

# 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

### MAY I INTRODUCE MYSELF?

**M**y name is David Ferraro and I will soon be the new pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist church here in Malta. I am so glad to be here, Malta is a wonderful country indeed, and we are very excited about ministering God's Word here. I will replace pastor Leonardi, who will serve several churches in the north of Italy.

loving, living relationship with God the Father our Creator and with His Son Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. I invite our readers to keep their eyes on Him. We cannot find a better friend and guide. He loves each one of us and we can fully trust Him.

Feel free to contact us either by e-mail or by phone. Both my wife and I will be very happy to get in touch with you.

May God bless the readers of our magazine.

**Past. David Ferraro**

Thank you for welcoming us into the wonderful, Christian Maltese family.

Let me tell you something about myself and my family. I am married to Fiorella, a lovely Italian lady, and we have a daughter, Elisa, who is studying in an Adventist University in the United States.

I had my theological training in Florence, Italy, and in the USA, in the state of Massachusetts. My wife also studied religion and education. After spending almost six years in America, in 1985 we moved back to Italy, where I have been a Seventh-day Adventist pastor for about eleven years, in three different regions of Northern Italy (Genova, Padova, Parma).

Then in 1995 my family and I moved to Africa, where we served the church and people in need for almost ten years. We have worked in West Africa (Niger and Mali) and in Central Africa, precisely in Burundi. I have always worked for the SDA church and my wife has been the director of ADRA, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency of our denomination.

Our African experience has been very intense. We have learned to appreciate and serve people very different from us. I assisted in the preaching of God's Word, and my wife supervised several development, educational, and relief projects. Yes, we had a lot of satisfactions, and we thank the Lord for this exciting African experience.

In the month of May 2005 we moved back to Italy and now we are looking forward to working here in Malta. As we arrived, we had the feeling that the Maltese are very religious people. Yes, it is indeed very important to have a



Pastor Ferraro's family

### Index

<b>Let us just say goodbye (G. and G. Leonardi)</b> .....	p. 2
<b>An experience of service in Africa (F. Ferraro)</b> .....	p. 3
<b>The man who couldn't be killed (S. Maxwell)</b> .....	p. 5
<b>News from the world</b> .....	p. 7
<b>Boys story (G. Sfatcu Beattie)</b> .....	p. 8
<b>The Internet Addiction (G. Marrazzo)</b> .....	p. 9
<b>Following Jesus (A. Stagno)</b> .....	p. 10
<b>When the dead fish became alive</b> .....	p. 11
<b>A scientific evaluation of evolution and creation</b> .....	p. 12

## CHRISTIAN TESTIMONY

## LET US JUST SAY GOODBYE

One could say, "It seems like only yesterday!" and instead it was longer than eight years ago when we arrived in Malta to serve our small Adventist community in these islands at the centre of the Mediterranean Sea.

My wife and I have lived this time of our life with passion. We never got bored. Sometimes we felt tired, sometimes excited, sometimes sad, sometimes worried, but much more often we were happy, and always filled with love and hope.

This modest and simple magazine has been a way to share our love for Jesus and for people. Sometimes some have found it offensive because it was contradicting the common understanding of Christian religion, but others have found it stimulating and positive. We thank all the friends who have read it. It doesn't matter if they agree or not. What matters is to read and judge honestly, with an open mind and an open heart. As Christians, our worst danger is that of believing that we are already perfect. We may apply this idea of perfection to our personal understanding, to our actions, to our church, or to our own faith. In any case, when it happens we die, for life is development while self satisfaction stops it.

The Gospel says that our perfection will always stay in front of us, for it is Jesus. We have always to progress "till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesiens 4:13). This implies humility in regard of our present condition and hope for our future. In humility we are living in this perspective. In humility we have invited our readers to do the same. We all look forward to knowing and being better. If we could help in this process, this is our joy and our way to honour God. For our possible wrongs we ask for forgiveness.

We do not know if we'll meet again. We are now going to serve in the north of Italy, in the cities of Asti, Alessandria, and Montaldo Bormida. But all of us are going forward to meet again in front of Jesus, on that glorious day of His glorious appearance. We hope all of us will be there, on the side of the sheep to whom Jesus will say: "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34).

**Giovanni and Gianna Leonardi**



## A NON FORGOTTEN FRIEND WROTE

*When I came to Malta, Mr. J.C. helped me go through some legal practices about my car. Being a kind person and a Christian believer, it was so easy for us to share thoughts about our Christian faith. After those first moments, we never had the opportunity to meet but I started to send him our Il-Lehen tat-Tama. Some weeks ago, to my surprise, I received a few lines on his part. He simply said:*

Just dropping you a few lines to wish you well for the coming years. Hope you are OK. By the way, I read your magazine on a regular basis and I must admit, although I must stick to my church's teachings, I still find your magazine so very interesting and helpful in my lifestyle and spiritual well being.

Wishing you the best of health and may God through His son Jesus, assist you in your evangelical mission.

*I replied to thank and ask the permission to publish his words, to which he replied:*

Dear Pastor Giovanni,

It is so sad to hear you will be leaving our beautiful island. Of course, Jesus Christ is so demanding! I must admit I do sometimes get lazy spiritually. However, that striking look that Jesus gave to Peter following his denial in front of so many people inspires me to continue through my conversion...

I must admit, your magazine is a means of reviving my faith. Please keep up your good work and No definitely, I do not mind printing my humble feelings on **Il-Lehen tat-Tama**, and No I will never forget the cordial discussions we used to have in my office, keeping in mind that we have, after all, one Thing in common... Jesus Christ ... humanity's only hope.

Jesus will surely assist you in your new mission. Keep up your humble mission and may Almighty God be with you ... always... through Jesus Christ as promised.

J. C., your brother in Christ [Signed letter]

**Thank you Mr. J.C. You give me hope that my mission may have not been in vain. Maybe other silent and unknown friends, one day will open their hearts and manifest their feelings. Above everything else I hope they may say, "Yes, Jesus is my Friend and Lord and I wish to love and obey Him according to His Word that we find in the Holy Scripture."**

**Past. Giovanni Leonardi**

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

# AN EXPERIENCE OF SERVICE IN AFRICA

## The Adventist Development and Relief Agency in Mali – West Africa



ADRA was founded by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Mali and has obtained its legal status on 02, August 1988. Its mission is to reflect the character of God through humanitarian and development activities empowering communities to solve their own problems.

### MALI - FACTS

- Population : 12 millions
- Population under 15 years : 46%
- Life expectancy : 48 years
- Total fertility rate : 6.9% per woman
- Infant mortality : 141 per 1000 live births
- Moderate and severe underweight children (1-5 years old) : 27%
- Population with access to safe water : 52%
- Population with access to adequate sanitation : 6%

### CURRENT SITUATION

Mali has one of the least developed economies in the world with a very low per capita income (\$265 a year). 80% of its population is rural and depends on subsistence agriculture that is continuously threatened by the desertification process and the decreasing of rainfall. Frequent droughts, the few amounts of exportable products, serious unemployment, high population growth (2.8%), and a still very young private sector contribute all to the country's increasing economic difficulties.

The low literacy rate has limited the understanding of information, education and communication messages, particularly among women. Therefore, having less educational and employment opportunities than men, they are more likely to remain poor and in poor health.

### PROJECTS

ADRA/Mali started its activities in 1985 by being involved in a relief intervention that responded to the needs of a prolonged famine caused by drought and shortage of rainfall. Since then, it has operated in emergency food distribution, water and natural resources management, agriculture, health, literacy, education and economic development.

In the years 1990's ADRA/Mali implemented an *integrated development program* (ACERAT) in the rural area. It included management of natural resources, water and sanitation, micro-enterprise, literacy, health and hygiene and community organization for sustainable development.



The *community education program* (COMED) built the capacities of the local partners, the majority of them



being women, in the areas of education, health and hygiene as well as basic community development.

During the years 2000-2004, ADRA/Mali *primary education program* (PAREN) served 32 community schools. This program's activities included: rehabilitation of schools, provision of school materials, health assistance, school vegetable gardens and food distribution.



In addition, the program *women economic development* (MICBA) is targeting rural and urban women. Through micro-credit, it assists them to manage small income generating activities such as chair renting, dyeing clothes for sale, small commerce, etc.



### IMPACTS

ADRA/Mali's *rural development program* has changed the life of local partners enhancing their productive capacity and their access to food, even during drought. It has made available water for drinking and for irrigation promoting health and hygiene in the villages. It has organized group and individual gardening, which are promoting the availability of vegetables and a better nutrition. It has planted fruit trees and wood trees, providing wood for cooking fire and preventing further deforestation.

The Community Education program has enabled participants to read and write in their own language, to practice principles of hygiene and health and to organize themselves in structures of auto-development. In addition, it has raised awareness on the importance of sending children to school. "I was like a blind person in the middle of the market when I was illiterate. But now, thanks to ADRA I can read and write and easily bargain in the market. What a great change it is for me! Enchee (thanks) ... ", said a participating woman.

The program supporting primary education has created environments promoting learning in schools having inadequate facilities; it has given access to quality education to poor children and girls in particular. It has promoted health and hygiene in school and initiated students in vegetable gardening.

The micro-credit program has initiated women in a practical activity generating income and improved access to food and better living of the women beneficiaries and their families.

**LEARNING EXPERIENCE**

ADRA's past experience has shown that community participation, linked with education and training, is a vital initiative and the best entry point in order to start changing human behaviour and to have a sustainable impact on the lives of poor communities.



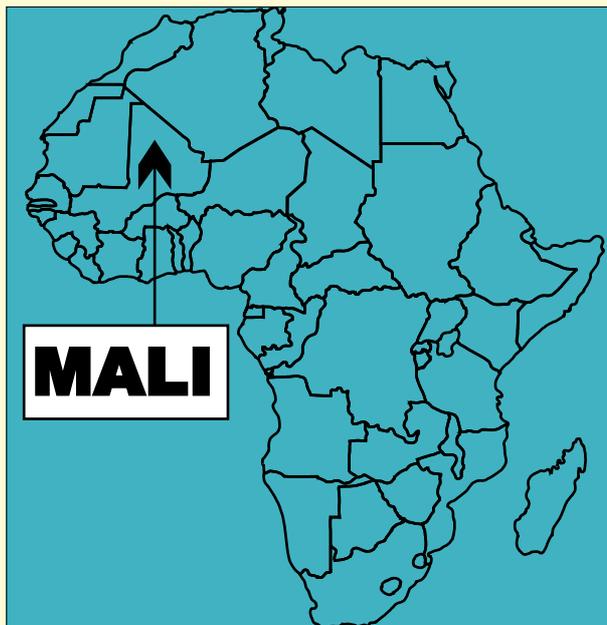
Community participation is essential because unless the community owns the program, there is little chance that the project's impacts will be sustained. For this reason, ADRA/Mali today involves its local partners at all stages and levels of program implementation, and both groups and individuals have become the focal point of all its activities. Education and training has proved also to be essential not only for broadening the thinking and enhancing the decision-making capacity of the target beneficiaries but also for building capacities and assist them to identify local resources leading to affordable and sustainable development.

**FUTURE RESEARCH**

The level of poverty in Mali is such that there is an increasing pressure on ADRA to expand its areas of intervention. Many leaders and villagers, particularly women, present requests such as to dig wells, build classrooms, to receive micro-credit, to create vegetable gardens etc....

ADRA/Mali is planning to conduct research on:

- Expanding the existing projects to touch other needy populations of the country;
- Implementing programs that alleviate poverty and enhance household food security;
- Building organizational capacity to meet the ever-changing procedures and competencies of the development field.



**FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES**

It is hoped that ADRA/Mali can be assisted to mitigate the level of poverty in Mali by expanding its areas of intervention.

**Mrs. Fiorella Ferraro**

(ADRA/Mali Director 1998-2004)

**KNOW THE BIBLE ON YOUR TELEVISION**



Many friends 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.

The first is privately held by some members of the Adventist Church, the second is the new official network of the church itself. Both are equally worth being watched. You will not find any artificial religious excitement but a quiet, spiritual atmosphere, and a sound explanation of the Holy Scriptures.

For more information, visit their web sites:

**WWW.3ABN.ORG and WWW.HOPETV.ORG**

## CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCES

# THE MAN WHO COULDN'T BE KILLED

An incredible story of faith and persecution during China's Cultural Revolution

## RESUMÉ OF THE PREVIOUS PARTS

Mr. Glorious Country Wong went to Shanghai in 1927. There, he became a police officer, married two ladies, and had some children. Because of gambling he also started to have problems and was going to destroy his life. But God had different projects for Him. During the Japanese occupation, the desolated Shanghai allowed him to discover an abandoned Bible and he started studying it with a Bible Correspondence Course offered by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. So he discovered Jesus, who became his best Friend, and started obeying the Ten Commandments.

He renounced his previous traditional religion and polygamy. Since his job wouldn't allow him to be honest with God and with people, he renounced it too, and trusted only in God for his future.

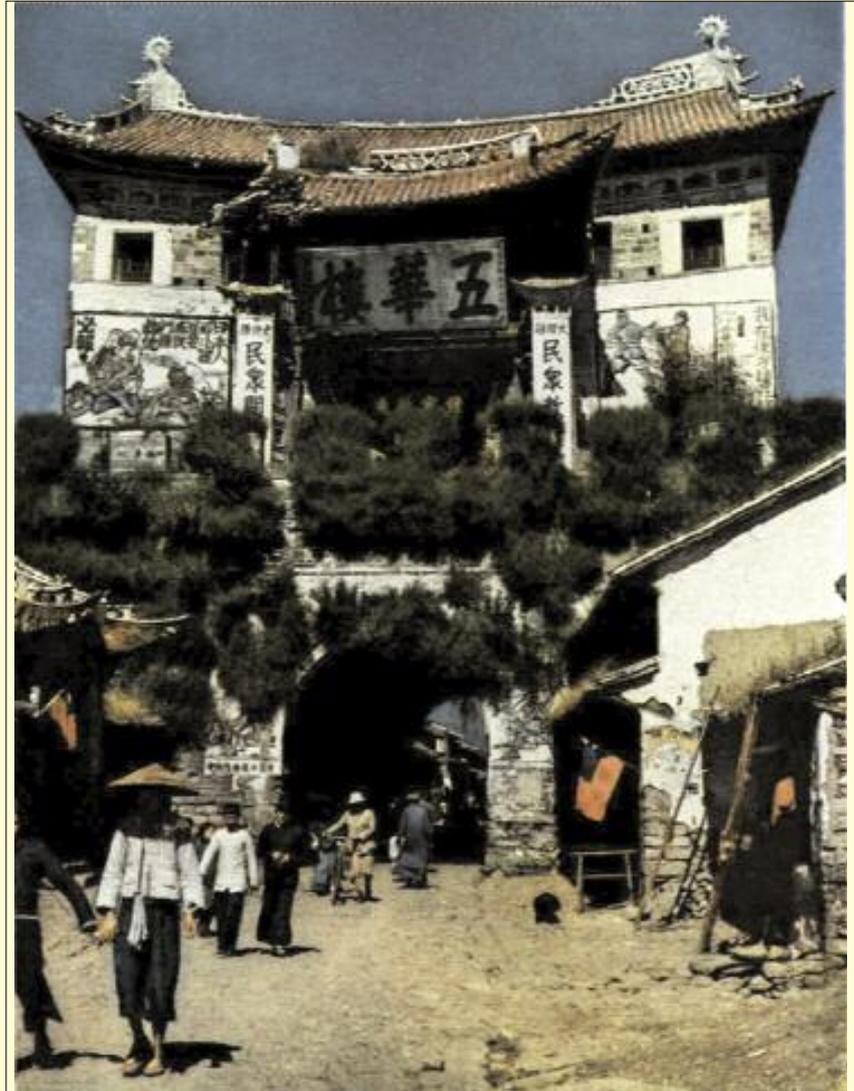
Meanwhile, China became communist and to the usual social and economic problems, a new menace was added, that against personal and social freedom, especially during the so called Cultural Revolution.

## IN A HARD LABOUR CAMP

Life became very hard in China for most of the people. But Mr. Wong and his family had to suffer because of their faith too. The observance of the Sabbath (Saturday) as a day of rest commanded by God made his faith visible, but even without the Sabbath, Mr. Wong would never renounce giving testimony of his love for Jesus.

Imprisoned and humiliated, Mr. Wong was at last sent with other victims of political and religious intolerance to a desolated highland region of the internal China to spend twenty years of his life in a hard labour camp.

When they arrived they found nothing but desolation. Under the surveillance of the guards, they had to build their own "barracks", in reality some subterranean burrows with niches to sleep in. When difficulties came, they had also to collect their own food searching for edible herbs in the fields. Many died because they ate poisonous herbs. Other died because of illnesses and all the pains they were exposed to. A Roman Catholic priest was a prisoner too, because of his faith, but Mr. Wong's sort was much worse because he decided to keep the Sabbath rest even in that labour camp (can you imagine



A painting illustrating how China was at the time of Mr. Wong's youth

how he could do so?) and also not to eat pork, the main and most nutritious food the camp could pass ... till when it lasted. He did so in obedience to God's commandment not to eat unclean animals (Leviticus 11).

Mr. Wong's survival in such conditions would be really a miracle, but this is what happened for he trusted in his Friend, and Jesus made miracles for him.

We are sorry we won't be able to narrate all the story. So we have decided to close our narration with this issue, by sharing with you just a few episodes of Mr. Wong's long testimony. We hope some of our readers may wish to buy the book to know the remaining parts.

## A TASTE OF HARD LABOR CAMP

The first morning in the camp, no one was given any food. The guards arranged the prisoners for exercises and roll call and issued communal work assignments.

"Criminals are required to meet daily quotas," a guard lectured. "If any criminal doesn't meet his quota, he'll be punished. There'll be no leniency and no exceptions!" Calling the prisoners by name, he assigned some to dig an underground burrow for living quarters and others to clean out a corral for some neighboring nomads. "Criminals in this unit will pick up the dried sheep, goat, and yak droppings and cart the dung to the camp to be used for fuel to bake bricks and cook meals."

Then Mr. Wong heard his name called. "This unit will make bricks! Each inmate should form five hundred bricks a day or be solely responsible for the consequences."

A guard supervised Mr. Wong's work unit. "First, we need an adobe wall to surround the area," he ordered. They used the dirt from the excavating to form bricks. Mr. Wong felt as though he were an Israelite slave in Pharaoh's Egypt mixing straw and mud.

Though they toiled the entire day, no one was given any food. The hungry prisoners salivated, watching the guards eat. Though his stomach ached, Mr. Wong remembered the walk home from church when his family had no food and Little Doll had declared it a time to fast. He found comfort, despite stomach cramps, following his daughter's example and declaring his first day in camp a day of fasting.

At the end of the day, the guards calculated the number of bricks each prisoner had made. Two of the inmates in Mr. Wong's unit had fallen short of their quota.

"What did the superintendent say this morning?" one of the guards barked.

"Criminals should make five hundred bricks," the prisoners replied.

"Why did you disobey orders?"

The guilty inmates said nothing.

"Come with me," the guard commanded.

The guard led the two prisoners to the hole that had been dug by the cave-digging team. He slapped one of the prisoners on the back of the head. "Take off your shoe," he ordered.

The prisoner took off a shoe and handed it to the guard.

"I don't want it," the guard snapped. "Give it to your friend." The prisoner handed his shoe to the other inmate, who took it.

"Now bend down!" the guard ordered the prisoner with the bare foot. The inmate leaned over.

The guard turned to the prisoner holding the shoe. "Smack him with the shoe and shout, 'Why didn't you meet your quota?' Don't stop till you're tired. When you need a rest, remove your shoe and trade places with him. He'll hit you and shout about your laziness. Trade off until I give you permission to stop."

The prisoners beat each other all evening until they were exhausted and hoarse. About midnight, the guard returned. "Are you going to meet your quota tomorrow?"

"Oh yes!" they chorused.

"Promise?"

"We promise!" they croaked. "Thank you for teaching us this valuable lesson about quotas! Please forgive us and let us sleep tonight."

"All right, you can sleep now." Relieved, the men put their shoes back on and dragged themselves to a spot out of the wind where they could sleep.

That night, hungry and tired, Mr. Wong talked with his Friend Jesus. "Thank You for giving me the strength to meet my quota. Help me never to fall short so they can't force me to beat a fellow inmate. May I prove my loyalty to China by being a good worker."

#### **THANKING GOD FOR THE FOOD**

For breakfast each morning, the guards lined up the prisoners in front of their niches. They squatted as the guards served them steamed rolls and cooked greens harvested from nearby fields. Mr. Wong thought mealtime was an opportune time for witnessing. He hoped his fellow inmates would ask him about his Friend Jesus. Like his hero Daniel, who prayed openly three times daily, Mr. Wong determined to do the same. When the guards handed him his steamed roll, Mr. Wong set his plate on the ground, bowed his head, closed his eyes, and thanked God for his meagre meal. When he opened his eyes, he discovered his steamed roll and vegetables had vanished.

"Looking for something?" the inmate next to him said.

"My food's gone."

"Did you eat it?"

"No."

"What's the problem here?" A guard came up to Mr. Wong.

"My food is gone."

"What happened?"

"I closed my eyes to thank the Real God for the food," Mr. Wong explained. "When I opened them, my food had disappeared."

"Come with me, Criminal Wong." Mr. Wong followed the guard up the dirt steps that led outside the cave. He saw his vegetables crushed into the ground. The roll had dirty footprints stamped on it. He couldn't eat the vegetables, but the roll was salvageable.

"Pick it up!"

Mr. Wong obeyed. He followed the guard back down into the burrow. "Do you know why this happened, Criminal Wong? Your superstition angered a prisoner. He despised you because you thanked a god who does not exist for the food the government issued you." Everyone heard the guard's loud accusations.

"Your God didn't give you the food—your government did! I'm very disappointed in your ungratefulness, Criminal Wong. Your kind government takes care of the Christians and Muslims in the camp. The Muslims get their special food with enough oil and clean vegetables. They show appreciation for our great favour of kindness by kneeling at our feet and kissing our hands. Why don't you thank your government instead of your so-called Real God? When a prisoner saw your ingratitude toward the Party, he thought you didn't deserve to eat, so he dashed outside and stomped on your steamed roll. Learn your lesson, and give up your superstition!"

"My Friend Jesus made it possible for the government to serve us this food," Mr. Wong answered. "Everything belongs to Him, even the cattle on a thousand hills!"

Mr. Wong ate what had remained of his dirty food. At the next meal, he boldly bowed his head, closed his eyes, and thanked God again.

#### **THE END OF THE STORY**

Mr. Wong was one of the few survivors from that hard labour camp. At the end of the Cultural Revolution, he was released in the year 1979.

For his faith, he had suffered what we cannot even imagine, but also he had the privilege of seeing God's protecting power in his life.

When we are afraid for the criticism people can pass on to us now, and we do not manifest our faith openly, we should think of what it means to be really persecuted. We have good reasons to thank God for the freedom we can enjoy, and decide to be totally faithful to Him.

**Dr. Stanley Maxwell**

[Extracted from *The Man Who couldn't Be Killed*]

**NEWS FROM THE WORLD**

**DENMARK: ADVENTISTS AIM FOR BRIDGE BUILDING TO MUSLIM NEIGHBORS**

Nærum, Denmark [Adventist News Review/ANN]

Responding to the global uproar over a series of controversial cartoons published in a Danish newspaper, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Denmark is reaching out to build bridges of understanding with its Muslim neighbors.

In their sermons pastors have taken up questions on freedom of speech and the relationship between Islam and Christianity. Members of the church have participated in the public debate on this issue by contributing letters and articles to the papers. The Danish Adventist church paper, *Adventnyt*, will produce a special feature on the cartoon controversy in its next edition. The Bible Correspondence School is conducting an advertising campaign for its course dealing with Christian and Muslim relations. And, special public meetings on Islam are scheduled in Denmark, the Faroe Islands and Norway.

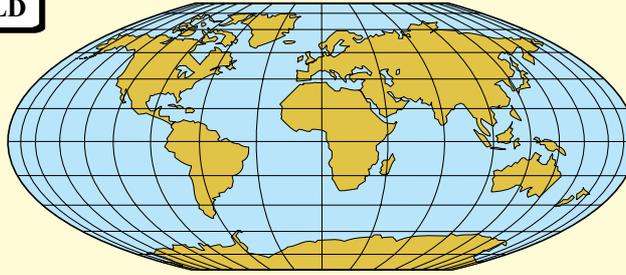
The book *Muslims among Christians in Denmark* by Adventist missiologist and pioneer director of the Seventh-day Adventist Global Centre for Islamic Studies, Børge Schantz, Ph.D., has been revised to include a new chapter on the current situation. This chapter deals especially with the themes that are high on the agenda in media, governments and religious circles in both Western and Muslim worlds. The book suggests interesting ways to build genuine relationships between the native Christian and the Muslim immigrants wherever they meet.

Church administrators say they will send copies of the revised book on Islam as a gift to ministers, members of parliaments in both Denmark and the Faroe Islands, as well as mayors in Danish cities and towns.

**THAILAND: ADRA GIVES GIRLS A SAFETY NET AMID HUMAN TRAFFICKING EXPLOSION**

Chiang Rai, Thailand [Taashi Rowe/ANN]

To be a poor girl in Thailand can sometimes mean being dis-



pensable, a “possession” easily traded for money, and then used for sex.

Human trafficking, or modern day slavery, is a horrifying reality for its victims. The desperately poor and uneducated are easy targets. In Thailand, where the sex industry thrives, girls as young as 10 often end up working as prostitutes.

Not many people understand how widespread this problem is, especially among young girls. In 1998 the director of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) in Thailand and his staff were working in a rural area and noticed that girls in the village weren't in school.

It soon became clear why. Even though education in Thailand is free, it is possible to be too poor to attend school. Students must pay for books, transportation and uniforms that can cost about US\$400 a year.

It is easier for parents who are struggling to survive to send their children to work to help support the family. But often there isn't sufficient work in these small, poor villages. So when men and women come from the big cities pro-

claiming the abundance of jobs as maids in big houses or as waitresses in restaurants, parents often succumb to the allure. Parents are often given as little as US\$100 for their daughters with the promise that their daughters will work and send back money.

“When we realized the extent of the problem, we came up with the idea to facilitate their education, because if they are going to school their parents will not try to sell them,” Young recalls. “These families don't want to lose their daughters, but if they are not an added expense then they can keep them at home and in school.”

ADRA staff started working with these girls in 1998 through the Nowarat Project. The staff would go to the schools and talk to the principals and teachers about girls who used to attend school. This was how they found the girls they helped. ADRA Thailand helped pay for books, uniforms and transportation. Last summer the ADRA staff wrote a proposal and started a full-scale operation called the “Keep Girls Safe Project.”

“Now we have a system of target areas and have a dedicated full-time staff in the areas of great need,” Young says. “We have also set up an operations centre. We've talked to local government authorities and talked to other non governmental organizations about doing this project. We work with local authorities, with schools and the local village elders.” For more information see [www.adra.org](http://www.adra.org).

Cut and use the prepaid post card, if you wish to communicate with us.

Postage will be paid by Licensee

No postage stamp necessary if posted in Malta & Gozo

BUSINESS REPLY SERVICE N° 243

**ADVENTIST CENTRE  
“THE VOICE OF HOPE”  
47, MANNARINO ROAD  
BIRKIRKARA BKR 08  
MALTA**

BOYS STORY

# IULIAN INVESTIGATES THE INVESTIGATORS

There was a time - and somewhere it is the same even now - when to import Bibles and distribute them was considered a crime. Iulian, a 12 year-old boy, was courageous enough to challenge the police and help people get the Bible they needed. But he was discovered and when he went to school Mr. Lupu asked Iulian about what was going on.

“Don’t pretend that you don’t know,” Mr. Lupu shouted. “You counted them and told your sister, ‘There are 50 in each box’ Remember?” Iulian was silent.

“We have our ways of finding out everything. Now get out of here!”

Iulian had been involved in receiving Bibles since he was 8. His job was to make sure that the street was clear. He would walk around, observing everything that was happening. When the road was safe, the Bibles were brought and quickly unloaded.

“They heard what we said in the living room,” Iulian whispered to his sister, Corina, and their grandmother when he got home. “How could they know?” they wondered, but they had been noticing something strange happening in the house of Ionel, their neighbours’ child. So Iulian thought he had to go and investigate. He went out pretending to play.

“What do you have there, Iulian?” asked Ionel.

“A red double-decker bus,” answered Iulian, putting another piece of pink bubble gum in his mouth. “It’s from friends of my aunt in England. You can play with it a little if you like.”

“Can I have some bubble gum? My mom always says there is none in the stores.”

“I’ll give you a whole packet if you let me see your toys in your room,” said Iulian.

“OK,” Ionel agreed, and took him into the house adjoining theirs.

“You have a nice house,” Iulian said as they stepped onto the Persian carpet in the living room. There his eyes went up and down, right and left, taking in everything.

“What is that?” Iulian asked, pointing to a reel-to-reel recorder.

“That’s a tape recorder,” replied Ionel. “You press the button, and it records what you say. Some men came and put it there. My father puts it on when you have guests. Then the men come and take the tape.”

That was all Iulian needed to see. “Thanks, Ionel. You can keep the bus as well as the bubble gum.”

So that’s how they heard me counting Bibles! Should we cancel the next shipment? he wondered. Lord, help me

to know what to do. Are the other rooms bugged as well? Iulian wondered. He went around the house looking for anything suspicious.

### TRACKING THE DEVICE

A few days later Iulian thought he heard something beeping. They had no radio in the house and no electronic equipment. So, he and his sister started following the sound, it took them to the chimney.

“It must be a microphone,” whispered Grandma. “When your father was alive he found one in the attic. They start beeping when they go wrong.”

Iulian got down on his knees and looked up the chimney from the fireplace.

“I have to go up on the roof,” he whispered, and he went while grandma walked around outside to keep watch, and Corina held the ladder.

There was the microphone, inside the chimney. It was making beeping sounds.

“What should we do with it?” whispered Corina.

“Let’s bury it at the back of the garden,” said Iulian.

They quickly dug a hole in the ground and put the beeping microphone in it. Then they covered it with earth and stepped on it until no more sound could be heard.

“It’s dead,” said Iulian.

Another week passed, and the next load of Bibles was safely delivered. But the secret police knew that something was wrong.

“What did you do with the microphone?” Mr. Lupu asked Iulian at school.

But Iulian refused to tell them. From that time on hidden microphones were not easy to plant as long as Iulian was living in that house. And God’s Word continued to spread to those who were eager to receive it.

Adpted from a true story written by **Genovieva Sfatcu Beattie**

Please, send without obligation, and free  
(Mark what you wish)

- Next issues of *Il-Lehen tat-Tama* (if you do not already receive it regularly).
- The illustrated Bible Correspondence Course “Discover” in 26 lessons.
- I would like to have a personal meeting with Pastor Ferraro to know better about your faith and/or discuss some problems.
- You can use the space below for a question or an opinion. (Card n° 42)

Mr./Mrs./Miss \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

## CHRISTIAN SOCIOLOGY

## CAUGHT INTO THE NET

### The Internet Addiction

A couple of years ago, a simple news became the emblem of an epochal change in our life style.

The marriage of a couple in Cremona (North of Italy), after ten years of common life, entered a crises because the husband, addicted to the Internet, had started spending time in front of the computer keeping virtual relationships with other ladies (ANSA). In the official acts of the separation case, the wife described the husband, once a sweet and caring person, as having become a totally different one. And all this because of the new pastime, without considering the increase in the telephone bills.

The great opportunities offered by technology when applied to communications open scenarios that we couldn't hardly imagine before. Surely, the possibility of being connected by the net offers an extraordinary development of humans capacities and potentialities. But there is also the other side of the coin! The Internet dependency creates psychological phenomenons similar to that produced by psycho active substances. In 1965 Ivan Goldberg, psychiatrist and researcher at the Columbia University in New York, coined the expression "Internet Addiction Disorder" and defined some criteria for the evaluation of the risk.

Dr. Kimberly S. Young, author of a very important book on the Internet addiction, and assistant of psychology at the University of Pittsburgh (USA), has carefully and scientifically investigated the phenomenon and the psychological effects on people and their families. Kimberley Young has become the most influential expert on the techno-pathology. But, ironically, to warn the youth against the Net-Dependency, you have to use nothing less than the Internet itself!

What risks are we exposed to?

The symptoms of this new addiction are not easy to discern because we are in the presence of something new and it is yet early to define sure diagnostic parameters. We offer some elements that wouldn't be wise to underestimate:

1. Need of spending an increasing length of time on the Internet, to feel satisfied. This way the sleep-watch rhythm is altered.

2. Important loss of interest for all activities but "navigation".

3. Crisis of abstinence characterized by psycho motory agitation, anxiety, depression, obsessive thoughts.

4. Inability to keep under control the time spent on the Internet, or inability to close the connection.

5. Waste of time in the Net related activities.

6. Continuous use of Internet notwithstanding the physical, social, working, psychological troubles caused by the Net.

Naturally, not all Net users are "caught into the net." Normal users can remain connected even for a long time but they are able to fully control the tool.

At risk are those who do not possess the full knowledge of the technical skills to navigate and just start because of curiosity becoming assiduous in conversations with more and more people connected on the Internet (chat line). Such persons start having physical, sociologic, and psychological problems, but only the addicted person starts having a compulsory attitude. To feel totally satisfied, they need to remain longer and



longer on the Net. They start suffering abstinence symptoms (anxiety, tremors, obsessive thoughts). When all this happens they have become slaves of the Net and such a phenomenon doesn't involve only teenagers but adults too.

Being dependent on virtual relationships, makes our relationship with true people very difficult and, as in a kaleidoscope, it distorts our self apperception. If such is the case, we need and we can find help, both from the people who love us and from Jesus.

**Pastor Giuseppe Marrazzo**

#### **What a human being needs is true love from true people, self esteem and a project for life that can give assurance and hope.**

When we have this, we do not need any longer any artificial relationships. We can come out of the darkness of our computer's room and face with joy our responsibilities in front of ourselves and of the people who love us and whom we love. Life will be a challenging and rewarding experience, much more exciting than all the Internet or video games stuff.

Jesus is the open door for a better life, for in Him we find a friend, a hope, and the power to overcome our fears. In Him we discover the truth about God, but also about ourselves, our life, the world. In Jesus we find freedom for He says to those who believe in Him:

**"If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31,32)**

And He adds:

**"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30)**

## CHRISTIAN MEDITATION

## FOLLOWING JESUS? IT'S OUR PRIVILEGE!

“**A**nd Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.’ They immediately left their nets and followed Him. Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.” (Matthew 4:18-22)

Who were these four men who left everything behind them to follow Jesus, a man who had just appeared on the scene of that small world around the lake of Capernaum, and yet a man whom they were waiting for to come, “the Messiah”? We read in the above text that Peter and Andrew were casting their nets at the time Jesus called them, and said to them “I will make you fishers of men.” On the other hand, James and John were mending their nets, but at their calling, the four immediately left everything and followed Jesus.

Sometimes, we too can be caught casting our drag net not for fish, but for the cares of this world, for our materialistic worries which keep us away from God’s calling. As fishermen untangle their catch from their net, so do we tend to untangle worldly things for personal possession. On the other hand we see how fishermen tend to their net to prepare for the next catch. Even so, we too can tend to our worldly net to prepare ourselves for more possessions. Jesus said to the four fishermen, “leave your nets and follow Me.” In our case, can it mean that we too must leave something to follow Jesus?

**Fishermen**

Having exercised this trade myself, I know by experience how hard fisherman work at sea, and also at port when they return from their fishing trip. Leaving their father and the boat with all its equipment and maybe some other hired hands, wasn’t an easy decision. And yet, without any hesitation, these four men dropped their nets and followed Jesus. They had to change their whole life style and trust in the Lord. They had to give up their lively hood, families and friends, because they believed what was written in the Holy Scriptures.

They were simple minded men, but educated enough to understand the testimonies of the prophets, and the law of God. They were waiting for the Messiah to come, they knew who He was through Scripture and they believed the Word of God. When the Messiah did come, they did not hesitate or doubt to have second thoughts to answer to their calling. They were ordinary Jewish believers who kept the law of Moses, and went to the synagogue for spiritual instruction and worship every Sabbath. They respected the teachings and traditions of the Pharisees and priests, but when the moment came to choose, they decided to follow Jesus, a carpenter’s son.

**What about us?**

What is it that may be holding us back from following Jesus? Are we willing and able to drop our fishing net, our cares of this world, and follow Him?

Today we have something much greater than the Apostles had to recognize that Jesus is calling, and asking us to follow Him. We have the testimony of the Apostles themselves. These four fishermen were eye witnesses to the fact that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah that they were waiting for, the Saviour of the world and of each one of us individually, if we just say, “Yes, I follow You!”

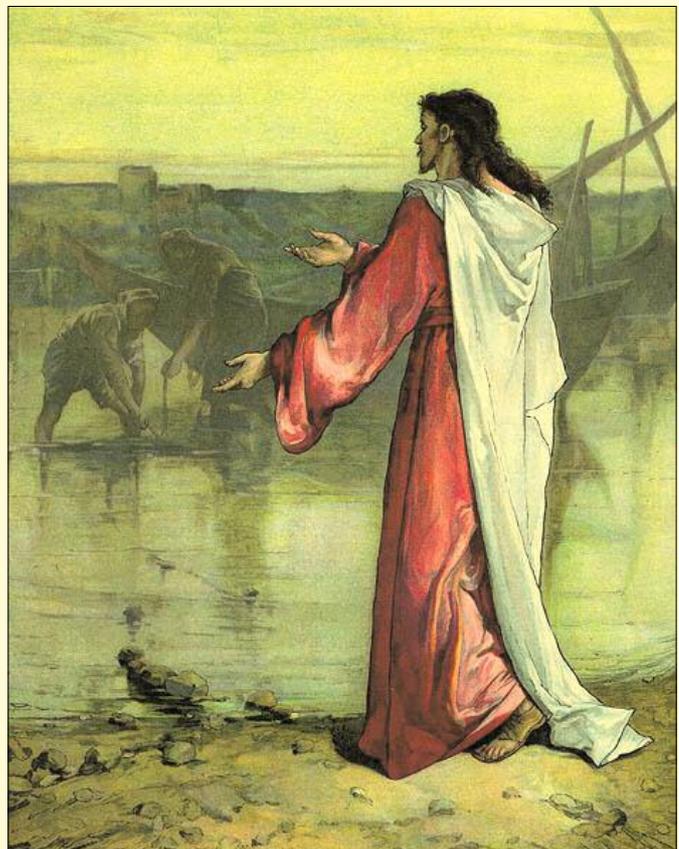
When we believe the testimony of the Scriptures, the Apostles and the others who wrote the New Testament writings, then we are on the way to heed the calling to follow Jesus. When we continue to read the Bible and believe

that it is God’s written word, and God Himself talking to us, He will start to make a change in our life as we ourselves start to follow Jesus and drop those nets which keep us stagnated day by day. Jesus said in Mark 8:34, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”

Do we hear Jesus calling? Or are we as fishermen sometimes say “entangled in the nets.” Let Jesus untangle us from the net of our world. After all, isn’t it time we dropped our net?

One day, one of these fishermen asked Jesus, “See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?” So Jesus said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, that ... everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.” Isn’t it a wonderful promise?

**Mr. Anthony Stagno**



**Jesus said to them:  
“Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”**

## BIBLE &amp; SCIENCE

## WHEN THE DEAD FISH BECAME ALIVE

### What does the Coelacanth say about evolution?

It is not every day that we can study a living being that was considered extinct. There are some fossils that have given us the possibility to find ourselves face to face with the inhabitants of past times. Each fossil has its anatomical, physiological, genetic characteristics and as we meet it alive, we have the unique possibility to compare reality with what we have thought about such an organism.

Even more, if the fossil that shows up among the living, is **one of the intermediate links** proposed by the theory of evolution, its study becomes very relevant. But let's ask ourselves a question, Up to what point can we trust the interpretations of the fossils and the evolutionary implications that were deduced of them?

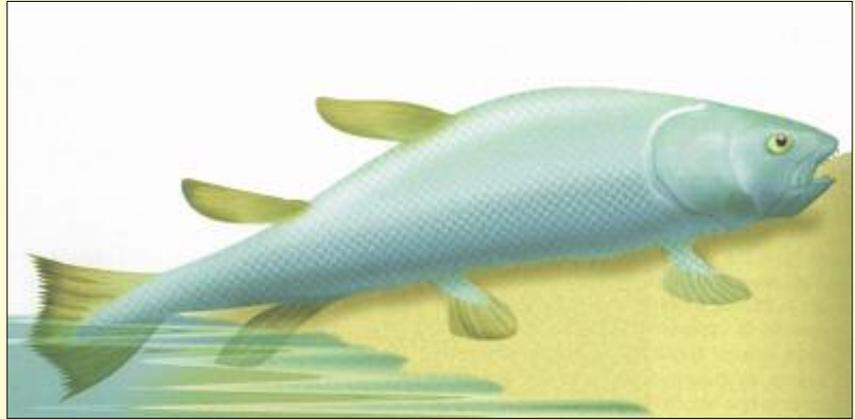
#### THE "RESURRECTION" OF A FOSSIL FISH

In the month of December 1938, the fossils of coelacanth "woke up" along the coasts of the Republic of South Africa. A blue fish was caught and brought ashore. The fish appeared very strikingly similar to the fossils of a fish that was thought to have been extinct 80 million years ago.

On July 30th, 1998, another similar fish was caught in Indonesia, fact which revealed a presence more widespread that it was thought at the beginning. (1)

The coelacanth, 'Latimeria chalumne'(2), has three anatomical and physiological characteristics of special interest: an intracranial articulation unique among all other living creatures and whose function is unknown, very peculiar fins and the capacity to detect electricity. The interpretations given to the fossil, however, were different.

The **fossils of coelacanths** are known since the 18th century and were considered as **intermediate links** between **fish** and **terrestrial vertebrates**. It was believed that they used to live in unsalted waters, that they would push themselves on the ground using their powerful fins, that their blood would pass through a structure similar to the lungs, and that they had a vertebral spine similar to the terrestrial vertebrates, solid enough to support the weight of the body without the floating push of the water.



#### THE 'RESURRECTED' FISH GIVES AN ANSWER

Now, the coelacanth has appeared, alive and strong, ready to answer all our questions, and, in so doing, we have confronted objective data.

The swim bladder of this animal, which was supposed to be an organ with breathing capacities, is full of fat. The vertebral spine does not allow the fish to live in dry land because it supports delicate ribs, and the fins can hardly support its 80 kilograms of weight. Besides, the brain is extremely small. Recently it has been possible to film specimen of coelacanth in water depth 150 metres and its behaviour has been observed on the sea floor (3): in no case the 'Latimeria' attempted to "walk".

In conclusion, anatomically and physiologically, it is a typical fish, it can hardly be considered an intermediate link, and it cannot move on dry land.

However, the 'Latimeria' was posing other problems to the theory of evolution. How is it possible a morphological variation so **insignificant** in eighty millions years? Darwin already knew cases of living fossils that, as the coelacanth, could be recognized for their morphology, and proposed the idea that their slow evolution during long periods of time was the consequence of a perfect adaptation in a well defined environment in which competition was absent. Other scientists have proposed a different idea, formulating the hypothesis that they did not change in an evident way because they adapted themselves to many different environments. Doubtless, both theories present serious difficulties.

On one side, we have to consider that the studies done on invertebrates living in very stable environments, like ocean beds, reveal a degree of **genetic variability** wider than what evolutionists were willing to suppose about invertebrates supposedly adapted to a specific environment. By example, it has been seen that the echinoderms (4), the brachiopods (5), the molluscs and other invertebrates present a degree of **genetic polymorphism** that can go up to 50 per cent. Practically the same polymorphism of animals that live in changing environments like woods or rivers.

On the other side, this fish has been found in the deep water of the Comoros islands, except the first specimen that has been found close to the continent; so, it looks like it is not living in other environments.

The analysis performed on the chain alpha and beta of the haemoglobin of the 'Latimeria', compared with the haemoglobin chain of other fish and amphibians reveal, at first sight (7), greater similarities with the tetrapods than with the rest of the fish that has been studied.

Inevitably, the news has raised contrasting opinions (8).

The coelacanth demonstrate how **fragile** are the **ideas based only on fossils**. From this concrete case we have to learn to be prudent in formulating theories based on fossils, of which we have scarce traces and upon which the supporters of evolution have concentrated their expectations.

(Translated from J. Flori and H. Rosolofomasoandro, *Creazione o Evoluzione*. See next page for the notes.)

## CHRISTIAN READING

## A SCIENTIFIC EVALUATION OF EVOLUTION AND CREATION

Science evolves, myths remain always the same. Is evolution a myth or a scientific fact. The book *Creazione o Evoluzione?* makes it very clear why we should be very cautious before we give our answer, for what is usually repeated is not automatically true.

Written by two learned scholars, it is also written in a clear language. Dr. Jean Flori is director of the French National Centre of Scientific Research. Dr. Henri Rasolofomasoandro was a researcher at the same French institution and a professor at the University of Geneva, Switzerland.

Originally printed in French in 1973, the book has been now updated by Dr. Celedonio Garcia-Pozuelo Ramos, a researcher on the variability in animal genetics, and printed jointly by the Spanish Editorial Safeliz and the Italian Edizioni AdV. The article on the previous page has been translated from this work to give an idea of the content.

The book has **342 wonderfully illustrated pages** and costs the equivalent of **LM 7.65**. We are so convinced of the

value of this book that we offer our dear readers the possibility of getting a copy paying only the price of the book while **Il-Lehen tat-Tama will pay for the postal expenses**. The offer is limited to the first ten readers who apply. If you like, you can use the supplied card on p. 8 of this magazine.

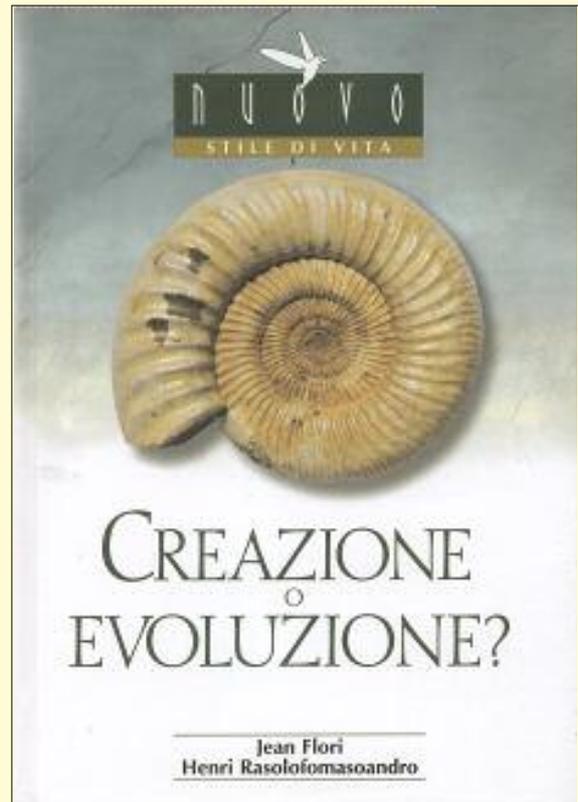
The main parts of the book are:

- 1) Evolutionist geology
- 2) Evolutionist palaeontology
- 3) Evolutionist biology
- 4) Alternative model
- 5) Dating methods

You will read about the dinosaurs, the first men, the true message of the Bible about the origin of life. You will know more about Charles Darwin, and mod-

ern evolution supporters. You will be introduced to the mysteries of biology (study of living beings), geology (study of rocks), and palaeontology (study of fossils). You will not become an expert, but you will be able to think with your own mind and judge by yourself where and how you came from, and why you are in this wonderful world.

The book is really a good food for thought.



### WHEN THE DEAD FISH BECAME ALIVE: NOTES

1. M.V. Erdmann, R.L. Calmdwell and M.K. Moosa, "Indonesian 'King of the sea' discovered", *Nature*, 1998, 395:335.

2. P.L. Forey, "Golden jubilee for coelacanth *Latimeria chalumnae*", *Nature*, 1988, 336: 727-732; P.L. Forey, 1990. "El celacanto", *Mundo Cientifico*, 10:28-36.

3. H. Fricke, 1990. "El celacanto", *GEO*, 44:2-33.

4. T.J.M. Schopf and J.L. Gooch, 1971, *Biological Bulletin*, 141:401.

5. J.L. Gooch and T.J.J.M. Schopf, 1972. "Genetic variability in the deep of the sea: Relation to environmental variability", *Evolution*, 26: 545-552.

6. F.J. Ayala, J.W. Valentine, D. Hedgecock and L.G. Barr, 1975, "Deep sea asteroids: High genetic variability in a

stable environment", *Evolution*, 29:203-212.

7. T. Gorr, T. Kleinschmidt and H. Fricke, 1991, "Close tetrapod relationships of the coelacanth *Latimeria* indicated by emoglobin sequences", *Nature*, 351: 394-397.

8. D. Stock and D.L. Swofford, "Coelacanth's relationships", *Nature*, 1991, 353:217-218.



*Il-Lehen tat-Tama* is published and distributed free of charge, every two months, by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Malta, as a friendly testimony of our Christian understanding of God's Word. Legally registered (18 September 1998). Editor G. Leonardi. Legal editor and publisher C. Mallia. You may apply for a free subscription, writing to "The Voice of Hope", 47, Mannarino Road, Birkirkara BKR 08. E-mail: "adventis@global.net.mt". ☎ 21 470 238. If you would like us to send this Newsletter to your friends, just let us know. **Credits:** Except when specified, the Biblical texts are quoted from the *New King James Version*. Printed by Print X Press, Birkirkara.