

October/November 2015

THE

C

entral onnection

A publication of the Sacramento Central Seventh-day Adventist Church



**Church
Picnic - a
time for
interaction**



**Are we
really
free?**



**RELIGIOUS
LIBERTY**
under threat

5 Smart Thrift
- new name, same management



Page 8

8 We asked
8 Healthy Plate
for Kids
9 Religious Liberty
13 Persecution in the communist Romania
12 Ask the pastor
13 End Times



COVER: Emily Carlisle photographed by Nash Carlisle

Inbox

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Really, we do! Which stories do you most look forward to seeing in The Central Connection? What photos or features made you want to sit down and enjoy a few more minutes with us? Do you have any story ideas, photos, announcements or just want to share your thoughts about something we published? Send a letter to the editor! You can email them to: alinehenda@gmail.com or to connection@saccentral.org. Letters may be edited for space, but we really do appreciate hearing from you! Thanks!

Editorial



Often when we contemplate religious liberty, we think about persecution in the past, problems we anticipate in the future, or at least what others are enduring in distant countries. In fact, religious freedom is being withdrawn right now, even in our own country, and certainly in our contemporary world.

According to John Graz, director of the General Conference Department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL), religious freedom has been decreasing steadily around the world. Seventy-five percent of the world's population now lives under some form of religious restriction. Various laws limit many churches, including the Seventh-day Adventist Church, from practicing their faith freely. Churches are subject to threats of intimidation, raids, and even termination or destruction. In addition to government restrictions, there is persecution from society, states Ganoune Diop, associate director of PARL, and director of United Nations Relations. About 150,000 Christians are killed every year, have their houses and churches burned, are imprisoned, or forced to leave their countries. The religious liberty department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists is continually at work, defending and promoting religious freedom worldwide. Religious liberty is a precious privilege for which we need to be profoundly thankful.

Worldwide persecution is happening right now, even though most of us are unaware of it. Restriction of our rights as citizens under the US constitution is closer than we realize. Laws have already been enacted that will affect our freedom to make our own decisions, as Tyra Taylor informs us on page 9. We can be inspired by Nash Carlisle sharing the story of his wife's experience with religious restriction in Romania. Aaron brings us part II of his End Times Saga - a true-to-life story that is real life for many people in dark corners of our world. Take a little time to read through your church magazine and tell us what you think! Until next time!

Aline Henda
Editor-in-Chief

THE Central Connection

The Central Connection is a publication of the Sacramento Central Seventh-day Adventist Church

6045 Camellia Avenue
Sacramento, 95819
www.saccentral.org

CONNECTION EMAIL
connection@saccentral.org

Sacramento Central Church

SENIOR PASTOR
Chris Buttery
ASSOCIATE PASTORS
Fred Dana
Mike Thompson
YOUTH/YOUNG ADULT
PASTOR
Michael Butler

ON FACEBOOK

www.facebook.com/SacramentoCentral

The Central Connection

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Aline Henda
MANAGING EDITOR
Hope Beale
LAYOUT AND DESIGN
Aline Henda
PHOTOGRAPHERS
Aline Henda
Je Ann Davis
Marilee Walker
Nash Carlisle

COLUMNISTS

Pastor Chris
Pastor Mike

COPY EDITORS

Ruthie Flynn
Chrystal White

CONTRIBUTORS FOR THIS ISSUE

Aaron Buttery
Aline Henda
Hope Beale
Marilee Walker
Nash Carlisle
Silvia Ballesteros
Tyra Taylor

PROOFREADER

Rosie Beavers

HELPING HANDS
6045 CAMELLIA AVE.
SACRAMENTO, CA 95819

Good Times With Old and New Friends at the Church Picnic

Photos: Aline Henda

By Aline Henda
Editor-in-Chief

When Kaessa Herdt, a Brazilian native, heard two girls talking in Portuguese at Costco, she went up to them and introduced herself. Although she had been living in the US for over a year, she didn't have many friends yet, and hadn't met other Brazilians. What she didn't know then was that her life was about to change – not only with new friendships – but also with a new faith.

One of the girls was Lili Larson, a member at Sacramento Central. She invited Kaessa to our church picnic in September last year. She accepted, also bringing her husband and mom, who was visiting her. Later she visited our church on Sabbath. One year later,

she still keeps coming regularly to worship with her newfound family at Sac Central.

"Everybody was so nice to me at the picnic. I felt welcome in this church," Kaessa shared.



Above: Kaessa (right) with her mom and son. Below: Tim and Elvia Karn (center) and Maria Gomez (far right)

"After I began studying the Bible, I discovered a lot of things that helped me understand that this is God's church, so I didn't see a reason to not keep coming."

On Sunday, September 20, Sac Central members had another opportunity to share friendship and fellowship with new and old church members, and simply have some fun during our church picnic at Howe Community Park. This annual event is one of the largest social gatherings of the church, where members get a chance to interact outside of the church campus.

"A lot of people are involved

Continued on page 4



Church Family NEWS

CHURCH PICNIC

Continued from page 3

Meet the two new church secretaries



After many years of service, Melissa Martin left her position of secretary of the church.



Diana Mitchell

Members showed her their love and appreciation for all of her work with messages of thanks. Now the church hired two part-time secretaries - Diana Mitchell, also the church clerk, and Lorrie Dana, pastor Fred Dana's wife.

5 things about me



Lorrie Dana

- 1- I love being a Grandma.
- 2- I have a degree in Chemistry.
- 3- I love to cook vegan food.
- 4- I have over 75 Yankee Candles.
- 5- I shook Bill Clinton's hand.



in church ministries and it's easier to know other people," said Tim Karn, a Sac Central member for many years. "But when you don't know a lot of people in the church you don't feel very comfortable."

"This church picnic is for socializing, specifically to get acquainted with others. And the food is delicious!" added his wife, Elvia Lopez de Karn.

The church picnic is where you will probably meet someone for the first time – whether it's a visitor, like Kaessa was, long-time members, like the Karns, or a recent one, like Nicole Edniy, mom of Dakota, 8, and Avery, 6, and a Sac Central member for 2 years.

"The girls loved the picnic," she said. "It's nice. We have some friends at church, but we don't have a chance to talk. This is an opportunity to get to know them better."

The church picnic lasted 6 hours and there was entertainment for everyone: kids jumped for hours in the bounce houses and beat the heat with water balloon games; the Adventurer Club set up their tent and sold sweet treats as a fundraiser for the club; some members played baseball and soccer while others relaxed in the shade of trees. There was time for talk and laughter. And of course there was food – veggie dogs and veggieburgers, breads, salads, veggies and drinks – enough to energize everyone under the 99°F heat of the day.

The church picnic was not only a gateway to church for Kaessa last year – it's where we can see new faces and interact with



Nicole Edniy with her daughters

people in a way that is almost impossible in church.

"Our church is very big," said Maria Gomez, also a long-time member. "This is an opportunity to meet all our brothers and sisters. We should have this more often!"



October

- Discipleship University on the first and third Sabbath
- Sabbath October 10th at 2PM there will be a Children's Concert
- Sunday October 11th is a Women's Ministry event, for more detail, contact Jan Nichols
- Fall Evangelism begins on Friday October 23rd
- Monday, October 26th is Healthy Plate Cooking Class.
- Women's Bible Study Class every Tuesday morning at 10:00 in the Family Life Room until November 10th.

November

- Communion service on Sabbath November 14th

December

- Fountainview Academy Christmas Concert on Sabbath December 19th, there will be two concerts again.

Baptisms

Photo: Je-Ann Ahl and Joy Assumen-Carpenter

August 15, 2015



Adam Brouhard

Michael Verella



SMART THRIFT



SMART THRIFT



Thrift Store gets a new name and look

By Silvia Ballesteros
Staff Writer



Photos: Aline Hendon

When Buddy and Teri Harper were in charge of the food closet at Sacramento Central SDA Church, people came who had other needs besides food. They also needed clothing. When the food closet had more donated clothing than they could distribute, Buddy and Teri heard that the Northern California Conference was subsidizing a program to start thrift stores in the community. Sacramento Central Church presented a proposal for this program and was chosen for this subsidy.

The primary purpose of the thrift store is to help meet needs and demonstrate the love of God to our community. Another purpose is to help support other ministries not funded by the church.

Clients like the cleanliness of the store and the Christian music that is always being played. Teri states: "Some people come to enjoy the atmosphere and then they buy things."

One way our thrift store reaches out to the community is by giving homeless persons a new outfit each

month. During the winter they give out blankets and toiletries. When a family lost everything because of a fire, they were the first to reach out with practical help, including desperately needed food and clothing. Literature, CD's and DVD's are outside the store, which people are welcome to take freely. Teri says: "They choose what they want and an angel goes with each piece taken."

The "Winter Sanctuary" (also sponsored by the thrift store) is part of an area wide plan where homeless persons and families go from organization to organization during the week. At Sacramento Central Church they spend the night, enjoy a vegetarian dinner, listen to Christian music, and sleep by a roaring fire in the Camellia room. The next morning they are given a continental breakfast and help to clean up. In the past new coats have been provided for those who need them—another practical way to demonstrate love and care.

Other ministries that have benefitted from our thrift store are: "Happiness for You" and the "Good Samaritan."

The store also provides jobs for people on welfare or Workmen's Compensation, who need work service hours.

Because the store has had many unexpected expenses and losses, they were offered a free consultation from a retailer, who advised a change that could bring a 30% increase in sales. The remodel plan was approved and done--and has been well worth it. Teri says: "Slowly there has been an increase in proceeds per transaction."

The Conference vision for the future is for other thrift stores to open in the community, with fewer bumps and bruises.

We can help by spreading the word about our thrift store, shopping there ourselves, being inspired and energized by volunteering one day a month, and donating good usable articles – as if we are giving to Jesus. If you know someone in need, tell them about this store and its multiple ministries to the community.





How Important is it to Eat a Healthy Lunch?

By Marilee Walker

It's vital that your child eats a healthy lunch, because lunch provides one-third of his daily calories. You want to make those calories count by offering nutrient-dense foods. Children who eat a healthy lunch have a higher nutrient intake not only for lunch but also for the entire day -- compared to children who don't. Eating in the middle of the day, several hours after breakfast, re-energizes your body and can raise blood sugar levels when focus and concentration are flagging.

If you're feeling sluggish, eating even a small lunch can renew your energy and help you feel refreshed and ready to take on the next several hours. In addition, eating lunch keeps your metabolism active, especially if you have a moderately sized meal and a snack before and afterward.

"Extended periods of starvation between large meals creates gaps which keep metabolism from staying active," says Dr. Kurt Hong, the Center for Human Nutrition director of Huntington Medical Foundation.

Eating a healthy lunch will:

1 Improve Academic Performance - Learning information depletes the brain's supply of glucose, according to Scholastic.com. Therefore, it is important to refuel children's glucose supplies with a healthy lunch. Scholastic.com suggests whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and lean sources of protein. A healthy lunch can give children the energy they need to stay focused, pay attention in class, and learn the information presented to them in their classes after lunchtime.

2 Promote Good Nutrition - A person's eating habits are typically acquired during his childhood, according to The Dairy Council. Therefore, healthier school lunches would lead to healthier nutritional choices throughout children's entire lifetimes. By making healthy school lunches the norm as opposed to the exception, children will inadvertently learn about nutrition and healthy eating. The reverse is also true; children who are provided with sugary, fatty foods at school can develop poor eating habits that can last a lifetime.

3 Prevent Obesity and Improve Health - School lunches that provide more calories than a child needs to maintain his body weight can lead to weight gain and obesity. This not only can compromise the child's health, but also lead to health problems as an adult. According to Colorado State University, children who are overweight have increased risks of developing health problems, including diabetes and hypertension, and becoming obese adults. Healthy lunches with proper portions can help support a healthy life.

4 Increase Consumption of Vital Nutrients - Teenagers who eat fast food frequently consume more fat and calories and fewer essential nutrients, including calcium, vitamin A, and vitamin C, than their counterparts, according to The Dairy Council. Lunch is supposed to supply a child with about one-third of his total daily calories, according to Scholastic.com. Therefore, it is important to make lunch a well-balanced meal to ensure that your child consistently receives good nutrition.

Suggestions for making healthy lunches:

- Stock up on lunch possibilities when you shop for groceries. Think simple -- a loaf of whole wheat bread and a jar of peanut butter; a package of corn tortillas, a can of black beans, and some fresh tomatoes; frozen veggie burgers, whole grain hamburger buns, little bags of almonds, fruit leather, and fruit. Throw together a few of your favorite ingredients, and see what happens!

- Prepare lunch items the night before right after dinner. This saves on clean-up time and let's you have enough time to plan and prepare a healthy lunch.

- Chill prepared fruits, veggies, and sandwiches in ziplock sandwich bags overnight. In the morning pack food in insulated lunch boxes or use frozen gel packs. Instruct your children to bring those gel packs home each night—no excuses!

- Make your dessert a nutritious part of your lunch. Use fresh fruits (melon, grapes, apple slices) instead of candy bars or high fat cookies.

- Substitute water for fruit juice or sugary drinks.

- Make lunches fun and appetizing for kids. Use cookie cutters to cut flower shapes out of the bread or small cookie cutters to cut pineapple or cucumbers into little stars. You can write a little note and attach it to your child's apple, something my children loved. These little extras can be done quickly, makes their lunches special, and your kids will love it!



Photo: Marilee Walker

When we make healthy lunches for our children, we set an example for them, teaching them how to make and eat healthy food. What we serve our children can either help or hurt their health. At least 2.7 million people around the world die each year as a result of not getting enough fruits and vegetables in their diets, according to the World Health Organization. Eating a healthy diet instead of an unhealthy diet can help our children get all the essential nutrients they need and limit their risk for a number of health problems. What a gift we can give our children!



Amy's Healthy Baking

Recipe

Apple Pie Oatmeal Cookies

Yields: 15 cookies

These oatmeal cookies are full of fruit and cinnamon, and they're incredibly soft and chewy. They'll stay that way for an entire week if stored in an airtight container—if they last that long!

- 1 c (100g) instant oats
- 3/4 c (90g) whole wheat flour
- 1 1/2 tsp (4g) baking powder
- 1 1/2 tsp (4g) ground cinnamon
- 1/8 tsp (1g) salt
- 2 tbsp (28g) coconut oil or unsalted butter, melted
- 1 large egg, room temperature
- 1 tsp (5mL) vanilla extract
- 1/2 c (120mL) agave
- 1 c (125g) finely diced red apple (about 1 medium)

Turn the page

Sac Central Promotes Healthy Plate for Kids

By Aline Henda
Editor-in-Chief



Aiyana Maldonado, 11 (left) makes her fruit smoothie recipe. Zariana Glynn, 3, approves

On August 7, the Healthy Plate - a program sponsored by the Health Ministry at Sac Central, offered a version for kids, with easy to make, kid friendly recipes, presented by kids and Karen Medeiros.

The kids watched the process and

helped make some foods, like a fruit smoothie, scrambled tofu, and waffles. They also learned about the importance of a good breakfast and eating healthfully.

At the end, two lucky kids, Alyssa Williams, 10 and Jason Henda, 5, won a raffle for a cookbook for kids. Jason quickly decided the first recipe he'll help his mom make.

"The more the kids are involved in the preparation, the more they are willing to try even something they don't like," said Amy Maldonado, whose daughter taught the smoothie recipe. "It's hard, because they can make such a mess-- but they get excited about the food."

The next Healthy Plate cooking class will be on October 26.



Alyssa Williams, 6 and Jason Henda, 5, happy with their prizes - a cookbook for kids

Photos: Aline Henda

RECIPE

1. Whisk together the oats, flour, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt in a medium bowl. In a separate bowl, whisk together the coconut oil or butter, egg, and vanilla. Stir in the agave. Add in the flour mixture, stirring just until incorporated. Fold in the apple. Chill for 30 minutes.
2. Preheat the oven to 325°F, and line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat.
3. Drop the cookie dough into 15 rounded scoops onto the prepared sheet, and flatten slightly. Bake at 325°F for 13-15 minutes. Cool on the pan for 10 minutes before turning out onto a wire rack.

Honey or maple syrup may be substituted for the agave. Alternatively, 1/2 cup (105g) brown sugar + 5 tablespoons (75mL) milk may be substituted as well. The chilling and baking times stay the same.

For a gluten-free version, use gluten-free instant oats and a gluten-free flour blend. I recommend the following blend: 1/2 cup (60g) millet flour, 2 tablespoons (15g) tapioca flour, 2 tablespoons (17g) brown rice flour, and 1/2 teaspoon (2g) xanthan gum.

Recipe by Amy's Healthy Baking Submitted by Marilee Walker

We Asked! Kids

What is your favorite lunch?

Photos: Nash Carlisle



Ava Phongmany, 5

Peanut butter and jelly sandwich with Grandma's homemade bread



Spenser Purba, 5

Any kind of noodles



Samaria Carrol, 7

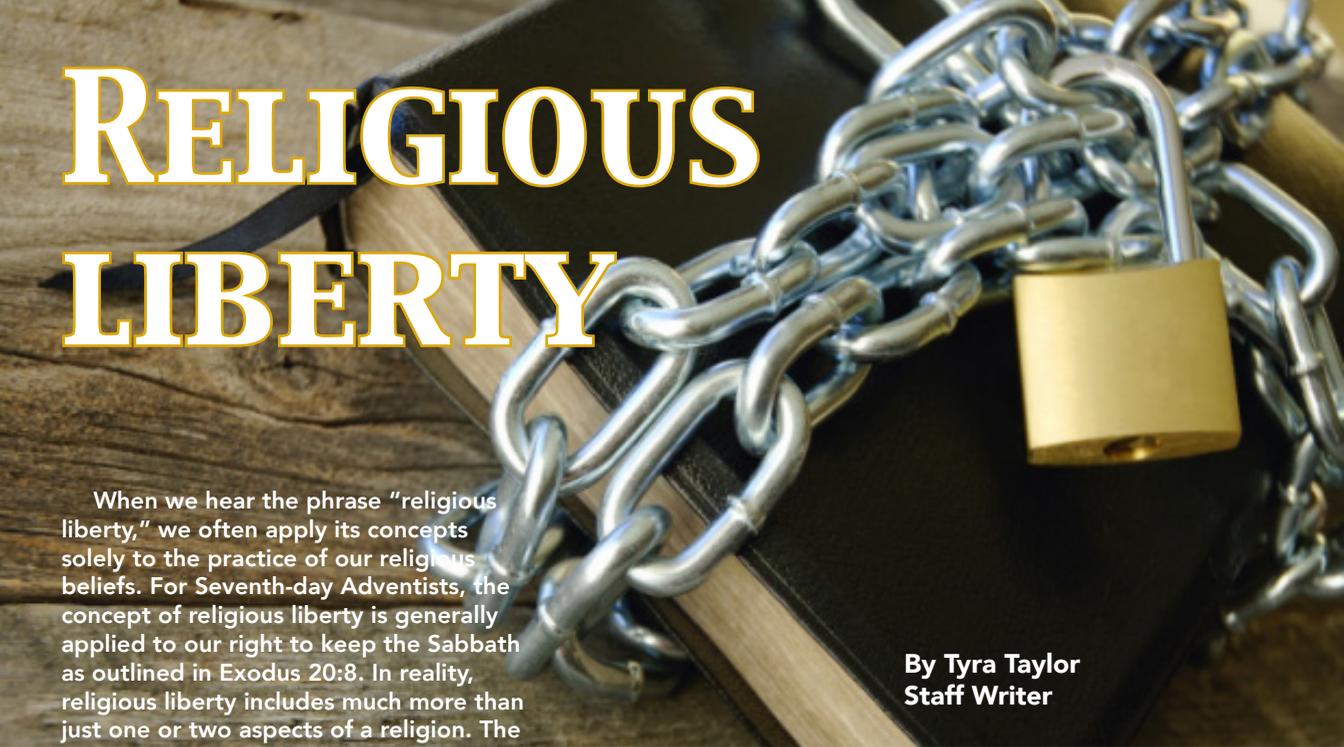
Asian salad with cheese pizza



Joanna Buttery, 12

Soy meat sandwich with lettuce, ketchup and spread.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY



When we hear the phrase “religious liberty,” we often apply its concepts solely to the practice of our religious beliefs. For Seventh-day Adventists, the concept of religious liberty is generally applied to our right to keep the Sabbath as outlined in Exodus 20:8. In reality, religious liberty includes much more than just one or two aspects of a religion. The First Amendment’s religious liberty clauses stipulate that Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, and neither shall it prohibit the free exercise thereof. But what does it mean to “exercise” a religious belief?

On June 29, 2015 California Senate Bill (SB) 277 was signed into law. SB 277 requires that all minor children be vaccinated prior to being enrolled in school. This includes both public and private schools and some home-school programs. Unless it is repealed, this law will go into effect July 1, 2016. If parents fail to comply with this mandate, their children will not be allowed to attend daycare or any private or public K-12 school. In addition, some adults who work in contact with minor children will be required to provide proof they’ve received certain immunizations or risk losing their employment. While SB 277 sounds similar to other immunization mandates and laws, it is in fact quite different. Unlike previous vaccination laws, SB 277 will not allow parents or caregivers to use a personal or religious exemption as a basis for not vaccinating their children. The only

exemption that will be allowed will be a medical exemption and it has to be given by a medical doctor. Essentially, unless a medical doctor can confirm that a child would be at risk for a significant adverse reaction to a vaccine, parents and caregivers will be required to vaccinate their child or not be allowed to enroll them in school. California is currently the only state in the nation with a vaccination law as strict in its effect as SB 277.

Many have argued, “Not all immunizations are bad...” The issue with SB 277 goes much deeper than one’s personal beliefs about the dangers of vaccinating children. SB 277 is essentially telling parents and caregivers that effective July 1, 2016, their ability to make certain health related decisions for their children based on their religious or personal convictions is going to be nullified. It is removing parents’ rights to make decisions for their minor children and is preparing our society to accept whatever laws are enacted. Considering what the First Amendment states about our right to exercise our religious beliefs, it’s amazing that State legislation could so easily undermine it. However, this should come as no shock to us. These seemingly small challenges to our personal and religious beliefs seem innocent enough at this point. But this is only the beginning. What happens when more of our religious freedoms are attacked?

In the book, “Last Day Events” the inspired author states, “When our nation, in its legislative councils, shall enact laws to bind the consciences of men in regard to their religious privileges, enforcing Sunday observance, and bringing oppressive power

**By Tyra Taylor
Staff Writer**

Continue on page 14



By Nash Carlisle
Staff Photographer

Photos: Nash Carlisle

BANG BANG BANG BANG!!!...BANG BANG BANG BANG!!! at the door sparked a burning terror in the hearts of those present that Sabbath morning as all who were in the house were aroused from their night's slumber. Their household allowed the Securitate officers to come inside under duress, as they made a determined search for a name, in an attempt to make an arrest and to stop the worship activity.

Was this normal? For some it was. Emilia Sime grew up as a Seventh-day Adventist Reformer in Communist Romania for over 25 years....This is her story.

On May 3, 1964, our world was bettered by the birth of Emilia. The seventh and final addition to the Sime household, she and her siblings were nurtured in the SDA Reform faith by two loving parents Armanca and Constantin Sime. "They raised us with a strict reverence to the God they knew and loved."

In Emilia's life, the government of Romania was highly atheistic and very prejudiced against all Christian churches, especially the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It was a high stakes affair to declare and live your faith openly. It could mean loss of

educational and job opportunities, repossession of property and imprisonment. Some members of her family, including one close relative's father, were sent to prison. His family estate was confiscated, so they had to pay rent in their own house, and the mother had no way of earning money to support the family-- all as a result of their religious faith and beliefs. Being a member of the communist party was a prerequisite to having a job-- which meant open denial of any faith. Note: Emilia (Emily) herself lost opportunities for furthering her education, (until later on in her life), because of a longstanding lack of Sabbath

accommodation. Philippians 1:21 best reflects Emily's take on what she lost: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

From speaking with Emily, (my wife by the way), the epicenter of the conflict for her and family between "church and state" was worship at home... Sabbath worship.

She shared with me that they were taught, in preparation for Sabbath, every detail of apparel, cleanliness of the house, and labor had to be done before sunset on Friday. "Then worship began. Friday evening we had singing, prayer and Bible study. Friday evenings continued with dinner and more singing of hymns."

Most of the time... interference could be expected on Sabbath Mornings. Securitate officers would come into the home during family worship and look for a certain name, usually the same name. At such times it was necessary to hide all religious books, especially The Bible and The Great Controversy. At one time, a pastor, (one of many who had to move about undercover as a business person), was at the Sime home to conduct Communion. In the middle of the night the Securitate hammered on the door and interrogated Constantin regarding the whereabouts of the pastor. Constantin denied knowledge of the Pastor's location. The Pastor had in fact escaped, but was later imprisoned.

When asked how she dealt with continual fear in her life, she told me: "She did not doubt God, but there was fear, as a young person cannot find any logic in persecution. This taught the family to spend time on their knees. The Lord never allowed the authorities to go beyond asking us for a certain name, and then they left us alone."

"Our Christian experience has been heavily shadowed by religious persecution. That was the tool in God's hands to shape us into who we are today."

Eight years after the fall of Communism in her homeland, and the death of a beloved family member in the United States, Emily came with other members of her family to our country, where persecution from the state and other churches was no longer an imminent threat. She did encounter many struggles, common to new immigrants here. She clutches a fluffy stuffed toy that I gave her as she recalls some of those hard times. But she did find hope from the Word of God via the ministry of Pastor Doug Bachelor. She made Sacramento Central Seventh-Day Adventist Church her spiritual home not long after arriving in the

U.S. She would soon, after joining our church, become a happy volunteer for Amazing Facts.

When my lovely wife evaluated the impact of her life in Romania and her new life here, she said: "I do sense that I have grown a lot in my spiritual life. A lot of the grey areas of doctrinal understanding have been cleared up for me, and my personal relationship with Jesus has been established at a profound level. He is my All in all."

As I pondered over this story, I was moved to tears in thinking of the will of my wife to cling to our Heavenly Father, no matter what, through the trauma of living under such oppression. I marvel at the goodness of God toward me through my wife, and how privileged I am to be married to this great woman. Emily, her family, and this story exemplify complete trust in Christ. I hope that soon all of us who are willing will learn to hide ourselves in Christ's love and care as the Sime family did.



Emily Carlisle



Ask the Pastor

Pastor Mike Thompson

Will there be people in heaven who have never heard of Jesus?



Heaven will be full of surprises! All joyful and happy ones! One such surprise will be that of meeting people there who had never heard of Jesus or the Bible, and who had never gone to church during their earthly life. "How come?," we might well ask. The Apostle Paul answers this question for us in Romans 2. Here Paul compares Jews who had the Word of God but violated it, with Gentiles who had not the Word of God yet unconsciously lived out its principles in their lives.

"For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts." Romans 2:14,15

There is a very enlightening commentary on this passage found in the book, *Desire of Ages*, page 638. "Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, but they have cherished His principles. Through the influence of the Divine Spirit they have been a blessing to those about them. Even among the heathen are those who have cherished the spirit of kindness; before the words of life had fallen upon their ears, they have befriended the missionaries, even ministering to them at the peril of their own lives. Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is

never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God."

It must be borne in mind that such children of God lived faithfully according to all the spiritual light they had. Had more light been revealed, God would have expected them to keep advancing along its path. Therefore God, who knows the deepest desires and motives of every heart, knows those who would have been faithful in all things had they been the recipients of such knowledge. All such considerations as these are factors by which God will weigh character in the judgment. But it must also be remembered that the less enlightened, yet faithful ones who enter the kingdom of heaven will not have earned salvation by their own works. Though ignorant of Jesus, It will still be through the free gift of His grace that they will be found worthy of eternal life.

Would you like to have Pastor Mike answer your questions? Send it to connection@saccentral.org. Subject line: Ask the pastor

End Times Saga

- PART 2

NARROW ESCAPE

By Aaron Buttery

Lungs burning and chest heaving, 16 year-old Ben Times collapsed on the ground and lay still. Around him he could hear shouts of Malaysian police officers and government agents surrounding him, looking for him. He had run from his Uncle John's bungalow nestled deep in the jungle as soon as he had seen the official looking cars coming up the barely visible driveway. It was a preplanned precaution that Ben run under any circumstances like that, so he did. Unfortunately, they had seen him and came after him, with the exception of a few men who had stayed to search the bungalow.

They're probably going to arrest Uncle John, Ben thought. And if they catch me, I will be arrested as well. Dear Lord, please help us.

Ben had made the decision to stay in Malaysia with his Uncle John while his parents returned to the United States. Now with pain shooting up and down his legs and in his chest, and with the officers and agents getting closer he realized that his decision might have been a bit hasty. Raising his head, he caught sight of a rope

dangling mere inches from his nose. Curious, he pushed himself up into a kneeling position and looked up. A face peered down at him from between two branches of a large tree. The face's lips moved and Ben read, Grab on!

Ben obediently grabbed the rope and was immediately hauled up into the tree. His rescuer was a young man who looked to be about Ben's age, with the physique of a native Malaysian. "Thanks," Ben said, steadying himself on the tree branch. "What's your name?"

"My name is Alex," the young man replied in English, with only a slight accent. "What is yours?"

"Ben," Ben responded. Then he tensed. "Are you working for those men down there?"

Alex laughed. "No," he said. "Why do you think I helped you? Besides, I'm a Seventh-day Adventist myself."

"Oh, sorry," Ben replied. "I'm still a little shook up. But," he looked Alex over, "I've never seen you at any of my Dad's meetings."

"Oh," said Alex, a strange smile across his face. "I've always been there."

Ben stared at him, and then shook his head. "Well, thanks for saving me anyhow..." A shout interrupted him. Both boys looked down and saw a police officer running beneath them.

"Time to go," Alex whispered. He swung onto another branch and beckoned for Ben to join him. Soon both boys were moving from branch to branch in the tree tops right above the men running around beneath them. In no time they had arrived in a tree overlooking the bungalow. Seeing several men gathered around the small building, Ben and Alex stopped to listen. One of the men looked back down the driveway and pointed excitedly. The other men gasped and backed up as a black limo plowed up the driveway until its bumper hit the steps leading up to the porch. It screeched to a halt, the door opened, and the Prime Minister of Malaysia herself got out. The man who had first noticed the limo ran forward and bowed before the Prime Minister.

"Oh, honorable Mrs. A. Theist," the man said in Malaysian. "This troublesome Christian won't come out."

Mrs. A kicked the man aside with her foot and strode to the front door. "John Times," she called loudly. "Open this door in the name of the law so we can arrest you for spreading lies about a god."

"Sorry," Uncle John replied. ". We're closed. Come back tomorrow."

The man whom Mrs. A had kicked out of the way let out a laugh that quickly turned into a cough. She glared at him, but then turned back to the door. "John Times, if you don't come out peacefully, we will come in and take

Continue on page 14

you forcibly. " No answer.
 "Mr. Times?" she called again.
 "All right. We're coming in." She motioned for all the men, who ran to the door and knocked it down. They began shouting and then abruptly stopped.
 "He's not here!" one of them yelled.
 "Oh?" Mrs. A looked surprised.
 "Well, search the area. He can't outrun us and he can't outfight us."
 "I can out-drive you, though," Uncle John announced, coming out from behind a tree and diving into the front seat of the waiting limo. "I guess it pays to have a back door."
 "Come on," said Alex. "Let's hitch a ride." In the next moment, Ben found himself on the roof of the limo. As he looked around, an

agent who had just returned from searching the house whipped out a gun and ran toward the car. Alex immediately began grappling with the gunman and Uncle John began struggling with the limo driver, as more men approached the car. In the next instant the driver sprang through the open car door and knocked Alex and the gunman down. Ben leaped off the roof and was about to enter the fray when Uncle John grabbed him from behind and dragged him into the limo. Next, Alex leaped in after him and closed the door behind him while Uncle John floored it.
 "Oh Ben! So glad you're safe," Uncle John exclaimed. "Who's your friend?"
 "Alex," Ben replied.

"Glad to meet you Alex-- but we have to leave the country. Now!"
 Ben couldn't believe it. He had made a decision regarding whether to stay in or leave Malaysia. Now it looked like it he was going to get the best of both worlds. "So we're going back to the U.S.?"
 "No," his uncle responded.
 "Your parents emailed me this morning. Someone stole some files about illegal church members in Russia right underneath their noses. We have to go to Russia and prevent anything from happening to those church members."
 For more adventures with Ben Times and his friends, stay tuned for the next issue of *The Central Connection*.

Mandatory Vaccination Will Not Exclude Religious Reasons



to bear against those who keep the seventh-day Sabbath, the law of God will, to all intents and purposes, be made void in our land, and national apostasy will be followed by national ruin." It is extremely important that we take the time to be aware of even the seemingly small violations of religious liberty, because we know

they're going to set a precedent for much larger issues. In addition, laws such as SB 277 serve as a warning of the times we're living in. 1 Peter 5:8 admonishes us to "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."
 The Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy have forewarned us of events that will be extremely difficult for all Christians, and

especially for our church members.. But we must not be shaken or discouraged by these events. We sing a hymn that begins with the words, "Be not dismayed what ere betide, God will take care of you." Even as we face losing our religious and personal freedoms, changes in political regimes, and the downfall of economic structures we must remember "Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world." (1 John 4:4)



Pastor's Corner

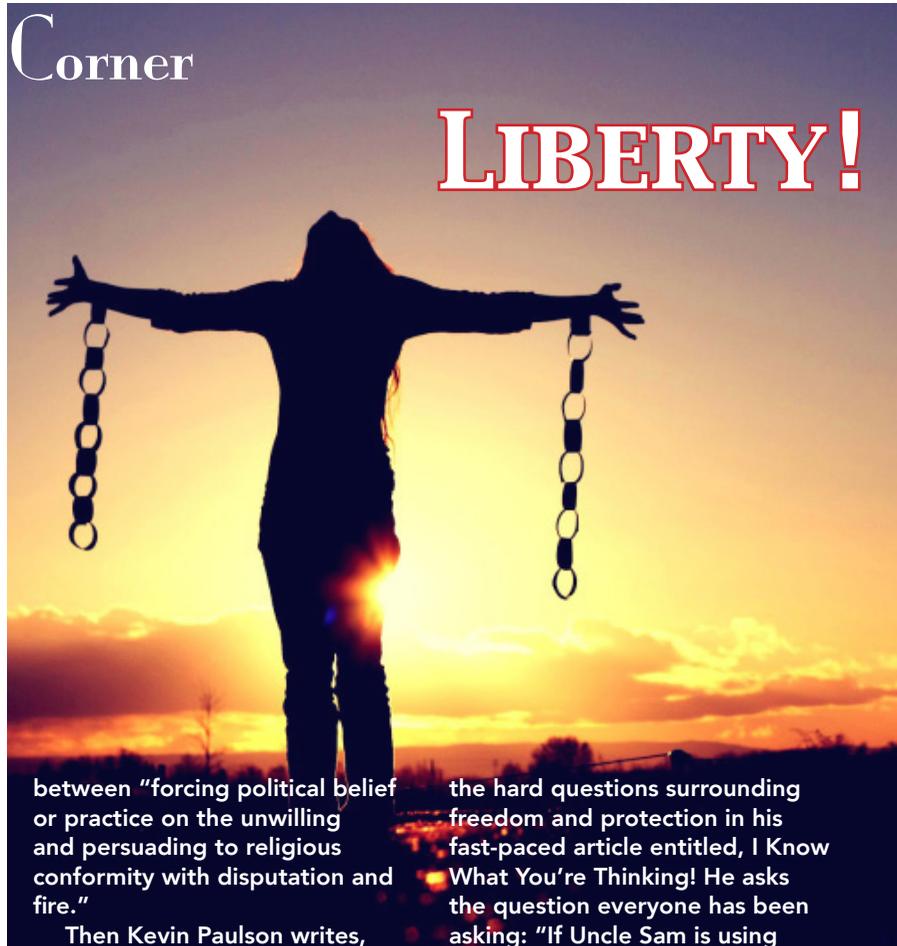
**Pastor
Chris Buttery**

Every two months I receive an insightful magazine at my office. Now perhaps receiving another magazine in the mail doesn't sound very appealing to you, but this particular periodical is extremely important to me. I have found it to be one of the most mind-stimulating, thought-provoking, up-to-date journals that I believe a person could and should read. While it doesn't touch on "front-page" news items all the time, it does contemplate important trends in our country and around the world – trends that are concerned with the fundamental issue of freedom in relation to Bible prophecy.

I can't tell you that this magazine is a relaxing read. Often I find myself re-reading paragraphs in trying to grapple with the writer's intent. My mind is often expanded when I read its challenging articles. This is Liberty magazine, a periodical produced by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which seeks to keep its readers informed regarding religious freedom issues that impact you and me.

Consider some of the articles in the most recent issue:

First there's the sobering article, *My Body to Be Burned*, which takes the reader back four centuries and describes the efforts of Mary Tudor to silence any protest to her restoration of Catholic doctrine in England. The author wonders whether there is any difference



between "forcing political belief or practice on the unwilling and persuading to religious conformity with disputation and fire."

Then Kevin Paulson writes,

Inconvenient History, which picks up on what became a controversial statement made by President Barak Obama regarding the Crusades, to highlight the reality that many have either conveniently or ignorantly forgotten history, when intolerance toward differing theology brought

the hard questions surrounding freedom and protection in his fast-paced article entitled, *I Know What You're Thinking!* He asks the question everyone has been asking: "If Uncle Sam is using

this power [surveillance] to track down the next Mohamed Atta or Dzhorhar Tsarnaev, who's going to complain?" The next question is, "How many innocent people get their privacy violated in the process?"

There's more (and you can read it all online at www.libertymagazine.org), but I hope this is enough to whet your appetite for thought-stimulating reading and a chance to stay abreast of important, life-changing events. The loss of liberty is always one generation away. Let us, by God's grace, utilize the time liberty provides for us to proclaim the Good News about the One Who lives to truly make men free

"The loss of liberty is always only one generation away."

about fines, imprisonment, and severe persecution at the hand of the Roman Catholic Church. It's a stirring read!

Then Hazen Dupre grapples with

Birthday Calendar

October 2015

1 Maria Weckman
Valerie Yuan
2 Amapole Francisco
3 Veronica Esparza
4 Fred Delgado
Carolina Navarrette
5 Douglas Lovell
Carl Yeager
6 Robert (Bob) Croom
7 Ellinda Angel
Elizabeth Rodriguez
8 Federico Demarchi
David Garcia-Hermoza
Hulda Kim
Bernadette Malqued
Wayne Parks
9 Brian Johnson

10 Melissa del Villar
Abigail Guyett
Gaylene Schubert
11 Robert Stewart
Sipa Whitley
12 Edgar Baltazar
14 Alfredo Pacheco
Cindy Russell
15 Jean Handwerk
16 Joseph Ingara
Aurora Ionita
John Keller
Louise Rollinson
Regina Sumler
17 Michael Thomas
19 Jack Downing
Margie Johnson

Oanh Thai
20 Joan Gabriel
Lyuudmila
Rossoshanskiy
21 Norma Arreola
Donna Fa'aiu
Linda Mori
22 Emily Lovell
23 Phil Cress
Isaac Galvez
Leonard Lithe
Alina Nedeia
24 Luckson Emmanuel
Irena Kolbach
John Stenacker
25 Luke Fessenden
26 Krystle Delgado

Lorna Herlache
Michael Mace
David Mori
Loren Oliver
Victoria Thomas
27 Thadene Callaway
Linda Cruz
Rodney Zellitti
28 Agnes Ingarra
Seiss Wagner
29 Emiliano Arreola
Mark Van Arsdale
30 Michelle Manthe
Shirley Shobe
31 Shereen Ivy-McNish

November 2015

1 Martha Michel Sablan
Andromeda Townsend
2 Jose Alvarez
Richard Anger
Deanna Baldwin
Linda Bell
Jenny Brown
Blanchie Fultcher
3 Liza Hernandez
Joe Martinez
Terri Yan
4 Lucian Maidan
Helen Thompson
5 Joe Goins
8 Natalie Adefunmi
Daniel Aquino
Laura Ferguson
10 Teresa Carter
11 Felicia Carroll

Xavier Collin
13 Kula Addy
Helen Bivin
Kevin Tangonan
14 Diana Clinciu
Lillian Johnson
15 Marilyn Tangonan
Sergey Tuzman
Shawna Whitsett
16 Mark Banks
Janice Escobedo
Liviu Ilyes
Marjorie Riley
Marjorie Whitaker
17 Del Evano
George Luh
Judy Schachten
Douglas Schappert
Nicole Theep

18 Arlene Overbeck
19 Johnathan Clemons
David DeRose
Doris Harris
Marchelle Meyer
Cristina Stefan
20 Miriam Arreola
Cheri Sparks
21 Fa'aiu Fa'aiu Jr
Thomas Hein
Doris Herrick
Maria (Marija) Kuraica
23 Linda Baker
Monica del Villar
24 (Terry) Scott Addington
Beverly Donato
26 Gene Madison
Danijela Stroud
27 Les Brown

Adeline Galvez
Wilmer (Scott) Scott
Christopher Steiner
Ayde Syed
Reyna Uriostegui
28 Hidemy Ruth
Barrientos
Donald Goff
Doug Hodel
29 Amy Estey
Andre Hope
Michele Jandera
30 Joshua Galvez
Pedro Galvez
Pam Garland
Joseph Graziadei
Arnulfo Montes
Auriyhani Yates