

ADVENTIST REVIEW

AUGUST 2018: AN ANGEL IN A CHEVY? + A BLACK, LEATHER-BOUND FLEECE + THE SMELL OF FAITHFULNESS + LORD, I SURRENDER + WHERE DID WE GET THE NEW TESTAMENT? + FROM PARENT TO CHILD

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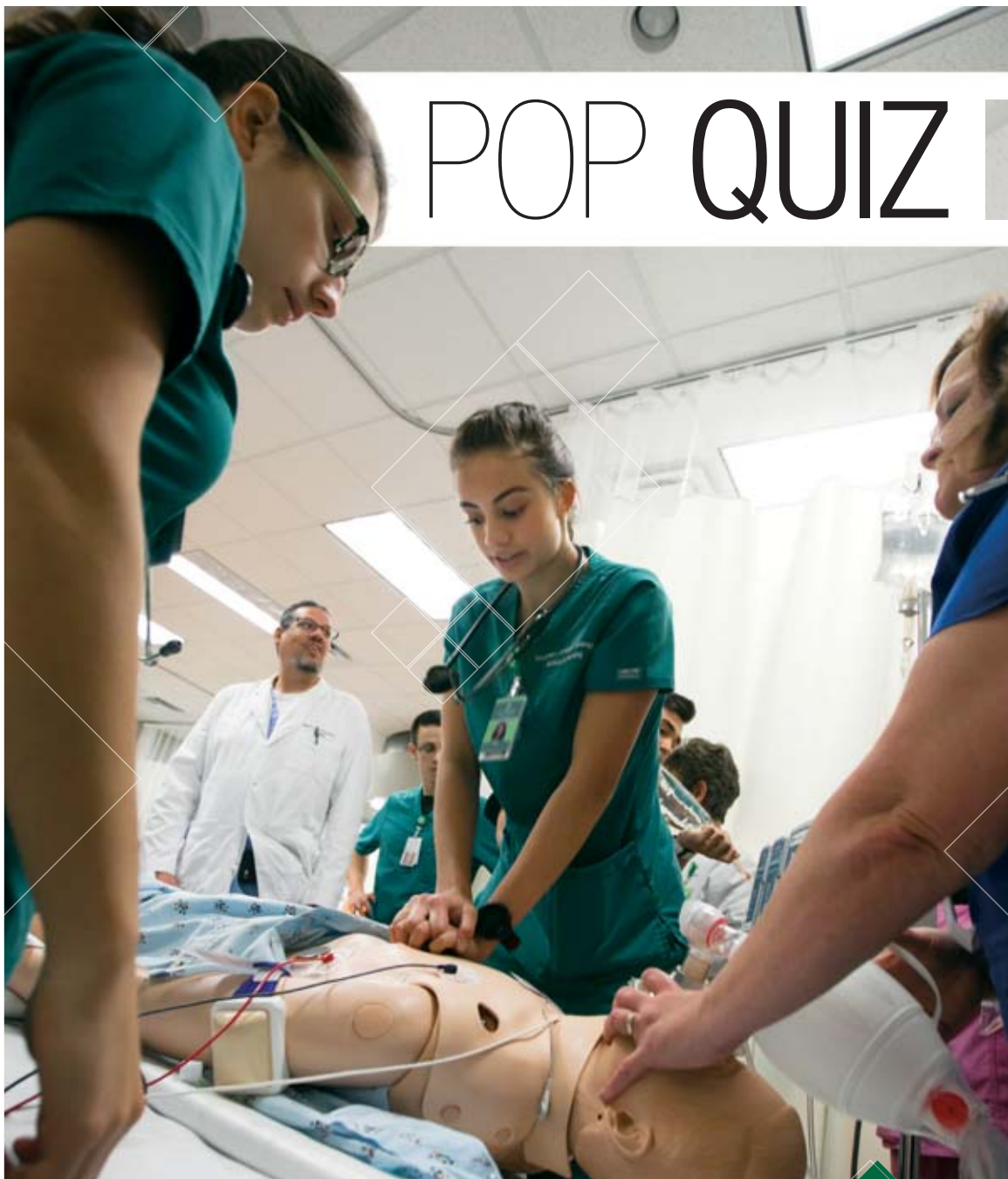


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BILL KNOTT



Staying Out

No single phrase of Scripture has been more responsible for the ongoing momentum of the Adventist movement through more than 175 years than the biblical injunction “*Come out of her, My people*” (Rev. 18:4).*

Devout Christians of every denomination first heard the heaven-sent invitation during the Millerite movement (1831-1844) that predated the organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They responded—sometimes reluctantly, always at the cost of personal and social pain—by leaving or being expelled from the faiths in which they and their families had happily resided for decades or centuries. They were walking away from a collective, world-circling system of heterodox teaching and false practice that Scripture identified as “Babylon,” and bravely stepping into a movement whose members shared a commitment to “keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev 12:17).

But “coming out of Babylon”—leaving a political and religious system so intertwined with the structures of society and the fabric of everyday life—was no easy or one-time action. Early Adventists saw the immense power of Babylon in the economic world, in the hideous institution of human slavery, and in the enduring appeal of sensuality cosmetically concealed as justifiable pleasures.

So it was that one of Seventh-day Adventism’s cofounders, the retired but indefatigable sea captain Joseph Bates, replied to a group of Millerite believers who asked in the aftermath of the disappointment of October 1844, if he had a new message. “*Stay out of her my people,*” Bates urged.

The *bon mot* from the sea captain retains a special significance for modern Seventh-day Adventists still living with the ongoing reality of systems that deserve the name of Babylon. While “leaving Babylon” is frequently a difficult, painful decision to disengage with faith groups that espouse unbiblical teachings about Sunday sacredness, eternal torment, theistic evolution, and salvation through anything other than “faith alone,” it’s not a one-time choice. “Staying out of Babylon” requires an ongoing attentiveness to ensure that God’s remnant people don’t drift back into either the doctrinal fuzziness or the unbiblical practices of a hugely pow-

erful and frequently attractive system. One of the least-useful phrases offered by those urging Adventists to adopt the worship practices or outreach strategies of other faiths is the frequently heard argument “But everyone else is doing it”

Chief among those practices to which we will always be tempted, both personally and corporately, is the adoption of Babylon’s power structures and coercive habits. On every side we are surrounded by commanding and successful social and religious structures that underscore the authority of one human being over another for economic gain or political control. The “corporate world,” with its unparalleled reach into every detail of our economic lives, is a fair representation of modern Babylon. Its hierarchical, top-down insistence on surrendering private opinion to the will of either a CEO or a collective of amoral shareholders models a system directly at odds with the conscious surrender of personal authority illustrated in the life and teachings of Jesus. “*I am among you as the One who serves,*” Jesus taught His followers (Luke 22:27). “*If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet*” (John 13:14).

The political establishments of almost every nation similarly imitate the coercive practices that Scripture identifies with Babylon. This is immediately apparent in totalitarian regimes, where human rights and freedom of conscience are carelessly trampled. But it’s also on display in so-called “representative democracies” where triumphant majorities override the beliefs and values of minority populations. The biblical example of the Jerusalem Council, summed up in Acts 15, shows us a heaven-guided process of consensus-building, inspired by the Holy Spirit, that underlines the dignity and giftedness of each participant.

“Staying out of Babylon” will require not only a church militant but a church vigilant to remain faithful to the values of a Saviour who taught us to turn the other cheek, love those who persecute us, and frequently reconcile with each other. “*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself*” (Phil 2:3).[♣]

* All Bible texts cited are from the New King James Version (NKJV).

In today's culture fixated on romance, it's nice to be reminded that marriage is about relationships.

ELSA JACKSON, HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY



BLESSINGS IN THE PAGES

Thank you for the blessings you share in these pages. We are excited about the Finley writings. We have always enjoyed his work and learn much from it.

We especially appreciated the feature “Even if I Don’t See It With My Own Eyes,” by Dixil Rodriguez (June 2018). It was the first time that we had seen an audio file in her feature. Listening to the experience continues to inspire our family to participate in mission more. We are fans of her column. Her stories truly touch the heart.

We appreciate all of you—every writer, editor, staff member. Thank you for your hard work! We pray for you continually. Your work is touching the world at a time of need.

Henderson Family
Nebraska

“THE MARRIAGE IS THE THING YOU WANT”

I found the above article (May 2018) to be a breath of fresh air. In today's culture that seems fixated on romance (so-called) and outrageous materialism, it's nice to be reminded that marriage is about relationships, those that last longer than the glitz and

glamour of many of today's weddings. Spiritual values of modesty, economy, and family are always in vogue.

Elsa Jackson
Hoboken, New Jersey

IMPORTANT ISSUES TO WORK THROUGH

The April 2018 issue of *Adventist Review* was very compelling; I couldn't put it down. I appreciated

the articles on the leadership summit, Del Delker, Billy Graham, and especially enjoyed Gordon Bietz's extremely well-written “Sunday Is Coming,” as well as the reprint from *Selected Messages* titled “Our Risen Redeemer.”

However, I have to admit I was disturbed by the May 2018 report “Survey Results Presented to Unity Oversight Committee.”

That said, the elephant in the room hasn't been addressed: Who decides which issues actually make it to the General Conference in session? As a pastor for nearly 30 years, I can tell that parishioners feel strongly about a number of issues. What if a group of vegetarians decided to mandate that the entire church be vegetarian, regardless of food availability or other factors? Or what if conservatives in the United States joined hands with their brothers and sisters in the Middle East to lobby for a mandated dress code requiring



A glitch in our production process prevented readers from seeing the opening spread of the article “A Saga of Mission” as it was designed to appear in the July *Adventist Review*. This is how it should have appeared. We apologize.—Editors.

women to wear long dresses? My guess is that there would be strong support for either issue brought to a vote at the General Conference session, depending on the session’s cultural composition.

Is there not strong biblical support for a vegetarian diet? And for modest attire? Do these issues warrant blanket rulings from the General Conference on par with our foundational doctrines? While we certainly are not a congregational church, many issues need to be decided on a regional or even individual level. Does every issue need a judicial ruling from the General Conference? Rulings that may actually incite insubordination and needless division?

I am grateful for the godly example of my own conference leaders who prayerfully and humbly have made decisions regarding music, dietary issues, and pastoral leadership, considering the needs and culture of the region or the church.

Marlan Knittel
via e-mail

IN A FEW WORDS...

CHOOSE YOUR FARFETCHEDNESS

Again, Clifford Goldstein’s article hits the nail on the head of the Genesis account of a superior race existing before the flood. Antediluvians enjoyed a world, a time of great advancements, the Fall notwithstanding. Let’s think about the fact that there was a fecundity in Eden, not seen since sin entered. So it is with animals such as dinosaurs, which became extinct after the flood. Ellen White, through inspiration, was able to explain why.

Milton Tomlinson, Via Web

STUDY FINDS CONNECTION BETWEEN ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER AND VIDEO GAME ADDICTION

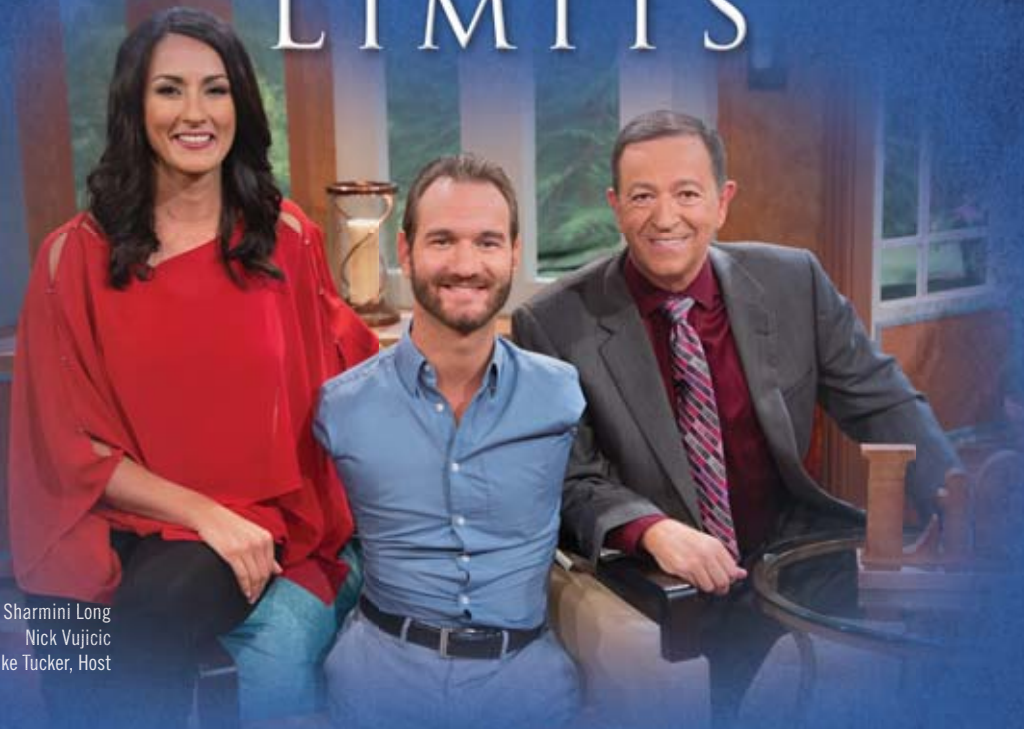
To any worried parents: if you think your kid is addicted to video games just because they are playing a lot, they don’t have a video game addiction. You’ll be able to tell when your kid is afflicted when they are failing in school, staying up extremely late to play every day, and refusing to do anything but play games. Of course video games can be played unhealthfully, but that doesn’t mean the individual is addicted. If your children are playing unhealthfully, talk to them about it, don’t accuse them of being addicted unless they show the symptoms. Too many media outlets have attacked video games for many violent behavioral changes. And while sometimes they are true, they are often exaggerated.

Mitchell Partner, Via Web

YOUR TURN

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

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“While Europe claims to be a continent where human rights are more promoted and defended, we are challenged to see inside our borders children, women, and men fleeing from terrible war situations not received and welcomed as they should be. João Martin, p. 15



More than 360 attendees gathered at the Fourth International Bible Conference in Rome, Italy. ALL PHOTOS: ADVENTIST REVIEW

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE CONFERENCE EMPHASIZES ESCHATOLOGY

MORE THAN 100 THEOLOGICAL PRESENTATIONS MADE WITHIN 10 DAYS

BY COSTIN JORDACHE, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATION AND NEWS EDITOR, ADVENTIST REVIEW

More than 360 Seventh-day Adventist theologians, college and university professors, and church administrators convened in Rome, Italy, June 11-20, 2018, for the Fourth International Bible Conference (IBC). The gathering, which takes place every few years, seeks to explore a chosen theme associated with theological studies through the presentation of papers, discussion panels, and professional networking.

The event was organized by the Biblical Research Institute (BRI),

which exists to “promote the study and practice of Adventist theology and lifestyle as understood by the world church” by providing research-based theological resources and by “facilitating dialogue within the Adventist theological community.”

In Rome the chosen theme was eschatology, a word that refers to “the teaching of the last things,” and describes the study of last-day events and associated subjects. The choice of location partnered with

the theme was meaningful, explained BRI director Elias Brasil de Souza. Depicted as the legs of iron in Nebuchadnezzar’s epic dream, Rome—representing both a secular and a religious power—plays a significant role in the prophetic narrative. “It is not without significance that we gather precisely here to attend a conference on eschatology,” wrote Brasil de Souza in the event’s program booklet.

As part of introductory remarks, Ted Wilson, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, greeted the scholars, sharing his deep interest in the subject. “The thing that drives me, animates me, and keeps me moving toward the goal is Jesus’ soon coming,” said Wilson. “I believe that this is going to be an extraordinary time, focusing on an extraordinary topic.”

Scholars from all parts of the world presented a total of 102 papers on a variety of topics.



Ted Wilson, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, greeted attendees before presentations began at the Fourth International Bible Conference in Rome, Italy.



Mario Brito, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Inter-European Division, which hosted the conference, talks with an attendee.

Plenary speakers focused on broad issues that framed dialogue on many more specific and specialized topics. Among the many plenary presenters, Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, former BRI director, provided a seven-part analysis of Adventist eschatology, emphasizing the Bible's central role. Frank Hasel, a BRI associate director, tackled

eschatology and hermeneutics, defined as a set of principles for and approaches to interpreting the biblical text. Additionally, Ekkehardt Mueller, a BRI associate director, presented on the relationship between Adventist eschatology and the historicist interpretation of the Bible's apocalyptic content.

Among the memorable aspects

of the Bible conference was the sheer number of papers presented in six parallel tracks. Scholars from all parts of the world presented a total of 102 papers on a variety of topics, not including plenary sessions. The tracks allowed attendees to choose from seminars among the following areas of specialty: Old Testament, New Testament theology, church history, missiology, and Adventist studies.

Topics of seminars and papers presented varied widely. Larry Lichtenwalter, Middle East University president, presented on "The Apocalypse and Ethics: Eschatology and Moral Imagination in the Book of Revelation." The relationship between ethics and eschatology was touched on by several presenters and emerged as a recurring theme. A second theme revisited by several presenters, including BRI associate director Kwabena Donkor and Geoscience Research Institute senior scientist Tim Standish, was the increasing adoption of theistic evolution as a means of reconciling science and faith. Presenters grappled with the serious implications of this expanding worldview for Adventist eschatology.

At the conclusion of the 10-day event, attendees voted a consensus statement, reaffirming the Adventist understanding of biblical prophecy, end-time events, and their missiological implications for the church. ▀

For full coverage of the Fourth International Bible Conference visit the news page at AdventistWorld.org.



ABOUT SUICIDE AND OTHER MENTAL ISSUES

EXPERT DISCUSSES WHAT TO DO IF YOU OR YOUR LOVED ONES NEED PROFESSIONAL HELP.

BY JANELLE RINGER, LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY HEALTH NEWS

Melissa J. Pereau has a passion for helping people during critical points in their lives, which is why the psychiatrist spends her days working with patients who have thought about or who have attempted suicide. As a medical director and psychiatrist at the Loma Linda University Behavioral Medicine Center, Pereau daily faces the reality of suicide, and how the topic—and other topics involving mental health—affects every community in some way.

Despite the prevalence of mental health issues, attempts at discussion are often rebuffed because of the sensitivities surrounding them. Although recent high-profile suicides in the United States stirred questions that have prompted individuals to confront the issue directly, the problem deserves wider attention. The rate of suicide in the United States has increased by 30 percent since the mid-1990s, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. On average there are 123 suicides per day in the United States, according to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

Pereau's work with patients and their support groups has inspired her to be a voice for mental health awareness. Her work at Loma Linda University has exposed her to many questions from patients and their friends and families about mental health and suicide. Pereau sat down for an interview to discuss mental health issues, including seeking support, help, and tools for coping. Here are some excerpts.

How should a friend or family member of someone suffering from mental health issues approach the conversation in a nonharmful way?

Make sure you're not approaching the person with judgment. Go into the conversation being willing to show your vulnerabilities and your weaknesses. Coming from a place of love and care can best help you address the topic of thoughts of suicide or feelings of depression or anxiety.

If someone is avoiding seeing a physician because they believe they're likely to receive a diagnosis, how can they mitigate the fear of the label?

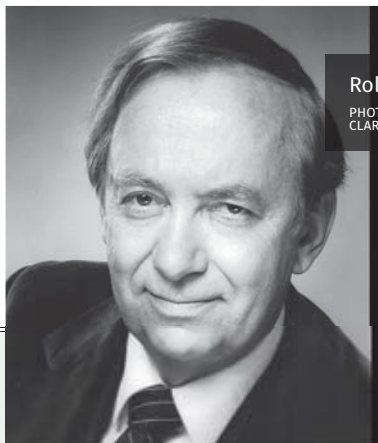
Someone not wanting to see a mental health professional because they're afraid of being labeled with a "mental illness" makes sense, but it doesn't help the root issue. It's also the same as not seeing a doctor for fear of being labeled with diabetes. It still means you have the illness. It still means you need help, and it's important for you to get the help you need.

What if someone's circumstances are largely contributing to their emotional pain? How can they know what is caused by their situation and what is an underlying mental illness?

Life circumstances can definitely contribute to thoughts about suicide, and a person can become trapped and isolated by those circumstances. Having support, having people to reach out to, is more important than anything else in those situations. Not being alone can help in both situations, whether suffering from mental illness or circumstances.

Are there any words or phrases people should stay away from when talking about mental health?

It's important to stay away from things that sensationalize mental illness, mental health, details of suicide, or details of illness. These things can be highly triggering. Instead, ask what someone is struggling with or what is causing them pain. These questions provide a lot more comfort than going into specifics.



Roland Hegstad

PHOTO COURTESY OF SHERI CLARKE/HEGSTAD FAMILY

What is a mental health assessment?

An assessment can be done by a variety of different providers, and it looks at current ongoing stressors and ways of dealing with those stressors. Sometimes it looks at previous life experience, but it often looks at day-to-day experiences, and how far off you might be from your ideal baseline. You can talk to a psychiatrist, a psychologist, a social worker, a counselor, or even your primary-care doctor.

Should patients have concerns that anti-depressants or psychiatric medications will change them as individuals?

Medications that treat mental illness are not designed to turn you into a different person. They are to help you get back to who you were before there was an illness. People are often afraid to give the medication enough time to work. Some antidepressants can take up to six weeks or longer to work, so talk to your doctor to know what you should expect.

Is it better for someone with a mental illness to be treated by medication or by therapy?

The best management strategy involves medications in combination with counseling and therapies. This “whole person” approach to treatment works both to get you to the root of the issue and to balance the chemicals in the brain.

How can a person even begin to cope with the suicide of a loved one?

Stay involved with others: join a support group [or] a small group of people you trust. Resist the urge to pull away from others. Without distractions, you are more likely to trigger painful memories about the loss. Aim for healthy and regular eating, exercise, and rest: they can help a lot. 🍀

ROLAND R. HEGSTAD, LONGTIME LIBERTY MAGAZINE EDITOR, DIES AT 92

HE IS REMEMBERED AS AN EXTRAORDINARY EDITOR AND MENTOR.

BY MARK A. KELLNER, ADVENTIST REVIEW

Long before he began a 35-year run as editor of *Liberty* magazine, Roland Hegstad had a decision to make.

That choice helped change the direction of his life from being a sports editor at a daily newspaper to Christian ministry. A veteran denominational worker, Hegstad died June 17, 2018, at the age of 92 in Dayton, Maryland, after a lengthy illness.

Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the Seventh-day Adventist world church, said Hegstad “was a wonderful church leader in the area of freedom of conscience and religious liberty. He served with absolute distinction in his capacity as an editor, and was an excellent speaker who helped keep a strong focus on the need for religious liberty.”

Wintley Phipps, who worked with Hegstad at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, said, “When people contribute to your sense of calling, and your sense of worth, they give you more than money could ever buy, and that’s what he did. [Roland] did more than I could ever imagine because of his encouragement and counsel.”

Clifford Goldstein, editor of the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, followed Hegstad as *Liberty* editor. He recalled his colleague as someone who “did not just teach me editing. I learned a lot from Roland about just what it meant to be a Christian.”

COLLEGE CROSSROADS

Linfield College in McMinnville, Oregon, had accepted Hegstad as a journalism student; he was promised a sports section editorship for the student newspaper.

“When I became editor, the name *Adventist* did not appear in *Liberty*, and editorial policy prohibited articles on doctrine or policy.”

Roland Hegstad

Walla Walla College, a small Seventh-day Adventist school nearly 300 miles to the east in College Place, Washington, also accepted him as a student.

He was not an Adventist, but, as Hegstad told *Adventist Review* in 1994, his aunt was. During what he called “a family crisis” just before college began, he took the advice of that aunt, Sylvia Peterson, who told the young man he could find answers to such questions as “Is there really a God?” at the Adventist school.

Hegstad earned a bachelor’s degree at Walla Walla in 1949. Five years later Hegstad earned a master’s degree from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary.

Beginning as an evangelist in the Upper Columbia Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Hegstad quickly segued into editorial work. In 1954 he became associate editor of *These Times*, joining the magazine’s staff in Nashville, Tennessee.

In 1959 the General Conference called Hegstad to serve as *Liberty* magazine’s editor, and as an associate director of the church’s Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department. During his tenure *Liberty* received the Associated Church Press’s award of excellence six times, along with 80 other awards.

“AN UNAPOLOGETIC ADVENTIST MAGAZINE”

Speaking with *Adventist Review* in 1994, Hegstad said his most important contribution to *Liberty* wasn’t



Hall of Fame recipients at Andrews University 1974 alumni homecoming. From left to right: Bender Lawton Archbold, V.E. Garber, Roland Hegstad, Irene Wakeham, Horace J. Shaw

PHOTO: GENERAL CONFERENCE

winning awards, but rather establishing “its identification as an unapologetic Adventist magazine.”

He said, “When I became editor, the name *Adventist* did not appear in *Liberty*, and editorial policy prohibited articles on doctrine or policy.”

He changed that. “Within a few years circulation increased from 165,000 to more than a half million.”

He added, “I [tried] to bring the wisdom of God’s Word to bear on issues and to communicate it, both in print and in illustrations, in a way intelligible to the secularists who make up a high percentage of our readership.”

One of Hegstad’s happiest accomplishments was helping to negotiate the opening of a Seventh-day Adventist publishing house in the former Soviet Union at the height of the cold war between the Soviet Union and the West.

In retirement Hegstad created and edited *Perspective Digest*, a lay-oriented publication for the Adventist Theological Society.

ENCOURAGED, MENTORED AUTHORS

While *Liberty* editor, Hegstad often found and nurtured new writers, including Goldstein, who said that Hegstad’s editing prowess was legendary: “Long before computers there was Roland’s famous red pencil. He would red-pencil my work, and he was hard on me. But I realized that this guy’s brilliant. Decades later, now and then I’m editing something, and Roland’s voice will pop into my head.”

Hegstad’s legacy is valued by current *Liberty* editor Lincoln Steed. “He was a great technical editor and an energetic force.”

Roland Rex Hegstad was born in Stayton, Oregon, on April 7, 1926. An eighth-grade teacher in his hometown of Wauna, Oregon, encouraged his writing interests, which continued through high school and at Walla Walla College.

Along with Stella, his wife of 70 years, Hegstad is survived by a son, Douglas; two daughters, Sheryl Clarke and Kimberly Handel; and four grandchildren. ▀



Chaplain Leighton Heise studying the Bible with Year 9 students from Central Coast Adventist School in Erina, New South Wales, Australia.

PHOTO: WES TOLHURST, ADVENTIST RECORD

STRESSED STUDENTS TO HAVE GREATER SUPPORT

ADVENTIST SCHOOLS COMMIT TO INVESTING MORE IN STUDENT WELL-BEING.

BY BRENTON STACEY, ADVENTIST RECORD

Challenging findings from surveys and an Avondale College of Higher Education academic's study are encouraging Seventh-day Adventist schools in Australia to invest more in the well-being of students.

Adventist Schools Australia has, during the past three years, tracked through its school improvement surveys the well-being of staff members and students. "We're finding that, just like those elsewhere, many of our students are not experiencing a strong sense of well-being," says associate national director Jacques Calais. "So we're doing something about it."

DEPRESSION, STRESS, AND ANXIETY

Exacerbated by such issues as family breakdown, globalization, and ubiquitous access to mobile Internet, adolescents tend to feel more isolated and more anxious about the future, and suffer more from depression and stress, says Peter Beamish, senior lecturer in the Discipline of Education at Avondale and developer of a well-being profiler.

He has received responses to an online survey from about 300 year 9 students from six Adventist schools across Australia, in Queensland, Vic-

toria, and New South Wales. The findings, which Beamish shared during his keynote at an Adventist Schools Australia-sponsored "Designed to Thrive" well-being symposium on Avondale's Lake Macquarie campus on May 22, 2018, show that one third of the students need help managing depression and stress and more than half need help managing anxiety. "Even in Adventist schools, despite the best intention of the schools, our students need more help to maintain high levels of well-being," says Beamish.

BELONGING, BELIEVING, AND BECOMING

Adventist Schools Australia established last year a well-being reference group comprising directors of education at Adventist Church conferences, teachers, counselors, Beamish, and Darren Morton, lead researcher in the Lifestyle Research Centre at Avondale. The group initiated the symposium.

Almost 90 educators attended. The administrators, principals, teachers, chaplains, and counselors listened to keynotes, presented case studies of well-being initiatives in schools, discussed implications and implementation, and contributed

to a plenary during which they recommended a way forward.

"The genesis of the symposium grew from concerns our directors of education had about our students, who were saying more could be done to support their physical and emotional well-being," says Adventist Schools Australia director Daryl Murdoch. "We seek to build strong communities of faith and learning, but for this to occur, we've got to meet three core elements: belonging, believing, and becoming. For students to belong, their well-being must be front and center."

Educators developed a comprehensive list of recommendations, including an audit of well-being resources available to Adventist schools, an increase in the number of well-being units offered as part of Avondale's Master of Education, and the employment of a curriculum officer to develop well-being resources.

RESPECT, RESILIENCE, AND RESPONSIBILITY

The consensus seemed to be for a system-wide approach to encourage the sharing of such resources as the Adventist Church in the South Pacific's Live More project and a whole-of-school model. Both are urgent, says Benton Craig, of Avondale School. A vision for the well-being of students and a better understanding of the age appropriateness of well-being for students in preschool to year 12 will help us "acknowledge we're taking our students on a journey to a fullness

The production team with ADRA Serbia staff pose in front of the peace mural created by the children at the ADRA community center in Belgrade.

INTER-EUROPEAN DIVISION AND
TRANS-EUROPEAN DIVISION NEWS



and a joy of life that sustains them through adulthood.”

As head of secondary, Craig has helped introduce changes to improve the well-being of students. The school is using Northpine Christian College’s yearlong, gender-specific and Bible-based challenge, The Next Step program, to further develop respect, resilience, and responsibility in year 9 students. It pairs the same year advisor with students as they move from year 7 to 12 and is planning to introduce male and female advisors for each year level. It has increased time in roll call for more worship and well-being activities. He hopes the recommendations “will propel us into a better space and allow us to take the reins a little with well-being.”

The recommendations will move through the well-being reference group to the National Education Council.

“I looked at those in the room and felt enormously blessed,” says Calais. “The collegiality and the commitment to collaborate to improve student well-being is exciting. I’m humbled and proud to be working alongside those in our schools who are dedicated to not only the academic and spiritual needs of students but also the emotional well-being of staff members and students.”

“We take seriously the statement Jesus makes: ‘I came so you can have life to the full,’” says Beamish. “We believe that’s what we should be giving our students.”

REFUGEE SABBATH AFFECTS LIVES AROUND THE WORLD

ACTIVITIES WERE SPONSORED BY THE EUROPEAN CHURCH AND ADVENTIST REVIEW.

BY TRANS-EUROPEAN DIVISION AND INTER-EUROPEAN DIVISION NEWS

Trapped in housing where a family of six may share just one room—and share cooking and washing facilities with other families—migrants in Serbia can suffer deep sociopsychological problems. In 2016 ADRA Serbia provided emergency aid to tens of thousands who passed through the country each week in the hope of a new life in the West. Now the aid organization is providing much-needed help for those who live for longer periods within Serbia’s borders, including assistance with social integration, education, life skills, and counseling.

The success of the ADRA Serbia community center in Belgrade led to its being chosen as the venue for a special livestream broadcast on Seventh-day Adventist Church-promoted World Refugee Sabbath on June 16, 2018.

POWERFUL TESTIMONIES

Refugees crowded into the women’s resource room at the ADRA community center, eager to share how ADRA became their family. Sotude, a mother with two young daughters, shared how she was in despair before ADRA became a part of her life. Now she comes to the compound each day. She reported that the visit lifts her spirits and allows her to develop life skills, engage in sports, talk to others back home via an Internet café, and socialize in a safe environment.

ADRA also works with school-age migrants, helping them integrate into the school system, providing mentors to help them with the local language, and drafting extra support at the center to help them catch up with the schooling they missed during their difficult journeys from Afghanistan or Iraq.

Twelve-year-old Farhad is one example: a musician, keen football player, and skilled artist whose time at the center has helped him develop his skills. An art exhibit showing his paintings helped raise funds for a Serbian boy in need of a serious operation. ADRA’s “little Picasso” is already giving back to the community that is supporting him—which has not gone unnoticed. Last August,

Children complete a powerful peace mural in the foreground during the live program on World Refugee Sabbath in Belgrade, Serbia, on June 16, 2018.

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Farhad and his family were invited to meet with Aleksandar Vučić, the president of Serbia, who graciously offered them citizenship.

“Among the refugees are a lot of children,” noted Corrado Cozzi, representing the Adventist Church in central and southwestern Europe. He emphasized, “A child needs special care, special food, and secure shelter every single day.” He noted that many of the children live in challenging conditions that will have a big impact on their future.

Throughout the one-hour program and in the spontaneous afterglow that followed, beneficiaries at the center expressed what a

cast expanded the journey with stories of hope from across Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. It included video reports prepared by local churches, ADRA offices, and individuals, as well as panel discussions with ADRA Serbia leaders and ADRA officials from its European and world headquarters.

Jonathan Duffy, ADRA International director, noted that while there are 64 million refugees or displaced persons in the world, there are 20 million members in the Adventist Church. “What if every Adventist got to know just two people?” he asked. “What difference would that make?”

Reports from Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Netherlands, and Sweden shared ways that members are interacting with their new neighbors. Members of the Adventist Church in Gothenburg, Sweden, turned their building’s basement into a dormitory after they discovered young men sleeping on the street. In Belgium, where there is a continuing crisis, the church works with other volunteers to host immigrants in private homes overnight. In the Netherlands a local church is helping with education and befriending programs.

Other church members have focused on fund-raising. Two young adults from Portugal plan to climb the highest mountain of every country in Europe, with the goal of raising at least €54,000 (about US\$62,400) for the Belgrade community center in Serbia. Croatian

youth shared how they gave up their New Year’s break to volunteer at a camp in Greece.

This year’s event marks the third annual World Refugee Sabbath program sponsored by the Inter-European (EUD) and Trans-European (TED) regions of the Adventist Church. This year, with input and support from ADRA International and ADRA Europe, as well as *Adventist Review*, the program has had an even greater impact than in the past.

João Martins, ADRA Europe executive director, said, “While Europe claims to be a continent where human rights are more promoted and defended, we are challenged to see inside our borders children, women, and men fleeing from terrible war situations not received and welcomed as they should be.” He continued, “ADRA works to fill this gap that is preventing thousands of persons from living with the dignity they deserve. It is why the World Refugee Sabbath is so important. When we have the chance to be in contact with this reality, we are challenged to do something to change it.”

Victor Hulbert, TED communication director, at the close of the broadcast explained that initiatives such as World Refugee Sabbath, highlighted and growing across Adventist media, help to raise awareness in viewers’ minds of “who is our neighbor.” “It gives us practical motivation to give, pray, share, and befriend as we can in every area where we can have influence,” he said. 📌



Farhad, 12, with *Adventist Review*'s Daryl Gungadoo.

INTER-EUROPEAN DIVISION AND
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blessing it was for them to be helped. A children’s choir sang about ADRA being their family.

Igor Mitrović, ADRA Serbia director, at the end of his short devotional talk, summed up the event, inviting all to the table, not just in this world—as projects like this bring communities together—but in the world to come.

A second livestreamed broad-



PASTOR HONORED FOR HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIAL PEACE. Jean Pourrat Meting, a Seventh-day Adventist pastor and church leader in the central African nation of Cameroon, was recently awarded the Order of Merit of Cameroon for his contributions to social peace through his preaching and example. The appointment to the Order of Merit of Cameroon can be made only after a minimum of 12 years of outstanding and proved service to the nation.



IN CZECH REPUBLIC, APP HELPS SYRIAN REFUGEES. A new app in the Czech Republic is designed to help Syrian refugees. The mobile app has been developed in partnership with ADRA Czech Republic. Funds, which benefit refugees, are generated through in-app purchases, a voluntary way of earning bonus points in the game, or by watching sponsored videos. The object of the game is to help the main character, a husky dog, to rescue puppies without getting caught.



WORLD WAR II HIDEOUT IS NOW AN ADVENTIST YOUTH CENTER. A basement used during World War II to hide dozens of Jews from occupying forces in Hungary recently became a center where Adventist young people and their friends can meet, study, and play. Duna Youth Center opened its doors on Székely Bertalan Street, in the capital city of Budapest, as approximately 30 young people who attended the opening enjoyed the opportunity of witnessing the fulfillment of a long-held dream.



SCHOOL OF NURSING CELEBRATES MILESTONE. An explosion of digital fireworks accompanied Alyssa Vega as she marched across the stage to receive her diploma from Loma Linda University's School of Nursing during recent commencement exercises. Vega became the School of Nursing's 10,000th graduate, in addition to receiving her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. The class of 2018 comprised 210 students receiving bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degrees.



ADRA OPENS FIRST SAFE WATER KIOSK IN MOZAMBIQUE. The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) recently launched its first safe water kiosk in Mocuba, Mozambique. The kiosk will provide 20 liters (21 quarts) per person per day of safe drinking water for more than 1,000 people. The Mocuba district of the Zambezia province in Mozambique has suffered from inadequate safe water for years, and prolonged drought conditions in southern Africa have worsened the situation. More than 100 people attended the grand opening of the new water kiosk.



NORTH AMERICAN CHURCH LEADERS DEDICATE PRAYER CHAPEL. The North American Division (NAD) recently dedicated the C. D. Brooks Prayer Chapel, located in the organization's headquarters. Approximately 70 NAD employees, Brooks family members, and guests heard from various church leaders who shared memories of the renowned Adventist evangelist C. D. Brooks, who passed away in 2016 at the age of 85. The chapel contains two pieces of art—a stained-glass window and a portrait of Brooks—that were unveiled during the ceremony.



EVANGELISTIC SERIES RESULTS IN MORE THAN 19,000 BAPTISMS. More than 19,000 people were baptized in Mwanza, Tanzania, after attending a Revelation of Hope evangelistic series. The three-week series featured Mark Finley (also an editor-at-large of *Adventist Review*) as the main speaker and Ernestine Finley as health presenter. All presentations were broadcast live on Hope Channel Tanzania. More than 4,000 sites in Tanzania and neighboring countries received the signal. The CCM Kirumba Stadium, where the meetings took place, was also transformed into a health center. An estimated 9,000 people were treated.

KNOWING JESUS AND KNOWING OURSELVES

Paying attention is of the essence.

JOHN MCVAY

Over the millennia since the first advent of Jesus, many false christs have appeared.

In 1867 William W. Davies, believing he had received a vision instructing him to do so, migrated to Walla Walla, Washington, and founded a group called the Kingdom of Heaven. While Davis himself claimed to be Michael the Archangel, he identified his newly born son, Arthur, as Jesus Christ, returned to earth. It proved a successful recruiting strategy for Davies, doubling the size of his group.¹ However, most believers with a nodding acquaintance of the New Testament descriptions of the glorious return of Jesus would not have been convinced by staring into Arthur's crib. The claim was outrageous; the evidence, nonexistent.

STRAIGHT FROM JESUS

It is Jesus Himself who predicts the appearance of false christs, a prophecy punctuated by a terrifying warning. Unlike the appearance of powerless infant Arthur Davies,

Discerning the true Jesus requires day-to-day faithfulness.

some of these false christs will perform convincing signs and wonders, deceiving many and proving so credible that the fidelity of “the elect” seems at risk (Matt. 24:24). In his culminating sermon in Matthew’s Gospel (Matt. 24; 25), Jesus focuses on the coming destruction of Jerusalem and on signs of His return, accenting the need to discern and wait for Him, the true Jesus.²

Jesus begins with the warning “Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many” (Matt. 24:4, 5).³ In a section that focuses on His return (rather than the destruction of Jerusalem), the warning reoccurs: “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. Therefore if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ do not go out; or ‘Look, He is in the inner rooms!’ do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be” (verses 23-27).

Two critical questions emerge as we consider these important warnings by Jesus concerning false christs. The first is “How can we discern the true, authentic Jesus (and avoid endorsing the fake ones)?” The second is equally important, though more subtle: “How can we know ourselves?” How can we measure and weigh our own spiritual condition? How can we avoid becoming discouraged or overconfident, and setting ourselves up to be deceived?

Since it is Jesus who issues the strident warnings about false christs, it makes good sense to ponder the counsel He offers in this final sermon in Matthew, advice that addresses these questions. He tells us that to await and discern His second coming requires alertness to signs pointing to it (verses 29, 30, 32-35), which is especially important since believers have no access to the precise timing of the return of Jesus (verses 36, 42, 44).

He provides clarifying descriptions of the manner of His return, which should protect us from chasing false, earthbound christs who appear in some rustic retreat center or a conference room (verse 26): “For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be” (verse 27); “they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (verse 30).

THE EXPERIENTIAL DIMENSION

In addition to this intellectual discernment about the manner of Christ’s return, we should notice carefully that Jesus also advocates a thorough, experiential preparation. Discerning the true Jesus requires day-to-day faithfulness, doing what Jesus has asked us to do (verses 45, 46 and the parable of the talents [Matt. 25:14-30]). Jesus recommends an experiential preparation that includes participating in proclaiming the “gospel of the kingdom” as the peerless sign of the Christ’s return (Matt. 24:14; cf. Matt. 28:18-20, [the Great Commission, the ringing conclusion to Matthew’s Gospel]). We learn best the lessons we teach. Entering into the experience of sharing Jesus with others helps bring us to a true, experiential knowledge of Him that will help protect us from chasing any false christ.

Jesus recommends another important experiential component to nourish our fidelity in the time of the end and to respond positively to His warnings about false christs: ministering to Jesus in the person of those in need (Matt. 25:31-46). His final sermon in Matthew reaches its crescendo as Jesus describes the final judgment, accenting afresh the central theme of discerning and awaiting the true Jesus (verses 31-46).

The Son of Man will invite into His kingdom those who have seen Him in hungry, thirsty strangers, in those who are naked, sick, and imprisoned (25:35, 36). Those who have ministered in these ways will hear words of commendation spoken by Jesus Himself: “And the King

We do well to give full consideration to one simple fact: This sermon of Jesus is filled with warnings.

will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me'" (verse 40).

Those who fail to do so hear parallel words of judgment: "Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me" (verse 45).

What is especially interesting about Jesus' sketch of the final judgment is that His true followers, who receive His accolades for discerning Him in those in need, are unconscious of their own ethical and spiritual accomplishment. They protest, asking when they have perceived and ministered to Jesus (verses 37-39). Like "the faithful and wise servant" (Matt. 24:45) and the recipients of multiple talents (verses 14-23), they have simply been doing what Jesus asked them to do as they awaited His return.

Yet while believers are oblivious to the connection, Jesus Himself perceives it: in ministering to those in need, His followers are identifying and caring for Him. Jesus, then, offers this word of inspired counsel to help us respond to His warnings about false christs and His exhortations to acknowledge the true: "As you await Me, minister to those in need. Doing so will sharpen your ability to recognize Me—the Bridegroom—when I arrive in the midst of the world's moral night and at an unscheduled moment. Entering into the ministry that I Myself have exhibited among you, you experience My own character, the way I treasure and care for others. This is superb preparation for being able to recognize Me and will help inoculate you against worshipping any egomaniac masquerading as Me. For you will know Me as only My followers—those who pattern their lives after Mine—are able to do."

OUR SECOND QUESTION

Jesus addresses our second question: As we face the end, how can we know ourselves? in His parable of the ten virgins, five of the bridesmaids represent those who have prepared in advance

for Christ's return, and five represent those who have neglected to do so (Matt. 25:1-13). In the anguishing conclusion to the parable—which provides a most poignant warning for those living at the time of Christ's return—the five unprepared bridesmaids knock at the festal door crying out "Lord, Lord, open to us!" (Matt. 25:11).

The Bridegroom Himself responds with the haunting verdict, "Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you" (verse 12). Jesus, moving outside the narrative of the parable, applies the lesson directly to His audience and to us: "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming" (verse 13).

Because we do not know with any precision the time when Christ will return, we dare not delay in tending and mending the quality of our relationship with Him. That lack of precise knowledge of timing seems to be by divine design! To know the day and the hour might well invite a fatal somnolence. Our relationship with Jesus, this most valuable element of discipleship and of life, demands constant and consistent monitoring. We dare not hit the pause button, assuming there will be time to recover our lapse.

The two groups of bridesmaids in the parable are differentiated by whether or not they bring extra oil for their lamps, indicating their level of preparation for the coming of the bridegroom. In the Bible, oil can serve as a symbol of abundance (e.g. Deut 32:13, 14; Job 29:6; Joel 2:24).

Our campus church at Walla Walla University has established a highly appreciated beginning-of-the-year tradition, "The Longest Table." We close down one of the streets that bounds our campus and fill it with conjoined tables as far as the eye can see. And our campus pastors have cast a vision of welcoming students to campus with a grand abundance. Not only are we to provide a plentiful feast on well-decorated tables—we send students back to their dorm rooms with arms filled with Tupperware. Leftovers!

God offers to believers a rich, abundant, spiritual

prosperity. Through the presence of the Holy Spirit and through His Word, Jesus becomes present in our lives, becomes the light of our world (John 8:12). With David we may testify, “You are my lamp, O Lord, and my God lightens my darkness” (2 Sam. 22:29, ESV).⁴ As is true of the New Jerusalem, the Lamb becomes our light (Rev. 21:23).

Believers have a responsibility to treasure and tend this abundance, to value it enough that we monitor its presence in our lives. We value Christ as the lamp of our lives so much that we invest in regular times of Bible study, prayer, and public worship. We are alert to the dimming of the lamp, the depletion of the oil. And we take immediate steps to trim the lamp and augment the supply of oil. We treasure the presence of Christ through the Holy Spirit in our lives as much as the householder of old treasured the presence of the light of an oil lamp in the darkness of night, or a traveler the light of a lamp upon the rough road ahead (Ps 119:105).

DON'T MISS THE WARNINGS

As we look back over the final sermon of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel, it seems marked by a great deal of negativity. The juxtapositions are stark. On one hand false christs appear, working profound wonders that deceive many (Matt. 23-26). On the other hand, Jesus Himself appears “as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west” (verse 27). Vultures gather over corpses and earthlings wail (Matt. 24:28, 30) while a victorious trumpet blast cues angels to begin the global gathering of the elect (verse 31). More frequently, Jesus shares the positive narrative first, reserving the corresponding negative story as the punchline.

The wise servant who is promoted to the top spot is compared to the wicked servant who is “cut . . . in pieces” (verses 45-51, ESV; cf. the parable of the talents [Matt. 25:14-30]). Five bridesmaids gain entrance into the bright joy of the wedding feast while five are left outside, bereft, in the dark of night (verses 1-13). Those who in the final

judgment are applauded for having ministered to Jesus by caring for those in need are contrasted with those who failed to do so and receive the dire judgment “Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (verse 41, ESV).

We do well, though, to give full consideration to one simple fact: This sermon of Jesus is filled with warnings. The sermon could be described aptly as one long, loud warning. It is not a report offered after an event has occurred, but a warning about the future. Warnings sound rather negative. But because they are delivered in advance of the threatened crisis, they are very positive communications. To shout “Don't touch that!” to someone about to reach for a hot stove or a hot wire is negative in tone, but positive in purpose. Warnings are not positive in their tone, but they are marvelously positive in their purpose—to keep as many as possible safe from the impending threat.

We should then judge this final sermon of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel not by its frequently negative tone but by its ultimate and positive purpose. No one who attends to these warnings of Jesus need suffer the doom He so graphically portrays. By spurning any false savior and embracing the abundance of a relationship with the true, we may experience the positive purpose of the warnings of Jesus about false christs and look with hope and joy toward His return. 🍌

¹ See “Kingdom of Heaven” in J. Gordon Melton, ed., *Melton's Encyclopedia of American Religions*, 8th ed. (Detroit: Gale, Cengage Learning, 2009), p. 1192 and “The William Davies & The Walla Walla Jesus History Website,” <http://ww2020.net/historic-sites/william-davies-and-the-walla-walla-jesus/>, Accessed June 12, 2018.

² Sometimes referred to as the Olivet Discourse or the Little Apocalypse, the sermon finds parallels in Mark 13 and Luke 21:5-36.

³ Unless otherwise noted, Bible quotations are drawn from the New King James Version. Copyright (c) 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

⁴ Scripture quotations marked ESV are from *The Holy Bible*, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

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EXCELLING IN THE ESCHATON

Ellen White described the *eschaton*, the times before Christ's return, with these words: "In the midst of the time of trouble that is coming—a time of trouble such as has not been since there was a nation—God's chosen people will stand unmoved."

During the month of June 2018 nearly 400 Adventist theologians and administrators attended the Seventh-day Adventist International Bible Conference on Eschatology in Rome. Throughout the plenary and parallel sessions three themes and one question seemed to emerge.

First, the application of Bible prophecy validates that we are living in the last times before the second coming of Christ. Second, to be prepared, believers must study and live truth. Third, awareness and application, while crucial for believers, must be anchored in a relationship with Jesus.

Then this question: What can believers do to live as overcomers? In the book of Revelation the Holy Spirit provides believers with good counsel via the messages to the seven churches (Rev. 2; 3).

1. *Leverage your love* (Rev. 2:1-7). The church at Ephesus left its first or original love and slipped into a religion of drudgery. Through daily repentance and a love for the righteousness of Christ we must tenaciously hold on to our first joy and commitment to Christ through prayer, Bible study, worship, and growth in grace.

2. *Persist through problems* (Rev. 2:8-11). The church at Smyrna reminds us that tough times will come. Some tests are truly cases of unprovoked persecution. Others are brought about through personal sins. Nevertheless, we must resolutely endure the tests, always depending on God's providence and forgiveness.

3. *Test your truth* (Rev. 2:12-17). God's

Word to the church at Pergamum counsels us to seek, embrace, and love truth. But be dead sure it is the right truth. Say yes to Bible-based truth and no to every so-called truth that leads to deception.

4. *Review every relationship* (Rev. 2:18-29). The message to the church at Thyatira warns that everyone who is friendly isn't necessarily friend-worthy. No matter if our relationships are personal, visual, auditory, or digital, we have to guard the avenues of our souls.

5. *Shake off stagnation* (Rev. 3:1-6). The experience of the church at Sardis affirms that what is stagnant can be invigorated. But it takes commitment, initiative, and resisting inertia. If we slip and back-step, we have to understand that this, too, is part of Satan's strategy of the last days. We can recharge, reboot, reignite, and reengage as often as necessary.

6. *Pursue new progress* (Rev. 3:7-13). The experience of the believers in Philadelphia reminds us that we can be in a good place. It says that we're on the right track, have the right love, and exemplify the right service, and heaven is pleased with our progress. But for the sake of Christ, don't become complacent.

7. *Revive and reform* (Rev. 3:14-22). The message to the church in Laodicea is that anything hot will inevitably cool unless the fire is kept burning. Riches, pleasures, success, allurements, and distractions cause fervor to wane, pace to slacken, and enthusiasm to dissipate. The antidote: inspiration, intention, and initiation. Keep the fire burning.

May this sevenfold counsel keep us on course during these last days. ▀

*Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 9, p. 17.

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TRANSFORMATION TIPS
DELBERT W. BAKER



SAY "YES" TO BIBLE-BASED TRUTH AND "NO" TO EVERY SO-CALLED TRUTH THAT LEADS TO DECEPTION.

2

ΒΙΒΛΟΣ ΓΕΝΕΣΕΩΣ ΙΥ ΧΥΥ

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ΤΟΣΑΚ Μ ΓΕΛ ΠΟΝΤ

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1



WHERE DID WE GET THE NEW TESTAMENT?

TOM SHEPHERD

Bishop Athanasius was worried about the church members in his region of Alexandria, Egypt. He had fought tooth and nail most of his life against people who claimed that Jesus was a created being.¹ One of the problems was that people were promoting books filled with these and other teachings supposedly written by apostles or great Christian leaders. The situation was confusing people, and Athanasius wanted to put a stop to it.

DISTINGUISHING THE BOOKS

The bishop in A.D. 367 penned a circular letter that laid out just which books should be accepted as part of the Old and New Testaments. In this letter for the first time we have the list of 27 books together that we call the New Testament.

But such a story raises the question: Did the New Testament as we know it not exist until nearly 320 years after the first Gospel or letter

was written?² If so, doesn't that call into question how we can be certain that this group of books is ordained by God? While the story of the New Testament is long, it is quite interesting, and actually builds our confidence in God's protecting hand over His Word.

The New Testament and Christianity arose out of the life, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. According to our best and earliest evidence, He chose 12 men to be His emissaries (minus Judas and adding Matthias). After His ascension these men became the foundational witnesses of early Christianity. An important addition to their number came a few years later with the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, who became known as the apostle Paul (Acts 9).

As these leaders traveled throughout the Mediterranean world establishing churches, it quickly became apparent that the needs of the churches and mission fields exceeded the resources of time and people available. Paul might be in Ephesus when the church in Corinth needed his counsel. Peter might be in fetters when the churches of Asia Minor were being infiltrated by false teachers. To respond to these problems from a distance, the apostles wrote letters to congregations, individuals, and sometimes believers in a wide area. In addition to this, as Irenaeus, an ancient church leader, wrote, apostles and their companions wrote out the story of Jesus in what we now call the four Gospels.³ In this way the story of Jesus could be told and studied everywhere.

CHERISHING THE TRUTH

What did early Christians do with these books? From what we can tell, they treasured them deeply. Far and away, the New Testament is the best-attested document from the ancient world. It has thousands of manuscripts ranging from the smallest fragment of a few verses to entire volumes containing all the books we now call the New Testament. The evidence is overwhelming that these were highly treasured books.

Discerning the truth requires a willingness to follow it wherever it leads.

And no wonder: they were written by eyewitnesses of the greatest events the world has ever seen, and by individuals who talked with the eyewitnesses and documented their stories.⁴ The apostles spoke with an authority that gripped people's attention. They claimed that their message came from God Himself: "For we were not following cleverly made up stories when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. On the contrary, we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. He received honor and glory from God the Father when addressed in such a manner by the majestic glory, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.' We heard this voice addressing us from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain" (2 Peter 1:16-18).⁵

It was an unforgettable experience, burned into their hearts. They spoke and wrote as men with certainty about what they saw. The authority comes across clearly in their writings. Paul speaks of this power in his letter to Timothy: "All Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction for training in righteousness, in order that the man of God may be fully qualified, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).⁶

The apostles believed that their message came from God and was consistent with the Old Testament (Acts 2:14-36), that the same Spirit that worked in the ancient prophets worked in their lives as well, enabling them to share the message of God in a trustworthy manner.⁷

Early Christians copied these writings of the apostles and began reading them in their church meetings. Justin Martyr, a Christian leader of the second century AD, describes a Christian service: "The memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then when the reader has ceased, the president [of the assembly] verbally instructs and exhorts to the imitation of these good things."⁸

However, even from the beginning of the Chris-

tian church, false teachers and their writings began to crop up.⁹ In the second century, documents that falsely claimed to be written by apostles and other early Christian leaders promulgated ideas completely contrary to the teachings of the apostles and the early church: books such as the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Judas, and the Gospel of Peter.¹⁰ How was the church to respond to such falsehoods?

To protect the Christians from being led astray by crafty charlatans, early church leaders promulgated three tests of genuine books.¹¹ Was the book written by an apostle or a companion of an apostle (the eyewitness test)? Did the book teach doctrines consistent with the body of beliefs that came down to the church from the Hebrew Scriptures and the apostles' teachings and writings (the doctrinal test)?¹² Was the book used widely by the churches (the consensus test)?¹³ The main use of these principles was to weed out false writings from those that were genuine. The genuine would be the Canon, the test or rule of all else.

This situation leads to an important concept in describing the origin of the New Testament. Did the church set the Canon, or did it simply recognize that which was canonical? The first position is often known as the Communitarian view of Canon formation. In this perspective the early church had the authority to set the Canon and to teach its members which books to accept and which to reject. The problem with this position is the way that it places the church above the Canon.

ACKNOWLEDGING THE SPIRIT

In the other view, often known as the Intrinsic Canon view, the church recognized the canonicity of genuine documents because these documents carried the telltale signature of the Holy Spirit's inspiration, a sense of authenticity inherent within the books. We see this type of perspective in such texts as John 7:17, where Jesus says, "If someone wants to do His will [the Father's will], he will know about the teaching, whether I speak from God or

from myself.” And Paul wrote: “And we speak these things not by human teaching in wise words, but instead by the teaching of the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to spiritual people. Now the secular person does not receive the things of the Spirit of God. They are foolishness to him and he is not able to understand them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:13, 14).

It is not that God has set some people on a secular path so that there is no hope for them to respond to Him. On the contrary, He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). But discerning the truth requires a willingness to follow it wherever it leads. This is what makes possible the ability to recognize the intrinsic authority of the Scriptures when the Holy Spirit touches our heart. It requires coming under the instruction of the Bible, letting its message clean away that which does not belong.

The three tests the early church came up with to weed out noncanonical books are consistent with the Intrinsic model of the Canon. Written by an apostle or his companion was a historical necessity for eyewitness testimony. The doctrinal test was a recognition of the books that held the precious treasure of the apostles’ teachings and were consistent with the Hebrew Scriptures. And consensus was a symptom of the recognition of the underlying authority of inspired books. What blessed the churches to grow and thrive was itself a result of the work of the Holy Spirit. As Jesus said: “A good tree cannot produce evil fruit, nor can a rotten tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire. So then, by their fruits you will know them” (Matt. 7:18-20).

Eventually, early lists of books began to circulate, such as the Muratorian Fragment (from the second century A.D.), and Athanasius’ letter (fourth century A.D.), referred to at the beginning of this article. These were simply end products of the lengthy process of people coming to recognize

the inherent authority of the books inspired by the Holy Spirit. The process was lengthy, which should give us confidence in the tried and true nature of these books. Forged on the anvil of hard-won experience and trial, the New Testament still speaks to us today with conviction and power. ✎

¹ Athanasius lived AD 296-373. The teaching that Jesus was a created being was first promulgated by Arius, AD 256-336, a presbyter (elder) in Alexandria, Egypt, where Athanasius was the bishop or pastor.

² Galatians may well have been the first book of the New Testament written, shortly before the Jerusalem Council in AD 48/49.

³ Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 3.1. See also Eusebius *Church History* 2:15; 3:24; 3:39; 6:4.

⁴ See Richard Bauckham’s interesting book, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).

⁵ All New Testament translations are by the author.

⁶ When Paul penned these words he likely was thinking of the Old Testament Scriptures. But that does not detract from the fact that Paul’s own words became recognized quickly in the same light (cf. 2 Peter 3:14-16). The same Spirit that guided the ancient prophets was also clearly working in the lives of the apostles (cf. Acts 2).

⁷ Second Peter 1:20, 21: “Knowing this first, that every prophecy of Scripture is not of the prophet’s own interpretation. For the prophecy was not transmitted by the will of a person, but rather, borne along by the Holy Spirit, men spoke from God.”

⁸ Justin Martyr *The First Apology of Justin*, chapter 67.

⁹ Note the apostles’ strong rebukes of false teachers in such passages as Galatians 5, Colossians 2, and 2 Peter 2.

¹⁰ The Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of Judas both clearly teach Gnostic beliefs, and the Gospel of Peter has Docetic teachings. Gnosticism was a second-century movement that taught, among other things, that the true God does not have contact with the material world, and the God of the Old Testament was an ignorant god. Gnostics taught that every person had a spark of the divine in them and special knowledge (*gnosis*) would unlock that understanding. Docetists taught that Christ was never human and that He did not really suffer or die; He only appeared to do so.

¹¹ Irenaeus developed the first two, Origen the third.

¹² The terminology for this was “the Canon of Truth” or “The Canon of the Faith”—the beliefs that consist of a summary of the teachings of Scripture. The Greek word *kanôn* meant a yardstick, a rule or standard. It was Irenaeus who first used the term *kanôn* in this sense when refuting heretics who would quote copiously from Scripture. See Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 3.1-12, 3.24 and 4.33.8.

¹³ See discussion in Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 251-254. Cf. John C. Peckham, *Canonical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), pp. 33-39. He lists the tests a little differently: apostolicity/propheticity (written by an apostle, a companion of an apostle or a prophet), consistency with past revelation, and self-authentication of divine commission. We argue for Peckham’s viewpoint.

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ENGAGED IN A COSMIC CRISIS

Issues in the final conflict are remarkably simple.

**NORMAN R. GULLEY
AND LAEL CAESAR**

Whether on earth or in heaven, the cosmic controversy is a fight for the mind, a fight of fancy challenging fact, or falsehood propounded instead of truth. Angels, Adam and Eve, in their perfection, fell victims in this battle. How much more perilous must be the situation for imperfect, fallen minds.

The controversy's end-time deception involves the issue of false worship on a global level. Too many still live oblivious to the crisis of which they are a part, and of its potentially tragic end.

THE BIG PICTURE

Scripture's panorama presents the two sides of the cosmic controversy: Satan versus Christ, hatred versus love. Satan spreads his fictions to counteract what and who was always there: God, the eternal Truth. The inspired writings both expose Satan's deceptions and disclose Christ's devotion. Both of these revelations are necessary to resolve the conflict fully. Christ's dying for sinners on the cross shows God's matchless, eternal love at the same time that it shows the ultimate cruelty of Satan, the being responsible for the heinous crime of crucifying the innocent Son of God. It

shows Satan's desire to bring an end to the life and possibility of other-centered, self-sacrificing love, and to preserve from thence forward his own rule of me-focused, greed-dictated, self-oriented existence.

Simply told, God is; Satan is created. God is love. Satan has made himself love's antithesis. His original rebellion from truth in heaven questioned God the Father's running of the universe, as well as His exaltation of Christ, the Son. Satan craved the ascendancy and corresponding worship due only to the Godhead (Isa. 14:4-20); he clamored for improvement in God's law. "Change" drove his campaign in heaven, and he has used it successfully throughout human history. Two major elements of his end-time deception are spiritualism and Sunday sacredness.

SPIRITUALISM

While ecumenism seeks to draw churches, religions, and nations into cooperation on some practical or social human basis, spiritualism pursues its own effort to replace God's Word with the words and works of created beings. Mysticism is a major element of spiritualism.

On Planet Earth the cosmic controversy first unfolded in Eden as Adam and Eve chose to believe Satan's blunt lie. God had warned that eating the forbidden fruit would cause death (Gen. 2:16, 17). Satan denied God's words, saying, "You surely will not die! . . . You will be like God" (Gen. 3:4, 5).¹

Satan's deception found success in Eden as he "exercised his power of hypnotism over Adam and Eve."²

Israel's history would show the advance of deception dressed up in mystery when King Saul asked a "familiar spirit" to speak to him (see 1 Chron. 10:13; cf. 1 Sam. 28:3). Satan uses spiritists or mediums, to continue his denial of the truth of God's Word that the dead know nothing (Eccl. 9:5, 6). God denounces as an abomination anyone who participates in alleged communication with the dead (Deut. 18:11; cf. Acts 16:16-18). And whether they

Satan's strategy of deception begun in heaven has not ceased.

realize it or not, people who place the claims of Satan above God's Word are choosing Satan's side in the cosmic controversy: "Little by little he [Satan] has prepared the way for his masterpiece of deception in the development of spiritualism. He has not yet reached the full accomplishment of his designs; but it will be reached in the last remnant of time."³

Satan's strategy of deception begun in heaven has not ceased. Our enthusiasm for mysticism may not be as spiritually helpful as sometimes thought. Consider the advice of Vatican II that "working to plant the church, and thoroughly enriched with the treasures of mysticism adorning the church's religious tradition, religious communities should strive to give expression to these treasures and to hand them on in a manner harmonious with the nature and the genius of each nation."⁴

However respectful of diversity and the world's many and varied cultures, mysticism and church traditions are not usually developed or designed to establish biblical gospel truth. It is their compatibility with the biblical worldview rather than their national esteem that makes worldviews helpful to planting churches, if those churches are to be grounded in biblical truth.

Jesus did not establish the foundations of His church on religious traditions or local cultures, but on a reality that anticipates and will outlast all human developments of custom and practice: the foundation of Jesus' church is Jesus Himself, the incomparable and unimprovable foundation; and "no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11). Simply true and simply told, the Word who was and is and is to come, He who created all, is He who took on flesh and lived among us, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, yet so one with us as to know and understand the feeling of our infirmities (John 1:1-3, 14; Heb. 7:26; 4:15). God, who in Him became human, became moreover sin for us, He "who knew no sin . . . , that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21).

Jesus Himself, Truth incarnate (John 14:6) and

liberating (John 8:32)—Jesus Himself, Spirit-anointed Son of the living God (Matt. 3:16, 17; Acts 10:38; Matt. 16:16-18)—is the basis of saving faith, and the anchored confidence, "both sure and steadfast" (Heb. 6:19), of saints through the ages, that all the blessings promised to this earth and its inhabitants through Abraham the father of the faithful (Heb. 4:13-20) are ours. Jesus became our sin and bore the punishment of that sin so that we might be healed of its sickness and live instead as super conquerors (1 Peter 2:24; Rom. 8:37) over evil and the evil one. The victory of right in the cosmic conflict between Christ and Satan, fought in the minds and hearts, and for the minds and hearts of God's intelligent creation everywhere, whether angelic or human, whether on this planet or occupying some unfallen orb (Job 38:7; 1 Cor. 4:9),⁵ is guaranteed because what is now Truth has always been truth. Satan's jealousy notwithstanding, Jesus is Lord of all; human failure notwithstanding, we can still be more than conquerors over self and sin and Satan through Him who loved us (Rom. 8:37).

Going forward from His passion, weeks of instruction to His disciples, His ascension, His coronation and our commissioning (Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:1-8; Matt. 28:18-20), we, His representatives, have been charged with doing His work for Him in the way He himself has appointed, under the guidance and anointing of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-18, 25, 26; 16:7-15). But God's self-distorted original cherub and now archenemy has not diminished in hate or developed new love for Jesus or His truth or His spokespeople. Instead, he has worked to develop multiple means of distracting humans from the truth as it is in Jesus. Jesus crushed him at the cross, but he has not surrendered: the conflict rages on.

Astonishingly successful examples of his distraction-deceptions include three that we shall briefly address: the glossolalia phenomenon, the Emergent Church movement, and Sunday sacredness.

GLOSSOLALIA

Glossolalia is one label of the sensational spiritual experience of “speaking in unknown tongues” [Greek *glossa*—“tongue”; *laleo*—“speak”] that allegedly proves that a person has experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the first half of the 1960s the experience of “speaking in other tongues” began to spread with previously unheard-of rapidity, reaching nearly 100 countries and multiple denominations, including Roman Catholicism, in a period of 10 years. By 1999 there were about 450 million Pentecostals or Charismatics involved, about 25 percent of all Christians. The fact that both Protestants and Catholics were involved in the spiritual experience gave a significant upgrade to ecumenism, as multiple denominations shared common spiritual experience. The label “baptism of the Holy Spirit” which came to be attached to their “speaking in tongues” was the practitioners’ way of identifying with the experience of early Christians reported in the book of Acts. The primary event to which they connected their own would have been the day of Pentecost when a sudden noise “like a violent rushing wind” filled a house occupied by approximately 120 praying male and female believers in Christ; simultaneously, “there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance” (Acts 2:2-4).

The divine purpose in sending this gift of speaking in other tongues was both gloriously synchronous with celestial timetables and thoroughly utilitarian in its function. The synchrony with heaven’s schedule was the fulfillment of Jesus’ own promise (John 14:16-18, 25, 26; 16:7-15), and a witness to earth that heaven was celebrating the coronation of Jesus Christ in glory, upon the Father’s acceptance of His atoning sacrifice for our sins and His enthronement at the Father’s right hand (Acts 23:32, 33; Rev. 4, 5). But the unprecedented outpouring of spiritual glory on that day

had a simple functional purpose: it enabled uneducated people to be suddenly able to communicate the gospel in languages they had not learned, because there were people around who spoke those languages. The Bible lists at least 15 different people groups along with their stunned reaction: “They were amazed and astonished, saying, ‘Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born?’” (Acts 2:7, 8). Whether at Pentecost or otherwise (Acts 10:44-46; 19:1-7), the Spirit’s baptism was not related to the show, competition and proof of spiritual superiority, or to the coached development of nonsense utterances that came to characterize it later on in biblical times (1 Cor. 14) and the decade of the 1960s and 1970s. Those distortions were nothing but functions of Satan’s distraction-deceptions brought in to contaminate the purity of God’s truth, embarrass the church of God (1 Cor. 14:11, 16) and confuse uninformed but objective onlookers, even spurring them to mockery (verse 23).

EMERGENT MOVEMENT

Another distraction-deception of the enemy of truth is the Emerging or Emergent Church movement. To Brian McLaren, a prolific Emergent Church writer, the church, through this movement, is now blessed with a generous orthodoxy: “all creation is healed . . . from its lost state” because “Jesus is the Savior of the whole world,” and Christians of different persuasions will be “working together to save the village which we call Planet Earth, and which God calls ‘beloved creation.’”⁶

Jesus is the Savior of the world, and McLaren rightly celebrates that salvation as long as he understands that Jesus saves the world from fancy to fact and from falsehood to truth. McLaren’s accommodation of different persuasions may not point in the same direction as does John 3:16. Indeed, McLaren believes all humans will be saved—a position historically characterized as “universalism.” But from the biblical perspective,

The truth of God is unfathomably deep yet accessibly simple.

he may have an even more fundamental problem: his pantheism⁷ raises questions about the personhood of his God; McLaren's God "is in the air that surrounds the tree, the soil in which it is rooted, the sunlight and rainfall that beckon it to grow and become, season by season, ring by ring. In God we live and grow and have our being. In God's wind we sway and our leaves dance."⁸

Leonard Sweet, another prolific Emergent leader and also a pantheist, subscribes to "a radical doctrine of embodiment of God in the very substance of creation."⁹

McLaren and Sweet show limited understanding of the irreconcilable difference between the Creator and creation, or the cosmic controversy with its opposing sides.

SUNDAY SACREDNESS

The creation of Planet Earth took place in six literal, continuous, contiguous days of 24 hours (Gen. 1 and 2). Only the seventh day was blessed by Christ (Gen. 2:2, 3). Later Christ's own written commentary records that He blessed the Sabbath (Ex. 20:8-11). While on earth Christ said, "The Sabbath was made for [humanity]," and He self-identified as "Lord even of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27, 28); He rested in the grave on the Sabbath (John 19:42; 20:1), and said the Sabbath would continue to be kept beyond His resurrection (Matt. 24:20).

Human attempts to tamper with God's law are prophesied in Daniel 7:25, and elaborated on by Ellen White: "Through the two great errors, the immortality of the soul [Satan's lie in Eden—Gen. 3:4, 5] and Sunday sacredness, Satan will bring the people under his deceptions. While the former lays the foundation of spiritualism, the latter creates a bond of sympathy with Rome." Note what follows: "The Protestants of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hands across the gulf to grasp the hand of spiritualism; they will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power; and under the influence of this threefold union, this country will follow in the

steps of Rome in trampling on the rights of conscience."¹⁰ Evidently, this rapprochement of Protestant, papist and spiritualist movements will produce a global union, an integration on a spiritual basis of forces inspired not by the truth as it is in Jesus, but by fascinations of spiritual darkness and distortions of the explicit commandments of God. Over against them Revelation depicts God's saints who still "keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus" (Rev. 14:12).

LOYALTY IN ADVERSITY

The truth of God is unfathomably deep yet accessibly simple. We shall never plumb its depths, but we may always know what He desires of us. The constancy of His eternal love guarantees us and His universe eternal safety when He closes out the controversy. Staying with Him and steering clear of the devil's distraction-deceptions makes sense. If we are willing Jesus is "able to keep [us] from stumbling, and to make [us] stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy (Jude 24). Simple, glorious, transporting truth. 📌

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

² Ellen G. White, Letter 159, 1903; *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1081.

³ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 561.

⁴ Vatican Council, *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott (New York: Guild Press, 1966), pp. 606, 607.

⁵ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898), p. 37.

⁶ Brian McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), pp. 64, 109, 158.

⁷ *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* offers this distinction between "pantheism" and "panentheism," the latter of which is embraced by both Brian McLaren and Leonard Sweet: Pantheism is "the belief or theory that God and the universe are identical"; panentheism is "the belief that the Being of God includes and penetrates the whole universe, so that every part of it exists in Him, but... that His Being is more than, and is not exhausted by, the Universe."

⁸ McLaren, p. 321.

⁹ Leonard I. Sweet, *Quantum Spirituality: A Postmodern Apologetic* (Dayton, OH: Whaleprints, 1991), p. 125.

¹⁰ E.G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 588.

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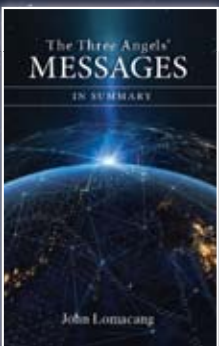
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SPAGHETTI TREES

Will you be fooled?

BY MERLE POIRIER

On April 1, 1957, the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) aired a three-minute video of a family harvesting their “spaghetti trees.” More than 8 million people viewed the broadcast. The BBC was inundated with requests from viewers wanting to know where they could buy and grow their own spaghetti tree. It was one of the most widespread hoaxes in broadcasting history.*

Sounds silly, doesn’t it? Who would fall for something like spaghetti growing on trees?

In 1957 most of those living in the United Kingdom had only heard of spaghetti. The person reporting the news was well-respected. The filming was expertly done. It had everything—credibility, expertise, and authenticity. So how does one protect against false information?

ASKING QUESTIONS

It may be as simple as asking questions.

1. Is the information from a reliable news source?
2. Is the author real and trustworthy?
3. Are credible experts quoted?
4. Do other resources agree?

If the BBC viewers had stopped to ask these questions, only question 4 would have revealed after proper research, that spaghetti does not grow on trees, but is made from flour and water. But it would have been enough to prevent deception.

We know that in the last days a greater hoax will play out on this earth. The last great deception will have credibility, expertise, authenticity, and more important, lead to a result much more serious than believing that spaghetti grows on trees. Satan is not only out to fool, but to trap and destroy.

How can we know truth? How can we arm our-



selves so that we end up *with* God instead of against Him?

KNOWING TRUTH

Just as with other information, spiritual things may be understood by asking questions. Identify the source, the author, the experts, and the agreement. But spiritual discernment is enhanced through several additional methods.

1. **Prayer.** Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide you “into all the truth” (John 16:13). Ask God for wisdom. Ask specifically for His gift of spiritual discernment to discover/know what is true.

2. **Bible Study.** One must spend time in the Bible to know what the Bible says. What is the entire counsel of the Bible? To know truth, one must study truth.

3. **Spirit of Prophecy.** The writings of Ellen G. White illuminate Bible truth. They can be a companion to the Bible, shedding understanding on what may be difficult passages. Arm yourself with the Bible. Then find support for biblical positions as you read her writings.

In 2018 it’s easy to sit smugly and judge those who did not see the absurdity of spaghetti trees. But now we live in an age of greater technology, more advanced media, and the increased ability to manufacture things that appear genuine when they are not—all tools the devil can use to his advantage. Be prayerful. Be armed. Be prepared. Don’t let the “spaghetti trees” of the future fool you. 🗡️

*To view the original broadcast, go to [Youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and search for “spaghetti trees.”

Merle Poirier is operations manager for *Adventist Review* Ministries.

TRUE OR FALSE?

Ellen White is not the only one who has claimed to have a message for Seventh-day Adventists.

ARTHUR L. WHITE¹

We Seventh-day Adventists have been particularly sensitive to God's special leadings. We have believed that God may speak through selected messengers. Indeed, we believe there is convincing evidence that He has done so through Ellen G. White "by the testimonies of His Spirit."²

As recurring November birthdays added years to Ellen White's life and it became clear that she would rest in the grave before the Lord came, Seventh-day Adventists wondered—What of the future? There had not been a time when Seventh-day Adventists had not had a prophet in their midst. When asked, Ellen White would at times pick up her Bible and some of her books and declare, "Here is light which will take the people through to the kingdom."

ANNA PHILLIPS

When Ellen White lived in Australia, Anna Phillips in Battle Creek, Michigan, claimed to have visions given to her and that she had the gift of prophecy. Phillips wrote out "testimonies" to various church members, including some leaders. A. T. Jones fully accepted her claims and assumed the responsibility of presenting her messages to the church. Her messages related what she "saw," often using this term as she described what had passed before her.

From Australia, Ellen White sent warning messages to Jones and others in Battle Creek. A significant point made by White was that although nothing objectionable had been discovered in the teachings of Anna Phillips, this did not constitute a sound basis for accepting them. One of her letters was so providentially timed that it carried convincing evidence unmasking the true nature

of the work of Anna Phillips. White's counsel led Phillips to reexamine her experience. She renounced her "visions," brought her life into harmony with the teachings of God's Word and Spirit of Prophecy counsels, and became a trusted Bible instructor.³

MORE PROPHETS

Again and again in the later years of her life Ellen White recounted the many times that Satan had attempted to mislead the Seventh-day Adventist Church through spurious visions and passionate enthusiasm.⁴

In 1908 an Adventist couple, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Mackin, called on Ellen White to solicit her support in their unusual experiences. When Mr. Makin volunteered the possibility of a demonstration that might enable Ellen White to determine the genuineness of their experiences, she told them she could not consent, "because I have been instructed that when one offers to exhibit these peculiar manifestations, this is a decided evidence that it is not the work of God."⁵

On the night of January 21, 1915, an alleged vision was given to a German Seventh-day Adventist soldier, J. Wieck, confined to a prison cell in his homeland for his refusal to accept a required vaccination. In his vision he saw himself proclaiming that the end of all things had come. A voice asked, "How long will you preach these words?" When he hesitated to answer, the answer came—"Until the stone fruits [cherries, plums, etc.] bloom."

Wieck sent the vision to the German Adventist press, but they did not publish it. What was unusual was that without knowing Wieck's experience, several other people in central and southern Europe also claimed to have visions. All had the same common element—that the stone fruits would mark the end of probation. The "visions" were published privately and circulated. As time passed supporters of the "visions" kept setting new dates until people became weary and disillusioned.



ANNA PHILLIPS



MARGARET ROWEN

THE CASE OF MARGARET ROWEN

Eleven months after the death of Ellen G. White in July 1915, Margaret W. Rowen, a member of an Adventist church in Los Angeles, California, published her initial visions in a 32-page pamphlet, claiming that God “has in these last days again chosen a mouthpiece through whom He speaks to His people.” The matter came to the attention of church leaders in southern California and they advised members to await further developments.

Rowen’s visions continued until February 21, 1917, when a committee of church leaders was formed to investigate. They offered their conclusion days later—they could not establish conclusive evidence of divine origin. They advised that “if they be of God, then we feel assured that He will not leave us in uncertainty, but will give indisputable and conclusive evidence of their origin.”

Most accepted this, but those who supported Rowen continued to press her message to the surrounding churches, causing leaders to make a formal statement against the messages. Rowen formed an organization and launched her own publication, *The Reform Advocate and Prayer-Band Appeal*. Some began sending their tithes and offerings to her as well.

In desperation to secure recognition, Rowen stooped to forgery. She composed a statement to which she signed the name of Ellen G. White. On November 11, 1919 this statement, which authorized Rowen as Mrs. White’s successor, was surreptitiously placed by one of her supporters in the Ellen G. White manuscript files. The forgery was so poor that no one was deceived, yet still some believed and continued to follow Rowen.

The climax came when Rowen predicted Christ’s return on February 6, 1924. When the date slipped by, she assured people it was actually February 6, 1925. The day came and went again. These events


opened the eyes of her close associate and editor. He published an issue disavowing Rowen and her teachings. Shortly thereafter, Rowen attempted to take her editor’s life, which resulted in a prison term.

HOW NOT TO BE DECEIVED

One might think this the end of those claiming to be prophets to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but there are more instances, including some today of people who make such claims. The church is warned by both the prophets of

old and by Ellen White to take heed lest we be misled by false prophets. Important biblical tests are established by which we may determine the validity of claims of divine enlightenment.

- 1 The fulfillment of predictions (Jer. 28:9)
- 2 Faithfulness to the truths of the Christian faith (1 John 4:1-3)
- 3 “Fruit”: You will know them by their fruit, i.e. their actions (Matt. 7:15-20)
- 4 Consistency with law and testimony (Isa. 8:20)
- 5 Consistency with previous revelation (Matt. 4)

Test those who claim to have “new light” or “words from God.” Apply these biblical tests. In addition: gauge the level of spirituality, the timeliness and practicality of the message, and the manner in which it is given. Seventh-day Adventists face the future with confidence and expectancy. We know not what may be in store for us, but we know that Christ is our leader and that He will lead us safely. 

¹Adapted from a four-part series written by Arthur L. White, then secretary of the Ellen G. White Estate, and grandson of Ellen G. White. The weekly series ran June 8-29, 1967 in the *Review and Herald* (now *Adventist Review*).

²Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 5, p. 661.

³Much of the counsel given by Ellen White in this case may be read in *Selected Messages*, book 2 (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958), pp. 85-95.

⁴See *ibid.*, pp. 41-100.

⁵*ibid.*, p. 42.

FINAL DECEPTION

Deception is here and is coming.

JACQUES DOUKHAN

Adventists know a lot about certain chapters of the book of Daniel: earlier chapters such as the first, where we celebrate vegetarianism (though such an idea may have been quite foreign to Daniel and friends); or the second, where the presidential advisors all get to keep their jobs (and their heads) thanks to Daniel and his small team of genius captive foreigners; and the third, where the nuisance genius captive foreigners go for a cool walk with Jesus (inside a raging furnace fire).

MORE TO LIKE IN DANIEL'S BOOK

Adventists are particularly inspired by the parallel prophecies of Daniel 2, 7, 8, and 9. Chapter 3, with its “burning fiery furnace” (verses 6, 11, 15, 17, 20, 21, 23, 26)¹, bears its own different emphasis, demonstrating that God is Lord of life. But the parallel prophecies of chapters 2-9 show beyond any reasonable argument that God Most High is not only life’s awesome author, but is ruler over every ruler

The saints who possess the kingdom forever and ever are the saints who must first survive great persecution.

in every human realm (Dan. 4:17), Lord and judge of history, empires, and kings (Dan. 7:9-14); that whatever the glitter and fanfare of earth's fiefdoms and empires, their passing power will finally crumble into the dust of time, while God's kingdom "shall not pass away" and "shall not be destroyed" (verse 14), or "be left to other people" (Dan. 2:44). Instead it will "break in pieces and consume all [other] kingdoms" and "shall stand forever" (verse 44).

The parallel prophecies also show that God cares. Indeed, He, the righteous judge of all the earth (2 Tim. 4:8; Gen. 18:25), has, in His righteousness, taken to Himself a people He identifies as "His own special people" (1 Peter 2:9). His plan is to hand His kingdom over to these people at the appropriate time (Dan. 7:22): "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High" (verse 27), and they will "possess [it] forever, even forever and ever" (verse 18; see also Dan. 2:44).

That's good news; and as children of God, lovers of prophecy, and participants in a movement of prophecy, we love going over those details: tramping through old and familiar stomping grounds.

THE KING OF THE NORTH

But Adventists also know that there is a dark side to the book of Daniel: the God who triumphs in the end is at first the object of mockery and challenge, His sacred house violated and its sacred contents deposited, as supposed proof of His inferiority, in the house of a heathen god (Dan. 1:1, 2). The saints who possess the kingdom forever and ever are the saints who must first survive great persecution; their cross before the crown continues through time, and times, and more time still (Dan. 7:25). They must endure seasons of religio-political tyranny under a power so astonishingly devious that its successes include dislodging and trampling "some of the stars" of heaven (Dan. 8:10); a power that even dares, in the spirit of the Babel tower builders (Gen. 11:1-4),

to raise itself "above the heights of the clouds" (Isa. 14:14), "as high as the Prince of the host," and seek to usurp his authority and control (Dan. 8:11). Such is the absorbing drama of these chapters.

And Daniel's later chapters are just as charged with wonderful news and intriguing prophecy. Daniel 11 engages us in an absorbing report on two kings, the kings of the north and south, locked in a competition that involves war, invasion, even the slaying of the Son of God. Daniel 11:43 gives us an insight into the thinking of the king of the north when it reports that "he shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; also the Libyans and Ethiopians shall follow at his heels."

This power, aggression, and plundering had once been the province of the king of the south (Dan. 11:5, 8). But later the King of the North regains what originally belonged to him, namely, the gods "with their princes and their precious articles of silver and gold" (verse 8). Mention of these precious materials evokes the spiritual tragedy of Daniel's own day to which we have already referred, when heathen King Nebuchadnezzar ravaged God's temple and transferred its sacred objects to "the house of his god" (Dan. 1:2).

In Daniel 11 the prophecy points to a time thousands of years later than his own day when the king of the north does much more than carry Israel's sacred treasures to Egypt, a name that here stands for secular and philosophical powers that deny God (see Rev. 11:8). For he now wields power over rulers in the secular, atheist domain at the same time that he practices his grand spiritual pretense.

In the cosmic orientation of the book, Daniel 11:43 refers prophetically to an imposture involving an earthly religious institution, the Roman Church, both politically respected and spiritually authoritative, affirming itself as God's true Israel, owner of a sanctuary that replaces God's heavenly sanctuary, and superseding heaven's program of salvation in a manner decidedly more sinister and

People across the globe follow common trends in fashion, music, food and entertainment.

ominous than Nebuchadnezzar's actions of the book's first chapter. This power's effort to take control over all the spiritual forces is a clear indication that what is at stake in this ultimate conflict is the claim for worship (Rev. 13:4, 7, 15; 14:9).

WHAT ABOUT THE LIBYANS AND ETHIOPIANS?

Why does the text refer to Libya and Ethiopia? What do they have to do with deception? The two countries named are the geographical limits of ancient Egypt, suggesting that success has reached its height: the king of the north has succeeded in controlling the totality of the world.

As Carol Newsom puts it, this passage "invokes the paradigm of the eschatological battle against Judah and Jerusalem as described in the postexilic prophets, especially the invasion by Gog in Ezekiel 38:8–13 and the gathering of the nations against Jerusalem in Zechariah. 14:2."² It is the scene of all earth's powers massed in unity against God's people.

The prophet Ezekiel also refers to the armies of Ethiopia and Libya in the extreme south gathered together with the forces of the North identified as Persia (Eze. 38:5) and the troops of Gomer and Togarmah (verse 6), who will come under the leadership of Gog of the land of Magog (verse 2) from the far north (verse 15) against God's people: "You will come from your place out of the far north, you and many peoples with you, . . . It will be in the latter days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me, when I am hallowed in you, O Gog, before their eyes" (verses 15, 16).

The book of Revelation refers to the same eschatological conflict initiated "on the great river Euphrates" (Rev. 16:12), which represents the north (Jer. 46:2, 6, 10). It is a gathering of all the evil forces led by "unclean spirits like frogs. . . . For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Rev. 16:13, 14). Later in the book of Revelation this gathering of evil forces is iden-

tified with the name of Gog (Rev. 20:8), which is also located in the north (Eze. 39:1, 2).

These powers now follow the king's steps, because they no longer accept the Lord's leading (Prov. 20:24; cf. Ps. 37:23; Jer. 10:23; Prov. 16:9). The worship of the king of the north, Daniel's little horn (Dan. 7:8; 8:9), has replaced the worship of God, as predicted in Revelation: "All the world . . . followed the beast" (Rev. 13:3). This description of the forces of the south now ruled by the king of the north, refers prophetically to the syndrome that will characterize the last events of human history: after long seasons of bellicosity, after generations of wars of conquest and confrontation, the south and the north find a way to walk at the same pace, on the same path, united in the same project. State and church, politics and religion, along with many who consider themselves secular and open-minded, will align under the spiritual ideals of an earthly ruler they hail as their god in the building of the kingdom of earth.

SPIRITUALITY OVER POLITICS

The remarkable alignment of once-rival bodies and contending forces does not depend on any nation's election cycle. It is not propelled by leaders of human institutions seeking for peace in unity by parliamentary vote, or action in the United States' houses of congress, or the United Nations General Assembly or its Security Council. Any or many or all of these political means may be seen to act in the human realm. But the ultimate alignment of powers in the final confrontation between good and evil is no secular, temporal matter. Rather, it is the work of miracle-working demons marshaling forces against the Almighty (Rev. 16:14).

It is the world climax of deception, as misguided and presumptuous, believer and cynic, religious and secular, Communist and Catholic find common ground and response to supernatural impulses: to the dragon who gives power to the beast (Rev. 13:4); the dragon who still craves the attention he longed for at the beginning of the controversy between transparency and deception

that shows him nurturing new notions of greatness (Isa. 14:13); who fell victim to his own invention of sin—specifically, pride (Eze. 28:17)—that occurred at the beginning of, and became the controversy; who knows his time is limited (Rev. 12:12); and who, in his rage of personal failure, inspires his last terror campaign against the people God identifies as His remnant (verse 17).

This final battle between truth and dissembling does not allow for neutral ground or nonaligned personnel. What Daniel sees is an eager commitment for unity based on human terms and strategies as it was in the days of Babel's builders (Gen. 11:1, 4, 6), a choice for worshipping the Creator or trusting in creaturely self. Daniel says, "they will mingle . . . ; but they will not adhere And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up His own indestructible kingdom; "and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever" (Dan. 2:43,44).

But before that end comes, a creature the demons exalt will come to receive the worship of all the earth: "authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation" (Rev. 13:7), the very event described as the gathering of "the kings of the earth and of the whole world" (Rev. 16:14).

No one can say precisely how these movements of unity will come about. But God's Word makes clear the power of supernatural deception to produce a paradox of unity among prideful entities all longing for preeminence, and finding in demonic alignment the best hope of their own ascendancy as Satan's lying wonders fill them with awe³ and bring secular-minded materialists into line with misguided theists "through the power of spiritualism."⁴

NO LONGER A DISTANT PROSPECT

The Bible's predicted scenario of blaspheming unification has already begun. Multiple human powers today strive to unite on every level: cultural, religious, economic, political, military. Alli-

ances that once seemed impossible between fiercely hostile nations are now materializing before our astonished eyes.

At the level of popular culture people across the globe follow common trends in fashion, music, food, and entertainment. Even ideologies such as modernism, postmodernism, and post-Christianity now exist and grow as global trends, a phenomenon dramatically amplified by the development of mass communications. People from disparate corners of earth now seem to know everything about each other as the world becomes more and more the one "global village" that Marshall McLuhan predicted some 50 years ago.⁵ Traditionally staunch enemies, the Roman Catholic Church, king of the north, and the secular state power, king of the south, are coming into closer and closer alignment.

At the same time, in this science-driven, ultra-technological age, there is the paradoxical intensification of interest in paranormal phenomena and manifestations of spiritism. Near-death experiences become the stuff of national television reportage and popular magazines, advancing the deception that there is life after death.

Our guard and protection in this hour of lies must be the same as Jesus employed when the devil's challenge was boldest: to every taunt, charge, and suggestion Jesus' answer was the same: "It is written." It worked for Him. It will work just as well for us. ♣

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, Bible texts are from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

² Carol A. Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, Old Testament Library (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox, 2014), p. 357.

³ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 612.

⁴ Angel Manuel Rodríguez, *Daniel 11 and the Islam Interpretation*. Biblical Research Institute Release 13 (Silver Spring, Md.: Biblical Research Institute, 2015), p. 22.

⁵ See Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), pp. 34, 93.

Jacques Doukhan is general editor of the *Seventh-day Adventist International Bible Commentary*.

THE SNARES OF SATAN REVEALED

ELLEN G. WHITE

The great deceiver shows his hand.

As the people of God approach the perils of the last days, Satan holds earnest consultation with his angels as to the most successful plan of overthrowing their faith. He sees that the popular churches are already lulled to sleep by his deceptive power. By pleasing sophistry and lying wonders he can continue to hold them under his control. . . .

SATAN'S PLAN

Says the great deceiver: "We must watch those who are calling the attention of the people to the Sabbath of Jehovah; they will lead many to see the claims of the law of God; and the same light which reveals the true Sabbath reveals also the ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, and shows that the last work for man's salvation is now going forward. Hold the minds of the people in darkness till that work is ended, and we shall secure the world and the church also.

"The Sabbath is the great question which is to decide the destiny of souls. We must exalt the sabbath of our creating. We have caused it to be accepted by both worldlings and church members; now the church must be led to unite with the world in its support. We must work by signs and wonders to blind their eyes to the truth, and lead them to lay aside reason and the fear of God and follow custom and tradition.

"I will influence popular ministers to turn the attention of their hearers from the commandments of God. That which the Scriptures declare to be a perfect law of liberty shall be represented as a yoke of bondage. The people accept their minister's explanations of Scripture and do not investigate for themselves. . . .

"But our principal concern is to silence this sect of Sabbath keepers. We must excite popular indignation against them. We will enlist great men and worldly-wise men upon our side, and induce those in authority to carry out our purposes. Then the sabbath which I have set up shall be enforced by laws the most severe and exacting. Those who

disregard them shall be driven out from the cities and villages, and made to suffer hunger and privation.

“When once we have the power, we will show what we can do with those who will not swerve from their allegiance to God. We led the Romish church to inflict imprisonment, torture, and death upon those who refused to yield to her decrees; and now that we are bringing the Protestant churches and the world into harmony with this right arm of our strength, we will finally have a law to exterminate all who will not submit to our authority. . . .

THE LURES OF SATAN

“But before proceeding to these extreme measures, we must exert all our wisdom and subtlety to deceive and ensnare those who honor the true Sabbath. We can separate many from Christ by worldliness, lust, and pride. They may think themselves safe because they believe the truth, but indulgence of appetite or the lower passions, which will confuse judgment and destroy discrimination, will cause their fall.

“Go, make the possessors of lands and money drunk with the cares of this life. Present the world before them in its most attractive light, that they may lay up their treasure here and fix their affections upon earthly things. We must do our utmost to prevent those who labor in God’s cause from obtaining means to use against us. Keep the money in our own ranks. The more means they obtain, the more they will injure our kingdom by taking from us our subjects. Make them care more for money than for the upbuilding of Christ’s kingdom and the spread of the truths we hate, and we need not fear their influence; for we know that every selfish, covetous person will fall under our power, and will finally be separated from God’s people.

“Through those that have a form of godliness but know not the power, we can gain many who would otherwise do us harm. Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God will be our most effective helpers. Those of this class who are apt and intel-

ligent will serve as decoys to draw others into our snares. Many will not fear their influence, because they profess the same faith.

“We will thus lead them to conclude that the requirements of Christ are less strict than they once believed, and that by conformity to the world they would exert a greater influence with worldlings. Thus they will separate from Christ; then they will have no strength to resist our power, . . .

TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD

“Until the great decisive blow shall be struck, our efforts against commandment keepers must be untiring. We must be present at all their gatherings. In their large meetings especially our cause will suffer much, and we must exercise great vigilance, and employ all our seductive arts to prevent souls from hearing the truth and becoming impressed by it.

“I will have upon the ground, as my agents, men holding false doctrines mingled with just enough truth to deceive souls. I will also have unbelieving ones present who will express doubts in regard to the Lord’s messages of warning to His church. Should the people read and believe these admonitions, we could have little hope of overcoming them. But if we can divert their attention from these warnings, they will remain ignorant of our power and cunning, and we shall secure them in our ranks at last. . . .

“We must cause distraction and division. We must destroy their anxiety for their own souls, and lead them to criticize, to judge, and to accuse and condemn one another, and to cherish selfishness and enmity. For these sins, God banished us from His presence; and all who follow our example will meet a similar fate.” ♣

This excerpt is taken from *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1962), pages 472-475. Seventh-day Adventists believe that **Ellen G. White** (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.

HEIDI'S HEALTH KITCHEN

A unique business-ministry hybrid

HEIDI LIV TOMPKINS AND IVAN JOSHUA RAJ



At Heidi's Health Kitchen, founded in 2014, we offer cooking classes, health lectures, Bible studies, and Bible-based business consulting. Additionally, we provide whole foods and plant-based catering, manufacture carob products, and operate an Adventist restaurant on a "pop-up" basis. God has used Heidi's Health Kitchen through each of these methods to reach people in New York City and around the world!

SHARING CHRIST IN OUR MARKETPLACE

In our "pop-up" restaurant we constantly see God blessing hearts through our friendly smiles, peaceful Adventist music, GLOW tracts on each table, and the delicious plant-based food and desserts we serve. We began operating our "pop-up" restaurant in November 2016, and in both of our service locations we've seen warm reactions from patrons as they learn that we are Seventh-day Adventist Christians who care about each of them and their physical, mental, and spiritual health.

Much prayer goes into this ongoing endeavor. We consistently pray for our regular patrons, as well as those whom God chooses to bring into our atmosphere of light and peace during the 60 to 90 minutes they spend eating dinner at Heidi's Health Kitchen.

SHARING CHRIST OVERSEAS

Our gourmet carob products, which include CARUBIES carob truffles and our CARUBELLA carob spread, continue to provide financial support for our ongoing Bible work and ministry projects around the world. Heidi's Health Kitchen has Bible students in eight countries, including the United States.

The fastest-growing ministry projects include a small group of Bible students and young Adventist entrepreneurs we have trained in Bangalore, India, and the Middle East. In India our Bible students meet regularly to worship, fellowship, sing, pray, and encourage one another as they work to share the love of Jesus and the truth of the three angels' messages in their city. Through their personal witnessing and Adventist-owned businesses, they are reaching hearts with life-changing truths, where traditions and idolatry are the norm.



We see God blessing hearts through our friendly smiles, peaceful Adventist music, and delicious plant-based food and desserts.

In the Middle East a small group of 10 to 15 men and their families often meet in secret to search the Bible for truths they cannot find elsewhere. We had the wonderful privilege of studying with and preparing three of the men to be group leaders. These men then teach others what they have learned, all done via social media using

Google Translate! These three men led their groups through a full It Is Written Bible study (in Arabic and Farsi). After they finished the studies, we put them in touch with church leaders in their area who continued encouraging them in their spiritual growth.

Praise God, nine of the group have expressed interest in baptism. We are working with local Adventist leaders to prepare them for baptism safely and privately.

By God's grace and provision, we pray that this group will continue to grow and spread the gospel of Jesus Christ in the Middle East, bringing many more to the truth in a region in which truth is desperately needed. 🙏

Heidi's Health Kitchen was founded in 2014 by Ivan Raj and Heidi Liv Tompkins in Brooklyn, New York. Heidi's Health Kitchen (HeidisHealthKitchen.com) will have a booth at the ASI convention in Orlando.

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

The gospel of good health is one way to start.

SEAN WYCLIFFE

Christ's Method Alone (CMA) is a campus ministry at the University of California, Berkeley, that recently joined ASI. CMA conducts How to Get A's seminars, hosts Friday CARE groups, and coordinates other activities that lead to Bible studies and discipleship.

Not long ago Delon Lawrence, a recent SOULS West graduate, came to stay with CMA and help out by preaching and working with campus ministries. Sean Wycliffe and Channchi Chau Wycliffe, founders of CMA, spent time talking with Delon about setting up a sustainable ministry that could reach souls in the San Francisco Bay Area while providing a way for Delon and others to earn enough income to cover life expenses.

After looking at and praying about different initiatives, the idea to sell green smoothies door to door came up in August 2017. Because of their experience (Channchi had sold green smoothies on the side before, and Delon had more than eight years of experience as a colporteur), they decided to give it a try.

People started to buy smoothies here and there, so Channchi and Delon formalized the initiative into The Fruit Tree, organic green smoothies delivered to homes and businesses. Soon they began to sell at farmers' markets. Now they have a few people working almost full-time on the project. The best part of The Fruit Tree ministry is the opportunities it provides to witness to others. Here are a few examples:

A vegan connected with Seventh-day Adventists through veganism now wants to attend church.

A Jewish customer told us she saw a documentary that mentioned Seventh-day Adventists as having higher life expectancies. This comment led to an at-the-door Bible study on health and the Sabbath.

A farmer's market vendor eventually started doing weekly Bible studies after Delon's interactions with him.

Clear answers to prayer as we follow God's instructions for medical mission work.

For Smoothie Night at our local church we invited The Fruit Tree's customer base to teach them how to make smoothies. Fifty people attended, 12 non-Adventist customers from The Fruit Tree, and three non-Adventist students from Christ's Method Alone.

A man shared how he lost 60 pounds after going

on the Daniel 1 diet. Now he's interested in attending church.

God has given us light regarding evangelistic medical missionary work being the entering wedge for the gospel.¹ (*Evangelism*, ch.122). We know that Christ's method alone will yield success: making friends and ministering to people's needs.² (*The Ministry of Healing*, 143.3). By following this counsel, we have seen people who initially resist spiritual things become open to the truth.

MAKING IT PRACTICAL

Here are some practical steps to witness to our communities:

Share knowledge or skills you already have. This could be helping students get good grades if you

did well in college, or helping them with standardized test prep or grad school applications. If you're a great cook, you can hold a cooking class at your home (advertise it as a Facebook/Meetup.com event and ask your neighbors to get the word out). This not only meets a need with a talent God has given you—it allows you to build relationships that can be infused with gospel evangelism.

Start small, but start soon. A lot of evangelism initiatives never happen because of excessive planning. Have an idea to start a Pathway to Health-type event in your area? If you don't have access to resources to host a large event, start with holding a free dental care clinic with one dentist, or a health table with one nurse. Big initiatives often start small; it's often best to get out and start and let God lead from there.

Don't be afraid of failure. Most successful evangelistic initiatives encounter a good amount of failure before things really start to work. Failure gives us a chance to pray, depend on God, grow spiritually, and learn from our mistakes. If you don't see success right away, keep on moving forward in faith!

The Fruit Tree expects to continue to expand across northern California, and the team has been praying about plans to secure land and start a farm that grows nutrient-dense greens that can be used for smoothies. It is also looking at other ministry initiatives for the farm, such as a vegan bed-and-breakfast, a day spa with medical massage, hydrotherapy, etc. (i.e. a modern sanitarium).

As this initiative has grown, The Fruit Tree now seeks more workers to help sell drinks and work in the kitchen. It is also looking for donations and/or investments to help with securing land and appropriate vehicles (the team currently uses a Honda Civic and a Ford Focus, not ideal for a farmers' market organization).

Interested in learning more? Reach Christ's Method Alone at info@ChristMethodAlone.org.

¹ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946), pp. 516-519.

² Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1905), p. 143.

Sean Wycliffe is one of the founders of Christ's Method Alone, a Bible-based campus ministry at the University of California, Berkeley.



A BLACK, LEATHER-BOUND FLEECE

When we don't know, God does.

KRISTI JENSEN

At an ASI Southern Union Conference chapter meeting I had the privilege of sitting down with Al Trace, director of the School of Massage at Black Hills Health and Education Center in Hermosa, South Dakota. Before moving to South Dakota, Trace taught advanced massage techniques at Wildwood. Al shared with me his incredible testimony of following God's lead in his life during tough years of hardship and health challenges.

As we began Al said, "A lot of times as Christians we are challenged to know how to share the gospel. . . . But I would always tell my students that everyone's got a story. God allows us experiences that can be life-changing. I may not be able to challenge people with doctrinal statements, but nobody can refute my story."

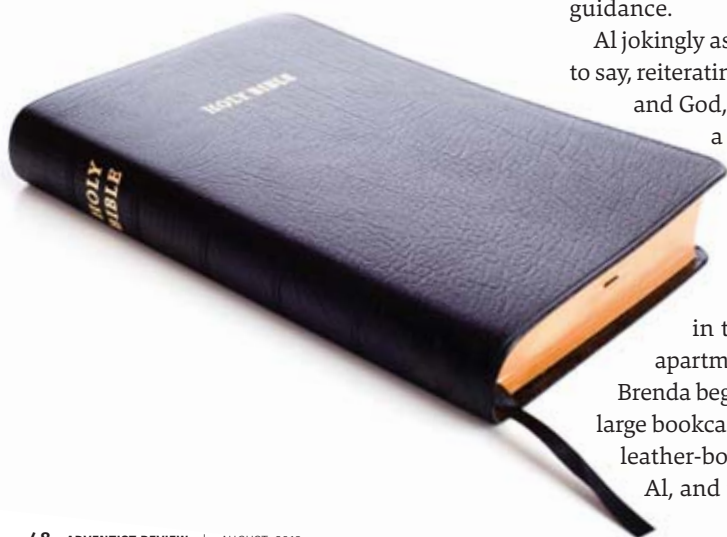
BEGINNING AGAIN

Seventeen years ago Al married Brenda, a woman he met online. Both Al and Brenda had been in previous marriages. Before they committed themselves to each other, they wanted to be sure that God would bless their relationship. Unbeknownst to Al, when Brenda and her ex-husband divorced she prayed that if God wanted her to remarry, He would give her a clear sign: not just any sign, but a black, leather-bound Bible.

Only a week and a half after meeting Brenda, Al proposed. Brenda agreed, but the newly engaged couple was still waiting upon the Lord for His blessing before marriage. Brenda admitted to Al that she'd "laid out a fleece, like Gideon," when in the Bible Gideon sought God's guidance.

Al jokingly asked for a hint, but Brenda refused to say, reiterating that the fleece was between her and God, and that she had never breathed a word about it to anyone.

Time went on, and after several months of long-distance dating, Al invited Brenda to come to northern California to meet his kids and family. Al was in the process of moving out of his apartment. On a Thursday evening Al and Brenda began packing books from one of Al's large bookcases. One of the books was a black, leather-bound Bible that had been given to Al, and that he had forgotten he owned.





“I may not be able to challenge people with doctrinal statements, but nobody can refute my story.”

He turned to Brenda and asked if she would like the Bible.

“Are you giving it to me?” she asked.

“Yes, I’m giving it to you,” Al answered.

Brenda started crying and told Al about the fleece she had laid before the Lord.

This sign encouraged Al and Brenda that the Lord would bless their relationship. Seventeen years later they are still happily married.

Al and Brenda have continued to seek God in all they do, even following His call to South Dakota to be director of a massage school. Al’s enthusiasm and passion radiated as we spoke. His testimony is a humble reminder that God still works in our lives today. He still calls us, leads us, and guides us. God’s leading in our lives is our greatest testimony, because as Al said, nobody can refute a personal story.

Kristi Jensen is content editor/creator for ASI.

LORD, I SURRENDER

The difference we make when we put God first

ESTHER ESPINOZA

Buried under the covers, heart racing, I held my breath as I turned another page of my Nancy Drew novel. Would the stalker attack her? Would she be discovered? Oh, no! She's just been whacked on the head by the bad guy. My 9-year-old heart froze; would she survive?

Books were my world. But not any old books. They needed to have a good mystery to make them interesting.

Browsing through the bookshelves in the school library, I started discovering some amazing authors. Not only were they writing mysteries, but their stories were entwined with ghosts, spirits, and magic. Something about those books stimulated my mind. I was spellbound.

Twenty years later I was at my desk writing ghost stories for children. I dreamed of the day I would become a well-known author. I imagined sitting at a book signing with hundreds of little fans holding my precious book for me to autograph. I wanted to make a difference, leave a legacy, and be known. I wanted my stories to empower children.

I sent every story I wrote to a publishing house, but my hopes and dreams were shattered each time a rejection letter arrived in the mail. What else could I add to make them more sizzling? They were already dripping with mystery, spirits, and ghosts.

WHOM I SERVE

One afternoon as I was driving home with my mum, I started complaining that another publishing house didn't want my story.

My mum was silent as I ranted on. Then she said, "Why do you write about ghosts and spirits?"

"Because it's exciting!"

"But we Christians don't believe in any of that."

Of course I knew that! "Writing is just make-believe. It isn't true," I answered.

"Esther," she paused, letting my name linger in the air. "You can become an amazing, famous writer!"

I smiled. That was exactly what I wanted!

She continued: "And you can become a great instrument in the hands of Satan."

Excuse me? I tightened my grip on the steering wheel. But she wasn't finished. "But God can give you all the fame you want. You would be writing for Him and for His glory."

I gasped.

"Why don't you write Christian books instead?"

"Christian books are boring! What am I going to write about? No way; I can't!" I shuddered at the thought, but the battle in my heart had begun.

All week my mum's words "*You can become a great instrument in the hands of Satan*" tormented me. I could feel the spiritual battle raging through my soul. I didn't have peace; everywhere I turned those words echoed. The battle was real! I started feeling the spiritual world fighting for my soul. I couldn't handle it anymore; I was going crazy.

One Saturday morning, upset that my peace had been disrupted, I knelt to pray. I knew what I had to say, but I couldn't bring myself to say it. If I let go of my secular books, my dreams of being an author would die. I wrestled with God in turmoil until finally my heart shouted, "OK, OK, God. I surrender!"

That was it. No fancy words, no elaborate prayer. Just the simple words "I surrender."



Then I calmly whispered, “Lord, I surrender. I will write for You.” Instantly the intense battle subsided, and a serene peace lingered. The battle was over.

I knew to whom I belonged, and whom I needed to serve.

FIVE SISTERS, ONE HEART

My desire to do more for God grew each day, and I wanted to reach out and make a difference. I prayed for 12 months, asking Him to show me what He wanted me to do. Then one day in June 2011 He handed me a dream, beautifully wrapped with all its trimmings, ready to be untied.

When my younger sister, Steph, shared her idea of doing a Christian magazine for teen girls, I embraced the concept. I knew that God was opening doors. I had been around teen girls for many years and knew the struggles they faced each day. Most were being held hostage in their own minds; trapped, confused, lonely, and trying desperately to understand anorexia, bulimia, comparison with peers, and sexual purity. Subjects that, unfortunately, are pretty much taboo in Christian churches and homes.

My other sisters joined in the excitement. The possibility of making a difference in someone’s life felt indescribable. In less than two months 5 Sisters Ministry was born, and so began our journey into the unknown waters of publishing. Many mistakes, heartaches, and tears later we distributed the very first issue of *GIGI (Gorgeous in God’s Image)* magazine.

From the very beginning *GIGI*’s aim has been to remind young women to value who they are. It stands for more than physical beauty; it stands for who we are in Christ. When we believe that we are gorgeous in Him our whole perspective in life changes. We are empowered through restoration.

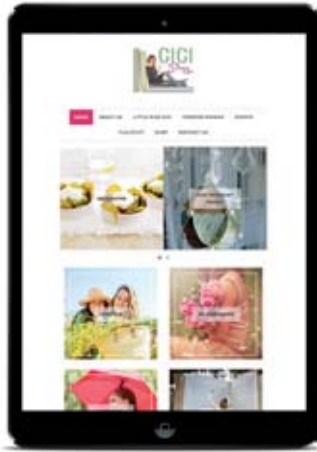
FIVE SISTERS CALLED TO DO MORE

The popularity of the magazine was growing. Teen girls and their families were e-mailing us and sharing testimonies of how God was helping them through *GIGI*. We were elated. God was working, restoring, and empowering girls.

In the midst of our excitement God spoke to our hearts, telling us we needed to do more.

In March 2013 we started the *GIGI* Rally. A one-day program for teen girls, their mums, aunts, friends, and grandmothers. More than 180 girls get to experience music, drama, and great speakers who discuss the issues many girls face.

We also started a magazine for women 30+ called *Forever Woman*, and a magazine for little girls called *Little Miss GIGI*.



THE HARDEST DECISION

Unfortunately, the dream came to an abrupt end in September 2015, when we stopped the printing of the magazines because of a lack of finances. However, we know God has a plan and is opening different doors to reach girls and women of all ages. Meanwhile, we continue uplifting our girls via our *GIGI* blog, workshops, and Bible study books. This year I’m launching a podcast for little girls and sharing wonderful Christian stories. I want

them to be excited about Jesus, and to never feel that Christian stories are boring.

We are also starting an online magazine for teen girls that will be available later in the year. God hasn’t stopped working. We still don’t have funding, but somehow God always provides.

I think back on the past few years and see how far God has brought me. Gone is the fear of writing for the Christian market. Now I know that I can make a difference, leave a positive legacy, and empower girls through uplifting and godly articles. I love to write stories that will enrich their lives and draw them closer to the kingdom of God.

The most humbling experience for me has been that my *GIGI* stories about women of the Bible have been extremely popular with girls. They claim that these stories are their favorites. It blows my mind to see how God transformed my desire from writing dark stories to creating ones that glorify only Him.

I am honored to work for Jesus. 🍀

Esther Espinoza is cofounder and owner of 5 Sisters Ministry, a self-funded ministry run by five Latin sisters living in Brisbane, Australia. Their blog at www.gigidiary.com contains updates of events. This article is adapted from one that appeared in *Signs of the Times*, March 2017).

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HIDDEN, BUT NOT INSIGNIFICANT

Many Americans have seen the movie *Hidden Figures*. It is rated among the top five films viewed on video. Although it features the story of three African American females, 45 percent of those who've seen it in the United States are White, and 37 percent are Black.

With the help of 15 seminarians, we used "Hidden Figures" as our theme for the Grace Place fourth annual evangelism series and Vacation Bible School that attracted 50 parents and children (June 2-9, 2018). Each meeting we presented stories of the lives and livelihoods of men and women mentioned only once in the inspired word of God, supported by our 28 Fundamental Beliefs. We ended with the ultimate Hidden Figure, Jesus Christ (aka hidden manna [Rev. 2:17]). Many unchurched attendees responded.

We told the story of the lad reported in all four Gospels, but based on John 6:1-9, and learned that God uses ordinary people who are willing to do as He commands.

The story begins with Jesus being followed by a large crowd eager to see more miracles. Jesus had compassion for them. To Him, they seemed as sheep without a shepherd.

Jesus' disciple Philip had a mathematical attitude toward life. To test him Jesus asked, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" (John 6:5). But Philip had forgotten the resources of Jesus and His power of multiplication or simple addition and missed the opportunity to affirm the Lord's ability. Apart from the resurrection, this is the only miracle found in all four Gospels. And the lad, the central character, is mentioned only in John's Gospel, perhaps

because no one in the crowd, even Andrew who found him, thought he mattered much. No one imagined that he carried in his basket the basis for one of the most significant miracles in Jesus' ministry.

Perhaps the boy's anonymity is because John didn't intend to focus only on feeding 5,000 men and countless women and children, but to teach us that the smallest human resource, when linked with divine power, becomes omnipotent. This boy, with two fish and five barley loaves, was chosen by God to show us that no one is too small or unimportant to be part of the Messiah's redemptive plan. The message of that sacred moment is that every man, woman, and child who trusts in Jesus becomes much when surrendered to Him.

Praise God who uses ordinary people like that unnamed boy who, from the viewpoint of social position, was so poor that his bread was made from barley, cheaper than wheat. In those days barley was the ordinary, coarse black bread of Galilean peasants. The loaves were likely very small, and the fish were probably the size of sardines that fishermen often threw away; yet the poor picked them up to dress their dry loaves. God used them to feed more than 5,000 people.

God uses ordinary people and things to accomplish extraordinary feats in His kingdom. "Who dares despise the day of small things?" asked the prophet Zechariah (Zech. 4:10).

Jesus can make much out of very little. Imagine what He can do with you! 🍴

Hyveth Williams is a professor at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University.

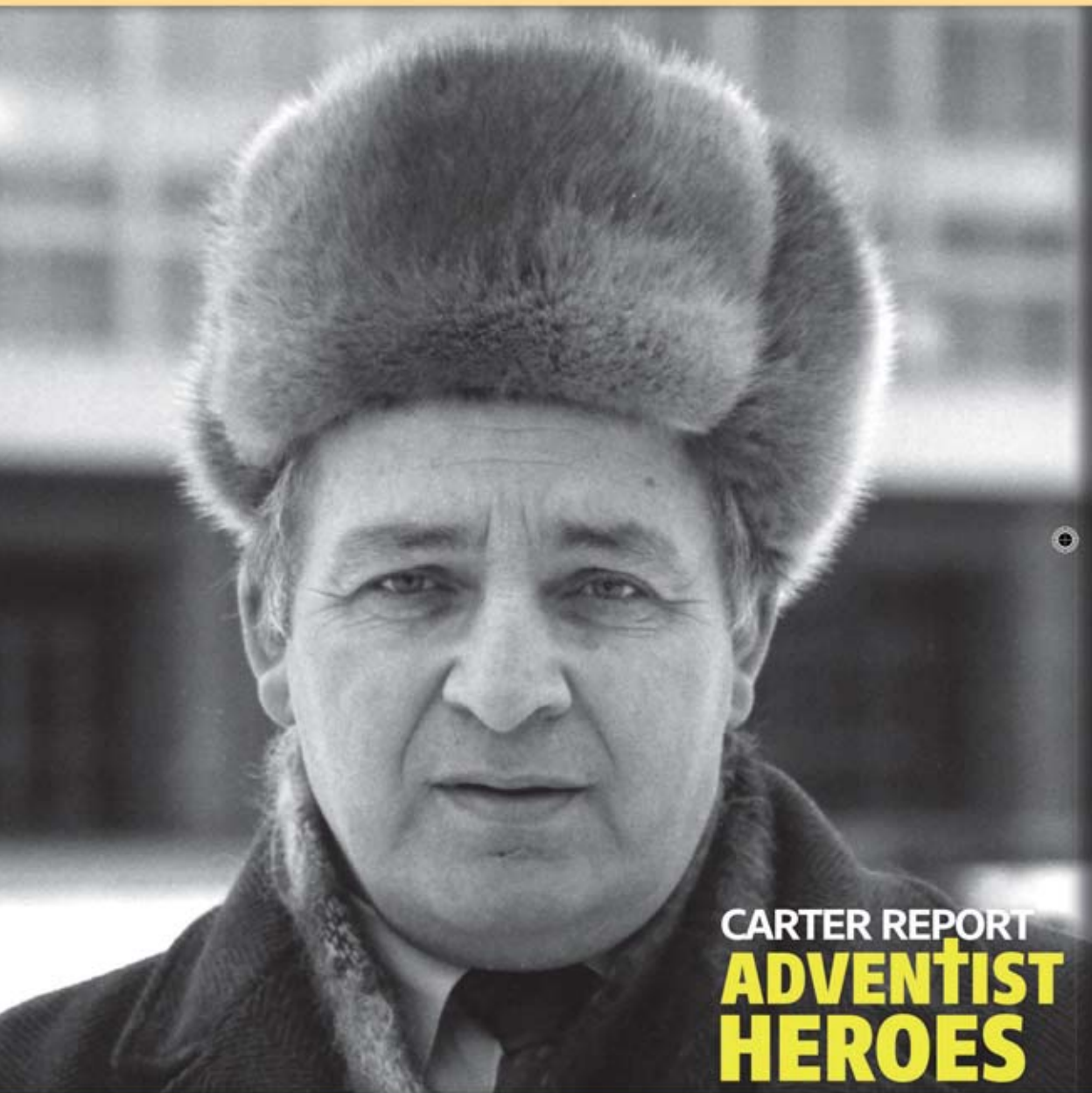
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HYVETH WILLIAMS



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ADVERTISEMENT

UKRAINIAN CHURCH LEADER *Refuses To Roll Over*



CARTER REPORT
**ADVENTIST
HEROES**

Mikhail Murga, leader of the Ukrainian Adventist Church, was ordered by the Kiev government to close down The Carter Report meetings in the huge Palace of Sport. "Never, Never, Never," said

the pastor who had already spent five years in a Soviet prison for his religious convictions. This softly spoken Union Conference President was not a yes-man. He understood the power of, "NO."

The meetings had commenced with a crowd of 30,000 with 100,000 turned away. The year was 1995. People in Ukraine after 70 years of oppressive atheistic Communism were looking for a better way. Already the campaign had experienced intense opposition with the leader of the State Church publicly vowing that John Carter would preach in Kiev, only over his dead body. With just days to go before the planned opening in the downtown auditorium, the powerful bishop suddenly died. Violence between the state militia and the priests erupted on the streets of Kiev after the government denied his burial inside the cathedral. Blood flowed. Pastor Murga remained calm in his determination that the Gospel would be preached.

The evangelistic meetings that had been approved by the Kiev City State Administration started in an atmosphere of high drama and expectancy. The glass doors of the great auditorium were shattered by crowds hungry for God. Kiev's biggest venue was packed twice a day. But great success quickly generated a fierce reaction.

Pastor Murga was told, "Close down your meetings." "Never, Never, Never," said our man. Pastor Carter was then summoned to City Hall, accompanied by pastors and church leaders. An illegal ultimatum was then issued: "You must close down your meetings, or else we will not guarantee your safety." Pastor Murga and his team urged us not to budge. With the support of the American, Australian, and Canadian embassies, The Carter Report meetings continued in spite of harassment, threats, and obstructionism.

By God's grace, we stayed the course. 3,530 precious souls were baptized in the cold waters of the Dneiper River. It could all have fizzled out and perished in ignominy. But Pastor Murga's courage turned the battle in the face of our adversaries. ***"To God be the Glory, great things He has done."*** ❖



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Seven Ways to Cope With Grief

We're rarely prepared to lose a loved one.



he surgeon lifts the knife, the limb is severed, blood flows. Fortunately, the patient is anesthetized; the doctor had prepared her for this loss, and powerful medications would diminish the pain. Now she has to renegotiate life practices, relearn how to use the rest of her body to compensate for the missing part.

Losing someone we love is somewhat like this epic event, except that one is not always prepared. We don't always know in advance. We aren't anesthetized when it happens. And no pain medications are available to ease our grief.

I certainly wasn't prepared when my husband simply dropped dead halfway between the kitchen and the garage two years ago. No goodbyes. No last "I love you"s. To make matters worse, we had just had an unpleasant disagreement, and now my soul was weighted with guilt on top of shock. As the ambulance personnel tried to pump life back into his still form, I cried into his ear, "Live, Mirko, live!" But his blue eyes registered nothing, and a friend hugged my trembling body as I faced the consequences of life in an evil world.

COPING WITH GRIEF

In the following days, weeks, and months, God brought thoughts to my mind and people to my home to guide my grieving. Through this very difficult experience, here is what I have learned:

BRENDA KIŠ

1 *Lean into your grief.* Don't try to ignore it, deny it, cover it up with busyness, or run away from it. If we are to fully heal, we must fully grieve. So what does that mean? It means that you face what has happened and think about it in the context of prayer. Cry your feelings and fears out to God. Thank Him for the years you had together, for the impact of your relationship. Confess what you need to confess about that relationship and receive forgiveness. Then praise God for His wisdom and understanding, for His ability to see what you cannot, for His love greater than yours for the loved one you lost, and for His plans that may seem to have been cut short. Remember, you are praying from the dimension of time, but God answers from the dimension of eternity. As your world appears to implode, God's timeless provision for His children is still available.

2 *Tell and listen to stories about your loved one.* One month after my husband died I invited some of his students from the university where he used to teach to my home on Sabbath. We ate together, then we sat and talked about my husband's life and what was significant to each of us based on our personal experiences and relationships with him. We took a walk down his favorite road, where he and I had passed many pleasant hours together on foot. We watched a DVD of one of his camp meeting sermons that focused on his life story, then I gave each student a copy of the DVD along with a book he had written. The students

stayed until late in the evening, and we were all blessed in remembering together.

3 *Go to the places your loved one cherished and relive them once more.* The next time you go may not hurt as much. Eventually you will be able to build a new story without that person, and without feeling guilty for letting go.

4 *Allow your vision to open wider.* How we think about events is powerful. Envision the span of history on earth. View yourself as one of billions of survivors who have even thrived after their loss. If they made it through, you can too. In fact, you can grow and become a better person, more compassionate and understanding. Begin to see people through God's eyes, wounded by the same enemy who brought death to your door.

5 *Make grief your ally as you seek to bless others.* Don't let your loved one's life go to waste. As I sorted through my husband's things, I thought of ways they could be useful to someone else. I recycled his clothing by donating it to the seminary where he'd taught, for international students who often come under challenging circumstances and with few belongings. His papers and articles went to the Center for Adventist Research as a resource for students. His library was packed up and sent overseas to smaller schools in need of resources. I wrote his life story for my sons and gave it to them on Father's Day. You can also bless others by finding people who need a card of

Ask Him to show you ways to make your suffering a conduit to reach the world for God.

encouragement, some fresh-baked cookies, a visit or an invitation to your home. Knowing what it feels like to be lonely and thrust into a new and unwelcomed world without your loved one, you can find ways to minister to people who also are suffering.

6 *Try out new things in your quest for a new identity.* One of the aspects of grieving that I never anticipated was an identity crisis. As Mrs. Kiš I knew who I was and what role I played. I had never before been a single woman out from under the wings of either my father or my husband. “Who am I now?” was a question that drifted about in my subconscious. I had to find my new self.

Once I was done dealing with my husband’s things, I thought about the changes I wanted to make in my house and started renovating. I changed my hairstyle and bought a few new clothes. I went to programs with or without others. I traveled to new places. I made some new friends and set new goals.

Above all, remember that you are still the beloved child of God that you have always been. Good fathers don’t abandon their children; instead, they help them through the twists and turns of life. “My God shall supply all your need” (Phil. 4:19, KJV), is something I reminded myself of often.

7 *Live in the presence of God.* When loneliness seeks to overwhelm you, speak aloud to the ever-present Christ. I was continually surrounded by the atmosphere of heaven during my grieving. Because Jesus was already my dearest friend, His presence was felt throughout my mourning. Even though my most intimate earthly friend was gone, my Best Friend was still with me. This kind of relationship is cultivated through time spent together in daily devotions. Read His Word. Talk to Him. Ask Him to show you ways to make your suffering a conduit to reach the world for God.

Your feelings will tell you that something isn’t right, but they must not have the last word. Feel your feelings, but don’t live by them. God needs your witness. You have been left alive for a purpose. When you find it, you can live well and joyfully. ♣

Brenda Kiš is retired from Adventist Frontier Missions on the campus of Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Her husband, Miroslav Kiš, who also was retired, died following a heart attack on February 23, 2018, at age 73. Miroslav most recently served as professor of Christian ethics and chair of the Department of Theology and Christian Philosophy at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. To learn more about Miroslav’s life and work, go to www.adventistreview.org/church-news/story3732-miroslav-kis-giant-in-adventist-ethics-who-wouldnt-tell-a-falsehood-dead-at-73.

REMEMBERING THE BEST

The rustic wooden lodge reverberated with anthems of praise. Melodies came from more than 150 men, men who refused to compromise and settle for mediocrity. I felt God's presence. In my heart I saw angels among us, adding their perfect pitch to our feeble notes.

Tears rolled down my cheeks and I remembered moments I once knew but might have forgotten along the way.

WHERE IT ALL STARTED

This year marks the 10-year anniversary of my column "Introducing the Why," the very first of which was entitled "The Best Spiritual Times."

I was a senior at Union College, with plenty of those times fresh in my memory. Youth retreats at Broken Arrow Ranch. Campfire altar calls that changed the course of young lives. Late-night dorm room talks that seemed to be bigger than the moment.

These experiences inspired me to write that first column, reminding myself that times of spiritual depth and rejuvenation don't happen only when we go to church; sometimes the "church" comes to us, "wherever two of three are gathered." Here are a few lines from that original piece.

"Over the next hour we seamlessly transitioned from hymn to praise song and back again. The more talented harmonized, while the rest of us simply let words flow from our lips. . . . Then one small voice began to pray; before long each of us had poured out our pain and sorrow to our God—and each other. Though I couldn't see them, I believe there wasn't a dry eye in the tree house.

"In that old, wooden, elevated sanctuary, we held a church service. There were no pews,

no cross-adorned altars and no sermons. We worshipped God with everything we had, wrapped our arms around each other in support and bared our souls to our Creator."

BACK AGAIN

In June I went on a men's retreat after being invited by my friend Stephen. It was a real retreat, complete with mountains, single cabin mattresses, and morning treks to the showers.

"Have you ever been to something like this before?" Stephen asked.

"I used to go on these types of things all the time back in college," I said, like I was referring to something that happened yesterday. Then I realized: *Man, that was 10 years ago.*

A few weeks later, I found myself atop the California wilderness in a rustic wooden lodge, pouring out my heart to God with men who had walked through the shadow of death and emerged on the other side as warriors for Christ.

I was reminded of a lot during those 48 hours. I was reminded that being a good husband and father doesn't begin with what I do, but with who I am. I was reminded that being a lifelong Christian doesn't mean that I know everything. It means that I still have a lot to learn.

Most of all, I was reminded to *remember*. To remember that the best spiritual times don't necessarily come from routine; sometimes they come from making the choice to break it. ♣

Jimmy Phillips is regional marketing director for Adventist Health Southern California.

INTRODUCING
THE WHY
JIMMY
PHILLIPS



BEING A LIFELONG
CHRISTIAN DOESN'T
MEAN THAT I KNOW
EVERYTHING; IT
MEANS THAT I STILL
HAVE A LOT TO
LEARN.

Life Stories

The *Adventist Review* has been a source of instruction and inspiration for nearly 170 years. Much of that inspiration comes from our readers who have used its pages to tell their stories of God's faithfulness in their lives.

In this month's issue we share how God has led in the lives of three of our readers. Perhaps their stories will serve as a reminder how God has led you. If you have a keyboard, or a pen and paper, we'd love to hear from you. Your story of God's providence may appear in a future issue of *Adventist Review* to inspire others.—Editors.

An Angel in a Chevy?

He obviously knew what to do.

RAYMOND PILON

I've always believed in angels. I knew that they were there and that they helped people. But the idea of me encountering an angel never crossed my mind until the morning of August 31, 1997.

The day before was a Sabbath, but I had no plans to attend church. In fact, I hadn't been to church in nearly nine months. I was in the military, stationed in Maryland, and according to most standards I was still a newlywed.

FIVE LITTLE WORDS

I woke up around 8:30. The bed felt nice, and I could see the morning calm outside our bedroom window. I was just starting to think of what I might want for breakfast when my wife snuggled up and whispered five words that scared me to death: "I think I'm in labor."

Launched from my bed, I nearly tripped over my feet in a state of utter panic. Surprisingly, my wife was calm. She reminded me that we were ready for this. We had a hospital bag already packed and a "what to do when in labor" checklist, and arrangements had been made for the delivery to take place at the civilian hospital in the town just west of my Army base.

When I had calmed down enough to drive, we loaded up and began the 20-mile drive from the base to



the hospital. I still remember turning onto the rural highway, convinced that I needed to set a new speed record for fastest commute.

At milepost 10 we blew a tire. Convinced that I must have done something really rotten to atone for, we flip-flopped into the only gas station on the highway between the base and the hospital.

As I pulled up, a rather rough-looking fellow sitting behind the cashier's booth smiled and said, "Morning, pal. Want a fill-up?"

"No!" I said. "My wife's in labor, and we just blew a tire!"

When I said this, he leaped from behind the booth and said, "You better climb into my Nova. I'll close up shop and drive you."

I was in no position to argue, fully convinced that our baby would be born in a matter of seconds.

I helped my wife into the back seat of his Nova, and we began to experience the car ride of our lives. Our driver pegged the speedometer at 80 miles per hour the entire way, laying on the horn whenever we came upon another vehicle. We came to a screeching halt in front of the glass doors of the hospital emergency room.

Before I could help my wife out of the back seat, this guy had already run into the hospital, commandeered a wheelchair, and brought it to the side of the car near our door, all the while yelling at the top of his voice, "We're having a baby! We're having a baby!"

As I pushed my wife toward the hospital doors I could hear his car tires screech as he sped away from the temporary parking. I gave a quick, short

wave and continued into the hospital. Ten hours later our daughter, Emalie, was born.

THANKS FOR NOTHING?

With mother and baby doing fine, we spent a quiet, comfortable night at the hospital. The next morning I left the hospital in a taxi to retrieve my car and get the flat fixed. As I climbed out of the taxi at the service station I said hello to the woman in the booth. I told her why I was there and asked if the fellow who had helped me the day before was working so I could thank him for what he did.

She looked at me as if I were drunk, in the wrong place, or both. She informed me in a matter-of-fact tone that she was the owner of the service station and that she had no male employees.

So make of that what you will. Who was the guy who helped my wife and me? I have no way of proving that he was an angel, so I don't know for sure. But I know for sure that God knows the plans He has for us. I also know that sometimes He fulfills those plans in very interesting ways.

Our daughter was born 10 hours after we arrived at the hospital, so getting there quickly was not necessary. However, if I had not been speeding, I would not have blown a tire. If I had not blown a tire, we wouldn't have needed a ride from a stranger. If I had not accepted that ride, I would have had no need to go back and retrieve my car. Had I not gone to retrieve my car, I would not have met the gas station owner. And I would not be writing this story, saying that I believe in angels. ▀

Raymond Pilon lives in Springfield, Oregon. He and his wife are now parents of three children.

Who was
the guy who
helped my
wife and me?



The Smell of Faithfulness

Small miracles are miracles nonetheless.

JULIE COOK

The battle began at prayer meeting. The Israelites had gathered at Mizpah to fast and confess their sins. “While Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to engage Israel in battle. But that day the Lord thundered with a loud thunder against the Philistines and threw them into such a panic that they were routed before the Israelites” (1 Sam. 7:10).

Samuel’s response to God’s victory was to place a stone between Mizpah and Shen. He named the stone Ebenezer saying, “Thus far the Lord has helped us” (verse 12).

Imagine how precious the Ebenezer became to every Israelite who journeyed that way: “Do you remember how terrified we were when the Philistines were closing in on us? We were as good as finished. But God sent the thunder!”

WHAT WE REMEMBER

What is your stone of remembrance? My stone of remembrance is not something I see, but something I smell. For me, the scent of God’s faithfulness is the fragrance of roses.

My fragrance story began when an appeal was made to donate toiletries to some missionaries visiting our school on the tiny remote island of Majuro, in the Marshall Islands. As I considered the appeal, my mind went to my two 24-ounce bottles of shampoo. I had brought them all the way from the United States, since I had been warned that shampoo was expensive in Majuro. That shampoo was meant to last me the whole year!

Living on a volunteer missionary stipend had been tough. I had just enough money for a spare diet, laundry, and the occasional 25-cent pancakes on Sunday mornings at a local restaurant.

So when the speaker asked for toiletries, my immediate response was “Not my shampoo, Lord!”

But the conviction came: “Give one of your bottles to them.” So I did.

SOMETHING STRANGE

At first I didn’t really notice; but then something funny seemed to happen with my remaining bottle of shampoo. It didn’t go down very quickly. Day after day I washed my hair, but the amount of shampoo in the bottle seemed to stay the same. I wondered if the miracle of the widow’s oil and flour (1 Kings 17:8-16) was happening to me. I couldn’t tell for sure.

Though I had no absolute proof, I could tell that God was supplying my need. People started giving me shampoo. I even got a gift box from the U.S. with shampoo in it. Who sends shampoo in a gift package? After a while I had a little line



of shampoo bottles stored under my bed. In fact, when it was time to leave the country, I had more shampoo than I could pack.

IT'S THE THOUGHT THAT COUNTS

Giving a bottle of shampoo away was a small thing, yet God graciously honored that gift. Even more valuable than receiving so many bottles of shampoo has been the constant memory of God's faithfulness. The shampoo that seemed to stay the same level was rose-scented. To this day when I find myself stressed or worried about the future, I buy rose-scented shampoo. I wash my hair with it, and the lingering aroma reminds me how God will provide my Ebenezer.

What's yours? What might God's faithfulness smell like, taste like, feel like, look like, or sound like?

Everything around us can remind us of who God is. Ellen White wrote, "The cross of Calvary is stamped on every loaf. It is reflected in every water spring." As we eat our bread in the morning, we can remember Jesus' body broken for us. Driving home at night, we can look at the stars and be reminded of His constant love. "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge" (Ps. 19:1, 2).

I want my Ebenezers to be embedded in all my senses. I want to encode God's faithfulness through every smell, taste, touch, sight, and sound. 🍀

* Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940), p. 660.

Julie Cook, an English professor, lives in Orlando, Florida.

Final Words

Why should forgiveness be the last thing we talk about?

KIMBERLY CARR

It was a cool fall day when I pulled up to the home of a new hospice referral. Dorothy greeted me at the door and quietly welcomed me into her home. She introduced me to her husband, Joe, whose face was gently creased from years of working outdoors.

We chatted about their life together and how long they had lived in their home. Dorothy told me about her recent diagnosis of cancer, and we discussed things she might need. I offered to set up an aide to help her with bathing and personal care. We talked about equipment that could be ordered to make caring for her easier and to help keep her more comfortable.

Dorothy rested in a faded recliner and listened intently. Her pale-blue eyes didn't reveal any of the thoughts running through her head. She quietly accepted the offer of equipment but refused any nursing or hospice aide care. Her husband nodded in agreement: "Whatever Dorothy wants."

Dorothy walked me to the door. She asked, "Will you come when I need you?"

"Yes, I will." I left my phone numbers and walked down the sidewalk paved with small stones and surrounded by daisies.

IT'S TIME

Several months later I received a call from Dorothy. "I need you now. Will you come?"

I went that afternoon and was greeted at the door by her husband. Dorothy was lying quietly in her recliner; both legs propped up to help relieve the swelling. Her abdomen was swollen; her skin was pale, almost translucent. Dorothy's blue eyes were shadowed, and she appeared to be in pain. Joe quickly left the room so we could visit.

I completed my nursing assessment quickly, trying not to tire her. She was getting around with difficulty and made very few trips from her chair to the bedroom and back. Her breathing was labored after just a few steps. I ordered oxygen and a hospital bed and placed them in her bedroom so she could be comfortable at night.



I asked if she would like someone to help her bathe several times a week. “I would prefer you helping me. I’m afraid that a lot of people coming in and out might upset Joe.”

We talked openly about her hopes, her fears, and briefly touched on spiritual matters. She seemed reticent, almost shy when talking about God, even though she seemed well acquainted with Him. After bathing and changing clothes, we prayed together, and I asked God for strength, peace, and comfort in the days ahead.

I went in search of Joe and found him sitting on the back porch. He was quiet, grieving already for whom he was about to lose: his wife and companion of 55 years. We talked about the garden and flowers that Dorothy had lovingly tended; his workshop and other things that were important to him. He carefully avoided any discussion about Dorothy’s impending death and what it would mean to him.

PRESSING FORWARD

Soon I began visiting three times a week. Tippy, the dog, greeted me at the door each time, and Joe would silently fade away, leaving Dorothy and me to our visit.

Thoughts flitted through my head: *Where are her children? Why aren’t they here with their mother when she is so close to death?* Dorothy kept in touch with them, she said, and she

**“I’m ready to die now.
It feels so good to be ready.”**

said that she would tell them when to come.

Eventually Dorothy shared some stories about her children. One son lived in Alaska, one in Turkey, a daughter in California and another son in Maryland. All were far away from her Midwestern home.

I soon became Dorothy’s pastor, her social worker, and her confidant. Sometimes the load seemed too heavy to bear. Dorothy refused any others in her home.

Our hospice team discussed her needs at weekly team meetings and offered support as I managed her care at home. Dorothy, her doctor, and I worked together to control her pain, always trying to keep her as comfortable as possible. We became very close and Dorothy revealed some unresolved family issues: things that needed to be said, forgiveness that had to be given. I helped her write letters to her children, and contacted each one by phone asking them to come home.

THIS LITTLE LIGHT

As I bathed Dorothy one day I asked if she had a pastor she wanted me to call. “No, please

don't call my pastor," she said. "I'm afraid it would upset my husband. I'm the only one in my family who believes. My husband and children don't know Jesus as I do. I wish they did, but I don't want to make them uncomfortable."

"Dorothy," I said, "this is your life and your death. If it would make you feel better to talk with your pastor, please don't let anything get in your way."

"No," she said, "it's better this way."

We talked a long time about the love of Jesus and what her faith had meant to her. "Dorothy, have you asked forgiveness for your sins?" I asked. "Have you accepted Jesus' gift of salvation?"

"Yes, I have," she answered, "but I'd like to make everything right one more time. Would you help me?"

We prayed together, and Dorothy asked forgiveness for her sins and privately made things right with her friend Jesus. She sighed peacefully when we finished. Traces of tears marked her face. "I'm ready to die now," she said. "It feels so good to be ready."

BE NOT AFRAID

By this time Dorothy's children were on their way home. Other close family members were coming as well. I made my last trip up the pathway to her door in the late afternoon. The flowers were brown and stiff, rustling in the breeze. It was colder now; snow covered the ground. Dorothy's sister met me at the door. Dorothy had slipped into a coma, her respiration slow, uneven.

I bathed Dorothy one last time. As I left the room her sister was in the hallway, tears streaming down her face. She began to sob. "I'm sorry," I said as I held her while she cried.

Finally she was able to speak. "I'm so afraid," she said. "I got here too late. I never even got to ask her if she was ready to die. We never talk about religion in our family; we like our privacy. I don't want her to be lost, but it's too late to tell her that now."

I comforted her and said, "I'm happy to tell you that Dorothy gave her heart to Jesus just yesterday. She was at peace and made things right with Him. She told me she felt ready to die."

One by one Dorothy's children came home that afternoon. They kept a silent vigil in the living room. At times they whispered and seemed almost ill at ease in their childhood home. Joe sat in the

recliner, surrounded by loved ones, yet looking lost and alone. Tippy lay close by, as if to guard Joe and comfort him.

I checked on Dorothy again. She was still unresponsive. I left her and quietly asked her children if they wanted to say goodbye to their mother. They went in one at a time and visited with her, gently holding her hand and kissing her. Each one spoke with her and told her that it was OK to rest now and that they loved her. Joe wanted to be alone while he said his goodbyes.

One of Dorothy's sons hung back, almost as if it were too painful to go into her room. I encouraged him to go in if he wanted to. "Will you come with me?" he asked.

We walked in together, but he hung back, his grief almost overcoming him. "You can touch her and talk to her," I said. "She may be able to hear you."

I bent down and whispered, "Glen is here, Dorothy; he wants to talk to you."

Glen reached down and closed his big hand over Dorothy's little one. "I love you, Mom. I'm so sorry for hurting you. Will you forgive me?"

A tear slipped gently out of the corner of Dorothy's eye. It wasn't too late; forgiveness was there for her son. Her hand tightened gently in his, showing that she was able to hear, and that she knew he was there.

By late evening the last family member had said goodbye. Just a few minutes later Dorothy peacefully took her last breath.

Our hushed conversation turned to Dorothy and her life. Her children shared funny stories, loving memories; we laughed and cried together. By the time the funeral home staff arrived we were all talked out. Tippy left Joe's side and quickly went to guard Dorothy's bedroom door.

Several days later Dorothy was laid to rest on a beautiful, wooded hillside that overlooked the town. The service was held in a little stone chapel; her family and I were the only ones in attendance. After the service we hugged each other and said goodbye. I gave each one a card with special remembrances their mother had shared with me and the little booklet *Life After Loss*. Driving away that afternoon I prayed that each of them would find the peace and assurance Dorothy had found in Jesus. ♣

Kimberly Carr writes from Saraland, Alabama.

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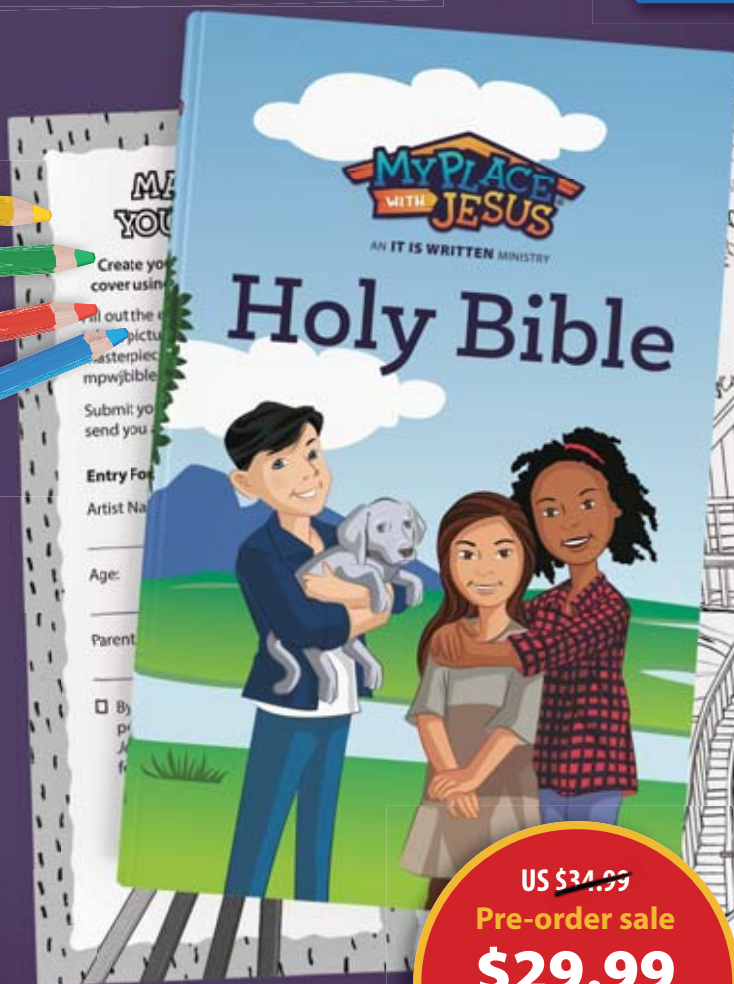


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PETER N. LANDLESS ZENO L. CHARLES-MARCEL

FROM PARENT TO CHILD

Can we transfer lifestyle habits genetically to our children?

Q: I am 25 years old and will soon get married. I heard that if I become athletic, live calmer, or even if I am stressed out a lot I can pass these behaviors on to my children and grandchildren because they change my genes. Is that true?

A: It sounds like somebody told you about “epigenetics,” and, yes, what you said is mostly true. The new reality of passing along to your descendants traits you acquired in life (before having children) was heresy to scientists only a few decades ago, but it’s on the cutting edge of medicine today. Here is a simplified explanation:

In school you probably learned that genes, made up of DNA, carry unique coded sequences as blueprints for who we are, and that only changes in the *code sequence* meant anything. All body cells in a person, however, contain the same genes but receive instructions telling nerves to be nerves and liver cells to be liver cells and so on. These instructions are “above the genes” and involve *epigenetics*. These high-level instructions change upon exposure to influences in our environment (alcohol, tobacco, environmental pollutants, foodstuffs, and additives) and in response to our circumstances (stress, sleep, exercise, gratitude, etc.). The same process causes identical twins to become less and less identical over time, even though both of them have the same genetic code. Epigenetics, as of today, affect how the genes *behave*—not the genes themselves!

Life experiences and circumstances can flip “on/off switches” on the genes in the eggs of the mother-to-be, the sperm in the father-to-be, or the cells of fetuses in pregnant women. The result is a unique pattern of “on” and “off” genes, much like

the patterns of “on” and “off” lights on screens that show different pictures or words. So strictly speaking the genes are *not* changed; but which genes are activated is what makes the difference. The pattern of switches is then passed to future generations: kids, grandkids, and beyond.

Evidence suggests that cigarette smoking and overeating epigenetically (through the mechanism of epigenetics) cause genes affecting obesity to become “switched on” and those carrying messages for longevity to be “switched off.” In mothers-to-be, drugs (including some medications), tobacco, emotional distress, and lifestyle habits epigenetically affect their children. Epigenetics in fathers-to-be have been associated with autism and appear to account for the illness risk of children fathered by “older” males.

Epigenetics also may explain some of the alcohol-associated brain damage in offspring, and some of the exercise benefits of parents on the health of their children. So be more athletic, don’t overeat, and manage your stress. Prayer, joyful service, and cultivating an attitude of gratitude all may help.

Life molded the epigenetic instructions of our ancestors and we received them. Yet by the way we ourselves live we can alter our *own* epigenetics to counteract what was inherited and create new traits, good and bad. Please read the Designer’s instruction manual (see Deut. 24:16; Job 21:19; Lam. 5:7; Eze. 18:2; Jer. 31:29, 30).

God created epigenetics; thankfully, His grace is hardwired into the process. ♣

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.



CLOSER LOOK



Living Up to Expectations

Come Sunday, directed by Joshua Marston, written by Marcus Hinchey, a Netflix film, 2018. Reviewed by Stephen Chavez, *Adventist Review*.

We're familiar with stories about people who hear God's voice and abandon everything to follow His lead—as long as those stories are in the Bible. If their names are Noah, Abraham, Moses, or Elisha, no problem. We've heard those stories before, dozens of times.

But what about our contemporaries, people who share our space? What do we say when they report hearing God's voice? That's the question behind the recent Netflix release *Come Sunday*, starring Chiwetel Ejiofor, Jason Segel, and Martin Sheen.

The film begins with megachurch pastor Carlton Pearson (Ejiofor) returning from a trip where he has been the featured speaker. Although spiritually, emotionally, and physically exhausted by the weekend's activities, his seatmate on the flight home is apparently in some emotional distress

Meet the Real Mr. Rogers

Won't You Be My Neighbor? Focus Films; Morgan Neville, director; 1 hour, 34 minutes; 2018. Reviewed by Stephen Chavez, *Adventist Review*.

Fred Rogers, Presbyterian minister, host of the iconic children's show *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*, and advocate for wholesome children's television programming, has been dead for 15 years. But his influence seems as strong as ever thanks to a new documentary film.

Won't You Be My Neighbor? takes Rogers' campaign for family-friendly children's programming and, with hours of archival film footage, describes its inception and effect on countless children's lives, as well as on society as a whole.

Rogers, who began his career in television as a reaction to the mindless, juvenile, slapstick entertainment then being peddled to kids, dared to treat his audience with respect and have conversations about such weighty topics as fear, death, self-esteem, divorce, racism, and war, all in a context that inspired trust. "Love is at the root of everything; all learning, all relationships," he

herself. Pearson sees it as an opportunity to share his faith; and by the end of the conversation the woman has accepted Christ as her Savior.

It soon becomes apparent that Pearson's primary motivation in bringing people to Christ is his belief in a fiery hell that punishes sinners for eternity.

The drama in the film comes when Pearson begins to question his understanding of a loving God who punishes people eternally, especially those who were prevented by geography or circumstances from hearing the gospel and accepting Christ.

At the beginning of the film Pearson is leading the Higher Dimensions Family

Adventist Review commentary on books, films or other items here considered does not constitute endorsement of items analyzed in such commentary.



maintained. Rogers' love for children, and for adults as well, is one of the primary themes of this film.

The film is rich with interviews from people who played supporting roles in the production of *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*. And although it is a film about children's television programming, it is not necessarily appropriate for children. Because of the themes, and some of the ways Rogers was

lampooned and satirized over the years, the film is rated PG-13.

Won't You Be My Neighbor? has some fascinating, little-known facts about Rogers and his neighborhood. For example, an accomplished musician, he wrote most of the songs for the program. He also voiced many of the characters. He developed a distinctive way for children to discern between fantasy and reality on the program. He played a significant role in securing federal funding for the Public Broadcasting System. The number 143 figures prominently in his personal and professional life. He produced a program for adults that failed after only a few episodes.

Won't You Be My Neighbor? is a remarkable introduction to a man who saw the potential of children's television and took the road less traveled to provide intelligent, age-appropriate programming to a couple generations of kids. As a devout Christian he let his actions and his words speak for the thing he held most dear: "The greatest thing that we can do is to help somebody know that they're loved and capable of loving."

Won't You Be My Neighbor?—the kind of film that requires a good supply of tissue on hand. ♣

Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma, with an average attendance of 6,000 each Sunday. He is also being mentored by Oral Roberts (Martin Sheen), and has one of the most watched television programs on the Trinity Broadcasting Network.

As Pearson shares his new belief in the unconditional love of God, he begins to lose the support of his congregation's leaders, as well as most of its members. *Come Sunday* illustrates the emotional and spiritual struggles of a man shunned by colleagues and friends because of his steadfast belief that God has communicated to him an essential truth unseen by most of those around him.

Come Sunday had its genesis in a *This American Life* radio broadcast and subsequent podcast about Pearson's story (www.thisamericanlife.org/304/

heretics). The Netflix version of his story debuted at the Sundance Film Festival, and the film reflects the industry's high standards of acting and cinematography.

The theology of Carlton Pearson, a Pentecostal preacher, was a long way from Seventh-day Adventist orthodoxy. Even after Pearson abandoned the hellish doctrine of the eternal punishing of the wicked, his theology was still far removed from what most Adventists consider orthodox.

But in *Come Sunday* theology is just a vehicle that drives the drama. The real story is the struggle of a man trying to stay true to his mandate from God when nearly everyone tells him he's wrong. It also begs the question: How far are we willing to go when we're convinced God has spoken to us? ♣

MORE THAN CONQUERORS

We are warned: “Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8). We also know that Jesus promised those who believe in Him: “I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand” (John 10:28).

So while it’s true that we face a formidable adversary, it’s also true that nothing “will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:39).

In this month’s installment we share some voices of faith from some familiar Bible characters. May their experience be ours.—Editors.

“Yet I am always with you;
you hold me by my right hand.
You guide me with your counsel,
and afterward you will take me into glory.
Whom have I in heaven but you?
And earth has nothing I desire besides you.
My flesh and my heart may fail,
But God is the strength of my heart
and my portion forever.”

ASAPH, AMAZED BY GOD’S FAITHFULNESS (PS. 73:23-26).

“Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever;
wisdom and power are his.
He changes times and seasons;
he deposes kings and raises up others.
He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to the discerning.
He reveals deep and hidden things;
he knows what lies in darkness,

and light dwells with him.”

**DANIEL, EXTOLLING GOD’S OMNIPOTENCE AND
TOTAL WISDOM** (DAN. 2:20-22).

“My mouth will tell of your righteous deeds,
of your saving acts all day long—
though I know not how to relate them all.
I will come and proclaim your mighty acts,

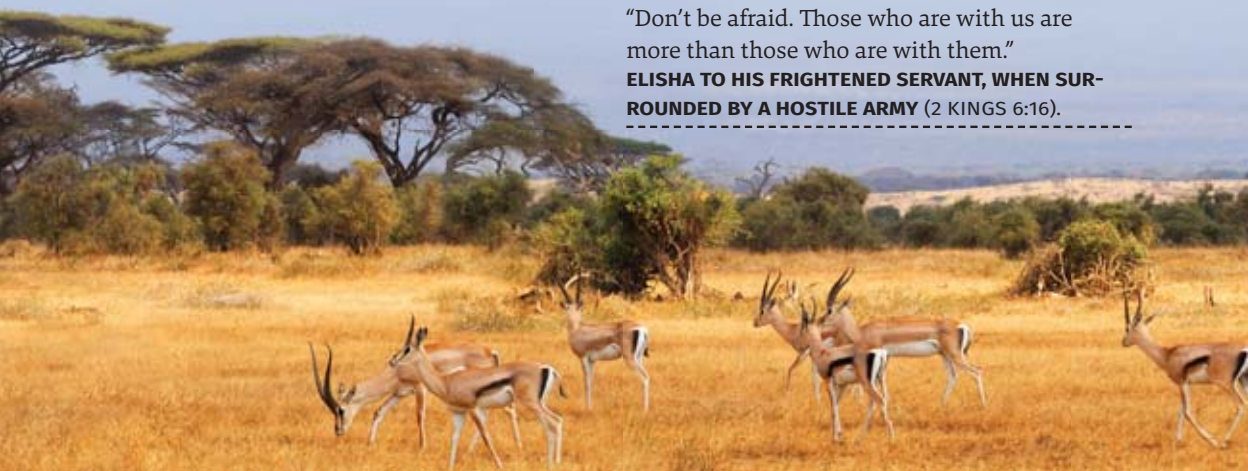
Sovereign Lord;

I will proclaim your righteous deeds, yours alone.
Since my youth, God, you have taught me,
and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds.
Even when I am old and gray,
do not forsake me, my God,
till I declare your power to the next generation,
your mighty acts to all who are to come.”

**DAVID, AMAZED BY GOD’S MIGHTY DEEDS ON HIS
BEHALF** (PS. 71:15-18).

“Don’t be afraid. Those who are with us are
more than those who are with them.”

**ELISHA TO HIS FRIGHTENED SERVANT, WHEN SUR-
ROUNDED BY A HOSTILE ARMY** (2 KINGS 6:16).





"I will tell of the kindnesses of the Lord,
the deeds for which he is to be praised,
according to all the Lord has done for us—
yes, the many good things
he has done for Israel,
according to his compassion and many
kindnesses."

ISAIAH, CELEBRATING VICTORY IN THE LORD (ISA. 63:7).

"I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the
end he will stand on the earth."

**JOB, FINDING CONFIDENCE WHILE IN THE DEPTHS OF
SUFFERING (JOB 19:25).**

"See what great love the Father has lavished on
us, that we should be called children of God!
And that is what we are! The reason the world
does not know us is that it did not know him.
Dear friends, now we are children of God, and
what we will be has not yet been made known.
But we know that when Christ appears, we shall
be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

**JOHN, THE APOSTLE, THINKING OF JESUS' GREAT
SAVING WORK (1 JOHN 3:1, 2).**

"When my life was ebbing away,
I remembered you, Lord,
and my prayer rose to you,
to your holy temple.
Those who cling to worthless idols
turn away from God's love for them.

But I, with shouts of grateful praise,
will sacrifice to you.

What I have vowed I will make good.

I will say, 'Salvation comes from the Lord'"

**JONAH, PRAYING FROM THE STOMACH
OF A GREAT FISH (JOANH 2:7-9).**

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the
race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store
for me the crown of righteousness, which the
Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on
that day—and not only to me, but also to all who
have longed for his appearing."

**PAUL, ANTICIPATING HIS EXECUTION AND MORE (2
TIM. 4:7, 8).**

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord
Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us
new birth into a living hope through the resur-
rection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into
an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or
fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you,
who through faith are shielded by God's power
until the coming of the salvation that is ready to
be revealed in the last time."

**PETER, WRITING TO THE CHRISTIANS SCATTERED
AROUND THE ROMAN EMPIRE (1 PETER 1:3-5).**



Remember

I suffer from amnesia.

Now that I've got your attention, I'm not kidding. But my amnesia is not injury-related or anything like that. It's actually somewhat selective. Actually, it's a bit faith-based.

You see, I tend to forget things. I tend to forget all the times God's led me through something and got me out on the other side, unscathed and better than when I went in. I tend to forget all the times He's taken care of me when I'm scared, showing me I had nothing to fear. I tend to forget all the times He's come through when I've wondered if He would.

FAITH CAN BE A TRICKY THING.

Do you share my selective, faith-based amnesia too? Why are we like this?

Faith can be a tricky thing. If we call ourselves believers, we claim to have it and claim that it carries us. But it's actually not always that straightforward. Faith does indeed require work—at least for me. It calls for discipline to practice it, to put it in daily motion. It calls for the exercise of getting up in the morning and saying, "Today, Jesus, I choose to trust You." You know this as well as I do: it's not easy to say that sometimes.

If you read my article last month, you might remember that I'm shipping my firstborn off to college across the country this month. Naturally, I'm a bit (understatement) anxiety-ridden. She's an exemplary young woman who's made it through four years of high school and accomplished much, and the Lord was clearly with her. But here I sit with all the questions playing in my mind: "How will she adjust? Will she make good friends?

Will her roommates be crazy people? Will she be safe? Will she have enough to eat on her (cheaper option) meal plan?" I could go on.

The act of writing this out is a great exercise for me because I'm flashing back through my life and literally seeing how the Lord provided for our little family when she was a baby and things were tight. I'm remembering how He provided the best childcare in moments when we didn't know what we were going to do. And I'm breathless as I realize how almost 19 years of her life have flown by with more blessing than blunder. That's the grace of God—undeserved, but abundant. But now I need to be better at not forgetting that.

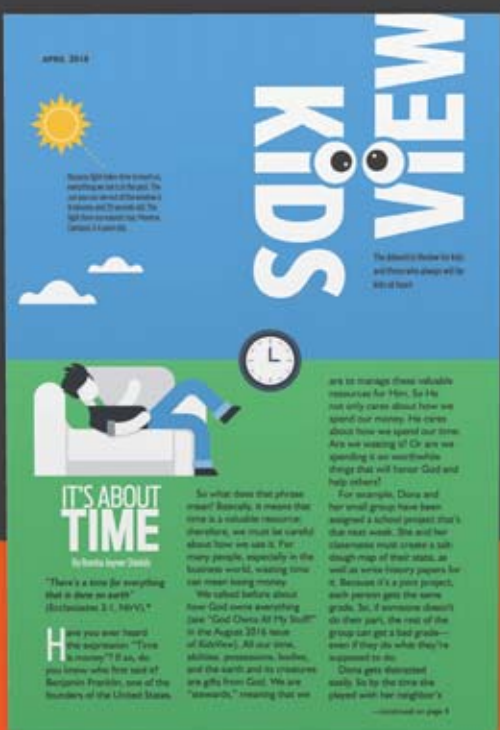
The reminders are all around us. Reminders of His faithfulness are found in nature, in song, and of course in the simple act of pausing just to think about all He's done. I could try to capture that, but an old hymn comes to mind whose less well-known second stanza says it best:

*"Let not your heart be troubled," His tender word I hear,
And resting on His goodness, I lose my doubts and fears;
Though by the path He leadeth, but one step I may see;
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.**

Oh, that we would do a much better job at remembering His faithfulness in the middle of any difficult situation or moment of fearfulness; for a peaceful heart could just be a recollection away. ▀

* Civilla Martin, 1905.

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