

ADVENTIST REVIEW

JANUARY 2021: IT IS TIME + ABOUT BURDEN BEARING + A BIGGER PICTURE + THE UNITED STATES IN PROPHECY + I DO SOLEMNLY SWEAR + LIFE IN THE BALANCE

**You
have to
read this!**





Child Impact International has partnered with ASI to complete a new secondary school at Riverside Farm in Zambia.

The school will be a day school, offer grades 8-12, provide lunch, and will be located 300 meters from the current primary school. The new secondary school will create up to 150 new sponsorships for disadvantaged children and allow them to smoothly transition from the primary school to continue their Adventist education.

There is a strong need for education in Zambia to break the cycle of poverty.

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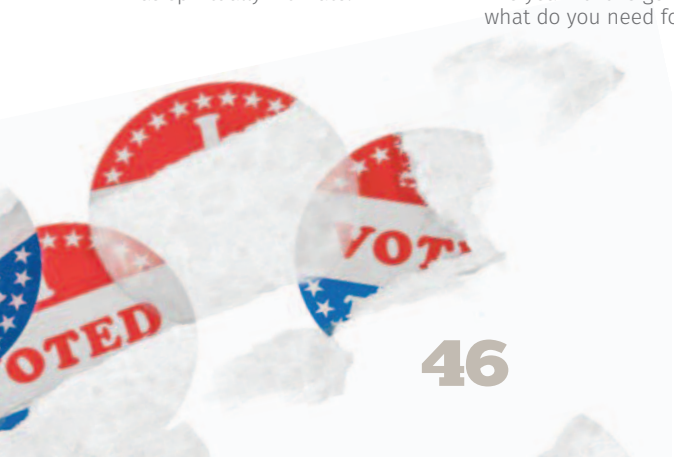
God's Word is the standard by which every word, act, and thought must be measured.

“What kind of Bible reader are you? The new year is a great time to change your spiritual diet. Why not try reading the Bible through in a year—in 2021? Before you protest, I’m here to encourage you. I know because I used to be you.”

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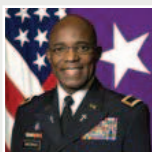
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TRENDING

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- 2 From Military to Hospital Front Lines
- 3 Brazil's Supreme Court Upholds the Rights of Sabbathkeepers
- 4 Research Links Eating Walnuts to Lower Risk of Heart Disease
- 5 Christmas in Our Adventist Past

160 YEARS AGO



The New Year

"Ere this paper reaches a majority of its readers, a new year will have dawned upon us. The old year will have completed its circuit and finished its record. The time will have come for new determinations and fresh resolves. Twelve months ago we no doubt, many of us, formed many purposes and resolves of this nature. How have they been carried out? Let us review the past and from it learn wisdom for the future. The past year has brought us its fifty-two Sabbaths radiant from the throne of heaven. How have we kept them? Can we look back upon them as so many bright gems in our pathway unsullied by our own words, or our own ways? Another year is before us. Years, in these last days when the events of months are crowded into days, are important eras. What new revolutions it will witness, what new signs of the times it will develop, we cannot tell. Let us commence it aright, and if we are permitted to see its close, live through and end it aright, that it may be to us a profitable year's journey on the road to translation.—Editors

This message first appeared in the Review, January 1, 1861.



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BILL KNOTT

“Worship, biblically defined, is not at heart an information download.”

To Cheer Us By the Way

The poll was informal and non-scientific—factors that usually lead us to ignore results.

Participants were self-selected by voluntarily joining a Zoom Sabbath School hosted in the state of Maryland—not the prototypical American state by reason of its proximity to federal power and major urban centers.

Though participants represented a diverse range of cultures and ethnicities, no attempt was made to create a representative group that approximated either the racial or cultural diversity of the suburban location or the nation in general.

It was, in short, a Zoom Sabbath School class.

But the near-unanimity of responses to the host’s initial question was striking and unexpected.

“I miss the singing,” said the first respondent when the class was asked what they missed most about congregational life since the COVID-19 pandemic shuttered the church 10 months ago.

“The singing,” said the second—“the opportunity to experience something corporate in worship, something beyond my living room.”

“I miss the congregational singing,” said the third, even though the host was clearly hoping for differing responses. “I miss standing there and lifting up our voices together in worship.”

By my count, nine of the first 11 identified congregational singing as the thing they missed most about church life.

And somewhere from the depths of my pandemic-weary

heart, the great “Amen” resounded, rolled, and took flight again.

The takeaway from this informal poll—and dozens of others—is not initially comforting to preachers, who typically have found a way to continue their accustomed ministry during this long hiatus by way of Zoom or Skype or Facebook Live. Perhaps if we had gone months without hearing a sermon, we would name preaching as the thing we missed the most.

But listening to a sermon is, at heart, a solitary event, even an intimate one. The most gifted preachers are those who create a bridge between a deeper understanding of the Word and our distractible minds. They build a bridgehead on our side of each week’s living, and construct a way for truth to walk across and enter our existence.

But singing together—not listening to others sing, but joining in with what voice we have—rich, high, or flat—cannot be replicated by virtual experience. If you’ve tried standing in your living room to join a hymn led by an onscreen chorister, you know just what I mean.

And here, thanks to the unwelcome impact of this pandemic, we glean a deeper understanding of what is truly central to Christian and Adventist worship: singing together. As much as we celebrate the sermon in Adventist church culture, it’s the experience of lifting up our voices in chorus to an awesome and so-worthy God that ties us to the great worship scenes of Scripture.

We hear the traveling pilgrims of Psalms 120-134 as they ascend

the climbing paths toward Jerusalem, chorusing their cares, their worries, their solidarity, and their triumphs. We gather with the elders and the living creatures in John’s glimpses of God’s throne-room. Something deep within us stirs as our imaginations join with that “great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages” (Rev. 7:9-10, NRSV*), crying, laughing with the astonishment of grace, and singing with every fiber of our being—“Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

For singing together is an act of both listening and expressing, merging the pieces of our individuality with the gathered praise of others—blending, modifying, harmonizing—so that the result wonderfully embodies not only “me” but “we.”

Worship, biblically defined, is not at heart an information download where we gather insights from the preacher’s exegesis or amusing stories that remind us of our foibles. It is, instead, those moments when we rise above our loneliness and brokenness, our pride and self-absorption, to sing the goodness of the God who covenants His faithfulness to us.

When church doors open once again, you’ll know just where to find me.

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Bill Knott



PRESS ON

The report from General Conference Treasury about the loss of income for the world budget saddened me. We've never seen anything like this in modern history. A world crisis has impacted us all. More than ever we need to show the strength of those brothers and sisters during the depression.

I remember a visit I made to a lovely Christian woman who would come to help my wife and our kids once a week in the city of Curitiba, Brazil. She lived in a small shack on the outskirts of the city, with one bedroom for the couple and one small daughter. They faced hunger and financial crisis, but she would not touch the Lord's money. After we finished prayer, she told me to wait and picked up a small envelope with her tithes. I'll never forget that touching experience and the faithfulness of that sister.

We've faced crises before, and this message must go on to prepare people for Jesus' coming.

Leo Ranzolin Sr.
Estero, Florida

LIFE, LIBERTY, AND ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL

The essay "Life, Liberty, and Accessibility for All," by Stephen Chavez (September 2020), was a refreshing reminder of a sermon Jesus would preach if He spoke those words today. The final words belong in the memory book of all *Review* readers. "Sometimes Christians' commitment to the

principles of the kingdom of their Lord produces an improved quality of life right in the here and now. We should not fear or apologize for efforts for eternity that bring material blessings to our neighbors and our nation."

Andrew Hanson
Chico, California

MARTIAN GEOLOGY AND THE

GOD OF DISCOVERY, HISTORY, AND REDEMPTION

I was delightedly surprised to see Ronny Nalin's article "Martian Archaeology and the God of Discovery, History, and Redemption" (October 2020). Our readers need such materials to aid them in processing developments in this area of science.

In his reflections Nalin states that "new entities don't come out of nothing." That this is true should be a no-brainer. Similarly, the theory of abiogenesis, or chemical evolution, which holds that biologic systems evolved from nonbiologic chemicals, is strongly embraced by most of the theorists and designers of the Martian rovers. Their mission, in part, is to validate the theory (not fact) of evolution. Beyond accessing the geologic history of Mars, the rovers, using onboard gas chromatograph mass spectrometers, search for vestiges of past life (microbial) on Mars. In doing this, they look for chemical signatures that can be made only by biological processes.

For example, what is true on Earth is true on Mars. On Earth the average natural abundance of carbon 12 to carbon 13 is 90 to 1. But if you were to analyze the residue from something that was once alive, the ratio would be 92 to 1, a definite biosignature. Numerous attempts to make such a discovery have all failed.

Christians, dedicated to truth and truth-telling, should be foremost in standing up for verifiable facts.

RUTH ELLIS, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

These past failures are more than enough to lead secular scientists to conclude that chemical evolution of life is an invalid hypothesis for Mars, and that the “message from Mars” should lead to the same conclusions for Earth.

Kent Knight

Hermiston, Oregon

ABOVE THE FRAY

Thank you for Michael Peabody’s article “Above the Fray” (November 2020). I don’t remember when our society has been so consumed with so many baseless rumors and conspiracy theories.

I grew up when some Adventists would point at this or that headline and suggest it was another stepping-stone toward inevitable persecution. I, for one, am happy to see that kind of speculation disappear from my Adventist congregation.

That’s why I’m bewildered that so many people buy into rumors that have no basis in fact. It seems that we, Christians dedicated to truth and truth-telling, should be foremost in standing up for verifiable facts, not chasing the devil’s rabbits, as Peabody so eloquently stated.

Ruth Ellis

Albuquerque, New Mexico

**COMMENTS FROM
ADVENTISTREVIEW.ORG**

RESILIENCE IN A TIME OF CRISIS

In the midst of the pandemic and

the global socioeconomic crisis, the message of the seven steps to resilience is timely for each church member to apply in their evangelism tasks. This is a practical way to become the salt of the earth, just as Jesus commanded us in Matthew 5:13.

Daniel Jimenez Espinoza

TWENTY-FOUR WEEKS OF BLESSINGS

Providing food and making contacts in the community brings to mind Matthew 25 and Isaiah 58. Thank you, Jackson church.

Milton Hare

BIBLICAL JUSTICE IN A WORLD OF SOCIAL UNREST

My wife and I have been members of many of our churches, and our favorites have always been multicultural. There is only one human race. If our leaders would recognize this and proclaim it, it would be another way for the church to lead in equality.

Jim Bob

2021 GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION

Official notice is hereby given that the postponed sixty-first session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists will be held May 20-25, 2021, in the Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, Indiana, United States. The first meeting will begin at 8:00 a.m., May 20, 2021. All duly accredited delegates are urged to be present at that time.

Ted N. C. Wilson, General Conference President

G. T. Ng, General Conference Secretary

YOUR TURN

We welcome your letters, noting, as always, that inclusion of a letter in this section does not imply that the ideas expressed are endorsed by either the editors of the *Adventist Review* or the General Conference. Short, specific, timely letters have the best chance at being published (please include your complete address and phone number—even with e-mail messages). Letters will be edited for space and clarity only. Send correspondence to Letters to the Editor, *Adventist Review*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600; Internet: letters@adventistreview.org.

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“This is more than an Adventist cause. . . . It stresses our conviction that freedom of religion is an individual right.”

—Helio Carnassale, director of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, South American Division, page 13.

NEWS



Local authorities in Cambodia worked with ADRA to secure necessary protective equipment and hygiene items. PHOTO: ADRA

MORE THAN 20 MILLION PEOPLE ASSISTED IN 2020

ADRA AND ADVENTIST CHURCH PARTNERSHIP YIELDS IMPRESSIVE RESULTS.

ADRA COMMUNICATION

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), the global humanitarian arm of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, has been responding globally to help more than 20 million people survive the significant health challenges and economic impact that the pandemic has created.

This global response had created, by early November, 422 projects in 96 countries. It resulted in a historic collaboration between ADRA and the Adventist Church

during a time when many churches were closed.

ADRA has described this collaboration and the significant impact of its global response in a new COVID-19 Global Report.

“ADRA reaffirms its commitment to continue to respond to the urgent needs of disadvantaged communities heavily impacted by the COVID-19 global crisis,” Michael Kruger, ADRA president, said. “Our global emergency taskforce, in coordination with the Adventist Church and our trusted partners, is making significant progress in helping vulnerable families

recover from the difficult challenges of this pandemic. We are grateful to the Adventist Church for the significant support it has provided, as well as to our donors and volunteers for their continued assistance. We pray that this aid will give comfort and hope to every person we help, and a sense of Jesus’ love and compassion.”

ADRA’s COVID-19 Global Report outlines how the agency pivoted from existing development projects to scale up to a major pandemic response by establishing a global taskforce for implementing a new

ADRA staffers in Peru help load food items to be distributed to a community stricken by hunger.

PHOTO: ADRA



approach. This helped ADRA to increase humanitarian assistance worldwide and leverage limited funds into a US\$26 million response that included Adventist Church entities, governments, multilateral organizations, nonprofit organizations, corporations, and other trusted partners to ensure vulnerable communities had access to lifesaving essentials and life-sustaining support. This included awareness and health promotion, water and sanitation, health training, personal protective equipment (PPE), medical supplies, food security, and psychosocial support to vulnerable populations, frontline workers, and first responders.

Seventy percent of ADRA's COVID-19 response operations were established or adapted rapidly in partnership with the Adventist Church with limited or no funding. Despite office closures and disruptions caused by the pandemic, ADRA successfully executed projects in multiple countries and multiple continents. Information below reflects figures by early November.

NORTH AMERICA

69 PROJECTS IMPACTING
714,000 PEOPLE

ADRA partnered with the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists (NAD) to donate US\$4 million in personal protective equipment (PPE), medical supplies, food, and cash assistance to Adventist-run food pantries across the United States and Canada. The donation supported medical facilities facing

severe supply shortages in U.S. suburban communities in states such as Texas, California, Maryland, and New York. More than 200 pallets of PPEs, face shields, gloves, and essential medical supplies were delivered to the facilities. In Canada 510 Adventist volunteers from 39 churches also delivered food baskets, hygiene kits, psychosocial support, and cash vouchers to nearly 30,000 people.

CENTRAL AMERICA

10 PROJECTS SERVING
54,000 PEOPLE

ADRA used innovative ways to adapt or change existing projects and create new ones to support migrants, refugees, and vulnerable populations during the pandemic. The initiatives, totaling US\$339,000, ranged from health prevention awareness campaigns, mental health counseling, food security, and crisis management training to PPEs and medical supply donations, as well as water and sanitation projects. ADRA's relief operations in this region covered at least nine countries, including Colombia, where hundreds of Seventh-day Adventist employees donated one day of their salary to support families affected by the pandemic. In El Salvador, efforts helped more than 6,000 small business entrepreneurs and families working in agricultural projects

to adapt their skills to continue earning livelihoods during the coronavirus crisis.

SOUTH AMERICA

101 PROJECTS HELPING
764,000 PEOPLE

ADRA worked closely with the Adventist Church and local partners to respond to the region's health, social, and economic crisis. The response, valued at more than US\$8.8 million, affected at least eight countries. The efforts featured mobile laundry and decontamination services in Argentina and Brazil, where trained volunteers washed, dried, and sanitized more than 20 tons of clothes regularly for COVID-19 patients. Initiatives also included public health training and assistance to support 13,000 recipients in more than 47 health centers sheltering the homeless and trafficked children and adolescents.

EUROPE

32 PROJECTS IMPACTING
42,000 PEOPLE

ADRA's response in Europe raised local funds to support the most vulnerable populations in developing countries around the world and those inside the European region. The projects worth US\$688,000 were located in some 14 countries. In the United Kingdom ADRA focused

“As we move forward, we expect to face greater challenges than we have so far,”

Mario Oliveira, ADRA director for emergency management.

on community hubs for the homeless, refugees, and people with chronic conditions. In Hungary children received laptops so they could study online. In Albania students at risk of dropping out of school received tutoring videos via WhatsApp. In Russia ADRA volunteers made and distributed 70,000 masks for 35,000 people in disadvantaged communities and for health workers.

Ten European ADRA offices supported humanitarian activities in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. Additional relief projects for underserved communities are already under way in South Sudan, Yemen, Tanzania, Lebanon, Sudan, some West African countries, Sri Lanka, and Nepal.

AFRICA

47 PROJECTS SERVING 16 MILLION PEOPLE

While COVID-19 cases in Africa have not surged at the same levels as other regions, the effects of the pandemic and recent natural disasters in the region have created a refugee and food security crisis. To address the challenges facing Africa, ADRA launched 47 projects worth US\$8 million, including activities focused on water and sanitation for more than 53,000 households and orphans; food and hygiene kits for more than 3,600 displaced people in Mali; and protective gear and medical supplies for health professionals serving more than 72,000 families in Mozambique.

ASIA

75 PROJECTS HELPING NEARLY 2 MILLION PEOPLE

In Asia ADRA worked closely with the Adventist Church and the European Union, national governments, corporations, United Nations agencies, and other local partners to ensure the development achievements of recent years were not lost. To this end, ADRA carried out 75 projects worth nearly US\$1.7 million in at least 15 nations, and many activities focused on adapting existing development projects to educate communities about COVID-19 prevention.

Other activities included training community members to use proper sanitation and providing medical resources to community health centers. In Cambodia ADRA helped more than 10,000 households and 800 health workers through COVID-19 projects targeting community health centers. In the Philippines ADRA leveraged partnerships with the Adventist University of the Philippines to provide psychosocial support for health workers. In Sri Lanka ADRA also leveraged funding to attract support from UNICEF to provide awareness about personal protective equipment, hygiene kits, and hand-washing basins.

SOUTH PACIFIC

49 PROJECTS SERVING 125,000 PEOPLE

ADRA also adapted projects to meet the challenges of the pan-

demic in the South Pacific and created new projects in partnership with the Adventist Church and other partners. The 49 projects totaled US\$1.9 million and were implemented in at least six countries. Some of the activities centered on reaching communities with more than 800 dialects in places like Papua New Guinea (PNG), where ADRA launched prevention awareness initiatives with multiple communication and education campaigns to ensure communities understand the threat and reduce their risk of infection. ADRA also trained vulnerable community members, especially women, to make soap, masks, and other products to sell to improve incomes in the community. In Australia ADRA provided food and counseling to more than 10,000 low-income residents, migrant families, and vulnerable international students who cannot access government benefits.

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA REGION

27 PROJECTS SERVING 260,000 PEOPLE

In the Middle East and North Africa region, ADRA covers 20 countries, including Lebanon, Iraq, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen. During the pandemic ADRA has been meeting emergency needs on the ground by forming alliances with local partners and the Adventist Church to increase COVID-19 awareness. The 27 projects in the region, totaling US\$419,000, are

BRAZIL'S SUPREME COURT RULES ON BEHALF OF SABBATHKEEPERS

DECISION CALLS FOR ALTERNATE ARRANGEMENTS, REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION.

FELIPE LEMOS, SOUTH AMERICAN DIVISION, AND ADVENTIST REVIEW

supporting refugees, low-income residents, and families affected by civil wars and impacted by recent disasters, such as the Beirut, Lebanon, explosion that happened in August. ADRA is also working to prevent the spread of the coronavirus by providing thousands of medical supplies and PPEs to hospitals damaged in the explosion, serving vulnerable families and children. In Yemen ADRA has sponsored COVID-19 prevention training and distributed hygiene kits to more than 2,500 households as part of a Danish government-funded project. In Tunisia more than 400 community members who lost their job because of the pandemic received cash vouchers. In Sudan water and sanitation support from ADRA in Canada is helping communities to have access to essential cleaning supplies.

“As we move forward, we expect to face greater challenges than we have so far,” Mario Oliveira, ADRA director for emergency management, said. “But we are prepared to face them head-on. As ADRA serves so many affected communities, it will continue to carry out relief operations founded on the principle that we are stronger together—together with our partners and with the Adventist Church. Our global offices, churches, ministries, schools, clinics, and partners must work in step to address the massive impact of this pandemic to ensure that many more lives can be touched and saved.”

Brazil's supreme court ruled on behalf of the religious rights of two Seventh-day Adventist church members on November 26, 2020. In an 8-3 decision, Brazil's top justices ruled for alternate arrangements to be made on behalf of Geismario Silva Dos Santos, and 7-4 for reasonable accommodation for Margarete da Silva Mateus Furquim.

Both cases are specifically related to the rights of the two church members to keep Saturday, the biblical seventh-day Sabbath—from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset—as a day of worship and rest. Mateus Furquim had been adversely affected after repeatedly skipping classes on Friday evenings. Silva Dos Santos had been repeatedly prevented from taking a test that would have allowed him to access a civil service position for which he had already qualified. Both church members had sued after being repeatedly denied their rights by public entities that refused to make accommodations for their Sabbath observance. Brazil's Supreme Federal Court agreed to consider their cases after Silva Dos Santos and Mateus Furquim had gone through all judicial stages and appeals at lower courts.

In the Silva Dos Santos case, the supreme court ruled that “it should be possible to carry out public activities on dates and times different from those

requested to someone who may plead exemption due to matters of conscience or religious belief, providing arrangements are reasonable and preserve the equality of all candidates involved.” In Mateus Furquim's case, the court ruled that “it is possible for public service, even at a probationary stage, to establish alternative criteria for the regular exercise of the regular duties inherent to public positions, on behalf of civil servants who may plead exemption due to matters of conscience or religious belief, providing arrangements are reasonable, and they do not involve distortion in the performing of their duties.”

According to Adventist legal experts in South America, the November 26 ruling can now be used as precedents for similar cases before Brazilian courts.

Luigi Braga, director of legal affairs for the Adventist Church in the South American Division church region, highlighted how significant the ruling is for the 1.5 million Adventist Church members in Brazil, calling the supreme court's decision “historic.” During a previous hearing before the court, Braga had stressed the long-standing nature of the Saturday (Sabbath) rest injunction according to Exodus 20:8-11 in the Bible. “No person should be deprived of his rights as a result of his religious beliefs,” Braga told the court.



Brazil's Supreme Court building in Brasília. PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA COMMONS PUBLIC DOMAIN

HOW JUSTICES VOTED

Supreme court members' votes reflected a variety of opinions on the topic. Justice José Dias Toffoli voted in dissent, arguing that there is no right to rescheduling exams on the grounds of religious beliefs. According to Dias Toffoli, "the right to believe is also the right not to believe, and it is not possible to allow for a privilege that cannot be extended to those who have other beliefs or simply do not believe."

At the other side, Justice Luiz Edson Fachin defended the validity of offering alternatives to guarantee religious freedom and stressed that the state has the onus of proving religious diversity is protected, something that, according to him, includes freedom of worship.

Justice Alexandre de Moraes stated that it is possible, within the principles of religious tolerance and reasonableness, for compatibility with alternative provisions for Sabbathkeepers. "It is possible to establish differences in dates and times in public ser-

vice, as a result of personal religious beliefs," he wrote in his concurring opinion. "Even though public entities do not need to take into account religious calendars to set their routines, it would not be reasonable to say that because of a person's religious beliefs, he or she may be absolutely prevented from claiming access to a civil service position."

In a concurring opinion, Justice Luís Roberto Barroso wrote: "It is possible for a candidate to fulfill testing or similar requirements at a different date and time than the ones communicated by public notice, as long as such request does not create any disproportionate burden to the public administration, nor interferes with the equality of the event, that is to say, that similar opportunities are preserved on behalf of every applicant."

Other supreme court members also concurred. For Rosa Weber, the ruling is about protecting the duty of public entities to provide necessary accommodation, an obligation that includes the rights of Sabbathkeepers. Justice Cármen

Lúcia Antunes Rocha, who spoke after Weber, stressed that the constitution cannot give some rights and take away others. In that sense she said, "Sabbathkeepers cannot be subjected to situations in which they need to choose between their faith and being able to apply and be tested for civil service." She added, "The state is separated from religion, but human beings are not separated from faith."

GRATITUDE

Helio Carnassale, director of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty in the South American Division, thanked all the church members who prayed for the outcome of these cases. He called the ruling "a great victory, thanks to God's blessing." Carnassale stressed that the ruling also has broad and far-reaching consequences. "This is more than an Adventist cause; it is a ruling that benefits every person with a holy religious day. It stresses our conviction that freedom of religion is an individual right, something that every human being must equally enjoy." 🍀



SEB. RAJARAM/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES

EATING WALNUTS LOWERS RISK OF HEART DISEASE

FINDINGS CONFIRM BENEFITS FOR OLDER ADULTS.

LISA AUBRY, LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY HEALTH NEWS

Researchers from Loma Linda University School of Public Health and the Lipid Clinic at the University of Barcelona in Spain released findings in a journal article in December 2020 showing that walnut consumption in older adults reduced six out of 10 inflammatory markers in the blood by up to 11.5 percent.

The study, “Effects of Two-Year Walnut-Supplemented Diet on Inflammatory Biomarkers,” appeared in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology* and is part of the Walnuts and Healthy Aging (WAHA) study, which ran from 2012 to 2016 and was the longest and largest study about the health benefits of walnuts.

Sujatha Rajaram, professor of nutrition at the School of Public

Health and a coinvestigator of the study, says newfound confirmation of walnuts’ ability to lessen chronic inflammation adds to a growing knowledge base linking nut consumption to lower risk of cardiovascular diseases. Previous research by this group and others has shown how walnuts’ cholesterol-lowering effects and contribution to vascular health can bolster the cardiovascular system.

“Eating walnuts can be beneficial from both a disease management and disease prevention point of view,” Rajaram said. “Those who have been diagnosed with cardiovascular disease can add walnuts to their diet to benefit their body in addition to medication or treatment they receive,

and others can start incorporating walnuts into their diets to reap preventive benefits.”

With cardiovascular disease reported to be the leading cause of death both globally and in the United States by the World Health Organization and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, findings of plant foods capable of cutting the risk of heart disease are all the more significant to fold into daily life for health’s sake, Rajaram said.

Incorporating walnuts to an existing diet doesn’t warrant a drastic lifestyle change—simply add the nuts to any routine by eating them plain, mixing them with breakfast cereals, sprinkling them atop a salad, or blending them in a smoothie. While the research in the article focused on daily walnut consumption in older people, eating a fist-sized portion of walnuts three to five times a week could be beneficial for everyone, Rajaram said.

Rajaram said she anticipates future studies by WAHA researchers to extend evidence about walnuts’ health benefits beyond heart disease and examine impacts on demographics beyond older healthy adults.

In the meantime, more scientific support for the inclusion of walnuts as part of a heart-healthy diet is refreshing, Rajaram said. “In a world where consumers are often told about which foods not to eat, it is nice to hear about what is actually good to eat for a change,” she said. ▀



What We Believe For Guide Readers, will be available for purchase from Pacific Press Publishing Association.

GUIDE MAGAZINE PUBLISHES STORY-BASED FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS BOOK

"KID-FRIENDLY APPROACH" PUBLICATION IS GEARED TO READERS AGES 10-14.

PACIFIC PRESS PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION

Guide magazine managing editor Laura Sámano has compiled 28 true stories, one for each of the Seventh-day Adventist fundamental beliefs, and written Bible study questions for each belief in the new book *What We Believe for Guide Readers*.

Taken from the weekly magazine for readers ages 10–14, the stories in the book are of Adventist pioneers and contemporary protagonists and introduce kids to each of the church's fundamental beliefs. Sámano, who said she's excited about the coming release of the book, pointed out that "no Adventist publisher has ever produced a book for this age group with the kid-friendly approach of storytelling and study questions."

CHRIST'S METHOD OF TEACHING

Jesus spent a lot of His time on earth teaching through the use of stories called parables. "Stories remain the most powerful means of transmitting information," *Guide* editor Lori Futcher said. "Barriers

crumble as the reader or listener begins to relate with the character and become receptive to the message the story is meant to teach. When a story is memorable, that lesson may impact the reader for a lifetime. That's exactly what we pray this book will do."

As *Guide* editors point out, some readers in the 10-14 age range haven't yet acquired the skill of understanding abstract concepts. Storytelling makes abstract concepts easier to understand. The selected stories show how real people learned to understand or put into practice the particular belief.

SIMPLIFIED BELIEFS AND TRIVIA

"Digging in the Word," the Bible study portion of the book, can be used within a small group or by individuals. "Not everyone learns in isolation; some want to talk about what we learn. This book allows for that sort of interaction," Sámano said.

A comprehensive statement of beliefs is included at the back of

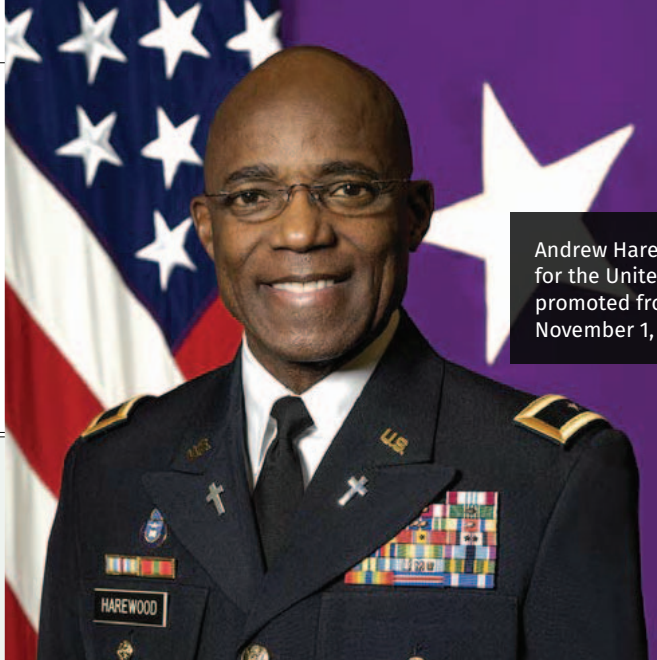
the book. Still, to help readers remember each belief, former *Guide* editor Randy Fishell wrote two-sentence versions of them with simple, kid-friendly wording. They are included at the beginning of each chapter.

A TIME TO TEACH

"I believe that the Lord is coming soon," Sámano affirmed. "If we expect to raise kids who love and know their Savior, it's time to teach them by showing them what a Bible-based life looks like."

This is best done when they are young, said Carl McRoy, North American Division Publishing Ministries director. "Although Jesus can transform our crooked ways when we get older, life is more enjoyable, and we are more useful, when we're nurtured in His ways while we're young. As Fredrick Douglass said: 'It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.'"

"It's time to teach kids what we believe so that as they grow older, they don't depart from God's ways," Sámano said. 🍀



Andrew Harewood is deputy chief of chaplains for the United States Army Reserve. He was promoted from colonel to general officer on November 1, 2020. PHOTO: COURTESY OF ANDREW HAREWOOD

ADVENTIST CHAPLAIN PROMOTED TO GENERAL IN U.S. ARMY RESERVE

ANDREW HAREWOOD IS THE FIRST ADVENTIST AND AFRICAN AMERICAN TO SERVE IN THAT CAPACITY.

MYLON MEDLEY, NORTH-AMERICAN DIVISION NEWS

On November 1, 2020, Andrew Harewood was promoted to general officer upon accepting the position of deputy chief of chaplains for the United States Army Reserve, making him the first Seventh-day Adventist and the first African American chaplain to become a general in the Army Reserve. With the promotion he is the third Adventist chaplain in the U.S. military to reach the rank of general.

"In the military we consider our career a success when we make it to colonel. When that happened three years ago, that was a humbling experience. When [the promotion to general officer] happened, it was very surreal and very humbling," Harewood said.

Harewood is one of three deputy chiefs of chaplains for the Army—respectively representing active duty, national guard, and the reserve—who report to the Army chief of chaplains. The Army chaplaincy leadership team oversees the reli-

gious support services within the military branch that are carried out in more than 220 countries and territories throughout the world. Harewood is the deputy who oversees the work of 700 chaplains in the Army Reserve, serving nearly 190,000 Army Reserve soldiers, their families, and Army Reserve civilians. He exercises his role from the Army's headquarters in the Pentagon, located in Arlington, Virginia.

Among his many duties, Harewood oversees strategy, plans, policy, and resources (SPPR) for the chief of chaplains' office. Responsibilities include directing strategic communication, policy, law, and doctrine; government affairs; religious accommodation; religious diversity and plans; force management; and strategic goals and studies. Harewood is also the primary representative to Army senior leadership in all matters related to religious support, advisement, and the free exercise of religion.

"Chaplain Harewood has had an

exemplary career as an academician, educator, pastor, and chaplain. His new role as deputy chief of chaplains is unparalleled in the Army and among Seventh-day Adventist chaplains," Paul Anderson, director of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries for the North American Division, said. "He is the third Adventist military chaplain to reach this level. He joins the august company of chaplains Barry Black and Darrold Bigger, who served in the U.S. Navy as chief and deputy chief of chaplains, respectively."

"Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries is thrilled to celebrate this providential promotion with Chaplain Harewood. He is the man whom God has singularly prepared for such a time as this," Anderson continued.

Harewood has been in the Army for more than three decades and has served as a chaplain for the military branch for 25 years. His highly decorated career has included active military work and civilian pastoral assignments within the Adventist Church. Prior to his previous position, he was senior pastor of the Ephesus Seventh-day Adventist Church in Harlem, New York, for four years.

"Anything I may have a limit to, God is bigger than that," Harewood said. This [perspective] allows me to communicate with other people who are of a different faith or even no faith, and still see them as a child of God. My faith informs who I am as a person—how I meet, engage, listen, and talk to people. I want the beauty of Jesus to be seen more in what I do than what I say." 🍀



RESCUE EVANGELISM REACHES 10,000 PER NIGHT, WINS MORE THAN 6,000. The Inter-Oceanic Mexican Union of Seventh-day Adventists recently concluded its fourth 2020 digital evangelistic campaign, a series that sprang out of the disruption of regular church meetings by the COVID-19 pandemic. Project #Rescate316, Spanish for Rescue316, named for John 3:16, regularly engaged some 10,000 followers per night, and yielded 6,000 baptisms by November 7, 2020.



HOSPITAL NOT YET OPENED DONATES TO NONPROFITS. When the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic delayed completion of the Texas Health Hospital Mansfield, hospital leaders contributed funds scheduled for their grand opening to five local nonprofit organizations: Mansfield Independent School District, Harvesting In Mansfield, Toys for Tots, Mansfield Mission Center, and Mansfield Cares. In response, Lori Williams, Mansfield Chamber of Commerce president/CEO, said, "Donations like these go a long way in helping provide some relief."



HASHTAG #WERTHECHURCH AGAIN CONNECTS ADVENTISTS ACROSS THE SOUTH PACIFIC DIVISION (SPD). On November 20, the South Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church convened its third #weRtheCHURCH interactive, electronic, multinational encounter under the theme "Sowing the Seed," highlighting the power of Adventist education for students' and societies' good. Interviews featured a police sergeant doing digital evangelism using mobile phones, and Pastors Roy and Jinha Kim on winning ways to evangelize during a pandemic.



FOCUS IN SOUTH KOREA ON BABIES WHO WILL SPREAD THE GOSPEL. The EUM Foundation, a Christian community ministry focused on passing on the faith to the next generation, became an independent entity October 25, 2020. Supported and funded by church entities from local churches up to the Northern Asia-Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the project has already accepted 141 babies with a view to an education that trains families for mission work.



ADRA ROMANIA COMPLETES MORE THAN 300 HOUSING PROJECTS IN 15 YEARS. The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) in Romania recently inaugurated its 330th social housing project in Valea Lungă-Cricov, Dâmbovița. Georget Pirlitu, executive secretary of the Adventist Church's Romanian Union Conference, emphasized that ADRA's assistance has no strings attached; and ADRA Romania executive director Robert Georgescu said that this 330th house "stands for people with a big heart, willing to invest in helping those in need."



JAPAN UNION CONFERENCE (JUC) HEADQUARTERS EMPLOYEES STAGE AT-WORK HEALTH RETREAT. From September 28 to October 2, 2020, 12 JUC headquarters employees participated in an at-work health retreat when the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic forced cancellation of their regular annual NEWSTART live-in program. The experimental program featured healthful practices ranging from drinking more water to bedtime before 10:00 p.m. Participants reported such benefits as improved sleep and relief from symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, and drowsiness.



LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY-DONATED PLOT SUPPORTS LOCAL ORGANIC GARDENING. A one-acre (0.4-hectare) plot donated by LLU Health is helping alleviate hunger in the southern California food desert of San Bernardino through establishing an organic community garden and outdoor activity center that will improve nutrition and well-being among the underserved, organizers said. Named the Jardín de la Salud, Spanish for "Garden of Health," the program is sponsored by Loma Linda University's Community Academic Partners in Service, part of the Institute for Community Partnerships.

LAEL CAESAR

BETTER- TASTING WORDS

*Choosing
the right
words to
chew on*



*“Your words were found and I ate them” (Jer. 15:16).**

In the beginning, when God gave Adam and Eve fruits, grains, and nuts to eat, He didn't mean for them to eat scrolls. But by Jeremiah's time, six centuries before Jesus came to reset earth life to its original mode, eating words seems to have become a thing to brag about. Not too long after Jeremiah says he did it and loved it, the Lord told Ezekiel to do something similar (Eze. 3:1, 2). Ezekiel liked it too—at least he did at first. Then at the end of the New Testament, the angel from whom John receives a book tells him: “Take it and eat it” (Rev. 10:9). So what is it with eating books?

WORD MEALS: THE IDEA

To be fair and clear as well as precise, Jeremiah doesn't represent himself as a book eater. It's words that evoke the pleasure upon his palate. Also, it's not just any words or just anyone's words: it's God's words. Our study of word eating is lost if we start focusing on paper versus papyri, or wood against baked brick. Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and John are not in an argument about ancient writing systems. The angel of John's vision is not proposing some unique form of documentation that will preserve yesterday's prophecy for the ether-reading people of the present.

The satisfaction of our “word meal” was not designed to wax or wane based on Anthony Bourdain's gustatory proclivities, Rachael Ray's culinary dexterities, or Chef José Andrés' disaster-intervening philanthropies. The value of a word meal must be the depth of its moral penetration, or the breadth and prophetic precision of its application, or the height of its intellectual and literary content. It was all these for Jeremiah. In context of which, we should note, despite Jeremiah's satisfaction: affective pleasure is not guaranteed from consuming words, even when they are divine.

Jeremiah was warned beforehand of what his text meal was for. The call he received was clarion. We don't know his age when he got it, but he was young—*na'ar* is the flexible Hebrew word for his life stage, the label Saul pins on David that proves him inadequate to fight a giant (1 Sam. 17:33). That Saul-David conversation helps illustrate the range of the term's application: Ishmael is a *na'ar* in Genesis 21; but the picture of a child in his early teens dying of thirst in the wilderness (Gen. 21:16) varies vastly from that of David, who responds to

Saul's label by informing his king that he has wrestled a lion and a bear and delivered his flock from their jaws (verses 34-39). *Na'ar* may mean inexperienced, but doesn't have to mean stripling or some equivalent diminutive as the King James Version describes David (see 1 Sam. 17:56, KJV).

Be that as it may, wherever Jeremiah falls on the spectrums of chronology and social development, he knows up front that he will not be allowed to use it as an excuse or justification for inadequate ministry. He knows this because he tries it at the very beginning and gets rebutted. “I am a *na'ar*” was his comeback when God tried to engage him for service (Jer. 1:6).

In response, God stated: “Do not say, ‘I am a youth,’ because everywhere I send you, you shall go, and all that I command you, you shall speak” (verse 7). And there was more: the Lord then reached out to touch the intern's mouth and spoke more words, words about eating—and regurgitating—words: “Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. See, I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms” (verses 9, 10). “Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you” (verse 8).

WORD MEALS: JEREMIAH'S AND OTHERS'

Public ministry subjected Jeremiah to unrelenting and capricious attacks from far and close quarters. Speaking for God was its own occupational hazard. There was so much to speak against in a nation God chose as His flagship that dedicated itself instead to “continual apostasy” (Jer. 8:5). And there seemed so little to speak for—except that divine grace always abounds beyond any scope of our sin. Grace always serves up delectable dishes. Tidbits like God announcing, “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness” (Jer. 31:3). And extravagantly multicourse meals: “I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, . . . I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. . . . They will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest . . . , for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more” (verses 31-34).

His people's rejecting such a God was heartbreaking enough, but the hostility heaped on Jeremiah personally was overwhelming. If it wasn't the king himself

(Jer. 36), then it was Priest Pashhur abusing and imprisoning him (Jer. 20:1-6), or some fake news false prophet feeding the crowds words of pâté de fois gras and ice cream, much less healthy and much more gratifying than the word dishes Jeremiah got from the Lord. Fake prophets were many and everywhere, aggressive and vile, slandering Jeremiah, sleeping around, spewing lies, and signing off with God's name.

Over in Babylon, Ahab ben-Kolaiah and Zedekiah ben-Maaseiah, the people's true enemies, added to their lies in God's name, sleeping with neighbors' wives (Jer. 29:21-23). Shemaiah the Nehelamite was

The best tasting words of all are God's words.

describing Jeremiah as a madman and urging supporters who consumed his propaganda to lock him up (verses 24-28). In Jerusalem fake newsman Haniah was predicting: "God is breaking Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar's yoke off your neck in two years"; in two years everybody would be back home and comfy (Jer. 28:10, 11). Over against his disinformation, Jeremiah, serving up God's words, was predicting seven decades of captivity (Jer. 25:11, 12; 29:8-10). The adulterous liars were pleasing and winning more people.

When Jeremiah wasn't locked in a spiritual and moral struggle with false prophets, it was a bunch of women from the rank and file pouring out scorn on his claims to be bringing some word from God (Jer. 44:15-19; re: the women, see, particularly, verse 19). If not false prophets and rude women, it was his right-hand man, his personal scribe, Baruch, who couldn't take it any longer and wanted out, nursing dreams of some better lot in life that would bespeak his genius, instead of being the colleague and servant of his society's greatest pariah (Jer. 45). And if none of those, then it was his own relatives scheming up some way to take out their cousin (Jer. 11:21; 12:6). Either his relatives, or everybody, "the priests and the prophets and all the people," mobbing him and crying "Kill him!" (see Jer. 26:8).

In the midst of the clamor for his blood, Jeremiah had to hear the command that had called him, command that he must go it alone: no woman to complete his manhood, to share love's deepest intimacies and bear him children; no woman to stand with him when all things and everyone opposed him, to squeeze his hand, tickle his ear, or whisper sweet and silly nothings that lack all

logic or rhetoric but mean everything to his very human heart. No welcoming smile to come home to, dear Brother J, so you could know that at the end of your day, whether bright or gloomy, warm hugs and hot tea were waiting for you (Jer. 16:1, 2). A man can lose sight of his true north at a time like that, or rather, at times like those. He can forget something crucial; fill his pillow full of tears as bitter as they are salty; cry his heart out for nobody to hear, sink into depression, and wonder why he has to be part of any such thing.

And Jeremiah did: he cried for disaster about to fall on his land (Jer. 4:19-22); he cried for himself: "My sorrow is beyond healing, my heart is faint *within me*" (Jer. 8:18); he cried for what the brokenness of his nation and people meant for him: "For the brokenness of the daughter of my people I am broken. . . . Oh that my head were waters and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for . . . my people!" (Jer. 8:21-9:1). He cried so much that he's called "the weeping prophet." He was undone by his personal victimization, by the national rebellion, and by the destruction that comes from rejecting God's uncomplicated guidance. The constantly depressing results made his pain "perpetual," and he wanted to know why (Jer. 15:18).

WORD MEALS: JEREMIAH'S ANSWER

But Jeremiah's story does not end in distress. He found his answer, the answer to all his anguish. He found the words that could feed his soul. The best-tasting words of all are God's words. As Jeremiah exclaimed: "Your words were found and I ate them, and Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I have been called by Your name," literally, "Your name is on me" (verse 16).

What words of God did he find? Succeeding verses suggest that the words of his prophetic beginning were part of his liberating discovery, words that will feed and vivify every follower of God who answers His call to service today. Why? Because He who calls us is faithful (1 Thess. 5:24). His promise to Jeremiah is as valid as ever: "I am with you to save you and deliver you" (Jer. 15:20); "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20).[✍]

* Scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard Bible*, copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

Lael Caesar is an associate editor of *Adventist Review*.



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MY ROCK

GREG SCOTT

Growing up, I remember hearing stories of missionaries smuggling Bibles into such countries as China, North Korea, and the former Soviet Union: protected and guided by angels; often risking detection, arrest, and possible imprisonment. Stories by Brother Andrew in his book *God's Smuggler* were deeply engraved in my memory. I would often imagine what it must have been like to risk capture and possible imprisonment to carry God's Word into godless countries.

In 2002 the church administrator for the trans-Mediterranean territory invited me to travel to a North African country. I met up with three other colleagues to pray with and encourage local church leaders and members. The invitation included a request to carry a box of Bibles and other devotional materials in Arabic to be shared with our church members. This was my first time traveling to this country, and so I was unfamiliar with religious materials' restrictions. And I was not briefed.

After arriving at the airport and collecting my suitcase and box of "books," I proceeded to the customs clearance area, where I was abruptly asked in French to open the box. Suddenly my French got very rusty, even though I had spent four years in France. I spent the next three hours responding to intense questioning in my "broken" French. The questions flooded: "Who are you? Who are these books for? Where did you get them? Who are you meeting? Why are you visiting our country?" Two supervisors were summoned and joined the questioning. During this time, I silently prayed for God's protection, and for Him to send those same angels that protected Brother Andrew. I feared deportation.

But after the authorities verified my doc-

uments and my confirmed travel plans, they released me. God had answered my prayers.

The Bible is foundational to our Christian experience. It is key to our understanding of salvation's plan, the battle between good and evil, and why God loves us so much. The Bible is the operations manual and guidebook to knowing and understanding our purpose, and what is next in this chapter of life. Yet billions of people are deprived of its blessings.

The Bible is my rock, my guiding light in teaching me about God's love and how He came from heaven to die for undeserving me. I gained a passion for the Bible early on in the form of memorization. One of my earliest memories of Scripture is "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Ps. 119:11, KJV). I came to learn that I needed to fill my heart with God's Word. Imagine hiding God's words so deeply into my heart that I might sin less frequently. That is quite something.

Among the Bible texts that have deep and personal meaning for me is "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5, KJV). Knowing that God is with me every step of the way brought me peace and encouragement when, in 2002, my father died suddenly in an automobile accident, and when, in 2015, my mother passed away from cancer.

Just as He called the prophets of old, God invites each of us to make disciples of all nations. He invites us to collaborate with Him in sharing His precious words of truth—the Bible. It is a privilege to respond to the call and remain encouraged that He is with us through trials and struggles, and that He does not abandon us. ▀

Greg Scott is associate director of Adventist Review Ministries.

“I’ve found great solace and joy in the Bible.”

THE WORD SHINES LIGHT INTO OUR LIVES

TIM LALE

I grew up around the Bible from birth. When we played Egypt to Canaan or that old Review and Herald Bible card game at our house, I knew most of the answers. My parents did a middling job of the Sabbath School lesson through my childhood, but I was in Sabbath School every week of my life. We bought that new translation of the Bible that came out in the 1970s with the stick-figure Bible characters. I went to Adventist school (and Bible class) from age 5 to age 22. Call me Bible-saturated.

My wife grew up in a tough family situation, a split home that caused her to go to public school from the third grade on. She learned the little songs and memory verses of childhood Sabbath School. Church (baptism, too) was expected until her mid-teens, when her parents essentially disappeared and she was on her own. As a married adult, she met God and joined Bible studies in Sabbath School with an Adventist pastor and at a nondenominational church.

As we talked about her journey, I realized something we had in common. Both of us had been convicted, as far back as we could remember and without consciously deciding it, that the Bible is God’s truth, and that it stands above all other sources that claim to be truth. Where we got that conviction from at such a young age, I’m not sure. It must have been the Spirit of God at work.

Something else we have in common in spite of our very different childhoods: we learned Bible information as children; then as adults we met God,

and the Bible information became our reality, our lived experience. The Bible became meaningful.

I’m thankful that neither of us brought a negative view of the Bible from childhood.

My wife remembers life in a small church being a bit traumatic for an earliten. It took some years (and having a son) to find her own place. But when she entered God’s way, she began reading around topics in the Bible, roaming far beyond the designated verses in a Bible study. She still appreciates the instructional value of the Bible above all.

For several decades I’ve found great solace and joy in the Bible. It is a trove of beautiful literature; it is an inspired revelation of the Father and the Son and the Spirit. It’s all the hope we need, encapsulated. God has delivered up foundational ideas in it that we thrive on. One of the earliest that He taught me was “Everything good comes from God.” Besides John 3, I can get through the day on Proverbs 3:5, 6 and Matthew 6.

If there’s an unspoken question for which we’ve received a full answer, it would be: How does this work? We needed to know the extent of God’s love and His nature, and how we can best respond to Him. We revel in the salvation that we read about for ourselves and understood as unchallengeable truth. We rely on the Holy Spirit to work in us, and we rely on the Word of God to fill in the picture of the way to go. Praise God for speaking clearly to us.✎

Tim Lale, a freelance writer, editor, works part-time for Adventist Review Ministries and lives in Burtonsville, Maryland.

“My mother had brought heaven within hearing distance.”

THUNDERING WORDS

The awe of hearing God speak

SIERRA BRUNEAU

As a young child I remember being afraid of thunderstorms. During a particularly wild storm, I was having trouble settling down to sleep. Knowing her child was unsettled, my mother came into the room to offer comfort. Concerning the crashes of thunder, she told me that I did not need to worry or fear, because we were in no danger. In fact, far from being dangerous, the frightful sounds were to be understood as the sound of joy. She told me to imagine that this was merely the sound of heavenly angels bowling.

Suddenly, with each deafening crack, instead of fear I envisioned angels happily gathered around a bowling lane and laughing in congratulations as yet another strike was bowled. My mother had brought heaven within hearing distance, and I was comforted by its thunderous sound.

That image has never left me. It made heaven alive and tangible. That tangibility is something I am determined to cling to.

The Bible speaks of God’s voice as thunderous (Ps. 29:3). Yet the sound of thunder has not always afforded the reassurance from heaven that it did when I was a child. I have often longed for that same sense of direct heavenly communication as one hears spoken of in hearing God’s voice. I desperately want to know what it sounds like, and to hear His words of direction and comfort.

The Bible has been my answer. As I’ve spent time reading Scripture, particularly over the past few years, my desire to know

His voice better has been fulfilled. “All Scripture is God-breathed” (2 Tim. 3:16). The Bible, the Word of God is God-breathed from His lips. To many this may seem obvious—something understood throughout their spiritual walk. But for me, what “God-breathed” meant for my journey didn’t become clear until a couple years ago—that not only is the Bible inspired by God but that the truths on every single page are His messages to me. His voice! When I wish to hear from Him, Scripture is how He speaks.

I hear His voice in the conviction and need of correction I feel when I open the Bible and read of His unblemished character; in the peace that washes over me when I pore through His promises; in the comfort provided when a Bible story is brought to mind and illustrates the answer; and in my heart breaking when I learn of His unrequited love for me.

Every time a passage or promise is brought to mind during a time of worry or distress, I am elated, humbled, and overwhelmed, knowing that my Father in heaven is looking down as a loving parent, intimately aware of my every thought as He quietly speaks the exact words I need to hear. The Bible has made it real to me. The Bible has brought heaven once again within hearing distance.✍

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DEEP IMPACT

What the Bible does for our family

THE BAPTISTE FAMILY

An informal poll of two generations of family members uncovered the differences between our experiences with the same book. Candid conversation with each person detailed the impact and importance of the Bible from their personal perspective. Understanding that a diversity in interpretation would be present, it was interesting to note the themes that emerged from our discourse.

"I read the Bible because that's how I get to know all about God." When asked why the Bible was important, this was the simple yet profound answer of Kryselle's 4-year-old son. His response provided quick insight to a reality she hadn't previously considered: The Bible has left a distinct impact on all who dare to peek inside.

FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE

People look to God's Word to guide them through tough times and provide them with "hope and a future" (Jer. 29:11). For many, the Bible is a soft landing place for the heart.

"It has made me understand the depths of God's love for me."

"It's given me hope when my life was at its worst."

"It gives me a basic framework to understand the message of love."

STRUCTURE AND SECURITY

Some of us need guideposts, some indication that we truly know what we think we know. The Bible reassures us that there is a standard by which we can measure our choices, even the seemingly basic choice to believe. Order and affirmation can be helpful when

we seek to make sense of our world. Children look for safety in what they read, see, and hear.* Adults look for reliability and trustworthiness. God's Word offers security for those who believe in it.

"It gives me a blueprint to live . . . even if I don't follow it to the letter, at least I know what the letter is."

"It's important to God because it has good stuff. It teaches us how to be good."

"It helps us know more about God and Jesus. It shows us how God heals people and lets us know He can do it for us."

COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

Cognitive dissonance commonly occurs when our beliefs do not align with our practices. We are all guilty of disappointing someone. We experience a similar sting when others fail to meet our expectations. Life never arrives on our doorstep neatly packaged and perfect. Wrestling with our uneasiness regarding Scripture at times doesn't make us heathen, it makes us human. Internal conflict has infinite potential to lead us toward invaluable introspection and honesty.

"The Bible causes me to be more analytical of the world and what is said and done."

"It has made me realize that people have been sordid since the Fall."

Clearly, God's Word is able to interrupt our regularly scheduled program of self-sufficiency. We must acknowledge that considering more than our own thoughts can profoundly change what we believe about the lives we live.

What impact has the Bible made on you? ♦

*To hear what one 4-year-old does on his own to remember his Bible verses, visit: <https://vimeo.com/488689099> and <https://vimeo.com/488689588>.

Marvene Thorpe Baptiste, editorial assessment coordinator for Adventist Review Ministries, lives in Silver Spring, Maryland.

"The Bible causes me to be more analytical of the world."

NO TASTE AND SEE

*Looking for a new diet?
We have one!*

**BY MERLE POIRIER, OPERATIONS MANAGER,
ADVENTIST REVIEW MINISTRIES**

My 4-year-old grandson is a fairly good eater. His parents have encouraged him to eat all sorts of foods, and in general, he complies. But every now and again a new food is introduced, and he draws the line to even a small taste. What's interesting is that he doesn't differentiate between something that may truly taste horrible and what actually might be a nice treat. In doing so, he doesn't realize he may be missing out on something really good.

People are sometimes like that with the Bible. They love a regular diet of the Gospels, Acts, Romans, and, perhaps, some Genesis and Psalms. But when asked to read something else, they push it away, determining without even "tasting" it.

So what kind of Bible reader are you? The new year is a great time to change your spiritual diet. Why not try reading the Bible through in a year—in 2021? Before you protest, I'm here to encourage you. I know because I used to be you. But I took the plunge, and lost track of the times I've read the Bible through, but I never tire of the experience. The Bible reads like a brand-new book every year.

The *Adventist Review* is including three different reading plans in this issue. Tear out your choice and try it. As you do, here are a few things to remember.

1 Choose a plan that works for you. Ask yourself: What is your attention span? Do you like to read things in order? Are you interested in how things fit together? Pros and cons for the plans are provided. Select the one right for you.

2 It's OK to change your mind. Let's say you decide on a plan, but it simply isn't keeping your attention. That's OK. Switch! But there is a limited time to do this. It's easier to switch in January. Once you hit February, commit.

3 You will fall behind. Sorry, let's just get this out of the way. Things get busy, and you miss a day. Then you're faced with a double reading, and you don't finish it. Don't get discouraged. Keep moving forward. Figure out a plan to get through the missing passages. This year I fell behind in Isaiah and Jeremiah. Not good. Big books with long chapters. I have a plan. It's OK.

4 Some books won't appeal to you. Some books will become your favorites. Others won't interest you. Read them anyway. You may be surprised which books appeal to you. Challenge yourself to find the message in each book.

5 Try a different translation. I usually select a translation and stick with it for the year. It can offer a different perspective. If you find a particular book challenging, switch to another translation. It may help.

6 Set a regular time. I read as I eat breakfast. It usually takes about 15-20 minutes to finish a reading, longer if I choose to linger. Don't select a time you may be sleepy or distracted. Satan will be sure to bring interruptions. Don't let him. Covet your time and do what is needed to dedicate that time completely to God. Think of it as a date.

7 Beware of creating your own plan. I shouldn't have to say this, but if you're like me, who thinks, This can't be that hard; I'll do it myself, be warned. I actually did this for 2020. BIG mistake. I'm sticking with it, but it's about to do me in; and it's why I'm behind. Use what others have found to be tried and true.

One last word of encouragement: even though you are following a plan, God seems to provide the right scripture for the right time. It never ceases to amaze me that there is no situation I have encountered—whether joy, sorrow, frustration, or discouragement—that on that very day the passage I read spoke directly to me. Try doing this for 2021. You can do it. Taste and see! 🍴

Canonical Plan*

The Canonical Plan reads straight through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

Pros

- Easy to track.
- Encouraging to see progress.

Cons

- If you like the New Testament, you have to wait until October.
- Can be heavy reading through certain books.
- Can tire you easily in the longer books.

1. Genesis 1-3
2. Genesis 4-7
3. Genesis 8-11
4. Genesis 12-15
5. Genesis 16-18
6. Genesis 19-21
7. Genesis 22-24
8. Genesis 25-26
9. Genesis 27-29
10. Genesis 30-31
11. Genesis 32-34
12. Genesis 35-37
13. Genesis 38-40
14. Genesis 41-42
15. Genesis 43-45
16. Genesis 46-47
17. Genesis 48-50
18. Exodus 1-3
19. Exodus 4-6
20. Exodus 7-9
21. Exodus 10-12
22. Exodus 13-15
23. Exodus 16-18
24. Exodus 19-21
25. Exodus 22-24
26. Exodus 25-27
27. Exodus 28-29
28. Exodus 30-32
29. Exodus 33-35
30. Exodus 36-38
31. Exodus 39-40
32. Leviticus 1-4
33. Leviticus 5-7
34. Leviticus 8-10
35. Leviticus 11-13
36. Leviticus 14-15
37. Leviticus 16-18
38. Leviticus 19-21
39. Leviticus 22-23
40. Leviticus 24-25

41. Leviticus 26-27
42. Numbers 1-2
43. Numbers 3-4
44. Numbers 5-6
45. Numbers 7
46. Numbers 8-10
47. Numbers 11-13
48. Numbers 14-15
49. Numbers 16-17
50. Numbers 18-20
51. Numbers 21-22
52. Numbers 23-25
53. Numbers 26-27
54. Numbers 28-30
55. Numbers 31-32
56. Numbers 33-34
57. Numbers 35-36
58. Deuteronomy 1-2
59. Deuteronomy 3-4
60. Deuteronomy 5-7
61. Deuteronomy 8-10
62. Deuteronomy 11-13
63. Deuteronomy 14-16
64. Deuteronomy 17-20
65. Deuteronomy 21-23
66. Deuteronomy 24-27
67. Deuteronomy 28-29
68. Deuteronomy 30-31
69. Deuteronomy 32-34
70. Joshua 1-4

71. Joshua 5-8
72. Joshua 9-11
73. Joshua 12-15
74. Joshua 16-18
75. Joshua 19-21
76. Joshua 22-24
77. Judges 1-2
78. Judges 3-5
79. Judges 6-7
80. Judges 8-9
81. Judges 10-12
82. Judges 13-15
83. Judges 16-18
84. Judges 19-21
85. Ruth
86. 1 Samuel 1-3
87. 1 Samuel 4-8
88. 1 Samuel 9-12
89. 1 Samuel 13-14
90. 1 Samuel 15-17
91. 1 Samuel 18-20
92. 1 Samuel 21-24
93. 1 Samuel 25-27
94. 1 Samuel 28-31
95. 2 Samuel 1-3
96. 2 Samuel 4-7
97. 2 Samuel 8-12
98. 2 Samuel 13-15
99. 2 Samuel 16-18
100. 2 Samuel 19-21

101. 2 Samuel 22-24
102. 1 Kings 1-2
103. 1 Kings 3-5
104. 1 Kings 6-7
105. 1 Kings 8-9
106. 1 Kings 10-11
107. 1 Kings 12-14
108. 1 Kings 15-17
109. 1 Kings 18-20
110. 1 Kings 21-22
111. 2 Kings 1-3
112. 2 Kings 4-5
113. 2 Kings 6-8
114. 2 Kings 9-11
115. 2 Kings 12-14
116. 2 Kings 15-17
117. 2 Kings 18-19
118. 2 Kings 20-22
119. 2 Kings 23-25
120. 1 Chronicles 1-2
121. 1 Chronicles 3-5
122. 1 Chronicles 6
123. 1 Chronicles 7-8
124. 1 Chronicles 9-11
125. 1 Chronicles 12-14
126. 1 Chronicles 15-17
127. 1 Chronicles 18-21
128. 1 Chronicles 22-24
129. 1 Chronicles 25-27
130. 1 Chronicles 28-2 Chronicles 1

131. 2 Chronicles 2-5
132. 2 Chronicles 6-8
133. 2 Chronicles 9-12
134. 2 Chronicles 13-17
135. 2 Chronicles 18-20
136. 2 Chronicles 21-24
137. 2 Chronicles 25-27
138. 2 Chronicles 28-31
139. 2 Chronicles 32-34
140. 2 Chronicles 35-36
141. Ezra 1-3
142. Ezra 4-7
143. Ezra 8-10
144. Nehemiah 1-3
145. Nehemiah 4-6
146. Nehemiah 7
147. Nehemiah 8-9
148. Nehemiah 10-11
149. Nehemiah 12-13
150. Esther 1-5
151. Esther 6-10
152. Job 1-4
153. Job 5-7
154. Job 8-10
155. Job 11-13
156. Job 14-16
157. Job 17-20
158. Job 21-23
159. Job 24-28
160. Job 29-31
161. Job 32-34
162. Job 35-37
163. Job 38-39
164. Job 40-42
165. Psalms 1-8
166. Psalms 9-16
167. Psalms 17-20
168. Psalms 21-25
169. Psalms 26-31
170. Psalms 32-35



- 171.** Psalms 36-39
172. Psalms 40-45
173. Psalms 46-50
174. Psalms 51-57
175. Psalms 58-65
176. Psalms 66-69
177. Psalms 70-73
178. Psalms 74-77
179. Psalms 78-79
180. Psalms 80-85
181. Psalms 86-89
182. Psalms 90-95
183. Psalms 96-102
184. Psalms 103-105
185. Psalms 106-107
186. Psalms 108-114
187. Psalms 115-118
188. Psalm 119
189. Psalms 120-125
190. Psalms 126-132
191. Psalms 133-139
192. Psalms 140-145
193. Psalms 146-150
194. Proverbs 1-3
195. Proverbs 4-6
196. Proverbs 7-9
197. Proverbs 10-12
198. Proverbs 13-15
199. Proverbs 16-18
200. Proverbs 19-21
201. Proverbs 22-23
202. Proverbs 24-26
203. Proverbs 27-29
204. Proverbs 30-31
205. Ecclesiastes 1-4
206. Ecclesiastes 5-8
207. Ecclesiastes 9-12
208. Song of Solomon
209. Isaiah 1-4
210. Isaiah 5-8
211. Isaiah 9-12
212. Isaiah 13-17
213. Isaiah 18-22
214. Isaiah 23-27
215. Isaiah 28-30
216. Isaiah 31-35
217. Isaiah 36-41
218. Isaiah 42-44
219. Isaiah 45-48
220. Isaiah 49-53
221. Isaiah 54-58
222. Isaiah 59-63
223. Isaiah 64-66
224. Jeremiah 1-3
225. Jeremiah 4-6
226. Jeremiah 7-9
227. Jeremiah 10-13
228. Jeremiah 14-17
229. Jeremiah 18-22
230. Jeremiah 23-25
231. Jeremiah 26-29
232. Jeremiah 30-31
233. Jeremiah 32-34
234. Jeremiah 35-37
235. Jeremiah 38-41
236. Jeremiah 42-45
237. Jeremiah 46-48
238. Jeremiah 49-50
239. Jeremiah 51-52
240. Lamentations 1-2
241. Lamentations 3-5
242. Ezekiel 1-4
243. Ezekiel 5-8
244. Ezekiel 9-12
245. Ezekiel 13-15
246. Ezekiel 16-17
247. Ezekiel 18-20
248. Ezekiel 21-22
249. Ezekiel 23-24
250. Ezekiel 25-27
251. Ezekiel 28-30
252. Ezekiel 31-33
253. Ezekiel 34-36
254. Ezekiel 37-39
255. Ezekiel 40-42
256. Ezekiel 43-45
257. Ezekiel 46-48
258. Daniel 1-3
259. Daniel 4-6
260. Daniel 7-9
261. Daniel 10-12
262. Hosea 1-7
263. Hosea 8-14
264. Joel
265. Amos 1-5
266. Amos 6-9
267. Obadiah
Jonah
268. Micah
269. Nahum
270. Habakkuk,
Zephaniah
271. Haggai
272. Zechariah 1-7
273. Zechariah 8-14
274. Malachi
275. Matthew 1-4
276. Matthew 5-6
277. Matthew 7-8
278. Matthew 9-10
279. Matthew 11-12
280. Matthew 13-14
281. Matthew 15-17
282. Matthew 18-19
283. Matthew 20-21
284. Matthew 22-23
285. Matthew 24-25
286. Matthew 26
287. Matthew 27-28
288. Mark 1-3
289. Mark 4-5
290. Mark 6-7
291. Mark 8-9
292. Mark 10-11
293. Mark 12-13
294. Mark 14
295. Mark 15-16
296. Luke 1
297. Luke 2-3
298. Luke 4-5
299. Luke 6-7
300. Luke 8-9
301. Luke 10-11
302. Luke 12-13
303. Luke 14-16
304. Luke 17-18
305. Luke 19-20
306. Luke 21-22
307. Luke 23-24
308. John 1-2
309. John 3-4
310. John 5-6
311. John 7-8
312. John 9-10
313. John 11-12
314. John 13-15
315. John 16-18
316. John 19-21
317. Acts 1-3
318. Acts 4-6
319. Acts 7-8
320. Acts 9-10
321. Acts 11-13
322. Acts 14-15
323. Acts 16-17
324. Acts 18-20
325. Acts 21-23
326. Acts 24-26
327. Acts 27-28
328. Romans 1-3
329. Romans 4-7
330. Romans 8-10
331. Romans 11-13
332. Romans 14-16
333. 1 Corinthians 1-4
334. 1 Corinthians 5-8
335. 1 Corinthians 9-11
336. 1 Corinthians 12-14
337. 1 Corinthians 15-16
338. 2 Corinthians 1-4
339. 2 Corinthians 5-9
340. 2 Corinthians 10-13
341. Galatians 1-3
342. Galatians 4-6
343. Ephesians 1-3
344. Ephesians 4-6
345. Philippians
346. Colossians
347. 1 Thessalonians
348. 2 Thessalonians
349. 1 Timothy
350. 2 Timothy
351. Titus
Philemon
352. Hebrews 1-6
353. Hebrews 7-10
354. Hebrews 11-13
355. James
356. 1 Peter
357. 2 Peter
358. 1 John
359. 2 John
3 John
Jude
360. Revelation 1-3
361. Revelation 4-8
362. Revelation 9-12
363. Revelation 13-16
364. Revelation 17-19
365. Revelation 20-22

Chronological Plan

This plan reads through the Bible according to when the recorded events actually occurred.

Pros

- Adds historical context.
- Inserts Psalms and prophets into the Bible's historical account.
- Allows for a nice blend of the Gospels and Jesus' life on earth.

Cons

- If you like the New Testament, you have to wait until October.
- Can be heavy reading at times through certain books.

1. Genesis 1-3
2. Genesis 4-7
3. Genesis 8-11
4. Job 1-5
5. Job 6-9
6. Job 10-13
7. Job 14-16
8. Job 17-20
9. Job 21-23
10. Job 24-28
11. Job 29-31
12. Job 32-34
13. Job 35-37
14. Job 38-39
15. Job 40-42
16. Genesis 12-15
17. Genesis 16-18
18. Genesis 19-21
19. Genesis 22-24
20. Genesis 25-26
21. Genesis 27-29
22. Genesis 30-31
23. Genesis 32-34
24. Genesis 35-37
25. Genesis 38-40
26. Genesis 41-42
27. Genesis 43-45
28. Genesis 46-47
29. Genesis 48-50
30. Exodus 1-3
31. Exodus 4-6
32. Exodus 7-9
33. Exodus 10-12
34. Exodus 13-15
35. Exodus 16-18
36. Exodus 19-21
37. Exodus 22-24
38. Exodus 25-27
39. Exodus 28-29
40. Exodus 30-32
41. Exodus 33-35
42. Exodus 36-38
43. Exodus 39-40
44. Leviticus 1-4
45. Leviticus 5-7
46. Leviticus 8-10
47. Leviticus 11-13

48. Leviticus 14-15
49. Leviticus 16-18
50. Leviticus 19-21
51. Leviticus 22-23
52. Leviticus 24-25
53. Leviticus 26-27
54. Numbers 1-2
55. Numbers 3-4
56. Numbers 5-6
57. Numbers 7
58. Numbers 8-10
59. Numbers 11-13
60. Numbers 14-15
Psalm 90
61. Numbers 16-17
62. Numbers 18-20
63. Numbers 21-22
64. Numbers 23-25
65. Numbers 26-27
66. Numbers 28-30
67. Numbers 31-32
68. Numbers 33-34
69. Numbers 35-36
70. Deuteronomy 1-2
71. Deuteronomy 3-4
72. Deuteronomy 5-7
73. Deuteronomy 8-10
74. Deuteronomy 11-13
75. Deuteronomy 14-16
76. Deuteronomy 17-20
77. Deuteronomy 21-23
78. Deuteronomy 24-27
79. Deuteronomy 28-29
80. Deuteronomy 30-31
81. Deuteronomy 32-34
Psalm 91
82. Joshua 1-4

83. Joshua 5-8
84. Joshua 9-11
85. Joshua 12-15
86. Joshua 16-18
87. Joshua 19-21
88. Joshua 22-24
89. Judges 1-2
90. Judges 3-5
91. Judges 6-7
92. Judges 8-9
93. Judges 10-12
94. Judges 13-15
95. Judges 16-18
96. Judges 19-21
97. Ruth
98. 1 Samuel 1-3
99. 1 Samuel 4-8
100. 1 Samuel 9-12
101. 1 Samuel 13-14
102. 1 Samuel 15-17
103. 1 Samuel 18-20
Psalm 11
Psalm 59
104. 1 Samuel 21-24
105. Psalm 7
Psalm 27
Psalm 31
Psalm 34
Psalm 52
106. Psalm 56
Psalm 120
Psalms 140-142
107. 1 Samuel 25-27
108. Psalm 17
Psalm 35
Psalm 54
Psalm 63
109. 1 Samuel 28-31
Psalm 18
110. Psalms 121, 123-125,
128-130

111. 2 Samuel 1-4
112. Psalms 6, 8-10, 14, 16,
19, 21
113. 1 Chronicles 1-2
114. Psalms 43-45, 49,
84-85, 87
115. 1 Chronicles 3-5
116. Psalms 73, 77-78
117. 1 Chronicles 6
118. Psalm 81
Psalm 88
Psalms 92-93
119. 1 Chronicles 7-10
120. Psalms 102-104
121. 2 Samuel 5
1 Chronicles 11-12
122. Psalm 133
123. Psalms 106-107
124. 1 Chronicles 13-16
125. Psalms 1-2
Psalm 15
Psalms 22-24
Psalm 47
Psalm 68
126. Psalm 89
Psalm 96
Psalms 100-101
Psalm 105
Psalm 132
127. 2 Samuel 6-7
1 Chronicles 17
128. Psalm 25
Psalm 29
Psalm 33
Psalm 36
Psalm 39
129. 2 Samuel 8-9
1 Chronicles 18
130. Psalms 50
Psalms 53
Psalms 60
Psalms 75
131. 2 Samuel 10
1 Chronicles 19
Psalm 20

132. Psalms 65-67
Psalms 69-70
133. 2 Samuel 11-12
1 Chronicles 20
134. Psalm 32
Psalm 51
Psalm 86
Psalm 122
135. 2 Samuel 13-15
136. Psalms 3-4
Psalms 12-13
Psalm 28
Psalm 55
137. 2 Samuel 16-18
138. Psalm 26
Psalm 40
Psalm 58
Psalms 61-62
Psalm 64
139. 2 Samuel 19-21
140. Psalm 5
Psalm 38
Psalms 41-42
141. 2 Samuel 22-23
Psalm 57
142. Psalm 95
Psalms 97-99
143. 2 Samuel 24
1 Chronicles 21-22
Psalm 30
144. Psalms 108-110
145. 1 Chronicles 23-25
146. Psalm 131
Psalms 138-139
Psalms 143-145
147. 1 Chronicles 26-29
Psalm 127
148. Psalms 111-118
149. 1 Kings 1-2
Psalm 37
Psalm 71
Psalm 94
150. Psalm 119
151. 1 Kings 3-4
152. 2 Chronicles 1
Psalm 72
153. Song of Solomon
154. Proverbs 1-3
155. Proverbs 4-6
156. Proverbs 7-9
157. Proverbs 10-12
158. Proverbs 13-15
159. Proverbs 16-18
160. Proverbs 19-21
161. Proverbs 22-24
162. 1 Kings 5-6
2 Chronicles 2-3



163. 1 Kings 7
2 Chronicles 4

164. 1 Kings 8
2 Chronicles 5

165. 2 Chronicles 6-7
Psalm 136

166. Psalm 134
Psalms 146-150

167. 1 Kings 9
2 Chronicles 8

168. Proverbs 25-26

169. Proverbs 27-29

170. Ecclesiastes 1-6

171. Ecclesiastes 7-12

172. 1 Kings 10-11
2 Chronicles 9

173. Proverbs 30-31

174. 1 Kings 12-14

175. 2 Chronicles 10-12

176. 1 Kings 15
2 Chronicles 13-16

177. 1 Kings 16
2 Chronicles 17

178. 1 Kings 17-19

179. 1 Kings 20-21

180. 1 Kings 22
2 Chronicles 18

181. 2 Chronicles 19-23

182. Obadiah
Psalms 82-83

183. 2 Kings 1-4

184. 2 Kings 5-8

185. 2 Kings 9-11

186. 2 Kings 12-13
2 Chronicles 24

187. 2 Kings 14
2 Chronicles 25

188. Jonah

189. 2 Kings 15
2 Chronicles 26

190. Isaiah 1-4

191. Isaiah 5-8

192. Amos 1-5

193. Amos 6-9

194. 2 Chronicles 27
Isaiah 9-12

195. Micah

196. 2 Chronicles 28
2 Kings 16-17

197. Isaiah 13-17

198. Isaiah 18-22

199. Isaiah 23-27

200. 2 Kings 18
2 Chronicles 29-31

Psalm 48

201. Hosea 1-7

202. Hosea 8-14

203. Isaiah 28-30

204. Isaiah 31-34

205. Isaiah 35-36

206. Isaiah 37-39
Psalm 76

207. Isaiah 40-43

208. Isaiah 44-48

209. 2 Kings 19
Psalm 46
Psalm 80
Psalm 135

210. Isaiah 49-53

211. Isaiah 54-58

212. Isaiah 59-63

213. Isaiah 64-66

214. 2 Kings 20-21

215. 2 Chronicles 32-33

216. Nahum

217. 2 Kings 22-23
2 Chronicles 34-35

218. Zephaniah

219. Jeremiah 1-3

220. Jeremiah 4-6

221. Jeremiah 7-9

222. Jeremiah 10-13

223. Jeremiah 14-17

224. Jeremiah 18-22

225. Jeremiah 23-25

226. Jeremiah 26-29

227. Jeremiah 30-31

228. Jeremiah 32-34

229. Jeremiah 35-37

230. Jeremiah 38-40
Psalm 74
Psalm 79

231. 2 Kings 24-25
2 Chronicles 36

232. Habakkuk

233. Jeremiah 41-45

234. Jeremiah 46-48

235. Jeremiah 49-50

236. Jeremiah 51-52

237. Lamentations 1-2

238. Lamentations 3-5

239. Ezekiel 1-4

240. Ezekiel 5-8

241. Ezekiel 9-12

242. Ezekiel 13-15

243. Ezekiel 16-17

244. Ezekiel 18-20

245. Ezekiel 21-22

246. Ezekiel 23-24

247. Ezekiel 25-27

248. Ezekiel 28-30

249. Ezekiel 31-33

250. Ezekiel 34-36

251. Ezekiel 37-39

252. Ezekiel 40-42

253. Ezekiel 43-45

254. Ezekiel 46-48

255. Joel

256. Daniel 1-3

257. Daniel 4-6

258. Daniel 7-9

259. Daniel 10-12

260. Ezra 1-3

261. Ezra 4-6
Psalm 137

262. Haggai

263. Zechariah 1-4

264. Zechariah 5-9

265. Zechariah 10-14

266. Esther 1-5

267. Esther 6-10

268. Ezra 7-10

269. Nehemiah 1-5

270. Nehemiah 6-7

271. Nehemiah 8-10

272. Nehemiah 11-13
Psalm 126

273. Malachi

274. Luke 1
John 1

275. Matthew 1
Luke 2

276. Matthew 2

277. Matthew 3
Mark 1
Luke 3

278. Matthew 4
Luke 4-5

279. John 2-4

280. Matthew 8
Mark 2

281. John 5

282. Matthew 12
Mark 3
Luke 6

283. Matthew 5-7

284. Matthew 9

Luke 7

285. Matthew 11

286. Luke 11

287. Matthew 13: Luke 8

288. Mark 4-5

289. Matthew 10

290. Matthew 14
Mark 6
Luke 9

291. John 6

292. Matthew 15
Mark 7

293. Matthew 16
Mark 8

294. Matthew 17
Mark 9

295. Matthew 18

296. John 7-8

297. John 9-10

298. Luke 10

299. Luke 12-13

300. Luke 14-15

301. Luke 16-17

302. John 11

303. Luke 18

304. Matthew 19
Mark 10

305. Matthew 20-21

306. Luke 19

307. Mark 11
John 12

308. Matthew 22
Mark 12

309. Matthew 23
Luke 20-21

310. Mark 13

311. Matthew 24

312. Matthew 25

313. Matthew 26
Mark 14

314. Luke 22
John 13

315. John 14-17

316. Matthew 27
Mark 15

317. Luke 23
John 18-19

318. Matthew 28
Mark 16

319. Luke 24
John 20-21

320. Acts 1-3

321. Acts 4-6

322. Acts 7-8

323. Acts 9-10

324. Acts 11-12

325. Acts 13-14

326. James

327. Acts 15-16

328. Galatians 1-3

329. Galatians 4-6

330. Acts 17

331. 1 and 2
Thessalonians

332. Acts 18-19

333. 1 Corinthians 1-4

334. 1 Corinthians 5-8

335. 1 Corinthians 9-11

336. 1 Corinthians 12-14

337. 1 Corinthians 15-16

338. 2 Corinthians 1-4

339. 2 Corinthians 5-9

340. 2 Corinthians 10-13

341. Romans 1-3

342. Romans 4-7

343. Romans 8-10

344. Romans 11-13

345. Romans 14-16

346. Acts 20-23

347. Acts 24-26

348. Acts 27-28

349. Colossians
Philemon

350. Ephesians

351. Philippians

352. 1 Timothy

353. Titus

354. 1 Peter

355. Hebrews 1-6

356. Hebrews 7-10

357. Hebrews 11-13

358. 2 Timothy

359. 2 Peter, Jude

360. 1 John

361. 2 John
3 John

362. Revelation 1-5

363. Revelation 6-11

364. Revelation 12-18

365. Revelation 19-22

Old Testament and New Testament Together Plan

*This plan reads the
Old and New
Testaments
simultaneously.*

Pros

- Gives variety.
- Allows you to read the New Testament throughout the year.
- Shorter daily segments make books easier to complete.
- If you don't enjoy one reading, another one usually follows.

Cons

- Readings are unconnected.
- You may not enjoy jumping back and forth.

1. Genesis 1-3
Matthew 1
2. Genesis 4-6
Matthew 2
3. Genesis 7-9
Matthew 3
4. Genesis 10-12
Matthew 4
5. Genesis 13-15
6. Genesis 16-17
Matthew 5
7. Genesis 18-19
Matthew 6
8. Genesis 20-22
9. Genesis 23-24
Matthew 7
10. Genesis 25-26
11. Genesis 27-28
Matthew 8
12. Genesis 29-30
Matthew 9
13. Genesis 31-32
14. Genesis 33-35
Matthew 10
15. Genesis 36-38
16. Genesis 39-40
Matthew 11
17. Genesis 41-42
Matthew 12
18. Genesis 43-45
19. Genesis 46-48
20. Genesis 49-50
Matthew 13
21. Exodus 1-3
Matthew 14
22. Exodus 4-6
23. Exodus 7-8
Matthew 15
24. Exodus 9-11
25. Exodus 12-13
Matthew 16
26. Exodus 14-15
Matthew 17
27. Exodus 16-18
28. Exodus 19-20
Matthew 18
29. Exodus 21-22
Matthew 19
30. Exodus 23-24
Matthew 20
31. Exodus 25-26
32. Exodus 27-28
Matthew 21
33. Exodus 29-30
34. Exodus 31-33
35. Exodus 34-35
Matthew 22
36. Exodus 36-38
37. Exodus 39-40
Matthew 23
38. Leviticus 1-3
39. Leviticus 4-5
Matthew 24
40. Leviticus 6-7
Matthew 25
41. Leviticus 8-10
42. Leviticus 11-12

43. Leviticus 13
Matthew 26
44. Leviticus 14
45. Leviticus 15-16
46. Leviticus 17-18
Matthew 27
47. Leviticus 19-20
48. Leviticus 21-22
Matthew 28
49. Leviticus 23-24
50. Leviticus 25
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51. Leviticus 26-27
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52. Numbers 1-2
Mark 3
53. Numbers 3-4
54. Numbers 5-6
Mark 4
55. Numbers 7-8
56. Numbers 9-11
57. Numbers 12-14
Mark 5
58. Numbers 15-16
Mark 6
59. Numbers 17-19
60. Numbers 20-22
61. Numbers 23-25
Mark 7
62. Numbers 26-28
Mark 8
63. Numbers 29-31
Mark 9
64. Numbers 32-34
65. Numbers 35-36
Mark 10
66. Deuteronomy 1-3
67. Deuteronomy 4-6
Mark 11
68. Deuteronomy 7-9
69. Deuteronomy 10-12
Mark 12
70. Deuteronomy 13-15
71. Deuteronomy 16-18
Mark 13
72. Deuteronomy 19-21
73. Deuteronomy 22-24
74. Deuteronomy 25-27
Mark 14
75. Deuteronomy 28-29
76. Deuteronomy 30-31

- Mark 15
77. Deuteronomy 32-34
78. Joshua 1-3
Mark 16
79. Joshua 4-7
80. Joshua 8-10
81. Joshua 11-13
82. Joshua 14-15
Luke 1
83. Joshua 16-18
Luke 2
84. Joshua 19-21
85. Joshua 22-24
Luke 3
86. Judges 1-3
Luke 4
87. Judges 4-6
88. Judges 7-8
Luke 5
89. Judges 9-10
90. Judges 11-12
Luke 6
91. Judges 13-15
92. Judges 16-18
Luke 7
93. Judges 19-21
94. Ruth
95. 1 Samuel 1-3
Luke 8
96. 1 Samuel 4-7
97. 1 Samuel 8-10
98. 1 Samuel 11-12
Luke 9
99. 1 Samuel 13-14
100. 1 Samuel 15-16
Luke 10
101. 1 Samuel 17-18
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103. 1 Samuel 22-24
104. 1 Samuel 25-26
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105. 1 Samuel 27-29
106. 1 Samuel 30-31
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107. 2 Samuel 1-2
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108. 2 Samuel 3-5
109. 2 Samuel 6-8
110. 2 Samuel 9-11
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111. 2 Samuel 12-13
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112. 2 Samuel 14-15
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113. 2 Samuel 16-18
114. 2 Samuel 19-20
Luke 18
115. 2 Samuel 21-22
116. 2 Samuel 23-24
Luke 19
117. 1 Kings 1-2
118. 1 Kings 3-5
Luke 20
119. 1 Kings 6-7
120. 1 Kings 8-9
121. 1 Kings 10-11
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122. 1 Kings 12-13
123. 1 Kings 14-15
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125. 1 Kings 19-20
Luke 23
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127. 2 Kings 1-3
128. 2 Kings 4-6
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129. 2 Kings 7-9
130. 2 Kings 10-12
John 1
131. 2 Kings 13-14
John 2
132. 2 Kings 15-16
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133. 2 Kings 17-18
134. 2 Kings 19-21
135. 2 Kings 22-23
John 4
136. 2 Kings 24-25
John 5
137. 1 Chronicles 1-3
138. 1 Chronicles 4-7
139. 1 Chronicles 8-10
140. 1 Chronicles 11-12
John 6
141. 1 Chronicles 13-15
John 7
142. 1 Chronicles 16-18
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158. 2 Chronicles 28-29
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159. 2 Chronicles 30-31
John 18
160. 2 Chronicles 32-33
161. 2 Chronicles 34-36
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162. Ezra 1-2
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164. Ezra 6-8
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165. Ezra 9-10
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170. Nehemiah 12-13
171. Esther 1-2
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172. Esther 3-5
173. Esther 6-8
Acts 6
174. Esther 9-10
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175. Job 1-2
176. Job 3-4
177. Job 5-7
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178. Job 8-10
179. Job 11-13
Acts 9
180. Job 14-16
181. Job 17-19
182. Job 20-21
Acts 10
183. Job 22-24
Acts 11
184. Job 25-27
Acts 12
185. Job 28-29
Acts 13



186. Job 30-31
187. Job 32-33
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188. Job 34-35
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191. Job 41-42
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192. Psalms 1-3
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193. Psalms 4-6
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195. Psalms 10-12
196. Psalms 13-15
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197. Psalms 16-17
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198. Psalms 18-19
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204. Psalms 33-34
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205. Psalms 35-36
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206. Psalms 37-39
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208. Psalms 43-45
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214. Psalms 60-62
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215. Psalms 63-65
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216. Psalms 66-67
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217. Psalms 68-69
218. Psalms 70-71
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220. Psalms 74-76
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222. Psalms 79-80
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223. Psalms 81-83
224. Psalms 84-86
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225. Psalms 87-88
Romans 13
226. Psalms 89-90
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236. Psalms 116-118
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238. Psalm 120
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240. Psalms 123-125
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241. Psalms 126-128
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243. Psalms 132-134
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245. Psalms 137-139
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246. Psalms 140-142
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250. Proverbs 1-2
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252. Proverbs 6-7
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254. Proverbs 10-12
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256. Proverbs 16-18
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258. Proverbs 22-24
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259. Proverbs 25-26
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260. Proverbs 27-29
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261. Proverbs 30-31
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265. Ecclesiastes 10-12
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280. Isaiah 28-29
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289. Isaiah 47-49
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291. Isaiah 53-55
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295. Isaiah 65-66
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296. Jeremiah 1-2
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308. Jeremiah 32-33
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309. Jeremiah 34-36
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317. Lamentations 1-2
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318. Lamentations 3-5
319. Ezekiel 1-2
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327. Ezekiel 20-21
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328. Ezekiel 22-23
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331. Ezekiel 30-32
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332. Ezekiel 33-34
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333. Ezekiel 35-36
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334. Ezekiel 37-39
2 Peter 2
335. Ezekiel 40-41
2 Peter 3
336. Ezekiel 42-44
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337. Ezekiel 45-46
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338. Ezekiel 47-48
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339. Daniel 1-2
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340. Daniel 3-4
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341. Daniel 5-7
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342. Daniel 8-10
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343. Daniel 11-12
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344. Hosea 1-4
Revelation 1
345. Hosea 5-8
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346. Hosea 9-11
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347. Hosea 12-14
Revelation 4
348. Joel
Revelation 5
349. Amos 1-3
Revelation 6
350. Amos 4-6
Revelation 7
351. Amos 7-9
Revelation 8
352. Obadiah
Revelation 9
353. Jonah
Revelation 10
354. Micah 1-3
Revelation 11
355. Micah 4-5
Revelation 12
356. Micah 6-7
Revelation 13
357. Nahum
Revelation 14
358. Habakkuk
Revelation 15
359. Zephaniah
Revelation 16
360. Haggai
Revelation 17
361. Zechariah 1-4
Revelation 18
362. Zechariah 5-8
Revelation 19
363. Zechariah 9-12
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364. Zechariah 13-14
Revelation 21
365. Malachi 1-4
Revelation 22

THE UNITED STATES IN PROPHECY

In the fall of 1979 I heard the Adventist message and read about the United States in prophecy. What helped matters along was that the very week I had my first Bible study on the link between the United States and Rome, John Paul II was on his historic tour of the United States. Imagine: the week that I first studied Revelation 13, I also saw the just-released photo of U.S. president Jimmy Carter in the White House shaking hands with the pope.

At that time the Christian Right, conservative evangelicals, were on a concerted effort to gain political power in this country. And back then they looked destined to succeed.

In short, from my perspective the prophecy looked plausible.

There was, however, one major problem: the Soviet Union. This was 1979. America was still licking its wounds from Vietnam, which—despite 50,000 dead Americans and years of napalming and poisoning the place with Agent Orange—still (with Russia’s help) went Communist. Communist uprisings unfurled in Cambodia and Laos. The Sandinistas, a bit closer to home, took power in Nicaragua. Fidel Castro was sending troops to Angola. Here was this dictator, 90 miles off our shores, and we could do nothing about him because of the Soviet Union. In Moscow, Leonid Brezhnev and his semi-Stalinist thugs still had firm control over Eastern Europe, and when later that year the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, we could do nothing. From that perspective, then, the Seventh-day Adventist scenario seemed impossible.

What—was the Soviet Union going to just disappear?

But even with these changes, some-

thing else remained unresolved in my mind. Despite the United States’ military and economic might, the nation’s institutions and political structures have always remained stable and secure, which is why it was hard to envision this country fulfilling its prophetic role as a persecutor. In Watergate, for example, Richard Nixon, the most powerful man in the world, was ousted from office without a shot being fired. Nixon made a speech, then flew away on a helicopter while Gerald Ford raised his hand and swore an oath. And that was that.

But that was then, and this is now—and who, now, in these roaring twenties, thinks such stability remains in this country? Whether on the right or the left, Republican, Democrat, Independent—who looks optimistically at our immediate future? We are watching our democracy, our democratic institutions themselves, start to disintegrate before our eyes. It’s really scary, isn’t it?

Short-term, we don’t know what will happen to our beloved country. Long-term, as the book of Revelation teaches, the lamblike beast will speak “like a dragon” (Rev. 13:11). How, exactly, such a radical change will take place, only God knows. For now, though, things have gotten bizarre in this country, socially and politically, and the institutions and processes that we once took for granted seem on the verge of collapse, even destruction.

All of which might help explain the lamblike beast speaking “like a dragon.” How so? A wounded animal, a wounded beast, can be a very dangerous creature. 🦁

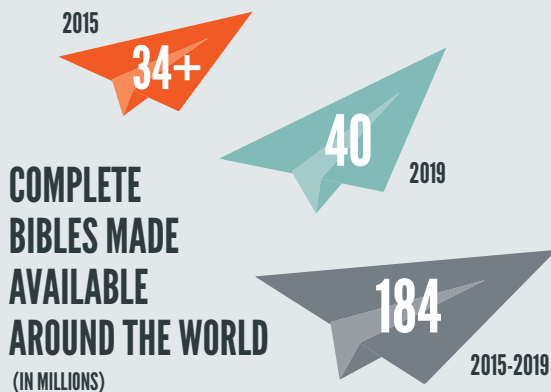
Clifford Goldstein is editor of the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*. His latest book is *Baptizing the Devil: Evolution and the Seduction of Christianity*.

CLIFF'S
EDGE
CLIFFORD
GOLDSTEIN



THE WEEK I FIRST
STUDIED
REVELATION 13
I SAW U.S.
PRESIDENT
JIMMY CARTER
SHAKING HANDS
WITH THE POPE.

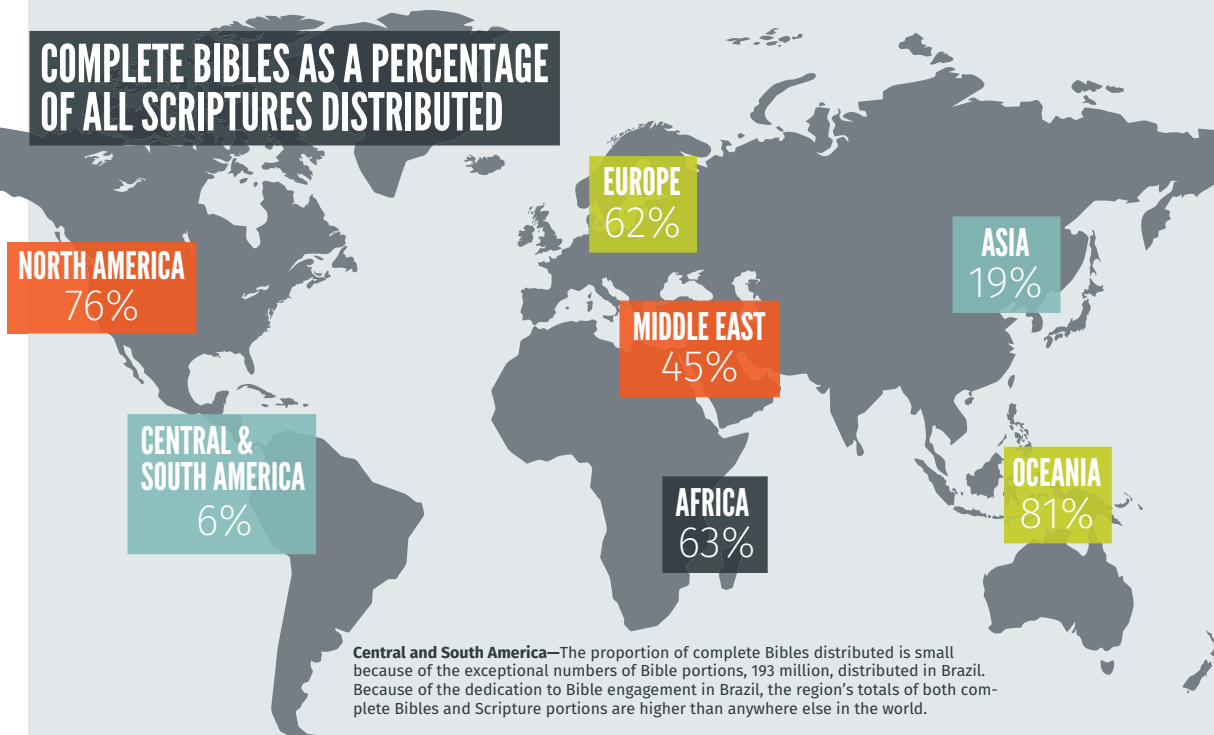
ACTS 12:24 OFFERS A LINE that otherwise appears only twice in the Bible, both referring to Israel's miraculous increase in numbers while living in the land of Goshen. But in Acts 12:24 the reference is not to population increase but to the spread of the gospel in the days of the early church: "The word of God grew and multiplied" (Acts 12:24, NKJV). Today, because of the work of more than 100 organizations in Bible translation and distribution, it is still true that the Word of God continues to grow and multiply. Following is some data on that growth and multiplication.*



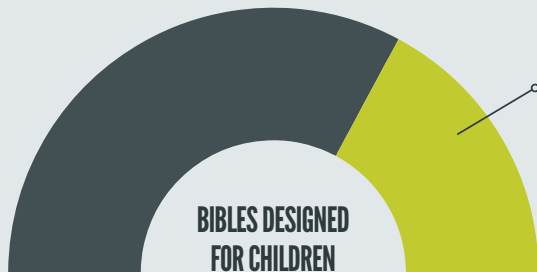
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COMPLETE BIBLES AS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL SCRIPTURES DISTRIBUTED



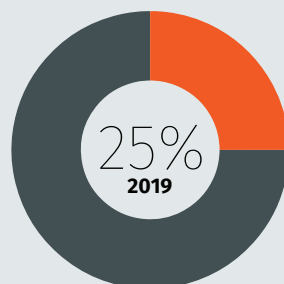
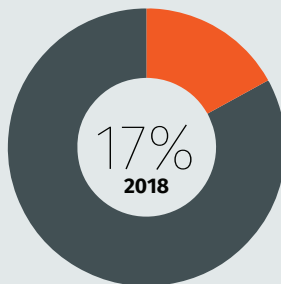
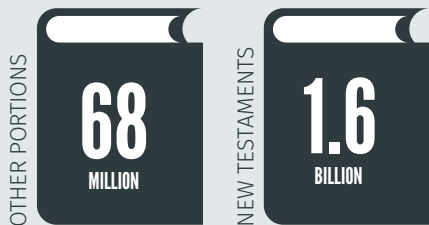
*www.biblegateway.com/blog/2020/08/nearly-2-billion-bible-passages-spread-worldwide-in-4-years/ and "State of The Bible report 2020" – Research from American Bible Society and Barna Group. Prepared by JEFFERY FULKS, PH.D. and JOHN FARQUHAR PLAKE, PH.D. Copyright © 2020 by American Bible Society. All rights reserved.



1.27 million

Out of a total of 3.7 million Bibles for children distributed, **1.27 million were distributed in Africa.**[†]

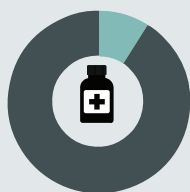
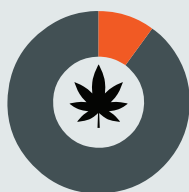
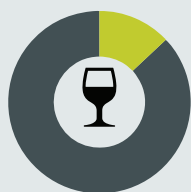
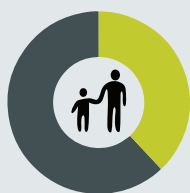
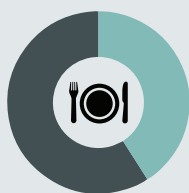
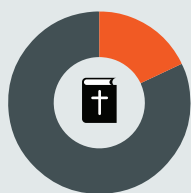
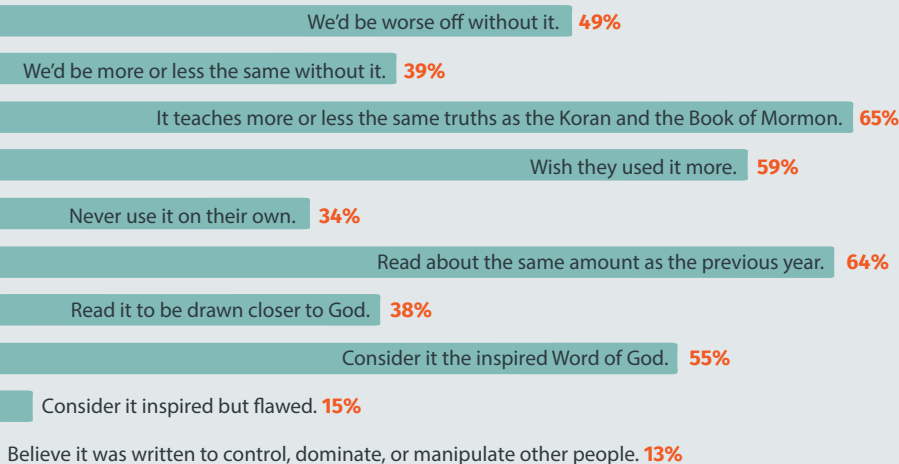
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HOW ADULTS IN NORTH AMERICA SEE THE BIBLE

(33.4 MILLION)



UNITED STATES, THE BIBLE, AND COVID-19

During the pandemic nearly one in five people in the United States (18%) reported finding comfort in reading the **Bible**. By contrast: two in five (41%) reached for **food**; just under two in five (38%) found comfort in **family**; more than one in 10 (13%) turned to **alcohol**; one in 10 used **marijuana** (10%); one in 11 (9%) used prescription **drugs**.

[†] Africa's great proportion (34%) relates to the fact that Africa is the continent with the world's largest youth population.



NPS

I DO SOLEMNLY SWEAR . . .

Presidential inauguration Bibles tell their stories.

As I write, the election results for the 2020 U.S. presidential election have yet to be certified; nor has its electoral college cast their votes. Publishing work occurs months in advance of an issue in order to bring quality content. Writing now as I am on this topic offers me the opportunity to play a prophetic role. But I will resist the urge, since that is not my calling. I will assume, though, that as you read this, you know who will take the presidential oath of office on Inauguration Day, January 20, 2021.

Inauguration Day started simply enough. Newly elected, George Washington entered New York City by barge to the sound of cannons and a 13-gun salute. He stood on the outdoor balcony

of Federal Hall (then capitol of the United States). Aware he was setting a precedent for the future, Washington took his oath with his hand placed on a Bible. The Bible, having been forgotten and found in haste, was a King James Version borrowed from a Masonic Lodge, and was randomly opened to Genesis, noting 49:13 as the specific, albeit chance, text.

While it is not a U.S. Constitutional requirement, most, but not all, presidents have taken their oath, just as Washington did, with their hand on either an open or closed Bible. The same Bible used by George Washington in 1789 has been preserved. A few presidents—Harding (1921), Eisenhower (1953), Carter (1977), and George H. W. Bush (1989)—decided to swear their oath of loyalty to the U.S. Constitution using this same Bible.

Inaugural records are not as clear on whether Bibles were used, until we reach Abraham Lincoln (1861). From that time forward, we know exactly what each president decided to do as they were inaugurated into this most important position. Most follow Washington's example, although there have been a few exceptions.

John Quincy Adams (1825) used a book of the law that included the Constitution. Teddy Roosevelt (1901) did not use anything for his first inauguration. That may be because of the rapid administration of the oath owing to the assassination of William McKinley. Likewise, Lyndon B. Johnson (1963) used a Roman Catholic missal found on Air Force One following the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

Presidents-elect are allowed to decide what they would like to do. If they choose a Bible, they are also able to select which Bible, if it is open or closed, and, if open, to what place in the Bible. Most have chosen family Bibles. Many have chosen specific verses, while others have opened the Bible at random (see table).

Some presidents, perhaps unable to choose, or wanting further inspiration, protection, and encouragement, have used two Bibles. In this group are Presidents Truman (1949), Eisenhower (1953), Nixon (1969 and 1973), Obama (2009), and Trump (2016). Each has used two Bibles either open or closed. For example, Truman had one Bible opened to Matthew 5, while the other Bible was open to the Ten Commandments. President Obama used Lincoln's and Martin Luther King's Bibles, both closed.

Contemporary accounts of Washington's inauguration are few. It is commonly reported, although not verified, that President Washington kissed the Bible after taking the oath, and whispered, "So help me, God." Once the ceremony concluded, he went immediately to St. Paul's Chapel to invoke the blessing of God upon the new government. Because Washington recognized the importance of the venture on which this then-fledgling country was to embark, he included God. And because of his forethought, the Bible continues to be used. Some presidents also include both the saying and the kissing of the Bible upon taking the oath.

History can be an interesting profession or hobby. Presidential history holds its own intrigue; even spiritual intrigue. Is the presence of the Bible at inaugurations important? Is the verse selected important? For me, perhaps.

It may give insight as to where the heart of the leader lies. For the cynical among us, it may be seen as a prop, no more important than the decisions made about bands, balls, and parades. We don't know, for we cannot judge a leader's heart. What we can wish is that the Bible's presence at least causes that individual to pause, ponder, and perform in a way that recognizes that God is and should be fully acknowledged and active in directing a country's leadership and vision. 📖

Merle Poirier is operations manager for Adventist Review Ministries.

INAUGURAL SCRIPTURES¹

George Washington ²	Genesis 49:13
Martin Van Buren	Proverbs 3:17
Abraham Lincoln ³	Matthew 7:1; 18:7; Revelation 16:7
Andrew Johnson	Proverbs 20 and 21
Ulysses S. Grant ³	Isaiah 11:1-3
Rutherford B. Hayes	Psalms 118:11-13
James Garfield	Proverbs 21:1
Chester Arthur	Psalms 31:1-3
Grover Cleveland ²	Psalms 112:4-10
Benjamin Harrison	Psalms 121:1-6
Grover Cleveland	Psalms 91:12-16
William McKinley ⁴	2 Chronicles 1:10; Proverbs 16:20, 21
Theodore Roosevelt ³	James 1:22, 23
William Howard Taft	1 Kings 3:9-11
Woodrow Wilson ⁴	Psalms 119:43-46; Psalm 46
Warren G. Harding	Micah 6:8
Calvin Coolidge ³	John 1
Herbert Hoover	Proverbs 29:18
Franklin Delano Roosevelt ⁶	1 Corinthians 13:13
Harry Truman ^{3, 5}	Matthew 5:3-11; Exodus 20:3-17
Dwight Eisenhower ⁴	Psalms 33:12; 2 Chronicles 7:14; Psalm 33:12 ⁵
Richard Nixon ^{4, 5}	Isaiah 2:4; Isaiah 2:2-4
Gerald Ford	Proverbs 3:5, 6
Jimmy Carter	Micah 6:8
Ronald Reagan	2 Chronicles 7:14
George H. W. Bush ⁵	random, Matthew 5
Bill Clinton ⁴	Galatians 6:8; Isaiah 58:12
George W. Bush	Isaiah 40:31

¹ If not listed, it is because information is unknown, a Bible was not used, or the Bible(s) remained closed. Sources: time.com/4639596/inauguration-day-presidents-bible-passages/; Library of Congress (memory.loc.gov/ammem/pihtml/pibible.html); scholarworks.gvsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1032&context=ask_gleaves.

² Bible opened at random.

³ Text selected for second inauguration.

⁴ First text used for first term; second text for second term.

⁵ Used multiple Bibles.

⁶ Used for all four inaugurations.



PHOTO BY BRODY CHILDS ON UNSPLASH

OUR ONLY SAFEGUARD

*Delving daily and
diligently into the Bible*

To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:20. The people of God are directed to the Scriptures as their safeguard against the influence of false teachers and the delusive power of spirits of darkness. Satan employs every possible device to prevent men from obtaining a knowledge of the Bible; for its plain utterances reveal his deceptions.

At every revival of God's work the prince of evil is aroused to more intense activity; he is now putting forth his utmost efforts for a final struggle against Christ and His followers. The last great delusion is soon to open before

us. Antichrist is to perform his marvelous works in our sight. So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures. By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested.

Those who endeavor to obey all the commandments of God will be opposed and derided. They can stand only in God. In order to endure the trial before them, they must understand the will of God as revealed in His Word; they can honor Him only as they have a right conception of His character, government, and purposes, and act in accordance with them. None but

those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict.

To every soul will come the searching test: Shall I obey God rather than men? The decisive hour is even now at hand. Are our feet planted on the rock of God's immutable Word? Are we prepared to stand firm in defense of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus? . . .

The apostle Paul declared, looking down to the last days: "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine." 2 Timothy 4:3. That time has fully come. The multitudes do not want Bible truth, because it interferes with the desires of the sinful, world-loving heart; and Satan supplies the deceptions which they love.

THE STANDARD OF DOCTRINE

But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority—not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain "Thus saith the Lord" in its support.

Satan is constantly endeavoring to attract attention to man in the place of God. He leads the people to look to bishops, to pastors, to professors of theology, as their guides, instead of searching the Scriptures to learn their duty for themselves. Then, by controlling the minds of these leaders, he can influence the multitudes according to his will. . . .

THE SEARCH FOR SALVATION

God has given us His Word that we may become acquainted with its teachings and know for ourselves what He requires of us. When the lawyer came to Jesus with the inquiry, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" the Saviour referred him to the Scriptures, saying: "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" Ignorance will not excuse young or old, nor release them from the punishment due for the transgression of God's law; because there is in their hands a faithful presentation of that law and of its principles and claims.

The language of the Bible should be explained according to its obvious meaning.

It is not enough to have good intentions; it is not enough to do what a man thinks is right or what the minister tells him is right. His soul's salvation is at stake, and he should search the Scriptures for himself. However strong may be his convictions, however confident he may be that the minister knows what is truth, this is not his foundation. He has a chart pointing out every waymark on the heavenward journey, and he ought not to guess at anything.

It is the first and highest duty of every rational being to learn from the Scriptures what is truth, and then to walk in the light and encourage others to follow his example. We should day by day study the Bible diligently, weighing every thought and comparing scripture with scripture. With divine help we are to form our opinions for ourselves as we are to answer for ourselves before God.

The truths most plainly revealed in the Bible have been involved in doubt and darkness by learned men, who, with a pretense of great wisdom, teach that the Scriptures have a mystical, a secret, spiritual meaning not apparent in the language employed. These men are false teachers. It was to such a class that Jesus declared: "Ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God." Mark 12:24.

The language of the Bible should be explained according to its obvious meaning, unless a symbol or figure is employed. Christ has given the promise: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." John 7:17. If men would but take the Bible as it reads, if there were no false teachers to mislead and confuse their minds, a work would be accomplished that would make angels glad and that would bring into the fold of Christ thousands upon thousands who are now wandering in error. 📌

Seventh-day Adventists believe that **Ellen G. White** (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry. This excerpt was taken from *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911, 1950), pp. 593-599.



LIFE IN THE BALANCE

When the battle between good and evil becomes inescapable

Burned into my mind's eye is a haunting, disturbing image that will remain with me until Jesus comes and removes it.

The setting is night. The place is San Francisco's Palace of Fine Arts. On this particular night a lone figure approaches. He has been here many times before. It is a place of solitude and peace. He is searching one last time for something that has eluded him.

Slowly the young man (25 years old—and young) approaches the spot where the meaning of life has many times been thought about, analyzed, and processed. At times his mind is clear, though at other times clouded by mental struggles and drugs.

Tonight his mind is unclouded by either. Rather, he is struggling with an intensity of powerful feelings that are consuming him. The midnight darkness of

depression envelopes him. Failure. Futility. Hopelessness. Loneliness. Tonight he hopes to achieve peace, find answers to questions about life, God, and all that other stuff.

He climbs about 10 feet into one of the four large concrete basins that surround the massive columned dome and methodically begins to organize various items that will shortly end his life. By morning he will have been successful, if that's the right word. The last sentence of his suicide note reads, "I need to go home."

WHY?

This is where my mind's eye pictures another Person. He walks with this young man whose parents had such high hopes for him; who was loved and valued by his family; a young man who had been prayed for every day of his life. His parents, family, friends, and prayer partners had all been praying for this Person to guide, protect, and care for him. Their prayers had an urgency of needing a miracle to change the desperate situation in this young life.

But the picture in my mind's eye does not see a last-minute miracle. This story will not have that testimonial, evangelistic ending that everyone likes. Perfect love and sin don't always make sense in the great controversy.

I see that Person standing—no, He's kneeling beside the young man. Hot tears stream down His face. Sin is about to claim the life of another of God's children. A father's son, whom another Father's Son died for centuries ago, is about to die.

The process of slowly snuffing out a life begins. The Person feels

the life force return to Him as He chooses not to intervene; a decision only He, the Lifegiver, can make; a decision over which I have no control or comprehension. God the Father and God the Son understand perfectly what is happening at this moment of human incomprehension to this young man so dearly loved by his earthly parents and infinitely loved by the Creator of this human being.

Finally, there is no longer any breath, no heartbeat, no life, no personality for the one I once knew as my son, Garrett. Sin has claimed another of God's children. What resurrection morning will be his?

This is where the ironies, paradoxes, and questions come into play. If the Lifegiver is present, why isn't there life? It worked 2,000 years ago; why not now? Is there some cosmic, significant part to an ongoing story I don't understand? Something only infinite divine wisdom and love can discern? If not, why even bother with the idea of this God-man holding gently my lifeless son in His arms?

WE WANT ANSWERS, NOT QUESTIONS

My mind's eye leaves this scene. I need to see a little of what God already sees in the future. I want to grasp the hope and reality that there is a moment when death will cease; when broken lives will be mended. I go to all the promises I've read again and again, running the words across the pictures in my mind like subtitles in a movie. I superimpose these promises over the horrific images that remain vividly burned into my mind.

I imagine Job. He wanted answers. He lost his material possessions; then his children were killed in a moment of horror. Then, while he was racked with physical suffering, his marital problems surged, along with misguided support from his friends. Answers from God would have been helpful. Except, like us, Job didn't get answers. Just a series of statements and questions from God.

The problems of sin, pain, suffering, and death do not offer satisfactory answers in this miserable, sin-polluted world we temporarily call home.

HIS SON FOR OUR CHILDREN

A number of years ago I had the privilege of being prayed for by a group of prayer intercessors on the one-year anniversary of our son's suicide. Spirit-filled people lovingly lifted me up in prayer for God's healing touch on my broken heart. One of

I must be patient and satisfied with God's mercy and justice while I wait for answers in the world called heaven.

them prayed this sentence: "Your Son for his son."

God gave His Son, Jesus, for my son, Garrett. Does this mean that I will hold my son again? I know where sin abounds, grace abounds infinitely more (Rom. 5:20, 21).

The only hope my eye of faith can see and try to understand is the significance of a rough, wooden cross on a hill outside Jerusalem. On it hangs the God-man, Jesus Christ. God the Father joins me in my sin-filled pain and suffering. He understands; He knows the end from the beginning. I must either reject or accept one of the choices before me.

If I reject God's perfect wisdom, I run the terrible risk of never finding out why.

So I choose to accept God's view. But I realize I must be patient and satisfied with God's mercy and justice while I wait for answers in the world called heaven. I am hanging on to a verse that promises "the peace of God, which transcends all understanding" (Phil. 4:7).

So does my son's suicide make sense now? No. The taking of one's own life should never "make sense."

Can I understand why it happened? Not really. All the answers I've heard are only trite, empty cliches.

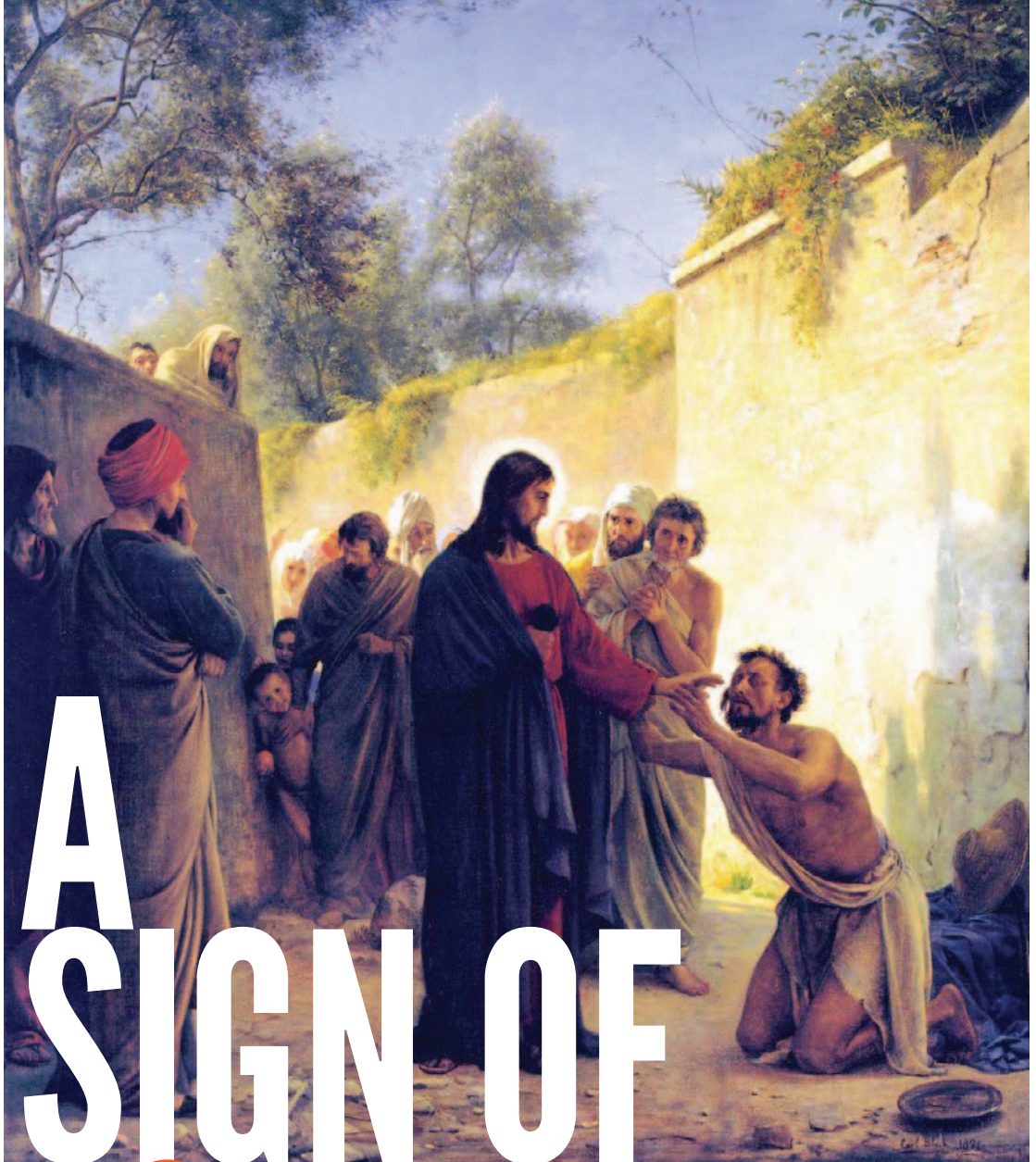
Do I feel better? Somewhat, but not always; not in this lifetime.

Until then, my mind's eye of faith will struggle each day to keep the picture, the words, and the person of Jesus Christ clearly in my heart. God is love. God is fair. God is good and merciful. God has been where I am, a heavenly Father losing a Son in death. The good news is that He got His Son back!

"Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20). 🍀

If you, or someone you know, is considering suicide, call the National Suicide Hotline, 800-273-8255, or visit [SuicidePreventionLifeline.org](https://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org).

Bruce Nicola, Jr., is retired after a career serving as a pastor and hospital chaplain.



A SIGN OF LOVE

*Jesus' practical
approach to
deaf and blind
individuals*

SARAH GANE BURTON

The deaf man knew that something important was happening. If only he could hear and understand what his friends were talking about! With excited gestures they pointed in the distance to a group approaching the town and pushed him toward the arriving visitors. Brown dust from the hurried feet filled the air and the man coughed, one of the few sounds he could make with his mouth.

At last the crowd met the travelers; all the attention was focused on one Man. The deaf man surmised that He must be someone of importance and influence, yet He appeared to be as ordinary and travel-worn as His companions. His friends seemed to be appealing to this Man for something. They brought the Man to him and stood, waiting.

The Stranger smiled knowingly, and gently (to the confusion of the crowd) led the deaf man to a quiet place away from the clamorous group. The deaf man studied His face as they walked—kindness was etched in the lines of the weary face. They stopped, and the Stranger turned toward him, commanding his complete attention. It seemed that the Stranger was going to do something to or for him. Holding His fingers up in front of the deaf man, He thrust them into his ears.¹

The deaf man jumped at the sensation. What was the Stranger doing to his ears? Was He putting something inside of them? The unusual behavior continued. The Stranger spat on the ground and then, gesturing that the deaf man should open his mouth, touched his tongue. What was the Stranger doing to his mouth?

Then the strange Man looked up to the sky and sighed so deeply that the deaf man could see the rise and fall of His chest. His mouth formed a word, and as the last “a” of *Ephphatha* was still leaving His mouth, the deaf man heard a sound, a voice. At once it all made sense. This Man, whoever He was, had healed his ears. He could hear!

But his mouth—the Stranger had also touched his mouth. Could he perhaps now speak as well as hear? He moved his tongue to form words and, to his joy, heard his own voice speaking. He was healed!

AN ELABORATE HEALING PROCESS

The stories of the deaf man in Mark 7:31-37 and the blind man in Mark 8:22-26 have always puzzled me. Why the elaborate healing process? And for whose benefit? Was Jesus using these healings as parables to convict the disciples of their lack of faith (Mark 8:18)? Richard Lenski in *The Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel* suggests that Jesus was actually using a form of sign language to communicate to the deaf man in Mark 7 and later the blind man in Mark 8. Jesus took His time healing these men and used signs/touch to communicate what He was doing for them.²

The deaf man was at a distinct disadvantage in terms of communication, since he could not hear his friends' explanations of Jesus' power to heal. He would have surely sensed their excitement at Jesus' coming, but likely did not understand what all the commotion was about. Jesus' act of taking him aside at once signaled that He was going to do something to or for him. Instead of explaining what He was going to do in words, which would have been meaningless to the deaf man, or simply laying His hand on him, as the crowd desired Him to do (Mark 7:32), Jesus took time to impress upon the man—using a kind of sign language—that something was about to be done to his ears and his mouth.³ With Jesus' sigh toward heaven, the deaf man understood that whatever was being done to him was a divine act.⁴

The healing of the blind man in Mark 8 parallels the deaf man's healing in many ways. Just as people brought the deaf man to Jesus and “begged” (*parakalousin*) Him to lay His hand on him

The stories of the deaf man and the blind man have always puzzled me. Why the elaborate healing process? And for whose benefit?

(Mark 7:32), so the people in Bethsaida brought the blind man to Jesus and “begged” (*parakalousin*) Him to touch him (Mark 8:22). Rather than healing him in the middle of an excited crowd, where the deaf man might be distracted, Jesus took him aside privately (Mark 7:33); likewise, Jesus took the blind man out of the village before healing him (Mark 8:23). Saliva, which was used as a sign that Jesus would be doing something to the deaf man’s mouth, is again featured in the healing of the blind man. This time Jesus spat on his eyes (rather than on the ground), then laid His hands on him (verse 23).⁵

Interestingly, the healing of the blind man occurs gradually. At first, when Jesus asks, “Do you see anything?” the man does not see clearly. But after Jesus’ second touch, the man’s sight is fully restored. This does not seem to indicate that the man’s faith was lacking and needed time to grow or that Jesus was unable to heal him the first time around. Rather, this gradual healing emphasizes to the man that healing, complete healing, takes place at Jesus’ hands. Just as Jesus used sign language to communicate with the deaf man, so this gradual healing communicated to the blind man that Jesus was the source of his healing.

TELL NO ONE

Both healings end in a threefold manner. First, the diseased part of the body is opened (ears—Mark 7:35; eyes—Mark 8:25); then proper function is restored (tongue released—Mark 7:35; sight restored—Mark 8:25); finally, the healing is complete (spoke plainly—Mark 7:35; saw everything clearly—Mark 8:25). Jesus then dismisses both men with the explicit or implicit command not to tell anyone. To the deaf man and observers, “Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone” (Mark 7:36). The blind man He simply sent home with the command “Don’t even go into the village” (Mark 8:26).

Commentators have noted that these two stories, which occur only in the Gospel of Mark,

“provide more detailed information about the manner of Jesus’ healing than any other narratives in the Gospels.”⁶ Indeed, there is something special about them. While we see many instances of Jesus healing by a word, a touch of the hand, or even a touch of His garment, these healings are earthy and intimate. They remind us of another time, long before, when God took clay and fashioned the first man. These healings celebrate “God’s creative power in action.” The healing of the deaf and speech-impaired man “was a case of divine intervention, that is, God intervening in repairing the eardrum and the tongue that was damaged by Satan. . . . It is noteworthy that Jesus thrust His fingers into the man’s ear, which was an expression of God’s direct and concrete intervention in the affairs of this man.”⁷

Jesus’ sensitivity to the needs of the deaf and speech-impaired man and the blind man should encourage us to be aware of the needs of those around us. Communicating the gospel can take many forms and should be adapted as necessary. Jesus used every opportunity and every means necessary to proclaim His message of redemption. As His followers, we are called to do the same. 🦋

¹ The Greek word *ballō* is used here, which can mean “put” or “place.” In this context it probably means “thrust,” which is much more forceful and indicates the power and authority with which Jesus is acting.

² Richard C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Mark’s Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1964), pp. 308-313, 328-332.

³ C. S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1993), pp. 154, 155.

⁴ Lenski, pp. 308-313. Ellen White notes an additional reason for Jesus’ sigh: “Looking up to heaven, He sighed at thought of the ears that would not be open to the truth, the tongues that refused to acknowledge the Redeemer” (*The Desire of Ages* [Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940], p. 404).

⁵ Karelynn Gerber Ayayo, “Magical Expectations and the Two-Stage Healing of Mark 8,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 24, no. 3 (2014): 381, 382.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 382.

⁷ Olu Benga Olagunju, “Jesus’ Healing Miracles in Mark 7:31-37 in an African Context,” *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology* 18, no. 1 (2013): 78.

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A BIGGER PICTURE

Recently, as I walked by a bulletin board in a hospital unit, a postcard caught my attention. The postcard contained a painted representation of Jesus walking, surrounded by a crowd. Some people had bandages, tattered clothes, bruises; some had beautiful garments, scrolls; most had extended hands, as if reaching for Jesus. I noticed that everyone seemed to be speaking, their mouths open. The image appears to be cropped from a bigger picture. The edges allude to the possibility of “more” to this image. At the center of the crowd Jesus stands calmly, as if listening to every voice.

I’m not certain why this image enters my mind as I attempt to match the speed of the EMT pushing the gurney into an empty bay inside the emergency room. *I can’t slow down; she’s reached for my hand.* I feel as if I am running right through the middle of that postcard scene, praying to catch up to the miracle. Amid ambient noise, I hear the patient’s muffled voice through a mask. I listen and nod, offering a physical affirmation. These days it is difficult to comfort someone with a smile. I do not know this woman. I heard she was “one of the family.” In an emergency that is a welcome title: “we remember you.”

Her hand trembles. “I am Mara.” I listen, but that has much to do with the fact that I have nothing left to say. A long and heavy 24-hour on-call shift has left me silent. *God, I just need to get through this last visit.* We pray before she is taken to surgery.

Two days later I find Mara. She tells me which beach to visit. I must watch the haze lift, she says, to genuinely appreciate the beauty of the Pacific. She served as a social worker in several nearby hospitals. Some cases were so difficult that memories still walk next to her on occasion, companions from the past.

“We are not good people,” she says. “We are fortunate to know God loves us.” We talk for a while, then she asks what the pandemic has taught me. *Taught? I can barely remember how life used to be.*

I am familiar with fear; I know its features, and I have discovered power in displacing it with prayer. I see desperation and try to feed it hope. I have witnessed brokenness and learned humility in picking up shattered life pieces for those who cannot do it for themselves. I see the emotional ledge people step on when their loved one walks into the hospital alone, no visitors allowed, and question the silence: *what happens now?* I have learned to lean in, step forward in faith, because my only certainty is that our heavenly Father is with us. Then, for some odd reason, I tell her about the postcard. I wonder what everyone is saying around Jesus. Mara agrees: *there must be a bigger picture.*

A week later I sit on a trail overlooking the beach. As the haze lifts, I see the beauty. One day we will understand the bigger picture. The haze will be lifted, and we will be amazed at how precious we are to Jesus in this very moment. ♣

Dixil Rodríguez serves as a hospital chaplain in southern California.

SEARCHING
THE OBVIOUS
DIXIL
RODRIGUEZ



I FEEL AS IF I AM
RUNNING RIGHT
THROUGH THE
MIDDLE OF THAT
POSTCARD SCENE.



AFTER THE DUST SETTLES

*Adventist public engagement
after the tumultuous year 2020*

NICHOLAS P. MILLER

As Adventists look to 2021, we find ourselves reflecting in many ways the divisions found within society. The social, political, and public health questions that divide our neighbors sadly all too often bring division between church members. How can we make our loyalty to Christ—and our place in His body—our first and primary identity, yet still deal thoughtfully with our duty as citizens of this world?

Early Adventism was a small, apocalyptic, end-time movement, devoid of ambitions for formal political power, either as a church or as individuals. Yet Adventists acted and exerted influence on matters of public policy ranging from slavery and racism, to alcohol prohibition and public health, to religious liberty and foreign policy. These policy engagements did not fragment their fellowship; rather they helped propel them to become one of the fastest growing and most widespread denominations in the world.

As we enter a new year, we are just exiting the most divisive political season in living memory, while the United States and the world still battle a pandemic, all amid tremendous social unrest. Now is a good time to revisit some of the principles of public engagement that guided our pioneers, praying that we can also engage coming social and public policy challenges and at the same time retain our unity in the body of Christ. Consider the following points.

The church's primary role must be about the gospel and conversion; but the application of the gospel will result in working for social change. In light of the prophecies of Revelation 13 and 14, our pioneers were firmly opposed to any attempt by the church to enlist the state to promote its spiritual agenda. Ellen White wrote that “the Saviour attempted no civil reforms. He attacked no national abuses, nor condemned the national enemies. He did not interfere with the authority or administration of those in power. He who was our example kept aloof from earthly governments.”¹

But those who quote this passage as defining all Adventist involvement in public matters overlook the context of the quote. It had to do with a movement we call today Christian Dominionism—believers who seek to establish a theocracy in this world. As Ellen White put it: “Today in the religious

world there are multitudes who, as they believe, are working for the establishment of the kingdom of Christ as an earthly and temporal dominion.”²

In describing Christ as keeping “aloof” from earthly governments, Ellen White was highlighting the spiritual mission of the church; but she was not purporting to set out Christians’ role and duty as citizens of this world. Elsewhere she dealt with the topic of the Christian’s role in public morality by word and action. In doing so, she revealed that the gospel and conversion would necessarily lead to the support of public justice, human equality, and social morality.

Obey and respect government when it is just; resist the overreach of government when it acts unjustly, even to the point of civil disobedience. Many Adventists are attracted to the philosophy of law and order. After all, we are end-time commandment keepers. Most Adventists understand that civil disobedience will become necessary in relation to Sabbath and Sunday observance. But many seem to think that this will be an exceptional case, and that before then most government laws should be obeyed (just don’t ask about speed limits!).

But shouldn’t our prophetic view of the centrality of civil disobedience in opposing the ultimate religious tyranny help us to see the truth that other unjust laws should be disobeyed and opposed? In other words, the final conflict is a culmination of smaller trends to evil and coercion; if we are meant to oppose the final step, should we not also oppose these earlier and smaller steps of injustice?

Ellen White evidently thought so. Even before the U.S. Civil War, Ellen White called for civil disobedience, the breaking of federal law, in order to protect the human rights of African Americans. “The law of our land requiring us to deliver a slave to his master,” she wrote, “we are not to obey.”³ Several Adventist leaders participated in the Underground Railroad to help escaped slaves, including John Byington, the first General Conference president.

Laws that threaten freedom of worship undermine the right of conscience that is part of the image of God found in each person. We must, however, be careful to distinguish laws about worship during the pandemic that merely regulate in-person gatherings for the health and safety of ourselves and our community. But equally wrong are laws or policies that threaten or undermine human equality, whether



How can we make our loyalty to Christ our first and primary identity, yet still deal thoughtfully with our duty as citizens of this world?

racial, ethnic, religious, or gender, which is also based on the image of God in men and women. Both kinds of unjust laws should be opposed.

Vote when you can do so for “justice, humanity, and right,” but not for those who oppose virtue, oppose the rule of law, and support racism. Some early Adventists believed that their focus should be entirely on heavenly things, and that church members should not even vote. But fairly quickly the church that opposed slavery and alcohol use realized that voting was one method by which these evils could be lessened. Only two years after formal organization, the General Conference passed a resolution on voting:

“Resolved, that in our judgment, the act of voting when exercised in behalf of justice, humanity, and right, is in itself blameless, and may be at some times highly proper; but that the casting of any vote that shall strengthen the cause of such crimes as intemperance, insurrection, and slavery, we regard as highly criminal in the sight of Heaven. But we would deprecate any participation in the spirit of party strife.”⁴

At least three points can be derived from this guidance. First, voting may or may not be the correct course of action, depending on the options available. There is no mandate either not to vote or to vote. Second, in order to vote, one must be able to support or further “justice, humanity, and right.” Third, one should not vote for candidates that support “intemperance, insurrection, and slavery.” These latter categories would fit the modern terms of open immorality, opposition to the rule of law and democratic norms, and support of racism or ethnic supremacy. Adventist Christians simply cannot support these “criminal” evils.

Prioritize religious freedom as a right for yourself and others. Ellen White and the pioneers prioritized the issue of religious freedom, which is the first and central basis of all our freedoms. Ellen White said that we cannot support those who will

“repress religious liberty. . . . The people of God are not to vote to place such men in office; for when they do this, they are *partakers* with them of the sins which they commit while in office.”⁵

Some mistakenly apply this quote to say we cannot vote for any person, because we would be guilty of misconduct they commit while in office. But this is to overread the instruction. We cannot be guilty of that for which we are ignorant and had no reason to know. She is referring to instances in which candidates openly promise or propose to violate religious freedom. This could include candidates who target minority religious groups for discriminatory treatment, or those who assert that they will promote the beliefs and power of majority religious groups.

Do not link with political parties. Our pioneers believed that political parties were deeply and inherently flawed. One could but should not declare for any of them. “There is danger, decided danger, for all who shall link themselves up with the political parties of the world. There is fraud on both sides. God has not laid upon any of our people the burden of linking up with either party.”⁶ Ellen White consistently counseled pastors and church teachers against involvement in purely political issues. “Those who teach the Bible in our churches and in our schools are not at liberty to unite in making apparent their prejudices for or against political men or measures.”⁷

Ellen White here appears to set down an absolute ban on church leaders’ involvement in any matters of politics or public policy. But the context was that of partisan politics on matters of policy not directly having to do with moral principles or basic human rights and freedoms. Later she clarified that these “absolutist” statements, as noted below, should not prevent Christian involvement in matters of basic morality and human rights.

Some moral issues are so connected with gospel principles of the image of God, including freedom, human equality, or health, that they deserve our support in the political sphere. Near the end of her life, Ellen White wrote that “while we are in no wise to become involved in *political questions*, yet it is our privilege to take our stand decidedly on all questions relating to temperance reform. . . . In our favored land, every voter has some voice in determining what laws shall control the nation. Should not that influence and that vote be cast on the side of temperance and virtue?”⁸

Ellen White did not believe that we should only

vote and keep quiet about it. “The advocates of temperance fail to do their whole duty,” she wrote, “unless they exert their influence by precept and example—*by voice and pen and vote.*”⁹

Some would wish to limit Ellen White’s statements about public issue activism to the immediate question of alcohol use and temperance reform. But she herself used language that was broader than that, including when she wrote that we should advocate for “temperance and *virtue.*” Also, she herself publicly advocated on issues of slavery, racism, religious liberty, and questions of social and economic justice and equity.¹⁰

She also had strong views of the sacredness of life, the importance of the family, including parents and child rearing, and the importance of distinctiveness and purity when it comes to gender and sexuality. She would surely have much to say in our day about redefinitions of marriage, family, gender, and appropriate sexual behavior, which have been advanced recently by Supreme Court decisions and voted legislation on both federal and state levels.

Be open to God’s call to nonpartisan government service, or public engagement with issues of social and economic justice. When I was young, most Adventist youth were encouraged to go into health care or education. Law and politics were often considered less than worthy fields of endeavor. Because of these views, I was particularly impressed by this statement from Ellen White about young people serving the Lord in the worlds of law and public policy. “Dear youth, what is the aim and purpose of your life? . . . Have you thoughts that you dare not express . . . that you may sit in deliberative and legislative councils, and help to enact laws for the nation? There is nothing wrong in these aspirations. . . . Aim high, and spare no pains to reach the standard.”¹¹

Inspired by these words, I followed the course of legal studies, law practice, and public policy work. I had the privilege to partially fulfill them when I testified to congressional staffers on behalf of religious liberty legislation in the United States Congress. Other Adventist young people will even more completely fulfill these words by engaging in legislative and legal work for our nation, while avoiding partisan entanglement.

More recently I have become aware of Ellen White’s candid comments about social equality and economic fairness. In commenting on

ancient Israel, she wrote about the system of laws, including gleanings, offerings for the poor and aliens, forgiveness of debts, freeing of slaves, and the return of land to the original families in the year of jubilee. These regulations, she noted, were “designed to promote social equality.”¹²

Given the capitalist bent of our socially conservative church, some of my students insist that these economic regulations could work only in a theocracy. Since God’s not directly in charge today, they argue that we must rely on the free-market, personal effort, and private charity to deal with issues of social and economic inequality.

Ellen White did not agree. She wrote that “the principles which God has enjoined would prevent the terrible evils that in all ages have resulted from the oppression of the rich toward the poor and the suspicion and hatred of the poor toward the rich.”¹³

In words especially relevant to today’s world, when the cities of America have been filled with angry protesters, clashes between police and angry young people, and the flickering shadows of burning buildings, White said such laws would “bring a peaceful solution of those problems that now threaten to fill the world with anarchy and bloodshed.”¹⁴

Is it possible that Adventists have more to offer the world of public policy and social fairness than we have previously realized? I have recently seen many young Adventists waking up to this possibility. The year 2021 could be a year of opportunity to prayerfully revitalize and reengage Adventism with the growing challenges we face as a nation and a world. ✦

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940), p. 509.

² *Ibid.*

³ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 1, p. 202.

⁴ *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, May 23, 1865, p. 197.

⁵ Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1923), p. 475.

⁶ Ellen G. White, in *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, Feb. 17, 1897.

⁷ E. G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 475.

⁸ Ellen G. White, *Temperance* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1949), p. 253. (Italics supplied.)

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 253, 254. (Italics supplied.)

¹⁰ See Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pub. Assn., 1890, 1908), pp. 535, 536.

¹¹ Ellen G. White, *Messages to Young People* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1930), p. 36.

¹² E. G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 534.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 536.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

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HAPPY NEW YEAR, SHARK BAIT

*Danger, disease, and
other happy thoughts for
the new year*



KIM PECKHAM

I like a good shark story. It's one of the great regrets of my life that I don't have one to tell you now. If only I had a U-shaped scar on my lower calf, friends might ask me about it when I'm wearing shorts. I would launch into a story about the time I was surfing the Pipeline and felt something tug at my leg.

Believe me, I would *always* wear shorts.

THE DANGER THAT SURROUNDS US

Maybe that's why I have this idea that we need more danger in our lives. I admit that it's a wacky notion you might expect from AM talk radio, but the theory is that we feel most alive when there is something around that can eat us. In the old days, when Mrs. Daniel Boone left the house, she might come across a bear. That made her life much more interesting. Even a school board meeting can be thrilling if you're anxious about making it home afterward without wringing bear spit out of your skirt.

But today we can travel far and wide in North America and never be in danger from any of God's creatures—unless you count the bacteria in rest stop restrooms. We're all getting soft.

Well, not everyone is soft. A South Pacific missionary named McLaren told about the time he was in Vanuatu and he encouraged the natives to raise money for missions. So they sailed out to a reef, and the young people began diving for shells that could be carved into mother-of-pearl buttons. The men took along spears, 15- to 20-feet long. McLaren asked them, "Are you going to spear the shells?"

"No," they replied, "we're going to spear the sharks that come near us while we are diving."

I'm going to put an exclamation mark right here in the middle of the page. "!" These saints swam with sharks to raise money for missions! And you thought Ingathering was too much trouble.

Soft. That's what we are. *SOFT.*

I hope we maintain
the spirit of a
missionary.

MISSIONARY BRAVERY

Then the coronavirus hit, and life became HARD. Maybe a little danger is good, but this is too much. The virus is everywhere, and it's on everything. It waits for us on the credit card scanner when we're checking out our groceries. "Tap the accept button," says the clerk. And you think, *I'm not ready to die. I have frequent-flyer miles left to use.* But you touch the tiny screen anyway.

The year 2020 is our shark story. There may be no visible scars, but there are gashes in our memories. A job lost or maybe a whole business. Anticipation for graduations, weddings, and vacations that turned into disappointment. That time we forgot to mute Zoom before yelling at the kids.

And 2020 also had racial injustice, and violence, and an election that forced us to seriously question our choice of Facebook friends.

What about the new year? Maybe we'll return to normal in 2021. The less danger the better. But the virus is still out there—circling like a shark at the murky edge of our vision. It makes us jittery and short-tempered.

They say that sharks don't really want to eat people. They mistake us for seals when they come across us in the ocean. They slurp us up accidentally, like when we inhale a gnat while bicycling. It's forgivable, really. Like when your husband comes across a Bundt cake in the kitchen that you had baked for your sister's birthday and innocently eats a slice—just to pick a random example.

But what if something, or someone, wanted to eat you *on purpose*? Meditate on that kind of danger. Which brings me to one of the most sensational characters ever to appear on stage at a Seventh-day Adventist General Conference Session. His name was Ratu Meli, and in 1926 he traveled halfway around the world to arrive at the meetings in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He wore no shoes and no pants, preferring bare feet and the traditional sari of his people.

But it wasn't his unusual garb that made Ratu Meli a rock star among the gathered believers. His popularity had to do with his former diet. Ratu



Ratu Meli

Meli was a converted cannibal.

He held the attention of every saint in the auditorium when he spoke. "In the old days of Fiji, our country had a god, Degei by name. It had a head like a man, whiskers like a man, but the body of a snake. We had priests for this snake god, and we built temples for it. This god taught us to be cannibals."

Then he held up the war club that he had used to bring home the groceries. "We would pick out a man and say, 'Come, you have got to be eaten.' That was the condition of affairs in Fiji; we were so bad, so wicked,"

confessed Ratu Meli."

The man had a riveting testimony, and when he wasn't speaking, brothers and sisters crowded around him and pressed money into his hands for mission work.

FAITH BEYOND FEAR

Ratu Meli reminds me that there is something more dangerous than swimming with sharks, and that is witnessing to cannibals. Some brave soul went into the jungle to preach the gospel to people who might look at him the same way we look at a box of Krispy Kreme doughnuts that have been left unattended in the employee lounge. Where does that courage come from?

We need that kind of courage as we step into the dark undergrowth that is 2021. Maybe it will all turn out fine. The vaccine will work, the economy will boom, and we will all prosper. Or maybe not. Maybe spears will fly out of the shadows and wound us.

Whatever happens, I hope we maintain the spirit of missionaries as we go into the new year. We can share their purpose, their passion, and their Christ-like love. There is danger. But there is also hope. The hope is not that we will survive without scars, but that the scars will tell a story. Perhaps it will be a story so dramatic and so full of God's grace that we will tell and retell it for a long, long time. 🦋

* See *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, June 3, 1926.

Kim Peckham shelters in place in Lincoln, Nebraska, with his wife, Lori, and their teenage son, Reef. He helps with communication at Union College.

FREELY YE HAVE RECEIVED, FREELY GIVE. MATTHEW 10:8

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About Burden Bearing

*Caring that
shares the pain*



*"Carry each other's
burdens, and in this way
you will fulfill the law
of Christ" (Gal. 6:2).*

What? We are asked to carry another's burdens? What about "Cast your burden on the Lord" (Ps. 55:22, NKJV)?¹ Isn't that the Lord's business? Life has caused me to think about this. It moves me to tell a story and share four convictions. The story has taught me four spiritual principles. I have learned (1) that some of life's heaviest burdens can be overlooked or hard to see; (2) that God can help us bear the heaviest of burdens; (3) that asking for help is part of burden bearing; (4) that bearing my own burdens prepares me to help God help others with theirs.

A FAMILY STORY

Every family has their story. Some are told, others tucked away in memory. This is Mel's story, his and his family's.

In the early 1980s, while on vacation with his family, Mel was terminated as head of the engineering department of the captive insurance company where he had been employed for 12 years. He had been with the company since its beginning, and his department had developed into a full staff of several engineers.

His removal happened after two things took place. First, a new company president called in an evaluation team to review the running of the insurance company. The evaluators decided that the fire protection engineering department was unnecessary, and recommended cutting the staff. Then an engineer whom Mel had hired proceeded to undermine him in his absence. He wanted Mel's job. Mel had saved the man's career years earlier when he should have been fired after having an accident with a company vehicle while driving drunk.

A BURDEN OVERLOOKED

Mel returned from vacation to find that he was out of a job. This was when engineers were unable to find work throughout the country. Mel was in his mid-50s, which made it even harder. His wife was starting a business of her own, but that was still at its start-up phase, and not yet able to support the family and two children in boarding school.

Mel worked at several part-time jobs, doing mostly menial labor at almost minimum wage. He was out of a steady job for two and a half years. It drove him into depression, and as time went by, he became more desperate, feeling increasingly hopeless.

When he lost his job, he lost his company car. With the help of his wife, he was able to procure a car of his own. That car became part of a lamentable episode in his personal and family story.

One night he left home in his car accompanied by his rifle. He pulled up in front of the house of the engineer who had cost him his job. Mel figured it would be the appropriate place for his suicide. He pointed the rifle at his head, but the weapon misfired. Again he lifted the rifle to his head and pulled the trigger; again it misfired. After the second attempt Mel was so shaken that he headed home, stopping on a bridge to throw the rifle into the river.

When he got home, Mel sat on the edge of the bed next to his sleeping wife and wept. She awoke and asked, "What's the matter?"

Mel's story left his wife stunned. Lesson one: some of life's heaviest burdens can be overlooked or hard to see. Mel's wife had seen no warning signs of anything so desperate; she never recognized the symptoms of how deep his depression was. We do not always know who is burden bearing. The love that teaches us to overlook another's faults may do its worst for someone close to us. Mel's wife never knew how much of a burden her beloved life companion was carrying.

HELP!

We sometimes think that Adventists are not subject to such depression as to take their own lives. But Adventists, like others, are subject to human frailty. The emotional trauma caused by Mel's depression and was indescribable.

The Sabbath after his suicide attempt it was Mel's wife's turn to play the organ at church. It was terrible. She couldn't focus. Mel became unable to make meaningful decisions. Decision-making came to be her burden. Mel needed treatment for his depression. They all needed counseling for their new life situation and financial guidance going forward. Family affairs became topsy-turvy: economically and emotionally it was back to the beginning.

Mel and his wife had to start over. They put the house up for sale to avoid losing it completely; it

Supporters and friends did not back away from him when he needed them most.

took more than a year to sell and was practically given away. They rented a townhouse for about four years, then purchased a house where Mel's wife could also have an office.

Their daughter, Melanie, urged Mel's wife to talk to one of her church pastors. She made an appointment, and they met for lunch. That was a big help. Lessons two and three: God can help us bear the heaviest of our burdens. And asking for help is part of good burden bearing. Mel's wife didn't carry the burden alone. Her experience helped her prepare to carry on alone after Mel died. Sometimes a spouse has no idea what to do to carry on with life when their partner dies because they've never had to make their own decisions. God leads us along the way, and we can learn if we let Him teach us.

NOW I CAN HELP YOU

By the way, Mel's wife, that's me. Let me tell you another story as a coda to my own. It's about a friend from church I'll call Lester.

While Mel and I were going through our experience, Lester was going through his own trial. He had lost his job; then his wife left him. He became increasingly despondent. We saw what was happening; we recognized the signs and their direction. As we talked with Lester, he admitted that he had some tablets he could take if he felt that life was not worth living.

I begged him to throw the pills away. I advised him that when he got to the point of making that final decision he would not be able to think clearly. I urged him to call us anytime—day or night—if he felt despair.

Late one night the phone rang. It was Lester in tears, telling us that he felt life was not worth living. He was at the crashing point. We talked and prayed with him for several hours. We could not promise that in the morning everything would be better, but we did assure him that we understood what he was going through, and so did God,

even though he felt far from God at that moment. I promised to call him in the morning. When I did, he was more composed. Just a few days later he was offered a job that later led to another job. In time he was vibrant and active again.

During his time of trial, Lester sang in the church choir. His fellow choristers gave him support, though they didn't know all the details of his trial. He attended church fellowship dinners, though he wasn't able to contribute. I encouraged him that when he was able again, he could bring extra to help out someone else to partake of our fellowship dinners. I knew from personal experience how important it is to have spiritual and social support in hours of dark distress.

Lester told me later that he knew he was a difficult person to deal with. Life's prickly experiences sometimes expose the more difficult aspects of our nature. But our times of difficult behaviors and attitudes are when we most need help. Lester's supporters and friends did not back away from him when he needed them most. There was one more example of living the life of God in community, of fulfilling "the law of Christ" by helping God help His children to bear their burdens.

Life's twists and turns may bewilder any of us sometimes. We do well to bear in mind, for our own sakes and for others', that challenges and difficulties in life are not always the fault of our folly. God "is faithful and just and will forgive" our failures (1 John 1:9). But some challenges come because God is building our Christian spirit and character. Ellen White wrote: "Trials and obstacles are the Lord's chosen methods of discipline and His appointed conditions of success."² When His grace has brought us through a trial, that success can help us understand another's similar experience, and we may help God help them bear their burden. 🦋

If you, or someone you know, is considering suicide, call the National Suicide Hotline, 800-273-8255, or visit [SuicidePreventionLifeline.org](https://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org).

¹ Bible texts credited to NKJV are from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

² Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1905), p. 471.

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PETER N. LANDLESS

ZENO L. CHARLES-MARCEL

HOME, HEALTHY HOME!

Q: How can I make our home environmentally healthy and COVID-free this winter?

A: The COVID era will pass, by God’s grace, but healthy home practices are always prudent.

Don’t import: The COVID-19 virus is spread primarily by person-to-person contact, through the air, and from surface contact. Creating an absolutely no-outside-contact “pandemic pod” is the safest solution, but rarely deemed practical in this situation. Many opt for relative safety through limiting outside exposure and self-imposing appropriate quarantine and testing practices. Avoiding entrance of SARS-CoV-2 into our homes through human virus carriers is key. At least half of new infections now come from asymptomatic people unaware of their infectedness. Requiring visitors at the door to be masked and physically distanced and following decontamination routines for all who venture into the public can help.

Keep air clean: While fresh, clean, outdoor air is the gold standard for good health, air carrying automobile and industrial exhaust fumes, chemicals, micro-sized dust particles, ash, and smoke is decidedly unhealthy. There are trade-offs in trying to be virus-free and seeking healthful indoor air quality in polluted environments. Gas appliances can pose carbon monoxide threats. Heavy drapes and blinds—especially when combined with indoor clothes-dryer venting (high indoor humidity) and leaky plumbing or water seepage—encourage mold and mildew. Solutions to these are apparent. Carpets, paint, aerosol sprays, household chemicals, pesticides, and even air fresheners are often unnoticed threats to health, but being aware is a first step. Tobacco smoke and cooking and fireplace fumes should be minimized. Taking care of these will go a long way toward making our homes healthier.

Good ventilation is essential for health. Open windows to let in sunshine and fresh air to replace stale indoor air, and dilute potential aerosolized

virus particles. Reduce the number of people in the same room at any one time. Use a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) purifier and HEPA filters in heating and air-conditioning systems, and replace the filters every six to 12 months. Home dehumidifiers help discourage mold, mildew, bacteria, and viruses. Well-working, externally ventilated exhaust fans promote better circulation in the house. Germicidal ultraviolet lights installed in HVAC ducts or beamed overhead across the most highly occupied rooms destroy mold, bacteria, and viruses. Use nonallergenic plants, such as ferns, aloe, and spider plants, to freshen the air. Use sliced lemon and baking soda to freshen up the kitchen; diffusion with lavender, rosemary, thyme, basil, or mint may be preferable to commercial air fresheners.

Clean surfaces regularly: Regular and more thorough cleaning, especially in high-touch, high-use areas, and appropriate cleaning of shared electronics, is a basic safeguard. Disinfecting using chemical or detergent agents or UV light goes beyond cleaning to kill germs and viruses and works best on already-clean, grime- and dirt-free surfaces. Soapy water cleans effectively but doesn’t disinfect. Commercially available, relatively safe cleaners are listed on the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) website (see reference sidebar).

Prudent, timely action and hygienic habits keep us all on the health track; and there’s no downside to a happy, healthy, godly home. 🙌

USEFUL RESOURCES

- » **COVID-19 Home Safety Information Center**
(www.cpsc.gov/homesafety).
- » **EPA disinfectant list**
(www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2).

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IT IS TIME

Charting a way forward with the words of Martin Luther King, Jr.

CLAUDIA M. ALLEN

Time is defined by what men do with it. Change is determined by how women influence it. Nations are made by the souls of their citizens. Martin Luther King, Jr., knew this all too well. It was 15 days after the historic inauguration of U.S. president John F. Kennedy. Both timid and excited about the recent transition of power, King was well aware of the fact that while the American people were powerful, the president held the power. He explored this in an article published for *The Nation* on February 4, 1961, entitled “Equality Now: The President Has the Power.”

King wrote about the moral and legal responsibility of the office: “We must decide that in a new era, there must be new

thinking. If we fail to make this positive decision, an awakening world will conclude that we have become a fossil nation, morally and politically.”¹ King believed that in times of transition presidents had the ability to set the tone for the moral and political trajectory of a nation. Therefore, the responsibility of equality, justice, and the full manifestation of the American creed fell at the feet of not just United States citizens, but particularly so at the feet of every United States president.

Sixty years later America finds itself at another crucial transition point. Its citizens are bombarded by the sting of police brutality, the stench of coronavirus deaths, and the surge of unemployment. This month America celebrates the birthday of its legendary civil rights hero in the shadows of another culture-shifting presidency.

Five days beyond that, President-elect Joseph R. Biden is due to be sworn in as the forty-sixth president of the United States. With the United States in the heat of intense racial division, moral apathy, and differing opinions on the way forward, President-elect Biden walks into the role with the job of ushering us into a new era. In the words of King, he must be willing to prioritize new thinking or further forfeit our standing in the world and potentially, significantly, the lives of the physically vulnerable and persons of color.

Celebrating the birth and legacy of Martin Luther King in light of Biden’s inauguration, I can’t help repositing King’s question from 1967: Where do we go from here? Where does the individual person go from here? Where do churches go from here? Where do schools go from here? Where do hospitals go from here?

King lent a powerful suggestion at the end of his article in *The Nation*. He wrote: “When our government determines to ally itself with those of its citizens who are crusading for their freedom within our borders, and lends the might of its resources creatively and unhesitatingly to the struggle, the blight of discrimination will begin rapidly to fade.” He continued, “History has thrust upon the present administration an indescribably important destiny—to complete a process of democratization which our nation has taken far too long to develop, but which is our most powerful weapon for earning world respect and emulation.”² “Citizens . . . crusading”: that should be all of us.

We see in Scripture a clear view of what is expected

It’s time that people begin to see the person of Jesus Christ in you, in me, in us.

of us in order to make this dream of Martin Luther King, postinauguration, a reality. In the story of Jesus we find a God who is committed to setting aside the invisibility of His divinity, donning the flesh of humanity, with the radical aim of wholistically healing a fractured people. Broken by sin, humanity is plagued with the social and spiritual erosion that comes with hatred, division, idolatry, selfishness, lying, gossip, and disregard for the worship of the one true God who made heaven and earth.

Seeing how our sinfulness separates us from God and one another, God Himself descended in the likeness of humanity for the sole purpose of saving humanity with His service and sacrifice. In the life of Christ we find Him rejecting the cultural customs of His time that restricted Him from talking with a woman, let alone a Samaritan, breaching the nationalist and sexist customs of His day for the beauty of harmony, community, and salvation. Whether touching the “untouchables,” speaking to the marginalized, restoring the widowed, fathering the fatherless, or cleansing the temple, we find God intent on disrupting the systems, teachings, and practices of His day for the wholistic restoration of humanity.

My prayer is that as we understand our duty to connect the world with their Savior, we understand that it is in our service and love toward one another that people see and believe in the character and person of Jesus Christ. While our country, our churches, even our homes might be in the midst of great division and despair, let us remember that now is a new era.

It’s time for a new way of thinking and being. It’s time to usher in the lived and expressed nature of God on Planet Earth. It’s time that people begin to see the person of Jesus Christ in you, in me, in us. ▀

¹ Martin Luther King, Jr., “Equality Now: The President Has the Power,” *The Nation*, Feb. 4, 1961, pp. 91-95.

² *Ibid.*

Claudia M. Allen is a writer and speaker on the intersection of faith, race, and politics.



STEPPING-STONES TO VICTORY

Using obedience to get past obstacles

The song “Can’t Give Up Now” embodies the determination demonstrated by the shepherd David in 1 Samuel 17.

“There will be mountains
That I will have to climb
And there will be battles
That I will have to fight
But victory or defeat
It’s up to me to decide
But how can I expect to win
If I never try?”

“I just can’t give up now
I’ve come too far from where
I started from
Nobody told me
The road would be easy
And I don’t believe He’s
brought me this far
To leave me.”¹

FAITHFULNESS IN ALL THINGS

David encountered Goliath in the path of faithful obedience. He had not journeyed to the camp of the army of Israel because he was

tired of keeping his father’s flocks. His father told him, “Take this ephah of roasted grain and these ten loaves of bread to your brothers and hurry to the camp. Take along these ten cheeses to the commander of their unit. See how your brothers are and bring back some assurance from them” (1 Sam. 17:17, 18).

Honoring Jesse, David began his journey to the Valley of Elah, where King Saul and the army of Israel were confronted by the boastful challenge of the Philistine giant Goliath.

David’s experience was similar to that of Joseph, son of Jacob, centuries before. Both of them were sent by their aged fathers to where their older brothers were engaged in business. Both Joseph and David were teens when they faithfully carried out their fathers’ instructions. Both journeys were life-changing and set them up for future greatness.

Nothing that true followers of God encounter is small or insignificant. It is wise to heed the counsel given us by the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul: “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31). We cannot see how God will lead us to future greatness through humble obedience, but we too can be blessed according to His holy will.

OPPOSITION SMALL AND LARGE

Despite the fact that David was on the path of obedience, his way was not without opposition. The Christian life is a battle and a march. The apostle Paul encouraged believers to prepare for the battle. “Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your

stand against the devil's schemes" (Eph. 6:11).

The opposition began just where it does for many believers—in the family. Eliab, David's oldest brother, rebuked him for asking about Goliath's defiance of Israel's army. He asked, "Why have you come down here? And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the wilderness? I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is" (1 Sam. 17:28).

David did not defend himself, for he was on God's mission. Wrote Ellen White: "The armies of Israel were in peril, and David had been directed by an angel to save his people."²

Eliab was jealous. Ellen White writes of David's brothers: "Their jealousy had been aroused as they saw David honored above them, and they did not regard him with the respect and love due to his integrity and brotherly tenderness."³

David moved on, asking the same question of other soldiers. Eventually King Saul sent for the brave youth. David made his declaration: "Your servant will go and fight him" (verse 32).

Sadly, David's faith was not encouraged by the king. In fact, Saul rebuffed the youth. "You are not able to go against this Philistine and fight him" (verse 33).

Even though Saul was king of Israel and commander of its army, David did not yield his faith in God under Saul's blast of doubt and discouragement. David stated the basis for his faith, outlining his victories against the lion and the bear through the power of God. He knew that the same Lord who had delivered him from those fierce animals would also save him from the hand of the Philistine.

Seeing that David would not be turned aside, Saul told him to go. Even so, his mind was still on the ways of humanity, and, in the words of Ellen White, "command was given to clothe the youth in the king's own armor. The heavy helmet of brass was put upon his head, and the coat of mail was placed upon his body; the monarch's sword was at his side."⁴

With all this protection at his disposal, why didn't Saul fight Goliath himself? Doubt and fear had taken the place of faith in God. While David spoke in faith of victory over Goliath, Saul could voice only doubt and discouragement. "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6).

David found that the monarch's armor and weaponry hindered him, so he returned to take them off. "The first thought in the minds of the anxious spectators was that David had decided

David's faith in God's ability to give him the victory was unshaken and grew even bolder.

not to risk his life in meeting an antagonist in so unequal an encounter," wrote Ellen White. "But this was far from the thought of the brave young man."⁵ David's faith in God's ability to give him the victory was unshaken and grew even bolder.

VICTORY OVER OBSTACLES

Before final victory, there came fresh insults and opposition. But young David knew that the Lord had not brought him thus far to leave him. In response to Goliath's insults and threats, David declared his faith in God. "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied" (1 Sam. 17:45).

According to David's bold, unconquerable faith, it was done. In a stunning victory that shocked everyone, David, armed only with faith, a sling, and a stone, slew Goliath.

Yes, we love to read about the defeat of the towering Goliath by David. But do we realize that this epic fight also represents the deliverances he gained over doubt, distrust, family pressure, and misguided kingly advice? Victory is not an accident, but the result of persistent and diligent effort in the strength of Christ.

Between Paul's listing of troubles and trials (tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril and sword), powers and circumstances (death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present, things to come, height, depth, or any other created being), he sounds forth this bold declaration of encouragement: "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Rom. 8:37). Nothing, he states, "will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (verse 39). 🗝

¹ Curtis Burrell, "Can't Give Up Now," © Peermusic Publishing.

² Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1890, 1908), p. 645.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 647.

⁵ *Ibid.*

Patricia J. Smith lives in Pioneer, Louisiana, is a second-generation Seventh-day Adventist, and loves to share God's love through her writing.

FROM OPPOSITION TO CHAMPION

*Threatening preachers
was what he did.*

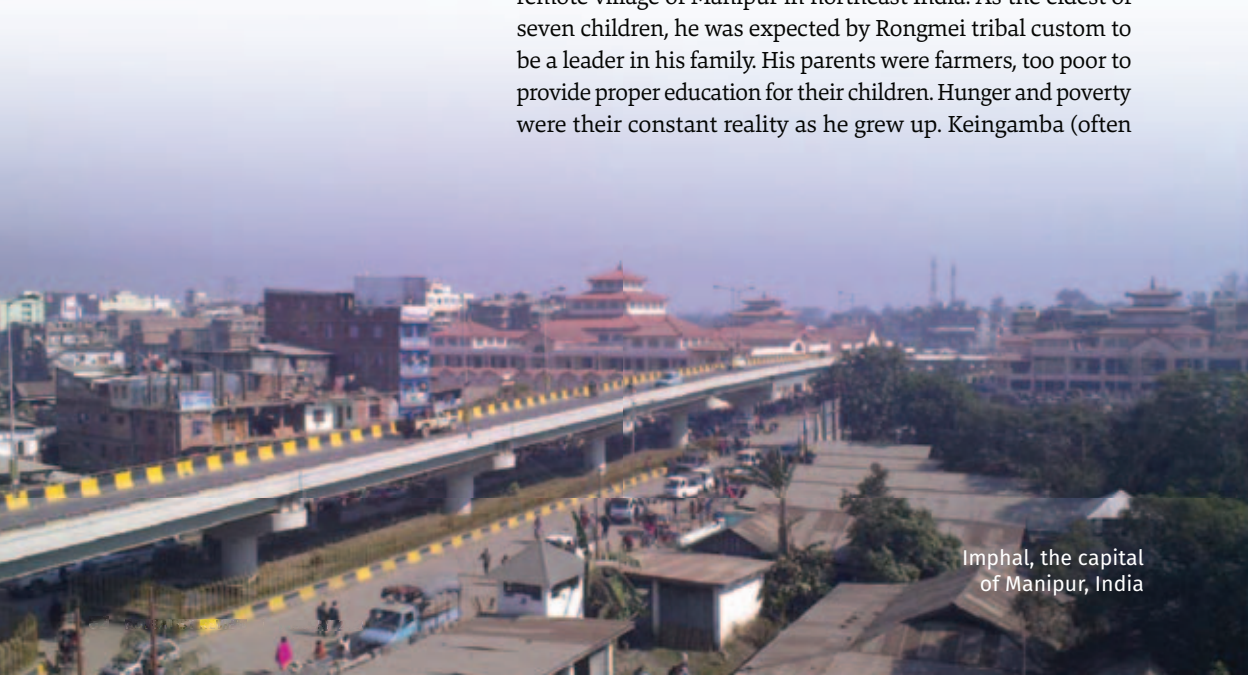
KOBERSON LANGHU



Peter Keingamba was an enemy of Seventh-day Adventists. He hated them because he felt that they were breaking up his family with their strange doctrines, especially the Sabbath. He was determined to stop their evangelism even if that meant using threats and violence.

EARLY LIFE

Keingamba was born on April 10, 1935, in a beautiful and remote village of Manipur in northeast India. As the eldest of seven children, he was expected by Rongmei tribal custom to be a leader in his family. His parents were farmers, too poor to provide proper education for their children. Hunger and poverty were their constant reality as he grew up. Keingamba (often



Imphal, the capital
of Manipur, India

called K. B. Peter) completed only grade 2 in the village school. As a young man he got a break when he was selected to undergo medic training in the city of Pune, 2,000 miles from his village. As a paramedic, his medical skill would become an indispensable tool in his life.

Keingamba's parents were animists, as were most of their fellow tribe members before they embraced Christianity. Although a Christian, he had little interest in religion. He felt no guilt living with two wives, who bore him two sons and eight daughters. Keingamba was also a "drinker, smoker, gambler, and a heavy meat eater, indulging in the use of all sorts of unclean meat."¹

In 1963, when he turned 28, his life underwent a dramatic change.

AN UNEXPECTED CONVERSION

Several evangelists had turned down invitations to conduct evangelistic meetings in Keingamba's village. The Village Volunteer Force (VVF), a counterinsurgency unit of the Indian Army, was known for beating people and causing fear in the community. C. Pheirim, a newly married evangelist, agreed to hold meetings in spite of the challenges. From the start Keingamba, a member of the VVF, was determined to oppose the young evangelist. As his parents seemed inclined to accept the new teachings, especially the Sabbath, Keingamba became angry and more determined to stop the meetings. He felt that the Adventist preacher was causing a division among his family and other Baptists with his strange doctrines.

Keingamba attended every meeting and carefully listened to every word, not intending to become an Adventist but to catch the preacher on some divisive words against the Baptist Church. To his disappointment, Pheirim preached only biblical truths. On several nights Keingamba came drunk to disrupt the meetings and to threaten Pheirim verbally. He made multiple plans to assault him, even instigating army personnel to beat up the evangelist. Whenever Pheirim went to his house to give Bible studies to his parents, Keingamba would either walk out of the house or listen in a state of drunkenness.²

Pheirim returned home at the end of the meetings having baptized 94 converts. A few months later the two men—Pheirim and Keingamba—had a chance encounter on the streets of Imphal, the capital of

Manipur. They spent more than an hour talking as Keingamba narrated the story of his conversion. Keingamba told Pheirim that although he had opposed him, he had been convicted by his message. He also disclosed to the still-stunned evangelist that he had been baptized and had started preaching the Adventist message after resigning from his well-paid job. Indeed, he was on his way to preach when they met that day. He pulled out a Bible and said that he had decided to become a preacher like him.

Keingamba also made a heart-wrenching decision about his polygamous lifestyle. He informed his family that since it was a sin to live with two wives, he would have to separate from his second wife. After words of prayer and farewell, he sent his younger wife away with her four children. Dhormo Kamei says that the separation was very painful for his mother, but that his father loved her with unselfish love and wished her to remarry, which she politely refused to do.³

CHAMPION OF ADVENTISM

Although Keingamba never went to seminary, he became a successful self-made evangelist. He studied the Bible and every Adventist piece of literature he could lay his hands on. Pheirim says that he has not known any mission worker in Manipur who knew the Bible better than Keingamba. He "mastered the Bible" and memorized verses for every subject. He was a true "Bible scholar"⁴ He was also well versed in the writings of Ellen White. His two sons acknowledge that their father's knowledge of the Bible was greater than theirs, even though they both completed a masters degree in theology. His memorization of Bible verses made people ask, "Did Keingamba write the Bible?"

Keingamba became a pioneering evangelist, medical missionary, gospel singer, church planter, and minister. He often went on preaching tours carrying a guitar, a blackboard, a lantern, books, Picture Roll, first-aid box, a typewriter, and several versions of the Bible. At a village public area he would give medical consultations, sing a few songs as he accompanied himself with his guitar, and preach the Adventist message. Sometimes he charged a minimal fee for his medical services. He also recorded songs for All India Radio, for which he received payment. He used most of the earnings for his lay ministry.⁵ Although many villages prohibited the preaching of Adventist messages, his



Peter Keingamba



C. Pheirim



Family Members of Keingamba

medical expertise and fame as a singer won him a ready access to the villages. Keingamba was gifted in many languages, preaching fluently in seven. P. Gangte, a close friend of Keingamba, called him the “one-man army of Jesus.”⁶

Preaching came naturally to Keingamba. He had an ability to keep his audience in rapt attention with his sermons. His evangelistic efforts usually lasted 30 to 40 days. He preached without notes and wove captivating stories into his sermons. He faced many hardships and persecution in his ministry. He survived at least three shootings and seven vehicle accidents. On one occasion a bullet missed him and hit the blackboard. In another village a group of angry men were ready to beat him when a man saved him by standing between him and the angry mob.⁷

His memorization of Bible verses made many people ask, “Did Keingamba write the Bible?”

Keingamba’s ministry spanned more than four decades, during which he preached in many villages and towns of Manipur, Nagaland, and Assam. When he retired, his converts numbered nearly 3,000. One source claims that Keingamba’s “efforts have probably brought more people to Christ than those of any other Adventist evangelist in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church of Manipur and Nagaland.”⁸ According to Cornelius Kamei, his father raised up 31 churches and inspired many individuals to share the Adventist message.⁹ He pioneered the work among several language groups.¹⁰ Additionally, Keingamba brought revival

and reformation to many Adventist churches.

Keingamba was chosen as a lay representative to the 1980 General Conference Session in Dallas, Texas, where he shared his testimony. His picture appeared on the cover of the *Adventist Review* (Apr. 24, 1980). In January 1987 his outstanding service to the church was complimented when he was appointed a regular evangelist and ordained by Pheirim, the evangelist who first introduced him to Adventism. An enemy of Adventism had become its mighty champion.

DEATH AND LEGACY

Keingamba retired from active ministry in 1998. Years later he suffered a stroke that kept him stricken until he passed away on August 23, 2013, at the age of 78. Though he is gone, his legacy lives on through the lives of his children, his converts, and the churches he planted. ♣

¹ “PMB’s Continued Effort,” *Southern Asia Tidings*, October 1979, p. 5.

² C. Pheirim, former president of Northeast India Union, phone interview by the author, Pune, Maharashtra, India, July 7, 2020.

³ Dhormo Kamei, director of Nagaland Region of Seventh-day Adventists, phone interview by the author, July 6, 2020.

⁴ Pheirim, phone interview, July 7, 2020.

⁵ Pouchalung Pamei and Champoumei Dangmei, eds., *The Golden Jubilee Celebration, 1963-2013* (Imphal, India: Michael’s Computer Works, 2015), p. 25.

⁶ Pouchalung Pamei, “Profile of Pastor Peter Keingamba Kamei,” *Sangai Express*, August 2013.

⁷ Kamei, phone interview, July 6, 2020.

⁸ Pamei.

⁹ Cornelius Kamei, “The History of the Emergence of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the State of Manipur, India” (D.Min. dissertation, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Mich., 2010), p. 139. For a list of the villages where Keingamba raised churches or groups of Adventists, see Pamei and Dangmei, p. 26.

¹⁰ K. A. Shimray, “School of Evangelism: ATS Seminary Students,” *Southern Asia Tidings*, July 1981.

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Into All the World

55 Years of **AMAZING FACTS**



In 1965, a pair of passionate clergymen founded a regional radio program called *Amazing Facts*. They had no idea that over the next 55 years, their small ministry, located in a basement in Maryland, would soon grow to become an international evangelism center.

Today, Amazing Facts International is headquartered at the all-new W.O.R.D. Center campus outside Sacramento—and while it has changed in size and scope, its Christ-centered mission remains the same: to proclaim a distinct last-day message of hope and salvation to every corner of the globe.

Every facet of ministry is designed to introduce people to Jesus in a way that speaks directly to their lives and needs ...



Television and Radio: 24/7, worldwide programming on AFTV.com, as well as through TV and radio broadcasts like *Amazing Facts with Doug Batchelor* and *Bible Answers Live*.



Center of Evangelism: Online (afcoe.org) and in-person outreach training for church members who want to become bold and effective soul-winners.



Internet: From amazingfacts.org to helltruth.com, Amazing Facts offers thousands of online articles, books, and video and audio resources to help surfing seekers discover Bible truth.



Bible School: More than 100,000 students have enrolled in our Internet and mail-based Bible course (amazingbiblestudies.com).



Publishing: From sharing magazines and books to DVDs and digital downloads, Amazing Facts publishes hundreds of resources and distributes them worldwide (afbookstore.com).

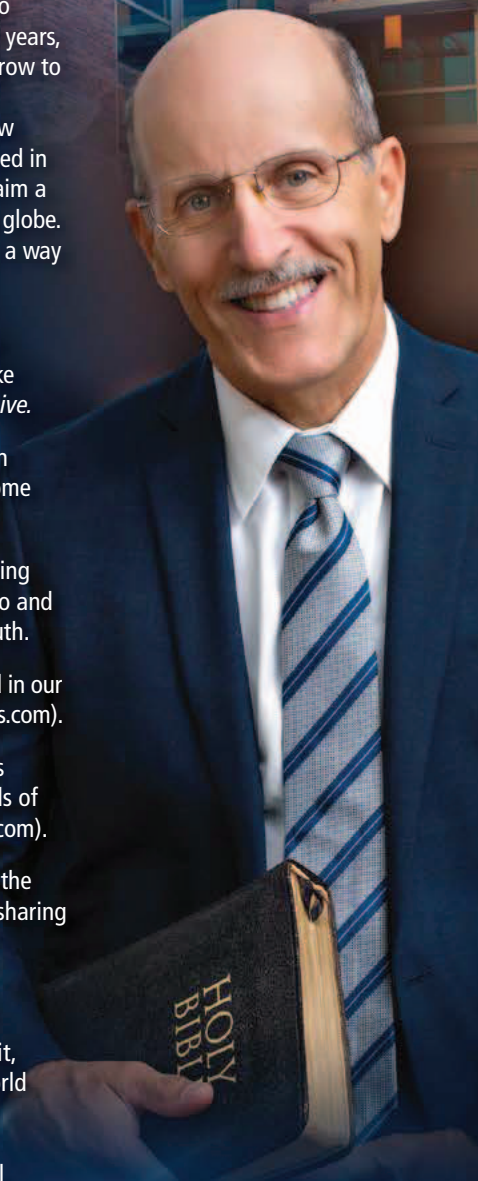


Global Evangelism: From India and China to all across the United States, our team of evangelists travels the globe sharing Christ through live local and televised events.

God's Message Is Our Mission

Every day, through the grace of God, the power of the Holy Spirit, and our faithful donors, Amazing Facts is giving people around the world the biblical answers they need to make an intelligent and heartfelt decision for Christ—and to equip them to help others do the same.

In honor of 55 years of ministry, the Amazing Facts International leadership and staff want to thank you, from the bottom of our hearts, for your continued support and prayers!





"...that they may have life more abundantly"
 Jesus in John 10:10

What We Do?

With your support, FARM STEW's African trainers educate extremely poor families so they can thrive. Currently 1 in 3 of their children are severely malnourished. With training they can learn to live abundantly with fresh, homegrown food, clean water, tidy homes, savings clubs, and strong community ties.

How does FARM STEW work?

Our Christian (Adventist) African trainers equip families to address the root causes of hunger, disease, and poverty. Drawing on Biblical wisdom and sound science, they conduct hands-on classes, freely sharing practical skills so people can help themselves. Our E-Learning Curriculum is on our website.

What is the impact?

Private donations have enabled tens of thousands of people to attend full day training held in villages, schools, mosques, orphanages, and churches. Testimonies of improved diet, health and livelihood abound.



You can create abundant life; one child, one family, and one village at a time.



FARM STEW's recipe for abundant life includes these eight "ingredients":

FARMING	ATTITUDE	REST	MEALS
SANITATION	TEMPERANCE	ENTERPRISE	WATER

Your gifts equip desperately poor families so they can help themselves.

\$15 for a garden, girls' pads, or clean water · \$37 sponsors a hands-on class for a village
 Transform a village - \$1,000/year for 3 years

To learn more or to donate, go to:

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THE NEED TO BE UNDERSTOOD

I stared at my computer in disbelief. *Really? I never said that. Why would Sally* say I had?* The words rankled somewhere deep inside. Those untruths, spun in an appealing way. Sent in e-mail form to dozens on my e-mail list. *How do I fix this, God? How do I explain what really happened?*

Snatching my coat, I stepped outside into the bitter cold. The sun did nothing to warm the earth. *God, it's me again. Do you care that people are lying about me?* The bigger truth lay deep in my heart, but I refused to allow that thought access to my mind. Still, it pressed unbidden to the surface: *Why does it matter what others think of you?* God can be maddening sometimes. Especially when He's right. Sometimes I just want to nurse my feelings of being wronged.

Months slipped by. I don't think I resolved Sally's words; instead, I just ignored them. It's often easier not to think of something than to replay those words in my mind. It's a coping mechanism, I guess, but not a very effective one.

Later another e-mail came in that brought the whole situation to a head. It was from a woman I knew on a mere acquaintance level. My cell phone whistled, and I casually glanced down at the e-mail. The words should've been written in all caps and in red, for the effect they had. "Please do not reach out to me again, under any circumstance." I caught my breath and read it again. I must have hurt her. Racking my brain, I could think of nothing. We rarely interacted, yet I had

obviously overstepped. *How do I apologize? How do I make this right when I'm not allowed to contact her again? How do I ask what's bothering her and explain what really happened?*

That night seemed like an eternity. I lay in bed staring at the ceiling, tears spilling over my cheeks and onto my hair. Greg's even breathing told me he was asleep. Grabbing my earphones, I pulled up Pandora and began to listen to worship music. *How could I have hurt one of God's daughters? How could I explain myself when I wasn't allowed to? God, will You help me?*

As the weeks passed, I found that the long-buried thought kept resurfacing. *Why do you care what others think of you?* Of course, it mattered if I had unintentionally hurt someone else, and that needed to be rectified. But why did I have this desire to be understood, to ensure that others saw my point of view, to explain myself or my actions?

The bottom line is that what other people think of us is none of our business. We don't need to justify ourselves, explain ourselves, or even vindicate ourselves. All of that is pride.

My prayer this new year is simple: *God, deliver me from myself and my need to be understood.*✍

* A pseudonym.

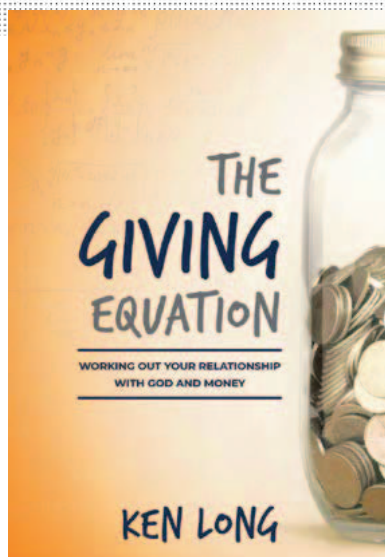
Jill Morikone is vice president and chief operations officer for Three Angels Broadcasting Network (3ABN), a supporting Adventist television network. She and her husband, Greg, live in southern Illinois and enjoy ministering together for Jesus.

JOURNEYS
WITH JESUS
JILL
MORIKONE



THE LONG-BURIED
THOUGHT KEPT
RESURFACING. WHY
DO YOU CARE WHAT
OTHERS THINK OF
YOU?

CLOSER LOOK



The Difference Between the Me- and the G-Economy

The Giving Equation: Working Out Your Relationship With God and Money, Ken Long, Signs Publishing, 2020, 86 pages, softcover. US\$9.99 (Kindle edition). Reviewed by Stephen Chavez, *Adventist Review*.

When preachers get up in the pulpit and say that stewardship is not about money, they're not being completely honest. Stewardship, as it is taught and practiced in most Christian settings, is all about money. That's because it is the currency (pun intended) that drives everything we do as Christians.

Conference stewardship directors encourage faithfulness in giving. Tithes returned pay pastoral and administrators' salaries, as well as some teachers' salaries. As members respond positively to church pastors extolling the virtues of faithful stewardship, local church ministries

Reviews and commentaries about books, films, or other items do not constitute endorsement by the editorial staff of *Adventist Review* Ministries.

Good News When We Need It

Advent: Hearing the Good News in the Story of Jesus' Birth, Nathan Brown, Signs Publishing, 2020, 135 pages, US\$9.99. Reviewed by Stephen Chavez, *Adventist Review*.

A book about Christ's Nativity in January is either slightly off the mark or the perfect way to begin a year that promises to be just as physically, emotionally, and spiritually chaotic as the one we just said goodbye to.

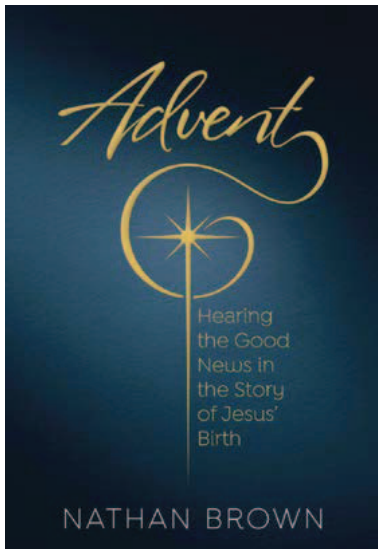
Actually, Nathan Brown's latest book, *Advent*, arrived in our office in November—too late to read and write a review for our December issue. But it's just as well, lest it be lost in the confusion of a pandemic-cursed holiday season. The beginning of the new year—before the challenges and resolutions become too stale—is the perfect time to focus on Christ, the miracle of His birth, and the supreme role He continues to play in our personal and corporate spiritual lives.

Brown, a native of Australia, is no stranger to readers of *Adventist Review* and *Adventist World*. His books and magazine articles have engaged

(schools, community services, and outreach activities) operate, serve the community, and promote the gospel.

Ken Long, author of *The Giving Equation*, knows this. But in this small book he goes beyond guilt (“Will someone rob God?”); beyond greed (“You’ll have more money than you’ll know what to do with”). Long emphasizes the spiritual component of giving—as a reflection of the selflessness and generosity of God.

In seven short, practical chapters, the author examines basic principles of bib-



and challenged readers in North America, the South Pacific, and around the world. He manages to communicate the timeless truths of Scripture to a society that seems increasingly secular, materialistic, and apathetic.

The advent highlighted in the title of the book is not only about the birth of the Baby in Bethlehem—it's also an examination of the prophecies that led to that singular event, as well as a preview of His selfless life, sacrificial death, and victorious resurrection. It unpacks the implications of this powerful question: "If the incarnation of Jesus changed everything, why is the world still so broken?"

lical stewardship. Yes, there is material that readers will find familiar. But the book pivots from most books about stewardship as it outlines the difference between the me-economy and the God-economy.

The chapter "Compelling Case Studies" may be the most valuable, as the author unpacks several familiar Bible stories to reveal the true nature of stewardship in a culture that is often obsessed with wealth as a standard of success. An appendix with "Life Application Questions" correlates to the chapters and provide guides for personal reflection as well as small-group interactions.

The book is a wonderful examination of Christ's birth through a series of 31 chapters, one for each day of the month. (Coincidence? I think not.) Each chapter has a one-word title, some predictable, as in "Anticipated," "Unexpected," "Pre-existing"; others with darker connotations, such as "Conflict," "Revolution," "Outsiders." The idea is that Jesus' first advent brought with it implications that play out starkly in the great controversy.

One of the book's great strengths is the author's citation of Christian writers that many of us are not usually exposed to, but whose voices have enlightened and engaged believers throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Apt quotations from the likes of Frederick Buechner, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Walter Brueggemann, C. S. Lewis, and N. T. Wright punctuate the author's attempts to describe the miracle of Christ's advent.

Those of us who have survived a deadly pandemic, divisive social upheaval, and a contentious political season owe it to ourselves during this new year to anchor ourselves to Him about whom it was said, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given. . . . And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6).

We meet Him in *Advent*. ♣

Biblical stewardship *is* about money, but it's about more than money. It's about entering into a partnership with God through which we dedicate to Him all that we have—our time, our influence, and yes, our money.

The Giving Equation is an easy read and a useful review for longtime believers. It also serves as an introduction for those just getting started in their walk with Christ, a primer about the fundamental Christian teaching of biblical stewardship. ♣

OUR GOD INHABITS THE FUTURE

One of the reasons we like celebrating the new year is that we get to start over. Twelve months stretch before us clean and fresh. Memories of the sadness and disappointments we experienced last year are now behind us. But for Christians it isn't just once a year. Every day is a new beginning. As the prophet said about the Lord's mercies: "They are new every morning" (Lam. 3:23). We may call on the name of the Lord every day, and embrace the possibilities and opportunities He offers us all again and again.—Editors.

"The only way to get rid of your past is to make a future out of it. God will waste nothing."

PHILLIPS BROOKS

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

HEBREWS 12:1, 2

"But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

ISAIAH (ISA. 40:31, ESV)*

"Forget the former things;
do not dwell on the past.
See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a new way in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland."

ISAIAH (ISA. 43:18, 19)

"The God who made us also can remake us."

WOODROW KROLL

"Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, 'The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.'"

JEREMIAH (LAM. 3:22-24)

"The more we let God take us over, the more truly ourselves we become—because He made us. He invented us. He invented all the different people that you and I were intended to be. . . . It is when I turn to Christ, when I give up myself to His personality, that I first begin to have a real personality of my own."

C. S. LEWIS

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"

APOSTLE PAUL (2 COR. 5:17)

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

APOSTLE PETER (1 PETER 1:3)

"The same Jesus who turned water into wine can transform your home, your life, your family, and your future. He is still in the miracle-working business, and His business is the business of transformation."

ADRIAN ROGERS

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"I lift up my eyes to the mountains—
where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord,
the Maker of heaven and earth.
He will not let your foot slip—
he who watches over you will not slumber;
indeed, he who watches over Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord watches over you—
The Lord is your shade at your right hand;
the sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night.
The Lord will keep you from all harm—
he will watch over your life;
the Lord will watch over your coming and going
both now and forevermore."

PSALM 121

"He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end."

KING SOLOMON (ECCLES. 3:11)

"Through salvation our past has been forgiven, our present is given meaning, and our future is secured."

RICK WARREN

"Whatever may be our inherited or cultivated tendencies to wrong, we can overcome through the power that [God] is ready to impart.

ELLEN WHITE (THE MINISTRY OF HEALING, P. 176)

"Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

APOSTLE PAUL (PHIL. 3:13, 14)



A JOURNEY FOR FORGIVENESS

Strolling through the mall with friends one day in 1998, I stopped at a Borders bookstore (who remembers those?). A stack of discounted books caught my eye, and it was there I thumbed through, and eventually bought, a coffetable book called *Offerings at the Wall: Artifacts From the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Collection*.

It's a fascinating book portraying the carefully curated items left at the memorial and stored by the National Park Service since the space first opened in 1982. As I flipped through it, I was deeply moved by the letters, photographs, and other items such as flags, patches, and military medals.

**HOW FAR WOULD
YOU GO FOR
FORGIVENESS?**

This is a sacred place where vets, family members, and friends come to heal the wounds of a painful and divisive period in America's history. In leaving objects and messages for names on that wall, those who do so hope to make peace.

Once I got the book home, I studied the objects and captions that went with them. But it was pages 52 and 53 that struck me hard: a photo of a little Vietnamese girl and her soldier father with a letter. "Dear Sir," it read. "For 22 years I have carried your picture in my wallet. I was only 18 years old that day that we faced one another on that trail in Chu Lai, Vietnam. Why you didn't take my life I'll never know. You stared at me for so long, armed with your [weapon], and yet you did not fire. Forgive me for taking your life, I was reacting just the way I was trained." The note goes on, but the writer concluded with three simple words: "Forgive me, sir."

The soldier's name was Richard Luttrell. Before returning to his platoon, he

looked for valuables on the dead man's body and found his wallet. Inside was the tiny photo of the soldier and his daughter. Richard took the photo and carried it in his own wallet for decades. Years later, as many Vietnam vets found some sense of absolution from leaving mementos from the war at the memorial, Richard tried to lay his guilt there as well.

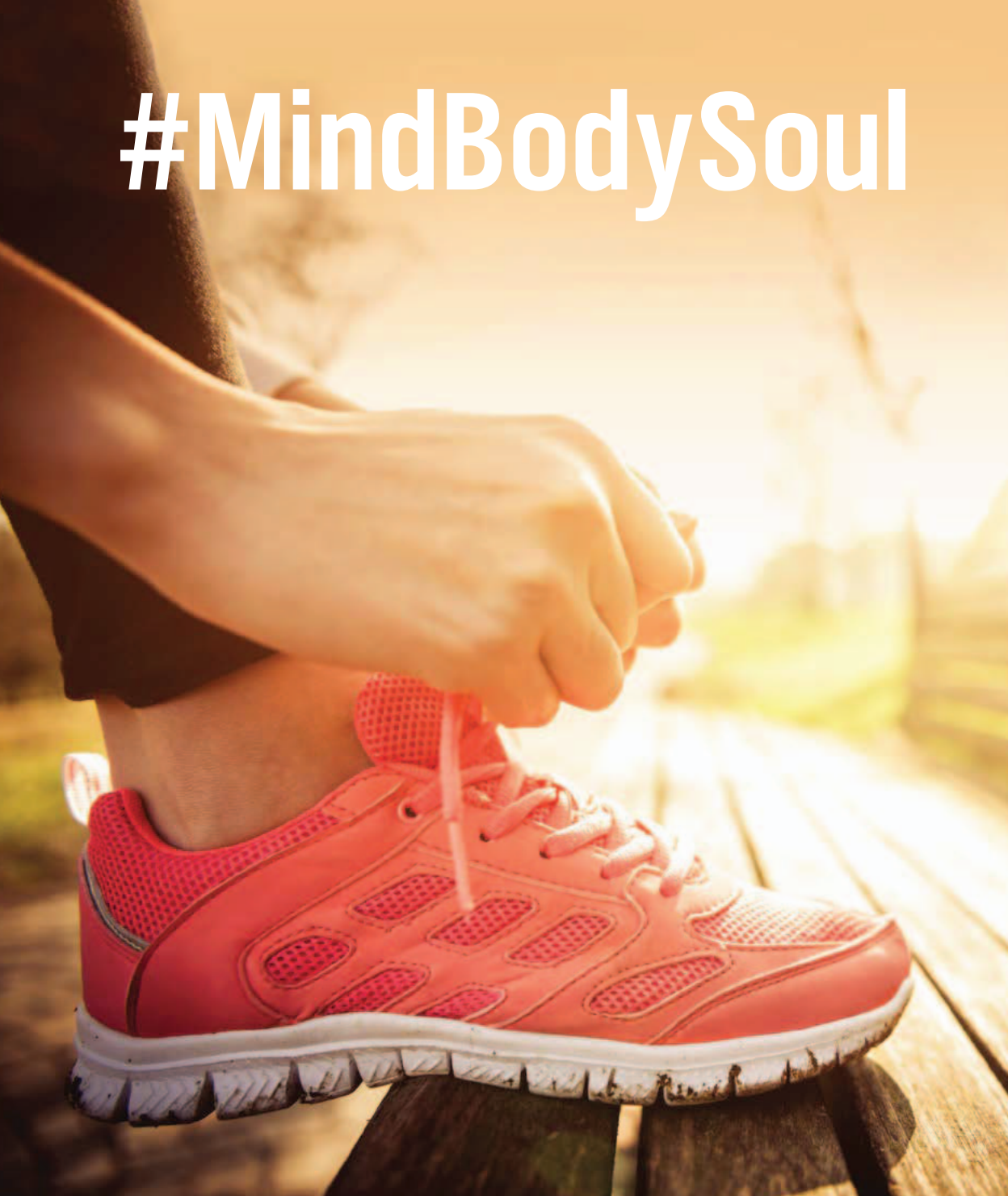
In 2000, after retrieving the photo from the Memorial Collection, Luttrell journeyed back to Vietnam. Assisted by producers of the news show *Dateline*, who documented the trip, Richard found the girl, by then a 40-year-old woman, and returned the photo to her. He practiced a message in Vietnamese, expressing his sorrow, acknowledging her pain, and asking for forgiveness. In free-flowing tears expressed from the old soldier and the daughter of another one, the forgiveness that eluded him was finally given. Richard repented and sought a way to right his wrong. The woman, whose life he forever changed, offered mercy.

When we are weighed down by the messes we make, how far would we go for forgiveness? "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Our first step should always be to ask forgiveness of God and, of course, to ask it of the people we have wronged. But when it's impossible to meet face to face, God' assures us that as long as we make things right with Him, He will bless us with the peace we need to move forward.

We may not have to journey halfway around the world to make things right, but thank God we need only Him to be washed absolutely clean. ✍

Wilona Karimabadi is an assistant editor for *Adventist Review*.

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