

ground continued to rumble with aftershocks, some of them unnervingly strong. I helped an elderly lady named Toby to safety, then walked eight miles across town to reunite with my family who were visiting friends on the outskirts of town. Praise God, they were safe!

That was more than a year ago, and the city is still picking up the pieces, both physically and emotionally. Thousands have moved away, hoping to find a safer, better place to settle down. The CBD remains a ghost town, and may never again be open for business. There is even talk of moving the city center 10 or more miles away from its current location.

As you can imagine, the earthquake put an abrupt stop to our meetings. We were not able to resume for nearly three weeks. But, resume we did! When the quake had struck we were just halfway through our series. Once the city council OK'd that public meetings could resume, we were back at it. Wonderfully, our attendance held reasonably strong given the circumstances.

And God gave us a harvest!

Some were baptized on our final Sabbath there (nine of them!), but more came in the follow-up which was conducted by the local church working with two ARISE graduates, Samuel and Amber Riemersma (who did an A+ job by all accounts!).

Yes, I love New Zealand. The mountains and rivers and wild places, but even more than this, I love the people. They are a special and hardy people down there near the earth's bottom. They are God's children in, as they like to say, "God's Own Country." They often abbreviate this simply as "Godzone."

And that is my prayer for New Zealand. That it would become God's Zone! And Christ's Church!

MAY 2012

Events Schedule

- **May 5**
Prineville SDA Church, OR
James Rafferty • (541)447-5537
- **May 5**
Hoodview SDA Church, Boring, OR
Ty Gibson with Songs of Ascent Concert
www.songssofarcent.org
- **May 11-12**
Student Training & Resource Institute for Discipleship
Evangelism (STRIDE), Cambridge, MA
James Rafferty • missions@gycweb.org
- **May 11-June 3**
Kingscliff SDA Church, Chinderah, NSW, Australia
David Asscherick • info@arisehub.org
- **May 19**
Kingscliff SDA Church, Chinderah, NSW, Australia
Jeffrey Rosario • tammielsner@gmail.com
- **May 31-June 1**
3ABN Pillars of Prophecy Camp Meeting
James Rafferty • (618)627-4651
- **June 1-2**
Milo Academy Women's Retreat, Days Creek, OR
Risè Rafferty • (541)825-3200
- **June 7**
3ABN Today Live
James Rafferty • (618)627-4651
- **June 16**
Winston SDA Church, OR
James Rafferty • (541)679-6255
- **June 24-28**
Southern New England Conference Camp Meeting, MA
Ty Gibson • (978)365-4551
- **July 3-7**
Light Bearers Ministry Convocation, Jasper, OR
www.lightbearers.org • (541)988-3333

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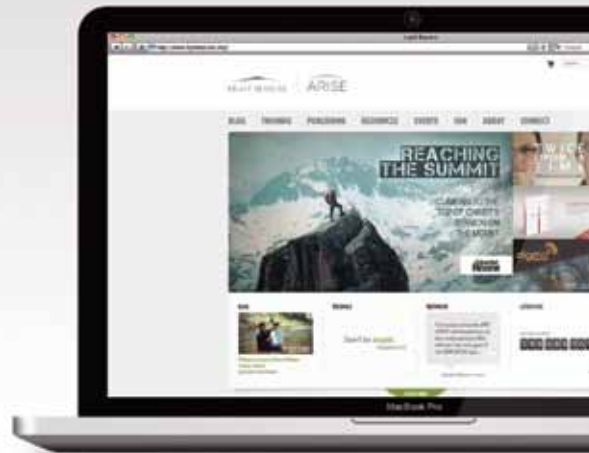
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MISSION UPDATE

The Newsletter of Light Bearers Ministry / ARISE



Myth Buster

By James Rafferty

It's extraordinary really, if you think about it. Many people, even "Christians," have a problem with the last book of the Bible. In 1522, Martin Luther declared that Revelation should not even be part of the canon of Scripture, "since Christ is neither taught nor known in it." More recently, a CNN blog post quoting "one of the world's leading biblical scholars" entitled "4 big myths of Book of Revelation," stated that the book of Revelation "was virtually forced into the New Testament canon. . . ." Myth number 3—its author was not even a Christian since, "there's no indication that he read Jesus' Sermon on the Mount or that he read the gospels or Paul's letters, . . . He doesn't even say Jesus died for your sins" (CNN Belief Blog, March 31, 2012, by John Blake). I understand that most people who have not spent time in the

"apocalypse" can misunderstand this book, but "one of the world's leading biblical scholars"? The idea that the book of Revelation "doesn't say that Jesus died for your sins" is over the top. I have to ask, is it possible to be more wrong about this book that begins: "the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 1:1)? You don't need to go more than five verses before this myth is busted and you encounter the message of the gospel:

" . . . from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood" (Revelation 1:5).

In addition, the symbol of the "lamb" (mentioned 29 times in the book of Revelation) directs us to the cross of Christ, the "Lamb of God" that was "slain" to take "away

the sins of the world" (John 1:29; Revelation 5:6). The death of the Lamb is so central to Revelation that it is even found in Revelation 13, the very chapter that identifies the beast, his mark and number (666). And it is those who follow the "Lamb" that are presented in contrast to those who acquiesce to the economic control of the beast (Revelation 14:1-5).

Even Luther, though he first missed Jesus in Revelation, changed his mind eight years later. In his new 1530 preface to Revelation he stated: "As we see here in this book, that through and beyond all plagues, beasts and evil angels, Christ is nonetheless with the saints and wins the final victory." Not sure if CNN and or one of the world's leading biblical scholars are open to reconsider, but I hope you are. Amen.

CONSIDER THIS . . .

Our lesson for the present time is, How may we most clearly comprehend and present the gospel that Christ came in person to present to John on the Isle of Patmos— the gospel that is termed “the revelation of Jesus Christ?” We are to present to our people a clear explanation of Revelation. We are to give them the word of God just as it is, with as few of our own explanations as possible. No one mind can do this work alone. Although we have in trust the grandest and most important truth ever presented to the world, we are only babes, as far as understanding truth in all its bearings is concerned. Christ is the great teacher, and that which He revealed to John, we are to tax our minds to understand and clearly to define. We are facing the most important issues that men have ever been called upon to meet.

Ellen G. White,
Counsels to Writers and Editors,
p. 29.2

As we near the close of this world’s history, the prophecies relating to the last days especially demand our study. The last book of the New Testament Scriptures is

full of truth that we need to understand. Satan has blinded the minds of many so that they have been glad of any excuse for not making the Revelation their study. But Christ through His servant John has here declared what shall be in the last days; and He says, “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein.”

Ellen G. White,
Testimonies to Ministers, p. 116

In the very first verses the character and object of the book are brought to view. It is “the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John: who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.”

Ellen G. White,
Sermons and Talks,
Volume 2, p.238.2

NEW ZEALAND: MY GLORY AND JOY!

BY DAVID ASSCHERICK

It is no secret to those who know me that I regard New Zealand as “the best country on earth.” I’ve been there four years in a row, and have no plans or desire to stop my annual visits. My most recent visit, which I’ve just returned from, was a wonderful blessing, as it afforded me many opportunities for ministry and fellowship.

Christchurch is New Zealand’s second largest city, and it was my first stop. I was looking forward to catching up with some of those who had been baptized as a result of our efforts over the past few years. As providence would have it, I was able to reconnect with more than a dozen of them. What a joy it was to see their bright, happy and energetic faces at church on Sabbath morning. I hadn’t alerted any of the three churches I visited about my arrival, so my presence was a genuine surprise. A good one, I hope!

My heart leapt with joy to see Debbie and her mother sitting in church soaking up the sermon. And Theresa and Collin both looked so content and settled in their new faith. James was making excellent contributions in Sabbath School

class, and Colleen was smiling and putting distance between her and her depression. Renee and Isaac were smiling and attentive, clearly enjoying the service. Amos is a regular missionary and powerful

young preacher. Adrian and Kate are sharing their love for Jesus with whoever will listen.

There is no greater joy and satisfaction in all the world than seeing those who’ve accepted Jesus Christ and

His end-time message growing and rejoicing in their new faith. I resonate deeply with Paul who wrote to the believers in Thessalonica, “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For you are our glory and joy” (1Thessalonians 2:19-20).

Our meetings last year were interrupted by a deadly and devastating earthquake. Hundreds were killed, and the central business district (CBD) was left in war-like ruins. It happened on February 22 at 12:51 p.m. The CBD received the brunt of the quake’s deadly force; I should know, I was there.

I’ll never forget how suddenly and violently my apartment began to rock. I was on the third floor and was certain my building was going to fall. It didn’t, but many others did. I stumbled clumsily down the stairs and out the door to “safety.” That’s when I saw the devastation, and I could hardly believe my eyes. A once quaint and clean city had been transformed into a dilapidated mess within seconds—20 seconds, to be precise. Scared and panicked people were everywhere. The

