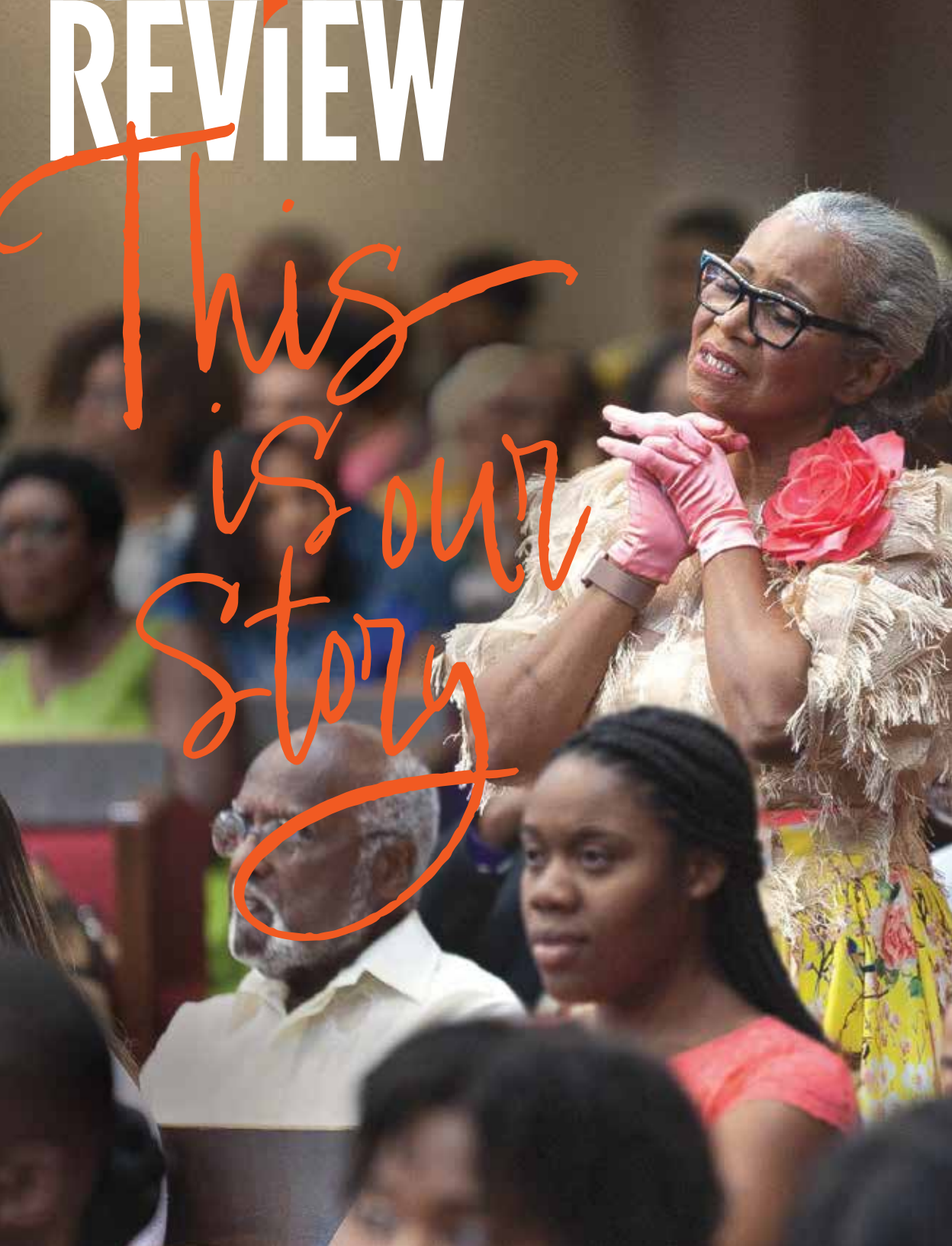


FEBRUARY 2022: THIS IS OUR STORY + FOR MY PEOPLE + THE END OF CONFUSION + CONFESSION OF THE PRIVILEGED + DARE TO DREAM

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ENNO MÜLLER

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TRENDING

THE MOST SHARED STORIES ON ADVENTISTREVIEW.ORG LAST MONTH:

1



Loma Linda University Medicine Residents Awarded US\$3.52 Million

2



Families Serve in Kenya for Christmas

3



The End of Blindness

4



Hospitals in Nepal Join ADRA to Roll Out COVID-19 Vaccine Campaigns

5



More Than a Half Million Pounds of Food for Families in Need

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BILL KNOTT



"We will be practicing these skills until that day when Jesus breaks the barriers of cloud—and color."

The Great Unlearning

His words are half-remembered, pulled from many years ago, and mixed with images of crew cuts, lemonade, and riding my tricycle down the sloping driveway of our East Texas home.

The Adventist deacon described a morning years before when his father took him to a lynching—to where an unconvicted Black man hung from an oak deep in the woods, his body pierced by bullet holes. There was no sadness in the tale, nor was I supposed to feel any. This was the way things were.

Two thousand miles away, and well north of the Mason-Dixon line, I learned that another Adventist relative had once belonged to the Ku Klux Klan—"back when it was good," or so the teller implied. And I recalled my relative's great affinity for guns, for country, and for Whiteness. This was the way things were.

Not once, but twice the February worship services at the campus church my family attended were disrupted by bomb threats called in to stop Black History Sabbaths. We scattered in the biting February wind, aware that there were those within our church—our congregation—who hated what this Sabbath meant, who sought to bar the door, refuse an entrance;

fueled by spite. This was the way things were.

I was too White and too naive to understand the day George Wallace was shot and permanently disabled by an assassin's bullet in the city where I now live. The young Black woman at the reception desk pushed down the intercom "Talk" button and told the news excitedly to the Adventist dormitory. A circle of rejoicing filled the dorm: their oppressor had been taken out. The world looked hopeful suddenly, as if a liberation might be theirs when racist Pharaoh toppled over.

And there is more—a lifetime of unlearning attitudes my Adventist White culture wanted me to know—behind the hand; behind the door; the muttered anger at the "they" and "them" who now were "welcomed" to the table. Why did administrators spit their venom when committee rooms were emptied, when they felt sure they couldn't be heard?

Did I seem "safe" to racists because I listened to their bursts of anger and of privilege? Should I have called them out for failing to obscure their prejudice?

And what goes unacknowledged in my soul, the deeply subtle ways of framing what it means to be Christ's body, His community? How do I get new eyes, new attitudes; a heart of

flesh and not of unresponsive stone? When will I see as Jesus sees—without a different valuing; with conscious love, and paying full attention?

We will be practicing these skills until that day when Jesus breaks the barriers of cloud—and color—to weld a willing remnant into one gracious, strong, and egoless community. There, all will serve and all will reign, dissolving every rank and status. We will be welcomed to a table where grace makes all of us one people: the banquet will be spread for those of every hue and language and experience. "Then people will come from east and west, from north and south, and will eat in the kingdom of God. Indeed, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last" (Luke 13:29, 30, NRSV).

But that day never comes—and it has already tarried for a while—until we yield, we bend; until we wash another's feet. Unlearning is the hardest thing we do, but Jesus still commands it. "Then he said to them all, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me'" (Luke 9:23, NRSV).

I'm reaching for the basin and the towel. Will you? ♣

Bill Knott

“I was pleased to see that the editor is challenging each of us to make covenants, not just resolutions.”

LEO RANZOLIN, SR., ESTERO, FLORIDA

LOVING OUR THEOLOGY

Just wanted to say I felt Shawn Brace really took the words out of my mouth with his December column about his love affair with Adventist theology. And it was so refreshing to hear this take from someone else in my age bracket. So often I find myself in his category and feeling a need to defend my love for our theology while listening to my peers get stuck on the “secondary and inconsequential matters” he acknowledges. Thanks for the encouragement, Shawn.

Jaclyn Knight

New Market, Virginia



TIMELY AND WITH MEANING

Let me say how timely was the excellent edition of the December *Review* to bring back the main purpose and *meaning* of Christmas, which is the celebration of the Saviour’s birth, sadly completely forgotten today by the media. Ellen White said that He was not entrusted to wealthy parents; they gave a humble offering when He was dedicated in the temple. What a paradox of the waste of expensive gifts today! I was happy to see in the January *Review* that the editor is challeng-

ing each one of us to make covenants, not just resolutions, and I believe that our covenant for the new year comes from the great apostle Paul: “And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth in insight” (Phil. 1:9, NIV), which was the message of our Saviour when He came down. He left heaven, offered His life, victoriously conquered sin, and eternal life was available again to humanity!

Leo Ranzolin, Sr.

Estero, Florida

SHARE THE POSITIVE

I took the liberty to cut and paste the article “Accentuate the Positive,” by Dr. Landless and Dr. Charles-Marcel, in the January issue and printed it on impressive paper to hand out to my Sabbath School class family. Lots of good stuff to do as we edge our way into 2022. Thanks.

Robert Rouillard

Lakewood, Washington

SENTIMENTS EXACTLY

Thank you, Shawn Brace, for expressing my sentiments even more accurately than I could have (December 2021 issue)! I have been so blessed by so many teachers, pastors, and Adventist journals; I am indeed called to invite all I meet into the same joy. May God continue to bless you and the *Adventist Review*, which does so well in cheering us on the way!

Lynn Baerg

COMMENTS FROM ADVENTISTREVIEW.ORG

ADVENTIST CHURCH LEADERS NOTE ‘ONE HUMANITY’ STATEMENT

I love the Adventist Church because they are spreading the true teachings of God.

Vincent Gwaya

2022 GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION

Official notice is hereby given that the postponed sixty-first session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists will be held June 6-11, 2022, in the America's Center in St. Louis, Missouri, United States. The first meeting will begin at 8:00 am, June 6, 2022. All duly accredited delegates are urged to be present at that time. This Session will also be accessible for delegates remotely by electronic means.

Ted N C Wilson, General Conference President

Erton C Köhler, General Conference Secretary

NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION FINDS PARTNER TO OFFER COVID-19 VACCINE CLINICS

I am very happy to be part of a church that saves lives by providing an effective vaccine for COVID. I pray each day that our elected church leaders do not succumb to the temptation to listen to the often very loud sophist logic. Loma Linda University has done an excellent job of providing data and clear explanations of the data that show the safety and effectiveness of COVID vaccines. There are rare reactions and there are breakthrough cases, but as a recent president has said, the vaccines are effective and do a very good job of preventing serious cases and death.

Duane C. McBride

REACHING THE WORLD NEXT DOOR

Awesome ministry! God bless you, and I hope this program spreads across the United States.

THE NEW COAT

Charles Mills, I was touched by reading this article. You have a gift.

Sylvia Gabrys

ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY IN GERMANY WILL OFFER FREE THEOLOGY DEGREES

I am a retired North American Division pastor and educator. This is excellent news! I congratulate our leaders who have the foresight of doing what they can to help with the needs of our future pastors! Practical experience will enable them to be better master's students, as well as solidify their calling to pastoral ministry.

Edwin Gibbons

COMMUNITY FAMILY IMPACTED BY AN ADVENTIST ACADEMY IS BAPTIZED

Brought tears to my eyes to see how God works through us, His church. Congratulations to the Campion Academy community and welcome to the Tesdardi family.

Sone Mariner

Beautiful story. God works things according to His will. May His name be honored.

Roselyn Oneka

IN THE U.S., LOCAL CHURCH PARTNERS WITH COMMUNITY TO OPEN HOMELESS SHELTER

This is the flesh and bones of witness.

Kevin James

U.S. ADVENTIST HOSPITAL BRINGS COVID VACCINES TO VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

Kudos to Shawnee Mission! And to the respiratory team!

Dan L. Kelly

WHAT HAPPENED ON CHRISTMAS?

After preaching this once, a 10-year-old boy was afraid gifts and celebrations would be stopped at his house. I now try to emphasize that celebrating God's entry into the human family is now authenticated. There's more reason to celebrate than ever!

David. E. Smith

A HYMN TO COMING JUSTICE

Six years later I'm still coming back to this article. Thanks, Bill.

Jarod Thomas

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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“If I walk down the street and see the mayor, he knows me, and I know him. These connections are wonderful. It tells people, ‘Hey, the Adventists do care!’”

Greg Carlson, p. 13

NEWS



A vaccine shot is prepared during the North American Division's December 12, 2021, clinic.

PHOTO: SCREENSHOT BY PIETER DAMSTEGT

NAD WORKS WITH COUNTY TO OFFER COVID-19 VACCINE CLINICS

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS ALSO DISTRIBUTED FRESH PRODUCE.

BY KIMBERLY LUSTE MARAN, NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION NEWS

On December 12, 2021, the sun beamed down on a crisp afternoon as a stream of cars pulled into the North American Division (NAD) headquarters parking lot in Columbia, Maryland. Once parked, people of all ages were welcomed and directed inside to the second COVID-19 vaccine clinic held this fall at its headquarters building.

The clinic, hosted by the NAD Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL) Department in partnership with Howard County General Hospital, was held in the Charles E.

Bradford Conference Center on the first floor of the building. For some this was a return for a second shot after getting their first vaccination on November 21. For others this was either a booster or first-time vaccination.

“On behalf of the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department, a heartfelt thank-you to our NAD family for making the vaccination clinics and produce giveaway a tremendous success,” organizer Melissa Reid, a PARL associate director, said.

“Community events such as this one are key to helping us vaccinate as many people as possible, allowing us to take one more step toward ending the pandemic,” Ben Bigelow, director of the COVID-19 Mobile Vaccine Team at Johns Hopkins Health System, said. “This event was a tremendous success, and we are grateful to NAD for allowing us to use their building.”

During the first clinic a total of 255 community members received vaccinations (six first and second doses for adults; 131 third/booster

doses; and 118 pediatric doses). In the first half hour of the event, 75 people were served. Organizers also distributed a pallet of fresh produce, including yams, potatoes, squash, onions, and bananas, to 100 families in under 90 minutes.

“I’M GLAD I FOUND OUT THE CLINIC WAS HAPPENING HERE. IT MEANS A LOT THAT A CHURCH ORGANIZATION WOULD OPEN THEIR DOORS FOR THE COMMUNITY.”

The number of people seen during the second clinic on December 12 grew to 415 (17 first and second adult doses; 228 third/booster doses; and 170 pediatric doses). Bags of produce were again distributed to 100 families.

As community members left the NAD, many expressed their thanks, pleased with the smooth and organized vaccination process. One patient, who declined to share his name, said he had been hospitalized in January 2021 with COVID-19 and was now getting boosted. “This is a lovely building and a really good location,” he shared. “I’m

glad I found out the clinic was happening here. It means a lot that a church organization would open their doors for the community.”

Felicia Ward, another area resident, agreed, saying, “I live here in Columbia, so I came here because it was convenient for us. And it was easy for us to get an appointment.”

Ward, who came with another family member, added, “I feel it’s important for us to get the vaccine to help slow this down and get back to really what life is normally about.”

Mandy Leblanc, from Highland, brought her two children, ages 7 and 9, for their vaccination. “I think the clinic was great. It was quick. It was easy. It was good. The kids were a little scared, but it’s important to help keep them safe and healthy and doing the things that they love.”

Leblanc plans to follow up next month with the second shot. “I think it’s great to be able to partner with the community and help build that relationship. Will see you guys [for] the next one,” she said.

In addition to the Howard County hospital workers and volunteers, NAD staff members also participated, including assisting with setting up and greeting visitors.

“We give special thanks to our incredible NAD administration, facility services team, custodial staff, security team, volunteer greeters, and local church members who facilitated the produce giveaway,” Reid said. “We even had

help from some of our friendly staff kids! We are especially grateful to our ministry partners, specifically Adventist Community Services, Publishing Ministries, and Stewardship, for providing disposable bags and sharing literature and children’s activity pages.

It is not the first time the NAD has held a health clinic at its headquarters. The division has opened its doors to host health and wellness screenings and has offered a place for people to receive flu shots. And with the help of volunteers, they’ve also distributed food to area residents at least twice before.

“Volunteers responded positively; it really turned into friendship evangelism,” Reid shared about one of the previous produce giveaways events. “God showed us that He doesn’t always work in the same way. He just wants us to be consistent when it comes to our willingness to supply the needs of others.

“Thank you again for your partnership in ministry and for helping us reflect Christ’s message of hope and wholeness to our Howard County neighbors,” Reid added regarding health partners and volunteers.

Bingelow said they are also partnering with individual Adventist churches in the area. “We know that the partnerships we build currently will serve us after the pandemic as we continue to promote healthy practices in the community,” he said. 🍌



Healthy cooking courses are a means of connecting coastal village residents with the Adventist Church.

PHOTO: SOUTH AMERICAN DIVISION NEWS

“FLOATING CHURCH” CELEBRATES ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE AMAZON

INITIATIVES RESULT IN NEW CHURCHES AND LEAD 312 PEOPLE TO BAPTISM.

BY JACKELINE FARAH, SOUTH AMERICAN DIVISION, AND ADVENTIST REVIEW

Downstream on the waters of the Madeira River, a tributary of the Amazon River in Brazil, the Seventh-day Adventist “Floating Church” carried out hundreds of evangelistic and social actions in eight coastal communities during 2021, leaders reported. The Adventist-led outreach has reached far-off communities such as Caiçara, Canumã, and Abacaxis, in Borba and Novo Aripuanã, in the Brazilian state of Amazonas.

The activities began in March, when the boat left the hub city of Manaus and headed toward the municipality of Borba, about 90 miles upstream from the capital city of the state of Amazonas. Its destination? The community of Caiçara, with 270 inhabitants.

The small village has only one school. When students finish elementary school, they have to go to Borba to attend high school. Some never attend high school. Reflecting on the needs of the young people, Floating Church leaders offered vocational courses to these communities. Offers

included courses in basic computing, healthful cooking, body image and personal grooming, and guitar and voice techniques to encourage the residents’ continuous development.

For coordinators, leaders explained that it is a way to bring opportunities, especially to young people. “They end up being lazy because they don’t have leisure or study options in that small village,” Pastor Herbert Frank Souza said. “It is the reason they make the most of anything we offer them.”

MISSION REACH

The Floating Church team’s work usually starts with health-promoting actions, including health education courses and distribution of healthful-food baskets. In 2021 the Floating Church teams performed more than 600 medical, dental, and psychological initiatives of social care, leaders reported.

Planting Adventist congregations and helping build new churches usually mark the conclu-

sion of the Floating Church’s work in the community.

Leaders added that in 2021 the Floating Church also enlisted the help of volunteers from the One Year in Mission (OYiM) program. The young people who committed one year of their lives to support Adventist mission coordinated church leadership training activities. They also helped with Sabbath School and small-group initiatives.

Those involved with the OYiM projects, which include a new challenge each year, celebrated 2021 as a year of overcoming, Souza acknowledged. “We went through a difficult year, in which everything was uncertain, but God led every step we took,” he said. “Our goal was to plant three new churches, and with the Lord’s hands guiding us, we succeeded.”

The mission teams helped coordinate the construction of new church buildings in the communities of Caiçara, Canumã, and Abacaxis. Those buildings, which have a modern layout, are ready to receive church members, who have already been meeting in groups.

Together with the social actions, leaders reported that the Floating Church reach had a definite evangelistic impact in the region. “Hundreds of Bible studies were given to people living in small communities along the coast,” Floating Church leaders reported. “The evangelistic initiatives that accompanied social action initiatives resulted in 312 baptisms.”

Young people from Betio participate in the Hope Radio anniversary ceremony in Kiribati on December 16, 2021.

PHOTO: HOPE RADIO KIRIBATI



KIRIBATI GOVERNMENT HIGHLIGHTS ROLE OF ADVENTIST RADIO STATION

MORE THAN 300 PEOPLE ATTEND RADIO KIRIBATI'S THIRD ANNIVERSARY.

BY TARATAAKE ANGIKAI, ADVENTIST RECORD, AND ADVENTIST REVIEW

A Kiribati government minister was among more than 300 people gathered to commemorate Hope Radio Kiribati's third anniversary on December 16, 2021.

The ceremony, held in front of the Kiribati Mission office of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, began with a formal parade by Adventist Youths (AYs), Pathfinders, Adventurers, and church members from seven churches throughout the Kiribati capital, Tarawa.

Seventh-day Adventist leaders said that during the past three years, Hope Radio has not only an informed, educated, and entertained but also has served as a powerful evangelistic platform that has changed lives. It is something that can be seen through the bap-

tism of a considerable number of new families into the Adventist Church, they emphasized.

In his welcome remarks, Kiribati Mission president Taabua Rokeatau said Hope Radio has made a significant contribution to the Kiribati government. He said it has especially supported government ministries that needed to disseminate important announcements to local people in situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Hope Radio has assisted the Ministry of Health by airing radio spots promoting handwashing and a clean environment.

Tinte Itinteang, Kiribati's minister of health and medical services, represented the Kiribati head of state and the vice president,

who were away on official trips. Itinteang said the government is thankful to the Adventist Church for its valuable contribution in many areas, especially in promoting better health through the Tarawa Wellness Centre and programs aired on Hope Radio.

Itinteang confirmed that he is a regular listener of Hope Radio and emphasized the key role of the medium. "Radio is very useful in keeping people informed, educated, and entertained in matters not only to do with their physical, social, and mental health but their spiritual well-being as well," he said.

The minister's address to church members, special guests, and visitors was followed by a ribbon-cutting ceremony, musical performances, and a march involving AYs, Pathfinders, and Adventurers. Special guests were taken on a short tour of the radio tower and studios. ▀



Park Seventh-day Adventist Church in Salisbury, Maryland, is using its Community Services building to shelter the area homeless. PHOTO: COLUMBIA UNION VISITOR

LOCAL U.S. CHURCH PARTNERS TO OPEN HOMELESS SHELTER

COMMUNITY BUILDING GIVES A ROOF TO THOSE WHO LIVE ON THE STREETS.

BY EVAN KNOTT, FOR COLUMBIA UNION VISITOR

When a local nonprofit organization supporting homeless men in Salisbury, Maryland, United States, needed a new location for its winter shelter, the Park Seventh-day Adventist Church decided to lend a hand.

An organization called Hands and Hearts Ending Homelessness (HHEH) was founded 18 years ago after three men froze to death in Salisbury. The organization is a partner with the city government and local churches of several denominations to aid homeless men in the city.

For the past three years the director of HHEH has been Walter Davidson, a member of the Park church. When HHEH needed to find another location for the shelter this year, Davidson reached out to his home congregation right away.

"It's very gratifying to have my church come alongside this ministry and pick this ministry up and run with it," Davidson said.

Greg Carlson, pastor of the Park church, approached the church board about using the Community Services building across the

parking lot from the church as a shelter, and the board unanimously agreed.

"You could sense the Holy Spirit in the room in that board meeting," Carlson said. "We have this building, and, of course, during COVID we weren't using it much at all. How could we not serve the community with the community outreach building?"

With the board's approval, members converted the community outreach building into a shelter, bringing in beds and setting up area dividers. The shelter opened to serve the community on November 6, 2021.

In addition to providing nightly lodging, the men's shelter offers hot showers, clean clothes, haircuts, and warm meals. HHEH also works to find permanent housing for the men, which they achieved for more than 20 men in 2020.

HANDS-ON MINISTRY

Hosting the shelter at the Park church has provided opportunities for members to get involved in hands-on ministry through helping to prepare meals, providing

supervision, and getting to know the men personally. Many of the men who have stayed at the shelter have chosen to attend the church's Friday night vespers program and Saturday (Sabbath) morning worship service.

"It's been a tremendous blessing to our church," Carlson said. "I've had more guests on the campus of the Park church in the past 30 days than I did in five years."

Partnering with HHEH to host the shelter is the latest example of the Park church's commitment to collaborating with local community organizations and government agencies to serve those in need. The church previously worked with its partners to open a community center in the city this summer. According to Carlson, these partnerships are essential for effective community witness and outreach.

"Partnerships with other community organizations are key, and I think it's something that Adventists have been deficient in for a long time," Carlson said. "We're now [building those relationships] here in Salisbury. If I walk down the street and see the mayor, he knows me, and I know him. These connections are wonderful. It tells people, 'Hey, the Adventists do care!'"

The Park church has committed to hosting the men's shelter in its facility through April 2022.

"We would like to end homelessness; we know that's not going to happen," Davidson said. "But we're going to take a big bite out of it." ❖

IN ITALY, REGIONAL PRESIDENT VISITS ADVENTIST NURSING HOME

STEFANO BONACCINI COMMENDED THE STAFF'S COMMITMENT TO SERVE.

BY LINA FERRARA, HOPE MEDIA ITALIA, AND ADVENTIST REVIEW

In Italy, Emilia-Romagna region president Stefano Bonaccini recently visited Casa Mia, an Adventist retirement home in Forlì, in response to an invitation from the director of the facility.

"You are a piece of a welfare system with many faces," Bonaccini said. "We must keep the quality of services high precisely because they cater to people who need the quality of care not to be lowered."

He emphasized the role of facilities such as Casa Mia. "Nursing homes do not repair cars or dishwashers; they deal with people, who are helped with their weaknesses and fragility, with their feelings, their suffering, and, often, their hopes."

For this reason, Bonaccini said, "you are a very important presence and, from what you told me, you are even thinking of increasing your investments, of adding space to care for more people."

Bonaccini closed by thanking Adventist leaders for their work and support of the Forlì facility.

"Thank you very much for what you do," he said. "We want to have the best relationship with everyone. Instead of raising walls, we must build bridges. So regardless of your skin color, your religion, your language, we seek harmony, friendship, and solidarity."

Stefano Paris, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Italy, welcomed Bonaccini and other local and regional officials.

"It is an important moment; it is a piece of our history," Paris said, referring to Bonaccini's visit. In 1999, Casa Mia had welcomed the visit of Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, then president of Italy.

"This is a story," he said, "that you want to make available to citizens because a church is such when it manages to enter the social fabric with the aim of doing good. And the good today is not easy to do."

The Adventist community, however, has always focused on this element of seeking good in society, Paris said. "I want to thank especially the nurses of this nursing home, who make it all possible," he added.

He concluded with a proverb from Solomon recorded in Proverbs 27:17: "'As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another' [NIV]," Paris quoted. "In the same way, working together and in close connection for the common good, we can become a strength, especially in difficult moments like the ones we are living in," he said.

At the end of the tour of the facilities, Paris presented Bonaccini with a plaque signed by the employees and guests of Casa Mia in recognition of his work and service. "To President Bonaccini, for his great commitment, admirable dedication and constant challenges in the role of governor in Emilia-Romagna. The guests and employees of the 'Casa Mia' retirement home," the plaque reads. 🍀



Hannah Drewieck, a senior business administration and communication major and the project's managing editor.

PHOTO: UNION COLLEGE

ADVENTHEALTH AND COLLEGE STUDENTS CREATE WELLNESS JOURNAL

UNION COLLEGE STUDENTS WORKED AHEAD OF NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS.

BY ANNIKA CAMBIGUE, UNION COLLEGE, AND ADVENTIST REVIEW

AdventHealth's CREATION Life program has joined forces with Union College to create a wellness journal for teens and young adults. Students in the fall 2020 editing class were responsible for the concept, writing assignments, line editing, and writing of extra content. The journal contains pieces written by students at Adventist colleges across the United States.

Your Wellness Journal guides readers through each topic in the CREATION acronym—choice, rest, environment, activity, trust in God, interpersonal relationships, outlook, and nutrition—and encourages them to apply the concepts to their own lives. "The journal is intended for high school and college students,"



Basic food baskets are helping alleviate the hunger of socially vulnerable people in Brazil's city of Bahia. PHOTO: SOUTH AMERICAN DIVISION NEWS

Hannah Drewieck, a senior business administration and communication major and the project's managing editor, said. "It's meant to encourage overall health and be a resource they can relate to."

"It was a huge project, and our students did an excellent job," Lori Peckham, Union College assistant professor of communication, said. "They delivered what AdventHealth wanted, and now they have a great portfolio piece they can be proud of."

"Working on *Your Wellness Journal* was my number-one favorite thing I've done so far in college," Drewieck said. She said she has been quick to mention the project in her résumé and during job interviews.

Union sophomore Alexia Rains was one of the first to get a copy of *Your Wellness Journal*. She said, "I never keep up with journals, but this book really kept me engaged and focused on the content. I appreciate the interactive sections, especially those about choices, activity, and procrastination. They helped me understand that other college students struggle with the same things I do."

Founded in 1891 by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Union College is located in Lincoln, Nebraska. With a focus on undergraduate studies, Union offers a traditional liberal arts education combined with practical experiences such as internships, academic and career counseling, study abroad, and volunteer opportunities. ▀

MORE THAN HALF A MILLION POUNDS OF FOOD FOR FAMILIES

NETWORK OF BRAZILIAN ADVENTIST ENTREPRENEURS SERVES THE NEEDY.

BY CHARLISE ALVES, SOUTH AMERICAN DIVISION, AND ADVENTIST REVIEW

Inside the simple house with mud walls someone lit the flame on the stove. Damiana Soares dos Santos, of the Solidarity Hands Project, coordinated by the Federation of Adventist Entrepreneurs in Bahia, Brazil, arrived unannounced to visit the humble home of one of the families benefited by a food-distribution initiative in 2021.

The Adventist volunteer noticed that only one egg was cooking in the pan and found that the food would be divided among four people. Scenes like this are not uncommon, volunteers said. In moments like this, the Adventist-driven NGO is stepping up to assist families in need and alleviate suffering.

The Solidarity Hands Project includes five social programs, and among them is Solidarity Food Baskets.

The program gained more strength during the COVID-19 pandemic. The board of the Federation of Adventist Entrepreneurs in Bahia decided to invest more in purchasing basic food baskets because it became aware of how much some families needed the food.

According to Antônio Miguel de Almeida Silva, vice president of the organization in Bahia, volunteers have distributed 16,734 basic food baskets, for a total of 513,677 pounds of food. Coordinators said

that the initiative benefited 67,000 people living in Bahia and surrounding communities. The program required getting scores of volunteers on board.

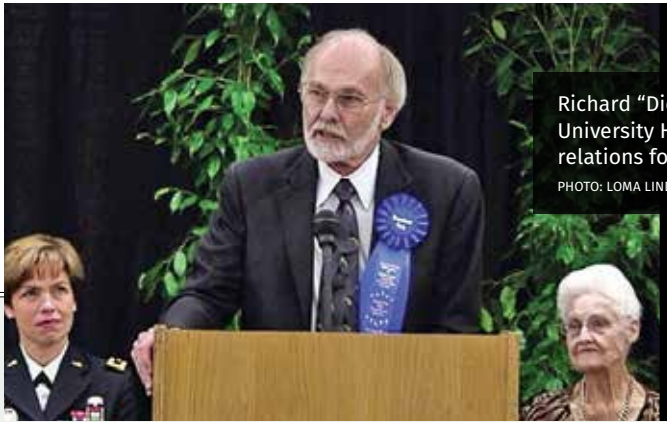
FROM ESTIMATES TO THE TABLE

The initiative involves much more than just purchasing the food baskets and delivering them. Silva said that sometimes he spends up to three days getting the best possible price. Then he has to buy the food, get a truck to pick it up, assemble the baskets, and finally reach the homes of those in need.

To accomplish all this, he enlists the help of other volunteers such as Damiana. In addition to visiting homes, she helps distribute food baskets and offers Bible studies to families. "It's a wonderful project because there are a lot of people starving. One example is the family that is studying the Bible with me. They were the ones frying one egg for four people," she said.

The basic food baskets include 31 pounds of rice, beans, flour, pasta, milk, vegetable protein, oil, and oats. "Only those who need such a basic food basket know its real value," Silva said.

Silva has been a volunteer for more than 20 years. "I find it very gratifying to help people who are socially vulnerable," he said. ▀



Richard “Dick” Schaefer was Loma Linda University Health’s director of community relations for nearly two decades.

PHOTO: LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY NEWS

LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY REMEMBERS HISTORIAN RICHARD SCHAEFER

EXPERIENCED PUBLIC AFFAIRS LEADER DIED ON OCTOBER 23 AT 80.

BY LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY HEALTH NEWS

Richard “Dick” Schaefer, the Loma Linda University Health (LLUH) official historian and storyteller, who served as director of community relations for nearly two decades, including during the high-profile 1984 “Baby Fae” surgery, died October 23, 2021. He was 80 and died from complications of leukemia.

Schaefer, who served as a spokesperson for the organization from the late 1960s to the 1980s, worked at LLUH for more than 55 years.

A native of Loma Linda, California, United States, Schaefer earned a bachelor’s degree in communication from La Sierra College (now La Sierra University) in 1966 and became assistant to the director of university relations, precursor to the LLUH Office of Public Relations. Two years later, in 1968, he became community relations officer, representing Loma Linda University Medical Center.

In 1976 Schaefer was asked to head the LLUH Office of Community Relations, the health-care counterpart to university relations.

In 1984 infant heart-transplant pioneer Leonard Bailey performed a procedure on a patient that

thrust LLUH into the international media spotlight. Schaefer and his communication colleagues were immediately inundated with attention from hundreds of media organizations. On several occasions, he provided news updates—sometimes on camera—to major U.S. television networks, as well as hundreds of other media organizations.

“That was baptism by fire,” Schaefer recalled in an interview with the Riverside, California, *Press-Enterprise* newspaper in 2012. “We were used to dealing with the news media 1,000 times a year, just giving patient condition reports and working on human interest stories. But when Baby Fae happened, that [number] went to 1,500 times a day.”

In 2000 he was tasked with researching and writing the history of Loma Linda University Health. Over the years he published several books, including *Legacy*, focusing on the heritage and history of Loma Linda University Medical Center; *On Becoming Shryock*, a biography of one of Loma Linda University’s founding pioneers, Harold Shryock; and *Glory of the Vision—Unabridged*, a five-volume history of Loma Linda University Health. Schaefer also

wrote and published the book *Creation: “Behold, It Was Very Good,”* a publication in which he cited nearly 1,000 scientists and commentators on both sides of the creation/evolution debate.

Schaefer served on the board of directors for Arrowhead United Way and United Way of the East Valley for a decade. In Forest Falls, where Schaefer was a resident for many years, he was part of the board of directors for the Forest Park Mutual Water Company for three years, as well as commissioner for the Forest Falls Fire Protection District for two decades. From 2008 to 2010 he served as president of the Loma Linda Chamber of Commerce, as well as commissioner of the City of Loma Linda Historical Commission beginning in 2008.

Schaefer had a twin brother, Bob, who would sometimes listen as unsuspecting individuals conversed with him about LLUH happenings, then calmly inform the speaker that they probably thought he was his brother.

Schaefer thoroughly enjoyed researching and writing the history of Loma Linda University Health, which he called “a special place on earth.”

“Sometimes, in the quiet of my office in the Del E. Webb Memorial Library,” he said during a 2020 interview with Margie Miller of Loma Linda *City News*, “I find myself laughing out loud—and sometimes, reaching for a box of tissues.”



HOSPITALS IN NEPAL JOIN ADRA TO ROLL OUT COVID-19 VACCINE

CAMPAIGNS. Since June 2021 the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) in Nepal has collaborated with hospitals dedicated to combat COVID-19. Nepal, one of the first countries in the southern region of Asia to start a mass COVID-19 vaccination drive, intended to inoculate 72 percent of its eligible population above 18 years of age. "Vaccine hesitancy and the fear of contracting the virus have kept many people at home," Leighton Fletcher, ADRA's country director in Nepal, said. ADRA is aiding in this issue.



U.S. CHURCH REGION PROVIDES GRANT FOR ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY IN

JAMAICA. The Georgia-Cumberland Conference supported the building project for the Northern Caribbean University Adventist Church (NCU) complex in Mandeville, Jamaica, by funding a \$75,000 grant. NCU needed new and updated facilities as it is the oldest private tertiary institution in Jamaica. The grant will go to completing the sanctuary, the School of Religion, and the community complex.



THE PRIME MINISTER OF CAPE VERDE COMMENDS THE SOCIAL

COMMITMENT OF THE ADVENTIST CHURCH. During his visit to Achada São Filipe Adventist church in Praia, Ulisses Correia E. Silva shared congratulatory remarks. "I would like to acknowledge the wonderful work the Seventh-day Adventist Church is doing, especially at the beginning of the pandemic. They held a very strong action of solidarity," Silva said. The Cabo Verde Conference welcomed Silva and hosted the visit.



ADVENTIST AMONG CHURCH LEADERS WHO MET WITH ESTONIA'S

PRESIDENT. Andres Ploompuu, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Estonia, was among a group of religious leaders who met with Alar Karis, the president of Estonia, in December. Among the topics discussed was the mental health of youth and children. Church leaders shared an overview of activities and initiatives that various denominations have taken in this area. The report to the president included a review of the Adventist Church's activities in the country.



ADRA RESPONDS TO REFUGEE CRISIS. ADRA has stepped up humanitarian relief operations to aid more than 31,000 Venezuelan refugees and migrants to rebuild their lives in Brazil. ADRA has launched the ANA Project to provide food and household and hygiene items to families. The project is locally known as the Food and Non-Food Actions for Venezuelan Migrants in Brazil.



ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY IN GERMANY TO OFFER FREE THEOLOGY

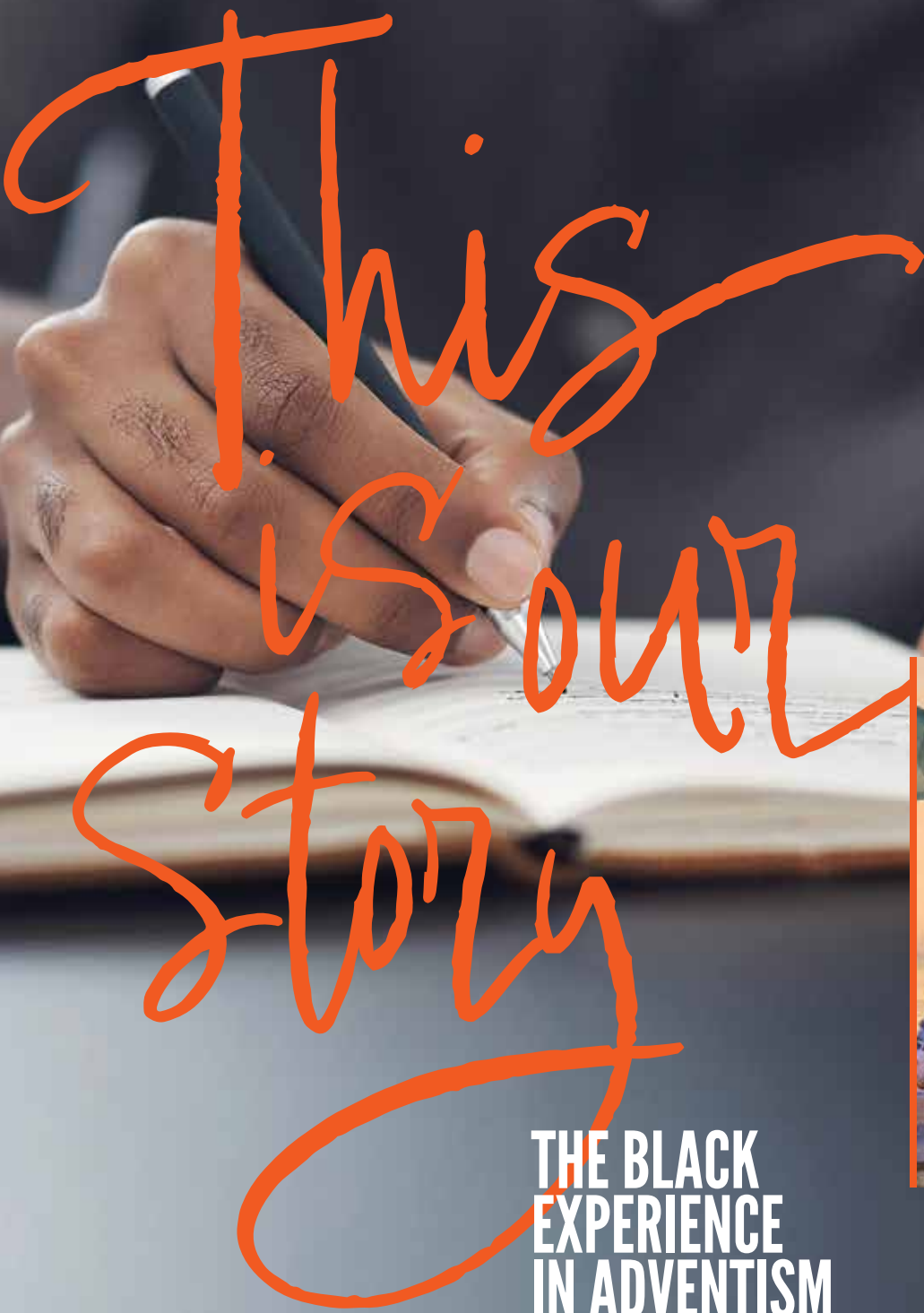
DEGREES. The North German Union and South German Union conferences of the Seventh-day Adventist Church have reached an agreement with Friedensau Adventist University, a higher education school, stipulating that the Adventist Church will cover students' tuition fees while they are enrolled in an undergraduate theology degree at the school. The agreement will allow students to complete a full theology degree without paying tuition fees, starting in the Summer 2022 semester.



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A close-up photograph of a hand holding a black pen, writing on a white notebook. The background is blurred, showing another person's hand and pen. Overlaid on the image is the text 'This is our story' in a large, orange, handwritten-style font. In the bottom right corner, there is a small inset image of a man in a hat and vest sitting on a boat, and the text 'THE BLACK EXPERIENCE IN ADVENTISM' in white, bold, uppercase letters.

This is our story

**THE BLACK
EXPERIENCE
IN ADVENTISM**



*Shadowed
beneath the
hand of
our God*

R. CLIFFORD JONES

The African American experience in Adventism is a complex saga of struggle and survival, protest and progress, retreat and resilience. The encounter of Americans of African descent with White Millerites, later Sabbatarian Adventists, and ultimately Seventh-day Adventists has produced a relationship that is a compelling blend of interest and intrigue that continues to provoke informed as well as misinformed analysis and conclusions. It may include elements or features both unfamiliar and perhaps difficult for all to relate to.

BEGINNINGS OF BLACK ADVENTISM

Initially, slave masters were slow, if not loath, to teach the Bible to slaves, but they began to do so when they concluded that Bible knowledge produced better slaves. Africans brought an array

force in the African American community. No other institution has had as profound or as protracted an impact on the lives of Black people.¹

The nineteenth century saw exponential growth and change in America. National geography and economy were dramatically altered, land mass almost doubled, and population almost quadrupled. Optimistic Europeans flooded the country in record numbers in pursuit of economic opportunities. Unconventionality in politics and religion was common, accommodating Millerism as an attractive alternative to organized religion.

Named for its most public advocate, William Miller, a self-taught Bible student and theologian, Millerism espoused Jesus' return to the earth to cleanse it in 1844. The Millerite movement attracted a handful of Blacks, including William Ellis Foy, to whom visions were given by God. Ostensibly Foy, fearing prejudice and violence, refused to publicize his visions, though he continued preaching until his death toward the end of the nineteenth century.² But the Millerite movement was hardly strategic about such sociological specifics as winning Blacks to the cause.

The Great Disappointment sent the Millerites reeling. Many surrendered their faith, but some added their belief in the Second Coming to the Sabbath truth. Sabbatarian Adventists were moderate abolitionists who rejected slavery as a stain on the fabric of the young and growing republic. They believed in the dignity of all human beings, but preferred quiet diplomacy to outright confrontation in combating slavery and prejudice.

Adventism would not seriously confront the race issue for many decades. But the ordination of Charles M. Kinney, "Father of Black Adventism," produced just such a challenge. Born in 1855, when only a sprinkling of Blacks identified with Adventism, Kinney was employed by the denomination shortly



VERNON INYE © RHPA

The Morning Star was a riverboat, purchased and renovated in 1894, by Edson White. It sailed down the Mississippi River as a mobile church and school primarily serving Black children and adults.

of religious beliefs and practices to slavery, including belief in a transcendent, loving Creator God. They syncretized what their masters taught with what they had brought with them. From that time to now the Black church, which existed during slavery as the "Invisible Institution," has been the centripetal

after he became an Adventist. In his giftedness Kinney was recommended for ordination to the gospel ministry in 1889. The event was a bittersweet experience that he would never forget. In one account, “church officials” attempted to segregate Kinney’s members at the camp meeting service, changing course only when Kinney and his congregation threatened to leave the grounds in protest.

Shortly thereafter, Kinney began to call for separate services for Whites and Blacks, all for the sake of mission and ministry. Believing that the entrenched prejudice in American society created real and intractable barriers to gospel promulgation, Kinney called for candid and frank conversations about race between Blacks and Whites. He did not want to see the dignity and worth of his people discounted, or to see



GC ARCHIVES

Charles M. Kinney

Whites walk away from religious services because of the presence of Blacks. Ultimately Kinney came to believe that for the sake of Adventist mission, separation should be pursued as a viable and strategic option. Such separation should neither be permanent nor become a monument to alienation.

ELLEN G. WHITE AND THE RACE ISSUE

Adventist Church pioneer Ellen G. White, whose life and ministry continue to be a grounding and guiding influence for the denomination, wrote eloquently about slavery and how people of African descent should be viewed and treated. For most of her life



OAKWOOD UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

William H. Green

people of color were locked in slavery, Reconstruction, or Jim Crowism. White died just as progressivism, the nation’s dominant political ideology in the early twentieth century, was beginning to wane.

White believed in the inherent equality of Blacks, saying that God’s love does not discriminate on the basis of race, and that the blood of Jesus makes of all people one nation. She stated that there would be no segregated neighborhoods in heaven, and that the denomination’s less-than-vigorous efforts to evangelize Blacks was

sinful. Moreover, that the church had received no permission to prevent Blacks from worshipping in White assemblies. She believed that the denomination’s treatment of Blacks left it unprepared for the second coming of Jesus Christ, and that much was owed Blacks for what they had experienced in this country: “The American nation owes a debt of love to the colored race, and God has ordained that they should make restitution for the wrong they have done them in the past. Those who have taken no active part in enforcing slavery upon the colored people are not relieved for the responsibility of making special efforts to remove, as far as possible, the sure result of their enslavement.”³

She continued: “Many among the colored people who have been entrusted with God-given ability, who had intellectual capabilities far superior to those of the master who claimed them as property, were forced to endure every indignity, and their souls groaned under the most cruel and unjust oppression.”⁴

MISSION TO BLACK AMERICA

White’s second son, Edson White, was an early leader in Seventh-day Adventist mission to Blacks. His impetus was his mother’s unambiguous counsel, which he felt impelled to put into action. His project to bring the Advent message to African Americans was financed by an educational aid he called the *Gospel Primer*, and was facilitated on a boat he called the *Morning Star*. White and his missionary companions plied the Mississippi River from the late nineteenth well into the twentieth century, bringing the gospel to Blacks hungry for truth, enlightenment, and empowerment. The *Morning Star* would become the headquarters of the Southern Missionary Society, which evolved into the Negro Department of the General Conference in 1909. The brainchild of an innovative thinker who pushed the margins, it represents the first sustained endeavor of Adventists to evangelize Blacks.

Around the time Edson White began traveling the Mississippi promoting the *Gospel Primer*, Adventists who placed a premium on education established Oakwood Industrial School in Huntsville, Alabama, for African Americans. Ellen White’s influence was key in the launch of the school, which she visited to offer encouragement and inspiration, and included in her will. Today, as Oakwood celebrates 125 years of transforming

lives, students from around the world still enter to learn and depart to serve. Breakthroughs and blessings continue to define life at Oakwood, which unashamedly leads with “God First.”

SPECIFIC MOTIVATION

What prompted Blacks to join the Advent movement during the nineteenth century, a period of volatility in which America fought several wars, including a civil war that was sparked by the race issue? Certainly not some overwhelming sense of love and inclusion experienced when they showed up, often uninvited, in White houses of worship. What Blacks discovered from Adventists was truth that uniquely resonated with their mental, physical, and spiritual needs. To a people emerging from the throes of slavery and caught in the clutches of racism, the Sabbath offered a much-needed respite from their daily grind; and the biblical teaching of the second coming of Jesus Christ held out hope of rescue from injustice and oppression. The still-developing emphasis on health in the Adventist Church was an antidote for their physical suffering. In sum, Adventism offered a system of truth and teaching that powerfully appealed to the desire of African Americans for a better life in this world, as well as the one to come.

THE NEGRO DEPARTMENT

In 1909 denominational leaders saw the need to create an entity that would intentionally and strategically plan and execute mission to the African American community. The result was the creation of the Negro Department of the General Conference. Black pastors of renown at the time generally supported the move, including James K. Humphrey⁵ and Lewis Sheafe, the “Apostle to Black America.”⁶ The first three directors of the Negro Department were White. That changed in 1918 when Black Detroit lawyer William H. Green was elected director, serving until his death in 1928. When Green assumed leadership of the Negro Department, the office transitioned away from the General Conference building, with Green working out of his suitcase.

Green’s death gave leading voices among African American Adventists the opportunity to revive an earlier call for the creation of regional conferences.⁷ The Negro Department had experienced some measure of success with major objectives, facilitating mission among Blacks, thousands of whom

had streamed into the urban centers of the North in the early twentieth century. But the development of Black leadership still lagged. Regional conferences were the way forward. They would provide the full participation and self-determination Blacks longed for and sought as their God-given right. Regional conferences would only materialize, however, after tragic defections from the church of such exceptional Black leaders as Lewis Sheafe (1915), J. H. Manns (1916), and James K. Humphrey (1929).⁸ African Americans have achieved little in Adventism without the intentional and concerted pushes of conscientious souls.⁹

Ellen White’s statement that Blacks and Whites may worship separately until the Lord reveals a better way has been heard as an oblique affirmation of regional conferences, under what is labeled the “Expediency Doctrine,” which temporarily allows, if not accepts, separate congregations and organizations for mission purposes.¹⁰ Though the regional conference phenomenon has sometimes been maligned because of a lack of understanding regarding its rationale and purpose, regional conferences continue to deliver on their promise. They represent a success story of mission to the African American community.

FURTHER NOTES ON THE BLACK ADVENTIST CHURCH

Church Growth and Evangelism: Church growth and evangelism have always been central to the African American Adventist’s understanding of mission and ministry. African American worship services are evangelistic in nature, with every element of the service done with a view to winning souls for Jesus Christ.¹¹ Late-twentieth-century evangelism giants in the Black work include Earl E. Cleveland, whose “Trinidad Triumph” of more than 800 baptisms from a single evangelistic campaign was unprecedented in Adventist evangelism; Charles E. Bradford, the first Black to be



GC ARCHIVES

E. Earl Cleveland



BENJAMIN BAKER/CO BROOKS COLLECTION

Charles D. Brooks

elected president of the North American Division; and Charles D. Brooks, the first speaker/director of the Breath of Life telecast. Pitched uniquely to the African American community, Breath of Life is efficiently operated and mission-driven. It builds on other evangelistic initiatives, such as



GC ARCHIVES

Charles E. Bradford

Message magazine, which continues to reach the African American community with the message of a loving Savior. *Message* is the longest-serving religious journal pitched to Black people in the United States.

Regional Conference Retirement Plan (RCRP): The RCRP stands out as one of the significant achievements in the Black work in the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. Doubts about the value of benefits Black retirees were receiving from the denomination's retirement fund led regional conference presidents to launch the RCRP around the turn of the century. Though many predicted the venture's failure, hundreds have been able to retire with dignity as a result of the plan, which today is on a solid financial footing. Construction of a multi-million-dollar, 32,000 -square-foot state-of-the-art facility to house the Office for Regional Conference Ministries (ORCM), the RCRP, Breath of Life, and *Regional Voice* magazine on the campus of Oakwood University is on the cusp of completion. *Message* magazine will also have an office in this facility.

Boarding Academy: Pine Forge Academy, the only all-Black boarding high school in North America, represents much more than secondary education. The school casts itself as a beacon of hope that eschews mediocrity and is a feeder for Oakwood University, which builds on its firm foundation. Not unlike many Adventist schools across North America, Pine Forge is facing its share of challenges. Black church leaders are united in their desire to see the school thrive and build on its treasured tradition of delivering quality education to Black youth.¹²

Office for Regional Conference Ministries: Headquartered in Huntsville, Alabama, ORCM is the operational arm of the regional conferences. It is responsible for coordinating the activities and

initiatives that regional conferences do collectively, meeting biweekly and at the call of its executive director, currently Dana Edmond. All regional conference presidents and directors of regional affairs in the Pacific and North Pacific unions sit on the Presidents' Council, which, with the executive director, guides ORCM.

THE REST OF THE STORY

The story of the Black experience in Adventism is far from over. What will the rest of that story look like? What will it bring? One thing is sure: leaders and supporters must be intentional and innovative in crafting the next, as well as every subsequent, chapter of the story. We must do this, Blacks and Whites, with integrity, courage, and understanding, engaging in candid conversations about race—and every other issue before us—as we serve together in our God-entrusted mission of taking the gospel of love to all America and all the world. To be sure, openly and honestly talking about race will be daunting, given that in this country conversations about race have always been difficult and potentially explosive. But we must talk if we are going to succeed in working as one, taking the good news of a soon-coming Savior to the whole world. And we can be assured that our God, who reigns and rules in all history, continues to rule in ours. 🦋

¹ For a concise history of the institution, see Louis Gates, *The Black Church: This Is Our Story, This Is Our Song* (New York: Penguin Press, 2021).

² Trenchant treatment of William Foy may be found in Delbert Baker, *The Unknown Prophet* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1987).

³ Ellen G. White, in *Review and Herald*, Jan. 21, 1896.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ For a succinct study of James K. Humphrey and his break from Adventism, see R. Clifford Jones, *James K. Humphrey and the United Sabbath-Day Adventists* (Jackson, Miss.: University Press of Mississippi, 2006).

⁶ An excellent study of Sheafe is provided by Douglas K. Morgan, *Lewis C. Sheafe: Apostle to Black America* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 2010).

⁷ "Regional conferences": administrative units of Blacks led by Blacks in various regions of the country.

⁸ Calvin B. Rock, *Protest and Progress: Black Seventh-day Adventist Leadership and the Push for Parity* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 2018), pp. 29-95.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ R. Clifford Jones, "Until the Lord Shows Us a Better Way: Ellen G. White and the Issue of Regional Conferences," *Ellen G. White and Current Issues Symposium* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, 2002).

¹¹ Rock.

¹² R. Clifford Jones, "African-American Worship: Its Heritage, Character, and Quality," *Ministry*, September 2002, pp. 5-9.

¹³ Douglas Morgan, *Change Agents: The Lay Movement That Challenged the System and Turned Adventists Toward Racial Justice* (Westlake Village, Calif.: Oak and Acorn), pp. 242-251.

R. Clifford Jones, dean of Oakwood University's School of Theology, was president, from 2014 to 2021, of the Lake Region Conference, Black Adventism's first regional conference.



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Oakwood University delivers, serving both God and community.



Oakwood University president Leslie Pollard and his wife, Prudence, stand near the Oakwood University mobile market, which helps to address food insecurities in Huntsville, Alabama.

One hundred twenty-five years ago 65 towering oak trees on an unpromising 360-acre former slave plantation in the heart of America's South inspired the name of what would become a signally successful monument to Christian education. Oakwood University (OU) began with 16 students, a principal and three teachers, a mere 30 years after the Civil War, for the education of former slaves and their children. Through the decades, OU has prepared students both "for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come."¹ In the following conversation Prudence Pollard (PP), administrator and creative leader for her school's Healthy Campus, Healthy Community initiative (HC2020), answers questions from the *Adventist Review* (AR) on her school and the programs she leads.

AR Why is a woman, Ellen G. White, identified as OU's founder? Did she discover the property or serve as its first administrator?

PP White deserves that title like no one else, because her counsel was like no one else's, explicitly divinely guided. In a letter [no. 313] written in 1904 she declared, "It was in the providence of God that the Huntsville school farm was purchased." And as we conduct our 125th anniversary celebration during this school year, we continue to live and serve by her inspired dictum on what true education is: "True education means more than the pursuit of a certain course of study. . . . It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for

the higher joy of wider service in the world to come."²

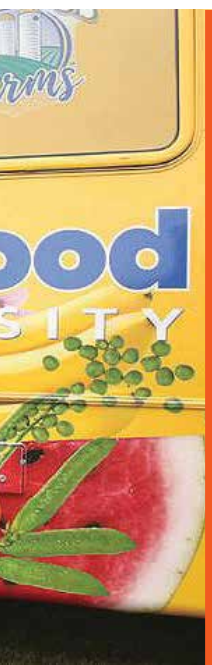
AR What's so unique about OU? What would you say OU stands for that would otherwise be missing?

PP As a missional institution, OU sits squarely within two important traditions. Oakwood is a strong member of the family of Seventh-day Adventist education in the North American Division, and the global Seventh-day Adventist Church. But OU is also a strong member of America's family of 107 Historically Black Colleges and Universities [HBCUs]. So Oakwood holds the unique distinction of being the only Seventh-day Adventist HBCU—a status that provides for all of Adventist higher education a direct pipeline to the White House and the U.S. Department of Education, because of its esteemed historic status.

AR "Esteemed status," you said? Where is that coming from? Stated a bit differently, how do you know that your school enjoys "esteemed status"?

PP *U.S. News & World Report*, known for its statements and analyses of rank, has consistently rated Oakwood University among top-tier, private liberal arts colleges and universities in the South, in two different categories. These are (1) "Historically Black Colleges and Universities" and (2) "Regional Colleges/South." Our combined student body and current workforce represent more than 50 countries. We offer 60 degrees in nearly a score of academic disciplines at the baccalaureate and master's levels, and consistently sustain an outstanding record of preparing successful applicants for graduate and/or professional schools or directly for the workforce. The school's motto, shared by faculty and students, is "Enter to Learn, Depart to Serve." Consistent with its mission statement, Oakwood University's primary business is the work of transforming lives through curricular and cocurricular learning—both for now and for eternity.

AR I believe it would be inappropriate to conduct an interview on Oakwood University without engaging you on two subjects: your Healthy Campus/Healthy Community initiative, and your food security drive. Tell me, first, about the



Oakwood students, employees, and community residents now have access to high-quality care at the walk-in clinic.



Huntsville Hospital CEO David Spillers (left) and Oakwood University president Leslie Pollard recently signed lease agreements related to the new ambulatory health clinic.



The Oakwood University/Huntsville Community Health Action Center opened in June 2021.

fundamentals of your Healthy Campus/Healthy Community program.

PP Yes, Healthy Campus 2020 [HC2020] was launched in 2015 as a signature program, and I'll speak of both its local function—on OU's campus—and the notoriety it has garnered without our investment in any PR campaign.

HC2020 integrates wholistic health education into and across curricular and cocurricular activities of the internal campus community. While being a comprehensive service and service-learning initiative, it is also complementary to service programs of our Center for Entrepreneurship, Department of Social Work, School of Business, and Department of Education, among others. I was asked to lead a program to better understand the health of our students and campus by organizing faculty, staff, and students into a design team for the initiative.³ It took 12 months of regular meetings and research to set the goals and define the objectives and outcomes of the HC2020 initiative. Our team organized with a very specific aim—to empower students to make healthy and healthier choices. HC2020 was very targeted: the program was and is responsive to the problem of preventable diseases that affect the principal populations our university serves—both students and employees. In all, 23 initiatives help educate the campus regarding healthy lifestyle decisions, utilizing Ellen White's eight principles of health, to foster a wholistic approach to health of mind, body, and spirit. Our students named the principles **STANDOUT** and developed the book *STAND-OUT: Eight Secrets to Unlocking Your Potential*.

As for notoriety, HC2020 was loudly affirmed in 2018, when Oakwood became the first Adventist institution of higher education and the only HBCU to be awarded the prestigious Crystal Apple Award by the Partnership for a Healthier America, chaired by Mrs. Michelle Obama, former first lady of the United States. The Healthy Campus program continues today with the support of faculty, staff, and a trained Student Health Ambassadors team of 40 who promote the goals of Healthy Campus and serve as student peer educators for every incoming class of university students.

Local and national media have found OU's health and wellness program eminently newsworthy. CBS affiliate WHNT provided local cover-

age of the inaugural student health fair during new student orientation.⁴ In November 2016 David Williams of Harvard University presented an eye-opening *TED Talks* article that cited OU's HC2020 as an example of programs across the U.S. dedicated to dismantling discrimination with its deleterious effects on the well-being of African Americans.⁵ In 2019 WHNT interviewed university administrators on the program.

AR Is your community benefiting in any way besides seeing you on the news and hearing about you in Harvard professor lectures? Does HC2020 engage with its neighbors in the city of Huntsville, Alabama?

PP Yes, we do, and did from the start. Built into the original HC2020 proposal was also a "town and gown" community-serving side of the proposal. Phase 2 of HC2020 was planned to move health ministry beyond the borders of our campus and to take our service into our local community. We wanted to share the good news of health with those in our communities near and far.

We operationalized phase 2 in 2019 by updating the initiative's name to Healthy Campus, Healthy Community [HC²]. We took specific steps by partnering with the Huntsville Hospital Health System to provide ambulatory care to underserved populations in a facility that we would build, own, and operate. On June 2, 2021, we officially opened the Oakwood University Community Health Action Center adjacent to the campus. The center encompasses an ambulatory-care clinic operated by the Huntsville Hospital. Oakwood students, employees, and community residents now have access to high-quality care at the walk-in clinic. Establishing this facility allows for continuity of care from the walk-in primary-care clinic to inpatient care at Huntsville Hospital.

At a lease-signing event in February 2021, David Spillers, CEO of Huntsville Hospital Health System, said: "Huntsville Hospital Health System is very pleased to work with Oakwood University in bringing this dream to fruition. The clinic will provide important health services to people throughout this community." And Dr. Leslie Pollard, president of Oakwood University, said, "The Community Health Action Center launches Oakwood's community-facing phase of our nationally

recognized Healthy Campus 2020 campus wellness initiative." He particularly emphasized that the signing ceremony "underscores our Healthy Campus, Healthy Community commitment to our community." And he expressed gratitude that Huntsville Hospital leadership was open to working with the university's out-of-the-box idea.

President Pollard highlighted the interesting historical continuity between his school and the hospital: "Oakwood University has been in the Huntsville community for 125 years, and so has Huntsville Hospital. Together we were founded in 1896. We plan to bring health and healing for the morbidities affecting the citizens of northwest Huntsville. The partnership today between Huntsville Hospital and Oakwood University is designed to improve the health status of underserved citizens of the city of Huntsville."

AR This is probably an appropriate juncture at which to introduce my second conversation, because of its direct impact on your neighborhood. I'm referring, of course, to your address to problems of food insecurity in the university's environs. Please tell us more about it. Are specific areas, ages, or ethnicities involved?

PP The region of north Alabama where Oakwood resides consists of Madison, Morgan, and Limestone counties. The city of Huntsville is located in Madison County. Huntsville's population is 215,000 according to the 2020 estimate of the United States Census Bureau. A staggering demographic detail of our community is that approximately 16.8 percent of the adult population lives below the Federal poverty line.

Oakwood's 10,000-square-foot Community Health Action Center [CHAC] not only delivers health care on one side of our facility. The other side of our facility houses real-life service-learning activities for our students and faculty. President Pollard charged the committee to be responsive to the health needs of the on- and off-campus communities. The CHAC responds to the comorbidities of diabetes, hypertension, diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular diseases and related issues such as job and income insecurities. And during the COVID-19 pandemic, Healthy Campus [now HC] responded offering testing and vaccination services to the campus and community. General



services include delivery of health education, nutrition education, job skills training, and the services of our food pantry and mobile food market. Health and nutrition education presentations are augmented with a certified professional teaching kitchen, allowing attendees to receive practical health and nutrition education. Children attending our afternoon or weekend programs will have their own room with a library donated by another partner, Jack and Jill, Inc., and a STANDOUT health curriculum designed by biologist Dr. Elaine Vanterpool and me.

The goal of the Oakwood University mobile market, managed by food scientist Lisa Dalrymple and the Health Ambassadors team, is to serve low- and fixed-income residents and senior citizens by ensuring prices are affordable and by optimizing opportunities for residents who receive public assistance to purchase healthy foods provided by the mobile market.

As a highlight of the phase 2 initiative, Oakwood University's long-awaited mobile market was

The goal of the Oakwood University mobile market is to serve low- and fixed-income residents and senior citizens by ensuring prices are affordable and by optimizing opportunities for residents who receive public assistance to purchase healthy foods provided by the mobile market.

officially launched February 2, 2021. This initiative is part of an effort to address food insecurity faced by many residents of north Alabama residing in food deserts, and also to combat diet-related health disparities and comorbidities that plague so many residents in the Deep South, particularly in our Huntsville communities.

AR So was all this work one long and diligent struggle to create something out of nothing, 12 months of plodding, committees, developing schemes, determining strategies, seeking the most meaningful type and area of engagement? How did you keep going? Was there some lift, some serendipitous thrill along the way, that made everybody break out into song before settling down to the grind again?

PP Well, I'd say it wasn't all slog and grind: there were and continue to be moments of joy and punctuations of satisfaction all along. Especially when people say, "Sure, we'll give you money for that!" One of my responsibilities is administering our grants office, providing the university with much-needed financial partners. In 2019 we submitted a grant application to Alabama's Department of Economic Development (ADECA). Thank God, the grant was funded by ADECA to respond to "Health in the Deep South: An Effort to Combat Health Disparities and Food Deserts in the Deep South." The ADECA-funded mobile market is designed to take fresh fruits, vegetables, and health education to underserved communities in Huntsville via a state-of-the-art, customized traveling mobile market and health education unit, and WHNT covered it too.⁶ So these double affirmations—grants awarded and coverage garnered—have been a repeated lift to our spirits in the midst of serious hard work. In 2020 and again in 2021 corporate partners awarded grants to fund an HC2020 Student Health Ambassadors transportation and mobile food pantry, to distribute free groceries and fresh fruits and vegetables from the Community Health Action Center to six food deserts in Huntsville, Alabama. Health education will accompany the fruits and vegetables, thanks to the generous support of groups like the Magic Johnson Foundation and our partnership with food banks and the American Heart Association. During the thanksgiving season the Student

Health Ambassadors team packed holiday food baskets to feed families of four. A packing party was held at the CHAC's food pantry and each grocery bag, valued at more than \$300, was delivered to 100 families by the Student Health Ambassadors team. For Christmas we did the same, thanks to a grant from the Versacare Foundation. The food pantry operates Monday to Friday at the CHAC, and also at the six mobile market food desert locations.

February 2, 2021, the fully equipped traveling mobile market officially launched in north Huntsville, aimed at safely delivering affordable, fresh, pesticide-free, locally grown produce on a biweekly basis. It is now providing access to health care, delivering nutrition education, and making healthy, affordable foods available to several identified food deserts and underserved communities. In our 125th year of service, we say, "Praise God!"

On campus, we're teaching youth to renew their strength; beyond campus boundaries we're bringing bread to the hungry. Local stakeholders help us optimize the success of our community health initiative. And all of it speaks of our commitment, stronger than ever, to the mission that birthed us 125 years ago. Some of our partners share our orientation to eternity—the Southern Union and its subentities. Other strategic partners—academic, or health, or political entities—value our contribution to bettering the world we share right now. With them as much as with the world church of which we are a part, we continue in faithfulness to the dictum of our founder, divinely inspired and earlier referenced: "True education means more. . . . It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come."⁷

¹ Words of the school's female founder, Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1903, 1952), p. 13.

² *Ibid.*

³ Prudence Pollard, interviewee, is a registered dietitian and health/nutrition educator.

⁴ WHNT.com, "Healthy Campus 2020 Adds Wellness to Oakwood University," Aug. 13, 2015.

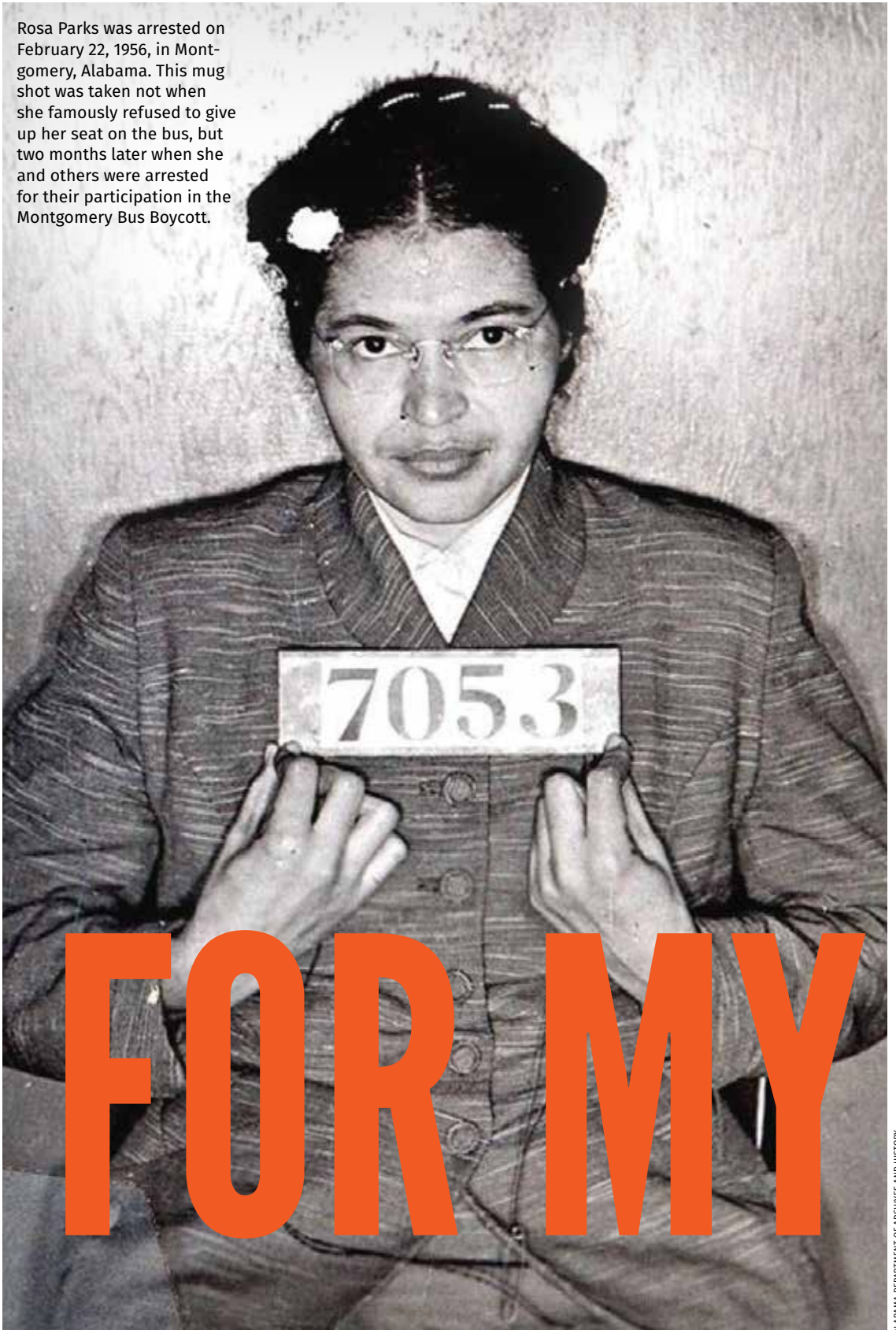
⁵ David Williams, "How Racism Makes Us Sick," *TED Talks*, November 2016.

⁶ WHNT.com, "State to Fund University's Mobile Farmer's Market for Underserved Communities," Apr. 30, 2019.

⁷ See note 1.

Prudence Pollard serves as the administrator and creative leader for Oakwood University's program of Healthy Campus, Healthy Community.

Rosa Parks was arrested on February 22, 1956, in Montgomery, Alabama. This mug shot was taken not when she famously refused to give up her seat on the bus, but two months later when she and others were arrested for their participation in the Montgomery Bus Boycott.



FOR MY

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

CLAUDIA M. ALLEN

Queen Esther answered, 'If I have found favor with you, Your Majesty, and if it pleases you, grant me my life—this is my petition. And spare my people—this is my request. For I and my people have been sold to be destroyed, killed and annihilated. If we had merely been sold as male and female slaves, I would have kept quiet, because no such distress would justify disturbing the king'" (Esther 7:3, 4, NIV).

A CALL FOR REVOLUTION

"For my people everywhere singing their slave songs repeatedly: their dirges and their ditties and their blues and jubilees, praying their prayers nightly to an unknown god, bending their knees humbly to an unseen power." This is the opening stanza in Margaret Walker's famous poem "For My People," originally published in 1942.¹ Walker's imagery and metaphor personify her people. They are those who sing songs of sorrow and jubilee, who "bend their knees to an unseen power." Beyond simply being overcome by sorrow, Walker believes African Americans are a people filled with much joy and laughter. At the end of her poem she cries out to "let a people of loving freedom come to growth. Let a beauty full of healing and a strength of final clenching be the pulsing in our spirits and our blood. . . . Let a race of men now rise and take control." Hers is a call for a revolution that turns what is seen as the sociopolitical tide of destruction, death, and

extermination to a tide of life, liberty, and freedom.

Of critical importance is the fact that Walker is not the first Black woman to call for such a revolution. For years African American women have contributed backbone, hands and feet, as well as brains, to many significant social movements of their race and broader society. A proper telling of history would recall there is no emancipation without Harriet; no civil rights without Rosa; and movements for justice in our day are no less dependent on the commitment of women leaders. Black women have consistently been both at the heart of our calls for revolution, and—if we are truly honest—at the engines firing the fuel that maintains them.

MY QUESTION

This reality of Black women's central involvement in America's past and present social justice movements has caused me to ponder the question: Why do Black churches' promotion of activism and the project of social justice as a prophetic anointing seem reserved exclusively for the male gender? Why do Black churches not celebrate the activism of Martin Luther King with properly balanced mention of Prathia Hall? Why don't Black churches celebrate the activism of Nelson Mandela with properly balanced credit to Miriam Makeba? Why don't Black churches celebrate the activism of Jesse Jackson

PEOPLE

Reviewing an erasure: Black women and history

I believe God is looking for a generation of women who are willing to take up the mantle of their foremothers and declare “for my people.”

alongside properly balanced mention of Shirley Chisholm?

It seems to me that a major reason that Black churches are more comfortable with men as the spokespersons for justice; that Black churches share stories chronicling the lives of men so much more than women as the leaders and sustainers of the work for social justice; that Black churches may neglect fair reference to women as they champion the efforts of male leaders engaging in the work of social justice, is that our social justice theology is based predominantly on the activism of men in the Bible. The next social justice sermon you hear, as well as the last one you heard, is probably on either Moses, the great emancipator; Jeremiah, the weeping prophet; Micah, the justice expositor; or Paul and Silas, the great liberators. This patriarchal lens through which we often read social justice in the Bible is itself unjust, erasing, as it tends to do, the female activists of Scripture. Such a reading effectively delivers the message that activism is most properly enacted by men.

Such interpretive practice communicates to the girls and young women of our churches that it is appropriate to support a man's social justice vision without motivating them to have their own. They have learned that it is fine to be the sounding board to a man's prophetic voice. They have not learned that it is appropriate to develop your own. Overlooking the leadership roles of women of the Bible as change agents in the communities of antiquity teaches our girls more often than not that it is normal—yea, honorable—to work for freedom, sacrifice for equality, even die for justice, and be forgotten.

THE MESSAGE OF MORE

I readily acknowledge the importance of recognizing the sacrifices and contributions of African American men to church and community

leadership. I also insist that there is a need for more of another emphasis, that of celebrating the history of progress within our churches and communities led out by women, female leaders who often enough remain invisible, whose contributions may go unchronicled, sacrifices unacknowledged, and strategic ability unappreciated. I call the names of women leaders such as Georgia Gilmore, who cooked meals during the civil rights movement to feed the leaders and fundraise for the boycotts; women leaders such as Prathia Hall, who inspired the likes of Martin Luther King, Jr., just from their prayers. Truth be told, it was at a service at the Mount Olive Baptist Church after their church was burned by the Ku Klux Klan that Prathia Hall stood before an audience that included Martin Luther King, Jr., and prayed a powerful prayer, repeating the words “I have a dream.” Moved by the phrasing, King asked permission of Hall to include the expression in his sermons, leading up to his famous “I Have a Dream” speech at the March on Washington just one year later.

The limited knowledge of such women stories illustrates an intentional or unintentional erasure of Black women from the nation's and race's activist narratives of social engagement. The lack perpetuates a long history of sexism between men and women, both African American and other. As Margaret Walker said in 1979: “Even in pre-civil war days, black [sic] women stood in the vanguard for equal rights [sic] for freedom from slavery, for recognition of women as citizens and co-partners with men in all of life's endeavors. . . . However, because of the nature of American history, and particularly because of the institutions of slavery and segregation, the names and lives of black women leaders are all but unknown in American society.”²

Scholar Bernice McNair Barnett has surmised

the reason for this practice: “Although they have traditionally performed crucial roles and have been considered the ‘backbone’ in the church, Black women historically have not been allowed the opportunity to become ministers, deacons, or trustee—the ‘heads’ and top decision makers in the male-dominated hierarchy of the Black Baptist Church.”³ This failure to give Black women legitimate church authority equates to the inability of many to acknowledge their spiritual gifts and capabilities, divinely bestowed, within the church, let alone without, in the wider community.

Theologian Jacquelyn Grant posits that there has been a misunderstanding of the compliment “backbone.” While we have taken it to mean Black women are a sturdy skeletal structure keeping every single aspect of protest programming in operation, it seems as though “most of the ministers who use the term have reference to location rather than function. What they really mean is that women are in the ‘background’ and should be kept there.”⁴ Nevertheless, had it not been for the courage of Black women, the protests of Black women, the activism and rebellion of Black women, who knows if, as a people, we’d still have been sold to destruction, death, and extermination far beyond 1863. The unstoppable energy, the voice, the political strategy, the inspiration, and the sustenance characteristic of Black churches owes much to a host of Black women who woke up every morning and said, “for my people.”

A BIBLICAL EXAMPLE

Queen Esther may have been the first woman to declare “for my people.” Holding one of the highest positions in the land, Esther is made aware that her people are facing the threat of genocide for no other reason than their nationality and culture. Her cousin Mordecai sends her a message:

“Do not think that because you are in the king’s house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:13, 14, NIV).

Realizing that her people are victims of targeted systematic and institutional extermination, Queen Esther takes on a critical leadership role to ensure

the preservation of her people; a role whose price could very well be her life.

Esther’s example shows that the exclusion of women leaders is unbiblical. It is exemplary of women have been at the forefront of leadership and protecting their communities since Bible times and in the Bible’s own stories. Declaring “for my people,” Esther shows us what it means to assume a leadership position and not allow the structures, customs, or policies of the establishment to prevent you from enacting justice.

In fact, Esther’s example reveals that it is better to risk one’s life attempting to do right than to seek to save one’s life by avoiding conflict. Put another way, individuals who truly believe in the responsibility of “for my people” believe that it is better to die demanding that God’s love be seen in the earth than to live silently while injustice reigns while justifying our silence with the claim of awaiting Christ’s second coming.

I believe God is looking for a generation of women who are willing to take up the mantle of their foremothers and declare “for my people.” We need such courage for the sake of making mass incarceration a bondage of the past; for illiteracy to become a forgotten story; for diabetes to be cured; for food deserts to be filled with stores selling fresh groceries; for mental health to be normalized, treated, and eliminated; for mountains of debt to be paid off and familial wealth generated; for girls to grow up knowing that they can be preachers, strategists, organizers, fundraisers, cooks, singers, teachers, yea, the very face of social justice. God is looking for a generation of women willing to lead for Him, within our churches and in the broad communities where they live, giving their all to transform their world while declaring, with Queen Esther, “for my people . . . ; [and] if I perish, I perish.”⁵

¹ Margaret Walker, *For My People*, ed. Stephen Vincent Benét, Yale Series of Younger Poets (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1942), pp. 13, 14.

² See Bernice McNair Barnett, “Invisible Southern Black Women Leaders in the Civil Rights Movement: The Triple Constraints of Gender, Race, and Class,” *Gender and Society* 7, no. 2 (June 1993): 162-182, web accessed Dec. 11, 2021.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Jacquelyn Grant, “Black Theology and the Black Woman,” *The Black Studies Reader*, ed. Jacqueline Bobo, Cynthia Hudley, Claudine Michel (Oxfordshire, Eng.: Routledge, 2004), pp. 421-433, web accessed Dec. 11, 2021.

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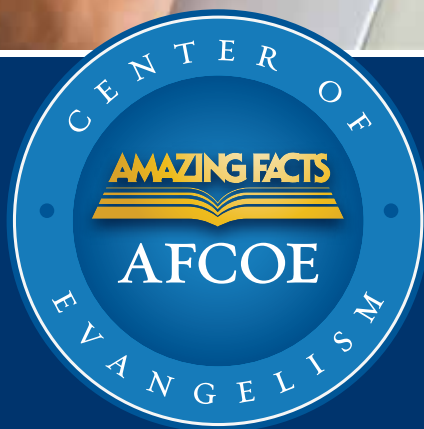
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BELIEVE, THEN UNDERSTAND

Though I don't like to compare myself with the apostle Paul (other than that we were Jews who, having once hated Jesus, came to love Him instead), one powerful similarity exists between us. And it can be found in Augustine of Hippo, who wrote: "Before we can understand, we have to believe."

Think about Saul of Tarsus. What did his intellectualism, his study, his presuppositions, culture, emotions, and training lead Saul to do? "Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest" (Acts 9:1).

Yes, it led him to kill Christians.

Then what happened? Paul is on the road to Damascus, and as he is thinking about logic, reason, nature, the Greek philosophers, and even Scripture, it suddenly hits him after deep thought and study: *Wait a minute: Jesus is the Messiah, after all.*

Of course not. Instead, Jesus supernaturally revealed Himself to Paul (verses 3-10), who, now believing in Jesus—became the world's greatest expositor of Christian doctrine.

In short, Paul first believed, and then understood.

Almost 2,000 years later something similar happened to me. Though irreligious as a tuna, I had occasional doubts and was growing more open to spiritual realities. Then one night in 1979, in Gainesville, Florida, the Lord Jesus—maybe not as dramatically as Paul, but just as abruptly, and unmistakably—revealed Himself to me, and I became a believer, even though I knew nothing about Christian theology. (Had you told

me that night I was a sinner, for example, I wouldn't have known what you were talking about.)

This is the point. I did not study my way to faith; I began with it and could not have proceeded without it. I'm not saying that a person cannot study themselves into a logical and rational decision for Christ, but only that it was faith that left me open to the workings of the Holy Spirit, who alone gave (and still gives) me an understanding of truth in a way that makes it more than just facts. Though I can't prove a counterfactual, the Bible studies I had right after my new birth experience, studies that so impressed me and strengthened my faith in those first days, would have meant nothing had I not had faith to begin with.

Decades ago I had studied biblical Aramaic with one of the world's greatest Old Testament scholars (now deceased). His knowledge of the texts and of the language was amazing, phenomenal even. And though not sure if he believed in God, I was sure that he didn't believe the Bible was inspired, because he would, at times, mock it as such. Can you have so much knowledge of the Bible, of its history and of its languages—and yet still be steeped in darkness?

Apparently.

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6).

Or, as Augustine said: "Before we can understand, we have to believe." And believe me, I understand what he meant.

Clifford Goldstein is editor of the Adult Bible Study Guide. His latest book is *Risen: Finding Hope in the Empty Tomb*.

CLIFF'S
EDGE
CLIFFORD
GOLDSTEIN



I DID NOT
STUDY MY WAY
TO FAITH.



HURTING

AND A REASON WHY

*What I learned from
months of pain*

BY TRICIA PAYNE

You don't look like what you've been through!" people say. And they ask, "How did you get through that?" In answer, I would be dishonest if I didn't admit that I have had moments of anger, questioning, and deep hurt over what happened. But then I consider the truth I've learned, that out of our pain, out of tragedies we have lived, our God is constantly at work to serve His highest purpose, the salvation of many.

THE UNEXPECTED

Beep! Beep! Beep! Beep!

My heart raced, pounding as if it would jump right out of my body. Pain gripped me mercilessly, holding me prisoner, powerless. *What in the world is happening to me?* I thought as the room swarmed with white coats and green scrubs. *What was all*

of the fuss about? Feeling confused, I watched them scurry like determined ants. *Wait a minute; this is about me!*

I sensed the panic in the room, swelling by the second. The expression on their faces, all directed at me, confirmed my worst nightmare—*it's a fatal emergency*. Fright overwhelmed me, and I looked at my husband, Shawn. Appearing just as alarmed, Shawn gazed at me, seemingly helpless to change the unfolding scene. Something was terribly wrong. Sweeping into the room with haste, the doctor explained, "We have to reset her heart. Where's the husband?" Like a student in class, Shawn raised his hand, "Right here!" With his attention directed at Shawn, the doctor urged, "OK, it's your job to keep her here."



Holding my hand with both intense tenderness and strength, Shawn fixed his eyes on mine and started talking. I can't remember what he said, but our conversation rose above the dread-filled air in the room. In that moment it was just me and my husband of only 1½ years. Still newlyweds, deeply in love. My room buzzed with what seemed like the entire staff from the floor. This was my ground zero.

I had seen reactions like this before, about 15 years earlier. Filled with new graduate excitement and youthful vigor, I embarked upon my first career, in full-time professional physical therapy, working on acute care and in the intensive-care units. It wouldn't be long before I would observe, and, in some cases, act out as a physical therapist, what I had read about in my textbooks. And I would witness the pace and focus of medicine's servants in a patient's room, all with one mission in mind—saving life.

TURNED TABLES

Now I was the patient. The physician announced, "Tricia, this will probably hurt; it won't feel good." He was about to reset my heart's rhythm, and they had to act quickly. Unbeknownst to me, my heart was threatening to race me right out of existence.

Shawn continued his conversation with me, seeming to ignore the crowd of worried medical professionals. Like lovers in the park, we kept talking, until, suddenly, he was alone, in what he describes as the single most frightening moment of his life—the moment that his wife's life seemed to slip out of his hands. I felt nothing; heard nothing; sensed nothing; said nothing. But my heart slowed to a near halt and was then slowly brought back.

Death is a thief. One instant you're here—breathing, hearing, talking, smelling, feeling. The next moment you're gone. "No one knows when

their hour will come" (Eccl. 9:12, NIV). Thankfully, my God brought me back.

But how in the world did I get here? Months of abdominal pain diagnosed as ovarian torsion; a diagnostic pelvic laparoscopy because of persistent discomfort; and now having my heart reset by panic-stricken nurses and doctors?

Just a year prior I had married a wonderful man, was officially commissioned as a pastor in the gospel ministry, and, nearly to the date, preached at our denomination's annual Pastoral Leadership and Evangelism Counsel (PELC). The Holy Spirit moved among us mightily; 120 pastors and leaders felt compelled to gather immediately afterward for a moving and protracted prayer session.¹ I could never know that after such a year of blessing I would be fighting for my life.

CONTEXT

It had all started with the onset of sudden abdominal pain months earlier. Terror gripped me as I nearly fainted on the cold bathroom floor. I was home alone and frightened by what had come as suddenly as a tsunami. I reached for my phone: "Babe, I think I am going to have to go to the hospital." Hanging up, I dialed 9-1-1. "Hello, what's your emergency?" The voice on the other end sounded calm and distant. I explained the best I could, wondering all the while if I was overreacting, yet certain I needed immediate medical attention. I felt so scared, frightened by the severity of the pain. *I've never experienced pain like this before*, I thought. "Please, I'm in pain. I need help."

Having nearly passed out, I knew something was terribly wrong. I had never experienced such symptoms. I'd incurred sports injuries from my athletic days, but had never had pain like this, nor nearly fainted because of it. As a physical therapy student, I was definitely not a fainter, not at the sight of blood, when watching heart surgeries performed, knees replaced, or working on cadavers.



I came to appreciate what I preach in the most direct way possible, personal experience.

The paramedics arrived, assessed, and took me to the hospital. The pain continued. As I watched, hospital workers frantically dashed from room to room, to nursing station, and again from room to room in the ER. I knew that only God would be able to help me. I know that humans have a level of understanding in pathology. But I also know that we can go down the wrong diagnostic path without God's guidance. Lying there in the hallway on a bed, I prayed, holding my hand over my throbbing abdomen. After numerous tests and assessments, they sent me home with a probable diagnosis, ovarian torsion, and a prognosis of recovery within a week.

I continued to follow up with my gynecologist (OB/GYN), who assured me that this malaise would resolve within a few days. It did not. Instead, the pain grew worse. Multiple visits to my doctor, numerous diagnostic imaging tests, provided no reasonable answer. I kept pushing through—working, traveling, attending meetings; hurting. Until my OB/GYN determined to take a look inside by way of a diagnostic pelvic laparoscopy, moving, reasonably, from least to more invasive procedures. After months of pain, I agreed. Such pain should not be ignored. It is the body's way of letting us know that something needs attention. Unaddressed pain can yield disaster.

Procedure scheduled, we arrived on time to sign the necessary paperwork. The morning of November 29, 2017, seemed like any other day. They completed the simple probe without any reasonable findings to account for the level of agony I had been experiencing over the previous months. With instructions and prescriptions in hand, Shawn took me home to recover over the next few days. Unbeknownst to us, that would be the last "normal" day we would enjoy that year. We walked into the outpatient diagnostic facility with no clue that this would be the beginning of the greatest

test of our faith, our marriage, and our life.

God be praised, I not only survived, but, by His grace, discovered triumph. I came to appreciate what I preach in the most direct way possible, personal experience. Now a great truth controls my thinking. It is the knowledge that what I experience can make me a greater blessing. Paul has told us of God, "the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God" (2 Cor. 1:3, 4, NIV). Now I can. And I can stand with my unnamed sister from two millennia ago, who lived in pain until Jesus healed her and insisted that she tell her story, which, I'm told, "is Heaven's chosen agency for revealing Christ to the world. We are to acknowledge His grace as made known through the holy men of old; but that which will be most effectual is the testimony of our own experience. We are witnesses for God as we reveal in ourselves the working of a power that is divine. . . . God desires that our praise shall ascend to Him, marked by our own individuality. These precious acknowledgments to the praise of the glory of His grace, when supported by a Christlike life, have an irresistible power that works for the salvation of souls."²

It is with this faith that I write and share my story. I know that someone who has faced or is currently in a sudden "storm," difficulty, or adverse circumstance, someone who needs both encouragement and salvation, will find it through my story. 📌

¹ See <https://www.adventistreview.org/church-news/story-holy-spirit-disrupts-adventist-pastors-meeting>

² Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940), p. 347.

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ACCEPTING THE JOY CHALLENGE: 2022

Life may be messy, times hard, and conditions unfair. Got it. What's new? More important, what now? What if you could develop a simple biblical formula for creating joy during chaos and confusion, joy under any conditions? That would be a good thing. The word is: you can. It's called the Joy Challenge.

Consider this. Paul says, "Rejoice in the Lord always"—literally, under any and all situations. Then he repeats for emphasis that we should remain in a joyful state—always (Phil. 4:4). Jesus talked about having full joy amid deep sorrow, a joy that no one can take away (John 15:11; 16:22). The Bible consistently maintains we can habituate joy.

When referring to joy, the Bible doesn't mean a brief, emotional, ecstatic, fleeting feeling—that's not true joy. Instead, the believer's joy refers to a deliberate state of mind that has a robust confidence and lasting contentment. This joy results in a conscious sense of well-being, despite external circumstances. How does this happen? It's triangular. It rests in a relationship with Jesus Christ and confidence in His Word, a conscious act of the will that implicitly trusts in divine Providence and cooperates with the empowering agency of the Holy Spirit. This combination results in a calm, peaceful joy that passes human comprehension (Phil. 4:7). Many who talk about it may not experience it. When this peaceful joy is present, you will know it.

In Ezra 3:9-13, at the triumphal laying of the foundation of the temple, part of the congregation was joyfully singing praises to God for this monumental moment of progress. Simultaneously, another part of the gathering was weeping and bemoaning how it was so inferior to

the former Solomonic temple. The difference between the expression of joy and despair was dramatic. Why? It had to do with attitudes, personal choices, and where one put their focus and confidence.

A believer can meet the Joy Challenge by positively responding in the following five ways:

1. Considering the context or circumstances for what they are: difficult, painful, unpleasant, etc. (2 Tim. 3:12-17).

2. Contemplating the promises and inherent power of the Word of God that speak to the current situation (John 6:63).

3. Constructing or visioning the outcome from the onset and knowing that "all things work together for good" (Rom. 8:28-39).

4. Choosing to do the right thing, knowing character growth is the result (James 1:4-8).

5. Cooperating with and accepting the righteous peace, joy, and yes, sometimes even serenity that result (Phil. 4:6, 7).

The resulting outcome of passing the Joy Challenge will be as Ellen White describes it: "It is His [Christ's] purpose that every Christian shall be surrounded with a spiritual atmosphere of light and peace. He desires that we shall reveal His own joy in our lives. The indwelling of the Spirit will be shown by the outflowing of heavenly love. The divine fullness will flow through the consecrated human agent, to be given forth to others. . . . There is peace in believing, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Believing brings peace, and trusting in God brings joy."^{*}

Let 2022 be the year you successfully face the Joy Challenge in the various dimensions of your life. 🍀

^{*}Ellen G. White, *Reflecting Christ* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1985), p. 134.

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TRANSFORMATION TIPS
DELBERT W. BAKER



JOY RESTS IN A
RELATIONSHIP
WITH JESUS CHRIST
AND CONFIDENCE
IN HIS WORD, A
CONSCIOUS ACT OF
THE WILL.



THE END

LAEL CAESAR

The tyrannical reign of wicked King Covid the 19th shows little inclination of ending. By another three years his disease may have turned endemic: we'll simply take our periodic vaccinations like some have taken flu shots for all their lives.¹

TRAGICALLY . . .

Sadly enough, COVID-19 is not our first instance of welcoming bad neighbors. Consider familiar neighbor alcohol. David Williams and Peter Landless inform us that “there is no safe level of alcohol use.”² Still, Americans consume an average of 2.4 gallons of pure alcohol per year,³ leading to such impacts on our bodies as high blood pressure, strokes, pancreatitis, liver disease, and cancers of the mouth, breast, head and neck, esophagus, liver, and colon. Beyond these, there is the increased risk of traffic accidents, violence, and suicide, and the death, annually, of about 95,000 people.⁴ Two other preventable causes kill even more of our friends, neighbors, and relatives: first is tobacco, then poor diet and lifestyle.

Welcoming these families—alcohol, tobacco, poor diet, etc.—into our neighborhoods and helping them to thrive at taking lives is not Christian. Sure, there may be numbers of Christian neighbors permitting or facilitating it. Which only increases the tragedy. And begs the question “Why?” Why should humans facilitate the presence and practice of murderous neighbors?

Robert Hart, in the American business magazine *Forbes*, reports that from June to December 2021, 163,000 COVID-19 victims could have lived if they had chosen to be vaccinated.⁵ Hart writes that “the vast majority of hospitalizations and nearly

“Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own” (John 7:17, NIV).

OF CONFUSION

all deaths from COVID-19 are in unvaccinated people, who have cost the health-care system billions and diverted resources from other areas of medicine.”⁶ Why people in America—or people anywhere—should die by the hundreds of thousands—or one at a time—when they could live is a tragedy enshrouded in a mystery. Ancient prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel agonized over why their people would choose to die when they could live (Jer. 27:13; Eze. 18:31). The answer to their anguish is a mystery of human volition, a commentary on our powers of reason, and a window on our varied and competing ways of establishing facts and truth. One nation’s health-care system may be perplexed at its obligation to invest billions of dollars and experts’ time in simply avoidable crises. But the crisis of the choice for death is not even unique to humanity.

DRAMATICALLY . . .

Seventh-century Israelite prophet Jeremiah flails his prophetic arms in desperation as Judah heads toward collapse at the hands of Babylonian invaders. His dismay focuses on King Zedekiah [hereafter, King Z], whom he is trying to help, as the nation approaches its sad end. Except that, according to another prophet, Hananiah, no such end is approaching. Whom is the

*Who can
hope to see it?*



What humanity most needs is saving truth.

king to believe? The prophets compete with and contradict each other while claiming the same level of legitimacy, both self-identifying as spokespersons for God—an unsurpassable sanction. Consider:

Prophet Hananiah, month five, year four, of the current monarch's reign: "The Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two years I will bring back to this place all the articles of the Lord's house that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon removed from here and took to Babylon'" (Jer. 28:2, 3, NIV).

Prophet Jeremiah, similar vein, year, and subject, to an international company of diplomats convening in the nation's capital, Jerusalem: "The Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'Tell this to your masters: . . . I made the earth and its people and the animals that are on it. . . . Now I will give all your countries into the hands of my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; I will make even the wild animals subject to him. All nations will serve him and his son and his grandson until the time for his land comes'" (Jer. 27:4-7, NIV).

Nebuchadnezzar has but two years, Hananiah says, in the name of the Lord of heaven's hosts! He has three generations, Jeremiah says, in the name of "the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel" (verse 4)! So how is poor King Z to know, when all claims derive from the same supreme authority? This is confusion—"lack of clearness or distinctness," the dictionary says; and, by way of illustration, offers a phrase that uses the term: "a confusion in his mind between right and wrong"⁷ King Z is certainly confused. Why doesn't God tell him what to do, and whom to heed? What a question! And we ask it too. But isn't He? Is divine silence the reason for the king's confusion?

For King Z's benefit, in 594-593 B.C., and for ours

today, God will speak clearly, dissipating the gloom where fungi and conspiracies hatch and creep around. God's bright distinction between Himself and the shameless liar, between reality and the fake, between His truth and bewildering deception, will end all confusion. Or will it? The naked human eye cannot automatically see in the dark, so God will give a special revelation (1 Cor. 2:14).

Jeremiah presents: with a visual aid. It's a yoke that dramatizes the subjection of all nations to Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 27:1, 2, NIV). And he has given his king the same message he gave the diplomats: surrender to Babylon (verse 12). But Hananiah, Jeremiah's prophetic competition, will lie with conviction, in God's name, and appropriate any tool available. Jeremiah's visual aid will do: it is a symbolic artifact resembling the implement that harnesses a pair of oxen. Hananiah lifts the yoke from off Jeremiah's neck and, as he breaks it, he speaks: "This is what the Lord says: 'In the same way I will break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon off the neck of all the nations within two years'" (Jer. 28:11, NIV). His show-stopping, in-your-face drama carries the day! Hananiah, one; Jeremiah, zero.

Then God gives Jeremiah another message. He must go and tell Hananiah, "This very year you are going to die, because you have preached rebellion against the Lord" (verse 16, NIV). Also, because "you have persuaded this nation to trust in lies" (verse 15, NIV).

Two months later Hananiah is dead (verse 17).

REALISTICALLY . . .

Hananiah, famous by fraud, paid with his life for it. But his death does not end confusion. Six years later, King Z denounces and imprisons Jeremiah: "Why do you prophesy as you do? You say, 'This is what the Lord says: I am about to give this city into the hands of the king of Babylon, and he will capture it'" (Jer. 32:3, NIV). Confusion dies hard! Moreover, confusion wasn't invented in the sixth century B.C. Long before then, before Earth's time, a bold creature stirred up and served his own bewildering brew to whoever would sip. A third of heaven's angelic hosts smacked their lips, said that it was good, and, for it, were expelled from the hallowed halls of Eternal Truth. Confusion would not reign in heaven: there would be no indistinctness between Lord and creature (Isa. 14:12-15; Eze. 28:12-19; Luke 10:18; Rev. 12:4).

The bold creature, now outcast, introduced his beguiling potion to Earth's first two humans. Our first parents drank, and found themselves morally poisoned, eternally doomed: they had succumbed to confusion, belief in a lie that mixed fact and fiction, engendering indistinctness: yes, God knows everything; yes, you will learn what you did not know before; but no, that will not make you like God; it will not bridge the unbridgeable chasm between you, the creature, and the infinite God, your Creator. Objective truth and reality do exist, independent of whatever intriguingly persuasive thing the liar may say. You will not become a deity; you will die (see Gen. 3:1-6).

Humanity's founding couple fell by giving credence to the word of the original fraud Jesus identifies as "a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44, NIV).

Adam and Eve did not have to surrender to a lie. Confusion is difficult to figure out sometimes, but never enough for King Z or Adam or you or me to blame God for leaving us in error. Jesus is unequivocal: "Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own" (John 7:17, NIV). This is a hard saying, with forbidding implications: confusion is never God's fault. I may be confused because I do not truly want to know. King Z's vacillation six years after God had publicly cut down liar Hananiah seriously calls into question any alleged uncertainty about God's voice in the matter. Am I just one more King Z? Do I clamor for clarity at the very moment that silence will allow me to hear (Ps. 46:10)? Am I (awkwardly) violating God's order of silence (Hab. 2:20)? Is my confusion a simple failure to distinguish genuine need from selfish craving, my personal fascination with forbidden fruit (James 4:3)?

Humans have been shown too much to believe that our unclarity must be God's fault. We may balk at heaven's damning assessment, but we lack the means or credibility to falsify it: "This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19, NIV). My own clarity about my faith, the strength of my conviction, may be greater than the Israel of Elijah's time, double-minded and unstable, hobbling between two

opinions (James 1:8; 1 Kings 18:21). But am I ready to declare before God again and again, "not as I will; but as you will" (Matt. 26:39, NIV)?

Those words are Jesus' own principled sentiment: "Those who accept the one principle of making the service and honor of God supreme will find perplexities vanish and a plain path before their feet."⁸ As the Lord has promised, categorically: "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart" (Jer. 29:13, NIV).

THANKFULLY . . .

The space-time where we live out our thoughts and behaviors is moral first. And truth matters. Eternally. Lies may win us rhetorical contests and more, but winning is not what humanity most needs. More vaccines, perhaps. Francis Collins, retiring director of the National Institutes of Health, is amazed that 60 million Americans, despite the COVID vaccines' lifesaving nature, "would *still* say, 'No, not for me.'"⁹ But what humanity most needs is saving truth. And Jesus who is saving truth and eternal life calls us all: "Come to me" (Matt. 11:28, NIV), I'll set you free (John 8:32). Confusion may be its own perplexing matter. But God is not confusion's author. Rather, He is the author of the wholeness that is peace (1 Cor. 14:33), and the antithesis of gray uncertainty: "God is light; in him there is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5, NIV). Why grope in confusion, why die when you don't need to; when you may live in Christ, and thrive?

Hananiah's fate is not inevitable. We have better models to follow. ♣

¹ <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/12/17/pfizer-executives-say-covid-could-become-endemic-by-2024.html>, accessed Dec. 20, 2021.

² David Williams and Peter Landless, in *Journal of Adventist Education*, December 2013/January 2014, p. 29, citing Lorraine T. Midanik et al., "Risk Functions for Alcohol-Related Problems in a 1988 U.S. National Sample," *Addiction* 91, no. 10 (1996): 1427-1437.

³ [https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/alcohol-recorded-per-capita-\(15-\)-consumption-\(in-litres-of-pure-alcohol\)](https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/alcohol-recorded-per-capita-(15-)-consumption-(in-litres-of-pure-alcohol)).

⁴ <https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/brochures-and-fact-sheets/alcohol-facts-and-statistics>.

⁵ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/roberthart/2021/12/14/160000-unvaccinated-americans-died-from-covid-19-since-june---shots-could-have-saved-them-study-finds/?sh=38ae517d44e8>, accessed Dec. 20, 2021.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ 2021 Dictionary.com, LLC.

⁸ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940), p. 330.

⁹ CBS News, "NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins on a Life in Science," Dec. 19, 2021, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/nih-director-dr-francis-collins-on-a-life-in-science/>, accessed Dec. 29, 2021.

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AT THE WELCOME TABLE

God's love, design and plan for those of every race

ELLEN G. WHITE

While at St. Louis a year ago, as I knelt in prayer, these words were presented to me as if written with a pen of fire: "All ye are brethren." The Spirit of God rested upon me in a wonderful manner, and matters were opened to me in regard to the church at St. Louis and in other places. The spirit and words of some in regard to members of the church were an offense to God. They were closing the door of their hearts to Jesus. Among those in St. Louis who believe the truth there are colored people who are true and faithful, precious in the sight of the God of heaven, and they should have just as much respect as any [other] of God's children. Those who have spoken harshly to them or have despised them have despised the purchase of the blood of Christ, and they need the

transforming grace of Christ in their own hearts, that they may have the pitying tenderness of Jesus toward those who love God with all the fervor of which they themselves are capable. The color of the skin does not determine character in the heavenly courts. . . .

GOD'S COLOR-BLIND LOVE

"Who," says Paul, "maketh thee to differ?" The God of the white man is the God of the black man, and the Lord declares that His love for the least of His children exceeds that of a mother for her beloved child. Look at that mother: the sick child, the one afflicted, the one born a cripple, or with some other physical infirmity—how the mother labors to give him every advantage! . . . The Lord's eye is upon all His creatures; He loves them all, and makes no difference between white and black, except that He has a special, tender pity for those who are called to bear a greater burden than others. Those who love God and believe on Christ as their Redeemer, while they must meet the trials and the difficulties that lie in their path, should yet with a cheerful spirit accept their life as it is, considering that God above regards these things, and for all that the world neglects to bestow, He will Himself make up to them in the best of favors. . . .

When the sinner is converted he receives the Holy Spirit, that makes him a child of God and fits him for the society of the redeemed and the angelic host. He is made a joint heir with Christ. Whoever of the human family give themselves to Christ, whoever hear the truth and obey it, become children of one family. The igno-

rant and the wise, the rich and the poor, the heathen and the slave, white or black—Jesus paid the purchase money for their souls. If they believe on Him, His cleansing blood is applied to them. The black man's name is written in the book of life beside the white man's. All are one in Christ. Birth, station, nationality, or color cannot elevate or degrade men. The character makes the man. If a red man, a Chinaman, or an African gives his heart to God, in obedience and faith, Jesus loves him none the less for his color. He calls him His well-beloved brother. The day is coming when the kings and the lordly men of the earth would be glad to exchange places with the humblest African who has laid hold on the hope of the gospel. To all who are overcomers through the blood of the Lamb, the invitation will be given, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." . . .

WHAT CHRISTIANITY DEMANDS

Among what are called the higher classes, there is a demand for a form of Christianity suited to their fine tastes; but this class will not grow up to the full stature of men and women in Christ until they know God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. The heavenly intelligences rejoice to do the will of God in preaching the gospel to the poor. In the announcement which the Saviour made in the synagogue at Nazareth, He put a stern rebuke upon those who attach so much importance to color or caste, and refuse to be satisfied with such a type of Christianity as Christ accepts. The same price was paid for the salvation of the colored man as for that of the white man, and the slights put upon the colored people by many who claim to be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, and who therefore acknowledge themselves debtors to Christ, misrepresent Jesus, and reveal that selfishness, tradition, and prejudice pollute the soul. They are not sanctified through the truth. Those who slight a brother because of his color are slighting Christ. . . .

Men may have both hereditary and cultivated prejudices, but when the love of Jesus fills the heart, and they become one with Christ, they will have the same spirit that He had. If a colored brother sits by their side, they will not be offended or despise him. They are journeying to the same heaven, and will be seated at the same table to eat bread in the kingdom of God. If Jesus is abiding in our hearts we cannot despise the colored man

Let not men take the place of God, but stand aside in awe, and let God work upon human hearts, both white and black, in His own way.

who has the same Saviour abiding in his heart. When these unchristian prejudices are broken down, more earnest effort will be put forth to do missionary work among the colored race. . . .

OUR OBLIGATION

God cares no less for the souls of the African race that might be won to serve Him than He cared for Israel. He requires far more of His people than they have given Him in missionary work among the people of the South of all classes, and especially among the colored race. Are we not under even greater obligation to labor for the colored people than for those who have been more highly favored? Who is it that held these people in servitude? Who kept them in ignorance, and pursued a course to debase and brutalize them, forcing them to disregard the law of marriage, breaking up the family relation, tearing wife from husband, and husband from wife? If the race is degraded, if they are repulsive in habits and manners, who made them so? Is there not much due to them from the white people? After so great a wrong has been done them, should not an earnest effort be made to lift them up? The truth must be carried to them. They have souls to save as well as we.

At the General Conference of 1889, resolutions were presented in regard to the color line. Such action is not called for. Let not men take the place of God, but stand aside in awe, and let God work upon human hearts, both white and black, in His own way. He will adjust all these perplexing questions. We need not prescribe a definite plan of working. Leave an opportunity for God to do something. We should be careful not to strengthen prejudices that ought to have died just as soon as Christ redeemed the soul from the bondage of sin. ♣

Seventh-day Adventists believe that **Ellen G. White** (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry. This excerpt was taken from *A Place Called Oakwood* (Huntsville, Ala.: Oakwood College, 2007), pp. 166-169.



GREEK

*Wholistic education
involves the head, the
hands, and the heart.*

AND TOOTHBRUSH

YOUSRY GUIRGUIS

The fifteenth child of Sam and Patsy McLeod, Mary McLeod Bethune (July 10, 1875–May 18, 1955) could pick 250 pounds of cotton a day. Even though she had been born free, her life on a Mayesville, South Carolina, cotton plantation was not that different from how it had been for the McLeods during five generations of slavery.

When Mary was 17 years old, a Black missionary woman started a school that she was able to attend. It was then that Mary discovered that the main difference between most White people and most Black people in her time was that most White people could read. School became a burning passion for Mary. Within a few years her teachers recommended her for a scholarship to Scotia Seminary, a school for the daughters of “freedmen” in Concord, North Carolina, where Mary studied literature, Greek, Latin, the Bible, and American democracy.

Mary soaked up knowledge like a thirsty sponge, and she wanted to give back to others what she’d learned. Deciding to become a missionary to her own people back in Africa, she attended Moody Bible Institute in Chicago in preparation for this endeavor. But after graduating and applying to the Presbyterian Mission Board, she was told, “We have no openings for a colored missionary in Africa.”

It was the bitterest disappointment of Mary’s life; but it was also a turning point. If she couldn’t go to Africa, she would teach her people at home in the South. Years later someone said to her, “What our people need is a few millionaires. Before I die, I am going to make a million dollars.” Mary responded, “I would rather make a million readers.”

Mary envisioned a school where young girls and boys would learn not only useful trades but also arts, sciences, and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Whenever someone would ask about her philosophy of education, Mary would laugh and reply, “Greek and toothbrush!”

After marrying Albertus Bethune, Mary moved to Daytona, Florida, and started her “school-on-a-shoestring.” She resolved

to build a school to teach the head (classical education), the hands (practical education), and the heart (spiritual education). In 1904 Mary began with a few young girls, and today’s Bethune–Cookman College is the reality that honors her vision.¹

THE GOAL OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

By including spiritual teaching along with practical and classical training Mary reflected the balance of Christian education, which not only teaches students traditional subject matter but also educates on redemptive themes, an academic practice as important as ministry from the pulpit. In the New Testament Epistles, the reeducation of humanity originates with the gospel.

Indeed, Ellen G. White helps us see that spiritual training is paramount. She states, “In the highest sense the work of education and the work of redemption are one, for in education, as in redemption, ‘other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.’ 1 Corinthians 3:11 . . . To aid the student in comprehending these principles, and in entering into that relation with Christ which will make them a controlling power in the life, should be the teacher’s first effort and his constant aim. The teacher who accepts this aim is in truth a co-worker with Christ, a laborer together with God.”²

Another aim of Christian education is to make paramount to the student the great import of the Christian experience. This emphasis “sits squarely on

an educational foundation³ that's centered on the Holy Writ and its precepts.

Christian education is spiritual growth. Mature Christians evidence love and sound judgment by living according to principles and commands laid out by God and by the apostles. Over time, each Christian should move toward the mark of Christian maturity set by Christ. This level of maturity evidences itself in stable theology, sound moral judgment, healthy relationships, and self-sacrificing service. The New Testament writers invite Christians to continually press on toward a higher and still higher degree of spiritual maturity (1 Cor. 2:6; 14:20; Heb. 5:12, 14; Eph. 4:13).

BEGINNING IN THE HOME

Ellen G. White contends that real Christian education begins in the family life. She states that there's no greater ministry for the mother than to be a teacher at home, "dealing with developing minds and character, working not only for time but for eternity"⁴ This may include evening and morning worship, Bible study, and other types of spiritual education in the home. This education, the foundation for future development, prepares young believers for future spiritual development.⁵ These principles, once anchored, provide the necessary elements to foster spiritual growth unto Christian maturity.

Individuals decide for Christ as a result of faithful teaching of the Word of God. Following their conversion, the learners advance into the discipleship phase, where they are nurtured toward Christian maturity. "Discipleship is truly Christian education in action."⁶ In other words, "those who are brought to faith in Christ are to be disciples primarily through teaching."⁷ The process in which the learner keeps on growing in the knowledge of Christ and strives to maintain Christlike attitudes is unique.

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

Christian education should seek to develop in persons a worldview that's scriptural. Individuals should be trained to make decisions from a Christian perspective—to help believers in Christ to think first as Christians in all spheres of life—and to prepare them to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in the work of influencing society with the message of Christ. The Bible and its principles must be the center of student development.

The uniqueness of Christian education is that

it endeavors to develop and instill in students, as Mary McLeod Bethune suggested, the head (classical education), the hands (practical education), and the heart (spiritual education).

Ellen G. White supports this approach: "True education embraces physical, mental, and moral training, in order that all the powers shall be fitted for the best development, to do service for God, and to work for the uplifting of humanity."⁸

Christian education is holistic in nature. This includes the three domains of learning: affective (feeling), psychomotor (action), and cognitive (thinking). It strives to help people become responsible humans, and it prepares them to contribute to the physical, mental, and moral training of others. True education is training both for this world and for the world to come.

TEACHER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

In the Scriptures the gift of teaching is the capability to expound the Word of God and "apply it to people's lives."⁹ Teachers in Christian education should aim to help students reach deeper levels of comprehension and to visualize the work of education as sacred. To accomplish this, teachers should be living examples of the sanctifying power, which is the sure result of Jesus' presence in the heart.

Teachers should be endowed with moral traits and characteristics such as the dignity of labor, modesty, honesty, and self-discipline. Additionally, love, joy, peace, patience, and all fruit of the Spirit should be present in all that they do—even in disciplinary action. Teachers' attitudes and behaviors prove the reality of their teaching. The true Christian teacher, who indeed applies and exemplifies the principles of Christian education, will "train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought."¹⁰

Ellen G. White notes: "The greatest work of the teacher is to lead those under his charge to be intellectual Christians. Then the mental and moral powers will develop harmoniously, and they will be fit for any position of trust."¹¹

In Jewish tradition, teachers were expected to keep students from interacting with anything injurious. Teachers were to clarify right and wrong and the harmfulness of sin. They were never to be impatient and were always to be ready to cheerfully repeat explanations. "It was said that children should be treated like young heifers, with their



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Teachers should be living examples of the sanctifying power, which is the sure result of Jesus' presence in the heart.

burdens increased daily. Any teacher who was too severe was dismissed."¹²

On the important role of the teacher, Ahmad Shawqi, the prince of Arabic literature, states: "Stand in salutation for the teacher. For he has almost reached the honorable role of an apostle."¹³ What Shawqi meant is that, in general, the teacher teaches to persuade; however, a true, genuine teacher should emulate God, who persuades in order to teach. Therefore, the purpose of the teacher is to help students to understand what it means to worship and serve God and to equip them with what they need to do it.

CONCLUSION

Christian education in simple terms is a disciple-making ministry. As Mary McLeod Bethune aptly put it, it involves "Greek and toothbrush!" 'Greek' is a reference to wisdom and knowledge. 'Toothbrush' is actually a reference to hard work. Therefore, "Greek and toothbrush" refers to wholistic education—that which teaches the head (classical education), the hands (practical education), and the heart (spiritual education).

The goal of Christian education, the beginning of Christian education, the student development

in Christian education, and the teachers' responsibilities in Christian education have the same goal: all aim to prepare students for the practical needs of this life, but also, more important, for the spiritual needs of this life and the next. ▀

¹ The story of Mary McLeod Bethune is adapted from Dave and Neta Jackson, *The Complete Book of Christian Heroes: Over 200 Stories of Courageous People Who Suffered for Jesus* (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale, 2000), pp. 39, 40.

² Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1903, 1952), p. 30.

³ Michael S. Lawson and Robert J. Choun, Jr., *Directing Christian Education: The Changing Role of the Christian Education Specialist* (Chicago: Moody, 1992), p. 14.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1952), p. 233.

⁵ R. Lateju, *Christian Education and Responsible Family Living* (New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 81.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ James Montgomery Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith: A Comprehensive and Readable Theology* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1986), p. 612.

⁸ Ellen G. White, *A Call to Stand Apart* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 2002), p. 65.

⁹ Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Inter-Varsity, 1994), p. 1061.

¹⁰ E. G. White, *Education*, p. 17.

¹¹ Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases* (Silver Spring, Md.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1981), vol. 1, p. 322.

¹² Hazel W. Perkin, "Education," in *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), p. 659.

¹³ From a poem to Ahmad Shawqi, "The Important Role of the Teacher," <https://www.aldiwan.net/poem15422.html>.

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HIS Impact On Me

Building Faith



"I had been praying and asking God to strengthen my faith." These were the words that led to the start of a two-and-a-half-year building project headed by a semi-retired surgeon, with nothing but a desire to help Native American children and grow in his own faith. Since then, God has led Randal Schafer to the near completion of two triplex apartments on behalf of a little school in the desert in northern Arizona. It's a project that has grown his faith while also "building" the ministry at Holbrook Indian School (HIS).

Back in 2019, Schafer had a desire to grow his faith but was not sure how. As Schafer's focus turned towards the Native American people, he found himself in contact with HIS principal, Pedro Ojeda, who told him about a need for staff housing at the school. HIS needed funds and labor for the construction of two apartment buildings. It was one of the school's most pressing needs at the time, but it was also a need that it could least afford in terms of time, labor, and cost.

Heading this project would mean a volunteer role. It would involve responsibilities like recruiting labor, budgeting, and fundraising. More than two years later, Schafer can now attest to the provisions made through God's hands--the faithful support from God's children in helping to meet a need.

"At one time I had two young people send a letter with an anonymous donation of close to \$400. They said that they had been saving for the summer and wanted it to go towards the triplex. They mentioned they wanted to do the same thing for next summer. When I read this it brought tears to my eyes.

For me, this whole project has been a walk of faith. God has, again and again, supplied funding and volunteers, just when we need them. It's a beautiful thing. I have just been amazed many times."

You too can help Native American youth while witnessing God's hand in faithful provision by making a gift to Holbrook Indian School today at [HolbrookIndianSchool.org](https://www.holbrookindianschool.org)



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PETER N. LANDLESS ZENO L. CHARLES-MARCEL

THE ZINC LINK

Q: Should I supplement for colds, flu, and COVID with zinc?



A: It depends! Your current situation makes the determination. Zinc is an essential nutrient. It must come from food, because the body can't make or store it. Women need about 8 milligrams per day, and men about 11 milligrams per day. This is easy to get from a balanced diet, but in the United States it's estimated that 12 to 40 percent of the population and 70 percent of the elderly are zinc-deficient.

Even in small amounts, zinc must be present for many cellular and bodily functions—such as taste, smell, wound healing, growth, digestion, vision, sexual development and reproduction, DNA synthesis, and DNA repair—to work properly. Zinc is essential for optimal immune function and cancer surveillance. The individuals most susceptible to zinc deficiency are elderly individuals, lactating or pregnant women, and persons with bowel, kidney, or liver disorders.

Vegetarians may be at risk if their diets are high in raw, unsprouted seeds or heavily grain-based (maize, wheat, wild rice, brown rice, amaranth, and oats, and the “brans” of these) and legume-based (peanuts, almonds, sesame), since compounds (phytates) found in these foods may decrease zinc absorption from the intestines.

The most recent analyses of zinc used for prevention and treatment of infections show mixed results. Zinc may be helpful in reducing the severity and duration of colds and flu. In one study published in February 2021, zinc supplementation had no measurable effect on COVID infection; while another study a few months later showed that zinc status may be predictive of COVID severity (lower levels correlated with greater COVID severity).

It's known that zinc is necessary for many aspects of the immune responses to bacterial and viral infections, and numerous studies demonstrate antiviral activity of zinc in the laboratory.

So it seems plausible that making sure you have adequate intake to meet your body's demand would be beneficial.

Of great significance is the association between zinc deficiency and chronic disease such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. Low-dose, long-duration fortification of the diet with zinc has been shown to improve specific risk factors for certain noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), decrease insulin resistance, and improve good cholesterol and triglyceride levels. This approach to fortification mimics natural zinc intake from food and was superior to high-dose or short-duration zinc supplementation; it also has the potential to decrease the comorbidities that are associated with the greatest risk of severe and fatal COVID infections.

God gave us a health-optimizing lifestyle that helps protect us from a wide variety of physical and mental diseases. Healthful practices such as adequate sleep, exercise, and hydration; healthy eating; wholesome relationships; stress management; and trust in God are fundamental to all health enhancements.

Unequivocally, we state that you should avoid zinc deficiency, which increases the risk of acute and chronic infections and a host of other problems. Zinc is inexpensive; low-dose, easily absorbable preparations have few side effects and should help avoid deficiency. But it can interact with certain medications, medical conditions, other supplements, and foods, so a conversation with your health-care provider is essential. Also, do not exceed 40 milligrams intake per day as a supplement. ♣

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



A COVID IMPACT (TIMES THREE)

**GABRIEL, JANELLE, AND
ETHANAEL MORENCY**

The three of us who wrote this piece have been together all our lives—even before people started counting our birthdays: We’re triplets, you see, now in our teenage years. And by now we have accumulated an abundance of memories because of all the things we do together.

For example, attending church—Emmanuel Brinklow Seventh-day Adventist Church. We remember the last time we attended church like it was yesterday. We sat in our usual places, participated in service as we usually did, and after the service we left to go home.

Never in our wildest dreams would we have anticipated that that Sabbath would have been the final Sabbath before the world changed. From a youth’s perspective, COVID-19 has affected the fellowship, outreach, and community worship of the Black church.

CHURCH: OUR VIEW

For many of our friends and colleagues, fellowship is a huge part of the church experience. It is a chance to collaborate with fellow Christ-centered people and evaluate beliefs, ideals, and practices observed in our daily

lives. Meeting with other individuals who share similar beliefs has helped to reinforce our personal convictions and strengthen our roots in the Christian church. Activities such as Pathfinders and youth church, as well as events such as Hush Harbor, a social event for the youth, provide a space for the youth to express themselves and find relief from the everyday stressors that accompany their lives.

PANDEMIC INTERRUPTION

As a result of the pandemic, many youth lost that space of relaxation and freedom. They were left stuck at home with no escape from the stresses and worries of their lives. While for some the lack of physical and interpersonal connections enabled individual growth and connection with God, for many it removed the motivation to continue attending church, and many were left with a spiritual gap in their lives. The pandemic was a rude spiritual awakening for many who had formed a relationship with church and not with God.

The pandemic affected different people differently. Many lost their jobs and now had to deal with the additional concern of how they would afford groceries, and how they would be able to pay their bills. Our church has always maintained a vigorous social witness, sharing material possessions, staging health fairs, hosting free “SALES” that allow neighbors in need to “purchase” attractive attire and other useful items. The pandemic has increased our witness, allowing us to continue to serve as a beacon of hope and relief for those in the community around us. We have been able to relieve some of the stress people face by creating food pantries, providing tuition assistance, and simply being a safe space to help alleviate their stressors. Through our experience with Emmanuel Brinklow’s Grocery Grab and Go initiative, we have had an opportunity to witness the impact of our services, whether it was preparing food bags on a biweekly basis or knocking on people’s doors to deliver the food.

This focus on outreach has helped to show the community that we care not only for their spiritual needs, but their physical needs as well. It has also provided an outlet to help us look outward, see the difference we were making in the community, and remove focus from ourselves and our personal situation. It has also given us time to reflect on how a simple act of kindness can bring joy to people’s

lives. Especially with all of the social justice issues of the day, we were empowered to be change agents in our own way.

As youth, we have always loved an active and engaging worship service. When virtual church services became the norm, many people lost the engaging element of in-person fellowship that they once associated with church. From the perspective of many youth, church evolved from a dynamic, in-person, worship experience to a relaxed, online, Saturday service. Then, in order to make their services more engaging and audience-friendly, some worship leaders began to change the way their services were delivered. Churches began implementing Zoom sessions during or after the service to encourage interaction between audience members and the speakers. Live chat sessions became an integral part of service, and people were encouraged to give feedback. This prompted the church experience to become more of a thoughtful, guided discussion where beliefs were strengthened and challenged, and new perspectives were explored. Through this new way of worship, the audience continued to feel engaged and motivated to listen so that they could participate in worship.

For some members, the pandemic has created many challenges. Virtual worship, financial hardships, and a lack of motivation seem to have affected young and old alike. However, through it all, we have persevered and continued to move forward. We began to take our spiritual lives into our own hands with greater seriousness; our church family started a huge outreach initiative; the online viewer experience grew from a simple service to a more dynamic and interactive worship experience. COVID has not been easy, but we have persevered and will continue to persevere.

COVID has shown us that nothing can stop the will of God’s young people who are committed to continue to spread His love and His Word to every corner of the globe. Our prayer is that as we all continue to worship and to serve, we may constantly remember how far we’ve come and be encouraged that Jesus will take us all the way, no matter how much farther we may have left to go. 🍀

Takoma Academy juniors **Gabriel, Janelle,** and **Ethanael** attend the Emmanuel Brinklow Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ashton, Maryland, with their parents, Darwin and Martine **Morency**.

VANESA PIZZUTO

Several months ago I was on my way to central London to run some errands. Since the weather was not too bad, I decided to ride my bike to the station and take the train.

PUTTING OFF DOUGLAS

I rode my urban bike, Red Arrow, to Watford Junction railway station, and secured it safely at the modern cycle park, equipped with specially installed CCTV cameras and lighting. But when I returned—you guessed it—my bike was gone. Having lost my job during the COVID-19 pandemic, I could not afford to buy a new one.

When I got back home, the phone rang. It was Douglas, a grandpa I had adopted several years ago. As soon as I told him what had happened, he said, “I’m going to buy you a new bike.” I thanked him for the generous offer, but secretly decided

not to take him up on it. I put him off for several months, until he finally said, “Tomorrow we are going to the store to buy your bicycle.”

The night before, I had checked the store’s website and found a beautiful Dutch-style bike, with a leather saddle and a basket at the front. It was love at first sight—until I saw the price! I decided to say nothing. The next day, as we walked into the store, Douglas suggested we start with a look around. Suddenly he pointed to a bike and said, “That one! Do you like it?” My heart skipped a beat. It was exactly the one I wanted. Douglas bought it immediately, not minding the price.

GOD AND DOUGLAS

I must confess that I often treat God the way I treated Douglas. I act as if settling for less and having “practical” dreams is a great spiritual achievement, the pinnacle of humility. However, if my experience is anything to go by, not daring to dream is not about humility, but about hiding. It is emotional cowardice. Often enough we kill our great desires, when dreaming of and believing for great desires are the true acts of faith!

DARE TO DREAM

We shouldn't be celebrating cowardice as humility.



What if Douglas had chosen a different bike? I might have said, *Well, maybe that was God's will!* But what if God wants to give you exactly what you dream, but instead of taking a risk, you bury your desire? *I was scared, so I hid my talent in the ground* (see Matt. 25:25). Remember him?

Throughout this process Anne, one of my best friends, kept telling me: "Ask for what you really want! God does not do half miracles." I have a lot to learn from her. Although Anne does not always get what she asks for, she is not afraid to ask. We honor God when we dream, and ask, and approach Him truly alive, not numbed by cynicism or anesthetized against all hope.

We deceive ourselves when we think that dreaming small will prevent us from suffering. For the less we choose to feel, the feebler our passion. To be fully alive, our hearts need dreams, a degree of risk and adventure.

GOD AND HAVING ENOUGH

"But what about contentment?" someone asks. Aren't we supposed to be content no matter the circumstances? Here's what I think: If God tells you to put your dream on the altar and sacrifice it, you must do *exactly* that. If He doesn't, then keep dreaming and believing. Why organize funerals for dreams God never told us to bury? We let go far too soon because hoping hurts.

So how can we hold on to our dreams when the waiting seems endless and God seems mute? By remembering that Jesus enters our pain and, in doing so, redeems and sanctifies it. The story of Lazarus' resurrection is a great example of this. Jesus was late *on purpose* because He had a better plan. However, He recognized that His tardiness had caused a lot of pain. In fact, I think Jesus was picturing all of us. His prophetic eyes saw the accumulated years of waiting and hopelessness of all humanity. He saw you and me wondering if God had forgotten us. And rather than numbing His heart and running away from the pain, rather than saying "Stop making a fuss; I am about to resurrect this man," Jesus chose the courage to feel and to weep. Only *after* acknowledging and honoring our pain did Jesus resurrect Lazarus.

This is the source of our hope: We serve a God who cries with us. Emmanuel waters the seeds of our courage with His own tears. We don't dream again based on the illusion that nothing will ever go wrong.

What if God wants to give you exactly what you dream?

Faith is not an insurance policy against all risks. We dream because we know that even if we do not receive what we wanted, our pain will never be wasted.

GOD AND YOUR LONGING

What do you want? Before healing blind Bartimaeus, Jesus asked him a seemingly unnecessary question: "What do you want me to do for you?" (Mark 10:51, NIV). If Jesus were to ask you the same today, what would you answer? I believe that one of the most profoundly spiritual things I'll ever do is the two-step act of figuring out what I want and mustering the courage to go for it, rather than covering my lack of self-awareness with fake humility. Jesus wants me to know and own my needs and dreams. This means untangling myself from other people's expectations. It means stilling myself long enough to breathe and hear my own God-inspired thoughts. It means trusting my intuition, something I was conditioned to doubt for years. And it means taking risks and making mistakes. All of which feels very uncomfortable and impossible to control. Moreover, our hopes and fears are too often the result of wondering what people think; of burying our dreams and desires so deep that we no longer even know who we really are.

So I ask you again: What do you want? There is nothing remotely spiritual about not dreaming, not asking, or never risking a thing. Being a Christian is not mainly about safety and practicality. Go ahead, dare to dream! God is calling you to an adventure of faith with Him. The journey will involve mistakes and uncertainty, but it is worth embarking on. Go ahead and dream. Trust Him enough to ask for something only God can do.

So, "be strong," "take heart," and "hope in the Lord" (Ps. 31:24, NIV).

Vanesa Pizzuto is a communication specialist; she lives and works in England.



*Learning to
serve the God
of no limits*

HOW COVID-19 IMPACTED MY CHURCH AND MINISTRY

One word: shaken. Because of the crisis brought about by the advent of the coronavirus pandemic, the world was shaken. So was the church. So was my ministry. Doing *as usual* could not work anymore. Something changed: “normal” is no longer the norm.

I felt as if a stop sign had appeared from nowhere to force us to reconceive our ministerial approaches. Within a few days orders were given to close churches and schools, while, simultaneously, a new era of extending the boundaries of ministry was inaugurated.

A familiar Bible verse serves well at this point: “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Luke 12:34, KJV). Henceforth, this *treasure* would be clearly defined and identified. No one would miss the point about what was their highest value as we made plans to work around our COVID-19-inspired lockdowns, social distancing obligations, and stay-at-home orders. COVID-19 was a tremendous wake-up call to sharpen my vision of ministry.

I spent much of 2020 and 2021 in self-evaluation, as I experienced something similar to Elijah’s invisible army experience found in 2 Kings 6:8-23.

A TIME TO PRAY

At first the exclamation of Elijah’s servant, “Oh no, my lord! What shall we do?” (verse 15, NIV), resonated deeply in me. On campus we had organized a Week of Prayer, invited speakers, lined up participants, purchased decorations for the chapel and prizes for the games we would play as well. We had scheduled a trip to St. Lucia for the dorm students; some had made reservations, and some parents had already paid in full for the trip. We also had humanitarian events scheduled, and a choral concert was in preparation. Besides, my agenda was filling up: spiritual counseling appointments with students and parents, preaching, seminar assignments. . . . Then the pandemic struck: “Oh no, my lord! What shall we do?”

COVID-19 struck as an unavoidable blow. In some people its stress and fear produced erratic behavior. In my own prayers I went through that moment of *Oh no, my Lord!* that exposed to Him my thoughts and concerns. As I asked Him for guidance, His Spirit quieted me down and led me to realize that the One who is with me is greater in wisdom and power. God always already knows the end before the beginning. He will make a way.

Then, just as Elisha prayed, “Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may see” (verse 17, NIV), I prayed, *Open my eyes, Lord, so I may see that this is a time of opportunities and possibilities!*

A TIME TO BE EMOTIONALLY AVAILABLE

The large number of casualties and the breadth of suffering COVID-19 has engendered are constant reminders that our neighbors, our colleagues, our students, are worried, distressed, and living now with unattended emotional wounds. In these times feelings of depression and suicidal thoughts are prevalent among both young people and their parents. As a chaplain, I knew that my posture as a listener and my ability to embrace individuals’ needs in the context of the pandemic’s nerve-racking atmosphere were keys to unlock the ways to people’s hearts. Every action, every word, needed to be thoughtfully conceived to convey Jesus’ message of grace and compassion. In order to do so, I needed to be self-aware and to address my own needs, fears, and anxieties. To become emotionally available and connect empathically with others was crucial to my ministry. Each opportunity needed to be grasped correctly; because of that, I felt compelled to be trained in clinical pastoral education and in life coaching.

A TIME TO STAY FOCUSED AND LISTEN

Most one-on-one meetings and home visits migrated from face-to-face to calls over the phone. I had to develop and improve my telephone listening skills, taking every feature of exchanges into consideration to listen clinically, in order to detect the emotions and feelings my parishioners were experiencing, and to identify the pastoral questions patients were posing: tone of voice, rhythm, silences, signs of excitement, volume, etc.—everything mattered. I had to see patients through my ears. Meanwhile, they needed to feel my presence through my voice in their ear: I needed empathy; I needed a voice that matched their mood, their questioning; I tried to recap key facts; my prayers needed to be oriented toward their expressed needs.

Shaken yet strengthened. So is my faith. So is my ministry. So is the church, I pray.

A TIME FOR COMPASSION AND BENEVOLENCE

Core values of the Adventist education system invite students to care for others, especially elderly individuals and the weakest of society. COVID-19 proved to be a time to empower families and young people to be the hands of Jesus, i.e., to find creative ways to meet the needs of their community while respecting health regulations and guidelines.

For example, a class of 20 high schoolers carried on a love-call project toward elderly people named “A call = A smile.” Each student chose up to three isolated persons, known or unknown, to call and find out fun facts about them.¹

A TIME TO UPHOLD CHRISTIAN VALUES

As bringers of hope and inspirers of faith, my team members made it a priority to reinvent and maintain fraternity without shaking hands and eating together. We did things to impact the school community, reassuring hearts and nurturing faith. Online challenges facilitated connection and inter-generational exchange.²

A TIME FOR CREATIVITY AND QUICK THINKING

While we maintain our focus on the soon coming of the Lord Christ Jesus, the pandemic has also been a time to revisit routine and established patterns of behavior and practice. It was a time for social distancing, and yet a time for digital connection over platforms like Zoom or Google Meet. School classes, committees, and spiritual activities all became part of our new digital world. We reenvisioned worship, Weeks of Prayer, prayer sessions, Bible studies, etc., as we questioned current needs and sought to meet students where they were.

In June 2020 we chose to break up the loneliness of our students by building a digital bridge between the three SDA middle schools from

Martinique and Guadeloupe, and sharing one common Week of Prayer. My team and I discovered the joys and challenges of filmmaking as we created the CODE PS46.12 series project, with participation from all three schools. Feedback was a torrent of praise to God.³

During April 2021 we returned to in-person school. However, the regulations forbade assembly of large groups. I asked God to give us a plan of action to organize the Week of Prayer that would work with 720 students. And He did. One week each, by class level, totaling seven continuous weeks of back-to-back prayer. It may sound crazy, but God did it!

A TIME TO PRAY MORE

“Then the Lord opened the servant’s eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha” (2 Kings 6:17, NIV).

Ministers involved in church, school, prison, and hospital ministries should not be afraid to invest, to train, to equip themselves, their membership, and their youth. When God responded positively to Elisha’s request, his servant saw something he would never have dreamed. Trying to limit the infinite God is a nonsensical and pointless contradiction. I learned this much during these recent months. God’s chariots are already in place. God has always been in charge of His work. It is He who provides the ideas, means, training, and finances for our success.

This pandemic continuously calls me, as a spiritual leader, to prayerfully review my church’s role and place in society; to better define my ministry priorities; and to become a close companion to those around me so they may become closer to Jesus.

Shaken yet strengthened. So is my faith. So is my ministry. So is the church, I pray. 🍀

¹ Find the video students made to complete the project, with the names and ages of those involved, at [Production n°8 Csarama. Org—YouTube.](#)

² The song “Our God Is an awesome God!” [“Car Dieu est un Dieu Puissant”] was offered and used as an antidote to stress. Hear the recording by a chain of students and staff singing in a variety of musical genres, both accompanied and a cappella: [ANTIDOTE AU DESESPOIR—UNIS CONTRE LE COVID19—Challenge Car Dieu est un Dieu Puissant—CSARAMA—YouTube.](#)

³ Find the link at: [Saison 1 Je compte pour toi—YouTube.](#)

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OLGA VALDIVIA

"For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways" (Ps. 91:11, NIV).

Do guardian angels exist? I like how Ellen White puts it: "A guardian angel is appointed to every follower of Christ. These heavenly watchers shield the righteous from the power of the wicked one." Indeed, guardian angels do exist, as I learned at the tender age of 13.

GIRL IN A STRANGE LAND

It was a hot spring, 1972, in the state of Florida, and right in the middle of that school year I was starting my very first year of junior high school.

Immigrating from Communist Cuba wasn't easy in any way: I missed my friends and family terribly, and adaptation was taking its time. Things were poles apart from what I was used to at my age.

It made me an unusual child in many aspects. Culturally, linguistically, and spiritually speaking, I felt left out. I didn't speak the language, and to top it all off, I was the awkward outsider who didn't go by the 1970s' standards—bell bottom pants,

frayed jeans, and midi skirts. I was a Seventh-day Adventist, learning to swim in the choppy social waters of my era in a new country.

Anti-bullying programs and tolerance for kids who were different, slow, challenged, or gifted were non-existent in those days. Schools were deep, dangerous water: you either sank or swam.

Then I stumbled into mean-girl territory, and that's when the bullying started: packs of four or five girls at a time; sometimes even more. They'd say mean things about me and make unkind comments right in my face; they laughed about my clothing and how I looked. Sometimes they'd even push me around whenever we encountered each other.

LAST STRAW

One day, after our physical education class, something happened that marked me for life and introduced me to the world of angels. I was wearing a beautiful, solid flowery scarf tied around the head with the end hanging down on one side—the quintessential hippie look of the day. It was my newest

“treasure” in the land of liberty; a recent gift from Mom. I felt special, confident: I was starting to fit in.

In the locker room one of the mean girls approached me from behind. I could never have imagined what was about to transpire. I felt a sudden jerk on my hair as my beautiful headband was yanked off of my head. This girl’s insolence had crossed all boundaries. I heard her laughing and making fun of me behind my back, and without even knowing what I was doing, I turned around and slapped her in the face.

They gave me the death sentence that same day after class.

The girl and all her tormentor friends were waiting for me outside. They threatened revenge, and called me out for a fight.

“Tomorrow morning when you get to school, we’ll be here waiting for you.”

I stood frozen where I was, unable to move or articulate a word, and just watched the girls walk away one after the other, until their silhouettes disappeared beyond the horizon.

What would I do? Run, hide, or ask others to handle my problems? Telling an adult could easily make things worse. It might stop the immediate situation, but I would just be painting a target on myself. What other option did I have?

ANGEL HELP

That evening at home I learned about the power of angels watching over us, and the light of God’s promises transformed the dark perspective on my situation. My heavenly Father gave me a new verdict.

My mom was a woman of faith. She believed her loving Savior watches over us with the deepest affection. She took me to her room, pulled open the top drawer of the small dark-green nightstand at the side of her bed, took her big old Bible out, and began to read.

First of all, a verse from the book of Joshua: “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:9, NIV).

Mom’s fingers traveled swiftly through the pages of her much-studied Bible, finding verse after verse of assurance of God’s protection from dangers seen and unseen, reassuring me and imparting light, strength, and courage.

Promises of the Lord’s angels sent to watch over

us were the “refuge” where, just as she had done all of her life, I was to hide and find my own comfort. And I did.

Mom believed in God’s promises with all her heart. She believed in her heavenly Father and His protection for His earthly children, and she passed that legacy on to her daughter that evening, as she made sure I memorized those precious gems.

The promise that God has placed angels all around us opened up such an amazing window to the invisible world of God and His majestic power. Without a doubt, angels of God are commissioned from heaven to guard God’s children. My best weapon was my faith and the trust I was placing in the care of my heavenly Father.

“Tomorrow when you get to school,” said Mom, “remember that He walks with you.” We prayed about the circumstances, and went to rest.

The following morning the girls were waiting for me just as they had promised. Half of them stood on one side of the door where I had to come in, while the rest stood on the other side. There was no adult supervising, and there was no turning back for me.

I raised my head and reminded myself: “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them” (Ps. 34:7, KJV). No evil could approach me without the Lord’s permission. As I entered, something inexplicable transpired.

The girls stood as if in a trance in front of me. Unable to move or even speak, they stood watching me, in silence, as if seeing something—or someone—I wasn’t able to see. I believe they saw my guardian angel walking by my side that day.

Those girls never victimized or bullied me after that. The bullying stopped, and I graduated from junior high school a conqueror in the Lord.

Whatever did happen that day, whatever those girls saw that morning, are questions that will remain with me to the end of my days. One thing I am sure of is that God’s faithfulness is everlasting. He is near when we are oppressed with anxieties and fears, and yearns for us to cast all our cares upon Him, because He cares for us.

“See, I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared” (Ex. 23:20, NIV).[♣]

[♣]Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), pp. 512, 513.

Olga Valdivia is a customer service representative at Pacific Press Publishing Association in the state of Idaho.



LOVE LIKE YOU DO



**CARLOS
L.Y.M.E.
TRIMBLE**

Carlos Trimble's lyrics introduce us to an American art form born in New York City's Bronx borough about 50 years ago. It's a product of inner city African-, Latino- and Jamaican-Americans, characterized by strong rhythms and chanted lyrics often charged with anger and violence. Trimble has done a bold and courageous thing, exploiting the form, known as rap or hip-hop music, for purposes of salvation. Instead of an assault on society's vulnerable elements or a rage against the machine he sets forth the contrast between a loving God and His apathetic followers. Christians who, for reasons of familiarity, may no longer cringe upon hearing that our best goodness is like filthy rags (the Hebrew is even more cringeworthy) may wince again upon meeting Trimble's music. God grant that it move us beyond cringing, to love like He does. Editors.

STANZA 1

All I can do is Smh,
It's kind of hard to LOL when the appearance of the church is hate,
And while we're supposed to be the light that leads to the pearly gates,
We're the reason that the lost remain in their blinded state.
Incredible, God's so credible,
Yet we represent Him just like Hannibal,
Flesh takes over mind, and we become just like animals,
Celebrate our sin by looking down on our neighbor,
Forgetting that we, even though saved, still need a Savior,
Watching, plotting, hatred,
Yeah we got His favor, but God don't play favorites,
And as holy as we think we are, we're still living reckless,
Because only God can change the shape of those fallen just like Tetris,
No wonder the world laughs at our invitations.
We reek of self-righteousness in our call to preservation,
So I pray that not only we realize our disconnection,
But that we turn to God and repent for improper representation.

CHORUS:

I'm gonna stand up and praise Your name,
 I'll be obedient to what You say,
 And when I get up out this pew
 I'm gonna love them just like You do.
 I promise to serve (I promise to serve You)
 I promise to love (I promise to love You)
 In everything I do, I'm gonna love them just like You do!

STANZA 2

Now turn in your Bible to Acts chapter 4,
 verses 32-35 express love at its core:
 One heart, one soul, unified under God;
 They sold everything they had without seeking
 applause;
 Laid the money at the apostles' feet,
 Giving so candidly,
 Church, can we agree that our breath ain't even
 ours to breathe?
 that's why their understanding turned into power
 and grace,
 because God's promises come to pass for the faith-
 ful that pray.
 But we think times are different now,
 Can't see us giving up all of our blessings now.
 Now is that me, or is that sin wearing a crown?
 And are we free, or does sin still have us bound?
 (Wake up!) the reason that the poor still exist
 Is that we cling to our possessions like they're try-
 ing to take our kids,
 When in reality we should have the love of Christ,
 So much that if He asked us to, we would lay down
 our life.

CHORUS:

I'm gonna stand up and praise Your name,
 I'll be obedient to what You say,
 And when I get up out this pew,
 I'm gonna love them just like You do.
 I promise to serve (I promise to serve You)
 I promise to love (I promise to love You)
 In everything I do, I'm gonna love them just like You do!

STANZA 3

One of the worst mistakes we could make is not
 sharing what we learn:
 It's like seeing your child on fire and just watching
 them burn!

If we're stuck to the pews, how we gonna reach every nation?

See, Mathew 28:19 is a call and command,
 But how can we make disciples if we don't agree
 with His plans?

Scared to say a word about Jesus, kind of like Peter,
 Actions speak louder than words, we're supposed
 to be leaders.

Instead we keep His word one day out the week,
 And wonder why what we sow is exactly what we reap.
 (Let's hit the streets) even if they laugh in our face,
 Let us not forget, we were once far from His grace.
 He broke the chains and this is how we show our
 appreciation!

If we're stuck to the pews, how we gonna reach
 every nation?

(Obedience) I propose we stand to our feet
 And worship the King with every single word that
 we speak,
 Accept the calling, and open up the doors of the
 church,
 The streets are falling, let's go on and give them
 some of this Word!

CHORUS:

I'm gonna stand up and praise Your name,
 I'll be obedient to what You say,
 And when I get up out this pew,
 I'm gonna love them just like You do
 I promise to serve (I promise to serve You)
 I promise to love (I promise to love You)
 In everything I do, I'm gonna love them just like
 You do. . . .

Link to song: <https://blaxicanlyme.bandcamp.com/track/love-like-you-do-feat-elias-and-alicia>

Carlos Trimble is a Christian recording artist/engineer from Los Angeles, California. His inspiration for music comes from the many lessons God has taught him throughout his life.



WHERE AND WHY

Valuing the Black Church

JAMIE RODDY

From my earliest memories the “Black church” has been my church home, although my family is White and I lived in Alabama the majority of my life.

MY WHERE

I grew up in the Oakwood College, now University, church family. The concept of our congregation being a part of the Black church was not something my family formally discussed. Oakwood church was my church, E. C. Ward was my pastor, and I was his “buddy.” Now as an adult I look back, and I do notice that my family and I were unique in the congregation. The Oakwood College church is where I accepted Jesus as my Savior, got baptized, got married, and funeralized my family. The most defining moments of my life occurred at Oakwood church.

Now as an adult I choose to continue to worship and feel most comfortable within the Black church. The Black church to me is more than style of worship, music, and preaching. Within, I find the Black church to be a welcoming experience with a strong sense of community centered on a shared desire to be part of Christ’s kingdom and share the good news with the community.

AND MY WHY

My experience has taught me that church family can be as strong as, if not stronger than, genetic family. At its best the Black church provides the village of support needed to counteract the challenges inherent in our society. The strength of the Black church community is evident both in times of tragedy and times of success.

The Black church proclaims the gospel of eternal salvation, while

at the same time proclaiming practical application of the gospel here on Planet Earth. I have seen the transformational power of the gospel message applied within the church (2 Cor. 5:17): Within my church community I have seen how the baptism and spiritual transformation of one family member led to educational, vocational, and financial transformation of the entire family. I find the willingness of the Black church to directly and vocally confront social issues—especially poverty, disenfranchisement, and police violence—unique within the Adventist Church (see Isa. 1:17). As a public school educator, I have brought numerous students with me to visit my church throughout my career. I pray the seeds planted will grow as my former students develop into adults.

For me the Black church has provided a sense of family and belonging, a place where I can be transparent and unguarded. I am sure that all Adventist churches are welcoming and will become a church family over time, but I find something unique in the social bonds that span generation and geography within the Black Adventist experience. I have seen over my lifetime that we as a worldwide church are stronger when we embrace and celebrate our similarities as well as our differences. Accepting our differences, embracing our past, growing together, and truly reflecting Christ to the world is all in our job of hastening His soon coming. 🦋

Jamie Roddy, trained educator and loving wife, taught for 14 years before becoming the mother of two sons, Brooks and Brayden.



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THE PRAYER I DIDN'T WANT TO PRAY

God, I really don't want to pray for him. I looked at the name on my Facebook friends list. He had publicly admitted to doing something awful, in the process hurting one of our mutual friends. *Certainly it would be OK if I just skipped him?*

My resolution for 2020 had been to pray my way through my Facebook friends. Each day I looked at my list of friends and prayed for two individuals, spending some time looking at their Facebook walls to see what I might be able to petition on their behalf. Then I would send them a message letting them know they were in my prayers.

Everybody deserves prayer. The response to my pleadings was forceful. I couldn't argue. Jesus had interceded for those who crucified Him. I could pray for my friend who had fallen to temptation.

I looked at his Facebook wall. There was a joke about money. Remembering that there's a bit of truth behind every joke, I wondered if he needed financial blessings. *God, I can't pray for that. That's way too personal! It's awkward enough to be praying for him at all, but to be praying about his financial situation? Does he even deserve financial blessings?*

God wasn't giving me a pass. And so I drafted a message to my friend.

"May God give you grace as you rebuild your life. May you stay healthy through the pandemic," I typed. Then forcing myself to pray for the one thing I didn't want to pray for, I finished, "and may God take care of your financial needs." I hit send, wondering if I would regret my message.

But when I got his response, all I felt was relief that I hadn't neglected my duty. He told me that he had just been put on unpaid leave because of the pandemic. He really didn't know how he was going to get by financially.

I let out a gasp, realizing how close I'd come to not praying for someone facing a crisis; and moreover, how close I'd come to not praying for the very thing he was desperately needing. I told him that I felt God had directed my prayer for him.

"Perhaps so," he responded.

What I didn't know was that there was another crisis he was facing. One that he didn't speak of at the time, but that would come out later: a crisis of faith.

I wish I could say my intercession put him back on the straight and narrow, but that would be untrue. He still struggles with the big questions and no longer identifies as a Christian.

But this makes me even more glad that I prayed for him. Had I skipped over him, I would secretly have wondered if praying for him would have made a difference in his decision.

And I still hold on to hope, hope that one day, as he looks back at the ways God has reached out to him, maybe this experience will play a small role in bringing him back into Jesus' arms.

No matter what happens, I'll always be glad I prayed the prayer I didn't want to pray. 🦋

Lori Fitcher is the editor of the new junior, early-teen, and youth "Alive in Jesus" Sabbath School curriculum that will become available in 2025.

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LORI FUTCHER



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CONFESSION OF THE PRIVILEGED

It's confession time. Back when I was an undergraduate at Andrews University, I came to despise a certain yearly celebration that arrived every February: Black History Month. Somehow, somehow, I found myself sliding into the cynicism of wondering why our chapels and church services had to be saturated with the constant—or so it seemed to me—recounting of not only the positive contributions of persons of color but also the indiscretions of my own race that hampered their advancement.

Of course, I confess this to my shame. God has been merciful to me—as have former classmates who have, since then, very graciously reminded me of some of the embarrassing and shameful things I said in person and wrote in student publications.

This is not the confession of some super-woke liberal, influenced unwittingly by Marxist propagandists. This is the confession of someone who has sat down and listened to the heart-wrenching stories of loved ones and friends who've dared to share a bit of their painful experiences with someone who has never walked—nor ever will—in their shoes. It's the confession of someone who's repeatedly read the Bible and can't get around the impression that if one were to expunge Scripture of all its talk of racial reconciliation, they would have to tear out about half of Paul's letters (for starters). The fact is, racial reconciliation has always been and always will be a fundamental gospel work.

A few years ago, on Martin Luther King, Jr., Day, I decided to read, for the first time, King's "Letter From Birmingham Jail." It was convicting and converting. The most compelling part was his line about the "white moderate," which seemed to point

to me: "I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in the stride toward freedom," he thus wrote, "is not . . . the Ku Klux Klanner but the white moderate who is more devoted to order than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice." And then came the real clincher: "Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection."

Those words pierce my conscience and call me to action. Our Black sisters and brothers are still hurting. So during the past few years I've decided to use my modest platform to call attention to the ongoing pain and invalidation they've experienced both within and without the church. Sometimes I've received pushback and been encouraged just to stick to the gospel, since that's supposedly less divisive. But, again, calling attention to ongoing racial disparities and the ways in which our Black sisters and brothers continue to feel excluded is a fundamental gospel work. And I've decided that if I'm to err, I'd rather offend my White brothers and sisters by my words than my Black brothers and sisters by my silence.

So how is one to do this? First: listen—with genuine desire to understand (not to invalidate). Then act. That's what I now try to do during Black History Month—as well as every other month of the year. 🍌

Shawn Brace is a pastor and author in Bangor, Maine, whose book, *There's More to Jesus* (Signs Publishing), further expounds upon a Jesus-centered understanding of Adventism. He is also a DPhil student at the University of Oxford, researching nineteenth-century American Christianity.

REIMAGINING
FAITH
SHAWN
BRACE



I'D RATHER OFFEND
MY WHITE BROTHERS
AND SISTERS BY MY
WORDS THAN MY
BLACK BROTHERS
AND SISTERS BY
MY SILENCE.

THE BLACK PERSPECTIVE

Seventh-day Adventism lives aware—even if insufficiently so—of the evangelistic, theological, social, administrative consciousness and impact of our Black leaders: Ella Simmons, first female General Conference vice president; Hyveth Williams, celebrated preacher, first female professor of preaching at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. We content ourselves, today, with hearing from but a few—their word historic, at times prophetic, always for the cause, and in the name of the Lord:

“People who are watching Adventist Christians are not looking for perfection. Neither are they expecting us to be quiet little church mice who never rock the boat. Most understand that oneness is not blandness, and peace is not always silence. Instead, they’re looking to see fellowship in our fellowship. . . . If they can see Christian virtues in us rather than vices, we will win more people to this church by accident than we now win to Christ on purpose.”

ROSA BANKS, first female associate secretary of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists; “United in the Fellowship of the Fellowship,” *Adventist Review*, October 2003.

“In the plans and purposes of God, the whole church may profit by the experience of its African-American brothers and sisters. This struggling yet victorious people make their greatest contribution to their church and the larger society when they are assured of their self-worth and affirmed by the belief system they have espoused—the message. When African-Americans, ordinary people, come to see themselves as laborers together with God, identifying with His plans and purposes, a sense of security maximizes their ability to serve their fellow human beings with dignity. They will not envy the rich and privileged, nor will they despise the poor and underclass. Buying into the divine economy helps the believer to see the big picture and thus transcend the injustices and inequities of the present.”

CHARLES E. BRADFORD, first president, North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, in *Perspectives*, Calvin Rock, ed.

“Evangelism is the elixir that warms up a cold church, the force that moves the members from standing on the premises to standing on the promises.”

C. D. BROOKS, media ministry founder, whose passing earned a headline article in the *New York Times*, June, 2016: “C. D. Brooks Is Dead at 85; Preached Seventh-Day Adventist Message”; from *blacksdahistory.org*.

“I have seen God, for so long, do so much, with so little, I now believe He can do anything with nothing—meaning me.”

E. EARL CLEVELAND, first Black to integrate a department at the Adventist Church world headquarters, and the man who conducted national evangelistic campaigns before the advent of satellite technology; from *blacksdahistory.org*.

Roll call of Cleveland’s impact: “I could experience no greater joy than seeing the power of God exhibited in the ministry of [those] who worked with me. George Rainey, Leonard Newton, E. C. Ward, Warren Banfield, Richard Barron, and Lucius Daniels were among them. M. T. Battle was originally hired at my insistence and went on to serve faithfully and efficiently in the secretariat of the world body. Benjamin Reaves became president of Oakwood College. James Edgecombe became president of the Southeastern Conference. Elbert Shepperd



became vice president of the Pacific Union Conference. And William Scales became secretary of evangelism for all of North America. Wintley Phipps became a world-renowned minister of music. Delbert Baker became editor of *Message* magazine. John Street became president of the City Council of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

“Outstanding women have made their mark. . . . Lillie Evans, Ola May Harris, Mildred Johnson, Bertha Bailey, Ellen Anderson, Vivian Perry, and Beatrice Hampton brought hundreds to the foot of the cross in my campaigns.”

.....
E. EARL CLEVELAND, *Let the Church Roll On*, pp. 40, 41.

“The question of a little gray-haired Bible instructor, Ella Johnson, I met as a young preacher in 1947 is relevant here. She asked, ‘How are Black people in the United States represented in Revelation 14:6? The text says, “. . . every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.”’ Answering her own question, she mused, ‘We are not a nation, nor a kindred. We do not have a tongue [language]. We are just “people.” All mixed-up people.’”

.....
CHARLES E. DUDLEY, SR., 31½ continuous years an administrator, South Central Conference; *Thou Who Hast Brought Us*.

“He was looking straight at them, challenging their scruples, belittling their person—throwing them under the gospel bus; so infuriating them that they ran Him out of town and actually tried to throw Him off a cliff [Luke 4:28, 29].”

.....
CALVIN B. ROCK, former president, Oakwood College (now Oakwood University), and, for 17 years, general vice president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, in “The Radically Social Jesus,” *Adventist Review*, <https://adventistreview.org/radically-social-jesus>.

“This time, after the shock, the outrage, and the pain [of George Floyd’s murder], let us not return to an unhealthy, inhumane business-and-ministry-as-usual, only praying and hoping for that better day of change.

“There was a time when God told His people to get up off their knees, to stop praying, and move forward. So let us arise and ‘let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!’ [Amos 5:24, NIV].

“I hear that charge to move now.”

.....
ELLA SIMMONS, “Deeds, Not Only Words,” *Adventist Review*, June 2020.

“Love is free. Coercion and control are its opposite. . . . The tree drags no one into its shade, even if we are in danger of a sunstroke. A lamp will not force its light on us lest we stumble in the dark. They respect our freedom to use or not enjoy their resources. Think of all the coercion and control that we submit to on the part of others when we so anxiously live up to their expectations in order to buy their love and approval. . . . Each time we submit to these, we undermine the capacity to love and receive love that is our very nature, for we cannot but do to others only what we allow them to do to us.”

.....
HYVETH WILLIAMS, “Love Alive,” *Adventist Review*, February 2018.

“Scales have valued sons over daughters, or a spouse over children, relatives over strangers, and fellow citizens over foreigners. The underlying principle for preference has often been likeness to me. The end result is a diminished reflection of God and godliness in humanity, and diminished human ability to see life as God sees life.”

.....
HENRY WRIGHT, “To God They Matter,” *Adventist Review*, February 2016.

THE EERIE FOG

During my teenage years I lived in a very small German village. The town's population was less than 4,000, and it was located just north of the city of Stuttgart. The village was situated in a region known for its vineyards. Many of the steep hillsides were covered with wine grapes.

Our family had only one car, which meant that I had to either walk or bike to school. The way to school led first down a steep hillside, and then across a flat valley and over a bridge. On the other side of the valley the path again climbed steeply uphill. My school was at the top of that hill. My journey between home and school was long and—literally—uphill both ways.

I usually chose to walk instead of using my bike, as the latter made me really sweaty. I got used to walking about 45 minutes to school one way. It was a nice way to begin and end the school day, as I was able to enjoy nature and to think. Throughout the years my route became familiar enough that little surprised me. But there was one interesting phenomenon that occurred a few times a year. When the temperature significantly changed, fog would swell and creep up from the river, spill into the valley, and rise up the sides of the steep hillside. It was so dense that it was difficult to see 10 feet ahead of you. My daily path that I was usually so comfortable with, became tricky, treacherous, and eerie.

Those foggy journeys were very challenging; yet, when I reflect on them years later, I find similarities to the lives of many of us today. So often we go about our daily routine on autopilot. We start

the day with prayer and breakfast, and then head to school or work. We're content. We're OK. We're able to enjoy life. But then there are those foggy days. We can't see where we're going, and the familiar path that we know so well becomes unrecognizable. We become scared and concerned, and the path becomes uncertain. In moments like these we long to experience the presence of God in a deep and meaningful way; instead, we sometimes feel alone and isolated.

We're not alone in this. Elijah also felt like that. After the miracle at Mount Carmel, Queen Jezebel threatened him, and he ran for his life. He was demoralized and felt alone.

Elijah goes into a cave and experiences utter isolation. He's told that he will stand before God. A mighty earthquake takes place, and a powerful and fierce fire sweeps by, but God isn't in those powerful natural catastrophes. "And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?'" (1 Kings 19:12-14, ESV).*

God is with us in those still, quiet, lonely, and isolated moments. He's right next to us. The eerie fog moments dissipate when we realize that our Lord is standing beside us. Listen for that still whisper. God will be there for you, as He promised. 🍂

* 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.

Enno Müller is director of communication and news editor for Adventist Review Ministries.

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