

ADVENTIST REVIEW

OCTOBER 2020: THE LINE IN THE SAND + WHEN JESUS ENDED IT + ANGELS ON A BIKE PATH + FONZIE, SEAWORLD, AND SIAMESE TWINS + HELPING HARVEY + IF MY PICKUP TRUCK COULD TALK



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Shawn Boonstra

Speaker/Director
Voice of Prophecy





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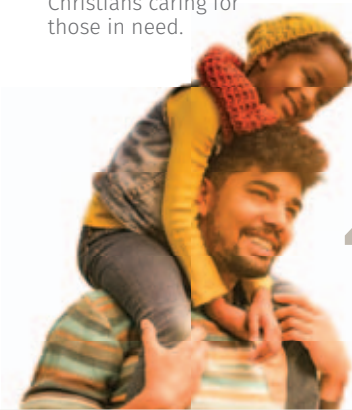
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TRENDING

THE MOST SHARED STORIES ON
ADVENTISTREVIEW.ORG LAST MONTH:

- 1 Social Media Is Sucking the Life Out of Us
- 2 Adventist Young Adults Join Playbook 2020
- 3 It's Not Your Imagination:
Colder Weather Brings Illness
- 4 Our Boast Is In the Lord
- 5 Memories and Lessons from September 11

148 YEARS AGO



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WE LIKE CALIFORNIA

The first camp meeting in the Western United States opened in Windsor, California, on October 2, 1872. James White, being in poor health at the time, gave up his work temporarily, and along with his wife, Ellen, traveled to California. Upon learning they were coming, J. N. Loughborough immediately thought a camp meeting was in order. When the camp meeting was concluded, James White wrote this on October 10, 1872, in the *Review*:

"[We] have been glad every moment since we met a cordial reception at the end of our long journey at San Francisco, that we were in California. The camp-meeting has not by any means changed our feelings upon the subject. And nothing but stern duty will ever call us from this country. We like the people of California, and the country, and think it will be favorable to our health."



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BILL KNOTT



“There’s another quality that’s often overlooked in our collective vision of the future.”

The Quietest of Virtues

The first snowfall of October is dusting the cedars Jack planted as she awakens on Sabbath morning.

As she has done for eight years now, she reaches out to gently touch the pillow where he slept for 43 years. A tiny gesture of remembrance and grief, it’s one of many that will fill her seventh day. *“If he were here,”* she muses, *“I’d smell the cinnamon buns he made each Friday afternoon.”*

By 9:10, she is dressed for church, though the 2006 Ford Taurus won’t move from the garage again this week, the twenty-ninth Sabbath in a row. She settles into the office chair in the living room: as always, she’s the first one in the Zoom waiting room for Sabbath School. Soon, the familiar “ping” of arriving friends populates her screen and her heart. She’ll still be here, pouring love and laughter into the monitor until the last pre-recorded hymn of the worship service fades at 12:30, lingering in the community of young families, teenagers, children, and senior citizens who gather online.

Here is the patience of the saints.

Elijah races through repairing the last battered television of Friday afternoon, eyeing the declining sun through bent antennas of a unit that may bring his boss 3000 Kenyan shillings.

His mind is leaping forward to the happy routines of Sabbath

preparation: the six-kilometer bicycle trip to home; the herding of three siblings—5, 8, and 9—under the cold-water pump in the backyard for their Sabbath bath; the comforting routine of maize and rice—with bananas—that marks each Friday night.

At 17, he’s older brother, father, mother to a family devastated by AIDs and alcohol. The vision of a university degree in bioengineering that briefly flickered is long gone. Until his brother and two sisters are grown, he will be repairing televisions.

But there is still the AY group—28 Adventist teens who gather on their smartphones Friday nights to sing and laugh and pray and study the book of Daniel. This is, no doubt, the highlight of his week—the place where for a moment he is 17 again, and hopeful.

He slips the headphones on and settles into the aging armchair beside where Tumaini, Akeyo, and Makena dream.

Here is the patience of the saints.

Our heritage as Adventists reminds us forcefully of the qualities required to survive the prophesied calamities of the end-time. Faithfulness to Scripture; keeping Sabbath in our hearts and in our calendars; saying “no” to Babylon’s seductions in all its forms, in all its pleasantries—these are the watchwords of our chosen identity, the markers of our DNA.

But there’s another quality that’s often overlooked in our collective vision of the future, perhaps because it seems banal, unsung, and unremarkable.

We discount the “patience of the saints” the same way we walk past bargain bins at Walmart or delete the breathless retail messages that clutter up an inbox. Of course we must be patient, we conclude, for what choice do we have? It’s either patience or departure, endurance or apostasy.

But in the always-seeing mind of God, patience is the virtue that fits us best for heaven, the demonstration we have placed our trust in things unseen and truths we cannot touch.

Babylon is all about arranging futures for ourselves—in wealth, in pleasures, and in righteousness. The patience of the saints is what the choir of heaven celebrates and just what Jesus most desires for us; for it’s the clearest sign that we have left our schemes and foolish dreams and settled into Christ.

So here’s to all who wait with quietness and faith—to all the grieving and the lonely; to those who bear great burdens with great grace and heaven’s fortitude; to all who light our days with hope that gets us through the nights.

The future—and the kingdom—will be yours. ♣

Bill Knott

I close the Sabbath by singing hymns, praising Him, and listening to what He says to me.

MARILYN MARSHALL

MORE PHOTO CREDITS, PLEASE

My parents faithfully subscribe to and read this journal. So have I and my husband for the past 51 years. Through the years your articles have been clear and strong about our message.

But there is one thing I wish you'd improve on. You seldom provide credits and information for art, covers, or photos. Nevertheless, I was so blessed by your timely July 2020 edition touching on COVID-19 and the sickening racism continuing in our church, country, and world. Your cover image was powerful, but again, no information or credit is given about the creator.

Other than this, thank you.

Nancy Daniels Nelson

Riverside, California



Unless otherwise noted, photographs in each issue are credited to Getty Images, and are listed in the masthead (in small print under "Web site"). In the case of the issue you referred to, that cover image was created by our art director Bryan Gray. It's a composite of images from multiple sources. Thanks for asking.—Editors.

THE TRUTH ABOUT SALVATION

I was profoundly moved by the article "The Truth About Salvation," by Lee Venden (July 2020). As an 86-year-old Adventist, I was brought up to obey the commandments of God as a way to salvation. Lee's "relationship" theory opened my eyes to a true understanding of salvation. It's not salvation through my obedience to the

commandments of God that merits my salvation, but my relationship with Jesus, who offers me salvation as a free gift. Keeping the commandments is a byproduct of that relationship.

I taught at Champion Academy with Lee Venden in the early 1980s for several years. He is truly a man of God.

Clint Anderson

via e-mail

BE STILL AND KNOW

I enjoyed "Be Still and Know" (July 2020), as I have experienced the same intimacy with Jesus on my many trips to Hawaii on the island of Maui. There is a quiet place, a small sloping beach behind the hotel where I stay, that is isolated. On Friday I prepare my lunch for Sabbath, my reading material, and my iPod. I arrive early Sabbath morning, greet God, and meditate on His amazing rising sun, the beautiful scenery, the ocean and blue skies. After meditation and talking to God, I read His Word, read my Sabbath School lesson, then listen to spiritual music.

I close the Sabbath by singing hymns, praising Him, and listening to what He says to me. It's such a wonderful and intimate time with my Savior. Like Kandace Zollman, I am moved to tears. As the sun sets, I hear and feel God saying to me, "Bye, Marilyn; we had a wonderful day together." As I say my goodbyes tears flow down my cheeks. I will always treasure those memories the Lord and I had together.

Marilyn Marshall

via e-mail

GOD'S HAND IN HISTORY

I read Jud Lake's article "God's Hand in History" (August 2020) with interest. For whatever

CORRECTIONS:

- » The article “Broadcasting the Good News” (September 2020) states that Juan Eduardo Pérez was the announcer of La Voz de la Profecía/Esperanza for some years. But in the photo the announcer shown is Manuel Nestares, who was from Argentina and became the announcer later.
- » In “Voices” (August 2020), Robert Lewis Stevenson should read Robert *Louis* Stevenson, the Scottish novelist and poet.

reason Mr. Lake left out what I consider to be an important part of the description of why God intervened in that battle.

Here’s the rest of that part of the narrative: “And had the Northern army at this time pushed the battle still further in their fainting, exhausted condition, the far greater struggle and destruction which awaited them would have caused great triumph in the South. God would not permit this, and sent an angel to interfere.”

Ultimately God was looking out for the slaves, for He knew that if the South succeeded in the war, slavery would continue.

Les Leno

Walla Walla, Washington

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I certify that my statements above are correct and complete.

Bill Knott, Executive Editor/Director of Adventist Review Ministries

COMMENTS FROM ADVENTISTREVIEW.ORG

THE RADICALLY SOCIAL JESUS

A powerful call to action—both in surrendering our thoughts and attitudes to the only One who can change us, and also to doing all we can by voice and action to relieve the suffering—physical, mental, emotional, and social—of the hurting world around us. May the One who was “tempted in every way, just as we are” (Heb. 4:15) find us humble recipients of His grace and come and heal our land (2 Chron. 7:14).

Jeannie Windels

via e-mail

A JOURNEY AND A MARCH

Thank you for republishing this article. This 15-year-old article has as much a message for us today as it did in 2005. Today we have moved beyond where we were in 1965.

But it challenges us with the question: To what extent are we today where God would want us

to be as to the social issues of justice? Sadly, congregations may not welcome those who do not look exactly like their members. This may be more than race and skin color. Our lack of welcome may involve the ways others dress, their political views, the music they enjoy, and more.

I am reminded of a struggling Adventist congregation that drove a newly baptized member away by addressing her, to her face and behind her back, with the title: “the little heathen.”

The congregational mission that God has given us today is to welcome into our fellowship those from the community at large who are on a spiritual journey. When we fail to welcome such, God will use others to accomplish what He wants done, even if those He uses are not as doctrinally advanced as we may think we are.

Gregory Matthews

via e-mail

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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“A person with COVID-19 can potentially spread the virus for up to twice as long as someone with the flu.”

Ara Chrissian, page 13

NEWS



CHURCHES IN NORTH AMERICA JOIN ACTS 20:21 EVANGELISM

IT IS WRITTEN LAUNCHES A 16-MONTH EVANGELISM CYCLE INITIATIVE.

BY ELLEN HOSTETLER, IT IS WRITTEN, AND ADVENTIST REVIEW

Local churches around the United States are signing up to take part in ACTS 20:21—a 16-month evangelism cycle initiative for churches in North America. Presented by It Is Written, ACTS 20:21 begins October 9, 2020, and includes six evangelistic events, training, a brand new, comprehensive database and outreach management app, soul-winning resources, and direct social media advertising.

The series title is a bridge to next year and connects the initiative with the namesake Bible verse, that reads: “Testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (RV95).

It Is Written president John Bradshaw will present the first five series online, with two series co-presented by local pastors. A sixth series will be presented by church

pastors, strengthening the connection between series attendees and the local church.

“The evangelism cycle is important in reaching souls for Christ,” said Yves Monnier, It Is Written evangelism director. “One evangelistic series isn’t enough. It’s a process, and it all centers around meeting people’s needs and making personal connections. That hasn’t changed in the world of



It Is Written speaker/
director John Bradshaw

**"THERE HAS
NEVER BEEN
A BETTER
TIME TO BE
INVOLVED IN
EVANGELISM"**

social distancing; in fact, it may have become more important. So It Is Written has designed a 16-month process that will meet those needs."

According to Bradshaw, It Is Written is capitalizing on knowledge gained from two large virtual events the ministry held in April and June. "We had the opportunity to learn a lot about what is truly effective in the realm of virtual evangelism," he said. The 2020 and 2021 meetings will reach several audience needs. Meetings will discuss prophecy, personal faith, health, prayer, and doctrine. "We've carefully listened to feedback from pastors and church leaders who joined us in our virtual series this spring and summer," Bradshaw continued. "As a result, the outcome is a more comprehensive online evangelism initiative that will yield even greater results than we saw in Hope Awakens and Take Charge of Your Health."

The six meeting series, all under the umbrella of ACTS 20:21, is a turnkey approach for churches or districts to plan for their evangelism in 2021.

"In addition to providing the online advertising, database, and meetings with John Bradshaw," Monnier said, "your church will also receive over a year of evangelism coaching and training by It Is Written evangelists and mentorship for your local church members. You won't be able to find this anywhere else. We have kept the costs low so that as many churches and

church districts as possible could participate."

The evangelism cycle builds relationships. Guests who attend a meeting on prayer or health early in the year will make connections that will encourage them to attend a full-message evangelism series later on.

The schedule for ACTS 20:21 is as follows:

- » October 2020: Prophecy series (Answers in Prophecy)
- » January 2021: Revival series for church members
- » April/May 2021: Health series
- » August 2021: Prayer series
- » October 2021: Full message evangelistic series
- » Following evangelistic series in 2021: follow-up series by local church pastors

"There has never been a better time to be involved in evangelism," Bradshaw said. "People are asking questions like no other time in recent memory. It is time to reach directly to those in our communities with the gospel message for this time. Churches that partner with It Is Written will receive tools, training, and resources. Our experienced team will provide coaching and assistance, and together we'll see the Holy Spirit do an incredible work." 🍀



PHOTO: NORTHERN CARIBBEAN UNIVERSITY

CRISIS NOT NEW TO ADVENTIST TERTIARY EDUCATION, LEADER SAYS

LISA BEARDSLEY-HARDY SUGGESTS USING EDUCATION CHALLENGES AS LAUNCHING PAD.

BY SHANNETTE SMITH, INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION NEWS

The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed all educational institutions globally into a state of crisis, according to education leaders. Yet in the history of Adventist education, particularly at the tertiary level, crisis and the threat of closure are not new, said Lisa Beardsley-Hardy, education director for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in a recent presentation.

Beardsley-Hardy spoke on the topic “Adventist Education in a Time of Crisis” during the Northern Caribbean University (NCU) Colloquium, held online on August 17 and 18, 2020. On day two of the event, Beardsley-Hardy gave an overview of the crisis in Adventist education and how the system has survived and, in some cases, thrived in difficult times. Beardsley-Hardy related, as an example, how the successes and failures of Battle Creek College led to the existence of Loma Linda University, Atlantic Union College, and Andrews University.

She pointed out that Battle Creek College, although run by Seventh-

day Adventists, started as a secular school lacking Bible study courses in the curriculum. As the church progressed and the prophetic advice of Ellen G. White—a cofounder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church—was considered, Bible study became part of the institution’s curriculum. As tertiary education in Adventism was going through its teething stage, conflicts between secular-minded and mission-minded Adventist educators grew, she said.

The world church’s education director argued that while some Adventist educators were focused on increasing student numbers, societal popularity, and financial profitability for Adventist institutions, others agreed with Ellen White that the church’s educational curriculum must be centered on the principles of the Bible and must involve Bible study. Additionally, the Adventist Church decided that training in Bible studies must be taught by Adventist educators who were trained specifically in Adventist theology.

For more than 100 years, Beardsley-Hardy recounted, NCU has been facing the danger of closure, the threat of losing its spiritual integrity, and the danger of losing its Seventh-day Adventist identity. Like Battle Creek College, during its formative years, NCU, originally called West Indies Training School, was closed for a period of time before it was reborn. Unlike Battle Creek College, which permanently closed, NCU has begun its second century of operation. Its current location is in the parish of Manchester, Jamaica.

The threats of yesteryear are the same today, Beardsley-Hardy said—the déjà vu of spiritual integrity, denominational identity, financial sustainability, institutional recognition, respect in society, and the need to retain current students and attract prospective ones.

“We face those same challenges, too, to increase enrollment numbers. We need those numbers because our budget is based on tuition income. . . . But one of the things we need to do is to throw out the old cargo,” Beardsley-Hardy said in reference to outdated methods of instruction and ministry. “[The crisis triggered by] COVID-19 has given us an opportunity to do that.”



Using a portable oxygen canister is simple and can stabilize a person for up to an hour while being taken to the nearest hospital. PHOTO: HECTOR SUKARI, SOUTH AMERICAN DIVISION NEWS

ADVENTIST TAXI DRIVER HELPS SAVE DOZENS OF COVID-19 PATIENTS

IN PERU, CABBIE PROVIDES EMERGENCY OXYGEN CANISTERS TO SICK PASSENGERS.

BY MARGIORY SALINAS, SOUTH AMERICAN DIVISION, AND ADVENTIST REVIEW

In the Libertad area in Peru, hospitals have been overwhelmed because of a large increase in positive cases of COVID-19. According to official sources, by the end of July 2020, almost 26,000 people had become infected. Against that background, having oxygen readily available has become essential to help save lives, not only inside hospitals but also outside of them.

Amir Cotrina Sánchez, a taxi driver and a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, lives in Trujillo, northern Peru. He is 37 years old, a married father of three, and has been a taxi driver for seven years.

At the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, taxi work within the city limits was forbidden. Eventually, however, a rule was issued that authorized taxi drivers to work two days a week. Sánchez chose only one day, since the other day he was given was Saturday, a Sabbath day of

rest and worship for Seventh-day Adventists.

Sometime after returning to his job, Sánchez felt weak, with chills, tiredness, and a sudden lack of oxygen. Worried, his family members gave him a portable oxygen canister so he could recover. He found that he did not need to use it, and his health was restored by taking only medication. As he improved and felt better, he returned to his cab.

READY TO SAVE LIVES

After that, Sánchez decided to take personal protective equipment items in his car, such as masks, facial shields, gloves, and hand sanitizer, to sell to his passengers. He saw it as a way of innovating, expanding his services, and adding a source of income.

Following the news, Sánchez learned that in Trujillo many people were dying from lack of oxygen. He then decided to take along

the canister he had not used and help people when necessary.

“A passenger got into the taxi with breathing problems. But at the nearest hospital, she was told they couldn’t take care of her,” Sánchez shared. “On the way to another hospital, the young woman began to cough and struggle for breath. I told her, ‘Please use this oxygen canister. She managed to calm down and make it to the hospital.’”

So far, Sánchez has managed to help almost 40 people. Some fellow taxi drivers also call him when they need his help, which he gives without asking for anything in return. As he gets acquainted with colleagues who don’t feel well, he prays to God that they recover quickly.

PRAYER AND TIMELY HELP

At Sánchez’s Adventist congregation, local pastor Rolando Quinteros Zuñiga and his members hosted an event titled the “40 days With the Holy Spirit” initiative. Sánchez, who took part in the program, asked his fellow church members to pray for his passengers and their family members suffering from COVID-19. Sánchez was happy to report that the people they prayed for are recovering satisfactorily.

Sánchez keeps driving his cab, now with a good supply of oxygen canisters. Indeed, the company where one of his relatives first purchased his oxygen canister has sent him a package of portable canisters he can share with his passengers when necessary. ▀

IS IT THE FLU OR COVID-19? WHAT DOCTORS SAY

FLU PAIRED WITH COVID-19 COULD BE EXTREMELY DANGEROUS.

BY JANELLE RINGER, LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY HEALTH NEWS

Flu season is right around the corner in many parts of the United States and other countries. As in years before, doctors recommend taking preventative measures, such as washing hands and covering the mouth and nose when sick—advice that seems commonplace in the era of COVID-19.

Ara Chrissian is an interventional pulmonologist and critical care physician at Loma Linda University Health, who regularly cares for patients hospitalized with COVID-19. He says the threat of flu paired with COVID-19 could be extremely dangerous, but using proper precautions and knowing the symptoms can help limit the spread.

“By not taking preventative measures, such as the recommended flu vaccine, the flu season and the coronavirus pandemic could synergistically overwhelm the health-care system,” Chrissian says.

The two viruses spread in a similar manner—mainly through respiratory droplets created during talking, coughing, or sneezing. Chrissian says the flu and COVID-19 viruses also have many symptoms in common.

“They both can cause fever, cough, shortness of breath, headache, stuffy nose, body aches, sore throat, and exhaustion or fatigue. These symptoms alone cannot be used to differentiate between the two,” he says. “However, understanding some differences may help us suspect one over the other, optimize therapy, and aid in limiting spread.”

FLU, NOT COVID-19

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), adults who have the flu seem

to be most contagious during the first four days of illness but may remain contagious for up to seven days. “With the flu, it’s possible to spread the virus for about seven days, with one of those days being before symptoms show in the sick person,” Chrissian says.

Most people who get the flu will recover in a few days, and if they don’t develop complications, they can avoid hospitalization and recover completely. Fortunately, for patients who require medical attention, health-care professionals are not strangers to the flu and are well equipped to treat it.

For flu patients, Chrissian says FDA-approved prescription antiviral influenza drugs are a great line of defense. “Those who may be hospitalized with flu or at higher risk for flu complications are treated with antiviral drugs as soon as possible and watched for new or worsening symptoms by providers who know how to fight this familiar beast,” he says.

Perhaps the most noticeable difference in the two respiratory viruses is the availability of preventative treatments. “There are several approved influenza vaccines created each year in anticipation of the viruses likely to circulate that season,” Chrissian says. “The best and simplest way to protect yourself from the flu and help reduce the spread of the virus is to get vaccinated. There is yet no vaccine to prevent COVID-19.”

COVID-19, NOT FLU

A characteristic symptom of COVID-19 is a change in or loss of taste or smell. While this does not occur in everyone who gets COVID-19

and is also a symptom seen with common cold viral infections, it has not been associated with the flu. Additionally, if you know when you were exposed to someone with an illness, Chrissian says you can have a better idea of how long you may be contagious, even if you have mild or no symptoms.

“A person with COVID-19 can potentially spread the virus for up to twice as long as someone with the flu,” Chrissian says. “However, there are likely many factors that contribute to one’s contagiousness, which we are still learning.”

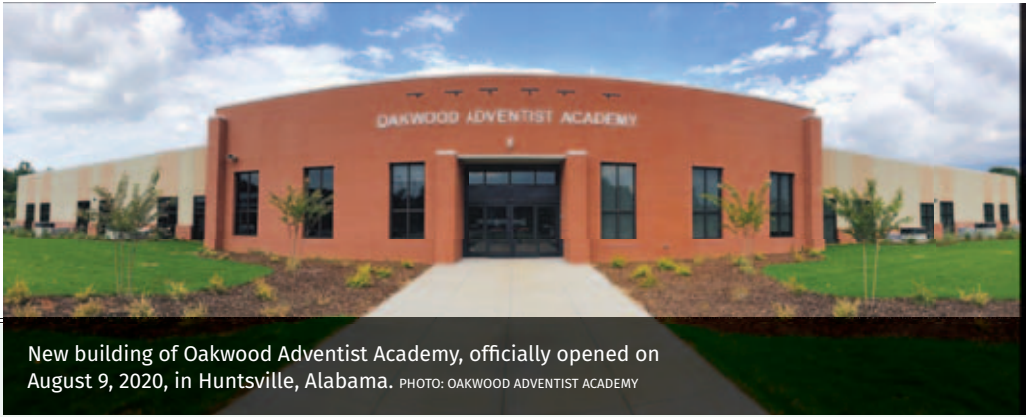


He also says the higher degree and duration of contagion seems to be especially notable in the elderly and those with certain underlying health conditions.

The CDC also states that COVID-19 has been linked to more super-spreading events than flu, meaning the virus spreads more quickly and easily than influenza.

Additional complications common with COVID-19 inconsistent with the flu include multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children and the development of blood clots in the veins and arteries, leading to a stroke or heart attack.

When treating COVID-19, providers stay updated as new treatment options and a better understanding of the virus emerges. “We are still learning the full extent of how the virus impacts the body. Many studies, both nationally and globally, are underway to find the best treatments,” Chrissian says. 🍀



New building of Oakwood Adventist Academy, officially opened on August 9, 2020, in Huntsville, Alabama. PHOTO: OAKWOOD ADVENTIST ACADEMY

OAKWOOD ADVENTIST ACADEMY OPENS NEW HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING

THIRTY-YEAR PROJECT TO ACCOMMODATE UP TO 500 STUDENTS.

BY CHRISTOPHER C. THOMPSON, NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION NEWS

Community residents, church members, and Oakwood Adventist Academy (OAA) employees, parents, and students gathered to witness the official opening of the newly constructed OAA high school building in Huntsville, Alabama, on August 9, 2020.

In his address, Oakwood University Church (OUC) senior pastor and OAA building project chairperson Carlton P. Byrd said, “After nearly 30 years of planning and discussing strategies for a full campus for Oakwood Adventist Academy, I’m pleased to announce that the third and final phase of the Oakwood Adventist Academy building project is now completed. It’s been a long time coming, but look what God has done.”

Special guests present for the occasion included Huntsville mayor Tommy Battle; Alabama state representative Laura Hall; and Huntsville city councilman Will Culver, all of whom shared greetings, well wishes, and words of commendation to OAA for the longstanding commitment to education and investment in the lives of young people. South Central Conference president Benjamin Jones and Oakwood University president Leslie N. Pollard

also shared words of support about the realization of this historic event.

Also present were Albert Dudley, Sr. and Bonita Dudley Parker, children of the late Charles E. Dudley, Sr. and his wife. The Dudleys were strong supporters of Adventist Christian education throughout Dudley Sr.’s 31-year tenure as South Central Conference president. Given the Dudleys’ advocacy, the new high school building was named in their honor.

OAA principal Judy B. Chiles-Dent remarked on the significance of the timing of the project’s completion, saying, “One thing I’m grateful for is that while we’re in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, it gives the opportunity for our children to have the necessary space for practicing social distancing while receiving a quality Christian education.”

In 1992, phase one of the OAA multi-education complex, the elementary school building, was completed under the leadership of the late E. C. Ward, then OUC senior pastor and OAA building chairperson. In January 2012, Byrd assumed these responsibilities, and in December 2013, phase two, including the middle school, gymnasium, and

cafeteria, was completed—along with a complete renovation of the elementary building. In August 2020, phase three of the OAA complex, the high school building, was completed. The full OAA campus can now accommodate 500 students.

The new high school building is a 20,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility, equipped with an administrative office suite, faculty lounge, conference room, and 12 classrooms, including a contemporary collaboration room for media and technology learning opportunities, along with two science labs to promote science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics education.

OAA vice principal Lakeisha Williams spoke about the unique learning opportunities that the new school building provides. “We really have the ability to provide stellar education in a Christ-centered environment,” she said, “not just for our Adventist community, but also for students in the entire Huntsville community.”

OAA business manager Mary Greene added, “I walk into this building and I feel a sense of relief, because it’s done! Just knowing that God was able to walk us through this and bring us to this point has been so refreshing. I’m just waiting to see what else God has in store as we walk in this uncharted territory.”



ADRA's clinic for people with albinism started in January 2020, and has already assisted 290 people. PHOTO: JAMES BISHEKO, ADRA IN TANZANIA

ADRA SUPPORTS ALBINOS' STRUGGLE AGAINST SKIN CANCER IN TANZANIA

THE DISEASE IS THE NUMBER-ONE KILLER OF PEOPLE WITH ALBINISM.

BY ADRA IN TANZANIA AND ADVENTIST REVIEW

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Private Grants Innovation Program is piloting a cryosurgery cancer treatment for persons with albinism in Tanzania.

Albinism, which affects as many as one in 1,400 people in Tanzania, is an inherited genetic condition that reduces the amount of melanin pigment formed in the skin, hair, and eyes. It leads to poor vision and a predisposition for skin cancer. This cancer, called the silent killer for persons with albinism, reduces average life expectancy to only 40 years.

Persons with albinism (PWAs) in Africa also suffer from discrimination, superstition, poverty, human rights abuse, and protection issues, making them one of the most marginalized and vulnerable communities on the continent. Since 2006 at least 73 PWAs have been murdered because of superstition, while 136 other cases of violations have been reported. PWAs have been "hunted" by people who believe

that albino body parts would bring them good luck.

"ADRA has been working with PWAs over the past four decades, focusing mainly on education," said James Bisheko, ADRA programs manager in Tanzania. "This new pilot project is a unique one and probably gives the most relief to the recipients. It's about skin cancer prevention, detection, and treatment by the use of cryosurgery technology. Cryosurgery uses liquid nitrogen to remove precancerous lesions from the skin of people with albinism before it develops into cancer," Bisheko explained.

A large part of ADRA's goal is to promote prevention through radio, public meetings, and SMS text messaging. ADRA is also coordinating efforts with the government's Department of Dermatology and the Tanzania Albinism Society for community mobilization.

ADRA's project started in January 2020 and has already assisted 290 people. Each person is screened

and also treated for skin cancer if necessary. The recipients leave the education center with skin protection supplies, including sunscreen lotions and hats.

"One of the patients, Richard Costa, came in for a consultation and examination," Bisheko said. "He had been treated in other clinics with little success. After cryosurgery he is recovering nicely."

Costa is 26 years old and has studied hotel management. He worked in a hotel for seven years to support his wife and son. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit Tanzania, Costa was laid off from his job in March. His only mode of transportation is a *boda boda* (motorcycle), which has become a useful way to earn income.

"Some kind people give me parcels to deliver, while others ask for a ride. On a good day I can earn 5,000 shillings [US\$2]," Costa said.

Through the training by ADRA, Costa is using the techniques he learns to protect himself, looking hopefully to the future. "I thank and appreciate ADRA for the skin cancer clinic. My skin is so smooth and healthy now," Costa said as he held out his arms for the ADRA staff to see. "Look! There are no more spots like I had before."

"Stories like Richard's are a testament that ADRA is helping to increase the lifespan and give hope to people with albinism. A donation to ADRA can ensure that clinics can continue to treat the very misjudged needs of albinism in Tanzania," Bisheko said. ▀



Thomas R. Neslund, who passed to his rest on September 8, 2020, at 85. PHOTO: ADVENTIST REVIEW

FORMER HEALTH AND AHM LEADER TOM NESLUND PASSES TO HIS REST

HE IS REMEMBERED FOR BEING A VISIONARY WITH A PENCHANT FOR ACTION.

MARCOS PASEGGI, ADVENTIST REVIEW

After an extended period of failing health, Tom Neslund, a retired Seventh-day Adventist health leader and Adventist Heritage Ministries (AHM) enthusiast, passed to his rest in Newport Beach, California, on September 8, 2020. He was 85.

Described by his colleagues as both a “creative visionary” and a “doer,” Neslund was a driving force behind various outreach projects before and after his official retirement.

“Tom was liked by everyone. He had an open, easy way about him that naturally drew people to him, a much-needed characteristic for a volunteer organization leader,” shared retired White Estate director Jim Nix. Nix worked with Neslund in AHM after he retired from the Health Ministries Department of the General Conference.

Neslund served as the AHM volunteer president for 15 years. It is an activity that he used as an evangelistic tool, according to Nix. “For Tom, it was all about finding innovative ways to draw people to Christ. His life was totally immersed in doing that,” he said.

MULTIFACETED SERVICE

Thomas R. Neslund was born in Montevideo, Minnesota, on June 9, 1935. After completing studies at Union College in Nebraska and Loma

Linda University, he began his service in the Adventist Church pastoring in the Iowa Conference between 1964 and 1968. That year he returned to California to teach at Glendale Adventist Academy for five years.

In 1973 Neslund was called to serve as health and temperance director of the Southern California Conference, a position he held for 13 years. In 1986 he was appointed Health Ministries associate director of the General Conference. He held that position until he retired in 1999.

HE IS REMEMBERED

Former Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries director Dick Stenbakken agreed with Nix and others about Neslund’s penchant for moving from ideas to action. “Tom was a uniquely creative person who could not only conceive an idea or program but could put wheels under it so it would actually move,” he said. “He was one of the very rare people who could do, and did, both.”

For years, shared Stenbakken, he and Neslund worked to transform the General Conference atrium into the village of Bethlehem during Christmas. According to Stenbakken, the Walk Through Bethlehem annual events became major community events

with thousands of guests each year. Several Washington, D.C., television stations did portions of their morning newscasts from “Bethlehem.”

Stenbakken also shared that the Christmas events prompted Tom to write, produce, and present several dramatic productions. “Matthew’s Miracle” was followed by “Matthew’s Victory,” then “Daniel.” “Adventist Church headquarters staff, employees, and families were involved in the dramas and Bethlehem events that drew a total of more than 40,000 visitors to the General Conference building,” he said. “It was the largest outreach series of events ever done at the complex.”

MISSION IN MIND

Stenbakken also emphasized that in every initiative, Neslund had mission in mind. “Tom’s faith and desire to share the good news in unique ways were foundational to his creativity, and formed the basis of his writing, planning, and ministry,” he said.

According to Nix, people “were impacted by Tom’s selfless service to others. He was a true servant leader for Christ.”

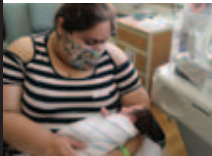
Neslund is survived by his wife, Gunda, whom he married in 1982; son, Todd; daughter, Stephanie; and six grandchildren. ▀



CLEAN WATER FOR INDIA Maranatha Volunteers International is addressing an urgent need in India: regular access to clean water. Maranatha is filling this need through a unique process in India's Sundarban Islands in the Bay of Bengal. Traditional large rigs do not reach the islands. So Maranatha is shipping in smaller rigs piece by piece and doing much of the drilling by hand. Over more than 50 years, Maranatha's more than 85,000 volunteers have built more than 11,000 structures in nearly 90 countries.



ADVENTIST HEALTHCARE ADDS VALUE FOR ITS 175,000 PATIENTS PER YEAR. Adventist HealthCare has augmented its promotion of healthful living for clientele at its Sydney Adventist Hospital and San Day Surgery Hornsby, through a new partnership with Elia Wellness, an organization known for its success in multiple educational health and wellness initiatives. The partnership sponsors activities such as its Live More Project, Wellness App, Lifestyle Medicine Summit, and Partner training programs while maintaining the two organizations' financial independence.



DOCTORS SAVE COVID-19 PATIENT AND HER PREMATURE BABY. Thirty-two-year-old Blanca Rodriguez, from Adelanto, California, was rushed to Loma Linda University Children's Hospital, 28 weeks pregnant, with severe upper respiratory issues, difficulty breathing. A medically induced coma, antiviral therapy, steroids, heavy oxygenation, convalescent plasma, and antibiotics for several days after a life-saving emergency C-section, enabled Blanca to go home after two weeks. Baby Jade continues to be carefully monitored by the hospital's neonatal ICU.



ADVENTIST PUBLISHING HOUSE IN GERMANY TURNS 125. Advent-Verlag, the publishing house founded 1895 by L. R. Conradi in Hamburg, Germany to spread Adventist literature to German-speaking people, is turning 125. Now a modern publishing house with 16 employees and a subsidiary, Wartberg-Verlag GmbH, Advent-Verlag GmbH cherishes its history while meeting tomorrow's need—books that promote, deepen, and accompany faith. Sönke Feldhusen, representing the Lüneburg-Wolfsburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce, presented a certificate of honor on the special occasion.



ASSISTANCE FOR LOUISIANA'S HURRICANE LAURA VICTIMS. On August 27, 2020, the state of Louisiana took a direct hit from Hurricane Laura that reportedly killed at least 14 people and caused up to US\$12 billion in damage. The Adventist Church's Southwest Region Conference made several churches available for shelter, and continues a feeding program for some evacuees. Donations pouring into the affected area created a unique challenge: where to put them, and how to distribute them as swiftly as possible.



JUDGE BAPTIZED THROUGH LAWYERS' ONLINE EVANGELISM. Ofelia Puerto Cabahug, presiding judge of a regional trial court in the Philippines, was recently baptized at the end of an online evangelistic series sponsored by Adventist Lawyers of the Philippines. Her sister-in-law, Gizelle Cabahug-Fugoso, the organization's president, invited her to watch, and she found the presentations logical and to the point. Her husband, Gibb Andrew Cabahug, also an Adventist, helped her with her Bible studies.



REWARDING ENDINGS TO SOUTH PACIFIC EDUCATION WEEK. Schools in the South Pacific Division's Trans-Pacific Union Mission celebrated Adventist Education Week in varied, rewarding ways. Fiji's Navesau Adventist High School concluded with 40 baptisms. At Funafuti Adventist Primary School in Tuvalu, teachers led out in evening presentations to a packed church every night, and students sang for the community. Betikama Adventist College in the Solomon Islands has seen 69 baptisms this year, including 19 at the end of Education Week.



THREE ANGELS' MESSAGES

THE BASICS



The heart of the book of Revelation and the rhetorical climax of the Book of all books is Revelation 12-14.

REVELATION'S HEART?

The book of Revelation does have a heart. Undying gospel is at its core (Rev. 14:6). And the gospel story is a love story—that's basic. You can't dismiss it as simplistic, shallow, and impractical, because you want something more sophisticated. Divine love is basic. And basic to any love story is at least one lover.

In the divine love story, the "at least one Lover" is God: He loved us when we were His enemies, while we were sinners (which is the same thing)—sinning by nature and by choice. Christ died for us because God was determined to turn His enemies into His friends; and the only way He could win us back, the only way He could reunite us with Himself, was "through the death of his Son" (see Rom. 5:10; also verse 8).

Winning back has always been the principal focus of God at war. Indeed, the very idea of conflict is totally alien to Him: He is the God of peace (Rom. 15:33; 16:20; Phil. 4:9; 1 Thess. 5:23).

But someone He loved completely, one whom He had honored highly, decided to become His enemy, now operating behind multiple IDs: Lucifer—because he once lived in the light; devil—for his scandalizing; Satan—for his hostility; roaring lion—for his terrorizing; ancient serpent—for his historic deceptiveness; great dragon—for his cruelty, etc. (Isa. 14:12; Matt. 13:39; 1 Peter 5:8; Rev. 12:9; etc.).

It is nearly unbelievable what this enemy first started fighting over, or where. It was over worship, and he started it in the central sanctuary of the universe, convincing many of God's serving spirits (angels—see Heb. 1:14) that their Master didn't deserve all the adoration and praise He received.¹

This is all heartbreaking to God because God is love by nature, by law, today and forever. "Every manifestation of creative power is an expression of infinite love."² That first rebel's brilliant endowments all witnessed to his Creator's love. And yet, today, when God's Word testifies that everything is from, through, and for Him (Rom. 11:36), God may seem intensely selfish—everything is for Him!—because of what God's enemy has done to our thinking. His distortions of our thinking diminish our capacity to grasp the most basic truth about the three angels' messages and the controversy the enemy started: that God is love.

To straighten our twisted thinking, God shares with us an otherworldly vision, a glimpse of the norm; a glimpse that reveals heavenly beings bursting out at the max of their lungs (if that's how they shout) because of the overwhelming ecstasy of basic truth, because they see reality, sheer and simple—just the facts: "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being" (Rev. 4:11).

The shouters here are neither brainwashed stooges nor shallow sycophants: they are the unfallen and the redeemed, drawn out together to the utmost extent of their being, in the transporting act of true worship, which is the first angel's call. Worship is where the great controversy started. Worship is where it must be settled. The heart of Revelation is chapters 12 through 14; and the heart of the three angels' messages is worship: "Worship your Creator—by the rules," the first angel commands (see Rev. 14:7). Get worship wrong, and experience the tragic consequences, the last angel warns (verses 9-11). Love is basic to all God does in and for creation.

Following His rules is the basic, true worship response of all Creation: we experience full existence by giving all back to Him through all we do, whether eating or drinking or serving or whatsoever (1 Cor. 10:31).³ It is the witness of human lips and lives committed to obeying the Creator's rules that have borne His messages across the earth from their first proclamation until today. Human beings are the angel messengers of God's good news. That's basic too.

BABYLON?

Yes, Babylon is a clear fundamental of the messages—Babylon, in the middle of everything, a word and name that stand for all of confusion's history from beginning to end.

When some of Lucifer's followers realized they were caught in a lie and wanted to go back to their loving Father, "Lucifer had another deception ready. . . . [He] now declared that the angels who had united with him had gone too far to return."⁴ It was a straightforward lie, for God loves with everlasting love (Jer. 31:3), forever yearning to have His lost children back. The lie illustrates what the second message announces: Babylon, confusion,⁵ is now exposed.

Human beings are the angel messengers of God's good news.

Babylon is the confusion of duress, of frustrated angels convinced that they should leave, and convinced that they cannot: disgruntled workers from then on. In Genesis, Babylon is Nimrod's ambitions,⁶ a tower to reach heaven and preserve earth's civilization (Gen. 11:4), distrusting God's promise never to flood the whole earth again (Gen. 8:21, 22). In Isaiah 14, Babylon's ruler schemes to usurp the throne of God Most High (verse 14). And in Judah's history, Babylon's greatest human ruler devastates God's people, terminates Davidic royal rule, destroys the place built for worship of the true God, and transfers the treasures of its sanctuary to the house of a heathen god (Dan. 1:1, 2; 2 Kings 25:1-22).

In sum, Babylon comes to stand for the triumph of greed over grace, lust over love, power over peace, devotion distorted and worship misguided (Jer. 51:7; Dan. 3:1-6; Rev. 17:1-5). And the second angel informs that Babylon is now fallen (Jer. 51:8, 9; Rev. 14:8); that the failures of its best systems—political, economic, religious, cultural—now lie exposed at multiple levels: domestic, local, national, international.

WORSHIP. AGAIN?

From the beginning of humanity's rebellion, God announced that He would get us back. The effort cost Him everything, requiring from Him an "unspeakable Gift," an "inexpressible," "indescribable" Gift, a Gift "too wonderful for words."⁷ When God gave us His Son, "He poured out all heaven in that one Gift."⁸ God gave up "his one and only Son" (John 3:16) to meet the law's natural consequence and basic demand: death to the lawbreaker (Rom. 6:16, 23). God's Son sacrificed Himself, substituting His innocence for our guilt. He is the "Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). But death could not retain Him when He died, because it had no claim on Him: He was guiltless. Now He reigns, and our life is guaranteed in Him.

This truth inspires one of the most glorious scenes of the book of Revelation, as millions of angels surround God's throne, belting out the music at the top of their lungs—if that's how they shout: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to

receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" The glory is infectious; all creation joins the shouting: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!" The exultation is climactic: "The four living creatures said, 'Amen,' and the elders fell down and worshiped" (Rev. 5:12-14).

Good sense and emotion would subscribe to this worship forever! And yet, some people choose not to. The time comes when God must honor their choice (Rev. 14:7). And the third message advises of the painful consequences of choosing the chaotically senseless adoration of created things, instead of joining the chorus of redemption in endless paeans of praise to the Creator Lamb. Worship is where the great controversy began, and worship is how it will be resolved. Forget the beast—cultic or economic; forget human contrivance and creaturely system, device, or creed: worship the Lamb.

BASICS. AGAIN.

Visualize yourself among the messengers of Revelation 14, God's unstoppable army, serving on all expeditionary fronts. Unavoidable and irresistible. Delivering, as they say of the famed U.S. Postal Service, through "neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night"; bringing a word to all that is just right for all right now. Our basic message: God is love that never will change; live all your moments to glorify His name. That is true worship. That is how you live life in all its fullness (John 10:10). Nothing else is true living. Nothing else makes sense. ♣

¹ For more on his slander campaign against God's character see Richard Davidson, "And There Was Gossip in Heaven," www.adventistreview.org/2013-1503-22.

² 1 John 4:8, 16; Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1890, 1908), p. 33.

³ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940), p. 21, tells how life works: "Through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life."

⁴ E. G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 40.

⁵ "It was called Babel—because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world" (Gen. 11:9).

⁶ Intriguing transliteration history has accented confusion around the word "Babylon," by producing apparently distinct names, Babel and Babylon, from the Hebrew word *babel*. But *babel* is Babylon.

⁷ 2 Cor. 9:15, as translated by multiple Bible versions.

⁸ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 19.

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



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

Our Students' Greatest Need? YOU!

Holbrook Indian School is a first- through 12th-grade Seventh-day Adventist boarding school that serves Native American children and youth. Since 1946, our goal has been for our students to be prepared to go into the world knowing that their Creator loves them.

Many students come to us trapped in a generational cycle of poverty and abuse. Holbrook Indian School provides a safe, nurturing environment for Native American students to learn and grow in.

Many students call Holbrook home.

Our students need you. They need your prayers. They need your help. They need your financial support.

More than 80 percent of our funding comes from people like you who have a heart for Native American children. Without them, Holbrook Indian School would not exist.

When you make a gift to operations, you keep the school going. Operational funding allows the students to be here, which makes a major impact in their lives.



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BY JIŘÍ MOSKALA

From time to time people ask me a pointed question: What should we proclaim to our dying world—the gospel or the three angels’ messages? This sincere query presents a false dichotomy that reveals a deep misunderstanding of the nature of Revelation 14:6-13. A careful study of this passage shows that these angels are clearly bearing “the everlasting gospel” (Rev. 14:6, KJV).

GOD’S ULTIMATUM

The three angels’ messages summarize the good news about God, His values, and our proper response. Every word they bear is crucial and pregnant with deep meaning; therefore, they must be studied together in the larger biblical context. The explicit expressions of this passage are only the visible tip of an iceberg. The three messages are one integral message with three parts; hence my use of the phrase “three angels’ message” in the singular.

The three angels’ message is depicted just before the scene of Christ’s second coming (Rev. 14:14-16). It is the last message of hope, calling people to prepare for Christ’s return. Ellen White writes: “The third angel’s message must be presented as the only hope for the salvation of a perishing world.”¹ This final invitation by God is the ultimatum of divine love for humanity.

It is not by chance that the phrase “ever-

lasting gospel” occurs only here in all the Bible. John underscores that the message God commissions at the end of time is not something new. Neither is it better—it has never changed. The gospel is always valid, still relevant, still life-changing; the same message the patriarchs, prophets, Jesus, the apostles, and Paul all preached, though now with a new emphasis. It is the good news about God, His character, the plan of salvation, God’s no to sin, and the eradication of evil.

The message is God’s response to the demands of the satanic trinity—the dragon and the sea and land beasts of Revelation 13—that demands universal obedience (verses 7, 8). Key words and actions repeated in chapter 13, such as “worship,” “authority,” and “power,” show Satan, with his allies, attempting to lead the whole world into false worship by usurping God’s authority, speaking in His name, and using force against nonconformists. They reign by fear.

But the three angels’ message shows the holy Trinity exposing these end-time deceptions and fake news, helping people to make right choices and worship the Lord in truth. “Worship,” mentioned five times with the satanic trinity (Rev. 13:4 [twice], 8, 12, 15), occurs again three times in the three angels’ message (Rev. 14:7, 9, 11). The angels present a message from the heart of the triune God—Father (verses 7, 10, 12),

Theological Essence

The gospel of Revelation 14

Revelation 14

mentions three pivotal characteristics of the faithful.

Lamb (verses 10, 12), and Spirit (verse 13)—that provides correct information; because people make better decisions when granted proper knowledge and clarification.

INTRODUCING THE MESSAGE

The message's introduction describes our divided world: nations, tribes, languages, and peoples literally "sitting" (Greek: *kathemai*) on the earth. Humanity's earthbound orientation contrasts with Abraham's focus, "looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God" (Heb. 11:10, ESV).² The eternal gospel is God's remedy for a divided world of secular-minded people who focus on things and dedicate themselves to consumption. The thrust of the message is to prepare people for the world's final spiritual crisis, and to stand with the Lamb, who died for sinners. The message unites, heals divisions, and prepares people for eternity so they can meet God face to face and live. It gives right perspective, correct directions in life, and inspiring goals. It presents all that is good, right, meaningful, beautiful, and lasting.

The angels³ proclaiming⁴ the everlasting gospel to the world are human messengers. They represent a movement commissioned by God to announce the unchanged gospel. In symbolic language these messengers are "flying in midheaven" (Rev. 14:6, RSV),⁵ imagery conveying the sense that their message is nothing hidden, but proclaimed worldwide, in the middle of the sky, clearly visible to everyone. Things that happen in midair attract attention. Thus, these angels represent a worldwide, visible, end-time movement of people delivering the message of salvation to all humanity.

CONTENT OF THE GOSPEL

What is the content of the eternal gospel? In summary, the first message contains three imperatives in context of the announcement that the special eschatological time of God's judgment has

arrived. The Lord wants to justify, save, deliver, and vindicate as many people as possible. But they will need to respond to His ultimate message of love. This time of judgment is God's way of saving people who accept Him as their personal Savior and dedicate their lives to Him. God is also bringing an end to the problem of evil. Divine judgment is the reason for three actions:

Fear God means to make decisions always in regard to God, His will, and His teaching, and to love and obey Him and live constantly in His presence.

Give glory to God entails allowing God to transform our lives through the Holy Spirit. God's glory is His character (Ex. 33:18, 19; 34:6, 7). To give Him glory means to reflect His holy character in our lives.

Worship the Creator means acknowledging God as our Creator, to whom we are accountable, and cultivating a deep relationship with Him. There is no collaboration possible between the biblical teaching of God's six-day creation of life on earth, culminating in Sabbath celebration (Gen. 2:2, 3; Ex. 20:8-11), and theistic evolution, a theory that distorts the biblical view of the beginning of life.

The second message is a warning against the anti-gospel and the antichrist, and exposes Babylon as the false religious system. The reformers had already discovered that it was important not only to present the beauty of the gospel but also to unmask and warn against the antichrist (Dan. 7:8, 21, 24-26; 8:9-12; 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7; Rev. 17:4-6). The second proclamation is strengthened by the message of Revelation 18, in which Babylon's condemnation is elaborated with two additions: (1) sinful conditions—the city is described as full of pride, wickedness, and deep connections with evil and demonic forces; and (2) the invitation offered to God's faithful followers still in Babylon: "Come out of her, my people" (Rev. 18:4, NKJV).⁶

The third message is a personal appeal to wholeheartedly follow the Lord. No compromise with falsehood is possible. The warning is solemn and specific: "If anyone worships the beast . . . he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God" (Rev. 14:9, 10, NKJV). This is a conditional statement with eternal consequences.

God does not want anyone to end up in the lake of fire and taste the second, irreversible death (Rev. 20:14). The message paints a lamentable picture of people experiencing eternal death before the Lamb and His angels as they follow the

beast and receive its mark. Here is an “impossible” possibility, something absurd that should never be. Yet there are people who will lose eternal life because of their stubborn attachment to sin and refusal to accept Jesus as the only solution to their problem of evil.

The Lamb died for them so that they might live (Isa. 53:4-6; John 3:16); holy angels have done everything possible to help them accept new life in Christ (Heb. 1:14). Nevertheless, they go to eternal perdition “in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb” (Rev. 14:10). This is why God sends out His loving appeal, a final call for repentance, and the strongest of warnings. All must understand that it is a matter of either-or; there is no third way.

THE FAITHFUL REMNANT

Revelation 14 mentions three pivotal characteristics of the faithful: “Here is the patience of the saints; here *are* those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (verse 12, NKJV). Then a beatitude is pronounced over those who die in the Lord. The voice from heaven culminates the three angels’ message with a statement: “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord” (verse 13).

The emphasis here is not on their death, but on how they died. How does one die in the Lord? That is possible only when one first lives in the Lord. “In Christ,” a key phrase in Paul’s writings, is also the final thought in the three angels’ message. Those who live in the Lord are happy because they did not labor in vain; as the Holy Spirit assures: “They may rest from their labors, and their works follow them” (verse 13, NKJV).

The word “lamb” (*arnion*) appears more than 25 times in Revelation, all but one of which refer to Jesus Christ. The other occurs when the beast seeks to counterfeit the true Lamb (see Rev. 13:11). Statistically speaking, the Lamb is named more than once for each of the 22 chapters of Revelation. John sees the Lamb everywhere. Significantly, in chapter 14’s first verse he sees the Lamb, accompanied by 144,000 faithful followers “who follow the Lamb wherever he goes” (Rev. 14:4, ESV).

This picture is also supported by the end of the chapter, because in Revelation 14:14 one encounters the Son of man, who comes to judge the earth. The very center of the third message is the Lamb (verse 10). The Lamb and His followers are important to each other. John sees the Lamb accompanied

by those who were faithfully proclaiming the three angels’ message and were in an intimate relationship with the Lord while preaching and waiting for His second coming. He emphasizes this picture by the use of such key terms as “I saw” (verse 6), “the Lamb” (verse 10), “worship” (verses 7, 9, 11), “die in the Lord” (verse 13). The theme is clear, namely, seeing the Lamb: living and dying in the Lord.

CONCLUSION

The main message of the book of Revelation is not about beasts, marks, or numbers (12, 1260, 666, 144,000). It is not about the patience of saints, or even commandment keeping. Revelation’s main message is about following the Lamb.

Shortly after the General Conference Session in Minneapolis in 1888, Ellen White stated: “Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of *justification by faith* is the third angel’s message, and I have answered, ‘It is the third message *in verity*.’”⁷ When we point people away from ourselves and themselves, when we teach them to cope with their fears by trusting the Lord, we do what John the Baptist did: we direct people to the Lamb of God (John 1:29, 36).

Ellen White wrote insightfully regarding our task of proclaiming the three angels’ message, the message of hope, faith, and love: “There is *no other work of so great importance*. They [Seventh-day Adventists] are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention.”⁸ By doing it, we confirm that we are in the service of the Almighty, and share His order of priorities. His mission is ours, and we are His messengers. 🦋

¹ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946), p. 196.

² Scripture quotations marked ESV are from *The Holy Bible*, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

³ “Messengers”: Greek—*angelos*; Hebrew—*mal’ak*. Both mean “messenger” or “angel.”

⁴ Greek—*euangelidzo*. It means “proclaim,” “announce good news,” “evangelize,” “preach,” etc.

⁵ Bible texts credited to RSV are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright © 1946, 1952, 1971, by Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Used by permission.

⁶ Bible texts credited to NKJV are from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

⁷ Ellen G. White, in *Review and Herald*, Apr. 1, 1890. (Italics supplied.)

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

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THE THREE ANGELS

IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Early Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the three angels' messages

RAOUL DEDEREN

At a Bible conference sponsored by the Adventist Church's Euro-Africa Division in 1988, on contemporary understanding of the three angels' messages, Raoul Dederen, a professor at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, presented the paper "The Three Angels' Messages: Origin and Development of Adventist Interpretation." The following pages summarize the sections of that presentation that focus on how Seventh-day Adventists understood the messages before the turn of the twentieth century.—Editors.*

Adventists believe they are a prophetic movement that God raised up to take the three angels' messages of Revelation 14 to the world. Appreciating this idea requires some historical context.

THE GREAT AWAKENING: AT THE START OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Millerism was neither a new denomination nor a new belief. It was a movement centered on belief in Christ's soon and personal return. It was part of a Protestant renaissance, especially in Great Britain and the United States. At the start of the nineteenth century many Christians were becoming interested in (1) a more meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ, and (2) preparing others for His soon return. On the threshold of the Industrial Revolution, Christians thought that they could do this by reshaping their restless society according to a heavenly pattern. Their political and social way of life would fulfill the

philosophical ideals of the Enlightenment as they lived better with everyone, all over the world, just as the Bible prescribes.

The growth of Bible and missionary societies, as well as the spread of democratic ideals, fed their optimism, expressed in the Christian doctrine of a millennium that would precede Christ's return. The study of Bible prophecy was one more significant contributor, following natural catastrophes and the repercussions of the French Revolution. Bible scholars of all denominations turned to the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, convinced that the end of the period of domination by the "beast" of Daniel and Revelation had arrived. Christianity on both sides of the Atlantic witnessed an unprecedented level of interest in prophecies—the 1,260 days (Dan. 7:25); the 2,300 days (Dan. 8:14); the millennium. It was "the time of the end," "the last days"; a new era had dawned.

As early as Joachim de Floris (1202), biblical students had believed that in accordance with the year-day principle the 1,260 days would end around 1790, and the 2,300 in the nineteenth century. In England, J. A. Brown looked to the year 1843, and William Cunningham to 1867. Joseph Wolfe expected Christ's second coming in 1847.

American pastor William D. Davis, of South Carolina, saw Daniel 9:24 as the key to identifying the beginning of the 2,300 days. Alexander Campbell, dynamic founder of the Disciples of Christ, expected the cleansing of the sanctuary, being the purification of God's church, in about 1847. Other dates were also proposed. But whether in Germany, Switzerland, England, or the United States, the 1840s were a moment of great expectations, though the Catholic Church's futurist and preterist interpretations challenged these explanations by disconnecting biblical prophecy from the continuous flow of history.

WILLIAM MILLER AND MILLERISM

American biblical commentators, following Daniel Whitby, proclaimed a spiritual coming followed by 1,000 years that would see global conversion of all peoples and religions to Christ. Lay Baptist preacher William Miller (1782-1849) gave himself over to an intense and systematic search for truth and was stunned by his findings: Christ's second coming was the focal point of Scripture, to be followed, not preceded, by the millennium. The 2,300-days chronology was to end "around 1843," coinciding with the return of Christ.

In 1831, 50 years old, Miller began to preach on Christ's soon return and the coming judgment. Around 1838 and 1839, kindred spirits took up his message, and its prominence grew through an ever-increasing tide of voices and published literature. Between 50,000 and 135,000 people came to believe in the imminent personal, literal, visible coming of Christ.

INITIAL APPLICATIONS OF THE MESSAGES

At first the Millerites gave little attention to Revelation 14. They saw the proclaiming angel of verse 6 as representative of Christian missionary movements that followed the fall of the Papacy in 1798. But things changed as they realized that they were proclaimers of the imminent day of judgment (Rev. 14:7). That pointed message led to increasing tension with established Christianity which, increasingly, rejected and condemned its ideas and promoters.

Charles Fitch, one of Millerism's most respected preachers, came to see that Protestants and Catholics, having wandered from the Scriptures' high spiritual demands, were both Babylon—spiritual corruption. God's faithful should "come out" immediately (Rev. 18:4).

The publication *The Midnight Cry* of February 1, 1844, laid out the relationship between the two first messages of Revelation 14, linking the call for God's people to come out with that of "the hour of judgment has come." Consequently, the great majority of those who believed in Christ's return separated from their churches, especially in the months leading up to October 22, 1844.

FOLLOWING OCTOBER 22, 1844

After October 22, many Millerites, humiliated and confused, abandoned their faith. Some returned to their churches. Others kept setting new dates. A third group, with no room for doubting their calculations, determined that their mistake concerned the event scheduled to take place at the end of the 2,300 days.

Few in number, this third group met for mutual consolation, cherishing the powerful spiritual blessings of their recent disappointment, delving into the true meaning of the cleansing of the sanctuary, and developing a theology of the sanctuary whose focal point was the nature of Christ's ministry in heaven: they saw that Daniel 8:14 announces the beginning of Christ's high-priestly ministry on the antitypical

Adventism's understanding of the three angels' messages had not changed much from that of Andrews and Smith, apart from one significant fact: Jones sought to give first place to Jesus, and place Him at the heart of the messages.

day of atonement, and that His return was still future. For them, the great Millerite disappointment was primary proof that they had fulfilled a divinely ordained, prophetic assignment.

THE ANGEL MESSAGES: DISAPPOINTMENT TO 1850

The group kept incorporating constantly improving understandings of the three angels' messages into their developing theology. Whereas Miller interpreted "the hour of judgment" (Rev. 14:7) as the end of the world, these Adventists related their interpretation to the typical functions of the high priest in the Old Testament. The judgment arrived and announced had to take place before the Lord's return and was distinct from His return.

The identity of the second angel's "Babylon" continued to be discussed. James White did not think it included the Roman Catholic Church, since God's people were not there. The view that prevailed was of apostate churches united to the kingdoms of the world.

The only Millerite preacher known to have shown any awareness of a third angel was Josiah Litch. But now the third angel's message received significant attention from those who held to the sanctuary message. And the message clearly needed an explanation: "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives its mark on their forehead or on their hand" (Rev. 14:9). What's the beast? What's its image? What's its mark? Everyone agreed about the beast: the "papal beast" who wages war against the saints and oppresses them (Dan. 7) was the one the third angel mentions. But what of the other symbols?

The group's determined pursuit of truths long obscured by tradition led them to the Sabbath. One of the first to see its relationship to the third angel's message was Joseph Bates, who had begun observing the Sabbath even before the great disappointment of 1844, and whose encouragement had influenced many others, including James and Ellen White, to keep all God's commandments. Bates believed that Revelation 14:12, announcing the keepers of God's commandments,

was a result of the angels' proclamation.

Though most of their arguments for Sabbath-keeping derived from Seventh Day Baptist understanding, Adventist doctrine was now relating closely to post-1844 experience. Sanctuary theology led to Sabbathkeeping, which quickly became an integral part of the third angel's message.

Revelation 11:19 showed that the heavenly sanctuary, as the earthly, contains an ark that holds the Ten Commandments, a clear demonstration of their perpetuity. Christ's entry, in 1844, upon the second phase of His ministry as our heavenly High Priest, had directed their attention to the Most Holy Place. The result was a deeper understanding of the role and function of the Decalogue, explaining why the Sabbath had become a test for God's people. In this context the first elements of the "mark of the beast" and "the false Sabbath" appear, in contrast with the "seal of the living God" (Rev. 7:2): rejecting the message means receiving "the mark"

This important work of clarification, unification, consolidation, and gradual growth resulted from a series of conferences between April 20 and November 18, 1848, as zealous men and women met for systematic Bible study and prayer. A fundamental unity emerged with regard to the principal doctrines and the foundations of interpretation of biblical prophecy accepted by Adventist Sabbathkeepers.

THE 1850S: CONSOLIDATION

The triple message had begun to take definitive shape, its central theme being stated in Revelation 14:12—the faithful who keep God's commandments and the faith of Jesus. But a much grander plan could already be discerned. Regarding "the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12, KJV), White, through the 1850s, came to hold that it included everything Jesus said and all His inspired apostles wrote. Understanding "the beast," however, was chiefly the task of J. N. Andrews and J. N. Loughborough. Andrews identified the beast of Revelation 14:9-11 with the first beast of Revelation 13; its image could not be other than fallen Protestantism. Loughborough saw church and state united for the persecution of her-

etics, such as seventh-day Sabbathkeepers. Sunday observance continued to be seen as the mark of the beast, a Protestant-imposed papal institution.

1860-1880

Two books by two authors provide a fair indication of Seventh-day Adventist thinking during this period. Andrews' preface to the 1860 edition of his book, *The Three Angels of Revelation XIV* (first ed., 1855), states four goals: (1) to warn humanity of coming judgment; (2) to light the way for the saints and put God's people on guard; (3) to unite the scattered saints into a single body; and (4) to restore to God's people the Ten Commandments, thus preparing them to escape the time of trouble and enter heaven.

Andrews is clear about the time and substance of all the messages. The first is a warning to all humanity, lasting from 1840 to 1844, and the second is preached along with it when Babylon, the worldly church, collapses. Babylon's fall is moral, prepared by its contempt for biblical doctrines (baptism, the Sabbath, conditional immortality). The third message depicts a future conflict between those who keep God's commandments and those who defend the beast. The seven last plagues of God's wrath are yet in the future, since the present is the time when the third angel's warning must be given.

Uriah Smith's *Daniel and Revelation* first pays attention to the three angels' messages in its fourth edition (1885). Significant insights on the angels include that they are not beasts—earthly powers—but angels, symbolic of the heavenly nature of their power. The first message belonged to the present just as much as it did through 1840-1844, a truth similarly applicable to the second, though it first sounded in the latter months of 1844. For Smith, Babylon meant "confusion," composed of three parts: pagan, papal, and apostate Protestant. The third angel proclaims God's final, special message to a dying world, embracing the import of the first two while adding content unique to itself.

THE 1888 GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION

Seventh-day Adventism, with its devastating array of scriptures and logic supporting their Sabbath and sanctuary doctrines, came to be seen as focused more on their own good works than on Jesus Christ. At the 1888 General Conference Session, E. J. Waggoner and A. T. Jones engaged the


church with the message that justification by faith was a vivifying, personal, spiritual experience, not mere biblical theory. Their emphasis augmented understanding of the three angels' messages. Waggoner taught that the three were one continuous proclamation of Jesus Christ, crucified and resurrected. Those who come out of Babylon will be perfect before God because they have heard and heeded the biblical teaching of righteousness by faith.

Jones, equally enthusiastic, was more prolific in his writing on the messages, publishing in the *Review and Herald* a yearlong series, January 1900 to January 1901, on Revelation 14. Its three angels bear one message on Babylon, "the gate of God," now turned to "confusion" for having rejected the judgment-hour message (verses 6, 7). That rejection by Roman Catholicism and her daughters the Protestant churches necessitated the second and third messages. The third, in particular, reaches out to the entire world and embraces Sinai and Calvary, the law of God and the gospel of Christ. It is God's ultimate effort to save humans and perfect all who would be ready to meet Him at His second coming, having conquered the beast and his image and kept the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

Having established the indispensability of obedience and the faith of Jesus, Jones goes on to define the faith of Jesus: commandment keeping is inseparable from it, for that faith means nothing if not expressed in good works, i.e., in keeping God's commandments. Commandment keeping is heaven's free gift received by faith. This is the message of the third angel.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Adventism's understanding of the three angels' messages had not changed much from that of Andrews and Smith, apart from one significant fact: Jones sought to give first place to Jesus, and place Him at the heart of the messages. After the 1888 General Conference Session, there was a new perception of humanity's total inability to save themselves, and a desire to accept only the righteousness of Christ and His power provided us to follow His steps. ✎

*The original article, in French, may be found in a published compilation of the conference papers. See Raoul Dederen, "Les messages des trois anges: Origine et développement de l'interprétation adventiste," in *Études sur l'Apocalypse: signification des messages des trois anges aujourd'hui*, Conférences Bibliques, Division Eurafricaine, 2 vols. (Collonges-sous-Salève, France: Institut Adventiste du Salève, France, 1988), vol. 1, pp. 25-56.



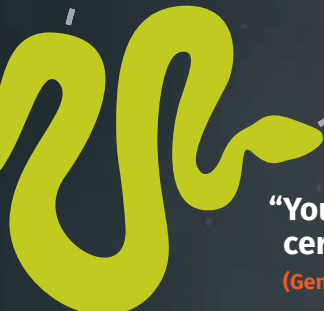
GOD'S LOVE IN THE PLAN OF SALVATION: A PRIMER

The history of this planet is the history of an epic struggle between good and evil that is soon to end. The diagram presented here aims to locate God's climactic message to the world—the three angels' messages—within the larger narrative of the struggle, and sharpen our focus on being ready to meet our Redeemer, who said, "Yes, I am coming soon" (Rev. 22:20).—Editors.



"War broke out in heaven" (Rev. 12:7)

when Lucifer, the covering cherub, chose to fight for God's place. God banished him from heaven with the angels who joined his rebellion (verse 4).



"You will not certainly die" (Gen. 3:4)

was Satan's lie to the first humans against God's counsel. They believed him, and that brought sin and disaster to earth.




Things got terribly bad on earth (Gen. 6:5):

God sent a flood to cleanse the entire planet; He also did a reset with the family of a God-fearing man named Noah.

Some of Noah's descendants continued rebellion

against God after the Flood (Gen. 11:4). God confounded them by confusing their language. Their tower, Babel (or Babylon), came to stand as a symbol of rebelliousness.



Beginning in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:15),

and again and again through His prophets (e.g., Isa. 9:6), God repeated His promise of a Deliverer, someone to rescue humans and the earth from eternal doom.



Jesus commissioned His followers

to share the good news with everyone everywhere (Mark 16:15).



“I saw another angel . . . ,

and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth” (Rev. 14:6).

The angel and his companions represent Jesus’ followers at the end of time, sharing the commission to take the good news of salvation to everyone everywhere.



In the gift of His Son,

who died to pay the penalty for our sins (John 3:16), God fulfilled His promise and made eternal salvation freely available to everyone: it’s called good news (gospel).



“Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great” (Rev. 14:8).

The symbol of rebellion that stretches all the way back to Lucifer’s rebellion will be unmasked.



“This calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God

who keep his commands and remain faithful to Jesus” (Rev. 14:12). Jesus’ followers will be patiently, determinedly loyal to Him as they wait for His return.



“Then I saw ‘a new heaven and a new earth.’ . . .

‘God’s dwelling place is now among the people. . . . They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God” (Rev. 21:1-3). The great conflict between good and evil will soon be over; rebellion will be wiped away; God’s people will rejoice in His presence and praise Him forever.



ME AND THE ANGELS

The following pages feature personal testimonies from random Adventists of multiple generations about what the phrase “three angels’ messages” means to them. The writers are united by a single requirement: they speak from the rank and file of Adventist membership rather than the church’s trained theological class. From teenagers to elders thrice their age, these voices of candor and courage deserve our ample admiration. Rather than critique their doctrinal precision or sophistication, we pray that you, their colleagues and friends, their brothers and sisters, will be challenged to ask yourselves that probing question and respond with proper urgency to the angels’ insistent call.—*Editors.*

I STILL HAVE QUESTIONS

When I hear the phrase “three angels’ messages,” I think of end-time events and the message that Jesus is trying to spread to the world before His return. This message is a call to obedience, specifically in regard to worship. Jesus is calling His people to worship Him, the Creator God, and to worship Him in truth, in the way that He has directed us through the Scriptures.

When I hear this phrase, I think of the Sabbath and the decisions that many will have to make

regarding worship. I also often have questions and even doubts about how God would use seventh-day Sabbath worship as an indicator of His true followers. I know God and have a deep trust in Him, but I still have questions at times, and I don’t always understand. But I am grateful for His Word, and I will keep searching for answers! ♣

Carolina Cruz, 21 years old, studies religion at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States.

THREE ANGELS’ MESSAGES: MY TAKE

Revelation 14:6-11 contains the three angels’ messages. The messages of these angels are meant for everyone living on earth. We Seventh-day Adventists believe that there is an urgency to helping everyone understand these messages. Thus, proclaiming them, and what is entailed within them, has become an urgent mission of our Adventist movement. I share my church’s belief in this mission. I truly believe them to be three warnings given to those living during the time of the end.

FIRST

The first angel’s message says to “fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come” (Rev. 14:7, NKJV).^{*} This is a wake-up call for us to give serious thought to whom our lives are honoring—whom our lives are worshipping—God or the prince of this world.

The picture that comes to mind from the phrase “fear God” is that of a child obeying because they know their parent loves them and would not steer them wrong, even though they do not fully understand why their parent would tell them to do something or not do something. God has given us His Word, the Bible, which outlines what is right for us to do and how we ought to live. Though it clashes with human philosophies and may not always make sense to us, we ought to still trust and obey Him. By doing so, we give glory to Him.

With strong distractions of this present age to lure us away from God, coupled with the fact that God has begun His pre-Advent judgment of the world and there isn’t much time left, these three messages have become urgent in nature.

SECOND

The second angel’s message says essentially that Babylon is fallen because she has made all nations partake in her fornication. Babylon, a symbol of human glory, self-achievement, and human worship, contrasts with the glory we ought to give to God. Thus, Babylon equates to living our lives apart from fearing and obeying God, apart from worshipping and giving glory to Him.

We are reminded that just as God was instrumental in bringing down the powerful city of Babylon in Nebuchadnezzar’s day, the worldly beliefs and philosophies built upon false doctrines, including false worship, have already fallen and been defeated. Thus, the second angel’s message comes as a warning to steer clear of false human doctrines.

THIRD

The third angel’s message lays plainly before us the issue of whom we worship and the consequences of that decision. Worshipping the beast and his image and receiving his mark on our foreheads and on our hands will bring down God’s wrath of eternal death upon us. As Adventists, it is imperative that we help others understand this issue of worship, upon which everyone living during the time of the end will be judged. It is my mission, and an urgent one, to help steer all people to fear, to give glory to God, and to worship Him as He has ordained. ♣

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

Andy Hunte is an elder at the Bayanihan Seventh-day Adventist Church, building up God’s kingdom in the city of Queens, New York, United States.

ANGELS OF PROPHECY AND PROMISE

The three angels' messages are where prophecy meets promise. They prophesy the glorious return of Jesus Christ, and they promise their believers that the Savior will take them home one day.

As members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, we believe that Jesus will return one day and take His people home. Therefore, it is our mission to make believers of every man, woman, and child, so they can share in the joy of Christ's return.

Throughout history, Christ has made and kept promises to His children. The three angels' messages are yet other promises that God is destined to keep. The evidence of fulfillment in the past legitimizes this. By sharing these messages with others, we can provide clear evidence for the basis of our faith, and we can spread this good news and build upon the growing community of believers that is waiting eagerly for the day when Jesus Christ will make good on His promise and take us home with Him. 📌

Daniel Morton is a sophomore animation major at Southern Adventist University.

“We believe that Jesus will return one day and take His people home.”

UNDERSTANDING THE THREE ANGELS' MESSAGES

Growing up Seventh-day Adventist, and in a church interested in prophecy, I remember learning certain topics at a young age.

BLACKBOARD AND BEYOND

I still recall one of our elders rolling a rickety blackboard out onto the stage. On that board there were drawings and terms I had come to know well, such as “the mark of the beast,” “the 144,000,” and, of course, “the three angels' messages.” As a child I remember it being a frightening topic, since it was usually brought up during a sermon on the end of days and was accompanied by strong imagery of tragic events. Once I heard the scripture reading for that Sabbath was found in Revelation, I knew to brace myself for things I did not understand.

As I grew older, I had the chance to study more on my own. Sadly, I was not interested in learning more about the three angels, because to me it just meant the end of the world. I knew that the three angels' messages were integral to my faith and my religious beliefs, but I felt no connection to them and did not find them relevant to my spiritual growth. For years I could not have told you what exactly the three angels' messages were. All I knew were the basics: three angels, they have messages, and Adventists care about them a lot.

TODAY

I finally understand the meaning of the messages and why they are so important. They are finally



relevant to my Christian walk. In Revelation 14:7 the first angel reminds us to give glory to our Lord. Every day, I strive to worship my God, my Creator, and live a life that is according to His will. I don't just limit my good works to the Sabbath day, but recognize that if I am to give Him the glory, I must do so with my thoughts and actions each and every day. I seek to obey God and remain faithful even when it is not the easiest task to achieve.

As I strengthen my relationship with God, He helps me to come out of sin and not let it have its grip on me, because I have been made free through Jesus Christ. While on earth, Jesus commanded us to preach about His Father's kingdom, and as I flee Babylon, as I flee sin, I accept Jesus' command to tell others to flee sin and enter into His kingdom. Putting these things into practice on a daily basis, I can rest assured that by His grace, I won't receive the mark of the beast (Rev. 14:9), but instead I will receive "the seal of the living God" (Rev. 7:2) and be marked for salvation.

That is what the three angels' messages mean to me. They means salvation. Not something frightening, not irrelevant, not tragic, but a calling to walk in His ways and wait patiently for my Father's soon return. 🍀

Kenia Reyes-de León, senior editorial assistant for the General Conference Youth Ministries Department, Silver Spring, Maryland. She also cohosts *Bible HelpDesk* on Hope Channel.

**“As a child
I remember
it being a
frightening
topic.”**

“I remember horses of different colors.”

MY THREE ANGELS' PICTURE

When I hear the phrase “three angels’ messages,” the first pictures that come to mind are “Get your life together or you will suffer with the wicked!”

A SCARY MESSAGE

When I was a child, the three angels’ messages seemed to be the message of spreading the gospel and recognizing the soon coming of Christ. But as I continued to grow in the Seventh-day Adventist Church environment, it turned into a message of gloom and doom, of angels and horses with plagues, of “Michael standing up” and the sealing of the righteous. Somehow the messages and prophecies of Revelation seemed to run together with the last messages of the three angels.

I remember horses of different colors, especially black and pale horses. These horses came with death and destruction to those who did not follow the law or the Ten Commandments. Of course, this all made me desire heaven instead of hell.

But desiring a God of love was the last thing on my mind. In fact, I felt that God was looking at me from “above” and telling the angels to write down every *bad* thing I did. I was distant from God. My relation to God was one of fear and trembling. I just wanted to *make it* and wanted to be in the *number*. Oh! You know that number, the 144,000. The number of those who will be saved in the last days. Doesn’t that have something to do with the three angels? Who knows?

As I continued to grow in my Seventh-day Adventist faith, I served God with all my heart. My relation to God was becoming works. I didn’t want to be caught up in the plagues that would come as a result of not listening to the three angels. I wanted to live a life pleasing to God, even if that meant “working out [my] own salvation.” My works-based relationship was empty and exhausting. I didn’t know what it meant to be free in Christ. I didn’t know a God of love. Even if I heard of God being loving, or read about a loving God, the scary visions of prophecy and the three angels’ messages overshadowed that love.

LATER

As a young adult I saw the three angels’ messages as a *network* for legalists who utilized the message to their advantage in order to “scare” people into following God. I became callous to the message and ascribed it all to loveless conspiracists.

Now, after walking with God over the years as an adult, I know that God is a God of love; that His purpose is to save as many people as would come to Him. The messages in His Word I now see as a love letter. I no longer have to worry about “hellfire.” I no longer have to live in fear. I just live hoping that no one else gets the *wrong side* of the message, and hope for God to give me the opportunity to let them know that they are set free. ♣

Anna Miller, ESL teacher, pastor’s wife, mother of three boys and a baby girl, lives in Colorado Springs, Colorado.



HOW I HEAR THE THREE ANGELS

As we wait for Jesus' return, I understand that I have a responsibility to let those in my sphere of influence know that true worship is important to God and that it can determine our eternal destiny. According to the "three angels' messages" articulated in Revelation 14:6-12, it is my responsibility to prepare people for Christ's second coming by letting them know that God is Creator of heaven and earth, and everything in it, including humans, and that only the Creator deserves our worship. The Bible teaches that God is jealous and is serious about His created beings worshipping only Him. True worship is reserved exclusively for God because He is Creator.

ENDGAME

The devil knows that worship is the exclusive purview of God the Creator, but in order to deceive humanity and rob us of the salvation that God freely provides, the devil developed a counterfeit system of false worship, in which people worship the beast and his image, implicating the Papacy and the United States.

As a Seventh-day Adventist Christian, I have a responsibility to tell people that God is judging the world and people are being separated into two groups, each with different destinies. Those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark in their foreheads or hands will reap God's wrath. Those who choose to worship God, keep His commandments, and have the faith of Jesus will inherit His kingdom.

Sometimes when we look around it seems as if the devil is winning the worship game. But then I am reminded of the good news that this system of false worship (aka Babylon) is destined for failure and defeat. To God be the glory! 🗡️

Businessman **Owen Carryl** loves starting new projects that bless God's cause, whether internationally or at his home church in Plano, Texas, United States, where he serves as head elder.

**“Worship is the
exclusive purview of
God the Creator.”**

“The first angel’s message is an assurance that God is fair. My love for God makes me want to share.”

WHAT DOES “THREE ANGELS’ MESSAGES” MEAN TO ME?

The three angels’ messages are given by a God with infinite love for His creation. He gave these as warnings for His remnant people, who live in the last days of earth’s history.

FIRST

The first angel’s message is an assurance that God is fair. His judgment began in 1844 with the righteous, to ultimately determine who will be happy in heaven and who will not be. God will not force anyone to go to heaven who would not want to be there. Whether people have fully submitted their hearts and lives to Him will determine their eternal destination.

SECOND

The second angel’s message was a warning for God’s people who believed in His judgment to come out from the churches that rejected the first angel’s message. This group of people who believed that Jesus was going to come in 1844 had already been disappointed when He had not appeared in 1843. They had returned to the Scriptures to find where they had made a mistake, and discovered that the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary would happen in 1844, not 1843. Their hopes were once again revived, yet still without fully understanding the cleansing of the sanctuary. Once again the hopes of Christ’s followers were crushed. Nonbelievers began scoffing and ridiculing them.

THIRD

The third angel’s message is a solemn and

grave warning with instructions for God’s people to avoid receiving the mark of the beast. It clearly indicates the importance of keeping God’s commandments, and in particular the fourth commandment, because of Satan’s great work to deceive so many into believing that the law of God was done away with at the cross.

But to those who seek God’s kingdom and righteousness first, the Holy Spirit will reveal the importance of keeping God’s immutable law, including the fourth commandment. Those who cherish a false belief system serve only themselves and Satan, and they will perish.

Those who cling to the Word of God and determine in their words and actions to keep His law holy will be empowered to do so through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. These are God’s righteous people, His remnant. Some will never taste death. These special people in whom Christ’s character will be fully replicated will stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator at the end of time.

God’s law is His character and the foundation of who He is; His law cannot be changed. If I love Him, I will want to live my life in a way that will vindicate His character against the false claims that Satan has made against Him. My love for God makes me want to share with others His true character. Sharing the three angels’ messages helps others to see God’s true character in the great controversy between Christ and Satan. ♣

Hunter Sorensen is a 2018 graduate of Southern Adventist University.

THREE GOSPEL ANGELS

The three angels' messages speak of the gospel of Jesus Christ. They speak of His love and His truth. They are an urgent warning for all who choose to believe in Jesus and His love. Their message is that we must all proclaim to the world the love that God has for everyone. This is our own preparation for the day of His coming. It is the very means by which we are preserved from Satan's clutches, and at the same time kept from wandering off the path God has offered to us.

Shortly after the creation of the human race, we lost our holiness through Satan's temptations and fell from our perfect state. Since then, we have all chosen our own paths. And in life there are only two: one leads to evil; the other leads to life eternal—the way of Christ. Those who commit to being faithful will obtain eternal life. So, let's preach the gospel and understand as we preach that we are proclaiming God's love and truth, giving hope to the world, the hope of life, the opportunity to return to the path that all need to follow.

The first and second angels cry out in a loud voice: "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (Rev. 14:7, KJV). And "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" (verse 8, KJV).

This is a message on the judgment of God and the fall of Babylon the Great. Babylon the Great is the city of perdition. Rather than worship the great Babylon, we should go to God with joy and rejoicing, loving Him as He has loved us.

The alternative to loving God is drinking the wine of His wrath. Such will be the lot of all who prefer the way of evil and will not accept Jesus Christ as their Savior from sin.

The message of the third angel makes the option clear. It speaks of the fate of those who choose adoration of the beast, who is God's opposite: they shall "drink of the wine of the wrath of God" (verse 10, KJV). Evidently, choosing to follow the way of evil, choosing not to do the will of God, means choosing a hopeless option. It is choosing to bear the punishment for our own sins.

But for those who choose the Lord, there is the hope of salvation and eternal life. This is the hope of those who strive in faith, supporting themselves by every word that proceeds from the mouth of our God. If we desire God's salvation instead of His wrath, we must resolve to endure whatever adversity may come our way. Our faithfulness in trial will help to proclaim the love of God, the truth of the gospel. ♣

Melvin Alexis Ayala, 20 years old, of Columbia, Maryland, directs his church's sound team and a small group. He is also a church and Sabbath School secretary.

**"We should go to God with joy
and rejoicing, loving Him
as He has loved us."**



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THE ANGEL GABRIEL

We've all heard about the angel Gabriel. He is part, not just of the Christian faith, but of the Jewish and Islamic faiths too. According to Ellen White, Gabriel was "the angel next in rank to the Son of God," most likely taking the place of Lucifer.*

Gabriel is named—that is, referred to, as "Gabriel"—only four times in the Bible.

He is first named in Daniel 8, when instructed by the Lord to make Daniel understand the vision just given to him (Dan. 8:2-14), which ended with the 2300-day prophecy (verse 14). "And I heard a man's voice from the Ulai calling, 'Gabriel, tell this man the meaning of the vision'" (verse 16).

The only other time Gabriel is named in the Old Testament is in the next chapter, when he appears to Daniel after the prophet's prayer concerning the return of the Jews from Babylon. "While I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice" (Dan. 9:21). Gabriel said that he had come to impart to Daniel "insight and understanding" (verse 22) regarding the preceding prophecy in Daniel 8, still partially unexplained. Then Gabriel immediately gave him the 70-week prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27, which pointed to Jesus.

Gabriel, named as "Gabriel," appears again in the New Testament with Zechariah, telling him about the upcoming birth of his son, John: "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news" (Luke 1:19).

The final time Gabriel is named in Scripture occurs when he tells Mary

about her bearing Jesus: "In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary" (Luke 1:26, 27).

That's it. Gabriel is named only these four times. What does it mean? I don't know, other than that the specific use of his name points to what must be the importance of these events, as well as the link between them.

John the Baptist heralds the first coming of Jesus the Messiah, whose dates, as well as His atoning death, is predicted in Daniel 9:24-27, the event that leads to the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8:14 (KJV). That's the link.

Also, John is the forerunner to Jesus, whose death offers all who believe in Him "the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time" (Titus 1:2). This same Jesus is now our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 8; 9). And after that sanctuary is cleansed (Dan. 8:14), He returns and will establish His "everlasting dominion that will not pass away" (Dan. 7:14). That's the importance.

John the Baptist (Luke 1:19), Jesus (Luke 1:26; Dan. 9:24-27), the cleansing of the sanctuary (Dan. 8:14)—all events deemed crucial enough to merit, not just the appearance of Gabriel, but of him being named as well. ♣

* Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940), p. 234.

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

**CLIFF'S
EDGE**
**CLIFFORD
GOLDSTEIN**



THE SPECIFIC USE OF HIS NAME POINTS TO WHAT MUST BE THE IMPORTANCE OF THESE EVENTS.



THE SABBATH

Call it a delight

The Sabbath was hallowed at the creation. As ordained for man, it had its origin when “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” Job 38:7. Peace brooded over the world; for earth was in harmony with heaven. “God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good;” and He rested in the joy of His completed work. Genesis 1:31.

Because He had rested upon the Sabbath, “God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it”—set it apart to a holy use. He gave it to Adam as a day of rest. It was a memorial of the work of creation, and thus a sign of God’s

power and His love. The Scripture says, “He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered.” “The things that are made” declare “the invisible things of him since the creation of the world,” “even his everlasting power and divinity.” Genesis 2:3; Psalm 111:4; Romans 1:20, RV.*

All things were created by the Son of God. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. . . . All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.” John 1:1-3. And since the Sabbath is a memorial of the work of creation, it is a token of the love and power of Christ.

SABBATH IN REVIEW

The Sabbath calls our thoughts to nature, and brings us into communion with the Creator. In the song of the bird, the sighing of the trees, and the music of the sea, we still may hear His voice who talked with Adam in Eden in the cool of the day. And as we behold His power in nature we find comfort, for the word that created all things is that which speaks life to the soul. . . .

The Sabbath was embodied in the law given from Sinai; but it was not then first made known as a day of rest. The people of Israel had a knowledge of it before they came to Sinai. On the way thither the Sabbath was kept. When some profaned it, the Lord reproved them, saying, “How long refuse ye to keep My commandments and My laws?” Exodus 16:28. . . .

The Sabbath was not for Israel merely, but for the world. It had been made known to [humanity] in Eden, and, like the other precepts of the Decalogue, it is of

imperishable obligation. Of that law of which the fourth commandment forms a part, Christ declares, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law." So long as the heavens and the earth endure, the Sabbath will continue as a sign of the Creator's power. And when Eden shall bloom on earth again, God's holy rest day will be honored by all beneath the sun. "From one Sabbath to another" the inhabitants of the glorified new earth shall go up "to worship before me, saith the Lord." Matthew 5:18; Isaiah 66:23.

FOR HUMANITY

No other institution which was committed to the Jews tended so fully to distinguish them from surrounding nations as did the Sabbath. God designed that its observance should designate them as His worshipers. It was to be a token of their separation from idolatry, and their connection with the true God. But in order to keep the Sabbath holy, men must themselves be holy. Through faith they must become partakers of the righteousness of Christ. When the command was given to Israel, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy," the Lord said also to them, "Ye shall be holy men unto Me." Exodus 20:8; 22:31. Only thus could the Sabbath distinguish Israel as the worshipers of God. . . .

When accused of Sabbathbreaking at Bethesda, Jesus defended Himself by affirming His Sonship to God, and declaring that He worked in harmony with the Father. . . . "Have ye not read so much as this," He said. . . . "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." . . . "The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." Luke 6:3, 4; Mark 2:27, 28; Matthew 12:5, 6. . . .

Christ would teach His disciples and His enemies that the service of God is first of all. The object of God's work in this world is the redemption of man; therefore that which is necessary to be done on the Sabbath in the accomplishment of this work is in accord with the Sabbath law. . . .

SABBATH! A DELIGHT

"Wherefore the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath." These words are full of instruction and comfort. Because the Sabbath was made for man, it is the Lord's day. It belongs to Christ. For "all things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." John 1:3.

To all who receive the Sabbath as a sign of Christ's creative and redeeming power, it will be a delight.

Since He made all things, He made the Sabbath. By Him it was set apart as a memorial of the work of creation. It points to Him as both the Creator and the Sanctifier. It declares that He who created all things in heaven and in earth, and by whom all things hold together, is the head of the church, and that by His power we are reconciled to God. For, speaking of Israel, He said, "I gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they may know that I am the Lord that sanctify them"—make them holy. Ezekiel 20:12. Then the Sabbath is a sign of Christ's power to make us holy. And it is given to all whom Christ makes holy. As a sign of His sanctifying power, the Sabbath is given to all who through Christ become a part of the Israel of God.

And the Lord says, "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; . . . then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord." Isaiah 58:13, 14.

To all who receive the Sabbath as a sign of Christ's creative and redeeming power, it will be a delight. Seeing Christ in it, they delight themselves in Him. The Sabbath points them to the works of creation as an evidence of His mighty power in redemption. While it calls to mind the lost peace of Eden, it tells of peace restored through the Saviour. And every object in nature repeats His invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28. ♣

*Texts credited to RV are from *The Holy Bible, Revised Version*, Oxford University Press, 1911.

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 the book *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940), pp. 281-289.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ADRA

STRUCTURING A BETTER PARTNERSHIP WITH THE ADVENTIST CHURCH

How ADRA and the church can unite in faith and partnership

In my three decades in finance, I've learned that structure is the antidote to unpredictability. Within that structure, the most pressing crises can be resolved; the most complex questions can be answered; the most unusual challenges can be anticipated.

When I stepped into the role of president of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), I found the same principle applied. Even within an industry as complex and far-reaching as international humanitarian relief and development, structure is the antidote to unpredictability.

The list of what ADRA responds to—and how we do so in a manner that is timely, effective, and long-lasting—is extensive. Our work brings life and hope to millions around the globe, through

projects as broad as clean water and as specific as literacy training for adults. But beneath it all runs the same principle I have come to value throughout my career: structure is the antidote to unpredictability.

Then a virus threatened the foundations of that structure.

CHALLENGED BY A VIRUS

In the early stages of the pandemic, ADRA was quick to respond with food, water, cash vouchers, and more for the most vulnerable in the path of the virus. At the time, the path of the virus seemed narrow and manageable. As the weeks passed, however, that path widened and extended to multiple countries, then multiple continents.

Accordingly, ADRA ramped up its initial response to include

more than 70 countries. In Mexico we worked to support the hearing-impaired; in Slovenia we sent health baskets to staff and residents in nursing homes; in Cambodia we partnered with hospitals and health centers to provide masks, gloves, and sanitizing alcohol.

The virus continued to spread, and our response intensified. In New Zealand we distributed grocery vouchers to more than 1,000 families in need. In Kenya we set up handwashing and sanitation stations; in Finland we partnered with local food banks. In Brazil we began delivering food baskets to refugees and vulnerable families.

But as our humanitarian response continued to chase the virus along its global path of destruction, our own organization began to feel its effects. By early March our programs in 130 countries had to be slowed down or put on hold while we launched a global COVID-19 task force to determine next steps and deal with the response in a coordinated manner.

But even in those early days of unpredictability, the structure that held ADRA together proved tougher than the virus. It is not just our dedicated staff and many partners that keep us running. Overwhelmingly, our continued success is because of the unfading foundational belief that we are serving so all may live as God intended; it is the passion that fuels our common desire to be the hands and feet of Jesus, even if we have to wear masks while doing it.

More than anything, however, it is the partnership with the Adventist Church that keeps our structure intact.

Since its beginning, ADRA has existed as the global humanitarian arm of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and we have never forgotten it. It is because of the Bible and the promises of God that both ADRA and the Adventist Church exist to change the world for the better and to inspire hope in a hopeless world.

A PRECEDENT FOR PARTNERSHIPS

When Hurricane Dorian hit the Bahamas in 2019, the loss of life and infrastructure was devastating. Flights were grounded, roads and runways were washed away, and whole regions were still under water. We mobilized our emergency response team, but the initial obstacles seemed insurmountable without local partnership.

Since its beginning, ADRA has existed as the global humanitarian arm of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

ADRA knew that the Adventist Church was perfectly positioned as an ideal local partner. The church there understood the region, the community, and the immediate needs. Best of all, it was a familiar face to those in search of a helping hand. The Adventist presence is strong in the Bahamas, and its engagement after Dorian reaffirmed what many Bahamians already knew: Adventists don't just preach the gospel; we practice it.

By working as partners, ADRA and the Adventist Church delivered a stronger, broader, and more efficient response to the disaster than either could have done independently. More important, the partnership showed what is possible when we live the gospel together, a priceless experience that found new footing when disaster struck again—this time on a global scale.

Our response to Hurricane Dorian showed us what is possible when ADRA and the Adventist Church work together to provide assistance and change lives. That premise of unified, global compassion is ingrained in what it means to be a Seventh-day Adventist. Ellen White emphasized this point:

“Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with people as one who desired their good. He showed sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’”¹

PARTNERSHIP FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

Life is at times difficult and painful, even for those of us with support systems, safety nets, and the knowledge of salvation. For others who lack these things, life can feel hopeless. That was true even before the globe was ravaged by a virus.

Today, millions around the world are out of work. People who never expected to be in line at a food bank are standing there now. ADRA and

the Seventh-day Adventist Church have an opportunity—an obligation, even—to share Jesus with a desperate world.

As an agency of change, ADRA has the proven experience, partnerships, and access to resources. As the body of Christ, the church has the networks, passionate members, and a reputation of loving-kindness. It's a transformative partnership like no other in the world today.



Michael Kruger

Few examples better illustrate the practical value of the church and ADRA coming together than the work being done in the United States. Today, ADRA and Adventist Community Services (ACS) are partnering on a \$2.4 million initiative to provide food to 200 food pantries and

medical equipment to the people and communities most in need in the U.S. By combining our resources, connections to partners and local communities, and the massive church infrastructure, we have the opportunity to change lives more efficiently than ever before.

Consider, also, the work being done with the church in South America. Not only are we partnering in that division to respond to specific COVID-19-related needs across nations, we have also developed a groundbreaking approach to address psychosocial needs throughout the entire division. By working with the church's information technology infrastructure, together we are developing a cell phone application for psychosocial response. This app will connect thousands of trained Adventist volunteers with potentially millions of people in need of support.

The same is true in Africa. Across the three divisions in sub-Saharan Africa, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has nearly 300 urban and rural health facilities that provide essential health services in poorly serviced areas at a nominal fee. Because of our reputation as a faith group that provides health care, some communities and governments (including those in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana) have come to the Adventist Church for help.

Because many health facilities do not have sufficient medical supplies to meet current and projected needs, however, ADRA has been focusing COVID-19 response on health-related interventions and has largely partnered with the Adventist Church. Because of this, critical health messages have been disseminated through countless channels, and shipments of personal protective equipment supplies have been delivered to 10 large hospitals and health centers across Africa.

Because of the pandemic, our "Every Child. Everywhere. In School" campaign—a global initiative spearheaded jointly by ADRA and the church—is critical. This campaign has gathered nearly 1 million signatures from more than 100 countries around the world, with the sole purpose of advocating for the rights of out-of-school children to have access to education. One day the virus will be defeated, but the damage could last generations. By partnering with the church, ADRA will continue to fight for the rights of children.

HOPE FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

When COVID-19 tore across the globe, I wondered if our existing structure at ADRA could withstand the unpredictability. But when God is in the structure, nothing can prevail against it. One of my favorite passages from Ellen White comes from *The Ministry of Healing*, the source that has fueled much of my thought and, indeed, much of the history of ADRA and the church: "There is need of coming close to the people by personal effort. . . . The poor are to be relieved, the sick cared for, the sorrowing and the bereaved comforted, the ignorant instructed, the inexperienced counseled. We are to weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice. Accompanied by the power of persuasion, the power of prayer, the power of the love of God, this work will not, cannot, be without fruit."²

That power of the love of God is our structure, and that structure is the antidote to all unpredictability. If ADRA and the Seventh-day Adventist Church continue in our partnership, our work will not, *cannot*, be without fruit. ▀

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1905), p. 143.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 143, 144.

Michael Kruger is president of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency.

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ANGELS ON A BIKE PATH

*Reflections on
faith and aging*

Insight slips in at unexpected moments and in unlikely places. It's often when we least expect it that we discover the greatest truths in life.

Jeff and I were resting on a park bench watching gulls dart and dive over Lake Ontario. We had chaperoned our wives to a fortieth high school class reunion at Kingsway College in Oshawa, Ontario, and escaped for a bike ride down to the lake.

When Jeff grabbed his borrowed bike for the return ride, he discovered that his back tire was flat. In fact, it was so flat that part of the tire had popped off the rim. Since his bike couldn't be ridden, we decided to walk the four miles back to Oshawa. The bike path ran through woods by a wild, clear

stream; the sun was shining; wildflowers were blooming. As we walked, we almost forgot about the flat tire.

But I kept hearing a persistent rattle. The bike path had frost heaves, those annoying cracks and bumps caused by repeated cycles of freezing and warming. Something on my borrowed bike was loose, and every time I pushed the bike over a crack or bump it rattled. I checked the brakes, seat, chain, and water bottle cages, but I couldn't find the source of the noise.

Finally, I pulled up on the handlebars and discovered to my horror that my front wheel was not clamped securely to the bicycle. Every time we went over a bump or crack the wheel rattled against the front fork dropouts.

At that unexpected moment and in that unlikely place I realized I had ridden the four miles to Lake Ontario with a front wheel that was not securely fastened to the fork. If we had ridden back over the frost heaves



and the front fork of my bicycle had bounced off the front wheel, I would have pitched headfirst over the handlebars to possible paralysis or death.

LURKING DOUBTS

Like many of us, I've listened with some skepticism to stories of miracles, healings, or direct angelic intervention in people's lives. But if an angel didn't save my life by letting the air out of Jeff's bicycle tire, how did the tire not just go flat, but also pull itself away from the wheel?

Yet I still struggle with the idea of God's power breaking through into our natural world. The longer I live, the more comfortable I am with scientific explanations or natural ways to account for apparent miracles.

Many of us struggle to believe that God's power is real in today's world. We claim the right promises; we pray the right prayers; we repeat the right phrases; but if our prayers were answered instantly, we would be shocked. Our doubts may increase rather than decrease as we age. Our faith can grow less, not more, secure. Why?

Most adults experience a sense of quest in midlife. This "midlife reevaluation," as gerontologist Gene Cohen called it, comes from a variety of factors, including "a newfound comfort with who we are and the courage to express ourselves freely or to try new things."¹ Our liberation can include questioning past beliefs.

When the last member of a family generation dies, the responsibility to live up to that generation's expectations dies also. There is something liberating about not having to live up to anyone's expectations. After the last living sister of my mother died, I questioned every one of my core beliefs. Did I believe it because my parents believed it, or was it my belief? While my core faith survived and grew stronger, the questioning process was unexpected and difficult.

Another reason doubt may increase with age has to do with the nature of youthful faith. Faith in our own abilities often masquerades as faith in God and His abilities. We make God in our image. As we age, our own abilities disappear; and as our image fades, so fades our image of God.

FAITH, OLD AGE, AND SCRIPTURE

How can we maintain faith in God and His supernatural presence in our lives as we age? The Bible provides an answer in two seemingly contradictory and incompatible definitions of aging. One definition appears after Adam and Eve ate fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Immediately they began to deteriorate and die. Our eyeglasses, hearing aids, and lack of energy remind us that aging for us brings deterioration and death.

But the Bible's first definition of aging does not teach that aging results in deterioration and death. Instead, Genesis 1 and 2 pictures a world in which

Is it possible that when our faith depends on our own efforts, we are really worshipping our own abilities?

the passage of time during the Creation week is filled with God's blessings, producing growth and fruitfulness. After God created humans, "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground'" (Gen. 1:28).

At the end of the sixth day, after completing His creation, God stepped back to inspect His work: "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good" (verse 31). God's creation was very good because God saw that everything He had created would be fruitful and would increase in number and in fullness as it aged.

Research has shown that much of the deterioration scientists thought was on account of old age can be retarded and reversed. When we sing in a choir, or learn a new skill that requires eye/hand coordination, or follow the Adventist healthful lifestyle we can retard or reverse the mental and physical deterioration associated with aging. The latest brain research shows its plasticity—the fact that we can continue to grow new brain cells and rewire our brain's architecture until the day we die.

But no matter how we fight aging, we eventually experience the post-fall definition of aging: deterioration and death. How can we maintain our faith as we age? How can we continue to believe when our bodies and minds tell us, every day, that no miracle can ultimately reverse the aging process?

AGING WELL

If our young faith was actually faith in our own abilities, if we were forming God in our image, then what we believed in the past was really no better than pagan idolatry. Is it possible that when our faith depends on our own efforts, we are really worshipping our own abilities? Could it be that the secret of aging well, of maintaining faith and hope, is a move from independence, from faith in

our efforts to dependence on Jesus and His efforts?

Paul describes the experience of aging as both deterioration and death, and fruitfulness and growth: "Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:16-18, NASB).²

The aging process allows us to learn dependence on God's power rather than our own power. A special promise for every generation as we age can be found in the Bible: "Listen to me, you descendants of Jacob, all the remnant of the people of Israel, you whom I have upheld since your birth, and have carried since you were born. Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you" (Isa. 46:3, 4).

Old Testament scholar J. N. Oswalt comments, "There will never come a time when we outgrow our dependence on God. We are as dependent on God in old age as we were when we were infants. . . . Nor will there ever be a time when a doddering old grandfather-God will somehow need to lean on us, and we will need to find a young, virile god for a new age. He is not subject to history; in every age he is the unchanging *I am he*."³

As we age it is good to be reminded that God does not age; as we lose our strength, to remember that God is still all-powerful; and as we face an uncertain future, to reclaim His promise to sustain and rescue us.

I'm thankful for a God I can depend on, a creative God who must have smiled as He asked an angel to slip behind a park bench on the shore of Lake Ontario and pull a bicycle tire off its rim to keep me from possible injury or death. ♣

¹ Gene D. Cohen, *The Mature Mind: The Positive Power of the Aging Brain* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), pp. 52, 67.

² Scripture quotations marked 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.

³ J. N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), p. 230.

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THOSE ON THE RIGHT

When Jesus returns with tens of thousands of angels on every side, He'll take His rightful place in the universe on the only throne that matters. Everyone who has ever lived will be present, waiting to discover their forever fate. As shepherds divide their flocks, He will put them into two groups because there's no such thing as partial followers; we're either all in or not. Then the King will gather His people on the right, while those who have taken their own path will be set aside to the left.

Then He will say to those on His right: "My children, it is time to enter into the eternal experience that you have been waiting for. I hope you love what I've prepared for you even before your world existed. You didn't earn this—I'm giving it to you because I love you more than you could possibly imagine. But you made the decision to love Me back, proving it by the way you treated Me when I needed you most."

I was sitting on the side of the road in the same clothes I'd been wearing for weeks. My hair was matted and I smelled worse than I looked. But you stopped to see if I needed anything. I was scared to admit it, but I hadn't eaten for days. Even though you had an appointment to get to, you went across the street to bring Me a hot meal and a cold drink. That act restored My faith in humanity.

I'd been laying in the same spot for weeks—in My only moderately comfortable nursing home bed. Every day was the same, especially since we couldn't have visitors

because of the pandemic. Even though you couldn't visit Me in person, you FaceTimed Me three days a week, just to talk. Those talks kept Me going; they kept Me alive.

I'd had a rough life, but that doesn't excuse what I did. I know I should be in prison—so here I am rotting away. It's exactly what I deserve, but that doesn't make it any easier. But you came to visit Me even though we'd never met. It didn't matter that our backgrounds—and skin color—couldn't have been more different. You were there when everyone else had written Me off. If it wasn't for you, I probably would have ended it a long time ago.

"So, My friends, here we are today. You backed up your belief with actions, proving that it wasn't just lip service." His followers are hesitant to question their Maker, but unable to suppress their confusion:

"What are you talking about? We don't remember *You* being hungry, sick, or imprisoned. You weren't even on earth when we were alive."

Then, the King will deliver the punchline: "You're right; it wasn't Me. But when you saw a human being that needed help you didn't say it wasn't your responsibility, make excuses to justify your actions, or claim that someone else would step in. Instead, you acted—and I count it just the same as if you were doing it for Me." ❖

Jimmy Phillips is network marketing director for Kettering Health Network.

**INTRODUCING
THE WHY
JIMMY
PHILLIPS**



**"YOU BACKED UP
YOUR BELIEF WITH
ACTIONS, PROVING
THAT IT WASN'T JUST
LIP SERVICE."**

An Angel Team member helps to winterize a home.



Angel Team members do yard work for a church family that was away for an extended time.

IF MY PICKUP TRUCK COULD TALK

What stories it could tell!

If my pickup truck could talk, it would tell you about the tons of tools and building materials and volunteers it has carried as the Holy Spirit worked through us to show God's love in powerful, life-improving ways. We're very human, yet we've been called "angels" so often that the ministry is called the Angel Team.

I never imagined that doing home repairs could be a soul-winning ministry. After all, it didn't involve preaching evangelistic sermons, passing out literature, and giving Bible studies. Decades of failure forced me to recognize that God had not gifted me to minister for Him using these methods. Instead, He wanted me to share His amazing, transforming love by doing good deeds that improved lives. In the 13 years since God started the Angel Team ministry at the Grace Fellowship Seventh-day Adventist Church in Madison, Alabama, I have seen more people drawn to Him than through all my previous evangelistic efforts.

A DIVINE MANDATE

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus instructed us to "let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). On the night before He was arrested, Jesus spoke it as a commandment, a divine instruction requiring our obedience as surely as any of those written by the finger of God on tables of stone: "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another" (John 13:34).

How do you show someone that you love them? By doing good things for them. Most of Jesus' ministry was spent doing good works, and He exhorted His disciples to continue that ministry when He told them, "If you love me, keep my commands" (John 14:15).

LIFE-CHANGING KINDNESS

The first result of every miracle Jesus performed was an improvement in the recipient's life. How many ways can we improve someone's life? The list is endless. For Angel Team volunteers it can be as simple as replacing lightbulbs for a senior citizen who can no longer climb a ladder; repainting a room; or doing basic home repairs. We've fixed plumbing leaks, replaced oven heating elements, trimmed trees, mowed yards, helped people move, and replaced worn-out light switches and outlets. A simple thing such as replacing a leaking toilet flush valve, a task that takes 15 minutes and costs a few dollars, can mean someone



The owner of this home cried with joy when she first saw the new floor the Angel Team had installed in her kitchen.



One of the Angel Team's more dramatic projects was helping a family recover items from their fire-ravaged home.

living on a fixed income can pay for life-saving medicine instead of having to pay a high utility bill.

I don't have to go looking for projects, because God sends them to me. Word of Teresa's need came at a church meeting where a man who worked with her passed me a note with her name and phone number on it and asked me to call her. I did and learned that Teresa's first concern was the fallen trees still lying across her yard after a severe storm several years earlier. So our first two visits involved using chain saws to clear her backyard. We told her that we did things like that without charging because we wanted to pass along the love of God that we ourselves had experienced.

"You're angels to me," Teresa told us as we packed up to leave.

Later visits to her home were to replace part of her kitchen floor that had been rotted out by a long-term water leak. It looked like there was a ditch across the center of the room, and except for multiple layers of flooring, putting a foot in that area would send you into the crawl space below. After finishing the repair, I told her she could even jump up and down on the floor because it was strong. The next afternoon I learned that she had been showing coworkers pictures of the repair and telling them that she and her daughter had joyously danced on it.

A few weeks later we returned to lay new flooring. Teresa and her daughter had to leave to attend a Christmas party before we were finished, so I used my phone to send her a photo. A minute later a note came back: "You're making me cry in front of my friends."

A GOD-DIRECTED MINISTRY

When a help request comes, I meet the client and evaluate the situation before sending an e-mail to the church, giving the details. Anyone can help.

I typically have no idea who's coming or how many workers we'll have. Yet I go, because I've learned to depend on God to send enough people—and the right people. Many times a person tells me they felt God impressing them to come to help. Often a first-timer, or someone who hasn't helped in a while, is the person with the life experience the homeowner can identify with, and they share with our new friend how God has worked in their life.

Visit our church and ask just about anyone you meet about the Angel Team, and there's a good chance you'll hear a story about how they've been blessed by helping others, or how they themselves have been helped. The ministry has strengthened the church by building bonds of friendship and love. Families have even joined the church because of the Angel Team.

RICH IN GOOD DEEDS

Paul instructed Timothy to teach believers "to be rich in good deeds" (1 Tim. 6:18); and he would have us "consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds" (Heb. 10:24). Peter admonished believers to "live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us" (1 Peter 2:12).

Jesus concludes the matter with His declaration that those who die in the Lord "will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them" (Rev. 14:13).

What ministry of good works does God want you to do to share His great love? Ask Him! It's your chance to discover an empowered relationship with the Holy Spirit. God will surprise you with the ministry He wants you to do. 🖊

William Noel is a writer, a dedicated do-it-yourselfer, and leader of the Angel Team ministry at Grace Fellowship Seventh-day Adventist Church in Madison, Alabama.



HARRY ANDERSON / ©REVIEW & HERALD

14 is linked to an astonishing, often neglected sentiment. Truly, divine judgment is a fearful time—yet the angel dramatically connects it with the “everlasting gospel” (verse 6, KJV). This is the only time in all Scripture that these two words are connected, although there is mention of an “everlasting covenant” in the Old Testament.

For example, after the Flood, God establishes an “everlasting covenant” with Noah and his family—along with every living creature: “Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures” (Gen. 9:16). Later, with Abraham, God again draws attention to this agreement, “an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you” (Gen. 17:7).

Being “everlasting” reminds that the “gospel” was not suddenly devised to meet the emergency of sin. God’s grace is everlasting—truly “good news.” Many Old Testament believers understood this. To them, divine judgment elicited the highest praise, because God’s people would finally be vindicated and sin wouldn’t persist forever.

One example: Psalm 98. After eight verses calling for shouts of joyous praise from humans and all nature, comes the reason for all the jubilation: “He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity” (Ps. 98:9; see also Ps. 96:10-13).

In Scripture’s final book more heavenly beings again insist that it is time for divine judgment to

JUDGMENT AND OTHER GOOD NEWS

Clarifying the nature of the everlasting gospel

JO ANN DAVIDSON

Three solemn messages are proclaimed from the midst of heaven by three mighty angels in Revelation 14:6-12, the first and third with loud voices—suggesting, at the very least, the crucial nature of the content.

CONTEXT

What’s the context of these messages? Until chapter 14, divine judgment has been projected to the future. The first angel now declares judgment a present reality: “the hour of his judgment has come” (verse 7). Thereby the sequencing scenes of John’s Revelation visions indicate the passage of time. The insistence on present judgment punctuates a pivotal time in salvation history, let alone world history. It is final, worldwide, and the ultimate life-and-death matter. Seventh-day Adventists rightly call attention to this decisive judgment.

JUDGMENT: GOOD NEWS

It must also be emphasized that this judgment in Revelation

vindicate God's people from sin's deadliness found everywhere: "the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying: 'We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty . . . because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign. The nations were angry, and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your people who revere your name, both great and small—and for destroying those who destroy the earth'" (Rev. 11:16-18).

Judgment is good news! Angels insist that judgment and gospel belong together. Unless we comprehend this, the three angels' messages of Revelation 14 will be misunderstood:

Our message is a life-and-death message. We need to know it is and let all see and know that it is the Word of God's great power. If we present it as it deserves to be presented, if we constantly show the inextricable intertwining of the first and second angels' messages with the third, then the Holy Spirit will apply it powerfully to human hearts. We must intentionally concentrate the power of the first and second angels' messages in our proclamation of the third.

SPECIFICS

The first angel highlights the issue of true worship—rightly linking it to the great Creator, "who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water" (Rev. 14:7)—words directly quoting the Decalogue's fourth commandment. This connects with the Genesis Creation summary, using the same three verbs of the Creator's actions (Gen. 2:1-3). Thereby, we are reminded that the Creator is Judge—all part of the "everlasting gospel." We are securely assured that, against formidable barriers, the promise to Abraham that through him all the earth will be blessed (Gen. 12:3), will be fulfilled by the angel messages being proclaimed to "every nation, tribe, language and people" (Rev. 14:6).

This perspective is vital for understanding the fearful messages of the second and third angels that delineate false worship and its deadly results. This pattern is found all through Scripture: when God must administer judgment against sin, He always warns beforehand, making plain the standard—and a way of safety.

The angel message is the Eden message, God's promise to "put enmity" between the serpent and

the woman that pointed directly to her Descendant (Gen. 3:15), "the first promise of a Savior who would stand on the field of battle to contest the power of Satan and prevail against him. . . . The angel that proclaims the everlasting gospel proclaims the law of God; for the gospel of salvation brings men to obedience of the law, whereby their characters are formed after the divine similitude."¹

A distinctive, crucial cross-cultural mission has been entrusted to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We should be eager to proclaim these angel messages about God fulfilling His promise to remove sin and its deadly effects from the earth. "By the mighty cleaver of truth—the messages of the first, second, and third angels"—God separates His people "from the world to bring them into a sacred nearness to Himself. He has made them the depositaries of His law and has committed to them the great truths of prophecy for this time. Like the holy oracles committed to ancient Israel, these are a sacred trust to be communicated to the world."²

Seventh-day Adventists have been invited to join the angel voices. "Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus" (Rev. 14:12, ESV).³ We can be encouraged that He will give the "patient endurance" we need (verse 12) while our commandment-keeping obedience signals to the world that the great Creator-Judge has never lowered or altered nor harshly administered the moral standard by which He brings judgment.

All this is part of the good news of the gospel. In fact, the longest of the three angels' messages, which troubles some, is the grandest of all, articulating the biblical teaching of justification by faith! "Several have written to me," Ellen White writes, "inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel's message, and I have answered, 'It is the third angel's message in verity!'"⁴

What a grand angelic message we are privileged to proclaim! ♣

¹ Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958, 1980), book 2, p. 106.

² Ellen G. White, *Counsels for the Church* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1991), p. 58.

³ Scripture quotations marked ESV are from *The Holy Bible*, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

⁴ E. G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 372.

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WHEN JESUS ENDED IT

*Jesus' enduring
ministry to lift
women up, not
oppress them.*

The following article is excerpted and adapted from the sermon preached for EndItNow Emphasis Day. To learn more about EndItNow and watch the message in its entirety, visit [women.adventist.org/enditnow-day](https://www.women.adventist.org/enditnow-day).—Editors.

ANTHONY KENT

For 18 years the woman suffered; standing up with a straight spine was a distant, faded memory. No doubt she longed to see a majestic blue sky with white puffy clouds, or to look up into the night sky and see stars and a full, rounded moon. Instead, her natural field of view was perpetually downward. Then one Sabbath a visitor came to the synagogue and changed everything. His name was Jesus of Nazareth.

JESUS STOOD UP FOR A WOMAN WHO COULDN'T

In the New Testament era women were overrepresented among the poor, suffering, captives, and oppressed, as they typically didn't hold a very high place in society. In fact, it's difficult to exaggerate how great their misery was. But Jesus uplifted them. His ministering to the bent-over woman of Luke 13 is just one example. "On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for 18 years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, 'Woman, you are set free from your infirmity.' Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.

"Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue leader said to the people, 'There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath day.'

"The Lord answered him, 'You hypocrites! Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie your ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?' When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing" (Luke 13:10-17).

Luke, by naming neither the location nor the woman, broadens the application and significance of this event beyond this one individual woman to all women who are in bondage everywhere. This beautiful story offers hope to victims.

With the tenderness of a physician, Luke describes the severity of her condition. Bible students have speculated about the specific disease she was inflicted with. Others suggest this woman showed symptoms consistent with injuries suf-

fered from sexual abuse or violence. Ultimately, Jesus laid the blame of her suffering upon Satan. The point is that there is nothing Christlike about abuse. No genuine Christian would sexually force himself on a woman, not even his wife. No genuine Christian would beat a woman, any woman, especially the one he promised to love as his wife.

This type of behavior is totally at odds with the teaching and values of Jesus. When He came to that synagogue that Sabbath, everything changed. Jesus saw this woman even though she was bent over. The Bible says He called her. Her body was disabled, but her faith was alive and well. We can imagine her making her way with difficulty as best she could, arriving before Jesus still stooped. She did exactly what Jesus asked her to do.

Then Jesus said the most wonderful words she'd ever heard: "Woman, you are set free from your infirmity."

In an instant she could look into people's faces—into the face of Jesus, the one who ended her bodily pain. Jesus' face was probably the first face she saw as she stood tall for the first time in 18 years.

The very first thing she does, upon being miraculously healed, is glorify God. Of all the Sabbath miracles in Luke, she was the first and only healed person to praise God when she was set free from her infirmity. Just as she had done nothing to deserve her 18 years of suffering, she had done nothing to deserve this healing, but was healed only by the grace of Jesus. For this reason she glorified God. And by glorifying God, she was letting the world know what she thought of His Son.

But while her physical pain and her physical health had been restored, her psychological torment wasn't finished.

Also in the crowd that Sabbath was the synagogue ruler. He was not impressed with what happened. In indignation, the synagogue ruler blurted out, "There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath." Clearly, he was using the Sabbath as a weapon against Jesus and the woman. He even quoted a portion of the Sabbath commandment in his attack.

This is a technique often used by people who abuse others—taking the words of Scripture and distorting them for their evil purposes. But the Bible is not a tool to justify the abuse of women.

Ellen White offered this valuable insight regard-

Not only did Jesus come to the support of the healed woman—He aligned Himself with her by designating her a daughter of Abraham.

ing Jesus and the Sabbath: “Christ, during His earthly ministry, emphasized the binding claims of the Sabbath; in all His teaching He showed reverence for the institution He Himself had given. In His days the Sabbath had become so perverted that its observance reflected the character of selfish and arbitrary men rather than the character of God. Christ set aside the false teaching by which those who claimed to know God had misrepresented Him. Although followed with merciless hostility by the rabbis, He did not even appear to conform to their requirements, but went straight forward keeping the Sabbath according to the law of God.”¹

IT’S ABOUT FOLLOWING HIS EXAMPLE

Jesus put the woman’s abuser in his rightful place. The ruler and his ilk were correctly identified as hypocrites, showing more compassion to animals than they did to a woman who was a daughter of Abraham, a person created in the image of God. The synagogue ruler and his allies would not allow a beast to go for a few hours on Sabbath without being released and allowed to drink its fill. But they were outraged that a woman’s suffering was not extended for at least another day. While Jesus was not saving the woman from impending death by healing her, He made a point about Sabbath being important to the enhancement of life.

No woman should endure abuse, be it sexual, physical, psychological, or emotional, any day of the week. But the prevention of abuse doesn’t need to be confined to a special Sabbath. While this woman’s physical suffering was ended by the physical healing provided by Jesus, the synagogue ruler increased her spiritual and emotional suffering with heartless words. It is for this reason that some of the strongest and most direct words we have in the Bible were directed against this man of privilege.

Not only did Jesus come to the support of the healed woman—He aligned Himself with her by

designating her a daughter of Abraham. Thus, the synagogue ruler found himself in the unenviable position of being on the same side as Satan in opposing Jesus; the wrong side of the daughter of Abraham and of Abraham himself. In our church today, some may try to dismiss the importance of programs such as the EndItNow initiative. They may resort to disagreeing with it as the synagogue ruler did. They may say the Seventh-day Adventist Church has a mission that should not be distracted by social issues.

Ellen White wrote: “True sympathy between man and his fellowman is to be the sign distinguishing those who love and fear God from those who are unmindful of His law. How great the sympathy that Christ expressed in coming to this world to give His life a sacrifice for a dying world! His religion led to the doing of genuine medical missionary work. He was a healing power.”²

This is the test the great Author of truth used to distinguish between true and false religion. True believers will not ignore women who are marginalized and suffering abuse and victimization. We have an ongoing duty to protect and shield all woman in these vile circumstances.

How did Jesus’ visit to this synagogue end? It concluded with the enduring image of a healed woman standing upright and praising God. This daughter of Abraham who had been bent over became a model for all people of all ages, showing what Jesus can do for someone who’s been oppressed.

Would you like Jesus to heal you, to reshape your life and your future? Perhaps there are men who may be thinking about their treatment of women; perhaps their attitudes toward women are not what they should be. Now is the time to ask Jesus for a new heart to treat women the same way as Jesus treated women—with kindness, compassion, and respect.

For women still suffering today, just as Jesus healed the woman who couldn’t stand straight, He can touch you with His pure love to reshape your life and future. Jesus’ words can lift you up just as they did for the woman from so long ago. 🦋

¹ Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1917), p. 183.

² Ellen G. White, *Medical Ministry* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1932), p. 251.



PETER N. LANDLESS

ZENO L. CHARLES-MARCEL

WHAT IS A VIRUS, ANYWAY?

I'm confused.

Q: Coronavirus, treatments, vaccines . . . I'm confused! Can you please explain what a virus is, how it causes problems in the body, and how we fight it?

A: Many people have the same questions. These issues can be very confusing. Because we have limited space, let's deal with the first parts of your question now and the rest in a later column.

Viruses, the most abundant known biological entities on our planet, are uniquely organized packages of chemicals that become biologically active only when they borrow or steal the "life machinery" of a living cell. Most viruses stealthily gain entrance into human cells and set up permanent residence there, incorporating themselves into the host cell's diverse and complex internal environment. Such viruses may not cause overt disease, but they are the ultimate biological spies—parasites that blend in and appear to be "normal" features of the host's internal landscape. In short, viruses are tricksters—stealthy, opportunistic invaders that sometimes are so disruptive that they cause disease and death.


There are two biochemical components of all known viruses: a set of genetic instructions and a protective outer protein shell. Some viruses have an additional layer, a greasy envelope or overcoat that helps to hide the identity of the sneaky invader.

The first component, the genetic material, gives at least two instructions: how to make and assemble proteins for its protective shell and how to make copies of its own genetic material. The second component, the protein shell, protects the virus' genetic material from hostile chemicals, contains attachment sites for docking with living cells to gain entry, and provides the chemical "passkey" to penetrate the unsuspecting host cell's outer membrane.

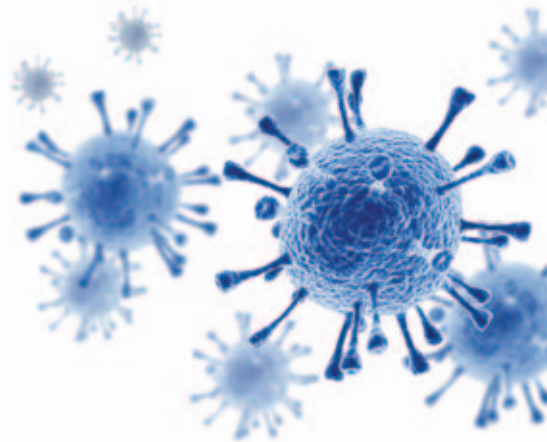
Viruses are generally classified by the kind of living creatures they infect (animals, plants, and bacteria), which kind of genetic material they contain, the size and shape of their shell, and

whether they have an envelope. The whole family of coronaviruses are named because of their appearance under the microscope; the word "corona" means crown, and the spiked structures that surround them look like the virus is wearing a crown. Coronaviruses have a greasy envelope that we can exploit in our defense of their invasion: soapy water and sanitizing alcohol.

In the case of coronavirus, the virus hijacks the invaded cells' normal factories so that they produce mainly proteins for the viral membrane envelope, spikes, and shell, as well as make multiple duplicates of the viral genetic material. Some kinds of viruses overwhelm the infected cells, and the process of exporting the millions of assembled viruses "pokes holes" in the host cells' membranes. This kills the host cells—with no gratitude shown by the virus! Interestingly, in many cases the exiting virus weakens but does not destroy the host cells. The body's own response to the invaders, the infected cells, and the surrounding tissues cause collateral damage that may lead to organ dysfunction. It is single vital organ failure or multiple-organ failure that produces fatal results.

But God has not left us unprotected and without hope—the Blessed Hope. You can count on that! 

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The Season of our Discontent

*What is God trying
to tell us in 2020?*

MARCOS PASEGGI

The seasoned church lay leader was not known for making overblown statements or grandstanding. On the contrary, he was relatively quiet, always ready to help and dutifully discharge his responsibilities to the best of his abilities.

REVEALING RESPONSE

That was the reason, perhaps, that his reply during a virtual small-group discussion left his local church believers in awkward silence and at a loss for a follow-up.

The question posed was *What do you think you have learned during 2020?*

After stroking his chin for a few seconds and looking directly into the camera, he answered. "I have learned," he said, "that our pastor is not such a great preacher after all."

Even though the "lessons" some of us might have been led to learn during 2020 so far could be less prosaic than what the good old brother gave away, he had a point: His time away from in-person worship services at his local church had moved him, in a sense, to reassess his options, and to question what his future relationship with his local congregation would look like from now on.

To a lesser or greater extent, many seem to agree that the COVID-19 pandemic and its related lockdown have somehow forced most people to pause and reassess the validity of their assumptions, values, and pursuits. COVID-19 is moving countless people to question long-held beliefs about their lives, jobs, and yes, their faith.

GRASPING FOR THE WIND

Even in a mostly secular world, an increasing number of reports share stories of people who, during the 2020 lockdown, have felt a call to do things differently. After realizing they had mostly been "grasping the wind," those people have, during their forced stoppage, reflected on what they will consider essential from now on. As a small business owner selling high-end items recently put it: "I felt compelled to reassess the meaning of making ends meet by providing stuff no one actually needs." In his case, his reflective stance led him to a drastic change in his business model, to embrace one that he feels can somehow appease his ethical uneasiness and help him sleep better at night.

Another area often cited as part of this "new reality" reassessment relates to professional sports. This is not about practicing a sport for recreation and physical exercise, but rather about the ongoing bleeding of resources to support a system that cares less about sports than about cold business. The lockdown stoppage of professional sports made many fans realize what they already suspected: it is quite possible to live without wasting countless hours and dollars a week watching or attending professional sports events. "I realized I was spending obscene amounts of money to support people who make obscene amounts of money and who, in many cases, see us fans as mere commodities," a disenchanted fan recently commented.

The list could go on and on. Early indicators seem to show that the current reassessment goes beyond the fleeting moment when a passing ailment affecting the ones we love, or us ourselves, leads us to weigh and rank our priorities again. For how long a society without God can sustain this process is anybody's guess. It is something, however, that certainly should not be off the radar of those "on whom the culmination of the ages has come" (1 Cor. 10:11).

CRISIS: POWERFUL POTENTIAL

Any crisis hides the potential for sifting through the chaff to lay people's motives and motivations bare. It is something that includes the new reality of life within the Seventh-day Adventist community. From the crisis resulting from the Great Disappointment in 1844, new junctures in the Adventist denomination have often prompted reactions probably as varied as the people groups within its walls.

Regarding the Advent movement's early history, Ellen White believed that the progressive unfolding of events around the Advent message's initial proclamation helped to strengthen those who remained faithful. Years later she wrote, "If the message had been of as short duration as many of us supposed, there would have been no time for them to develop character. Many moved from feeling, not from principle and faith, and this solemn, fearful message stirred them. It wrought upon their feelings, and excited their fears, but did not accomplish the work which God designed that it should. God reads the heart. Lest His people should be deceived in regard to themselves, He

The worst mistake Seventh-day Adventists could make in 2020 is to end the year with limited reflection and no significant reassessments.

gives them time for the excitement to wear off, and then proves them to see if they will obey.”¹

What about 2020? This year, in countless places, church leaders and members are discussing how the new reality will affect the way we do church, outreach, even evangelism. In some churches, followership of some Adventist livestreamed services has been steadily declining since the beginning of the first lockdown in March. Noting this, some wonder what church will look like when restrictions are eased. Some have even begun to entertain the sad possibility that scores of church members may never return to their local congregations.

At the same time, in this context, could the current crisis hide some easily overlooked benefits?

HEART CONTENT

In a review of Israel’s history just before entering into the Promised Land, one of God’s direct statements to the people points to one more possibility for the trials His followers must endure. God says, “Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands” (Deut. 8:2).

In case we wonder how the punishment during those 40 years could connect with God’s assertion, Ellen White makes the point clear. “The wilderness wandering was not only ordained as a judgment upon the rebels and murmurers, but it was to serve as a discipline for the rising generation, preparatory to their entrance into the Promised Land.”²

Even though we know that every evil in this world—including the novel coronavirus—comes from the enemy of all good, we also accept that, in His infinite wisdom, God sometimes allows His children to go through paths they would never choose themselves. At the same time, God seeks to use those walks through valleys of shadows of death for His greater purpose.

Seeing our current conundrums from this reviewed angle, could it be that God is allowing 2020 to try us so that we may know what is in our hearts? Could it be that He is using the current pandemic to “rattle our cages”? Let’s listen once more to Ellen White: “God leads His people on, step by step. He brings them up to different points calculated to manifest what is in the heart. Some endure at one point, but fall off at the next. At every advanced point the heart is tested and tried a little closer.”³

WARNING FOR 2020

By all accounts, the worst mistake Seventh-day Adventists could make in 2020 is to end the year just as many of us probably started it—with limited reflection, no significant reassessments, just basking in the soothing comfort of the status quo. Even without jumping to forecast doom-and-gloom scenarios, an increasing number of people are concluding that this first global pandemic in modern history can potentially affect us for longer than we can know, and in ways we still don’t fully anticipate.

What will Seventh-day Adventists do? Live in a constant state of alert and fear? Jump to the latest conspiracy explanation? Downplay the human and economic toll of the pandemic? Limit themselves to discuss online worship “rankings” or the preaching capabilities of their local church pastor? Ignore the whole ordeal altogether?

There may be a better way, one that is triggered when we ask God to help us see the whole picture. We may then start hearing God’s voice telling each of us personally, “Remember . . . [My purpose is] to humble and test you . . . to know what [is] in your heart” (Deut. 8:2), “to prove your character” (verse 2, NLT),⁴ “to uncover your motives” (verse 2, Voice).⁵ Then, just like Job, we may proclaim confidently, “When He has tested me, I will come forth as gold” (Job 23:10).⁶

¹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 1, pp. 186, 187.

² Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1890, 1908), p. 407.

³ E. G. White, *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 187.

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⁵ Bible texts credited to Voice are from *The Voice Bible*. Copyright © 2012 Thomas Nelson, Inc. *The Voice* translation © 2012, Ecclesia Bible Society. All rights reserved.

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Pandemic

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ADRA.org/EndCoronaVirus



Mars follows right after Earth in the planet list memorized by children when they are learning about the solar system. This rocky planet is smaller than Earth, but it's still sizable, with a diameter slightly more than half the Earth's. Yet, because of its great distance from Earth, to the naked eye it does not look much more than a small bright star in the sky. Only the invention of telescopes about four centuries ago made it possible to discern more detailed features of this planet's appearance.

Our knowledge of Mars has exploded at an exponential rate in the recent past. Multiple robotic spacecraft have provided and are providing streams of high-resolution information on its composition, topography, surface processes, and rock record, both from the planet's surface and looking down from orbit. We now have stunning images, videos, maps, and digital reconstructions of Martian surface features, often accessible to the general public

through the websites of governmental agencies.¹ Some of these features are strikingly similar to geologic features observed on Earth, both at the large scale, such as mountains, valleys, plateaus, and canyons, and at the small scale, such as cross-bedding and other sedimentary structures produced by wind and possibly water.

Christians living in the twenty-first century are immersed in a stream of exciting details from this current frontier of space exploration. While the features of this distant world become somehow more familiar, our minds turn to God for guidance and inspiration on how to place such new knowledge in the context of the biblical worldview.

How does God's self-disclosure of His character and plan for us as revealed in the Scriptures help give meaning to what we encounter in the study of His creation? How does Martian geology fit with the God of the Bible? Here are some personal reflections on these questions.

MARTIAN GEOLOGY AND THE GOD OF DISCOVERY, HISTORY, AND REDEMPTION

CREATION AND DISCOVERY

In considering what we know about the surface and geologic processes acting on Mars, there is an interesting balance between what looks exotic and what appears familiar to us. For example, we find that the knowledge accrued by humans in disciplines such as physics and chemistry works well not only on Earth but also on Mars. What we have learned about gravity has allowed for successful planning and execution of space travel from Earth to Mars and the landing of the 2,000-pound (900-kilogram) *Curiosity* rover. The consistency and applicability of the principles of physics beyond the realm of Planet Earth speak of a universal Designer who created and sustains the entire creation: “He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together” (Col. 1:17). Indeed, “all things” means so much more than our beautiful planetary home.

At the same time, what intrigues us about Mars are the distinctive elements that make it a different

place. Mars and Earth are made from the elements of the same periodic table, yet they are uniquely complex worlds, which differ, for example, in the composition and thickness of their atmosphere or availability of liquid water on their surface.

The vastness of possible combinations, the genius of immense variability built upon a shared foundation, the delight of being surprised by the unanticipated, speak to us of an incommensurably creative God, who will always transcend us. We cannot help exclaiming with the psalmist: “How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand—when I awake, I am still with you” (Ps. 139:17, 18).

The combination of these two aspects—consistency and variability—suggests that discovery was part of God’s plan for His creatures. There are innumerable things to explore in the universe, and they have been made in a way that we can



This image from the European Space Agency shows the 51-mile-wide Korolev crater filled with water ice 1.2 miles deep.

The combination of these two aspects, consistency and variability, suggests that discovery was part of God's plan for His creatures.

discover them. The invitation to growth and expansion is included in the divine mandate to “be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it” (Gen. 1:28).

I sometimes wonder whether God smiles with satisfaction as He witnesses these tiny human beings who, like a colony of ants, laboriously expand their sphere of influence. Yet, for all our advancements, we cannot help feeling like Newton, who is reported to have said: “I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.”

THE GOD OF HISTORY

As we learn more about the geology of Mars, our minds strive to organize the record contained in its rocks and sediments into a succession of events.

The questions that we ask of this apparent history are not dissimilar from those we ask here on Earth: questions of time and process. In some ways these have implications for philosophical questions about origins. When something begins, we are used to tracking its growth. This is true of humans, developing from an embryo to mature individuals, but also of engineering projects, where materials are assembled and a design implemented.

At the same time, our experience attests that new entities don't come out of nothing, be it babies from their parents or projects from engineers. As we think of God and His relation to the universe He created, the Bible provides a true compass to help us navigate the unknown.

On Earth we encounter evidence that points to history and process, but we are also told that God creates fully functional and equipped ecosystems and that He operates in powerful ways that transcend our understanding and creative capabilities. God is worthy of our worship because He is a powerful Creator who acted in history. Therefore, I do not resonate with origin models that remove God from His creation, like a vessel telling the potter, “You did not make me” (cf. Isa. 29:16). Neither do I find promise in models that deny God the unfathomable power that He displayed in the days of Creation week.

It's true that space exploration can be an expression of noble human ambitions, but it's also entangled with a darker component, summarized in the words *power*, *pollution*, and *peril*.

Power: The missions assembled to study Mars are often marvelous examples of international cooperation. Technological advancements developed for space exploration, however, can find military applications. Moreover, accomplishments in space exploration are often used by governments to assert dominance and technological supremacy, as happened in the years of the Cold War.

Pollution: As the physical footprint of humans expands beyond our planet, so does the garbage we leave in our wake. Agencies have been established to mitigate the polluting effects of space exploration, but an impression remains that once we set foot on a place, some of its pristine qualities are lost.

Peril: There are true dangers connected with the exploration of another planet. Some of them derive from the fact that God fully equipped us for life on Earth, not Mars. Others come from partial understanding of the dynamics of a different environment, and others still can be the result of haste, error, or misguidance. Because of these dangers, no human has yet visited Mars, and such a mission would involve significant risk.

When we connect the call to discovery with such negative realities, we recognize our longing for something better. We long for a time when God's plan for our growth will unfold in harmony and peace, and a time when “they will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (Isa. 11:9).

This year let's celebrate Creation Sabbath on October 24, perhaps with an activity involving the study of Mars.² It will remind us of the God who made us for discovery, provided us with a place in history, and has redeemed us for exploration in the new heaven and new earth. ▀

¹ See, for example, NASA's Mars Exploration Program website: mars.nasa.gov/.

² Find more information about this global celebration at www.creationsabbath.net.

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FONZIE, SEAWORLD, AND SIAMESE TWINS

The other day I turned on the TV to watch the news. But as I scanned the channel guide, another show caught my eye: *Happy Days*, the 1950s-era sitcom (produced in the 1970s and 1980s).

I immediately felt a wave of memories from watching *Happy Days* as a boy. I'd fly off the school bus with my saxophone and duffel bag and race up our long gravel driveway, our dog leaping beside me. Out of breath, I'd burst in the front door, put two Pop-Tarts into the toaster, and if I timed everything perfectly, I'd be sprawled on the couch right at 4:00 when the *Happy Days* theme song started: "Sunday, Monday, happy days! Tuesday, Wednesday, happy days! Thursday, Friday, happy days! Saturday—what a day! Groovin' all week with you!"

I liked watching *Happy Days* almost as much as *Gilligan's Island* and *The Brady Bunch*. (I watched too much TV.) I liked the 1950s setting; I liked the humor; and I especially liked the friendship between Richie Cunningham (a regular guy, like me) and Fonzie (the coolest guy ever). "The Fonz" wore a leather jacket, and all the girls loved him. It was fun!

So when I turned on *Happy Days* the other day, I expected to enjoy the throwback memories of Richie and the Fonz (my old buddies).

The episode I watched was set in Arnold's Diner. Fonzie walks in (the studio audience cheers) and proceeds to kiss about a dozen girls, one by one. Someone asks where Richie is, and Fonzie says inappropriate things that produce great laughter.

It's a hard thing to realize that what

once seemed acceptable . . . really wasn't. Sure, Fonzie and Richie might have been likable characters, and not every episode of *Happy Days* was so lewd. But as I sat thinking about it, and my daughter walked through the room, I realized that the overall culture of *Happy Days* was degrading to women—reducing them to mere objects. ("I found my thrill," the guys often sang, "on Blueberry Hill.")

How could I have been entertained by this? Why didn't I see it?

Culture (like its sister word, cult) is one of the most dangerous and powerful forces in our lives because, by living within a culture, we get used to it. We get changed by it. We tend to take it lump-sum rather than carefully distinguishing. That's why a generation can be simultaneously patriotic and prejudiced, or hardworking and selfish, or compassionate and entitled.

I think of other tough realizations. As a boy I loved the breathtaking Shamu whale shows at SeaWorld; I didn't stop to think about the captivity. I also remember the "Siamese Twins" at the county fair. We peered through a window to watch these two brothers—"Oh, look, they're arguing!" Even as my young heart felt a discomfort, I didn't say anything.

But someone did. At some point someone said, "Freak shows are wrong." "Whale shows are wrong." "Objectifying women is wrong."

At some point we, too, can say, "It's wrong." "We were wrong." "I was wrong." ❖

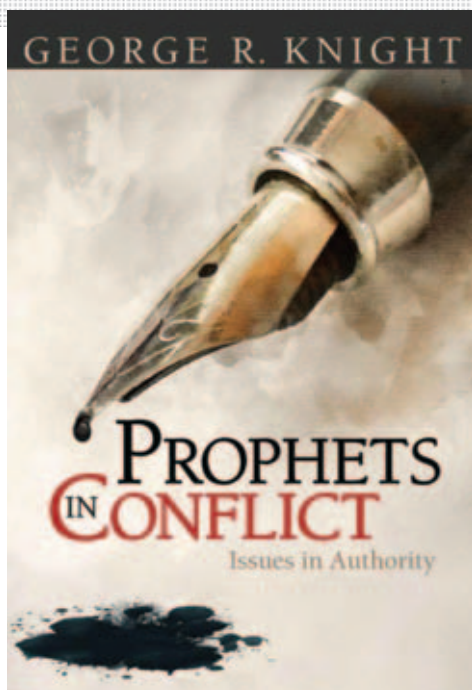
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THE LIFE
OF FAITH
ANDY
NASH



HOW COULD I HAVE
BEEN ENTERTAINED
BY THIS? WHY
DIDN'T I SEE IT?

CLOSER LOOK



Ellen White and Prophetic Authority

Prophets in Conflict: Issues in Authority, by George R. Knight, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2020, 208 pages, US\$17.99. Reviewed by Gerhard Pfandl, retired associate director, Biblical Research Institute.

George Knight, professor emeritus of church history at Andrews University, with more than 30 books, 70 book chapters and entries in reference works, and 150 articles in journals and magazines to his name, is considered one of the most prolific authors in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Except for chapter 10, the present volume is a compilation of articles and scholarly papers on the topic of Ellen White and her authority that he wrote during the past 40 years. As noted in his introduction, Knight has already

published six books on Ellen White. *Prophets in Conflict*, he says, is his final major contribution to Ellen White studies. The book has 14 chapters with endnotes and an index.

A recurrent expression in this book is the phrase “the Mormon Temptation,” the topic of the first two chapters. Knight compares Ellen White’s position, who said, “We want Bible evidence for every point we advance” (p. 9), with Joseph Smith’s claim that he was “called to the prophetic office to correct the biblical record and restore those parts of it that had been lost” (p. 17). Thus, the Mormon canon consists not only of the Old Testament and New Testament, but also of the *Book of Mormon*, the *Pearl of Great Price*, and the *Doctrine and Covenants*. The first two supply supposedly lost parts of the biblical record; the last one consists of prophetic revelations of a doctrinal nature. Hence, the Mormon Temptation for Adventists is to view Ellen White’s writings the same as Scripture, as a divine, infallible commentary on Scripture (p. 38), which is a misuse of her writings.

Chapters 3 through 8 deal with the framework for understanding Ellen White’s prophetic authority. These chapters discuss the purpose of her writings, her major themes, the myth of the inflexible prophet, principles for understanding Ellen White’s writings, the issue of Ellen White and change as she received more light, and the case of her overlooked postscript in one of W. C. White’s letters to S. N. Haskell, who believed in verbal inspiration.

Chapters 9 and 10 address the issue of compilations. Knight supports compila-

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

Ellen White never originated a doctrine or teaching of the church.

tions—after all, Ellen White’s will explicitly charged White Estate trustees with making them—but takes issue with unauthorized compilations and the headings in several authorized ones. He is especially critical of the heading “Took Sinless Human Nature” in the compilation of Ellen White quotes on the nature of Christ in the book *Questions on Doctrine*, even though at least in one quote she clearly stated: “We should have no misgivings in regard to the perfect sinlessness of the human nature of Christ.”¹ Chapter 11, “A Wrongheaded Journey: The Search for the Human Nature of Christ,” and chapter 12, “A Fruitful Journey: The Search for Proper Education,” deal with the proper and improper uses of Ellen White. The penultimate chapter focuses on prophetic authority, followed by Knight’s closing thoughts.

One statement in the book is puzzling: Knight seems to deny that Ellen White had doctrinal authority. She has prophetic authority (p. 49), and even divine authority (p. 54), but not doctrinal authority. The difference between these categories is unclear. The author is concerned that “some Adventists have placed Ellen White in the role of Joseph Smith and given her doctrinal authority” (p. 26). He writes: “She is neither a determiner of doctrine nor the final word on the meaning of Scripture” (p. 42). She is certainly not the final word on the meaning of Scripture, but she did play an important role in the formation of our doctrines.

The word “doctrine” from the Latin *docere*, “to teach,” means “teaching.” In English it also has the meaning of a set of beliefs held and taught by the church. Ellen White never originated a doctrine or teaching of the church. This seems to be the meaning Knight has in view when he denies her doctrinal authority. However, when in the Sabbath conferences in the late 1840s the believers “came to the point in their study when they said, ‘We can do nothing more,’ the Spirit of the Lord would come

upon me, I would be taken off in vision, and a clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given me, with instruction as to how we were to labor and teach effectively.”² Here the Holy Spirit empowered her to determine which of the various views were correct. This is clearly a display of doctrinal or teaching authority.

The same is true in connection with the crisis over the book *The Living Temple* and its pantheistic ideas presented at the General Conference Session in 1903. After a long discussion, General Conference president A. G. Daniells concluded the session, but he did not call for a vote. When he returned home, he found a letter from Ellen White in which she counseled him, “Be careful how you sustain the sentiments of this book regarding the personality of God. As the Lord presents matters to me, these sentiments do not bear the endorsement of God.”³ Her letter was crucial in saving the church from pantheism.

The problem with Knight’s position that she has no teaching authority is twofold. First, it is unbiblical. Scripture makes no distinction between a prophet’s pastoral and dogmatic function. When faced with this distinction, former Andrews University professor Raoul Dederen used to say, “I am happy to accept this, if you can prove it to me from Scripture.” Second, it leads to rejecting much that she has written on our doctrines. This was the position Desmond Ford took when he rejected the investigative judgment.

Nevertheless, the book contains much useful information for anyone interested in the prophetic ministry of Ellen White. ♣

¹ *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1962), vol. 5, p. 1131.

² Ellen G. White, *Early Writings* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1882, 1945), p. xxiii.

³ Ellen G. White letter 211, 1903, in Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Early Elmshaven Years, 1900-1905* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1981), p. 297.

THE TRUTH BEHIND THE SYMBOLS

For 2,000 years God’s people have been learning to see beyond the symbols of the book of Revelation. The book is called “Revelation” for a reason: through its symbols God reveals what we need to know: broad principles and specific, unmistakable details. We learn that truth and righteousness will ultimately eradicate sin, death, and evil. We learn that as we faithfully follow Christ, we shall finally share His victory.—Editors.

“Though Scripture symbolically portrays these messages as being proclaimed by three angels, it is actually God’s people—His last-day church—who deliver them to the world. Additionally, two groups emerge—those who choose to follow God’s Word completely and those who choose to mix biblical teachings with human traditions.”

—**BIBLEINFO.COM** (“WHAT ARE THE THREE ANGELS’ MESSAGES?”).

“The real reason I am for separation of church and state is that unless there is clear differentiation between church and state—unless we make sure that Babylon has not seduced us into its corner by means of money—we will lose our prophetic edge. Separation of church and state isn’t important only because it keeps the government from influencing the church. Separation of church and state is crucial if the church is going to influence the government. If we take money from government, it’s as simple as this: whoever pays the fiddler calls the tune. If they are paying for our programs, they will be able to dictate what our programs are all about, and that is already happening.”

—**TONY CAMPOLO** (“DEALING WITH BABYLON,” *LIBERTY*, JULY-AUGUST 2004).

“While scholars may debate some of the fine details of this particular vision, the main points of application seem abundantly clear:

Culture is not neutral.

The devil attacks God’s people via the front door through governmental persecution.

The devil attacks God’s people via the backdoor through seductive, idolatrous culture.

No enemy of God’s people will finally stand. The Lord has a day and that day is coming.”

PAUL CARTER (“WHO IS THE WHORE OF BABYLON? [AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?]” *THE GOSPEL COALITION*, CANADIAN EDITION, JUNE 14, 2018).

“Knowing that Jesus has conquered sin, death, and the unjust consequences (our basic issues) for all humanity, following Jesus faithfully and worshipping the creator God who is just is key. Distinct gospel messages of judgement bringing God’s justice, a character-building lifestyle, the Ten Commandments, and the seventh-day Sabbath are a part of the package.

GLENN TOWNEND (“THREE ANGELS’ MESSAGES,” [RECORD.ADVENTISTCHURCH.COM/2020/02/13/THREE-ANGELS-MESSAGES/](https://record.adventistchurch.com/2020/02/13/three-angels-messages/), FEB. 13, 2020).

“[W]ords have a source or sources. And it is important to know whose words they are because subscribing to and embodying a controlling story ultimately means following someone else. The vital questions everyone should satisfactorily be able to answer in this context are, “whose words are you following?”

FLAVIO PRESTES III (*WORLDVIEWS: CONCEPTS OR NARRATIVES?* AUSS 57.2, AUTUMN 2019).



"Some of our [believers] have expressed fears that we shall dwell too much upon the subject of justification by faith, but I hope and pray that none will be needlessly alarmed; for there is no danger in presenting the doctrine as it is set forth in the Scriptures. . . . The exceeding great and precious promises given us in the Holy Scriptures have been lost sight of to a great extent, just as the enemy of all righteousness designed that they should be. He has cast his own dark shadow between us and our God, that we may not see the true character of God. The Lord has proclaimed Himself to be 'merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.'

"Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel's message, and I have answered, 'It is the third angel's message in verity.'"

ELLEN G. WHITE (SELECTED MESSAGES, BOOK 1, P. 372).

"We must note that the core of the three angels' messages, proclaimed before the Second Coming, is worship. . . . The author of the book of Revelation mentions two groups of worshipers. One group worships Him 'who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water,' and the other worships the beast and his image. One shows obedience to God and fulfills His commandments (Rev. 12:17; 14:12), the other participates in adultery with spiritual Babylon (Rev. 17:2). One will finally rest in God (Rev. 14:13), while the other will not rest 'day or night' (Rev. 14:11). The three angels' messages call every believer to choose his or her position in this great controversy between good and evil, between truth and lie."

EUGENE ZAITSEV ("THE MISSION OF ADVENTISM: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE THREE ANGELS' MESSAGES FOR TODAY," MINISTRYMAGAZINE.ORG, DECEMBER 2012).



THE LINE IN THE SAND

We are faced with many lines in the sand these days. Everyone seems to be digging in to fiercely defend their line in the sand. As we face a seemingly unending pandemic, heated discussions about social distancing, face masks, freedom of speech, racism, theology, or politics rage online, intruding on all our relationships and underlining an ever-increasing sense of polarization.

To “draw a line in the sand” goes back, in one reference, to an encounter between the Roman consul Gaius Popillius Laenas and the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who, in 168 B.C., was about

to enter the Ptolemaic city of Alexandria with a large army. Based on the report of the Roman historian Livy,^{*} the Roman leader drew a circle around Antiochus, handed him the written demands by the Roman Senate ordering an immediate retreat, and told him not to move out of the circle until he had considered the consequences. Antiochus hesitated briefly as he contemplated his options. He then agreed to withdraw with his army. Rome had just exerted its power and influence—even in the absence of its battle-hardened legions—by drawing a line in the sand.

What lines are we drawing in the sand as we engage with people living in a complex world? What issues are nonnegotiable for followers of Jesus waiting for the coming of the Master?

When we face tough choices and difficult circumstances, it’s always good to consider the example of Jesus. Jesus faced a polarized nation. First-century Judaism was awash in competing sects and parties. His starting point, while talking to a

top-notch religious scholar and member of the Sanhedrin, was this: “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again” (John 3:3). The kingdom of God requires a complete reset, a spiritual birth, resulting in a new direction, even if it’s only in baby steps, toward the heavenly Father.

Once our operating system has been changed, we still face hard questions that require us to make difficult choices. How did Jesus make these calls as those surrounding Him sought to push and pull and drag Him into their arguments and agendas?

Gentle Jesus chose His battles carefully. His opponents goaded and prodded Him—yet He remained kind and caring and focused on God’s kingdom. Kingdom values, however, were never up for discussion as Jesus engaged His world. Jesus ignored the legalistic Sabbath interpretations of His contemporaries as they sought to trap Him and His disciples. He never engaged in the typical rabbinical Sabbath discussions, yet He never wavered on the Sabbath that He had established right at Creation. That was a line in the sand.

In the midst of an increasingly more toxic mix of vibes and opinions produced on social media by those who feel strongly about what’s right and what’s wrong, let’s resist the temptation to retaliate and respond in kind. Before we draw another line in the sand, let’s make sure that this line is based on kingdom values and reflects the mind and heart of Jesus. ♣

* For the text, see en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaius_Popillius_Laenas.

Gerald A. Klingbeil serves as an associate editor of Adventist Review Ministries.

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