

Theme: "Natural Disasters"

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MESSAGE FROM JAN PAULSEN, PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF SDAs

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Over the past days we have seen an unprecedented humanitarian disaster unfold in southern Asia. It is a tragedy on a scale that it is difficult to comprehend. We see its continuing impact in the grief of those who mourned their loved ones; in the helplessness of the children who have lost parents; and in the desperation of survivors left without adequate food or water.

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It is a distressing irony that this disaster occurred in a region of the world that is not well-equipped to cope with an emergency of this magnitude. The men, women and children who have been caught up in this tragedy are, for the most part, poor and already well acquainted with hardship. It is good for us to remember that in the midst of this pain and suffering, these people are not forgotten by God. Each one is precious to Him.

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How do we, as followers of Christ, respond? Now is not the time to ask "why", or to search for explanations—some answers we may never have before our Lord returns. Now is a time to act; to reach out to our fellow human beings with compassion; to be Christ's visible symbols of hope in a situation where fear and hopelessness hold sway. This is what we are called to do. I trust that each one of you will do what you can to support the ongoing relief work with both your prayers and your resources, whether it is through the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, or through other organizations in this effort. (January 6, 2005).

Would you like to send us your questions or comments on Spirit of Prophecy matters? Please, contact us:

EGW-SDA Research Centre

Northern Caribbean

University,

Mandeville, Jamaica

Website:

<http://egw-sdaresearch.ncu.edu.jm>

E-mails:

egw-sdaresearch@ncu.edu.jm

bareid41@yahoo.com

kchambers@ncu.edu.jm

Tel: (876) 523-2446-7

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

**"For nation shall rise against nation,
and kingdom against kingdom: and
there shall be famines, and pestilences,
and earthquakes, in diverse places."**

(Matthew 24:7, KJV).

FROM THE DIRECTOR:

TSUNAMI: A PROPHETIC PERSPECTIVE

BASIL A. REID

When the news of this Tsunami broke, perhaps there was no one who could imagine the comprehensive devastation and destruction this tidal wave could cause. At some six miles beneath the ocean floor, and spreading for over seven hundred and fifty miles, the waves moving at nearly five hundred miles (800Km.) per hour with billions tonnes of water. Enzo Boschi, head of the Italy's National Geophysics Institute likened the power of the quake to a "million atomic bombs the size of those dropped on Japan in World War II...the shaking was so powerful it even disturbed the Earth's rotation" (Daily Gleaner, Monday, December 27, 2004, p. A-3).

In the presence of such fury, humankind is helpless and can offer no complete and acceptable explanation for the massive lost of lives-even of little children. I personally contemplated answers before I went to the Bible or the writings of Ellen White, which many feel curtail thoughts and critical imaginations. And had God not reveal the meaning of such catastrophic events, He would be judged by the court of human suffering and found guilty. So, once again the source for answers in understanding the understandable, and comprehending the incomprehensible, is from God Himself, the Creator of "the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all that are in them."

Ellen White explains it in these words, "*The time is at hand when there will be sorrow in the world that no human balm can heal. The Spirit of God is being withdrawn. Disasters by sea and by land follow one another in quick succession. How frequently we hear of earthquakes and tornadoes, of destruction by fire and flood, with great loss of life and property! Apparently these calamities are capricious outbreaks of disorganized, unregulated forces of nature, wholly beyond the control of man; but in them all, God's purpose may be read. They are among the agencies by which He seeks to arouse men and women to a sense of their danger*" (Prophets and Kings, p. 277).

In further explaining these events as natural responses she says that during the flood, immense forests were buried which since have changed to coal "forming extensive coal beds that now exist, and also yielding large quantities of oil. The coal and oil frequently ignite and burn beneath the surface of the earth. The rocks are heated, limestone burned and iron are melted. This action of water upon the lime

adds fury to the intense heat and causes earthquakes, volcanoes, and fiery issues....These wonderful manifestations will be more frequent and terrible just before the second coming of Christ and the end of the world, as signs of its speedy destruction" (Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 108, 109).

From these statements we see that there are times when nature's fury is raised capriciously. Just a natural response in nature.

However, there are times when the destructive forces in nature are of Satanic power. "*Satan works through the elements also to garner his harvest of unprepared souls. He has studied the secrets of the laboratories of nature, and he uses all his power to control the elements as far as God allows. When he was suffered to afflict Job, how quickly flocks and herds, servants, houses, children, were swept away, one trouble succeeding another as in a moment....It is God that shields His creatures and hedges them from the power of the destroyer....Satan has control of all whom God does not especially guard*" (Counsels on Health, p. 460).

Ellen White makes this other significant statement, "*Even now he (Satan) is at work. In accidents and calamities by sea, and by land, in great conflagrations, in fierce tornadoes and terrific hailstones, in tempests, floods, cyclones, tidal waves, and earthquakes in every place and in a thousand forms, Satan is exercising his power....He sweeps away the ripening harvest, and famine and distress follow. He imparts to the air a deadly taint and thousands perish by the pestilence*" (Great Controversy, pp. 589, 590).

Thirdly, disasters can be an act of God to punish the wicked. "*The depths of the earth are the Lord's arsenal, whence were drawn weapons to be employed in the destruction of the old world. Waters gushing from the earth united with waters from heaven to accomplish the work of desolation. Since the Flood, fire as well as water has been God's agent to destroy very wicked cities. These judgments are sent that those who lightly regard God's Law and trample upon His authority may be led to tremble before His power and to confess His authority*" (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 109).

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FROM THE DIRECTOR (CONTINUED)

According to The Cambridge Factfinder, published in 1993, the recording of major Tsunamis began in 1498. The highest death total up to 1993 was sixty thousand recorded in 1775, with location in Portugal and affected Western Europe, Morocco and the West Indies. The same book shows that the highest death from an earthquake up to 1992 occurred in Shensi, China, in 1556 when 830,000 died.

Ellen White states that *“these wonderful manifestations will be more and more frequent and terrible just before the second coming of Christ and the end of the world”* (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 109). The recording of major earthquakes seems to have begun about 526 AD. Up to 115 years after there, were five major ones. In the seventeenth century there were two, in the eighteenth century four, none in the nineteenth, but in the twentieth century (1906-1992), there were thirty-seven according to The Cambridge Factfinder. With the increase of earthquakes there was also an increase in tsunamis. The prediction of the prophet is that these events will increase as the end draws near.

The conclusion therefore is that the world is being warned by God. Whether tsunamis, earthquakes or any significant change in nature is capricious, a manipulation by Satan with the permission of God, or a judgment of God they all tell that one day this earth will be destroyed. All such events are but signs of the end and strong warnings before the final day of the Lord. This is a prophetic perspective.

“And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring.... And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.”
Lukę 21: 25, 28 (KJV).

THE HEALTH CORNER: Beware of Mercury in Local Fish



The University of West Indies developed a research among pregnant women. Scientists found “relatively low concentrations of mercury in their placentas—the organ that provides the unborn child with nourishment....Dr. Horace

Fletcher...one of the researchers, was sparked by [an] advisory by **U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** advising pregnant American women and other vulnerable citizens, to avoid eating some fish with high mercury content. Methylmercury is toxic, negatively impacting the central nervous system and kidneys. Pregnant women, women planning to become pregnant, nursing mothers, and young children are particularly vulnerable to effects of mercury and one source of mercury are meals containing some large fish such as shark, swordfish, king mackerel and tilefish” (Eulalee Thompson, Mercury Found in the Womb, *The Gleaner*, December 1, 2004). Dr. Fletcher recommends to pregnant women “not to eat much fish as there are still small amounts in local fish and there could be an accumulation that could cross the placenta during pregnancy.... [It is advised] to eat only two fish meals per week using a variety of fish...with lower levels of mercury such as...canned tuna, salmon, Pollock, and catfish” (E. Thompson, *Ibid*). Ellen White advised to avoid the eating of fish, especially in those areas exposed to pollution. She wrote: “In many places fish become so contaminated by the filth on which they feed as to be a cause of disease.... Thus when used as food they bring disease and death on those who do not suspect the danger” (Counsels on Diet and Foods, p. 394).

DONATIONS

The Research Centre is thankful for the donation of a collection of Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guides (1999-2004) donated by the **Powell’s Family** of Graighead SDA Church, Manchester, Jamaica, and a set of Bible Study Lessons (Video) “Paz Para Vivir” by Alejandro Bullon, donated by **Mr. and Mrs. Antonio Biamonte**.

COMMENTS FROM OUR VISITORS

"The Centre is filled with adequate information and is very useful for those doing research and for those who have an interest in the SDA Church," **Godfrey Walcott**, Spanish Town, Jamaica.

"The E. G. White Centre is truly a wonderful place to obtain information on any aspect of the life of E. G. White and the SDA Church," **Riquett Williams**, Salem SDA Church.

"The tour was a trip down memory lane for me, as my mother is the only other person I know who has such detailed information on Ellen White. I hope to come back to the Centre very soon," **Christopher Thomas**, Catham SDA

The Spirit of Prophecy Association

Did you Know?

The Ellen G. White—Seventh-day Adventist Research Centre at Northern Caribbean University has launched a **Spirit of Prophecy Association**. Members of the Association support and benefit from the activities of the Centre.

Activities at the Centre include collecting and preserving Ellen White's writings as well as other materials (supportive and critical) that are relevant to SDA theology and history. We also produce research, present seminars, and answer questions about Ellen White and SDA history and theology.

PIONEER OF THE MONTH: Uriah Smith (1832-1903)



Editor and author, Uriah Smith gave 50 years of service to the cause of the SDA Church. In December, 1852, he accepted the light of the message taught by the Sabbath-keeping Adventists. The following year he associated with the publishing interests of the believers in Roch-

ester. For about half a century he was the editor or on the editorial staff of the Review and Herald. He was the first Secretary of the General Conference in 1863. Uriah Smith is best known for his book The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation. He was also the first Bible teacher at Battle Creek College. "Smith strongly urged the separation of church and state, advocated noncombatancy, vigorously opposed slavery, did not approve of SDAs seeking political office, and campaigned tirelessly against Sunday laws" (*SDA Encyclopedia*, II: 619). He married Harriet Newall Stevens in 1857.

NEW MEMBERS! We would like to welcome to our Spirit of Prophecy Association 68 new members.

Please fill out and send this coupon to the

EGW-SDA Research Centre,
Northern Caribbean University,
Mandeville, Jamaica

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Did you Know?

"Ellen [White] lived during the presidencies of 22 U.S. Presidents, from Quincy Adams, the sixth President, to Woodrow Wilson, the twenty-eight. She died just two years prior to the birth of John F. Kennedy" (Phyllis C. Bailey, Fascinating Facts about the Spirit of Prophecy, p. 6).

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Ellen G. White—Seventh-day Adventist (EGW-SDA) Research Centre, Northern Caribbean University.

Spirit of Prophecy is a news letter dedicated to the promotion of the biblical truth concerning God's revelation through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit of Prophecy. This news letter is published by the EGW-SDA Research Centre to equip the members of the Spirit of Prophecy Association to participate in the ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Editorial Staff: Basil A. Reid, Director, Research Centre; Kerry-Ann Chambers, Administrative Assistant, Research Centre.

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