was not good for man to be alone, so He fashioned Eve from the rib of Adam. Couples are supposed to care for and uphold, encourage, and strengthen their spouse to become the very best person possible. Especially now in our broken world we need all the help we can get.

For my more or less chronic pain I have been given two steroid injections by the Pain Management Specialist, which unfortunately did not do the trick. But no matter how much pain I have, as long as I can go to church on Sabbath I am overjoyed and happy. Each Sabbath seems to be better than the one before! I keep on singing of the wondrous love of Jesus, which helps tremendously. I have now made it a habit to talk to all the other patients while waiting at doctors' offices. I hobble around with my walker, chat to the other sufferers and hand out Glow tracts. Recently I came to a beaming lady who took two and told me excitedly that the signs of the coming of Jesus were fulfilling fast. And I agreed with her, but then she joyfully told me she was expecting to be raptured soon! It was absolutely no use trying to tell her she would wait in vain. It made me feel sick to know how firmly Satan has established the many beachheads of false interpretation of prophecy we see in the world today. People do not want to read the Bible for themselves to see what it actually says: that suddenly, like a thief in the night, He would flash into the sky with great glory, plus that of His Father and the glorious angels! We realize that Satan is the most earnest student of prophecy, so he can invent a false interpretation to suit every case! My heart just aches for those who remain in willful ignorance, neglecting to prepare for that most wondrous longed-for occasion, when there will be just two classes on earth: those who welcome Him with great joy, and those who cry to the rocks and mountains to fall on them and hide them from the glory of His the second coming!

In the meantime, something causes me great sorrow, which is not good for my health. Instead of preaching the messages given us in Revelation 14 loudly and clearly, we are in serious disarray and at loggerheads with one other, beating our fellow servants as predicted in the last few verses of Matthew 24. People from South Africa are deeply worried and ask Edwin about what is going on here in the United States. Friends, instead of fulfilling the prayer of Jesus in John 17 for deep love and unity, we are wasting the Lord's time and money, crucifying the Lord Jesus anew and putting Him to open shame.

We do not know if you also love the writings of Ellen G. White. Edwin and I have, in addition to our daily reading of God's Word, also been reading through our set of *Testimonies to the Church*, which we bought in South Africa. We were recently much blessed by pondering the last section of Vol. 7, where she advises how elderly workers should be cared for and be treated as treasures to be consulted by younger workers. In Section 3, of volume 8, in the difficult time of crisis and widespread belief in pantheism, she with wonderful tender love wrote to encourage a physician who was having a difficult time, working too hard, and being assailed by slander from his own congregation. She lovingly told him how she longed for him and his wife not to become discouraged, but to be saved eternally. I realize how deeply God invested in this church by taking all that time to give her visions and messages of encouragement, but also of warning when necessary. Friend, you will also be much blessed and encouraged in your daily walk with God by reading "the lesser light" together with your Bible. On us as a people the blazing, accumulated light of all the ages is shining. Let us thank God for the special trouble He has invested in this movement at the end of earth's history, and not for a moment be tempted to walk in "the sparks of our own kindling" by neglecting the counsel of the Spirit of Prophecy.

Some scholars believe Edwin is the expert on the topic of the Number of the Beast, about which he has been asked to contribute an article for an important publication. We also thank the Lord for the substantial use which our other dear friend, Dr. Norman Gulley, made in his last and fascinating volume of *Systematic Theology*, entitled *The Church and the Last Things*. It appeared in 2016 and is available from Andrews University Press. Dr. Gulley was also responsible for the excellent Sabbath School quarterly for the last quarter of 2018. But please take the present quarterly with a big pinch of salt.

**Finally, please try and help us find a willing and expert web master.**

May the Lord bless, sustain, heal and help you moment by moment to remain close to His wounded side, the only place where we can safely hide.

We remain joyfully and humbly in His most blessed service.

Ria (and Edwin)