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Anniversaries and Lockdown

Suddenly, almost overnight, the whole world has been turned upside down—for everybody, including the De Kocks. In December last year, we were celebrating our 65th wedding anniversary, and our Mission Hope congregation made such a fuss of us.

But now we are, like the rest of the country, in lockdown. The dreaded Coronavirus COVID-19 has reached into southernmost Texas and flipped into an unfamiliar mode, which is afflicting the entire planet.

During this time, Edwin celebrated his 90th birthday on March 9. We could still eat out with Carl, who works in McAllen and André, who had flown down from California. But on that same day the indicators of the U.S. economy began to plunge badly on the New York stock exchange. Our congregation still honored Edwin for living so long, and he preached there about a few lessons that his long life had taught him. But soon the lockdown fell over us all like a cloak of silence, and the church services ceased. On April 5, Ria, six years younger than Edwin, also had her birthday. Because André had already gone back to California, only Carl looked in and briefly visited us. Otherwise the celebration was largely a nonevent, although we naturally thank the Lord for sparing her so long.

Another anniversary is looming for later this year: remembering Edwin's graduation from the Theology course at Helderberg College, South Africa, in 1950. That was seventy years ago! He is so thankful for his godly teachers, all of whom believed unconditionally in the Bible as well as the Spirit of Prophecy. With this firm foundation underlying his thinking, he could safely study for other college diplomas and university degrees. When the Alumni meet at Helderberg College, he hopes to speak to some of them via WhatsApp.

Meanwhile, South Africa, from where we obtain the greater part of our income, has also gone into lockdown—and has failed to send us our monthly pensions. As untaxed recipients of Social Security, we are also still waiting for our stimulus payments. Fortunately, a very kind brother has now twice helped us out to survive financially.

“Fear Not”

At this time of world-wide panic about the Coronavirus COVID-19, we need to remember how often, in the Old as well as the New Testament, the Lord has with these two words and similar expressions comforted his followers, telling them not to be afraid. Very appropriate right now are the promises of the ninety-first psalm, some of which are as follows:

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say of the LORD, “He is my refuge and my fortress;
My God, in Him I will trust.”

Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler
 And from the perilous **pestilence**.
 He shall cover you with His feathers,
 And under His wings you shall take refuge;
 His truth shall be your shield and buckler.
 You shall not be afraid of the terror by night
 Nor of the arrow that flies by day,
 Nor of the **pestilence** that walks in darkness,
 Nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday . . .

No evil shall befall you,
 Nor shall any **plague** come near your dwelling ...

(NKJV, bolding supplied)

Does this mean that we should not take sensible precautions? Of course not, but we need not fear, if we remain close to our Saviour, who will take care of us.

Whatever is going to happen, those who love the Lord can not only set aside their own apprehension but also take heart and cheer up; for this is a portent of the Second Coming. Apart from the signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars, there will be “on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity . . . men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth . . . Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.” (Luke 21:25-28, NKJV)

Misleading Statistics

But there is also something else. This is, above all, a pandemic of *fear*, which is largely propagated by the media, as always thriving on sensationalism. Much of it is irrational and fraught with suppositions. For instance, you may have read that 3% who catch it will die. That is an unfounded statistic. Scores of people are affected very lightly and are never tested. Many may not even suspect that they have it before it passes on. It seems to us that this pandemic is probably 5% virus and 95% fear.

Italy is its European epicenter. According to an Associated Press report of March 19, 2,978 people there had died of the COVID-19 by the previous day. But what is the population of that country? A little more than 60,000,000. Therefore, the mortality rate from this pandemic on that date was just under 0.005%, or about 1 in 2,000. Furthermore, the same report said: “U.N. and Italian health authorities have cited a variety of reasons for Italy’s high toll, key among them its large elderly population, who are particularly susceptible to developing serious complications from the virus. Italy has the world’s second oldest population after Japan’s and the vast majority of Italy’s dead—87%—were over age 70.”

So the elderly are more at risk. However, as we should also note: “In addition, virtually all of Italy’s dead had one or more underlying medical condition, such as diabetes, cancer, hypertension or renal insufficiency.”

Also on March 19, the United States had 9,521 confirmed cases of COVID-19. That has led some pundits to conclude that it then began to surpass Italy as the epicenter of the

pandemic, which is, however, incorrect. For America has a huge population, an estimated 333,500,000, five times that of Italy.

Covid-19 Statistics, April 30, 2020

Instead of always dwelling only on the numbers of people who have caught or died of the disease, it would be more rational to calculate percentages and ratios, bearing in mind the population of each country, as follows:

<i>Population</i>	<i>Total Number Infected</i>	<i>Total Number Who Died</i>	<i>% and Ratio of Infected Who Died</i>	<i>% and Ratio of Population Infected</i>	<i>% and Ratio of Population Who Died</i>
Germany					
83,780,000	161,845	6,470	3.470% or 1 out of 25	0.1932% or 1 out of 518	0.0077% or 1 out of 12,949
United States					
333,500,000	1,042,874	61,123	5.8610% or 1 out of 17.1	0.3127% or 1 out of 320	0.0183% or 1 out of 5,456
United Kingdom					
67,550,000	166,441	26,166	15.7209% or 1 out of 6.4	0.2464% or 1 out of 406	0.0387% or 1 out of 2,582
Italy					
60,460,000	203,591	27,682	13.5969% or 1 out of 7.4	0.3367% or 1 out of 297	0.0458% or 1 out of 2,184
Spain					
46,754,778	239,639	24,543	10.2417% or 1 out of 9.8	0.5135% or 1 out of 195	0.0525% or 1 out of 1,905
World					
7,800,000,000	3,255,746	228,809	7.0279% or 1 out of 14.2	0.0417% or 1 out of 2,396	0.0029% or 1 out of 34,090

Contrary to a wide-spread belief, America is doing better than several other countries that are also often in the news. It is overshadowed only by Germany. Why? Because that country has an excellent and highly efficient one-payer health care scheme. When in that country Covid-19 is suspected, the patient is immediately and free of charge rushed off to one of its hospitals, which have all the necessary testing equipment, beds, and ventilators. Doctors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals, wearing masks as well as other protective gear, immediately begin treatment. The result is a death rate dramatically lower than in other countries.

Other Causes of Death

Meanwhile the media also have little to say about other killer conditions and diseases that may be comparable to or even surpass Covid-19. For the United States, the leading cause of

death per year for the period 2015-2019 has been abortions, almost 1 million; heart disease, 634,000; cancer, 103,000; and alcohol, 88,000.

Nevertheless, the COVID-19 is ruinous, for in addition to the virus itself it is swiftly destroying businesses, livelihoods, perhaps the infrastructure of our economic system itself. Another Great Depression, like that of the 1930's, may well be on its way.

Three Scheduled Conferences Postponed

When the previous Prophetic Bulletin was written, many people in the world had plans to travel overseas to meetings important to the groups of which they were part. But the COVID-19 virus suddenly smashed every one of them.

The 105th International Esperanto Congress

Scheduled to meet at Montreal, Canada, during the last week in August 2020, it could no longer take place. Because of the COVID-19 virus, all people traveling by air from other countries were forbidden entry. The organizers wisely deferred this congress until 2022 and invited those who would have gone to Montreal to take part in virtual meetings. In the meantime, Edwin, however eager he was to be there, had decided not to borrow money for our air tickets and hotel expenses!

A Thwarted Pontiff

On November 8 last year, in a previous Prophetic Bulletin, we warned as follows:

May 14 next year will be the fifth anniversary of the pope's encyclical *Laudato Si* with its plea for measures to protect the environment, fight global warming, and eliminate fossil fuels. As Seventh-day Adventists should know, that is—for them—a very dangerous document. It boldly calls for Sunday observance as an ecological measure.

Meanwhile, our SDA elected leaders mostly pay no attention to the trap being set for us. Instead, they are squabbling about a compliance document to enforce a ban on women's ordination, which is threatening to tear the denomination apart. At the same time, the Church is also distracted by the inroads of emergent Christianity with its mysticism, theistic evolution, a Trinitarian controversy, and other deviations. In our congregations, ministers preach mostly evangelical sermons, with little attention to the third angel's message, a future Sunday law, and what lies ahead for the world. All this leaves us extremely vulnerable to what our enemies are planning for our destruction.

But suddenly this became impossible. Recent televised images on the Internet have shown Pope Francis saying mass in his private apartment, while St. Peter's square outside his balcony is totally devoid of people. Italy has become the epicenter of the COVID-19 virus, the country is in lockdown, and no airplanes are to fly in people from other countries.

The pope is, however, very determined and has postponed his conference for only about six months, to October 2020.

Well, we will see about that.

The 61st General Conference Session

The General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, its highest deliberative authority when in session, was scheduled to meet at Indianapolis, Indiana, from June 25 to July 4, 2020. This, too, has been blocked by the COVID-19 virus and the suspension by the American authorities of the air flights that would have brought the delegates from the various Divisions around the planet.

For a good number of years, even before the General Conference session at San Antonio in 2015, President Ted Wilson has been actively fighting the ordination of women as SDA pastors, while others have opposed him.

A strange thing about this controversy is that during the nineteenth century, when this denomination was founded, only elders and deacons were ordained. No ministers as a higher order of religious functionary. This was a continuation of Church ecclesiology in New Testament times. Then, too, there were only elders and deacons—plus apostles. The latter, certainly the Twelve, had been eyewitnesses of the Lord’s life and resurrection, or had met him, like the Apostle Paul. So where did the ministers come from? They first appeared in the twentieth century, in imitation of other denominations, constituting, so to speak, a heresy, for which we are now paying a heavy price.

But several parts of the world Church have ignored the GC vote at San Antonio to withhold permission for each of its Divisions to decide for itself whether or not ministers may be ordained. These are the Columbia Union Conference and the Pacific Union Conference in the North American Division as well the Danish Union of Churches Conference, the North German Union Conference, the Norwegian Union Conference, and the Swedish Union of Churches Conference.

Therefore, the GC Executive Committee at the 2019 Annual Council approved the *Recommendations Resulting From the 2018 Annual Council Compliance Action*. This document, as amended, warns all six of these entities to comply with what was decided at San Antonio in 2015 before disciplinary steps are taken against them. Not mentioned was the fact that in China the SDA Church not only ordains women, but these also ordain other pastors, both male and female. Significantly, at the meeting of the 2019 Annual Council, Jan Paulsen, himself a Scandinavian and a former GC President, was also thinking of what the future had in store. “Where will it take us?” he wanted to know. “What if they [the unions] cannot make the changes that some of the leaders are asking? I cannot see this is the way God wants us to proceed.”

In the meantime, we have been praying that the Lord will somehow prevent the presentation of that divisive compliance document, which has the potential for producing nasty court cases and even to destroy the unity of God’s Church on earth.

God is infinitely wise. We are sure that he has not unleashed the COVID-19 virus. Satan must have done so, but the Lord can use even the devices of the Evil One to outwit him. Since 1844 in the nineteenth century, our pioneers—all of them poor people—built up the Remnant Church through many years of strenuous effort and severe self-sacrifice. Physically they are no more, awaiting the first resurrection when Jesus will return, but he does not cease his remembrance of them: toiling James and Ellen G. White, dear Joseph Bates, J. N. Andrews practically working himself to death, Uriah Smith who kept on writing, writing, and many others, too.

The Most High does not want his work through these dear folk and their successors to be destroyed.

An abbreviated version of the 2020 General Conference session has now been rescheduled for May 20-25, 2021, still at Indianapolis, Indiana, in the United States.

We will see about that as well.

What Will the Future Bring?

Only the Lord knows the exact details of the events that lie ahead. But from a prophecy in Revelation 13, augmented by Spirit of Prophecy predictions, we know what America will be up to in the future. It will somehow survive the COVID-19 virus and support the papacy by creating the image of the beast. It will make a national Sunday law and enforce it by forbidding people to buy or sell unless they observe the first day of the week and desecrate the Sabbath. Eventually it will enact a death decree for Seventh-day Adventists. This terrible state of affairs will prevail not only here but also internationally, since the United States will cause the other nations in the world to do the same. For this to be possible it will need to develop so much clout—economically and otherwise—that none of them will be able to resist. We can therefore expect America to become even wealthier and more powerful than ever before.

But when will this be and when will Jesus intervene with the Second Coming?

That is as yet unknown. So far as he himself is concerned, this should already have happened, more than a hundred years ago, but his return has been delayed. The servant of the Lord made the reasons abundantly clear. Let us consider some of what she wrote about it.

Ellen G. White About the Delay

As a girl and young woman, she had been one of Millerites—also known as Adventists—who fervently looked forward to the Second Coming in 1844. Like the rest of them, she was very deeply disappointed when Jesus did not then return.

In 1883, 39 years after the Great Disappointment, she wrote: “Had Adventists [Millerites], after the great disappointment in 1844, held fast their faith, and followed on unitedly in the opening providence of God, receiving the message of the third angel and in the power of the Holy Spirit proclaiming it to the world, they would have seen the salvation of God, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts, the work would have been completed, and Christ would have come ere this to receive His people to their reward.”

But this is not what happened. “In the period of doubt and uncertainty that followed the disappointment, many of the advent believers yielded their faith. Dissensions and divisions came in. The majority opposed with voice and pen the few who, following in the providence of God, received the Sabbath reform and began to proclaim the third angel’s message. Many who should have devoted their time and talents to the one purpose of sounding a warning to the world, were absorbed in opposing the Sabbath truth, and in turn, the labor of its advocates was necessarily spent in answering these opponents and defending the truth. Thus the work was hindered, and the world was left in darkness. Had the whole Adventist body united upon the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, how widely different would have been our history!” (*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 67-69.)

The next year, in 1884, she sadly and wistfully wrote: “If all who had labored unitedly in the work in 1844 had received the third angel’s message, and proclaimed it in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts. A flood of light would have been shed upon the world. Years ago the inhabitants of the earth would have

been warned, the closing work completed, and Christ would have come for the redemption of His people. (*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, pp. 292.)

There were 50,000–100,000 (let us say 75,000) Millerite Adventists, while the population of the world in 1850 stood at about 1,200,000,000 (1 in 16,000). Through personal contact, public meetings, and the printing press, that host of believers could, she indicated, have evangelized the entire planet.

But this did not happen. Instead, a handful of Sabbatarian Adventists had to start all over again. In 1863, when they organized as the Seventh-day Adventist Church, there were only 3,500 of them, according to D. J. B. Trim in his “Adventist Church Growth and Mission Since 1863: An Historical-Statistical Analysis.” By that time, the population of the world had grown to 1,306,000,000, i.e., only 1 SDA for every 373,142, a hopeless ratio.

In 1900, which was 120 years ago, she was more optimistic and wrote: “Had the purpose of God been carried out by His people in giving to the world the message of mercy, Christ would, ere this, have come to the earth, and the saints would have received their welcome into the city of God” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 449). By that year, the number of Seventh-day Adventists had increased to 75,767, more or less matching the Millerites of 1844, while the population of the world had increased to 1,628,000,000, about 1 SDA for every 21,706 of the world’s inhabitants.

She pointed out, moreover: “It [the coming of the Lord] will not tarry past the time that the message is borne to all nations, tongues, and peoples.” (*Review and Herald*, June 18, 1901). This is both a promise and a warning.

In 1904, a full sixty years after the Great Disappointment, she wistfully still reflected: “If all who had labored unitedly in the work of 1844 had received the third angel’s message and proclaimed it in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts. A flood of light would have been shed upon the world. Years ago the inhabitants of the earth would have been warned, the closing work would have been completed, and Christ would have come for the redemption of His people” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 115).

But in 1901 she also wrote these sad words: “We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel; but for Christ’s sake, His people should not add sin to sin by charging God with the consequence of their own wrong course of action” (*Evangelism*, p. 696).

The Unfinished Task

Unfortunately, that is exactly what happened. The Seventh-day Adventists have remained in this world “many more years,” for more than another century. It is now 2020. At the end of last year our Church had a membership of 21,414,779. So what is the population of our planet now? An estimated 7,800,000,000 about 1 out of 371, a better ratio than ever in the past. It is, in fact, more feasible.

Before he returns, the Three Angels’ Messages has to be presented to the entire world. To the apostles, Jesus said: “This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world to all the nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14, NKJV). The last book of the Bible expresses it even more precisely: “Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people” (Revelation 14:6, NKJV).

But wait a minute. As far back as 1893 Mrs. White said: “It is a solemn statement that I make to the church, that not one in twenty whose names are registered upon the church books are prepared to close their earthly history, and would be as verily without God and without hope in the world as the common sinner.”—ChS 41. Therefore, if we assume that Seventh-day Adventists today are not better or worse than 127 years ago, it would be wise to estimate that even now a mere one in twenty is fully converted and a good instrument through whom the Holy Spirit is likely to work to finish the Lord’s work. So let us reduce the 21,414,779 to 1 million. That leaves 1 for reaching every 7,800. This is still better than the challenge that would have confronted the Millerite Adventists or the Seventh-day Adventists at the turn of the twentieth century.

Most of the Work Is Still Undone

A vast amount of unfinished work remains to be done, especially in what is known as the 10-40 window, located between 10 and 40 degrees north of the equator. Inhabited by about two-thirds of the world’s people, Christians also used to refer to it as the “resistant belt.” It includes China and India, each with more than a billion inhabitants, mostly Atheists and Hindus. Also living largely in that area is a majority of the world’s Muslims, who are very difficult to convert. “Apostasy” from Islam is punishable by death.

Most Seventh-day Adventists live outside the 10/40 window. Inside it, they make up fewer than 6 per 10,000 inhabitants. Here, too, most of the world’s languages are spoken: 7,117 according to Ethnologue. In how many of these are any of our publications available? Some 234. Our believers do speak considerably more but fewer than half of the total. Admittedly many of these languages belong to very small people groups. Each is, however, a mother tongue, dear to somebody. When and how will all these dear souls be reached by the everlasting Gospel?

Instead of sitting back while we imagine that the Second Coming is just around the corner, we need to pray for the Holy Spirit to use us in finishing the truly colossal task which still awaits us.

But consider all the means which are at our disposal. In addition to the traditional methods and technology available to the pioneers of 1872-1902, we now also have international travel by fast-moving vehicles on land, by sea, and in the air. Sophisticated radio and television reach all over the planet. We can also communicate over the Internet: via e-mail, online magazines, videos, Zoom, Skype, iPods, blogs, websites, face book, and YouTube, plus data CDs, memory sticks, DVDs, etc. A single electronic gadget can contain an entire library of magazines and books. On cell phones, WhatsApp has made it possible to see and give Bible studies to people in other countries, free of charge. Our schools, medical facilities, branch Sabbath Schools, and even food banks have a potential for witnessing. The possibilities are endless.

Some of our agencies, like Adventist World Radio, are doing a phenomenal work; but how much more can be done!

Mere technology and techniques cannot, however, by themselves achieve what the Saviour wants his followers to do. These things can only be useful if those who profess his name are truly converted and on fire to work for him. Let us therefore take stock of this human potential.

But how should the Lord’s people work? Public evangelism, radio, television, and many other methods can undoubtedly play a useful, sometimes a mighty role. But this is not

enough. For each member who is not bedridden or housebound, the following is also required: “By personal labor reach those around you. Become acquainted with them. Preaching will not do the work that needs to be done. Angels of God attend you to the dwellings of those you visit. This work cannot be done by proxy. Money lent or given will not accomplish it. Sermons will not do it. By visiting the people, talking, praying, sympathizing with them, you will win hearts. This is the highest missionary work that you can do. To do it, you will need resolute, persevering faith, unwearying patience, and a deep love for souls.” 9 *Testimonies for the Church*, 41.

Let us now consider what would happen if each of one million Seventh-day Adventists, driven by the Holy Spirit, could be fully aroused to work wholeheartedly for the Lord and persuaded just one sincere and fervent person to join our Church per year, and each of these did the same, our likeminded membership would double every year. The number would rise to 32 million in five years and a billion within ten. After the thirteenth year, the number of converts would equal the total population on the planet. The challenge of the 10/40 window could be met in a little more than a decade.

But this, alas, is not going to happen. Of course, the Saviour would like everybody in the world to be saved, for he died for them. But the great dragon, Satan, that ancient serpent, hates and is at war with the end-time remnant “who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:17). When Seventh-day Adventists are asleep or occupied otherwise than working for the Lord, he is content and largely leaves them alone, for they are his. But when they awake and begin to labor for the redemption of souls and to prepare people for the Second Coming, he is enraged and fights back.

Available to him are all the resources of wickedness in the world. Above all there are the sinful habits that already dwell in people who are mostly unwilling to make the changes that the Gospel requires. Then, too, there are the devil’s old allies: atheism, paganism, the papacy, and a myriad of false religions which he has himself invented. These are not totally bad but mixtures of good and evil. We know besides that the Church of Rome is a clever blend of Christianity with heathenism, together with a spiritualistic cult of the dead: the so-called saints. Recent fellow travelers are Protestants whose ecumenism has lured them back into the welcoming arms of the pope.

Consequently, just before Christ returns, the great controversy between him and Satan will greatly intensify. In the battles lying ahead, many of the Lord’s people will apostatize and join his enemies. Yet, from the ranks of these, an equally large number will also change their allegiance and join his cause. There will, so to speak, be a tremendous interchange of personnel between those who obey God and those who do not. We love Ellen G. White’s graphic portrayal of what lies ahead:

The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit

“Before the final visitation of God’s judgments upon the earth, there will be, among the people of the Lord, such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children. At that time many will separate themselves from those churches in which the love of this world has supplanted love for God and His Word. Many, both of ministers and people, will gladly accept those great truths which God has caused to be proclaimed at this time, to prepare a people for the Lord’s second coming. The enemy of souls desires to hinder this work; and before the time for such a movement shall come, he will endeavor to prevent it, by

introducing a counterfeit. In those churches which he can bring under his deceptive power, he will make it appear that God's special blessing is poured out; there will be manifest what is thought to be great religious interest. . . .”—FLB 326.2

“It is with an earnest longing that I look forward to the time when the events of the Day of Pentecost shall be repeated with even greater power than on that occasion. John says, "I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory" [Rev. 18:1]. Then, as at the Pentecostal season, the people will hear the truth spoken to them, every man in his own tongue.”—6BC 1055 (1886). That is, the true gift of tongues—an ability to communicate in every human language on earth—will again enable the Lord's people to witness for him more powerfully.

Also manifest will be the gift of healing and other wonders: “In visions of the night, representations passed before me of a great reformatory movement among God's people. Many were praising God. The sick were healed, and other miracles were wrought. A spirit of intercession was seen, even as was manifested before the great Day of Pentecost.” —9T 126 (1909). “The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. The prophecies which were fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel, are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close. . . . Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers.”—GC 611, 612 (1911).

Special Means and Methods

In addition to the technology and other marvels mentioned above, let us also consider the following factors.

All over the planet, the seed of truth has already to a large extent been sown and awaits the Holy Spirit to make it germinate and quicken it into fruitage. This includes very prominently the literature of our Church: the tracts, magazines, and books disseminated in the past as well as the future, millions of pages. Very much of this is in print, but additionally much is also available on the Internet, for instance that powerful book *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan*.

To back the messages there is God's great storehouse of truth: the Bible, in an incalculably huge number of copies. Here is encouraging snippets of data we have discovered on the Internet: “The complete Bible has been translated into approximately 700 languages, while the New Testament has been translated into well over 1,500 languages. Smaller portions of the New Testament have been translated into over 1,000 languages.” Admittedly, the Scriptures are not available in everybody's mother tongue; but people belonging to minority groups can often read material in other languages. According to Ethnologue, “Just 23 languages account for more than half of the world's population.” These can play an important role. Here are just two of many possible examples.

Alemannic is spoken by most people in Switzerland as well as western Austria, Swabia (Germany), Liechtenstein, and the Alsace region of France. It used to be written, too. In fact, Huldrych Zwingli's Bible translation during the 1520s was in a variant of Alemannic. But those who speak it no longer write it, preferring standard High German. But audio iPods in Alemannic do exist, especially for children.

The Philippines are at present inhabited by 106.7 million people. They speak between 120 and 187 languages, according to different methods of classification. The inhabitants of that country often refer to them as “dialects,” although linguists call them languages. Presumably the Bible has not been translated into all of them. As a whole, however, the country has only two official languages: Filipino, a standardized version of Tagalog, and English. Filipino is the national language and the more popular of them. Nevertheless, the government conducts much of its business in English. Therefore, very many people of that country can at least read either of these languages.

As for the methods that will be used to finish God’s work, we can expect much more than what we have already mentioned. Some of it is as yet unimaginable. Among other things, let us note what Ellen G. White has also foretold, together with a warning for those, presumably in leadership positions, who tend to prescribe how other people must labor: “Let me tell you that the Lord will work in this last work in a manner very much out of the common order of things, and in a way that will be contrary to any human planning. There will be those among us who will always want to control the work of God, to dictate even what movements shall be made when the work goes forward under the direction of the angel who joins the third angel in the message to be given to the world. God will use ways and means by which it will be seen that He is taking the reins in His own hands. The workers will be surprised by the simple means that He will use to bring about and perfect His work of righteousness.”—TM 300 (1885).

Jewish Seventh-day Adventists

The Lord has many additional resources for proclaiming the Three Angels’ Messages in the end time. One of them is converted Jews. The Lord’s servant had a good deal to say about the special work that we need to do for them and the effect that this will have. In 2018, the Ellen G. White Estate published on the Internet a compilation on this topic by S. R. Howard, titled *Ellen Gould White Speaks Out Regarding the Work for the Jewish People*. Some of her statements are amazing. Here are a few:

“In the closing proclamation of the gospel, when special work is to be done for classes of people hitherto neglected, God expects His messengers to take particular interest in the Jewish people whom they find in all parts of the earth. As the Old Testament Scriptures are blended with the new in an explanation of Jehovah’s eternal purpose, this will be to many of the Jews as the dawn of a new creation, the resurrection of the soul. As they see the Christ of the gospel dispensation portrayed in the pages of the Old Testament Scriptures, and perceive how clearly the New Testament explains the Old, their slumbering faculties will be aroused, and they will recognize Christ as the Saviour of the world. *Many* will by faith receive Christ as their Redeemer” (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 381, emphasis supplied). Elsewhere, she wrote: “There are to be a *multitude* convinced of the truth who will take their position for God” (*Manuscript 66, May 25, 1905 [Talk given at the General Conference]*, emphasis supplied).

What is more, “There are among the Jews many who will come to the light, and they will proclaim the immutability of the law of God with wonderful power. The Lord God will work. He will do wonderful things in righteousness.” (*Manuscript 74, 1905 [Sermon at the General Conference, Washington, D.C. 1905 and reported in the Review & Herald, June 29, 1905]*.) As a matter of fact, “Converted Jews are to have an important part to act in the great preparation to be made in the future to receive Christ, our Prince. A nation shall be born in a day. How? By men whom God has appointed being converted to the truth.” (*Evangelism*, 579 [Written in 1905].) What is more, “Among the Jews are some who, like Saul of Tarsus, are

mighty in the Scriptures, and these will proclaim with wonderful power the immutability of the law of God.” (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 381).

These are inspiring as well as inspired words about what is largely yet to be. For the time being, however, Seventh-day Adventist Jews are not numerous and make up only a small part of the Lord’s work force. We do, of course, have Doug Bachelor and Steve Wohlberg, both of whom are outstanding televangelists. The names of two learned Jewish SDA scholars also readily come to mind. One is Alexander Bolotnikov, who served as a professor at Zaoksky University in Tula Oblast, Russia. He helped, moreover, to produce a new Russian Bible translation. The other is Jacques B. Doukhan with doctorates in Hebrew plus Hebrew Old Testament exegesis and Jewish Studies. During 2018, he retired as professor in both these fields. The author of several books, he is also director of the Institute of Jewish-Christian Studies at Andrews University.

We look forward to welcoming into our midst many more such people, mighty in the Scriptures, like Saul of Tarsus . . .

From Tribulation to Triumph

But Satan has always, through the centuries, hated everybody who honors the Law of God, including the Jews. Their very existence was a standing rebuke to both the devil and those who chose to follow him in his apostasy. For the same reason, when the Seventh-day Adventist Remnant of the Millerites appeared on the scene and also became Sabbathkeepers, his anger blazed up again. And so “the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:17, NKJV).

Christians who rest on the seventh day have always been taunted by Sundaykeepers by accusing them of observing the Sabbath of the Jews. And now—behold—these Seventh-day Adventists are closely consorting with them! This is blatant anti-Semitism, instigated by the devil, and is directed, ultimately, against Jesus the Messiah himself. One day, during his earthly ministry, he sat at Jacob’s well and said to a Samaritan woman: “You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22, NKJV).

For this, the enemies of the Lord’s Remnant, who cannot refute their message from the Scriptures, will persecute them with unwonted fury. Legislation will be passed, to enforce universal Sunday-keeping with an economic boycott and finally a death decree against those who will not comply (Revelation 13:15-17, NKJV). But, as the Apocalypse also reveals, the Lord who is their great helper will respond and deliver them. First he will pour out on their persecutors the seven last plagues. Then he will return and slay them with the brightness of his coming while he delivers his faithful ones.

When Will the Lord Jesus Return?

While still on earth, the Saviour in the Sermon on the Mount very plainly said: “Of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only” (Matthew 24: 36, NKJV). Any attempt at time-setting, direct or through insinuation, is dead wrong and should be avoided. Since 1844, many well-meaning but misguided Christians have made that mistake.

They also overlook the fact that some, though not all, of the Bible's predictions are conditional. That was certainly the case in relation to the First Advent, as is made clear in Edwin's *Christ and Antichrist in Prophecy and History* (Chapter 9). Among other things, it states:

"The Old Testament contains an entire series of predictions quite different from those we find in Daniel. At least a dozen prophets, including Micah and Isaiah, depict an obedient Jewish nation, which would spectacularly grow into a global superpower, eventually incorporating all the planet's people. Its rulers would be the Messiah and God himself.

"This is the history that never was, which the Lord would have greatly preferred to what actually happened. But it depended on the faithfulness of his people, which had so often—from the time of the Exodus onward—disappointed him."

Likewise, the servant of the Lord has made it clear, as shown by the statements quoted above, that conditionality plays an unmistakable role in determining time of the Second Advent.

There has been a very long delay, which was, however, not caused by the Lord. He should and would have come at least a hundred years ago. He is still eager to do so, as soon as his people, filled with the Holy Spirit and cooperating with all the agencies available to them, stop sitting around with speculations about when he will come. To all of us he can say: "No, get up from your comfortable recliner and proclaim my final message for the world, to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. When you have done so, I will most certainly come, exactly as I have promised to do!"

Web Site Linkage

Many details about Edwin's publications, our activities, and previous Prophetic Bulletins appear on our Web site: www.propheticum.com, which we hope will soon be reconstructed.

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