

# Il-Lehen tat-Tama

## "THE VOICE OF HOPE"

47, Mannarino Road, Birkirkara BKR 08, Malta - [www.adventist.org.mt](http://www.adventist.org.mt)

BY THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN MALTA

A logo is a way to represent one's identity, nature, purpose. If you now enter our chapel in Birkirkara you can see our logo just on top of the door: a book with a cross at its centre and a great flame arising from there. What does it mean?

**The book is the Holy Bible,** and represents the foundation of our faith since it is only through the Bible that we can know God's love and will. Without the Bible all faith is just a human philosophy or a set of human traditions. They come from man and take us only to man. But if our faith is based on the Bible which comes from God, then we can be sure that it will lead us to God.

The Bible is represented open because the Word of God, as Jesus said, must be preached to all nations: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). For too long a time, the Bible was hidden from the people, and those who dared to contradict the edicts of the religious and political authorities of their time risked persecution, imprisonment and even death. Now everybody can possess a Bible and study it, and everybody can see for himself or herself what really God wishes we believe and do. It would be a pity that, even now, Christians might be discouraged from reading the Bible because, for them, it was given through the Prophets and the Apostles: "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it" (Revelation 1:3). The two sides of the Bible also suggests that we accept all the Bible as Word of God, both the Old and the New Testament. As the apostle Paul taught, we consider all of it as useful for us: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16,17)



### WHAT'S IN A LOGO?

**At the centre of the book is the cross of Jesus,** the centre of the Bible message, sign of God's only way for our salvation, as the apostle Peter declared: "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

**The large flame arising from the Bible and the Cross,** is formed by lines of fire encircling an implied sphere, our globe, to which we wish to preach all the Word of God. It also represents the Holy Spirit Who gives us knowledge and power to live our Christian life and give testimony

to humanity. The fact that the lines are three also represents a special message that must be given to humanity in these last times. This message is represented in the Bible by the message of the three angels described in Revelation 14. They invite all the nations to give glory to God by accepting Him as their powerful Creator, gracious Saviour, and just Judge. Their messages also imply that each human person has the responsibility of making a choice about whom his/her final personal allegiance is due, if to human authorities or to the only Divine One.

**The lines arising from the bottom of the cross and going toward heaven,** wish to represent Jesus' resurrection and ascension to heaven.

With Him, all faithful believers will ascend to heaven when, according to His promise, He will return in the glory of God, to take us with Him: "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." (John 14:1-3). This is our hope and we pray that it may be yours too.

#### Index

Let our speech edify others (A. Stagno) .....	p. 2
Bible Quiz .....	p. 3
The Pope died, the Pope reigns (G. Leonardi) .....	p. 4
Mission stories .....	p. 6
News from the world .....	p. 7
Was Jonah's fish true? (G.F. Hasel).....	p. 8
Children story: A half reward .....	p. 9
Alcohol: Don't let it be your friend (K. Smith-H. Munson) .....	p. 10
Christian dictionary .....	p. 12

CHRISTIAN LIFE

LET OUR SPEECH EDIFY OTHERS!

I would like to tell you a story of someone named "Profanity." You all know and have met this person at some time or another because he is everywhere around us. When profanity speaks you will feel disturbed, you will feel grieved, and you may also feel disgusted. Profanity will start every sentence by using foul language, cursing and blaspheming God's name, then carries on with his conversation. This person is also capable of gossips, tells lies, gives false witness, and breaks every commandment of truth. From outside, this person may seem to be good, but inside there is corruption.

Nearly two thousand years ago the apostle Paul also told this same story. He warned the Ephesians' church not to imitate profanity when they speak to each other: "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:29,30).

Let's examine carefully some points from these two verses.

**1 Our speech and the temple of God.** The word "corrupt" can mean bad, decayed, or rotten. When it is used in a moral sense, it can also mean evil, contaminating, and may also refer here to anything that is obscene, offensive, or that tends to corrupt others. Paul is saying that we should be very careful what we say, and how we speak to one another. Jesus says, "There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man (Mark 7:15). Jesus is saying that when we use corruptive words we defile ourselves and are set apart from God. In Corinthians 3:17 Paul also says that we are the temple of the living God: "If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are." In chapter 6:19 he adds: "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?". When we use corruptive speech, we defile God's temple which we are, and we grieve the Holy Spirit Who dwells in us. God says that He will be forced to destroy such a person.

**2 Necessary edification.** In 1 Thessalonians 5:11 the apostle Paul teaches: "Therefore com-

fort each other and edify one another." This is especially true in relation to our words. Everything we have to say, must be said to edify and encourage others. Jesus says that we are the light of this world, that we are to shine as beacons shedding our light that others may see our works and glorify God (Matthew 5:14-16). What we say must give hope and inspiration to our listeners. As Jesus said, we must be the salt of the world, our words must be seasoned with righteousness and truth (Matthew 5:13). The apostle Paul too uses the image of the salt and applies it to our words: "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one" (Colossians 4:6). When this happens, then our words impart grace, harmony, and truth in righteousness to encourage and strengthen one another.

**3 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit.** Most Christians do not understand that the Spirit was sent by God the Father to help us in many ways. This is what Jesus told the Apostles: "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you"(John 14:16-17).

King David knew the importance of the Holy Spirit. When he sinned against God, David repented and prayed: "Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me" (Psalms 51:11). Every time we sin, we grieve the Holy Spirit because sin defiles us, makes us dirty and corruptive.

Most people do not think before they speak, so they lash out with corruptive speech. Most of the time those who use corruptive language do it to gain attention from those

around them, because they wish to be heard, and maybe also to express a sort of superiority over the others. In reality the opposite is true. When foul-mouthed persons speak, others see how ignorant and uneducated they are.

**Jesus and swearing.** Our Lord Jesus says, "But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one." (Matthew 5:34-37) In English the verb "to swear" has two main different meanings. One is that of blaspheming, the other that of uttering an oath, of taking a solemn engagement in the name of God. It is evident that in the previous text, Jesus is referring to this second meaning which may have a positive connotation. And nevertheless, the Lord asks His disciples not even to mention God in an oath for fear of using it in a careless way. How much more should we avoid using an offensive language? In the same text, Jesus invites us to have a sober language. To express ourselves in a convenient way, we do not need so many impressive words. We just need to say "Yes" when we wish to say "Yes", and "No" when we wish to say "No". Wise and good people do not need much more, and it will be of a great benefit to all those who listen.

Mr. Anthony Stagno

"A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgement. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."  
(Jesus)

**BIBLE QUIZ**

**DO YOU KNOW THE BIBLE?  
CHOOSE YOUR ANSWER!**



**THE BIBLE**

- 1** What does the word "Bible" means? (A) **Scroll**, (B) **tables**, (C) **books**.
- 2** The Book of Acts describes: (A) **Jesus' miracles**, (B) **the story of the first Christian church**, (C) **the story of the Patriarchs**.
- 3** Who wrote the book of Revelation? (A) **Isaiah**, (B) **Peter**, (C) **John**.
- 4** Who said that the Old Testament books have no authority for Christians? (A) **Paul**, (B) **Jesus**, (C) **Nobody**.
- 5** The first book of the Bible is Genesis. What does this word mean? (A) **Birth**, (B) **beginning**, (C) **world**.
- 6** Amos was: (A) **A king of Judah**, (B) **a disciple of the apostle Matthew**, (C) **a prophet**.
- 7** In the Bible, a prophet is: (A) **A person who shares a message given by**

**God**, (B) **a person foretelling the future**, (C) **a holy man sharing his ideas**.

**8** Who wrote the Gospel of John? (A) **John the Baptist**, (B) **John the apostle**, (C) **John surnamed Mark**.

**9** Jesus said that ... (A) **He had come to abolish the Old Testament**, (B) **that some prophecies are uncertain**, (C) **that the Word of God is true**.

**10** Who is not an apostle? (A) **Judas**, (B) **Luke**, (C) **James**.

stroyed Judah in 586 B.C.? (A) **Babylon**, (B) **Egypt**, (C) **Rome**.

**3** When Jesus died, Israel was ... (A) **independent**, (B) **controlled by the Romans**, (C) **allied with the Syrians**.

**4** Who lived first? (A) **Enoch** (B) **Jacob**, (C) **Noah**.

**5** Which prophet was imprisoned in a cistern? (A) **Isaiah**, (B) **Jeremiah**, (C) **Daniel**.

**BIBLE HISTORY**

**1** Who was the first king of Israel? (A) **David**, (B) **Saul**, (C) **Herod**.

**2** After the death of king Solomon, the people of God were split into two kingdoms: Israel in the North, and Judah in the South. Because of their rebellion against God, Israel was destroyed by the Assirians in 721 B.C. Who de-

**TRUE OR FALSE?**

**1** David was a poet. TRUE - FALSE

**2** The apostle Paul had been a Pharisee. TRUE - FALSE

**3** The Gospel says that Jesus will be incarnated again to contrast the final antichrist. TRUE - FALSE

**4** Jesus was used to keep Saturday holy. TRUE - FALSE

**5** For the Gospel, baptism must be preceded by faith. TRUE - FALSE

**6** Jesus promised that He would return to take His disciples to heaven. TRUE - FALSE

**7** The Bible says that the true tabernacle is in heaven. TRUE - FALSE

**CORRECT ANSWERS**

THE BIBLE: 1C - 2B - 3C - 4C - 5B - 6C - 7A - 8B - 9C - 10B.

BIBLE HISTORY: 1B - 2A - 3B - 4A - 5C.

**TRUE OR FALSE?**

- 1 TRUE: He was both a king and a poet. He is the author of most of the Psalms.
- 2 TRUE. He says so in Philippians 3:5. As such he was used to believe that salvation was a mixture of grace and personal works. Only after he discovered Jesus, he understood that salvation is only by grace.
- 3 FALSE. The Gospel says that Jesus will return in glory and with all the angels (Matthew 24:30-31; 25:31).
- 4 TRUE: "So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath (Saturday) day" (Luke 4:16).
- 5 TRUE. Jesus said: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16).
- 6 TRUE. Jesus said: "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." (John 14:2-3).
- 7 TRUE: "Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man." (Hebrews 8:1-2).



## CHRISTIAN ACTUALITY

## THE POPE DIED, THE POPE REIGNS

It is a long time that I have been thinking about this article, since when Pope John Paul II started to be seriously sick and everybody knew he was going to die. For days all the world seemed to be suspended waiting for that sad event as if not just a man was going to die, but the heart of the world with him too. On the Italian televisions almost all programs were stopped and all the news we received were about the Pope, his long ministry and what was going to happen. It was the same in Malta, in Germany, and in other countries.

Thanks be to God, this issue of *Il-Lehen tat-Tama* is coming out quite a long time after that event. By now the feelings are quieter, a new Pope has been elected, and life seems to continue as usual. In this situation, our hope is that we may give an honest testimony, and that our readers may receive it in a friendly way.

**John Paul II, a great pope**

John Paul II has surely been a great pope. He has played a great role in the changes of our world in the last part of last century, and has helped the Roman Catholic Church to dramatically develop her presence in the world of which she has become the spiritual focus. A man of great culture (as popes usually are) and great sensitivity, he has also been able to take all possible advantages from the modern mass media opportunities. After the fall of ideologies and the disappearing of the great personalities of the world dominating the international panorama till the sixties of last century, John Paul II has filled the emptiness by becoming the omnipresent representative of an ideal world.

We have a great admiration for the man, and we honour him as the leader of the largest Christian church. We also respect his battle for peace and for social justice. But nevertheless we cannot hide some reservations too.

**Our problems with John Paul II**

**Politics.** For instance, we do not agree with the widespread idea that he won communism. Surely he had a role in it, but what could he do if instead of Gorbachev - for example - Breznev was still in charge of the former Soviet Union? A great man is not a solitary person. Many times only a favourable situation lets a person express his value. The greatness of John Paul II is the result of his personal ability, but also of the favourable circumstances in which he lived and operated.

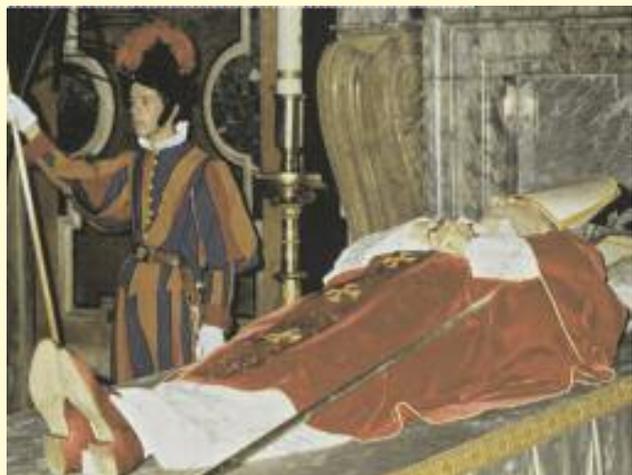
**Mary.** According to the Roman Catholic theology, the Pope should be the representative of Jesus. Maybe because of our ignorance, but it appeared as a great contradiction when he chose as his papal motto "Totus Tuus" (All for you) referring not to Jesus but to Mary. All his pontificate has been coherent with this motto. As a matter of fact, he has greatly contributed to the development of the Marian devotion and if this may not pose problems to some, it is still one of the most serious problems in the Catholic-Protestant relationship.

We consider the Marian devotion contradictory with the centrality and uniqueness of Jesus as our only Lord, Saviour, and Mediator. The official theological statements may try to preserve the uniqueness of Jesus. As an example, the recent Seattle document written by Roman Catholics and Anglican theologians ( *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ*), says: "We agree that there can be but one mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ, and reject any interpretation of the role of Mary which obscures this affirmation." Unfortunately the reality does not seem to be in agreement with the theory. The majority of the Roman Catholics practically give Mary a role much more important than that of Jesus. Just to consider our experience in Malta, everybody knows how most of the houses having a religious name, are dedicated to Mary, how in most of the gardens there is an altar to Mary, how most of the prayers are raised to Mary. At the recent flower exhibition at San Antonio Garden, many parishes presented some exhibits and the greatest majority of them made an exclusive reference to Mary. When we asked a visitor: "Where is Jesus in all this?" He answered: "He is still at the centre of the church, in the tabernacle." The problem is that, even if it were true that Jesus is in the tabernacle (which we cannot accept), we have to say that Mary is everywhere else, especially in the hearts of the majority of Roman Catholic believers. With his motto "Totus tuus," with his continuous exhortations to the veneration of Mary, and with his personal example, John Paul II strongly encouraged the church to be more Marian and less Christian. This is our main rebuke to him.

**Personalization of the faith.** We said that Pope John Paul II has been very able to use the power of the mass media for the glory of the church and her mission. The result has been impressive. But there was a negative side—the risk of identifying the church and the same faith with the person of the Pope. We knew everything of him—when he went on holidays, where he stopped for a rest, which coffee he was used to drink, his sportive abilities, his poems, the minimum details of his sickness and everything else. Continuously under the light of the mass media, he risked to become the omnipresent incarnation of what was good and holy. Many people started thinking that it wasn't necessary to confront themselves with the reality or with the Gospel. It was enough to look at the Pope to understand what was true and good, for the Pope himself was the incarnation of these values.

A whole generation of people, used to refuse as idolatry the cult of personality imposed in many dictatorial countries, accepted in full freedom the often acritical service that the mass media rendered to the Pontiff. The way the mass media worked in front of his death are a loquacious example of what we are saying. During the funeral somebody went to Rome with a poster saying "We have come to adore you." On a Maltese television a teacher, to describe her sadness for the illness of the Pope to her child said, "Jesus is sick." A newspaper titled, "Our papa who are in heaven." Why should we be surprised? They may be exaggerations but they are the result of precise causes.

The apostle Paul used to think in a totally different way: "I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2).



Marco Politi, a Vaticanist, wrote: "On the church-square of St. Peter the story of Wojtila has become a coffin of cypress. It is the farewell day. Joseph Ratzinger, hierarchical like Pius XII, proclaims the Pope transfigured in a suffering Christ." We hoped that if the Pope had to die, what we didn't wish, he could not die on Friday, in the afternoon.

**The humility and the glory.** When Christ chose to be born as a man, He was born in a stable, and when He died, He died among two criminals. Modern popes are no longer what most of them were in the middle age. They are no longer transported on the shoulders of some Roman noblemen as it happened till not long ago. But the ideology of the glory is still there. It isn't a personal glory but the glory of the office. People may be personally very humble, but they have to forget that humility when they become popes for they have to represent the glory of God.

The same way of their election is emblematic. Cardinals must work for the election of a pope in total segregation and must keep an absolute secret on what happens and on what they say in the conclave. This way, human discussions and strategies do not reach the people and the only idea that passes is that the election is the supernatural fruit of the Holy Spirit's intervention. The election of the Pope is encircled in an ethereal atmosphere of mystery and holiness that will be transferred to the elected one.

In the same days when in Rome the cardinals were gathered for the election of the new pope, in a small town close to Rimini, the representatives of the Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Italy and in Malta were also discussing the election of our leaders too. We too believe that the Holy Spirit must lead our minds, and we too try to preserve the privacy and the respect for the brothers about whom we talk. We do that by electing a commission that examines the different names and suggests the chosen ones to the general approval of all the delegates. And if somebody doesn't agree with a suggested name, he can ask the commission to listen to him, and we have open and frank discussions. The Holy Spirit was present at the first council of the Christian Church in Jerusalem, but we have also a full report of the contrasts and of the way to find solutions. The first Christian church was a church led by the Holy Spirit and yet it was a democratic community working with all the believers and in front of all the believers.

When the new Pope was presented to the people, he had to wear the insignia of his office that distinguish him from

anybody else. The apparel is solemn and glorious at the same time. Even the chair on which he sits must be different from all other chairs. His throne is white as to represent the holiness of the office and of the person. He cannot sit on anything else. When, some years ago, Pope John Paul II paid a visit to the Italian parliament, he couldn't sit on even the armchair of the president, but had to sit only on his white throne that was carried there for the occasion.

I saw the ceremony of enthronization of Pope Benedict XVI. He was sitting on the throne, and while all people had to bow to greet him, he never stood up or bowed his head in sign of humility or respect in front of his guests, not even of the president of the Italian Republic, Azeglio Ciampi, a man older than the Pope himself. But this is the ceremonial of glory of the papal office—he can come out of his car and caress a child or a disabled person, but all must first bow their heads in front of him. Love and humility are there, but the practical theology of glory covers both of them.

**Our Pope too?** Why should we say all this, risking to offend somebody? If the Pope were only the leader of the Roman Catholic Church we could not like that role, but we would respect it. All organizations need a structure and a leadership and everybody is free to choose his own. The others know and respect, while asking for the same respect. The problem is that papal authority is not just a question internal to the Roman Catholic Church. The pope pretends to be called by Christ to be our leader too, the leader of all Christians. In a certain way, we are continuously told, that if we

do not accept that leadership we are out of Jesus' will.

For this reason, what papacy is concerns us too. And this is why we are forced to manifest our opinion, with love and respect but also without any fear and hypocrisy. In our understanding, the papal office is not based on any Bible declaration and is the complicated result of a long historic development of ancient religious and social elements present in the extrabiblical world.

As Seventh-day Adventists, we believe that the Biblical model for the Church is different. It focuses on Jesus, the only High Priest of the Christian Church, a High Priest now officiating for us in the only true temple, a temple not made by man, but by God Himself in heaven. Jesus is represented on earth by the Holy Spirit who leads the church to understand and live according to the teaching that God passed to us through the prophets and the apostles, and that we find in the Holy Scriptures. Men may receive special gifts (charismata) and ministries to serve and lead the church. Nevertheless, their authority is always subject to the Word of God and to the authority of the church at large, made by all believers in Christ, who live by His grace and obey His law. For this church we work and in it we live our experience of faith and love. Of this church we give testimony, and through her we try to give glory to God, being aware of our human limits and only trusting in His grace and power.

With love,

**Past. Giovanni Leonardi**



MISSION STORIES

BURY ME AS A CHRISTIAN

A young man in Thailand was killed in a terrible accident. The grieving father, a wealthy businessman, had lost not only his son, but his business partner.

Although the family was Buddhist, the son had recently begun learning about Jesus. One day just before his death, he had made a request of the father. "If I die before you do, Father, promise me that you will bury me in a Christian cemetery as a Christian."

The broken-hearted father was determined to honour his son's request, but his son had not yet joined a church, and Christian churches reserve their limited burial plots for members of their faith. The father contacted one church after another inquiring about

burying his son in their cemetery, but denomination after denomination denied his request for a grave site. For one long month the boy's body lay in the Buddhist temple awaiting burial. Finally the father visited the pastor of the Chinese Adventist church in Bangkok, Thailand, Pastor Songrit Detwinya.

"We have very little space in our cemetery," the pastor said, "and normally we reserve it for our church members. But I will take your request to the church board. If they agree, then your son can be buried here."

The father's face lit up when he later learned that the church board had accepted the request and agreed to the Christian burial of this man's son. At

last a grieving father would be able to keep his promise to his son. A funeral service was planned and the burial took place in the Adventist church's cemetery.

The businessman was touched by the kindness of the Adventist congregation. After the funeral he began to visit the church, curious to discover why his son had been so interested in the God of the Christians. He was impressed with the message of Jesus and the kindness of the believers. In time he asked the pastor to teach him more about the Christian faith. After four months of study, the grieving father accepted Jesus as his own Saviour and was baptized. He finds hope in the promise that he and his son will be reunited when Jesus comes, and he prays that his wife and two remaining children will accept Jesus as their Saviour as well.

**J.H. Zachary** (co-ordinator of international evangelism for The Quite Hour)

THE PRODIGAL'S SECOND CHANCE

I grew up in a Christian home in Madagascar, but I chose a different path in life. Eventually I became a drug addict and a thief. One day I borrowed a friend's bicycle to run an errand. I did not return the bicycle but instead sold it to buy drugs. When my parents learned what I'd done, they told me to leave their home. I lived on the streets of my city until I was arrested for the theft.

Prison was miserable, but there I realized my need of God. I began to pray. I learned that an Adventist chaplain held services in the prison, and I decided to go. At the first meeting some prisoners sang a song titled, "Change Me, Jesus." The song touched my heart and became my prayer.

We were given only one meal a day of boiled casava. I was often hungry. But after I began attending the worship services, the Bible became my food. I knew that if I turned away from God this time, it might be my last chance. I gave my life to Christ and enrolled in the prison's Bible study.

I had been in prison only a month when my friend whose bicycle I had stolen asked the judge to free me. Upon release, I found an Adventist church. I attended church faithfully. When I learned that my body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, I begged God to free me from my addictions to alcohol and tobacco. I asked the pastor and church members to pray for me, and after several weeks, I lost my appetite for these

drugs. I continued Bible studies with the pastor and was baptized.

My parents invited me to return home, and I have. They can see the changes in me. I want to be an honourable son, to let my parents see the difference God is making in my life and ask questions about my faith. I want them to ask questions about what I believe rather than to preach at them.

I work with my father, who has given me Sabbaths off to worship. My younger brother goes to church with me and wants to study at the Adventist college. My father has agreed to send him there.

"I have returned to my father's house a changed son," Olivier says. "I am determined to remain faithful to my heavenly Father and honour my parents. I am praying for my parents and younger brothers, that they will not follow my naughty ways but will follow God."

**Randriamalala Narison Olivier** (Antananarivo, Madagascar)

**The Gospel can make miracles in our life and in that of our children. Trust God!**

KNOW THE BIBLE ON YOUR TELEVISION

Many friends in Malta are enjoying the Gospel through the Television. Why don't you join them?



What you need is either a satellite system pointing to Hotbird or an ADSL Internet connection to receive them on your computer.

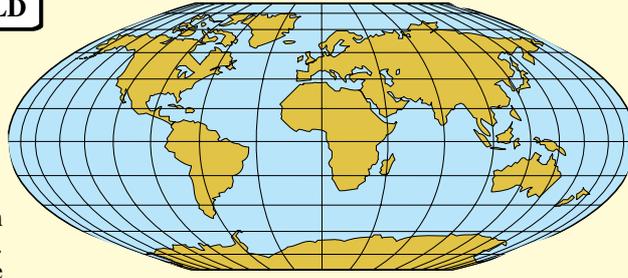
We offer you two world-wide networks: The 3ABN (Three Angels Broadcasting Networking) and Hope Channel.

For more information, visit their web sites: WWW.3ABN.ORG and WWW.HOPETV.ORG.

**NEWS FROM THE WORLD**

**MALTA: COURSES TO BE OFFERED FOR MISSIONARIES AMONG MUSLIMS**

This last month of June, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Malta enjoyed the visit of Mr. Peter Kunze, treasurer of the Euro-Africa Division of the same church, and of Pastor Ernst Pala, former missionary in Africa and now president of the SDA Church Trans-Mediterranean Union gathering Muslim countries from Afganistan to Morocco.



new programmes for the future, and elect the world-wide leadership for the next 5 years. The theme of this section is "Transformed in Christ."

Meetings will be held at the Edward Jones Dome which has 70,000 seats. All of them will be occupied by many believers joining the delegates on special days like the Sabbath. Malta will be represented by pastor Giovanni Leonardi.

**PHILIPPINES: GOVERNMENT AND ADVENTISTS IN HEALTHY LIFESTYLE FESTIVAL**

Bringing better health to Central Philippines was the goal of a recent collaboration between Seventh-day Adventists and the Philippines government's Department of Health. The two-day "Healthy Lifestyle Festival" brought more than 2,000 participants to

the campus of East Visayan Academy in Talisay City, Cebu, Central Philippines.

Three hundred volunteers from the government and Adventist hospitals assisted in the festival, which offered "one-stop" health services and featured strategies for maintaining good health. Presenters also encouraged healthy living and led workshops about preventable lifestyle-related diseases such as hypertension and diabetes. One service included a computerized health age appraisal, where a person's lifespan can be determined through their daily routine or activities, food intake and health habits.

Festival attendees benefited from on-site medical and dental consultations, children's immunizations, cholesterol and blood sugar screening, breast and cervical examinations, and a skin clinic.

First to launch in Central Philippines, the festival was jointly conceived and organized by Dr. Judith Tawatao, technical program co-ordinator on non-communicable diseases for the Department of Health, Region 7; and Pastor Charles Nogra, health ministries director for the Adventist Church in the Central Philippines region.

"I am thankful that the Adventists are advocates of a healthy lifestyle. They are the right partners of the government in promoting the healthy lifestyle program," Dr. Tawatao said.

**June 14, 2005 Cebu City, Philippines [Teresa S. Mahinay**



**Mr. Kunze with his wife Petra and Mrs Gianna Leonardi enjoying a tourist visit to Vittoriosa.**

These Muslim countries are at present hardly penetrable by the Gospel. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is developing new approaches to offer a more effective testimony to the people living there. Among the new initiatives, one tries to prepare young people of Muslim origin so that they may share their Christian faith with their people having a similar religious and cultural background. Malta has been chosen to be the first seat of this programme. This choice, has been determined by the geographic location of our country and the facilities offered by the new premises that we manage in Birkirkara.

**GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH**

From June 30 to July 9, St. Louis (Missouri) will give hospitality to the 58th General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. About 2,000 delegates from all the world will discuss the situation of the church, develop

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BIBLE STUDY

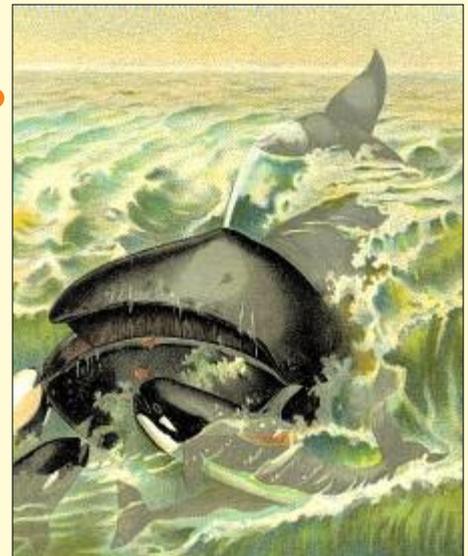
# WAS JONAH'S FISH TRUE?

The story says that when God sent Jonah to preach to Niniveh, the great city, the prophet was scared and fled to the opposite way on a ship going to Tarshish. But God sent a great wind that provoked a tempest. Jonah, understanding its meaning, told the sailors: "Pick me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will become calm for you. For I know that this great tempest is because of me. ... So they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. ... *Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.*" (Jonah 1:12-17)

**A** continuing discussion has centred around the "great fish." The question of whether or not the book of Jonah is a historical narrative has focused to a very large degree upon the difficulty of accepting the story of a "whale" swallowing up Jonah. Those who interpret the book as an allegory interpret this story also as an allegory. Some seek to interpret the experience not as an actual fact but as a dream. This hardly does justice to the narrative. There is no indication anywhere that this experience took place only during a dream at night. It is reported as a historical narrative, and we seek to interpret it as such. The following considerations may aid in understanding the miracle of the "great fish" which swallowed up Jonah.

First of all, let us emphasize that the Hebrew text does not refer to a "whale." The original text speaks of a "great fish." The Septuagint translated the Hebrew words dag gadol with the Greek term ketos, a turn taken over in Matt. 12:40. The KJV renders it with "whale" and is followed by the RSV and NAB, whereas the NEB and NAS translate the word as "sea-monster." However, it should be noted that the Greek term may also have the meaning of a "large marine creature." The kind of "great fish" or "marine creature" is not specified in either the book of Jonah or the New Testament reference. It is vain to speculate at this point when the Scriptural text gives no direction. Thus the renderings "whale" or "sea-monster" are mere guesses. It is sound to speak only of a "great fish" (following the Hebrew text) or "marine creature" (following the Greek term in the New Testament).

Large sharks, some species of which attain length of over 30 feet, and a variety of whales have been identified in the eastern Mediterranean. Among the whales to be encountered in the Mediterranean are the humpback whale, the fin whale, and the sperm whale. Not all whales have gullets large enough to swallow a whole man. Sperm whales, which are known to live in the Mediterranean, have gullets large enough to swallow a whole man. The blue



Whales in the waves

whale, the world's largest mammal, whose habitat is in the Arctic Ocean, cannot swallow a man. Despite this physical obstacle it turned out that even a blue whale could save a man from drowning, if the man managed to keep open the air-supply tract of the mammal and reach the great laryngeal pouch. In 1891 a whale hunter was reportedly swallowed whole and recovered unconscious but alive from the inside of the mammal the following day. Another report tells of a seaman swallowed by a sperm whale in the vicinity of the Falk Islands. This sailor was recovered after three days unconscious and with some damage to his skin, but alive. While these instances do not prove that Jonah was swallowed by a "great fish" (1:17), they at least indicate that men have been kept

alive for certain periods of time within a number of different species of whales, one of which is encountered in the Mediterranean. Thus there is really no serious objection to the events reported to have happened to Jonah. This is not to deny the miraculous in this report. It is preserved in the fact that this "great fish" was there just at the right time, that the storm subsided, and that Jonah emerged from this marine creature alive after a long period of time. In any case, let us not look so hard at the "great fish" that we fail to see the great God behind it all.

**Prof. Gerhard F. Hasel**  
(From Jonah: Messenger of the Eleventh Hour, Pacific Press, 1976, pp. 25,26.)

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## CHILDREN STORY

## A HALF REWARD

*“Be content with such things as you have” (Hebrews 13:5).*

The prince of a far away country went to Ireland to wed the king’s daughter.

Knowing that the prince was very fond of fish, the king asked the cook to prepare a delicious meal made of a whole fish with delicious vegetables.

The cook, wishing to buy the most beautiful fish that he could find around Ireland, visited all market places but could not find any worthy for that occasion. When the king knew of this, he saw the honour of his country in danger. He then promised that if anyone would find the required fish for the wedding, he would be well compensated.

Attracted by that promise, the fishermen went out to sea. But it was all in vain as their nets could not find any but just small fish.

In a non far away village, lived a pleasant fisherman named Patrick. He had just a little boat with which he couldn’t go and fish in the open sea. He was used to work only by the coastline, collecting molluscs and fishing small fish. That day, instead, he caught an enormous fish which he found difficult even to pull out of the sea into the boat. Trembling with emotion he rowed to the shore to take it to the king.

When he approached the king’s door the guard stopped him: “Halt! Who are you? What do you want?” Patrick showed him the fish and explained that he would like to offer it to the king.

The guard thought: “This man will be rich and honoured. Why didn’t a similar fortune happen to him?” Envious of the poor fisherman, he shouted at him:

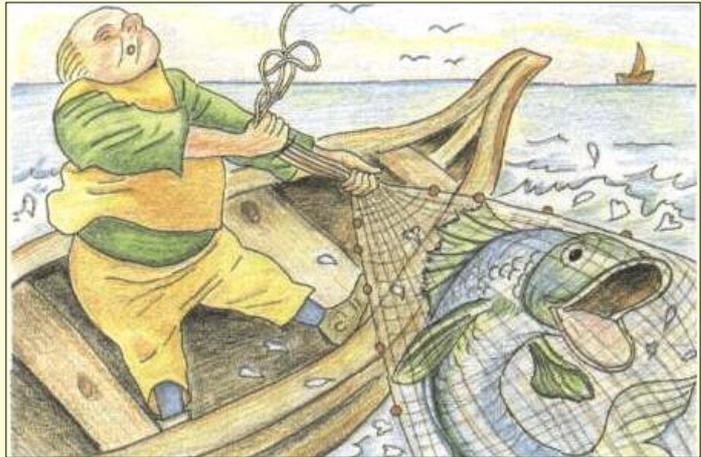
“From here you cannot pass unless ...” - and here he lowered his voice - “... unless you promise me half of what the king will give you.”

Patrick thought a little about this and smiling said: “O.K. half of it will be yours.” “Be on guard! Half, we said!” the guard menaced while letting him in.

At the sight of that magnificent fish, the king embraced Patrick and told him: “Ask what you want and I’ll give you!” Patrick answered: “I just want one hundred floggings.” “What did you ask for?” The king pretended not to understand. “One hundred floggings!” Patrick insisted. The king laughed: “Are you joking?” “No,” replied Patrick, “I am not joking at all. I’m really asking for one hundred floggings.”

The king thought the man had to be a little foolish, and asked one of his servants to give him what he was asking for, but winking at him, as to say: “Be gentle, do not harm him!”

When he was given fifty, Patrick said: “Stop! The other fifty floggings are for my partner in this business.” The king opened his eyes wide: “Is there another foolish man like you in Ireland?” “Of course he exists. He lives close to you. It’s the guard at the door of your palace. He let me come in on condition that I would divide with him your reward for the fish.” “Oh, greedy man! - exclaimed the king - He will get what he wanted!”



The soldier went to the guard: “The king wishes to see you so that you may have the same reward your partner has received.”

The guard already imagined himself rich, honoured, and even feared by the others. When he was in front of the king, he heard: “Your partner has already received his reward. It is your turn now.” The guard bowed and, full of joy, said: “Thank you, your majesty.”

And so, with great surprise and shame, he received, his reward: fifty floggings, not in a gentle way as with Patrick, but with all the strength of the soldiers. And after that, he was sent away from the palace and lost his job at the king’s service.

Boys, this was his reward for his greediness and jealousy. Most probably, I am not wrong saying that greediness and jealousy are the cause of many evil actions and misfortunes. So, my friends, if sometimes you discover in your hearts similar feelings, ask Jesus to win and throw them away. Instead, let’s repeat with the apostle Paul: “I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content” (Philippians 4:11).

**[Irish legend adapted by Giovanni Negro and illustrated by Christine Nicolson. From *Il Messaggero Avventista*, May 2005.]**

HEALTH FOR YOUNGSTERS

# ALCOHOL: DON'T LET IT BE YOUR FRIEND



It's just a little toy. It cannot scare anybody!

The habit of drinking alcohol



Look how it grows! But I can still force it to obey me. It is so harmless!



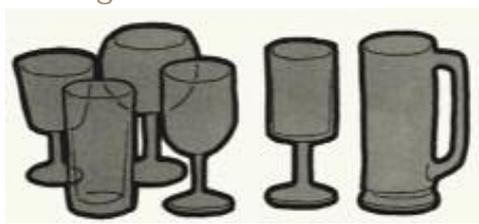
The habit of drinking grows very fast



I like playing with it. I feel so relaxed after we have fun together! It's strong but I can dominate it when I want.



The drinker thinks he can stop drinking whenever he wishes.



It's too strong! I am a prisoner. HELP! It's strangling me!



The drinker discovers - too late now - that he is prisoner of a habit so strong that he cannot abandon it any longer. He needs help.

(Adapted from Kathryn Smith and Harold Munson, The I-Don't-Want-To-Get-Sick Book, Review & Herald Publishing Association.)

**CHRISTIAN DICTIONARY**

**JESUS**

The word "Jesus" comes from the Latin *Iesus* and is the name of our Saviour. In Hebrew - the language from which it comes - is *Yeshuah*, the late form of *Yehoshuah*, "Joshua," which means "Yahweh saves." Some Biblical persons held this name. The most known is Joshua, Moses' successor, who took Israel into the promised land. In New Testament times *Yeshua*, "Jesus," was a common given name for Jewish boys. It expressed the parents' faith in God and in His promise of One who would bring salvation to Israel. The angel Gabriel instructed Joseph to call Mary's first-born by this name, the reason given being, "He shall save his people from their sins" (Mt 1:21). But Jesus will do even more than provide forgiveness for our sins. As the Old Testament Joshua introduced the people into the promised land "flowing with honey and milk" (Exodus 3:8), so our Jesus will return to introduce us into a new earth where "God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." (Revelation 21:4).

Every time we pronounce this name, we are saying that our salvation and hope is in Jesus, and the Gospel clearly says that "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12). This is why Christians should use no other name to obtain salvation. In Jesus we have all that we need.

**CHRIST**

We usually say "Jesus Christ" as if Christ were part of Jesus' name. In reality "Christ" is not a name but a title, and it means "anointed" which in Hebrew is *Mesiah*, and in Greek *Christos*. In the Old Testament the high priest (Ex 30:30), the king (2 Sa 5:3), and sometimes prophets (1 Ki 19:16) were "anointed" upon consecration to holy service, to represent God and lead the people. By the time, the prophets started announcing the coming of a special "anointed," the Messiah by excellency. He would be more than a normal prophet, king, or high priest. He would restore God's everlasting kingdom for His people, and give them justice, freedom, salvation: "For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the

increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever." (Isaiah 9:6-7)

Christ was not anointed with normal oil but with the Holy Spirit when he started His mission at His baptism: "When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, 'You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.'" (Luke 3:21-22)

Since that time, the Gospel of salvation in Jesus has been preached and you are invited to accept it with simplicity of heart and honesty of mind, so that you too may be part of the experience announced by the apostle Paul: "Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:9-11)

**CHANGE STRATEGY**

**One day, a blind man was sitting on the steps of a building. At his feet, a hat, and a writing saying: I'm blind. Please, help me!"**

**An advertiser passed by and stopped in front of the poor man and noticed that there were only a few cents in his hat. He bent down and put some more coins in it. After, without asking any permission from the man, he took the writing, turned it back and wrote a different sentence.**

**That same afternoon the advertiser returned where the blind man was sitting and noticed that the hat was full of coins and bank-notes. The blind man recognized the pace of the man and asked if he was the person who had changed his writing and what he had written.**

**The advertiser answered: "nothing that was not true. I just wrote yours in a different way." Then he smiled and went away.**

**The blind man never knew that on his sign the new writing was saying: "Today is spring and I cannot see it."**

**When life is not getting on as you wish, change your strategy and you will see the difference.**



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