

southern asia-pacific division

outlook

THIRD
QUARTER
2009

Health & Home marks 50th year at LE meet in Cebu



outlook

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Southern Asia-Pacific Division

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We are more than conquerors

READINESS, THEN AND NOW

I was six years old when I became awed by the brightness of what I thought was Jesus' coming. That early dawn scene seemed so close to the cart we were riding on our way to sell firewood at the market.

I rubbed my eyes to check whether I was dreaming but I wasn't! The big ball of fire was falling some yards away. My dad told me it was a meteorite that fell not too close from us. My tender mind rushed to thinking whether I was ready for Jesus' coming. "What about my mom and my siblings, would they be, too?" I pondered.

To this day, I carry the memory of that event, which to me, would have been better if it was indeed Jesus' second coming.

Why did I want Jesus to have come 53 years ago?

I was a child then. And as a child, I would have not been introduced to the growing moral degeneration the modern world offers. The pain and suffering that caused anguish to my family over deaths of my young, middle-aged, and aged loved ones would have not been experienced; much more, those tiny bits of their illnesses would not have become mine, too! Most importantly, I could have spared my children to battle life's hardest.

I am not blaming God for what had transpired in my life to this day; neither do I credit them to my human frailties. I believe God had a lesson for me to learn.

And I learned that I was not a result of an accident. Isaiah's claim (Isaiah 49:1) that before he was born the Lord called him was nothing different from mine. But when God said that "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will display my splendor" (v.3), He did not end it with Isaiah performing such task. It was also mine to do.

The questions, however, were asked: "Have I been showing God's splendor during my earthly existence?" "Can my children say, 'If you have seen me, you have seen my father'?"

I know that my influence over my family members was just a speck on their own vast experiences; a small 'mustard seed,' so to speak. However insignificant, I believe these experiences have played a role in displaying "God's splendor" as they mix with people every day of their life.

Today, I ask myself, "Am I as ready as 53 years ago to welcome the Lord's coming; and, what about my family's salvation?"



Guam-Micronesia welcomes new president

HOLA AMIGOS! It's good to have Carol and Louis Torres back to Guam-Micronesia. He accepted the call to be president of this mission field within the southern Asia-Pacific region (SSD).

Pastor Torres has made numerous visits to Micronesia over the past few years, but this is Carol's first after she and Pastor Torres served in Palau from 1985 to 1987.

They have served in many places since they began ministry in 1972. Pastor Torres says that "God has called us back to Micronesia. Without a clear indication from God we would not have left our ministry in Oregon." Pastor Louis and Carol Torres had been operating Mission College of Evangelism, a school they founded, since 1996 prior to their return to Micronesia. More than 160 of the graduates are now serving as denominational pastors.

When asked about his vision for Micronesia, Pastor Torres said, "I hope to enhance what is already taking place and to build on it. With the opportunities we have this mission should expand and become a conference. We want to continue winning souls and expanding the kingdom!"

Pastor Torres believes that when people are inspired and trained and believed in the vision, they can accomplish the mission.

As we press forward, Pastor Torres encourages each one, to take an active part in "finishing our work in this part of the world. Let's work together to accomplish our mission in Micronesia."
[Matt Dodd]

Publishing work strengthens church members

CHURCH AND field pastors, part-time literature evangelists, workers and members at Yangon Attached District of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (YAD) in Myanmar, had a wonderful time attending the Publishing Ministries and Spirit of Prophecy Seminar, June 30-July 1 held in Yangon.

This seminar was facilitated by Pastor Thang Lian Khai, publishing director for the Adventist Church in Myanmar (MYUM). He, too, was the main presenter that uplifted the work of the publishing ministry and strengthened the confidence of the church members in the Spirit of Prophecy publications. "I would like to see that in every church, we have at least one member joining the publishing work. And I challenge everyone to make this commitment,"

Pastor Khai told the participants.

"Indeed, this church is blessed with the writings of Ellen G White. Her writings are binding the church to a more aggressive work of preaching the word," delegates said. "And we hope that the churches will find time to hold meetings like this to strengthen church members in the faith," concluded Pastor Mg Mg Htay, publishing coordinator for YAD. [Myo Chan]

Human body—God's wonderful creation

THE STUDY of the human body still creates interest in many people today, and to know the human body's origin deserves more in-depth search. As a joint effort of English-speaking churches of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Klang Valley of Malaysia, the subject, "DNA, Man and His Origin," was a much-pursued topic.

Dr Sang K Lee, a preventive medicine specialist who takes keen interest in human gene and genome science, provided the nightly presentations, May 31-June 6, at the PJ SDA English Church.

About 150 people who attended the nightly meetings had the privilege of discovering God's design and His plan for human beings. Among those who attended were a naturopathy practitioner and his wife, who travelled long distance to come to the presentations.

"It is so wonderful to know how God so marvelously designed our bodies deserving our appreciation to Him as our Creator," said participants. [PEMNews, June 2009]



COMMITMENT:
Behind SPAC's
quest for
Excellence

RENEWED COMMITMENT to provide excellent Christian education to students propelled school leaders to make every way possible for a sustained program of spiritual, academic, physical, and facilities development at South Philippine Adventist College (SPAC), in Camanchiles, Matanao, Davao del Sur, Philippines.

Included in these developments were the renovation of the administration building, acquisition of a brand-new Toyota van, and the arrival of a 48-seater Hyundai bus donated by Samhyook University, SPAC's sister institution in South Korea.

Such commitment was celebrated during the July 14 blessings ceremony for these new acquisitions. Despite the heavy rain, the SPAC community witnessed how the Lord continued to bless the school even before it was upgraded into a tertiary institution of learning.

The administrators, faculty and staff, academy and college students and the members of the school board, headed by Pastor Wendell M Serrano, were among the hundreds who wit-

“As you march out of this building; as you get off the bus or the van, you shall be a witness to the people and the community,” stressed Pastor Serrano. “And the people will know what South Philippine Adventist College exists for.”

“We just can't let time go without us in the leadership doing something for the Lord,” said Dr Chliejvferwyn C Catolico, college president. “These projects: college van, school bus, and the administration building facade enhancement were done for a purpose, and that is to invite students to taste how beneficial and important Adventist education can be to their life as they prepare for service here and in the hereafter.”

As pastors, church leaders, faculty and staff, and students encircled the two transport vehicles parked in front of the administration building, Pastor Serrano and Dr Nemuel Tambalque, SPAC theology department chair, offered a prayer of thanksgiving and blessings.

nessed the event. Pastor Serrano who flew to the college straight from his trip to Geneva, Switzerland, where he attended the world congress on health, addressed the school community at this celebration.

Besides Serrano, guests coming from the headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in southern Philippines (SPUC) were Pastor Wilson C Catolico, executive secretary; Mr. Levi Baliton, treasurer, and Dr Ildefonso Faigmani, education director. Other guests included Pastor Robert Jimenez and Mr. Lawrence Llamera, president and treasurer, respectively, of the Davao Mission; and the Honorable Nery Obedencia, barangay captain of Camanchiles.



Commitment: Behind SPAC's quest..., to page 10



At the said ceremony, the college administration expressed its elation for the services of Ian Enoch, a young Davao-based architect, who saw to it that such structural enhancement meet both functionality and aesthetic values.

"It's like a first-class resort!" students and visitors were heard saying of the new look of the administration building and the landscaping that enhanced it.

"We also wish to thank Sahmyook University for the bus which will greatly help our students and school family in their transportation needs," added Dr Catolico. "And the school Toyota van will help us meet our official functions."

"Indeed, these new developments add to our pride of being at South Philippine Adventist College," students concluded. [Rhoen P Catolico]





Students conduct drug-free education campaign

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST schools are expected to live to their distinction as drug-free institutions. Community leaders and drug-free enforcers find this distinction working conspicuously for the benefit of the society.

Police Senior Superintendent Ronald Marapon dela Rosa, provincial director of the Philippine National Police-Davao Sur Provincial Office, spoke openly about such feat for South Philippine Adventist College (SPAC) during the launching of the Drug-Free Education Campaign for the community, August 4, at the college's La Sage Auditorium in Matanao, Davao del Sur.

"South Philippine Adventist College is absolutely drug-free and our drug-enforcement office is happy for the school's contribution to society," said Superintendent dela Rosa.

The activity enabled the SPAC students to volunteer their services to conduct information drives on buses and passen-

Students conduct drug-free..., to page 12

ger jeepneys plying the national highways and by distributing leaflets and stickers to passers-by. Students who board buses and jeepneys told passengers about the advantages of a drug-free family and society.

“My happy family is drug-free, how about yours?” these students asked their passenger-audiences.

Also at the launching of this program, Dr. Chliejvferwyn C. Catolico, SPAC president, reiterated that the advocacies of the college and all other Adventist schools are to make families happy and become campaign leaders against drug abuse. “In fact, our teachers integrate these values in their respective classes and conduct seminars and community programs at summer breaks,” he said.

After the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement between the partners (SPAC and PNP), the energetic and enthusiastic student speakers were installed together with the policemen who were assigned to escort these students in their campaign on buses and jeepneys that ply the Digos-Bansalan, Bansalan-Digos City, and other routes.

While the campaign was being held, a series of interviews were conducted by the student leaders on those who benefited from the information drives. Several interviewees agreed to have their reactions published.

As regards benefits, Kyna Oberes, a young commuter, said that “the program is very good because it informs us that every family has the right to be happy by instilling the virtue of a drug-free home.” She was joined by Geraldine Espino, a mother, who thanked the initiators of the program because she “was given guidance on how to help her children abstain from drugs.”

“The ill-effects of drugs were made clear to us,” said Abner Sabate, another passenger. “I appreciate the efforts of the school and the police for conducting these very important and informative presentations,” added Reynaldo Hernandez.

“As parent, I am so thankful for the lectures on how I can deal with my children on the evil effects of drugs,” May Catane, told the interviewers. “It is very enlightening to us who

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were not given the privilege to gain such knowledge before.”

Other young people who were not students from SPAC, upon seeing the enthusiasm of the SPAC students, also took the challenge of becoming purveyors of a happy family. “I will help with drug prevention drives so that other young people will refrain from this debilitating practice,” said Buddy Makulaw, an 18-year-old student at STI in Digos City. Alejandro Chan also became interested the program. “Helping parents cope with drug abuse problem is such a noble task,” he said.

The “My Happy Family is drug-free! How about yours?” Program is a collaborative effort between SPAC through the Guidance Department and the PNP Davao del Sur Provincial Police Office. The Guidance Department of SPAC is under the direction of Mr. Zarcarias C. Escobidal. The program’s prime objective is to disseminate information to the public about preventive measures against drug abuse by instilling family values and good parenting. The program was spearheaded by the College Student Government and Peer Counselors Society under the guidance of the college administration, faculty and staff.

“This is just the beginning of a partnership between SPAC and the PNP in educating the community to keep their family happy by being drug-free!” concluded Police Superintendent Amelia V Tugade, PCR WCD of the Davao Sur Police Provincial Office.

Said program was in line with Republic Act 9165, otherwise known as The Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, where it stipulates that, “there is a need to integrate the Drug Education Program in the school instructions specifically on drug abuse prevention and control in all levels of education – elementary, secondary, and tertiary curricula of all public and private schools, whether general, vocational, technical, or agro-industrial as well as in non-formal, informal and indigenous learning systems.”

[Robin Charles Ramos/SPAC BEAT]



Women's goal: **In-reach for outreach**

A NATION-WIDE gathering of women in Bangladesh, June 18-21, created impact to 175 participants as they envisioned themselves potent members of a church community that will reach out to the world through its in-reach programs, empowering them and their families to serve the Lord.

Held at Dhaka Seventh-day Adventist Church, the seminar gathered together delegates representing all fields and institutions within the territories of the church in Bangladesh (BAUM).

Organized by Ms Lucena Chambugong, BAUM women's ministries (WM) and Shepherdess International (SI) director; the convention had, for its presenters Ms Helen B Gulfan, WM/SI director for the southern Asia-Pacific region (SSD) and Ms Shirley C Aguinaldo, director for the church in southern Philippines (SPUC). They were assisted by four others: Ms Sweetie Ritchil, BAUM treasurer; Pastor Isaac P. Bairagee, Adventist Mission Director; Mr Benjamin Raksham, Bangladesh Children's Sponsorship director; Dr. Rongten P Bala, education director; and Dr Douglas D Roy, chairperson of the Religion Department of the Bangladesh Adventist Seminary and College.

The opening ceremony was highlighted with the parade of delegates donning their costumes signifying the territories they represent. Ms Chambugong, welcoming the guests with bouquets of flowers, also welcomed the participants to this four-day affair.

Pastor Bibek Halder, president of the church in west Bangladesh (WBM), delivered the welcome remarks while Pastor Edward P Chambugong, BAUM executive secretary keyed the event.

The topics presented included the following: Are you emotionally healthy?, Partnership in

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Mission, Connectedness, Preventive Health Care, 10 Ways to Improve Spiritual Life, Never Good Enough, and From Powerless to Powerful.

On vespers, Ms Aguinaldo shared a message on "Touch a heart, Tell the world" and Ms Gulfan at Sabbath worship, "Do not get tired of doing well." The Saturday evening cultural and social program enabled the delegates to socialize with each other and drown themselves with laughter.

"We are so glad conventions like this are held for us. It equips us with ways to share the gospel to the people in our village; and we thank the Lord for this kind of meetings," delegates said. "We also thank our Church for such an uplifting convention for women and we hope we shall have more of this to enhance our spiritual growth," concluded Priya Mondol. [Milton Das]



Myanmar's pioneer school *makes* Bible reading a **lifestyle**

THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST Church in what was once called Burma and now Myanmar, traces its roots to the work of pioneers in the early 20th century. One of these pioneers was Eric B. Hare, who was well known to grade school readers as “Mr Rabbit.” In fact, Eric B Hare established an academy in 1916 where the youths of the then young church in Burma can gain an education that harmoniously develop their physical, mental, social, and spiritual powers. This academy later was named in honor of him—the E.B. Hare Memorial Academy.

The present leadership of Myanmar, also known as the country of the golden pagodas, wanted to keep the fire of faith burning in the hearts of the church members by initiating programs that bring them back to the Bible.

Such obsession of the school leadership brought about a strong program of the four-fold development with strong emphasis on faith as a foundation for wholesome lifestyle of every church member. And one of the ways to rekindle the love of reading the Bible was the Follow the Bible (FTB) exercises that have become a new way of life of the students.

The FTB exercises included regular Bible study, quizzes, Branch Sabbath School programs, and youth to youth friendship activities at nearby villages. As a way of life of the faculty and students, such programs have been producing good results. Last school year 2008-2009, 18 students were baptized to the Adventist Church.

In retrospect, the E.B. Hare Academy was first established in Ohn-Daw, Kamaaung, Papon Township, but in 1997 it was moved to its present site at Yay-Bu, Hlaibe Bwe Township, about 24 miles away from the capital city of

the Kayin State, Hpaan.

E.B. Hare was also known for his love of missions. His feats for the Lord in this foreign land were recorded in his book, *Jungle Flower*. It was in this publication that E.B. Hare Academy became known around the world as he penned what the pioneer missionaries had done in Burma.

The Academy has done through the years what was envisioned to do. It has produced several missionary workers in the country, Pastor Kalee Paw, the first national president for the Church in Burma, being one of them.

Today, the Academy has 293 students from various parts of Kayin and Mon states. Of this number 108 come from non-Adventist homes and are potential members of God's community of Adventist believers in this part of the globe.

“Even if we do not have a chapel where we can congregate every Sabbath to learn of the Scriptures, our learning exercises take us to understanding and knowing Jesus more and more,” students said. And a non-Adventist stu-

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New president tells vision for church in Sri Lanka

MAKING THE church in Sri Lanka a body through which the Holy Spirit can work through the members freely has become the vision of the new leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Sri Lanka (SLM).

“Connecting and being united and led by the Spirit is the way forward for building the work in this country”, said Larry Brown, new SLM President, when he met the church family upon the couple’s arrival in Sri Lanka.

Speaking further on his vision for the church, he said that he plans to use the biblical model of Ephesians (Chapter 4) to identify and harness the talents of the Sri Lankan church in uniting the diverse and multifaceted gifts within the church community; to make that vital connection so that the Holy Spirit can work without restraint in His own way to complete the work.

Pastor Brown and his wife, Rhonda, arrived in early June to lead the church in Sri Lanka as its 17th president.

Dr. Brown hails from Oregon in the United States, where he spent his formative years with his parents and three older sisters.

He holds a doctor of ministry degree from the Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, Maryland; “Congregation - short term mission” being his main area of concentration.

Dr. Brown served for sometime in the United States Navy, but gave up the Navy to

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dent expressed his impression, "I like to know more of Jesus, this way."

During morning and evening devotional sessions, the hostel residents follow the FTB readings regularly. "I am very proud to be a part of this prestigious Academy for His services and through these activities I feel my ministry is well deserved," John David, Boys' hostel dean, said.

"We are so proud to be a part of an institution that is rooted in God's word as we continue to produce leaders to serve the needs of the church," concluded Cally Thein, academy principal.

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join the ministry. He counts 13 years of service to the church, his first as pastor in the Oregon conference and later in two-district churches on the Pacific Coast. While serving as pastor he undertook and led out in three successful field education mission trips, one to India and two to Poland.

Speaking about his wife, Dr. Brown observed: "Rhonda credits the education system of the Seventh-day Adventist church in changing her perception of God." She graduated from Walla Walla College in College Place, Washington, and holds degrees in Dietetic and Physical Therapy. She also holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing. She has several years of work experience as an associate dietician and physical therapy assistant. Her work interest lies mainly in the area of Public Health.

Pastor Brown's adult son, Philip, lives and works as a computer technician in the USA. [Nedra Perera]

Church ordains first Laotian national pastor

THE ADVENTIST church in Laos will mark May 23 as a special day to remember. On this day the first Laotian national pastor was ordained. Officers and department directors of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Southeast Asia (SAUM), with headquarters in Singapore, joined with Pastor Rungsit Satyavaksakool, ministerial secretary for the church in Thailand, to take part in the ordination of Pastor Bounpranee Vannady, one of the full-time pastors in Laos. His wife, Khounmy, and two daughters, 7-year-old Martha and 2-year-old Malee, joined him in the ordination service.

God's work in Laos was started in 1957 by Pastor Richard Hall and family. After the fall of the country to Communism, the Adventist work came to halt. But work resumed in 1991 and at present the church has three full-time ministerial workers and about 15 lay pastors.

One of the largest churches in Laos is the Ban Huay Hae Church in the Muankon District. This church was started with funds raised by Mrs. Judy Aitken of the Adventist Southeast Asia Projects (ASAP) and completed with funds from the Laos Projects Fund.

After the ordination service of Pastor Bounpranee Vannady, the group of visiting ministers visited the Ban Huay Hae Church, where more than 300 worshipers meet each Sabbath. [SHINING LIGHT IN THAILAND, July issue]

Typhoon cuts short writing seminar at Northeast Luzon

LESS THAN seven years ago, Northeast Luzon Adventist School of Technology (NELAST) was destined for closure. Buildings were dilapidated, finance was rock bottom, students few, and alumni support was nothing; and worst, a typhoon wiped out the roofs. A visitor during that time would not find any reason to come back to this school again. But “those were the days...” runs a popular song in the 70s; NELAST today deserves a second look!

If you are familiar to the place where NELAST was located a few years back, it will surprise you to find the new-look of the school from the gates to the campus itself! The buildings—auditorium, elementary, high school and technology classrooms, guestrooms—are all new, from tiled floors to painted walls and cemented pathways, literally, a metamorphosed species!

“A very strong alumni support has transformed this school to what it is now, and we credit the leadership of our director for tapping the golden hearts of the former students and community members to recreate a new environment for us,” said Henry Borromeo, school treasurer.

NELAST was the last of the recent venues of seminars for effective writing design, and electronic publication organized by the communication depart-

ment of the church in the southern Asia-Pacific region (SSD) for the first and second quarters of 2009 in northern Philippines (NPUM). The July 15-17 training seminar, though, was cut short to only one day because the weather bureau hoisted storm signal 2 in the area, mandating closure of elementary and high schools for safety measures. All 40 participants consisting of teachers and students reluctantly adhered to the announcement, but requested that in the future the team of presenters resume the training.

Pastor Romeo Mangilaman, NPUM new communication director, promised to bring back the team during the first quarter of 2010 for the said seminar. [Jonathan C Catolico]

Health & Home marks 50th year at LE meet in Cebu

BY THE HEALTH & HOME STAFF

HEALTH & HOME turns 50 this year, and by all reckoning this magazine is the longest-running health and better living publication in the country today.

The flagship publication of Philippine Publishing House (PPH), Health & Home celebrated its golden print anniversary during the 9th National Convention of Literature Evangelists on September 9-12, at the Cebu International Convention Center in Mandaue City.

A 20-minute or so video presentation highlighted God's leading and blessings on this magazine, from its conception to its golden celebration. It opened with Boots Anson-Roa, a well-known TV and film personality in the Philippines, and Commission on Elections (Comelec) Commissioner Rene V. Sarmiento greeting the Health & Home readers on the occasion of the magazine's 50th anniversary, and wishing Literature Evangelists across the country the best during their 9th national convention in Mandaue City, Cebu.

In line with this event, PPH, working in tandem with the publishing ministries departments across the Philippines, offers 2-for-1 promo of this magazine to all workers and church members.



“This is to ascertain that all subscribers and readers of Health & Home can take part in the celebration,” says Rameses Rivamonte, vice president for marketing at PPH. “This is also a way of thanking all subscribers for patronizing Health & Home through the years,” he adds while explaining that subscribers will get two magazine subscriptions for the price of one.

“Health & Home started circulation in 1959 to provide readers with the right information on health, parenting, relationship, lifestyle and sound spiritual life,” states Pastor Florante P. Ty, PPH president. With its 90,000+ single subscriptions, Health & Home has become the widest health magazine circulated in the Philippines, making it a household name among parents, teachers, and other professional circles.

Imagining 50 years of Health & Home, Levi Contridas, a Literature Evangelist based in Meycauayan City, Bulacan, says, “It sounds a long time. But by the looks of it Health & Home will last another 50 years.”

He further says he doesn’t just sell Health & Home, he reads it too. The articles motivate him to insist on getting orders from his customers. What he reads to his customers usually serves as his sales talk and finds it effective. Unlike other health magazines that prick the imagination of the readers in order to sell, Health & Home prints wholesome articles that enable readers to lead healthy, happy and holistic life.

In 2005, Health & Home was awarded the seal of product quality at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel by the National Product Quality Excellence Awards, National Council for Product and Service Quality, and Consumer Today, as the “Best Informative Magazine.”



Philanthropy seminar *goes to* Bangladesh and Myanmar

TWO SEMINARS organized by the Philanthropic Department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the southern Asia-Pacific region (SSD) were conducted in Bangladesh, July 27-29, and Myanmar, August 10-12.

Held at the headquarters of the church in Bangladesh (BAUM), the seminar was conducted by Mr Joel Habaradas, SSD philanthropic services director, and Ms Glenda Antonio, chief executive officer and president of Spring Rain Global Consultancy, Inc. Attended by the BAUM officers and department directors, field presidents, school principals, college officers and department heads, and officers of the Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA), the seminar dealt with Fundraising as Friend-raising endeavor.

“Learning the trade is a good way to participate in changing lives by giving and caring,” said Habaradas. In this regard, the leaders of the Bangladesh Adventist College and Seminary, headed by Dr Myun Ju Lee, president and also BAUM philanthropic director, recommended that a subject on philanthropy can be a part of the college curriculum.

In Myanmar (MYUM), the seminar was also held at the church headquarters (MYUM) on August 10-12 and conducted by the same presenters.

“We were extremely blessed by the presentations,” participants said, and Pastor Muller Kyaw, MYUM president, exclaimed that many subjects “we learned were eye-openers and are very useful as we expand the Lord’s work in our country.”

Specific courses at both venues included workshops on managing organizations during challenging times, writing effective fundraising letters, and preparing successful grant proposals. These topics were presented by Habaradas, while Ms Antonio presented institutional sustainability, institutional financing and planning, and other related topics. [Milton Das/Myo Chan]

Seminar participants urge one LE per church



FROM ALL over the country of Bangladesh, 38 literature evangelists (LEs), publishing directors, and pastors met at the headquarters of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Bangladesh (BAUM) to attend the publishing seminar, July 22-25. This was organized by Pastor Edward P. Chambugong, BAUM publishing ministry director and executive secretary.

Antonio Rom III, recently retired vice president for marketing at Philippine Publishing House, was the main presenter. He dealt on topics that teach the ministers of the printed page how to face challenges that confront them as they work for the Lord. He laced his presentations with true-to-life experiences that attended his 42 years as literature evangelist, director, and marketing manager.

“This is not selling books but it is sharing the bread of life to people who await such blessings,” said Rom.

The presentations were inspiring to the participants as shown in their countenances. “His experiences which were seasoned by challenges and joys altogether give us the courage to provide our best as we bring the printed page to homes in our field,” participants were heard saying of Rom’s presentations.

Besides the daily topics, the morning devotional messages given by Pastor Isaac P Bairagee, BAUM Adventist Mission director, and Ms Sweetie Ritchil, BAUM treasurer, were also inspiring, participants said.

The four-day seminar came up with a vital recommendation that each local church sponsor at least one LE per year by providing him or her canvassing samples and prospectus. The support can also come in personality grooming necessities, special training opportunities and spiritual encouragement. [Milton Das]





Media ministry — the way to go

FULLY COMMITTED to imparting his skills to his fellow media enthusiasts, Donny Tan of the Loud Voice Media, sought the full participation of the 15 trainees to the Video Production Workshop held at the headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church for Southeast Asia (SAUM), 798 Thomson Road, Singapore, on September 7-10.

Attending the workshop were media enthusiasts and church leaders from five countries: Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Myanmar. These participants also represented five of the eight mission fields in Southeast Asia and the church headquarters in Myanmar.

Donny Tan was assisted by Ernest Ong, also from the Loud Voice Media. Anandan, manager of Studio Elpizo, was also one of the instructors.

Pastor Simon Siew, SAUM communication director and organizer of the said workshop, was among the devotional speakers. Other speakers were Pastor Konis Gabu, president of the Sabah Field, and Dr Jonathan C Catolico, communication director for the church in the southern Asia-Pacific region (SSD).

“Where are you in your commitment to the media ministry?” asked Dr Catolico, during his devotional message? He emphasized the need to get deeply rooted in Jesus Christ to be able to relate with others by using the talents and skills God gave them.

The four-day event was specifically devoted to camera work, lighting and camera practicum, video editing skills, and audio and live production. The participants were asked to produce a few-minute video as a requirement for the crush course.

“Today, most people can only relate with technology,” said Kim Seng of the church’s media services in Cambodia. “And we can only reach them through the technology they understand and indeed, that’s the way to go!” [AND Staff]

Global Mission donations up despite economic downturn



DESPITE THE flagging world economy, Global Mission donations have increased in 2009 —with a 13 percent increase for the first six months of 2009 compared to the first six months of 2008.

“This is encouraging news,” says Gary Krause, director of the Office of Adventist Mission, which cares for the Global Mission initiative to start new congregations in new areas of the world. “It’s painful whenever we have to cut mission initiatives and reduce the number of Global Mission pioneers in the field. But this trend shows our supporters are digging deeper and making greater sacrifices so Global Mission can go forward.”

This growth may seem surprising in light of numerous reports of decline in philanthropic giving. But according to the 2009 Giving USA Foundation, this increase coincides with a financial trend. The survey found that while two-thirds of public charities experienced decreased donations in 2008, religious organizations reported an increase of 5.5 percent.

This climb came a little later for Global Mission which experienced a lean year in 2008. But to date, 2009 donations look promising. “This increase is coming not so much from new donors,” says Nimfa Sumagaysay, Donor Response Manager for Adventist Mission, “but from our regular donors who are giving even more.”

Again, Global Mission’s current experience mirrors findings from recent surveys, such as one conducted by Wilson Research Strategies for Dunham+Company. The survey suggests that faith-based organizations may continue to fare better than other non-profit entities because 60 percent of those who attend religious services more than once a week (about 27 million Americans) intend to give the same amount in 2009 while 14 percent say they intend to give more.

Along with donations received via mail, Global Mission is seeing an increase of donations online at their www.global-mission.org address. “We’re trying to make it as convenient as possible for people to make contributions,” says Sumagaysay.

“It’s very clear that God is blessing abundantly even in these difficult times,” says Homer Trecartin, Planning Director for Adventist Mission. “There are so many projects that need funding in order to reach people with the gospel. The generosity of our donors makes the crucial difference between starting a project now or waiting until the economy improves. We all know time is of the essence.”

Myanmar church leadership gets updates on legal matters

THE VISIT of the director for legal matters at the Seventh-day Adventist Church's southern-Asia Pacific region (SSD) paved the way for consultation on matters related to the legal operations of the church in Myanmar (MYUM). Sergie Ferrer, SSD legal affairs director, visited Myanmar on September 15-16 and sat down with the church leadership consisting of Pastor Muller Kyaw, president; Pastor Memory Tun, executive secretary; and Maung Maung Myo Chan, MYUM legal director.

During the meeting, several action plans were identified to ensure the smooth implementation of church programs related to legal matters. Also discussed during this visit were the benefit schemes for retiring church employees and workers.

The challenges posed by government regulations on the use of modern technology such as those of the Internet, among others, were also discussed. This, however, awaits guidelines and instructions from world church resources that pertain to IT-related matters.

"I am pleased to see the legal system set up in our church in Myanmar despite the challenges it faces," said Ferrer.

"We are hoping that this visit have enlightened us on what needs done for the church as it operates its programs without violating any government regulations," said the church leaders. [Myo Chan]

Happy Family Forever seminar ends with baptism of 153



THREE WEEKS after the launching the Happy Family Forever Seminar in Zamboanga City, the exposition culminated with 153 people joining God's family through baptism, September 19.

Pastor Alberto C Gulfan, Jr, president of the more than one million Seventh-day Adventists in the southern Asia-Pacific region (SSD), was the speaker during this 20-day event that was taped through the facilities of Hope Channel Philippines and went on nightly broadcasts on Hope Channel International starting September 13 through October 2.

The first NET series conducted regionally, the Happy Family Forever seminar had thousands of viewers within SSD who were also listening to the languages of their choice: English, Bangla (Bangladesh), Singalese (Sri Lanka), Burmese (Myanmar), Bahasa (Indonesia), Tagalog, and Ilonggo.

Besides groups attending nightly broadcast at more than 150 downlink sites, thousands also view the on-going series through cable connections on their television sets and through the Internet.

At one downlink site came the report of Kap Lian Thang, principal of Upper Myanmar Adventist Seminary (UMAS): "We at UMAS enjoy listening and watching Happy Family Forever sermons of Pastor Gulfan at Hope Channel. Our nightly attendance is over 200 both church and non-church members, and we thank the Lord for the satellite facilities of the church."

"I wish I could listen to my native tongue as I view Pastor Gulfan's nightly message on the Internet," says a Bangladesh lady who sent her letter to the management of Hope Channel at the church headquarters in Maryland, USA.

World-wide viewers, many of them Filipinos now living beyond Asia, identified so much with Pastor Gulfan as he presented the nightly topics with nostalgic local Filipino dialects. "My! I am proud to be identified with the speaker and his audience at the broadcast site as I listen to him speaking my dialect once-in-a-while," emailed one Filipino viewer

from Africa.

"I praise God for the church using satellite and Internet facilities to keep me abreast with principles that establish a happy family," said one Internet viewer from Singapore. "And I want what it offers—happiness now and beyond!"

Zamboanga City, known for its notoriety, is just a neighbor to the "kidnap lair" island of Basilan. The many apprehensions why the city has been chosen for the event faded rapidly as the nightly series went full blast. Nightly attendance did not break below the 1000 mark as church leaders of different denominations, employees and employers, military personnel, government leaders, came together to listen to the messages.

As the presentations went on air two weeks after the start of the series at the Orchid Garden Convention Center, many of those who were at the site gathered in front of their television sets to refresh their minds with the messages they listened to during the actual taping of the programs.

This Latin City of Asia has proudly defied the threats of terror and instead brought about a new era of family closeness not only among church members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but also among family members of the community.

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“As we have prayed for, the nightly series time-tuned with the countries of Bangladesh, Myanmar, Indonesia, Philippines, and the other southeast Asian countries produced a new roll of church members in these countries,” said Dr Jonathan C Catolico, Hope Channel coordinator for the southern Asia-Pacific region. Latest statistics showed that 88 people were baptized in Myanmar and 145 in Bangladesh as reported by Maung Maung Myo Chan and Milton Das, communication directors of Myanmar and Bangladesh, respectively.

“Indeed, we have come to a time when the proclamation of the gospel goes to the ends of the earth and we are glad that our church in the Philippines has acquired the capability for this kind of outreach. We are praying that our newly acquired franchise to operate radio and television stations nationwide will get full financial support from every Seventh-day Adventist member. With this support we can establish radio and television stations throughout the country,” concluded Pastor Nelson Paulo, Zamboanga NET series executive producer and Hope Channel Philippines coordinator. [AND Staff]



Church's social work meets community needs

THE CENTRAL region of Myanmar is predominantly Buddhists. Christians find difficulty penetrating this area with their message. The Seventh-day Adventist Church, however, is at work here through the ministry of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) where social alleviation was the felt need.

At the July 15-19 assessment tour of the board of trustees of ADRA Myanmar, Pastor Muller Kyaw, chairman and also president of the Adventist Church in Myanmar (MYUM), and his party visited the project sites in the dry zone area of Pak-okku district, 200 miles from the capital city of Yangon. This district is located near the ancient city of Nyaung-U, which is famous for pagodas built by the Bagan dynasty as recorded in the history of ancient Burma. There the party met with community leaders and asked them how the projects have been helping them.

Voicing out his community's recognition, a leader said that they have "high respect for the workers of ADRA who bring to us relief and development projects that respond to our needs."

"This is the most difficult area to reach with the gospel but we are glad that ADRA foreruns the implementation of the church's mission of sharing God's love to

the community," said Maung Maung Myo Chan, an ADRA board member and communication director for MYUM.

"As ye have done it unto the least of my brethren, ye have done it unto Me" is very much reflective of our church's social amelioration programs," added Myo Chan.

On July 18, Pastor Caleb Paw, MYUM ministerial secretary and a member of the board, encouraged the ADRA workers to keep the agency's commitment to becoming a vehicle for introducing God's love on top of its mission to provide for the needs of the community.

"ADRA Myanmar has been greatly blessed with the opportunity to work here where non-Christians can see how their brother Christians become no respecter of religious beliefs as long as they can provide for the people's needs," concluded Teddy Din, ADRA country director.

Writing skills, a great need in evangelism

WHO WOULDN'T WANT to visit the summer capital of the Philippines especially for a training seminar that hone skills to write effectively in pursuit of people for Christ's kingdom?

This question occupied the minds of those who battled the strong rains as they negotiated the zigzag roads leading up to Baguio City, the summer capital of the Philippines. The tail of the recent storm still required hoisting signal 2 in northern Luzon. Nevertheless, this incident did not drown the spirits of those who travelled from far and near to attend the writing seminar, July 13-14, organized for enthusiasts, editors, and church leaders at the headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Mountain Provinces (MPM).

Communication directors and their teams from central Luzon, northern Luzon, south-central Luzon, and the host field of Mountain Province numbering 60, battling the cold weather, learned techniques of writing and translated them into beautiful layout and design to meet the need for communicating God's love through print and electronic publications.

"I have been a teacher many years but haven't gotten techniques as simple as these presentations to help me communicate to my students a better way to tell God's love to those around them," said one participant as she voiced her elation of attending the seminar.

An English teacher at one of the church-operated high schools was mesmerized by the versatility of the graphic software in translating literary articles into beautiful and captivating de-

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He changed my life . . . **believe me!**

The following story was sent to me by Rochayathit Hongwatananon who was fondly called Jhee by her friends.

HER FRIEND Jenny or Jane led her to care-group meetings. She was baptized on May 23. During her baptism she invited her family and friends to come to church. This was because she wanted to share the joys of accepting Jesus. She showed them the miracle that changed her life that could also be theirs if they follow her into the sacred rites of baptism.

“My daughter, after she joined your care group, became a changed person. I am glad that Jesus changed her life,” Jhee’s father said. Jhee’s dad believes that sending Jhee’s younger brother to the care-group services is best for him too.” [Hanna Detwinya]

I was born a Buddhist. I grew up with lots of character flaws: hot-temperament, imprudent, captious and irritable. If you have known me before I met my God, you will get a surprise of your life. My family who knew me pretty well had seen this difference, too. Those years had me set on negative living: I was stubborn to learn anything; I always fight with my little brother and found out gossips that peddled around were about me, and these kept me angry.

I grew up believing that whatever I do, it would end up a mistake. And I always compared myself with everyone, including the members of my family, seeing them to be much better than me.

I was a pathetic sight. At age 13, I took the high school entrance examination at Ekamai International School (EIS). My English was bad that I couldn’t spell “vegetable”

and “yesterday.” I finished the entrance exam with so much of guess work, and bemused at the interview I had with ma’am Beatrice because I never understood a single question. I left the interview room feeling that getting accepted into the school would be the least to expect.

Right after my interview, my dad went into the exam room. I didn’t know what he did, but when he came out he hinted that I would probably get accepted. Sure enough I was accepted to EIS and was put in an ESL (English as a Second Language) class . I was happy anyway.

On my first day at school I was taught how to pray. I was amused because I thought I was in the movies. I was also taught about Jesus and the Bible stories that seemed like tales to me.

One day, while she was relating the story about Jesus’ death on the cross, she dashed out of the room, leaving us stunned. One of my friends said that our teacher was crying. We ended up laughing and sneering

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Heaven's will

BY STEPHANIE LORIEZO

I MET my foster parents during an evangelism seminar in the Philippines. It was during their stay in this country that they adopted me as their daughter.

We planned to see each other again sometime in the near future and this happened when mom picked me up at the Las Vegas airport two days before my birthday. Although it was my second time to visit the United States, it was my most memorable vacation. It was because they took me to their home just a few minutes drive to Lake Havasu, Arizona.

Lake Havasu is a haven of different species of cactus that shelter quails and ducks in the lake, adding delight to the colorful boats fronting the village of English architectural designs.

What made me think of writing this story? Not the mountains, not the burst of sunshine, neither the chimes of the humming birds or the joyous cries of the bunnies from our back patio; not even the sunset that covers the lake with its dancing reflections. It was the story of love, faith, and miracle that made my second parents survive the rigors of time and circumstances that inspired me to encode them into the disks of my mind.

It was said that "A man's purpose should be sought out, thought out, and wrought out." Yes, I sought out that purpose amid the imperfections that enveloped the life of my wonderful parents.



Mom grew up in a California town, got married and had two wonderful sons. She longed to have a daughter but endometriosis took that hope as she went under a knife to perform hysterectomy at age 26. Her first marriage lasted a few years but she met another man at Hollywood, where she, then, was working. Life was good for both of them for some years—she living with her husband's daughters whom she loved dearly, and he with mom's two sons. However, old age overtook her second husband's life and at his death sadness became more real. She promised herself to shun another marriage to live peacefully the rest of her life in the beautiful home she established



at the premises of Lake Havasu in Arizona.

“I was not born an Adventist. From childhood to my married life I lived with leisure and success,” mom recounted.

She was a writer, a novelist! Never had she imagined that life would be different when her business transitioned her to what she is now—living in the beauty of God's truth.

She met dad in her massage clinic. One Sabbath, at the clinic, dad invited her to attend church services as he then would be the speaker. She obliged and her interest in studying the Bible and about the Adventist beliefs grew. It was here that she discovered a healthy lifestyle

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signs for publication. “It is only now that I learned the way to making good designs for my school papers,” she said.

Mr Reuben A Pagaduan, chair of the Tradigital Fine Arts at the Adventist University of the Philippines, widened the interests of the participants to unlimited possibilities of making their publications attractive to their readers. His presentations dealt on layout and design, photography, and software application. Mr Jose F Sarsoza Jr, vice-president for editorial services at Philippine Publishing House and editor of Health and Home, an award-winning health journal published by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Philippines, introduced the participants to the beauty of well-written news stories about day-to-day events in the church and other stories that uplift the well-being of humanity.

“The law of attraction works well with us as communicators,” said Dr Jonathan C Catolico, communication director for the church in the southern Asia-Pacific Division, “when we transmit God's glory in both verbal and non-verbal methodologies.” Dr Catolico also challenged the trainees to be on constant lookout for better ways to communicate God's love to those they get in touch with.

The lecture on electronic publication presented by Mr Winelfred Pasamba, systems administrator of the Online Information System of the Adventist University of the Philippines (AUP), was also well received by the participants as they saw how modern communication reaches the elites of society and the ‘natives’ of this technology.

that she embraced. For five long years of friendship, she decided to get back her words not to marry again. She accepted dad's proposal for a "till death do us part" companionship, now in Christ!

While dad was waiting for her at the living room in her beautiful wedding gown, he was surprised to hear a loud crushing in the bathroom. He rushed to the bathroom and discovered mom was lying on the floor with an inflated neck. Dad rushed her to the hospital. Aneurism made her hover between life and death. The excitement awaiting the ceremony turned to sadness and fear. The people who came to the hotel for the wedding were shocked!

As she regained consciousness just before she went for the surgery, she whispered, "No, this isn't right! I'm supposed to get married with the most wonderful man in my life. This just can't be right!" And as she was losing consciousness into operation, she called up her Lord and said, "Okay Lord, if this is your will, I'll close my eyes now and if I don't survive this, the next time I open them I'll see You and my husband!"

Praise God the surgery went well and five days later, mom and dad were wedded.

"Your dad was my savior, he never left my side. I believe it was heaven's will for me to live to be with your dad," mom spoke as she shed tears.

During these years of their marriage, they decided to dedicate their lives for a mission. And they joined the *Share Him* ministry to reach out to the world with the message of hope. It was in one of these trips that they came to the Philippines in 2008 and was timed with their third wedding anniversary.

In the Philippines, she was among the nightly speakers. And when she was introduced: "Welcome Susan Vance—our guest

speaker," mom's heart pounded heavily. This was the night that changed her life totally.

"My Baptist upbringing gets in the way at times, I must admit, but when I presented the truth that first night, the night after, and until it was over, God had helped me lived what He wanted me to live," mom exclaimed.

"Why did God call me to come here?" I asked myself as I lay on my bed that evening. My wonderful husband did not wonder what must have been running on my thoughts because the calm on my face was enough to suggest that we needed a prayer to give me more courage to go on with what we were called for," mom recalled.

The mission trip to the Philippines was very successful. A mass baptism of all interests from the different meetings the *Share Him* team conducted was held and was enough "to fill our lives with joys beyond words." Succeeding trips brought them to Brazil, where hundreds of new believers were brought to Jesus through baptism.

"Now I know what it means to allow my Heavenly Father an access to my life, to serve Him without considering what reward lies ahead. And I also know why God gave me a new daughter even as I enter the sunset years of my life. I'm happy to have you, daughter," mom said to me. "A daughter to write your story that will inspire people, and to tell others why God gave you a second life to live for Him," I answered her back. Mom smiled and hugged me tight and kissed me for bed on that cold night.

Philosopher Soren Kierkegaard said, "Life can be understood backwards; but it must be lived forward." Yes, in the green sceneries of Oklahoma, where mom calls her "other castle," she and dad now spend their retirement years. Despite their age, mom claims, "If still given a chance, I am willing to go where He wants me to serve Him, wherever that may be, because God has some role for me to perform yet!"



A better work for a seamstress

BY ATEMIO Z JIMENEZ*

“WHY AM I the only one not getting baptized, pastor?” five-year-old-Greeco asked as he watched members of his family don their baptismal gowns on January 3. “Your baptism will be a special one when it comes and I will baptize you even if you’ll be the only one,” promised the pastor.

After the family members’ baptism, Dr. Marie Lynn Sy Fama, who was instrumental to her family’s conversion, testified, “I grew up a devout Roman Catholic, until 1990 when I picked up and read a book entitled *Power for Living*. I was moved by the message that my sister and I joined the ‘Faith Assembly of God.’”

Soon afterward, her sister became interested with the doctrines the Adventists adhered to. And as she attended the Adventist Church she addressed the members, saying, “I know that there are still some of you who doubt whether your church is the right one. I ask you to stop doubting. The Adventist Church is an uncompromising church because all its beliefs are based on the Bible.”

Her sister told the congregation that when she transferred from the Catholic Church to the Faith Assembly of God she learned a lot of new things, but when she came to the Adventist Church and studied the principles the church believes in, she learned things very clearly.

How did Dr. Marie Lynn Sy Fama come to know about the Adventist beliefs? She confided that in her former church she felt utter loneliness in spite of so many good things: good relationship in the

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family, financial stability, good health, and all necessities provided. “I felt something was missing in my life,” she admitted. And the lyric of the song that runs, “The Lord can fill that lonely, empty, feeling” she often heard penetrated her soul and said to herself, “That’s how it was, an empty feeling that the Lord can fill.” And she continued, “Thanks to Carol, we now belong to this church.”

Who was Carol?

CAROL, a literature evangelist (LE) since 1989, took the Pangasinan Provincial Hospital as her place of mission. There she called on the medical director for permission to visit and pray not only for the patients, but for the medical staff as well.

“At first Dr Fama was skeptical with what I was doing,” Carol confided. “She thought I was just another enthusiastic born-again Christian who eventually will tire out.”

But because she had a sincere burden for souls, Carol continued praying for everyone who cared to be prayed for including staff members who did not subscribe to her literature.

Eventually Dr Fama realized that this lady’s concern was real and not a cheap gimmick to sell. Just like the other hospital workers, Dr Fama became friends with Carol. The friendship deepened until she started asking questions about Carol’s faith. Quick to see the privilege, she asked if the lady physician was interested in Bible studies. That began a series of studies, which lasted two years. When the questions turned to the prophecies on Daniel and Revelation, Carol realized that the studies have reached a level beyond her competence. So she asked Pastor Daniel Villosio, former president of the Adventist Church in Northern Philippines (NPUM), for help.

After a 7-month-twice-a-week Bible study, the whole family except 5-year-old Greco, decided to be baptized. Those baptized were Dr Marie Lynn; her husband Dr Rhonulfo B Fama, a surgeon; their three daughters and two household helpers.

Carol Bolos, a credentialed LE for nine years in Northern Luzon Mission, used to make women happy with the beautiful dresses she made. Now the former seamstress thrills in seeing people fitting up Christ’s Robe of Righteousness.

***Atemio Z Jeminez** is the Associate Publishing Director of North Philippine Union Conference

at her even when we didn't understand what made her cry.

At one time I entertained a wild idea of testing God whether He was real or not. I said, "God, if you do exist, show me a guy I wanted to see." A minute later, I noticed the guy passing by. I was shocked but I told myself that it was a coincidence. I prayed the same prayer once more and met the guy again. I couldn't be so sure that I kept repeating the same prayer for more than two weeks, and strangely enough, that and everything I asked were answered. I started believing that there really is a God!

And because I was prone to mistakes, I remembered what Madam Das said that if we make mistakes, God forgives. Since then, prayer has become an essential part of my life. Strange enough, in spite of my belief in God, I haven't stopped worshipping idols in the temples and seeing fortune tellers.

I tried to imagine what God is like. I wanted to attend the Adventist church but my weekends were spent with family and so I promised myself that I would attend church after I finish my studies, when I could find a job and live on my own.

When I entered university, I prayed less until I decided to go to Melbourne, Australia to take up an English summer course for a month.

I tried to get in touch with my friend Jane in Melbourne but couldn't contact her. I eventually gave up.

In Melbourne, I stayed with family in Hawthorn. I was able to check my emails

after two weeks and was glad Jane replied to my letters. To my surprise, she was just a block away from where I stayed."

One day, Jane invited me to attend a Stress Management Seminar at Gateway Adventist church where I was warmly welcomed by the members. I instantly became interested with Bible study with Joe Lee helping me. From then on, I attended CARE group activities and church worship services. Here I finally realized how God truly loves me and have understood why Madam Das cried that day when she was trying to reach to us with the story of Jesus' death on the cross.

When I got back from Melbourne, I participated in the worship services at Grace 107 Evangelistic Center. Here I learned more about who God was truly like and how He opened His arms to embrace my sin-sick soul. After I received Him into my life, I was filled with peace and joy I could never have imagined.

I have come to believe that in times of trouble and sorrow, He is there to uphold me for I no longer face giants alone, He is always there for me.

Now I thank God for allowing me to live a day at a time; for giving me a family: a father who loves and teaches me how to live a good life, a mother who cares for me, an older brother who models obedience, an older sister who walks beside me, a little brother who comforts me; all of my friends who love me and understand me; and my good teacher, who introduced me to Jesus.

WE ARE MORE THAN CONQUERORS!

Are we struggling with the power of sin and death? Are the sins we've committed too big for God to forgive and too strong that we cannot endure?

What about our journey to heaven with Christ? Are our eyes still fixed on it or are tired and exhausted of running the race of faith not knowing that we are almost there? Are we losers or are we conquerors?

The apostle Paul says "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loves us" (Romans 8:37). There is no sin too big for God to forgive. No problem too big for God to handle. No. We are not losers! We are more than conquerors.

So what makes us "more than conquerors"? Here are four significant points I want to share with you.

1. **Spirit of Life (Romans. 8:2).**

In Romans chapter 7:5,6, the apostle Paul makes a contrast between life in the flesh and life in the Spirit. Then in Romans 8 Paul draws out this distinction in detail. He refers to life of flesh as "law of sin and death." (8:2) "...because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death."

In the previous chapter, Paul discusses the struggle of sin which was the "law of sin and death." He then listed down the struggles to overcome sin. Later he said "For what I want to do, I do not do, but what I hate I do" (Rom. 7:14-16). Sin handicaps us and separates us from God. It turns us into slaves - "slave to the law of Sin" (verse 25). While sin condemns us, the Spirit of life sets us free (Rom. 8:2). Here Paul gives us the assurance the spirit of life brings peace (vs.6) and sets us free from total condemnation. It turns us from slave to conquerors!

2. Spirit of Life groan in us inwardly (Romans. 8:26).

Not only does the Spirit of Life set us free from the law of sin and death, but it helps us in our weaknesses. “Inward groaning” is what Paul refers to. There is a spiritual battle that each of us is facing that turns us into warriors of faith. It not only convicts sin and helps us in our weakness, it also testifies that we are God’s heirs (Romans 8:17). For Paul, the Spirit of Life is the life-breathing presence of God. When this presence is realized in a person, a new kind of life emerges: life in the Spirit .

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to intercede in us in accordance with God’s will. It is the Spirit that helps us battle the “inward groaning.” Again, Paul is saying life in the Spirit will make us more than conquerors.

3. God is before us (Romans. 8:31).

Indeed, If God is before us, who can be against us! The fact that we are God’s children and His heirs makes us realize He protects us like an earthly father protecting his child from danger. He protects us from the attacks of the devil, and guards and directs our hearts, thoughts and actions for us to focus on the right things.

The devil is afraid when we look up to heaven and when we call out to our Heavenly Father. He is afraid of the name ‘Jesus Christ of Nazareth’ that frees people from evil’s control. What shall we fear, if God is before us? Even if we may walk through the valley of death, God is before us! He is before our red sea of life. If He is before us, nothing can be against us. He is more than able to make us more than conquerors!

4. His love generates power (Romans 8:37).

God’s love generates the power to free us from the power of sin and death and makes us conquerors. His constant love gives us new perspective to face the storms of life. His love gives us the assurance that there is nothing too big for Him to handle. His love is saying that the battle belongs to the Lord. Our journey to heaven can be challenging, but His love supplies the energy to complete the race of faith. God is with us groaning inside our lives to shape and turn us into extraordinary conquerors and witnesses. In all these things, we are more than conquerors through Him who loves us.

Knight, R. George, “The Abundant Life Bible Amplifier, Romans.” pp. 155-156.

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