God has a specific purpose for his people in every age which cannot be discerned or accomplished without the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit. His purpose for us today is clearly identified in the following quote:

Success in any line demands a definite aim. He who would achieve true success in life must keep steadily in view the aim worthy of his endeavor. Such an aim is set before the youth of today. The heaven-appointed purpose of giving the gospel to the world in this generation is the noblest that can appeal to any human being. It opens a field of effort to everyone whose heart Christ has touched. (White 1903:262)

The goal of giving the gospel to the world “in this generation” may seem unattainable in view of the situation in the 10/40 Window and the long lists of countries closed to missionaries, unfriendly to evangelism, and even hostile toward Christians. However, Ellen White suggests there is “a divinely appointed means of rapidly extending the third angel’s message into all the nations of earth” (White 1914:4, emphasis mine).

This paper takes a candid look at the God-given task, identifies major obstacles impeding progress, and then explores a divine strategy and God’s providences designed to overcome those obstacles. It also observes the success of this strategy in action, identifies specific biblical lessons, inspired counsel, and divine providences by which God is seeking to guide and empower his people to rapidly accomplish the divinely appointed mission of giving the gospel to the world “in this generation.” Finally, it recommends guidelines for a more intentional implementation of this strategy in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in light of the fact that it is our privilege “not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord
Jesus Christ’” (2 Pet 3:12, margin; White 1900:69).

**The Task**

On the surface, it may appear that the world has almost been completely reached with the gospel. According to one source, “the Seventh-day Adventist Church has established work in all but 24” of the “228 countries and areas in the world” (Global Mission). However, a closer look reveals that even within countries that are counted as “reached” or “entered” there are many language groups that are still without any Christian influence. In the small country of Laos, for example, Seventh-day Adventist work has barely scratched the surface as it works in only two of the sixty-eight separate language and ethnic groups. The other sixty-six language groups remain unreached. This, sadly, is not an isolated case. The Joshua Project, a research initiative which compiles the work of numerous mission researchers, has identified 16,689 total distinct people groups worldwide, 6,898 of which are still unreached by any Christian denomination. This means that at least 2,799,637,000 people are still unreached by the gospel message (Great Commission Statistics). A quick look at the world population clock (which reached 7 billion on October 31, 2011 with a daily net population growth of more than 82,000, increasing at the rate of nearly three per second (Worldometers: Real Time World Statistics) together with some simple calculations, reveals that more than one third of the world’s population is still unreached by any Christian influence.

**Obstacles**

**Geographical Distance**

The outlook is complicated by the fact that of these 6,898 groups, 5,907 (86% of all unreached people groups) are clustered together in the 10/40 Window (Great Commission Statistics), an area which is geographically distant from most countries with large Christian populations, which makes missionary efforts to these countries expensive in terms of missionaries’ travel expenses.

**Difficult Access**

Many unreached language groups are isolated in mountain or jungle areas with the only access being narrow dirt trails which are impassable for days at a time after frequent rains.

**Multiple Diverse Language Groups with Few or No Resources**

Progress is further impeded by the fact that “of the 6,898 unreached people groups, about 3,557 (52%) are small groups under 10,000 in popu-
lation (or population unknown). . . . Of the remaining 3,341 unreached
groups, about 1,313 are under 50,000 in population” (Great Commission
Statistics). Numerous of these smaller language groups are without a writ-
ten language, and of those with a written language, there are many which
do not have Bibles in their languages. Wycliffe Bible Translators estimates
that there are more than 2,000 languages still without any portion of the
Bible (The Worldwide Status of Bible Translation 2010). In fact, “almost
2,100 language groups do not have a single verse of Scripture available in
their languages” (The Areas of Greatest Need).

Beyond these language groups that are completely without the Scrip-
tures, 1,079 additional languages have only the New Testament (Bearing
Precious Seed Global), and many of the languages with a complete trans-
lation of the Bible have no concordance or any text finder to help people
research Bible topics and questions.

While Christian resources abound in the English language, with books
and even seminars available on almost every topic imaginable, not to
mention the whole system of Christian and even Adventist education,
most unreached language groups have no access to any of these resources,
and the learning curve for missionaries to become sufficiently proficient
in these languages and cultures to do even mediocre translation work, is
a long, tedious process.

Government Restrictions

Many of the countries with the most unreached people groups do not
give missionaries visas. According to Global Opportunities for Christ,
“more than 60% of the world’s population lives in countries closed to
Christian missionaries from North America.”

Religious and Societal Roadblocks: Prejudice and Hostility

Closely related and often intertwined with government restrictions are
religious and societal roadblocks. Many individuals who would be open
to learning about God and studying the Bible find themselves hemmed
in by an intricate web of family traditions and religious prejudice and
blocked from any investigation of the Bible. In some cases, even any con-
tact with Christians is blocked by religious prejudice and a complicated
set of rigid religious and societal rules with severe punishments for any
who even venture to explore the possibility that there might be something
valid beyond their current belief system.

The Voice of the Martyrs lists 38 restricted countries and 14 areas that
are hostile to Christianity. This information is available in map form on
the website, and can also be obtained in list form by contacting Voice of
the Martyrs directly.
Security Issues

Some government restrictions and religious and societal roadblocks even endanger the safety, not only of missionaries, but even of members of unreached people groups venturing to explore the Christian faith.

The Divine Strategy

The obstacles are many, but they come as no surprise to God. “Jesus sees the end from the beginning. In every difficulty He has His way prepared to bring relief” (White 1940:330). In the great task of reaching the world with the gospel in this generation, “our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us, of which we know nothing” (1940:330). “As the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings” (333).

God has a strategy that is wisely designed to overcome the obstacles. Yet, that strategy seems to be tucked away, inconspicuous to the casual reader, to be found only by the intentional seeker. Yet, all who seek shall find (Matt 7:7, 8) “Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7). “Have faith in the Lord your God and you will be upheld; have faith in his prophets, and you will be successful” (2 Chr 20:20).

As I have testified for years, if we were quick in discerning the opening providences of God, we should be able to see in the multiplying opportunities to reach many foreigners in America a divinely appointed means of rapidly extending the third angel’s message into all the nations of earth. God in his providence has brought men to our very doors and thrust them, as it were, into our arms, that they might learn the truth, and be qualified to do a work we could not do in getting the light before men of other tongues. (White 1914:4, emphasis mine)

It is as though a scrap of paper from the minutes of God’s strategic planning committee in heaven just dropped into our laps. This quote spells out a battle plan of the Creator and Redeemer of the Universe, but it is not mere theory.

Providential Openings

God is moving millions of unreached people from the most distant and hard-to-reach areas of the world right into Christian communities in the very countries famous for the most freedoms.
United States

Migration Information Source reports that “of the 10 countries that carry out [refugee] resettlement programs, the United States accepts more than double the number of refugees accepted by the other nine countries combined” (Singer and Wilson 2007). This trend is not limited to refugees. According to the U.S. Office of Immigrant Statistics, “Naturalizations grew at a record pace between 2006 and 2008 with a total of 2.4 million immigrants becoming new citizens in the United States” (Baker 2009).

Canada

A news release in Ottawa, February 20, 2009, says, “Canada welcomed an unprecedented number of permanent and temporary residents in 2008, according to preliminary data released by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) today.” According to the Minister for Multiculturalism, this is a trend the government intends to continue. “Our government will not follow the advice of those who believe that Canada should take steps to reduce immigration levels. In fact, we are maintaining our planned immigration levels for 2009,” said Minister Kenney. “As minister responsible for multiculturalism, I am particularly concerned by short-sighted, divisive rhetoric that pits immigrants against Canadians in our economy” (Citizenship and Immigration Canada).

Australia

While Australia has a smaller land mass and population and therefore cannot absorb the vast numbers of refugees that the United States resettle each year, its per capita rate is even higher. According to the latest World Refugee Survey released by the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, Australia resettles nearly twice as many refugees per capita as the United States (World Refugee Survey 2009).

Global Migration

The last ten years has seen one of the greatest migrations of peoples in the history of the world. According to the International Organization for Migration’s World Migration Report 2010, the number of international migrants was estimated at 214 million in 2010. If this number continues to grow at the same pace as it has during the last twenty years, it could reach 405 million by 2050 (World Migration Report 2010).

God’s purpose is to turn the curses of political turmoil, famine, and religious persecution in various countries into a blessing for vast numbers of refugees fleeing these dangers. “The mysterious providences over which we so often lament, are designed of God to accomplish a work which oth-
erwise might never have been done” (White 1974:293). However, the extent of that blessing will depend largely on whether God’s people catch his vision and cooperate with him in implementing this “divinely appointed purpose.”

Providential Parallels

Interestingly, many of the countries that are hardest for Adventists to send missionaries to are the very countries from which the highest numbers of refugees, asylees (asylum seekers), foreign students, and other temporary visitors and permanent immigrants are coming from. Just a glance at the list of countries in the 10/40 Window, Voice of the Martyrs lists of Restricted Nations (Voice of the Martyrs) where government policy or practice prevents even Christians from obtaining Bibles or other Christian literature (Persecution.Com), the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom 2011 Annual Report with its list of countries of particular concern for “particularly severe” violations of religious freedom, as well as its “Watch List” (U.S. Department of State), and the Religious Freedom World Report produced by the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the International Religious Liberty Institute based at Andrews University (Public Affairs and Religious Liberty) when compared with the lists of countries from which the largest numbers of refugees, asylees, foreign workers, foreign students, and permanent residents are coming to the United States, Canada, Australia, and other countries, reveals striking parallels. Here are just a few of the most conspicuous examples of these striking parallels.

China

China is the largest country in the 10/40 Window, with the largest unreached population of any country in the world. It is also on the Voice of Martyrs list of Restricted Nations (The Voice of the Martyrs). It is one of the State Department’s Countries of Particular Concern for “particularly severe” violations of religious freedom (United States Commission on International Religious Freedom) and is classified in Category 4 of five categories of religious freedom, with Category 5 being the least tolerant.

Chinese in Canada: Canada Immigration Statistics lists two Chinese languages—“Chinese” (Mandarin) and “Cantonese”—on its chart of top non-official languages spoken in Canada. “Chinese” (Mandarin) is listed as fourth from the top non-official language spoken in Canada. “Cantonese” is listed as sixth. If both of these Chinese languages were listed as one, Chinese would be the top non-official language spoken in Canada.

Chinese in the United States: China is also the country from which the
United States accepts the most asylees. More than six times as many people find refuge as asylees in the U.S. from China as from any other country. (Refugees and Asylees 2010/2011)

International Students

Even more significant, though, in terms of reaching mainland China, is the huge number of Chinese university students who come to North America each year for the express purpose of broadening their cultural experience and understanding. According to a press release dated November 15, 2010,

the number of international students at colleges and universities in the United States increased by 3% to 690,923 during the 2009/10 academic year, according to the Open Doors report, which is published annually by the Institute of International Education (IIE) with support from the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. This represents a record high number of international students in the United States. This year’s growth was primarily driven by a 30% increase in Chinese student enrollment in the United States to a total of nearly 128,000 students, or more than 18% of the total international student population, making China the leading sending country. (Institute of International Education 2011)

These trends are continuing in the 2010-2011 academic year: The number of international students at U.S. colleges and universities rose 4.7% to 723,277 during the 2010-11 academic year says an annual report by the Institute of International Education (IIE), which has tracked data since 1949. China, the top country of origin for international students, sent 157,558 undergraduate and graduate students to the U.S.A., up 23% from the previous year (Markein 2011).

In addition to Chinese students enrolled in U.S. and Canadian colleges and universities, many more Chinese students come as temporary visitors for English “camps” in our large cities or for summer work programs. Still, the purpose is the same. They come to learn all they can learn. According to one Chinese Adventist business woman facilitating these programs, these students are “the rising stars of China.” They are China’s future leaders. The potential for mission is tremendous.

As these students come to know Christ, are discipled, and return home, they become missionaries in their own right. But instead of reaching a people foreign to them, they are reaching their friends
International students are uniquely gifted to reach the world because they speak at least two languages fluently, know their own culture well, are future leaders and respected for their education, already have many relationships underway back home, do not need visas to go to their own countries, [and] can open doors for foreign ‘tentmakers.’ (Global Frontier Missions)

The U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs published a list that it calls “Foreign Students Yesterday, World Leaders Today” where it lists 326 world leaders today who have studied in the United States (U.S. Department of State). It is estimated that “one fourth to one half of the future leaders of the world are currently attending college on American campuses” (Bible Fellowship Church). Yet, “statistics have shown that 75 percent of international students never receive an invitation to an American home, and as many as 85 percent will never be invited to an American church” (United Methodist Church). The experience of these future leaders while they are among us will have an influence on their future roles. This is clear from recent history.

Yosuke Matsuoka attended the University of Oregon. Isoroku Yamamoto studied at Harvard. Both experienced incredible racial prejudice. After returning to Japan they became the Foreign Minister of Japan and the Commander in Chief of the Combined Fleet respectively. They played key roles in leading their nation to attack Pearl Harbor. “Ho Chi Minh also studied at Harvard and was subjected to extreme racial prejudice. He later studied Marxism and due to his influence all of Southeast Asia came under communist dominion” (Global Frontier Missions).

One can only imagine how different our world might be today if there had been vibrant Adventist Christians reaching out and befriending these international students while they were living in America and providing them with a refreshing oasis of friendship and hospitality—a safe haven from the racial prejudice they were experiencing.

“Chi Alpha [the campus ministries organization of the Assembly of God Church] believes that there is no more strategic mission field than international students on American campuses. By welcoming international students to America, it is possible to open the door to the supernatural in their lives and, ultimately, reach future global leaders” (Assembly of God General Council 2011).

Certainly the remnant church with the last message of mercy—the Everlasting Gospel—to give to “every nation, kindred, tongue and people” should be foremost in welcoming these future leaders and inspiring them with “the noblest [goal] that can appeal to any human being,” “the heaven-appointed purpose of giving the gospel to the world in this generation” (White 1903:262).
Major Source Countries of Refugees

The source countries for the largest numbers of refugees entering the United States in 2009 and 2010 were Iraq, Myanmar, and Bhutan (U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2012/2011:46). All three countries are identified by the Voice of the Martyrs as Restricted Nations. Bhutan (U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2012 2011:46) and Myanmar (Burma) are on the State Department list of Countries of Particular Concern for particularly severe violations of religious freedom, and Iraq is one of the countries recommended for that list by the United States Commission for International Religious Freedom (United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2011:34, 88). Arab Iraqis and Burmese in and from Myanmar (Burma) are also on the Joshua Project’s list of the 100 largest unreached people groups (Joshua Project).

The Religious Freedom World Report produced by the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the International Religious Liberty Institute places Iraq and Burma (Myanmar) in Category 4 for their voted legislation restricting religious liberty and Bhutan in Category 5 as having no religious freedom (Public Affairs and Religious Liberty 2008-2009:293, 294; 195-197; 327, 328).

Christian missionaries are not welcome in these countries, but refugees from these countries are free to explore the message of salvation that Adventists share, and many are eager to learn what we believe, especially when they see that we are sincerely committed to practicing our faith, and when they feel that we care for them unselfishly.

Even among Muslims (who have gained a reputation for terrorism because of a radical six percent) are vast numbers of sincere believers in the Creator God who are submitted to him, are following him to the best of their knowledge, and are eagerly looking for other people of the book who, like them, are preparing for the end of the world and the return of Jesus.

Obstacles Overcome by God’s Providences

“Whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world” (1 John 5:4). God’s overruling providences in bringing millions of unreached people from the hardest to reach places on earth removes the obstacle of geographical distance for these unreached millions who have already come to our shores. To reach them, Adventists do not even need to quit their jobs, sell their homes, raise thousands of dollars for plane tickets and living expenses, leave friends and family, or fly overseas. The unreached peoples are coming to us. God is sparing us the sweltering heat, tropical diseases and dangers, and the need to navigate narrow dirt trails during monsoon rains in
isolated mountain or jungle areas to reach these unreached people groups. People can now drive on the nearest freeway and find the unreached by the thousands from those very mountains and jungles in the nearest city. Sometimes we even bump into them in our local grocery stores. Many international students are walking past our homes and churches on their way to classes, but are we awake to that privilege and possibility?

Many of these unreached people groups have more freedom to explore the Bible and make friends with Christians here than they did in their home country. The government restrictions are gone. Security is not an issue. They are protected by the law, and they are far from many of the religious and societal roadblocks of prejudice and hostility of family and friends back home who might ostracize them for talking to a Christian or picking up a Bible.

An even more amazing twist of this divine providence is that even if we were to make the sacrifices and spend the money necessary to get to these unreached people groups overseas, we would still have to spend years learning their language to even be able to communicate with them, much less translate the needed resources into their languages and then we would still be very limited in what we could say and do because of government restrictions. But the people God is bringing to us are already learning our language—the language with by far the most Christian resources and Adventist advantages, including the tremendous benefits of our educational system, not to mention the many ministries and departments of our church dedicated to nurturing faith and facilitating outreach. Thus, God is preparing many native speakers of once remote languages to be qualified translators, though they may not realize it now.

God’s purpose in this arrangement is that they may “have opportunity to hear the truth for this time, and receive a preparation that will fit them to return to their own lands as bearers of precious light shining direct from the throne of God” (White 1944:200).

Results of Cooperation with the Divine Strategy and Providences

I have personally been involved with three people who illustrate the success of God’s plan in action.

1. A pastor of a multi-cultural church in Chicago noticed that some members were bringing their father, who was visiting from India, to his evangelistic series. The man came faithfully every night, was convicted of the truth of our message, and baptized. He wanted to make sure he had his baptismal certificate and Bible study materials to take back to India, as he “happened” to be the pastor of a 300-member non-denominational...
church in the mountains of India, and he wanted to convert his members to Adventism.

2. A refugee from a restricted nation became an Adventist while living in the U.S. After becoming a citizen, she accompanied her pastor and his family on a trip to speak for a camp meeting in a country bordering her home country. As an American citizen, she was able to safely enter the country from which she had fled, to visit her relatives. She found that her granddaughter was married, but could not have children.

“God can help,” she told them, “and I can pray for you, but you must stop calling on the spirits and depend only on God for help, and if He gives you a child, you must take that child to church and become believers yourselves.”

They agreed, and soon after her arrival back in the States, she heard the good news that her prayers had been answered and her granddaughter was pregnant.

The family followed through with their promise and within two years, the whole extended family was attending church, and three young men in the family wanted to become pastors.

All this happened in a country that is closed to missionaries from the outside and that recently gave at least two Christian organizations forty-eight hours to leave the country permanently for such things as bringing in Bibles and going door-to-door sharing their faith. Yet when the Adventist Church reaches out to resettled refugees in America, these refugees can evangelize their own people back home in ways that missionaries from the outside never could.

3. A Mongolian woman caring for an elderly man in the United States began watching Adventist television in her free time. Notice the series of providences: Neighbors brought her a local newspaper with the story of her client’s 100th birthday. On the opposite page was a picture and article about a local Asian Adventist pastor she would not have read about otherwise. She discovered that there was an Adventist Church within walking distance from her home. She began attending, studied with the local pastor, and was baptized.

Then she called her mother in Mongolia. “Mother, you need to be attending an Adventist church,” she told her. All it took was a phone call. Soon her mother’s letters were filled with glowing accounts of the wonderful things she was learning at the Adventist Church. Now the woman’s brother is attending an Adventist Church in Europe where he migrated for work. The Adventist message spread through this one woman to two continents without her even leaving the U.S. city where she first began learning the Adventist message.

If God can accomplish things this remarkable despite our blurry vision
of the big picture of his wise strategy, what could he accomplish if we were intentional about integrating his global strategy into our personal and collective plans, goals, schedules, and budgets?

**Implementation**

Jesus is not willing that any should perish, so he delays his return a little longer to give us time to share the message of salvation with the millions of his precious unreached children that he has brought from the mountains and jungles of remote villages and massive unreached metropolises right into our very own communities so that we can introduce them to their Maker, Redeemer, and Heavenly Father, and so they too can be ready to go home with him.

There is a great work before us. The world is to be warned. The truth is to be translated into many languages, that all nations may enjoy its pure, life-giving influence. This work calls for the exercise of all the talents that God has entrusted to our keeping—the pen, the press, the voice, the purse, and the sanctified affections of the soul. Christ has made us ambassadors to make known His salvation to the children of men; and if we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ and are filled with the joy of His indwelling Spirit, we shall not be able to hold our peace. (White 1914:4)

Once Adventist members, especially in America, Canada, Australia, and other countries with a significant Adventist presence and large numbers of refugees, immigrants, and temporary visitors from unreached countries catch the vision of God’s plan to reach the world rapidly through these guests, and once they see that God is ready to empower them to accomplish it in “this generation” (1903:262) there is no limit to the ideas for implementation that will surface.

Once we catch this vision, reaching the unreached will not merely be one ministry among many. It will give vitality, direction, and meaning to all Adventist ministries.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has always been a missionary movement, and seems to be designed with this very strategy in mind, so the potential for integrating this divine strategy into the existing systems and ministries of the church and adapting existing ministries, programs, and systems to more fully implement this strategy are endless.

**General Guidelines**

There are, however, several guiding principles that can help the Ad-
ventist Church avoid pitfalls. First, those who see this vision must share it. “It is acquaintance that awakens sympathy, and sympathy is the spring of effective ministry” (White 1903:269).

Second, in all our efforts, we must remember that “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me’” (White 1947:143).

Third, we must let God give us his self-sacrificing love for the lost. We must be willing to give up anything and everything, even life itself, rather than allow the unreached people to be lost for eternity. God loves each person—all seven billion—“as if there were not another on the face of the earth” (White 1940:480). He is not willing that even one should perish (2 Pet 3:9). God poured out all heaven in the gift of his Son (White 1980:7) and he calls us to “love one another; as I have loved you,” pointing to this love as evidence that we are truly his disciples (John 13:34).

Esther risked her life to cooperate with God’s plan, and the lives of her people were saved. Like Esther, each person capable of reading this article has been placed by God in a strategic position with a specific responsibility for the salvation of not merely their own family and circle of friends, but for God’s unreached loved ones throughout the global community who speak languages we do not know.

Mordecai told Esther, “Do not think that because you are in the king’s house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?” (Esth 4:13, 14).

For us, there is no question. We know why we are here. God has clearly spelled out his purpose for placing us in our positions. Our responsibility to the unreached billions of the world, especially to those God’s providences have brought within our reach, is clear. Will the consequences be less dramatic for us who have the light of the whole Bible detailing God’s great purpose in and for our lives if we refuse to fulfill our mission? I only hope that God will help us rise to the occasion and go down in history, like Esther, among those who bravely fulfilled their purpose in God’s great plan for the redemption of the human race.

**Tackling the Task**

In order to merely reach the foreigners who are coming into North America this year at the rate of 104,000 per day (Martin and Midgley 2010), and not even taking into consideration the immigrants and foreign-
ers who came in last year, or the year before, and are still here studying in our universities or working in our communities, and not counting the three million refugees who have come to North America since 1975, most of whom are still unreached, each Adventist in North America needs to develop a friendship with at least one new foreigner every ten days.

This task may seem daunting, but ignoring it will not make it go away. It will only get more difficult as the population grows. The 2011 population of Canada and the United States is 346.3 million, but is projected to increase to 470.2 million by 2050 (Population Reference Bureau 2011).

In order to accomplish this God-given mission, it will take research, planning, a paradigm shift (Saelee 2008) and “all the talents that God has entrusted to our keeping” (White 1914:4). However, if the church and its members face this task squarely with a “whatever it takes” attitude of faith in God’s promise that his “biddings are enabling,” he will not disappoint.

The widespread religious awakening of the early 1840s reveals how quickly a message can spread when the realization hits home that one is living on the very brink of eternity. Today we need not set dates for Jesus’ coming. All we need to do is to really believe and live the three angels’ messages and share them with the language groups who are hungering to hear these messages. Involvement in this task will revitalize many of apathetic members to help them value anew the heaven-sent messages.

**Biblical Lessons and Inspired Counsel**

God gives numerous lessons on welcoming foreigners. Two of the most prominent stories have pertinent lessons for us in the context of the theme of this article.

**Solomon**

When the Queen of Sheba visited Solomon, he took time out of his busy schedule to give her a warm welcome, answer her questions in a way that glorified God, and let her discuss “with him about all that she had on her mind” (1 Kgs 10:2). He was also generous with his material possessions. “King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba all she desired and asked for, besides what he had given her out of his royal bounty” (1 Kgs 10:13).

As a result, not only did Solomon’s fame spread when she went back and said, “indeed, not even half was told me” (1 Kgs 10:7), but she also glorified God. “Praise be to the Lord your God,” she exclaimed, “who has delighted in you and placed you on the throne of Israel. Because of the Lord’s eternal love for Israel, he has made you king, to maintain justice and righteousness” (1 Kgs 10:9).
Hezekiah

Hezekiah also had reason to glorify God, but when the visitors from Babylon came to learn from him the reason for the sun being turned back, he turned their attention away from the God of the miracle to the material things God had provided. He shifted their focus from the great Giver to mere temporal material possessions.

Instead of sharing God’s gifts with them, as Solomon had done, Hezekiah dedicated the visit to showing off the treasures of his kingdom. “Hezekiah received the messengers and showed them all that was in his storehouses—the silver, the gold, the spices and the fine oil—his armory and everything found among his treasures. There was nothing in his palace or in all his kingdom that Hezekiah did not show them” (2 Kgs 20:13).

The visit of the ambassadors to Hezekiah was a test of his gratitude and devotion. The record says, “Howbeit in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to try him, that He might know all that was in his heart.” 2 Chronicles 32:31. Had Hezekiah improved the opportunity given him to bear witness to the power, the goodness, the compassion, of the God of Israel, the report of the ambassadors would have been as light piercing darkness. But he magnified himself above the Lord of hosts. He “rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up.”

How disastrous the results which were to follow! To Isaiah it was revealed that the returning ambassadors were carrying with them a report of the riches they had seen, and that the king of Babylon and his counselors would plan to enrich their own country with the treasures of Jerusalem. Hezekiah had grievously sinned; “therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem.” (White 1943:346)

What do most foreigners see when they come to our shores? Do they see the One who gives power to get wealth, or do they merely see the wealth? Do we as Christians take time to sit down and answer their questions and discuss with them all that is on their hearts, or do they merely see the tourist attractions? Do we share the blessings God has given us, or leave them to fend for themselves during their time with us?

The followers of Christ are to be the light of the world; but God does not bid them make an effort to shine. He does not approve of any self-satisfied endeavor to display superior goodness. He de-
sires that their souls shall be imbued with the principles of heaven; then, as they come in contact with the world, they will reveal the light that is in them. Their steadfast fidelity in every act of life will be a means of illumination.

Wealth or high position, costly equipment, architecture or furnishings, are not essential to the advancement of the work of God; neither are achievements that win applause from men and administer to vanity. Worldly display, however imposing, is of no value in God’s sight. Above the seen and temporal, He values the unseen and eternal. The former is of worth only as it expresses the latter. The choicest productions of art possess no beauty that can compare with the beauty of character, which is the fruit of the Holy Spirit’s working in the soul.

When God gave His Son to our world, He endowed human beings with imperishable riches—riches compared with which the treasured wealth of men since the world began is nothingness. Christ came to the earth and stood before the children of men with the hoarded love of eternity, and this is the treasure that, through our connection with Him, we are to receive, to reveal, and to impart.” (White 1947:36, 37; see additional valuable lessons and guidelines in the same chapter as this quote)

Jesus

Jesus was the most significant “foreigner” in the history of the human race, yet few, even the prominent leaders of his time, ever bothered to find out where he really came from, much less consider the significance of his role in the plan of salvation for the human race.

We may be missing more than we think when we brush our foreign-born neighbors and guests off with a mere passing greeting. “Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me” (Matt 25:40).

When Jesus came the first time, the Jewish people were looking for the Messiah to come with pomp and glory, so when he came as a humble, homeless, “uneducated” wayfarer, they failed to recognize him as their divine King.

Now we know how he will return—in the clouds, in glory, with all the holy angels with him—or do we? Could it be that we, too, are missing something?

Twice, the heavenly King came for a visit in the form of a humble earthly traveler, merely passing by on other business. Twice, he initially refused the hospitality of those he came to visit. Both times, it was not until they (Abraham and then the disciples on their way to Emmaus) urged him to accept their hospitality and insisted that he stay with them and let
them meet his physical needs that he surprised them with the realization that they had just been honored by a visit from the King of the universe. Could it be that only those who recognize Jesus in the form of the needy travelers and insist on doing more than they are asked will be honored with his hospitality in the heavenly home?

Assurance of Results

There are many rich assurances given to those who devote themselves unselfishly to ministering to “the least of these” and fulfilling the Great Commission.

“Our church members should feel a deep interest in home and foreign missions. Great blessings will come to them as they make self-sacrificing efforts to plant the standard of truth in new territory. The money invested in this work will bring rich returns. New converts, rejoicing in the light received from the Word, will in their turn give of their means to carry the light of truth to others” (White 1948:9:49).

“When God opens the way for the accomplishment of a certain work, and gives assurance of success, the chosen instrumentality must do all in his power to bring about the promised result. In proportion to the enthusiasm and perseverance with which the work is carried forward, will be the success given” (White 1943:263).

Yet, “God does not ask us to do in our own strength the work before us. He has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal. He gives the Holy Spirit to help in every strait, to strengthen our hope and assurance, to illuminate our minds and purify our hearts” (White 1905:489).

“The presence of the Spirit with God’s workers, will give the proclamation of truth a power that not all the honor or glory of the world could give” (White 1911:51).

“In fields where the conditions are so objectionable and disheartening that many workers refuse to go to them, most remarkable changes for the better may be brought about by the efforts of self-sacrificing lay members. These humble workers will accomplish much, because they put forth patient, persevering effort, not relying upon human power, but upon God, who gives them His favor. The amount of good that these workers accomplish will never be known in this world” (White 1948:7:22, 23).

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt 28:18-20).
## Appendix

### Urban Ministry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Larger Context</th>
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<tr>
<td>The souls in China are no more precious than the souls within the shadow of our doors.</td>
<td>The souls in China are no more precious than the souls within the shadow of our doors. God’s people are to labor faithfully in distant lands, as his providence may open the way; and they are also to fulfill their duty toward the foreigners of various nationalities in the cities and villages and country districts close by (White 1914:3, emphasis mine).</td>
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<td>I must write something in regard to the way in which our cities in America have been passed by and neglected,—cities in which the truth has not been proclaimed.</td>
<td>I must write something in regard to the way in which our cities in America have been passed by and neglected,—cities in which the truth has not been proclaimed. The message must be given to the thousands of foreigners living in these cities in the home field (White 1914:3, emphasis mine).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who feels heavily burdened to see the message proclaimed in Greater New York and in the many other cities as yet unworked? . . . Much remains to be done within the shadow of our doors,—in the cities of California, New York, and many other States.</td>
<td>Who feels heavily burdened to see the message proclaimed in Greater New York and in the many other cities as yet unworked? Not all the means that can be gathered up is to be sent from America to distant lands, while in the home field there exist such providential opportunities to present the truth to millions who have never heard it. Among these millions are the representatives of many nations, many of whom are prepared to receive the message. Much remains to be done within the shadow of our doors,—in the cities of California, New York, and many other States (White 1914:3, emphasis mine).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wake up, wake up, my brethren and sisters, and enter the fields in America that have never been worked. After you have given something for foreign fields, do not think your duty done. There is a work to be done in foreign fields, but there is a work to be done in America that is just as important.</td>
<td>Wake up, wake up, my brethren and sisters, and enter the fields in America that have never been worked. After you have given something for foreign fields, do not think your duty done. There is a work to be done in foreign fields, but there is a work to be done in America that is just as important. In the cities of America there are people of almost every language. These need the light that God has given to his church (White 1914:3, emphasis mine).</td>
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The work in the cities is the essential work for this time. . . . When the cities are worked as God would have them, the result will be the setting in operation of a mighty movement such as we have not yet witnessed.

In the cities are people of all nationalities, many of whom, if earnest effort is put forth, will accept the truth. These will be specially qualified to carry the message to their own countrymen. How long shall these teeming centers of population be neglected? If our brethren will use their God-given ability in this work, angels of heaven will go before them, to make an impression on the hearts of the people for whom they labor. The Lord has many who have not yet bowed the knee to Baal.

I appeal to those who for many years have known the truth. It is time to wake up the watchmen. I have expended my strength in giving the message that the Lord has given me. The burden of our cities has rested so heavily upon me that it has sometimes seemed that I should die. The work in the cities is the essential work for this time, and is now to be taken hold of in faith. When the cities are worked as God would have them, the result will be the setting in operation of a mighty movement, such as we have not yet witnessed. May the Lord give wisdom to our brethren, that they may know how to carry forward the work in harmony with his will. With mighty power the cry is to be sounded in our large centers of population, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him” (White 1910:7, emphasis mine).

Works Cited


Terri Saelee discovered the joy of ministering to refugees as a freshman at Union College. She went to Thailand as a shy student missionary and returned with an unquenchable passion to reach refugees here in America where she launched SEARCH (Southeast Asian Refugee Community Helps). Four refugee church plants later, Terri is now reaching out to the Hmong in Wisconsin with her husband, Ko Saelee, (Hmong Coordinator for the Wisconsin Conference) and three children. Terri coordinates Adventist Refugee and Immigrant Ministries (ARIM) for the North American Division.