

# Ria's Corner

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November 2, 2021

Our most precious family and friends, old and new, you are still our special treasure,

How often in my imagination this past year I had a lovely chat with you, because I miss you so much. But then I found repeatedly the spirit is so willing, even eager, but the flesh becoming weaker and less able to actually sit down and type. I so love hearing from you, but I guess you too have too much to keep you busy, because I do not get many replies.

As you may have noticed, *Ria's Corner* and Edwin's *Prophetic Bulletins* are cooperative publications. We edit each other's work. This time, however, things are a little different. Because he has been struggling to complete his latest Bulletin, he suddenly here added so much theological discourse it is fair to say that to a considerable extent he hijacked this *Ria's Corner*! But I hope you will find it worthwhile.

On the calendar of Seventhday-Adventists, October 22 is an important date when we remember the year 1844. It has now been 177 years since our Saviour entered the Most Holy Place in the heavenly sanctuary and began the Investigative Judgment, while continuing to plead for us before the Father. Ours is, about this, a unique view in comparison with other denominations. It is based on the First Angel's Message: "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—saying with a loud voice, 'Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.'" (Rev. 14:6, 7. Here as in the rest of this Bulletin we quote from the New King James Version.)

The *hour* of His judgment is a specific point in time, which ends the 2,300 year-days foretold by Dan. 8:14. Further, it begins an extended period of time, concerning everybody who has ever lived on this planet since Adam and Eve were still alive. And who is the judge? As the Lord Jesus told the Scribes and Pharisees, our heavenly Father "has committed all judgment to the Son" (John 5:22). This is also what Paul said: "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Cor. 5:10).

And yet elsewhere the great apostle stated: "Do you not know that we will judge angels?" This seems to be contradictory, although it is borne out by the following Scripture: "And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them." Who are these? They are the Lord's resurrected saints, who will do this work and reign with Christ for a thousand years. (Rev. 20:4)

If we read these texts in Greek, the original language text of the New Testament, the apparent contradiction is readily resolved. In it we find two words, both of which in English are translated as "judgment," but they have two meanings. The first is κρίσις (krisis), the second is κρίμα (krima). The former is the act of judicial decision, which is the prerogative

of Jesus Christ alone. As both Jesus and Paul said, only the Son of God has the right of krisis. It is He who decides who are saved and who are lost. He does so during the Investigative Judgment. He says who will be saved. By default, the rest of humanity as well as Satan and the other fallen angels will be lost. **Κριμα** (krima), on the other hand, is the sentence meted out to those who are lost. In this work, the redeemed also participate. Though all the wicked, fallen angels and human beings alike, will be destroyed by the final fire that descends from God in heaven, their punishment will vary. As *The Great Controversy* puts it, some will be consumed as in a moment, while others will suffer for many days, the great deceiver, Satan, most of all.

Why, however, must there be a judgment over a protracted period of time? The Lord can surely decide both the **κρισις** (krisis) and **κριμα** (krima) in a moment. Of course, He can, but those proceedings also have spectators with enquiring minds: the holy angels and the beings of other worlds where transgression never entered. But they need to be shown the falsity of Satan's accusations against God. In other words, for justice to be done, justice must be *seen* to be done!

The Second Coming has not yet taken place. Why has it tarried so long? Throughout the twentieth century, members of the Remnant Church have been waiting for it.

During that time, so much has happened all over the planet, some of it affecting our loved ones, in this very month. Twenty-one years ago, on October 4, 2000, Edwin became an American citizen. That day was also the 56th anniversary of when his brother Lucas was killed by a mortar bomb during the Second World War in 1944. It happened in the Gothic line, Italy, north of Florence, a little south of Bologna. Lucas was a radio signaler in a tank corps. When he died, he was off duty and was carrying food to Fred Shaw, his brother-in-law. This event had a profound effect on Edwin's future. Two years earlier, in 1942, Major General Daniel H. Pienaar, a beloved South African warrior, on his way home died in an air crash at Kisumu, Kenya. His loved ones created the Dan Pienaar Memorial Fund to enable close relatives of slain soldiers to study. This fund paid for Edwin's Theology Course at Helderberg College, near Cape Town, where he graduated at the end of 1950, almost seventy-one years ago.

On October 25, precious Monique, my niece's daughter, died in South Africa at the tender age of 24, slain by cystic fibrosis, a genetically transmitted disease. Further back in time, André, our elder son, was born in Cape Town on October 29, 1955. He is now 66 and has three grown-up children of his own! This almost brings us to December 26, when Edwin and I will be celebrating our 67th wedding anniversary! You are, of course, cordially invited to share our joy.

But why, indeed, has Jesus not yet come? He would have loved to return on the clouds of heaven more than a century ago, but there has been a delay. Why? Because His people have failed to finish the work of preaching the Three Angels' Messages as a witness to every nation, kindred, tongue and people. If they had fully done so, His elect would by now have long since been in His heavenly kingdom. In fact, the twentieth century with all its horrors here on earth could have been totally avoided.

But in the 10/40 Window, which also used to be called "the resistant belt," has been largely unreached by Protestant Christianity. Geographically this area covers Asia and North Africa as well as Southern Europe from 10 to 40 degrees latitude north of the equator. In it, live more than 4.4 billion people, two-thirds of the planet's population. It is inhabited by huge numbers of Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Pagans, and Chinese. The latter have been brought up to believe that God does not exist. Also in it are the Israeli Jews, Eastern Orthodox Greeks and Roman Catholics in Southern Europe as well as the Philippines. All these people are opposed to Protestantism. Wikipedia says: "In many 10/40 countries, open evangelism is difficult and even impossible because of governmental restrictions." Just think of countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan, and many other countries where people are killed if they dare to give up Islam! Also discouraging is that since 1844 Western Europe has largely given up Christianity. Even around us, in so-called Protestant America, most people live out their lives and go down to the grave as if Jesus did not die for them and are largely ignorant of His return or have confused ideas about it.

In 1844, the entire population of the world amounted to about a billion and much of the 10/40 area was part of a European empire or under its influence. So much has changed since then. The empires have faded away and most of their missionaries are gone. Nearly eight billion people have in the meantime filled up the earth.

Nevertheless, the Saviour almost two thousand years ago instructed His followers and foretold: "This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14). Also, the Third Angel's Message of His saving love as well as His Second Coming must go to "every nation, tribe, tongue, and people" (Revelation 14:6). That hardly sounds like English television. How, for instance, will the work for every tongue be done if not *in* that tongue?

Unfortunately a large majority of those who inhabit the earth do not know any English, mostly only their mother tongue.

Fortunately, everywhere on earth, a large variety of agencies, including self-supporting ministries, are nevertheless at work to fulfill the Great Commission, some in forbidding circumstances. These are four of our favorites: Jeff Reich's Laymen Ministries; Gospel Outreach; Adventist Frontier Missions (AFM); and Adventist World Radio. Of the latter, the shortwave broadcasts penetrate everywhere, including all countries in the 10/40 window. Gospel Outreach is unique. It trains, coordinates, and finances Seventh-day Adventist workers who live in the 10/40 window. They already know the languages, cultures, and circumstances of their countries.

AFM, which likewise focuses on the 10/40 window, shines a penetrating light on the unreached—and neglected—people groups within it. Non-Adventist Christians are also aware of them. Here, from the Internet, is one of their definitions: A people group is "an ethno-linguistic group with a common self-identity that is shared by the various members. For strategic purposes it is the largest group within which the Gospel can spread without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance." According to AFM, "There are nearly 7,000 unreached people groups representing more than 2 billion people. Out of every 1,000 Gospel workers worldwide, only 14 serve among the unreached. Out of every \$100 given for

Christian ministry worldwide, less than *one penny* (cent) goes to help reach the unreached. Is this status quo acceptable? Absolutely not! Every day, thousands of people die without any knowledge of Christ or the salvation He gave His life to purchase for them."

We need not, however, despair. The very realization of this need is now stimulating SDA ministries to fulfill the Master's Great Commission by doing the work as He wants us to do it.

Wonderful too has been the proliferation of Bible translations all over the planet, even in the 10/40 countries. Also according to Wikipedia, some portions of the Scriptures are now available in 3,350 of the world's 6,500 languages. The entire Bible exists in 683 languages, while 1,534 possess the New Testament as a whole. And there are Seventh-day Adventists working in many, if not all, those countries—such as largely Hindu India and Communist China. Each of these is inhabited by more than a billion people.

To help out further, there is technology, among other things: Data CDs, Cell phone evangelism, DVDs, Web Sites on the Internet, Podcasts, Zoom, WhatsApp, and Flash Drives. Smaller than a human thumb, it amazes me that one of them has the capacity to record the text of everything that Edwin has written: five books as well as many digital publications! While very many people cannot write or understand a spoken European language like English, they can often read it.

Of our self-supporting ministries another works in Cuba. At present a dear friend is there, where a horrible situation afflicts its people, including 33,000 Seventhday-Adventists. Millions are facing starvation and other suffering. He could not go directly to Cuba from the United States, which is only 90 miles away, but had to fly through another country, many extra thousands of miles, to reach Havana. With him he took antibiotics and other medications as well as means to help his fellow workers. The ministry he belongs to is concerned with more than physical help. Above all, throughout that Communist country, it does medical-missionary work and garners in souls, with 2,000 to 3,000 baptisms to date. In the past, when it was possible to fly to Cuba directly, his wife accompanied him; but it has become much more expensive as well as dangerous. Therefore, she remains at home and prays, together with others who support that work.

Edwin has now for the second time assisted by fetching and mailing him a large quantity of antibiotics and other medications from a village in Mexico, 42 miles away, where they are much cheaper and can be bought without prescriptions. Because of his age, he no longer drives long distances on the freeway; therefore, a neighbor takes him there and is paid for his help.

The news from Cuba is very bad. We just heard that for lack of antibiotics an infected finger had to be amputated. Hunger, too, is stalking that land. Edwin cannot stand suffering if he can prevent it!

In the meantime, we persist with our own ministry: promoting Edwin's five published books and digital material on prophecy. As you probably know, his most important work, *The Truth About 666 and the Story of the Great Apostasy*, supports what our pioneers like Uriah Smith and our evangelists have taught for more than a hundred years. We still believe, and this

book shows with very much new research material, that the number 666 in Revelation 13:17, 18, refers to *Vicarius Filii Dei*, which has for centuries been a title of the pope.

Right now, Steve Wohlberg of **White Horse Media**, as he calls his television ministry, is finalizing a new publication titled *The 666 Beast Identified: What it Means to You*. It is heavily indebted to Edwin's book, *The Truth About 666*. A very much shorter and compact work, it is not particularly intended for Adventists but a larger public. We find this most gratifying.

Some time ago, Edwin was requested by two editors of the *SDA Encyclopedia* to prepare for it "The Number of the Beast." Tracing the various interpretations of the number 666 in Revelation 13:17, 18, from early Christian times to the present, it can now be read on that prestigious online website. This, too, is most gratifying.

Reinhardt Stander, a South African scholar who is now a minister in the United States, obtained his doctorate from the University of Stellenbosch by analyzing Preterism, Futurism, and Historicism. He concluded convincingly that the last mentioned is the only truly credible method of prophetic interpretation. His dissertation also leans heavily on Edwin's magnum opus, *The Truth About 666*.

In the Ukraine, two young ministers, twin brothers, are likewise working on their doctorates and using *The Truth About 666* as source material.

What particularly pleases Edwin is that Steve Wohlberg, Reinhardt Stander, and the Ukrainians are all much younger than he is. When he is gone, such people can continue carrying the torch of prophetic truth.

If you would like to support our ministry, a fine way of doing so would be to purchase one of Edwin's books on prophecy as a Christmas present for a friend.

Recently, for quite a few days, I was so happy to see at least six hummingbirds circling and yo-yoing the feeder for the longest time. Perhaps they were just passing through, because I have not spotted them lately. The seed-eating birds come faithfully for their breakfast.

The other day, I had to go for a third blood test because of too high potassium which is bad for my heart. In addition I also have two leaking heart valves which have to be taken care of soon. I sometimes idly wonder which of my constellation of maladies will take me out, because chronic pain does not kill, though it is a tyrant. Years ago my university students all wrote that they would know they were alive when they felt pain. Now I believe them: if I wake up without pain I will think I am dead!

Surely this is not what our heavenly Father envisaged for us! Recent headlines mentioned that 85% of humanity is adversely affected by climate change, and that suicide among college students as well as farmers has reached troubling proportions. Men's hearts are failing them for fear and for the things that are coming on the earth indeed. Fires, floods, earthquakes, hunger, homelessness, 20 or more hurricanes per year here in the States. . . . Gunmen have killed 15,000 and wounded 30,000 in this country so far this year.

In addition crazed mental health sufferers on the loose kill and injure innocent pedestrians in New York City and Philadelphia, and no doubt in other cities too. Our sense of security, the most basic of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, is badly tattered, especially for those who do not know about our loving Savior who has promised to prepare homes for us in heaven! Friends, you and I who are so extremely fortunate to have "this blessed hope" have been appointed light bearers. We must hold our light up high for all who are lost in this twilight zone or downright midnight darkness so they can see the way out. The bright sunshine and warmth of love for the lost must inspire us, pain or no pain, to hold up our light to lead the lost sheep home. This is our sacred and special reason for being alive so close to the coming of our precious Prince of Peace.

I often wonder how your year has been so far during this tumultuous time of fires, floods, earthquakes, an increased murder rate and the ravages of the virus from hell. You no doubt also lost loved ones to some horrible disease or another, and are praying for somebody close in the valley of the shadow of death. We lost a dear cancer friend for whom we prayed for years, and two to the virus suddenly. My brother-in-law was in the valley of the shadow of death, but is home now, to our great joy. We are even now pleading with God for another cancer friend in South Africa and her parents.

Our most wonderfully good news is that our website is being repaired by our very good friend Lewis L. Szerecz! We have a photo gallery on my bedroom wall and his kind face looks down on us from there, together with our precious Michael Scheifler, who started our website a number of years ago until Parkinson's knocked him out. Our parents and other friends are there too, and we would love to add your picture please.

When Edwin and I are tired or in too much pain to do constructive writing we gloriously journey through interesting books written by others. As you probably know, it is very hard work to write, so we doubly appreciate those who manage to do it well. We recently in four months finished reading *The Great Controversy*, and were richly blessed. It is wonderful for preparing one for His coming. There is no better book on the market, except the Bible.

For those who love true mission stories, I recently read with great enjoyment the book by Victoria Duarte, *Kidnapped, the Abduction of the Bongo Mission Medical Staff*; and Abigail Follows's fantastic book *Hidden Song of the Himalayas – memoir of a gospel seed sower in the mountains of India*.

We also read *The Solusi Story*, by Virgil Robinson. It is about the first SDA mission station overseas. Again I was struck by the large number of missionaries who willingly struggled and died during the years it was developed and did a great work there in Africa in what used to be called Rhodesia, later becoming Zimbabwe.

What much impressed me was the following tragic story. During a rainy spell and a bad mosquito infestation, several missionaries became ill with malaria. One of them recognized the disease and bought quinine, which he and his wife began to use. He also offered the medicine to the other missionaries, but they refused it, saying it was a poisonous drug. They

added that using it would demonstrate a lack of faith in the Lord's healing power. Five of them and their children died. The couple who used the quinine survived.

That was more than a hundred years ago. Is that not like the anti-vaccination arguments of religious people in our own time, when the virus from hell is raging through the world? At least 5 million people have already died of it. The largest component was in the United States of America, almost 735 thousand. With our scientific resources, they should, however, have been far fewer. At present, our planet has 7.9 billion inhabitants, of which this country makes up only 4.25 percent. What would be the reason for this strange situation? Those who died of Covid-19 have largely been people who refused to be vaccinated. For them, the mortality rate is about 11 times higher than that of those who accept vaccination.

That is all for now, dearest friends. May the festive season bring you rich blessings with your loved ones and may our King come soon, so we can meet on the clouds of heaven. Please drop us a line and tell us how things are with you, and please attach a photo which I can add to my bedside gallery. Please continue being the wind under our wings with your prayers for us and our ministry.

Fondest love and big, virus-free hugs from your forever friends, Ria and Edwin. ☺

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