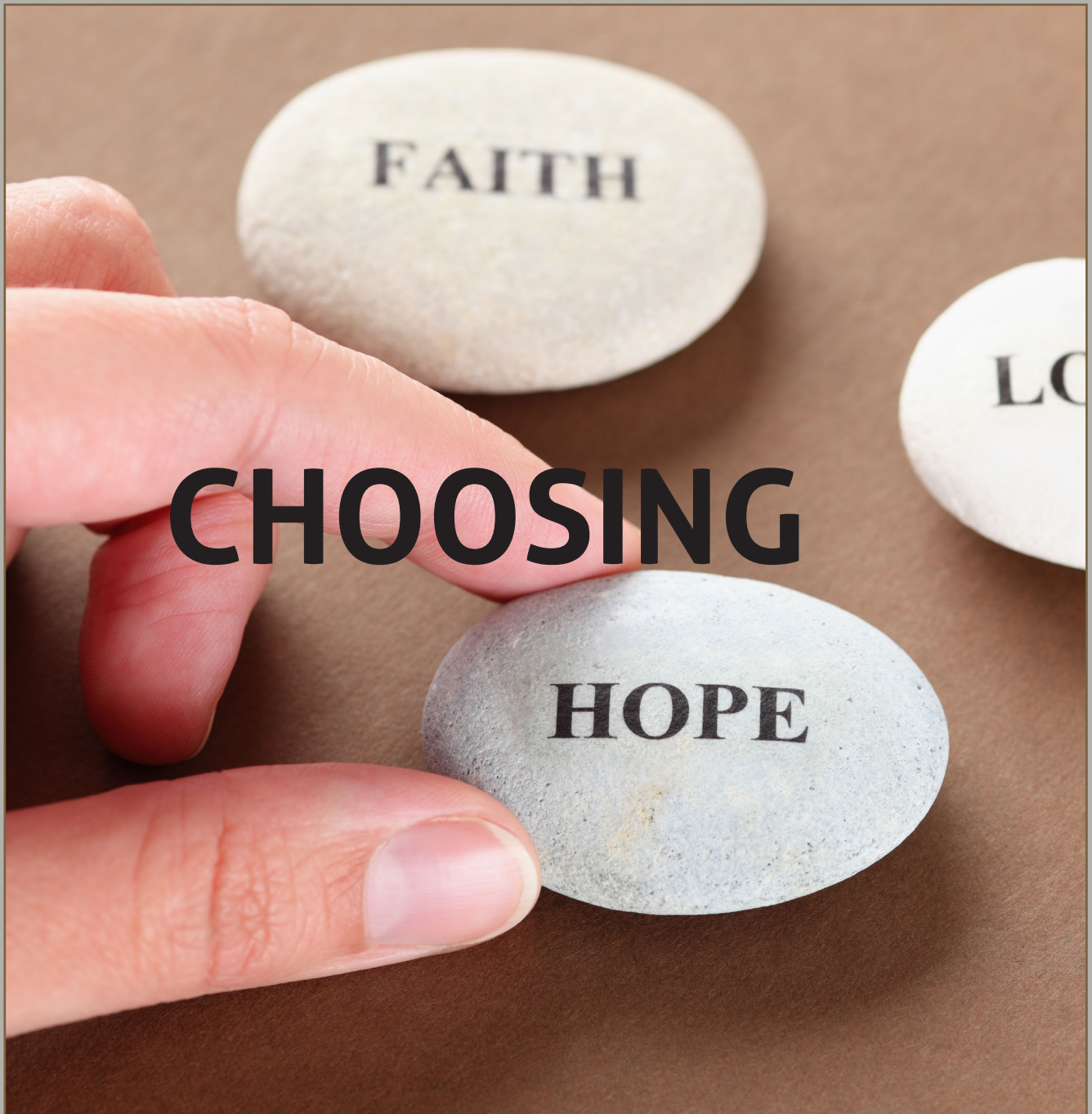


Outlook

SPECIAL ISSUE NO. 2 2015 SOUTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION



CHOOSING

HOPE

FAITH

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Outlook

SPECIAL ISSUE NO. 2 2015

EDITORIAL

Managing Editor – Jonathan Catolico

Editor – Teresa Costello

Associate Editor – Romhelyn Gay Deles

Proofreaders - Welsie Dela Cruz, Kat Taylor

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TO WRITERS /CONTRIBUTORS:

We welcome unsolicited manuscripts and letters to the editor. (Please inquire before submitting long articles). Include address and telephone number. Address all correspondence to:

OUTLOOK

Southern Asia-Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists, Bypass Road, Aguinaldo Highway, 4118 Silang Cavite, Philippines

Phone +63 (46) 4144.4000 Fax +63 (46) 414 4001

Letters to the editors: jcatolico@ssd.org / tcostello@ssd.org

Submit articles: outlook@ssd.org

SSD DIRECTORY

President -Leonardo Asoy

Vice Presidents-Johnny Lubis | Rudy Baloyo

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Associate Secretary/AVS-Kevin Costello

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Public Affairs & Religious Liberty/Legal-Rex Rosas

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Sabbath School & Personal Ministry-Hermogenes Villanueva

Stewardship/Trust Services-Happy Sibilang

Women's Ministries/Shepherdess International-Helen Gulfan

Youth Ministries/AMICUS-Jobbie Yabut

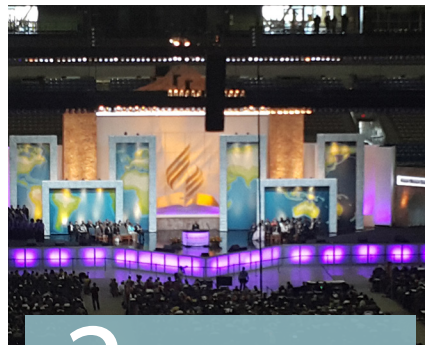
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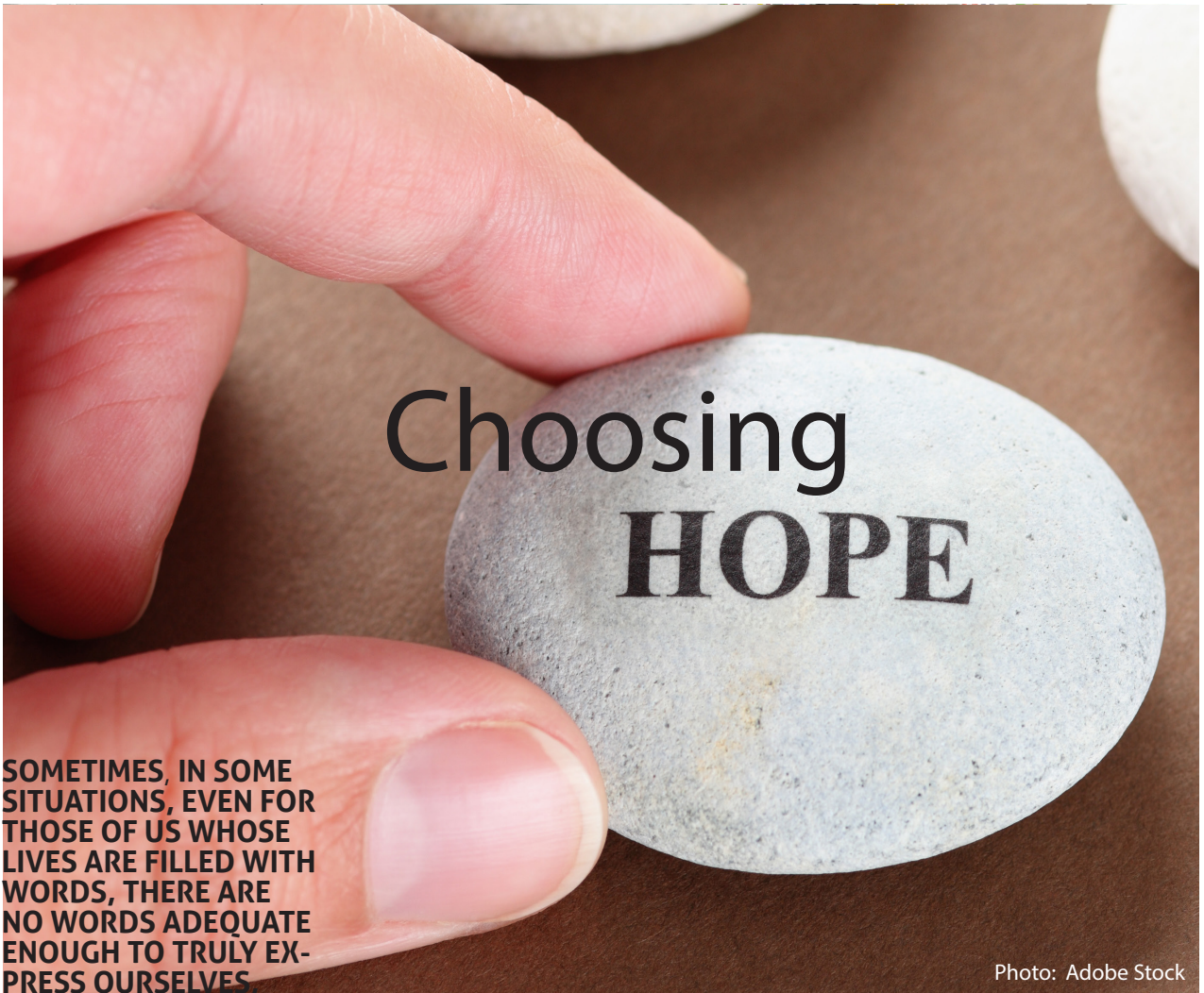


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SOMETIMES, IN SOME SITUATIONS, EVEN FOR THOSE OF US WHOSE LIVES ARE FILLED WITH WORDS, THERE ARE NO WORDS ADEQUATE ENOUGH TO TRULY EXPRESS OURSELVES,

OUR FEELINGS, OUR THOUGHTS, OR OUR EXPERIENCES. That is how it's been these months past. But there is one word that keeps coming back to my mind as we carry on in the face of loss, and that word is hope.

We hope for many things. We hope someone has a good day. We hope for a better tomorrow. We hope for an education, a new car, a promotion, a family, and a million more things. We hope people get well soon. Throughout SSD we hoped. So many of you hoped with us – for a different outcome regarding our beloved Pastor Alberto C. Gulfan, Jr.

Scholars might refer to the Merriam-Webster Learner's Dictionary and its definition of hope as "to want something to happen or be true and think that it could happen or be true". Inspirational writers might quote Bishop Desmond Tutu, the famous South African anti-apartheid activist and Catholic archbishop, who once said, "Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness." He learned that definition through difficult days that seemed hopeless.

However, I'd prefer to look back to the Old Testament writings of Hosea, a man

who knew a thing or two about hopelessness and, more importantly, hope. He was in a seemingly hopeless relationship that didn't turn out at all the way he had hoped and he let God know that through his questions and honest, authentic conversations with God. From that strong relationship with God, the emphatic promise in Hosea 2:15 rings out across the ages that God is the only one who can turn "a valley of trouble into a door of hope" (NKJV).

And so while it's difficult to hope when we have questions that cannot be answered on this earth, we

keep holding onto the reality that our God is great, greater than any circumstance we experience.

There is a story being written that we don't see yet. We know its beginning - in Heaven with angelic characters and the character of God on trial. We know the ending - in Heaven once again filled with heavenly characters but this time it's a celebration of the validation of God's character. But, it is this, the in-between time, that we don't know. We don't know chapter-by-chapter all the details because our chapters are being written daily, in the choices we make, in the perspectives we have, and in the interactions with the people who come in and out of our lives.

Daily, we have opportunities to develop and demonstrate the character of Christ but we forget one very important aspect of Christ's character. We forget that He bore burdens and sorrows like us here on this earth. He was in all ways tempted like us and thus can relate to our burdens and sorrows. And so, if He bore all these weighty matters in His soul, if He felt those emotions, would He not also experience hope? Surely, couldn't He have hoped the disciples would understand more than they did, that they would make better choices than they did, that they would trust more than they did? Surely, it is not incomprehensible to think this about the Creator of hope, the one Whose promises give us hope - that there is a place for

“When we must choose between despair and hope, we will choose hope.”

us, the resurrection is real, that one day death will not have its horrific sting. Surely, we can at least imagine for a moment that the Creator of that hope, that all-encompassing, mind-boggling hope, also hoped while He was on earth and hopes today.

And so, did He not experience that desire, that longing for a better place and a different twist in the story? He experienced that hope of Heaven because that was His home. He longed to return yet He stayed long enough on this sin-marred and sorrowful earth to offer us this powerful hope. And we're reminded in Hebrews 6:19-20, "We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf..." (ESV).

Jesus continues to hope for us. Yes, He knows the end from the beginning but I believe there are so many plot twists and different ways the chapters

of our lives can be written based on our choices, others' decisions, and Satan's attacks. And He hopes that we will make the better choice. When we must choose between despair and hope, we will choose hope. When we must choose between defeat and perseverance, we will choose to trust God again and again. When we must choose between all the world tells us about this life versus what He said, we will choose Him. I believe His greatest hope is that you and I will choose Him daily forever.

So it is our prayer that this issue will give you hope as you read of a life well-lived, of persevering people, of those responding compassionately to others' pain, and of how we can see God working in so many ways and in so many places across SSD. Together, let us continue on with the hope of Heaven, moment by moment and choice by choice.

- Teresa Costello

ALBERTO C GULFAN JR

FORMER DIVISION PRESIDENT REMEMBERED AS A PASSIONATE EVANGELIST

By Andrew McChesney, news editor, Adventist Review, with reporting from SSD

Alberto C. Gulfan Jr., a passionate evangelist who conducted five to six evangelistic series a year even during his 12 years as president of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division, died Sabbath, Sept. 26, after a lengthy battle with cancer. He was 64.

Gulfan, a lifelong Seventh-day Adventist, also had a quiet, humble leadership style and a love for tennis that endeared him to friends and colleagues.

"He was a wonderful champion of God's truth and evangelistic proclamation," Adventist world church president Ted N.C. Wilson said in a condolence letter to Gulfan's wife, Helen Bocala-Gulfan, and three adult children. "Pastor Gulfan's many years of service for the Lord are a testimony to God's power in using an individual in powerful ways for His remnant church."

Gulfan served the church in a 42-year career that culminated with his election in June 2003 as president of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division, which covers the Philippines, Indonesia, and 12 other countries. He stepped aside because of his illness at the church's General Conference session in July 2015.

Close friends said Gulfan would be best remembered for his passion for evangelism. Gulfan regularly led several evangelistic series per year, sometimes as many as five or six, while maintaining his busy sched-

ule as division president.

"He was an evangelist at heart," said G.T. Ng, executive secretary of the Adventist world church, who first began working with Gulfan [when Ng was] a professor at the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, or AIAS, in the 1990s. Gulfan worked as president of the church's Central Philippine Union Conference [at the time]..

"Evangelism was in his blood and was his constant refrain."

Myron Iseminger, undersecretary of the Adventist world church, said he would long remember participating in a large evangelistic campaign held in multiple locations on the Philippine island of Mindanao that concluded with a mass Sabbath baptism of more than 2,000 people led by Gulfan.

"I believe anyone you talk to would agree that Pastor Gulfan's legacy was his passion for evangelism," said Iseminger, who worked directly with Gulfan as associate treasurer of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division for three years. "That's where his heart was. **He loved holding evangelistic meetings.**"

Gulfan worked in many other roles

in his more than four decades of church service. He was a literature evangelist, church pastor, district pastor, hospital chaplain and health educator, union health and temperance director, mission president, union ministerial secretary, union executive secretary, and union president before being elected division president.

"I appreciated and liked his 'quiet' leadership," said Gerald A. Klingbeil, an associate editor of the Adventist Review, who worked with Gulfan [during Klingbeil's time] as dean of AIAS' Theological Seminary from 2006 to 2009. "He was not a noisy leader, very humble, and often searching for consensus, but knew where he wanted the church to be."

Ng described Gulfan as "always unassumingly humble" and recalled how the two had enjoyed playing tennis together two decades earlier.

"When we played a game together, I never saw him upset after losing a game," he said. "Indeed, the church has lost **a dedicated man of God and a valiant soldier of Christ.** Because of the grace of Christ, we have the assurance to see our esteemed leader again in the Earth made new. Even so, come Lord Jesus."

In a sign of his humble nature, "he first and foremost considers himself

In Remembrance



Photo: Ansel Oliver

a minister and thus prefers to be called "pastor," according to a short biography published on the division's website.

Gulfan also had an excellent memory, said Linda Mei Lin Koh, who knew him for nine years while overseeing the children's, family, and women's ministries for the division.

"He knew I love to eat marang, a local fruit from the Philippines," Koh said. "Whenever I went to the Central Philippines Union Conference to conduct training seminars, he would tell me when he met me that he had asked someone to buy marang for me to eat. He was a very gracious and hospitable host."

Koh worked directly under Gulfan at the division office for six months before being called to the church's

world headquarters in Maryland to work as director of children's ministries, the position she now holds.

"When he came to the division, he also encouraged all directors and everyone who works at the division to hold evangelistic meetings for children, women, and families," she said. "But he especially reminded me to train the children and women to hold evangelistic meetings, too."

Alberto Cuyos Gulfan Jr., born on Dec. 1, 1950, in Cataingan, Masbate, Philippines, is survived by his wife of 38 years, Helen Bocala-Gulfan, who has served as the division's women's ministries director and Shepherdess International coordinator. They have three children — Helen Zella, married to Erwin Tecson; Lloyd, married to Novelou Lagra-Gulfan, and Jarbien Pol — and

two grandchildren, Sam and Hugh.

The family has expressed appreciation for the great outpouring of love and support from around the world.

A tribute page has been set up on the division's website.

Funeral services will be held on Oct. 4 at the AIIAS campus church in Silang, Cavite, Philippines.

Reprinted with permission from the September 27, 2015 online version of the Adventist Review.

News

ANDRES RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS FAMILY MINISTRIES AWARD

Southern-Asia Pacific Division Children's and Family Ministries (ChM/FM) Director Dr. Miriam Andres was named a recipient of a rare award in July. She received the Arthur and Maud Spalding Medalion in recognition of her contributions to family ministries. It is the highest honor bestowed by the world church's Family Ministries department.

To date, only 37 couples or individuals have received this distinction. In addition to Andres, two well-known Family Ministries leaders also received this award: Elder Pardon Mwansa and Linda Koh, NAD Family Ministries Director and former SSD Children's and Family Ministries Director.

Andres has served as the SSD CHM/FM since 2008. Previously she served as the Children's and Family Ministries Director for the North Philippine Union Conference for 13 years. She holds a bachelor's degree in Education, a Master of Education degree in Educational Administration and Doctor of Education degree in Educational Management. In addition to this ministry, she has served as a busy pastoral wife during her husband's many years of pastoral ministry.

During her time as the SSD FM/ChM director, Andres focused on resource development, emphasized the role of prayer for children, initiated new couples' enrichment opportunities, encouraged children and family discipleship,



Photo: Courtesy of Andres family

and launched a strong family to family approach to evangelism.

Hearty congratulations to Dr. Miriam! We are blessed by her committed ministry and are thankful that she has represented SSD so well.

ASOY ELECTED SSD PRESIDENT



Leonardo R Asoy is elected president of the Adventist church in the southern Asia-pacific region (SSD) after a July 6 vote during the 60th General Conference Session of the Adventist church in San Antonio, Texas.

Asoy was born and raised in Mindanao (southern Philippines) and

graduated from Mountain View College in 1983 with a degree in Theology.

He served as a district pastor in the Western Mindanao Conference in 1983 and then youth director from 1988-1990. In 1990, he finished a Master in Pastoral Studies at the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies in Cavite, Philippines. In 1991 he was called to the South Philippine Union Conference (SPUC) as Youth Director and as Sabbath School and Personal Ministries director in 1996. In 2003, he became the Davao Mission president but was called back

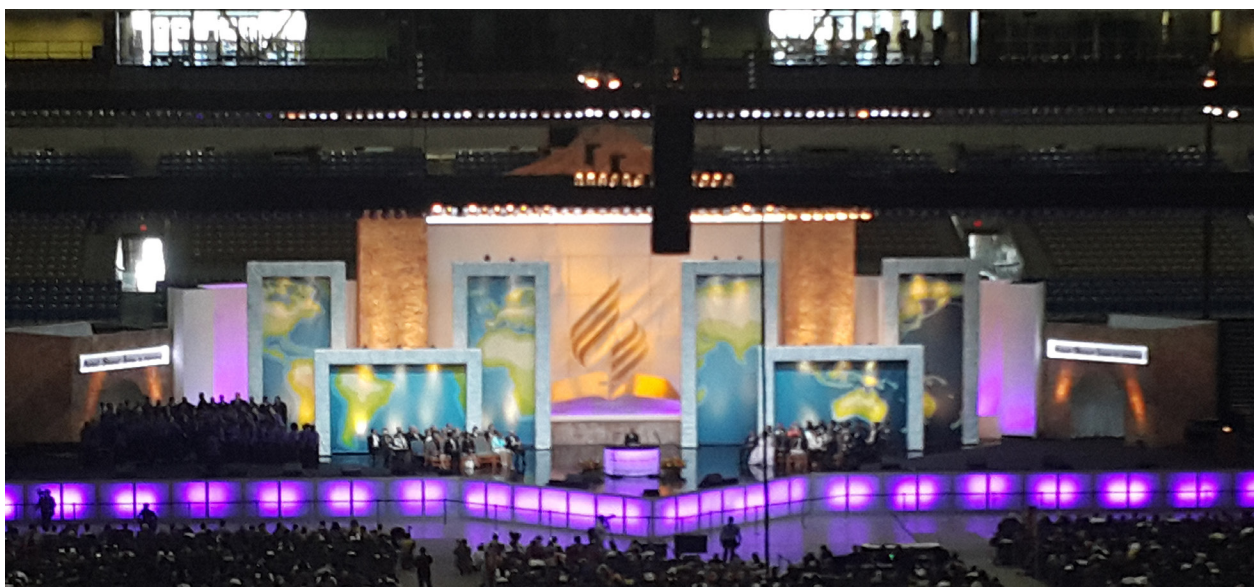
after a year to be Ministerial Secretary in SPUC.

Asoy accepted a call to serve as the SSD Sabbath School/Personal Ministries director in 2007. From 2011 until his recent election, he was president of SPUC.

He is married to Elma Vasques. They have two grown children, Elnardz and Shawnette, who are both registered nurses.

Asoy succeeded Alberto C Gulfan Jr. who served as SSD president for two terms. Gulfan recently announced his retirement this year. [Gay Deles]

NEW SSD LEADERS CHOSEN AT 2015 GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION



Lively presentations filled the stage during the 2015 General Conference Session in San Antonio, Texas. (Photo: Khennjo Deles.)

During the 2015 General Conference Session held in San Antonio, Texas a number of personnel changes occurred for SSD. Administratively, Leonardo Asoy was elected as SSD president, Saw Samuel was re-elected as SSD executive secretary and Max Langi was elected as SSD treasurer. Johny Lubis was re-appointed as an SSD vice president. A new position, Associate Director of Church Ministries for Integrated Evangelism Lifestyle, was created with Rudy Baloyo tapped to fill this.*

In addition, the following individuals were appointed/re-appointed:

Associate Officers

Under Treasurer: Jacinth Adap

Associate Secretary: Kevin Costello

Associate Treasurer: Gay Tanamal

Departmental Directors

Adventist Mission: Douglas Venn

Children's/Family Ministries: Orathai Chureson

Education: Lawrence Domingo

Health: Rizaline Alfano

Ministerial: Houtman Sinaga

Publishing: Vivencio Bermudez

Sabbath School/Personal Ministries: Hermogenes Villanueva

Stewardship: Happy Sibilang

Women's Ministries: Helen Gulfan

Youth: Jobbie Yabut

Associate Director

Education: Canadian Panjaitan

Finally, it was voted to formally express **"deep appreciation to all officers and directors who have served faithfully for the past five years but will not be returning to office"**.

**This position was later changed to a vice president position.*

News

MYANMAR ADVENTISTS ASSIST FLOOD VICTIMS AMID DESTRUCTION

During the early weeks of August, Adventists in Myanmar conducted assessments and provided relief activities in the flood-affected western areas of the country. Recent heavy rainfall, combined with high winds and rain from a recent cyclone caused flooding in four western areas, leaving 27 dead and more than 150,000 affected according to current news reports. These statistics up the overall death toll over the last six weeks to 46 with a total of more than 200,000 affected throughout Myanmar.

In response to this latest development, the Seventh-day Adventist church began its relief efforts last week in Rakhine state, a region stretching south east of the Bangladesh border and along the Bay of Bengal. The Yangon Attached District (YAD) administration there worked with Adventist Community Services (ACS) to distribute food items to approximately 500 disaster victims according to Ler Hser, YAD treasurer. Ten area churches have been partially destroyed by the wind and floodwaters with one being completely flooded.

Heavy rainfall and landslides damaged portions of Hakha, the capital of Chin state in upper Myanmar. A makeshift

rescue camp has been set up to accommodate them. The main road to this state capital has been destroyed and thus it has been difficult for government and other rescue and relief teams to reach the area.

In central Myanmar, church leaders note that house churches were partially destroyed by the flooding but in spite of this, they are focused on helping their communities. In addition, one of the nation's top non-government organizations (NGO) is requesting health care assistance from the Adventist church's relief teams. In response, Tha Tun Aye, Central Myanmar Mission treasurer, said that "the church is ready to start relief activities especially health care. We are coordinating with the ACS coordinator in Myanmar Union to send medical doctors and health workers to the disaster affected area."

Pastor Rozama, Upper Myanmar Mission executive secretary, reported that more than 134 families of church members were affected by the flood in Chin state and Sagaing Region. A total of 22 churches in the area remain flooded since last week. Members and leaders are waiting for the waters to recede so they can assess the

damage.

ADRA Myanmar is also lending their valuable expertise in this affected north-western part of the country. With input from church pastors and elders in the Kalemio area of the Sagaing Region, ADRA Myanmar is coordinating a joint emergency response with government and NGOs. The focus will be on filling unmet needs and/or gaps in support.

"ADRA has an initial response of USD 15,000 that is activated within 24 hours once a clear coordinated emergency response plan is in place and will include emergency food and clean drinking water supply for flood victims," notes Brendon Irvine, ADRA Myanmar country director. "A larger ADRA International Network response of up to USD 50,000 is also planned once clearer details emerge of ongoing needs, which [could] possibly include [the other] areas," he adds.

With more monsoon rains predicted in coming weeks, the Adventist church in Myanmar is prepared to continue its relief work and bring the comfort of Christ to those in crisis.

[Myo Chan/Teresa Costello with additional reporting by Brendon Irvine] (Photo: ADRA Myanmar)

More than 900 attend children's spiritual celebration in Indonesia



Children in west Java, Indonesia celebrate Christ's love during the Children's Spiritual Celebration at the Indonesian Adventist University on August 9. They represent the different countries of the world in their colorful international costumes. (Photo courtesy of WIUM.)

Adventist children's ministry leaders in West Java, Indonesia use a variety of activities to encourage a more vibrant relationship with Jesus among children. On August 9, more than 700 children and 200 staff from 25 Adventist churches joined in a one-day Children's Spiritual Celebration at Indonesian Adventist University (Universitas Advent Indonesia) in Bandung.

With a theme of "Christ loves children of different nations", participants aged 2-14 years old spent the day in age-appropriate activities,

seminars and break-out sessions. The younger children enjoyed more active programming while the older ones participated in life skills preparation such as lectures on health and sexual purity as well as cooking and gardening classes.

The day also focused on music and cultural expression. Attendees enthusiastically joined in a festival of songs as well as displayed their national outfits.

This annual event began in 2013 when Nelly Siho-

tang, West Indonesia Union Mission (WIUM) Children's Ministries director, saw a need for innovative children's events that would progressively offer a spiritual foundation. From that initial year, organizers see returning attendees each year. Some attend classes while others now assist the leaders. This trend follows the leaders' goal of emphasizing "leadership, spiritual development and how to be a friend to others," according to Linda Purba, West Java Conference (WJC) children's ministries director.

In addition to this event, West Java Conference hosts other children ministries' events to enhance spiritual growth. Earlier this year in March, WJC children attended the first division-wide children's prayer conference. Purba notes that during the three-day event, the children "showed more interest in prayer and...the Bible." This was followed a conference-level prayer conference attended by 250 children.

Ultimately, leaders such as Sihotang and Purba strive to

News

Continued from page 11

equip children with a personal faith experience. "I like to see children maintain a connection with God even without the presence of their mothers or fathers. They will feel that peace wherever they are, like when they are in [school] dormitories [and other places]," shares Sihotang.

In addition to medallions to commemorate their participation at the August 9 event, attendees left with a greater appreciation for each other and for the Savior who celebrates children.

[Teresa Costello with additional reporting by Gay Deles]

Vacation Bible School yields results in Malaysia

A recent Adventist evangelistic series in Sarawak, Malaysia featured a unique variation on ministry to children. As church leaders in Kampung Simboh prepared for the August 2-8 evangelistic series, the original plan focused on adult programming. However, they soon realized children's programming was also needed to more fully reach families in the surrounding communities.

When it was suggested that they run a nightly Vacation Bible School (VBS) for the children, the rest of the organizers enthusiastically agreed. Although VBS is more traditionally used during the daytime hours of summer seasons or school breaks, the leaders discovered that it complimented the adult programming well with few adjustments needed.

How did the children respond? The first night 89 children attended, but the following

night the attendance among both the children and adults increased. The theme "Kids of the King – a Royal Adventure" seemed to enthrall the children as they learned through games, crafts and interactive stories.

VBS attendance increased each night until it reached 135 on Friday night. When the VBS leaders invited the children to attend the final program the next day, they weren't sure how many would actually come because it would be on Sabbath morning.

To their surprise, 179 children came with many of the regular participants bringing friends and relatives who had not previously attended. As surprising as this was to the leaders, the responses of the children brought even more joy. The children shared that they were very happy to have this kind of program because it was active and they felt they had a special



Over 100 children sat on mats covering the floor of a church in Kampung Simboh, Malaysia during a Vacation Bible School held in the evenings in coordination with an adult evangelistic seminar on August 2-8. [Photo courtesy of Joggery Gelu.]

part. The children expressed hope that there would be another program like this next year.

With a total of 69 baptisms from the evangelistic series, organizers have learned that family-centered programming with a particular emphasis on children's ministry can be a vital tool in religiously diverse areas.

Malaysia is a predominantly Islamic country but Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, various Chinese religions, indigenous religions and Christianity are also freely practiced among its population of over 23 million people. It is home to 28 Adventist churches and over 5,500 members.

[Joggery Gelu and Teresa Costello]

Adventist seminar addresses domestic violence in Bangladesh

Adventists recently responded to the challenge of domestic violence which is a national concern in Bangladesh. Leaders from the Bangladesh Adventist Union Mission (BAUM) as well as the Dhaka Seventh-day Adventist church offered a one-day seminar about domestic violence on August 15. A crowd of approximately 300 participated in this Enditnow initiative.

According to the Violence against Women Survey 2011

(VAW) produced by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics in partnership with the United Nations Population Fund, 87% of women in Bangladesh have experienced some form of domestic violence within the home – either physical, psychological, sexual, and/or economic which involves finances as a method of control.

“Violence should not be part of the home as we are one family under God,” emphasized Mahuya Roy, BAUM Women’s



Photo: BAUM Women’s Ministries

Ministries director during one of the seminars. “Instead, we must love each other and help each other as God loves us so much,” she concluded.

Adventist youth in Sri Lanka focus on special needs children

Twenty year-old Gobi Krishana and eighteen year-old Mohan Raj are among the One-Year-in-Mission (OYIM) volunteers for the Adventist church in Sri Lanka. They’re used to leading out in compassion activities, mentoring youth and being spokespersons for OYIM locally.

However, as they interacted with groups of special needs children during recent community activities, Gobi and Mohan didn’t know how much these children would teach them.

They first visited the Ozanam Centre for those with special needs on September 21. The school is located in Batticaloa on the eastern side of the island country. Soon after, word spread of their weekly activities on Fridays at Ozanam. In response, a deaf orphanage invited them to begin regular

visits there on Thursdays.

For their most recent visit to Ozanam on October 2, Gobi and Mohan planned a coloring activity and celebrated the birthday of one child that day.

Gobi, whose generous and self-sacrificing spirit gained them friends at the center, said, “God’s love can change everyone and everything. Money is not a matter. When they [the children] smile and hug us, we can feel the trust they have in us.” [paraphrased]

Assigned to Batticaloa, Gobi and Mohan are half of the OYIM-Sri Lanka team. Norisha and Anjalika, the other two team members, are assigned in the capital city of Colombo.

To better prepare for these

recent outreach events, OYIM-Sri Lanka coordinator Janath Dananjana arranged an autism awareness seminar early this year for the entire team. Ms. Victoria Liyanage, former principal of Ceylinco School for Autism and author of Practical Guide on Autism, provided training on February 19. She shared sobering facts such as that “for every 93 kids in Sri Lanka, one is autistic.”

As a result, Janath’s dream is to have an Autism awareness program but that hasn’t been realized due to lack of resources. Janath’s spirit, however, remains high when he sees the OYIM volunteers live compassion in their lives.

[Gay Deles with additional reporting by Janath Dananjana]

Photo: Courtesy of Janath Dananjana

YouthLink



**II CAN'T TELL YOU MY NAME.
I CAN'T TELL YOU MY COUNTRY.
BUT I CAN TELL YOU MY STORY.**

Image: Adobe Stock

I grew up one of several children in a non-Christian family. In my country, there are two strong religions and my family followed one of them. It is the center of our lives.

I remember going to the temple to worship there. We also had places at home where we left offerings to show our faithfulness and to help prevent bad from happening.

I can't say my life was very happy but I can't say it was very sad either. I had privileges that some other girls my age didn't have like being able to go to school. I did not want to marry early like some had to, I wanted to keep studying and studying.

One day I had the opportunity to go to a very good school. The teachers were known for being kind and their students did well on the national exams. I was very happy to go there.

The only thing I wasn't sure about was that it was a Christian school. At first, I didn't pay much attention to that part, but as time went on, I noticed how the teachers were so helpful and really cared about us.

I observed this for some time and began to really listen to their answers when the students would ask questions about what they believed and why. And we had such nice programs with many good talks and songs. Little by little I began to understand more and more. I decided I wanted to be a Christian but I knew what my family would think. My father had told me that if I ever became a Christian, I would die.

So I kept this to myself for some time but finally I couldn't be silent anymore. I told my teacher that I wanted to study to become SDA. It was a happy but sad time for me.

I was so happy to learn how much God loves me. Then I would think of what could happen to me and I would become a bit sad. Still, I kept learning.

I was baptized. I decided that one day when I marry, I want an SDA husband. I will be the only wife and he will treat me kindly and never hit or hurt me. I want us to have a happy family that loves God. My daughters will never be forced to marry before they are ready. I hope and dream that it will be this way. I ask that you please pray for me. I must return to my village and I hope to tell all this to my mother but I do not know what will happen. I am trusting God to show me the way.

I WILL CONTINUE TO HOPE.

(Some details have been changed to protect the subject.)

HEALTHY TREATS

from the kitchen of Adventist vegan chef Elaine Oliveira <http://nacozinhadaleli.blogspot.com/>



MANGO TART

Dough Ingredients:

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup of roasted nuts

3 Tbsp dry fruits (can be raisins, dates, apricots, mango, etc.)

Procedure: Blend all the ingredients in a food processor/ blender until it is fine and crumbly. Press into a small tart pan.

Chia Pudding Ingredients:

100 mL of coconut milk

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp of chia seeds

Procedure: Mix the chia seeds and coconut milk and keep (the mixture) in the fridge for 5 minutes.

Mango Flower Ingredients:

$\frac{1}{2}$ mango

Procedure: Cut the mangos into very thin strips and arrange into a rosebud/flower shape to decorate the top of tart.

BANANA COOKIES

Ingredients:

1 cup of oat flour;

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup of rolled oat;

1 banana (big size);

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup of dry fruits (raisins, plums, apricot etc.)

4 tbsp. of nut butter (peanut butter, cashew butter etc.)

Procedure:

In a bowl put the oat flour, rolled oats and dry fruits and mix them (You can make oat flour by blending the oat very well using a blender).

Add the nut butter and mix until well combined to form dough. Mash the banana and mix with the dough.

Pre-heat oven to 200°C.

Shape the cookies (from dough) and place them in a baking sheet.

Bake the shaped cookies for 10 to 15 minutes or until the bottom of the cookie is golden brown.

Editor's note: Some may wish to add a healthy sweetener to taste. If a liquid sweetener is added, a bit more oat flour may be needed to get the right consistency of the batter.

Photo: SSD Stock



Originally, this was an oral presentation given by Elder Lowell C. Cooper at the October 4, 2015 funeral of Elder Alberto C. Gulfan at the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies in Silang, Cavite, Philippines. The oral style was retained to best express Elder Cooper's message.

It is my honor and privilege to represent the General Conference officers - Elder Wilson, the president; Elder Ng, the secretary; Elder Prestol, the treasurer - at this service of remembrance for Pastor Alberto Gulfan, Jr. In addition to their messages of condolence to Helen and the Gulfan family, I bring also the warm, affectionate expressions of so many of my General Conference colleagues, the other officers of the General Conference, the departmental directors [and] indeed the officers of other divisions.

For it has been over the course of several years, in multiple meetings - primarily in annual councils- that we have all felt that Pastor Gulfan belonged not to the SSD but to the world church. We have regarded him as a statesman, an ambassador, a counselor and leader. Since arriving here yesterday morning, I have heard many touching tributes concerning his ministry, his leadership, and his widespread influence. Your presence here today is another indicator of how well he was known and respected. My colleagues at the General Conference, were they here to speak for themselves, would echo those warm and appreciative sentiments that many of you have publicly expressed.

Today we bid farewell to a trusted colleague. We demonstrate our support for Helen and the family. And we reaffirm the reality but not

the finality of death. We come here to wrestle with our thoughts about death. For death is an enemy, vicious and unrelenting. He leaves his trail of devastation everywhere. He is unescapable, really.

You can exercise 'til you are blue in the face. You can eat raw vegetables, nuts, fruits. You can have semi-annual checkups and consume nutritional supplements, but in a hundred years or less, death will win out. Now maybe if you are rather exceptional, you will live beyond 100. The oldest living person today, according to ABC News, is Susannah Mushatt Jones of Brooklyn, New York. As of today, she has lived 116 years and 89 days. You would not want me to show a picture of people who have lived beyond 100. It is clear that they are not in their prime. Death is catching hold.

Pastor Gulfan had almost 65 years... lived a long time compared to a mayfly that has a lifespan measured in hours. On the other hand, it seems a short time compared to Susannah Jones' 116 years and 89 days. But even 116 years is short when you realize that in 2006, in a Calcutta zoo, a turtle died at the age of 250 years. And just a few years ago, a date palm seed sprouted and grew into a small tree. The seed was estimated to be 2,000 years old. The oldest known living individual tree is the Great Basin Bristle Cone Pine with a ring count of 4,965



years. So, however old you are, you haven't lived very long.

And this is why at times like this we come to struggle with the question of death. It is difficult to talk about death. Often there is a conspiracy of silence about this subject with people who are in their last days. Because death is a stranger, an alien, an intruder, a malevolent dictator. We try to mute its ugliness by surrounding it with flowers, with dimmed lights and soft music. Both by behavior and absence of speech, we keep our distance from it. We clothe its ugliness with garments of explanation.

Throughout the ages, all around the world, when people and religions have talked about death, it has



Image: James Steidl

primarily been through attempts to define it. And the classic views of major religions differ. A child born in one part of a world might be taught a view of death that is completely different from that which is taught elsewhere. In one area of the world, this child might be taught that if he or she kills an enemy and, in the course of doing so, dies himself or herself [that] immediately he or she will go to paradise. If born somewhere else in the world, a child might be taught that at death, one really doesn't die. Instead, one is reborn into a new form of life. Elsewhere, the child will be taught that all righteous people will be resurrected so death doesn't really matter. In yet another area of the world, the explanation is

that at death, one enters the realm of disembodied consciousness. In commenting on the permissive society of the 1960s, atheist Bertrand Russell gave expression to the angst of his day in these words from his autobiography, "No dungeon was ever constructed so dark and narrow as that...which...imprisons us... There is darkness without, and when I die there will be darkness within. There is no splendour, no vastness, anywhere; only triviality for a moment, and then nothing" (p. 374).

Among all these attempts to explain death, there is one voice yet to be heard. It is the voice of Jesus and the unmistakable message of His gospel. For he said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who

Image: Adobe Stock believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live"(John 11:25, author paraphrase). The sovereign of the universe has initiated and is carrying out a dramatic rescue plan for a planet caught in the throes of self-destruction. Thus the apostle Paul could write to the church in Corinth, "...Christ is risen from the dead and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:20 NJKV). That's why the poet John Donne can pen those words [n Holy Sonnet X],

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee

Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;

Devotional

Continued from page 17

For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow

Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me...

One short sleep past, we wake eternally

And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

So I want to think with you for a few moments about the death of death. We often come to services like this to celebrate life. There will come a time when we celebrate death – the death of death. Theologians use an expression called the scandal of particularity when trying to fathom God's response to the whole human crisis. The scandal of particularity is that God acted at a particular time in a particular place and in a particular way. He entered human existence through a particular person of a particular height, weight and complexion, of a particular race and of a particular village. And through a singularly unique drama, effected the rescue of all time, resolved the dilemma of death and destruction. Apart from that, there is no other escape. Here in this scandal of particularity, we find the central pivot and reference point for understanding and living life. God begins it and God ends the story of existence.

So we assemble here today in tribute to one no longer present. We grasp this moment in time to make sure that we store away in our memories the joy of knowing Pastor Gulfan. We assemble to assure Helen and the family that when it comes to the carrying the pain of losing loved ones, we are all one family. But we gather here for another reason. It's to remind ourselves that though deeply saddened and uncertain of the moments, days, weeks, or years

remaining in our lives, we have no need to fear. For it is here in the face of death, we discover anew the great drama that is unfolding in our universe. It's not about us, our jobs, our professions or our possessions. It's about God and He is completing the mop-up operations in the master plan to defeat death.

The gospel according to Mark tells us that on resurrection morning as three women made their way towards the garden tomb that supposedly held the body of Jesus, they came to anoint the body of one who had been crucified. But as they neared the place, they asked themselves, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" (Mark 16:3 NIV). Now we build our tombs differently today and yet that carved wheel of stone is a meaningful symbol. It speaks of the death that must come to each of us. It doesn't matter who we are, what we have done. Death will come to us. However, much power we may exercise in this life, there will be a day when our power comes to an end. No human power has been found to defeat the power of death. This is the message of the stone.

But scripture says when they arrived at the tomb, the stone had already been rolled away. What is beyond their means was not beyond the means of God. Here is the reference point for navigating the uncertainty of life. The story of God, of Jesus Christ, His death, resurrection and lordship is the one stabilizing reality in the chaos of our world. Isn't that why David in the Psalms can exult, "The LORD is my light and my salvation - whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life - of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27:1 NIV) The apostle Paul writing to a troubled community of faith in the early years of Christianity

took great pains to galvanize their understanding about living in the light of God's intentions and interventions in human history. Listen to how Eugene Peterson paraphrases this passage from 1 Corinthians, "...if there's no resurrection for Christ, everything we've told you is smoke and mirrors, and everything you've staked your life on is smoke and mirrors... And if Christ weren't raised, then all you're doing is wandering about in the dark, as lost as ever... If all we get out of Christ is a little inspiration for a few short years, we're a pretty sorry lot. But the truth is that Christ has been raised up, the first in a long legacy of those who are going to leave the cemeteries. (1 Corinthians 15:15-20 The Message).

The apostle Paul having painted the possibility of hopelessness and despair now proclaims the news, "The fact is Christ is risen!" and in so doing sounds the death knell of death itself. There is a marvelous assurance in the words of Jesus to John the Revelator. Three times in Revelation we are reminded that Jesus is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. We journey through life with the expectation that the present shapes the future but the message of scripture contradicts that. The future is in God's hands, not ours. He who is the beginning is also the ending.

We now read papers, hear the headlines, go about the daily tasks of living with a sense of eager expectancy. What God started He will also finish. And we shall be escorted not into nothingness but into a life transformed beyond our wildest imagination. The realization that Jesus is in charge of the ending gives us the freedom to experience the present without fear. Yes, the path of our lives is often

far different from the scripting we would choose for ourselves but we live in between a beginning and ending that is in His hands. And while we are in this in-between time, we can know the security of walking hand-in-hand with He who holds the future.

In the truest sense, every Christian is a wait-watcher. You can work to clean the leaves off your driveway. You can work to obtain an education or follow a career. You can work to prepare a meal or build a house but some things you cannot work for, you must wait for. You must wait for morning. You must wait for spring. You must wait for resurrection. It is all a matter of time, not uncertainty.

Is it possible for us to even faintly imagine what God has in store? We are so accustomed to thinking of life in its progressive and degenerative stages: Childhood, youthfulness, adulthood, old age.. followed by death. How then can we comprehend that the life of the future is not some disembodied existence or rebirth into another form of life but the dramatic transformation of the dimensions of this life, the life of touch, taste, sound, smell, hearing unbounded by disease, decay or disaster. We shall know life in its fullest.

I'm not sure. Perhaps the story comes from London. A small boy whose whole life to that moment had been lived in the concrete jungle of the city was taken for a ride into the countryside. He entered a totally new world. Pausing briefly to view the landscape, he spied a bird sitting on the limb of a tree and he exclaimed, "That poor bird! It doesn't have a cage to live in." Is it not so with us when we try to think of Heaven? Imprisoned as we are in our world of experi-

ence, we have almost no way of contemplating what resurrection life will be like. Even the scripture strains to describe it for us and it relies on the imagery of absence: No sickness, no sorrow, no death, no crying. When the Bible attempts to open our minds to the glory of eternal life, the rallying point is that Jesus Himself will be there. And one can get lost in imagination of the boundless possibilities that eternity like that presents.

No wonder Ellen White wrote, "The return of Christ to our world will not be long delayed. Let this be the keynote of every message. The blessed hope of the second appearing of Christ, with its solemn realities, needs to be often presented to the people. Looking for the soon appearing of our Lord will lead us to regard earthly things as emptiness and nothingness" (T6, p. 406).

It's like George Matheson said, "Every schoolboy studies his lesson not in the light of the lamp, but in the light of the coming holiday." And so, my church family, we can say to Pastor Gulfan, "Sleep on. Sleep on. You fought valiantly. Disease consumed your body but not your spirit. Rest peacefully until the morning." And we can say to Helen and her family, "Go on. Go on. This day is a painful punctuation point in a difficult journey. The chapter is ended but the story is not. Go on with your faith securely anchored to the promise of Him who is Alpha and Omega, the creator of beginnings and endings.

Grieving the loss of a loved one is not something we get over; it's something we learn to live with despite pain and scars. In the days ahead just when you think once again you can cope with the job of living, in a split second, tears will burst forth unbidden, sorrow

will grip your mind and spirit with crushing force. In that moment, you must remember that you are not alone. All who gather here today stand ready to support and encourage you, to share in the bearing of your heavy burden. Remember, too, there is another way in which you are not alone for Jesus Christ himself, the Lord of Creation, will be your strength and comfort. And we can say to each other, "Go on. Go on! Go on! Live confidently and courageously until the dawn." When storms and trials overwhelm your soul, when you wander in life's wilderness or grope anxiously in the darkness of midnight or languish in the deserts of loneliness and your faith withers under the scorching winds of affliction. When the fires of affliction obliterate the horizon and the sting of death pierces your family circle. When you place your hand on the cold, lifeless form of a loved one, then you must remember that in all our trials and tragedies, our source of strength, joy and peace comes not from our ability to see God but from the knowledge that He sees us and that He keeps His promises! After all, He is God and He will bring His children home safely.

We came here today to mourn the death of Elder Gulfan and to assuage our mourning by celebrating his life. We always celebrate life but there will come a day when we celebrate death or rather the death of death. No wonder the poet Coleridge could write, "Is that a deathbed where a Christian lies? Yes! But not his - 't is Death itself there dies." May these reflections arm us with strength and courage and joy and peace and security until that day.

Lowell Cooper is a an author and retired General Conference general vice president.

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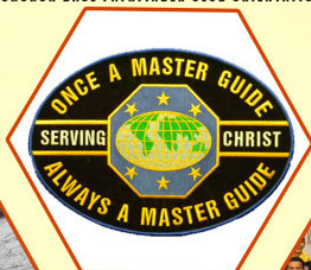
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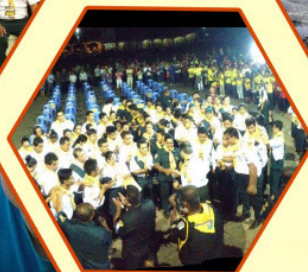
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