

ADVENTIST REVIEW

**APRIL 2020: JESUS: FAILED EVANGELIST? +
ART IS FOR THE LIVING + DECLUTTER YOUR
WORLD + MISSIONARY: WHAT'S THAT? +
BE OUR GUEST + TIME'S UP!**



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FEATURES

The Church
I Want to
Belong to Is...

MISSION-MINDED

COMPASSIONATE

WELCOMING

18 **MISSIONARY: WHAT'S THAT?** | LAEL CAESAR



Some embrace the title; others flee from it.

22 **THE MISSION OF GOD** | GORDEN R. DOSS



Our vision of God informs our sense of mission.

28 **JESUS, FAILED EVANGELIST?** | SHAWN BOONSTRA



He didn't have much to show for His three and a half years of ministry.

32 **ONE COMMUNITY AT A TIME** | MARTI SCHNEIDER



When she went looking for a mission field, she found one in her front yard.

34 **BE OUR GUEST** | HEIDI BAUMGARTNER



People in Seattle who face long hospital stays now find a home away from home at Green Lake Church.

36 **MY CHURCH MULTIPLIES** | BOYAN LEVTEROV



Which is better? One large church? Or several smaller ones?

40 **BEYOND THE NUMBERS GAME** | CHRISTIAN AND HEIDI MARTIN



Statistics don't tell the whole story.

Don stopped in Gary, Indiana, where he waited on the front porch of the church for Toni and her family to arrive for the funeral. Toni later told us that as they drove up, someone from the family said, “Who’s that White man up there?”

Toni looked and said, “That’s no White man! That’s my neighbor, Don!”

32

ARTICLES

44 **THE PRESIDENT AND THE PROPHET**
MERLE POIRIER

Arthur Grosvenor Daniells, General Conference president, respected and admired Ellen White’s gift. He really did.

46 **DOUBLE-MINDEDNESS, NOT OTHNIEL JEREMIAH**

We want to be victorious. But how much do we want it?

48 **A PIVOTAL SESSION**
BARRY OLIVER

This year’s General Conference session won’t happen in a vacuum.

54 **FORGIVEN, NOT FORGOTTEN**
RICHARD D. MARTIN

Jesus’ resurrection was immensely important to one disciple in particular.

58 **SEEKING TRUE KNOWLEDGE**
ELLEN G. WHITE

The science of becoming like Christ

62 **THE GO-BETWEEN**
MARYBETH GESSELE

Seeking an answer to one of life’s most important questions

65 **JESUS LEADS HOME**
ERWIN GANE
NOT I

PRERNA LALL

66 **DECLUTTER YOUR WORLD**
WILONA KARIMABADI

Resolved: to stop buying so much, and to organize what we have.



NEWS | OPINION

- » U.S. Supreme Court Declines to Hear Sabbathkeeper’s Case
- » Adventist Schools Offer Free Enrollment in Puerto Rico
- » New Study Guides Teach Biblical Health Principles
- » William H. Shea Remembered
- » Employees at World Church Headquarters Work Remotely.
- » Young Adults Encouraged to Be Creative in Evangelism



EDITORIAL

5 **BILL KNOTT**

LIT BY JOY AND WARMED BY LOVE

DEPARTMENTS

- 6 **LETTERS**
- 61 **HOUSE CALL**
- 68 **CLOSER LOOK**
- 70 **VOICES**

COLUMNS

- 27 **CLIFF’S EDGE**
CLIFFORD GOLDSTEIN
- 35 **JOURNEYS WITH JESUS**
JILL MORIKONE
- 53 **THE LIFE OF FAITH**
ANDY NASH
- 72 **IN OTHER WORDS**
GERALD A. KLINGBEIL

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TRENDING

THE MOST SHARED STORIES ON ADVENTISTREVIEW.ORG LAST MONTH:



- 1 Coronavirus
- 2 Call to Prayer Regarding Coronavirus
- 3 "We Hold Them Accountable"
- 4 "Why Are So Many Leaving the Church?"
- 5 The Day It Rained Ash and Stones



CASTING A WIDER NET

The 1905 General Conference session seemed to demonstrate the church's awakening for mission. It was reported as a "precious season," allowing for a spirit of unity, a conviction to preach the third angel's message worldwide, and for increased financial support of missions. Reports were heard from Japan, Korea, China, India, Africa, and Europe.

W. A. Spicer, secretary of the General Conference, summarized the session with these words:

"It was a missionary General Conference. The gathering of delegates from the far-away fields, with their stirring words of progress, helped to make it so. . . . Anxious hearts were waiting in the distant fields to know if the General Conference would call for retrenchment and delay, or sound the note of advance. Advance is the word, and the trumpet call of the conference gives the order with no uncertain sound."



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BILL KNOTT



*If all we know is duty, not desire,
then we will make a replica of us.*

Lit by Joy and Warmed by Love

One of my seminary friends used to regularly amuse our homiletics class with folksy wisdom about preaching.

“Adventist congregations,” he opined with full dramatic gestures, “love nothing so much as being whupped up ‘longside the head!”

Once the laughter died away, we found ourselves wincing at the painful reality he uncovered with his odd assertion. It was true, we knew, how easy it is to create guilt and apprehension from the pulpit by reminding worshippers of just how far they fall short of the mark.

References to cheese and chocolate work remarkably well. A passing mention of inadequate devotional time can make a proud heart tremble. The obligation to return a faithful tithe will cause fully half of every congregation to start studying the carpet patterns underneath the pews.

But nothing works so fully as reminding good and faithful Adventists of their responsibility to share the three angels’ messages in every way, in every place, at every time.

“Now *that* was a good sermon,” church members will say as they stare darkly at their feet. “You really preached to us today. I’ve got to do better at sharing the gospel.”

And in our hasty, unreflective hearts, we preachers take the backward compliment—and miss

the real message. We make the quick, unwarranted assumption that the mere proclamation of the message—whether heartfelt or not—will have some saving effect and thus accelerate the kingdom. When a dozen grumbling souls turn out for our next witnessing event, we count as though the witnesses were joyful and the message life-transforming.

Was this the movement Jesus set in motion? Is this the passion that made men and women stand in marketplaces and courtrooms, lit by joy and warmed by love? Could what we call our “mission” be the stuff that drove disciples by the thousands to climb mountains, cross oceans, brave emperors, and face protracted, agonizing death?

No—obligation never made a real missionary of anyone. Duty may get us to the door, but only love will make us choose to sacrifice. Unless there is a fire burning in the soul; unless there is a joy in knowing Jesus that has grown unstoppable; unless the heart is changed by grace and charged by love, the work we call our “mission” will stall long before we cross saltwater or even leave the neighborhood.

If you would make a missionary of someone, you must make them fall in love with something—preferably Someone. For every story we tell of those who were themselves converted while “creeping like snail unwill-

ingly to school,”* we know another 10 about the damage done by unconverted, downbeat witnesses. If all we know is duty, not desire, then we will make a replica of us—and thereby make the kingdom less attractive to those who don’t know Jesus.

Mission is the natural, impossible-to-miss next step for those who have spent sweet time with Jesus. Healed people make the best evangelists. Forgiven sinners know just how to sing of grace. One witness who can cry, “My life is different! May God be praised!” will do more good than 50 drudges we’ve recruited with our words of obligation.

Don’t put an unlit candle out against the night and then expect the world to be compelled by what it sees.

And so the church’s first responsibility is always—to make disciples. Let them spend their time in close with Jesus; let them see how grace will change their attitudes and characters; let them feel the deep affection of a Lord who promises to never leave them or forsake them (Heb. 13:5).

Then you will have a revolution on your hands.

The church I want to belong to is . . . *mission-minded*.

*William Shakespeare, “Seven Ages of Man,”
As You Like It.

The mission of the Adventist Church is so much more than to simply proclaim the three angels' messages.

GREGORY MATTHEWS, VIA WEB

THE COLOR OF LIVES THAT MATTER

I love this article. I never hate on anyone. I strive to respect every human being, and I love the differences in color, hair, eyes, height, language, accents, etc. I love God's creativity. Furthermore, we have only one race—the human race.

Imagine if God made everyone White or Black, the world would be the most boring place ever.

Astrid Okelo
via Facebook



Church is much more than to simply proclaim the three angels' messages. We can, and often do, proclaim a message that is unheard and produces no change in life and belief. The mission of the church is to prepare people for the coming of the Lord. We must be careful that we do not accuse those who attempt to convert those of our secularized society to Christ of watering down the doctrinal teachings upon which this denomination is founded, when in actual fact we are doing exactly what God wants us to do in compliance with the message of the first angel.

Gregory Matthews
via web

CELEBRATING MARANATHA

I was so happy to hear that Maranatha celebrated 25 years of service to the people of Cuba. It was my privilege to be a part of a tour of 30 leaders and lay members to inaugurate the Pinar del Rio church, visit the seminary, and witness a large baptism in Havana back in 2000. It is amazing how the Lord has blessed this organization, not only in Cuba but around the world.

My wife and I remember the joy of our people and their

gratitude for the ministry of Maranatha. Praise God for Don Noble's leadership, his wife, Laura, and the thousands of volunteers. I also appreciate the article remembering Kari Paulsen, who passed away January 10. We cannot forget how dedicated our companions have been to the work of the Lord.

Leo Ranzolin, Sr.
Estero, Florida

WHY ARE SO MANY LEAVING THE CHURCH?

The mission of the Adventist

The problem of our youth leaving the church is a serious one, but I

Take some young people under your wing. Do things with them. Love them. Most of the young people I have done that with are still in the church.

DANNY WHATLEY, VIA WEB

don't agree with the author's suggestion, "Could it be that we spend more time talking about the beast, creating righteousness by fear, than talking about the Lamb, who credits us with righteousness by faith?"

I doubt that most Adventist churches spend that much time talking about "the beast." Most sermons I hear are about justification by faith, and a watered-down version of that subject at best. Vital Christianity being modeled in the church may be a more likely problem. How many actually follow the pattern left by Jesus? How many actually witness for Him?

Take some young people under your wing. Do things with them. Love them. Most of the young people I have done that with are still in the church. No credit to me. I should have done more!

Danny Whatley

via web

WILLIAM H. SHEA REMEMBERED AS A REMARKABLE, HUMBLE SCHOLAR

Williams Shea was instrumental in my journey into a deeper understanding of the book of Daniel—especially Daniel 8:8-12.

I have admired his scholarship ever since. He will rest in peace, and his family will have the comfort of knowing that a great man in Christ is awaiting the resurrection.

Jeff Couzins

via web

Bill Shea was such a thoughtful and godly man. I always appreciated his biblical diagnoses in the articles he wrote. He will be missed, though his writings will continue to speak for God's glory.

Kevin Morgan

via web

2020 GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION

Official notice is hereby given that the sixty-first session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists will be held June 25-July 4, 2020, in the Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, Indiana. The first meeting will begin at 8:00 a.m., June 25, 2020. All duly accredited delegates are urged to be present at that time.

Ted N. C. Wilson, General Conference President
G. T. Ng, General Conference Secretary

2020 GENERAL CONFERENCE CORPORATION NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the next regular meeting of the members of the General Conference Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists will be held in the Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, Indiana, on Sunday, June 28, 2020, for the transaction of any business that may come before the meeting. The members of this corporation are the delegates to the sixty-first session of the General Conference.

Daisy Jane F. Orion,
Corporate Secretary

YOUR TURN

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



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WE STAND APART

- Run by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Southern Asia Division.
- Give 94% of sponsor funds directly to support children, retaining only 6% for administration.
- Support kindergarten through college education.

Adventist Child India was conceived and built by Dorothy and Ron Watts. Today, it is led by Bill and Nancy Mattison-Mack.

“I felt a burden to reach those who hadn’t heard this gospel and thought, *Where are my time and energies spent? What does serving my local church sound like?*” Justin Khoe, page 16



Darrell Patterson. PHOTO: DAN WEBER, NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION NEWS

ADVENTIST PHARMACY WORKER’S CASE DECLINED BY U.S. SUPREME COURT

CASE STILL MOVES THE CAUSE OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN THE WORKPLACE FORWARD, LEADERS SAY.

BY TODD MCFARLAND, OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

On Monday, February 24, 2020, a nearly nine-year journey came to an end when the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear *Patterson v. Walgreens*. This case came out of Walgreens’ decision to terminate Darrell Patterson because he failed to work on a single Saturday (Sabbath) in 2011.

The case wound its way to the U.S. Supreme Court, asking the question: What does the law require employers to do to accommodate the religious beliefs of its employees? Patterson asked the court to reconsider its 1977 decision in *TWA v. Hardison*.

Hardison said anything more than a minimal inconvenience or expense would be an undue hardship.

While it is disappointing that the court did not take *Patterson*, his case moved the cause of religious liberty in the workplace forward immeasurably. Before Patterson’s case, religious employees were not only stuck with the *Hardison* decision; there was also no movement to get the Supreme Court to reconsider *Hardison*.

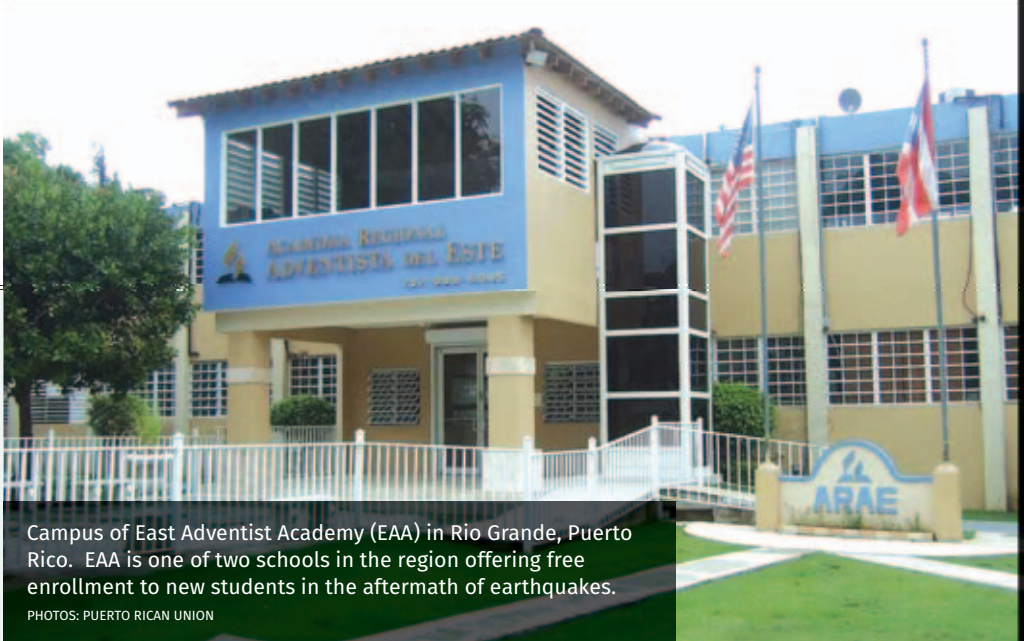
That has all changed. In declining to hear *Patterson*, three justices (Samuel Alito, Clarence Thomas,

and Neil Gorsuch) said they were looking for an appropriate case to revisit *Hardison*. In a statement made when the case was denied, Justice Alito wrote: “I reiterate that review of the *Hardison* issue should be undertaken when a petition in an appropriate case comes before us.” In Supreme Court parlance, that is as clear an invitation as it gets.

In addition, the U.S. government is now on record as supporting *Hardison*’s being revisited. This is not insignificant; the solicitor general (who represents the U.S. government) is often called the tenth justice, and that opinion matters. The position of the government is not likely to change even when the administration changes in either 2021 or in 2025.

To use an analogy from American football, while the church was unable to get the ball over the goal line in *Patterson*, we moved it considerably. Before Patterson brought his case, legal challenges to *Hardison* were nonexistent—the equivalent of being on our own one-yard line. This single case has put the issue in the red zone. While there is no guarantee the court will overturn *Hardison*, it is now in striking distance.

Football analogies aside, Patterson’s case, despite its not being granted, is the most significant development in workplace religious accommodation in a generation. The Adventist Church is committed to continuing this fight—as it has for the past four decades—and to bettering the workplace for all people of faith. ▀



Campus of East Adventist Academy (EAA) in Rio Grande, Puerto Rico. EAA is one of two schools in the region offering free enrollment to new students in the aftermath of earthquakes.

PHOTOS: PUERTO RICAN UNION

IN PUERTO RICO, ADVENTIST SCHOOLS OFFER FREE ENROLLMENT AFTER EARTHQUAKES

“OUR MISSION AS A CHURCH IS TO SERVE,” CHURCH LEADER IN THE TERRITORY SAYS.

BY LIBNA STEVENS, INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION NEWS

In the aftermath of a series of earthquakes that forced more than 800 public schools to close at the beginning of 2020, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Puerto Rico has begun free enrollment at its church-operated schools.

“We are not sure when schools across the island will open again, and we understand that it is important that students complete their school year, so we are more than happy to offer free enrollment to our primary and secondary schools that have classroom space available,” said José Rodríguez, president of the Puerto Rican Union Conference church region.

“Our mission as a church is to serve, and we do not want children to miss their school year more than

they already have,” Rodríguez said. “We have some schools that have already filled those open spaces and are finding out there’s a long waiting list.”

The announcement was broadcast through a territory-wide television channel and print media.

The schools in the eastern part of the territory are offering various combinations of free tuition or free registration, uniforms, and school supplies to more than 130 students who enrolled. In the western region, several schools are offering free registration and 10 percent off the rest of the school year until May.

Some of the church schools that were partially destroyed or damaged are finishing the school year



Teachers and church members help set up temporary classrooms in January 2020 on the campus of Southwestern Adventist Academy in Sabana Grande, in order to resume classes.

in specially built temporary tents for the next four months, Rodríguez said. “Our schools have been running drills in case of an earthquake, or any other emergency, should they have to respond for security reasons,” he said.

“OUR MISSION AS A CHURCH IS TO SERVE, AND WE DO NOT WANT CHILDREN TO MISS THEIR SCHOOL YEAR MORE THAN THEY ALREADY HAVE.”

As Hurricane Maria devastated the island in 2017, Adventist school facilities suffered some damage, and classes were interrupted. As a result, more than 400 students dropped out, according to Rodríguez. The earthquakes likewise caused some students to leave, leaving more spots for new students. “That has opened the way for the church to pour in more resources and offer free or discounted enrollment until May,” he explained.

“Everyone is stressed out and anxious about this earthquake situation, especially the young ones. So we are providing extra psychological services to students and taking safety measures to relieve the stress they constantly live in,” Rodríguez said. 🍌

NEW STUDY GUIDES TEACH HEALTH PRINCIPLES FROM A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

ADVENTHEALTH AND IT IS WRITTEN PARTNER IN THE CREATION OF BIBLE-BASED STUDIES FOR ACHIEVING OPTIMAL HEALTH.

BY INGRID HERNÁNDEZ,
ADVENTHEALTH

International media evangelism ministry It Is Written has partnered with AdventHealth, a faith-based, non-profit health system, to develop study guides for groups interested in learning about health from a biblical perspective.

“Health care is an important ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church,” said Ted Hamilton, AdventHealth’s senior vice president and chief mission integration officer. “AdventHealth has the expertise and credibility, and therefore an important calling to collaborate with the church, so that together we can have a bigger impact in the delivery of wholeness.”

The CREATION Life study guides incorporate AdventHealth’s whole-person health philosophy in a welcoming and easy-to-remember approach based on the CREATION Life framework. The CREATION acronym stands for choice, rest, environment, activity, trust in God, interpersonal relationships, outlook, and nutrition.

“Many people simply have no idea that the Bible has a lot to say about good health. The way the CREATION Life study guides are written and designed provides a wonderful opportunity for sharing faith in a very positive way,” said John Bradshaw, speaker/director of It Is Written. “The guides draw on the excellence and expertise of AdventHealth, a trusted name in health care that commands respect.”

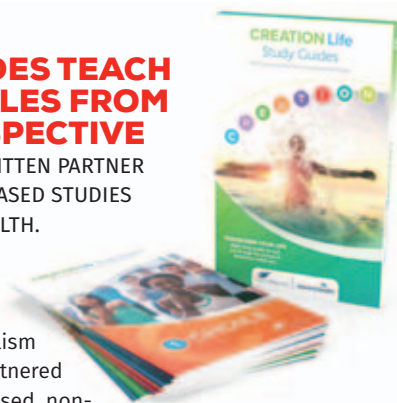
Over the years AdventHealth has developed an array of whole-person health materials that have been used by a variety of institutions, congregations, and ministries. When AdventHealth got the call for this opportunity, the health system gave It Is Written permission to use its existing CREATION Health Bible Program as the foundation for the new studies. CREATION Health is the former name of the CREATION Life framework, and as the materials are rebranded, churches and communities can expect to receive new resources this year.

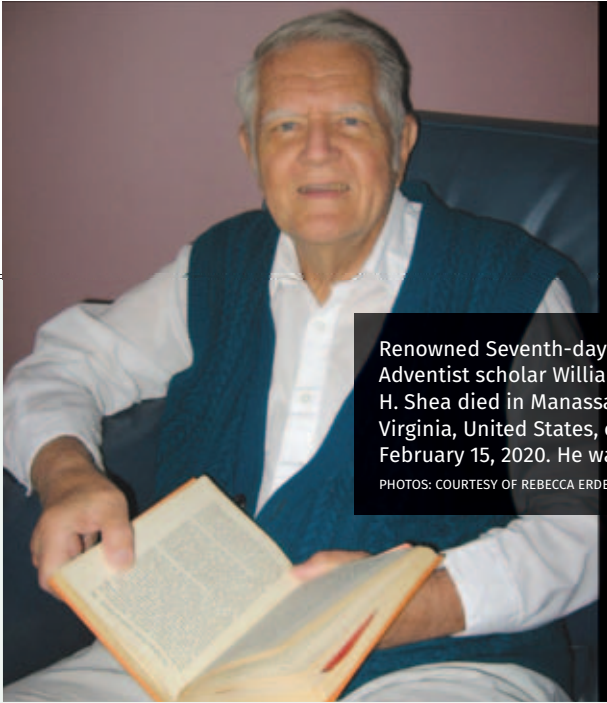
“I learned about the study guides at an AdventHealth executive board meeting,” said Ron Carlson, president of the Kansas-Nebraska Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. “I was deeply impressed with them and ordered enough sets to share with all our pastors at our January meeting. They will be placing an order through us soon to put them to use in various ways.”

Pastors and ministry leaders expect the guides to be an effective tool for witnessing in a more accessible way.

“People care deeply about health and wellness, and the Bible seamlessly dovetails with these subjects,” Bradshaw said. “It’s a gentle yet extremely effective way to build bridges, to offer real, practical help, and to win the confidence of people. The CREATION Life study guides do that. They’ve already become very popular. We’re going to see God do great things through this resource.”

The CREATION Life study guides are available at ItIsWritten.com and in the future will also be delivered through the It Is Written Bible study app. AdventHealth plans to make them available to team members in 2021. 🍌





Renowned Seventh-day Adventist scholar William H. Shea died in Manassas, Virginia, United States, on February 15, 2020. He was 87.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF REBECCA ERDELYI

WILLIAM H. SHEA REMEMBERED AS A REMARKABLE, HUMBLE SCHOLAR

HE RESEARCHED, LECTURED, AND WROTE ABOUT THE SABBATH, GENESIS, DANIEL, AND REVELATION.

BY ADVENTIST REVIEW STAFF

William H. Shea, a physician, professor, and lecturer on archaeology and the Bible, died February 15, 2020, in Manassas, Virginia, United States. He was 87.

“What I find especially difficult to put into words is what a humble and unassuming person he was,” daughter Rebecca Erdelyi said in reflecting on her late father. “He was the epitome of ‘walk humbly with thy God.’”

Shea was also a remarkable scholar. Seventh-day Adventist professor Ferdinand O. Regalado, who wrote his dissertation on the impact of Shea’s works on biblical studies, states, “[My research] has ... shown that he is both a renowned

scholar and a dedicated believer.”

Shea’s two worlds, as a scholar and as a person, were interconnected, according to *Adventist Review* associate editor Gerald Klingbeil. Shea “was not only a consummate scholar and a creative and careful interpreter of the Word,” he said. “He was a kind man whose openness and friendliness attracted students and church members.”

Shea also had a talent to reach outside Adventist circles. Klingbeil shared that while he was pursuing his doctorate at a major non-Adventist university in South Africa, professors would speak about Shea with the highest esteem. “[Shea]’s contribution to Adventist scholar-

ship cannot be overestimated. His love and interest in people around him is something to be replicated,” Klingbeil said.

HIS LIFE STORY

William “Bill” Shea was born to Henry Morris Shea and Nettie Josephine Lende on December 30, 1932, in Upland, California, United States. His boyhood days were spent by the sea in Laguna Beach.

His family moved to Ontario, California, where he attended high school. Across the street from his new home lived two Adventist young people with whom he walked to school every day. They invited him to an evangelistic meeting at the Adventist church on the topic of Daniel 2. He started attending church services, became involved with the young people’s activities, and was baptized.

Shea went to La Sierra College, where Karen Olsen, his wife of 63 years, first caught his eye. Karen later attended the college and they became acquainted. They married at the end of her freshman year of medical school.

While in college, Shea was undecided between the ministry and medicine, finally deciding on medicine with the goal of becoming a medical missionary. He graduated from the Loma Linda University School of Medicine in 1958 and Karen in 1959. A year of internship at White Memorial Hospital was followed by a year of general surgery residency at Santa Fe Hospital in Los Angeles.

William and Karen Shea outside the Pasadena Seventh-day Adventist Church in Pasadena, California, United States, at the time of their 60th wedding anniversary.



NEW HORIZONS

The following year the Sheas drove down the Pan-American Highway to live in Nicaragua, with Josephine and Theodore, their two young children. They served at the Nicaragua Adventist Hospital in Estelí. They returned home to Los Angeles in 1963, and Rebecca joined the family.

During this time Shea sat in on a class on biblical archaeology taught by Siegfried Horn to a group of pastors. His interest in the archaeology of the Bible was born.

The following year the family moved to the Caribbean island of Trinidad, where *Adventist Review* associate editor Lael Caesar, then a theology student, heard Shea, the missionary doctor, present lectures on Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) inscriptions. Shea continued to practice medicine, but he

had heard that the way to get into Harvard University was through the back door as a special student. He applied and was accepted.

STUDENT, LECTURER, AND RESEARCHER

While studying at Harvard, Shea received two calls to service: one to return to Trinidad to practice medicine at the hospital, and the other to complete his doctorate and teach at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. He told the leaders that he was willing to go where most needed, but

his long-term goal was to finish his degree and teach.

The Sheas returned to Trinidad for two years, then moved with the family to Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States. Shea completed his Ph.D. in ANE Languages and Literature at the University of Michigan. His thesis, "Famines in the Early History of Egypt and Syro-Palestine," connected the famines of Egypt to the accounts in the Bible.



William H. Shea, with his third child, daughter Rebecca, in the mid-1960s.

While working at Andrews University, Shea filled many capacities, including professor, chair of the Old Testament Department of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, and acting director of the Institute of Archaeology. During this time he participated in the Glacier View Conference in Glacier View, Colorado, often perceived as a critical period in the history of the Adventist Church. He also taught at Bible conferences and extension schools around the world.

In 1986 Shea joined the Biblical Research Institute of the General

Conference. During this time he traveled internationally, preaching, lecturing, and teaching on archaeology and the Bible, as well as many other issues of interest to the church. Shea said he was happy to go wherever he was needed. He occasionally joked, however, that he wished there were more Bible conferences in Bora Bora or Tahiti.

Shea published several books on the Bible book of Daniel, including *Daniel: A Reader's Guide*, and *Daniel 1-7: Prophecy as History*. He also authored dozens of articles in various scholarly journals on the Sabbath, Esther as history, the day-year principle, and ANE creation stories. Among many other topics, he also wrote on Assyrian campaigns, beer and wine in the Bible, and the construction of the tabernacle in the desert.

HIS GOLDEN YEARS

Shea retired in 1999 and moved to Red Bluff in northern California to be near his son, Ted, and family. Years later the Sheas moved back to the East Coast to help with the care of the youngest grandchild, Allison. He kept teaching Sabbath School and special classes, and occasionally preached.

Shea is survived by his wife, Karen; one son, Ted; two daughters, Josephine Shea and Rebecca Erdelyi; four grandchildren; and one great-grandchild. ▀



“The Church will continue working hard and working appropriately. We are not shutting down.” –Dr. Peter Landless

ADVENTIST CHURCH WORLD HEADQUARTERS ASKS EMPLOYEES TO WORK REMOTELY UNTIL MARCH 30

WORLD CHURCH LEADERS CONTINUE TO ASK FOR PRAYER FOR ALL THOSE AFFECTED BY THE COVID-19 VIRUS.

BY ADVENTIST NEWS NETWORK STAFF

Out of an abundance of caution and care for the community served by the world headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Adventist leaders decided on Sunday, March 15, 2020, that employees will work remotely until March 30, 2020. This is a precautionary response as a result of a heightened index of suspicion related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

President of the Seventh-day Adventist world church, Ted N. C. Wilson, emphasized that the business of the Seventh-day Adventist Church will continue. Wilson said, “Although access to the building will be very limited, the General Conference will continue to operate remotely by using many technological tools such as Zoom®, Office365®, and VPN access. Hourly employees will continue to be paid during this time.”

On Thursday, March 12, General Conference leaders met to assess travel of its employees. At that time, travel restrictions were put in place and traveling employees were called home.

As a next step, in an effort to further protect employees and the

surrounding community, the decision was made to restrict access to the world headquarters building for two weeks.

On March 11, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic. At the time of writing, the virus has infected more than 130,000 people, and more than 5,000 people have died.

The goal of these temporary changes is to provide a buffer of protection to help slow the spread of COVID-19 in our communities. Care should always be taken to follow the simple health-care guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control and medical experts. These include:

Careful washing of your hands with soap and water, and using sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol when washing hands is not possible.

Covering of your mouth and nose while coughing and sneezing. If you don’t have tissue paper available, then utilize your arm or sleeve to cover your mouth and nose.

Maintain a safe distance from others and avoid shaking hands, giving hugs, etc.

Sanitize your living and work areas daily.

Stay at home if you are sick.

Seek medical treatment if you have any of the symptoms associated with COVID-19.

The world church leadership asks that all members remain vigilant and continue to operate in the best and most responsible way to protect their communities. Director of Health Ministries for the Seventh-day Adventist world church, Dr. Peter Landless, emphasized this closure isn’t a stop to the work of the Adventist Church. “The Church will continue working hard and working appropriately. We are not shutting down,” he said. “We have to follow the guidelines of the jurisdictions we live in, but we will continue to work.”

More important, leaders asks members to pray. Pray for those who are working to heal those who are sick. Pray for those who are battling illness, and pray for world leaders and doctors as they face tough decisions to curb this pandemic.

Wilson asked members to be an example to those around them. “Be an anchor of stability. Be a pillar of hope, all grounded in Jesus Christ,” he said. “I urge you to be a strong testimony and witness for the Lord. God wants you to be a special witness for Him even in this time of heightened concern and chaotic behavior. Be a strong, firm person grounded on the rock, Jesus Christ, as you appropriately engage in Total Member Involvement.”



Ministry of Teaching Overseas (MOTO) offers teacher education students at Avondale University College with some cross-cultural service learning experience. More than 20 students completed a placement in Tonga, the first MOTO destination in the Pacific islands, in February 2020. PHOTO: ADVENTIST RECORD

MINISTRY OF TEACHING REACHES MILESTONE IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC

AUSTRALIA'S AVONDALE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE STUDENTS SUPPORT ADVENTIST SCHOOLS IN TONGA.

BY BRENTON STACEY, ADVENTIST RECORD

A service-learning initiative that offers teacher education students at Australia's Avondale University College some professional experience in another culture chalked up its twenty-first trip in February. For the first time, a Pacific island country was the destination.

Twenty-four students visited Tonga to complete one of their two-week placements at Beulah College, Beulah Primary School, and Hilliard Memorial School. The Nuku'alofa-based Seventh-day Adventist schools hosted the students February 5-25, 2020.

Before the placements, Jason Hinze, Ministry of Teaching Overseas (MOTO) coordinator, said that both the schools and the students would benefit from the experience.

"I'm hoping our teachers demonstrate some innovative strategies their supervisors will adopt in the classroom. But we're going to learn a lot too, as these supervisors share

their experiences with us," Hinze said.

Hinze encouraged the students to contribute to other areas of campus life, including the schools' agricultural programs, social activities, and worship services. "Taking our teachers into another culture, a new context destabilizes their initial understanding of what makes quality teaching. They begin questioning what they once took for granted."

MOTO is leaving a legacy. Almost 350 students have participated in a trip since 2007—India, Cambodia, and Nepal being previous destinations—while Hinze has raised a most AU\$350,000 (about US\$229,000) to build schools, feed orphans, and pay teachers in the countries through the One Percent Club, a group of alumni and friends of Avondale who donate at least one percent of their wages for mission.

The ministry is also receiving recognition. In a letter of recommendation, the university college's International Community Engagement coordinator, Brad Watson, describes Hinze as demonstrating "outstanding commitment and passion for involving others in service." A senior lecturer in the School of Education, Hinze received a Faculty of Education, Business and Science Excellence Award in 2019 for "innovation in work-integrated learning or community engagement" that "enhances student engagement in real-world tasks." MOTO acknowledgment also comes in a public note of thanks from Kevin Petrie, dean and associate professor, who writes, "These trips leave an indelible mark on the life of the students and on the communities they spend time with."

That mark includes a better sense of teaching, not just as a career but as a ministry. "A lot of our teachers are studying at Avondale because they want to use their God-given gifts to make a contribution to the world," Hinze said. "MOTO is an opportunity to do this. And they love it! They return inspired to serve even more. Teachers with that mentality will last the distance in our schools." 🍀



Young people were encouraged to try new methods to share the gospel during the Lake Union Youth Evangelism Congress in Shipshewana, Indiana, United States.



Main event speaker and vlogger Justin Khoe praying after his appeal to attendees of the Lake Union Youth Evangelism Congress.

PHOTOS: CENTER FOR YOUTH EVANGELISM

YOUNG PEOPLE ENCOURAGED TO GET CREATIVE WITH EVANGELISM

YOUNG LEADERS SAY THEY ARE WILLING TO TRY NEW METHODS TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS.

BY VICTORY KOVACH, CENTER FOR YOUTH EVANGELISM

Youth and young adults recently attended the Lake Union Conference Youth Evangelism Congress in Shipshewana, Indiana, United States, to be encouraged and to act on the Holy Spirit's call for evangelism.

This event is the only event of its kind that provides young people with a matching fund opportunity of US\$100,000 (provided by the Lake Union Conference, local conferences and churches) to do creative evangelism in their communities.

Organized by the Center for Youth Evangelism, the weekend's theme was Courageous, and the keynote speaker was Justin Khoe, founder of the popular YouTube channel "I'm Listening With Justin Khoe," formerly known as "That Christian Vlogger." Khoe shared his journey from literature evangelist to YouTube personality, using the online video platform as an evangelistic tool and building a community of almost 100,000 subscribers, despite having no media training.

"I felt a burden to reach those who hadn't heard this gospel and thought, *Where are my time and energies spent? What does serving my local church sound like?*" he said.

Khoe encouraged the multigenerational crowd of 300 to confront their fears. "Perfect love casts out

fear. Living a life of courage is rooted not in your actions but in your identity. It's not something you earn . . . it's something you receive. When God speaks identity over you, that's who you are."

Presenters included Melissa Taylor (Indiana's Art and Soul), Lilly Widdicombe (Michigan's Fieldwork), Connor Nelson and Sheree Skinner (Michigan's We are Called), Matthew Lucio (Peoria Illinois Digital Church), and Joel Campbell (Green Bay Wisconsin Street Team), and others.

Isaac Smith from Village Seventh-day Adventist Church in Berrien Springs, Michigan, was sponsored by his local church. His goal is to help produce Village church's podcast through interviews. He said he believes that God has called him not only to tell stories but to listen as well. On the final day of the conference he shared how his life was impacted by what he had experienced.

"This weekend showed me how many other people are out there, trying to do things in their own way. It was inspiring to feel that camaraderie," Smith said.

Adventist Christian Fellowship at Purdue (ACFP) president Myles Chapman and officers Joel Taina and Adrian Calderon attended the event. They decided to adopt a con-

cept presented by Joshua Guerrero and the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point ACF. With help from the Lafayette church, they will have an ACFP Campus House to give their organization a permanent presence on Purdue's vast campus.

"I came into this weekend uncertain of the nature of future ACFP projects," Chapman said. "I left with a ministry plan and the resources needed to execute. I realize now that God provides everything we need to succeed in ministry. We must simply be courageous in taking steps with Him."

YOUNG ADULT ADVISORY

The Lake Union Conference Young Adult Advisory followed on February 16 and 17. Mediated by youth training expert Steve Case, a selection of young adults representing the five Lake Union conferences discussed issues and provided input for youth directors and conference staff to glean from. A unanimous vote authorized the use of nine Church of Refuge (COR) principles to evaluate the condition of local churches in the North American Division territory.

COR values—the Sabbath, discipleship, acceptance, community, support, service, leadership, budget, and change—are not a to-do list, an event, or a program. They are principles developed by healthy churches around the NAD territory, according to NAD research.

The next Lake Union Conference Youth Evangelism Congress will take place in 2022. 📌



Literacy Partnerships to Broaden Across World Church Divisions. Two world regions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church officially entered into a partnership with the North American Division's Hope for Humanity literacy program, Partners in Mission. The Southern Asia Division and Southern Asia-Pacific Division have officially joined the collaboration. Both the Hope 4 Kolkata program in India and the SULADS missionary organization in the Philippines will now offer literacy programs to adults in remote areas.



Medical Residents Get Hands-on Experience. A team of AdventHealth Global Missions volunteers traveled to the Dominican Republic to provide primary-care services to about 2,000 patients. Medical school graduates from two residency programs were among the group. Mission trips are not a requirement for AdventHealth's family medicine residents, but are sought after nonetheless. The mission trip was the first to the Dominican Republic since that country officially became part of the AdventHealth Global Missions footprint.



Two Missions Plant Almost 800 Congregations in 2019. Data collected at recent ministers meetings and discipleship training events held across Papua New Guinea (PNG) have revealed significant church growth during the past 12 months. The growth is attributed to the implementation of the Discover Bible Reading Plan. The Eastern Highlands Simbu Mission planted 592 "branch churches," and Madang Manus Mission planted 185 in the past year.



On Appeal, Angola Reviews Status of Saturday Exams. Angola's president and parliamentary speaker agreed to consider excusing Seventh-day Adventist students from Saturday (Sabbath) exams in state universities and other public schools at the request of church president Ted N. C. Wilson. Wilson raised the issue of Saturday exams during a 30-minute meeting with Angolan president João Lourenço on February 13, 2020. Lourenço agreed to take a serious look at rescheduling Saturday exams.



Lower Meat Consumption a Key to Fighting Global Warming, Study Says. A global transition to a vegetarian diet would significantly impact the battle against global warming and other environmental concerns according to research conducted at Loma Linda University Health. Researchers found that shifting from current dietary norms to ovo-lacto-vegetarian and vegan diets would reduce greenhouse gas levels an average of 35 percent, reduce land use for food production by an average of 42 percent, and reduce agricultural water use by an average of 28 percent.



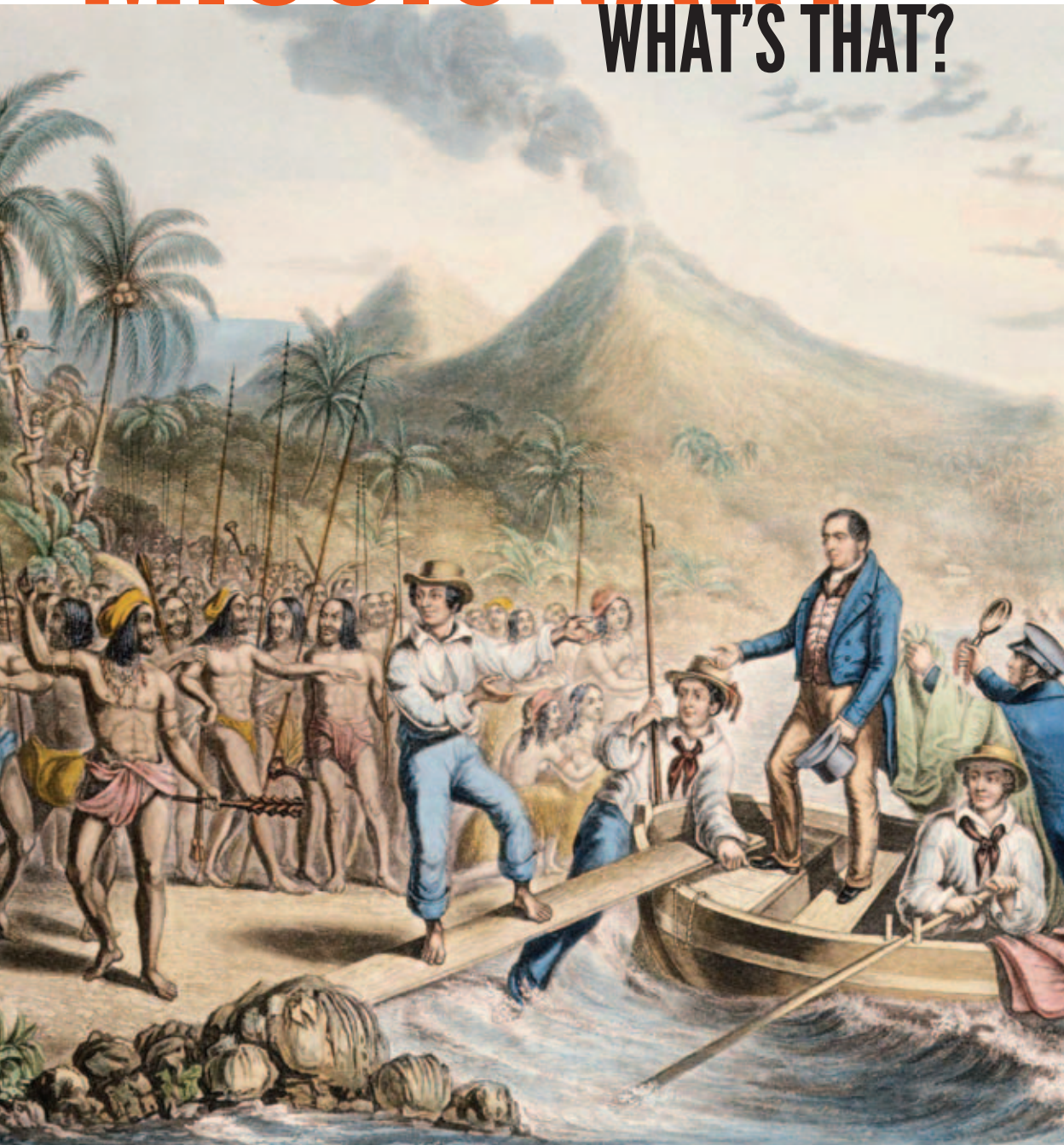
Church Leaders Back Creation of Leadership Institute. Participants to the thirteenth Global Leadership Summit organized by the General Conference in Cape Town, South Africa, endorsed a proposal to establish an institute focused on leadership, innovation, and mission at the church's headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland. The institute, located in space vacated by the North American Division, would provide hands-on practical training to leaders from around the world. Among other goals, the center would train young church leaders and provide ongoing training for its current leaders.



Volunteers Choose Service Over Vacations. Nearly 21,000 Seventh-day Adventist volunteers, most of them young, decided to spend part of their Southern Hemisphere summer vacation serving other people in two northeast Brazilian states. The number represents almost 10 percent of the total church membership in the two states. Volunteers led multiple activities, including health fairs, cleaning drives, blood donation drives, and Bible study sessions.

MISSIONARY

WHAT'S THAT?



The answer is Paul, or Jonah

BY LAEL CAESAR

Missionaries used to be sent. Now some of them don't seem to go anywhere—they're missionaries without a passport. Missionaries used to all be foreigners. Now some of them where you are have lived there all their lives—they never had to get passports. Missionaries used to have lived in multiple countries. Now some of them never leave their homeland—they look just like lots of other people in their neighborhood. Missionaries used to all come from one part of the world—with their passports. Now the slogan is "From everywhere to everywhere." Missionaries used to all be White. Now they're all colors. They used to all be Christian. Now they're from all religions, even from no religion at all. And though this article focuses on Christian missionaries, this list of differences validates the summary statement that missionaries ain't what they used to be. The relevant question is, "How profound are these differences?" Or put differently, "How much do they matter?"

LINGUISTIC DEFINITION

The word "missionary"—and its corollary, "mission"—come from a Latin word *mitto*, "I send." There's nothing in there about passports, air or sea travel, cultural or ethical complexion. None of those amounts to the defining issue for mission. No one is fairly disqualified for mission on the basis of their financial complexion [she's in the red/black] or ethical elegance [we hate/love their rickshaws], or even because of a scarred or starry history. But in *mitto* there is everything about purpose and motivation: missionaries go because they have been sent.

Writing about the lost finding salvation, Paul raises this question: "How can anyone preach unless they are sent?" (Rom. 10:15). And he knows the answer: "No way!" Missionaries have gone and continue to go because something or someone has been sending them out through the ages to do what needs to be done. And whatever the changes between yesterday and today, the sense of the original missionary ID is still recognizable.

Modern missionaries are still good news bringers. They still exist and labor within the categories that identified past missionaries, warming the world with their love, inspiring the world with their spirit of surrender to the claims of Christ's cross, motivating many a spectator to action by the total abandon of their service to God and their fellow humanity.

THREE POINTS OF COMPARISON

Our title asks what a missionary is. Trying to answer well, we consider two long-ago performers of missionary function, Paul and Jonah. Our comparisons are not rigorously parallel: Paul's entire career stands over against Jonah's performance on a single assignment, namely, Nineveh. Hopefully, this imbalance still allows for responsible comparison of their



Because God's grace is specifically for rebels, both Jonah and Nineveh survive.

relation to God's call, their performance on the clock, and their mood at the climax of their ministries. These three are treated under the subheads of (1) call and commissioning, (2) journey, and (3) climax.

CALL AND COMMISSIONING¹

If you know the call stories of Paul and Jonah, you already have a valid criticism: neither Jonah nor Paul has a typical stage-one story: light-blasted to the ground, struck blind and groping in three days of darkness as requisite for claiming a divine call or commission. Swallowed by special fish—or normal fish—as standard initiating ritual. True. But drama aside, these stories do supply the indispensable particulars of the missionary call and commissioning: the missionary goes because God has called, and because the call always includes a sending.

He said to Jonah ben-Amittai, "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it" (Jonah 1:2). And to Paul, " 'Get up,' the Lord said, 'and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do' " (Acts 22:10).

Later still Paul's commission was further defined—"Leave Jerusalem immediately, because the people here will not accept your testimony about me" (verse 17)—and fully clarified: "I will send you far away to the Gentiles" (verse 21).

Missionaries go because God sends them. They know where to go because He is particular about where He sends them: "Not more surely is the place prepared for us in the heavenly mansions than is the special place designated on earth where we are to work for God."² God's specific directions to Paul include, "Asia, no" (Acts 16:6), "Bithynia, no" (verse 7), but "Macedonia, yes": "We got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them" (verse 10); and "Corinth, yes," for 18 months: "I have many people in this city" (Acts 18:10).

Divine specification is not always that particular. The way he speaks of it, Ephesus was one of Paul's most highly valued mission stints. And it isn't hard to see why: it was one of his longest—three years (Acts 20:31), and perhaps his most drama-filled of all (Acts 19:23-40). But he gives no indication that the Spirit named that city beforehand. In fact, it was in the very province, Asia, that the Spirit had earlier forbidden him to enter. The missionary may move on a hunch, but mostly she looks and listens, gathers information and processes it, draws thoughtful and responsible conclusions, then makes sound decisions as the Spirit gives light.

Summarizing, then, on the missionary's call and commissioning, we may state that missionaries know where to go because they are attentive to and respectful of God's directions.

JOURNEY

Attentive and respectful? Not always: witness Jonah. The drama of Paul's call was because he was a sincere persecutor of the people of "The Way"³ The drama of Jonah's Phase I grows out of his commitment to prophetic truancy and turns his Phase II into one of the Bible's most absorbing stories on the persistence of God's patience. Just like Paul, he knew God had called, and he knew where he should go and what he should do: he was to go "to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it" (Jonah 1:2).

Jonah simply refused. His disobedience produced very little change in anything besides the length of his journey: the Ninevites' wickedness, his responsibility, God's love for and longing to save Assyrians were still all as before. Why do we still choose disobedience? Disobedience yields no help of any qualitative sort. For Jonah, more than anything, it made his Phase II a much more complicated affair: he would traverse the ocean, plumb the depths of "the realm of the dead" (Jonah 2:2), become the object of a fish's ingestion and an article of its vomit before eventually arriving at his divinely appointed destination, Nineveh.

The miseries that presumption added to his journey may or do not transcend the list of trials that befell missionary Paul—beatings, stonings, shipwrecks, insomnia, hunger, thirst, and dangers of myriad other sorts (2 Cor. 11:23-28). But the God who called and commissioned him could also consistently console him that heaven's grace was available to sustain him throughout (2 Cor. 12:9).

Where the dedicated apostle lived with soul consolation the renegade prophet lived with conscience torment. But because God's grace is specifically for rebels, both Jonah and Nineveh survive: the special fish effects his resurrection from Sheol to life again and the renewed opportunity for gospel proclamation (Jonah 2:10-3:3). Nineveh hears of grace and hope that reach way beyond Jonah's malicious version of the message. The entire city, royalty to commoner, repents before God. And He who ever longs for us to come to repentance "relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened" (Jonah 3:10). Whether we convey it well or poorly, the news that God commissions missionaries to take to sinners is always good news.

CLIMAX

The end of Paul's story overflows with a confidence that would be nothing but fake for the unenlightened sinner. How could any clear thinker face death with such words on his lips and such inspiration flowing from his pen! "The time for my departure is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:6, 7). His last notes to Timothy, his son in divine service, enjoin him to "discharge all the duties of your ministry" (verse 5). For Paul, being sent by God amounted to something, everything. He was a missionary.

In fact, he was an "apostle," not just "sent" [Latin, *mitto*] but "sent from" [Greek, *apostolos*] God. The New Testament title is associated with Jesus' principal disciples, but with Paul more than any of them. He contends like no one else in the Bible for his right to it: "I was appointed . . . an apostle" (1 Tim. 2:7); and again in a second letter to Timothy, "I was appointed . . . an apostle" (2 Tim. 1:11). The popular warrant for labeling him as apostle is the claim, earnestly advanced by Paul himself, that he was an eyewitness, that he personally met Jesus: "Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" (1 Cor. 9:1). I may have seen him "abnormally" (1 Cor. 15:8), but I did see him. Thousands of Jesus' followers and converts to "the Way" who saw Him and committed to His cause are never identified as apostles in the Bible. But Paul wouldn't leave it to question: he knew for himself the truth that came to be written about the man who baptized Jesus: "There was a man sent from God whose name was John" (John 1:6). Paul knew he was another such man. And, perhaps because the title "apostle"

said so, his identity is inextricably bound up with it.

Through the New Testament's 79 occurrences of the term *apostolos*, Peter is the only individual besides Paul who applies it to himself (three times). Considering Paul's 26 self-identifications, it seems safe to say that for Paul, being an apostle, being sent from God, amounted to something. He reveled in the privileges of apostleship, bore its insults and battery for three decades, testified to kings and plebes, to dedicated people of the Torah and pagan philosophers. He also wrote more than a dozen letters and treaties that have informed Christian history and are Spirit-preserved portions of the Holy Scriptures, about the Jesus he had seen and heard (see Acts 22:15). What a missionary Paul was!

And Jonah? Jonah has left us a much different climax. He is sour about the way God makes him look stupid by saving an entire city, and bitter about how God exposes him to the beating sun after temporarily sheltering him under a shrub He prepared just for that purpose (see Jonah 4). Outside the Garden of Eden, Jonah is the one character in all Scripture who is so uniquely and explicitly the direct recipient of such pampering from God—the preparation of a special fish for his transportation and, later, the creation of a special plant as his shelter from midday heat. Losing his umbrella affects him so profoundly and offends him so deeply that he wants to die (Jonah 4:8, 9). He offers no response to God's concern about Ninevites and their cattle (verse 11). What a missionary Jonah was! 🐟

¹ Currently, being called may be distinguished from being commissioned. Spiritually speaking, call and commission both refer to the initiating factor, the supernatural summons requisite to the start of the missionary's season of service.

² Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1900, 1941), p. 327.

³ Paul testifies consistently on his sincerity as a persecutor. At the time of his first arrest he told the crowd he had been "zealous for God" (Acts 22:3); years later, before Agrippa, he said, "I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26:9). About the label "The Way": devotees of Jesus were known as followers of "the Way" (*hodos*—see Acts 16:17; 18:25; 19:9; 24:14) before observing skeptics at Antioch labeled them "Christians" (Acts 11:26). "Christian" as title is hardly celebrated in the New Testament. It appears only twice more after that historical note by Luke on its origins. Luke reports on Agrippa, who is either nearly penitent or gently scoffing in Acts 26:28, implying either that Paul's appeal to him is almost convincing, as per KJV ("Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian"), or that it is clearly absurd, as per NIV ("Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?") Elsewhere, Peter notes that bearing the name is a reason to be persecuted (1 Pet. 4:16).

Lael Caesar, *Adventist Review* associate editor, repents of the Jonah stories in his own life and prays to be more like Paul.



THE MISSION OF GOD

Humanity's response is intelligent obedience.

GORDEN R. DOSS

A mission-minded Christian church understands that mission was not started by a charismatic church leader, a particular group of believers, or even by great biblical characters like the prophets or the apostles. Neither does it arise from a single biblical text such as the Great Commission. Rather, Christian mission arises from the heart of God and comprises the central theme of the whole Bible.

BEGINNING MISSION

The story of God's mission to lost humanity is the greatest story ever told; it's the central narrative of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. The story begins immediately after the Fall, when God took the initiative to reach out to Adam and Eve (see Gen. 3:8-24). The mission narrative continues throughout the patriarchal period and the history of Israel, with patriarchs, prophets, priests, kings, and ordinary people serving as God's mission agents.

The Gospels record the central event of God's mission—Christ's birth, ministry, atoning death, resurrection, and ascension. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit performs the next great act in God's mission by coming to empower and launch the church. The story continues in the book of Acts and the letters of the apostles, and the spread of the Christian church throughout the Roman Empire. The mission narrative reaches its apocalyptic climax in the book of Revelation, when Jesus shall return to "make all things new" (Rev. 21:5, KJV). At that point, "the great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation."¹ This is the story of the missionary God.

DEFINITIONS

The phrase *mission of God* (Latin: *missio Dei*) came into use in mission studies in the last half of the twentieth century in a particular historical context. World War II had ended. Colonies were becoming independent nations. The modern missionary movement (c. 1750-1950) was ending as churches and denominations around the world transitioned to indigenous leadership. In this context the project of global mission was called into question, both from inside and outside the church. Was the continued cross-cultural evangelization of non-Christian peoples biblically appropriate, or was it merely a continuation of colonialism? Different answers were given and continue to be given.

The conclusion reached by many Christians, including Seventh-day Adventists, had two elements.

First, colonialism and colonial attitudes in the church and its missions are biblically unacceptable; any mistakes of the colonial era must be recognized and confessed; the church must learn and apply lessons for today from its mission history.

Second, the continued evangelization of the world is not only appropriate but required for Christians because it's part of God's mission for humanity. The functions of local churches and the evangelization of local communities are ideally performed by local indigenous people. Cross-cultural mission remains necessary, however, because many millions of unreached people don't have any local Christian churches nearby. Unlike the colonial era, cross-cultural missionaries would now come from everywhere and go everywhere, instead of coming mostly from the West. This would show itself as mission-

The church does not control God's mission, because He remains sovereign over the work He started.

aries from the Philippines, Brazil, the United States, or Kenya serving cross-culturally to strengthen local churches in each other's territory or establish them where none was before.

CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE

Not everyone agrees with these conclusions. Leaders of some world religions don't want their adherents to be evangelized; they sometimes charge Christian missions with colonialism, no matter how much respect missionaries show for local cultures. Sometimes in the West, secular, agnostic, or atheistic individuals see Christianity as offering nothing of unique value, and support the label of Christian mission as colonialist.

These differing opinions must be acknowledged and respected. But the biblical concept of the *misseo Dei* requires Christians to hold fast to the conviction that "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations" (Matt. 24:14, KJV). As Christians obey Christ's commission, they can expect to face opposition. When Jesus sent the Twelve on their first mission trip, He warned that they would face great opposition (see Matt. 10); early church missionaries to Thessalonica were accused of turning the world upside down (Acts 17:6); and Paul documents an amazing catalog of suffering he experienced in the work of missions (2 Cor. 11:24-27). Twenty-first-century Christians must balance questions of respect for the rights of others with a sense of the value that saving truth can bring to everyone possible.

Probing more deeply into the historical context of the term *misseo Dei* allows us to expose its meaning and implications more clearly. The mission-of-God concept implies that Christian mission arises from the nature and character of the Creator God Himself. Mission exists because God exists and because God has particular character attributes. The attributes of God—such as compassion, grace, loving faithfulness, mercy, and justice—comprise God's

glory and holiness and make Him the only valid subject of human worship. Mission calls all human beings to give glory only to God and to worship only Him (Rev. 14:7). God's character is the foundation of the principles undergirding missions.

The triune God works in harmony, and each divine member plays a role in God's mission. The Father's role is that of the fully engaged source, sender, and initiator of mission. During all of human history God works dynamically among all people through His chosen agencies. The Father sends angels, prophets, signs, miracles, and His Word to accomplish His mission. He called Abram and the people of Israel to be His special mission agents. In "the fulness of the time" (Gal. 4:4, KJV) the Father sent the Son as the ultimate missionary, to play the central role in God's mission. The Father also sent the Spirit to empower the launching of the church (verse 6).

God the Son's role was to embody God's mission within Himself in two special ways. First, Jesus embodied the principles of the kingdom of God in His human person in a way that humans could understand. Said Jesus, "If you really know Me, you will know My Father as well" (John 14:7). Jesus personally embodied and demonstrated the new creation to which God's mission calls humanity. The incarnated Christ "translated" divinity into humanity, just as one language can be translated into another. He became a particular man, Jesus of Nazareth, who was a cultural Jew, living at a particular time and place. By doing so, Jesus modeled how the principles of God's kingdom may be translated into other cultural contexts in other times and places. Second, Jesus embodied God's mission by becoming "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8, KJV).

God's mission was possible because He "presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of His blood—to be received by faith" (Rom. 3:25; see 1 Cor. 15:3; Phil. 2:8). The objective actions of human sinfulness needed the objective atone-

ment of the cross. Thus, the cross of Christ is the foundation upon which God's saving mission rests.

Within God's grand plan of mission, the Spirit's mighty works at Pentecost were a follow-up to the Son's mighty works as Savior. God the Holy Spirit assumed His particular role in God's mission at Pentecost by becoming divine overseer and guide of mission until the Second Coming and the new earth. This is not to imply that He was inactive before Pentecost, but to say that He has a special role in the era of the church. Understanding His continued role in mission is vital.

First, the Spirit empowers the church for the proclamation of Jesus Christ with overflowing joy. Shortly before His ascension, Jesus told His followers that "I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). Second, the Spirit teaches the church the principles and message to be proclaimed in mission. Said Jesus, "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth" (John 16:12, 13). Third, the Holy Spirit sustains the church through the suffering and persecution experienced in mission, as already noted above.

UNDERSTANDING THE CHURCH'S ROLE

If God is the source of mission, what role do the church and its members play? One mistake to avoid is to conclude that Christians can just sit back passively, waiting for God to finish the work He started. The opposite mistake is to place so much weight on the role of the church that God becomes a virtual hostage who waits for the church to finish the work He started. Neither of these positions is biblically acceptable.

While God both started His mission and will "finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness" (Rom. 9:28, KJV), He chose sinners saved by grace through faith to be agents in His mission. He does

not use sinless angels as His only agents, although they have a role to play (Heb. 1:14). The fact that He uses ordinary believers, like you and me, is deeply humbling. The following quotation, attributed to D. T. Niles, is surely apropos: "Christianity is one beggar telling another beggar where he found bread." The church is powerful when it feels weak. In the words of Paul: "For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:10). The awareness of our weakness does not imply passivity toward God's mission. Rather, believers should use every personal spiritual gift and engage every human capacity in mission to humanity.

Yet even though it exerts every energy, the church does not control God's mission because He remains sovereign over the work He started. Lesslie Newbigin writes: "Because the Spirit is Himself sovereign over the mission, the church can only be the attentive servant. In sober truth the Spirit is Himself the witness who goes before the church in its missionary journey. The church's witness is secondary and derivative. The church is a witness insofar as it follows obediently where the Spirit leads. . . . The witness that confutes the world is not ours; it is that of one greater than ourselves who goes before us. Our task is to simply follow faithfully."²

The mission-minded church understands that when people respond to its best works and endeavors, they are in reality responding to the Holy Spirit's voice and influence that goes ahead of the church. God started His mission in the Garden of Eden, and He will finish His mission in great glory and in the fullness of His time. The church's sacred privilege is to be God's humble, faithful, diligent servant.

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 678.

² Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), pp. 61, 62.

Gorden R. Doss grew up a missionary kid in Malawi, southern Africa, and has remained dedicated to mission service in Malawi, and mission training as a professor of world mission at Andrews University, in Berrien Springs, Michigan.



HIS Students, Laqueta & Isis dressed in their regalia for the annual HIS Heritage Fest.

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ART IS FOR THE LIVING

I'd long been a fan of the late Christopher Hitchens. I loved his booming articulate Brit timbre. If a breeze flowing through finely coiffed steel and glass chimneys could talk, it would sound like Christopher Hitchens. Over decades I consumed his oeuvre, even what I disagreed with (his Trotskyite phase seemed rather puerile, even for the time); his prose was often precise, pungent, logical, hilarious, and at times irreverent.

After September 11, however, apparently unable to differentiate between Islamic fanatics who flew planes into buildings and, say, Quakers who run homeless shelters, Hitchens—along with fellow “new atheists”—began an intellectual jihad against all theism, regardless of who the *theos* was (because, according to them, it never existed, anyway). His most famous tirade, *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (2007), was so bad I couldn't finish it. Not because I was threatened by the arguments, which were hardly threatening (things such as Catholic priests molested children; ergo, God does not exist), but because the book was, well, so poorly done.

In another work, responding to the inevitable question about how one finds meaning in life apart from God, Hitchens wrote: “There are the beauties of science and the extraordinary marvels of nature. There is the consolation and irony of philosophy. There are the infinite splendors of literature and poetry. . . . There is the grand resource of art and music and architecture, again not excluding those elements that aspire to the sublime. In all of these pursuits, any one of them enough to absorb a lifetime, there may

be found a sense of awe and magnificence that does not depend at all on any invocation of the supernatural.”

Of course, who's going to argue about the “extraordinary marvels of nature”? (And though loving philosophy and appreciating its irony, I've not found much by way of consolation in any of it.) But please, Hitchens was so right about music, art, literature, poetry—100 lifetimes could only begin to extract all the “awe and magnificence” found in them.

Then in 2010, Christopher Hitchens was, unfortunately, diagnosed with esophageal cancer. He wrote about the experience, and his words were compiled posthumously (he died in 2011) in a work called, appropriately enough, *Mortality*, in which he talked about the pain, about how crummy the treatments made him feel, and about the needles in his arms. There was nothing, however, about drawing hope and comfort from the “awe and magnificence” of art, literature, poetry, or music. Nothing.

Of course not. Art is for the living, not the dying. *The Eroica Symphony*, *The Faerie Queene*, or *The Scream* might be great when you're alive, but when dying, who needs Beethoven, Edmund Spenser, or Edvard Munch? You need Jesus and the promise of eternal life. Whether Hitchens ever understood that (there is some evidence that in private he was a bit softer on faith than he let on in public), I don't know. The One who died for Him does, and He alone will make the call. ♣

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



ART IS FOR
THE LIVING,
NOT THE DYING.



**JESUS,
FAILED
EVANGELIST?**

SHAWN BOONSTRA

Henry Feyerabend, the famed Canadian evangelist, used to tell the story of a workers' meeting in South America where he found a young intern in the hall, fighting back tears. "What's the matter?" he asked.¹

"I just found out that they're not going to ordain me this year," he replied, his disappointment palpable.

"Why not? Is there a problem?"

"I only baptized a little more than 200 people this year," he uttered sorrowfully.

If this young pastor was baptizing more than 200 people a year in North America, I suspect we'd be putting him on the front of church journals and dragging him in front of workers' meetings in dozens of conferences, asking him to share the secrets of his dizzying success. Those are the kinds of numbers usually seen only by itinerant evangelists.

Different parts of the world, of course, yield different results, even though the basic principles of biblical evangelism remain the same.² When I first moved from a rather secularized Canada to the United States, I was amazed by how much *easier* the work suddenly seemed: decisions came much faster than they had back home. (I occasionally hear workers bemoaning the post-Christian state of America, but the United States is one of the *least* post-Christian states in which I've labored.)

The issue of numbers in evangelism raises an important question: At what point do we consider an evangelistic effort a success? Fifty baptisms? One hundred? *Five* hundred? My team has seen anywhere from six to 16,000 baptized in a single effort. I've heard various people describe each of those efforts as both a success *and* a failure, depending on whom you ask.

What number would be considered a success? Should we develop an algorithm that accounts for costs, regional and cultural differences, time spent . . . then create a chart that lets us know if the effort should be considered a success?

If we're going to do *that*, what would we do with Noah? He built a boat that, by any standard, would be considered massively expensive, especially considering the fact that he was preparing for something that had never happened before. Then he preached for 120 years . . . and "baptized" only

his own kids. Yet we find him in the Hebrews 11 hall of heroes.

And what would we do with Jesus Himself? On the day of Pentecost, there were only 120 disciples gathered in Jerusalem . . . after three and a half years of public ministry (see Acts 1:15). He preached one sermon during His itinerant years that lost Him a huge swath of His interests—they simply quit following Him (see John 6:66).³ His evangelistic team was often dysfunctional, marked by quibbles over who was most important. One of them sold his soul for the price of a slave, then committed suicide (see Acts 1:18). Another had to be scolded by Paul because he was duplicitous, refusing to be seen hanging out with unclean Gentiles when Jews were watching (see Gal. 2:11, 12).

JESUS, THE FAILED EVANGELIST?

Was Jesus a failure? Of course not. "I have brought you glory on earth," Jesus prayed to His Father near the end of His ministry, "by finishing the work you gave me to do" (John 17:4).

A glance through John 17 reveals that Jesus was doing much more than accumulating baptismal totals during His public ministry. And of course, we need to factor in the fact that Jesus was also the Lamb of God, here to secure our salvation. But His ministry was reflected in Noah's: faithful.

I should probably state for the record, before I continue, that I firmly believe in counting the numbers. (After all, God placed an entire book in the Bible by that name!)⁴ Each baptismal total represents real human beings—people God knows by name—who will be secure in the kingdom because we were faithful. We need to be willing to consider the fact that if our ministry *never* bears fruit, we might be doing something wrong—because there definitely is a right and wrong way to pursue evangelistic work.

Ellen White wrote: "The conversion of sinners and their sanctification through the truth is the strongest proof a minister can have that God has called him to the ministry. The evidence of his apostleship is written upon the hearts of those converted, and is witnessed to by their renewed lives. Christ is formed within, the hope of glory. A minister is greatly strengthened by these seals of his ministry."⁵

Perhaps it would be useful to consider *why* God has us doing evangelistic work in the first place. Surely an angel would be far more eloquent, far more reasoned, and far more persuasive than me. (I sometimes wonder if I'll get schooled on what I did *wrong* from my angel while we are en route to heaven.) So why use *us*? There's an important clue in that spiritual masterpiece, *Steps to Christ*:

"If you will go to work as Christ designs that His disciples shall, and win souls for Him, you will feel the need of a deeper experience and a greater knowledge in divine things, and will hunger and thirst after righteousness. You will plead with God, and your faith will be strengthened, and your soul will drink deeper drafts at the well of salvation. Encountering opposition and trials will drive you to the Bible and prayer. You will grow in grace and the knowledge of Christ, and will develop a rich experience."⁶

We have a proclivity for thinking that the work of personal spiritual growth boils down to more study and more prayer. These things are essential, of course: we simply will not grow without them. But still, fallen beings have a tendency to make their spiritual experience about *self*: we become obsessed with our personal progress (or lack thereof). So what does God do? He gives us an all-absorbing assignment that focuses on *others*, so that our egos melt into the background. And with self out of the way, the Spirit can work on us.

I'm certain that God doesn't need me to save the world. But I'm just as certain that I need the experience for my own good.

"The spirit of unselfish labor for others gives depth, stability, and Christlike loveliness to the character, and brings peace and happiness to its possessor. The aspirations are elevated. There is no room for sloth or selfishness. Those who thus exercise the Christian graces will grow and will become strong to work for God. They will have clear spiritual perceptions, a steady, growing faith, and an increased power in prayer. The Spirit of God, moving upon their spirit, calls forth the sacred harmonies of the soul in answer to the divine touch. Those who thus devote themselves to unselfish effort for the good of others are most surely working out their own salvation. . . .

"The only way to grow in grace is to be disinterestedly doing the very work which Christ has enjoined upon us—to engage, to the extent of our ability, in helping and blessing those who need the help we can give them."⁷

WHAT AM I FOR?

God doesn't *need* me to save the world. But I need the experience for my own good. He's teaching me an all-important skill I'm going to need in the coming kingdom: faith. When we arrive on the new earth, we aren't going to suddenly become omniscient; we will have to rely on God forever. (Remember: Lucifer was not admitted to the councils of the Godhead; I highly doubt we'll be.) For all eternity we will be living by faith.

Therein lies the problem: we're not good at faith. We broke faith with God in Eden. We no longer trusted His word. So how will God restore faith? One of the key methods, it seems, is to give us a seemingly impossible assignment. He gives us the three angels' messages, which we love, and asks us to preach them to a world that does not seem to love them at all, and sometimes seems incapable of grasping it. "Go ahead," God says. "Try it out and see if I won't come through for you. I want you to see that *I'm* doing this, not you."

Have a quick look through your Bible: God gives a *lot* of impossible assignments to His people. Leave Egypt and cross the Red Sea. Take the city of Jericho, even though you've been recently liberated from slavery and can hardly be considered a crack team of warriors. Take on the Midianites with a *tiny* fraction of the troops deemed necessary. Go and preach in the streets of Nineveh, to one of the most violent and oppressive cultures in the world.

What God has asked us to do has *never* been possible, which tells me something important. Studies reveal that preaching is getting more difficult, and that audiences are becoming more skeptical of religion. I've seen studies proving that culture is shifting rapidly. But then God reminds me, at the very moment I'm tempted to succumb to the data, that in an early feasibility study, 10 out of 12 spies determined that conquering the Promised Land was utterly impossible.

The Bible is the story of people who *ignored* the odds and chose to believe. When the walls of Jericho fell, God's people had never touched them. When Gideon entered the camp of the Midianites, God did *all* the heavy lifting. When the day became too short for victory, it was God who turned back the sun. In a valley full of sun-baked bones, God showed a prophet that He could give them life.

"Do you believe I can do this?" God asks. "I don't know," replied Ezekiel. "Watch!" says God.

Over the years I have chosen to ignore the studies that tell me the assignment is impossible. To be sure, I *read* them—then I *ignore* them and press ahead anyway. I refuse to allow mere statistics to stand in the way of what God wants me to experience by faith. I remind myself that God did not make a mistake with the assignment that He gave the remnant church: He did not choose the wrong message for a world perched on the eve of Christ's return.

JESUS, THE FAILED EVANGELIST?

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was established for just one purpose:

"In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers," wrote Ellen White. "To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the Word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import—the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention."⁸

Even if there was *no* response, we'd have to keep doing this—just as Noah did. Fortunately, for the moment we live in pretty exciting times. Overall, I've been seeing larger, more responsive audiences than in the past—yes, even here in North America.⁹ I've even seen audiences stop the sermon by

launching their own altar call, coming forward before I'm ready. They'd heard enough. They wanted to make a decision.

I've seen God defy the studies and the statistics again, and again . . . and again.

But eventually, when the crowds no longer appear, and the decisions begin to dwindle, I will continue to do this, because the point isn't really the numbers (although they *do* matter). The point is to learn, to grow, and to understand and trust God better. "Let the one who boasts boast about this: that they have the understanding to know me," God says (Jer. 9:24).

If you want to know God more intimately, go join Him where He is still very much at work. If you want to learn to trust Him, grab hold of this impossible task and watch Him work. Go where He continues to seek and to save that which was lost (see Luke 19:10), and you will see the Spirit of God move with power.

Be *faithful*. It's the whole point.

"But you, keep your head in all situations," Paul wrote to Timothy. "Endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry" (2 Tim. 4:5).

Oh, and Jesus, the "failed" evangelist? Never forget: every last baptism in the past 2,000 years—billions of them—can be traced back to those sermons Jesus preached for 42 short months . . . and to the continuing labor of those mediocre, hopeless disciples He trained. Every last one of them. Including the ones He's going to let *you* participate in. 🍌

¹ He asked it, of course, in fluent Portuguese. Within five months of moving to Brazil, he was preaching fluently in the language—a genuine gift of tongues!

² After working on six continents, I have been assured of this. But that is another topic for another article.

³ You might find it interesting that Jesus did not subsequently reframe His sermon and try to win back those who had abandoned Him.

⁴ One of Feyerabend's favorite jokes.

⁵ Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 328.

⁶ Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1956), p. 80.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 9, p. 19.

⁹ This is at least partially true because of the fact that our team has been working from a biblical model of how and why evangelism ought to work. But that also is a subject for another day.

Shawn Boonstra is speaker/director of the Voice of Prophecy media ministry.



ONE COMMUNITY AT A TIME

Taking the gospel to the world begins with one small step.

MARTI SCHNEIDER

For years I longed to share Jesus, but I was naturally shy. *I want to! But I can't, Lord!*

On September 11, 2001, planes crashed into the skyscrapers of New York City. People died. The city was in shock. The country, too. The North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church divided Manhattan into geographical sections. Adventist conferences took responsibility for their respective sections of the city and sent missionaries.

My husband, Don, and I had recently moved to Laurel, Maryland, to serve at the North American Division. I begged God to let us go to New York City, to live in a high-rise apartment

building and share Jesus with our neighbors.

Jesus answered, "You already live in a city. You have neighbors. Work here!"

Ouch!

STEP ONE: PRAY

I woke in the middle of the night: "OK, God, so how can we impact our neighbors for You? I'm shy! And we travel so much!"

Again, Jesus answered: "Pray for your neighbors by name!"

What a novel way to witness! But it was Jesus' idea.

So at Christmas in 2001, Don and I went to each home on our block, with its 17 townhomes. We gave each family a letter telling them about ourselves, some delicious cookies baked at our Adventist world headquarters, and one of Don's books, *One Heart Rejoicing*. We learned their names and wished them all Merry Christmas: Christians, Muslims, Hindus, uncommitted—everyone! What difference did our visits make?

One evening I saw a neighbor in his yard. I called, "Hey, Kevin! How's Denise?"

How did I know their names? Because I prayed for them each day by name.

Kevin said that Denise was not well. My reply reflected Jesus' commission: "Thanks for telling me. I pray for you each day."

"You pray for us every day?"

"Yep!"

"What a difference you're making in our neighborhood!" he exclaimed.

STEP TWO: GIVE

Our wedding anniversary was in August. We worked late at the

office. *We ought to do something special*, we thought. But we were so tired: “Let’s go home.” But when we said home, we thought of neighbors. *How can we use our wedding anniversary to build relationships with our neighbors?* Don bought ice cream and root beer. We set up a serving table on our postage-stamp-sized front yard. Don knocked on all the doors and shouted, “Come out and help us celebrate our anniversary!”

They came. They didn’t know each other. But it was the beginning of our becoming a neighborhood family. The next year we served a whole picnic on our front yard.

In September I asked God, “Is there anything else You want us to do?”

He answered, “Ask *them* to pray for you!”

That’s why I went across the street to our Muslim neighbors and knocked on their door. Amber opened the door and pulled me inside. She was very *expectant*. “I’m so glad you’ve come! I have no one to talk to about what it is like to have a baby. My mother lives in Pakistan.”

We talked and talked . . . all about having a baby.

After an hour or so, I remembered God had said, “Ask them to pray for you.” So I told Amber that we were going to Nigeria, where Don would speak in a stadium with 10 different translators. Amber agreed to be our prayer partner.

As I was leaving Amber’s home, I said, “I’ve forgotten so much about babies, but I could be your local mom.” She hugged me and sent her love to Don and greeted our children as a sister. She became our daughter.

That’s why, when little Murium was born, Amber introduced Don and me to the nurses at the hospital as her *grandparents*. That’s why, when Amber brought Murium over for a visit, she and I went shopping so I could buy a new dress for the new mommy. We were the only Christians who went to Murium’s first birthday party. Another time they came to our home to eat. Didn’t God have a good idea?

We did something we called “standing in the street.” We’d watch the kids play and chat with their parents. Anytime we noticed a special need—Dawn needed a job, Seetha’s parents needed a visa to come from India to meet their new baby grandson, the Waters wanted to have their home blessed—we’d pray right there in the street.

One day as we arrived home from work the

**Toni looked and said,
“That’s no White man!
That’s my neighbor, Don!”**

neighbors were standing in the street, looking dazed. Toni’s mom, who was visiting from Indiana, had just been taken by ambulance to the hospital. Don and I left immediately and found Toni so that we could pray with her. Don went to pray with the mom, too.

That night Toni’s mom passed away. Don was going to be flying to Chicago and driving to Michigan, so he stopped in Gary, Indiana, where he waited on the front porch of the church for Toni and her family to arrive for the funeral. Toni later told us that as they drove up, someone from the family said, “Who’s that White man up there?”

Toni looked and said, “That’s no White man! That’s my neighbor, Don!” She called me early the next morning to talk about God’s plan for our lives.

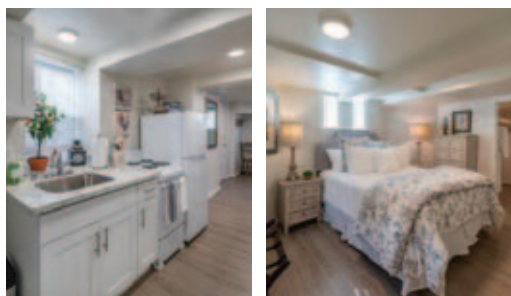
STEP THREE: RECEIVE

As we were moving from Maryland, the neighbors gathered for a party. The children did a cheer for us. Then parents asked if we would bless their children. They lined up and knelt before us one at a time so we could pray for them.

When Don died, Sam and Seetha discovered the news of his passing online and sent the word to our friends in Laurel, Maryland. They called me. They came to visit with their three children, two of whom were born while we lived in Maryland. I was able to bless them once again. And the Maryland neighbors were a wonderful support! Still family!

What did I learn? Ask God to show you what’s needed. Write it down. Do it. And don’t forget to pray for your neighbors! ♣

Marti Schneider lives in Texas, where she still has a heart for her community.



BE OUR GUEST

Temporary housing creates unusual ministry opportunity.

HEIDI BAUMGARTNER

John and Karin McLarty were in the midst of an arranged hospital visit with a family whose young son was in the burn unit. Karin asked the grandparents, “Where are you staying? Your family is likely to be here for a while.”

Green Lake church in suburban Seattle, Washington, had recently opened a guest suite for out-of-town guests who come to the area for specialized medical care. Karin offered this service, but the family declined, so she left a phone number.

“They called me later and said their hotel rate was going up to \$400 a night,” recounts Karin, who now serves as the church’s housing ministry coordinator. “This family was our first guest in the new guest suite. They were grateful and so appreciative.”

Seattle is a tertiary center for medical treatment, and patients come from around the Pacific Northwest to receive specialized treatment for diseases and accidents. Area churches frequently receive requests for housing assistance and/or pastoral visits.

Since January 2019, Green Lake church has

helped a dozen families. The church now owns two furnished guest apartments, with two additional guest apartments available through the generosity of church members.

“As a family, we share the good times and the heavy times,” says John McLarty, Green Lake church pastor. “We are helping people in a time of need.”

HOUSING WITH A MISSION

Most ministry dreams take time to become a reality, and this was true with Green Lake’s housing ministry. The church’s foundation for funding ministry purchased the North Gate housing property, known as the Jenson House, in 2013.

The renovation team transformed the home, the planning team finalized ministry guidelines, and the first guests were served in 2017—mainly through word-of-mouth connections.

The goal was for the housing to be self-sustaining: The main living area is rented to cover mortgage and expenses, and the separate guest suite is provided free of charge to guests for stays that average two nights to two months. Each guest, after initially contacting the Green Lake church office, goes through an application and screening process to determine needs, scheduling, and placement, since there are guest suites in different neighborhoods.

With growing needs, Green Lake Foundation purchased a second ideally located property, sight unseen, near the church.

The Meridian House, circa 1902: guest house renovation was finished and dedication held in September 2019 for use with the church’s collegiate and housing ministries.

“It took a lot of people and a lot of generosity to get to this point,” says Rhona Kwiram, Green Lake Foundation chair. “There is no way we would be having this dedication less than a year after purchasing the property without the energy, time, talent, and treasure that Don and Shirley Mehrer invested in this house and this ministry. The Mehrers are truly outstanding builders of community.”

If you or your family find yourself in the Seattle area needing temporary housing during your medical treatment, you are welcome to contact the Green Lake church office at 206-522-1330. The church would be honored to help if at all possible. ✍

Heidi Baumgartner is director of communication for the Washington Conference. This article first appeared in the North Pacific Union *Gleaner*.

THE FACE OF SETH

The rough, older man sat across my desk, the smell of cigarettes filling the room. Yet, somehow, I hardly heard him, barely saw him. My attention was drawn instead to the small boy sitting beside him, brown hair hanging into his eyes. He looked so incredibly vulnerable. *How long had it been since he'd eaten?*

Greg and I had been at lunch ourselves when I received the call from my assistant. "There's a man in the lobby asking for you. He packed all of his things and claims he's moving to 3ABN." I took a deep breath. *Why do ministries inspire people to show up like that?*

Returning to the office, I headed for the lobby. This should be routine. The usual request for a job. The standard line of "nothing available with your skill set at this time." And life would go on.

Stepping into the lobby, I paused. *He had a little boy with him!* I reached out to shake the dad's hand, then turned to the little guy, mentally guessing him to be about 8. "My name's Jill. How old are you?"

He tossed his head to the side, flipping the hair out of his eyes. "I'm Seth, and I'm almost 13." He held out his hand, amazingly confident for such a young person.

We headed to my office and talked. It was the usual: history of drugs, amazing deliverance. The story began to change when he shared how God had given him messages to deliver to others. He just needed a place to stay, a job, and an outlet for the words God gave him.

I wondered if the boy was really his. *Was he OK? If I didn't give the dad a job, where would they live? How would the boy*

eat? My thoughts whirled as the dad talked. Suddenly I realized it was quiet. *Say something, Jill.*

Leaning forward, I spoke about 3ABN not having any jobs right now for his skill set. About our inability to divert donor funds for other projects, such as his need for an apartment. As the words tumbled out, I glanced at the boy. Somehow that scripture from James crept, unbidden, into my mind. "Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?" (James 2:15, 16).

I felt so hypocritical, saying the right words, while pushing away one of His children. *Why must policies and procedures be followed?*

Then I thought of our local Seventh-day Adventist church. Perhaps they would help! I assured the dad that our church would like to give them a hotel room and a gift card for food. Perhaps a local business would hire him. The boy brightened as he talked about his cat. We went outside to their car, the cold wind whipping my coat. He seemed so pleased as he showed me his cat. I saw all their worldly possessions in the back seat of the car.

What was one night in a hotel in the face of such need? I watched them drive away, sick at heart.

Could I have done more? Should I have done more? Maybe; only time will tell. ♣

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

JOURNEYS
WITH JESUS
JILL
MORIKONE



I SAW ALL THEIR
WORLDLY
POSSESSIONS IN
THE BACK SEAT OF
THE CAR.

BOYAN LEVTEROV

We don't need to plant churches! We need to bring together all the smaller congregations and have one large church with money," said my pastor friend from across the table. The small church plants he referred to were growing with attendances of 110 and 130; his church barely broke 200.

"No! Our churches shouldn't be larger than 100, so we can connect with the members," another colleague shared. "But we do have to pack our empty pews before we plant."

If you've participated in church planting discussions, you have heard many similar objections. I had some of the same arguments with my colleagues in my first year of ministry as an associate pastor in Colorado.

Even though I grew up in a pastor's home and watched my dad plant seven churches in 12 years in Communist Bulgaria, my belief was that we had enough churches; my job was to grow my congregation to as large a number as possible. I figured this would make us highly visible to our community. This was my default thinking until I attended a seminar on church planting in 1999 at the Mid-America Union Conference pastors' meetings. What I heard completely transformed my philosophy of ministry.

I realized that every church reaches its ministry ceiling, then plateaus—for years—unless its leaders are willing to adopt major changes to raise that ceiling. I was also challenged to consider the

well-documented statistics that one large church reaches fewer people than two healthy churches of equal size in the same context.

As I returned home, I discovered that with minor variations, atten-

MY CHURCH MULTIPLIES



dance in all three congregations in our district had stayed the same for the past 15 years, despite numerous baptisms and the great pastors who preceded me. The churches were reaching few new people, and even though we could improve on that, it became clear that one church would not engage all communities and cultures in our city. The reality was that we would be more effective if we started a new church that would connect with those we were currently unable to reach than forcing a change in the existing church. If I wanted to see a real difference there, I had to ensure that church planting was a part of our vision for growth.

CHURCH PLANTING IS EVANGELISM AT ITS BEST

Evangelism leads to church planting, and church planting leads to evangelism. In Matthew, Jesus compelled His disciples to go and “make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19). The plural form of *ethnos* (nations) in the Greek refers to non-Jews. In today’s language, Jesus would say, “Go and reach all ethnic and socioeconomic groups living among you.” Jesus told His followers that when they received the Holy Spirit they would be witnesses in “Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Mission-minded churches must be passionate for sending missional teams to new geographic areas and to new demographic groups in the midst of our communities.

GOD’S PASSION: SAVING LOST CHILDREN

The church exists for mission. Our faith community is there to help us grow and remain spiritually closer to God. But if that’s all it does, it ceases to be the church of Jesus. “ ‘Follow me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will send you out to fish for people’ ” (Mark 1:17). “He appointed twelve that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out the demons” (Mark 3:14, 15).

Christ did not call His disciples to walk with Him so that they could build a bigger temple, to help Him take care of the believers, or to assist Him in handling larger crowds. He sent them to serve others and lead them back to God. Churches that have adopted a true Bible-based discipleship model focus not only on discipling people “in,” but “sending them out.” Church planting is the natural outcome of healthy *sending* churches.

PLANTING CHURCHES ARE GROWING CHURCHES

A church that sends, grows. The more disciples and leaders you grow, the more people you can send out to plant. The more people you send out, the more opportunities you have for growing new disciples within your church. God might grow your congregation to a megachurch if that is best for the community you’re serving. But you



should not ignore God's call to keep planting.

In 2005, my family and I planted a church in Frisco, Texas—a suburb in northern Dallas—under the umbrella of the Richardson Seventh-day Adventist Church. The area was experiencing a growth explosion. Of the 20 people who joined our core team, six were pastors' kids. Only three of them were actively involved in church ministry before they joined Crosswalk, despite their great leadership skills and professional training. Church planting creates opportunities for inactive members to get involved in new ministries.

THE POWER OF MULTIPLICATION

In 2000, Richardson, our sponsoring church, had made a decision to multiply under the leadership of a missional pastor. By 2005 it had planted four churches (English, Spanish, Brazilian, and African). Our church was the second English church plant, and we joined Richardson and its daughter churches in continuing to plant. By 2019 the combined church planting efforts resulted in 17 new congregations in northern Dallas: 10 churches (four English, five Spanish, one Brazilian), four companies (two English, one Spanish, one Korean), and three mission groups (two English, one African). Total attendance of all 17 new congregations was more than 2,200 people, with a membership of 2,737. The average annual conversion growth rate between 2002 and 2010 reached 10.76 percent, equal to that of the fastest growing fields of South America. The average annual conversion growth rate still remains 6 to 8 percent.

Reflect on this: in 19 years the Adventist church in northern Dallas grew six times (more than 600 percent). If this can happen in North America, it can happen anywhere in the world. Welcome to the power of multiplication.

What happened to the Richardson church during that time? Its attendance grew from 450 to 650, and its membership from 654 to more than 1,000. This isn't unique. During the time I was assisting the Texas Conference as the church planting coordinator, from 2015 to 2019, we were blessed to start 46 new churches. Every sponsoring church planted a new congregation for mission, and not because of conflict. Attendance and finances grew beyond preplanting levels in less than nine months. A church that plants, grows, and a church that grows, plants.

BACK TO OUR ADVENTIST ROOTS

The Adventist movement was a church planting movement. In 1862, James White wrote to all the Adventist pastors, "In no way can a preacher so well prove himself as in entering new fields. There he can see the fruits of his own labors. And if he be successful in raising up churches, and establishing them, so that they bear good fruits, he gives to his brethren the best proofs that he is sent of the Lord." The Adventist Church had a reputation of being a multiplying church.

In December 1909, the *Seventh-day Baptist Reader* published, "All Seventh-day Adventist clergymen are missionaries—not located pastors—and are busy preaching, teaching, and organizing churches the world over."

We grew exponentially by reaching new communities here and abroad. We've continued growing the mission abroad very well, but it seems we've neglected the mission at home.

Despite the surge in the church planting movement in the past 10 years, statistics reveal that only 4 percent of all Christian churches in North America have ever multiplied. This means that 96 percent of churches have never bothered to reach or succeeded in reaching a new community and starting another congregation. Adventist church statistics are about the same. So if we want to have only 4 percent of our churches multiply, we must plant 260 churches a year in North America alone. In truth, we should do even more.

How do we do that? We must train and empower our elders to oversee and disciple our existing church members so that pastors can focus on training and leading new planters and plant new churches, following our Adventist roots. Of the 46 new churches we planted in Texas, all but four were raised by lay leaders who felt the call of God to plant congregations in their communities.

God has called us to return to our roots, creating a culture of multiplication within Adventism. The fastest growing conferences in North America are those that plant new churches. Disciples make disciples; leaders develop other leaders; and churches must plant churches that plant churches. ■

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The background of the entire page is a blurred, high-tech financial market visualization. It features a candlestick chart with red and green bars, overlaid with several line graphs in blue and white. A dashed white line trends upwards from the bottom left towards the top right. In the upper middle section, the number '+11,000' is visible in a light blue font. The overall color palette is dominated by dark blues, oranges, and reds, creating a sense of dynamic energy and data analysis.

BEYOND

THE

NUMBERS

GAME

*Searching
and caring
for even one*

CHRISTIAN AND HEIDI MARTIN

Building up the nerve to jump, I [Christian] took one last breath and held it. Swinging my arms up in the air, I leaped off a 20-foot ledge into the strikingly blue, frigid cold waters of Crater Lake. That particular lake has the distinction of being the deepest and clearest lake in the United States, and the ninth deepest in the world, with a depth of 1,949 feet. It's breathtaking in more ways than one, with water temperatures rarely rising above 55 degrees Fahrenheit!

This beauty of nature is actually a volcanic basin filled with 4.6 trillion gallons of water maintained only by rain and an average snowfall of 44 feet a year. One can walk around the rim of the crater for a spectacular sight, but our outlook changed the day Heidi and I strapped ourselves into the seats of a Bonanza V-35 single-engine aircraft (with its distinctive V-tail), and lifted off. Within minutes we were flying high above Crater Lake for an amazing bird's-eye view. Our flight provided distinct features of both the lake and its volcanic surroundings from a whole new perspective.

THINKING ABOUT MISSION

As a Bible-believing, church-attending follower of Jesus, what is my perspective on mission? When I look at a crowd, do I even notice actual people? Do I put value on massive crowds more than the troubled man or lonely woman in them? If I were to freeze the frame of a packed auditorium, would I still see only one large gathering, or would I be mindful of each person? In other words, what's my outlook on mission?

Back to that freeze frame: what would Jesus see? In the midst of large multitudes found in every city, Jesus told His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Luke 10:2). So who makes up this so-called harvest that Jesus identifies as being so "great"?

Reading Matthew's parallel passage enhances our understanding of the immediate context of Luke's words. When Jesus saw the massive crowd, "He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Matt. 9:36). Other translations describe them as "distressed and dispirited" (NASB);¹ or "fainted, and . . . scattered abroad" (KJV). I cannot think of a more accurate

description of the "great multitudes" of the twenty-first century.

Perhaps because we tend so often to gawk in awe at the masses, we somehow miss seeing the shirtless young man with sleeve tattoos; the anxious grandmother trying to keep up with her hyper grandson; giggly teenage girls craving attention; a boy completely oblivious to his surroundings as he scrolls through Instagram on his smartphone; the single mother holding her wailing toddler. They are like sheep, having no shepherd.

In every evangelistic event are attendees who are categorized as being the most promising interests, with the prominent criteria simply being high attendance, while those who appear to be uninterested or indifferent are in many cases the very ones longing to believe in something much greater than themselves. While professing to be "mission-minded," do we find ourselves caught up with the numbers game? Mindful of everything and anything but the heart of mission.

MISSION AS MARKETING SUCCESS

From a marketing and business perspective, anything short of the largest possible response or attendance is not considered most successful. So I wonder: Does my church judge evangelistic success by sheer numbers? We hear the exciting praise reports, "More than 100 baptisms!" "More than 1 million requested Bible studies!" "Thousands volunteered!" But what truly defines an accomplished mission? Must we expect to hear only evangelistically successful stories from developing countries, in which reports of mass baptisms are announced on a regular basis? Do we need a whole new point of view?

Wherever we are, this very day, all around us are men and women of all ages who need to know that there's a God who loves them and whom they can love in return. Do we notice their tears, the longing in their eye, their nonverbal communication? Or are they lost in the masses? Ellen White wrote, "Prayers and tears and inquiries go up from souls longing for light, for grace, for the Holy Spirit. Many are on the verge of the kingdom, waiting only to be gathered in."²

Do we believe that to be reality? Are we as ready to do and dare for souls as I did for fun in an

The heart of God aches for each life that is fearfully and wonderfully made in His image.

Oregon lake years ago? Or do we fail to notice those persons in tears because they're the only ones who showed up when thousands of invitations were sent out?

Am I driven and heartbroken over the condition of broken people? Robert Pierce, founder of the international charity organization World Vision International in the 1950s, wrote on the flyleaf of his Bible: "Let my heart be broken by the things that break the heart of God." Dwight Nelson quoted these words years later from the pulpit in Pioneer Memorial church, and brought conviction to the heart of Heidi Towar and other students at Andrews University one Sabbath in September 1996.

Inspired with a mission to reach Benton Harbor, Michigan, a city about 30 minutes from Andrews University, Heidi and friends prayerfully drove to the heart of that city and started knocking on doors, asking to pray with each resident who opened their door. For some it was more challenging than my leap into the lake. At times student optimism was met with blank stares and closed doors. How many unopened doors and locked hearts does one count before deciding that it's time to go back to campus? Ten? Twenty?

Charles Spurgeon once said, "If we had to preach to thousands year after year, and never rescued but one soul, that one soul would be a full reward for all our labor, for a soul is of countless price." A mission-minded disciple keeps looking for one soul. As Paul encouraged the believers in Galatia: "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up" (Gal. 6:9). That hot Saturday afternoon in Benton Harbor, mission-minded students did not give up.

BENTON HARBOR MISSION


Instead, in a relatively short time, the Spirit led us into a ministry to the community that involved hundreds of students. Each student was encouraged to adopt a home in the community, learn the

residents' names, spend time getting to know them and caring for their hearts. Sometimes that looked like raking leaves, shoveling snow, or picking up trash. Other times there were Bible studies, children's programs, evangelistic meetings, health screenings, and choir concerts. We shared prayers and tears, and heard thanksgiving for our visits. Yet in all the flurry of our work, we sometimes wondered if we were making a difference.

Looking back over the years, this mission-minded zeal with fellow students was a huge piece of what made me (Heidi) who I am today. Nothing is more powerful than seeing God move in front of your very eyes on a weekly basis. Those were the experiences that we lived for—the joy that motivated each heart; the thrill of seeing others capture a vision of Jesus and His deep love for them. Mission is all around us. We just need to open our eyes and hearts to see where Jesus wants us to minister. Christian artist Brandon Heath sings, "Give me your eyes for just one second . . . , give your love for humanity"

Over the years the Benton Harbor ministry has expanded to what is now the Harbor of Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church, still ministering in the heart of Benton Harbor, Michigan. The stories continue to this day, across the expanse of our amazing mission-minded church, all around the world.

GOD AND MISSION

The heart of God aches for each life that is fearfully and wonderfully made in His image. His mission is fueled by compassion for one. What helps us without fail to cultivate a love for one is spending time with Him. It is truly amazing what happens to our hearts when we do this. God fills us with His love so that we can love those around us—even those who are tough to love. He alone can change our unloving hearts into loving, mission-minded ones that care for others of His children. We truly long to be mission-minded Christians. For as Jesus makes that change in each one of us, our church becomes the mission-minded church we want and long to belong to. 

¹ Texts credited to NASB are from the *New American Standard Bible*, copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

² Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 109.

Christian Martin enjoys the companionship and support of his wife, **Heidi**, in his work as pastor of the Living Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church in Haymarket, Virginia.

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THE PRESIDENT AND THE PROPHET

*He thought he knew
what she meant.*

Arthur Grosvenor Daniells was elected General Conference (GC) president in 1901, a significant General Conference session, because the church structure was completely reorganized. The restructuring was actually much of Daniells' idea, so he seemed a natural choice. Now, almost 10 years later, in 1910, Daniells found himself president of a much larger church.

When Daniells was elected, the membership was 78,000. His presidency saw a growth rate of 25 percent. But growth wasn't simply membership. More local and union conferences were established, leading toward an increased bureaucracy. Church institutions showed growth as well, with 28 publishing houses, 74 sanitariums, and 680 schools. All might have seemed well, but, in fact, 1910 proved to be one of Daniells' more troubling years.

To give some context, one must first go back a few years. In 1907, W. W. Prescott, GC vice president and *Review* editor, introduced some "new" theology concerning the "daily" in Daniel 8. This opened some debate and study sessions, and eventually led to sides being taken. Daniells, while cautious, thought Prescott's view held merit.

By 1909, it was time for another GC session. Grumbling about Daniells' leadership permeated the camp. Ellen White, who was in attendance, heard more than a few people share their opinions on both doctrine and the president. While the issue was not on the agenda, a theological cloud overshadowed the meetings.

For the previous five years Ellen White had been sending repeated communications to Daniells about city evangelism. While he dealt with administrative issues, including this ongoing theological debate, she, in turn, pressed for a focus on evangelism to large cities.

At the 1909 GC session, she surprised the leaders by declaring that W. W. Prescott should be relieved of his duties as *Review* editor and sent to New York City as an evangelist. Thinking they did not understand her correctly, they questioned her several times over a period of months. She was resolute. By 1910, Prescott was in New York, but unhappy with his assignment.

A. G. Daniells, on the other hand, was doing all he could to take her requests seriously. Leaders appropriated \$11,000 especially for city evangelism. They had dispatched Prescott to New York. Daniells planned a five-day meeting dedicated to discussing the topic. Whatever progress he thought he'd made didn't make a difference; White continued to urge the need for larger plans. Her son, W. C. White wrote: "Mother's burden for the cities continues. It is pressed upon her mind night after night that we are not doing what we ought."¹

More time passed, and Ellen White continued to express

her dissatisfaction. “What can we do? What can we do to persuade our brethren to go into the cities and give a warning message now, *right now!*”²

In California for meetings in May, Daniells traveled to Ellen White’s home at Elmshaven, hoping to surprise her with the news of his plans for city evangelism. But when he arrived, he was stopped at the door. The prophet declined to see him, sending a message instead: When he, the General Conference president, was ready to carry out the work that needed to be done, she’d talk to him. Rebuffed, Daniells boarded a train for home.

Feeling the sting of rejection, Daniells was confused. *Hadn’t he done what he could? The money, the committees, sending the Review editor to the field? What more could be done? What did she mean?* The answer came in a package of letters in late June. Ellen White had lost her confidence in him. Clearly, more plain speech was required, and it came in two decisive statements.

“Had the president of the General Conference been thoroughly aroused, he might have seen the situation. But he has not understood the message that God has given. I can no longer hold my peace.”³

The second, however, was a bigger blow, as recounted by Daniells himself, in 1928:

“Finally I received a message in which she said, ‘When the president of the General Conference is converted, he will know what to do with the messages God has sent him.’ . . . That message, telling me that I needed to be converted, cut me severely at the time, but I did not reject it. I began to pray for the conversion I needed to give me the understanding I seemed to lack.”⁴

Clarence Crisler, one of Ellen White’s secretaries, tried to persuade her of the things Daniells was doing right. But she was undeterred. He reported:

“Sister White touched on the blessing that would come to the general work if Elder Daniells and some of his associates who are bearing large responsibilities could personally enter the cities and act as leaders. . . . As the General Conference brethren labored for souls in the great cities, their sympathies would be enlarged, and their minds would be so fully occupied with the work of thwarting the efforts of Satan to win the allegiance of the world, that they would lose sight of petty differences of opinion on doctrinal points.”⁵

To Daniells’ credit, he had great respect for Ellen

White and her prophetic calling. While he was hurt, he did not cast off the testimony, but rather began some serious soul-searching. He also did not keep it quiet. On July 1, 1910, he shared all of Ellen White’s letters with the General Conference Committee. That day they took an action to relieve A. G. Daniells of his administrative duties for such a time as he could go to New York and personally conduct an evangelistic meeting—still president, but totally focused on sharing the gospel with those in the city.

In that same committee they appointed 17 men whom they assigned to four geographic regions to begin aggressively conducting city evangelism in major U.S. cities. Daniells was energized by his experience in New York City, so much so that he wrote to Ellen and W. C. White expressing the sentiment that he’d be happy to lay aside his presidency and focus on evangelism. Her reply dissuaded him of this path.

“The position you have taken is in the order of the Lord, and now I would encourage you with the words, Go forward as you have begun, using your position of influence as president of the General Conference for the advancement of the work we are called to do.” She added, “Angels of God will be with you. Redeem the lost time of the past nine years by going ahead now with the work in our cities, and the Lord will bless and sustain you.”⁶

A. G. Daniells was changed by this experience, painful as it might have been. By spending some time in the field winning souls for Christ, he gained a new perspective that transformed the way he spent his time and his emphasis as an administrator.

Much could be taken from Daniells’ experience, but the one truth that seems best is that mission changes lives. Certainly sharing the gospel with others brings them to Jesus and saves them for eternity. But doing mission, whether overseas or in your backyard, changes individuals. We see what God values. What we might have thought important fades as we work for Him. ♣

¹ Arthur White, *Ellen G. White: The Later Elmshaven Years, 1905-1915* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1982), p. 222.

² *Ibid.*, p. 223.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 224, 225.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

Merle Poirier is operations manager for *Adventist Review*.



DOUBLE-MINDEDNESS, NOT

What will power can and cannot do

We all have it—sin—in our own familiar and hereditary forms, or fresh faults we personally import from new and contemporary sources.

SIN: FIFTY SHADES AND MORE

There may be sins that we, our kids, and our parents have the same tendency to struggle with the most: self-sufficiency, the self-righteous assurance that our families are nice people who don't need God desperately the way others may; or its opposite, an insecurity in constant dread of God, and ready to detect that someone or other wants to insult us. Then there's quick temper, or, conversely, apathy and passivity about principle; the love of pleasure, or contempt for the hedonists; lust, greed, and ambi-

tion, or, at some other extreme, epic satisfaction with slackness, laziness, and mediocrity.

Or it's more respectful sin, such as gluttony. There's pornography, entertainment addiction—endless, mind-enfeebling hours before a screen, or the sustained search for fatuous trivia to laugh about.

Before and beyond any of these, there's the insatiable craving for recognition, for the praise and adoration of humans, or the deep pride and haughtiness of spirit that goes before destruction and a very hard fall (Prov. 16:18). Or we may be struggling with more than one of these, multiple spiritual problems—listed or otherwise—all at the same time. Whatever the case, we all have a sin problem.

WHAT TO DO

The question is “How?” How do we get rid of the sin in our lives? Perhaps we try—valiantly, even—but somehow never seem to overcome. The addiction grabs us harder, our temper flares even hotter, and our craving for pleasure grows stronger.

WILLPOWER, ETC.

So we try willpower. Maybe we’ve started adding a little bit of devotional time in our day. Perhaps we have begun to pray more for God’s help to get rid of our fault once and for all. But somehow we still cannot overcome.

Why? What are we doing wrong? Everything, perhaps.

It bears repeating, and repeating again, that the issue is often enough that we believe in quick fixes. Progress in our world is equivalent to quicker and quicker fixes—buttons to push, instructions to give Alexa, switches to flick that brighten everywhere; hand claps that make our devices perform detailed tasks. We are less prepared for the long struggle. But getting rid of well-rooted sin involves long struggle; conversion means a complete mind change, and growing in godliness and holiness—sanctification—is a lifelong effort and an eternal process.

Also, overcoming is not for two-minded souls. James tells us that “a double minded man is unstable in all his ways” (James 1:8, KJV). Sometimes we or the voices of spiritual authority in our heads obsess over some particular behavior that has been labeled “sin.” Our laser focus on that specific thing can be a great obstacle to our spiritual success. Our attempt to rid our lives of it may show the tragic flaw in our mental and spiritual preparation. We don’t quite triumph in one thing because we attempt to win in one area instead of in every area, a surgical strike over a blitzkrieg.

Giving up eating candy can be very different from surrendering our lives completely to the Holy Spirit’s rule: it’s palate over person. But genuine surrender always surpasses the stats of calorie counting; it shifts the focus from our midriff to the Master who is our Savior, who comes to own our affections and translates them from earthly things and ways of thinking. We eventually listen to John’s warning: “Do not love . . . anything in the world,” or else “love for the Father is not in [us]” (1 John 2:15). Now we respect Paul’s elevating advice: “Set

Growing in godliness and holiness—sanctification—is a lifelong effort and an eternal process.

your minds on things above” (Col. 3:2). We remember James: “Don’t you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God” (James 4:4). We insult Jesus by trying to do what He has already told us is impossible to do: “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to the one and despise the other” (Matt. 6:24). Thus we receive the victory, not on our own picky and choosy terms, but on the exhaustive terms of Scripture’s instruction: “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Rom. 12:2).

Now, meekness subverts temper tantrums, because God has become our primary focus every morning, and the Holy Spirit controls the time and content of our food intake. Service to others grows ever more delightful because the entertainment we once chose—even elements of it that we claimed were “not all that bad”—has given place to the contemplation of what is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report; virtuous or praiseworthy (see Phil. 4:8).

We come to understand that sanctification is one word meaning the same as the two-word phrase, continuous conversion; that salvation is a thoroughgoing and endless process. As eternity discloses to us more and ever more of our God, we turn evermore into the likeness of Him in whose likeness we were always meant to be. God the Spirit gives us single-mindedness for our double-mindedness, and there’s no more picking and choosing about what we’ll give up for Jesus. When His love comes home to our heads and hearts, we are glad to give Him everything. So here we are, Lord: transform us so You can translate us.✎

Othniel Jeremiah is a grateful, pseudonymous penitent.



A PIVOTAL SESSION

General Conference session decisions that still impact us today

As we approach the 2020 General Conference session, we thought it interesting to learn about previous sessions. This article deals primarily with the 1901 General Conference session. It's adapted from a longer paper. You may read the entire article online at www.adventistreview.org/2004-50 —Editors.

BARRY OLIVER

The General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church was formally organized in May 1863 at a meeting in Battle Creek, Michigan.¹ In order to provide a structure for the emerging group of believers, it was decided that there would be three administrative levels of church organization: the local church, the conference, and the General Conference (headquartered in Battle Creek, Michigan). The officers of the General Conference were president, secretary, and treasurer. Three people were appointed as members of a General Conference Executive Committee. General Conference sessions were to be held annually.²

A major reorganization of denominational structures occurred between the years 1901 and 1903 at the General Conference sessions held in those years.³ While later adjustments have been made, the reorganization of 1901 to 1903 was the most significant period of major organizational reform in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The structures put in place at that time still form the organizational building blocks of the denomination.⁴



ELLEN G. WHITE ESTATE

incorporated as independent bodies, with their own officers and executive boards or committees. Although they were all part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church—officers appointed by, and reporting to the General Conference session—they were not administered directly by the General Conference. Because of their independent status, issues of coordination and integration were constant problems during the 1890s.

3. Membership Growth and Diversity

Seventh-day Adventists understood themselves to be simply “a body of believers associating together, taking the name of Seventh-day Adventists, and attaching their names to a covenant simply to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus,” with the Bible as “their only creed and discipline.”⁵ But by 1888 there were already 30 organized conferences containing 889 organized churches, and 227 ordained and 182 licensed ministers. The constituency was supporting six publishing houses, three senior educational institutions, and two medical establishments.⁶

By the turn of the twentieth century the church had 66,547 members spread not only across the United States but also in Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and other “mission fields.”⁷ As the church continued to grow and diversify, it was evident that the organizational framework set in place in 1863 could not cope with this numerical and geographical growth.

4. The Centralization of Control

The growing global missionary consciousness of the church during the 1870s and 1880s was accompanied by increased centralization of administrative control. The concept of administration grew from General Conference president George I. Butler’s idea of leadership.

Butler had written an essay in 1873 in response to some observations he had made on the leadership style of James White and other church leaders at that time. It revealed his attitude toward leadership.⁸ Butler described a leader as a benevolent monarch. He supported this assertion by references to numerous biblical examples of authoritarian leaders. While he was willing to concede that Christ was indeed head of the church, he insisted that some men were “placed higher in authority in the church than others.”⁹

WHY REORGANIZE?

Despite the simplicity of the organization set up in 1863, the need for major modification of those structures became evident. A number of factors precipitated the need for change.

1. The Growth of Institutions and Entities

The organization of 1863 did not anticipate the need to accommodate organizational entities to care for the publishing, educational, health, and missionary interests of the church. Consequently, these organizations emerged not as integrated parts of the conference administrative structure of the church, but as independent units apart from it. Although they had a separate infrastructure, most shared personnel with the administrative structure of the denomination.

2. Loss of Coordination and Integration

These secondary organizations were legally

For Daniells, decentralization as a principle of reorganization was paramount.

The 1877 General Conference session withdrew its support for all parts of the Butler essay that referenced the leadership of the church as residing in one man. This was supported by a resolution stating:

The highest authority under God among Seventh-day Adventists is found in the will of the body of that people, as expressed in the decisions of the General Conference when acting within its proper jurisdiction; and that such decisions should be submitted to by all without exception, unless they can be shown to conflict with the Word of God and the rights of individual conscience.¹⁰

In the early 1880s, Ellen White began to rebuke General Conference administrators for taking too much of the responsibility for decision-making on themselves and failing to give others opportunity to have input. In 1883, Ellen White pointed out that “every one of our leading men” considered that “he was the very one who must bear all the responsibilities” and “failed to educate others to think” and “to act.” In fact, she charged, the leading men gave the others “no chance.”¹¹

5. Financial Crisis

Another precipitating factor that led to restructuring was the state of the church’s finances. When G. A. Irwin assumed the presidency of the General Conference in 1897, he faced a woeful financial predicament. Within a few weeks of his appointment, the situation was so desperate that he wrote that the General Conference was “living from hand to mouth, so to speak. . . . Some days we get in two or three hundred dollars, and other days we have

nothing.” On the particular day that he was writing, he lamented that the treasury was “practically empty,” even though there were at that time “a number of calls for means.”¹²

6. Decreasing Ability to Support Missionary Expansion

The inability of the denomination to financially support its growth began to limit the rate of its missionary expansion. During the last five years of the nineteenth century there was a diminishing of missionary activity by the denomination, exacerbated by the lingering impact of the global financial recession of the mid-1890s. Change was needed not only to accommodate the growth of the past, but also to facilitate growth in the future.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES¹³

At the 1901 General Conference session held in Battle Creek, Michigan, major changes in administrative structures of the church were voted. Sound principles of organization were established at the denomination’s founding between 1861 to 1863. But by 1901 it was recognized that those principles needed fresh application.

Ellen White was particularly pointed in her endorsement of change. The day before the official opening of the 1901 General Conference session, she declared, “God wants a change. . . . We want to know what can be done right here, . . . right now.”¹⁴

The principal changes at the 1901 session were:

1. The formation of union conferences as the constituent bodies of the General Conference.¹⁵
2. The decentralization of decision-making from the General Conference administration to union conference executive committees.
3. The consolidation of departments of the General Conference and the dissolution of independent incorporated entities that had been operating departments and some institutions.
4. The title of the chief officer of the General Conference was to be “chairman of the board” rather than “president.”

MISSION IS IMPORTANT

When it came to the need for organization, Arthur Daniells, who was appointed General

Conference chairman (president) at the 1901 session, began with the certainty and imminence of the return of Jesus Christ. This, for him, determined the urgency of the mission and the need for reorganization.

Because the need arose from a perceived sense of urgency—both in the soon return of Jesus and mission—there was no doubt among those who held this view that the structure they had erected was biblically based. They believed the New Testament affirmed that Christ was returning and the transmission of the gospel to the world was the primary precondition for His return. With a consciousness of divine providence, they understood that Seventh-day Adventists had been specifically chosen within a precise time reference to herald the “everlasting gospel” to the world. Reorganization was undertaken not because the end was coming, but because there was a “work” to do *before* the end could come. It was the mission policy of the church and the urgency associated with that mission that was the more precipitating factor in reorganization.¹⁶

PERSUADING PRINCIPLES

The principles that appear to have most strongly influenced reorganization were as follows:

1. Decentralization: For Daniells, decentralization as a principle of reorganization was paramount. Daniells affirmed that “the guiding principle [of reorganization] had been the decentralization of authority by the distribution of responsibility.” One of Daniells’ favorite expressions was that those “on the ground” should bear the burden of administration and have the prerogative of decision-making.¹⁷ He saw the implementation of the union conference structure as the manner in which administrative responsibility was being delegated to those “on the ground.”

2. Unity and Diversity: When Daniells discussed the principles that were to govern the reorganization of the church, and described the benefits that would accrue from the implementation of the union conference plan, he did not emphasize unity. Ellen White had done so in her address the day before the 1901 session.¹⁸ The principle of unity had always been a top priority for Seventh-day Adventists, and would continue to be so. But for both Ellen White and A. G. Daniells,

the immediate priorities were elsewhere.

The principle of diversity, rather than unity, was the more determinative factor in establishing an additional level of administration, and in delegating some functions to union conferences, but not without consequences. As the new structures were put into practice, Ellen White found that the new organization could be abused just as the old. She reproved church leaders because of the tendency to gather power to themselves. Whenever the need to promote unity was prioritized to the extent that it disrupted the maintenance of equilibrium between the principles of unity and diversity, centralization was the result.

By 1903, Daniells included unity among the list of advantages and benefits realized by reorganization. He summarized: “In short, the plan recognizes one message, one body of people, and one general organization.”¹⁹

3. Participation/Representation: The Executive Committee selected in 1901 comprised representatives of departments and institutions, with only union conference presidents as representatives of “the people” who were supposed to be the authority base in the church. The union presidents were outnumbered 17 to eight and could easily be outvoted. Further, as chairs or executive board members of the institutions within their own unions, union presidents were more often focused on institutional matters than on the concerns of local churches and church members. They were, therefore, more likely to be sympathetic to institutional problems and needs than to the needs and concerns of the church at large.

Representation was understood as being compatible with the higher principle of decentralization. The church and its members were very much in the mind of Daniells, both at the General Conference session in 1901 and the year that followed. Though he was conscious “more and more” of the “influence and power” that the General Conference had, he was anxious to use that power “rightly” and get into “sympathetic touch” with the “rank and file” of the church constituency. He censured conference officers for failing to consult their constituencies when decisions of importance were to be made. In 1901, he wanted administration and government in the church to be “of the people, by the people, and for the people.”²⁰

4. Decision by Consensus: Along with his regard for the rights of church members to implement a participatory decision-making process at the local conference level, Daniells advocated decision-making by consensus in 1901 and 1902, rather than by majority vote. It's not clear what he had in mind when he advocated consensus decision-making. Whatever the case, his attitude changed, so that by the 1903, General Conference session vital decisions were being made by majority vote. The shift from emphasizing participatory representation and consensus decision-making to emphasizing more structured representation and majority-vote decision-making indicated a shift from emphasis on diversity (or decentralization) to emphasis on unity.

5. Constituent Authority: Daniells intended that the General Conference Executive Committee in 1901 should be advisory, not executive. That is, it was not to make decisions, but to advise other bodies in their decision-making prerogatives. Daniells' answer to the centralization of power in the General Conference committee was that the committee would not make executive decisions. It was going to be a fostering, advisory board, whose interest was coordination, not supervision.

6. Simplicity: In view of the complication and confusion that had characterized denominational administration in the 1890s, reorganization was perceived as a simplification of the organizational system. In 1903, simplicity was still described as a desirable principle of reorganization, but it was proving to be an elusive quality. It was to remain so, especially in parts of the world in which the administrative machinery necessary in North America or Europe was just "too complicated."

7. Adaptability: The fact that the church was willing to enter into a process of radical reorganization is indicative of the principle of adaptability in organizational structures. Further adaptations in 1903 indicate that the commitment to adaptability remained.

CONCLUSION

Major changes were made in Adventist administrative structures in 1901 and 1903, and have continued in their application for almost 120 years. From time to time modifications have been

made, but the four-tiered constituent structure—local church, local conference, union conference, General Conference—that was implemented in 1901 remains. The global mission and ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church continues to be facilitated by the structures implemented in 1901 and 1903. Time will tell if further major revision is necessary. ❧

¹ John Byington and Uriah Smith, "Report of General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, May 26, 1863, p. 204.

² For a detailed discussion on denominational organization in 1863, see Andrew G. Mustard, *James White and SDA Organization: Historical Development, 1844–1881* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1987).

³ The minutes of those General Conference sessions may be accessed at the General Conference Archives webpage at <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Minutes>; also see the *General Conference Bulletins* for 1901 and 1903.

⁴ Much of the content is directly drawn from research conducted by the author when preparing and writing a Ph.D. dissertation at Andrews University in 1989, and from the published version of the dissertation. See Barry David Oliver, *SDA Organizational Structure: Past, Present, and Future* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1989).

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 12.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 9–40.

⁷ *Annual Statistical Report of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, December 31, 1900*, accessed March 4, 2018, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Statistics/ASR/ASR1900.pdf>.

⁸ See Kevin M. Burton, "Centralized for Protection: George I. Butler and His Philosophy of One-Person Leadership" (M.A. Thesis, Andrews University, 2015).

⁹ George I. Butler, "Leadership," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Nov. 18, 1873, pp. 180, 181.

¹⁰ "Sixteenth Annual Session of the General Conference of S. D. Adventists," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Oct. 4, 1877, p. 106.

¹¹ Ellen G. White to W. C. White and Mary White, letter 24, Aug. 23, 1883.

¹² G. A. Irwin to N. W. Allee, May 5, 1897, Record Group 11, Letter Book 18, General Conference Archives, Silver Spring, Maryland.

¹³ A comprehensive directory of organizations, institutions, and employees of the global church as they were subsequent to the reorganization of 1901 can be consulted in the 1901 *General Conference Bulletin*, pp. 520–559.

¹⁴ "Talk of Mrs. E. G. White, Before Representative Brethren, in the College Library, April 1, 1901, 2:30 P.M.," Ellen G. White manuscript 43a, 1901. (Italics supplied.)

¹⁵ A. G. Daniells, "A Brief Glance at the Work of Reorganization," *General Conference Bulletin* 4, no. 3 (Third Quarter 1901): 513–515.

¹⁶ A. G. Daniells, "The President's Address: A Review and an Outlook—Suggestions for Conference Action," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, May 11, 1905, p. 8.

¹⁷ A. G. Daniells to W. T. Knox, May 21, 1901, Record Group 11, Letter Book 23, General Conference Archives, Silver Spring, Maryland; and many others (see full paper).

¹⁸ "Talk of Mrs. E. G. White, Before Representative Brethren."

¹⁹ *General Conference Bulletin* (1903): 17–21.

²⁰ A. G. Daniells to E. A. Sutherland, December 20, 1901, Record Group 11, Letter Book 25, General Conference Archives, Silver Spring, Maryland; and others (see full paper).

Barry Oliver retired as president of the South Pacific Division in 2015. He has worked as a pastor, evangelist, college teacher, and administrator. He and his wife, Julie, have worked in Australia and Papua New Guinea.

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL MOMENT IN LIFE

“Whenever two or three . . . come together . . . , I am there with you” (Matt. 18:20, CEV).*

When basketball star Kobe Bryant was killed in a helicopter crash in January, a friend of mine posted an online question: What was your favorite Kobe Bryant moment?

Along with the many amazing moments on the basketball court itself, I shared my own favorite Kobe Bryant moment: when Kobe and Shaquille O’Neal reconciled.

For those who don’t know the story, Kobe and Shaq were teammates on the Los Angeles Lakers—winning three consecutive championships together. Kobe and Shaq were also both alpha males who contended internally with each other . . . and, eventually, refused even to talk.

Shaq finally left Los Angeles to play for another team, the Miami Heat. And when the two teams played, Kobe and Shaq barely acknowledged each other.

But then in 2006, during a Los Angeles-Miami game on the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday, Shaq approached Kobe for a handshake and a hug. Everything changed.

Separation is the hardest experience we can have in life. That’s why restoration, the opposite of separation, is the most beautiful experience we can have in life.

When Jesus said, “Where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them” (Matt. 18:20), He wasn’t talking about two people worshipping together. (Jesus doesn’t need a quorum of two to be with you.)

Jesus was talking about coming together. Look at the fuller context: “If your brother or sister sins, go and point

out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ . . . For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them” (verses 15-20).

This is why two or three are needed—because it takes two (sometimes three) to reconcile. Jesus cares so deeply about healed human relationships that He personally promises to join the experience in a special way.

Jesus knows firsthand how painful human separation is. He once turned to His friends, after nearly everyone else had left Him, and said, “You do not want to leave too, do you?” (John 6:67).

In the end, Jesus was rejected by nearly everyone. Yet He forgave them all—inviting them back into relationship with Him. That includes you and me.

When we have the opportunity to heal a broken relationship, we must grab it. Another friend of mine once told me about the hardest 40 steps he ever took in his life—walking over to reconcile with someone whom he’d been in conflict with. He said the healing between them brought incomparable joy and renewal.

Yes, just as it takes two to tango, it takes two to come together. But it’s never just two. Because Jesus Himself is there with you both. ♣

* Scripture quotations identified CEV are from the Contemporary English Version. Copyright © American Bible Society 1991, 1995. Used by permission.

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THE LIFE
OF FAITH
ANDY
NASH



**WHEN WE HAVE THE
OPPORTUNITY TO
HEAL A BROKEN
RELATIONSHIP, WE
MUST GRAB IT.**



Forgiven,
not Forgotten

“Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him” (Acts 2:22-24).

While a student in seminary, I had the wonderful opportunity to visit Israel. It was a phenomenal, immersive experience. I visited the Garden Tomb, one of the sites in which Jesus is purported to have been buried. I bent over and ducked beneath the low entrance. As I looked left and right, my convictions were confirmed. The grave was empty. On that account, at least, the site qualified.

On the day of Pentecost, Peter stood before thousands of people and, empowered by the Holy Spirit, boldly proclaimed that Jesus Christ was alive, victorious over the grave. This liberating message might have been just as pointed and powerful coming from another disciple’s lips. But no disciple would be more delighted than Peter to announce the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Scripture’s record of Peter’s journey toward spiritual maturation highlights his strengths and weaknesses. Although each of the disciples possessed character flaws and personality dents, Peter’s unresolved issues were probably more difficult to mask. He was simply too tempestuous and outspoken, too often running his mouth before running his mind. When Jesus first predicted His coming suffering, Peter responded impulsively, “Never, Lord. . . . This shall never happen to you” (Matt. 16:22). Peter believed Jesus was the Christ, and he could not imagine the Christ being conquered by death. Shocked by the first part of Jesus’ announcement, Peter must have become deaf to the last part: *and on the third day be raised to life*. Peter so insisted that Jesus not die that at the Transfiguration he offered his services as a handyman to “put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah” (Matt. 17:4).

Can you blame him? Peter was privileged to witness unforgettable miracles, signs, and wonders during Jesus’ dynamic teaching, healing, and

preaching ministry. Peter served hundreds bread and fish when Jesus fed the 5,000 and 4,000 (Matt. 14:19-21; 15:36-38). Peter walked on water with Jesus (Matt. 14:28, 29). Peter saw Jesus heal his mother-in-law of a fever (Luke 4:38, 39). Peter observed Jesus treat all people with dignity and respect, regardless of age, gender, class, or nationality. Peter’s life was better because of Jesus, and he signified his loyalty to Jesus saying, “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will,” and “Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death” (Matt. 26:33; Luke 22:33).

RIGHT MAN, FAILING MAN

Though these claims were admirable, Jesus knew Peter better than Peter knew himself. True to his tendency toward inconsistency, Peter would fail to live up to his declarations of determined devotion. When Jesus could have used the cooperative prayers of intercession, Peter fell asleep (Matt. 26:40). When Jesus could have been encouraged by the loyal presence of a companion, Peter ran away (Mark 14:50). When Jesus could have been represented by a faithful friend, Peter denied knowing Him three times, just as Jesus foretold (Luke 22:34).

Realizing the error of his lapse in judgment and feeling the chilly winds of regret, Peter “pressed on in solitude and darkness, he knew not and cared not whither. At last he found himself in Gethsemane. The scene of a few hours before came vividly to his mind. The suffering face of his Lord, stained with bloody sweat and convulsed with anguish, rose before him. . . . It was torture to his bleeding heart to know that he had added the heaviest burden to the Saviour’s humiliation and grief. On the very spot where Jesus had poured out His soul in agony to His Father, Peter fell upon his face, and wished that he might die.”¹

The inner pain of personal failure pierced Peter’s

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is every sinner's hope of salvation—our only hope; our unique hope; our omnipotent hope.

heart. It was a pain to which many can relate. Peter is not the only one who has ever felt irredeemable. Today, hundreds of thousands are intimately acquainted with the foreboding sense of guilt and shame that often accompanies poor choices. And it is to Peter and the entire human family that this message is given: there is forgiveness after failure.

Do you have a checkered past? Jesus forgives. Are your hands soiled from drug dealing? Jesus forgives. Is your tongue tainted from lying? Jesus forgives. Was your reputation ruined by infidelity? Jesus forgives. Were you imprisoned for youthful mistakes? Jesus forgives. Are you shackled by secret sin? Jesus forgives. Have you denied Jesus again, and again? Jesus forgives that, too.

On resurrection Sunday, Peter would learn that he was not forgotten. An angel gave Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome these instructions after they found the empty tomb: “Don’t be alarmed,” he said, “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, “He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you”” (Mark 16:6, 7). The women were specifically directed to make sure Peter received the news. Jesus was back from the grave. Peter needed to know that all hope was not lost. “Peter . . . got up and ran to the tomb,” desperate to know if Jesus had really risen (Luke 24:12).

FORGIVEN MAN, FORGIVEN ALL

Like the women who bore the good news to him, Peter did not find Jesus at the tomb (John 20:3-7). However, the apostle Paul said, “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve” (1 Cor. 15:3-5). Jesus gave Cephas (Peter’s Aramaic

name) a personal audience at some point after His resurrection (see Luke 24:34). We do not know the exact details of this conversation or if any words were exchanged at all, but we do know Peter saw the risen Lord with his own eyes.

Perhaps it was this moment that brought everything together for Peter. Beholding Jesus for himself, he was convinced that absolutely nothing could have kept Him in the grave. Ellen White says, “Mountains piled upon mountains over His sepulcher could not have prevented Him from coming forth.”² This is the truth Peter preached and believed.

And you, dear reader, what about you? Do you believe Jesus lives? I am not speaking primarily of the historicity of His resurrection. Rather, do you believe Jesus lives in and for you? The New Testament says, “But because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them” (Heb. 7:24, 25). Jesus prays for you.

Peter would later write, “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade” (1 Peter 1:3, 4). Paul said, “And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. . . . And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins” (1 Cor. 15:14-17).

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is every sinner’s hope of salvation—our only hope; our unique hope; our omnipotent hope. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the foundation of the preacher’s authority. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the bedrock of the believer’s faith. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the constraining compulsion for my sharing hope with you and our sharing with the whole world. Our hope is the great news that Jesus lives. And “because He lives, I can face tomorrow. Because He lives, all fear is gone. Because I know He holds the future, and life is worth the living just because He lives.”³

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940), p. 713.

² *Ibid.*, p. 780.

³ Bill and Gloria Gaither, hymnary.org/text/god_sent_his_son_they_called_him_jesus, 1971.

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SEEKING TRUE KNOWLEDGE

*Building character
for eternity*

ELLEN G. WHITE

More clearly than we do we need to understand the issues at stake in the great conflict in which we are engaged. We need to understand more fully the value of the truths of the word of God and the danger of allowing our minds to be diverted from them by the great deceiver.

The infinite value of the sacrifice required for our redemption reveals the fact that sin is a tremendous evil. Through sin the whole human organism is deranged, the mind is perverted, the imagination corrupted. Sin has degraded the faculties of the soul. Temptations from without

find an answering chord within the heart, and the feet turn imperceptibly toward evil.

As the sacrifice in our behalf was complete, so our restoration from the defilement of sin is to be complete. No act of wickedness will the law of God excuse; no unrighteousness can escape its condemnation. The ethics of the gospel acknowledge no standard but the perfection of the divine character. The life of Christ was a perfect fulfillment of every precept of the law. He said, "I have kept my Father's commandments." His life is our example of obedience and service. God alone can renew the heart. "It is God

which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." But we are bidden, "Work out your own salvation." John 15:10; Philippians 2:13, 12.

THE WORK THAT REQUIRES OUR THOUGHT

Wrongs cannot be righted, nor can reformations in conduct be made by a few feeble, intermittent efforts. Character building is the work, not of a day, nor of a year, but of a lifetime. The struggle for conquest over self, for holiness and heaven, is a lifelong struggle. Without continual effort and constant activity, there can be no advancement in the divine life, no attainment of the victor's crown.

The strongest evidence of [humanity's] fall from a higher state is the fact that it costs so much to return. The way of return can be gained only by hard fighting, inch by inch, hour by hour. In one moment, by a hasty, unguarded act, we may place ourselves in the power of evil; but it requires more than a moment to break the fetters and attain to a holier life. The purpose may be formed, the work begun; but its accomplishment will require toil, time, perseverance, patience, and sacrifice.

We cannot allow ourselves to act from impulse. We cannot be off guard for a moment. Beset with temptations without number, we must resist firmly or be conquered. Should we come to the close of life with our work undone, it would be an eternal loss.

The life of the apostle Paul was a constant conflict with self. He said, "I die daily." 1 Corinthians 15:31. His will and his desires every day conflicted with duty and the will of God. Instead of following inclination, he did God's will, however crucifying to his nature.

At the close of his life of conflict, looking back over its struggles and triumphs, he could say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." 2 Timothy 4:7, 8.

The Christian life is a battle and a march. In this warfare there is no release; the effort must be continuous and persevering. It is by unceasing endeavor that we maintain the victory over the temptations of Satan. Christian integrity must be sought with resistless energy and maintained with a resolute fixedness of purpose.

No one will be borne upward without stern,

Christian integrity must be sought with resistless energy and maintained with a resolute fixedness of purpose.

persevering effort in his own behalf. All must engage in this warfare for themselves; no one else can fight our battles. Individually we are responsible for the issues of the struggle; though Noah, Job, and Daniel were in the land they could deliver neither son nor daughter by their righteousness.

THE SCIENCE TO BE MASTERED

There is a science of Christianity to be mastered—a science as much deeper, broader, higher than any human science as the heavens are higher than the earth. The mind is to be disciplined, educated, trained; for we are to do service for God in ways that are not in harmony with inborn inclination. Hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil must be overcome. Often the education and training of a lifetime must be discarded, that one may become a learner in the school of Christ.

Our hearts must be educated to become steadfast in God. We are to form habits of thought that will enable us to resist temptation. We must learn to look upward. The principles of the Word of God—principles that are as high as heaven, and that compass eternity—we are to understand in their bearing upon our daily life. Every act, every word, every thought, is to be in accord with these principles. All must be brought into harmony with, and subject to, Christ.

The precious graces of the Holy Spirit are not developed in a moment. Courage, fortitude, meekness, faith, unwavering trust in God's power to save, are acquired by the experience of years. By a life of holy endeavor and firm adherence to the right the children of God are to seal their destiny. 🍀

Seventh-day Adventists believe that **Ellen G. White** (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry. These passages were excerpted from her book *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1905), pp. 451-454.



"The challenge is the same as it has been: to utilize our television opportunity to the utmost in extending the Gospel wherever people can view the program. This is Faith for Today's task, its commission."

—William A. Fagal, Founder

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PETER N. LANDLESS ZENO L. CHARLES-MARCEL

LEG PAIN

It might mean more than you think.

Q: I have pain in my calves when I walk a short distance or up a few stairs. My practitioner says it's artery clogging, which needs medications or surgery. Are there any natural treatments?

A: It seems as though your practitioner is talking about peripheral artery disease, or peripheral vascular disease (PVD), which is often treatable and sometimes reversible. It affects more than 8 million people in the United States, especially those over the age 60 and those who smoke, have diabetes, have high blood pressure, and are sedentary. Establishing a firm diagnosis will likely include some combination of laboratory tests, functional tests, and imaging.

If PVD is confirmed, you should know that your risk of stroke and heart attack will also be high, since it develops through the same process. Depending upon the severity of your condition, you may be able to use lifestyle approaches to relieve symptoms and reverse or slow the progress of the hardening of the inner lining of your arteries and the development of "scarring" of the arterial walls (plaque). But while lifestyle improvement is absolutely essential, it may be insufficient.

When the lining cells function properly, they produce nitric oxide (NO). NO is very potent in widening the capacity of arteries and improving circulation. Systemic inflammation, psychological stress, weight gain, high bad cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes, and smoking all promote malfunction of this normal process. Consequently, stress management, weight loss, smoking cessation, and active physical exercise may all contribute to your improvement or even help you avoid

surgery. Please follow the recommendation for your treating physician. But get a second opinion, as treatment may necessitate surgical or balloon interventions to reestablish healthy circulation and avoid unnecessary loss of a limb.

Once diagnosed, stop smoking or using any tobacco product that you may now be using. If you have diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or high triglycerides, get it (or them) under control by becoming actively involved in your own care. Take special care of your feet, which are at risk of gangrene. If you have diabetes, get your

HbA1C, an indicator of blood sugar control, to the recommended level, since levels greater than 8.0 are associated with blood vessel complications in the eyes, heart, brain, and kidneys, as well as the legs.

Get active. A progressively more intense, daily walking schedule may reduce calf pains and increase the distance you can walk without pain. Consult your doctor about your heart disease risk, and get a recommendation for a safe starting point. If you smoke, stop! If

you're overweight, try to get lean and maintain a healthy weight. Check your blood pressure regularly and, if high, get it to safe levels. Eat more healthfully, and choose foods that help normalize nitric oxide levels and response in cells lining the arteries. Foods high in flavonoids, such as cocoa, walnuts, berries, and grapes, have been shown to help to some degree.

Prayerfully consider your situation and all options, and by God's grace, do your best. 🍀

Peter N. Landless, a board-certified nuclear cardiologist, is director of the General Conference Health Ministries Department. **Zeno L. Charles-Marcel**, a board-certified internist, is an associate director of Adventist Health Ministries at the General Conference.





THE GO-BETWEEN

Salvation is such a personal matter.

The phone call was like none I had ever received. It was from a son of the gentleman for whom I did elder care. I supposed it to be a routine call. Not so. Dale got right to the point.

“Dave [Dale’s brother] and I have something we want you to do, even if it means getting fired,” he said.

My brain whirred as I wondered where he was going with this. “We want you to find out where Dad stands with God.”

I knew what Dale meant, and it sounded like an easy task. Again, not so. Anytime I mentioned God or hinted of spiritual things during the five years I’d worked for Charlie, he either

totally ignored me or immediately changed the subject.

RESERVATIONS

Charlie had grown up a Christian. He’d attended church with his wife and twin sons. Now active in their own churches, Dave and Dale had also experienced their dad’s aloofness and disregard at any mention of God. Because of Charlie’s health and age, the sons were concerned about their dad’s salvation and had chosen me to check it out—job or no job.

Charlie lived in his own home and needed some assistance from me to continue doing so. We spent afternoons together laughing and talking. On sunny days we often visited the cemetery where his beloved wife was buried.

I have fond memories of sitting on the ground beside her grave while Charlie, perched on the seat of his wheeled walker, told family stories.

We shopped together, bought flowers for the yard, and talked about all the people we would help if we were rich. I took him to doctor’s appointments and to visit friends. We enjoyed each other’s company. Many of our ideas paralleled, except one. He wouldn’t talk to me about God no matter what angle I tried.

WAITING FOR THE RIGHT TIME

A few days after he called, I told Dale I was uncomfortable with his request. I didn’t want to do anything to ruin my relationship with Charlie. I assured Dale that I would encourage his dad and do all I could to witness to him, but to please give me and the Holy Spirit more time.

Somehow Charlie had to become aware of his need of God. I increased my prayers on his behalf, pleading with God to let me be the “pleasing aroma of Christ” (2 Cor. 2:15) for Him. (Nothing was ever mentioned about being fired; I just prayed desperately for help.)

The next week Dave visited his dad. On his way out the door, he whispered with a teasing grin, “You’re as spineless as the rest of us.” We both laughed, knowing that neither Dale, Dave, nor I had been successful in talking to Charlie about God.

“Let’s give it time,” I said. Dave agreed. If I could only communicate to Charlie that God has something vastly better to offer him than he was seeking for himself, I would have felt that progress was being made.

Time passed. In July, Charlie celebrated his ninety-fifth birthday with a big backyard party. His goal was to reach 100, and I determined to help him do so. But his eyesight was failing, and his steps were becoming slower.

One fall day after a visit with Charlie, Dale motioned for me to follow him outside. He told me that he had just been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and had approximately six months to live. He had not yet told his dad, but planned to do so soon.

I walked into Charlie’s house a couple days later to find him almost in tears. “Sit down,” he motioned to the chair. “I have some very bad news.” His emotions poured out as he talked about Dale. I prayed inwardly for them both.

When I left that day, I patted Charlie’s arm and told him I would be praying for Dale. He said nothing.

THE SPIRIT SPEAKS

Weeks passed. Dale went through all the necessary treatments for his disease, visiting his dad whenever he was strong enough. I was shocked one afternoon when Charlie asked if I would pray with him about Dale. I sat down in front of his big chair and took his gnarled hands in mine. It was the only time I was glad Charlie was blind, because by the time I finished praying, tears were streaming down my face, more because of Charlie’s softened heart than Dale’s condition. The Holy Spirit was truly making Himself known.

Charlie told me he prayed for Dale every day. This surprised me. Several weeks later he said, with irritation: “I don’t know why God isn’t answering

“You’re as spineless as the rest of us.” We both laughed.

my prayers about Dale!” I explained that we don’t always understand God’s ways. He remained silent.

Charlie had to go to the hospital for several days, then he went to a nursing home for recovery. I visited him almost daily. It seemed doubtful that he would ever be able to return home. After he asked me to pray with him about Dale, I felt free to ask Charlie if we could pray together. He always nodded a “please” in reply. Whatever animosity Charlie harbored toward spiritual things was definitely fading.

More quickly than even the doctor expected, Charlie took a turn for the worse. Renal failure set in. We all knew it was just a matter of time.

I spent hours at Charlie’s bedside, just holding his hand as he moved in and out of naps. Hospice care was arranged, and Charlie realized that his time was short. We talked easily about heaven. When we read Scriptures about the new earth, Charlie whispered, “Unbelievable.” It was a special moment the first time his family and I gathered around his bedside in prayer. Our hearts united in thanks for Charlie’s openness toward our God.

One evening Dale and I visited quietly at Charlie’s bedside as he slept. I told Dale that I felt his dad’s obvious turning toward God had come as a result of Dale’s illness. He agreed.

“You know,” he said, nine months after his diagnosis, “I never prayed that I would be healed. Other people did. I figured the doctors were smart, and they knew how long I had. I only prayed that I would be acceptable to God, no matter what.”

Charlie breathed his last a few days later. His on-and-off life with God lasted 96 years. All indications point to the fact that the Holy Spirit did His work of restoring a broken relationship in spite of the “spineless” tools He had to work with.

In their book *In His Image*, Paul Brand and Philip Yancey write that the Holy Spirit serves as the go-between God, who unites people to each other and to Him. ♣

Marybeth Gessele lives in Gaston, Oregon.

Jesus for Asia

...because people are dying without Jesus



The impossible made possible!

Among the Hindu caste system, the Brahmin, or highest caste, is the most difficult to reach with the gospel. Typically, Brahmins who become Christians are either killed or shunned by their community, and very few are willing to take that risk.

Mohan's* family lives in Western India. Despite being Brahmins, they suffered great financial difficulty. The mother was lame, and Mohan's sons could not find work.

Their lives changed when Joseph*, a Jesus for Asia Bible Worker, traveled to their village. He taught them about God, and they began to pray for His help. The other villagers, however, thought the family was foolish. They mocked them and attempted to change their minds.

"What will prayer do?" they asked.

Mohan and his family kept praying and learning about God. Finally their prayers were answered and both of Mohan's sons found good jobs.

They were so overjoyed, they threw a big party and invited their family and friends. There they publicly declared their faith in Jesus in front of over 60 guests! As a result of this, 12 people accepted Christ and were also baptized.

We have never heard of this taking place in that society. God performed a huge miracle in and for this family! This is a result of the partnership God has established through Jesus for Asia that enables donors to send people like Joseph into these unentered areas to find souls hungering for the Gospel of peace.

Since then, the family has continued to pray and share with their relatives. This has opened the door for Joseph to preach the Word to five other Brahmin families. The numbers continue to grow as the light of the Gospel spreads warmth, one heart at a time.



You can sponsor a Bible worker like Joseph at:
Jesus4asia.org/sponsor

We are receiving many calls from church leaders across India with requests for Bible workers like Joseph. There are lay members whose hearts are warm with the love of Christ who would like to work full time. All they need is a small stipend of just \$90/month. It's a beautiful partnership God has set up!

NOT I

PRERNA LALL

Someone will help you
But surely not I.
I've far too much fear
So I'll just pass on by.
I'll pray and I'll weep, I'll beg and I'll cry
For someone to help you
But surely not I.
You're sickly, you're dirty
You're covered in grime.
What I really mean is: You're not worth my time.
What I really mean is: I'm living a lie.
I'll sit in my pew and I'll sing all the lines
Of hymns about service, isn't that fine?
I'll speak about the Cross but no! I won't cross the line—
Not to where you are! No thank you, I'm fine.
Someone will help you
But surely not I.
You might be in my reach,
But I'll still pass on by.

Prerna Lall, writing poems since her days as a student at Sligo Adventist School (now Takoma Academy Preparatory School) in Takoma Park, Maryland, dedicates this poem to all who have a passion for compassion and the courage to act on it.

JESUS LEADS HOME

ERWIN GANE

There are mansions above in that city of love,
But saved souls rejoice to see Jesus;
There are flowers so bright they shine with delight,
Those who are saved shine with Jesus;
There are angels up there who offer God's care
For those taken there loved by Jesus
There is God on His throne in that heavenly home
For those who, above all, love Jesus.

They receive God's seal whose experience is real
Doing God's will, taught them by Jesus;
They confront many fears and shed many tears
Striving always to walk with Jesus;
They speak of God's love and His mansions above
For sinners who come to know Jesus
Their hearts overflow when the winds of strife blow
For they know they soon will see Jesus.

His trumpet will sound as Jesus comes down
With His angels from their home in heaven.
He stays in the sky and will not pass by
One sinner whose sins are forgiven;
He calls forth the dead whose souls had been fed
With life-giving truth of God's love;
The living shall rise to meet in the skies
The loved ones redeemed from above.

God's loved ones He leads to that city above,
To the mansions He promised to give them;
They rejoice at the sight of their homeland so bright,
And praise God that He rules in heaven;
That huge joyous throng sing the glorious song
Of redemption made possible by Jesus;
They give praise for the cross that atoned for their loss
And ensured them eternity in heaven.

Erwin R. Gane, retired theologian and author, is a former editor of the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*.



DECLUTTER YOUR WORLD

Springtime is a great time to school your inner pack rat.

It's been a long day. Meetings, phone calls, unrelenting deadlines, then a commute in which it seems as if everyone on the road has forgotten how to drive.

At home, mail from days ago sits on the kitchen island next to a half-eaten cake. Son's 50-pound backpack is parked on the family room couch with his dirty Air Jordans chucked on the carpet, decidedly in the "no-shoes" zone. Upstairs the storage closet is bulging with suitcases from last month's trip. In the bedroom—that refuge from the world—hubby's Sabbath suit is strewn across the bed, and it's Wednesday. Stacks of dusty magazines sit piled against the wall, the nightstands laden with books, bills, mail, pens, earbuds, etc. And the

treadmill, a constant reminder of fitness goals yet to be achieved, doubles as a clothes rack. The sweaters in the closet are tumbling out—new ones stuffed over those that haven't seen daylight since the new century dawned. The drawers can't close with ease for their abundance of complimentary charity 5K T-shirts. In the master bathroom the vanity cupboards host products well past their prime and likely hazardous to human skin now. Those colognes gifted every Christmas and birthday? They sit gathering dust and threatening to tumble out in a mass of shattered glass on the tile floor.

Have I stressed you out yet?

THE BEAUTY OF LESS STUFF

How do you feel when you check into a nice hotel room for the first time? Ignoring any annoyances of the journey to get there, you hopefully notice how clean and ordered the room is. There's usually a comfortable chair and table, a working desk with a notepad and pen neatly arranged, and a flat-screen TV angled just so. The bathroom is dry and clean with the countertop free of anything but a couple of clean glasses and complimentary toiletries. And the bed—simple and crisp with white sheets, a comfortable duvet, and a few pillows—beckons you to take a rest. That's it. If you feel good from that imagery, it's because the room has instantly relaxed you just for its minimalism.

If an overabundance of "stuff" has overtaken your home and you feel frazzled just looking at it, there's good news. It's time to

declutter, and doing so is going to make you feel a lot better.

So here's how to attack those beasts of messes.

MAP OUT A PLAN

Divide your home into sections that will each receive individual and focused attention. While the task ahead may seem daunting, know that you can approach it in realistic blocks of time. It doesn't all need to be accomplished in one day, though if you can devote that to it, you'll feel amazing once you are all done.

Areas that deserve attention: all rooms including communal living spaces and the kitchen. Within them, drawers, closets, desk, and tabletops, and in your home office—you'll go after whatever's on your computer as well.

Armed with trash bags and a shredder (for paper items such as old bills and other sensitive documents), create three piles: keep, toss, and donate. Go through each drawer, closet shelf, shoe rack, and be brutally honest. A rule I've found helpful when going through items is to ask myself if I've worn or needed it in the past year to two years. If the answer is no and the piece is in good condition, it goes in the donate pile. If you have items that are damaged and cannot donate them, find an ethical way of disposing of them. To borrow from Marie Kondo, the current queen of decluttering: if an item doesn't "spark joy," get rid of it.

It's a good idea to do a little research beforehand for donation possibilities. Some organizations will pick up your items from your home free of charge—and that can even include furniture you may wish to part with. Other outlets such as Goodwill or the Salvation Army can easily be found in nearly every city or town. Plan to take your bags of donations to these places that very day, if possible. Doing so will alleviate any temptation to second-guess and hold on to items deemed ready to go and will help you see a visible difference.

Apply these same rules to every area of your home. Those piles of magazines? Recycle them. Medicine cabinets? Throw out every old prescription bottle, or over-the-counter product past its prime. Overstuffed drawers? Throw, recycle, or shred (papers). Diligently go section by section through your home and eye everything critically. If you have a problem doing that, recruit the assistance of a discerning and firm friend or relative

How do you feel when you check into a nice hotel room for the first time?

to help you stick to the decluttering mission at hand.

Once you have discarded items that no longer have a place in your space, neatly fold and reorganize what remains, give surfaces a good dusting, and breathe a sigh of relief. Trust me, you will.

BE VIGILANT

To keep your newly decluttered spaces soothing to your soul, you need to establish an attitude of vigilance and commitment (yes, it's that deep). This means you don't let things get out of control again.

For example, if you buy new articles of clothing or footwear, consider pieces in your closet that might be ideal for donation. Again, if you aren't wearing it or you look at it and say "Meh," it's time to let it go. Perhaps designate a monthly day to shred old bills or documents you no longer need before they pile up. Organize a monthly fridge/freezer cleanup date the whole family can participate in (because all those stockpiled ketchups or dressing packets have served everyone).

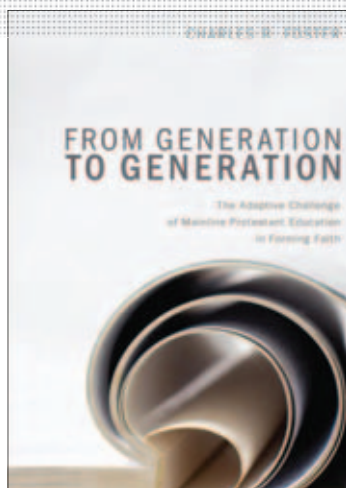
These same ideas can also be applied to your life commitments. If you are overloaded with too many school, church, or social obligations, it might be time to take stock of what's really important. Pray for wisdom in this and learn how to politely bow out where you should.

While decluttering doesn't sound like the most fun way to spend a day, it represents a much more important exercise in being a good steward of the material blessings God has given you. After all, if you didn't have so much, you wouldn't need to downsize. That says a lot about the importance of taking stock of our lives and paring things down to what really matters—in our closets and in our hearts.

Happy decluttering! 🍀

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

CLOSER LOOK



Intentional Ministry to Young Adults

From Generation to Generation: The Adaptive Challenge of Mainline Protestant Education in Forming Faith, Charles R. Foster, Cascade Books, 2012, 150 pages, US\$20, paperback (\$9.99, Kindle). Reviewed by Tim Nagy, pastor, Chilliwack, British Columbia.

From *Generation to Generation* is the latest of Charles R. Foster's published works. Although originally published in 2012, its message for today's church couldn't be more relevant.

The author begins by lamenting the passing of the 1950s and early 1960s, when it seemed that young people were well integrated into congregations, and when churches were generally vibrant. Then Foster asks: Why do churches have a diminishing number of young people? Why don't today's young people remain active as they grow up? Why don't pastors and leaders pay more attention to young people?

Answers to these questions allow him to focus on the importance of education in faith formation. The author builds a case toward what he calls "the adaptive challenge," a reenvisioned education that intentionally forms the faith

Nearly Dead?

Through the Valley of the Shadow: The Near-Death Experience Under Scientific, Philosophical and Biblical Scrutiny, ed. Jacques Doukhan, Safeliz, S.L., 2019; 112 pages, paperback. Reviewed by Lisa Beardsley-Hardy.

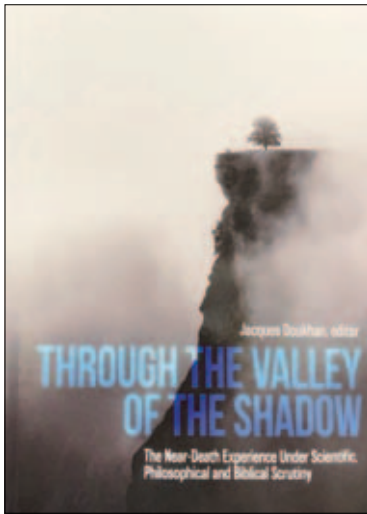
What happens after we die? Are near-death experiences (NDEs) real? Do the out-of-body experiences (OBEs) you've heard of prove that there's consciousness after death? The personal and graphic NDEs of Ruth Frikart-Moor, related in this book's first chapter, catapult readers into the topic. Emergency physician Dr. Paul Giem, in chapter two, comments that his clinical experience with patients leads him to consider NDEs to be "overhyped" and not providing "major support of any theology of the afterlife" (p. 35).

In chapter three Dr. Raymond Romond comments on normal and other neurobiological activity in the brain's temporo-parietal junction that possibly underlies OBEs and NDEs. Brain trauma (oxygen deprivation, neurological seizures, drugs, etc.) may disrupt the normal integration of stimuli from sight, sound, smell, touch, and the proprioceptive feedback loop, and lead to the NDEs and OBEs some recount, e.g., floating or traveling through a lighted tunnel while actually lying in bed. In flight simu-

of children and youth. The challenges Christianity faces today are not unprecedented. Nevertheless, the Bible provides several examples of intergenerational faith formation.

One of these examples is the Passover. As Israelites gathered yearly, they would tell stories and go through rituals that served to remind younger generations about God's providence and love. Using this prototype, congregations can intentionally include practices that give meaning to the story of salvation and involve young people in that process.

Foster presents three types of learning. First, developmental learning, which



lation experiments, pilots securely strapped into a cockpit seat can experience OBEs when deprived of oxygen. Romond explains that the brain's temporal lobe and limbic system are "involved in multiple cortical activities that mimic several NDEs" (p. 66). He offers his own conclusions on what is possible when the brain is dead.

In chapter four physician and theologian Sigve Tonstad analyzes philosophical perspectives from Athens to the present. He argues that notwithstanding their varied motivations—e.g., self-mastery for Augustine, freedom and choice for Eccles and Popper—their philosophical positions are based on dualism and belief in an immortal soul.

focuses on creating content that caters to one's developmental stage and needs. For example, educators have to be prepared to answer and even encourage difficult questions as children become teens and teens become adults. Wrestling with difficult questions helps shape and grow the faith of both learners and teachers.

Practice learning is a second type of learning. Practice learning allows learners to integrate what they learn and act on it. Faith communities have numerous rituals, and practice learning is the avenue to teach and integrate young people in acquiring these practices as well as what they symbolize.

Foster's third type of learning, discovery learning, pushes the boundaries of developmental and

In a hard-hitting chapter (five) entitled "Near-Death Delusions," Clifford Goldstein distinguishes between the experience itself and its interpretation, reflecting on his own OBEs when he was first opening to spirituality. Extending Tonstad's reasoning, he expounds on why dualism is not only seductive but even diabolical. In light of the great controversy motif and the biblical teaching on death, he asks: "If the dead . . . are in an unconscious sleep until the resurrection, what else could these experiences be but preternaturally inspired phenomena?" (p. 96). He sees Eden's deception, "You will not surely die," growing to an apocalyptic crescendo in the final conflict between good and evil. The book concludes with theologian and longtime professor Jacques Doukhan's effective wrap-up. Doukhan lays out the biblical perspective on what it means to be human, and to die. Resurrection, he posits, is God's thorough solution to the human problem of death.

Through the Valley of the Shadow is a volume thoroughly relevant to its time. Its authors deserve commendation for their effort, and its potential readers are in for a vital lesson—pun fully intended.

Lisa Beardsley-Hardy directs the Department of Education at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.

practice learning by allowing for the imagination and curiosity of a person to probe and even challenge previous ideologies. Discovery learning allows for freedom to be inquisitive, and even to disagree.

When churches discover their true purpose of being places of empathy, caring, and love, they will naturally seek to impart these attributes to all their participants. When learning and growing are the foundation of a church, intergenerational faith formation happens naturally.

Pastors, parents, and church leaders who care about the decreasing attendance of youth and young adults in our worship services will find this book helpful in reversing that trend. ♣

TODAY'S MESSAGE FOR TODAY'S WORLD

Christianity is evangelistic by nature. When we follow Jesus Christ, we are missionaries. Sharing the gospel (good news) is our *raison d'être*; it's why we exist. Christians live for the difference Christ has made in our lives. We live to proclaim the glorious news that Jesus will soon return to destroy with fire everything that is wrong with our planet, and create a new world in which everlasting love, peace, mercy, and justice will prevail. That's our privilege, to go, tell what the news is and what it's done for us.—Editors.

"The spirit of Christ is the spirit of missions. The nearer we get to Him, the more intensely missionary we become."

HENRY MARTYN

"Don't complain to yourselves that you can't go to the mission field! Thank God for bringing the mission field to you!"

BROTHER ANDREW (*GOD'S SMUGGLER*)

"People from my first home say I'm brave. They tell me I'm strong. They pat me on the back and say, 'Way to go. Good job.' But the truth is, I am not really very brave; I am not really very strong; and I am not doing anything spectacular. I am simply doing what God has called me to do as a person who follows Him. He said to feed His sheep and He said to care for 'the least of these,' so that's what I'm doing, with the help of a lot of people who make it possible and in the company of those who make my life worth living."

KATIE J. DAVIS

"In 1982 I wanted to take my life because I thought, *After I die, no more suffering, no more pain.* I found the New Testament in the library in Saigon [Vietnam]. Christmas 1982 I became a Christian. . . . My enemies list became my prayer list. . . . Forgiveness set my heart free."

KIM PHUC PHAN THI (*THE NAPALM GIRL*)

"The Indians had become people to me—they were no longer my 'field.' While I had once declared them to be my equals, I now regarded myself as theirs. Instead of saying, 'Oh, you are as good as I—let me help you,' I now said, 'I am as poor as you. God help us all.'"

ELISABETH ELLIOT

"If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new has come."

PAUL (*2 COR. 5:17*)

"The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let the one who hears say, 'Come!' Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life."

JOHN THE REVELATOR (*REV. 22:17*)

"There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, Mine!"

ABRAHAM KUYPER

"I found Jesus here. I don't care if I ever leave. I just want others to know that this place is not the end. There is hope. God can change us even here—especially here."

PRISONER (*QUITO, ECUADOR*)

"We are . . . Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us."

PAUL (*2 COR. 5:20*)



“When He [Christ] ascended, His divine spirit gave life and strength to the tottering world, and the whole universe became stable . . . , as if the stretching out, the agony of the cross, had in some way gotten into everything.”

HIPPOLYTUS

“Why is it that some Christians cross land and sea, continents and cultures, as missionaries? What on earth impels them? It is not in order to commend a civilization, an institution, or an ideology, but rather a person, Jesus Christ, whom they believe to be unique.”

JOHN STOTT

“Under the training of Christ the disciples had been led to feel their need of the Spirit. Under the Spirit’s teaching they received the final qualification, and went forth to their lifework. No longer were they ignorant and uncultured. No longer were they a collection of independent units or discordant, conflicting elements. No longer were their hopes set on worldly greatness. They were of ‘one accord,’ ‘of one heart and of one soul’ (Acts 2:46; 4:32). Christ filled their thoughts; the advancement of His kingdom was their aim. In mind and character they had become like their Master, and men ‘took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus’ (Acts 4:13)”

ELLEN G. WHITE (*THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES*, P. 45)

“This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world. You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses.”

JESUS (MATT. 24:14; ACTS 1:8).



TIME'S UP!

For millennia the rich and powerful could use and abuse others without consequences—or so it seemed. Then something changed. During the past three years we have witnessed growing movements around the globe speaking out against discrimination or any type of abuse, especially gender-based abuse. #MeToo or #TimesUp started a revolution in boardrooms, human resource departments, and the public square. Previously untouchable and unchallenged leaders suddenly found themselves in deep waters. Just ask Harvey Weinstein after the recent guilty verdict.

Timing is important in many of the things we do. The Protestant Reformation did not just happen. The invention of the printing press and the Renaissance's call *ad fontes* ("back to the sources") both played a crucial role in setting the stage and creating the conditions needed for major religious, social, and even political disruptions. The time was right to rediscover *sola scriptura* ("by Scripture alone"), *sola gratia* ("by grace alone"), and *sola fide* ("by faith alone").

God's timing has always been impeccable. Paul tells us that Jesus, the world's Saviour, came right on time (Gal. 4:4). Daniel's prophetic vision had anticipated His arrival at the beginning of the last week of the 70 weeks cut off from the larger prophetic period of 2,300 days (see Dan. 8:14; 9:24-27).

Similarly, Christ's death in the "middle of the week" (Dan. 9:27, NKJV)¹ surely brought an end to sacrifice and offerings. Type met the antitype when Jesus died on the cross as the Jewish world prepared for Passover.

His resurrection wasn't hurried or delayed. The Saviour rose for the final leg of the salvation journey after resting in

the grave on Sabbath. Time was up for the antagonist—even though we don't see the outcome quite yet. We still experience death, abuse, suffering, health epidemics, and war all around us. For two millennia God's children have yearned for the ultimate comeback. The "blessed hope" (Titus 2:13), awaiting the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, has fueled the courage of uncounted generations.

Peter experienced something of this urgency in his own time when he wrote: "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

God is waiting, eager to save even more. But as He waits, He is neither sleeping nor slumbering. Prophetic time has ended. God's heavenly clock marks the countdown until *that* final day.

Time's up for death and dying. Time's up for abuse and pain. Time's up for disease and suffering. Time's up for war and destruction.

Time's up.

Satan knows that his time is up. The abuser will not get away from justice. He who specialized in destroying marriages and families will soon be called before the Judge of the universe. Resurrection morning reminds us that justice will prevail. Not in a limited way, barely visible among the mountains of injustice—but publicly, live-streamed before a universe counting down the minutes.

Time's up—and that's good news enough for me today. ▀

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Gerald A. Klingbeil is an associate editor of *Adventist Review*.

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