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The editor/proprietor assumes responsibility for his own contributions. He is not, however, responsible or liable for the ideas expressed in pieces by other writers, also sometimes mentioned or cited.

A Twofold Series

In most of this Prophetic Bulletin and also, God willing, the next one, we shall be focusing mainly on the Sabbath. Here we propose to deal with it largely from a historical point of view. Next time, our focus will be more theological.

Antiquity of the Sabbath

The Sabbath is as old as the human race and the world itself. After six days of creation, the LORD rested on the seventh day. That is why and when he declared it holy. For Adam and Eve, it was the first full day of their existence; and they assuredly would not have been at work in the garden while elsewhere the One who had made them was resting.

About Abraham we read how the LORD, when speaking to his son Isaac, renewed the gift of the land of Canaan and promised, once more, innumerable offspring. “And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws” (Genesis 26:4, 5, KJV).

The Law of God and well as the Sabbath Commandment, as quoted in Exodus 20, did not originate at Sinai, where it was merely repeated. Throughout the Tanakh (the Hebrew Scriptures, which we call the Old Testament), the seventh remained the LORD’s ordained day of rest. And so it remained in the New Testament. Jesus, who is a Jew, observed the Sabbath, and so did his apostles.

It was with the Great Apostasy and the Roman Church that Sunday Observance was substituted. Nowhere does the New Testament teach that the rest day would be transferred from the seventh to the first day of the week. Admittedly there is one place where the Bible does speak of it, but is in the Old Testament, Daniel 7:25: “And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws ...”

But to whom or what does this scripture refer? The Little Horn, the Papacy, which for Protestants is not particularly good company to keep.

In any case, as we have said, there have always been Sabbathkeepers, even during the persecution of the Dark Ages, a long and terrible time. Such were some of the Waldensians who for centuries sheltered behind the ramparts of the Alps and often had to fend off their persecutors, who had murder on their minds. Below the Sahara, too, the Ethiopian Church observed the Sabbath, and so did Christians on the Malabar coast of India.... before the

Catholic Portuguese found a sea route around the Cape of Good Hope and brought the terrible Inquisition to exterminate all who would not submit to the Papacy.

Our Indebtedness to British Antecedents

Seventh-day Adventists honor the memory of all those saints in bygone days. More recently, however, they trace their origin back to the American Millerites of the nineteenth century, adopting their denominational name as recently as 1863. But often they are unaware of the theological contributions by others who went before us elsewhere on this planet, especially in Britain.

Only a little of what we believe originated with us, apart from the exception of what we teach about the Investigative Judgment and the Spirit of Prophecy.

A striking example is two of our most important doctrines, the Saturday Sabbath and the nature of man. John Milton (1608-74), a very famous Englishman, clearly wrote about them more than 300 years ago.

He is best known for his great epic poems, *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. But he also produced a great deal of prose. Some of it is in Latin, like *De Doctrina Christiana* [Concerning Christian Doctrine], which contains his theological ideas. Among other things, he favored—though he may not actually have observed—the Saturday Sabbath, saying: “For if we under the gospel are to regulate the time of our public worship by the prescriptions of the Decalogue, it will surely be far safer to observe the seventh day, according to the express commandment of God, than on the authority of mere human conjecture to adopt the first.” – John Milton: “A Posthumous Treatise on the Christian Doctrine,” bk. 2, chap. 7, trans. by Charles R. Sumner, in *The Prose Works of John Milton* (London, George Bell and Sons, 1877), Vol. 5, p. 74.

He also believed as we do about the nature of man. He made this very plain in a long passage, from which we only cite the following sentence: “Man having been created after this manner, it is said, as a consequence, that *man became a living soul*; whence it may be inferred (unless we had rather take the heathen writers for our teachers respecting the nature of the soul) that man is a living being, intrinsically and properly one and individual, not compound or separable, not, according to the common opinion, made up and framed of two distinct and different natures, as of soul and body,—but that the whole man is soul, and the soul man, that is to say, a body, or substance individual, animated, sensitive, and rational . . .” –John Milton: “The Christian Doctrine,” bk. 1, chap. 7, in his *Prose Works*, trans. by Charles R. Sumner (London: George Bell and Sons, 1887, Vol. 4, pp. 187-195.

Milton had his heyday when Britain, after the execution of King Charles I, was for a few years a *de facto* republic, the so-called Commonwealth, under Oliver Cromwell, the Lord Protector. This lasted from 1649 to 1660, not even a dozen years. After that, the monarchy was restored and Charles II returned as the country’s king.

Even before, but especially during the Commonwealth, there had been a reaction against some doctrines of the country’s dominant religion, the Church of England, whose members are often also called Anglicans. This had been established in 1534 by the Act of Supremacy, when King Henry VIII needed a divorce so that he could marry Anne Boleyn. This legislation also made him in effect the ecclesiastic head of his country. Doctrinally the Church of England retained much that still smacked of Catholicism. Many conscientious Christians wanted to purify it and complete the Protestant Reformation by returning more

closely to what the Bible teaches. For this reason, they were called Puritans. Milton was one of them.

Another was Oliver Cromwell who headed the Commonwealth. In matters of religion, he was a tolerant man, except towards the Roman Church.

The Seventh-day Men

For this reason, various groups of people who disliked the Catholic elements in the Church of England could thrive. Some of the Dissenters from the Church of England, who went a good deal further than other Puritans were the Seventh-day Men, who observed Saturday as the Sabbath.

They had ancient as well as more recent antecedents, all the way back to the Apostles and Jesus himself and down to the Protestant Reformation. Of this they were well aware. And at least some of them may well have discovered their Sabbath observance directly from the Bible by simply reading the Fourth Commandment in Exodus 20. Throughout history, this has often happened.

For instance, Seventh-day Adventism in South Africa began when a very wealthy man, Peter Wessels, studied the Bible. Something similar happened to Edwin's mother. One day, when she opened the Scriptures for personal worship, she read the words "but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God." Thereupon she paused and said to herself: "That is funny. The *seventh* day? But that is Saturday! Why are we observing Sunday, the first day of the week?"

The Seventh-day Men originated during the pre-Commonwealth period, when the Church of England, backed by the government, persecuted them. For the following information, we have partly relied on the Internet but especially on the first edition of *The Seventh-day Men: Sabbatarians and Sabbatarianism in England and Wales, 1600-1800* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1994), which our son André gave to Edwin on his 66th birthday, more than thirty years ago. The Seventh-day Adventist author, Dr. Bryan W. Ball, is an impeccably careful scholar.

The first Seventh-day Men of note were John Traske (1585-1636) and Theophilus Brabourne (1590-1662). Both of them were accused by clerics in the Church of England as heretics who had reverted to Judaism. This especially Brabourne denied. He could, of course, have rebutted their anti-Semitism by citing Jesus, who said to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well: "You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22). These Seventh-day Men, however (and certainly Brabourne), do not seem to have done so.

During 1617, Traske founded a Sabbatarian congregation in London. In that same year, he married his second wife, a spinster named Dorothy Coome (1585?-1645), also a Sabbath keeper. Similar Sabbatarian congregations appeared in other parts of England, though it is uncertain how many there were. They also abstained from eating swine's flesh and observed the Passover at the same time as the Jews.

In 1618, Traske was arrested on orders from the Court of High Commission. At that time, this body was the supreme ecclesiastical court of the country. It zealously enforced what the Church of England believed. John Traske was accused of Judaizing and severely punished. In addition to imprisonment, he was whipped. During 1619, he caved in under the pressure and recanted his views. But his wife Dorothy, who had been active in propagating their Sabbatarianism, refused to do so, which greatly concerned the Court of High Commission. A

true child of God and a martyr to her faith, whom it will be a privilege to meet in the Kingdom, she languished in prison for 27 years until her death in 1645, just four years before the much more tolerant Commonwealth was established.

Theophilus Brabourne, the second great pioneer of the Seventh-day Men, was renowned not so much as a preacher as by his writings, producing more than 1,000 pages in support of the Saturday Sabbath. Most impressive was his 1632 work, *A Defence of that most ancient and Sacred ordinance of Gods, the Sabbath Day*, which very soon drew the ire of the established church.

As Ball puts it, “By early 1634 he was imprisoned on the Gatehouse, pending proceedings in the Court of High Commission in which he was to answer the charge of holding and disseminating ‘erroneous, heretical and judaical opinions.’” He had to endure a number of appearances. The Court then sentenced him “to be deposed from all ministerial office, excommunicated, fined £1,000 and expenses, ordered to make a public retraction of his views, and remanded in custody to appear at a later date, presumably to make the required recantation.” By 1635, he paid the fine. Eventually a carefully worded document was prepared, acceptable to both him and his tormentors. But as Ball has it, to the end of his days, Brabourne stoutly maintained that he had retracted nothing of substance concerning the seventh day.

In 1648, a family inheritance enabled him to leave the ministry and concentrate on his writing. He published at least seven religious works. One of the last was *Of the Seventh Day* (1660), which reiterated his research about the Saturday Sabbath.

Another book that upset the clerics belonging to the Church of England was a book by James Ockford: *The Doctrine of the Fourth Commandment, Deformed by Popery; Reformed & Restored to its Primitive purity* (1650). Since it was published during the religiously tolerant Commonwealth, there was, however, little they could do about it. But then, in 1658, its Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell, died. Although the Commonwealth continued for two more years, it was crumbling, and Ockford’s enemies pounced.

They prevailed on Parliament to act on their behalf by issuing a document dated 8 March 1649, of which a photocopy is displayed in the *The Seventh-day Men* by Ball. After a preamble, it stated, in part:

Resolved by the Parliament,

That this book (entituled, *The Doctrine of the Fourth Commandment deformed by Popery, reformed and restored to its Primitive Purity, etc.*) asserting the observation of the Jewish Sabbath, and condemning the observation of the Lord’s day as the Christian Sabbath, is Erroneous, Scandalous and Prophane, contrary to the practice of the Apostles, and of all the Christian Churches.

Resolved by the Parliament,

That all the Printed copies of the said Books [sic] be burnt; And that the Marshall be required to do the same at the Exchange and in Cheap-side.

Resolved by the Parliament,

That all the Printed copies of the said Book, wheresoever they shall be found in *England* or *Wales*, shall be brought to the Chief Magistrate of the place where the same shall be found, who is hereby required and enjoyned to cause the same to be burnt accordingly.

Among these champions of the seventh-day Sabbath, none was more eminent than Thomas Bampfield, the youngest son of Sir John Bampfylde of Poltimore. After training and admittance as a lawyer, he was soon elected Member of Parliament for his home town of Exeter in four successive Parliaments. He wrote *An Enquiry Whether the Lord Jesus Christ made the World, and be Jehovah, and gave the Moral Law? And Whether the Fourth Command be Repealed or Altered?* (1692). This work was, in the same year, attacked by anti-Sabbatarian John Wallis. Bampfield promptly rebutted with *A Reply to Doctor Wallis* (1693). Though Wallis replied, their interchange ended because Bampfield died in that same year.

Fifth Monarchists

Even worse was the trouble that afflicted the Seventh-day Men because some of them were Fifth Monarchists, who were also active during the time of the Commonwealth, from 1649 to 1660. These were Puritans who looked ardently forward to the Second Coming, which they believed was imminent. They had studied the prophecies of Daniel 2 and 7 that predicted the Neo-Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman Empires, four in all. After these, God would establish a fifth kingdom, worldwide and eternal. They were entranced by the words: “And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion was an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.” (Daniel 7:13, 14)

An early advocate of such views was William Aspinwall, author of *A Brief Description of the Fifth Monarchy or Kingdome, That Shortly Is to Come into the World* (1653). He and others like him were not Seventh-day Men. In fact, Aspinwall opposed them by writing against their Sabbatarianism. Some Fifth Monarchists believed that the year 1666, since it included the 666 of Revelation 13:18, concerned the number of the Beast. For them this date marked the end of earthly rule by carnal human beings.

This could spell trouble, especially because a leading Fifth Monarchist was Major-General Thomas Harrison. During the civil war he not only fought against King Charles I but in 1649 was one of the men who signed his death warrant. Soon after the monarchy was restored in 1660 and his son, King Charles II, ascended the throne, a number of regicides were executed. Harrison was hanged, drawn, and quartered, a particularly gruesome method of doing a human being to death. Some of the Fifth Monarchists not only believed that Christ would come again, but that they had to do their bit by helping with the establishment of his kingdom, by force if necessary. On 6 January 1661, fifty of them, in an armed rebellion led by Thomas Venner tried to gain control of London in the name of “King Jesus.” The insurrection was quickly crushed, and most of them either killed or taken prisoner. Venner and ten others were likewise hanged, drawn, and quartered for high treason.

Fifth-day Men who had Fifth Monarchist sympathies were also immediately suspect. For instance, Elder John James was arrested while preaching to a congregation of about forty in Bull-Stake Alley, on Saturday 1661. He was a violent man. Nevertheless, he was also executed—mercifully by beheading. Even as late as 1671, a large group of Seventh-day Men were arrested and imprisoned on suspicion that they were Fifth Monarchists.

Baptists and Seventh Day Baptists

Also among the Puritans were the Baptists, so-named because they rejected the sprinkling of infants and insisted on full immersion, which they called believer's baptism. Their most important pioneer was John Smyth. After breaking his ties with the Church of England, due to persecution, he and other likeminded Christians went into exile. At Amsterdam in the Netherlands during 1609 they founded the earliest Baptist congregation. Afterwards they returned to England. They were Sunday keepers, but some of them went further and observed the Saturday Sabbath, becoming known as Seventh Day Baptists. These became closely associated with the Seventh-day Men. Some of them practiced not only believer's baptism, but foot-washing and gave up eating unclean meat like swine's flesh. They also abstained from blood and things strangled.

Present-day Seventh-day Adventists have much in common with the Seventh Day Baptists of seventeenth-century England, more than 300 years ago. In fact, we wonder whether meat-eaters among us are as careful as they were. If we are not vegans or vegetarians, we should likewise consume only meat from which all the blood has been carefully drained.

A map in Ball's book shows the extent of Saturday Sabbatarianism during the 1600s and 1700s. Thirty-one counties throughout England and Wales had congregations all or some of whose members observed the Biblical Sabbath. According to some Seventh Day Baptists, their first antecedents were John Traske and his wife, who had founded a Sabbatarian congregation in London, in 1617, as mentioned above.

But others believe the first Seventh Day Baptist meeting took place at the Mill Yard Church in London during 1651. That was in the time of the Commonwealth. Its leader was Peter Chamberlen the third, an eminent medical doctor, famous for his involvement in midwifery. The invention of the obstetrical forceps has been credited to the Chamberlen family, which had strong links with the French Huguenots. Especially interesting was his links to and influence with the British Royal family. He attended the birth of the future King Charles II and years later became his personal physician in 1661, just after the Restoration of the monarchy.

In those days, Sabbath-keeping churches flourished, but after 150 years they withered and finally disappeared from Britain, for a variety of reasons. One was mixed-communion churches, i.e., some members observed the seventh-day Sabbath while others did not. In all of these, Sabbatarianism became extinct. At times, very capable Sabbath-keeping pastors also ministered to Baptists who were Sunday-keepers and a spirit of compromise prevailed. Furthermore, Sabbatarian congregations were not sufficiently motivated to associate with one another. They therefore never had a centralized organization.

Seventh Day Baptists in the New World

Two Baptist ministers immigrated to America and founded branches of the First Baptist Church in Rhode Island, Roger Williams at Providence during 1638 and John Clarke, at

Newport in 1644. Just twenty-one years later, in 1665, Stephen Mumford, a Seventh Day Baptist, also turned up at Newport, Rhode Island. His observance and advocacy of the Saturday Sabbath, attested by many records of the time, was not appreciated. Two members of Clarke's congregation, Samuel and Tacy Hubbard, joined with Mumford. They and four others covenanted to meet together and at first were known as Sabbatarian Baptists. They established the first Seventh Day Baptist church in Rhode Island during 1671.

Passing on the Torch of Truth

More than 160 years later, in 1837, Rachel Oakes, originally Harris (1809-1868), and her daughter, Rachel Delight Oakes, joined a Seventh Day Baptist congregation at Verona, New York. In 1843, after she had been widowed, they both moved to Washington, New Hampshire, where her daughter was to be a schoolteacher. Because at that place there were no other Seventh Day Baptists, they attended a "Christian Brethren" church.

At first, when Rachel tried to present the Sabbath truth, she had no success, for this was a Millerite congregation, focused on the Second Coming, which they thought would take place in 1843 or 1844. But then they had a guest speaker, Frederick Wheeler, an ordained minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He, too, was a Millerite but that Sunday he preached about the importance of observing the Law of God.

Rachel, spurred into action, promptly invited him to her home for tea, where she deftly pointed out that he was actually not keeping the Fourth Commandment. This startled him and made him deeply study the subject. Soon he was convinced that she was right. On March 16, 1844, he preached his first sermon about the seventh-day Sabbath, seven months before the Millerites' Great Disappointment of October 22. After that date, William Farnsworth and several other members of the "Christian Brethren," likewise under Rachel's influence, also accepted the Sabbath truth.

From these men, it passed on to the Millerite remnant who in 1863 organized and adopted the name of Seventh-day Adventists. As for Rachel herself, she later married Nathan T. Preston and moved away from that area. In the last year of her life, she became a Seventh-day Adventist.

Nowadays the Seventh Day Baptists are still showing little growth and have a world membership of about 50,000. Apart from Sabbathkeeping and baptism by immersion, they have a Congregationalist system of church governance as well as a very flexible theology. Seventh-day Adventists, on the other hand, now number more than 22,000,000, with centralized governance and a much more coherent set of beliefs.

Our Double Indebtedness

The word *Adventist* was first, in a Protestant sense, applied to the Millerites, named after their leader, William Miller, who proclaimed an imminent Second Coming. He was ordained as a Baptist minister, remaining a Sunday observer to the end of his life. Rachel Oakes was a Seventh-day Baptist. Though a different denomination, Seventh-day Adventists are doubly indebted to the Baptist tradition and, through them, to the Puritans of the seventeenth century, some of whom were Seventh-day Men, who valiantly did battle for the Truth and sought to complete the Protestant Reformation.

Pro-Sabbath Publications

In addition to the historical role of the Seventh-day Men and the Seventh Day Baptists, there has been a continuously powerful influence of publications by them as well as by later writers. For instance, in 1849, a work appeared entitled *The Sabbath; or An Examination of the Six Texts Commonly Adduced From the New Testament in Proof of a Christian Sabbath*. It had been written by someone who called himself A Layman. Six years later, in 1855, his identity was revealed by a further book: *The Sabbath or An Inquiry into the Supposed Obligation of the Sabbaths of the Old Testament* by Sir William Domville. On the title page, beneath his name, one reads that he was also the author of the first-mentioned book, By a Layman. But who was Sir William Domville? No less a personage than the Lord Mayor of London!

In his *History of the Sabbath and First Day of the Week*, John Nevins Andrews (1829-1878), Seventh-day Adventism's great apologist for the Biblical Sabbath, referred to several of the abovementioned people and writers: not only John as well as Dorothy Traske, Theophilus Brabourne, James Ockford, and Thomas Bampfield during the seventeenth century, but also Sir William Domville in his own time.

Andrews, a multifaceted scholar and diligent worker for the Saviour, died just five years after this second, enlarged edition of *History of the Sabbath* (1873) was published by the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association at Battle Creek, Michigan. He himself lies buried at Basel, Switzerland, where he awaits the resurrection. While still alive, he earnestly contended for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 1:3, KJV), and his magnificent mind lives on in the pages of that book.

Much to Be Thankful For

March 9 was Edwin's 91st birthday. As he thinks back over the greater part of a century, since 1930, he gratefully remembers the times when his life was spared. Several times, there was divine intervention, as well as the blessings of medical science not available in earlier times.

In 1972, he was working at the offices of the South African Union Conference, where he edited *The Lantern*, a bilingual publication, and headed a unit for translating Spirit of Prophecy books into Afrikaans, his mother tongue. He was suddenly struck down by meningitis, which viciously thrust him into a coma. This could have killed him or turned him into a human vegetable, but many God-fearing people prayed for him. He survived with his mental faculties unimpaired. At that time, he was only 42, less than half his present age.

Twice after coming to America, heart problems likewise almost finished him off.

In 2001, when Edwin was just putting the final touches to the first edition of his *Christ and Antichrist in Prophecy and History*, he collapsed in our bathroom and had to be rushed to hospital. It was congestive heart failure and atrial fibrillation, complicated by a heavy overdose of warfarin. A few days later, a consignment of his printed book arrived at our home, but an advance copy had already been placed in his hands while he was still in the intensive care unit. It made him so happy! He even sold further copies from his hospital bed.

At that time, Edwin was already 71 and did not know that this was just the beginning of his career as a writer on prophecy. When he arrived back at home, while recuperating further, Ria said to him: "You are not going back to teaching at the university! You must stay at home and write your books."

She herself had not yet finished her M.A. and was working for a company that trained mostly Latinos to drive the huge trucks that one sees on the roads of the United States. She taught them English. But then she was laid off as the company began to go out of existence. Suddenly our income was reduced to a very inadequate pension from South Africa. Two months later, our car reached the end of its tether and had to be replaced. What, apart from prayer, could we do? Selling copies of *Christ and Antichrist* helped a little. So did Mirtha, our kind physician daughter-in-law, in California, as well as a few friends.

For eighteen months, Ria was out of work, while studying full time, completing that degree. Twice she obtained student loans. Fortunately, having passed the age of 65, she also received a tuition waiver. In 2002, at the age of 68, she completed her M.A. at the University of Texas, Pan America. The next year, she began teaching there, first as an adjunct and then full time, until she was 76. This enabled her to earn a small amount of Social Security and, more importantly, to qualify for Medicare. We bless the memory of the late Claude Pepper (1900-1989), Senator and Legislator, who in years gone by fought hard for the elderly. During 1989, especially he succeeded in abolishing mandatory retirement for federal workers and raising it from 65 to 70 for the private sector.

Edwin's second book, *The Use and Abuse of Prophecy: History, Methodology, and Myth*, appeared in 2007, funded entirely by Ria.

In 2010, he was at work on his largely unfinished magnum opus, *The Truth About 666 and the Story of the Great Apostasy*. Then, a few days after his 80th birthday, he had what he thought was persistent acid reflux. But a voice in his mind warned him: "Remember that last time you also thought so, but it was your heart!" Ria quickly drove him to the Mission Medical Center, where a physician confirmed that it was. An ambulance immediately transferred him to the McAllen Heart Hospital, to await surgery on Monday. But that Sabbath afternoon he had another heart attack. Remarkably—miraculously, we think—the surgeon was right there, during the weekend! He took one look and ordered that Edwin be prepared for surgery. It lasted for five hours, resulting in a quadruple bypass.

This could have resulted in kidney failure or brain damage. Satan had tried to kill or maim him but was not allowed to succeed. The next year, in 2010, Edwin finished his three-volume book, totaling 878 pages.

Afterwards he also went on to write two more books that were subsequently printed, *Seven Heads and Ten Horns in Daniel and the Revelation* (2012) and *A More Sure Word of Prophecy* (2015), as well as several digital publications.

Ria will, God willing, also have a birthday on April 5, when she will be ... let us say, older than in the previous year, a few years younger than her husband, but she is not eager to let people know by how many! She is, however, willing to admit that she is not getting any younger.

The Angolan Students in Cuba

Our previous Bulletin described the financial problems experienced by two Angolans who are studying at our Theological Seminary in Cuba, a fully accredited Seventh-day Adventist institution. It offers four years of training. Of these they have already completed two years.

Until very recently, studying there cost only \$1,000.00 (U.S.) per student per semester, for tuition as well as their board and lodging, plus \$150.00 to pay the laundry and cover other expenses. This was a very reasonable amount. Being good students, 25 and 28 of age, they successfully completed their first two years but then ran out of money.

Normally, this would not have been a great problem. They could have gone to work and earn the further funds they needed in Mexico or Panama, two other Spanish-speaking countries. But suddenly the Covid-19 pandemic struck and made it impossible for them to leave Cuba. Thereupon, they turned to Edwin.

In that previous Bulletin, we also described how we dealt with the problem. We raised money from several resources, including our own, although we are retirees who have to live on a very limited budget. Among other things, we donated \$1,000.00 from our own income. This was made possible because both Edwin and Ria received \$600.00 stimulus payments from the Federal government.

We also held out the begging bowl to our readers. A dear 90-year-old brother followed our example and sent a check for \$600.00, his own stimulus payment. Others sent \$1,000.00, \$500.00, and smaller amounts. Then we looked for further funds. One source was money that a non-SDA friend had given for printing an English version of Andreas Helwig's Latin book, *Antichristus Romanus* (The Roman Antichrist). But we could never find a Protestant who could produce a satisfactory translation. With our friend's permission, we used some of that money. What else? We had been saving money to replace our dilapidated garden shed, which is in a very sorry state, with holes in it. We thought, however: let it wait for another time. And so we almost emptied our savings account.

All this made us extremely happy, for we believed that we had raised enough money to pay for basically everything that the students still needed for the second semester of their third year as well as both semesters for their fourth and last year.

But then the Seminary in Cuba dropped a financial bombshell: The fees for each student have suddenly gone up from \$1,000.00 to \$2,000.00 per semester, twice as much as we had already paid for! What happened?

The economy of Cuba, which has been deteriorating for some time, suddenly nosedived because of several factors. Covid-19 badly impacted on everybody's life. The authorities suspended all commercial flights into the country, and also internally imposed limitations on people's movements, such as a 7:00 p.m. curfew to keep them inside their municipalities. At the same time, an intensified trade embargo (*el bloqueo*, as the Cubans call it) by the previous U.S. Administration has greatly limited the availability of many commodities, like toothpaste, soap, and shampoo. Worst have been sharp increases in the prices of food or even its availability.

Our self-supporting SDA World Youth Group, which does medical missionary work on that island recently reported as follows: "Cuba is in trouble. With the loss of Venezuela's support and Cuba's ban on foreign travel due to COVID-19, basic survival has become challenging. The once bustling outdoor food market we frequent in Havana had two items, garlic and peppers. No potatoes, bread, vegetables, fruits, grains, or meats, not even rice and beans. Repeatedly we witnessed long lines extending several blocks of mask-wearing Cubans awaiting a chance to buy basics such as rice or medicine. To make it possible for WYG leaders to meet with us they paid a person to stand in line in their behalf for six hours, so they could buy a little white bread for their family. With shortages of food, gatherings forbidden, churches closed, travel bans, curfews and at times whole communities on indoor lockdown, you can be sure finding avenues to minister to poor and disenfranchised neighbors has been extremely difficult." (World Youth Group, www.worldyouthgroup.org, P.O. Box 1454, Westminster, SC 29693, USA.)

As part of their attempts to cope, the Cuban authorities have made an unfavorable adjustment to the dollar-peso exchange rate. They have also raised the salaries of their employees.

And so has our Seminary. Therefore, the cost of tuition as well as board and lodging, for its students, including the two Angolans, has suddenly been doubled. The increase of \$1,000.00 per student per semester to \$2,000.00 per semester came into immediate effect in February 2021, which is the second semester of their third year.

As a concession to us as sponsors, the Seminary has reduced that \$2,000.00 to \$1,600.00 per student, but only for the current semester, a shortfall of \$600.00. That is, another \$1,200.00 will be needed. To date, we have been able to make up only \$600.00, half of what is required. Most probably, their laundry and out-of-pocket expenses will also have to be increased, that is, an estimated extra of, say, \$200.00.

According to our calculations, we need to raise an additional \$4,900.00

But where can we obtain that additional amount? Our savings account for a rainy day is almost empty and cannot be made to yield any more. What about the money saved up for translating Andreas Helwig's *Antichristus Romanus* referred above? Alas, it, too, is now all gone.

To help out, Edwin has already given \$1000.00 of President Biden's \$1,400.00 American Rescue Plan. The stimulus money has not yet reached our banking account and may not do so for several more months. But he has, in the meantime, taken a credit card loan to cover this amount. He has also prevailed on a dear friend elsewhere in the United States to match his donation. This leaves a shortfall of \$2,900.00

With great reluctance, we therefore find that we once more must hold out the begging bowl on behalf of the Angolan students. An unpleasant alternative would be for them to leave and go back to their country without completing their four-year ministerial course. Please also pray.

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