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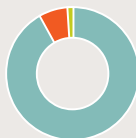
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- 2 Soda Bad for Health, But May Not Be Making Us Fat
- 3 Fifteen Church Members Die in Rwandan Church after Being Struck by Lightning
- 4 Foot Washing Ministry Reaches Hearts of Homeless Population

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BILL KNOTT



"It's time that Adventists everywhere recover a keener sense of just where we are when we sing and preach and pray."

Not About Us

Gabriel yawned and stretched.

"Gather 'round," he said wearily. "We've got to pull this together, and we've only got 20 minutes until worship begins. And remember, we've got three services today, so we've got to pace ourselves.

"We'll start off with 'Majesty' in the opening set," he continued. "Yes, I know it's 40 years old. But we get a lot of kudos every time we perform it. We'll add a couple of old hymns for the traditionalists in the myriads who can't seem to go even one Sabbath without hearing 'How Great Thou Art.'"

"Raphael put together some thoughts about the possibilities of intergalactic travel that he will be sharing during the homily. And Ariel and his friends have a little skit that should make everyone smile about the challenges of singing in the same choir for hundreds of years."

"That's pretty much the run sheet for today's services. Sound check, everyone?"

The scene just described is truly unbelievable, especially for believers who maintain that the book of Revelation is a central inspiration for their theology and their practice. But something akin to this occurs in hundreds of Adventist churches across the land each Sabbath. And while we all agree—whatever our preferred worship style—that practicing is a key element of the excellence God's character demands, it has become increasingly difficult to imagine much of what Adventists experience in worship as any but the merest shadow of what John the Beloved tells us is constantly occurring in heaven.

Lest these words incite another skirmish in the worship wars, let me hasten to add that nothing here should be construed as endorsing or critiquing any of the many worship styles Adventists now employ. I've wept with joy at the feet of Jesus as the worship leader thoughtfully guided us through contemporary Christian anthems. I've wept in frustration as nineteenth-century art songs more appropriate to a recital were gorgeously delivered

by a tenor in a "traditional" congregation. I've stood among the people as the music of deliverance and redemption swept over an African-American congregation and known conclusively that I was in the throne room of heaven. And my soul has writhed with discomfort as those ostensibly leading me in worship practiced funky dance moves.

Missing from many such services is any notion that all of this—all that we call "worship"—is occurring in the very presence of the One before whom angels, elders, and living creatures are constantly bowing in adoration. And no, this isn't a hymn to the hushed solemnity that characterized much of the Adventist worship of my childhood. I've been fond of saying from pulpits everywhere that the most reverent place in this universe is also the loudest place in this universe—with trumpet blasts, thunderings, and the voices of millions of adoring worshippers rising in one vast, eternal chorus. Reverence doesn't equal quiet: silence isn't the highest form of praise.

But it's time that Adventists everywhere, and especially those to whom we give the privilege of leading us in worship, recover a keener sense of just where we are when we sing and preach and pray—and for whose glory all this wonder is unfolding. Worship is the moment that most unites God's faithful universe. Somewhere, through every time zone on this "terrestrial ball," believers are enacting the deep, delighted adoration we see pictured in the book of Revelation, led, as I imagine, by one of those 24 elders.

And when it flows like that river that proceeds from the throne of God; when it rises to a zenith in proclaiming the grace we find in Jesus; when it makes our hearts burn with a passion to tell everyone of the goodness of our God—then it is worship pleasing to the Lord, in whatever language, music, style, or idiom.

So here's a call for "verticality"—an ever-upward look—in our worship, excellently planned and passionately led; a soul-moving opportunity for us to find our knees even as our tongues extol His praise. 🍀

At current rates, if time should last, Islam will overtake Christianity as the dominant world religion in the last half of this century.

ERIC STONE, WEST HILLS, CALIFORNIA

WHERE CHANGE IS LEADING

After completing the rest of the pie charts at the beginning of the article “Where Change Is Leading” (March 2018), we would notice another significant trend. While Christianity has remained constant at 33 percent of the world’s population over the past 100 years, Islam has nearly doubled and is currently about 25 percent of the world’s population. It is the fastest growing of the world’s major religions. At a 1.8 percent annual growth rate, the 1.8 billion Muslims in the world are increasing at a rate of nearly 80,000 per day.

At current rates, if time should last, Islam will overtake Christianity as the dominant world religion in the last half of this century. Adventists should get to know their Muslim neighbors. There will be more of them.

Eric Stone

West Hills, California

HEARING EACH OTHER

Bill Knott’s editorial “Hearing Each Other” (February 2018) is one of the most articulate and helpful editorials Helen and I have read.

More than a year ago we moved to the Gables of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, an assisted living community near our family. A lot of interaction takes place among the residents. Since we are the only Adventists, we are

careful not to offend and, therefore, when chatting avoid interrupting them. We take time to hear them out.

When we are with Adventists, it would also be well not to interrupt each other. We Adventists come from many different backgrounds and don’t always think alike. As we communicate with each other, we should hear each other out.

Lynn Sauls

Massachusetts



IMPRESSED

The *Review* is no longer something I glance through; I read it! I am particularly impressed with the sections Connect and Engage. In the February issue I was inspired by “Life Detours,” by Dixil Rodriguez. Then I was moved to tears by Stephen Chavez’ review of *Barking to the Choir*, the selection of quotations in “Know Justice,” and Chavez’ essay “When Things Get Weird.”

Andy Hanson

Chico, California

APPRECIATION

I’m writing to express appreciation for two articles in the February 2018 *Adventist Review*: “Where Was the Justice?” and “It Is Time.”

Adventists come from many different backgrounds and don't always think alike. As we communicate with each other, we should hear each other out.

LYNN SAULS, MASSACHUSETTS

As one who grew up in the north (Maine) and moved to Alabama in June 1963, I have seen discrimination, injustice, and lack of fairness. I have also seen serious attempts by those in leadership, specifically at the University of Alabama Medical Center, the School of Medicine, and School of Dentistry, in 1963 and onward, to lead in serious integration and to initiate attitude changes on both sides.



The suggestions made in the "It is Time" article are important. However, healing must be an ongoing process. I doubt that "privileges" will ever be eliminated this side of the kingdom; for in the United States and in our church we still have a long way to go.

Ronald E. Turk
Greenville, Tennessee

IN A FEW WORDS...

VOLUNTEER TEAMS SAVE MUCH-NEEDED SCHOOL IN URUGUAY FROM CLOSING

Hallelujah for those blessed people who saved this school. God worked through them.

Mutungo Joel, via Web

IN MEXICO, ADVENTIST CHURCH HELP BELIEVERS AFFECTED BY RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

Be faithful, be strong in the Lord! Soon Jesus will come.

John D. Kelly, via Web

IF TIME SHOULD LAST

Interesting article. Sometime, in the not-too-distant future, the only qualification that will matter is not that of "conservative" or "liberal" but those who have the patience of saints, who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus."

A. E. Hobbs, via Web

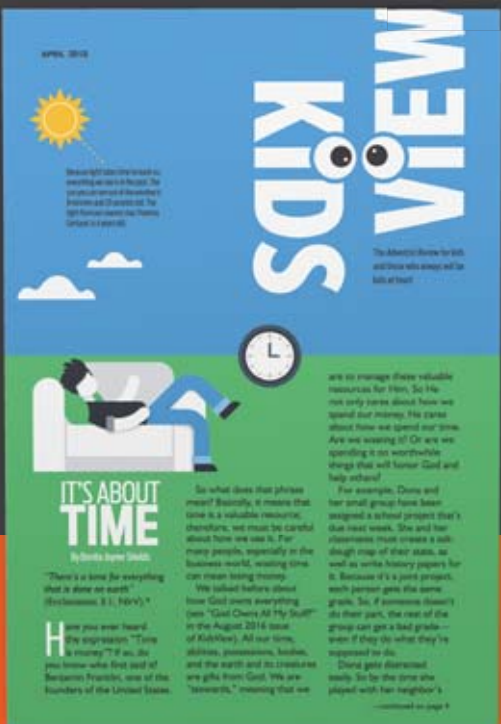
DISRUPTIVE ADVENTIST YOUTUBER GOES 'FISHING' MILLENNIALS IN ARGENTINA

This is a great initiative and shows that non-traditional outreach can have some very positive and surprising results. May his tribe be multiplied across the globe!

Victor Hulbert, via Webb

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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“An unhealthy diet is the most important modifying factor in causes of death in the United States.”

Frank Hu, page 15

NEWS



SURVEY RESULTS PRESENTED TO UNITY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE; QUALITATIVE RESEARCH CONTINUES

BY GENERAL CONFERENCE UNITY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Results from a worldwide survey were presented to members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's General Conference (GC) Unity Oversight Committee on March 20, 2018, during a scheduled meeting held at the world headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland.

The six-question survey was designed and administered by the church's Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research (ASTR). The survey addressed issues relating to compliance with voted actions of the General Conference in session, the church's highest decision-mak-

ing body, and its Executive Committee, which meets annually between the quinquennial sessions of the General Conference.

Following the process adopted by the Unity Oversight Committee in December 2017, the survey provides quantitative data, allowing the committee "to more accurately judge where the world Church leaders and members stand on these issues," according to Mike Ryan, chair of the committee. "This information will serve as a guide to the Unity Oversight Committee in defining consequences for unions that

have not complied with votes of the GC session and of the GC Executive Committee," he added.

The report, presented to the committee by the director of ASTR, David Trim, featured survey data gathered from the presidents of the Church's 13 world divisions, as well as the Middle East North Africa Union, an attached field of the GC. In addition, the survey was sent to the 137 presidents of unions around the world.

"The union presidents answer directly to a grassroots constituency," said Ryan. Additionally, union presidents are members of the GC Executive Committee with an overview of global church events and actions. Unions comprise the constituency of the GC.

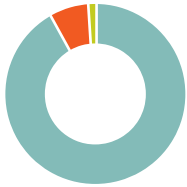
SURVEY RESULTS

In his report Trim stated that union and division presidents were requested to answer the six survey questions according to "what they believe is the view of the majority of members in their territory, as opposed to their personal opinion."

Trim noted that 100 percent of the surveys, sent out on January 18, 2018, had been received by March 4. He then presented each question, along with the data received, including (1) number and percentages of "votes" received; (2) number and percentages of union president "votes"; (3) percentage of union membership living in the territories represented by each vote.

Following are the questions and responses presented to the committee:

QUESTION 1: “Should the General Conference Unity Oversight Committee appoint a team to listen sensitively, counsel, and pray with the presidents of unions not in compliance with voted actions of GC sessions and of the GC Executive Committee?”



RESPONSE:

- **“Yes”**—139 total votes (92%); 126 union president votes (92%); percentage of world membership residing in those unions: 90.56%.
- **“No”**—10 total votes (7%); nine union president votes (7%); percentage of world membership residing in those unions: 6.28%.
- **Not answered**—two total (1%); two union presidents (1%); percentage of world membership residing in those unions: 3.16%.

QUESTION 2: “Should there be further organizational consequences for unions that do not comply with voted actions of GC sessions and of the GC Executive Committee?”



RESPONSE:

- **“Yes”**—108 total votes (72%); 97 union president votes (71%); percentage of world membership residing in those unions: 83.93%.
- **“No”**—34 total votes (22%); 31 union president votes (23%); percentage of world membership residing in those unions: 12.17%.
- **Not answered**—nine total votes (6%); nine union presidents (6%); percentage of world membership residing in those unions: 3.9%.

QUESTION 3: “Should church leaders be asked to sign a document saying that they will follow voted actions of GC sessions and of the GC Executive Committee?”



RESPONSE:

- **“Yes”**—72 total votes (47.7%); 65 union president votes (47.4%); percentage of world membership residing in those unions: 60.6%.
- **“No”**—77 total votes (51%); 70 union president votes (51.1%); percentage of world membership residing in those unions: 36%.
- **Not answered**—two total (1.3 %); two union presidents (1.5%); percentage of world membership residing in those unions: 3.4%.

Charts indicate percentage of total votes

CONCLUSIONS DRAWN

The following conclusions were drawn from the collected data:

■ There is overwhelming support for a GC team to meet with presidents of unions not in compliance, “to listen sensitively, counsel, and pray.”

■ There is strong support for some kind of consequences for noncompliance.

■ There is also strong support for not allowing presidents of noncompliant unions to serve on standing or ad hoc committees of the GC Executive Committee.

■ There is pronounced support for not allowing presidents of unions not in compliance with voted actions of GC sessions and of the GC Executive Com-

mittee to vote in meetings of the GC Executive Committee.

■ A majority of Church leaders oppose removing “voice” as well as vote from noncompliant union presidents.

■ Most Church leaders also oppose requiring union presidents to sign a document promising to abide by GC session and Executive Committee actions.

QUESTION 4: “Should presidents of unions not in compliance with voted actions of GC sessions and of the GC Executive Committee be allowed to speak (i.e., have voice) at meetings of the GC Executive Committee?”



RESPONSE:

- **“Yes”**—76 total votes (50.3%); 67 union president votes (48.9%); percentage of world membership residing in those unions: 34.3%.
- **“No”**—67 total votes (44.4%); 63 union president votes (46%); percentage of world membership residing in those unions: 60.9%.
- **Not answered**—eight total (5.3%); seven union presidents (5.1%); percentage of world membership residing in those unions: 4.9%.

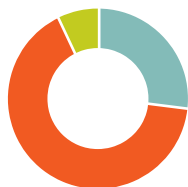
QUESTION 5: “Should presidents of unions not in compliance with voted actions of GC sessions and of the GC Executive Committee be allowed to vote in meetings of the GC Executive Committee?”



RESPONSE:

- **“Yes”**—56 total votes (37.1%); 50 union president votes (36.5%); percentage of world membership residing in those unions: 26.8%.
- **“No”**—86 total votes (57%); 79 union president votes (57.7%); percentage of world membership residing in those unions: 67.9%.
- **Not answered**—nine total (6%); eight union presidents (5.8%); percentage of world membership residing in those unions: 5.3%.

QUESTION 6: “Should presidents of unions not in compliance with voted actions of GC sessions and of the GC Executive Committee be allowed to serve on standing committees or ad hoc subcommittees of the GC Executive Committee?”



RESPONSE:

- **“Yes”**—40 total votes (26.5%); 36 union president votes (26.3%); percentage of world membership residing in those unions: 15.5%.
- **“No”**—100 total votes (66.2%); 91 union president votes (66.4%); percentage of world membership residing in those unions: 79.1%.
- **Not answered**—11 total (7.3%); 10 union presidents (7.3%); percentage of world membership residing in those unions: 5.4%.

QUALITATIVE DATA GATHERING CONTINUES

A preliminary report on qualitative data gathering was given by Hensley Mooroooven, secretary of the Unity Oversight Committee. Mooroooven reported that qualitative data is continuing to be gathered through personal visits and dialogues with division and union leaders worldwide. Qualitative data

is also being gathered from GC institutions and the GC Leadership Council, composed of GC officers and departmental leaders.

So far, 11 such dialogues have taken place, according to Mooroooven, with many more scheduled for the near future.

“Of the dialogues that have taken place,” added Ryan, “there appears to be a positive correla-

tion between the quantitative and qualitative data.”

Ryan pointed out, however, that in the end, “data is a guide. It can be empirical, but not necessarily infallible, information. It’s a guide, not an absolute. But we will be informed by the data in crafting what is brought to the Executive Committee during Annual Council 2018.”

Panamanian youth line up for Global Youth Day activities, wearing “I am the message” shirts. Photo: Jovenes Adventista En Accion Panama



FOOD AND WATER PROPEL DAY OF ADVENTIST YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

GLOBAL YOUTH DAY 2018 A RESOUNDING SUCCESS, SAY ORGANIZERS.

BY: MARCOS PASEGGI, ADVENTIST REVIEW

Food and water.

Two of the most basic human needs were driving forces behind Adventist Youth involvement during the 2018 edition of Global Youth Day (GYD18), a 24-hour period dedicated to reaching and serving local communities, on March 17, 2018. From Australia to Argentina and from India to Iceland and beyond, committed Seventh-day Adventist young people and their leaders provided hot meals, drinking water, free books and hugs, and moments of prayer and music to orphan children, urban passersby, senior residents, and others. In so doing, rather than listening to a sermon, that day they opted to “be the sermon” to people within their communities.

“GYD18 gave us the depth and breadth of the creativity of the youth and young adults of the Adventist Church,” said associate youth director of the world church Pako Mokgwane as he shared some of the initiatives driven by the youth

themselves. “[It showed us that] we can count on the youth.”

EVER-GROWING INITIATIVE

Global Youth Day was launched in 2013, when Adventist Youth leaders reported that 52 projects were rolled out in 78 cities in 21 countries. As this year’s final figures became available, leaders said that last year, GYD17 boasted 16,601 proj-

ects in 412 cities in 124 countries. This means that in five years, youth-driven outreach projects multiplied a mind-blowing 319 times!

Unlike this year, the focus of GYD in 2017 was donating blood. “[Last year] we could not determine the number of blood packets collected,” shared Mokgwane. “For this year we have put in place a system to get the actual involvement of youth and the value of food and water distributed.”

Besides hard figures, however, Mokgwane said Adventist Youth leaders are taking steps for GYD to become not only a one-day-a-year event but an ongoing initiative. “We have a new Web site [that] allows for personal engagement



A GYD volunteer in Peruvian city of Ñaña is ready to serve those in need.

Photo: North Peru Union Mission

so that GYD can be done throughout the year,” he shared. “It is also easy to search projects within one’s own town or city.”

The leaders’ goal is unmistakably clear. “We want GYD to be a lifestyle, not an event,” said Mokgwane.

BEYOND A WATER BOTTLE AND A HOT MEAL

Regarding GYD18, leaders emphasized that church members and supporters shouldn’t be misled by the seeming simplicity of the 2018 focus on food and water.

“Give the youth something, and they will give you more than you asked for!” wrote Mokgwane in a follow-up e-mail to *Adventist Review*. “[Young people] found exceptional applications for this year’s theme. . . . It was not just about the conventional water for drinking.”

For example, Mokgwane shared that in a southern Africa location where there was a pit latrine, a water system toilet was installed. In Sri Lanka water purifiers were given out. In other parts of the world wells were dug, creating long-term sustainable provisions of water. “GYD18 showed strongly that Adventist young people can be trusted,” he wrote.

A YOUTH-DRIVEN, COLLABORATIVE EVENT

GYD18 also highlighted the increasing role of the youth themselves, and various world church departments, in making Global Youth Day a success. In discussing the 24-hour live broadcast man-

A teenager from the Tambara Adventist Church passes out food during GYD 2018.
Photo: Tambara Adventist Church



aged from Hope Channel Germany studios in Alsbach-Haehnlein, Mokgwane shared that this year youth involvement in the studio was more prominent. “Youth directors gave the youth center stage,” he wrote.

Another plus, according to Mokgwane, was the increased involvement of several other departments and offices of the world church. He shared that GYD18 involved chaplaincy ministries, communication, the information office, children’s ministries, women’s ministries, and others. It was Total Department Involvement, he said in a nod to Total Member Involvement, a program of the world church to get every member involved in sharing Jesus. “Collaboration was evident.”

PLANS FOR 2019 AND BEYOND

Youth leaders shared that for next year, the focus will be to “adopt” an inmate by providing for their sundry needs, such as toiletries. Unlike previous GYD editions, however, leaders will encourage

participants to start at the beginning of the year, rather than waiting until the GYD specific day, which usually takes place in mid-March. “The idea is to get reports of how prison ministry is doing,” shared Mokgwane. This will emphasize that GYD is a lifestyle, not an event.

Leaders also hope to place a stronger emphasis on the Youth Week of Prayer, which in the past few years has been launched on the GYD Sabbath. “[For] next year we would like to encourage at least 100,000 local churches to conduct the Week of Prayer with an evangelistic thrust so that our efforts become more intentional,” wrote Mokgwane. “We exist for mission, [and] it is one of the things we would like to pass on to the army of youth.”

Mokgwane closed by calling Adventist young people and young adults to keep serving and being involved in the work of the church. “Please continue to be relevant to your communities,” he pleaded. “Keep being the sermon.”



Israel Leito, center, flanked by IAD executive secretary Elie Henry on the right and IAD treasurer Filiberto Verduzco on the left.

Photo: Keila Trejo, Inter-American Division News

INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION PRESIDENT ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

ISRAEL LEITO LED THE INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION FOR ALMOST A QUARTER OF A CENTURY.

BY LIBNA STEVENS, INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION NEWS

Inter-American Division (IAD) president Israel Leito announced his retirement from church service on March 24, 2018, as the denomination's regional business meetings commenced in Miami, Florida.

Next to his fellow administrators, Leito addressed the executive committee representing the 24 major church regions, or unions, in Inter-America, stating that his decision to leave came about after much consideration and prayer. "By the grace of God I have served the church in the IAD for many years and have decided to retire as of August 1," said Leito. He spoke highly of the level of dedication and commitment from Elie Henry, executive secretary, and Filiberto Verduzco, treasurer, as they led the division as top administrators.

Adventist world church president Ted N. C. Wilson took a few moments to acknowledge Leito's outstanding leadership. "On behalf of the world church and the General Conference I would like to express strong appreciation to Pastor and Mrs. Leito for their very extraordinary extension of their lives in service of their church," said Wilson.

Leito, who has been president of the Inter-American Division since 1993, led the division from 1.4 million to 3.7 million members. He holds the record for the longest continuous term as division president, according to the church's Office of Archives,

Statistics, and Research. His 48 years of denominational service include more than 41 years in Inter-America, in the Netherlands, Central America, and the IAD headquarters.

"I want to express my profound gratitude, express my extreme appreciation, for the way God has led you, and I think so many feel the same," added Wilson as committee members stood to their feet in applause.

"With the blessing of God, Inter-America will do many more things, so there is nothing to fear," said Wilson, quoting 2 Timothy 1:7: "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (NKJV).^{*} Leaders prayed for Leito and his family before the nominating committee stepped away to study new names for the IAD presidency position.

Leito's announcement shocked Josney Rodríguez, ministerial secretary of the church in Inter-America, and a former union president in Venezuela. Rodríguez, who learned of Leito by reading through his articles in the youth magazine printed decades ago, was stunned by the announcement. "I am proud to have had him as a mentor, and seen the incredible vision of ensuring that the church is better cared for through the organization of more unions and conferences across the territory."

Leito was instrumental in reorganizing the church territory in Inter-America from 11 to 24 unions,

and from 60 local fields to 150 since he was elected in 1993. His leadership also saw the establishment of the Inter-American Theological Seminary (IATS), which for decades has been offering graduate degrees, equipping hundreds of ministers to minister throughout local churches and institutions in the territory.

"I feel like my training wheels have just been taken off," said Efraín Velásquez, president of IATS, as he took in the news of his mentor leaving. "I remember being 15 years old when I met Pastor Leito in 1989, as I was a layperson in my church back home in Puerto Rico."

That mentorship by Leito has been visible throughout the IAD, where, for more than two decades, training, equipping, and empowering of church leaders and members have been part of the culture.

A native of Curaçao, Leito began his church career in 1969 as district pastor in the Netherlands Antilles Mission. He then served as youth ministries director at the Inter-American Division headquarters in Miami. From 1986 to 1993 Leito served as Church Ministries director at the General Conference.

Leito said he looks forward to enjoying retirement with his wife, Ludmila, their son and daughter; and three grandchildren. He said he is willing to assist the church if the need arises.

The nominating committee recommended Elie Henry as the next president of the IAD. Henry has served as the division's executive secretary since 2010. The committee also recommended Leonard Johnson, associate ministerial secretary for the church in Inter-America and president of the Atlantic Caribbean Union, as the next IAD executive secretary. ▀

A full story on both Henry and Johnson is available at AdventistReview.org.

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“IT IS POSSIBLE TO BE A VERY UNHEALTHY VEGETARIAN”

LOMA LINDA VEGETARIAN NUTRITION CONGRESS OPENS WITH ENLIGHTENING PRESENTATIONS.

BY MARCOS PASEGGI, ADVENTIST REVIEW

This news item is part of a series of reports on presentations given at the Seventh International Congress of Vegetarian Nutrition in Loma Linda, California, United States, February 26-28, 2018. Additional stories from the congress are available at AdventistReview.org.—Editors.

It’s possible to be a very unhealthy vegetarian,” said Harvard School of Public Health researcher Frank Hu in his keynote address “Plant-based Diet for Personal, Population, and Planetary Health.” Hu made this and other ear-catching remarks on February 26, 2018, the opening day of the Seventh International Congress on Vegetarian Nutrition in Loma Linda, California. The event gathered more than 800 nutrition and health professionals from 34 countries for three days of scientific presentations, question-and-answer sessions, discussions, cooking demonstrations, and networking opportunities.

In welcoming the international group of participants and speakers, Loma Linda University Health

president Richard Hart said advising on what to eat or not to eat is nothing new. “Giving nutritional advice is as old as the Bible itself, but as new as the newest tablet,” he said. “Seventh-day Adventists have been doing it for more than 150 years now, and Loma Linda University has been studying the connections between food and health since at least the 1950s.”

NUTRITION AND OTHER SCIENCES

Joan Sabaté, congress chair and director of the Center for Nutrition, Healthy Lifestyle and Disease Prevention of Loma Linda University, also welcomed the health-minded professionals to the event. Sabaté explained that the congress is not

a one-discipline event. “This scientific conference is not just about nutrition and dietetics,” he said. “Among other sciences, it will integrate epidemiology, environmental sciences, and education.”

It’s also about asking some hard questions, acknowledged Sabaté. “It includes discussing how we treat our fellow inhabitants of this planet, and how to best use the resources we have available,” he said just before introducing Hu.

In his presentation Hu, considered one of the most important authorities in the world on nutrition and chronic diseases, said unhealthy eating is killing people. “An unhealthy diet is the most important modifying factor in causes of death in the United States,” said Hu, who was part of the team that wrote the 2015 US Dietary Guidelines. “Science provides evidence that plant-based foods prevent cardiometabolic diseases.”

THE CASE FOR THE UNHEALTHY VEGETARIAN

At the same time, explained Hu, you can be a vegetarian but consume highly refined grains and sugars, and add to that a low consumption of fruits and vegetables, which

“We need a better definition of a healthy vegetarian diet.”

makes your diet unhealthy, despite the absence of meat.

In that sense, “not all plant-based diets are healthy,” he said, noting that unhealthy plant-based diets are associated with an increased risk of disease. Referring to Jane E. Brody’s book *Good Vegan, Bad Vegan*, he quoted, “A vegan who consumes no animal products can be just as unhealthy living on inappropriately selected plant foods as an omnivore who dines heavily on burgers and chicken nuggets.”

Hu’s remarks were echoed by other scientists, including Adventist Health Study 2 director Gary Fraser. “We need a better definition of a healthy vegetarian diet,” he said, in trying to explain some of the complexities of studies on diet. “It seems very likely that aspects of diet, aside from meat, dairy, and eggs, do matter and probably explain the differences between different vegetarian populations.”

Preet K. Dhillon, senior research scientist from the Public Health Foundation of India, agreed. She explained that 300-400 million people in India are vegetarians. Studies in India have shown, however, that many vegetarian Indians consume more sugar than nonvegetarians. That fact minimizes the seeming advantages of being a vegetarian, Dhillon said. “Also, non-vegetarians in India consume approximately a tenth of the meat amount consumed by a nonvegetarian in the Western hemisphere,” she explained, something that often

makes differences between the group statistically insignificant.

“AIR POLLUTION MAKES YOU OLDER”

Hu said that unhealthy diets have shown correlation not only with greater risks of suffering diabetes, cancer, and cardiovascular diseases, but also with age acceleration. “While exercise, and the consumption of fruits, vegetables, and fish, among others, were shown to help slow aging, a greater body mass index and waist-to-hip ratio, and higher triglycerides and systolic blood pressure seem to accelerate it,” he said.

The same applies to pollution exposure, as recent studies in China have revealed that being exposed to hydrocarbons such as fumes and smoke from various sources increases aging. “Air pollution makes you older,” said Hu.

IMPORTANCE AND LIMITATIONS OF PRECISION NUTRITION

During the past few years precision nutrition has attempted to provide personalized diets, which adapt to the specific needs of each person. It is related to recent scientific research, said Hu. For instance, “people eating identical meals present high variability in postmeal blood glucose response,” he explained. “Personalized diets . . . that integrate such parameters as dietary habits, physical activity, and gut microbiota” may be helpful to lower postmeal blood glu-

cose and its long-term metabolic consequences.

Many companies are profiting from these discoveries, offering custom-made nutrition guidelines, shared Hu. Precision nutrition, however, is a science in development, he said, and should be balanced with public health strategies, which are usually more economic and proven methods of inducing positive changes.

WHAT WE CAN DO

“We can support initiatives against unhealthy foods, such as the soda tax, which has proved to be beneficial,” said Hu, who noted that the reduction of trans fats consumption has also shown a positive correlation with a decrease in deaths. “Also, plant-based meals are more sustainable because they use less water and greenhouse gases in comparison to meat-based diets; so there’s something we can do about it.”

Putting its money where its mouth is, the ICVN used reusable name tag holders, potato starch utensils, and post-consumer plates and napkins. The food provided included a wide selection of locally grown fruits and vegetables. The event decor even boasted biodegradable balloons.

Echoing Hu’s comments, Hart said that in the end it’s all about being balanced. “There is not just one good diet,” he said. “The challenge is to adapt the recommendations we have to different cultures around the world.”



FAMILY CONFERENCE IN KENYA TACKLES CHALLENGING TOPICS. The Pan-African Conference on Dynamic Family Relations was organized by the Family Ministries Department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, along with the three African divisions, to discuss relevant and challenging subjects in the area of marriage and family. Hosted at the Adventist University of Africa near Nairobi, Kenya, participants discussed topics ranging from polygamy to traditional African religions, bride price (or lobola), divorce, honor and shame culture, and urban migration.



FIFTEEN MEMBERS KILLED BY LIGHTNING STRIKE IN RWANDA. Lightning struck a Rwandan church on March 10, 2018, killing 15 Adventists. More than 130 others attending services at the Gihemvu Seventh-day Adventist Church were taken to an area hospital and other health centers. Church leaders and government officials, including Abidan Ruhongeka, president of the South Rwanda Field, and Mureshyankwano Marie Rose, governor of the Southern Province of Rwanda, attended a burial ceremony held Sunday, March 11.



ANDREWS UNIVERSITY BREAKS GROUND FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS CENTER. On March 5, 2018, Andrews University broke ground for a US\$17.5 million, 76,000-square-foot Health and Wellness Center scheduled to open in the fall of 2019. The Health and Wellness Center will have a swimming pool, a recreation and event center with basketball courts, fitness and exercise areas, and space for educational programs. The building site, now under construction, will have a Web camera installed to provide a live view as the center takes shape.



ADVENTIST ONE OF EIGHT SURVIVORS OF KIRIBATI FERRY TRAGEDY. Taauke Ruevita was one of just eight survivors of the Kiribati ferry tragedy, which claimed more than 80 lives in January. The 15-year-old, a student at Kauma Adventist High School, was also the youngest person to survive. The survivors were adrift for 12 days before being spotted by a plane. They survived by eating dried coconut meat (called copra) that some had with them, as well as fish they managed to catch.



ADVENTIST CHURCH HELPS BELIEVERS AFFECTED BY RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE. The Adventist Church in Chiapas, Mexico, is helping victims of religious intolerance after four families were forced out of their homes by locals in the San Miguel Chiptip Community. The four men were expelled from their communities after attending an evangelistic series in another community. Their wives and children were forced to stay in Chiptip. Adventist leaders have been working with municipal leaders and state government officials to appeal for religious liberty laws to be enforced.



ENGINEER FROM SPAIN FINDS GOD, GETS BAPTIZED IN KOREA. A Spaniard working as a managing engineer for the Olympics organization found God and the Adventist Church and was baptized in Korea one day before the end of the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics in February 2018. Alejandro Hernández, 41, from Madrid, Spain, credits a walk in nature and a dental issue as some of the providential events that led him to meet Seventh-day Adventists and get acquainted with the denomination.



ADVENTISTS MURDERED IN TRINIDAD. Adventists in Trinidad were devastated by the loss of three church members who were victims of a recent knife attack. The victims were Michael Scott, 69, a retired high school teacher and church elder; Abigail Chapman, 42, a Spanish teacher at Southern Adventist Academy; her daughter, Olivia Chapman, 15; and schoolmate, Michaela Mason, 14. Chapman's two younger children, who attend Point Fortin Adventist Primary School, were unharmed.



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- » TESTIMONY OF A STAY-AT-HOME MOM
- » A BLUEPRINT HELPS
- » END IT NOW
- » THE MARRIAGE IS THE THING YOU WANT

DISCOVER

SUCCESSFUL MOTHERING

The mere thought of trying to be a successful mother can elicit overwhelming stress and tremendous pressure for today's modern woman. With 70 percent of women who have children under the age of 18 working, and some also single, many mothers have to juggle their jobs along with the demands of child rearing. Added to that, the growing community of home schooling, now numbering



ALINA BALTHAZAR



2 million children, finds both stay-at-home and working moms also carrying formal teaching responsibilities.

CHALLENGES

Today's moms do benefit from modern amenities. Technology, with its robot vacuums, the ability to work from home, and online help with homework, seems to make tasks easier. Yet the case remains disputed. To begin with, moms must now monitor their children's Internet and smartphone use. And while the modern flexibility of working from home is wonderful, it contributes to the stress of balancing work and caregiving demands. Finally, while having more involved fathers is certainly a blessing, it still doesn't even out the workload for moms, many of whom work more weekly hours outside the home than previous generations, while still doing the great majority of the child care and housework.

As for coping with these challenges, there is no shortage of mom blogs, Web sites, parenting books, and unsolicited advice from any number of well-intentioned people. The problem may be a lack, not of information, but of finding what works for you and getting the support you need. Salaried work leaves little time to get together to support one another. And the real mother work—caring for our families—rarely allows time for anything else.

Some of the challenges I cite have been my own. With my boys now aged 14, 17, and 20, I may be nearing the end of my “every-day-all-day” mothering journey. The decades have taught me by multiple means—as mom, as clinical social worker, family therapist, and family life educator. I hope that sharing what I have learned may help someone else in their own mothering journey.

SUPPORT FROM THE LORD

The first, most foundational resource for moms is our heavenly Father. He knows the concerns of careworn mothers and is eager to answer our prayers, if we but ask. The mighty God of the universe is just a prayer away! He loves our children infinitely beyond what we can imagine and will always guide us, especially when we acknowledge to Him that we don't know what to do. While He might impress our hearts during prayer, He speaks to us most directly through His Word. The

Bible is filled with treasure troves of wisdom that continue to apply today. Isaiah 40:11 tells us that God “gently leads those that have young.” Each book of Scripture offers gems awaiting our search.

CHURCH AS VALUABLE RESOURCE

With extended family members living far away and so many moms working outside the home, finding the necessary support becomes essential. Enter, the church community. Our love for the Lord and our desire to raise our children in the way of heaven draw us to church. As we take our little ones to church to learn about Jesus, we are met with the knowing glances and smiles of fellow moms who are also in the trenches. Their looks say “*Me too!*” Automatically we sense kinship and a growing bond with these fellow moms.

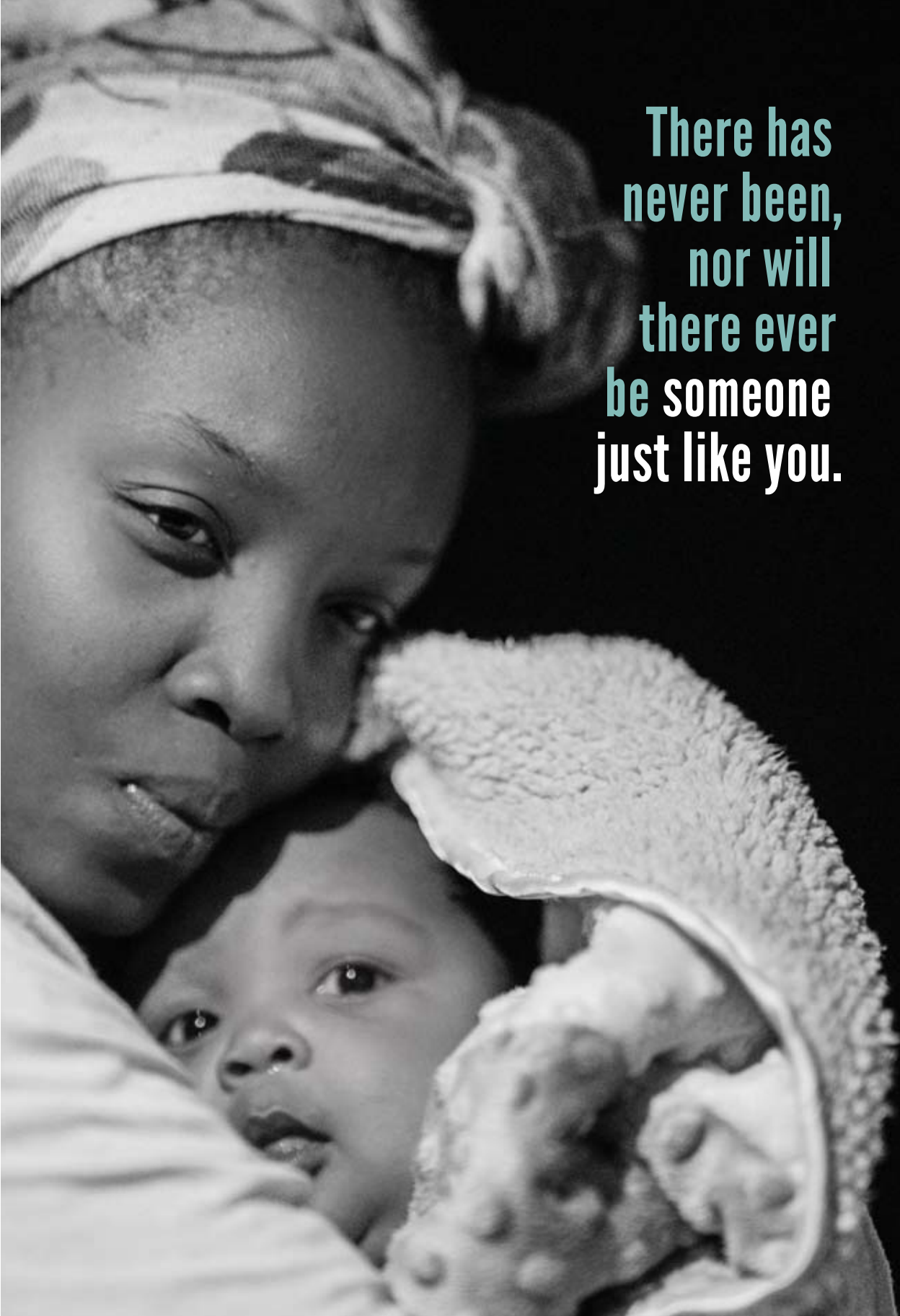
In addition, churches can be a great place to learn parenting skills through parenting workshops and similar events. Many churches also offer Mommy and Me groups. Getting that support from other moms who are going through similar joys and sorrows is necessary to surviving the difficulties we all face. Church is where I met all of my mom friends. We have supported each other through regular home meetings when our children were young, sometimes camping together, going on picnics, and even an occasional moms' night out!

SELF-CONFIDENCE

Another way to diminish the stress of mothering is to accept who we are as individuals. Each of us is a product of genes and life experiences that make her beautifully unique. There has never been, nor will there ever be someone just like you. Though there are societal expectations for moms, the way we go about meeting them is uniquely individualized. And that's OK! Feeling free to “be yourself” makes being a mother much more enjoyable.

ORGANIZATION AND PLANNING

When people ask how I manage my busy life, the first thing I say is “Scheduling!” If you have multiple responsibilities you know how important it is to plan out your day, week, maybe even your month and year ahead. That is how you know where to be, and if you can say “Yes” to additional responsibilities.

A black and white photograph of a woman with a headwrap holding a baby wrapped in a blanket. The woman is looking down at the baby with a gentle expression. The baby is looking towards the camera. The background is dark.

**There has
never been,
nor will
there ever
be someone
just like you.**



One problem women often have is that of being “pleasers.” But overcommitting leads to a crash sooner or later. So take advantage of smartphones and computer apps that help keep your schedule. This is especially important as our children get older and start getting involved in extracurricular activities. While it is good for children to participate in these activities, it can be difficult to manage without a plan.

THE INDISPENSABLE IMPERATIVE: LOVE YOUR CHILDREN

In our harried days, whether running to shuttle our kids to school or sports, or juggling work and home responsibilities, we often forget to show love to our children. Motherhood involves having to tell our children “No” to what they want and discipline them if they break the rules. Kids will push the rules—and you!—to breaking point. The best salve for these difficult moments is simply to love your children through these issues, in real and tangible ways, however difficult it may prove.

One way is to spend quality time connecting with children so they can feel your compassion and tenderness. Connections change as children grow: when they are babies, it is easy to show love through the frequent touch and holding they require. Entering toddlerhood, they start to enjoy reading time and cuddling at night before bed. Joining them in play is another significant connector at this stage. As children get older and start spending time with their friends, regular family meals and car rides become an excellent time to connect and show love.

Ask how their day went and what was the best thing that happened. Listen with compassion, always trying to put yourself in their shoes. It may feel as if your teenager is pulling away and doesn't want you around, but this may be when your child needs you the most. Pray for wisdom, choose your words wisely, and God will give you a good strategy to show your love without smothering them. Remember that your support and approval continue to be important even as they enter early adulthood.

MOTHER'S INFLUENCE ON SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Ellen White wrote: “Next to God, the mother's power for good is the strongest known on earth.”¹ Mothers typically are children's first and primary

caregivers. This gives mothers a powerful influence in children's spiritual development: the love we give them shows them God's love. Our patient loving with them makes God's love for them more real. So does the judicious spiritual training we give them throughout their development. As much as we think they may not notice, they are watching: mothers should try to be the role model they wish they had as children. Such a large responsibility compels us to seek the Lord in prayer daily, even moment by moment, for guidance.

THE HUSBAND'S CRUCIAL ROLE

As a family therapist, I have seen many families in which fathers feel isolated and disengaged from the parent/child relationship. This can happen when mothers become so consumed with their role as supermom that they push away their most valuable support, their husband. The coordinated parenting team of father and mother together is still God's ideal for the family.

Today, mothers provide more to the household income than they did in previous generations, but men are still the primary financial providers. Fathers should be appreciated for their role in providing and child rearing, as well as for the love and support they give to their wives. Because marriage satisfaction typically declines as children join the family, it is doubly important to find time to spend alone together as husband and wife. While date nights and weekend getaways are easier when children are older, try to find moments to reconnect and rekindle your affection at every stage of your children's lives.

SINGLE PARENTING

In single parent situations, the father is still very important to the mother. One of her biggest stressors is having to parent alone. The single mother plays a powerful role in maintaining the partnership between mother and father. Being civil and finding common ground in raising the children will go a long way toward keeping the father engaged. Where he isn't available, Big Brother Big Sister and other such organizations may be able to provide some of the needed male support, and mothers should acknowledge their appreciation for the help received.

A MOTHER'S LOVE FOR HER GAY SON

"As I have loved you," says Jesus

HEIDI A. B. SHADEL

My oldest son told me he was gay in an e-mail. His message didn't surprise me: I could tell he had been tormented by something for months. What did surprise me is that he thought I would stop loving him because of his sexual orientation.

CREATING A SAFE PLACE

I thought I had shown him unconditional love. My love didn't depend on his sexual orientation; it had to reflect my heavenly Father's love for me. He was my flesh and blood; I had sacrificed to be at home with him; with sweat and tears I had watched his growing pains.

My son has been spat upon, called terrible names, and experienced prejudice because of his sexual orientation. Not just by those whom we would think of as bad people, but by individuals who think of themselves as good Christians.

It took months for my son to realize that I loved him no matter what! I feel that he still questions my maternal love for him, and tends to misinterpret the maternal instincts that come roaring to the front when he tells me a story of injustice.

He feels that most Christians hate the LGBTQ community. This misconception carried over into what he thought my reaction would be. He was raised in a conservative Christian home, and I know what the Bible says about homosexuality. And no, I don't bury my head in the sand about the issues. But I know that Christ died for all our sins. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

When my son announced on social media that he was gay, we shared many friends in common. I received a few expressions of grief. People felt sorry for me. I encouraged them to remain friends with my son. If we rejected him because of his sexual orientation, we would only strengthen his stereotype of Christians.

My son grew up leading out in church. He and his brother learned how to make and deliver emergency food baskets, how to lead out in youth groups, how to run Vacation Bible Schools. When my son became old enough he led out during the lesson study, sang beautiful special music selections, even gave his share of sermons—heartfelt sermons that moved his audiences. I felt the Holy Spirit move in his life.

As time has passed I realize that God gave me my son, and gave His Son, Jesus, for my son. God loves my son more than I ever could, and He has not abandoned him. I have seen my prayers working in the life of my child on so many different levels. And I want to love him as God loves and as I want to be loved.


Heidi A. B. Shadel is a pseudonym.

TIME FOR SELF

Mothers can get so busy with mothering that they forget to take care of themselves. There are simply not enough hours in a day to do all they feel they must and still care for themselves. But they will be better, happier moms if they prioritize their own needs: take a nap while baby sleeps or when someone else can care for the baby; see the doctor for regular medical checkups or when an illness doesn't heal; eat the healthful meals you make with your children, or (if it's a bit chaotic) find a quiet time to enjoy your food and digest it properly; exercise on a consistent daily schedule—if not daily, then at least most days. Try exercising with the kids. Be creative!

Motherhood requires health of body and strength of mind. Relaxation and fun are serious elements of that. Relax when the kids are out, or stage getaways with hubby or good friends. Most importantly, time for self, body and mind, means time for spiritual health. Spend time with the Lord, ideally first thing in the morning.

FORGIVENESS: FOR YOURSELF

With so much that mothers have to do, we are bound to make mistakes, mistakes that may harm our loved ones and leave us with overwhelming guilt. The burden of guilt can negatively affect our emotional and spiritual health, even our relationships. But God reminds us that whereas "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23), "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Forgiveness is one of the most precious of all gifts that God offers mothers throughout—and beyond—their child-rearing years. Knowing we're forgiven for the blunders assures us that our efforts have not been in vain. 

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1952), p. 240.

Alina M. Baltazar is an associate professor of social work at Andrews University, and mother of three sons: two teenagers and a 20-year-old.

THE INEXORABLE INTRUSION OF ASSUMPTION

I've been reading Steven Shapin's book *Never Pure: Historical Studies of Science as if It Was Produced by People with Bodies, Situated in Time, Space, Culture, and Society, and Struggling for Credibility and Authority*, which shows that, contrary to popular opinion, science is not this uber-objective pursuit of raw truth unencumbered by the kind of things that taint mere mortal forms of human inquiry.

Take, for instance, evolution, which arose in a specific historical time and place that, according to some, influenced the rise of the theory itself.

"Each age," wrote James Moore, "fashions nature in its own image. In the nineteenth century the English naturalist Charles Darwin (1809–1882) recast the living world in the image of competitive, industrial Britain."

Even Karl Marx noticed it: "It is remarkable," he wrote, "how Darwin rediscovers, among the beasts and plants, the society of England with its division of labor, competition, opening up of new markets, 'inventions,' and the Malthusian 'struggle for existence.'"

"It is a curious fact," wrote John C. Greene, "that all, or nearly, all, of the men who propounded some idea of natural selection in the first half of the nineteenth century were British. Given the international character of science, it seems strange that nature should divulge one of her profoundest secrets only to inhabitants of Great Britain. Yet she did. The fact seems more explicable by assuming that British political economy, based on the idea of the survival of the fittest in the marketplace, and the British competitive ethos generally predisposed Britons to think in terms of competitive struggle in theorizing about plants and animals as well as man."

How strange that nature would, indeed, divulge one of "her profoundest secrets" only to a nineteenth-century Englishman. Or, instead, maybe the competitive ethos of British society caused these Englishmen to read natural selection into nature when it was never there to begin with, at least to the degree that it could, as Darwin's theory claims, cause a proto-life-form to eventually morph into *Homo sapiens*—a preposterous idea, yet openly promoted over and over until many don't see just how preposterous it is.

In other words, the social and political environment in which he lived could have caused Darwin to hold assumptions that he might not have held had he lived in Czarist Russia or the Antebellum South, where he may never have arrived at his theory of evolution by natural selection to begin with. A theory derived from subjective assumptions (as they inevitably are) doesn't automatically need to be wrong; it means only that the theory was derived from, well, subjective assumptions, which hardly guarantee the theory's veracity.

The origins of Darwin's assumptions are a handy example of the bigger issue in science: the inexorable intrusion of assumption. Science works on givens, foundations, paradigms upon which it rests and from which it proceeds. However, if those givens, those foundations, those paradigms, are created by "people with bodies, situated in time, space, culture, and society, and struggling for credibility and authority," we have no guarantee of their veracity, even when proclaimed in the authoritative name of science. ♣

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

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GOLDSTEIN



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STRANGE THAT
NATURE SHOULD
DIVULGE ONE OF
HER PROFOUNDST
SECRETS ONLY TO
INHABITANTS OF
GREAT BRITAIN.

Being a parent is a tremendous challenge, made all the more difficult when trying to decide if it can be done successfully while working outside the home. Lots of circumstances make working outside the home a necessity. Here we share two (of several possible) perspectives about the topic.
—Editors.

TESTIMONY OF A STAY-AT-HOME MOM

KRYSELLE CRAIG

During premarital counseling our pastor asked, “How do you plan on raising your children?” I was shocked when I heard my lips answer that I’d prefer to be at home with them for three to five years. Was this the same career-driven woman who had spent years in school gathering the tools to ensure productivity and a steady paycheck? who had just landed a great job with a world of potential? My fiancé had just noted that he wanted to start a family in a year or two, and I had agreed. Through the lenses of love the future looked fluorescent, but how would we pay the electric bill to ensure the lights remained on?

A TOUGH DECISION

A year into marital bliss the expectations of my role at work seemed to leave me breathless by the end of each day. We wanted to extend our family, but thoughts on when and how to do so were cloudy at best—until we became pregnant.

A BLUEPRINT HELPS

How my husband and I balance parental roles

DILYS BROOKS

I am a mother. Having grown up in a family and a culture in which women often worked to help support their families, I intended to do the same myself. I remember as a young adult the first time I met a mom who stayed home with her children. I was

both fascinated and drawn to this as an option if I ever got married and became a parent. After she delivered her third child, her oldest began school while she cared for the younger two.

When they were ready for school, she worked at their school. I admired and respected her ethos: a loving, welcoming, safe environment for her young family. I saw her commitment to being easily accessible to her children and husband as my own potential family blueprint.

The journey to parenthood was not simple or painless for my husband and me. When we determined after five years that we were ready for children, we experienced heartbreak and disap-



We revisited the questions asked in those premarital sessions and found ourselves even more dedicated to the idea of keeping a parent at home. As three younger siblings and two nephews had primed me for parenting in a way my husband had yet to identify with, we decided I would be home with our children until they were old enough for formal education. We began making plans for our first little one to come, not knowing how God would provide, but trusting that He would.

We had no clear replacement for my income when I informed my boss I would not be returning to work. There was no change in the number of bills that would be due every month. With my husband dedicated to seminary studies by night and church ministry by day, additional employment remained out of reach. So many negative notions existed, but so did God.


My husband and I committed to counting all we were gaining in place of what we were losing with our decision. Our child would have a safe, loving environment in which to learn about the God who created him. He would always be surrounded by music, stories, and language that

elevated and honored the Lord. This child would have what every child needs most: an opportunity to meet Christ while growing in love and life.

GOD PROVIDES

Six months after our son was born I was offered a position with income far exceeding any other I'd previously earned—and I could work from home and choose my part-time hours. I now work during naptime or after baths with rubber duckies. My full-time assignment is to “train up a child in the way he should go” (Prov. 22:6, NKJV).*

Our family has been blessed, and there are no needs for which we lack provision. God honors His commitment to provide for His children as we commit to providing for our child.

“We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done” (Ps. 78:4). 

* Texts credited to NKJV are from the New King James Version. Copyright (c) 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Kryselle Craig lives in Odenton, Maryland, and says she will “live right or die trying,” as she and husband Jason do their best to keep up with life and Ezra.


pointment: we mourned the loss of our first two children. I learned that every couple does not immediately have their prayers or desires fulfilled.

But then, a month after our tenth anniversary, we welcomed our son. The only thing I was sure about was that I would love him and take care of him in partnership with my husband. His arrival was part of a new season in our lives: moving to a new state; becoming denominational employees; becoming parents. With prayer, reflection, and lots of conversations we decided that I would keep working. It was time, after many iterations, to put my blueprint into action. The basic tenet was our commitment to providing a loving, nurturing, child-friendly home.

We adjusted schedules once I returned to work after maternity leave. We created a flexible co-parenting practice that we continue to adjust. Morning worship, mealtimes, and set nighttime rituals involved both parents more times than not. The children travelled with me when I did until they were 2 years old. I was thankful that my husband thought about making meal preparation simple, so that when I returned home from work I could spend more time with our children.

I had to learn to manage my time and create boundaries. I learned that I couldn't do it all. I also learned that asking for help was a sign of strength, not weakness. I shall always be grateful for the mothers who have come alongside me. Their words of encouragement, accountability, and affirmation have helped buoy me up over the years.

When our son began kindergarten, I remember meeting and observing moms who were available to be class moms or go on trips. At first I compared myself to them and wondered if they were judging me for being a working mother. Then I remembered that we were not in competition with each other. These moms are actually allies, who have also been given the gift of motherhood.

Over the past 12 years my husband and I have shared almost equally the responsibility of caring for and nurturing our two children. He has gone on many school trips and coached, while I have worked on projects and crafts. Our blueprint has allowed our children to experience time with their father and me. We'll be learning better and better parenthood even as they mature into adulthood. 

Dilys Brooks is campus chaplain at Loma Linda University.

DISCOVER

END IT NOW

*It's never too early
to stop the cycle of abuse.*



"To not have your suffering recognized is an almost unbearable form of violence"—Andrei Lankov

AMANDA AND GERMAN RODRÍGUEZ

When our church began an End It Now committee as part of our women's ministry, the congregation was hesitant. Nevertheless, committee members tirelessly pushed, preached, and prayed to help our church community recognize the need for this ministry.

Their work paid off. The committee members were surprised by the overwhelming response from victims of abuse who finally felt safe to come forward and ask for help from their fellow church members.

ALL TOO COMMON EXAMPLE

The responses included a late-night phone call from a member of another congregation who heard about the ministry and needed help. She described the abuse but denied that her spouse was abusive. Initially she described only emotional abuse. She told about how her spouse called her stupid and overweight. He compared her to other women and wondered why God had given him such an "inferior" wife.

She discussed periods of extreme isolation: he didn't allow her to talk to her family or friends. At church he was friendly and charismatic; she was always in the background and struggled to make any connections. He constantly called her at the office, which caused her career to stagnate. She grew distraught as she watched her peers excel while she remained financially dependent upon him.

She did everything to get pregnant with their first child, believing that her spouse would be pleased, or at least leave her alone. But as soon as she became pregnant he became physically abusive. She normalized his behavior by imagining

that every wife had to go through this. He normalized it as well: "At least I didn't give you a black eye" or "You made me do this; it hurts me more than it hurts you." After each outburst he became loving and attentive. Slowly the physical abuse became more and more violent, and in his fits of rage he started threatening to kill her.

Things did not improve after the births of their children. One evening he became so violent with one of the children that she knew she had to take action.

She reached out to her pastor for help. He seemed shocked by the accusation against her husband, an elder of the church. The pastor spoke to her husband, suggesting that the couple get counseling. That night her husband tried to strangle her. The next day he left. Now she is unable to pay her bills and care for her children. Many church members will not speak to her.

Abuse is sadly common in our society. It is a serious public health problem. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that one in three women, and one in four men, will be victims of abuse in their lifetime.¹ In 2014, 702,208 children were abused or neglected.² Despite these sobering statistics, abuse has historically been underreported, especially within faith communities.

WHAT IS ABUSE?

Abuse is more than an unhealthy or unhappy relationship; it is a pattern of behavior used by one individual to assert power and control over another. Although commonly portrayed as physical or sexual behavior, abusive patterns also include mental, emotional, financial, and even spiritual facets. Victims often suffer in silence, unsure about how or where to seek help. Unfortunately, many victims reach out for help only to

Abuse carries serious long-term health implications for victims beyond their immediate injuries.

receive advice that perpetuates the abuse or retraumatizes them.

Abusive behaviors include:

- » communicating in a way that is hurtful, threatening, insulting, or demeaning;
- » mistreating the other by disregarding or threatening the other's feelings, opinions, or physical safety;
- » making unfounded accusations of infidelity or disloyalty, often to justify physical or verbal abuse;
- » denying that abusive actions are harmful, shifting blame to the victim or others to excuse abusive behaviors;
- » controlling the other by claiming inherent authority over the other or consistently making decisions in the relationship without the other's input;
- » isolating the other by controlling what they do, where they go, and whom they talk to, including curtailing interaction with family and friends;
- » forcing sexual activity or pregnancy against the other's will or without the other's consent;
- » exerting economic control by restricting access to financial resources and arbitrarily foreclosing open dialogue about finances; victims are often prevented from earning an income, or from accessing their own income;
- » engaging in manipulative parenting by using the child(ren) as leverage against the other, including lying to the child(ren) about the other, or threatening to harm the child(ren) in the event of noncompliance or disclosure.³

Initially, victims rarely recognize abuse as such while it is occurring. Instead, they internalize and normalize the violent behavior. Abusive relation-

ships generally follow a cycle that includes (1) a "honeymoon" period, (2) a tension-building period, (3) an abusive incident, and (4) reconciliation.

George K. Simon notes that through this cycle "often victims end up unnecessarily prolonging their abuse because they buy into the notion that their abuse must be coming from a wounded place and that only patient love and tolerance . . . will help them heal."⁴

ABUSE: A PRIVATE PROBLEM?

A common reaction to signs of abuse is to ignore them as private, intrafamilial problems. Alternatively, well-intentioned but misguided interventions are often aimed at promoting reconciliation at all costs. The reality of domestic violence requires an immediate and calculated response to safeguard victims. According to the CDC, more than half of female homicide victims are killed by an intimate partner. Domestic violence is one of the leading causes of death among women under the age of 44. Even when physical abuse is not a precursor to domestically related homicide, other types of abuse—such as emotional abuse—are typically present.

Abuse carries serious long-term health implications for victims beyond their immediate injuries. According to a recent study, individuals exposed to six or more adverse childhood experiences—including all forms of child abuse and witnessing domestic violence in the home—suffered a life-expectancy reduction of approximately 20 years, compared to individuals not exposed to such experiences. This chilling data points to the long-lasting aftereffects that children may suffer from domestic abuse, even when they are not the primary target of the abusive behavior.

In light of such high risks of immediate and long-term harm, abuse must be taken seriously. Although it may occur behind closed doors, its corrosive effects are felt in our schools, churches, and workplaces. Because of unfounded stigmas and unawareness, church communities can provide cover for perpetuating abusive behavior. But equipped with information and compassion, churches can also be ideal places of refuge and portals to healing for victims.

Abuse is not simply a private problem; it is a community problem that demands a community response. We Christians are called to follow in

Jesus' footsteps to "heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and . . . to set at liberty them that are bruised" (Luke 4:18, 19, KJV).

HOW TO RESPOND

Many abuse victims do not seek help because they are unaware of available resources, they are in denial about the abuse, or they have spoken out before and received an improper or ineffectual response. Fortunately, many resources are readily available to assist abuse victims by providing counseling, shelter, legal advocacy, and other services. The National Domestic Violence Hotline (www.thehotline.org, 1-800-799-7233) is an excellent gateway to national, state, and local resources; [enditnow](http://enditnow.org) (www.enditnow.org), an initiative of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, provides helpful information for victims and church communities.

Because of the vicious cycle of abusive relationships, victims often do not recognize the abuse or cannot take the first step toward healing by themselves. It is crucial for our communities to be trained to recognize signs of abuse and equipped with information to point victims toward help. Even if unsure of whether a situation rises to the

level of abuse, seeking help should always be presented as an available option, and safety should be our paramount concern. Fear has no place in Christian relationships. Abuse is never acceptable in any form; it is never too early to seek or offer help.

Whether facing an abusive situation or striving to support someone who is, we can find strength and assurance in the words of the psalmist: "You, Lord, hear the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, so that mere earthly mortals will never again strike terror" (Ps. 10:17, 18).¹

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey," www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvsfreport2010-a.pdf (2010).

² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "Child Maltreatment," www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/child-maltreatment-2014 (2014).

³ National Domestic Violence Hotline, www.TheHotline.org/healthy-relationships/relationship-spectrum.

⁴ George K. Simon, "Some Different Views on Gaslighting and Gaslighters," www.drgeorgesimon.com/some-different-views-on-gaslighting-and-gaslighters (Mar. 20, 2015).

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THE MARRIAGE IS THE THING YOU WANT

Put your bridal magazines down for a bit and look at the big picture.

WILONA KARIMABADI

Enjoying the revelry at a bridal shower not long ago, I found myself among a group of married women tasked with giving the bride sage marriage advice. For those of us who at that point had more than 10 years of marriage experience to draw from, it was a challenge to zero in on exactly what to tell this beautiful young woman on the verge of becoming a Mrs. I remember surprising myself at how I got a little teary recalling how the depth of love for my husband despite the natural ups and downs of so many years together, had really deepened beyond the intense feelings of our wedding day.

Many of the women shared similar sentiments. But one piece of “advice” given was rather sad: “I really don’t know what to tell you,” one showergoer said. “It really is all downhill from here.” Her words cut through the light-hearted atmosphere like a knife. It was not the most appropriate thing to say in the moment, but several of us who’d attended her very well-orchestrated wedding knew the remark was true to her situation, and sad. Very sad.

THE WEDDING DAY IS A DAY

Most of us gathered at this shower had been to one another’s weddings over the years. In my culture (East Indian) weddings are a big deal. South Asians are a partying people who celebrate life’s happy moments as if it’s our job. We love the festivities, the colors, the food, the people; and weddings are the grandest occasions of them all. Our “small” weddings involve about 200 people and for several of us at this particular shower, our ceremonies and receptions had been attended by anywhere from 500 to 1,000 guests. But grand weddings aren’t limited to South Asians alone.

In 2016 The Knot.com, one of the most well-utilized and popular wedding planning Web sites on the Internet, conducted a survey of nearly 13,000 brides and grooms across North America. According to the study, the national average of wedding expenditures (not including the honeymoon) was \$35,329. Of course, that figure varies widely depending on the size and location of the wedding. For example, on average, weddings in New York City will be far more expensive than similar events in Utah.

For this most special of days, brides and grooms spend money on the venue, photographers, event planners, music, flowers, videographers, wedding attire (including that all-important dress), cake, invitations, favors, transportation, catering, wedding day hair and makeup, etc. The cost of all these things can vary and be economized of course. But for many couples, planning and executing a dream wedding can become an all-con-



suming passion that, I'm here to tell you, ends up being nothing more than a blur of a day that will not carry you through the rest of your life.

MARRIAGE VERSUS WEDDING

I'm not anti "fantastic wedding extravaganza" at all. I'm a South Asian woman who had a 500-person wedding and two receptions in two different states. Celebrating your wedding day in the most memorable way you can isn't an outlandish idea, because it's understood that cultural and social considerations, along with many other factors, can often drive the flavor of the event. So provided you can create a wedding experience you love within your means, it really should be an incredible day. It is, after all, the joining of two lives brought together by God into a sacred union that is meant to bless the lives of those in it and around it. It is one of the Lord's great gifts to His children, "heaven below,"¹ and a profound example of His deep love for us.

But after the blur of this amazing day passes, and all you're left with are memories, pictures, and video, and a lovely array of gifts, will your wedding day make or break your marriage?

MARRIAGE ISN'T THE END OF YOUR LOVE STORY

Clearly, starting your marriage with a public and sacred commitment to each other blessed by God, is starting it on the right foot. But right on the heels of that comes life. And married life can be really challenging. You've heard the saying, "Marriage is work." But it's a work that, partnered with God's help, yields beautiful blessings.

Ellen White wrote about marriage: "Though difficulties, perplexities, and discouragements may arise, let neither husband nor wife harbor the thought that their union is a mistake or a disappointment. Determine to be all that it is possible to be to each other. Continue the early attentions. In every way encourage each other in fighting the battles of life. Study to advance the happiness of each other. Let there be mutual love, mutual forbearance. Then marriage, instead of being the end of love, will be as it were the very beginning of love. The warmth of true friendship, the love that binds heart to heart, is a foretaste of the joys of heaven."²

Once you return from the honeymoon and make it past the period of newlywed bliss, which may not exist for some couples (and that's OK), you settle in to real life as a new family unit. Work, advanced

studies, bills, buying first homes, having or not having children—all of these things contribute to the stresses of adjusting to living with another person who now shares your bed and bathroom space.

Then routines settle in and before you know it, years have passed. Struggles will come. Some will be minor; some will be life-changing. Will the rosy memories of your wedding day be the glue that holds you together then?

WHAT SHOULD REALLY MATTER TO A MR. AND MRS.

Happy recollections can help, but you're going to need a bit more substance to hold on to than that. Ellen White addressed the notion that marriage is a lottery: it is not.³ Many couples may honestly look at it that way. But an institution created in the Garden of Eden by God Himself is clearly not frivolous. Furthermore, while the struggle is real, the grace of God is stronger.

"Time strips marriage of the romance with which imagination had clothed it, and then the thought finds entrance into the mind through Satan's suggestions, 'We do not love each other as we supposed.' Expel it from the mind. Do not linger over it. Let each, forgetful of self, refuse to entertain the ideas that Satan would be glad to have you cherish. He will work to make you suspicious, jealous of every little thing that shall furnish the least occasion, in order to alienate your affections from each other. Life is a real matter, and it can be made unbearable by the husband and wife. When the romance is gone, let each think, not after a sentimental order, [but] how can they make the married life what God would be pleased to have it."⁴

By all means, have a beautiful and memorable wedding day that works for you and your families, for it is absolutely a day to be remembered! But if you are placing too much emphasis on executing the perfect fantasy production and giving little thought to the real business of being married, take a step back and order your priorities. Your wedding day will be an unforgettable day, but your marriage is where the magic—for years and years to come—really happens. 🌿

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1952), p. 112.

² *Ibid.*, p. 106.

³ Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases* (Silver Spring, Md.: Ellen G. White Esates, 1990), vol. 10, p. 184.

⁴ *Ibid.*

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CONNECT



**“LIKE A
WOMAN IN
CHILDBIRTH,
I CRY OUT,
I GASP AND PANT”**

Discovering a surprising metaphor

(ISA. 42:14)

GERALD A. KLINGBEIL

How does one describe God? How can we nail down in language what we struggle to grasp conceptually? We know some of God's attributes. He is powerful, gracious, kind, and holy—yet also the judge of the universe whose unwavering righteousness has been challenged by Satan, the accuser of the brethren.

We are told that God is light; God is energy; God is a rock; God is a fortress; God is a father—or is He? Biblical authors wrestled with these issues again and again. They used countless metaphors to communicate essence and nature where mere words could not do justice. They knew that God was always more than a rock, a fortress, or a father. In fact, their multiple similes (“God is

like...”) remind us of the fact that God is always the “Wholly Other,” a phrase popularized by German theologian Rudolf Otto in the early twentieth century.¹ Always surpassing our expectations; always surprising our presuppositions; always demolishing our sureties. That’s God.

So what shall we do with that birth-giving mother metaphor for God—and others highlighting female characteristics of God? What about those feminist theologians who tell us that God is a mother—full stop?

Bible readers with a high view of Scripture (which includes Seventh-day Adventists) cannot agree with feminist theologians in their assertion that Scripture exhibits an unbalanced predominance of male voices. They will be hard pressed to accept the notion that biblical texts are mostly oppressive texts, providing a theological rationale for the dominance of men.² They will recognize that the creation of Adam and Eve together as a reflection of the image and likeness of God is diametrically opposed to the wholesale caricature of biblical texts as representing chauvinistic male-centeredness. They understand that the historic Christian doctrines of God and humanity suggest not only order and hierarchy but, more important, divine purpose and connection.

So what can we learn from Scripture’s repeated use of feminine characteristics in references to God?

FEMALE METAPHORS OF GOD IN ISAIAH

The Old Testament prophet Isaiah is a surprising source of female metaphors of God in Scripture.³ This evangelist of the Old Testament, whose poetry and prose rise heavenward as he describes God’s future plans for His remnant people Israel, includes a startling number of female metaphors describing how God feels and acts and even thinks.

The most well known can be found in Isaiah 49:15: “Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!” The entire chapter speaks about God’s ability to return His people from exile. Prisoners will be freed (verse 9), hunger and thirst will be conquered (verse 10), inhospitable mountains will suddenly become highways bringing peoples from the end of the earth to Zion (verses 11, 12).

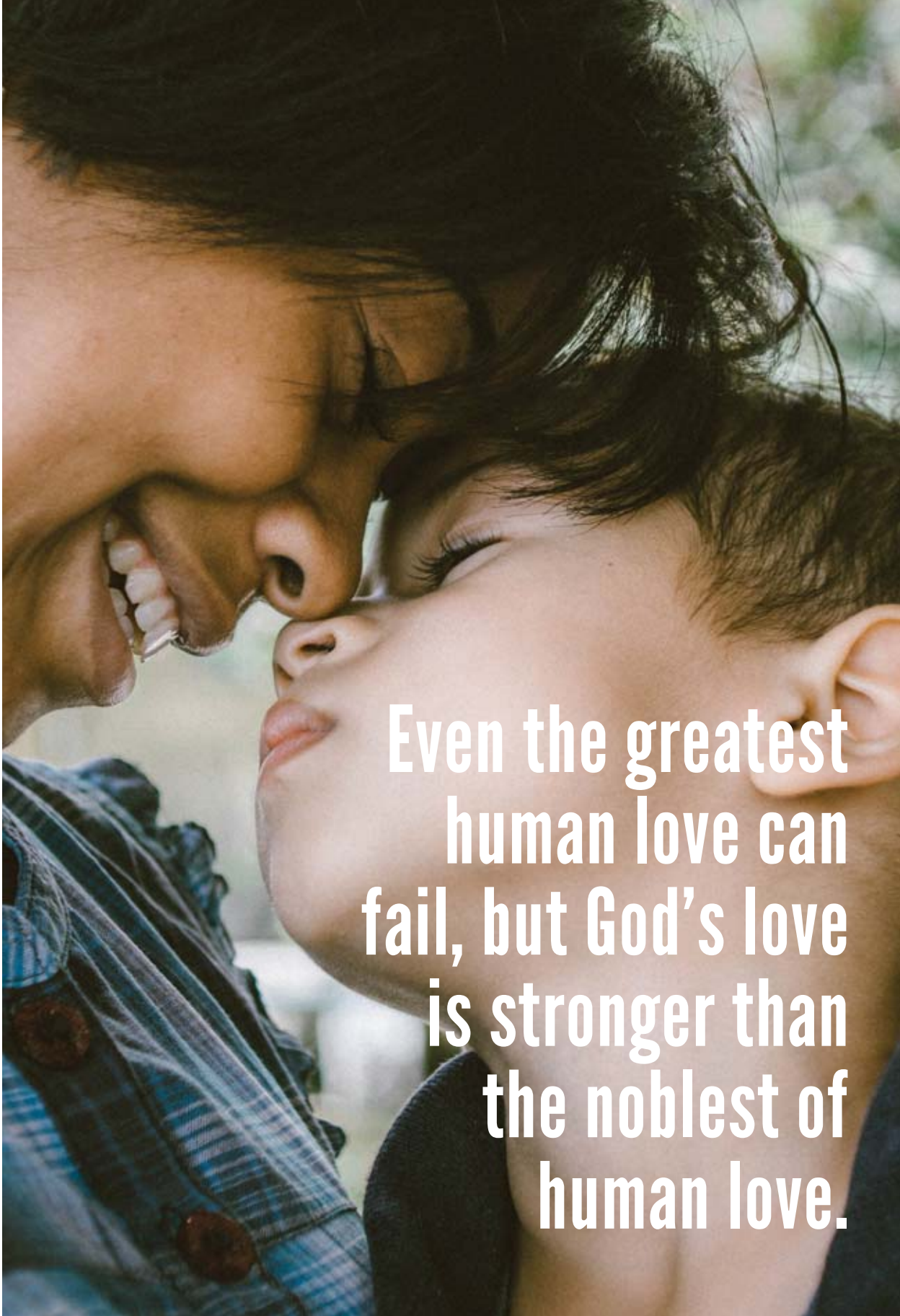
All looks perfect until we hit the heartfelt lament in verse 14: “The Lord has forsaken me; the Lord

has forgotten me.” There is no hope; there is no future; there is no memory—or is there? God’s answer appears in the form of a rhetorical question. “Can a mother forget the baby at her breast?” The prophet utilizes the generic word for “woman,” instead of “mother,” as reflected in most versions. Yet the proximity to the verb “to suckle, nurse” makes clear that this woman is a mother. Generally, mothers don’t forget their babies. *But even if they would*, God says, *I will not forget you*. Even the greatest human love can fail, but God’s love is stronger than the noblest of human love; He will not fail us.

Isaiah 42:14 offers another strong female simile applied to God—it’s Scripture’s only explicit comparison of God with a woman in labor. “For a long time I have kept silent, I have been quiet and held myself back. But now, like a woman in childbirth, I cry out, I gasp and pant.” The context suggests the messianic age, introduces the Servant of the Lord (verse 1), and describes the Servant’s task (verses 5-7).

Again, we hear about total transformation. No more disease, no more prisoners, no more darkness. God’s people will sing a new song and are joined by nature and other nations (verses 10-12). Like a warrior (another metaphor!), God will triumph over His enemies (verse 13)—and then, out of nowhere, we hear about God giving birth to something new. Verse 16 describes how God is tenderly guiding the blind on a once-crooked path now made straight. God’s birthing process restores those who are utterly dependent on Him to wholeness.

Isaiah 46:3 contains another mother-related image. The context of the chapter indicates judgment and destruction of the idols (represented by the Babylonian deities Bel and Nebo) and those that worship or “carry” them. “Listen to me, you descendants of Jacob, all the remnant of the people of Israel, you whom I have upheld since your birth, and have carried since you were born.” A literal translation would depict God carrying Israel from the “belly” and lifting her up from the “womb.” Like a newborn child, Israel was helpless. As any mother would do, God carried Israel for the first months of life. Verse 4 makes a big circle and promises the same care and support in old age, though using a masculine pronoun. “Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.”



**Even the greatest
human love can
fail, but God's love
is stronger than
the noblest of
human love.**

God's compassion is a recurring theme in Isaiah (14:1; 30:18; 49:10, 13, 15; 54:8, 10; 55:7; 60:10). The Hebrew term for "compassion" has the same root as the word translated as "womb." Compassion is illustrated by the feeling of a mother remembering her child. That doesn't mean that men cannot feel or express compassion. Yet, for the biblical authors, the best prototype of divine compassion comes from a mother who unconditionally loves her child—even her wayward child.

One final example of a female metaphor describing God can be found in Isaiah 1:2: "Hear me, you heavens! Listen, earth! For the Lord has spoken: 'I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me.'" Old Testament women were in charge of the household and were also responsible for raising the children of the household.⁴ We can catch a glimpse of their influence in many patriarchal stories in which a mother names her child (cf. Gen. 29:31-30:24). Intriguingly, the Hebrew verb *gadal*, "to raise a child" (2 Kings 10:6; Isa. 23:4; Hosea 9:12) that is used by Isaiah in 1:2, can also be translated as "make great." It's used in God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:2 to make him "a great nation." God had raised His people and had even made them great—yet, as noted in Isaiah 1, Israel and Judah rebelled and did not keep their part of the covenant promise.

GRASPING THE CONTEXT

Isaiah's repeated use of female imagery and metaphors is surprising, since he lived in a world that was full of female deities associated with fertility rites. Ishtar, the goddess of love, and Ninkarrak, the mother goddess, were both well known in Mesopotamia and Syria-Palestine. Hathor, the Egyptian sky goddess wearing the sun disk and cow horns; Isis, the wife of Osiris and an ancient mother goddess with magical powers; and Maat, the goddess of truth presiding over judgment—they all were part and parcel of a large pantheon of deities, mostly associated with fertility, birth, and motherly activities.

Why would Isaiah ascribe the characteristics of a mother to Yahweh in the midst of a world where goddesses representing debased fertility rites were so prominent?

First, by using female characteristics to describe God, the biblical authors reflected creation theology. God, who is neither male nor female, made

both Adam and Eve in His likeness and image. A mother's tenderness and care; a father's strength and protection were reflecting God's characteristics.

Second, the God of Scripture is not a supercharged copy of a human superhero as consistently found in heathen pantheons; as Creator and Redeemer He is acting in history. He is more than any metaphor can truly describe. While He is more, these crucial metaphors help us relate to Him in ways that are familiar to us.

When God made Adam and Eve in His image and likeness, He built something into our being that resonates with motherly kindness and care, since it is so intimately related to our first human experience. Interestingly, Isaiah often connects male and female metaphors of God to express wholeness and completeness. Isaiah 51:2 connects Israel (as a people) to the archetypal father Abraham but also reminds the readers that Sarah "gave birth" in pain to Israel. God as a parent (involving the characteristics of a father *and* a mother) reflects this wholeness and continues to speak beyond gendered, generational, and racial borders.

All of our nearest and dearest relationships were meant to reflect aspects of the God who is the "Wholly Other." In this sinful world where some of our most intimate relationships may only bring memories of pain, abuse, or absence, Scripture describes God as our perfect father, mother, sibling, fortress, maker, and, ultimately, our liberator. His self-descriptions that make use of feminine metaphors serve to deepen our regard for women and motherhood, and also soften those sterner images of maleness and manhood that often engender unbalanced perspectives of both the ideal man and of the sensitive, compassionate Father who is in heaven. 🌱

¹ See Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 2nd ed. (Hammondsworth, Eng.: Penguin, 1959).

² C. Osiek, "Reading the Bible as Women," in L. E. Keck, ed., *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), vol. 1, pp. 181-183.

³ More references and arguments can be found in Gerald A. Klingbeil and Chantal J. Klingbeil, "Metáforas femeninas de Dios en Isaías—Reflexiones sobre la hermenéutica de la teología feminista," *Theologika* 14, no. 1 (1999): 38-65.

⁴ L. G. Perdue, "The Israelite and Early Jewish Family," in L. G. Perdue, et al., eds., *Families in Ancient Israel* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1997), p. 172.

Gerald A. Klingbeil is an associate editor of *Adventist Review* who marvels at the wideness of God's being as He reaches out to a world that struggles to comprehend Him.



EIGHTEEN YEARS **ALONE?**

From a motherhood of sorrow to a life full of joy

JANELLE PHILLIP

I am loved by God. Over the last 18 years people have regularly told me that I am doing a fantastic job raising my daughter. For a long time I would awkwardly smile and reply with the generic “God is good,” because I did not believe that I had done anything worthy of praise.

Like most parents, I stumbled through these years hoping that the few things I did right would outweigh all my errors. The parenting books are nice suggestions, but no one has a foolproof way of raising a child who turns out to be a decent human being. And for many single parents, those books might as well have been written in a foreign language.

When I found out I was pregnant, I was petrified. Like most people who have any dirt in their lives, you hope it stays hidden. I was afraid of what this pregnancy would mean for my life and my family. I was a sophomore in college, and my Trinidadian family was extremely active in our church. The questions of how I would finish school and what people would say were yelling loudly in my ear.

But God knew this child would save my life, and He ensured that my network of support was top tier. My family helped me with everything I needed to finish school. I worked, went to school full-time, and with help from my family and friends raised my daughter until I completed both bachelor’s and master’s degrees. God used my dirt as compost to bloom the most beautiful flower.

My daughter’s father was never very present in her life and has remained distant for years. While this still hurts, I am thankful for my earthly father, “Grandpa,” who has a matchless bond with my daughter.

This road has not been smooth. I have cried buckets of tears, passed many sleepless nights, and fought financial struggles. The monumental task of being the primary and sole caretaker often left me feeling vulnerable and fragile. But God carried me when I was too weak to walk. He spoke sweetly and lovingly to me when I felt like the worst mother on earth. He encouraged me and pushed me when I was too tired to keep going. His unwavering love pulled me into Him and never let me go.

Through the consistent support of my family, friends, and church, my daughter matriculated through 12 years of Christian education and earned a full ride to college. Best of all, she loves God and knows that He loves her.

Being a single parent is full of challenges . . . But God! So now when I say “God is good!” it is no longer a generic phrase, but a heartfelt praise. I live in His goodness. He has shown me love in its purest form by caring for my daughter and me in such a specific and special way.

I am loved by God. 🌱

Social worker Janelle Phillip is the loving single-mother of one awesome, talented and intelligent teenage daughter, Nia. Above all else, she loves the Lord.



IT TAKES A VILLAGE

Grandparenthood, with emphasis on parents

W. S. LEE AND WILMA LEE

Most parents look forward to the time they become grandparents. It's a time to *spoil* the little ones in the family without having to implement consequences. However, the reality is rather less flippant: of the 65 million grandparents in the United States in 2012, 7 million, or more than 10 percent, lived with at least one grandchild, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. They are the untold

and not-so-glamorous grandparenting story.

In some homes in the village, they are doing what's expected: they're primary caretakers for their grandchildren! Parenting so late in life is not usually by choice, but out of necessity. Where children are unable to come through for their own children, grandparents have stepped in to fill the gap. It's what has to be done.

WHAT THEY'RE IN FOR

One of the first challenges such a kindness entails is losing control of one's time. Children require structure: mealtimes, study times, and bedtimes. Grandparents have spent their lives moving to the schedule of children, and have looked forward to the time they would be in charge of their own calendar. Not only are they dealing with schedules again, but their grandchild's day is fuller than when they first parented. How do they get everything in?

Today's children are a technology generation. They have never experienced a time in their lives that they did not have access to electronics. Most grandparents can remember the day of face-to-face contact, or notes from the teacher. The expectations of media are constant; they just don't require presence!

Further, many grandparents live on a fixed income, but children's needs are never fixed. There's always a new pair of shoes, pants, dress, or something required from the school. Along with those things come the medical needs of both children and grandparents. Provid-

ing for financial needs of the family becomes a true faith walk.

Another challenge not often acknowledged is the fatigue that comes from active parenting. Grandparents may be reluctant to admit it, but truth is that they're just tired! Active young children require a lot of involvement from the adults in their lives from the time they wake up until the time they go to bed. Grandparents are slowing down and expecting to move at a more leisurely pace.

Grandparents are sometimes also temporary caregivers. Parents become ill or need caregivers while they make transitions in their lives and jobs. The toll on grandparents is no less, except when they can establish expiration dates. Grandparents like their role as auxiliary adults. They want to be involved in their grandchildren's lives—when they choose.

ASSISTANT GRANDPARENTS

The rest of the village also has its role, though today's world has channeled almost everyone into their own silo! Now everyone moves in their own little world, unconcerned at times about anyone or anything else!

By contrast, Christians are charged: "Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking" (Rom. 12: 2).^{*} Put into practical terms, we should be aware of others and their needs and find a way to come beside and practice the ministry of Aaron and Hur. When Joshua went to fight Amalek, he needed assistance, and turned to elder statesman Moses. Moses climbed to a high point and held up his hands: as long as his hands were up, Israel prevailed. "But Moses' hands got tired. So they got a stone and set it under him. He sat on it and Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on each side. So his hands remained steady until the sun went down" (Ex. 17:12).

We all have days in which we wonder how we will summon the strength to put one foot in front of the other and keep moving. We don't want to admit our feelings of fatigue, nor can we always see the signs in others. Grandparents who have stepped up to become parents of their grandkids want to appear capable, competent, and all-sufficient, where it is safe to say, "I'm tired. I'm at the end of my rope. I don't know how I can go on."

Exhausted grandparents don't need sermons,

It takes a village to raise a child.

African Proverb.

opinions, or idle words. They need our attention and sympathy when parenting stretches them thin. We need to become the village!

First village stop—extended family: when grandparents step up to raise their grandkids, other family members should be on hand to help. This may be as simple as preparing and bringing over a meal, or picking children up for a "play date." Growing children need clothing, school supplies, the list goes on. One word of caution: instead of asking "What can I do to help?" fill the need if you notice a need!

Next village stop—church family: grandparents who are parenting are often not aware of all a church's children's activities: Adventurers, Pathfinders, Bible Bowl, to name a few. These are activities for children, but who provides for the adults? Senior ministries should not be just for independent and disengaged seniors, but also for those caring for young children. It requires additional work, but the ministry that reflects Jesus does not leave anyone out. Churches can offer respite care—just to give grandparents a break.

Because the village is a part of the larger community, here are some resources:

"Help for Children Living with Grandparents and Other Relatives," www.USA.gov.

GrandFamilies.AARP.org

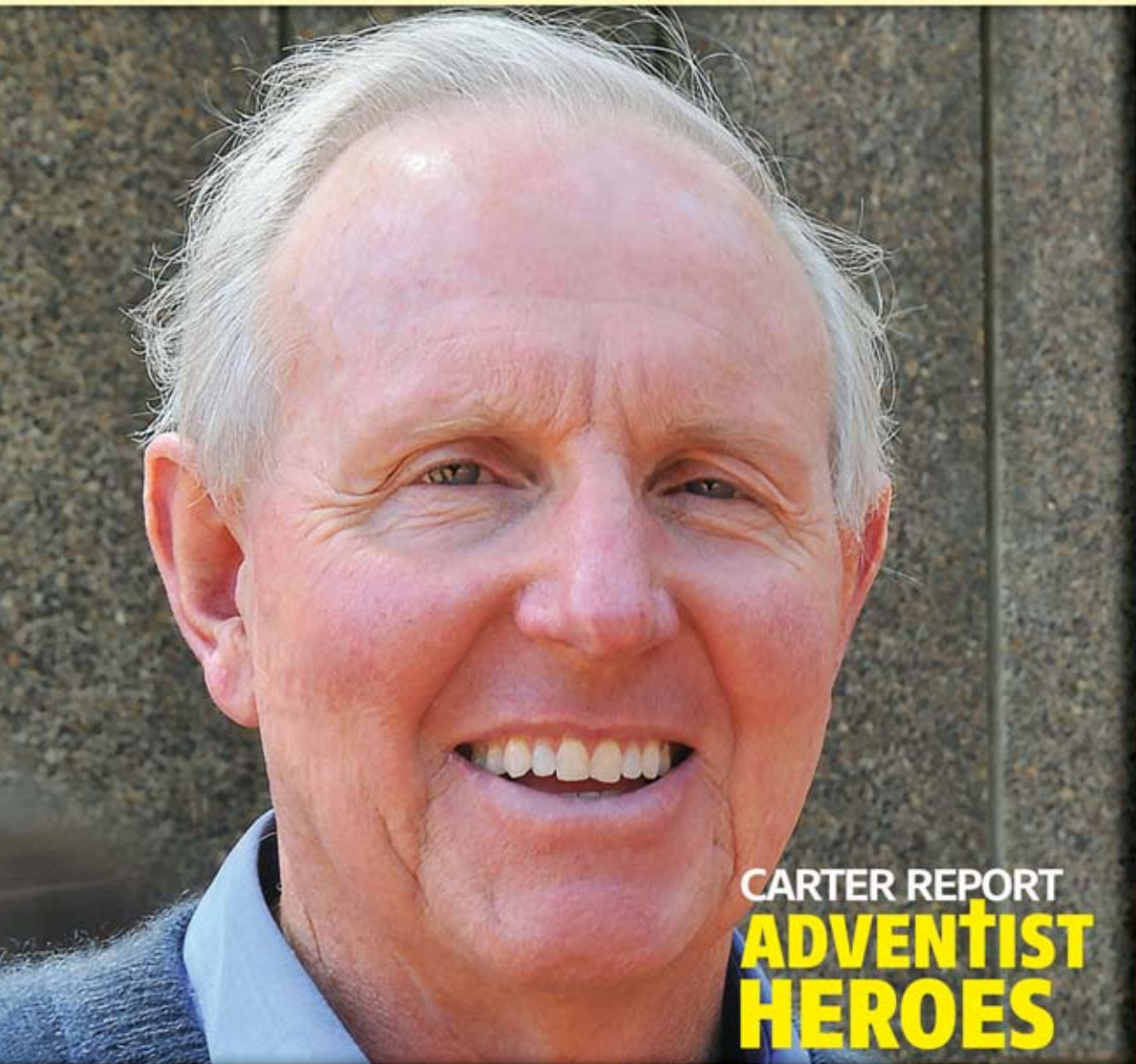
www.grandfactsheets.org

Grandparents should always remember they are not alone! God has promised never to leave us or forsake us.

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W. S. Lee and his wife, **Wilma Kirk Lee**, longtime Family Ministries directors, have been assistant grandparents many times over.

PASTOR INTERROGATES KGB GENERAL



CARTER REPORT
**ADVENTIST
HEROES**

The Carter Report team was running meetings in Nizhni Novgorod, Russia. We had been invited to a meal with General Vladimir and his colonels prior to a special meeting with 1,000

KGB officers. Pastor Graeme Bradford, in good form, was doing what he had done all his life — asking tough questions. The general squirmed. Graeme persisted. I perspired.

Dr. Bradford was an honest scholar who eschewed all forms of political and ecclesiastical correctness. He was simply quite unique. He also had a heart as big as the world for lost, lonely, hurting people. That's probably why the KGB chief warned to him.

We went on to baptize 2,530 souls in the Volga River, and Graeme was right there in the frigid waters with 60 Russian pastors doing what he loved to do. He was first and foremost an evangelist. His inquiring mind led him to investigate the gifts of the Spirit, especially as manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White.

From his pen came books that challenged conventional thinking while defending the Church he loved.

Graeme was my friend for more than 50 years. He was honest, brave, generous, funny, and perceptive. ❖



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WHY I STRUGGLE WITH MOTHER'S DAY

Nearly every culture has some observance honoring the role of mothers in its society. But for some, Mother's Day is freighted with baggage that's not altogether positive. Perhaps you can identify with one or more of these essays.—Editors.

ONE DAY, MAYBE NOT JUST NOW

Coming to terms with a less-than-ideal childhood

TAYLOR CLAY

Growing up in an Adventist home, we were all about behaviors: church attendance, entertainment, shunning jewelry, family worship, etc. You could say we proudly adhered to a set of rules that, under ideal circumstances, strengthen faith.

But despite adherence to the sorts of things that made us distinctively Adventist, our home lacked the experiences where faith in Jesus makes a difference in one's life. The fruit of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Gal. 5:22, 23) were, for most of my life at home, missing.

AN UNFORTUNATE PATTERN

At the time, we didn't understand exactly what was wrong. My mother would speak of her faith carrying her



through her difficulties, and then immediately begin a tirade of verbal abuse.

Mental and emotional abuse directed against me and my brothers were pretty pervasive, a never-ending roller coaster ride of mental and emotional onslaught, pleas for forgiveness and hysterics, followed by promises to do better. My parents' marriage was far from healthy, but the facade was real. My parents were pleased at the seemingly convincing outward picture of a stalwart Adventist family that had no issues to speak of.

So it wasn't until adulthood, working through my own quest to do better with the help of a professional therapist, that I came to understand that my mother was possibly suffering from certain mental health challenges. Had she come to that conclusion on her own or received a diagnosis from a medical professional? No. But that possibility has helped me better understand things in order to stop asking "Why?"

Instead, I focus on growing into the person the Lord wants me to be, seeking His guidance to have

my character reflect His. Many days I'm not even close. Yet God has delivered me from the situation of my younger years with a stable and happy home of my own.

MY LIFE TO LIVE

But when Mother's Day rolls around each year and it's time to do the gift-giving thing, I often stand at the card section unable to make an accurate selection. None of the messages inscribed on neutral or pastel-hued card stock speaks to the truth of my experience as a child, and I can't bring myself to buy them. Parent-child relationships can be complicated in healthy situations, but almost impossible when rampant dysfunction is present.

So will things be made right in this life? I'm not sure. But I know that in the earth made new all things will be made new: including difficult relationships. I'm already focused there. And I believe my mom is too. 🌱

Taylor Clay is a pseudonym.

MOTHER'S DAY IS TOUGH

It's Not Over Yet

DONNA DUBLIN

I've had many Mother's Days, not always on the second Sunday in May.

Mothers' Day began for me when a social worker placed a handsome baby boy in my arms while his birth mother and others looked on in celebration. Smiles and praises filled the day, for God had given me the opportunity for which I had long prayed: the chance of becoming a mother. I sat in the back seat of our car and talked to my 7-day-old baby boy who looked back at me with expectant eyes and delightful facial expressions. I've had many Mother's Days since then, not all as pleasurable.

I recall one early Mother's Day when we drove more than 60 miles to the Los Angeles County courthouse to sign final adoption papers. As we always do, we offered a prayer for protection before we left. But on the way it seemed the enemy had a different plan. We were sandwiched

in a multiple-car accident. As we waited for the police to arrive I began feeling a pain in my neck. I kept looking at my baby to make sure everything was OK as I worried that we'd miss our court appointment. The pain and anxiety was tough to deal with. But we prayed even as we waited and God brought us through. By the end of the day we were singing and praising God as we drove back home with signed adoption papers in hand.

Some of my toughest Mothers' Days involved me using my maternal marketing skills. "Son, I'm sure you'll enjoy Pathfinders!" Or, too many times to count: "Son, you need to pick a piece and practice for the recital. It'll be great!" It occurred to me that it was because I was a bad mother that I got so much "pushback". It was always super-tough. But again, occasional investitures and flawless performances brought relief to my heart.

I used to think that my worst Mother's Days were during my son's teenage years. For a mother who thinks of herself as very communicative, those days were excruciatingly painful. It seemed that my son could reply to me only with groans and grunts. On his expansive days those mumblings would bloom into two or three-word sentences. The saving grace of those years was the delight in seeing my son grow into a young man. The future looked bright and beautiful.

Then just when I thought I could relax and reap

the results of my having produced a self-actualized young adult, the lights in my son's room went dark, as he was struck with a deep depression. Those Mother's Days were a nightmare. I often found myself on my knees, asking God to give me strength and insight to deal with his deep despair, coupled with his refusal to get the help he needed. He seems better now.

But every (Mother's) day is tough and I continue to pray that he will surrender himself to God's will. 🌱

Donna Dublin is a pseudonym.



PAIN AND PEACE

BY JILL MORIKONE

Most days I carry the pain hidden deep inside. Some days I don't even realize it's there. Years ago I gave the death of my dream to God, choosing to trust Him with the "why." Choosing to serve Him where He's planted me, finding joy and meaning in marriage and ministry.

Many days I feel joy and peace, thankful that I am well over that pain. Then something triggers a memory, and I'm transported back more than 10 years to the day the pain of Mother's Day first became real.

That first Sabbath, only weeks after the doctor's verdict, is forever seared in my memory. The roses handed out to the mothers and the anguish of the knowledge that, unless God worked a miracle, I would never receive one of those. Or at best, it would be a Band-Aid, a cover, a front by sympathetic people to make me feel better. *They're just being nice because I'm not a mom.* I smile and take the rose, while something inside me cries. *You'll never be one of them. A simple rose can never turn a woman into a mom. It takes more: someone to love, someone to care for, someone to nurture. Someone you don't have.*

I try not to let myself feel too deeply. After all, what good does it do? So I swallow the lump in my throat and will my mind someplace else, any-

where but here. *Oh, God, why does it still hurt after all these years?*

I recently bumped into a woman who had read an article I wrote years ago for *Adventist Review** about Mother's Day and wanted to thank me for my honesty. Many people offer prayers or suggestions, but this was different, for she too had her own pain. She and her husband decided to adopt, waited years for their children, and then, devastatingly, the adoption fell through. We talked and traded stories. As we said our goodbyes, she reached out and squeezed me tightly. "Here's a hug from one wannabe mother to another."

She disappeared into the crowd while my tears spilled over. We had different stories but the same pain. The same longing. The same unanswered questions.

Will the pain ever go away completely? I used to think that surrender and trusting Jesus were enough. Surely Jesus could fill that void inside. And He does! I've experienced His peace and contentment in ways I never thought possible.

But on Mother's Day the void remains. 🌱

* Jill Morikone, "The Pain of a Rose," *Adventist Review*, May 14, 2009, p. 31.

Jill Morikone is general manager for 3ABN, a supporting Adventist television network. She and her husband, Greg, live in southern Illinois and enjoy ministering together for Jesus.

THEY DON'T CARE ABOUT YOUR SALVATION

I had wanted to write about our shared salvation in Christ, but instead I need to warn you about something.

There are people in your life right now who don't care about your salvation. They don't care whether you're saved or lost for eternity. These people may include your friends, teachers, pastors, and family members.

These people may say they care about you, but the only thing they really care about is how much fun they can have with you. If you fit into their plans—and their fun—then fine. But when they're done with you, they will use you up and spit you out, because they couldn't care less about you.

The thoughts I just shared are not my own. They belong to a man named Jude. You may have heard of his Brother: Jesus of Nazareth. In Mark 6:3 we learn that Jesus had four brothers—James, Joseph, Jude, and Simon—and at least two sisters.

Yet in his letter, Jude doesn't identify himself as a brother of Jesus, but rather as “a brother of James” and “a slave of Jesus” (Jude 1, NLT).^{*} Why would this be? Perhaps because Jude had come to understand more deeply what it meant to be a brother or sister of Christ—to be the family of Christ. Jude had once heard Jesus say that He loved His followers just as much as His own family (see Matt. 12:46-50). At some point Jude must have realized: being in Jesus' family isn't about blood; it's about *blood*.

That's why Jude is filled with such concern about Jesus' wider family—including you and me. In his short but powerful

letter, Jude reminds us:

1. *People can be lost.* Once you're in the family of God, it's very difficult to be lost—but it's possible. There were, writes Jude, Israelites who walked through the Red Sea . . . who were lost. There were angels in heaven . . . who were lost. And there are believers today . . . who are wavering.

2. *People can help other people to be lost.* It should terrify us to think that people in our lives may be leading us down dark paths. (There's an expression: Take your five closest friends, divide them by five—and that's who you are. Think hard about who surrounds you.) It should terrify us further to think that we could be leading others down dark paths, our once-bright faith choked out by the worries and pleasures of this life.

3. *People can help other people to be saved.* “Be merciful,” wrote Jude, “to those who doubt, save others by snatching them from the fire” (verses 22, 23). Think of it: We have the capacity to help save others for eternal life. As believers, we're called not only to love others; we're called to speak truth into their lives. It's not unloving to speak truth to someone; it's unloving not to. We are in a real war at the close of time—as close as the book of Jude is to the book of Revelation. 🍌

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BEING IN JESUS' FAMILY ISN'T ABOUT BLOOD; IT'S ABOUT BLOOD.

THE BEAUTY OF

*Inspired
answers about
relationships*

After the excitement and stress of their weddings, couples are faced with the challenge of building and maintaining happy and fulfilling marriages. For some faith-based tips, we sought counsel from the writings of Ellen G. White.—Editors.

TELL US WHAT YOU MEAN BY THE PHRASE “PERMANENCE IN MARRIAGE.”

You have united in a lifelong covenant. Your education in married life has begun. The first year of married life is a year of experience, a year in which husband and wife learn each other's different traits of character, as a child learns lessons in school. In this, the first year of your married life, let there be no chapters that will mar your future happiness.

To gain a proper understanding of the marriage relation is the work of a lifetime. Those who marry enter a school from which they are never in this life to be graduated. . . .

WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING LASTING HAPPINESS IN THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP?

In your life union your affections are to be tributary to each other's happiness. Each is to minister to the happiness of the other. This is the will of God concerning you. But while you are to blend as one, neither of you is to lose his or her individuality in the other. God is the owner of your individuality. Of Him you are to ask: What is right? What is wrong? How may I best fulfill the purpose of my creation? . . .

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES IN SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGES?

You now have duties to perform that before your marriage you did not have. “Put on therefore, . . . kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering.” Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us.” Give careful study to the following instruction: “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. . . . Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own hus-



MARRIAGE



In your life union your affections are to be tributary to each other's happiness.

bands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it" Colossians 3:12; Ephesians 5:2, 22-25.

Marriage, a union for life, is a symbol of the union between Christ and His church. The spirit that Christ manifests toward the church is the spirit that husband and wife are to manifest toward each other.

OF THE TWO PARTNERS INVOLVED IN MARRIAGE, WHO WOULD YOU SAY IS "IN CHARGE"?

Neither husband nor wife is to make a plea for rulership. The Lord has laid down the principle that is to guide in this matter. The husband is to cherish his wife as Christ cherishes the church. And the wife is to respect and love her husband. Both are to cultivate the spirit of kindness, being determined never to grieve or injure the other. . . .

Both of you have strong willpower. You may make this power a great blessing or a great curse to yourselves and to those with whom you come in contact. Do not try to compel each other to do as you wish. You cannot do this and retain each other's love. Manifestations of self-will destroy the peace and happiness of the home.

Let not your married life be one of contention. If you do you will both be unhappy. Be kind in speech and gentle in action, giving up your own wishes. Watch well your words, for they have a powerful influence for good or for ill. Allow no sharpness to come into your voices. Bring into your united life the fragrance of Christlikeness. . . .

WHAT COUNSEL DO YOU HAVE FOR COUPLES WHO HAVE TO DEAL WITH SELFISHNESS IN THEIR MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP?

One victory it is positively essential for you both to gain, the victory over the stubborn will. In this struggle you can conquer only by the aid of Christ. You may struggle hard and long to subdue self,

but you will fail unless you receive strength from on high.

By the grace of Christ you can gain the victory over self and selfishness. As you live His life, showing self-sacrifice at every step, constantly revealing a stronger sympathy for those in need of help, you will gain victory after victory. Day by day you will learn better how to conquer self and how to strengthen your weak points of character. . . .

WHAT ABOUT NEWLYWEDS WHO BELIEVE THEY SHOULD "KEEP TO THEMSELVES" IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN THEIR MARRIAGE?

Do not shut yourselves up to yourselves, satisfied to pour out all your affection upon each other. Seize every opportunity to contribute to the happiness of those around you, sharing with them your affection.

Words of kindness, looks of sympathy, expressions of appreciation, would to many a struggling, lonely one be as a cup of cold water to a thirsty soul. A word of cheer, an act of kindness, would go far to lighten the burdens that are resting heavily upon weary shoulders. It is in unselfish ministry that true happiness is found. . . .

HOW ABOUT SOME FINAL THOUGHTS?

Live in the sunshine of the Saviour's love. Then your influence will bless the world. Let the Spirit of Christ control you. Let the law of kindness be ever on your lips. Forbearance and unselfishness mark the words and actions of those who are born again, to live the new life in Christ.

"None of us liveth to himself." The character will manifest itself. The looks, the tone of the voice, the actions—all have their influence in making or marring the happiness of the domestic circle. They are molding the temper and character of the children; they are inspiring or tending to destroy confidence and love. All are made either better or worse, happy or miserable, by these influences.

We owe our families the knowledge of the word brought into practical life. All that it is possible for us to be to purify, enlighten, comfort, and encourage those connected with us in family relation should be done. 🌱

This excerpt is taken from the book *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), volume 7, pages 45-50. Seventh-day Adventists believe that **Ellen G. White** (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.

ALSO IN THIS SECTION:

- » WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH FIBER?
- » LYDIA'S FAMILY
- » A CALL TO LOVE
- » RAISING HER TOGETHER, APART
- » WHAT'S IN YOUR WALLET
- » MY BLOGGING-PARENTING JOURNEY

ENGAGE



ESAU IS COMING

There's a story of a man who walked into a bar, ordered a drink, then threw it in the bartender's face. As you might imagine, the bartender wasn't pleased.

"What's wrong with you?" he yelled.

"I'm so sorry," the startled patron replied. "Please forgive me. I didn't mean to do it."

"You didn't mean to do it?" the bartender snapped. "This is a bar. People drink here. They don't throw drinks! Get out of this bar and don't come back!"

The embarrassed man slowly made his way back to the other side of bar, his head hanging low. "I'm so sorry," he mumbled. "I have this compulsion, and I can't help myself." The downcast customer determined to get help



DWAIN ESMOND

for his condition. He visited a psychiatrist for several months and was sure that he was cured on the day he returned to the bar.

As he entered, the bartender recognized him instantly and eyed him warily. “You again?” he grouched. “Didn’t I tell you not to come back here?”

“Sir,” the man brightened, “I’m cured. What happened the last time won’t happen again.”

The bartender was unconvinced, but he relented. The man ordered a drink. No sooner had the drink been served than, *splash!* Once again the customer emptied the glass in the bartender’s face.

“I thought you said you were cured!” the bartender yelled.

“I am cured!” the man retorted. “Now when I throw a drink in a bartender’s face, I don’t feel any guilt!”

WHAT DO WE DO WITH GUILT?

What do humans do with guilt? How do we deal with the psychic baggage from past indiscretions and failures?

Ethicist and theologian Lewis B. Smedes, in his book *Shame and Grace: Healing the Shame We Don't Deserve*, recounts a story of Joseph Stalin, the dictator who ruled the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) from 1929 to 1953.¹ Some historians estimate that Stalin was responsible for the deaths of 20 to 25 million people, sending many to their deaths confessing to crimes they did not commit. How was he so effective at getting such confessions? Torture had something to do with it, of course. But Stalin reportedly had a psychologist on payroll who was a master at extracting confessions from innocent people. He did it with something known as the Mongolian peasant principle.

To illustrate his technique, the psychologist told of a poor man who walked into the well-appointed office of a wealthy general. The general offered him 1 million rubles if he simply pushed the red button near where he was sitting. The visitor was understandably concerned about what would happen once he pushed it.

“Not to worry,” the general assured him. “When you push the button, an old Mongolian peasant dies in a village very far away. The local people have been hoping he would die.” The man pushed the button and left with his loot in tow.

Years passed and the poor visitor had not spent any of his riches. In fact, he became so wracked with guilt for what he had done that he eventually took his own life.

The point of this story? Stalin’s psychologist closed the tale by adding that all he had to do was find the Mongolian peasant in his clients’ heads, and they would confess to almost anything. Such is the power of unaddressed guilt.

A PEASANT FOUND

Human beings will do just about anything to free themselves of guilt. But guilt is undaunted. It creeps, it stalks, it haunts us. Perhaps this is what Jacob felt on the day when the messengers returned saying, “We came to your brother Esau, and he also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him” (Gen. 32:6).²

In case you have forgotten the story, Jacob conspired with his mother to take his brother Esau’s birthright (Gen. 27). What follows is a backbreaking, humbling sojourn in Mesopotamia, the home of his uncle Laban.

After 20 years on the road, Jacob got a startling message from God: “Go home.” Genesis 31:1, 2 chronicles the changing winds in Laban’s home. Jacob had become *persona non grata*. “Return to the land of your fathers and to your family, and I will be with you,” God said (verse 3). In that moment, God fingered Jacob’s Mongolian peasant.

Notice that God is the one who forces the crisis in Jacob’s life. Sometimes we think that only Satan sets obstacles in our way, but this is not always the case. Satan may instigate, but God at times gives approval. Just look to Job (Job 1:8). Remember that God promised to bring a great nation out of Jacob’s loins, but Jacob had unfinished business in his past.

It is encouraging to think that even though Jacob had sinned against God and his family, God did not forsake him. Regarding the ladder shown to Jacob during his flight into exile (Gen. 28:12), Ellen White wrote: “The Lord knew the evil influences that would surround Jacob, and the perils to which he would be exposed. In mercy He opened up the future before the repentant fugitive, that he might understand the divine purpose with reference to himself, and be prepared to resist the temptations that would surely come to him when





There was panic in Jacob's prudence, panic in his planning, even panic in his prayers. But God hears the cries of His children.

alone amid idolaters and scheming men. There would be before him the high standard at which he must aim; and the knowledge that through him the purpose of God was reaching its accomplishment would constantly prompt him to faithfulness.³ God blessed Jacob before he had even repented. What a God!

ESAU IS COMING

It bears repeating that God's direction for Jacob to return home was simple and clear. Go home, and I will be with you (Gen. 31:3). Yet Jacob complicates this simple directive. He decides to "help God," because surely it couldn't be as easy as just going home, not after all that he had done. Jacob's strategy of sending emissaries ahead to Esau (Gen. 32:3-5) may not have been born of God's direction. Esau's response was immediate and terrifying. He raised an army of 400 men and began heading for the brother who, 20 years earlier, had turned his life upside down. Esau was coming.

Jacob decided to help God, in a manner similar to the way his mother, Rebekkah, had "helped" when she drew up the scheme to take the birthright (Gen. 27) from Esau. Her action consigned Jacob to 20 years of unrelenting guilt, while betraying Isaac and Esau. Who can read Esau's devastating cry for his father's blessing and not be touched (verse 34)?

Jacob likely assumed that Esau felt that he was returning to take what was left of the inherited wealth Esau had long believed was his own. Esau, Jacob was certain, had revenge on his mind.

A VERY HUMAN RESPONSE

Beginning with the dispatching of his messengers, Jacob's response seems prudent. It makes sense to send messengers ahead with gifts and words of affirmation to someone you have wronged. But God had not asked him to be prudent; He had asked Him to be obedient. Human prudence would not stop Esau from coming, no matter how justified it appeared.

When Jacob received the fearful news that Esau was on his way with 400 men, he undertook further strategy, driven by guilt and fear: "So Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two companies" (Gen. 32:7). Surely there cannot be anything wrong with planning, right? Shouldn't we "count the cost"? Yes, Jesus says (Luke 14:28). But there are times that our very prudence deprives us of God's blessing for those who obey Him and follow His every word. Jacob's planning did not stop Esau. Esau was still coming!

Genesis 32:9-12 records that after the panic planning, Jacob prayed! Isn't that just like us? We do everything else we can before seeking God, when we can only do more than seek God after we have sought Him. Human strategy for facing any crisis begins with God, yet our first response is often panic when it should be prayer.

FINALLY ALONE

In his prayer Jacob called on the God of his grandfather, the God of his father, and the God

whom he knew. Guilt and fear will change the tenor of one's prayers. Jacob even reminded God of His previous directive. "You told me to go home," Jacob seems to say. "I didn't come up with this on my own. You promised You would be with me. Please help me."

I imagine that God must have thought to Himself, *But did I ask you to help Me?*

"I am not worthy of the least of all Your mercies and of all the truth which You have shown your servant" (Gen. 32:10). Is it not amazing how "unworthy" we get when all our plans have failed and Esau is coming? Jacob's prayer is deep, heartfelt, and productive. However, this does not mean that he was no longer stressed. The next few verses record more attempts to placate Esau—all to no avail. Esau was still coming!

There was panic in Jacob's prudence, panic in his planning, even panic in his prayers. But God hears the cries of His children. After Jacob had done all, he had decided to "spend the night in prayer, and he desired to be alone with God. God could soften the heart of Esau. In Him was the patriarch's only hope."⁴ That is when a hand grabbed him.

WRESTLING IN THE DARK

What followed was an hours-long wrestling match that changed Jacob's life forever. Clawing and scratching, grunting and tussling, Jacob wrestled his antagonist with every fiber of his being. His sins ever before him, he pleaded with God for assurance that all was forgiven, that he and his family would be saved from Esau's wrath.

As the battle neared morning, the Angel with whom Jacob had been wrestling urged a cessation of hostilities. When the Angel saw that He could not prevail against Jacob, He "touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him" (Gen. 32:25).

"Jacob's persevering faith prevailed." Armed with the realization that his antagonist was divine, "he held fast the angel until he obtained the blessing he desired, and the assurance of the pardon of his sins. His name was then changed from Jacob, the supplanter, to Israel, which signifies a prince of God."⁵⁴

Jacob refused to let go of God. His physical strength was superseded by his "physical faith." He reminded God of His promises of forgiveness.

Sometimes we may not be able to give God much more than His promises to us. He promises to forgive our sins if we confess them (1 John 1:9), and we should remind God of it. He promises pardon to the wicked who forsakes his way and the unrighteous man who lets go of his thoughts (Isa. 55:7); we must press God until He honors His Word.

THE MAGNIFICENT DEFEAT

Jacob's desire for God's blessing was so intense that His faith "weakened" God. Sinners who cling to God by faith, no matter how weak or powerless they may be, will prevail. Jacob sank his "claws" deep into his Deliverer and "forced" Jesus to submit! Can you imagine such a thing?

American writer and theologian Frederick Buechner captured it best when he dubbed this biblical narrative *The Magnificent Defeat*. God allowed Himself to be "defeated," that Jacob might be transformed and the will of God go forward. Jacob's humility, surrender, and sincere repentance "weakened" God, and ours can as well. God wants us to conquer Him!

It should not be lost on us that every blessing Jacob received that night was "post-hurt." His experience of forgiveness was post-hurt. The change of His name was post-hurt. The blessing received was post-hurt. Even the realization that all would be well when Esau arrived—post hurt; for God intervened to change Esau's heart during Jacob's night of wrestling.⁶

Jacob's panic took many forms, but his perseverance with God removed the burden of guilt and brought peace with his brother. What a marvelous and merciful God we serve! 🍌

¹ Louis B. Smedes, *Shame and Grace: Healing the Shame We Don't Deserve* (Harper, San Francisco, 1993).

² Bible texts in this article are from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

³ Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1890), p. 184.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

⁵ Ellen G. White, *The Story of Redemption* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1947), p. 95.

⁶ See E. G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 198.

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Need More Faith?

Faith may be closer
than you think...

*Faith is the assurance
of things hoped for,
the conviction
of things not seen.*

HEBREWS 11:1

Mike Tucker,
Speaker/Director

SUMMER SCHEDULE

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| May 25-26 | Portland, TN — KY-TN Camp Meeting |
| May 31- June 1 | Lincoln, NE — KS-NE Camp Meeting |
| June 9 | Danville, OH — Ohio Camp Meeting |
| June 12-14 | Hagerstown, MD — Chesapeake Camp Meeting |
| June 15-16 | Huttonsville, WV — Mountain View Camp Meeting |
| June 22-23 | Union Springs, NY — New York Camp Meeting |
| Aug 3-4 | Camp Hope, BC — British Columbia Camp Meeting |
| Sept 28-29 | Bonnerdale, AR — Cowboy Camp Meeting |



PETER N. LANDLESS ZENO L. CHARLES-MARCEL

What's the Deal With Fiber?

Can I get it from meat?

Q: I saw an article on the Internet about muscle fiber and the quality of meat. Can I get the fiber I need from meat, or do I still need to eat vegetables? What's the deal with fiber, anyway?

A: The bundles of cells in muscles are called muscle fibers, but *dietary* fiber—also known as roughage or bulk—refers to the health-promoting edible parts of plants that our bodies can't digest or absorb. Instead, they are processed by the bacteria in our gut to promote our health. Fiber is commonly classified as soluble, which means it dissolves in water. This type of fiber forms into a gel-like material. Insoluble fiber doesn't dissolve in water. Most edible plants contain both types of fiber in varying degrees.

Soluble fiber can help lower blood cholesterol and glucose levels, promotes healthy bacterial growth (probiotic), and aids in satiety (feeling of fullness with eating). It is readily fermented in the colon into gases and physiologically active by-products. Soluble fiber is found in oats, peas, beans, apples, citrus fruits, carrots, barley, and psyllium, among other foods.

Insoluble fiber has bulking effects by absorbing water, can be fermented in the large intestine, and aids defecation. Whole grains, wheat bran, nuts, beans, and vegetables such as cauliflower, green beans, and potatoes are good sources of insoluble fiber.

Functional fibers are isolated fiber sources that may supplement the diet.

Eating fiber from diverse plant sources favors the growth of intestinal bacteria that produce chemicals that positively affect our health (short-chain fatty acids). While it is preferable to ingest fiber as it is found in food, fiber supplements may be used to increase the total dietary fiber when needed.

The recommended daily intake of fiber is 25

TIME PERIOD	CHAMPION(S)	HISTORIC CONTRIBUTION
Ancient Greece	Hippocrates	Bran prevents constipation
1877-1930s	Dr. J. H. Kellogg	Confirmation of positive effects of fiber in patients with constipation and colitis
1953	Dr. Eben Hipsley	The phrase "dietary fiber" first used in a scientific article
1970s	Drs. D. Burkitt and H. Trowell	Concluded from work in Africa that processed, low-fiber foods in Western diets lead to more heart disease and cancer

grams per day for women and 38 grams per day for men (25 percent soluble), but some populations with few chronic degenerative diseases ingest up to 100 grams per day. On average, those who live in North America, like many people around the world, ingest about 15 grams per day and can benefit by gradually increasing intake to at least the recommended levels, even up to 40-60 grams per day. Increasing too fast, however, may cause bloating and flatulence. Interestingly, overweight people lose about as much weight just by eating a fiber-rich diet as they do on complicated diets, despite consuming slightly more calories in the process.

There is no dietary fiber in meat, and meat eating cannot provide you with this very necessary food component. Eating a sufficient amount and variety of available fruits, vegetables, nuts, beans, whole grains, and seeds according to your specific situation will provide you with what you need just as naturally and physiologically as God provided for our human parents in Eden. 🍌

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



LYDIA'S FAMILY

Everybody has a backstory.

She always complains. Nothing is ever right," exclaimed one of my exasperated employees. "I'm getting tired of her demanding ways."

My husband and I own a personal-care home, and the employee was venting to me about one of our particularly difficult residents, Lydia. Lydia tested the patience of even our most seasoned caregivers.

A rather particular person, Lydia was more than willing to share her opinions about almost anything: from food, to lighting, to planned activities. She also had special demands, such as a foot rub every night, and a special way she wanted her bed turned down. Occasionally, only occasionally, did she ever offer a "please" or "thank you."

Yet any time of the day, if you entered Lydia's room you would find her reclining in her chair with an opened Bible on her lap,

rosary in hand, poring over the Scriptures. *How can she act the way she does when she spends so much time reading the Bible?* we all wondered.

THE UNTOLD STORY

One day Lydia had to go to the doctor. I hadn't seen her receive many visitors, only a brother who visited occasionally, so I offered to take her to her appointment.

On the way back from the doctor's office I was amazed to hear her express sincere gratitude. "Thank you for taking me," she said softly. "I really appreciate it."

She wanted to pay me, but I said no. "My treat to you." Her eyes brightened, and she smiled for a second. Then, as if the floodgates of pain from her former life had just been lifted, out spilled an astonishing, heart-breaking story.

"You know, I don't have any family that can help me with things like this," Lydia said. "My brother is my only family now, and he doesn't live nearby." Her eyes seemed to focus on something in the distance. I could tell that she was recalling something from the past.

I gently asked, "Lydia, I know you're a widow, but I don't think I've ever heard if you have children."

"I had two boys," Lydia responded almost in a whisper. "They're not with me now. My oldest was killed in the Vietnam War. Our whole family was devastated. My younger son went into a deep depression after losing his brother, and committed suicide two months later."

She continued: "I didn't think it could get worse, but it did. A few months later my husband

was repairing our roof. He fell off the roof and died. Within a matter of months I was driving my parents to an appointment. I had a seizure while driving and we were in a terrible wreck. Only I survived.”

I had to drive, but I wanted so badly just to throw my arms around her. I had a modern-day Job in my passenger seat! I couldn’t believe that someone could endure that much tragedy. I had tears in my eyes as I glanced over at her and offered my sympathy for what she had gone through.

Surprisingly, she didn’t show much emotion; she just responded stoically. That moment I realized that any emotion she had once possessed was probably exhausted through years of trying to come to terms with such tremendous loss.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND THE STORIES THEY TELL

The next day I visited Lydia in her room. I had never noticed them before, but this time I saw three little frames on her nightstand. The faces in the frames revealed some strikingly handsome faces from yesteryear. I picked up one of the photos. “Was this your husband?” I asked. She nodded. “Wow, he looks like a movie star. He actually looks like Gregory Peck!” I exclaimed.

A broad smile spread across her face. “People used to tell us that we looked like a Hollywood couple.”

The other two frames contained photographs of each of her two sons. Again, I commented about how handsome they were, and how I could see their resemblance to their father.

“But where’s your picture?” I asked.

She dropped her head a bit, the smile fading from her face. “I don’t like to show it to people. It was taken before I got sick.”

“Oh, Lydia, I’d love to see it,” I said. “I need to see what you looked like when you were on the arm of Gregory Peck!”

She opened the drawer to the nightstand and slowly pulled out one more small, oval frame. She handed it to me. I looked at the photograph and almost gasped. Staring back at me was a picture of one of the most beautiful women I had ever seen. Lydia was absolutely stunning. The long flowing hairstyle of the 1940s draped around a flawless face that featured large, sparkling eyes. And the smile, oh, the smile was gorgeous. She honestly looked like pictures you see of a young Marilyn Monroe.

Lydia must have noticed my complete amaze-

I looked at the photograph and almost gasped.

ment because she said, “See, that’s why I don’t like to show it. I looked like that once.” Then leaning on her walker, and looking at her swollen feet clothed in tight diabetic hose, she sadly reiterated, “That was before I was sick. But look at me now.”


Taking the frame from my hand she returned it to the drawer, facedown. I felt so privileged that she showed it to me, but I regretted that I had caused her to revisit a painful past—a past she preferred to keep in the drawer.

I tried to reassure her that we all have reminders of when we looked our best, and we all have to come to terms with the aging process. But I realized that for Lydia it was more than that. For Lydia the process of aging was just one more loss, and she didn’t need that reminder.

UNDERSTOOD

That afternoon was the beginning of some understanding on my part, and on the part of our caregivers. The foot rubs are now lovingly given because we understand that Lydia needs to feel the healing power of touch. Where else is she going to get that? And we now know that all the little demands come to us because she needs to feel our attentiveness—to know that someone still remains in her life. After all, we are her family.

And can you guess what else happened in this process of understanding? Our caregivers tell us that they are hearing “please” and “thank you” from Lydia more often, and she’s learning how to request rather than demand.

We’re also noticing that she is being more helpful to the other residents. The more giving we are to Lydia, the more giving we see her become to others. This circle of generosity must be what Paul wanted us to experience when he wrote: “In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:35). 

Beverly Owen has been a pastor’s wife and enjoyed a long career as a marketing executive. She lives in Georgia, where she and her husband own a personal-care home.



COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR

Madison, Robert, and Ashley Clark

nant and have a child of my own, and I couldn't understand why God was not making a way for my husband and me to be parents when we wanted a child so badly. We knew we could give a child a wonderful home and life.

After a great deal of thought and many prayers, Robert and I tentatively began discussing the subject of adoption. We knew that going through a private agency wouldn't be financially possible, and the thought of a multiyear wait to only possibly get a baby was daunting. So we decided to look into foster care with the possibility of adoption. We visited a local Christian agency, and we signed up to begin taking classes, a home study, background checks—the works. It was an exciting time. We couldn't wait to get our first placement. But we waited . . . and we waited . . .

FINALLY—A CHILD!

After about a year with no child placed with us we were becoming discouraged. Then one Friday morning it happened! I was at work when I got the call. It was our social worker, and she had a little boy just less than 1 year old who needed a home that day. My heart started going into overdrive. I was excited and nervous all at the same time. I told her we'd be there that evening to pick him up.

His name was Justin. He had beautiful sandy-blond hair and blue eyes. While the reason he

A CALL TO LOVE

The challenges and joys of fostering

My husband, Robert, and I met in early 2003 and were married in November 2004. Like many young couples, while dating we spent many hours talking about our future, including our desire to have children. Before we were even married, we both knew we wanted two children—a boy and a girl—and we had names all picked out.

Eventually, though, we realized that we weren't going to get pregnant on our own, so we considered seeing a fertility specialist. After some initial consultations and a lot of money, however, we abandoned the idea of having a biological child, and I went through a time of deep sadness. I had always wanted to be preg-

ASHLEY CLARK

was coming to stay with us was sad, we fell immediately in love with him. We brought him home, and for the next nine months he toddled his way directly into our hearts. Several times that year we thought there would be a chance to adopt him, and we began to think that he was the reason we had never had a child of our own, that God was giving this little guy to us forever.

But it didn't turn out that way. The courts ruled to send him back to his biological family. We were heartbroken.

GOD'S BETTER PLAN

In time, however, God helped us to see that He had a better plan. During the next three years we fostered eight other children ranging in ages from 1 week to 5 years. Some we had for a very short time, and one we had for a year. Again we struggled when he, too, was returned to his family.

In early 2012 we were fostering a brother and sister. At the time we were experiencing a rough stage in our marriage, and our faith was low. Then my husband became very ill and had to be hospitalized for several months. Twice he almost died. Out of necessity our foster children were sent to another home so I could be with Robert.

During those months Robert and I spent a great deal of time talking, praying, and regaining that closeness we had before we let being parents completely consume us. When he finally came home from the hospital, our relationship was stronger than ever. While some of the sadness was still there, we had come to terms with the thought that our having a forever child just wasn't meant to be. God obviously had other plans for our future. But we were wrong again.

A CHALLENGING DECISION

About a month later I received a Facebook message from a friend. She told me about a 10-week-old baby girl who needed a home right away. The baby had been born about a month early, was addicted to drugs because of the mom's addiction, and had a condition called Dandy-Walker syndrome and hydrocephalus. My mind was racing! I knew about hydrocephalus because my husband also had it, but I knew nothing about Dandy-Walker.

From the brief research I did in those few minutes after she messaged me, what I read scared

me. Through the Internet I read about cases of delayed development in speech and motor function, as well as learning disabilities. My friend told me that this baby had what they felt was a mild case of the syndrome and was so far doing fine developmentally. I asked her to send a picture of the child. Once she did, I was hooked.

I quickly went home and told my husband about my conversation with my friend and showed him the baby's picture. We both felt God's hand on our hearts telling us that we needed to take this baby. We didn't know what to expect with her development, or whether she would have any future problems because of the drugs in her system at birth. But we felt at peace about it.


A NEW ADDITION TO THE FAMILY

We talked with the family who had been caring for the baby, then made arrangements to see her the next day. We also spent a lot of time on the phone with the adoption attorney, picking out a name for the baby and arranging the financial side of things. I don't think I slept a wink that night.

The next day my sister and I left work at lunchtime and went to meet the baby. I fell in love at first sight. She was 11 pounds of perfection. Holding her in that moment, I knew that I didn't want to live another day without her—and I didn't. My husband and I took her home that evening. It was December 19; she was our Christmas gift.

We spent the next 10 months falling in love with our little girl, whom we named Madison. Then in September 2013 our dreams came true when the judge signed the adoption paperwork making our little angel our forever child.

Madison is now a happy, healthy, 4-year-old princess who is smart and beautiful and loved by so many people.

God didn't answer our prayers exactly the way we prayed them when we were first married, and the journey we've taken together the past 12 years hasn't been without its tears. But it has also had its triumphs, and has certainly taught us that God does have a plan for our lives. While it may not be anything like the plans we make for ourselves, if we trust in Him He will give us exactly what we need in His time. 

Ashley Clark is a contract billing administrator who lives in Alabama with her husband, Robert, and daughter, Madison.



RAISING HER TOGETHER, APART

Sharing child care With a former spouse

EUGENE KORFF

The best day of my life was the day our daughter was born. Among the worst days of my life was the day her parents separated, and the day, 12 months later, when a dispassionate judge signed their divorce decree.


This question plagued me: how would circumstances so cruelly thrust upon her by the imperfect decisions of so many others affect such a precious and innocent child? The decisions her parents were unable to reach consensus on—about custody, schedules, and finances—were made by a judge. Court order in hand, the work of raising her together, apart, began.

From the outset I determined to do the best I knew how to shield our daughter from conflict. This meant giving her my permission to love her other parent; and to provide an environment in which she felt safe to share her feelings and make decisions without being afraid of uncomfortable repercussions or adverse reactions, rather than limit, restrict, or interfere with her equal access to her mother. It's the determination not to use her as a medium of communication between parents; not to impose on her a sense of duty or obligation to feel responsible for my happiness or sadness; not to allow disagreements between her parents to change the tender, loving way I relate to her.

It also means reaffirming my decisions to: never neglect or abandon her; change my career from one that required a fair amount of extended travel to one

that required almost none; be present and engaged in her academic and extracurricular activities; involve her in wholesome activities that foster growth, awareness, and development, including teaching her to begin, spend, and end every day with Jesus; attend Sabbath School, church, Pathfinders, camp meeting, evangelistic meetings, and junior camp; travel (we've visited San Diego, Orlando, New York, San Antonio, and Cancun); see theatrical productions (*Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *The King and I*, *The Miracle of Christmas*, and *The Lion King*) and concerts (on the steps of the United States Capitol, and the *Evensong* series at Spencerville Seventh-day Adventist Church).

It requires intentional management of my intense workload to schedule time to go for walks, build puzzles, read books, do homework, and participate in age-appropriate chores; shop for groceries, clothes, and school supplies; go to the bank to learn about saving money; and practice the piano—which develops perseverance, problem-solving, and other skills. It also means allowing the Bible to speak and to minimize conflict by bringing its own unbiased standard into any discussion—considering the opinions of pastors, teachers, friends, and parents on decision-making in context of the counsel found in God's Word.

After all, what a better world it would be if we would all live at peace with everyone (Rom. 12:18); act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly (Micah 6:8); treat others as we would want to be treated (Matt. 7:12); be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger (James 1:19); and speak words that are like apples of gold in settings of silver (Prov. 25:11). 

Eugene Korff is General Conference controller. His 12-year-old daughter attends Atholton Adventist Academy in Columbia, Maryland.



WHAT'S IN YOUR WALLET?

*Our priorities
reveal our loyalties.*

Listed in *Time* magazine's top 10 bank slogans of a recent 12 month period is Capital One's "What's in Your Wallet?" Their captivating advertisements are carefully designed to attract new clients to their credit cards.

PROFITABLE LOYALTY

It is fascinating to observe the subtle yet growing emphasis on loyalty programs in the North American economy. A loyalty program is a marketing strategy designed to reward customers for their support. It is known as a win-win philosophy, benefiting both customer and retailer. The goal of this model is to keep existing customers while attracting new ones, something similar

to the mission of God's church.

Sean Copeland, director of research at Abacus Data, reported on a 2013 survey of loyalty programs in Canada: "The average Canadian household is a member of 8.2 loyalty programs." The nation's best performing loyalty programs that year ranged from frequent flyer miles, departments stores and retail businesses to gas stations, food businesses, and the Canadian Automobile Association (CAA). In descending order, the top 10 list featured Air Miles, Shoppers Optimum, Canadian Tire, Aeroplan, HBC Rewards/Hudson's Bay, Petro-Points, Scene, Sobeys, CAA, and PC Plus. Nine of those 10 have already hooked my family.

Successful loyalty programs are not the result of whim and accident. Retailers thoroughly analyze demographic data, and carefully study both what customers say (feedback) and what they actually do—their preferences, buying patterns, preferred payment methods, preferred shopping mode (online versus in-store), and brand preferences. They know that when customers are in the process of making a purchasing decision, they go through a decision journey: a number of steps leading to a decision. Loyalty programs, through a points system, assist a retailer to guide the customer in making the decision. It functions like bait, resulting in increased sales.

LEARNING FROM LOYALTY

The thorough cleverness of loyalty programs leads me to wonder what they may have to teach, particularly in the light of a remark by Jesus that sounds

like His affirmation of a fraudulent businessman and his corrupt behavior: “The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light” (Luke 16:8).

To get Jesus’ point and learn the lesson He is teaching, we must understand His “why.” The dishonest manager, so morally inferior to us, is complimented not because of his dishonesty, but because of his astuteness. Jesus speaks categorically. And what He says is both unfortunate and thoroughly factual: selfish schemers bring more brain and strategy to the table than many converted Christians do. Christian comfort in mediocrity and contentment with empty intellectual wallets does God no honor, and surely will not now during these obviously last days of history.

Serving Jesus today will not work as some unreflective evening stroll through the park. The times demand that the Master’s people be astute about the Master’s business.

The Master begins with a loyalty program that binds us to Him for a win-win situation: “I chose you . . . so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last” (John 15:16). The Jesus loyalty program brings demonstrable success. The fig tree that promised but did not deliver became a dramatic moral parable when it withered at His curse (Mark 11:12-14, 20-24), exposing Jesus’ thinking on spiritual unproductivity. Fig trees and saved Christians must function at the level of their potential and advertising.

Ellen White wrote: “The church is God’s appointed agency for the salvation of [men and women]. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world.”* The purpose of God’s agency, the church, is neither static nor sedentary, but unrelentingly dynamic, going forth with Jesus conquering and to conquer (Rev. 6:2, KJV); “and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18, KJV).

God’s church is ever again assaulting, battering, and shattering replacement barriers the master of hell seeks to raise up as his earlier defenses keep collapsing under the onslaught of the armies of truth. God’s thinking people are constantly designing new strategies to outwit, confound, and strike down the enemy; to locate and liberate God’s children from the strongholds of sin.


Loyal family members are never apathetic or smug about missing loved ones.

FADING LOYALTIES

General Conference statistics show that during the past 50 years the Adventist Church has lost approximately 43.36 members for each 100 new converts. Forty percent of former Adventists surveyed said that they were never contacted when they stopped attending church.

This suggests a failure of loyalty where most eyes are not looking. We are smugly superior to unscrupulous managers; and we are better than absent members because we are ever present. But loyal family members are never apathetic or smug about missing loved ones: they are an unshakable tax on law enforcement, demanding all assistance possible, whether in numbers and resources for searching, or the posting of all-points bulletins; they themselves launch out, beating down the hedges and combing the woods, sending up their own drones to seek and find their sisters or brothers. Caring congregations act equivalently: they compile their list of missing siblings, with clear plans for finding and bringing them home.

Caring about and seeking the lost; finding God’s children—the rest of the family; freeing them from Satan’s clutches: such is God’s plan and intention for His church, for His children, “the children of light.” And such we shall be when we bring to our work for Him the rich wallet of skills and talents that He already knows He has given us. If we will, and when we do, there will be no limit left. Not even the sky.

What’s in your wallet? 

* Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 9.

Mansfield Edwards is president of the Ontario Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Ontario, Canada.



The author chronicles the busy life of being a wife and mother by writing.

readers. As an English teacher, I loved writing about writing, and sharing progress on my publishing journey. I loved everything about this new hobby of mine.

Until I became a mom.

BLOGGING CONFUSION

If we are committed to blogging (which is to say, we are committed to writing for an audience), it's our job to find our message. And if we call ourselves Christians, our message should inspire hope and point to Jesus. But as my mom story unfolded, I couldn't seem to get my head far enough above water to write about anything but my own troubles—much less stay awake to read my Bible most days. In short, I wasn't inspired anymore, and I didn't know what to say to inspire others.

For Christians, of course, there is *always* hope to speak of, but at the same time, the enemy of our souls is *always* trying to steal our message of hope. In my case, after baby number two, the enemy was drowning me in feelings of doubt and failure as a mom, telling me I *should* be able to write happy, inspirational things about motherhood. But I wasn't yet. I was still processing the whole experience, an experience that, while exciting and wonderful, was also painfully confusing.

MY MOM STORY

To back up a bit, in February 2016 my second baby was born, and my book *Ending the Pain* was published. Suddenly, on the one hand, I was an "expert" on

MY BLOGGING—PARENTING JOURNEY

Writing as therapy

The year 2013 was pivotal for me. That year I decided to become both a mom and a blogger. But I didn't start out with the goal of being a "mommy blogger." Initially I started my blog simply because I had a message and I needed an audience. I had recovered from more than a decade of depression, and I wanted to spread hope to others. Eventually I wanted to write a book about my depression and recovery story, but first I simply wanted to get comfortable telling that story.

And I did get comfortable, really comfortable, telling that pre-kids story. I loved writing blog posts about my healing journey. I loved connecting with

LINDSEY GENDKE

depression and writing; on the other hand, I was fighting to get through every day at home with a baby and toddler. I'm a perfectionist, which often works to my favor in writing, but is not too helpful when it comes to mothering two young children at two different developmental stages.

I was suddenly faced with dozens of daily decisions in which there was no "right," clear, or easy answer. The result? Paralysis. Hyperventilation. And explosions. I didn't know what to call it then—later I was diagnosed with anxiety.¹ But as life continued in perpetual survival mode, my confusion only grew: What was my Christian message now?

FINDING THE HOPE

Before I had kids, I found healing from depression through Bible study, prayer, Christian community, and "writing to my roots," or writing through my losses in life, as well as writing to discover the original plans God intended for me.

Now that I have kids, I have much less time to study the Bible, pray, tend to Christian friendships, or write. But as I've blogged through four years of motherhood, I've found that writing, perhaps more than anything else right now, keeps me growing in my Christian walk.

In a season of life in which it's hard to "be still," the act of writing forces me to do just that. In a season with few sacred spaces, pen and paper provide sanctuary. Even if my writing sessions begin "Oh God, help!" that written cry is a start. To a blog post. To a prayer.

Sometimes I wonder if my public writing is too raw. Too real. Frequently I hit the "publish" button only to cringe and wonder: was that blog "Christian" enough? I wondered this about my 2017 post

If You Want to Blog

Anytime we write or speak—anytime we communicate—we do it for a purpose: we have stuff to say, and someone to say it to. If you are considering starting a blog, ask God to help you answer these questions: What is my purpose for writing? What is my subject? Who is my audience? Answering these questions will help you determine your message, and what would be helpful to you and/or to others.

"A Time to Speak, and a Time to Be Silent." In that post I was trying to figure out what to speak about at the Iowa-Missouri Conference women's retreat . . . because I didn't feel comfortable sharing my "dark" mom story.²

One day after I posted that blog, I got this Facebook message from a reader:

"Oh, Lindsey! Just read your newest post! I know God is using you to speak to me. I know that we're in different stages of life, but I can still relate and identify with so much of your story (I think it's the melancholy personality). Thank you so much for bravely sharing these parts of your life with so many of us. It truly does have a positive effect on me, and helps me to remember to seek God in all stages of my life, too. You're a strong child of God, and it shows."

FINDING MY MESSAGE

Praise God. There, in the words of this reader, was my message as a mom: Honesty in the Christian life is the best policy, even when life is hard. Especially when life is hard. Why? Because, as I've seen again and again, honesty begets honesty, begets healing, begets Christian community. I can't tell you the number of times I have opened myself up to others in writing or otherwise, only to find a "me too!" story on the other end. And that is God's plan for us: to see and be seen. To hear and be heard. To uplift and be uplifted. After too many years spent in depression, isolation, and silence, I choose God's plan. And for me, that includes blogging.

If you are considering blogging, or if you just want to experience more Christian community in your life, I advise you pray for God to show you the right audience, and then give you the words He wants you to speak. After five years of *Writing to my Roots*,³ I can confidently say that when we commit our words (our blogs, our conversation, our communication) to the Lord, He blesses others, and blesses us as well. 🍀

¹ To read more about Lindsey's anxiety story, see her post "Getting Help," Nov. 16, 2017.

² You can view Lindsey's talk from the 2017 Iowa-Missouri Conference women's retreat on YouTube.

³ *Writing to My Roots* is the name of Lindsey's blog, and is based on healing principles from Straight 2 the Heart prayer ministry.

Lindsey Gendke is a wife, mother, and writer whose passion is sharing God's redemptive work in messy lives. Her blog is available at www.lindseygendke.com.

PROCESSING REAL-TIME TRAGEDY: FOUR STAGES

February 14, 2018.

PROCESS ONE: REVULSION

Like millions of people around the world, I too was shocked and deeply moved. I heard about and saw the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida, where a young gunman killed 17 people and wounded 17 more.

It made no difference that I was some 8,000 miles away at the Adventist University of Africa (AUA). The news flashed around the world in real time.

PROCESS TWO: RESPONSE

Of course, it wasn't the first school shooting. We all know the sickening list of these incidents. However, something about this Parkland situation riveted me. With sorrow, questions, and emotions I followed it closely.

I silently prayed for the people involved; with the AUA campus family we prayed publicly. We empathized and sympathized. Later in the relevant Web sites I scrolled through the photos showing all 17 victims, lives cut short: men and women, girls and boys, all races and ethnic groups.

I was touched, saddened, and angry at the loss of lives. I thought: *What can we do?*

PROCESS THREE: REACTION

About a week after the Parkland incident young student survivors and students across the country launched the #NeverAgain movement, and the March for Our Lives nationwide protest to speak out against gun violence.

"Not one more," reads the march's mission statement. "We cannot allow one

more child to be shot at school. We cannot allow one more teacher to make a choice to jump in front of a firing assault rifle to save the lives of students. We cannot allow one more family to wait for a call or text that never comes. Our schools are unsafe. Our children and teachers are dying. We must make it our top priority to save these lives."

Students said they were determined to do something, because politicians wouldn't and other adults didn't. Motivated, they mobilized and started a phenomenon: a spontaneous youth movement that erupted with social media buzz, news media coverage around the world, and untold millions of messages being transmitted on social media.

The March for Our Lives took place March 24, 2018, and was a success beyond expectation. Estimates of how many people marched in North America are inexact, but numbers range from 500,000 to 1 million. It's difficult to predict where the movement will go from here.

PROCESS FOUR: REFLECTION

Reflect on this well-known statement by Ellen White: "With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world! How soon might the end come—the end of suffering and sorrow and sin!"*

FURTHER REFLECTION

Why do you think incidents such as these continue to happen?

What can we do about the last-day events that surround us?


Where can we turn? To the Word? To others?

What should be our response?

If we don't act, what will be the outcome?

*Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1903), p. 271.

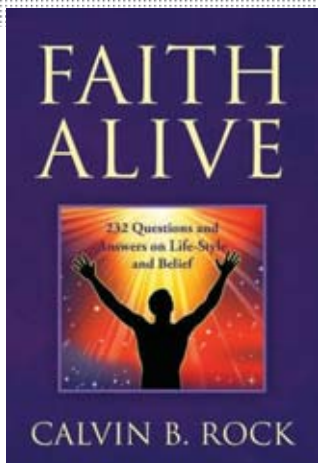
Delbert W. Baker is vice chancellor of the Adventist University of Africa near Nairobi, Kenya.



**TRANSFORM-
ATION TIPS**
**DELBERT W.
BAKER**

**STUDENTS SAID
THEY WERE
DETERMINED TO
DO SOMETHING.**

CLOSER LOOK



Faith Alive

Faith Alive, Calvin B. Rock, Outskirts Press, Denver, Colorado, 2015, 282 pages. Softcover, US\$15.95. Reviewed by Stephen Chavez, *Adventist Review*.

Calvin Rock's resume is impressive by any standard: pastor, administrator, university president, General Conference vice president, chair of countless boards and committees. He was also a columnist for *Adventist Review* from 1990 to 2001; and it is in that role that he may have left one of his most lasting legacies.

A collection of Rock's columns was recently released in the form of a book, *Faith Alive*. The book is a treasure trove of answers he provided to questions asked by readers across the spectrum of Adventist faith and practice.

The book is divided into 13 chapters, under broad categories such as family relations, human relations, societal relations, congregational relations, etc. Readers' questions and Rock's answers reveal a kind of time capsule containing the issues with which the church grappled at the end of the twentieth century.

Rock's expertise as a theologian and ethicist made him



Live More Happy

Live More Happy: Scientifically Proven Ways to Lift Your Mood and Your Life, Darren Morton, Signs Publishing, Warburton, New South Wales, Australia, 180 pages. Softcover, US\$9.99. Reviewed by Stephen Chavez, *Adventist Review*.

With physical and emotional health on the radar of practically everyone these days, it's no surprise that another book about physical and emotional health should find its way into bookstores.

What is surprising is how *Live More Happy* is so readable. Each of the 11 chapters contains highly technical and thoroughly annotated content. But it is presented in perfectly engaging, everyday language, as if the author is daring readers to stop reading.

As with any book about health, readers are treated to the basics: exercise, rest, nutrition, etc. But the author, a fellow of the Australasian Society of Lifestyle Medicine, shows his genius in bridging the gap between theoretical and practical, and from the physical to the emotional and spiritual. The book is not heavy-handed or preachy, yet the message comes through loud and clear: "The more you put in, the more you will get out of it"

To that end, each chapter ends with activities, that, when put into practice, will put readers on the road to living more happy. 🍌

the perfect spokesperson for examining and commenting on the teachings, customs, and aspirations of the church. If the amount of reader mail received in response to his columns is any indication, this book will give readers something to talk about for years to come. 🍌

FAMILIES: WHERE WOULD WE BE WITHOUT THEM?

Here in the United States we set aside two months to reflect on family relationships, specifically with our mothers (May) and with our fathers (June). We offer here a sampling of thoughts about the importance of families.—Editors.

God sets the lonely in families (Ps. 68:6).
DAVID, KING OF ISRAEL.

One of the greatest lessons of my own life was learning to turn the inner rampage of hatred and anger toward my own father for his reprehensible behavior and abandonment of his family into an inner reaction more closely aligned with God and God-realized love.

WAYNE DYER, AMERICAN AUTHOR AND COUNSELOR.

Neither man nor woman is perfect or complete without the other. Thus, no marriage or family ... is likely to reach its full potential until husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, men and women work together in unity of purpose, respecting and relying on each other's strengths.

SHERI L. DEW, AMERICAN AUTHOR AND PUBLISHER.

Honor your father and mother so that you'll live a long time in the land that God, your God, is giving you.

GOD, EXODUS 20:12, THE MESSAGE*

Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in.

ROBERT FROST, AMERICAN POET.

In every conceivable manner, the family is link to our past, bridge to our future.

ALEX HALEY, AMERICAN AUTHOR.

The only rock I know that stays steady, the only institution I know that works, is the family.

LEE IACOCCA, AMERICAN INDUSTRIALIST.

Then [Joseph] sent his brothers away, and as they were leaving he said to them, 'Don't quarrel on the way!'" (Gen. 45:24)

MOSES, HISTORIAN.

If a country is to be corruption free and become a nation of beautiful minds, I strongly feel there are three key societal members who can make a difference. They are the father, the mother, and the teacher.

A.P.J. ABDUL KALAM,

INDIAN SCIENTIST AND POLITICIAN.

When you get married your loyalty, first and foremost is to your spouse, and to the family that you create together.

PHIL MCGRAW, TELEVISION PERSONALITY.

Iwould prefer to have no money but to have a nice family and good friends around.

LI NA, PROFESSIONAL TENNIS PLAYER.

Iwoke up one morning thinking about wolves and realized that wolf packs function as families. Everyone has a role, and if you act within the parameters of your role, the whole pack succeeds, and if that falls apart, so does the pack.

JODI PICOULT, AMERICAN AUTHOR.

No other factor affects a child's relationship to God as do parents.

RICHARD RICE, THEOLOGIAN.



I try to live my life like my father lives his. He always takes care of everyone else first. He won't even start eating until he's sure everyone else in the family has started eating. Another thing: My dad never judges me by whether I win or lose.

BEN ROETHLISBERGER,

PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL PLAYER.

You don't choose your family. They are God's gift to you, as you are to them.

DESMOND TUTU,

SOUTH AFRICAN CLERIC AND THEOLOGIAN.

**Soup is a lot like a family.
Each ingredient enhances the
others; each batch has its own
characteristics; and it needs time to
simmer to reach full flavor.**

MARGARET KENNEDY, *ENGLISH AUTHOR.*

The home should be to the children the most attractive place in the world, and the mother's presence should be its greatest charm.

ELLEN G. WHITE,

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST PIONEER AND AUTHOR.

God would have our families symbols of the family in heaven. Let parents and children bear this in mind every day, relating themselves to one another as members of the family of God. Then their lives will be of such a character as to give to the world an object lesson of what families who love God and keep His commandments may be. Christ will be glorified; His peace and grace and love will pervade the family circle like a precious perfume.

ELLEN G. WHITE

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Do What's Right Because It Is Right

Repetition, many say, is the key to recall. This proves true for me with a sermon I heard some decades ago. All I actually remember about the sermon is one sentence: “Do what’s right because it is right, and leave the consequences with the Lord.” The presenter repeated this phrase incessantly throughout the message, and although the numerous repetitions seemed irksome, I have never forgotten it.

**DOES “DOING
WHAT’S RIGHT”
ALWAYS HAVE A
HAPPY ENDING?**

Stories abound of unexpected rewards for “doing what is right” when it doesn’t seem personally advantageous to do so. Harman Singh in South Auckland, New Zealand, for instance, was brought to tears by a magnanimous gesture by a local news station following an act of kindness. Even though the wearing of a turban in public is mandatory for Sikhs, Singh removed his turban to place it under the head of a bleeding 6-year-old lying on the road after being hit by a car. The news team that later interviewed him in his home about the incident noticed that his furniture consisted of a few plastic chairs and a mattress on the floor. Singh was shocked when soon after, a van full of new furniture showed up at his door—thanks to the news station and a local furniture store.¹

But does “doing what’s right” always have a happy ending? Sadly, no. Loss of family, friends, funds, and freedom can sometimes be the result of standing firm for the right. One of the more extreme

examples is the story of sixteenth-century Anabaptist Dirk Willem. Imprisoned in his hometown of Asperen, Netherlands, for his faith, and condemned to die, Willem escaped by sliding down the prison wall using a rope made of strips of cloth. He made it safely across a nearby pond that was only thinly frozen over, but the guard who was chasing him fell through the ice. Willem ran back and saved him—thus losing his chance of escape. On May 16, 1569, he was burned to death at the stake.²

Doing what’s right can obviously come at great cost, so the questions are: What would *I* do under such circumstances? What would *you* do? And how can we ensure that when the time comes to make life-altering decisions we will do what’s right, no matter the consequences?

I can think of only two ways. First, by God’s grace, we choose to do what’s right in our small, daily decisions, so the Lord can prepare us to make the right choices with more significant judgments. And second—and more important—we must keep our eyes continuously on Jesus, who paid the greatest consequences possible for doing what He decided was right for all humankind.

In other words—as with all things—our answers and strength lie only in Jesus. 🏹

¹ <https://www.thechronicle.com.au/news/after-helping-6-year-old-harman-singh-given-big-su/2649109/>

² <https://www.christianity.com/church/church-history/timeline/1501-1600/dirk-willem-burned-after-rescuing-pursuer-11630015.html>

Sandra Blackmer is an assistant editor of *Adventist Review*.

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