

ADVENTIST REVIEW

NOVEMBER 2019: LIP-SYNCING FOR GOD + STRAWS
AND SIPPY CUPS + SPIRIT-WOKE ADVENTISM +
SO THANKFUL FOR SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS + MY
DESPERATE CRY + BEYOND THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

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FEATURES

18 **LIP-SYNCING FOR GOD** | GERALD A. KLINGBEIL

Yes, God has His spokespeople. No, they don't always fit the stereotype.

24 **PROPHECY AGAIN?** | LAEL CAESAR

True prophets are always by divine selection.

31 **SPIRIT-WOKE ADVENTISM** | RANDY MAXWELL

The Spirit-led church: what's the secret?

35 **BEYOND PROPHECY TO PROPHETIC VOICE** | CHRIS BLAKE

We may know the future, but do we know our role in it?

38 **100 YEARS LATER** | MICHAEL W. CAMPBELL

Looking back on Adventists making up their minds about prophecy

“The prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, and Micah spoke up for justice, peacemaking, and liberation. In every generation prophetic voices challenge power, wealth, and comfort, offering a microphone to the voiceless. At times this means speaking truth to power and pointing out systemic evils.”

35

ARTICLES

42 LAODECONOMICS

TIM AKA

How will world economics affect us in the future?

46 FROM THE DISAPPOINTMENT TO THE ADVENT

MICHAEL F. YOUNKER

How does one begin to take a message to the entire world?

50 A GROWING MINISTRY

ROBERT BURNETTE

The church’s ministry to Native Americans is significant and largely unsung.

54 BREAKING THE CYCLE

Brian Cladoosby, immediate past president of the National Congress of American Indians, visits with Sandra Blackmer.

58 JESUS AWAITS

DÉBORA TATIANE BORGES

A conversion story never ends.

60 JACOB’S GIFT OF PROPHECY

ELLEN G. WHITE

This father had much to say about the future of his sons.

62 THE SPECIAL SAUCE

MATTHEW J. LUCIO

Do you know what makes Adventists unique?

64 MY DESPERATE CRY

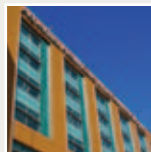
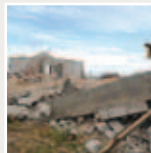
NED NAGGYA

Cancer can take us down a path we never could have imagined.



NEWS | OPINION

- » Bahamas: Singing and Praying in the Storm
- » Summit Focuses on Helping to Recognize and Stop Abuse
- » Washington Adventist Hospital Has a New Home and New Name
- » Rwandan President Inaugurates Adventist Medical School in East Africa
- » “Why I’m Striking for Climate Change”



EDITORIAL

4 BILL KNOTT

LIVING WITH THE GIFT

DEPARTMENTS

6 LETTERS

45 HOUSE CALL

68 CLOSER LOOK

70 VOICES

COLUMNS

29 SEARCHING THE OBVIOUS

DIXIL RODRÍGUEZ

37 INTRODUCING THE WHY

JIMMY PHILLIPS

49 CLIFF’S EDGE

CLIFFORD GOLDSTEIN

72 IN OTHER WORDS

WILONA KARIMABADI

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TRENDING

THE MOST SHARED STORIES ON ADVENTISTREVIEW.ORG LAST MONTH:



- 1 Maranatha Celebrates 50 Years of Mission Service
- 2 Loma Linda University Opens Grade School in Malawi
- 3 "Why I'm Striking for Climate Change"
- 4 Adventists Contribute to Relief Efforts in Bahamas
- 5 Adventist Women in South Pacific Advocate Against Violence.

IN THE REVIEW, NOVEMBER 17, 1896



The *Review* carried a detailed news account just one day after the opening of Oakwood Industrial School. The school, located in Huntsville, Alabama, was situated on 360 acres of farmland and forests. An old manor house, barn, and nine former "slave" cabins had been repaired and refurbished by volunteer workers, including General Conference president, O. A. Olsen. The school opened with 16 boarding students and 15 day students. Now Oakwood University—as of 2018—has 1,636 students enrolled.



Living With the Gift

During the last 25 years, I've had the privilege—and sometimes the pain—of serving on many search committees. I've worked with groups searching for qualified pastors, teachers, conference administrators, university presidents, and editors. Despite the great differences in those groups and the amazing variety among the hundreds of talented personalities we've considered, there's one question that arises about every finalist.

It's not a question about their age, since we can't legally ask that. It's certainly not about their politics, because we don't want to know that. It's not about their salary expectations: working for God's church will never be about financial gain.

It's a question about attitude in the end. At some point, a member of the committee will raise a hand and ask that most important question: "Can this person take direction?" "Can this person accept counsel?" "Can this man or woman get past their own views and opinions long enough to actually listen to the voice of God speaking to them through another Christian?"

I've watched search committees turn on the proverbial dime when that question was asked—and answered with a negative. Committees on the verge of choosing a talented, sophisticated candidate have turned

around and moved in an entirely different direction.

In the end, the most significant question that will likely ever be asked of us isn't a question about our education or experience, or even a question about our competence. Our culture knows, and, unfortunately, the church also knows how easy it is to lie about educational achievements, or fudge the record on a resume, or line up

It's a sign of spiritual adulthood to say "yes" to God's gifts.

references who say only good things. But the unmistakable sign that we will take up our work with humility and care and wisdom and gentleness is whether or not we can accept direction, and thrive with the help of counsel.

What I've found true on search committees I've also found true in the life of the Church. The men and women intent on growing up into what the apostle Paul calls "the measure of the full stature of Christ" (Eph. 4:13) are the ones who can accept direction. These are they who don't fight counsel. They

have grown past their original opinions and the arrogance with which we're all born to learn that Jesus grows His church through the gifts He gives His people.

Jesus blessed His first-century church with teachers and pastors and evangelists and prophets, and Jesus has blessed His end-time church with teachers and pastors and evangelists—and at least one prophet. Let's be clear about it: it's a sign of maturity to figure that out. It's a sign of spiritual adulthood to say "yes" to His gifts—to acknowledge, "I could use inspired counsel. There's more I need to know."

*"The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-13).**

It hasn't been fashionable of late to raise your hand and say, "I believe in the gift of prophecy." You've likely heard someone say it's a sign of dependence or childishness to continue to believe in the Spirit of Prophecy.

A dozen websites flush with feverish prose will inform you that you must be independent of all outside influences—except theirs. Critics have dismissed

the ministry of Ellen White as irrelevant to the modern world, as a relic of the Victorian era, or described her as an author to be read only devotionally and only occasionally.

I don't doubt that some reading these words have experienced this gift more as a weapon than a blessing. Some have known the Spirit of Prophecy as the unrelenting judge of everything in your life that seemed fun or free or fresh. Let me apologize for those who misinformed you.

That painful past may have tempted you to pay less attention to what Jesus wants you to understand through this gift.

Your difficult experience with those who unkindly crowded this gift into your life may have caused you to become a person who won't welcome direction, a person who finds it hard to accept counsel, and thus a person slowed on the road to Christian maturity.

"But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ" (Eph 4:15).

If there are people in your past who caused you to distrust or ignore the gift of prophecy, now is the time to deal with them the way mature Christians always deal with those who have hurt them: it's time to forgive them.

It's time in the history of the Adventist Church, and in the story of our own lives as disciples of Jesus, that we find the grace and wisdom to acknowledge we could all use a little more divine direction. We would all do well to accept inspired counsel. It's time to *"grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ."*

The church I want to belong to believes in the prophetic gift. ♣

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Bill Kuntz

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THE GOOD NEWS?

Around the world, our cell phone evangelists are sending the *Revelation of Hope* series to friends and family. However, many are still waiting to hear the Good News because it has not been recorded in their native language.



How relevant was the message of the October issue focusing on the second coming of Jesus. I can relate to the editorial by Bill Knott. When I accepted the Lord and studied theology, I never thought I'd make it. I have listened to sermons from my father-in-law, R. M. Rabello, speaker of the Voice of Prophecy in Brazil, and his messages about the signs of the second coming of Jesus! We've never seen signs like the ones we see today.

I remember hearing about one of the islands in the Pacific where people would get up in the morning, go to the beach, look to the sky, and ask, "Is it today You're coming?"

Let us be ready every day for Jesus. My prayer is "Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus!"

Leo Ranzolin Sr.
Estero, Florida

COMMENTS FROM ADVENTISTREVIEW.ORG

WHY I'M STRIKING FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

I have been an environmental consultant for 20 years, and an Adventist Christian for almost 30 years. Let's not lose focus on the real crisis. God's remnant church is not yet prepared. The world already died when our first parents sinned. Climate change is just one of the consequences of a sinful world. It is an important issue, but let's not fail to be mindful of the bigger issue.

If I had the choice as a young Christian, I would rather tell others that Jesus is coming soon than choose a side in the climate change debate. Choose your battles.

Ronie Magcamit, via web

Regarding "Why I'm Striking for Climate Change" (www.adventist-review.org/why-im-striking-for-climate-change): Thank you for your Christian witness. It seems like many members of our church have lost sight of God's clear charge to care for the

earth. In one of God's first interactions with humans, "the Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it" (Gen. 2:15). It is clear from other references in the Old Testament that God did not intend humankind to stop caring for things just because they were no longer in the garden.

God expects humans to cherish and care for the earth.

Climate change is real. The science behind climate change is well understood, and many of the predictions made 20 years ago are coming to pass now. As a scientist myself, I have been following the research of climate scientists with great interest for more than 30 years, and I'm impressed with how careful and accurate their work has been.

This verse should give us all pause: "The nations were angry, and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your people who revere your name, both great and small—and for destroying those who destroy the earth" (Rev. 11:18).

It would seem that God

It would seem that God expects us to be found taking care of the earth when He returns, not destroying it.

BRYAN NESS, VIA WEB

expects us to be found taking care of the earth when He returns, not destroying it. Pushing for societal changes that can slow down or stop climate change represents a very clear way to help care for the earth.

Bryan Ness, via web

WORLD CHURCH TREASURER DISCUSSES CHURCH FINANCES AND HIS LIFE BEHIND THE SCENES

Excellent interview! Juan Prestol Puesan is a very experienced man and servant of the Lord Jesus! God bless him!

Mark B. Gomes, via web

TRUST THE KNIFE

What a remarkable story! Praying for missionaries all over the world. These children continue to teach us important lessons of trust.

Shannon Robinson-Pitkin, via web

CLIFF'S EDGE— 10,000 ADAMS AND EVES

Evolution, if you just analyze what it proposes, is complete fantasy. The concept of things getting gradually more complex over time. Systems developing

and growing together through a series of completely random mutations that not only don't have a driving force but cannot provide intelligent feedback to the supposedly evolving species is literally impossible.

David Lynch, via web

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

This article (www.adventistreview.org/church-news/story14035-adverse-childhood-experiences-can-be-deadly-but-there-is-hope-expert-says) is helpful, and I do not challenge the conclusions of the author. But I would add a few points.

People may, within the Adventist community, experience adverse experiences as adults, young adults, and as children. Those who have experienced such in their past have likely developed their own methods of coping. This may include the

repression of some aspects of that trauma, which may mean that it has not yet been appropriately dealt with.

While I am not attributing this to the author of the article, we should not approach every person in the same manner. People are different. They must be allowed to tell their stories. The appropriate response must be individualized to them. In some cases, in order for people to heal, they may need to seek spiritual nurture outside of the Adventist denomination. God can and does use people outside of the church to provide ministry. It is not for us to judge people who leave our fellowship because of what they have experienced within our community.

Gregory Matthews, via web

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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Many Christians are well-meaning when they provide “thoughts and prayers” on many issues; prayers, however, won’t solve the climate crisis.

—Kayla p. 16



Remains of the Salem Seventh-day Adventist church building after Hurricane Dorian’s powerful winds leveled the partially completed structure. PHOTOS: LIBNA STEVENS, INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION NEWS

BAHAMAS: SINGING AND PRAYING IN THE STORM

ADVENTISTS SHARE HARROWING STORIES AS CHURCH LEADERS TOUR HURRICANE-STRICKEN ISLANDS.

BY LIBNA STEVENS, INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION NEWS

Snapped pine trees, downed electrical poles, mangled steel buildings, destroyed businesses, flattened neighborhoods, broken church buildings, and debris everywhere.

That was the sight that greeted Seventh-day Adventist leaders from the Inter-American Division (IAD) church region during a recent tour of the damage caused by Hurricane

Dorian on the islands of Abaco and Grand Bahama.

NOT MUCH LEFT IN ABACO

“You look at it all and think, Where to start? Where to rebuild? When will it be possible for them [the islanders] to restart their life?” said Elie Henry, president of IAD. Henry, along with fellow administrators, visited several church properties

and members’ homes and businesses on September 15, 2019, in Marsh Harbour, the largest city on Abaco.

Leaders stopped to see Marsh Harbour Adventist Church, which sustained extensive damage to its structure, including the roof, walls, and interior. Most of the church’s 250 members evacuated to Nassau or the United States, said Peter Watson, associate pastor for the Abaco district, who stayed behind to help in the relief efforts.

“Many people died here,” Watson said. “You saw bodies on the ground, and rumors of cholera began to spread, so people just started to

Peter Watson, associate pastor for the Abaco Seventh-day Adventist churches, points to where the Salem Adventist Church's wooden structure was wiped out when Hurricane Dorian blew it away.



evacuate as quickly as they could.” Watson said that very few church members are left.

The Salem Haitian Adventist Church, a wooden structure next to the Marsh Harbour church, was destroyed. The 120 church members had been working to build a new church on a property on a nearby hill, said Wilson Isnord, head pastor for the Abaco district. “The members were looking forward to finishing the church by December,” he said. The cement church seemed safe to many people who took shelter inside during the storm, Isnord explained. “But soon after the storm, eight bodies were found in the church. None were church members.”

“It is very sad to learn that a community of a lot of Haitian people lived right behind here . . . many looking for a better life, and their homes were wiped out,” said Henry, a native of Haiti. “We hope that those on the island can rebuild, because where there is life, there is still hope. So we continue to hope the Lord, who spared their lives, will give them hope to rebuild everything and continue to witness of the goodness of the Lord.”

The trip was not only for the purpose of surveying the damage caused by the hurricane, Henry said. “For me, it was much more impressive to meet the church members and see that they have

great maturity in their faith. They understood how God saved them after they prayed to God for protection.”

MEMBERS ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Nathaniel Hannah, who lives in the Spring City community, was met by the caravan of leaders who came to visit church members. “It was terrifying what we experienced,” Hannah said. During the storm his wife and two children kept praying and singing hymns, he recalled. “A tree hit our roof, plywood started flying off, and the pressure we felt in the house was so powerful. . . . It was crazy,” he said.

“When we felt a calm, we got in



Inter-American Division (IAD) president Elie Henry (right) looks at the Mudd community on Abaco in the Bahamas, where thousands of Haitians lost their homes and some lost their lives when Hurricane Dorian struck. Isaac Collie, an Adventist lawyer and businessman on Abaco, talks about the aftermath of the storm.

the car, kept singing, got out of the car with the help of a neighbor, and headed for shelter at a library building. There were many there taking shelter already.”

He has no electricity or running water in his home, but Hannah and his wife are living there. The children are in Nassau so they can go to school. “This is our home; I didn’t want to leave. God has saved us and will help us through this.”

Hannah is watching several of his neighbors’ homes now. Many have left, but check in with him when they can. Visiting church leaders prayed with him and his family and delivered relief supplies.

The Abaco district is personal to Leonard Johnson, executive secretary for the IAD. “This is where I started my ministries as a young pastor for three years,” Johnson said. “I got a sense of home as I listened and saw in action the work of Peter Watson and Isaac Collie, an Adventist lawyer, business owner, and Adventist-laymen’s Services and Industries (ASi) coordinator for the union conference. Though having experienced losses in terms of homes and businesses, they are very positive, optimistic, and confident that the Lord will help rebuild again.”

“Listening to Nathaniel Hannah’s testimony and the others only underscores that we are a disaster or storm away from the possibility of losing everything, and our only trust and hope really is God,” Johnson said.

CHURCH FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

Looking at the extent of the damage in Abaco brought some concerns to Filiberto Verduzco, treasurer for the IAD. “This trip allowed us to let the church in the Bahamas know that we are with them, and this is the time to help our brothers and sisters in need, while quantifying ways in which we can help as a church.”

One third of the financial support for the church in the North Bahamas Conference, which oversees Abaco and Grand Bahama, comes from the membership in Abaco, Verduzco said. “This definitely affects the operation of the local church,” he explained. “Our members are displaced, have lost everything, are not able to work, and they are not able to give to the church. But we have a great opportunity to help rebuild churches, to help members so they can return to their island and can find normal life again.”

Verduzco said it is IAD policy to assist church members in rebuild-

ing their lives in the wake of a natural disaster. The division sent funds to assist the union conference immediately after Hurricane Dorian struck, he explained. Three other IAD union church regions have already sent funds to help North Bahamas and other areas and have pledged to assist in the recovery as well.

“The Atlantic Caribbean Union is assessing the scope of their needs after the hurricane and will present us their plan to help in the rebuilding and relief efforts in the days, weeks, and months ahead,” Verduzco said.

Jose Alberto Rodríguez, president of the Adventist Church in Puerto Rico, took a team from a national television station in Puerto Rico to raise funds for those affected by the hurricane. “It’s hard to see the destruction in this place,” Rodríguez said. “My heart is moved by so many affected. We will continue to assist in relief efforts indefinitely.”

The union conference, through its Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) in Puerto Rico, has been sending funds every week since the storm struck, Rodríguez said. The funds are assisting feeding programs in Grand Bahama and those for victims who evacuated to Nassau from Abaco.

Church leaders also traveled to affected areas in Freeport, Grand Bahama, on September 15, to speak to church members, visit damaged church properties, and visit ongoing relief operations there. 🍌

SUMMIT FOCUSES ON HELPING TO RECOGNIZE AND STOP ABUSE

LEADERS SAID THEY HOPE PASTORS AND SEMINARY STUDENTS NOW HAVE BETTER TOOLS TO ACT.

BY KIMBERLY LUSTE MARAN, NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION, AND ADVENTIST REVIEW

On the first day of the North American Division's 2019 enditnon Summit on Abuse, the seminary chapel at Andrews University was full.

The two-day summit on September 4, 2019, on the Andrews campus in Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States, was organized to give pastors, seminary students, teachers, volunteers, church staff, and members the tools and knowledge to help end abuse within their scope of influence.

The summit featured a number of experts, ranging from church leaders, administrators, professional advocates, and educators to women who shared their stories of abuse. The division's third summit, the event was broadcast during two days in English and Spanish, and is the first to be held on a university campus.

A SOBER AND SERIOUS SUBJECT

"This is a very sober and serious subject facing our society and our church," said G. Alexander Bryant, North American Division (NAD) executive secretary, during an introduction to the summit. "It is my prayer that you leave this summit more equipped, informed, and motivated to address abuse in the sphere of your influence—where you work, where you socialize, and even where you worship."

In addition to the live audience gathered both days in the chapel, according to Jamie Domm, NAD digital media strategist, more than 3,600 registered to watch the Facebook livestream event for both days. More than 500, on average, continuously viewed the livestream video presentations on Facebook.

Before the summit's experts made their way to the platform, Ivan Williams, NAD Ministerial Association director, welcomed the audience, and on-site and online audiences participated in an initial survey on abuse. During both days attorneys, pastors, Adventist Risk Management representatives, and summit presenters (after their lectures) were available to answer questions generated on Twitter and Facebook.

"Why is addressing this incumbent upon the church?" asked first presenter René Drumm, who shared the second part of Jesus' words in John 10:10. "Living a life of abuse is not abundant living," Drumm said. "One person is too many."

TOPICS COVERED

The topics covered during day one of the Summit on Abuse included "Relational Abuse and Violence in the Seventh-day Adventist Church," by Drumm, a professor of social work; "Spiritual Abuse: Let's End It Now," by David Sedlacek, professor of family ministry and discipleship; "The Silent Victims of Domestic Violence," by Ruben Muriente, outreach coordinator for the Family Justice Center (Tennessee); "Peer Abuse: Prevalence, Protection, and Prevention," by Mindy Salyers, educator, counselor, and bullying prevention specialist; "Pornography and Violence," by Stanley Stevenson, social services regional director, Mississippi Department of Health; "Double Abuse and Its Consequences," by Sarah McDugal, abuse recovery coach; and "The Heart of Abuse," with the coordinator of the Psalm 82 Initiative.

The second day's presentations were in Spanish.

One Facebook viewer, Nicole Crozier Parker, shared her appreciation for the summit via comment: "This. Was. Amazing," Parker wrote. "Thank you to all of these awesome presenters, and everyone else who put so much work into this! This is how change happens!"

After the livestreams concluded, presenters and attendees, in another first, were invited to a reception and Q & A session. There audience members asked questions of the presenter panelists and got to hear about real-life situations and solutions in response.

ADVENTIST CHURCH CAN BECOME A LEADER

First presenter René Drumm, who has been doing research on domestic violence and intimate partner violence (IPV) in the church for decades, said she believes that the Adventist Church is uniquely poised to be a world leader in the area of abuse response and prevention.

"The first study in the early 2000s showed that our rates of IPV are about on par with U.S. national statistics," Drumm said. "The second study took an in-depth look at Adventist victims/survivors of IPV, which captured my heart and energy. The pain from the survivors' stories convinced us that the most pressing need was to train pastors to respond to disclosures of abuse. From there the Lord opened the doors for our research team to train the pastors in our area [then the Georgia-Cumberland Conference] on abuse response. We developed a four-hour training that the conference mandated for all of their pastors with amazing and lasting results."

Drumm concluded, "Because a significant number of people in our church are suffering from this silent affliction, we need to act. We have the data, we know what needs



David Sedlacek, professor of family ministry and discipleship at Andrews University, addresses both the online and on-site audiences during the enditnow Summit on Abuse at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary chapel on September 4, 2019. PHOTO: PIETER DAMSTEEGT, NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION NEWS

to be done, and we have a proven path for improvement.”

ERADICATING ABUSE

Another presenter, Ruben Muriente, said he was participating in the summit because he wants to equip the Adventist Church with the best available resources and education and awareness possible to battle abuse head-on. Muriente, outreach coordinator for the Family Justice Center in Tennessee, spoke both days of the summit, presenting in English and Spanish.

“My goal is to eradicate abuse in our church,” Muriente said. “I will be presenting on the effects of abuse on children who witness abuse. I want the audience to understand that children need our help and support.”

RESPONSIBILITY TO CREATE SAFE CHURCHES

David Sedlacek, a professor at Andrews University, said, “as a survivor of spiritual and emotional abuse, I am convinced that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has a responsibility to create safe churches, not only for our members but also for the communities surrounding us.”

Sedlacek believes that the enditnow NAD Summit on Abuse provided information, testimonials, and strategies to help deal with abuse and violence of all types. “It will help to move our church for-

ward. It is an essential element of the healing mission of the church as we prepare for the second coming of Jesus,” he said.

TAKING ABUSE SERIOUSLY

“The enditnow Summit on Abuse is crucial for the Adventist Church because it is long past time for us to take the subject of abuse seriously,” Sarah McDugal said. “We carry a gospel mandate to accurately represent the loving character of God to those who are vulnerable and wounded. Properly dealing with abuse and abusers is an evangelistic imperative, because poorly handled abuse situations are one of the overwhelming contributors to young people leaving the church. How can we expect our young people to stay when they too often see leaders misrepresent God’s character by protecting abusers and sweeping victims aside?”

McDugal said she hoped the audience leaves the summit with a healing awareness that there are people in the church who care about counteracting abuse; a sense of more freedom to speak out about the pain and find support; and a connection to practical tools to be used to increase education on abuse topics.

PUTTING THE TOPIC OUT IN THE OPEN

While many from the NAD administration and leadership supported the summit in a myriad

of ways—from hosting to planning to presenting—two leaders also gave presentations at this year’s event during the Spanish-language segment.

Gerry Lopez, associate director of NAD Children’s Ministries, said, “It is time for our church to talk and inform about these topics, to put them out there in the open. We need to educate our leaders and members and make them aware that this is a real problem that exists in our church. We have to educate everyone so that we all can know how to identify the problem and help the victims.”

Lopez presented on bullying, with the hope, he said, that viewers would gain a better understanding about not only what bullying is and how to prevent it but also how to help kids deal with it. “As pastors, Sabbath School teachers, children’s ministry leaders, schoolteachers, and parents, we must be the people that the victims of bullying can go to for help and protection. The only way that will happen is if they can trust us enough to come to us; the only way we can help is if we are informed on what to do.”

Claudio Consuegra, NAD Family Ministries director, spoke about the relationship between pornographers and intimate partner abuse. After the summit he said, “We hope to shed some more light on the growing problem with pornography in our churches and communities.”



WASHINGTON ADVENTIST HOSPITAL HAS A NEW NAME AND A NEW HOME

THE HOSPITAL HAS MOVED TO SILVER SPRING AND IS NOW CALLED ADVENTIST HEALTHCARE WHITE OAK MEDICAL CENTER

BY ADVENTIST REVIEW NEWS

After more than 100 years in Takoma Park, a city on the northern edge of Washington, D.C., Washington Adventist Hospital has relocated to Silver Spring, Maryland, and has been renamed Adventist HealthCare White Oak Medical Center.

“While this 112-year-old hospital is leaving Takoma Park,” said Terry Forde, CEO and president of the Adventist HealthCare system, “the historical and divinely inspired call to serve our country for miles and miles around Washington, D.C., continues.”

The formal move to the new hospital location took place on August 25, 2019, although the transition—and the construction of the new US\$400 million medical center—has been in the works for a few years.

Prior to making the transition to the new campus, Adventist HealthCare leaders organized an on-site dedication service on August 8, 2019, that brought health-care and Adventist Church leaders together with community leaders. Many of those who spoke at the service emphasized providential

leading throughout the project.

“This hospital is going to do magnificent things,” said John Sackett,



Terry Forde, CEO and president of the Adventist HealthCare system, addresses attendees at the White Oak Medical Center dedication service. PHOTO: EMILY MASTRAPA/ANN

Adventist HealthCare executive vice president and chief operating officer. He emphasized, however, “I don’t want us to ever get to the point that we forget” how God led

and blessed the process.

“We celebrate today, not what we have accomplished, but what God has done,” said Ann Roda, Adventist HealthCare vice president for mission integration and spiritual care. “We gather together to praise the One who created the world we live in; who has enabled the space we minister from, who establishes the purposes of our call, and defines the mission we commit to.”

Dave Weigley, president of the Columbia Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and Adventist HealthCare board chair, summarized the sentiments expressed by quoting Ellen White, a cofounder of the Adventist Church. At the turn of the twentieth century White donated proceeds from her book *The Ministry of Healing* to assist with the construction of Washington Sanitarium, the precursor of Washington Adventist Hospital.

“It’s not the capabilities you now possess or ever will that will bring you success, but it’s that which God can do for you,” Weigley quoted.

Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the Adventist Church, also spoke at the service, highlighting his personal history with the hospital. He was born at Washington Adventist Hospital and later served as a chaplain there. Wilson emphasized the hospital’s legacy and its impact in the community. ▀

For additional information and articles about the new Adventist HealthCare White Oak Medical Center, visit tinyurl.com/y4j7vcn5.



The new East-Central Africa Division School of Medicine was inaugurated in Kigali, Rwanda, on September 2, 2019. PHOTO: COURTESY OF LISA BEARDSLEY-HARDY

RWANDAN PRESIDENT INAUGURATES ADVENTIST MEDICAL SCHOOL IN EAST AFRICA

AS A NEXT STEP, PAUL KAGAME PROMISES SUPPORT FOR A TRAINING HOSPITAL.

BY PRINCE BAHATI, EAST-CENTRAL AFRICA DIVISION, ADVENTIST NEWS NETWORK, AND ADVENTIST REVIEW

His Excellency Paul Kagame, the president of the republic of Rwanda, and Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church, unveiled the new East-Central Africa Division (ECD) School of Medicine in Kigali, Rwanda's capital city, on September 2, 2019.

During the ceremony, attended by regional church leaders, members, and government officials, Eustace Pennicook, founding dean of the medical school, highlighted the four planned phases of the school and explained that only the first phase has been completed. This phase is composed of four main buildings, including a science complex with nine laboratories and smart classrooms, a cafeteria building, an updated complex for student dormitories, and a guest house area.

Blasious Ruguri, president of the Adventist Church in the ECD, thanked President Kagame, who fulfilled his promise of providing a paved road that gives easier access to the campus. At the same time, Ruguri shared that the new School of Medicine was a project that was beyond local financial capacities.

"I thank the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists for the 2016 Thirteenth Sabbath special

offering that was funneled to this project," he said. "I also thank church members from the 11 countries included in this region. Each one contributed to the school, and many others also extended their generosity." Ruguri said they now need more land on which to build other facilities for the school, including a training hospital.

Wilson congratulated the newly established institution and thanked Kagame for supporting the Seventh-day Adventist Church through infrastructure and religious freedom. He further commended Kagame for the confidence he had in the Seventh-day Adventist Church when he urged them to take on the project of a medical school.

"What a privilege to be part of inaugurating the East-Central Africa Division medical school in Kigali, Rwanda—the seventh [Adventist school of medicine] in the world church," Wilson said. "This medical school will be a tremendous blessing to East-Central Africa as students obtain a quality medical education and combine it with a spiritual emphasis in a 'blended ministry.'"

Wilson challenged ECD leaders not only to display splendid buildings but to strive for quality education inside them. He prayed for

heavenly blessings upon the school and the country of Rwanda, reminding the audience that pride and arrogance have no room in successful projects.

"God will use this medical school and its graduates as they follow in the footsteps of the Master Physician to further comprehensive health ministry as the right arm of the gospel in preparing people physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually for Christ's soon coming," Wilson said.

Kagame, who was accompanied by his wife, Jeanette, commended the Adventist Church for making health a pillar of evangelism and development. He further saluted Adventists in Rwanda for contributing to the development of the country for 100 years. Regarding the medical school, he thanked the church for being an honest partner with the government of Rwanda. "I promise to provide land and money to build a training hospital for the medical school," Kagame said.

The new ECD medical school is hosted by the Adventist University of Central Africa (AUCA) on the Masoro main campus in the city of Kigali. It becomes the second of its kind on the African continent, and the seventh in the Seventh-day Adventist Church worldwide. ▀



WHY I'M STRIKING FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

A 14-YEAR-OLD SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST FROM AUSTRALIA SHARES HER RATIONALE FOR CLIMATE ACTION.

BY KAYLA, FOR ADVENTIST RECORD

I am Kayla. I'm 14 years old and on the School Strike for Climate Sydney team. I am also a Seventh-day Adventist.

As well as having several nonreligious motivations for being passionate about the environment, I am convinced that Christianity has a heavy emphasis on looking after the earth that we have been given and caring for the creatures that live on it—which we are very clearly not doing. The earth is not an endless pool of resources for us to exploit for personal gain. It is dying in our very hands, and we are not doing enough about it.

Stewardship is caring for what belongs to God. It acknowledges that everything we have is from God, and everything we have is God's. I have been called to be an environmental steward, which has inspired me to do a lot. Psalm 24:1 says, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it" (NIV).

My grandpa was a famous scientist. He was an echydrologist and a strong Christian. He was an idealistic man, passionate about creating clean water. Much of his motivation came from his Christian beliefs about caring for the environment, which led to caring for others. He was a very humble and kind man, and I know that if he were here today, he would be striking along with me.

As I have learned more and become more involved in the climate movement, there have been many ups and downs. I felt a bit shy at first, because I had only just started high school and had few friends to support me in my passion. As time went on I made more

friends and was more involved with the strikes.

My perspective on environmental stewardship is rooted in kindness. The School Strike for Climate is a network of inclusive, nonviolent, ambitious people. As I am trying to bring climate action and reduce single-use plastic in my church, it has been hard. There are Christians who avoid the movement for political reasons, because of spiritual ideas, or from being scared or maybe even having a dislike toward youth. Despite this, kindness has helped me get through the challenging people, which is rooted in my faith.

Many Christian churches are coming out to show their support for the climate strike on September 20, and encouraging high schools to let students attend. This is a huge step forward, but this goes beyond us high school students. We need more than just your support; we need your action. Christian or not, the climate crisis is happening.

The Australian prime minister, Scott Morrison, has been very clear in his disapproval of the strike. "More learning and less activism," he said.

It just so happens that Australia's last four prime ministers are Christian. Christianity indicates principles of environmental stewardship in that God calls us to be caretakers of His creation. But in my opinion there has been an obvious lack of climate action within our Australian government.

Many Christians are well-meaning when they provide "thoughts and prayers" on many issues; prayers, however, won't solve the climate crisis. There are no jobs on a dead planet, and neither will there be churches. ♣



IN MYANMAR, ADRA ASSISTS THOSE AFFECTED BY ONGOING INTERNAL CONFLICTS. ADRA in Canada has played a significant role in caring for Myanmar's internally displaced people (IDPs). With funds from supporters and the government of Canada, ADRA is working in the Baptist IDP camps. ADRA has set up water and sanitation systems, education programs, and a voucher system, for which some of the most vulnerable IDPs receive a small amount of cash each month to help with family expenses.



MELTING ICELAND, A NEW APPROACH TO MISSION. A team of young adults representing Generation Youth for Christ (GYC) recently traveled to Iceland to reach as many residents as possible by praying for them, one person at a time. Iceland is a secular country of approximately 360,000 people, where only a few hundred are connected to the Adventist Church. According to attendees, the group of 50 reached more than half the population of the country during the 10-day trip.



ADVENTIST YOUTH CONGRESS DRAWS 2,000 PEOPLE IN CAMEROON. A Seventh-day Adventist youth congress in Cameroon recently drew 2,000 people in Nanga Eboko. It was the first-ever national event for Adventist young people, organizers said. The opening ceremony took place in the main square of the town of 30,000 located about 100 miles (160 kilometers) from the capital city of Yaounde. Nanga Eboko is considered the cradle of Adventist mission work in Central Africa, which began in 1926.



SYDNEY ADVENTIST HOSPITAL APP WINS PRESTIGIOUS AWARD.

Sydney Adventist Hospital in Australia, commonly known as the San, has won a prestigious award for creating an app that puts patient health information at their doctor's fingertips. The SanCare mobile app won the Health Informatics Society of Australia (HISA) Enterprise Achievement Award 2019 for outstanding achievement. The app gives doctors real-time access to patients' records, enabling them to see up-to-the-minute vital signs, X-rays, scans, and test results, and communicate with nursing staff and extended-care services.



OSHKOSH CAMPOREE OVERSTOCK BENEFITS MINISTRIES, COMMUNITIES.

Attendees to the International Oshkosh Pathfinder Camporee donated food and reusable camping equipment at the end of the event to the homeless ministry of the nearby Green Bay Adventist Church. Pathfinders donated camp chairs, tables, stoves, airbeds, and tarpaulins, including 32 sleeping bags, 18 mats, 10 small tents, and seven tarpaulins, along with several backpacks. Food items included canned goods, rice, dried beans, peanut butter, juice boxes, and dry cereal.



BRAZILIAN STATE ADDS "BREAKING THE SILENCE DAY" TO ITS OFFICIAL CALENDAR.

Eduardo Leite, governor of the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul, signed a bill creating a "Breaking the Silence Day" that now will be included in the state's official annual calendar. The signing event took place at Piratini Palace, the seat of the state government, on September 4, 2019. As a result of the bill, the fourth Saturday in August every year will be officially marked by actions promoted by the Seventh-day Adventist Church to combat domestic violence and sexual abuse.



NEW CENTER FOR HEALTHY LIFESTYLE BEARS THE ADVENTIST IMPRINT IN BELARUS.

Residents of Brest, Belarus, recently attended the Sport for All festival and official inauguration of the first Inclusive Center for the Promotion of a Healthy Lifestyle in Belarus. The event allowed guests to learn how to take better care of their bodies. The center, which is free for residents, boasts courts for various sports and games, including facilities for people with special needs. Children can use a special section with games and a playground in the open air.

Israel's prophets and their message

BY GERALD A. KLINGBEIL

Go to YouTube, type in the name of any sport equipment manufacturer, and watch one of the thousands of ads associated with that brand. Every ad tells a story, and every story has a hero—usually well-known sports stars who signed multimillion-dollar advertising contracts to promote the brand. These spokespersons tell us of “victory” or “endurance” or “success.” When they look into the camera, sweat dripping and exhaustion palpable, they suggest that, we too, may be able to succeed.

Prophets in Scripture were spokespersons too. They did not speak on their own behalf. They spoke on God’s behalf and communicated His words. They did not have office hours. Their personal lives were often intricately entwined with their ministry.

They did not sign multimillion-dollar advertising contracts for their troubles.

Lip-syncing

WHEN GOD SPEAKS

The most common Hebrew term used to describe a prophet is *nabi'*. The word can be used as a noun (“prophet”) or as a verb (“to prophesy”). Abraham is described as a *nabi'* in Genesis 20:7. We don’t know if Abraham ever made any public pronouncements about the future—though he was privy to God’s perspective when YHWH told him about the sojourn of his descendants and their servitude that would last 400 years (Gen. 15:13). He communicated God’s blessings to people surrounding him and interceded on their behalf (Gen. 18:16-33; 20:17). Scholars have repeatedly debated the exact meaning of the term underlying *nabi'* and have concluded that it has both an active as well as a passive meaning.

The active meaning describes the task of a prophet: one who calls out on behalf of someone else. The passive meaning emphasizes the specific calling of a prophet: one who has been called or appointed. Both elements are key to understanding the ministry of biblical prophets. Isaiah’s awe-inspiring call experience offers a

good example of this latter aspect of prophetic ministry (cf. Isa. 6). One could not study to be a prophet and speak on God's behalf.¹ No one became a prophet because their father had been a prophet. God called—and the prophet responded.

Often God's call caused trepidation, consternation, and a strong sense of incompetence. Jeremiah hears God's call, but feels inadequate, too young, and out of his depth (Jer. 1:6). God insists, as He had insisted again and again for others—and then He empowers (verses 7-10). God's call always comes with His empowerment.

The passive meaning emphasizes the prophetic message: prophets speak on God's behalf—not in their own name (Ex. 7:1; Num. 12:1-8). They don't follow their own agendas—even though some bibli-

a dream (Dan. 1:17; 2:19; Zech. 1:8). An Egyptian pharaoh (Gen. 41:1-8) and a Babylonian king (Dan. 2, 4) both were recipients of prophetic dreams. God can use anyone (including an abused donkey, cf. Num. 22:28) to reveal His will to a world urgently needing to hear from Him. In all cases, prophets communicated God's will to those listening (the original audience) and those reading (later generations of readers, including us today).

ON ALL CHANNELS

Not all prophets wrote down their messages, though most seem to have preached. Some wrote books (or, better, scrolls [cf. Jer. 36:1, 2]), while others did not. We know very little about the prophet Ahijah, who ministered during the reign

for God

cal prophets seemed to forget this now and again. Balaam's attraction to cash and honors led to his engagement by the Moabite king Balak. The prophet for hire was called to curse the people of Israel on their way to the Promised Land (Num. 22-24). Jonah's warped attitude to divine grace and compassion relating to non-Israelites (see Jonah 4:2) led him to try to flee "from the presence of the Lord" (Jonah 1:3, NKJV). We wonder about the logic behind this. How can one flee from the Creator of the world, who holds everything in His hands? Clearly prophets, like most of us, suffered now and again from a lack of logic and a distorted sense of reality.

Biblical prophets received God's revelation in many ways. Sometimes God spoke directly to them (Num. 12:6-8; Deut. 18:18); sometimes He revealed His will through a vision (Isa. 1:1; Jer. 1:11-19) or

of Jeroboam I in Israel (1 Kings 11:29). He appears several times at crucial moments, but then disappears from sight.

Some prophets wrote books, even though those books were never included in the biblical canon. The books of Nathan the prophet or Gad the seer are not part of our Bible (1 Chron. 29:29). Both Nathan and Gad were bona fide prophets during the reign of King David. God obviously knew that their writings would not be needed later on to communicate concisely and comprehensively His plan of salvation.

All prophets, however, communicated with everything they had. Hosea is told by God to marry "a wife of harlotry . . . , for the land has committed great harlotry" (Hosea 1:2, NKJV). Scholars have wondered what exactly that means. It is clear that

God used Hosea's love life and family relations as visible object lessons to communicate His love and care for His people.

Media savviness and dramatic enactments are not something that is unique to the twenty-first century. When the prophet Ahijah meets Jeroboam, the future king of the northern kingdom, he tears a perfectly good garment into 12 pieces and hands Jeroboam 10 of them (1 Kings 11:29-40). That's quite an entrance. Translation: *God is giving you the 10 northern tribes as a kingdom. Walk in God's ways; keep His statutes and His commandments.* Consider this a sermon illustration that cannot easily be forgotten.

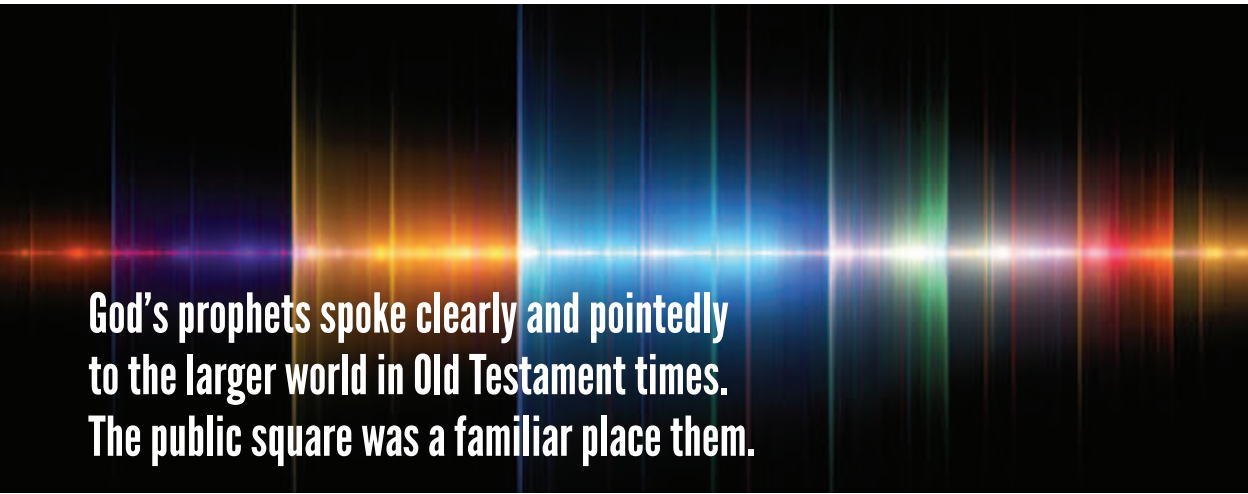
The prophet Elisha commands King Joash of Israel to shoot arrows out of a window, and con-

vineyards shall be possessed again in this land" (verse 15, NKJV) was His message to those willing to listen. Exile would not be the last word.

Many more examples could be added here. Consider Ezekiel's miniature clay city portraying Jerusalem surrounded by siege ramps and battering rams—used as a sign for God's people to live in God's reality (Eze. 4:1-3). All these signs and activities were meant to communicate in ways that were meaningful and relevant to an audience that needed to hear a word from the Lord but were not always ready to actually listen. Prophets were a crucial part of God's media strategy.

THE PROPHETIC VOICE

Old Testament prophets were not crazy



God's prophets spoke clearly and pointedly to the larger world in Old Testament times. The public square was a familiar place them.

nects this with a message promising Israel's victory over the Arameans (2 Kings 13:14-19). Isaiah walks three years barefoot and without outer garments through Jerusalem because God told him to do so. It was an object lesson of judgment against Egypt and Ethiopia (Isa. 20:1-6). Imagine seeing that half-naked prophet making his way through the capital city, day after day!

Following God's explicit command, Jeremiah wore a yoke, pointing to Judah's coming captivity (Jer. 27:1, 2). He also bought the field of a relative in his hometown of Anathoth during the final siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 32:1-12). At that moment Anathoth had already been occupied by Babylonian forces. Who would buy property that they could not possess? God wanted to send a powerful message of hope: "Houses and fields and

women,³ and men, who walking around half naked, and playing with miniature siege models, or carrying yokes around town. Unlike other ancient Near Eastern prophets of the surrounding cultures, they also were not financed (and controlled) by the monarchs of Israel or Judah. While some addressed kings and courts, they spoke first and foremost to God's people—and the larger world surrounding them. Let's examine five aspects of their message.

1. Old Testament Prophets Engaged the World

Scholars have noted that about 15 percent of the content of Old Testament prophetic books was directed to the nations surrounding Judah and Israel.⁴ Amos' strong denunciation of Edom's pitiless persecution of "his brother" (i.e., Israel) in

Amos 1:11, 12 serves as a good illustration that God's justice was not limited to Israel. God takes note of abuse—any abuse, for as the Creator of the universe, His principles of justice are always valid and don't depend on a particular cultural context. God takes note when a child cries in pain. God remembers physical or moral atrocities. God's prophets spoke clearly and pointedly to the larger world in Old Testament times. The public square was a familiar place for them.

2. Old Testament Prophets Engaged God's Covenant People About Their Ethical Conduct

God called prophets to remind His people that justice and mercy are central parts of His law. "Proclaim in the palaces at Ashdod," says Amos,

they break all restraint, with bloodshed upon bloodshed" (Hosea 4:1, 2, NKJV). This is public courtroom language. God brings a charge against His people, based on His covenant law, i.e., the Ten Commandments. The list of infractions can be checked off ("swearing, lying, killing, stealing, committing adultery"), resulting in the final summary: "They break all restraint." Prophets, often at great risk to their own lives, spoke uncomfortable truths.

3. Old Testament Prophets Unmasked Religious Formalism

Prophets consistently critiqued the *senseless* performance of sanctuary ritual. Religious activity without heart transformation is useless and counter to God's purpose for His people. Here

"and in the palaces in the land of Egypt, and say: 'Assemble on the mountains of Samaria; see great tumults in her midst, and the oppressed within her. For they do not know to do right,' says the Lord, 'who store up violence and robbery in their palaces'" (Amos 3:9, 10, NKJV).

Nations neighboring Israel are called to witness the social abuse and oppression that can be seen in God's people. "*They do not know to do right*" is God's verdict. It's not an intellectual problem. It's a problem of action and right-doing.

Hosea offers a resounding indictment of God's people: "Hear the word of the Lord, you children of Israel, for the Lord brings a charge against the inhabitants of the land: 'There is no truth or mercy or knowledge of God in the land. By swearing and lying, killing and stealing and committing adultery,

are two well-known examples.

"For I desire mercy and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings" (Hosea 6:6, NKJV). Hosea puts sacrifices, ordained by God in His law, in juxtaposition to covenant mercy (or *khese*d, a key term of biblical theology). Outward piety involving costly sacrifices can never replace the internalization of the underlying principles and concepts expressed by the sacrifices.

Amos offers a second example: "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I do not savor your sacred assemblies. Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them, nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings. Take away from Me the noise of your songs, for I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments. But let justice run down like water, and

righteousness like a mighty stream” (Amos 5:21-24, NKJV). Religious forms without justice and righteousness will not do. In fact, God “hates” them, for they ultimately function as inoculations against heart transformation.

4. Old Testament Prophets Stood in the Breach

Moses, the prototype of Old Testament prophets, interceded again and again for Israel (Ex. 32:11-14; Num. 11:2; 12:13; 14:11-19). Likewise, Amos interceded twice when confronted with God’s judgment against Israel (Amos 7:1-6). Intercession shows the heart of a person. Intercession points beyond us and covers the world in grace. Intercession echoes divine care. When Israel’s prophets interceded on behalf of others, they

65 and 66 offer more details of this hope-filled messianic kingdom: an earth made new; a people restored; a hope revived. “It shall come to pass,” says the Lord, “that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear” (Isa. 65:24, NKJV).

Old Testament prophets were called to speak on God’s behalf—to the world surrounding them, to God’s people and their leadership. They spoke on God’s behalf, using imagery and words that could be understood by their audiences. They reminded God’s people that pious religious forms without heart transformation were empty and useless. They unabashedly spoke about ethical living and the close connection between God’s law and the way we live. Often they became intercessors, pleading



Prophets, often at great risk to their own lives, spoke uncomfortable truths.

anticipated the great Intercessor who prayed for His disciples in His darkest hour (John 17:6-26).

5. Old Testament Prophets Shared Hope

While judgment figures prominently in most Old Testament prophetic books, hope is never far away. “On that day,” writes Amos at the end of his book, “I [God] will raise up the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, and repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old. . . . I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; they shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them” (Amos 9:11-14, NKJV).

Beyond judgment there is a future. God’s future is bigger and better than can be imagined. Isaiah

to God on behalf of the people. They always pointed to the great hope that has driven generations of God’s children to move forward by faith. ♣

¹ The schools of the prophets seem to have been communities surrounding prophets who received education and spiritual orientation, perhaps similar to the disciples in the New Testament (cf. 2 Kings 4:1-6; 6:1-4). Ellen G. White (*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students* [Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1913], pp. 281, 282) emphasizes the idea that these schools focused on education “to impart knowledge of a high order.”

² 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.

³ The prophetic gift was not exclusively given to men. Consider Miriam [Ex. 15:20]; Deborah [Judges 4, 5]; Huldah [2 Kings 22:14], etc.

⁴ Paul R. Raabe, “Why Prophetic Oracles Against the Nations?” in *Fortunate the Eyes That See: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Astrid B. Beck et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), pp. 236-257.

Gerald A. Klingbeil serves as associate editor of *Adventist Review*.

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What was wrong with yesterday?

LAEL CAESAR

PULL QUOTE Three different groups emerged from the Disappointment. What's wrong with Old Testament prophecy? Nothing! In fact, it's because prophecy is so good that God gives us more of it in the New Testament. It is His heart to give good and perfect gifts (James 1:17).

INTRODUCING NEW TESTAMENT PROPHECY

For many faithful Bible students, prophets and prophecy are somewhat more strongly associated with the Old Testament than with the New Testament.¹ But the consistent listing of the gift of prophecy among the church's spiritual endowments helps us to see it as no less prized in the New Testament church than it was with Old Testament Israel (1 Cor. 12:7-11, noting verse 10). The New Testament church clearly thought that prophecy was a good thing. While comparative lists of spiritual gifts are not a feature of Old Testament Scripture, the location of "prophecy" high up on New Testament lists of spiritual gifts emphasizes the great esteem it enjoyed in the early church; in an ordinal list, prophets are named second to apostles (verse 28); elsewhere, prophecy heads the list in Romans 12:6-8, and is second in Ephesians 4:11.

Prophecy works in the New Testament in the same way that it does in the Old Testament, if we judge by the Bible's earliest definitions of prophetic function. Enoch, seven generations from the first man, Adam, is the earliest human to receive the identification of "prophet," though we



must credit the New Testament with awarding the honorific (Jude 14, 15). Next labeled in historical lineage, Abraham is so named by God Himself (Gen. 20:7), but without any clear articulation of what prophets do.

The earliest explicit introductions to, and depictions of, a prophet's work come from Moses as he relates to God's summons to discharge a specific assignment. God's effort to extract him from Midian's desert and return him to service in Egypt as liberator of His people opens up the window to what prophecy is and what prophets do: the God who "is a consuming fire" (Deut. 4:24; Heb. 12:29) confronts Moses with the miraculous spectacle of fire and no consuming (Ex. 3:1-3).

However startling that would have appeared, it seems that God would also have us notice something else. There is present another phenomenon



that He would have us recall perhaps even more clearly: not sight, but sound—the sound of words, of echoing words. Prophecy, as definable from this early instance, is words that are echoed. Echoes are what God will not let us forget.

In fact, echoing God may be the supreme prophetic function: Moses will tell Aaron what to say (“put words in his mouth”) once God has told Moses what needs to be said. Aaron will then relay Moses’ words from God to the people of Israel, or whomever God has prepared them for. As God Himself explained to Moses: “I will help both of you speak. . . . He [Aaron] will speak to the people for you [Moses], and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him” (Ex. 4:15, 16). What we may call the “prophetic proclamation chain” exhibits a specificity that God deems necessary: Moses will echo God, and Aaron will echo Moses.

Prophets of New Testament times understood and celebrated this specificity just as well as their Old Testament antecedents. The early articulation, “The Lord says thus,” which becomes predictably familiar with Old Testament respondents to God’s call into prophetic service,² is spoken with no less authoritativeness among New Testament prophets, because they know that their commissioning God means for His spokespersons to utter “His words”—a phrase that we shall clarify—to their audience, rather than words born of their personal genius or some other inspiration.

In Tyre Paul hears from disciples “through the Spirit” that he is not to go to Jerusalem (Acts 21:4). Even if the disciples are not labeled prophets, we are told that it is the Spirit who is the authority of their utterance, the same Spirit who inspires all prophetic utterance (2 Peter 1:21). Agabus is

labeled, and he says, "Thus says the Holy Spirit" (verse 11, NKJV).³ Prophecy was authoritative in New Testament times because it conformed to the same divinely imposed requirements of Old Testament times for qualifying as authentic.

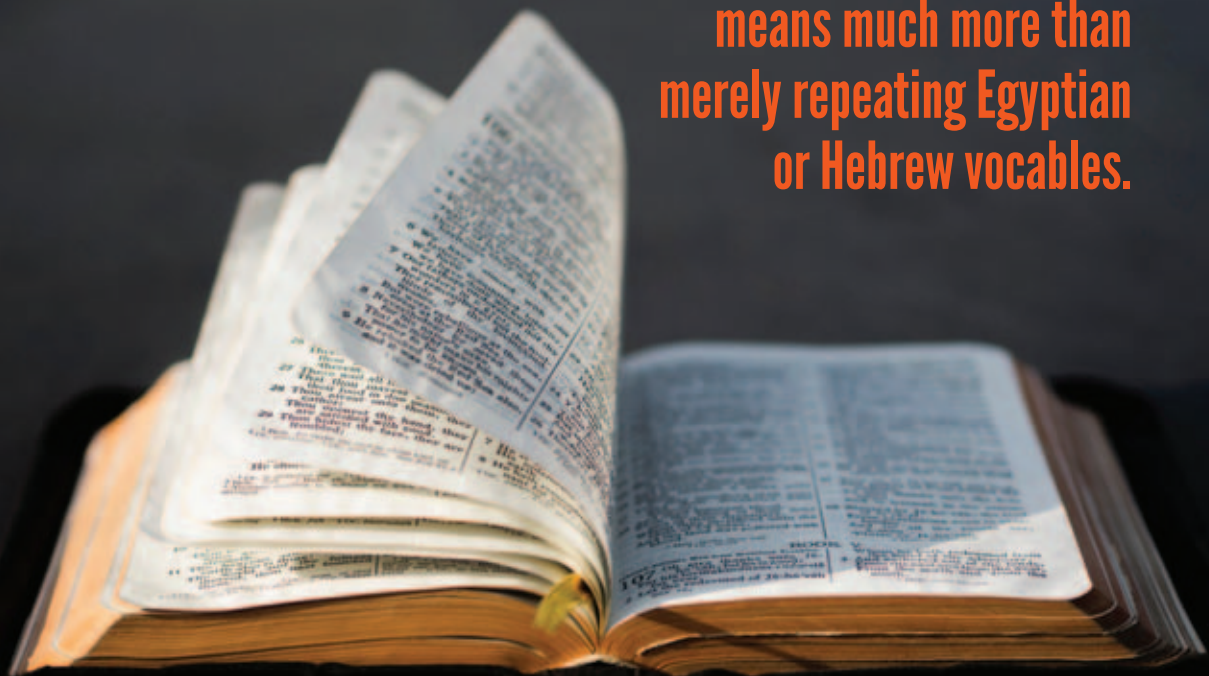
MORE THAN MERE MYSTERIOUS VOCABLES

At the same time, and importantly so, keeping God's words echoing means much more than merely repeating Egyptian or Hebrew vocables Moses may have heard God utter. God's most important Old Testament declaration, Exodus 20:1-17,⁴ gives good illustration of this truth. The Ten Commandments are twice identified as "10 words,"⁵ though the fourth of the 10 alone contains either 35 or 56 words, according to two different and well-established methods of counting Hebrew words. The phrase "10 words" allows us to clarify what God means by "His words." For it is surely not God's intent that we haggle over consonants and vowels, phonemes and syllables, numerical or numerical traditions. It is His determination that we strive to fathom and apply the particular ideas communicated in His commands.

In the case of the Ten Commandments He wants us to understand and cooperate with Him on ideas about idolatry and blasphemy, respect and obedience, greed and selflessness. The prophetic proclamation chain is no meaningless ritual echoing of sounds. It is meaningful communication of ideas from God to human audiences. It is getting the message out, whether by word or by drama: Old Testament Jeremiah buries and later digs up a linen waistband (Jer. 13:1-11) to dramatize God's message against the pride of Judah and Jerusalem; New Testament Agabus binds himself with a belt (Acts 21:11) to dramatize his prophecy that Paul will be arrested in Jerusalem.

New Testament prophecy, like its Old Testament antecedent, communicates content, data from heaven, be it on contemporary issues or events in the near or distant future: Moses warned Egypt's pharaoh of imminent judgment;⁶ Peter warns his contemporaries, and generations since, of final judgment (2 Peter 3:10). Old Testament prophetic voices demanded moral living (Isa. 55:1-3; Micah 6:8); New Testament prophets also declare God's will for His people's everyday living (Rom. 12:9-21; 2 Peter 3:11).

**Keeping God's words echoing
means much more than
merely repeating Egyptian
or Hebrew vocables.**



FURTHER PURPOSES OF NEW TESTAMENT PROPHECY

Often enough, New Testament prophecy takes up (echoes) an issue already addressed in the Old Testament, either in reiteration, expansion, or fulfillment of its Old Testament predictions: Every chapter of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, the final New Testament book, is better understood through studying the Old Testament book of Daniel: the book of Revelation connects to and significantly expands upon Daniel's explanations of world history, and notably, his end-of-time sanctuary and judgment message.⁷

At other times, a New Testament prophetic statement highlights the typical function of a historical Old Testament event—Noah's times and the days of Sodom and Gomorrah are types of the end-times (Matt. 24:37-39; Luke 17:26-37). Sheer familiarity with the scope of Jesus' teachings may keep secular minds and even believers from realizing how consummately prophetic He is. His statements about His future return to earth include brief parables, longer sermons, responses to hostile queries about His kingdom or royalty, or sympathetic questions inspired by admiration of Herod's temple,⁸ with the varied literary genres involved not mutually exclusive.

Apart from these climactic presentations, His predictions involve a variety of grand happenings treated tersely and unpretentiously: Nathanael will see greater things than he has so far (John 1:50, 51); the centurion will find his servant healed when he gets home (Matt. 8:13); some of the disciples will soon experience a glimpse of the glory of His future kingdom (Matt. 16:28; Mark 9:1; Luke 9:27); the temple and the city of Jerusalem will fall (Matt. 24:2; Luke 21:20-24); He will be glorified as a result of Lazarus' illness (John 11:1-4); Lazarus will come back from the grave (verse 23); He [Jesus] will give His followers eternal life (John 6:27); believers in Him will never hunger, thirst, or die (John 4:14; 6:35, 50, 51; 11:25, 26); they will go free in the judgment (John 3:14-18); He will resurrect His followers at the end of the age (John 6:40, 44); there will actually be two resurrections at the end of the age, one for life and one for punishment (John 5:28, 29); His enemies will eventually arrest Him (Luke 13:31-33); they will arrest Him today—the hour “has come” (John 16:32); His disciples will all be undone (“offended”) that night (Matt. 26:31; Mark 14:27; Luke 13:27); one of His disciples will prove

a traitor (John 6:70, 71; 13:21, 26); Peter will deny Him (John 13:38); He [Jesus] will be crucified (John 12:32, 33); He will die for the sake of His followers (John 6:51; 10:11-18); He will spend three days and nights “in the heart of the earth” (Matt. 12:40); He will raise Himself from the grave (John 2:19); He will return to heaven (John 7:33, 34); people will see it (John 6:62); He will be gone only for a little while (John 16:17-23); His followers will be hated (Luke 21:17), maltreated (Matt. 23:34; Luke 21:12), even martyred (Luke 11:49; John 16:2-4); He and the Father will send the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 15:26); the Spirit will convict people of their guilt and lead them to truth (John 16:8-15); some urban dwellers (from Bethsaida, Capernaum) will fare worse than others (from Sodom and Gomorrah, Tyre and Sidon) in the final judgment (John 10:14, 15; 11:21-24)—a monumentally incredible remark if by any being but God Himself.

PROPHECY BEYOND BIBLE TIMES

After Jesus' return to heaven, the Holy Spirit continued selecting people to be prophets, a job that is His unique responsibility, depending on spiritual rather than technical or academic considerations. God's Word then echoes through the prophets' ministry: they speak as He moves them (2 Peter 1:21). As in the Old Testament, some of them produced Bible books—the four Gospel writers, Peter and Paul, etc. Others, such as Agabus and the evangelist Philip's daughters (Acts 21:8-10) did not. And because prophetic qualifications are wholly a divine determination, Christians throughout history have always needed to depend on God's guidance in deciding whether or not to accept a given individual's prophetic claims.

Through the centuries individuals have claimed to possess the prophetic gift, and followers of Jesus have had to determine the validity of their claim. The Bible gives sound instruction on how this is to be done: the witness of true prophets will be in accordance with God's law and with the work of earlier prophets of God (Isa. 8:20; Rev. 19:10). Even accurate predictions of future events do not count if a prophet's teaching contradicts the principles of God's law (Deut. 13:1-5). Jesus warned of the critical role of false prophets in Satan's commitment to deceiving as many as possible (Matt. 24:5, 11).

Through the centuries various men and women from Asia to America have claimed the gift:

Three different groups emerged from the Disappointment.

Montanus, as well as Priscilla and Maximilla, in the second century after Christ; Mary Baker Eddy and Edgar Cayce in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the United States. Second-century Montanus believed that the church's access to spiritual gifts is to be continuous through time. Though his case continued to be debated for centuries after his time, he is to be admired for his yearning after the simple godliness and spiritual anointing of the Apostolic Era.

That yearning for holiness was a character trait of a nineteenth-century child, Ellen Gould White (née Harmon), from the time she was 11 years old. With others who were many years older, White passed through what came to be known as the Great Disappointment of October 22, 1844: on that day Bible students in many parts of the world expected Jesus to return to earth. When He did not appear, they were profoundly disappointed.

In the New England region of the United States three different groups emerged from the Disappointment: one group consisted of people who rejected the Bible as a source of reliable predictions; a second group persistently set new dates for Jesus' return, each one passing unceremoniously; a third group reviewed the biblical evidence to determine where they had blundered in interpretation. Continued study clarified their error and deepened their conviction on the reliability of Jesus and of God's Word. It also led them to other significant Bible truths: death as a completely unconscious state; the second and investigative phase of God's salvation program, equivalent to the once yearly, Day of Atonement rituals connected with the Most Holy segment of the sanctuary service. That new phase of God's thoroughly organized program involves a review of cases, an "examination of character, of determining who are prepared for the kingdom of God."⁹

On August 30, 1846, Ellen married James White. Along with retired sea captain Joseph Bates, the Whites are recognized as the principal nineteenth-century founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Over a period of almost 70 years, from 1844 until her death in 1915 at the age of 87, White received more than 2,000 visions and produced more than 100,000 written pages of work.

The development of the Adventist Church is inextricably bound up with her ministry. Her individual, familial, and personal life as woman, wife, and mother; her professional life as author, gospel preacher, educator, Bible student, and theological thinker; her agitation for social justice, Christian education, temperance, and, more broadly, the practical necessity and spiritual profits of healthful living: all of these, through the testimony of her peers and the study of her writings, continue to be available for public and academic scrutiny by anyone interested in investigating the claim that she represents a nineteenth- to twentieth-century manifestation of the spiritual gift of prophecy. Adventists believe that her life and body of work amply validate the New Testament prediction that spiritual gifts, prophecy included, will be present to work in Christ's church "until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).

That day is near. Praise God. 

¹ On Old Testament prophecy see pages 18-21 of this issue: Gerald Klingbeil, "Lip-syncing for God: Israel's Prophets and Their Message."

² Nine times from Moses between chapters 4 and 11; near interminably thereafter, through Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. Even the mighty Elijah, who wrote no biblical book, knew the strength of that oracular introduction, as demonstrated in the surprise letter Jehoram discovered that Elijah had left behind for him (2 Chron. 21:12).

³ 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.

⁴ As distinct from the rest of the Holy Scriptures, "the Ten Commandments were spoken by God Himself, and were written by His own hand. They are of divine, and not of human composition" (Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* [Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911], pp. v, vi).

⁵ Deuteronomy 4:13; 10:4: 'aseter haddevarim, literally, "the ten words."

⁶ Ex. 8:1-7, 20-24; 9:1-7; 10:3-6, 12-15; 11:4-10; 12:29.

⁷ Key portions of the book of Daniel on world history beyond his own time, as well as the doctrine of the heavenly sanctuary and investigative judgment include 2:31-45; 7:1-27; 8:3-26; 9:20-27; 11; 12.

⁸ Matthew 13, particularly verses 36-43; 24; 25; 26:63, 64; Luke 17:20-37; John 13:31-16:33

⁹ E. G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 428.

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REUNIONS

If you ever wonder about the emotional state of humanity, visit the airport baggage claim area to view tangible proof that human beings share deep emotions for one another. An observer needs only see, after the plane arrives, passengers at the gate greeted by friends, family, loved ones, all with emotional reunions. *Nothing compares to the genuine joy of running into the arms of my family after being away so long.*

I think on the definition of “reunion” just as I watch passengers begin to enter the baggage claim area.

“Is this seat taken?” asks an unfamiliar voice. An older couple stands before me, the gentleman holding a bouquet of flowers. They sit, quietly, holding hands. He taps his foot nervously. I casually introduce myself. The couple, Paul and Kathy, are very kind and very uncomfortable. I try to lighten the mood by telling them I am picking up my father, a rare treat for me, since he often leaves his car at the airport when he travels.

Just then Kathy hides her face in Paul’s shoulder and begins to sob. *Obviously my story sounded happier in my head than when I delivered it.*

“We are here to pick up family too, our daughter,” says Paul. “At least we hope so.”

Over the next hour I “meet” their daughter, Maggie. Five years ago Maggie left Texas and traveled to the East Coast to attend university. After attending one semester, Maggie dropped out. Eventually Maggie stopped calling home. Paul and Kathy alerted authorities, filed a missing person’s report, only to discover that their daughter had been living on the streets for the past several years.

“We are Christians,” says Kathy. “So we

made contact with our sister church in that city, sent them her picture, and asked for help.” And they received it. A parishioner at the church sent them a photograph of Maggie. Kathy immediately sent the parishioner a plane ticket with a simple note: “Get this to her.”

They waited three months. I imagine Kathy going through her mailbox each day, checking e-mail, checking “junk mail” in the e-mail box, picking up every phone call, just in case.

Today they are sitting at the airport by faith. Paul takes a piece of paper out of his shirt pocket, the e-mail that announces the time of Maggie’s arrival. It’s been folded, opened, folded again, soft to the touch from wear and possibly from tears.

Time passes, and we talk as if we are old acquaintances. Somehow sharing about Maggie has calmed their spirits. Paul says the experience has cost them several friends at church.

The term “prodigal daughter” has been hurtful to them, even though Paul believes that all of us have been in that role at some point in our lives.

As the announcement of the arrival of both flights we are waiting for is made, Paul, Kathy, and I huddle in prayer. There in baggage claim A4, a prayer is offered for safety, grace, mercy, kindness, forgiveness, and peace.

Fifteen minutes later my father and I walk toward the airport exit. There they are: Paul and Kathy sitting in airport chairs, Maggie kneeling in front of them, weeping.

Heavenly Father, she is home. May this reunion, shaped by Your hands, be blessed. 🙏

Dixil Rodríguez, a university professor and hospital chaplain, lives in Texas.



**TIME PASSES,
AND WE TALK AS IF
WE ARE OLD
ACQUAINTANCES.**



SPIRIT-WOKE ADVENTISM

An urgent plea for a prophetic church to reclaim the Spirit of prophecy

RANDY MAXWELL

The other day I had one of those uncomfortable conversations we'd all rather avoid. A member had to be confronted about behavior unbecoming a Christian, and because I'm the pastor (and no one else volunteered!) it was me, me, me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer. Kind of like now.

Is the church still prophetic? The question is uncomfortable. And to be honest, I'm not sure that it's even the right question. One hundred seventy-five years after the disappointment of 1844, is ours still a prophetic movement? (Any volunteers? No? Pray for me.)

ANOTHER LOOK AT PROPHECY

Yes, I believe the Seventh-day Adventist Church is still a prophetic movement. We were birthed in prophecy, given a prophetic message, and guided by the gift of prophecy.

On the other hand, the movement—at least in North America and in other developed nations—seems to be missing its *move*. Without *movement* you don't go anywhere. Have we replaced "*move*" with "*establish*"? Can a prophetic *establishment* influence society the way a *movement* can?

Being prophetic is more than presenting Daniel and Revelation seminars. (Nobody does it better, but fewer ears are listening.)

Being prophetic is more than vegetarianism. (Now that Burger King and others have jumped on the plant-based meat substitute gravy train, we're just not that special anymore.)

Being prophetic is more than going to church on Saturday. (The nondenominational church

down the block probably has a parking lot that's fuller than yours *on Sabbath!*)

Being prophetic means being "woke," a colloquial term meaning "actively aware of systemic injustices and prejudices, especially those related to civil and human rights." Because our God cares about social justice, being prophetic means that we speak into and against the injustices of our society. You can't be a true Sabbathkeeper without offering rest, not merely from servile labor, but from the injustices described in Isaiah 58 (see verses 6-14).

Being woke, like being prophetic, is to be as the sons of Issachar, "men who *understood the times* and knew what Israel should do" (1 Chron. 12:32). Do we know what time it is, and what we are to do?

I'm appealing for a Spirit-woke Adventism today. In light of the #MeToo, #TimesUp, and #BlackLivesMatter movements, can we recognize that #HolySpiritMatters? Do we realize that #Time's(nearly)up on Planet Earth and we can't play church anymore? Can we admit that it's #MeToo, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer?

Our problem is not that we're not "Adventist enough," as some accuse. It's that we're not "Spirit-woke" enough. A. W. Tozer wrote: "If the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the church today, 95 percent of what we do would go on and no one would know the difference. If the Holy Spirit had been withdrawn from the New Testament church, 95 percent of what they did would stop, and everybody would know the difference." Excuse me, but I think our lack of Spirit-wokeness is showing.

Speaking with the voice of a prophet, Ellen

Our model for ministry is Acts 2. Our conviction is to stop coming to church and start being the church.

White wrote: “Wherever the need of the Holy Spirit is a matter little thought of, there is seen spiritual drought, spiritual darkness, spiritual declension and death. Whenever minor matters occupy the attention, the divine power which is necessary for the growth and prosperity of the church, and which would bring all other blessings in its train, is lacking, though offered in infinite plenitude.”¹

ACCOUNTABILITY AND ACTION

Awareness and *acknowledging* the problem is a start, but it’s not enough. There must be *accountability* and *action*. The Adventist Church will not fulfill its prophetic role without being woke to the Holy Spirit and the urgent, unrivaled need for revival. “To seek this should be our first work.”²

A prophetic church is accountable for being filled with the *Spirit* of prophecy (see Rev. 19:10). Not the books, but the Author. Not only Ellen White, but the Holy Spirit who inspired her. The Holy Spirit was sent to bear testimony to Jesus (John 15:26). He brings the life of Jesus to us, and that life is the light of humanity. Without that life all we have is beasts without blessing; vegans without victory; programs without power; and commandments without the character of Christ.

The Lord and the world have the right to rebuke us saying, “How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god!” (Jonah 1:6). That’s the call to action!

A prophetic church must be a praying church, or it’s a pathetic church. If we are to use our collective (and prophetic) voice to influence society, we have to talk with God first before we say anything to anybody else. Again, the prophet wrote: “A revival need be expected only in answer to prayer.”³

That’s not news, right? It’s taken for granted that we pray. And that’s the problem: It’s taken for granted—assumed.

I sat through a presentation on church revitalization that featured four “must-haves.” Prayer wasn’t among the four. It was assumed. Of course we pray! But prefix and suffix praying at the beginning and ending of meetings won’t get us woke spiritually. I agree with Francis Chan: “If you can accomplish your church’s mission without daily passionate prayer, then your mission is insufficient, and your church is irrelevant.”⁴

MAKE IT REAL

In recent months I’ve been part of a growing united prayer movement among pastors that is marked by humility and an insatiable hunger for the Holy Spirit. I find myself on the phone nearly every night praying with colleagues from near and far, praying out of a desperate desire to break with the status quo and pursue an authentic walk with God. The praying is interchurch, anti-territorial, and united. The Holy Spirit is showing us that we are better together than in our individual silos. Our burden is revival. Our model for ministry is Acts 2. Our conviction is to stop coming to church and start being the church. Our method is united, corporate prayer.

Disappointed that there’s nothing new, clever, or high-tech here? “Let me tell you that the Lord will work in this last work in a manner very much out of the common order of things, and *in a way that will be contrary to any human planning*. . . . God will use ways and means by which it will be seen that He is taking the reins in His own hands. The workers will be *surprised by the simple means that He will use* to bring about and perfect His work of righteousness.”⁵

I love surprises. Jesus had a big one for His disciples on the day of Pentecost, and we surely need one now. It’s time for the Spirit to take the wheel and to reclaim the Spirit of prophecy. 🍀

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 50.

² Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958), book 1, p. 121.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Francis Chan, *Letters to the Church* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: David C. Cook, 2018), p. 62.

⁵ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1923), p. 300. (Italics supplied.)

Randy Maxwell, prayer ministries coordinator for the Washington Conference, pastors in Renton, Washington, and is the author of *If My People Pray* and *Boot Camp for the Last Days*.



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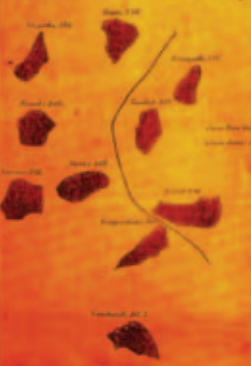
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A CHRONOLOGICAL CHART OF THE VISIONS OF DANIEL & JOHN.

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THE TEN KINGDOMS.



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BEYOND PROPHECY TO PROPHETIC VOICE

How we live expectantly

CHRIS BLAKE

Prophecy is surely beneficial in confirming God's overarching design. Yet could we be so focused on prophecy that we lose sight of that which stands directly before and within us? Is it possible to proclaim the mark of the beast more than the mark of the best? Should the 2,300-day prophecy supplant in urgency and importance the days and nights of struggle for people now?

To find answers to those questions, we must first name the practical difference between *prophecy* and *prophetic voice*.

Prophecy is settled dates on a calendar. Prophetic voice is our must-do list for this marvelous today.

Prophecy is declaration. Prophetic voice is application.

Prophecy is a record of vital signs following a physical exam. Prophetic voice is our lungs filling and emptying, heart squeezing and releasing, brain synapses firing and calming.

Prophecy is imminent, focusing on *when*. Prophetic voice is immanent, concentrating on *why* and *how*.

Prophecy is Daniel and Revelation. Prophetic voice is God's indwelling Spirit.

Prophecy provides assurance that God has been present throughout earth's chaotic history, and will, in the end, win. Prophetic voice supplies vivid hues, prompts, and purpose for living out our personal histories that will, in the end, resolve in the liberating love of Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus embraced both prophetic voice and prophecy. Quoting the prophet Isaiah, Jesus started His public ministry by announcing, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom to the

prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18, 19).

And He went beyond. At the conclusion of His earthly life, in the actual Lord's prayer of John 17, Jesus said to the Father, "As you sent me into the world, I have sent [My followers] into the world" (John 17:18).

RESPONSE ABILITY

The prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, and Micah spoke up for justice, peacemaking, and liberation. In every generation prophetic voices challenge power, wealth, and comfort, offering a microphone to the voiceless. At times this means speaking truth to power and pointing out systemic evils.

Conveying a prophetic voice, Ellen White wrote, "Ye will not give your voice or influence to any policy to enrich a few, to bring oppression and suffering to the poorer class of humanity."¹ Hélder Câmara famously remarked, "When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. But when I ask why the poor have no food, they say I am a Communist."

Whoa, whoa! Aren't you simply parroting the media's fixation on the latest headlined cause?

Well, actually, no. We're following biblical precedent and directives from the Redeemer. Imagine telling Jesus, "I don't want to be involved in helping those people, because it's a political thing."

Look into His sad eyes as He whispers, "Really? *That's* your reason? You must not have heard about My followers in the Netherlands who disobeyed laws and hid persecuted Jews. Or My followers in the United States who fought in nonviolent ways for civil rights. Or My followers in Poland who gathered to act out their prophetic voices and tore

“My followers use their privileges to protect and sustain the vulnerable.”

down an Iron Curtain. Today, across the planet, even at deep personal cost, My followers use their privileges to protect and sustain the vulnerable.”

What’s your response?

Jesus also observed, “The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light” (Luke 16:8, KJV). And: “You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don’t know how to interpret this present time?” (Luke 12:56).

After the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, Peter related a promise from God: “I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy” (Acts 2:17). Notice the promise says *all* people. This prophesying involves prophetic delivery that moves beyond foretelling to *forthtelling*—communicating with clarity and boldness why and how to love God and God’s creation, including our families, colleagues, oceans, forests, and bees.

Shane Claiborne comments, “New prophets are rising up who try to change the future, not just predict it.”² Following Peter’s words places us in our present time directly on the path of God’s activity.

Naturally, even beyond *telling* is *living out* with integrity. Specifically, we’re living out Jesus’ example. Our Master continually disturbed the comfortable and comforted the disturbed. So do we.

SEVEN WOES, EIGHT BLESSINGS

Using His prophetic voice, Jesus pronounced woes and blessings for His time. Here are some for our contemporary landscape, invoking beyond our *when* prophetic voices, to our *how* and *why*.

Woe to you when the enticements of materialism wrap like dripping seaweed around your soul.
Woe to you when fear reigns in your hearts through local and cable news reports and quiet desperation.

Woe to you when you concentrate on “Jesus is coming soon!” and miss “Jesus is here now.”

Woe to you when you focus more on what we avoid than on what we do and are.

Woe to you when you make a habit of witnessing human suffering created by injustice but do not speak out in love against it (see Eph. 4:15), when you default your godly power to discern and act.

Woe to you when your messages and sanctuaries are not filled with joy, for in God’s presence “is fulness of joy” (Ps. 16:11, KJV).

Woe to you when you take your eyes off Jesus and lose hope.

Blessed are you when you live out your marvelous todays with defiant optimism, uninfected by the epidemic depression and envy germinated in social media’s glow.

Blessed are you when you get angry and do not sin (see Eph. 4:26). May you never lose your anger against injustice, and may you ever do your balanced best to see beyond labels and to work toward lasting solutions.

Blessed are you when you focus on listening, realizing that all truth is God’s truth, wherever and in whomever it is found.

Blessed are you when people get infuriated with you for your inclusivity and impugn your motives and imply that you are a radical as they remain smug in distraction and resolute in bias, for so they did to the prophets and to Jesus and His disciples (see Matt. 5:11).

Blessed are you when you are a living, thinking, laughing sanctuary—a safe place for God and for God’s creation.

Blessed are you when the Holy Scriptures grip and goad you to live more fully, courageously, and purely. In doing so, you will share the gospel of salvation and will act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God (see Micah 6:8).

Blessed are you when you discover the supremacy of righteousness by love (see Matt. 22:36-40; John 13:34, 35; 1 Cor. 13; 2 Peter 1:5-7; 1 John 4:7-21).

Blessed are you when you listen to God’s voice to find your own. 🦋

¹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1923), p. 333.

² Shane Claiborne, *The Irresistible Revolution* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), p. 24.

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STRAWS AND SIPPY CUPS

California's new "straw law" really cramped my style, man.

For those of you who live in a normal state, here's some background. Last year California passed a law that on January 1, 2019, full-service restaurants would no longer be able to offer plastic straws without request.

Some establishments anticipated more change, moving away from straws to what essentially amount to disposable sippy-cup lids. If their master plan was to initiate vivid flashbacks to the toddler years, I think they succeeded.

The first time I encountered one of these lids I did the only obvious thing: asking for a straw, I jammed it into the sippy-cup opening and proceeded per normal. Upon arriving back to the office, one of my Gen-Z staff members looked at me with a combination of disdain and pity.

"Don't look at me like that," I joked. "They're messing with my routine!"

BREAKING ROUTINE

Some changes are good, such as quelling that nighttime sugary cereal habit. Some changes are bad, such as getting fired without cause. And some changes don't matter that much at all (hello, straws).

But sometimes, whether we like it or not, we *need* change, and a break from the routines that turn our lives into managing the status quo.

In his book *The Heavenly Man*, Chinese Brother Yun describes the multi-decade struggle he faced in Communist China. Change was a constant with Yun, who was tortured, and thrown in and out of prison. But after being released from his first stint in prison, Yun fell into the routine of a

"normal" life by taking care of his young family, doing housework, and continuing to try to spread the gospel. A short while later he was thrown into prison again, but this time he realized something different.

"I went to prison for a second time. The Lord saw I was exhausted in the ministry, so He graciously allowed me to rest in Him behind bars for a while and learn about inner spiritual life."¹

A similar experience is described in Genesis 37. Ellen White wrote about why God allowed Joseph to be sold into Egyptian captivity. "In the providence of God, even this experience was to be a blessing to [Joseph]. . . His father, strong and tender as his love had been, had done him wrong by his partiality and indulgence."²

My family and I moved from California to Ohio this year. It's been a *change*. My wife is a native Californian, and our kids are now a plane ride away from their cousins. It wasn't until I left that I realized what can happen when you spend so many years in the same place. Things become too easy, too normal. I needed to be somewhere I didn't have any routines that kept me from seeing, hearing, and feeling what was really going on in my soul.

Perhaps you don't need to be thrown into prison or sold to slave traders, but is there a routine in your life that needs to be broken so that you can experience the fullness of God's presence?

By the way, I only jammed the straw in the new lid only once. Turns out that when I gave the sippy-cup lids a shot, I found that I actually liked them better. 🍷

¹ Brother Yun and Paul Hattaway, *Heavenly Man* (2002).

² Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1890, 1908), p. 213.

Jimmy Phillips is network marketing director for Kettering Health Network.

INTRODUCING
THE WHY
JIMMY
PHILLIPS



IT WASN'T UNTIL
I LEFT THAT I
REALIZED WHAT
CAN HAPPEN WHEN
YOU SPEND SO
MANY YEARS IN
THE SAME PLACE.

A historic Bible conference leaves many questions unanswered.

100 YEARS LATER

MICHAEL W. CAMPBELL

The early twentieth century witnessed Seventh-day Adventists wrestling with change. Many of the early pioneers had passed away, marking the end of an era. Of particular note was the passing of Adventist cofounder and prophet Ellen G. White in 1915. The denomination had to wrestle with issues without a living prophet.

That same year a German U-boat torpedoed the British ocean liner *Lusitania*, leaving more than 1,000 people dead, including 128 Americans. It appeared inevitable that America would be pulled into a global conflagration that eventually mobilized 60 million people and left 10 million dead. World War I was a major turning point in world history as humanity harnessed technology to kill and destroy more effectively than ever before: a “Christian” war, fought between overwhelmingly “Christian” nations. Christianity now faced a world that was rapidly changing.¹

One way the Seventh-day Adventist denomination dealt with this change was to call for a Bible conference. The earliest Adventist pioneers had wrestled with the development of distinctive theological beliefs during the earliest “Sabbath and Sanctuary Conferences” between 1848 and 1850.

As early as 1913 church leaders started calling for such a meeting. The desire was to gather influential thought leaders and administrators to study issues within the church brought about by a change in society and in the world in general.²

THE PROPHETIC CONFERENCE MOVEMENT AND FUNDAMENTALISM

During the late nineteenth century a revival of premillennialism arose that was associated with a series of prophetic conferences. Some Seventh-day Adventists attended the 1878 Niagara Falls meeting, but conference participants distanced themselves from Adventists by affirming their belief in eternal hellfire.

By World War I a cross-denominational movement focused on the Second Advent precipitated a number of major prophecy conferences held in major cities across the United States. Once again Seventh-day Adventists attended these meetings, noting, almost with a bit of envy, their success at gathering the attention of the masses about Christ’s return.

F. M. Wilcox, editor of what was then called *The Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald*, described these meetings as among some of the most important in Christian history, right up there with Martin Luther posting his 95 theses. Wilcox and others, however, noted that although they shared many commonalities, the two movements embraced some significant theological differences.

These same conservative Christians who rallied around these prophecy conferences were also becoming known for a widely circulated series of pamphlets titled, *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth* (1910-1915). Thanks to Lyman and Milton Stewart (who sold their oil company to Standard Oil Company), they shared a vision to make sure that all American Christians were warned against a number of new and insidious teachings that were infiltrating some circles of Christianity, especially within Christian higher education.

The Stewart brothers were generous philanthropists promoting major missionary endeavors and funding a number of Bible teachers at colleges. They became concerned when they heard that at one school, Occidental College, where they had funded the entire religion department, such teachings as those were being promulgated by modernist or liberal theologians.

When they found out that their worst fears were realized they withdrew their funding. What were the Stewart brothers concerned about? The infiltration of certain ideas, known as “higher criticism,” that



minimized the role of the supernatural and dissected the Bible the same as any other piece of literature.

This conservative reaction within Christianity became known as “fundamentalism” after 1922 when Curtis Lee Laws coined the term to describe this specific historical movement. Unlike some people who might use the term “fundamentalist” in a pejorative sense to describe someone seen as an anti-intellectual or extremist, the historical fundamentalist movement had a rich intellectual background. It was firmly rooted within modernist constructs of right and wrong, and militantly opposed to anything that might undermine the divine authority of Scripture, Christ’s virgin birth, the atonement of Christ, belief in miracles, and the inerrancy of Scripture, i.e., the belief that Scripture is without error or fault in words or teaching.

While Adventists could easily affirm the first four points, the last point became problematic within Adventism by the time of the 1919 Bible Conference.

AUTHORITY AND CHANGE

Early on during the 1919 Bible Conference delegates raised a wide variety of issues that related to prophetic interpretation. During World War I some Adventists had predicted that the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) would capture Jerusalem. Even though church leaders officially warned against sharing such speculations, the temptation to speak about the “Eastern Question” seemed almost irresistible. Thus many Adventist exponents of Bible prophecy had their hopes dashed when on December 11, 1917, General Edmund Allenby, commander of the British Egyptian Expeditionary Forces, entered Jerusalem, wresting control from the Ottoman Empire.

This sense of authority and change came up in various forms as evidenced by the wide variety of topics brought up during the 1919 Bible Conference.

Another was the question of Bible translations.

At one point, H. Camden Lacey, a religion teacher, praised the Totherham translation of the Bible. When questioned, Lacey remarked that “no translation is infallible.” This was controversial because this translation was based upon Wescott and Hort’s Greek edition of the New Testament that was missing some words and even verses not found in the earliest manuscripts.

While Adventists, including Ellen White, had used a variety of Bible translations, this raised the question about how one should relate to these Bible translations. It similarly raised the question as to whether, if Ellen White used a particular translation, that was the one correct translation. Was Ellen White the arbiter to determine the correct Bible translation?

Delegates realized these issues were complex, even though they recognized that Ellen White did not consider herself as the arbiter of correct Bible translations.

PROGRESSIVE TRUTH

Another important topic raised during the 1919 Bible Conference was the Trinity. Lists of beliefs from the early twentieth century began to include the word “Trinity” as Adventists became less afraid of the word and embraced Trinitarian beliefs. Still, the concept remained controversial.

Some early Adventist leaders, particularly Uriah Smith and James White, had embraced a semi-Arian position reflecting the idea that at some point Christ was created. This prompted some candid conversations as to whether it is permissible to disagree with some of the early Adventist pioneers. Church president A. G. Daniells reassured delegates: “Now let’s not get a bit nervous nor scared. Don’t let the conservatives think that something is going to happen, and the progressives get alarmed for fear it won’t happen.”³

Transcripts of the conference show that although

the topic of the Trinity was still controversial at this meeting, Adventism remained on a course trajectory that continued to affirm its adoption (thanks in large part to Ellen White's strong affirmation of the three coeternal divine persons of the Godhead during the last part of her life).

Another eschatological issue was the "daily" (referring to the "daily sacrifice" in Daniel 8:11). Some delegates understood this to refer to pagan and papal Rome, whereas another view popular during the 1890s argued that this referred to the ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. This latter view gained traction, but some saw this as a sellout because Ellen White made statements that appeared to affirm the earlier position.

In 1908 Ellen White made a strong appeal to Adventist thought leaders not to use her writings to settle this controversy. Yet after her death rumblings continued as some argued that to adopt the "new view" of the "daily" revealed a lack of respect, and therefore, effectively undermined a more traditional respect for Ellen White's prophetic writings.

Other delegates raised questions about whether it is permissible to revise Uriah Smith's predictions in *Daniel and Revelation* when there were errors in facts. Some leaders, such as W. W. Prescott, had actively worked with Ellen G. White to revise her last and final edition of *The Great Controversy*. What if these works by church pioneers might need further revisions? What does one do when there are differences between these editions? Which one remains authoritative? Matters related to authority and change raised questions about the nature and authority of Ellen White's writings.

CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS

Although not officially on the docket of topics for examination, the nature and authority of Ellen White's prophetic writings were discussed early at the 1919 Bible Conference. Such crucial conversations would, after their discovery, become the reason these minutes became famous within the church.³ As participants discussed various issues, largely eschatological, they soon appealed to Ellen White's writings to settle their differences.

As they did so, it created an opportunity for self-reflection as participants discussed, for the first time after her death in 1915, the nature, authority, and legacy of Ellen White's prophetic ministry. The denomination was forced to grapple with how they

would continue without a living prophet.

The topic of Ellen White's prophetic authority came up at several crucial points during the 1919 Bible Conference. Both the traditionalists and progressives appealed to Ellen White's writings to settle their disagreements.

The first discussion happened on July 10, 1919, when church leaders appealed to her writings to settle their disagreements. Daniells felt that in light of this conversation he should follow up, since many of the participants were not personally acquainted with Ellen White while she was alive. Daniells shared his own experiences with her prophetic ministry, and how it had impacted his life.

Although some had criticized him for not supporting Ellen White's prophetic ministry enough, he believed that if participants knew about his personal interactions with her, they would know that was simply not true.

As the Bible Conference wound down, a much smaller group of educators (no more than half of the participants) gathered for follow-up questions. At this "round table" discussion they spent two days with Daniells, dialoguing about the significance of, and how to interpret, Ellen White's prophetic ministry. This was one of the first major discussions of the significance of her writings since her death.

Some of the younger traditionalists pushed the idea of applying the Fundamentalist understanding of the inerrancy of Scripture to Ellen White's writings. Participants recognized that they needed to educate the church on this crucial topic, and if they did not, that this could become extremely troublesome in the future for the denomination.

Some of the differences over biblical interpretation raised at the 1919 Bible Conference remain with us. The theological tension that shaped much of the debate still exists. How will it be resolved? Perhaps if today's Adventists can learn from this conflict, it might just be possible to use these insights from the past to construct bridges of dialogue, understanding, even healing.

¹ See Philip Jenkins, *The Great and Holy War: How World War I Became a Religious Crusade* (New York: HarperOne, 2014), pp. 5, 17.

² For a more detailed description of the conference, including references, see my book, *1919: The Untold Story of Adventism's Struggle with Fundamentalism* (Nampa, Id: Pacific Press, 2019).

³ July 6, 1919 minutes.

⁴ To read the minutes of the 1919 Bible Conference visit www.adventistarchives.org where all of them have been digitized.

Michael W. Campbell is an associate professor at Southwestern Adventist Academy. His book, *1919: The Untold Story of Adventism's Struggle with Fundamentalism*, was released earlier this year.

ELLEN WHITE BY THE NUMBERS

Birthdate: November 26,
1827



Ellen Harmon had her first vision
in December **1844**.

She married James White on
August 30, **1846**.



In 70 years of ministry she produced
more than **100,000 manuscript pages**.



In *The Desire of Ages*, her book on the life of Christ,
3,955 Bible verses are quoted, some repeated several times.

Her most widely distributed book, *Steps to Christ*,
has been translated into more than **165 languages**.



Ellen White was listed among the **100 most significant**
Americans in *Smithsonian* magazine, Spring 2015.



Ellen traveled widely.
By 1878 she had crossed the United States **12** times.
She spent **11** years working internationally.



LAODECONOMICS

*The economics of the
Laodicean era*

We are living in the most prosperous period in human history. Since the end of World War II more people around the world have enjoyed affluence than ever before.

So why are more young people living in their parents' basements, literally or figuratively? Why are fewer young people in North America getting married and having children? While older generations are often critical of those who are younger for not "adulting" well, perhaps there are deeper economic reasons for this shift.

Somewhere along the path to prosperity we rounded a corner, and the steady gains seen from

the 1950s to 2000 have begun to reverse. A change has transpired, and a rise in the standard of living can no longer be taken for granted. Even the status quo can no longer be maintained, it seems, without governments taking extraordinary financial measures.

But these measures are not without consequences and are not without time limits. When a third of government-issued bonds have negative interest rates, we ought to be concerned that we have reached those limits.

We also need to understand and acknowledge that because of these extraordinary financial measures, our wealth and future financial security is placed

squarely on the shoulders of future generations. Our pension plans, our social security systems, our house prices, our stock prices are all built up by the never-ending stream of deficit spending and liquidity injections by governments borrowing from the future. Today's wealth is being built on the backs of our children and grandchildren, and this makes it hard for them to afford to live, and guarantees their servitude to the economic system.

A MESSAGE FOR OUR TIME

The Bible warns about the era of Laodicea. In Revelation John wrote a sharp rebuke for the church: "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: . . . 'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. . . . You say, "I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing." But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy from me . . . white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see'" (Rev. 3:14-18).

The prophet warns that in this era we will lose the passion for mission that God called us to. We will feel that we are wealthy in the things of this world and have no sense of our real deficit, both material and spiritual. We don't recognize our true financial condition, or the broader economic condition of the world.

In the past seven decades we have become increasingly materialistic and worldly, losing our sense of purpose. We have become increasingly comfortable on this earth. In developed nations people have amassed wealth and comforts unimaginable a century ago. Those who live in the developing world are striving to catch up and attain the same standards, even though the dangers and "debt traps" of affluence seem quite apparent.

This era of Laodicea is understood to be a period in the church's existence near the end of time and describes the spiritual condition of Christians. The world around Laodicea comprises an economic system that is designed to draw in and trap God's people into financial servitude by giving an illusion of wealth, happiness, freedom, and contentment.

Our modern economic system creates a mirage of prosperity, yet we scratch and claw our way toward it as if it were real.

Perhaps we can coin a new term: *Laodeconomics*,

A rise in the standard of living can no longer be taken for granted. Even the status quo can no longer be maintained.

the economics of the Laodicean era. An economic system that makes God's people into unwitting prisoners, that keeps them not only focused on worldly things, but so tied up financially that we keep straining toward a mirage that turns out to be dust in the end.

CHOICES, CHOICES, CHOICES

Laodeconomics, the spiritual condition of Laodicea (lukewarmness), is characterized by inattentiveness to spiritual matters, and by a form of godliness that denies God's power over our lives; and makes us lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

Ellen White wrote about Satan's effort to mislead God's remnant people in the last days. "As the people of God approach the perils of the last days, Satan holds earnest consultation with his angels as to the most successful plan of overthrowing their faith. . . . 'We can separate many from Christ by worldliness, lust, and pride. They may think themselves safe because they believe the truth, but indulgence of appetite or the lower passions, which will confuse judgment and destroy discrimination, will cause their fall. Go, make the possessors of lands and money drunk with the cares of this life. Present the world before them in its most attractive light, that they may lay up their treasury here, and fix their affections upon earthly things. . . . Make them care more for money than for the rebuilding of Christ's kingdom and the spread of the truths we hate, and we need not fear their influence; for we know that every selfish, covetous person will fall under our power and will finally be separated from God's people.'"

God's remedy for Laodicea was to buy eye salve so that they could see, and white raiment to cover their nakedness. But part of Laodicea's problem is

that they are unable to see their true condition.

So what is God's solution? "Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock" (Rev. 3:19). When God rebukes and chastens Laodicea, He may use the same method He has used time and again: a famine or financial crisis. God has often used economic crises to regain the attention of His people who have drifted away. The Bible points to economic disasters in the last days, disasters that may be God's ultimate effort to extricate His people from the system of Laodeconomics and from the condition of Laodicea.

As we look at today's global economy, many challenges and much turmoil seem to be building and converging toward one gigantic calamity. From overindebtedness, financial bubbles, trade wars, currency wars, and the potential for real shooting wars, the world appears to be on edge. We have built our world on an economic foundation that relies on an ever-continuing growth in spending.

Globally, in the past 10 years we have tried to maintain that growth with more than US\$60 trillion in stimulus spending, which, in effect, is just borrowing from the future on the backs of our children and grandchildren. Growing strife, financial volatility, and protectionist sentiments are symptoms of the global economic system nearing its ultimate breakdown. Yet most of those who live in the world, including Adventists, continue to act as if everything is normal. Many may receive a rather stark wake-up call.

QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS

But if we are living in the time of the end, and all of this turmoil is just a prelude to even greater financial and physical calamities, what should our response be? We Adventists believe and hope for the soon coming of Christ. What should we do?

Some may argue that we ought to live our lives the same, regardless of when Jesus returns. Others may become the Christian equivalent of "preppers," those who stockpile resources to survive calamities. In my role as an investment manager, I'm often asked how we should invest our money if we think the end is near, or if we should invest at all.

The key question is not "How should we invest?" but "How do we want to use our money in the future?" What are our financial goals, and how do we want to use our savings when the time comes?

By knowing our future plans, we can more effectively prepare for today. Our spending habits, savings plans, and investment programs will all be guided by our desired outcomes for the future.

So what are our plans? Are we looking to raise or maintain our standard of living? Are we seeking a comfortable retirement to enjoy pleasures of this world? Are we seeking to make ourselves useful in gospel ministry? Are we helping our extended families to be financially secure to serve God? Do we feel the sense of responsibility to help others break free from the financial traps set before them?

There is a growing divide worldwide between the haves and the have-nots. Unfortunately for many, both young and old, making ends meet is becoming a greater challenge. Saving for the future seems impossible. Whether this is because of our current circumstances, past choices, or unfortunate timing, many find their situations difficult and getting worse. The mirage of financial security is receding further into the distance, even as people's desperation grows deeper.

God always responds to our sincere prayers for help, but we have to be willing to make the changes that God suggests. His remedies may range from becoming more disciplined in our daily living, perhaps making sizable shifts in our lifestyle, to more radical changes in our circumstances.

How do we know what we should do? Honest introspection is needed to see our true status and recognize the leading of God's Spirit. Are we just getting by in our Christian life, or are we motivated by God's mission? We may have to ask a key question: Am I able to serve God better in my current circumstance?

Most of us can probably get by with a lot fewer material things. Reducing expenses and living simpler lives may be key for us. Not only will this have financial benefits, it may make us happier and healthier and result in better relationships with our families, friends, and neighbors. Ultimately, if we seek more opportunities to grow our financial faith and partnership with God (stewardship), we will be guided into more purposeful and meaningful lives. We can break free from the system of Laodeconomics. ▀

* Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1923), pp. 472-474.

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PETER N. LANDLESS ZENO L. CHARLES-MARCEL

HOUSEPLANTS: HARMFUL OR HEALTHFUL?

Q: My husband believes that houseplants are not healthy for the bedroom because they produce “bad gases” that could be harmful. I think they keep the air clean. Do they help or hurt?

A: In general, houseplants are healthful, beautifying additions to any room. God created plants to produce life-giving oxygen and consume the waste-product gas carbon dioxide (CO₂) in daylight. In darkness, most common plants act like humans (and all air-breathing creatures) in that they consume oxygen and produce carbon dioxide. In very high concentrations this gas is not healthful, but it is sometimes confused with another gas, carbon monoxide (CO), which is highly toxic and has nothing to do with plants.

The toxicity of *carbon monoxide* in automobile tailpipe exhaust emissions is well publicized, but tailpipe exhaust emissions, we’re told, are a major source of the “deadly greenhouse gas” *carbon dioxide* (CO₂). No wonder these two gases may be confused. Neither plants nor humans produce carbon monoxide. If sleeping with a human or pet in your room at night poses no threat, neither does sleeping with houseplants.

Nonetheless, some houseplants can be hazardous to people or pets (see table). We advise keeping all houseplants out of the reach of those who might crush, eat, or taste them.

In 1989 the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), in association with the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA) studied the effectiveness of houseplants as air-purification systems in space facilities. Several houseplant air purifiers filter out common,

volatile organic compounds such as benzene, toluene, ammonia, formaldehyde, xylene, trichloroethylene (common indoor air pollutants), and even carbon monoxide from the air! These plants include the peace lily (Mauna Loa), florist’s chrysanthemum, English ivy, variegated snake plant (mother-in-law’s tongue), red-edged dracaena, spider plant, and gerbera daisy.

BASIC FACTS:

Plants are God’s natural air purifiers.

All humans and air-breathing creatures remove oxygen and add CO₂, while houseplants remove CO₂ and add oxygen during the day. (Humans add 100 times more CO₂ than the average houseplant.)

Different plant species have different efficiency and effectiveness for any given polluting chemical, so houseplant combina-

tions work best for indoor air purification.

Overwatering plants, a common problem, can create excessive soil moisture and promote mold growth—not a healthful situation.

At least one plant per 100 square feet of home or office space is required for efficient air cleaning, according to NASA researchers.

Some houseplants have fragrances (chemicals) that are irritants or toxins or provoke allergies. So even if a plant is a great air purifier, it may not be prudent to use it if someone in the household or office is allergic to the plant or uniquely sensitive to its fragrance. ♣

Plant	Toxic to Human	Toxic to Dog/Cat	Air Purification
Philodendron	Mildly	Yes	especially formaldehyde
Golden Pothos (Devil’s ivy)	Yes	Yes	especially formaldehyde
Arrowhead (Syngonium)	Mildly	Mildly	Benzene and volatile organic compounds
Peace lily	Yes	Yes	all including ammonia
Dieffenbachia (Dumb canes)	Moderately	Moderately	especially Xylene, Toluene
Chrysanthemums (mums)	Yes	Yes	all including ammonia

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HARRY ANDERSON | ©REVIEW & HERALD

FROM THE DISAPPOINTMENT TO THE ADVENT

Reviewing the herald of the good news of the Sabbath

In 1848 a small Christian movement without a name or any organized leadership had just begun. Its advocates had recently suffered a keen disappointment—the Lord’s second advent had not happened, as they had hoped. They had few friends and even less money. The future seemed uncertain, even grim.

Little could they imagine what actually awaited them. They possessed something more valuable than their namelessness would suggest. They had a knowledge of truth that needed to be reviewed by the entire

world before the Second Advent of the Lord. The question was “How?” They could not see a way.

TAMING TECHNOLOGY

It’s nearly impossible for us to imagine a time before the Internet. Imagining life before airplanes and automobiles, and yes, before the railroad, is unfathomable. When horse-drawn carriages through Maine’s often very muddy roads were the most common and quickest way to share information in the northeastern United States,

reaching the world must have seemed an impossible task. America's western regions didn't even have railways in the 1840s.

When penniless preachers wished to share their take on matters of theology, the typical pathway forward was on foot. It was a constant reminder to message bearers of the humility needed by God's messengers, and the beautiful simplicity of the truth.

But while the message this small movement felt burdened to share would be carried in part by foot, the Lord had another plan for a global movement that needed more than sermons. This was a message God wanted placed before people with the time to ponder what they were learning, to review it thoroughly, even from the comfort of their homes.

It seemed impossible until God spoke. "Print a little paper" was the word of the Lord to 27-year-old James White, through the mouth of his 20-year-old wife and young mother, Ellen.

She had just emerged from a vision, and she reported to James, "I have a message for you. You must begin to print a little paper and send it out to the people. Let it be small at first; but as the people read, they will send you means with which to print, and it will be a success from the first. From this small beginning it was shown to me to be like streams of light that went clear round the world."¹

At the time, it must be noted, there were not as many religious papers as we have today, and very few were sponsored by nonexistent nameless organizations—quite literally a small "scattered flock," as James described his friends and sympathizers. The idea of printing a periodical must have seemed quite out of reach for the small company of believers.

MOVING BY FAITH. PRINTING BY FAITH.

The first edition of *The Present Truth* appeared in July 1849: 1,000 copies printed with ink solicited by faith (a generous donor, not an Adventist, obliged the aspirant writer's requests for help). Although James White had moral support from some of his friends, all the articles that appeared in the volume 1, number 1 issue were written by him.

The topics he addressed were the seventh-day Sabbath and the Ten Commandments. In the years

Today and every day we are entering into a future nearer the Second Advent.

following, the title *Present Truth* shifted to *The Advent Review*, from there to the *Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, and, since 1978, simply the *Adventist Review*. But the main theme and focus have always remained the same: to bring to light truth that would remain present until the Second Advent.

The world has changed in many ways from 1848 to 2019—the 170 years between the beginning of James White's publishing career and today. Yet while the passage of time is often unkind to the "present" truth of the world's many purported philosophical and scientific truthsayers, the core message that White and his company felt obligated to share has more than stood the test of time, inspiring thoughtful curiosity and dialogue, while likewise withstanding the continual critique of many scholars in various areas. From our theology to our health principles to our educational methods, and more. Always, the source of our pioneers' inspiration was their commitment to a closer study of the eternal Word of God.

Written words may be human and fallible, but reviewing our history and reading our present times in which we live in the light of Scripture, shared through the *Adventist Review* and its many sister publications by believers and institutions the world over, those words helped make the Seventh-day Adventist Church possible. Through it the message of our pioneers has indeed spread around the world, reaching the hearts of millions, as Ellen White's vision foresaw.

THE WORK REMAINS

But while the impact of the message is staggering in its own right, we are reminded by Scripture that the work before us will see yet greater and greater miracles as the Second Advent approaches,

with many more lives transformed from the darkness of misguided ideologies and false religions still dominant around the globe today to the glorious light of God's truth. Adventists the world over every day feel the burden of White's first words of volume 1, number 1, that remind us to "not be negligent to put [ourselves] always in remembrance of these things,"¹ and be established in the PRESENT TRUTH (2 Peter 1:12).²

While our history as a denomination is truly an incredible story, and continually worth revisiting to inspire us by the passion and self-sacrificing spirit of our pioneers, many of whom have been forgotten to history,³ we should also remind ourselves of the meaning of our title (including some of its earlier iterations). That somewhat cumbersome title, the *Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, stands out clearly in defining our ongoing mission.

It reminds us to review, or keep in mind, God's leading in the past in pointing us toward His second advent. God's design has been that this be a period that would require an explanation of Scripture: "This calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God who keep his commandments and remain faithful to Jesus" (Rev. 14:12).

Despite what might be our personal preference at times, and the encouragement that we may in a manner hasten His coming, the Lord, in foresight, warned us that there would be time to review the Advent message, that it might reach all people of the world. That is not to deny that at times we may struggle to understand the delay of the advent, as our pioneers struggled with the bitter taste and disappointment of its announcement (see Rev. 10:9). Nor is it to deny that in our doubts amid today's complexities we may not contribute with the passion we ought, to spreading God's message (see Rev. 3:16). Rather, through it all, the title's focus on reviewing the Advent message seems very appropriate to our mission.

Similarly, to be heralds of the Sabbath perfectly represents what we are to do. The Sabbath is a message of rest amid a work-obsessed and weary world. The speed of life in the Internet age has only accentuated the need for everyone to hear the voice of Jesus: "Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matt. 11:28, 29).

It is no accident that the truth of the Sabbath is tied to the return of Christ and the end of a world that is losing itself further every day to work that bids us race ever faster to get ahead, and never lets us stop to catch our breath.

LOOKING AHEAD

As we look forward from the vantage point of 170 years of reviewing the Second Advent and looking forward to our first heavenly Sabbath (Isa. 66:22, 23), we should recognize that today and every day we are entering into a future nearer the second advent.

Unlike James White and his friends, our challenge is not being constrained to spread the news by the speed of horse-drawn carriages. We have at our fingertips the power of the railway, the automobile, the airplane, television, and the Internet, with their instantaneous power to spread information.

But while these tools of communication may be useful, the task that remains before us is to maintain and uphold God's original purpose for sharing present truth, which, as White reminded us, is because "present truth must be oft repeated, even to those who are established in it. This was needful in the apostles' day, and it certainly is no less important for us, who are living just before the close of time."⁴

Methods of reaching the world with our message remain very much the same, even as we use the many technological tools available today to hasten its delivery to far-flung corners of the world. We still need the simplicity, purity, and patient endurance of heart that motivated its passage by foot and the printed word. These will forever remain symbols of the personal touch needed to bring God's light into people's minds: "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the Lord Almighty" (Zech. 4:6).⁵

¹ Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1915), p. 125.

² James White, in *The Present Truth* 1, no. 1 (July 1849): 1.

³ One of the more recent awe-inspiring glimpses into what made Adventism possible is found in the work of David B. Trim, *A Living Sacrifice: Unsung Heroes of Adventist Missions* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 2019).

⁴ James White, in *The Present Truth* 1, no. 1 (July 1849): 1.

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SO THANKFUL FOR SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

About 40 years ago I entered the world of Seventh-day Adventists. And I am so very thankful; so thankful for the Adventists who taught me truths that, well, no one else would have. Sure, the Lord is behind it all, but in His wisdom He raised up Seventh-day Adventists to proclaim a message that no one else is proclaiming.

Who, for example, but a Seventh-day Adventist would have given me a copy of *The Great Controversy* just as I was delving into the occult and spiritualism?

And sure, I could have learned about Jesus and righteousness by faith from other churches, but who other than Seventh-day Adventists would have taught me the “everlasting gospel” (Rev. 14:7, KJV) in the context of the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14?

And though knowing, of course, about the seventh-day Sabbath, I learned from Seventh-day Adventists the bigger picture, both of creation and redemption, contained in the Sabbath truth.

Also, with rare exceptions, who but Seventh-day Adventists would have taught me about the state of the dead, a biblical teaching that I so love and that remains a powerful protection against so many illusions and lies that have deceived billions, including most Christians?

Oh, yes—there’s the hell thing, too. Having been born again just two days earlier, and knowing nearly nothing about Christian theology (and the little that I did know, learned mostly from Hal Lindsey, was wrong)—I remember cynically asking one of the first Adventists I had met, “So what’s with all this eternal torment in hell stuff?” In about two min-

utes he gave me the gist of what is called (sometimes derisively) “annihilationism.” However much sense it instantly made to me then, over the decades I’ve come to so love this biblical truth, especially in contrast to the raving insanity of eternal torture in hell, which for some reason so many Christians refuse to let go of, kind of like a woman who refuses to leave a violently abusive spouse.

Today, too, with so much of the Christian world having been swept up in the myth of billions of years of suffering, disease, trauma, famine, and death as our Creator’s wonderful way of making life on earth, how thankful I am for people whose very name—*Seventh-day Adventist*—points to the truth of our origins as revealed in the first two chapters of Genesis.

Now 64 years old and no pup, I’m so thankful for the health message that I learned early on at Wildwood, from Seventh-day Adventists. Again and again, when I walk into restaurants and see people who, to quote Ellen White, are “digging their graves with their teeth,” I thank God for Seventh-day Adventists and what they have taught me about health.

And speaking of Ellen White—what can I say? Only Seventh-day Adventists have kept alive the legacy of this amazing woman, whose life and ministry have impacted my life and faith in so many positive ways.

Any wonder that I thank God for Seventh-day Adventists? 🍌

* Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Diet and Foods* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1938), p. 141.

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

CLIFF'S
EDGE
CLIFFORD
GOLDSTEIN



I REMEMBER ASKING ONE OF THE FIRST ADVENTISTS I HAD MET, “SO WHAT’S WITH ALL THIS ETERNAL TORMENT IN HELL STUFF?”



Young people on a trail ride at the Native youth camp in Oklahoma

PHOTO: JAMES BOKOVYOY

nated by Monte Church. Of the 573 federally recognized tribes in the United States, well more than half are in the North Pacific, since every village of Inuit people in Alaska is a federally recognized tribe.

It has been difficult to establish work in remote regions of Alaska as well as on St. Lawrence Island in the Bering Sea, at the tip of the Arctic Circle in Barrow, or on the Alaska coast, which has no road access to large cities. Vast differences in culture and language exist among the tribes in Alaska, Montana, Washington, Idaho, and Oregon. This is also a challenge.

Yet the work continues to grow with new baptisms almost every week in the North Pacific Union, which has seven Native American schools and two new churches being built. For more than 100 years baptisms of tribal chiefs have helped to advance the work among Native American people as the chiefs themselves became involved in ministry.

ROADBLOCKS TO GROWTH

Indigenous work in North America has not been easy because of wars, the desire of the U.S. government to assimilate the indigenous population, and the effort to eliminate Native American languages. The result is a general lack of trust in non-indigenous people and a scarcity of hope among Native American people. Their fight with the U.S. government saw Native American areas turned into “reserva-

A GROWING MINISTRY

Exploring the blessings and challenges of Native American ministries

North American Division (NAD) Native Ministries was officially created in 1996, and I had the privilege of serving as its first director. This was the beginning of the official work for Native American people in the NAD territory, and God has worked many miracles to advance this ministry.

UNION CONFERENCE-LED NATIVE MINISTRIES

By early 1999 each of the unions in the NAD had a Native Ministries coordinator. We viewed this as evidence of God’s blessing and leading of this new initiative.

The North Pacific Union Conference has a very strong Native Ministries program, first coordi-

ROBERT BURNETTE

tions” or economically disadvantaged areas. But Native Americans have not surrendered their fight to keep their cultures alive.

Non-indigenous populations have developed opinions and stereotypes of Native Americans based on television programs rather than actual exchanges with communities. Interestingly, the religious beliefs of most North American indigenous communities are similar to those of Seventh-day Adventists; in fact, in the contiguous United States there is a Seventh-day Adventist Church within 25 miles of all of the 573 federally recognized tribes. Adventists are logistically close to this mission field, but most of the people of these tribes are still unreached with the true gospel of Christ. Still, there are many projects that highlight the meaningful interaction between Adventists and indigenous peoples.

HOLBROOK INDIAN SCHOOL

Holbrook Indian School (HIS)—a K-12 Adventist boarding school in Holbrook, Arizona, comprising students largely of the Navajo Nation—offers an example of how our heavenly Father provides for our needs.

I remember a period when Holbrook was deeply in debt. During a board meeting to address the debt, I spoke with the Native American board members and we wept while in fervent prayer. Then as the members went to lunch, I walked to a desert area behind the property, knelt, and prayed until it was almost time for the board to meet again.

Once back on campus, I called a businessman I knew. When his assistant heard my voice, she said, “He’s been trying to reach you.” The businessman told me that he wanted to know where I needed help, and he donated \$300,000—more than enough to cover Holbrook’s debt! God provided the funds without my even asking for them. This reminds us that all wealth belongs to God (see 1 Chron. 29:12; Ps. 24:1; 50:10).

THE NAVAJO NATION

The Navajo Nation stretches across four local conferences (Texico, Rocky Mountain, Nevada-Utah, and Arizona), and three union conferences (Pacific, Southwestern, and Mid-America). Besides HIS, it houses the Chinle School, also in Arizona, and La Vida Mission in New Mexico. La Vida Mission is totally self-supporting, with faculty and

Vast differences in culture and language exist among the tribes in Alaska, Montana, Washington, Idaho, and Oregon.

staff who faithfully share the love of Christ with their students and see youth and families baptized every year. When I served as director of Native Ministries, six Navajo pastors and their spouses served on Navajo land.

Nancy Crosby, Native Ministries coordinator for the Pacific Union Conference, works closely with Navajo leaders. She and her pastor husband, James, have developed a relationship with the people based on love and trust, and are meeting needs. Under their leadership, community gardens have been established with the help of Southwestern Adventist University and several other volunteer mission teams. Events such as health-disparity workshops; Vacation Bible Schools; and training programs, such as how to give Bible studies, do outreach, and teach creation health are successful door openers.

FIRST NATIONS MINISTRIES IN CANADA

The Mamawi Atosketan School, a K-12 First Nations day school in the Alberta Conference of the Adventist Church in Canada, has a current student enrollment of 220. It began with only non-Adventist students, but multiple baptisms result each year.

About the year 1900 a First Nation tribal chief, Dr. G. W. Hill, who was also a Seventh-day Adventist physician, held much land in New York and the Brantford, Ontario, area of Canada at Six Nations. His history in our church documents reveals answers to prayer as he developed Native American ministries in both the United States and Canada as a pastor, writer, health promoter, and faithful servant to our Savior.

Families such as Pastor Daniel and Gina Geibosh do outreach internationally through health ministries, and young people such as Nicole Luttrell in the Maritime provinces and other regions of



PHOTO: JAMES BOKOVOY

The Board of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) poses with leaders of the North American Division and the General Conference in January 2015. The president of NCAI honored the Adventist Church by presenting church leaders with an Eagle feather.

North America distribute *American Indian Living* magazine and other Adventist literature. Minnesota also has an extraordinary couple impacting Native American tribes through Bible studies, as well as health and other training events.

MORE OUTREACH MINISTRIES

In the Southern Union Conference, Gulf States Camp Alamisco conducts two weeks of health summer camp with more than 100 children from the Poarch Creek Nation. This last summer alone, 69 children accepted Jesus as their Savior; 53 made a decision for baptism; and 44 more asked to learn more about accepting Jesus as their Savior. Almost all are taking Bible studies.

In Oklahoma *American Indian Living* media thrives. *American Indian Living* Radio, with David DeRose, has been sharing the gospel and health messages on National Public Radio (NPR) and tribal radio stations for more than 20 years.

The Oklahoma Conference Native Ministries has a strong relationship with the National Indian Health Board and the National Congress of American Indians, created by the U.S. Congress in 1944 and representing all tribes in the United States. Doors have been opened for Adventist physicians and independent health ministries to work with tribes, resulting in a strong positive reputation of the denomination.

The Oklahoma region has the most baptisms each year through programs that serve beyond conference lines. Millions of dollars in donations

have flowed from tribes to Loma Linda University and Seventh-day Adventist schools, clinics, and conferences. The Oklahoma Conference recently released Bible Study Connect, an Internet Bible study program, allowing interaction with the participant and tracking to help develop better lessons and yield a higher rate of conversions. For the NAD as a whole, Native American camp meetings are the primary tool for training and equipping members for sharing the gospel through positive, effective, and enjoyable experiences.

FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY

John the Revelator must have seen them in this scene: "After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: 'Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb'" (Rev. 7:9, 10).

More than 2,000 tribes of indigenous peoples reside in North America alone, with more than 2,000 languages and 2,500 dialects. A great mission field is here in North America, waiting for people who will accept the call of God to take the gospel message to every tribe and language and people. 🗡️

Robert Burnette is assistant to the president of the Oklahoma Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. He served as director of Native Ministries for the North American Division from 1996 to 2000.

Jesus for Asia

...because people are dying without Jesus



A Prayer of Faith For Blindness!

Susanna is a Jesus for Asia Bible Worker in India. She takes care of the Adventist churches in two villages that would have closed without her. The leaders in one village hate her because every time she makes a new friend, someone new gives their life to Jesus. They told the villagers not to trust her. "She doesn't care about you; she doesn't want to be your friend; all she wants to do is change your religion."

Susanna did not let their lies stop her. She did love these people, and she wanted to share with them that Jesus loved them too and died for each one of them. So, she kept praying, and God kept opening doors.

One of the leaders hated her so much that he determined to find her and beat her so she would leave. He would purify his village from all her Christian foolishness.

He went to the church, the market, and even to church leaders' homes, but Susanna was not there. He searched for many days with no results. Everywhere he thought she would be, she wasn't.

Little did he know, Susanna had prayed for the Lord to blind his eyes so he could not find her - just like the angels did for Lot.

One day, the Lord allowed him find her in the middle of the bustling village center. "You!" He shouted, "If you keep sharing this Bible, this Jesus, in my village, I will kill you. You need to leave and never come back to this place..."

Then, although he was furious at the very sight of her, he simply turned around and walked home. The Lord was protecting his servant, even as the threat of death stared her in the eye.

Susanna trusted that God would protect her. She had much more faith in Him than she had fear of the man who threatened her. So she continued to share Christ with the villagers.

Little did she know how God would arrange events to bring this man to be a friend!




To read the rest of the story, visit Jesus4asia.org/susanna

Or scan the QR code:



Bible Workers are desperately needed to go into many unentered places in Asia. Many are eager to carry Christ to those who sit in darkness. You can sponsor someone like Susanna in India for just \$90/month. No administrative expenses are taken from your donations. One hundred percent goes to support Bible Workers.

A photograph of Brian Cladoosby on a salmon fishing boat. He is wearing a large, wide-brimmed, woven hat and a bright red jacket. He is standing on a boat deck with fishing nets and yellow buoys visible in the background. A lamp is mounted on the boat behind him.

Brian Cladoosby on a salmon fishing boat. Cladoosby says a goal of the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community in Washington State is to increase the natural resource of salmon so it doesn't become extinct.

BREAKING THE CYCLE

Native American tribal leader reflects on the challenging journey of his people.

Seventh-day Adventist Brian Cladoosby is immediate past president of the National Congress of American Indians—the largest Native American representative body recognized by the U.S. government.

Cladoosby has also served on the Swinomish Indian Senate, the governing body of the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community in Washington State, for more than three decades, and as chair since 1997.

Described by some as “tough but pragmatic” and “humble but ambitious,” Cladoosby apparently gets things done. But although awarded the American Indian Tribal Leader Award for his exceptional achievements by the Reservation Economic Summit and American Indian Business Trade Fair in 2011, Cladoosby consistently gives the credit for his accomplishments to God.

Adventist Review assistant editor Sandra Blackmer recently talked with Cladoosby about Native Americans' challenging history, the role that the salmon industry plays in their tribal culture, and their continuing struggles today.—Editors

Tell me a little about yourself.

I was born and raised on the Swinomish Indian reservation about 60 miles north of Seattle. I had grandparents who prayed for us. My grandfather went to a Pentecostal church, and he introduced me to Jesus at a young age. I had a great-uncle and a great-aunt who prayed for us.

Was your grandmother also a Pentecostal?

My grandmother was murdered when I was 1 year old, so I never got a chance to know her.

How did your family become acquainted with Adventists?

About 35 years ago my wife, Nina, and I were into drugs and alcohol, which was straining our relationship. My wife said that we either needed to go to church or we'd end up in divorce.

As we were searching out churches, an Adventist church was built on the Lummi Indian reservation about one hour north of us. Nina's grandmother was a strong Adventist, and when Nina was little, her grandmother would take her to church. So when the Adventist church in Lummi was built in 1983, Nina's brother invited her to go there. Even though it's a one-hour drive from our home, we've been attending ever since.

Do you have children?

Yes, we have two grown daughters, Lavonne and Mary, and two grandchildren, Isabella and Daniel. Having God in our family has made all the difference.

In what way?

In our community it's what we call breaking the cycle. Native American communities have the highest drug and alcohol rates of any segment of society. So as a leader and a father, my goal is to try to break that cycle of drug and alcohol abuse. My father quit drinking in 1976; Nina and I quit drinking 30 years ago in 1989; and neither of our daughters do drugs or alcohol. Our two grandkids are the first in our family in 100 years to be raised in a home that's 100-percent drug and alcohol free.

Since you served as the twenty-first president of the National Congress of American Indians from 2013 to 2017, explain the organization's mission.

The National Congress was founded in 1944, so

it's the oldest and largest Indian organization in the United States. Our goal is to advocate in Washington, D.C., for all 573 tribal nations in the United States. Even though all the tribal nations are distinct sovereigns, the issues we deal with are the same when it comes to health, education, social services, economic development, and infrastructure.

What are your personal major accomplishments during your term of service?

Also some of what we accomplished was started before my presidency, so the baton was handed to me to finish the work. Accomplishments include such things as the Indian Health Care Improvement Act,¹ the Tribal Law and Order Act,² and the *Cobell* case, working toward ending violence against women.³ We have a long laundry list of accomplishments.

You've also served on the Swinomish Indian Senate, the governing body of your Indian tribal community.

I've served on the Senate since 1985. This is my thirty-fifth year on the council and my twenty-third year as chairman of the tribe.

What's the Senate's function?

We set policy and implement programs that will benefit our community members. The senate's number-one job is to provide essential governmental services to our people. One of the biggest services we now provide is for those who graduate high school or get a GED; they can get a full-ride scholarship to the college of their choice. Right now we have 1,000 tribal members. Approximately 600 of them are adults, and about 80 are attending higher education on a full-ride scholarship from our people.

We're trying to break the cycle of high dropout rates that we experience in Indian country. We've had to deal with high dropout rates for various reasons. One of those is historical trauma, a result of a federal government policy implemented in the 1870s that basically meant "Kill the Indian, save the man."

Unpack that phrase.

Basically what they did was take 80 percent of the kids ages 6 to 18 away from their parents and transport them to boarding schools to be assimilated into the White man's culture. They did not

allow them to speak their language, associate with their parents or their elders, tell their stories, sing their songs, or anything related to their culture. All church denominations in the United States in the 1870s had a part in running these schools.

A couple generations of kids were basically stolen. They never saw their parents or families again for six to 12 years.

Many people today aren't aware of that part of Native American history.

Unfortunately, that history is not taught in our schools. When our grandparents and great-grandparents went to these boarding schools, many experienced sexual, physical, and verbal abuse. The mental abuse was off the chart. It was historical trauma, PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder] at unprecedented levels. When you suffer with PTSD, you need a mental health counselor or drugs to deal with it. Unfortunately, our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents didn't have counseling available to them, so the drug they turned to was alcohol.

Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States all had the same policies implemented around the same time for the Native communities. The United Nations developed the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in 2007.⁴ The four countries that did not sign UNDRIP were Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. They all later reversed their position and endorsed the declaration. The United States under President Obama was the last country to sign in December 2010.⁵

In what other specific ways are you attempting to break the cycle of drug and alcohol abuse and the high dropout rate in schools?

We're emphasizing education. During the past 10 years in Swinomish we've increased our high school graduation rate to almost 100 percent. We're also trying to break the cycle of poor dental care. We provide money to pay for children's dental care because our people are still very poor, and having good teeth to help their self-esteem is especially important for our kids. We also provide funds for clothes and braces. In order for parents to get the certificate for the clothes, they have to show proof that their kids went to a dentist on our reservation. So it's an incentive.

When we implement these programs it saves money at the tribal, local, county, state, and federal levels because these kids are now getting educated. They're not on welfare. They're not on food stamps. They're not in prison. They're not in the foster care program. When you add up the money that you could potentially spend on someone who is out there in the world dealing with drugs and alcohol, the costs are enormous. But when you have an educated tribal member who is a productive member of society, paying taxes, it's just a night-and-day difference.

You've been described as being instrumental in the emergence of the Northwest Indian country salmon and seafood industry. What does that mean?

Our people have always been salmon people, have lived on salmon. Our goal is to do anything and everything to try to bring that natural resource back so it does not become extinct.

We live on the Skagit River, the only river in the lower 48 states that has every species of wild salmon still spawning in its tributaries. The actions we take today will impact the next generations. We want to make sure that in seven generations—if the Lord doesn't come back by then—the person filling my shoes will still be able to share with a reporter that the Skagit River has every species of wild salmon spawning in its tributaries.

What other types of economic-development programs have been put in place for Native Americans in your region?

We have a state-of-the-art health clinic and dental clinic, a housing program, free hearing aids for our elders, and a senior stipend to help pay for their utilities. We serve about 40,000 meals a year to our elders age 55 and older. We also have a heroin treatment center, the first of its kind in the nation.

You've been described as "tough but pragmatic," "religious," and "humble but ambitious." Would you say those descriptions are accurate?

My priorities are very simple: God, family, community. I take a lot of my leadership qualities from the Bible. As a leader in Indian country your mentality can never be "I climbed the ladder of success." Instead, it has to be "I made it to the bottom."

Servant Leadership?

Yes. In our culture we have the totem pole, the



Brian Cladoosby (front/red shirt), NCAI president at the time, leads tribal attendees in stretches and warm-ups before the annual NCAI Health Walk in Atlanta in 2014. Seventh-day Adventist Church Native Ministries sponsored the event.

story pole. We're taught that the most important figure of the totem pole is the one on the bottom, the one who holds everybody up. As a young child I started at the top of the totem pole, and my elders, my grandparents, my parents, held me up. My elected leaders held me up. Slowly I started climbing down that totem pole to where I am today, a leader among my people. I give God the credit for allowing me to do that. The Swinomish Tribe is doing well, not because of me, but because God blesses us.

You have to be humble in leadership; you have to be able to protect what you think is most valuable to you. God gave us this creation to be stewards over it, and we are very, very strong on environmental issues. It's part of the end-time prophecies that Satan is going to do everything he can not only to destroy God's family but also His creation, and we're witnessing that today. It's our job to protect what we have today, to be that voice for the salmon, the water, the air, and the soil.

In what ways do the challenges that Native Americans face today differ from those of 30 or 40 years ago?

Thirty or 40 years ago the drug of choice was alcohol, but things have evolved to where we are breaking the cycle of alcoholism. But because of the introduction of Oxycontin into our community, we are now seeing the emergence of those who are addicted to heroin. One hundred percent of our tribal members who have become addicted to heroin started with Oxycontin prescriptions.

So we started a program called This Has to Stop,

to combat the negative impact of the Oxycontin and the opiates that were being prescribed at unprecedented levels in our community and surrounding communities. This Has to Stop has become a model for heroin treatment and has received national awards.

Are there ways in which the Adventist Church in North America could better minister to or serve Native Americans?

Sadly, the Adventist Church ran one of the U.S. government boarding schools I described earlier to assimilate Native Americans into the White culture, so I would say making Adventists aware of this history and how it negatively impacted the tribes is vitally important.

Just as the field is ripe for missionary work outside the United States, we also have a field that is very ripe in the United States among Native American tribes.

What is the most important thing you would like our readers to take away from this article?

That God is a miracle worker. I am a reflection of that. Only by the grace of God am I here today. Also that historical trauma is still real, it's still alive—and it's up to us to break the cycle.

¹ www.ihs.gov/ihtcia

² www.justice.gov/tribal/tribal-law-and-order-act

³ www.thoughtco.com/history-behind-the-cobell-case-4082499

⁴ www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html

⁵ truthout.org/articles/the-us-rethinks-the-un-declaration-on-indigenous-rights-maybe



JESUS AWAITS

Turning our backs on God is not the end.

At age 15, while going through various conflicting stages of adolescence, I learned about Jesus and His marvelous message of salvation. As my parents granted me freedom, allowing me to step out with my girlfriends, I thought that freedom would bring me happiness. Instead it produced a void filled with intense frustrations.

One night after coming home from a party, I happened to spot a Bible on the table. Perhaps it had always been there, but that night I was irresistibly drawn to it, as if a voice said, “Here is the solution to the emptiness you feel.” I started reading. When the sun came up, I was reading in the book of Revelation.

What I read frightened me. Instead of finding the sense of peace that I had longed for, I

became preoccupied with those future events: predictions of plagues, destruction, and earthquakes. I couldn’t sleep, so I prayed as I had never prayed before. I pleaded with God to help me to understand what I was reading so that I could be part of His people. I continued reading the Bible daily, praying often, asking for an understanding of the book of Revelation.

About a month later two Seventh-day Adventists visited our home. They offered us a course of Bible studies explaining those apocalyptic mysteries. I was thrilled that God seemed to be hearing my cries for help. My father and I accepted their invitation, and we began Bible studies.

During each lesson I was surprised to learn how to understand the Word of God, and to see that the book of Revelation, contrary to what I thought before, is a book that offers hope and comfort to individuals such as me.

THE NARROW PATH

With the acceptance of these truths came tests from some of my relatives and friends. I soon realized that my only true friend was Jesus. Many of my friends stopped talking to me, and those who kept in touch ridiculed my new faith. I began to understand that following Christ meant carrying a cross. In the midst of this struggle a conflict arose within me. I realized that when I tried to do good, only evil resulted.

I longed to find someone who understood me. Unfortunately, certain individuals knew only how to cite definite rules of conduct, such as how to dress, what to say, and which foods to eat. As

important as these are, it seems that it wasn't the proper moment or the right way to address them. It seemed impossible to obtain salvation without fulfilling all those rules. Heaven seemed far away.

In time (and I say it sadly) my friendship with Jesus became superficial. My efforts were so concentrated on my attempts to become perfect that I ended up forgetting how to love and to relate to my Savior. I lived a sad life and became depressed. My mother (although now an Adventist) and friends begged me to abandon my faith. According to them, the Adventist religion was sapping my youth and my joy of living.

I reluctantly accepted the enemy's invitations. I left the church, much to my father's disappointment, confirming the suspicions of some regarding my sincerity in the first place. But God knew my heart.

I never enjoyed the company of my friends, for I knew it was not my place to join them. I even feared to venture into the streets, lest I die a lost person. Every Friday at sunset I suffered mental anguish as painful memories swept over me.

Once in a while, in desperation, I visited a church, longing for something in me to change. Whenever I entered a church, I felt the suspicious gaze of curious persons I knew. Sometimes their demeanor seemed hostile. I thought that salvation was unavailable to me.

But while I was astray, Jesus not only waited for me with open arms, He came to my rescue, showing how much He loved me.

BACK ON TRACK

Not long after I left the church, something happened to my best friend's mother. My friend asked me to pray for her mother and to give her Bible studies. She had always been critical of my beliefs and never accepted what I told her about Jesus. But now she wanted me to seek divine help for her mother.

How could I, a sinner, intercede on her behalf?

Astonished but still rejoicing, I knelt with my friend, seeking forgiveness of our sins. It seemed as if light streamed from heaven to brighten the dark recesses of my life.

We stayed up until late at night, praying and studying God's Word. We began attending church regularly and asked to be baptized.

Some individuals were skeptical of my conversion, doubting that I would remain true to God's

We should not consider persons unconverted because they do not behave as we would like them to.

leading. But now I had Someone at my side; Someone who understood my struggles.

My friend and I prayed together and encouraged each other. During this time I became acquainted with my future husband, who also helped me to come closer to Christ. We began giving Bible studies, distributing gospel leaflets, and accepting church offices. I began to be an instrument in Jesus' hands, further strengthening my faith.

Without realizing it, I was living up to church standards: the Spirit was bearing fruit in my life. I began to understand that when we focus our attention on doing God's will because of our love for Jesus, obedience becomes a natural—and pleasurable—consequence of having a transformed heart.

REACHING OUT

Young people don't always have to be reminded of right and wrong. Even though they invent excuses to explain away their sinning, they often know perfectly well how to discern right and wrong.

We need to let them fall in love with Jesus, and to be involved in His work with the support of other church members. People who are one step above in the ladder of sanctification don't throw stones down at those who are below. Instead, they extend helping hands to those who are trying to climb the same ladder.

We shouldn't consider persons unconverted because they do not behave as we would like them to. Far better to put ourselves in their place and offer to assist them in every possible way. As we pray for and with each other, we'll all take pleasure in belonging to the marvelous worldwide family of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. 📌

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JACOB'S GIFT OF PROPHECY

Inspired declarations from a pilgrim in Egypt

Through the ages God saw fit to bestow the gift of prophecy on various individuals such as Enoch, Anna, and Simeon, to name a few. This excerpt shows God's endowment of the gift of prophecy upon Jacob during the last days of his life. —Editors.

ELLEN G. WHITE

Joseph brought Jacob before Pharaoh, and introduced his much honored father to the king. Jacob blessed Pharaoh for his kindness to his son Joseph. "And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou? And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years; few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage."

Jacob told the king his years had been few and evil. That is, he had seen much trouble, and suffered much perplexity, which

had cut short his years. The life of Jacob had not been smooth and peaceful. The jealousy of his wives had brought a train of evils. Some of his children had grieved him, and made his life very bitter. But the last years of Jacob's life were more peaceful. His sons had reformed.

DIVINE REVELATIONS

As Jacob was about to die, his children gathered about him to receive his blessing, and to listen to his last words of advice to them. He forgave his children for all their unfilial conduct, and for their wicked treatment of Joseph, which had caused him

many years of grief as he had reflected upon his supposed dreadful death.

As he spoke with his children for the last time, the Spirit of the Lord rested upon him, and he uttered prophecies concerning them which reached far in the future. While under the spirit of inspiration he laid open before them their past life, and their future history, revealing the purposes of God in regard to them. He showed them that God would by no means sanction cruelty, or wickedness.

He commenced with the eldest. Although Reuben had no hand in selling Joseph, yet previous to that transaction he had grievously sinned. His course was corrupt, for he had transgressed the law of God. Jacob uttered his prophecy in regard to him. "Reuben, thou art my first-born, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power, unstable as water, thou shalt not excel."

A PAINFUL TRUTH

He then prophesied in regard to Simeon and Levi, who practiced deception to the Shechemites, and then in a most cruel, revengeful manner destroyed them. They were also the ones who were the most guilty in the case of Joseph. "Simeon and Levi are brethren, instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united; for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce, and their wrath, for it was cruel. I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel."

Jacob thus uttered the words of inspiration to his sorrowing sons, presenting before them the light in which God viewed their deeds of violence, and that he would visit them for their sins. His prophetic words in regard to his other sons were not as gloomy.

PROPHETIC WAYMARKS

In regard to Judah, Jacob's words of inspiration were more joyful. His prophetic eye looked hundreds of years in the future to the birth of Christ, and he said, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."

Jacob predicted a cheerful future for most of his

God by the spirit of prophecy elevated the mind of Jacob above his natural feelings.

sons. Especially of Joseph he uttered words of eloquence of a happy character. "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall. The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him; but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob. From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel. The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors, unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills. They shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren."

Jacob was an affectionate father. The words he uttered to his children were not his, spoken because he had retained an unforgiving spirit on account of their wrongs. He had forgiven them. He had loved them to the last.

He mourned deeply at the loss of Joseph, and when Simeon was retained in Egypt, he manifested grief, and expressed his anxious wish that his children should return safely from Egypt with their brother Simeon. He had no resentful feeling toward his sorrowing children.

But God by the spirit of prophecy elevated the mind of Jacob above his natural feelings. In his last hours angels were all around him, and the power of the grace of God shone upon him. His paternal feelings would have led him to only utter in his dying testimony expressions of love and tenderness. But under the influence of inspiration he uttered truth, although painful. ▀

This excerpt was taken from *Spiritual Gifts* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1864), vol. 3, pp. 169-173. Seventh-day Adventists believe that **Ellen G. White** (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.



THE SPECIAL SAUCE

What keeps your grace well flavored?

MATTHEW J. LUCIO

Our church library might as well be a museum. The slumping bookshelves hint of forgotten glory, like the once-chiseled physique of an aging body builder. It's been a decade since the last book was officially checked out, and H.M.S. Richards, Jr. (may he rest in peace), would recognize many of them from his childhood.

MORE MUSEUM STUFF

Moving on from the bronze age, there's a shelf loaded with VHS tapes. This technology meant that anyone could be a televangelist, and anyone could host an evangelistic series in their home. Though, in hindsight, if the books aged like cheese, videos age like milk.

Which leads me to McDonald's. The burger empire's marketing minds celebrate their "special sauce" as that *je ne sais quoi* granting them victory over their flame-grilled foes. McDonald's has done such a great job praising the goo that when they

finally unleashed 10,000 bottles of the stuff many of them were sold for \$100 to—no kidding—\$100,000. "Special sauce" has since become a byword for that unique quality that sets you apart from others.

Musician Bono got at the same idea when he described Apple: "What the competitors don't seem to understand is that you cannot get people this smart to work this hard just for money." Money isn't enough. You need to find the mysterious *more*. Speaking "McTalk," you need some special sauce.

Which brings me back to my admiration for our little church library. For me, that room represents Adventism's special sauce; that ingredient that helps make the Seventh-day Adventist Church special.

DISCOVERING THE RECIPE

Someone gathered those books and videos so that the church would be more than a place of worship; it would be a place where members could keep learning. This room has Adventism's special sauce: the principle of *semper discens*, "the church always learning." And this sauce has flowed through our veins from the beginning (it's also great on haystacks).

Emerging from the Great Disappointment in 1844, the men and women who founded our church went back to the Bible to learn where they had been wrong. They believed that they should "study of the Scriptures, that they might divest themselves of errors which have been handed down."¹ From the beginning the special sauce has flowed through our Adventist veins.

Early on, learning meant knowing the Bible stories and doctrines. Then the 1888 crisis made

clear that head knowledge wasn't enough: "We have a great and solemn truth committed to us for these last days, but a mere assent to and belief in this truth will not save us. The principles of the truth must be interwoven with our character and life."² Knowing, loving, living Jesus is the goal of true Christian learning.

WHAT MAKES THE SAUCE SPECIAL

Appreciating the delectable flavor of our Adventist faith includes understanding the spiritual and practical implications of its special sauce, of which I shall highlight three:

First, our special sauce means openness to truth: while we appreciate the past, we will never be defined by it. We respect the past because our history builds our confidence for today and tomorrow as we see how wonderfully God has led in our yesterdays. But our church pioneers ruled out the use of creeds, lest they handcuff the ways the Spirit could lead us in the future: As their very name indicates, Adventists are forward lookers.

Second, our special sauce stands for conscientious commitment to the great Protestant principle of *semper reformanda*, or "the church always reforming." Only if Christians are always learning in grace will the church always be reforming. Ellen White wrote: "When our people search the Word of God for themselves, we shall hear less murmuring than we hear today."³

Finally, our special sauce provides balance and maturity to our Christian living. "Those who are continually learning in the school of Christ will be able to pursue the even tenor of their way."⁴ The knowledge that we always have much to learn should keep us humble. It astounds me how a certain almost-retired colleague regularly harasses me for thoughts on how to improve his ministry! He embodies Ellen White's counsel that "God would have his servants, old and young, continually improving. . . . They should not settle down contented, thinking that their ways are perfect, and that others must work just as they do."⁵

KEEPING THE SAUCE SAUCY

My grandmother is a prolific cook. Her cooking year (yes, "year") culminates at Christmas with a batch of tamales. Everyone argues over how many they've earned throughout the year. All agree that there's never enough. Our own tries at tamales

Turning bland, formal, and tasteless is not an aspiration.

never work; we can't match a lifetime of practice. But we're painfully aware that someday our own knockoff tamales will have to do.

It's a critical, vital, indestructible truth: multiple pitfalls risk the sauciness of our sauce; history is littered with movements that ran out of gas when later generations became more interested in legacy than in mission. To preserve relevance and sustain authenticity every generation has to learn the special sauce recipe for themselves, *and then perfect it*—not by discussion in the classroom, but *by action in the kitchen of day-to-day living*.

To every pharisaical claim that we're Abe's kids, Jesus responds, "If you were Abraham's children, . . . you would do what Abraham did" (John 8:39). Adventism must not cheat our ancestors and our God by forfeiting the unique and rousing flavor of our faith. Turning bland, formal, and tasteless is not an aspiration. And fossilization is not an ambition!

For God's sake, and for our awesome grandmothers' [and grandfathers'] sakes, we must, we shall: (1) stay open to all truth into which the Spirit would guide us; (2) stay open to change for the better, and (3) constantly grow in spiritual balance and maturity. One day soon Jesus, Author and Finisher of our faith, will show up to transport us to a school of holy culinary exercise where that special sauce of growing in truth and grace will be lathered over every dish of glory! ▀

¹ Ellen G. White, *Early Writings* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1882), p. 250.

² Ellen G. White, *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials* (Washington, D.C.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1987), vol. 1, p. 117.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), p. 426.

⁵ Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1892), p. 301.

Matthew J. Lucio pastors the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Peoria, Illinois.



PHOTO BY AARON BURDEN ON UNSPLASH

MY DESPERATE CRY

Health is something we can never take for granted.

Being a nature lover, I stood in my garden enjoying the tranquil beauty all around me; the rich foliage of brightly colored flowers and the many varieties of roses in full bloom. It seemed as if a divine hand had painted each petal with love and precision.

I heard the birds of different hues, shapes, and sizes flitting from tree to tree, chirping merrily. I gazed upon the vast expanse of the clear blue sky dotted with clouds here and there. Truly our Creator had

spared no effort in creating such magnificent beauty and splendor.

UNWELCOME NEWS

A few days later any peace I had known was shattered, and my world came crashing down. Over the past four months I had experienced severe heartburn and difficulty swallowing, and had lost 30 pounds. I heard the doctor say that my symptoms were caused by stage 3 esophageal cancer. In shock, I calmly accepted my fate; my life was in God's hand.

My tumor was so large that it obstructed food from getting to my stomach. Surgery would involve removing one third of the esophagus, two thirds of the stomach, and any affected lymph nodes.

The plan seemed simple: three cycles of chemotherapy, followed by surgery, then three more cycles of chemotherapy. The chemotherapy was aggressive. The side effects left me weak and helpless. They robbed me of my appetite, left painful sores in my mouth, caused me to lose my hair, and left me nauseous and vomiting, and with blurry vision. I couldn't pray or remember a single Bible text. I felt as if the devil were shaking my wasted body like a rag doll; but I would not let him shake my faith in Jesus.

UNDER THE KNIFE

I went in for surgery knowing that my family and the entire church were praying for me. Just before the anesthetic took effect I prayed, "Lord, if I make it through this, it will be a miracle. If not, Lord, remember me when

You come in the clouds of glory. Please take care of my family.”

The next thing I knew, I was being wheeled to a recovery unit. The hands of the Great Physician were on me, and the surgery was a success. Every test, X-ray, and vital-sign reading came back normal. Nine days after surgery I was discharged and eagerly anticipated being home with my family.

A few weeks later I started my second round of chemotherapy. The hair on my eyebrows and eyelashes fell off; my once-full beard became patches of whiskers; my eyes were sunken and my cheeks hollow. I was a walking skeleton. I was told to eat, but once again my mouth developed sores, and I couldn't eat or drink even if I wanted to. I didn't have the energy even to pick up a spoon. I felt myself wasting away.

My wife tirelessly did everything she could to keep me comfortable, but I felt as if I were dying a slow, painful death. My family helped me to sit outside to get some sun and fresh air. I tried to connect with God through nature by looking at all the beautiful flowers, but my mind was incapable of grasping much of reality. The gulf between God and me seemed to widen. I felt terrible isolation.

My body felt shattered and wasted. My tortured mind screamed for release. At that time even death would have seemed welcome. My confused mind tried to find answers in the chain of events that led to my predicament. Through my pain and suffering I tried to seek the Lord, but heaven seemed silent. Throughout my life, through many trials, I always felt God's hand guiding and protecting me, but now my heart was breaking. My God, whom I loved and trusted, seemed to have forsaken me. Day after day, night after night, I felt myself falling into an abyss. My cry of anguish was “Where are You, Lord?”

Just when everything seemed lost, I got down on wobbly knees and with tears streaming down my face, managed to say just three words: “Jesus, help me.”

A strange feeling of peace came over me. The fog lifted, my mind was clearer, and as the days passed my vision improved. I was able to pray and read from God's Holy Word. The icy-cold fingers of death seemed to let go. By the grace of God, I had cheated death.

My faith was tested to its limit, but the Lord delivered me.

My faith was tested to its limit, but the Lord delivered me. Throughout this storm of life my faith was tossed like a boat in rough seas, but my anchor was grounded firm and deep in the Savior's love.

ALIVE AGAIN

After my terrible ordeal I never again questioned my heavenly Father, for I knew what He would say, if asked, “Lord, where were You when I needed you most?”

He would gently reply: “When you felt as though heaven was silent, that was when I was closest to you.”

I've walked through the valley of the shadow of death, but I did not walk alone. Jesus held my hand. He promised: “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you” (Heb. 13:5). I praise God for snatching me from the jaws of death, for giving me a new lease on life, and for restoring me to my wonderful family.

I shoveled snow last winter. I'm now ready to mow the lawn and tend my rose garden. I walked my daughter down the aisle and rejoiced that God in His goodness decided to spare my life.

As long as God lends me breath I will praise Him and enjoy my second chance at life with my wife, our children, and our grandchildren. His grace is sufficient. With a grateful heart I offer my praise: “You are good, Lord. You are kind and merciful. All praise, glory, and honor belong to You, O Lord.”

Ned Naggyah wrote this when he lived in Pointe Claire, Quebec, Canada. Unfortunately, cancer claimed his life a few years after this was written.

THE CARTER REPORT

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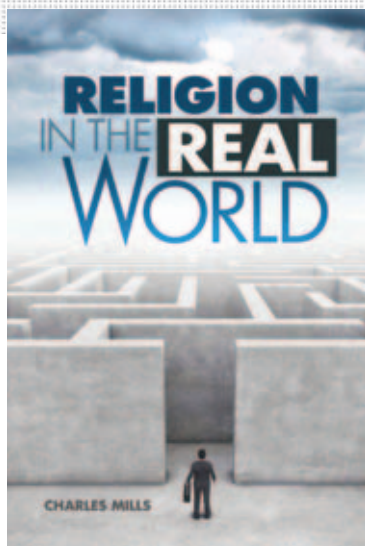
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CLOSER LOOK



Real World Religion

Real Religion in the Real World, Charles Mills, Pacific Press, 2019. Softcover, US\$14.99 (Kindle edition \$7.99), 128 pages. Reviewed by Stephen Chavez, *Adventist Review*.

In *Real Religion in the Real World* author Charles Mills makes the case that viewed from a certain perspective, Christianity is the answer to most of the perverse problems that face us as individuals and as a society. The book is the latest offering from an individual who is an accomplished author, photographer, and videographer. His audiences range from young children to the rest of us, and his material is always top-shelf.

The book is in fact an anthology of articles that have appeared mostly in *Signs of the Times* over the past decade or so (with a couple having appeared in *Adventist Review* in the 1980s). The articles have been organized into four parts that cover most of the Adventist Church's 28 Funda-

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

Good News About God

God? Really? Good News About the God I Don't Believe In, Harald Giesebrecht, Signs Publishing, 2019. Softcover, 153 pages. Reviewed by Stephen Chavez, *Adventist Review*.

Not many books begin with a statement from the author such as this: "If you are a confident and happy Christian today, content with your faith and the answers you've found, maybe you should lay this book aside. It wasn't written for you."

He goes on: "It was written for people who are searching, people who would like to believe in Jesus, but who more than once have shaken their fist at heaven and shouted, 'God? Really?'—or something along those lines."

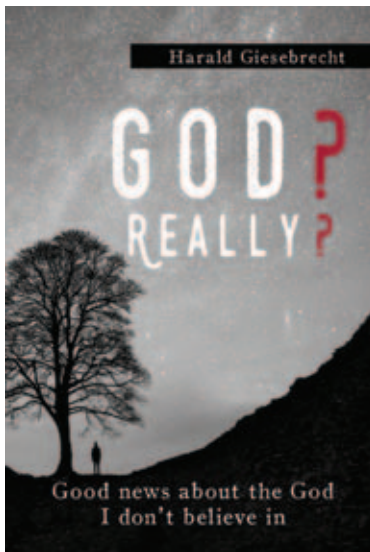
In *God? Really?* The author, a pastor and director of children's and family ministries for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Norway, reveals his passion for reaching those who are tempted to give up on Christianity. He confidently and unapologetically addresses issues raised by some of Christianity's harshest critics, avowed atheists such as Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens.

Giesebrecht's response is not to dismiss them

mental Beliefs. And since most of them appeared in *Signs*, the church's premier outreach publication, they are all written in such a way as to engage those who are searching for answers to spiritual questions.

The author uses personal experiences and anecdotes taken from well-known popular sources and skillfully combines them with Bible verses and stories to connect his readers with practical spiritual truths.

Real Religion doesn't shy away from



or their criticism, but to examine them objectively. In the process the author admits that taken casually, some critics are justified in their dismissal of Christianity's core beliefs.

For example, what does one do with God's apparent ultimatum: "Love Me or I'll kill you"? How does one take seriously God's claim of being a God of love when that "threat" hangs over one's head?

The titles of the four sections of the book indicate that this is not your typical book of Christian apologetics. They read like dares: "Can God Be Trusted?" "Escape From a Psychopathic

tough topics, such as the character of God, hatred, death, judgment. At the same time, it affirms our beliefs about God's law, God's Word, the sanctity of the family, salvation, and eternal life. The final and fourth section of the book—"Body Temple"—highlights the relationship between physical and spiritual health, and includes chapters about diet, stress, and breaking bad habits.

The most powerful argument about the vitality of Christianity comes in the last chapter of the book, the epilogue. Mills illustrates that at its best Christianity is not just a collection of doctrines or

God," "Is God Qualified for the Job?" "Going Deeper."

In a climate in which many commentators, both secular and religious, decry our age as "post-Christian," *God? Really?* is a serious and readable attempt to look at Christian dogma in a way that both reaffirms biblical faith and challenges Christians to see the claims of the gospel—and more particularly God's true character—as the beginning of making Christianity relevant in a society that sees itself as post-Christian.

God? Really? doesn't minimize the teachings of the Bible. It admits straight up that some things in the Bible are difficult to understand. But then the author goes on to examine several (not all) of these problem texts to reconcile them with other passages that help readers examine them from fresh perspectives.

One of the great perils of reading the Bible is not misunderstanding it, but reading it in a way that portrays God as someone created in our own image. Jesus' life and ministry was an attempt to set the record straight. *God? Really?* is one man's struggle to harmonize Bible stories that seem to extol violence and bloodshed with the being we love and worship as the Prince of Peace. ♣

teachings that are divorced from real life. Christianity in fact improves the quality of the lives of those who practice it.

Real Religion in the Real World is a positive, life-affirming commentary about Christianity. In a society in which religion in general and Christianity in particular is often used as a punch line, or as an example of bigotry or dysfunction, Mills reminds readers that Christianity is a viable solution to many of society's ills. *Real Religion* is as much for sharing as it is for one's own edification and inspiration. ♣

PEOPLE OF PROMISE

God's people believe in prophecy. Prophecies are God's down payment on His promises. Through the centuries of salvation history, God's prophecies have applications that are both personal and corporate, and always for the benefit of His people.—Editors.

"I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will crush your head,
and you will strike his heel."

GOD TO THE SERPENT (GEN. 3:15).

"I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

GOD TO JACOB (GEN. 28:13-15).

"I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey. . . . And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."

GOD TO MOSES (EX. 3:7-10).

"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel."

ISAIAH TO THE HOUSE OF DAVID (ISA. 7:14).

"Eli answered, 'Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him.'"

ELI TO HANNAH (1 SAM. 1:17).

"For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever."

GOD THROUGH ISAIAH TO THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH (ISA. 9:6, 7).

"As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance."

GOD TO DANIEL (DAN. 12:13).

"But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays."

GOD THROUGH MALACHI TO THE NATION (MALACHI 4:2).



“Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

ANGEL TO JOSEPH (MATT. 1:20, 21).

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”

JESUS TO HIS DISCIPLES (JOHN 14:1-3).

“According to the Lord’s word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.”

**PAUL TO THE BELIEVERS IN THESSALONICA
(1 THESS. 4:15-17).**

“Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.’ . . . He who testifies to these things says, ‘Yes, I am coming soon.’”

JESUS TO HIS CHURCH (REV. 22:12-20).

“[God] took him outside and said, ‘Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.’ Then he said to him, ‘So shall your offspring be.’ Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.”

GOD TO ABRAM (GEN. 15:5, 6).

Beyond Thoughts and Prayers

Early in the morning I like to take a quick glance through the daily news. I say quick because lingering too long is not good for anyone. I also get news alerts on my watch so I can decide if there is a story I should pay more attention to. Sometimes they are harmless—a headline about Archie Harrison Mountbatten-Windsor charming Bishop Desmond Tutu with his 5-month-old antics, for example. But more often than not, the news is grim. Shootings, threats of war, world leaders behaving badly, wildfires, drought, the earth's climate malfunctioning. I could fill this entire page with more examples.

It's easy to become desensitized to news reports, and breathe a sigh of relief that it doesn't affect you or yours. But more and more I'm convinced that we can't call ourselves Christians and remain unaffected.

We do offer our thoughts and prayers. We think and we pray, and we pray and we think. Good enough, right? But for believers, there has to be more to it.

We do need to think. We need to think about the mother whose son's biggest concern was taking the SAT next week. Instead, he was gunned down on his way to chemistry class. We need to imagine, with God, that it was our child and feel her anguish.


We need to think about what it would feel like to wake up one morning to see smoke in the distance and by day's end have no home anymore. How would we cope if we lost everything in the span of

hours? For every difficult story we must step into the shoes of the ones affected and cultivate more empathy. Don't just feel for someone in distress—feel with them.

We do need to pray. When we stop to remember that people going through horrific circumstances are no different from us; that they are someone's brother or sister, child or friend, we need to lift them up in prayer as if we'd known them all our lives. We need to try to feel a minute of their pain and plead on their behalf for God to give them all they need to face their current agony. We need to take them on board in our prayers as if all our lives depended on it. Pray for them without ceasing, as if we were praying for ourselves.

But then we need to act.

To be the hands and feet of Jesus means we actually have to do something besides putting our hands together. If we can, we have to find ways to involve ourselves in the effort of changing bad to good. No contribution is too small, no effort is too meager. As Jesus took the small offering of a boy's fish-and-bread lunch and caused it to feed 5,000 hungry souls until they were satisfied, so can He take our sacrifice of time, money, or gesture of activism to bless someone in need and lift them out of their struggles. When we unselfishly offer ourselves to ease someone else's burdens, Jesus Christ is honored, glorified, and, most of all, glad.

When that happens, we are exactly where we should be. 

Wilona Karimabadi is an assistant editor of *Adventist Review*. She also edits *KidsView*.

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