

ADVENTIST REVIEW

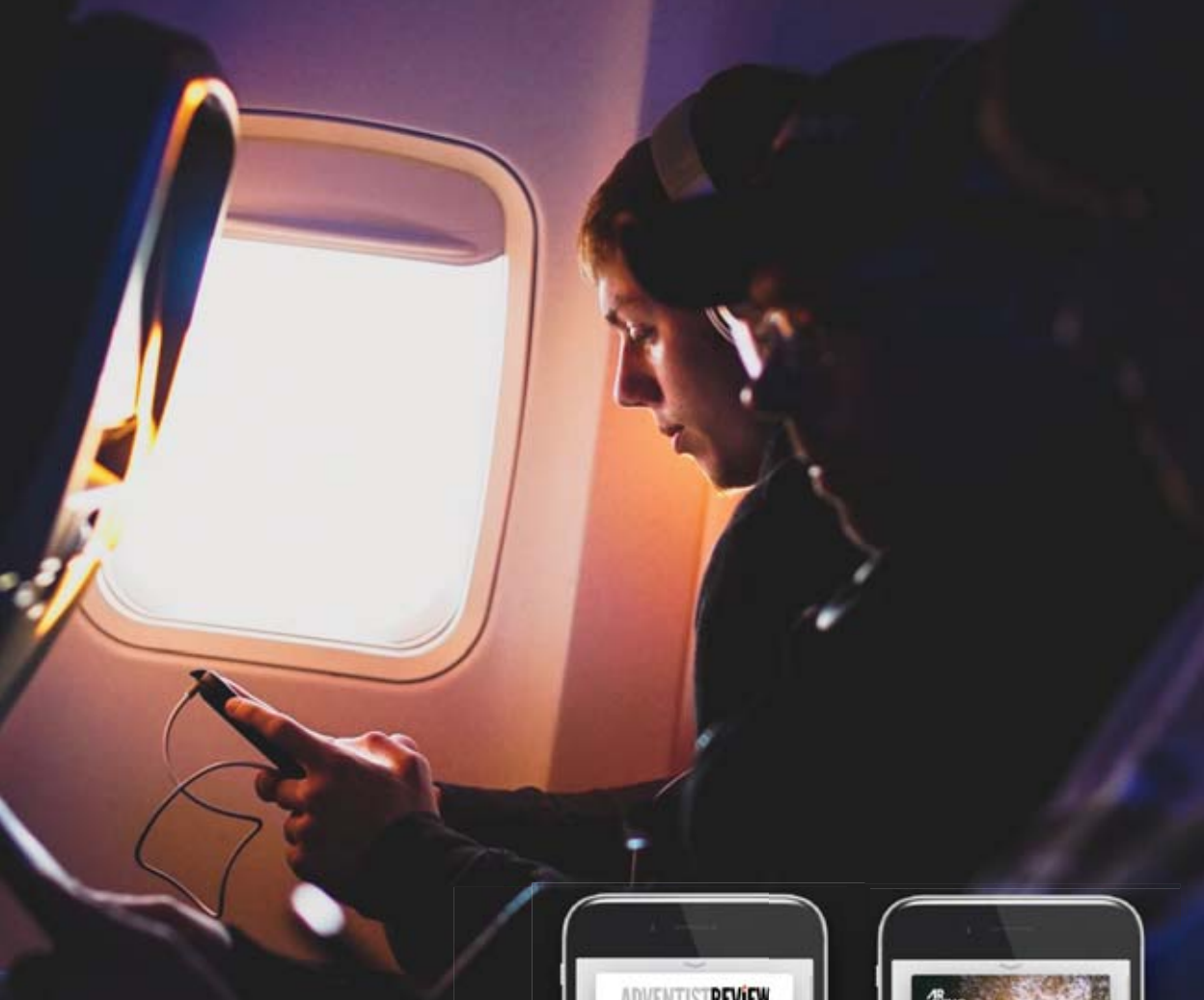
OCTOBER 2018: THE BEGINNING OF ADVENTIST
EDUCATION + WHAT ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT? +
AN EXTRAORDINARY RIVER + THE DAY I BOUGHT
JESUS A BURRITO + WHY I STAYED

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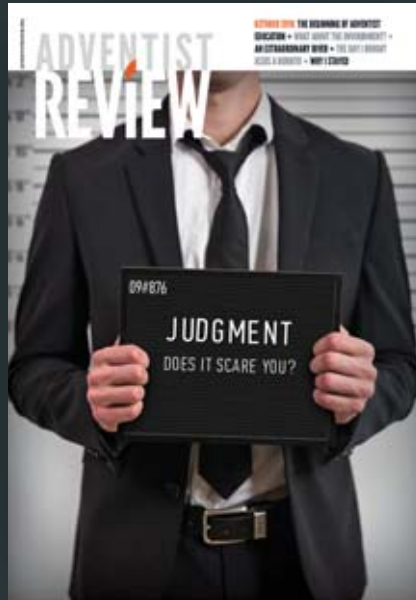
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- 2 Myanmar Refugee Finds His Pastoral Calling in the U.S.
- 3 Decades-old Gift Prompts Former "Miss Alabama" to Join Adventist Church
- 4 Running Hard Even When Our Feet Don't Work
- 5 Cliff's Edge—Sabbath Controversies and the End



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Adventist HEALTH SYSTEM

BILL KNOTT



Had God somehow arranged the travels of two random souls so that we stared uncomfortably at each other?

Faith Among the Radishes

The teen squinted in the morning light as he surveyed all of us in vehicles crowded close behind him at the signal. He was obviously uncomfortable being noticed, perched on bags of lettuce and snap peas piled in the cargo bay of a Piaggio three-wheeled truck—headed, no doubt, for a market in this Indian metropolis.

The uncomfortably long wait for the light to change made him look away from all the eyes inspecting him. This wasn't what he wanted for his life, it seemed. His neat jacket, smoothed-back hair, the angle of his jaw as he stared out from his commercial chariot—they all suggested he aspired to something greater than a lifetime hawking produce.

Twelve hours on, our vehicle pulled up to yet another crowded intersection to wait for the inevitable melee in this city of 3 million souls. There—unbelievably—was the same teenager, slumped wearily among the bags of unsold produce in the back of the Piaggio. The jacket had surrendered to humidity and heat: the hair was tousled and unkempt. The confidence had disappeared as well: the eyes cried boredom, even sadness. I scanned the piles on which he sat: not much had moved. A tedious day had yielded too few rupees.

I estimated the odds that twice in 12 hours I would have seen the

same uneasy teenager among the thousands of delivery vehicles, motorbikes, and cars that overwhelmed these avenues. One in a million? One in 3 million?

And why? In what winding of the celestial clock was it imperative that we meet—eye contact only, not a word or gesture? Had God somehow arranged the travels of two random souls so that—for 30 seconds at a time—we stared uncomfortably at each other? Had He who knows when sparrows fall arranged 3 million lives and all those drivers so two strangers would assess each other at some disputed red-light signal?

The grand conceit of poor theology rebuked me soon enough. No, God doesn't necessarily order all the world to be of benefit to me, to teach me lessons about providence, or ponder questions of coincidence. All the world may be a stage, but heaven doesn't stage productions just to tune my faith or give me object lessons on His rulership of everything.

In the unfolding of each day, there's no need to make the Author of the universe responsible for every human incident or every flake of breakfast cereal. The hand of God need not be traced in things He didn't originate—including programmed stoplight sensors, motorcycles wedged up against our car, or whether I have soup for lunch.

Life happens: there's nothing

in God's Word requiring we believe that He determines every minute, or that all choices and connections correspond to some emerging great design. God surely causes certain intersections: Phillip meets the Ethiopian; Jesus meets a woman at a well; Moses turns aside to learn why the bush was not consumed. Such moments—timed by God—advance His kingdom and align the history of peoples. But if we make Him responsible for every incident, we lessen the responsibility He gave us. This isn't faith or piety: it is, in fact, unfaith to claim that we are largely pawns of His omnipotence and choice.

Faith takes the stuff of daily-ness, and finds in it a call to prayer and new commitment. Deep trust in God increases our accountability to make good sense of all that we experience—to find in conversations, choices, and their aftermath the presence of a Lord who regularly calms storms He didn't cause.

And so I prayed for him, this teen among the radishes—asking that the Lord who loves Him just as fully as I'm loved will plant in him a faith that puts the light back in his eyes, and pulls him toward the kingdom.

Perhaps—who knows?—we'll meet again where no one ever hurries. ♣

Bill Knott



IMPORTANT TOPICS

I appreciated the excellent articles in the August issue of *Adventist Review*. Especially those referring to the final deception.

More than ever, our members need to be reminded of the issues we are facing in the last days. As Jacques Doukhan wrote: “The final battle between truth and dissembling does not allow for neutral ground.”

I also appreciated the message by John McVay, and the challenge to know Jesus more than ever. We don’t know when Jesus is coming, so we must strengthen our relationship with the Lord. Paul said that he considered “everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord” (Phil. 3:8).

We must remain faithful and ready for His coming! We’ve never witnessed signs of the times as we are today.

Leo Ranzolin, Sr.
Estero, Florida

STRAWBERRY SABBATHS

Bill Knott’s “Strawberry Sabbaths” (July 2018) was such a blessing!

Just last week I spent some time gleaning the last few berries for a strawberry shortcake. I thoroughly enjoyed the open spaces, the twitter of birds, and nature. What as a teenager on Dad’s acre of strawberries meant work, now

meant pleasure.

It also reminded me of the Sabbath when I thought I heard Mother calling me at sundown from the wild raspberry path to hurry home for family worship, only to find out that she had never called. It’s interesting how “in the silence of God,” we can hear Him speak.

Gerhard Unger
Idaho

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I certify that my statements above are correct and complete.
J. Raymond Wahlen II, Undertreasurer of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

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.

IN A FEW WORDS...

NEWS SUMMIT FOSTERS COLLABORATION

Amazing! Adventist news has a future. Can't wait for the app.

Stanton A. Witherspoon, Via Web

HIGH HOPES SMASHED—AGAIN!

Thanks so much for the timely message, whose timelessness is proved by the silence with which it has been received. It must have touched some nerves. It's not easy in our ideologically polarized time to walk a fine line that illuminates the hidden spiritual issues at stake. Thanks again for the courage to offer a biblical perspective on current affairs.

Elijah Mvundura, Via Web

THE MARK OF THE BEAST

This article is a must-read for Adventists who contend with new theology that tears down our pillars. I thank Brother Finley for this blessing. May the Lord keep you to press on and help us.

Greg Cox, Via Web

NEWEST MISSION BOAT IN THE AMAZON BUILDS ON DECADES OF SERVICE

In 1994 I was a nurse for two weeks on Luzeiro 1, the original launch built by Leo Halliwell. It was an honor to live there for a short time on the same boat where angels took the wheel.

Shirley Morrison, Via Web

SIX LESSONS LEARNED AT TEACHERS' CONVENTION 2018

I was blessed to be part of this amazing event. The convention was a time to see old friends and meet new ones, be energized with helpful break-out sessions. Most of all, it was a spiritual awakening to our awesome opportunity to present Christ first in all we teach and do.

J. Webster, Via Web

Thanks for this report. Yes, we should always remember to pray for our teachers. To teach young people today, even those in our institutions, is not an easy task. But through the grace of God, and our daily surrendering to Him, He will see us through. We all could use these gems you came away with in whatever role we may be called upon to fill.


Catecha Francis, Via Web

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AHS undertook the comprehensive branding process in order to make health care easier for patients, and to explicitly articulate and preserve AHS's connection to its legacy of whole-person health. Page 12

NEWS



Daniel R. Jackson, NAD president, offers his remarks during the Future of Seventh-day Adventist Higher Education Summit held on Aug. 9-12, 2018, in Chicago, Ill. PHOTO: ADVENTIST LEARNING COMMUNITY

HIGHER ED LEADERS VOTE TO EXPLORE COLLABORATION

ADVENTIST COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY LEADERS MEET WITH CHURCH LEADERS TO DISCUSS FUTURE OF EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM.

BY DEBBIE MICHEL, LAKE UNION CONFERENCE

Against a backdrop of tighter finances and dwindling enrollment at Adventist colleges and universities in North America, school administrators and church leaders voted overwhelmingly in favor of forming a “strategic alliance” to strengthen the overall educational system.

The August 12, 2018 vote on what was dubbed “The Chicago Declaration” came after four days of presentations on the Future of Seventh-day Adventist Higher Education Summit, following the North American Division (NAD) Teachers’ Convention in Chicago. The declaration states, “We share a commitment to shape a strategic alliance, consisting of a coal-

ition of the willing, with the goal of first piloting and then evaluating the efficacy of an eventual higher education system. We intend for this to result in a whole that is stronger than the sum of its parts.”

After the vote NAD president Daniel R. Jackson said, “When we allow the Spirit of God to move in a room, you can bring the diversities of thought, geography, gender, and racial ethnicities. And when you bring those all together and you subject it to the Spirit of the Lord, you can come out with something that bodes well for the future.”

Details on the collaboration will be hammered out in coming months. A timetable is set for college and

university presidents to discuss the issue with their various constituencies, and by the end of the calendar year each campus is to select a representative to serve as liaison between the schools.

As discussions ensue, the division’s leadership has stressed the importance of each campus maintaining its unique identity under the control of local union conferences and with local alumni support. Larry Blackmer, NAD vice president for education, reaffirmed this commitment. “We are voting only that we agree that we need each other. And that we agree that that independence still needs to be there in many ways and needs to be tempered with collaboration,” said Blackmer.

Some areas under discussion where centralization may be most feasible include the sharing of “back office” systems, consolidation of human resources and marketing services.

Blackmer noted that distance

“Unless we do something tangible and concrete the system many of us grew up with and love will be history.”

—Larry Moore, president, Southwestern Union Conference.

education is one area ripe for collaboration. “Instead of Andrews having to hire a professor to teach three students, and Walla Walla and Union and Southwestern [doing the same], we can hire one professor to teach that required low-enrollment course and have a broader input from students in a larger course, which would save the other universities from hiring a faculty member. Those are the collaborative kind of things we’re talking about, that don’t diminish the independence of any of those institutions.”

IDENTITY CRISIS

Seminary professor emeritus George R. Knight cautioned the group in his Sabbath morning address that while it may be tempting to travel the route of other colleges with historical church ties by competing in the secularized world of higher education, it’s crucial to stay true to the tenets of Adventist education.

“The losing of the denomination’s unique theological understanding . . . is the greatest threat Adventism and its educational system face in the twenty-first century,” he said.

Knight also reminded the audience of more than 200 that a former college president raised the topic of a unified Adventist system more than 100 years ago. As he thanked Gordon Bietz, retired Southern University president and current NAD associate director of higher education, for organizing the con-

ference, Knight elicited laughter from the audience when he quipped, “All we need is Solomon to figure out how to cut up the baby!”

TRENDS

As put forth in a document distributed beforehand, a confluence of critical factors is driving these discussions. Factors include:

- declining traditional college/university student populations;
- decreasing financial capacity of many Seventh-day Adventist families to afford private higher education;
- decreasing willingness to borrow to finance a private education;
- extraordinary increases in costs of providing a traditional college/university experience over the past 25 years;
- increasing availability of competitive and educational modalities that no longer require a residential campus (free community college, online degrees, subscription-based programs);
- transformation of the job market to more competency-based education;
- the closure of Atlantic Union College, as well as many other small colleges and universities primarily because of financial exigency.

Several presenters and researchers expounded on these trends, including Andrea Luxton, president of Andrews University, who noted in her presentation that this wasn’t the first time there have been discussions about collaboration. In 2009 she chaired a group evaluat-

ing the threats to higher education, and a decision was made for institutions to work more closely together. However, there wasn’t much progress, for many reasons, including a need some felt to protect “my campus” and the complexity of the organizational structure.

In a panel discussion church and university/college leaders expressed a deep sense of urgency. “Unless we do something tangible and concrete the system many of us grew up with and love will be history,” said Southwestern Union Conference president Larry Moore.

There was a recognition among conference participants—university and union presidents, university/college board members, cabinet members, deans and faculty—that this was time for decisive action. Bubbling up out of table discussions were five key objectives for success:

- Make Adventist education affordable so that kids whose families make less than \$50,000 per year can afford to go to Adventist schools
- Establish faculty support: system-wide support through a teaching and learning center that focuses on pedagogy, modalities...also discipline teams, research teams
- Provide meaningful and measurable preparation for and successful internships during studies and employment after graduation based on industry perspectives and needs
- Establish one division platform for online education

■ Develop customized degrees enriched through micro-credentialing, badging, and competence-based learning

Richard Hart, president and CEO of Loma Linda University, noted in his presentation that over the past five years enrollment in the 13 Adventist colleges and universities in North America has shrunk from 26,000 to 24,000. “The handwriting is on the wall,” he said somberly. “We’re at that point in history where we have to make some tough decisions.”

WILL THIS TIME BE DIFFERENT?

Aside from the sense of urgency today, there’s need for someone who can focus almost entirely on this issue. Bietz is championing this renewed push.

And Blackmer noted another key factor: “This declaration was actually written by college presidents, not by the North American Division and forced upon colleges and universities. Colleges and universities, from a grassroots level, developed this and brought it to the group. I think that’s a difference.”

John Freedman, president of the North Pacific Union Conference, soberly told the group, “My dad said the best time to plant the oak tree is 20 years ago. The next best time is today. We can’t keep kicking the can down the road. We’re all in this together. This is still [God’s] church and His divine way for education. Start and move it and see where God is leading.”



Terry Shaw, CEO/president of Adventist Health System, introduces the health system’s new name, AdventHealth, and its accompanying logo.

PHOTO: ADVENTIST HEALTH SYSTEM

HEALTH SYSTEM’S NAME CHANGE REINFORCES WHOLISTIC ADVENTIST HEALTH MESSAGE

NEW BRAND WILL HAVE NO IMPACT ON CHURCH’S NAME

BY ADVENTIST NEWS NETWORK, NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION COMMUNICATION, AND ADVENTIST REVIEW

United States-based Adventist Health System (AHS) recently announced the organization will change its name to AdventHealth as of January 2019, a transition AHS leaders say connects the health-care system to the Seventh-day Adventist Church more closely.

“The decision to identify our dynamic health system as AdventHealth emerged from a multiyear process of prayer, market research, and mission-focused thinking,” says Adventist Health System CEO Terry Shaw. “We’re committed to working even more closely with the world church to unite the healing, teaching, and outreach missions for which God raised up this movement. Our new name underscores our vital connection with the Seventh-day Adventist Church in purpose, service, and identity.”

AHS is a nonprofit health care organization that manages 50 hospital campuses and hundreds of care facilities, mostly in the Southern and Midwestern regions of the United States.

Ted Wilson, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, addressed questions that the health system name change implies other coming changes. “The Seventh-day Adventist Church has been blessed with a name agreed upon by our pioneers and blessed by heaven as the right name for God’s last-day movement,” clarified Wilson. “Our name is inextricably linked with our identity and mission. There are absolutely no plans whatsoever, and there will never be plans to change the name of our beloved church, the Seventh-day Adventist Church.”

WHY THE CHANGE?

AHS undertook the comprehensive branding process in order to make health care easier for patients, and to explicitly articulate and preserve AHS’s connection to its legacy of whole-person health, AHS leaders explained.

“AdventHealth ties us so beautifully into the roots of our church,” says Gary Thurber, AHS board chair and president of



Headquarters of Adventist Health System in Altamonte Springs, Florida, United States. PHOTO: ADVENTIST HEALTH SYSTEM

the Mid-America Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. “We began because we had our eye on the Second Coming, and the Second Coming is really where all healing is going to take place. That’s really the cure for all that ails us—the Second Coming. And to tie that into our health system’s name is just beautiful to me.”

As part of this transition, all of Adventist Health System’s wholly owned hospitals and care sites across its footprint will adopt the AdventHealth name and logo. Currently AHS hospitals operate under a variety of names, many of which do not have a reference to the Seventh-day Adventist name. The new naming structure will allow patients to more easily distinguish AdventHealth’s care locations and services, say AHS leaders. While its name is changing, the organization is not changing in ownership or business structure.

A POSITIVE MISSION-ORIENTED RELATIONSHIP

While AHS is not owned directly by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the health-care system maintains close and positive ties with the denomination. Among those ties, the organization’s board is chaired by an Adventist union conference president, and AHS continues to create health-related resources widely in use by Adventists, such as the CREATION Health curriculum for healthful living.

The relationship between Adventist Health System and the church will continue to be strong and supportive, say church leaders. The name change is an action of a particular health system, which embraces the Seventh-day Adventist hope in the second coming of Jesus Christ. 🍀

NO SAFE LEVEL OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

EVEN A LITTLE ALCOHOL IS HARMFUL

BY PETER N. LANDLESS AND DUANE C. MCBRIDE

An important article on alcohol use was published on August 23, 2018 in *The Lancet*, a leading, prestigious scientific journal based in the United Kingdom. This landmark study integrates and appears to do some new data analysis on 694 data sources collected over a 26-year period from 195 locations around the globe.

This is the first global integrated meta-data analysis that we have seen on alcohol use. The methodology is strong, and researchers improved the analysis others had done when they could use original data. Their conclusions are groundbreaking and should be definitive in world health.

Among the major findings are:

- Alcohol is a major factor in global mortality and disease burden and the highest risk factor for those aged 19-45.
- All-cause mortality was associated with *any* level of alcohol use.
- Risk of many types of cancers increased with *any* level of alcohol use.

The authors confirmed that there was no safe level of alcohol use. The level of alcohol intake that most reduces mortality risks is *zero* intake. The article clearly shows that *even half a glass of an alcoholic beverage a day has a measurable impact on increased mortality.*

Any cardiac health benefits from low-level alcohol use *is far outweighed by increased cancer risks and many specific types of cardiac risks.*

The authors note, “*These results suggest that alcohol control policies might need to be revised worldwide, refocusing on efforts to lower overall population-level consumption.*” This has huge implications for policy and public health approaches that must be changed despite the vested interests of the massively profitable and influential alcohol industry.

This study confirms that for more than 150 years the Adventist health message has done a great deal to enhance quality and length of life.

The number of voices in the scientific literature raising questions and caution regarding the widespread perception that moderate alcohol use is beneficial to health has achieved robust credibility. Although many papers and studies support the cardio-protective effect of alcohol (moderate drinking), this hypothesis is by no means definitive. Alain Marchand and others emphasize the many problems inherent in studies that end up approving of alcohol use, including the risk of abuse and dependence; methodological issues related to assessing dosing; confounding; and nonrepresentativeness of study populations in reaching this conclusion.¹

There is also great concern about the diversity that exists among nondrinkers. Nondrinkers represent a very diverse group, adding to the confounding, and variation in this group needs to be studied. This latest meta-analysis of global data published in *The Lancet* confirms other commentaries on the limitations of the evidence for a beneficial effect for moderate alcohol consumption, concluding, "The evidence for the harmful effects of alcohol is undoubtedly stronger than the evidence for beneficial effects."²

IN SUMMARY

- Alcohol is a widely used commodity.

- It is the world's third-largest risk factor for disease burden.

- Alcohol use places a burden on families, including a strong association with domestic violence.

- Alcohol use can be addictive.

- Alcohol use exacts high costs from society through associated crime and violence.

- Moderate alcohol use is reported in the literature to have a cardio-protective quality, but the purported health benefits of moderate alcohol consumption are not applicable across age, ethnic, and gender variations.

- Any apparent cardiac benefits are far outweighed by increases in cancer risks as well as specific types of cardiovascular risks such as strokes.

"CONSUMING ZERO STANDARD DRINKS DAILY MINIMIZES THE OVERALL RISK TO HEALTH," A GROUNDBREAKING STUDY SAYS.

- The most vulnerable for alcohol-use consequences are those aged 19 to 45 years; it is mandatory to get the facts to youth and younger adults.

- Moderate drinking is associated with many documented negative health, behavioral, and spiritual effects.

Alcohol is a known carcinogen, and no safe level of alcohol intake that may avoid this dreaded health complication is known; it is now scientifically clear that the safe level of use is zero.

CONCLUSION


Taking into account the significant health risks related to alcohol use, there is no scientific basis for

promoting its use for the sake of heart health. This is especially so when proven and safe interventions for heart disease prevention and rehabilitation are available, including exercise, a healthful diet, and nonaddictive, tested medications where needed.

We sometimes persist in trawling the shark-infested waters of the definite evidence showing the dangers of alcohol use in search of one sardine's worth of positive, healthful evidence in favor of alcohol use.

Certain lifestyle choices and measures offer protection against the problems alcohol inevitably brings in its wake: informed choices; exercise; rest; healthful eating; fresh air; sunshine; pure water (within and without); trust in God; social support; a good dose of optimism; and of course, temperance.

By definition, temperance encourages us to use wisely those things that are healthful and good, and to dispense entirely with all things harmful. Temperance, lived through the enabling power of our gracious Lord Jesus Christ, serves as a foundation for a Spirit-filled experience that can celebrate life free from alcohol and its attendant ills.

So should people who don't drink alcohol start to use it? Based on the best scientific evidence, definitely not! Should those who currently drink alcohol quit? Based on the same evidence, unequivocally yes! 

¹ Alain Marchand, Andree Demers, Pierre Durand, and Marcel Simard, "The Moderating Effect of Alcohol Intake on the Relationship Between Work Strains and Psychological Distress," *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 64, no. 3 (2003), pp. 419-427.

² Hans Olav Fekjaer, "Alcohol—A Universal Preventive Agent? A Critical Analysis," *Addiction* 108, no. 12 (December 2013), 2051-2057.



A group picture of many of the attendees to the first annual Seventh-day Adventist Global News Summit in South Korea

PHOTO: MARCIO BASSO GOMES

SUMMIT FOSTERS COLLABORATION AMONG ADVENTIST NEWS PROVIDERS

FIRST-EVER GATHERING CONNECTS NEWS WRITERS AND EDITORS FOR REFLECTION, DISCUSSION, AND PLANNING.

BY ADVENTIST REVIEW AND ADVENTIST NEWS NETWORK

A group of news providers serving within the Seventh-day Adventist Church recently met for a day of reflection, open discussions, and planning on the eve of the 2018 Global Adventist Internet Network (GAIN) annual convention in Seoul, Korea. The meeting, which took place in the Northern Asia-Pacific (NSD) church region headquarters on August 6, 2018, gathered more than 40 communication directors, news writers, and news editors of several regionally printed church magazines and newsletters from around the world.

In opening remarks the Adven-

tist Church's Communication Department director Williams Costa reminded news communicators about the importance of their job. "We can build or destroy with our words," he said.

Costa made a case for keeping in mind the power of words. "Words have power: God used His words to create the universe. Words have creative power, and you have that power in your lives," he said.

WHY A GLOBAL NEWS SUMMIT?

Reminding attendees that the world in which we live is substantially smaller than it used to be,

Adventist Review communication director and news editor Costin Jordache emphasized that this new reality begs for greater collaboration. "Because [the world] is smaller, we need to figure out how to work better together," he said. "The key word here is 'collaboration.'"

Touting the gathering as "a very significant moment" in the history of Adventist news operations, Jordache explained that this first summit was jointly organized and facilitated by the world church's Communication Department and Adventist Review Ministries. The Communication Department manages the Adventist News Network (ANN), and Adventist Review Ministries is the publisher of the *Adventist Review* and *Adventist World* magazines.

Adventist News Network news editor Jennifer Stymiest shared that a second reason for the gathering was to dialogue together about best practices regarding general article writing, official

Communication professionals weighed in on the best practices to deal with a crisis and sensitive news from around the world, such as stories that involve the work of the church in restrictive or dangerous areas.

news releases, and breaking news stories within the Adventist Church. Stymiest also facilitated discussion about news-related photography and videography. “We need to discuss and agree on standards, because we’re most effective when we’re on the same page,” she said.

WHY ADVENTIST NEWS?

Stymiest reminded participants about the purpose of having a news operation within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. “The purpose of Adventist news is to inform, to inspire, and to connect,” she said. Jordache then elaborated on those items, explaining that the more that news is circulated from all parts of the world, the more and better Adventist members are able to understand each other.

Jordache also explained that by its very nature, news can’t always be triumphalist. “We all very much value inspirational news stories and enjoy publishing them. However, not every story can focus on strictly positive outcomes,” he said. “Sometimes the goal is to analyze and reflect, in order to understand better a subject and to learn from it for the sake of more effective mission.”

GLOBAL NEWS PLATFORM IN DEVELOPMENT

The day’s presentations included the introduction of a global news infrastructure, currently being developed in partnership between the world church

Communication Department and Adventist Review Ministries. The software solution would allow Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook entities around the world to publish news articles to a central repository. Once posted to the repository—together with images, audio, and video—stories would be translated into major languages and made available for distribution by any official Adventist entity around the world.

“Thousands of Adventist entities are producing great news,” explained Jordache, “but very few of the articles are ever read by audiences around the world. This global news infrastructure aims to provide a way for stories from around the world to be made available to members everywhere in a timely and a consistent manner.”

Stymiest and Jordache unveiled plans for a global news app, aggregating all news stories into a mobile app, which would allow news stories to be segmented into regional topics and categories. “Depending on your area of interest,” said Stymiest, “you will be able to curate your own Adventist news feed, keeping in touch with developments around the world.”

Brent Hardinge, assistant director for communication and web manager, provided a historical sketch of how the project came about and announced that the global news repository software platform was scheduled for a 2019 release.

OTHER TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Among the more technical aspects of the news production workflow, organizers discussed photo and video style guidelines, and how to process and distribute breaking news expediently.

Communication professionals in attendance also weighed in on the best practices to deal with a crisis and sensitive news from around the world, such as stories that involve the work of the church in restrictive or dangerous areas.

The summit included ample time for sharing impressions, posing questions, and sharing ideas about how to make some of the projects in the pipeline a reality.

SUMMIT ASSESSMENT

Feedback after the event was overwhelmingly positive, according to organizers.

“It was really important to have the news providers together to discuss how we can better share our story with the world,” said Stymiest. “I can’t wait to see this event grow each year.”

“The willingness of communication professionals to open up and discuss sensitive matters collaboratively was both necessary and inspiring,” added Jordache. “It’s the dawn of a new day for Adventist news, and we are excited about possibilities for the future.”

The next Seventh-day Adventist global news summit is slated for February 2019. 🍀



PHOTO BY ANNA PELZER ON UNSPLASH

PAPER EXPLORES GLOBAL INFLUENCE OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH ON DIET

HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL OVERVIEW DISCUSSED IN PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL PUBLICATION.

BY JAMES PONDER, LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY HEALTH NEWS

The impact of Seventh-day Adventist dietary philosophy on the development of global dietary practices, especially the rise of vegetarianism, is the focus of an article released in August 2018 in the peer-reviewed journal *Religions*.

Titled “The Global Influence of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on Diet,” the article, written by lead author Jim E. Banta, associate professor at Loma Linda University School of Public Health, documents historical developments related to the Adventist emphasis on plant-based nutrition starting in the mid-nineteenth century.

Since Adventist vegetarianism is linked to the New Testament emphasis on the importance of treat-

ing the human body as the temple of the Holy Spirit, Banta and his Loma Linda University coauthors—Joan Sabaté, Georgia Hodgkin, Jerry Lee, Zane Yi, and Andrea Fanica—present an overview of church teachings on many health-related topics.

Starting from the Second Great Awakening, a nineteenth-century religious and social movement that gave birth to Mormonism, Shakerism, and Millerism, Banta and his team trace the articulation of Adventist health principles in the writings of Ellen G. White. They go on to discuss the establishment of Adventist sanitariums and hospitals in the 1860s, the invention of breakfast cereals and plant-based meat substitutes, and the church’s twenty-first-century global


network of health-care institutions, colleges, and universities.

The authors also discuss how the Seventh-day Adventist organizational and institutional structure supports its perspective on diet, and how the denomination has used professional education and research to advance vegetarianism.

The most widely cited research on the health benefits of the Adventist lifestyle are three prospective-cohort studies, conducted over a period of 50 years at Loma Linda University Health. Collectively known as the Adventist Health Studies, the National Institutes of Health-funded projects evaluate data gleaned from 96,194 Adventists in North America.

The church’s success in its efforts to promote vegetarianism is attested by the popular Blue Zones books and worldwide interest in plant-based nutrition not only for its substantial longevity benefits (Adventists often outlive their peers by 7 to 10 years), but also as a way to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions.

“Lessons learned from the Seventh-day Adventists include the importance of social engagement, family, faith, moderate physical activity and no smoking or alcohol. Food-specific lessons include a plant-based diet, and consuming plenty of legumes, including soy, whole grains, and nuts,” Banta observes.

Additional information on the benefits of the Adventist diet can be found on the Web site of the Center for Nutrition, Healthy Lifestyle and Disease Prevention. 



GUYANA EXPATRIATES CELEBRATE 25 YEARS OF GIVING BACK. The Linden International Reunion Association (LIRA), a group of Adventist members in North America originally from Linden, Guyana, recently made a pilgrimage home to celebrate LIRA's twenty-fifth anniversary. *Adventist Review* associate editor Lael Caesar, originally from Guyana, spoke for the anniversary event. LIRA has developed an effective model for giving back to the Guyanese community. To date, four churches in Guyana have benefited from LIRA's Church Pew Project, at a cost of GYD\$8 million (about US\$38,000).



CHURCH MEDIA EXPERTS FOCUS ON MISSION AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

The 2018 Global Adventist Internet Network (GAIN) Conference was held in Goyang, South Korea, August 8 to 12. About 250 participants from 40 countries, all of whom work for the Adventist Church in media and communication-related roles, attended the event. The event's motto, "Mission First. Go Forward!" indicated a focus on digital evangelism. Presentations included keys to effective branding, use of technology in local churches, and understanding search engine optimization better.



ADVENTIST INSTITUTE IN THE PHILIPPINES HAS A NEW PRESIDENT.

The Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS) board of trustees recently voted Obed Jiménez to serve as the eighth president of the institution. Jiménez succeeds Stephen Guptill, who retired after 13 years of service as president. AIAS is an international graduate-level institution of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists located in Silang, Cavite, Philippines.



NEW CENTER IN RWANDA BRINGS REHAB RELIEF. A new room in the Ubumwe Community Center in Rwanda will allow children with physical disabilities to receive regular physical therapy. Jessie's Place, a new physical therapy center sponsored by A Better World Canada (ABW), is anticipated to change many lives. According to organizers, physical therapy is hard to find in Rwanda. ABW, a humanitarian organization associated with the Adventist Church, began working on projects scattered across Rwanda more than 10 years ago.



EDUCATORS GATHER IN CHICAGO FOR TRAINING AND INSPIRATION.

The 2018 North American Division (NAD) Teachers' Convention was recently held in Chicago, Illinois, United States. Held every six years and organized by the NAD Office of Education, the event is an opportunity for some 6,000 Adventist teachers—through keynote meetings and hundreds of breakout sessions—to network, learn, grow, and gain tools and resources to help them to become more effective educators. Educators engaged with more than 200 exhibits that featured classroom supplies, core curriculum services, and online educational resources, among others.



SOUTH KOREA HOSTS MASSIVE MISSIONS CONGRESS.

The 2018 International Mission Congress of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD) was recently held in Goyang, Korea. The IMC gathered more than 4,000 church leaders and members from across the NSD territory for full days of testimonies, plenary sessions, cultural presentations, and workshops. The event was also an opportunity for representatives from around the world to learn new techniques and skills to spread the gospel in their respective countries and beyond, organizers said.



ADVENTIST CHURCH APPEALS TO MEMBERS TO REPORT ABUSE.

The church in Jamaica is appealing to its members to report criminal and abuse violations. Addressing attendees at a family ministries and enditnow conference, leaders emphasized that the church must see attacks on children, adolescents, and adults as evil, and must live ethically and pay attention in making their homes, churches, and institutions safe places for everyone, especially the young.

*Legalism,
liberalism,
and
Adventist
identity*

THE AMAZING

ADAM FERGUSON

I love this picture of my son and me at a local fair a couple years ago. The face painter turned my son into the amazing Spider-Man. He was on cloud nine.

I'm not a huge movie watcher, but I saw the first Spider-Man movie years ago. If you did too, you may recall the lesson Peter Parker's (Spider-Man's) uncle passed on to him: *"With great power comes great responsibility."*

We Seventh-day Adventists actually have more power than we might think. We have an amplified understanding of what is happening in this world, of God's plans for our lives and for the future of the universe, and a fascinating origin story involving every living being across time. We have the full scoop on the complete picture, and that information is power.

Our prophetic understanding is in 4K ultra resolution, and our hindsight is 20/20. But what about our *"heart sight"*?

Given all this information, it is our responsibility not only to share the truth, but to do so in love, so that *"speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ"* (Eph. 4:15).



SPIDER-MAN

LEGALISM-MAN

As a musician, I've worked with many Adventist evangelists over the years, helping with music during their seminars. Many of them approach their role with great responsibility, and they have my respect. But others, I feel, take a less-than-responsible approach to their role. They arrive in a church and proceed to conduct meetings every night, sharing facts and Bible data as through a veritable firehose. After 20 or 30 nights of this, the attendees, dazed and barely comprehending all this new data, are then ushered through a one-on-one "clearing" meeting. The evangelist proceeds to question them with a long checklist of topics:

[Bullet] Do you believe that hell is a state of eternal separation from God and not a place of eternal torment?

[Bullet] Do you agree that the seventh day is the Sabbath, and that believers should neither buy nor sell nor work on that day?

[Bullet] Do you believe in tithing and agree to tithe to the local church on a consistent basis?

Attendees who consent to every question are checked off the list as "cleared for baptism." Thankfully, not all evangelists use this method. They understand that baptism is not about assenting to mere factual knowledge. But many did and still do.

The recidivism rate for this approach to evangelism is very high, particularly when no relational aspect is built in

to this method to ensure that seminar attendees meet and form relationships with existing church members. Evangelism is vital to the gospel. But this mode? It is lifeless and legalistic. I'm not against the seminar evangelistic approach to sharing the gospel. When done effectively, it works for some people very well, for the meetings share vital information from Scripture. But when the seminars become too heavily steeped in facts, and baptism finds anchor in intellectual correctness, something irresponsible has occurred. Spiritual stillborns are made, and legalism is the result.

LIBERALISM-MAN

At the other end of the spectrum I had another experience with a different kind of legalism, albeit one that managed to turn my stomach in the same way.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines legalism as "excessive adherence to law or formula." And while the legalists in this other group did not make it their mission to force other people's behavior along rigid adherence to rules, they did manage to excuse their own behavior on the basis of works, though very subtly.

They are still around today, and their code of conduct resembles something like this:

"Look: it was all done at the cross! Jesus and His grace cover me and there's nothing left to do. Don't push repentance and the law in my face. Don't shove doctrine down my throat. The only thing that matters is having a relationship with Jesus."

Some people call this liberalism, also known as antinomianism. But it is really the same old legalism in a new suit. Instead of trusting in a lot of head knowledge, or pushing doctrine *onto* other people, this brand of legalism goes to the extreme opposite: pushing all doctrine *down and away* to an excessive degree.

Trademark behaviors include:

- talking about a relationship with Jesus without a definitive doctrine to identify who He is, what He wants for us, and what He is averse to;
- a negative reaction to some commonly used words in Scripture, including *God*, *doctrine*, and *repentance*;

We Seventh-day Adventists actually have more power than we might think. We have an amplified understanding of what is happening in this world, of God's plans for our lives, and for the future of the universe.

■ a strong aversion to traditional Seventh-day Adventist identity, including the three angels' messages and the writings of Ellen White, save the parts that talk about having a relationship with Jesus.

In fact, while their preeminent assertion was always "Jesus," further discussion with anyone in this group made it apparent that this Jesus was little more than a cardboard cutout, a buzzword for the notion of "nothing required but to dress well and be civil." I sometimes wonder whether this group is less of its own unique entity and more of a reaction movement to the first group of legalists that I mentioned.

While the messages of the two groups are different, their actions can at times be equated. Take materialism, for example, where the first group pours money into expensive cathedral-style church decor and ornate traditional sanctuaries, while the second group pours money into hot beverage bars in their lobbies, and lights and smoke machines for their stages. The first group prizes pricey suits and ties; the second group values the latest skinny jeans and trendy fashions. Perhaps they are no more than two sides of the same coin.

Their messages highlight one of two extremes. Either "You need to do more on your own" or "Lighten up! You need to do very little or nothing." One mistakenly prides themselves for keeping a list of laws; the other mistakenly prides Christ for doing away with the law so that they don't need to behave. One group does every kind of work except surrender to Jesus; the other group wants a friendship with Jesus without surrender.

BETWEEN THE EXTREMES COMES GREAT RESPONSIBILITY

I have a testimony to share, but it belongs to another time and another place. However, I will say this: I have at different times in my life also been pulled to these two extremes. Maybe you have too. But having shared my perspective on these two "extremes" within Adventism, it's important to add this thought: While we have experienced extremes in this church at times, the extremes do not dominate the identity of this church. Our identity has not changed.

That identity, along with our special role and mission, has not changed since our church's inception. Nor is there any reason to think it would need to change. Ellen White said many things about Adventism's identity and role in the last days. Note these two passages from her writings:

"In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the Word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import—the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention."¹

Again: "The message of Christ's righteousness is to sound from one end of the earth to the other to prepare the way of the Lord. This is the glory of God, which closes the work of the third angel."²

Is traditional Adventist identity—the peculiar doctrines, the three angels' messages, the writings of Ellen White and our early pioneers—so at odds with Christ's righteousness and the grace He brings that we cannot find a way to reconcile the absolute value of both of these realities to our future identity?

As a lifelong Seventh-day Adventist, I know what it's like to be inundated with doctrines and beasts in a way that is lifeless and ineffective. I also know what it is like to be told that "nothing is required because grace covers all." That second idea led me to make horrible decisions that I am still paying for today.

But both extremes can kill us. Somewhere in the middle lie all our peculiar doctrines, bursting at the seams with more love and grace through Christ than we may yet have tapped into.

This powerful combination alone will help us fulfill our unchanging identity as we seek to share the three angels' messages—to lift up Jesus in all the truth.

After all, what are we here for? 🦋

¹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 9, p. 19.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 19.

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THE GOODNESS MULTIPLIER

Doing good is one of the best ways to beat the darker sides of our nature and advance spiritual growth. Goodness is a multiplier.

In his autobiography *I Was Wrong* (1996), former televangelist, Jim Bakker, tells of his descent into ignominy, impoverishment, and imprisonment.¹ He frankly admits his dishonesty, deception, and fraudulent behavior. As a result he lost his freedom, dignity, confidence in his faith, and eventually his wife.

Inmate 07407-058, one-time beloved televangelist, once advisor to presidents, hit rock bottom. If anyone was apparently unworthy of goodness it was Jim Bakker. Yet if anyone desperately needed goodness, it was Jim Bakker.

Bakker recalls that he was at his very lowest point when something miraculous happened. A prison official told him, "Billy Graham is here to see you."

He thought, *Billy Graham has come here? To this place? To see me?* When Bakker walked into the room, Billy Graham turned toward him, arms opened wide.

Bakker described how he experienced the incredible power of goodness. "I will never forget that the man who had just been voted one of the most influential men in the world, and who has ministered to millions of people, took time out of his busy schedule to come minister to one prisoner." In the midst of Bakker's depression and hopelessness, Graham's act of goodness refreshed his heart and boosted his spirit. "I felt as though Jesus Himself had come to visit me," he said.

We see the effect of the universal goodness multiplier in that one act of goodness by Billy Graham to Jim Bakker (see Gal. 6:7; 2 Cor. 9:6; Prov. 11:18):

1. as the recipient of goodness, Jim Bakker was unspeakably blessed.

2. as the initiator of goodness, Billy Graham was blessed for having done good.

3. untold others, having heard about this experience, have been inspired by this act of goodness.

To a greater or lesser degree, the goodness multiplier is operational every time an act of goodness occurs. Paul demonstrates this goodness principle in his letter to Philemon on behalf of Philemon's runaway slave, Onesimus.

He wrote: "I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, because I hear of your love for all his holy people and your faith in the Lord Jesus. I pray your partnership with us in the faith may become effective in deepening your understanding of every good thing we share for the sake of Christ.

Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the Lord's people" (Philemon 1:4-7).

Ellen White wrote: "We may never know until the judgment the influence of a kind, considerate course of action to the inconsistent, the unreasonable, and unworthy."²

Let us adopt John Wesley's rules for life and be multipliers for good:

Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can. ▀

¹ Chris Dyches, "Fallen PTL pastor Jim Bakker Recalls Prison Visit from Rev. Billy Graham," Charlotte, N.C.: WBTV.

² Ellen G. White, *Christian Leadership*, p. 7.

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TRANSFORMATION TIPS
DELBERT W. BAKER



THE GOODNESS MULTIPLIER IS OPERATIONAL EVERY TIME AN ACT OF GOODNESS OCCURS.



It's not comfortable to know
that someone is quietly keeping
track of your crimes.

JESUS GETS THE VERDICT

*Judgment
according to heaven*

SHAWN BOONSTRA

Are you *sure* that's everything?" The officer looked at me across his desk while pointing to something on a computer monitor visible only to him. It was my naturalization interview for U. S. citizenship; you're supposed to declare every occasion you've been detained by law enforcement over the course of your entire life—including traffic tickets. You are instructed to add additional pages to your application if you need them. Sadly, I had to provide the required addendum.

My mind raced. *What, exactly, did the officer see on that monitor? Had I forgotten to declare something? Was he just bluffing? Would I be denied citizenship if I got this wrong?*

"I think so," I answered. "But we're talking about a lot of years, so there might be something I forgot to declare."

He smiled and dropped his finger from the screen. "OK," he said, and finished up his computer work. He had been testing my honesty. But then he hit "Send," and his sober look returned. "Hmm," he muttered, "the system doesn't like this. What exactly does 'without due care and attention' mean?"

"It means that I totaled a car when I was 16 and the cops had to charge me with *something*, so they charged me with not paying attention."

He frowned again and tried a few more keystrokes. A surge of anxiety doubled my heart rate. *Would it all fall apart at this point, after all these years?*

"Good news," he finally said. "It went through. You'll be hearing from us by mail."

And with that, I drove home knowing that I soon would be a United States citizen.

It's not comfortable to know that someone is quietly keeping track of your crimes. When I was a small boy, there was a statement from Jesus that terrified me: "For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and

STEVE CREITZ/GOODSALT.COM

In God's kingdom, conviction is not designed to create hopelessness; instead, it drives toward reconciliation. You do not feel conviction because God hates you. The goodness of God leads you to repentance.

what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops" (Luke 12:2, 3).⁶ It's a nightmare akin to that one where your clothes disappear in public. I could visualize angels shouting my secret sins across my neighborhood, imagining the hot shame of having people know what I was *really* like. That nasty picture I drew of my teacher? Posted in the local paper. That not-so-kosher story I whispered to the other boys on the playground? Captured by a hot microphone.

No, it's not comfortable to know that someone is quietly keeping track of you. From that perspective, it's understandable that "fear God . . . , for the hour of His judgment has come" (Rev. 14:7) might garrote our hearts with a cold wire. But is *terror* the response that God hopes to elicit?

To some extent, perhaps. I won't deny that the thought of facing our life's record *without* Christ *should* make us squirm. Sometimes we become so obsessed with creating an atmosphere of love and acceptance that we want to prevent *all* discomfort. But Isaiah isn't wrong when he describes restless nights brought on by sleeping on a too-short bed with a too-small blanket (Isa. 28:20). Conviction isn't comfortable, and Paul didn't seem to mind disturbing Felix's peace with the idea of judgment (Acts 24:25).

But in God's kingdom, conviction is not designed to create hopelessness; instead, it drives toward reconciliation. You do not feel conviction because God hates you. The goodness of God is what leads you to repentance (Rom. 2:4).

Heaven is not seeking some technicality with which to bar you. The high price paid at the cross to secure you for the kingdom should demonstrate that God is trying to get you *in*.

Perhaps that's why David can describe judgment in terms of joy and thanksgiving:

"Jerusalem is built as a city that is compact together, where the tribes go up, the tribes of the

Lord, to the Testimony of Israel, to give thanks to the name of the Lord. For thrones are set there for judgment, the thrones of the house of David” (Ps. 122:3-5).

During the past quarter century of public evangelism I’ve noticed something curious. Public audiences love the investigative judgment. I’ve never had an objection—except from some Adventists who find the subject distasteful. I struggled to understand why.

Why do so many in our midst, in spite of the astonishing love of Christ portrayed in our unique understanding of the great controversy, still carry a largely medieval European impression of judgment? Why do we see judgment the way Michelangelo portrayed it in *The Last Judgment*? The painting is despondent enough close up, but it becomes more sinister as you try to escape it, taking on the appearance of a grinning skull when viewed from the other end of the Sistine Chapel.

Where would we have to stand if we want to see what *David* saw?

If you have already come to Christ but the thought of the judgment still terrifies you, perhaps it’s time to reread Daniel’s account and ask an important question: What, exactly, is the case being considered in heaven’s court? Go ahead: grab a Bible and read Daniel 7. I’ll wait.

Did you find any mention of *you* in that chapter? No. Of course, that doesn’t mean that you won’t face judgment. We *all* do (see Rom. 2:3-5; 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10). But notice that only two *individuals* are mentioned in Daniel’s account: the Ancient of Days and the Son of Man. The rest of the scene is *corporate*. It’s a *group* of angels considering the record of a run of large *empires* established in defiance of God’s throne. No solitary human being is depicted.

Perhaps because of my sinful, selfish bent, I want to think that the heavenly court session is all about *me*. The immigration computer is fired up, then an angel points to it and asks, “Is that

everything? Have you *really* come clean?” But I’m not mentioned in this chapter, and neither are you. As with the rest of Scripture, the central focus is Christ. It’s dealing with *His* right to *His* inheritance:

“I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed” (Dan. 7:13, 14).

In other words, the primary subject of the trial is Jesus. Unbelievably, God has put Himself on trial.

Perhaps you’ve noticed that when Jesus comes for His church, His feet never touch the ground. Instead, we are caught up into the air to meet Him. Feet were a symbol of possession in the ancient world, which is why Satan’s answer to God in Job is so deeply freighted with meaning: “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it” (Job 1:7). He’s not informing the assembly that he’s been out for a stroll: he’s declaring ownership of the fallen planet.

When the angels review the books, they come to the unmistakable conclusion that Jesus deserves His inheritance—that the Last Adam, God in human flesh, has taken back what rightfully belongs to Him. All earthly kingdoms will now be set aside in favor of His: the throne belongs to Christ.

But before the verdict is ultimately executed, He takes *us* into the courts of heaven to review the books as well (Rev. 20:4, 11, 12). We, too, must be convinced, of our own freewill, that Jesus deserves His throne. Only *then* does His foot touch the mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4).

Of course, we cannot escape the fact that when Jesus returns, the fates of the righteous and

The big question in judgment is not whether or not you are worthy. That was established a long time ago.

wicked have already been decided (Rev. 22:11,12). But the books of heaven are not there because God can't remember who belongs in the kingdom. They're not there in order to change God's mind about you. They're there for the benefit of angels—and then us—so that we can understand *why* God made the decisions He made, and forever settle the question of God's worthiness.

They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been manifested" (Rev. 15:3, 4).

The big question in judgment is not whether or not *you* are worthy. That was established a long time ago. You can let go of your mental anguish, always wondering if you're good enough to make the cut: the angels know full well that you are *not*. That is not their primary consideration. This is about Jesus and His right to establish a kingdom in which He invites you to share His throne (Rev. 3:21; 20:4).

The good news? Jesus wins. If you've got Jesus, you're *in*. You can bask in the knowledge that the judge in *your* case also happens to be the defense attorney (John 5:22; 1 John 2:1). We can have *boldness*, not fear, in the day of judgment (1 John 4:17, 18).

If you *don't* have Jesus, why in the world would you reject such an incredible offer?

Perhaps you remember the story of Boaz and Ruth. It tells of an immensely prosperous landowner who wishes to marry the girl of his dreams. The girl would like to marry *him* too: she has already lain at his *feet*, wanting to be claimed (Ruth 3:7, 8). (Just in case you're missing the typology, Christ is the exceptionally wealthy landowner, and *His church* is the dream girl.)

There's a barrier to the wedding, however. There is a previous claim to the land and the girl—someone who is more closely related and has a more natural right to her. "Now it is true that I am a close relative," Boaz states. "However, there is a relative closer than I" (verse 12).

That other, more closely related suitor would be the devil; after all, we handed him the keys of this world in Eden, and we chose his rebellion over the throne of God. We are more naturally inclined to be like *him* than we are to be like Jesus. So what does Boaz do about it? He will not be deprived of his dream girl. He goes to the gate of the city, where judgment was held, and takes the case to the elders. "Sit still, my daughter," Naomi reassures Ruth, "until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day" (verse 18).

At the judgment footwear changes hands, and it is determined that Boaz has a right to the land and his bride. It's the best possible verdict. And in Heaven's judgment, the bridegroom might be delayed (Matt. 25:5), but the verdict will most certainly be in His favor . . . and yours. It's not about whether Jesus is obliged to *take* you; it's about whether or not He can *have* you—and it turns out He *can*.

"Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God'" (Rev. 21:2, 3).

I'm with David. That *is* an occasion for thanksgiving. ♣

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God enquires because
He is humble, not
because He is ignorant.

JUDGMENT FOR DUMMIES

Basic theology for sinners

LAEL CAESAR

Some people don't believe that God has a judgment. Others who do are terrified about their standing in that judgment. Before we hear the judgment story, here are seven truths about God's judgment, selected from a multitude of others. The first of the seven enumerates seven truths about God Himself, selected from a multitude of others:

- 1 God, (a) eternity's unique life source, is (b) fair, (c) caring, (d) omniscient, (e) unchanging, (f) law-abiding, and (g) love.
- 2 God runs the entire universe on the same rule of selfless love.
- 3 Adam's sin violated the law of life for the universe.
- 4 Adam's sin blighted all earth existence.
- 5 Judgment on Adam alone, or any such partial approach, would not restore what Adam ruined.
- 6 Jesus' perfect sacrifice for sinners fulfilled all the demands of God's law.
- 7 God's judgment procedure is particularly on behalf of creatures: we don't know everything.

Now here's the Bible's account of God's judgment story.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BEGINNING

Earth's history began with judgment—keen, discriminating judgment—that summarized God's doings through earth's first week as "very good" (Gen. 1:31). There was neither flaw nor guilt.

Then things went awry, and judgment had to play a different role as God initiated a one-on-One meeting to let Adam and Eve know how He would correct their violation, restoring all things to life from the death they had brought to earth (Gen. 3:15).

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING RESPONSIBLE

First, Adam and Eve needed to face what they had done: "Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" (verse 11). God's words showed, with gentle firmness, that He knew, understood, and cared enough to want them to take responsibility and show their willingness to be accountable. Only then could He really help them.

Senselessly, the man and woman tried their worst to not be accountable, with a God before whom "everything is uncovered and laid bare" (Heb. 4:13), whose omniscience fitted Him to handle their loss of the Beginning before they brought it on themselves. Their rebellion did not change God's nature of love (1 John 4:8). But clinging to sin separates humans from Him and life; it keeps Him from flooding us with all the gorgeous expressions of His love. It does us no good (Isa. 59:1, 2; Prov. 28:13).

The fear behind the first couple's denials and distortion of facts inspired creative stupidity. First it was the woman's fault, or God's, rather: He had made the woman; He had given her to the man (Gen. 3:12). The woman used her chance to take responsibility as her cue to be more creatively stupid: it was the snake's fault; the snake had outsmarted her (verse 13).

Human duty begins with accepting responsi-

God's verdict—individual, regional, or cosmic—consistently includes an investigative phase that gives thinking, choosing creatures an opportunity to admit their actions and review the possible consequences.

bility and ends with giving account of our stewardship (1 Cor. 4:2; Luke 16:1-13). Instead, Adam and Eve opted for dissembling.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TAKING YOUR TURN

Cain's judgment, like Adam and Eve's, was primarily an offer to show transparency: "Where is your brother Abel?" (Gen. 4:9).

Cain responded like his parents, missing his turn, his chance to acknowledge the truth: "I don't know." God always knows when we're lying, even when we don't. Cain didn't seem to: "Am I my brother's keeper?" (verse 9). "Cain had gone so far in sin that he had lost a sense of the continual presence of God and of His greatness and omniscience."¹ Rather contradictorily, his murderer's mind still demanded fairness for himself: "My punishment is more than I can bear" (verse 13). He was criticizing God's judgment.

Centuries after Cain, similar elements invest the Sodom and Gomorrah story: omniscient God conducts an investigation to give human beings the chance to receive mercy (Prov. 28:13). But the people muff their chance and miss their turn to be pardoned. Note the possibility of mercy that brings the Lord out into the heat of Mamre at midday: "I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me" (Gen. 18:20, 21).

God's verdict—individual, regional, or cosmic—consistently includes an investigative phase that gives thinking, choosing creatures an opportunity to admit their actions and review the possible consequences. The divine lawsuit is one of His more significant postures, in which He "enters into judgment against the elders and leaders of his people" (Isa. 3:14). These investigations are for the sake of creatures dwarfed by the universe of facts and ever attracted to personally sympathetic explanations. They are for our information, not for God's, because He knows the correct order of everything.

He enquires because He is humble, not because He is ignorant. But we take His meekness as

license to be freely judgmental about Him, denouncing Him for everything—fussiness about trivia like distrust, disobedience, and rebellion; books of record that document everyone's behavior; arbitrary punishments; destruction of innocents; and generally, the commitment to having any kind of justice system at all.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING JUDGED

But God's justice system is not unique to Planet Earth. Our interaction with extraterrestrial intelligences does not require monumental IT departments, endless translation code, multiple satellites in the sky, and access based on affordability; or searches for funding, extended doctoral training in Rosetta Stone decoding, and communication ingenuity across the light years; or teams of careful scholars in biological and sociological research spooling out hypotheses and tests, and finally reeling in valid generalizations and established theories.

Had it not been for sin, we all would freely interrelate with both natural and supernatural orders throughout the universe, whether we eat with chopsticks or knives and forks. Diet and attire are negotiable across space-time. Conformity to God's law of life is not. Witness Jesus: "Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. . . . All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. . . . Through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life."²

Sin, in Eden or elsewhere, makes an argument contrary to the nature of existence: that ordinary life runs by getting, and life supreme by getting everything that God, manifestly selfish, withholds. Agreeing with this lie meant defying and contradicting the universal law of life, and bringing death to the planet (Rom. 6:23); death to violated nature, death to nature's violators. This is why God sometimes includes nature as a witness in His lawcourts

(Ps. 50:4). A trial isolating Adam and Eve would not do: everything in God's universe is connected.

Jesus personally holds everything together (Col. 1:17). Piecemeal fixing—Band-Aids for Adam's shins, surgery for the violated Eden tree branch, and physical therapy for angels' wings—would not do either. Grace would sustain existence for as long as necessary. But fixing everything would require sin's elimination from the physical realm and from the queries of fallen and unfallen intelligences, as well as the eternally secure restoration of God's original gift called life. God would have to bring everything back from the dead.

God's judgment shows that He has taken everything and everyone into consideration. In His inexhaustible devotion to us He has also borne the blame for our sin. Infallibly innocent Himself, He has paid the penalty of death on the cross (2 Cor. 5:21), in an unimprovable judgment that fits the contours of eternity. By living sinless and dying for guilty sinners God has triumphed over the forces of cosmic evil (2 Cor. 2:14; Col. 2:13, 14), quashed every accusation of Satan against Himself or us through past, present, or future ages (see Zech. 3:1-5; Rev. 12:10; Rom. 3:21-26), destroyed Satan's works (1 John 3:8), and given eternal and total victory to every saint who will believe in His name and accept His sacrifice on their behalf (2 Cor. 2:14; Col. 2:10).

Now, sinners who come to know the heart and way of this God, whose love does not change, relate very differently to His judgment than do those who do not understand the basics, or are still determined to dissemble and self-justify. Instead of hiding in fear, they enthusiastically invite His examination: they know that it is the way to sure and complete vindication because His righteousness has become theirs and equips them to stand, whatever the scrutiny, when God brings all into judgment. As the psalmist petitions: "Judge me, O Lord"; and at the same time declares, "I have trusted in the Lord; therefore I shall not slide" (Ps. 26:1, KJV; see also Pss. 7:8; 35:24; 43:1).

The metaphors vary, but the truth is the same:

we are enveloped in Christ's righteousness (Phil. 3:9); Christ lives out His life in us (Gal. 2:20); Jesus, our Savior, is our judge (John 3:16; 5:22, 27); Jesus is our advocate (Zech. 3:1-5; 1 John 2:1); Jesus is both our lawyer and our judge (John 5 and 1 John 2); judgment is passed in our favor (Dan. 7:22), and our accuser is consigned to eternal damnation (Rev. 20:7-10). The message is the same: "there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1).

Those who do not grasp the basics of God's judgment perceive everything differently. Satan's fiction of life by getting distorts all their adjudication: in the hard sciences their study of natural phenomena proves that chaos is the order of things; in the social sciences their analysis demonstrates that selfishness is the single strongest indicator of viability; in their sport, aggression pays and deference is pathetic; in their art, irreverence and the bizarre earn more plaudits than unselfishness and respect; and in religion they, in all the rainbow colors of diversity, placate conceptions of humans' ugliest red and yellow, black, white and green selves that they project as their gods.

Nevertheless, before God, for love's sake, metes out His final executive judgment, all thinkers, even the most skeptical, will acknowledge that He is fair: His exhaustive documentation (Dan. 7:10; Mal. 3:16; Rev. 20:12, etc.) and the thorough review He provides for, including millennial review even after the resurrection of the just (Rev. 20:4), will move His enemies to concede His justice. Hence the confidence of Paul writing to the Philippians, that "at the name of Jesus every knee [will] bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10, 11).¹

¹ Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1890, 1908), p. 77.

² Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1892, 1940), p. 21.

Lael Caesar, *Adventist Review* associate editor, is glad for the judgment at Calvary.

THE HEART OF ADVENTIST THEOLOGY

JUD LAKE

It was October 22, 1844, and thousands of Millerites were searching the skies for the sign of Jesus' coming. William Miller had taught from his key text, "unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" (Dan. 8:14; KJV), that the sanctuary was the earth, which would be cleansed by fire at Jesus' second coming.

CAST DOWN BUT NOT DESTROYED

All through that unforgettable day believers waited for the cleansing fire, but to their great disappointment, they never saw its flame: Jesus did not return. "What happened?" they wondered. In the confusing aftermath, some of the heartbroken saints knew they should not doubt the soundness of their historical calculations. So they determined to find biblical answers for what really happened on October 22, 1844. This group of Bible-believing truth seekers would eventually develop into the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the 1860s.

Their investigation began the day after the disappointment. Hiram Edson, a Methodist farmer from Port Gibson, New York,



The sanctuary doctrine always has been the heart of Adventist theology.

“wept, and wept, till the day dawn” because Jesus did not come. On this morning after the disappointment, he and several friends spent a season of prayer in his barn and found courage to venture out to share their hope with others.

According to his own handwritten account, as he and a fellow Millerite were passing through a large field, it occurred to him with great clarity that on the day before, October 22, instead of coming to cleanse the earth, Jesus, our high priest, for the first time entered into the Second Apartment of the *heavenly* sanctuary. He thus began a work there that needed to be completed before He would come back to the earth. This new insight became a topic of vigorous discussion between Edson and his fellow believers, F. B. Hahn, a medical doctor, and O.R.L. Crosier, a preacher and editor.

Over the next year these three collaborated in a detailed study of the Bible on the subject of the sanctuary, focusing on such books as Hebrews, Leviticus, Daniel, and Revelation. By early 1846 their position had matured and provided answers to what happened on October 22, 1844, and the sanctuary that needed cleansing. On February 7, 1846, Enoch Jacobs published their findings in the *Day-Star Extra* with the title “The Law of Moses.”¹

This article was a significant milestone in early Seventh-day Adventist history. The combined study of Edson, Crosier, and Hahn set forth fundamental principles of what would eventually become a major pillar in Seventh-day Adventist theology. At the heart of their conclusions was the reality of the heavenly sanctuary and its cleansing by blood rather than the earth’s cleansing by fire, as William Miller taught. Furthermore, just as earthly priests had a two-phase ministry in the earthly sanctuary, so Christ has a two-phase ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. The first phase began in the holy place at His ascension, while the second began October 22, 1844, when He moved from the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary to the Second. The first phase of Christ’s ministry focused on forgiveness,

whereas the second involved the blotting out of sins and the cleansing of the sanctuary.

Christ would not return until He completed His work in the Second Apartment of the sanctuary. Henceforward, the focus was on Christ’s high-priestly ministry in the heavens.

ADVANCING TOGETHER

From 1848 to 1850 groups of Sabbatarian Adventists met together in what they later called Sabbath Conferences, in which they established the pillars of their faith, wonderfully integrated together through the doctrine of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. By the late 1840s they were in agreement on the nature of the sanctuary, and further clarified the meaning of “cleansing the sanctuary” through the following decades. During this time Elon Everts first proposed the idea of an “investigative judgment” on the righteous dead. “I solemnly believe,” he wrote in the *Review and Herald*, January 1, 1857, “that the judgment has been going on in the Heavenly Sanctuary since 1844, and that upon the righteous dead . . . judgment has been passing.”²

Within a month James White used the same term. Both the wicked and the righteous, he wrote, “will be judged before they are raised from the dead. The investigative judgment of the house, or church, of God will take place before the first resurrection; so will the judgment of the wicked take place during the 1,000 years of Revelation 20, and they will be raised at the close of that period.” He further explained that in the great day of atonement taking place since 1844, “the sins of all who shall have part in the first resurrection will be blotted out.” This time of blotting out sins is not the “time when they are forgiven.” Rather, “we must look to the great day of atonement as the time when Jesus offers His blood for the blotting out of sins. It is at the time of the cleansing of the Sanctuary.”³

This cleansing of heaven’s sanctuary involved cleansing the record of sin, according to pioneer educator Goodloe Harper Bell in 1878.⁴ Thus, by the later 1800s there was basic agreement on

The doctrine of the heavenly sanctuary, including its pre-Advent investigative judgment, has been, and will continue to be, the heart of Adventist theology.”

several fundamental points: the judgment began on October 22, 1844, and therefore occurs before the second coming of Christ. It is investigative in nature; it includes the righteous; it involves cleansing the records of sin; and Christ is at the center of it. Adventists would expand and develop these concepts in the next century and beyond.

VISIONS AND DISPUTANTS

Ellen White had at least 11 visions on the subject of the sanctuary between the years 1844 and 1851, visions that functioned mostly as confirmation rather than initiation. The appeal in doctrinal study on the sanctuary was always to the Bible. Ellen White’s visions served mainly to confirm the importance of the subject they were studying.

Some years ago Paul Gordon, former director of the Ellen G. White Estate, collected in a volume all the sanctuary-related articles in Adventist publications between the years 1846 to 1905 (more than 400). A careful reading of this 1,007-page document reveals how anchoring, developing, and clarifying the sanctuary doctrine was consistently an exploration and explication of Bible truth.⁵

Nonetheless, from the beginning there have been detractors of the sanctuary doctrine, such as D. M. Canright, Albion Fox Ballenger, Louis Richard Conradi, and more recently Desmond Ford and Dale Ratzlaff.

The most scholarly and influential of these was Ford, whose concerns mirrored similar issues of earlier detractors. In August 1980 he presented his conclusions at a special gathering of church administrators and scholars at Glacier View, Colorado. The October 1980 issue of *Ministry* magazine, a special double issue, provides a thorough summary of this event, including context, procedure, arguments and counterarguments, and even relevant correspondence between parties involved. Though his major positions were found unpersuasive, and he lost his ministerial credentials, the benefit of Ford’s challenge is that it provoked Adventist scholars to deeper Scripture study, with the resultant

enhancement of critical understandings on the subject of the sanctuary and judgment.

GROWING IN GRACE

Since the early 1980s the 1844 judgment has received significant published attention from Seventh-day Adventist scholars.⁶ Building on the careful foundation laid by the pioneers, these scholars have opened new vistas and depths from the biblical data on Christ’s ministry in heaven. These include the thrilling and reassuring recognition that the verdict of the pre-Advent judgment favors the righteous (Dan. 7:22).⁷ Today’s scholars continue to serve up these new insights from their careful study. Their findings serve to validate the fundamental conclusions of those who first plowed through the Scriptures in ways that strengthen faith in God’s inspired Word and deepen our love for Christ, the focus of the doctrine, the center of our assurance, and the climax of our hope.⁸ The doctrine of the heavenly sanctuary, including its pre-Advent investigative judgment has been, and will continue to be, the heart of Adventist theology.⁹

¹ O.R.L. Crosier, “The Law of Moses,” *Day-Star Extra*, Feb. 7, 1846.

² Elon Everts, “Communication From Bro. Everts,” *Review and Herald*, Jan. 1, 1857.

³ James White, “The Judgment,” *Review and Herald*, Jan. 29, 1857.

⁴ Goodloe H. Bell, “The Cleansing of the Heavenly Sanctuary, Continued,” *Review and Herald*, Dec. 12, 1878.

⁵ Paul Gordon, “Pioneer Articles on the Sanctuary, Daniel 8:14, the Judgment, 2300 Days, Year-day Principle, Atonement: 1846-1905” (Silver Spring, Md.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1983).

⁶ See, for example, the Daniel and Revelation Committee’s seven-volume set at www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/shop; Frank Holbrook, *The Atoning Priesthood of Jesus Christ* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Adventist Theological Society Publications, 1996); Roy E. Gane, *Altar Call* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Diadem, 1999); Ray E. Gane, *Who’s Afraid of the Judgment?* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 2006).

⁷ See Gerhard F. Hasel, “Divine Judgment,” in Raoul Dederen, ed., *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 2000), p. 834.

⁸ See Richard Davidson, *A Song for the Sanctuary*, forthcoming graduate textbook on the doctrine of the sanctuary, commissioned by the General Conference’s Biblical Research Institute.

⁹ See Roy Adams, *The Sanctuary Doctrine: Understanding the Heart of Adventist Theology* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1993).

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THE BEGINNING OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION

“But as for you, continue in what you have learned . . . , because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures” (2 Tim. 3:14, 15).

When the first Adventist parents sent the first Adventist students to the first Adventist schools they cared about one textbook above all others: the Bible.

Scripture was the entire reason for the existence of the Adventist Church. Those earliest Adventists studied Scripture verse by verse, letting light unfold ray by ray. In those days there were no multiple-choice questions and fill in the blanks about Adventist beliefs—there weren’t yet Adventist beliefs, only Scripture.

When these early Adventists opened Adventist schools, the same hunger and thirst for God’s Word superseded academics, facilities, and tuition. Seeking the light of Scripture was everything to early Adventists. More than 150 years later important questions are being asked about the state of Adventist education: the cost, the quality, the viability.

But may we also ask another question? Are Adventist teachers, students, and parents still immersed in the Word of God? Is our personal study of Scripture overflowing into our classrooms and conversations? Or have we assumed that the Word has been sufficiently studied, that truth has been categorized into a list, and that we no longer need the source of the list?

Recently George Knight, Adventist historian and author of the Exploring Bible study series, was asked to speak at an Adventist university. Knight said he had planned to speak on personal Bible study.

Instead, he was asked to speak on the subject “Why Be Adventist.”

What’s more important—telling university students why they should be Adventist, or calling them to study Scripture for themselves?

At this summer’s North American Division Adventist Educators conference I visited with Nina Atcheson, Adventist author of the excellent Encounter Bible curriculum and new book *As Light Lingers: Basking in the Word of God*. Atcheson shared how, when she talks with Adventist teachers about meaningful Bible study, some tearfully express that they’ve never learned how to study Scripture inductively for themselves; but they are hungry to do so.

“There is nothing,” wrote Ellen White, “more calculated to strengthen the intellect than the study of the Scriptures. No other book is so potent to elevate the thoughts, to give vigor to the faculties, as the broad, ennobling truths of the Bible. If God’s Word were studied as it should be, [men and women] would have a breadth of mind, a nobility of character, and a stability of purpose rarely seen in these times.”¹

The biggest need in Adventist education right now isn’t academic quality, facilities, or tuition. It’s Adventist teachers, students, and parents immersing themselves in Scripture.

This month, 501 years ago, a university professor on a Christian campus in Wittenberg called his colleagues back to God’s Word, kindling a fire that lit the world. May that fire fiercely burn in our hearts today. ♣

¹ Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1956), p. 90.

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**THE BIGGEST NEED
IN ADVENTIST
EDUCATION RIGHT
NOW ISN'T
ACADEMIC QUALITY,
FACILITIES, OR
TUITION.**



DON'T JUDGE ME!

Engaging a generation's fear

CHANTAL J. KLINGBEIL

A very useful expression has recently taken social media by storm. “Don’t judge me” is a wonderful hashtag for that picture of you with a tub of ice cream and a spoon. This expression seems to hold the power to elicit approval over any action, because anyone who posts or comments anything other than absolute support will be judging.

FANTASY

Many recent surveys show that Millennials are more likely than the general population to reject organized Christian faith, and more than 60 percent point to Christianity as being too judgmental as one of the reasons for their exodus.¹ Judging and judgment seem to touch a raw nerve.

Perhaps part of the popularity of the expression “Don’t judge me” is the unspoken meanings that come along with it. It’s a good stand-in for a whole array of painful expressions: “Please

Jumping from a plane without a parachute is not a good thing.

don't think less of me"; "Don't think that I'm a bad person"; "Please accept me"; "Please love me."

IS IT EVEN POSSIBLE?

Just imagine our world without any judgment. Everyone could be free to do what they wanted to. We could wear whatever we wanted, wherever we wanted, without raising any eyebrows. We could eat and drink whatever we wanted, and wouldn't have to feel guilty about our Starbucks cup in certain company. Most important, we would feel confident everywhere we went, and could be certain that we would hear nothing but positive expressions coming our way. And, of course, we could sleep peacefully every night, and never have to worry about whether we are good enough. No fearsome thoughts of a final judgment would haunt us.

REALITY

But even if we did manage to stay absolutely nonjudgmental and even support everyone's efforts in everything, there would still be consequences. In other words, no matter all the likes and affirmative comments on social media, our tub of ice cream will still have calories.

And that's where judgment comes in. We live by making decisions, i.e., judging. We have to make a judgment call each morning about what we're going to wear. We make judgments about what we eat, what we listen to, when it is safe to cross the road.

Our imaginary world free of judgment is just that—an imaginary world.

Take, for instance, a recent social media campaign calling for an end to body shaming, which sounds really good, except that it may have made things worse for many on social media.

The campaign began with a beauty blogger photographed without makeup, revealing her acne and encouraging others to accept themselves, flaws and all. Under the hashtag #DontJudgeChallenge others then began posting photos or videos

of themselves with drawn-on unibrows, acne, or other physical features that are often mocked. Then they wiped off their "flaws" to reveal their picture-perfect, beautifully made-up selves underneath. Instead of helping to end body shaming the campaign served to reinforce the notion that you have to be perfect to be loved, or at least to get some likes.²

JUDGING, OR NOT

The Bible has some fairly strong statements on judging. Jesus Himself said, "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you" (Matt. 7:1, 2).³

Ellen White expands on this theme of judging others when she wrote: "Consider Christ's pity for man. He knows just how they were born; He knows just how they were surrounded in childhood. You don't know what temptations came with their birth. You don't know the condition of their parents. Put away all judgment."⁴

This injunction is pretty tough to follow. If we were to judge ourselves half as critically as we judge others the results wouldn't be pretty. Much better not to judge at all, and let everyone do their own thing, right?

While it is absolutely true that we should not be critical or judgmental of others because we really don't have the ability to make correct judgments on motive and circumstance, the Bible also encourages us, even commands us, to judge. "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment" (John 7:24).

So how do we both judge and not judge?

JUDGING

Unlike current thinking in our present culture of moral relativism, we really do live in a world of absolutes. Just as there are physical laws that govern tangible processes around us and produce measurable results when broken (e.g., jumping out of an airplane without a parachute), so there

While we are called to investigate and examine everything in our quest to find and apply truth, we are not called to condemn others.

is right and wrong, good and evil (jumping from a plane without a parachute is not a good thing).

In order to survive physically as well as spiritually we have to make informed judgments. We have to observe well and carefully our own motives, thought processes, and actions and make moral calls. We must never let cultural trends replace the authority of God's Word for making judgment calls between right and wrong and forming moral opinions.

Ah, but there's the challenge! While we are called to investigate and examine everything in our quest to find and apply truth, we are not called to condemn others. God is the only true judge, and only He can judge humanity (Rev. 20:12). So how does this relate to the "Don't judge me" movement?

SALAD IN YOUR TEETH

Imagine that you are having dinner with your friend and you notice that your friend has some green salad stuck between her front teeth. What kind of friend would you be if you let her go off to her job interview like that? Would you be judging her if you told her about the salad?

It may be awkward, or even a little uncomfortable, to point out the salad, but if you really cared about her, you would take the risk. The relationship makes all the difference. You would not be pointing this out to make yourself look better, or to appease your own guilty conscience— you would be doing this only out of a desire for her happiness.

Only in the context of an unselfish love for others can we point out actions and behaviors that may well inhibit their eternal happiness.

JUDGMENT COMING

Most often when someone says "Don't judge me" their conscience is already at work, and they feel a sense of guilt and alienation that they are trying to drown out with a plea for affirmation.

We all have different ways of running, but in


the end we know instinctively that there is no place to hide. There will be a calling to accounts. There will be a final judgment.

Strangely enough, part of the good news of the "everlasting gospel" is that "the hour of His judgment has come" (Rev. 14:7). How can judgment be good news?

Judgment can be good news if we know the Judge and we know the verdict. "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1).

If we truly understand that the Judge is completely on our side, and we know that He was prepared to die rather than live without us, then we can face judgment without fear. While we are not trying to gloss over the enormity of our sin and guilt that separate us from a holy God, in faith we have claimed His gift. We have died to the old sinful life and our lives are now "hidden with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3).

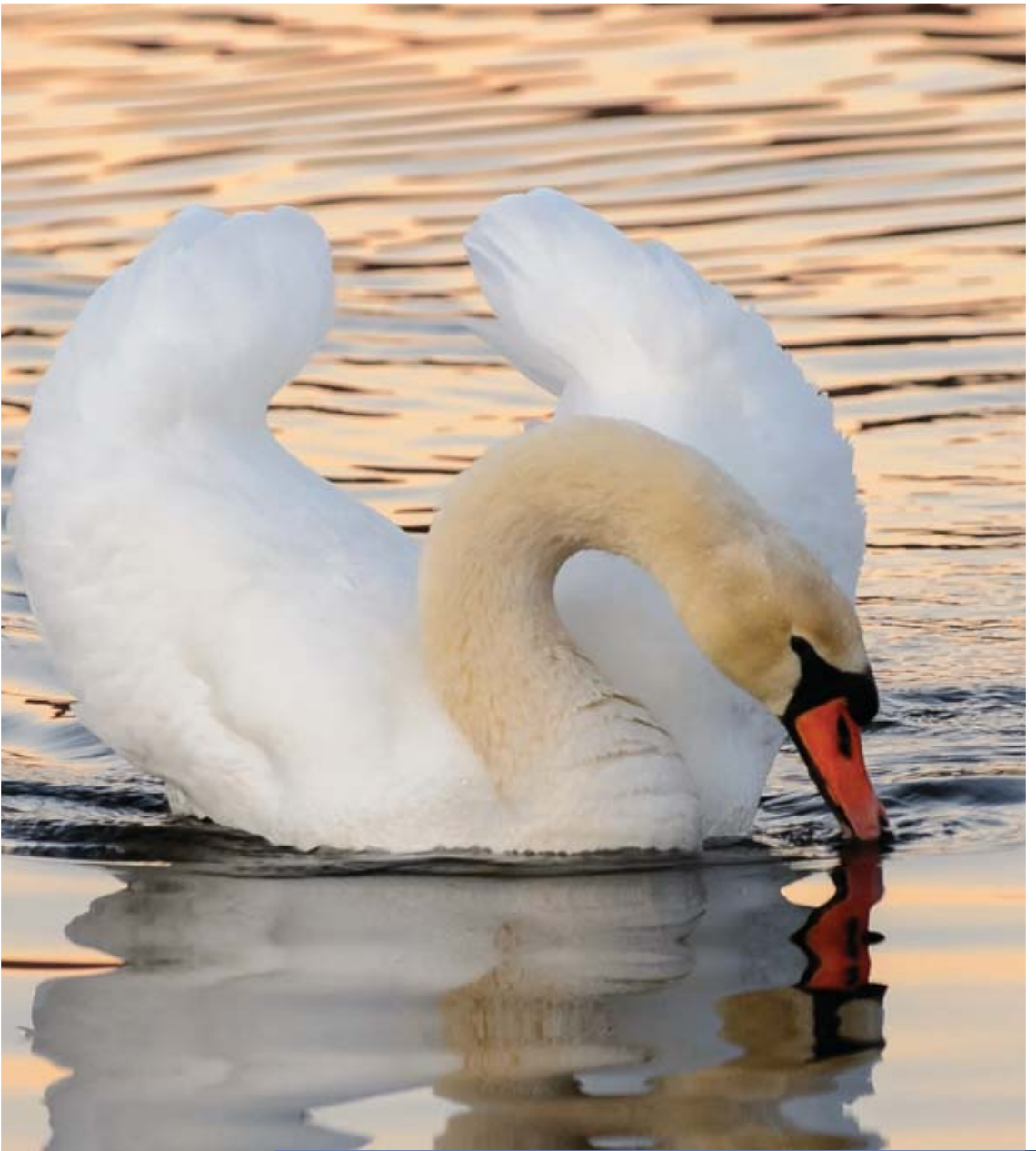
The final judgment, rather than exposing to all our pitiful state, will be the public affirmation that we are loved and accepted, no matter where we come from, no matter what our flaws and deficiencies, no matter the mess of unwise choices and destructive decisions.

When we are truly in love with our Judge and Advocate, when we know what the verdict will be, rather than saying "Don't judge me," we will eagerly say, "Please, judge me." 

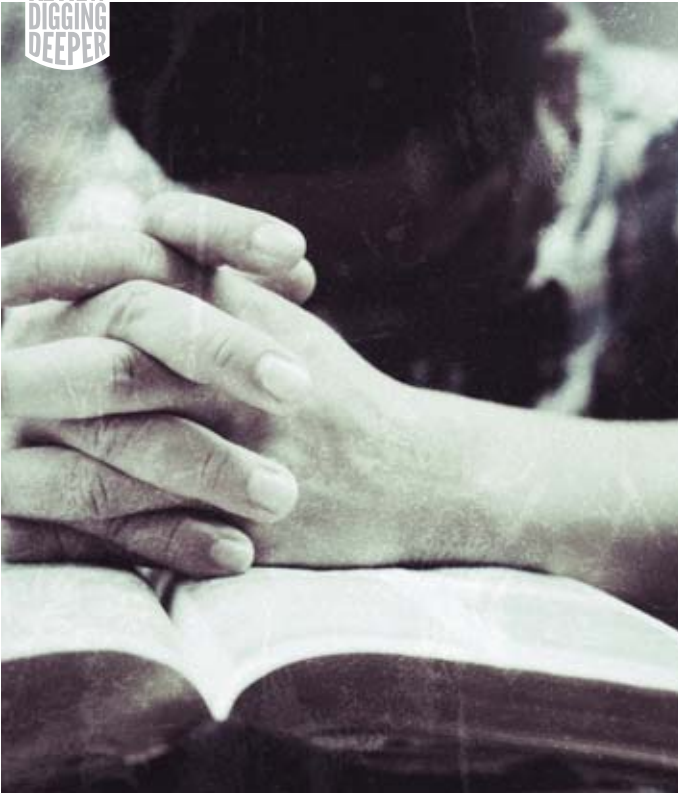
¹ According to the Millennial values survey more than six in 10 (62 percent) believe that present-day Christianity is "judgmental," while 58 percent agree that "hypocritical (saying one thing, doing another)" describes present-day Christianity well. Other surveys by Pew Research and the Barna Group show the same tendencies. www.prri.org/research/millennial-values-survey-2012/

² Time.com/3948968/dont-judge-challenge/3 Bible Texts in this article are taken from the New King James Version. Copyright (c) 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Ellen G. White, manuscript 174, 1901, in Ellen G. White, *The Upward Look* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1982), p. 332.

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“Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city” (Rev. 22:1, 2).



FACING LIFE'S RECORD

*Are our names written
 in the book of life?*

The hidden selfishness of [men and women] stands revealed in the books of heaven. There is the record of unfulfilled duties to their fellow [men and women], of forgetfulness of the Saviour's claims. There they will see how often were given to Satan the time, thought, and strength that belonged to Christ.

Sad is the record which angels bear to heaven. Intelligent beings, professed followers of Christ, are absorbed in the acquirement of worldly possessions or the enjoyment of

earthly pleasures. Money, time, and strength are sacrificed for display and self-indulgence; but few are the moments devoted to prayer, to the searching of the Scriptures, to humiliation of soul and confession of sin. . . .

Those who would share the benefits of the Saviour's mediation should permit nothing to interfere with their duty to perfect holiness in the fear of God. The precious hours, instead of being given to pleasure, to display, or to gain seeking, should be devoted to an earnest, prayerful study of the word of truth.

The subject of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment should be clearly understood by the people of God. All need a knowledge for themselves of the position and work of their great High Priest. Otherwise it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith which is essential at this time or to occupy the position which God designs them to fill.

Every individual has a soul to save or to lose. Each has a case pending at the bar of God. Each must meet the great Judge face to face. How important, then, that every mind contemplate often the solemn scene when the judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened, when, with Daniel, every individual must stand in [his or her] lot, at the end of the days.

CHRIST OUR INTERCESSOR

All who have received the light upon these subjects are to bear testimony of the great truths which God has committed to them. The sanctuary in heaven is the very center of Christ's work in behalf of [men and women]. It concerns every soul living upon

the earth. It opens to view the plan of redemption, bringing us down to the very close of time and revealing the triumphant issue of the contest between righteousness and sin.

It is of the utmost importance that all should thoroughly investigate these subjects and be able to give an answer to everyone that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them.

The intercession of Christ in [humanity's] behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven.

We must by faith enter within the veil, "whither the forerunner is for us entered." Hebrews 6:20. There the light from the cross of Calvary is reflected. There we may gain a clearer insight into the mysteries of redemption. The salvation of [humanity] is accomplished at an infinite expense to heaven; the sacrifice made is equal to the broadest demands of the broken law of God.

Jesus has opened the way to the Father's throne, and through His mediation the sincere desire of all who come to Him in faith may be presented before God.

SATAN'S INPUT

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Proverbs 28:13.

If those who hide and excuse their faults could see how Satan exults over them, how he taunts Christ and holy angels with their course, they would make haste to confess their sins and to put them away. Through defects in the character, Satan works to gain control of the whole mind, and he knows that if these defects are cherished, he will succeed.

Therefore [Satan] is constantly seeking to deceive the followers of Christ with his fatal sophistry that it is impossible for them to overcome.

But Jesus pleads in their behalf His wounded hands, His bruised body; and He declares to all who would follow Him: "My grace is sufficient for thee." 2 Corinthians 12:9. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matthew 11:29, 30. Let none, then, regard their defects as incurable. God will give faith and grace to overcome them.

We are now living in the great day of atonement.

... All who would have their names retained in the book of life should now, in the few remaining days of their probation, afflict their souls before God by sorrow for sin and true repentance. There must be deep, faithful searching of heart. The light, frivolous spirit indulged by so many professed Christians must be put away.

There is earnest warfare before all who would subdue the evil tendencies that strive for the mastery. The work of preparation is an individual work. We are not saved in groups. The purity and devotion of one will not offset the want of these qualities in another. Though all nations are to pass in judgment before God, yet He will examine the case of each individual with as close and searching scrutiny as if there were not another being upon the earth. Everyone must be tested and found without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

THE ONGOING JUDGMENT

Solemn are the scenes connected with the closing work of the atonement. Momentous are the interests involved therein. The judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. For many years this work has been in progress. Soon—none know how soon—it will pass to the cases of the living. In the awful presence of God our lives are to come up in review.

At this time above all others it behooves every soul to heed the Saviour's admonition: "Watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is." Mark 13:33. "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." Revelation 3:3.

When the work of the investigative judgment closes, the destiny of all will have been decided for life or death. Probation is ended a short time before the appearing of the Lord in the clouds of heaven. Christ in the Revelation, looking forward to that time, declares: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22:11, 12. ♣

This excerpt was taken from *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), pp. 487-491. Seventh-day Adventists believe that **Ellen G. White** (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.



“I WON’T BE AFRAID OF LOVE”

*Judgment through
 ordinary eyes*

ANNA MILLER

I know I’m not alone with all my troubling questions about how God will judge me. If everything that I’ve ever done has been and is being written down, shouldn’t I be scared?

MY QUESTIONS

I know my questions are not crazy. They aren’t out of turn either. Because He’s judging me right now. So I need to have some basic facts. What is wrong? I don’t want to be doing it. And: What is right? And: What are my rights? And: How should I view

judgment in light of such verses as this one: “If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?” (1 Peter 4:18)? Why should things be so scary for even the righteous? They’re barely making it! So the rest must be hopeless. And maybe that’s me, because I know I’m not barely anything—especially righteous! When I was growing up, these queries were always in my mind. And I think many people will relate to the answers I give, because I’m no pastor or theologian, just an ordinary person.

AS A CHILD

Growing up in an Adventist home I learned that I should always do what was right because angels are writing down everything we do. Keeping our hands from being idle was very important; so was making sure our eyes and ears stayed pure, thinking only about whatever was true, noble, right, and praiseworthy (Phil. 4:8). At the end of time, they said, my life would be laid out for all to see. However embarrassing that may turn out to be, I would know—and everyone else looking on would too—that God is just. When I was a child, my strongest motivation for doing right was fear.

Adventist education at home, church, and school taught me that God is a taskmaster, and informed me of the investigative judgment. I understood that one day something called “probation” would close and Michael would stand up (Dan. 12:1). Then those who were just would be just, and those who were not

would suffer the consequences. I was one of those scared kids who decided to follow the rules: I wanted to be just.

AS A TEEN

My goodness lasted for a little while. But high school was a challenge. Many of my schoolmates were supposed to be Adventists, just like me. But sometimes you could see that we were mostly Christian in name only. We did believe in doing right to avoid “suffering the consequences,” but my fear for the future failed in the face of greater present consequence: I was terrified of being the odd girl out. Between fear and peer—fear of God and peer pressure—peer consistently won out. We all wanted to fit in and be cool. So we went wrong instead of right. I didn’t ask everybody else, but I imagine that they decided the same as me. Whether or not, I decided I would worry about the other consequences sometime later.

Satan makes such a fool of his followers; he did for all of us. I was searching for something I could never find by following him. Hanging with the cool crowd didn’t satisfy my yearnings. It didn’t because it couldn’t (and still can’t). And when the judgment questions got their chance inside my head, as happened sometimes, then guilt tied my belly in knots and made me sick. I was disobeying the God of the rules. It left me dirty and naked before Him, the judge of the universe. And His verdict was always the same: GUILTY! I could not hide. I could not run. I could not stand.

AS AN ADULT

As a coed, even when I could tell myself that I believed Jesus’ sacrifice paid for my sin, I still felt a weight on my shoulders. Until that Sabbath day, my sophomore year, when our college pastor, John Nixon, preached a sermon on the concept of forgiveness that would forever change my view of the Mighty Judge. I experienced in my soul the God who is love. For the first time I saw a being who desired to save me more than I desired to save myself. I saw a God who chased after me for “goodness and love . . . all the days of my life,” leading to David’s conclusion: “I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever” (Ps. 23:6). The Lord is my shepherd.

I found myself reading the Bible through different eyes. I read with a light I had not had before.

Just as earthly priests had a two-phase ministry in the earthly sanctuary, so Christ has a two phase ministry in the heavenly sanctuary.

I came across Zechariah 3, where Joshua stands before God’s judgment, dirty and accused by Satan. But the Lord’s words silence Satan: “Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?” (Zech. 3:2). Then the Lord replaces Joshua’s filthy clothes with clean, rich garments.

I read and realized that I was the same: filthy like the high priest, with Satan ready to accuse, but with God already committed to protecting me. The angry, condemning eyes whose look overwhelms me with shame . . . those are Satan’s eyes, not God’s. No! God gives me His fresh, clean clothes to wear. His miracle takes my filthy-ragged righteousness, and all the rest of my sin and shame away in a “single day” (Isa. 64:6; Zech. 3:9). God is not the “hard, exacting taskmaster”; He is my “best friend.”

FINAL THOUGHTS

After too many years of fears and cravings, God brought me to realize that the grief I felt all that time was unnecessary. Sure, I was disobedient. But being scared of God means being afraid of love, and that makes no sense. But even though I misunderstood His character, He knew that I needed Him, and He kept seeking and wooing me. I am so thankful that our God is one who will chase after us even in our sin. I am so thankful that our God is willing to take off our dirty clothes and dress us up nice and clean.

I am so thankful that I have been able to overcome the misconceptions of God’s ongoing judgment. I don’t have to live in fear of judgment, because instead of “GUILTY!” I know now what my verdict is: forgiven! ♣

* Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1956), p. 103.

Anna Miller, happy pastor’s wife and mom of three, is an English as a Second Language [ESL] specialist in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

THE DAY I BOUGHT JESUS A BURRITO

Blessed by being a blessing

CAMERON JOHNSTON

Practical religion is sometimes not pretty. In Matthew 25 Jesus said clearly that to feed the hungry, to give a drink to someone thirsty, and to visit those who are sick and lonely is the same as doing it for Him.

AN ALL-TOO-FAMILIAR SIGHT

I was visiting Portland, Oregon, coming out of a shopping mall in midafternoon. Suddenly in front of me was a shabby, unkempt man asking for money.

My standard response is, "I don't give out any money," I replied, my standard response. "But if you're hungry, I'll be happy to buy you some food."

"That would be great," he said. "I haven't eaten today."

"What kind of food do you like?" I asked.

"A burrito would be great," he responded.

Not knowing the area very well I asked, "Where's the nearest Mexican restaurant?"

"There's one just down the road."

As he pointed I could tell that it was at least a couple miles away. "Jump in my car," I said. "I'll drive you."

"Oh, I can't get into your nice car," he responded. "I'm dirty; I'll soil your seats."

"No problem," I said. "They're leather; you can't hurt them."

After some persuasion the man finally got into my car and we drove to the restaurant. The menu had several varieties of burritos. He chose the one he wanted, and we ordered it. "Would you like a drink with that?" I asked.

"That would be great," he said.

When the order came the burrito was larger than either I or he had expected. He said, "That's big; it will do for two meals."

As we picked up our take-out I looked around the restaurant and sensed that everyone, including

the servers, were thinking, *What's up with this? Another sucker got taken.*

A GENTLE REMINDER

As we went out the door the man excitedly said, "I'm going to find a sunny, grassy place and enjoy half of this now and keep the rest for tomorrow."

No such place was obviously nearby, so I asked, "Could I drop you off someplace?"

"If you could drop me off at the train station, that would be great. It's near where you picked me up," he said.

While driving, I asked, "How long have you been living on the streets?"

"About 20 years," he answered. "I worked for my dad doing roofing, and he died suddenly of a heart attack. Within three months my mother died. For a few years I worked for the man who had taken over the business. But the business closed, and I was never able to find steady work."

As we arrived at his drop-off point he turned and said, "God bless you. Not many people treat us nice."

Then, maybe sensing that I was a Christian, he turned back and said, "I'm a believer, you know. I would never survive on the street without God taking care of me."

"God bless you," I said, and he was gone out of my life but not out of my prayers.

I have thought a lot about that man and my experience with him. It was a clear reminder that we are all God's children, and that many of His children do not look, smell, or live as nice as we might expect.

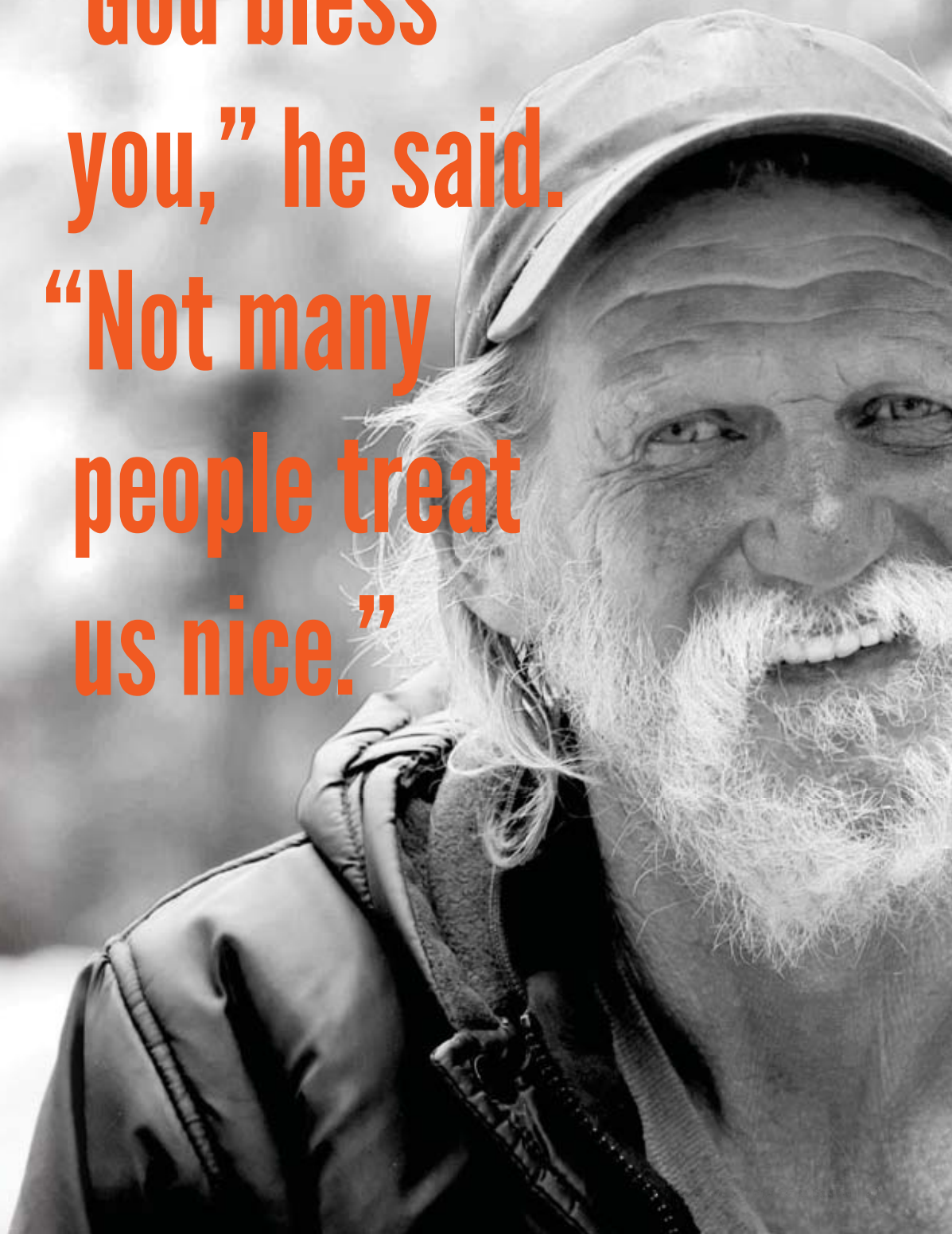
Yet Jesus said, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (Matt. 25:40).

I know Jesus enjoyed the burrito that day. And I was blessed by giving it to Him. 🍌

Cameron Johnston is pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Bella Coola, British Columbia.

**“God bless
you,” he said.**

**“Not many
people treat
us nice.”**



STORYTELLER PAR EXCELLENCE

*Artistry at work:
the parable of the prodigal son*



DEREK BOWE

Ask anyone who their favorite storyteller is, and you might get as many answers as persons asked. From yesterday's Europe: William Shakespeare? Leo Tolstoy? From Africa and India: Chinua Achebe? Rabindranath Tagore? Or voices from the modern West: Derek Walcott? Toni Morrison? Gabriel Garcia Marquez? The brilliance of these writers and many others is available in their plays, novels, stories, and poems.

JESUS STANDS OUT

But one storyteller transcends them all. His mesmerizing and timeless narratives powerfully instruct His audience, simultaneously supplying them with both healing and inspiration. One biographer labels Him the Word. And in His parable of the prodigal son His masterful use of the word in setting, theme, suspense, moral, and more meets His readers' deepest need, the need for restoration. No wonder so many regard it as the greatest story ever told.

Great writers use the key element of setting to emphasize and reach their conclusions. Stephen Crane's setting for *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* is the bleak, stifling world of the Bowery that illustrates the impossibility of the heroine's escape from her environment. Similarly, Jesus' astute setting, in context of scribes and Pharisees' vilification for His eating with sinners, is a pair of parables stressing everybody's need for restoration.

SHEEP AND COIN

Jesus' first parable tells of a bewildered sheep rescued only because of its owner's total effort (Luke 15:3-7). Many people, Jesus teaches, are like sheep: lost, alienated from God, safety, and comfort—and aware of it; but they cannot find the way back to safety without God's gracious help.

Jesus' second story, the lost coin, recounts the plight of a young woman who loses a

coin from her precious dowry (verses 8-10). Terrified, she turns her house upside down until she joyously finds it. Some people are like the coin, Jesus intimates: lost, but so deceived and degraded by sin that they are unconscious of their true state and value. They need to be sought out perseveringly, enlightened divinely, and restored fully to their God-given condition.

These stories introduce a theme that Jesus will explore more fully in the last story of His triad of parables: God seeks for each sinner with a father's love, works untiringly to rescue them, and is overwhelmed with joy when they are liberated.

PRODIGAL SON

The parable of the prodigal son narrates an all-too-familiar journey: a young son chafes at his father's rules, asks for his inheritance prematurely, gets it. He immediately sets off for a far country to indulge his fancies without his father's meddling. He rides the high wave of newfound friends, parties, and riotous living until it crashes onto a shore of hunger and friendlessness in the basest of conditions—feeding pigs for a living.

Finally coming to his senses, the youth resolves to return to the comfort of home and father, but believes he has forfeited sonship and can go back only as a servant. On his arrival, however, his father embraces him and will not countenance accepting his beloved son as a mere servant; instead, he adorns him with all the accoutrements of sonship and throws him a lavish party.

Incensed when he hears of these goings-on, his older brother refuses to party with someone he now considers a stranger. This "individual" has wasted the family's money with dissolute living but comes home to celebratory acceptance, while he, the dutiful older son, has never been given a pittance to celebrate with his friends.

The father's heart overflows with love for both sons, one formerly lost outside the home, the other currently lost within its

Calvary, scene of Jesus' sacrificial death for our salvation, is the ultimate speech-act.

walls. He leaves the party to conciliate the aggrieved son: everything the father has is now his, but celebrating the younger son's return is still right, for your brother "was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found" (verse 32).

IMPLICATIONS

The God of Jesus' story shows all-encompassing love for wayward people—overtly sinning prodigals and their clandestine colleagues, carping religious teachers. So many of us have shared the faraway journey of rebellious pleasures and forbidden activities whose once-coveted delights ultimately prove as momentary as morning dew with a sting of shame as degrading as dung. But God, the long-suffering Father, dishes His gift of repentance freely (Acts 5:31), treating those who accept with a lavishness that we do not deserve and never envisioned. He unabashedly accepts us as though we had never sinned and invites everyone to join in the merriment.

Some fret at His indiscriminate largesse toward prodigals. But He is as kind and conciliatory to the disgruntled as He is to the restored ones, assuring all of their value and family position, explaining the need to celebrate the return of the lost from ultimate disaster: "This brother of yours was dead and is alive again" (Luke 15:32).

There Jesus ends the story—with the Father still outside the party, awaiting some response from His older son.

This ending is no narrative flaw, but a deliberate, suspenseful, masterful stroke, employed elsewhere in His stories. At the end of the parable of the good

Samaritan, for instance, His word to the lawyer whose question initiated the story is "Go and do" like the man you say is the true neighbor (Luke 10:37). Go and live kindly and generously with all people, for every needy person is your neighbor.

We do not know if the lawyer took Jesus' challenge, but it remained for him, and for us today, to end the suspense for ourselves.

Similarly, the challenge to the older brother outside the party is a gauntlet Jesus threw down to the Pharisees and scribes of His day, as well as to readers through successive generations: shall we stand pouting on the outside of God's parties for reclaimed scumbags, stuck with the arch-accuser (Zech. 3:1; Rev. 12:10), defaming the repentant who are now God's forgiven children? Or shall we answer the story's moral challenge by joining the party, embracing the once-dead-but-now-restored-to-God's-bosom? It's up to us.

MORE OF JESUS' ARTISTRY

Further examination of Jesus' storytelling methods reveals more of His literary dexterity. Hebrew understandings of knowledge are much more experiential than theoretical. The words of a story were to be lived if their moral was to bear any worth. This is the basic understanding of the prophetic "speech act." Witness Old Testament prophet Isaiah warning of impending doom and enslavement at the hands of the Assyrian army by prophesying in the streets "stripped [possibly in his underwear] and barefoot" for three long years (Isa. 20:3). Or consider prophet Agabus warning Paul of impending imprisonment by binding his own hands and feet with Paul's belt to signify the danger (Acts 21:10, 11).

Jesus employed similar methods in His stories. Salvation was always His agenda: He "came to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). Everything about Him, including His very name, denoted His mission. Before His birth an angel advised both His mother, Mary, and later her fiancé, Joseph, that His name was to be Jesus, meaning "Savior," because He would save His people from their sins (Matt. 1: 21). Gospel writer John, who labels Him the Word, implies that He would be a walking billboard sent from His Father announcing amnesty, forgiveness, and salvation to all. In Him the Word amounted to a visible manifestation of God's forgiving thoughts toward all God's erring children (John 1:1, 11, 12). In Him, John affirms, "was life, and that life was the

light of all mankind" (verse 3). And "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16, KJV).

Jesus merges all these features of Living Word, Light Bearer, and Life Restorer in the parable of the prodigal son. Together with its two antecedents it is immersed in forgiveness: the poignant picture of the Eastern father, dignity set aside, racing down the road arms spread wide, toward the returning prodigal; again, stepping outside from the feast to implore his estranged older son to welcome his repentant brother back into the family.

ULTIMATE SPEECH ACT

Other writers have tried to reflect their works' central themes in their lives with varying degrees of consciousness and success. Tired of the materialistic, hedonistic Russian society of his time, Leo Tolstoy not only distanced himself from it and his earlier works, such as *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, which glorified it, but also deliberately started living the simple, anti-materialistic life of the Russian peasants that he extolled in works such as "How Much Land Does a Man Need?" and *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*. But when he considered forgoing royalties on his hugely successful earlier fiction and putting them in the public domain, his wife, Sophia, protested, bringing the plan to a halt.

Contrasting somewhat with Tolstoy, F. Scott Fitzgerald, boy-wonder of American literature in the early twentieth century, lived in the same lavish milieu as the rich characters he created in works such as *The Beautiful and Damned* and *The Great Gatsby*. Unfortunately, his life also mirrored his characters' unhappiness, for like them he found wealth to be toxic. Extravagant partying and drinking during the Roaring Twenties ultimately wreaked havoc upon him and his family, but he was forever chasing it. As Matthew J. Bruccoli remarks in *A Brief Life of Fitzgerald*: "He did spend money faster than he earned it; the author who wrote so eloquently about the effects of money on character was unable to manage his own finances."¹

In James Baldwin's case authorship was welded with life in the arenas of civil, sexual, and religious rights: works such as *Another Country* and *If Beale Street Could Talk* castigate American society for racism and police brutality against African Americans. Baldwin's life sustained this theme, as evi-

denced by his continual participation in civil rights marches in the 1950s and 1960s, and his strident criticism of American injustice until his death in 1987. Such works as *Giovanni's Room* were part of his campaign for acceptance of those who like him embrace alternate lifestyles. For what he saw as its hypocrisy and marring of people he took the church to task, particularly the African American church, and with some authority, having served as a young minister in the pulpit from 14 to 17. His firsthand criticism of the institution that he knew so well is prominent in his novels *Go Tell It on the Mountain* and *Just Above My Head*.

However flawed, the efforts of Tolstoy, Fitzgerald, and Baldwin represent the attempt of writers to reflect their works' themes. But earth's greatest demonstration of the dramatized narrative is the preaching and living of Jesus Christ. Calvary, scene of Jesus' sacrificial death for our salvation, is the ultimate speech-act, the ultimate act of bridging the great divide between God and all humanity, as Jesus, lifted up, draws us all to Himself (John 12:32). Where others failed, Jesus succeeded. His stories are still staples on the reading menu in our times, satisfying our needs beyond entertainment.

Perhaps it is their brevity, which Edgar Allan Poe has called an essential tenet of "all works of literary art."² But perhaps it is for a far more profound reason, and one reflected in the response of the Temple guards whom enemies once sent to arrest Him. The guards returned emptyhanded to the livid authorities who fumed, "Why did you not arrest Him?" The guards' explanation in defense was awesomely simple and categorical: "No one ever spoke the way this man does" (John 7:46).

Yes, Jesus wrote as He did, spoke as He did, and worked as He did, because no person has ever lived as He did. As the one sent from God, His life of flawless integrity gave His words supreme and unassailable authority. His words and life were in complete agreement with each other: each reflected the other, as He walked His talk. His stories, like Him, transcend the human: they are a blessing to us from eternity. ✎

¹ Matthew J. Bruccoli, *A Brief Life of Fitzgerald*, www.fscottfitzgeraldsociety.org/biography/biography_p1.html (consulted May 8, 2018).

² Edgar Allan Poe, "A Philosophy of Composition," www.eapoe.org/works/essays/philcomp.htm (consulted May 8, 2018).

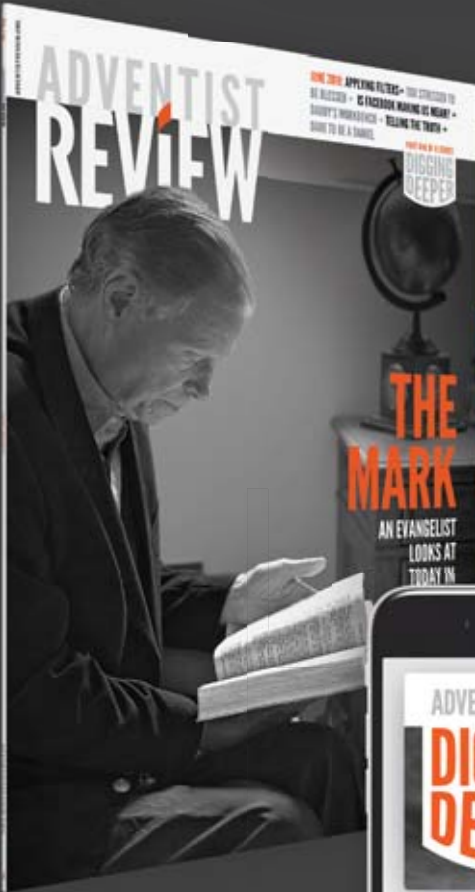
Derek Bowe is a professor in the Department of English and Foreign Languages at Oakwood University, Huntsville, Alabama.

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“He will cover you with his feathers,
and under his wings you will find refuge;
his faithfulness will be your shield and
rampart” (Ps. 91:4).





White for guidance and instruction in raising them. After all, didn't Jesus say, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them" (Matt. 19:14)?

When it comes to raising children, a word that can evoke both emotion and controversy is "discipline." Whether we are parents or teachers, we appreciate those who possess the ability to administer discipline wisely and effectively. Most of the strong personal opinions that many of us hold on the subject of discipline are based on our own experiences in the home, at school, with neighbors, and with others. Some of these experiences were likely commendable; others may have been abhorrent. From those experiences often come strong, admirable convictions that are extremely valuable in interacting with children. Yet we often don't find them totally adequate in directing a child effectively. We need more help.

In the chapter titled "Discipline" in the book *Education* Ellen White discusses the atmosphere in which discipline is to be administered, and effective methods of administering it. "The object of discipline is the training of the child for self-government. He should be taught self-reliance and self-control. Therefore as soon as he is capable of understanding, his reason should be enlisted on the side of obedience. Let all dealing with him be such as to show obedience to be just and reasonable."¹

The object of discipline is to train children for self-government, that they may develop self-reliance and self-control. We want our children to do what

DISCIPLINE: A POSITIVE APPROACH

*Using the right method
can have lasting results.*

RUTH A. EDWARDS

To whom do the children belong? Most Americans would respond, "To their parents," and insist that parents are responsible for educating and providing for their children. In Seventh-day Adventist circles most parents dedicate their children to God at an early age. This suggests that our children belong to the Lord, and that we can look to Him through His Word and the writings of Ellen

they know is right and wise when we are not there to guide them. For that to happen, we parents and teachers must follow certain guidelines. Ellen White spells out 10 principles we would do well to buy into as we attempt to develop self-control in our children.

1 Encourage confidence and strengthen the child's sense of honor. "Children and youth are benefited by being trusted. . . . Suspicion demoralizes, producing the very evils it seeks to prevent. . . . Lead the youth to feel that they are trusted, and there are few who will not seek to prove themselves worthy of the trust."²

2 Request rather than command. "The one thus addressed has opportunity to prove himself loyal to right principles. His obedience is the result of choice rather than compulsion."³

3 Rules should be few, well thought out, and enforced. "Whatever it is found impossible to change, the mind learns to recognize and adapt itself to; but the possibility of indulgence induces desire, hope, and uncertainty, and the results are restlessness, irritability, and insubordination."⁴

4 Do not compromise with evil. "Neither in the home nor in the school should disobedience be tolerated. . . . It is not love but sentimentalism that palter with wrongdoing, seeks by coaxing or bribes to secure compliance, and finally accepts some substitute in place of the thing required."⁵

5 Do not treat sin lightly. "Terrible is [sin's] power over the wrongdoer. . . . The greatest wrong done to a child or youth is to allow him to become fastened in the bondage of evil habit."⁶

6 Guard against faultfinding and censure. "Continual censure bewilders, but does not reform. With many minds, and often those of the finest susceptibility, an atmosphere of unsympathetic criticism is fatal to effort."⁷

7 Frequent censure results in discouragement. "A child frequently censured for some special fault comes to regard that fault as his peculiarity, something against which it is vain to strive. Thus are created discouragement and hopelessness,

The object of discipline is to train children for self-government, that they may develop self-reliance and self-control.

often concealed under an appearance of indifference or bravado."⁸

8 Remember the Savior's rule: Do to others as you would want them to do to you (see Luke 6:31). This "should be the rule of all who undertake the training of children and youth. They are the younger members of the Lord's family, heirs with us of the grace of life. Christ's rule should be sacredly observed toward the dullest, the youngest, the most blundering, and even toward the erring and rebellious."⁹

9 Do not make public the child's faults and mistakes. The teacher or parent should "seek to avoid giving reproof or punishment in the presence of others."¹⁰

10 Learn self-control before attempting to teach it to others. "To deal passionately with a child or youth will only arouse his resentment. When a parent or teacher becomes impatient and is in danger of speaking unwisely, let him remain silent. There is wonderful power in silence."¹¹

DEVELOPING THE FRAMEWORK

In the preceding principles we find the framework for developing self-control and character building in children and youth. But what about the times—and they surely will come—that children step over the line and disobey?

Too many methods of discipline, such as threat-

GOD'S DEALINGS WITH ADULTS

Adults make mistakes. Sometimes we even plan wrong behavior. How does God deal with us?

He is good; and He forgives. But He has to let the consequences play out lest we sin with impunity. If I overeat, I put on weight. If I stay up late, I oversleep in the morning. If I disrespect a family member, I bring tension into the family circle.

Whatever people sow, that they will also reap (Gal. 6:7). Consequences are different from punishment. Consequences happen; punishment is contrived. As I understand it, God uses consequences to help us learn, if we will; but consequences happen whether or not we learn. They are the harvest of our sowing. Graciously God often allows us to have a crop failure, so that we may learn and grow. And during these times, in His kindness, He often shelters our self-respect.

Remembering how God deals with us gives us a model in dealing with our children.

ening and bribing, do not result in the development of self-control. So what approach should we take? Another paragraph from *Education* helps to guide us.¹² Its principles are as follows:

The true object of reproof is gained when: (1) wrongdoers are led to see their faults; (2) the will is enlisted for correction of the fault; and this being accomplished, (3) the children are pointed to Jesus, the source of pardon and power; (4) the children's self-respect is preserved; and (5) children are inspired with courage and hope.

EFFECTIVE BUT APPROPRIATE METHODS OF DISCIPLINE

As a teacher I often struggled to find effective, appropriate ways of dealing with children who needed to be corrected. I tried many of the methods that were currently popular. I was not happy with any of them. Then in a teacher's magazine I found an approach that matched what was written in the book *Education*. It was proposed by American psychiatrist William Glasser,¹³ and I found that it worked in my classroom. Here is a synopsis of what Glasser suggested:

Isolate children until your own feelings are under control. Then sit down beside them, and in a friendly voice, ask three questions:

1 What did you do? Do not ask what someone else did or what the extenuating circumstances were. Stay with the question "What did you do?" until the children take responsibility for their actions.

2 Did it help you? Children are amazingly willing to admit that misbehavior doesn't help them.

3 What do you plan to do next time? Accept the children's plan without trying to modify it, and encourage the children that their plan will work.

I always added prayer to Glasser's method. Pray with children, both for forgiveness and for power to work out their proposed plan for dealing with similar situations in the future. Prayer is appropriate, but never force prayer from a child.

When this method is used the recognition of wrongdoing is the child's. The recognition that it didn't work is the child's. And the plan to improve is also the child's. This combination usually results in success.

Hope and courage come from us: adults. Forgiveness and strength come from Jesus. ♣

¹Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1903, 1952), p. 287.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 289, 290.

³*Ibid.*, p. 290.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 291.

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸*Ibid.*

⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 292, 293.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 293.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 292.

¹²*Ibid.*, pp. 291, 292.

¹³www.psychologistanywhereanytime.com/famous_psychologist_and_psychologists/psychologist_famous_william_glasser.htm.

Ruth A. Edwards, a retired schoolteacher, writes from Washington State.



PETER N. LANDLESS

ZENO L. CHARLES-MARCEL

What About the Environment?

Isn't that health-related too?

Q: Articles about lifestyle and health abound, but what about the environment? Isn't that also a contributor to health and disease?

A: Yes, the environment is an important contributor to health and disease. Today more than ever, scientists recognize this fact. Globally 23 percent of all deaths could be prevented through healthier environments. Growing evidence indicates that early life exposure to environmental chemicals might increase noncommunicable disease (NCD) risk throughout life. In fact, in 2016 ambient and household air pollution caused, respectively, 2.8 and 3.7 million deaths from NCDs. By reducing air pollution, exposures to ionizing and ultraviolet radiation, and exposures to household and industrial chemicals we can prevent some diseases.

But "the environment" goes way beyond the purely physical one. Our physical, social, psychological, occupational, and religio-spiritual situations affect our internal biochemical environment and, therefore, our risk of, or resistance to, disease. Suitable environments are essential for human life and for the well-being of the planet. Pollution of the air and water; the destruction of natural habitats; the negligence, inattention, and abuse of flora and fauna; the destructive and greed-driven effects of industrialization; ecological disregard; societal decay; and the squandering of our planetary resources threaten life as we know it.

In 2005 Christopher Wild, in a call for more and

improved scientific research regarding the impact of environment on health, coined the term *exposome* to signify the sum of all of a person's exposures from conception until death. By age 65, each of us has more than 1 million chemical exposures, every one with its own impact, together having a cumulative effect and also interplaying with our genes.

Simply stated: our health is mediated through our internal biochemistry. Food, drugs, actions, stress, beliefs, moods, attitudes, emotions, and the chemicals and radiation that surround us positively or negatively alter our internal chemistry. A sustaining and supportive exposome, in all its dimensions (see table), promotes health; anything less undermines our well-being.

We are tasked to be stewards of the earth's resources, the creatures on our planet, our homes, and our immediate socio-cultural condition as advocates for free, just, and moral societies: after all, we are our brothers' keepers. We have God-given responsibilities to take care of His earthly creation. God designed our planet to have complete chemical, ecological, social, and spiritual harmony. Disruption of any one of these factors could lead to the eventual deterioration of all. Yet, we look forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness reigns! (2 Pet. 3:13). 🦋


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.

DIMENSIONS OF THE EXPOSOME	
Environments	Constituents
physical-external	chemical and biological influences surrounding and interacting with us: air, climate, sun, soil, water, flora, and fauna
social	familial and societal interactions: pets; varying quality and quantity; direct or virtual
psychological	intellectual and emotional catalysts: from caring and nurture to anger, neglect, and abuse
spiritual	spiritual and religious beliefs, stimuli, and responses

An aerial photograph of a river meandering through a dense, vibrant green forest. The river is dark and winds from the top left towards the bottom right, with several sharp turns. The surrounding forest is thick and uniform in color, with some small patches of lighter green or brown visible. The overall scene is serene and natural.

AN EXTRAORDINARY RIVER

A parable

An aerial photograph of a winding river flowing through a dense, vibrant green forest. The river is dark and meanders across the landscape, creating a stark contrast with the surrounding foliage. The forest appears to be a mix of deciduous and coniferous trees, with varying shades of green. The river's path is irregular, following the natural contours of the land.

I was shown that the recording angel makes a faithful record of every offering dedicated to God and put into the treasury and also of the final result of the means thus bestowed. The eye of God takes cognizance of every farthing devoted to His cause and of the willingness or reluctance of the giver. The motive in giving is also chronicled.

"Those self-sacrificing, consecrated ones who render back to God the things that are His, as He requires of them, will be rewarded according to their works. Even though the means thus consecrated be misapplied, . . . those who made the sacrifice . . . will not lose their reward."¹

JEFF SCOGGINS

An extraordinary river flowed through land and forest in a certain country, a thing of beauty: deep, wide, twisting and turning, reaching every corner of the land, providing life-giving water to plants, animals, trees, and people. It served also as a highway by which boats could travel for trade, business, and communication. But beyond its beauty, depth, or complexity, the river was extraordinary because it had no visible source.

The single reason this river existed in the land was that once upon a time the inhabitants of the territory recognized the need for a river to water the land. In fact, the Lord of the rain had whispered of this need into their ears. So they had sought him for advice, and been told that if each of them would consistently pour a small portion of the rainwater they collected into the riverbed, they could sustain such a river.

This they did. And they recognized the Lord of the rain also as Lord of the river.

Time passed, as it does. And although the inhabitants of the land were proud of their lush forests and lands, they began pouring less and less of their hard-earned rainwater into the river. The keepers of the river became concerned as the water level dropped. If this continues, they said, the forest and lands will not receive the water they need. When asked why they did not increase their offerings of water in order to maintain the river, the inhabitants of the land offered various explanations:

We do not have enough water for ourselves as it is. We are already giving enough in other ways. The river has plenty of water and doesn't require our contributions. We shall give, but only token amounts that show our sense of respect. We cannot trust the river to flow where it actually needs to. It is better to direct our own water to the places we feel it should go. Some of the most persuaded spoke vehemently at meetings: we are waiting until we receive a crystal-clear report of exactly how our water is being used. Truth be told, many believed, deep down, that giving to the river was no longer urgent.

One day, a delegation decided to take their issues to the Lord of the river.



The one and only reason this river existed in the land was because, once upon a time, the inhabitants of the territory recognized the need for a river to water the land.

“We are concerned about contributing to the river,” they said.

“Why?” asked the Lord of the river.

“Well,” they replied, citing their first concern, “because pouring in our buckets of water is like pouring into a black hole. We have no idea where our water goes. Who knows if it gets to the proper place! We have heard tell that sometimes thieves steal from the river. We have even heard that some keepers of the river divert streams to their own gardens.”

The Lord of the river was silent for a few moments. Then he asked quietly, “Do I understand correctly that you think of this life-giving river that waters all this country as a black hole because you cannot identify where ‘your’ water goes?”

The delegation sat in awkward silence, for they immediately understood the ridiculous nature of their complaint. First, a black hole implies greed without return. These are not characteristics of a life-giving river. Second, one simply does not expect to pour a bucket of water into a river and know where one’s particular molecules of water end up.

Unwilling to so meekly concede, they said, “Sure, we cannot know precisely where our individual buckets of water go. But we do know that sometimes the water from the river is misused and diverted for wrong purposes. How can we in good conscience contribute our water to such practices?”

The Lord of the river responded, “You call it your water. Why?”

“Because we work hard to gather it from the rain,” they replied.

“You’re welcome,” replied the Lord of the river. The delegation stared back blankly, so he continued. “You’re welcome that I have given you the blessing of rain and the blessing of being able to

work to gather it. I ask again, why do you call it your water?”

Again the delegation sat before him in awkward silence, comprehending that all waters belonged to the Lord of the river and the rain.

“As for your suspicions concerning how the water of the river is used,” he continued, “is not the use of the river my responsibility? If in fact the river is ever misused, which happens less than you suspect, those who do it will be held accountable, for their actions are recorded. Understand, though, that those who refuse to do their part to feed the river will also be accountable, for their actions also are recorded.”

The delegation shifted uncomfortably. Quietly shredding their list of concerns, they finally replied, “Be assured that we do not wish to withhold the waters. But we have experienced great joy in taking buckets of water directly to those who need it. May we contribute that way?”

“Of course you may,” replied the Lord of the river. “Indeed, I hope you will. But ask yourself this: Why do you prefer to give directly rather than adding to the river? Is it not because of the feeling you gain from seeing your water benefiting someone else directly? Could your gift, then, be just a tiny bit selfish? By all means, water beasts or plants or people as you see fit, but do not neglect the river, for parts of the forest of which you know nothing will perish without it.”

A hushed murmur rippled through the delegation. The idea had simply not occurred to them that the river fed parts of the forest unknown and unreached by any but the river itself. They rose and bowed low. “Forgive us,” they said. “We will gladly continue to support the river with the water you entrust to us.”

“I was shown that the recording angel makes a faithful record of every offering. . . .

“Those self-sacrificing, consecrated ones who render back to God the things that are His, . . . will be rewarded. . . . Even though the means thus consecrated be misapplied, . . . those who made the sacrifice . . . will not lose their reward.”¹

¹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn, 1948), vol. 2, p. 519.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 518, 519.

Jeff Scoggins is planning director for Adventist Mission at the General Conference.

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ANXIETY AND ATTACHMENT

It recently became clear to me that expectation is the root of all anxiety and attachment. We expect anything and everything from the contradictory to the impossible—the opinion of Daniel J. Boorstin, former librarian of Congress and director of the National Museum of American History. “We expect to eat and stay thin; to be constantly on the move and ever more neighborly; to go to the ‘church of our choice’ and yet feel its guiding power over us; to revere God and to be God. Never have people been more the masters of their environment. Yet never has a people felt more deceived and disappointed.”¹

And never, perhaps, has service to God and others been more suppressed than by the two evil companions of expectation called anxiety and attachment.

Anxiety is a distress, an apprehension caused by fear of danger or worry that something expected will not come to fruition. Attachment is something we crave or dread, someone to whom we cling while believing that without such a person or thing we cannot be happy. Like anxiety, attachment causes one to be tossed about by emotions, to suffer pangs of anger or depression because the heart is set on getting and/or holding something or someone while fearing their loss.

The Bible reminds us that we were born in sin and raised in iniquity (Rom. 7:18-20). Our anxiety and attachment spring from the way we’ve been programmed by our society, distorted religious teachings, and even ourselves, namely, that without this person or that thing, we can’t or won’t be happy.

There’s only one cure: accepting that

no thing or person outside of us has the power to make us happy or unhappy. We were created happy by God. This happiness is not a momentary, spontaneous feeling of delight about a particular person, thing, or event; it is a gift from God.

Ellen White affirmed this. “God made man perfectly holy and happy. . . . It is transgression of God’s law—the law of love—that has brought woe and death. Yet even amid the suffering that results from sin, God’s love is revealed.”² Although sin has deformed or made a shadow of the image of God and His corresponding happiness in all of us, we still hold the option to decide whether we’ll be happy or unhappy.

Happiness is like holiness. The moment we are aware of it, it’s ours. Therefore, despite the terrors of daily breaking news and fears of failure, avoid the addiction of attachment and “do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear” (Matt. 6:25). Instead, “rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” (Phil. 4:4).

Take a careful look at the things and people around you. Look, as if for the very first time, at the face of a friend, a tree, a bird in flight, the behavior and mannerisms of your family. See them without expectation through the lens of God’s grace. See them afresh, and escape the dulling, stupefying effect of anxieties and attachments. God’s grace wins all the time!

¹ www.goodreads.com/quotes/316573

² Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1956), p. 9.

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

CURE FOR THE
COMMON LIFE
HYVETH
WILLIAMS



NO THING OR
PERSON OUTSIDE OF
US HAS THE POWER
TO MAKE US HAPPY
OR UNHAPPY.



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WHY I STAYED

Some visitors at church aren't looking for a sermon.

VALERIE SHOOP-MCCREERY

It was a sunny Sabbath morning in the city of Baltimore. The day before my friends and I had stood on deck in our shirt-sleeves leaning against the rail, waving at passing sailboats, admiring the radiant colors of an East Coast fall, and watching the Canada geese flying low overhead. We had sailed up the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, I as medical officer on the cable laying ship C.C.G.S. *John Cabot*.

Now, 24 hours later, the sun had just risen and was shining through the lobby windows of a downtown hotel where I had spent the night. I entered the lobby to catch a cab to church. The room was loud and raucous with men in town to catch the ball game. A cooler had spilled. Beer cans and ice cubes skittered across the polished floor to the echo of catcalls, as I made my way through them wearing high heels and a sheath dress.

MEANWHILE, AT CHURCH

About 20 minutes later the cab pulled up at a curved drive and parked in front of a small church. I can't remember much of what the church looked like. I think it was white, or nearly that, but it had a retaining wall along the drive.

I do remember the feeling of loneliness that engulfed me as I entered the lobby, hanging back, feeling lost in a place that should've felt like home to a girl raised in the church. I hadn't felt so lonely with the guys on the ship. I hadn't felt so lonely with the guys at my health club. Suddenly it was as if I weren't seen, as if I didn't belong.

An old man welcomed me and handed me a leaflet entitled *The Seventh-day Sabbath*. I thanked him, slipped into the sanctuary, and sat in the back pew. The church had a small congregation of conservatively dressed parishioners. Of the three people up front, two led out in singing and one was the Sabbath School superintendent.

One of the leaders looked different from everyone else. Her dress was shorter and sleeveless. She stood out amid the conservative members of the congregation. I was asked to join a lesson study group. What I longed for was conversation, lunch, and afternoon fellowship. None of that appeared forthcoming.

Before I knew it, worship service was over, and everyone started to leave the building. Cars started pulling out of the parking lot. I was left standing alone in the foyer.

As the pastor and a few men talked to each other I asked, "Is there a phone I can use to call a cab?"

"In my office over there," the pastor gestured. "Turn the lights off when you leave, OK?" It felt like the final dismissal.

I called the cab company while silently telling myself that I was no longer part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I felt no need to return. I was not really wanted. I sat outside on the retaining wall waiting for a cab long after everyone had left.

VISIBLE AGAIN

Suddenly up the drive came a car that made itself known by its rattles and bangs. Out of it stepped the woman who looked least like the

I called the cab company while silently telling myself that I was no longer part of the Adventist Church.

other church members, the Sabbath School leader.

"I couldn't just leave you here," she said. "I wanted to take you home, but my husband works in the clubs and will be sleeping. He wouldn't be happy with company. Will you come have lunch with me?"

Would I? She looked and sounded to me like an angel of God. And that's how a young woman raised in the Adventist Church, a young woman who never went to a restaurant on Sabbath and usually lived as a vegetarian, was taken out to a restaurant for Sabbath lunch. Over coleslaw and fried chicken I found a friend for a day, and a feeling of home and family. I also felt the desire to try once more to find a place in the Seventh-day Adventist church in which I was raised.

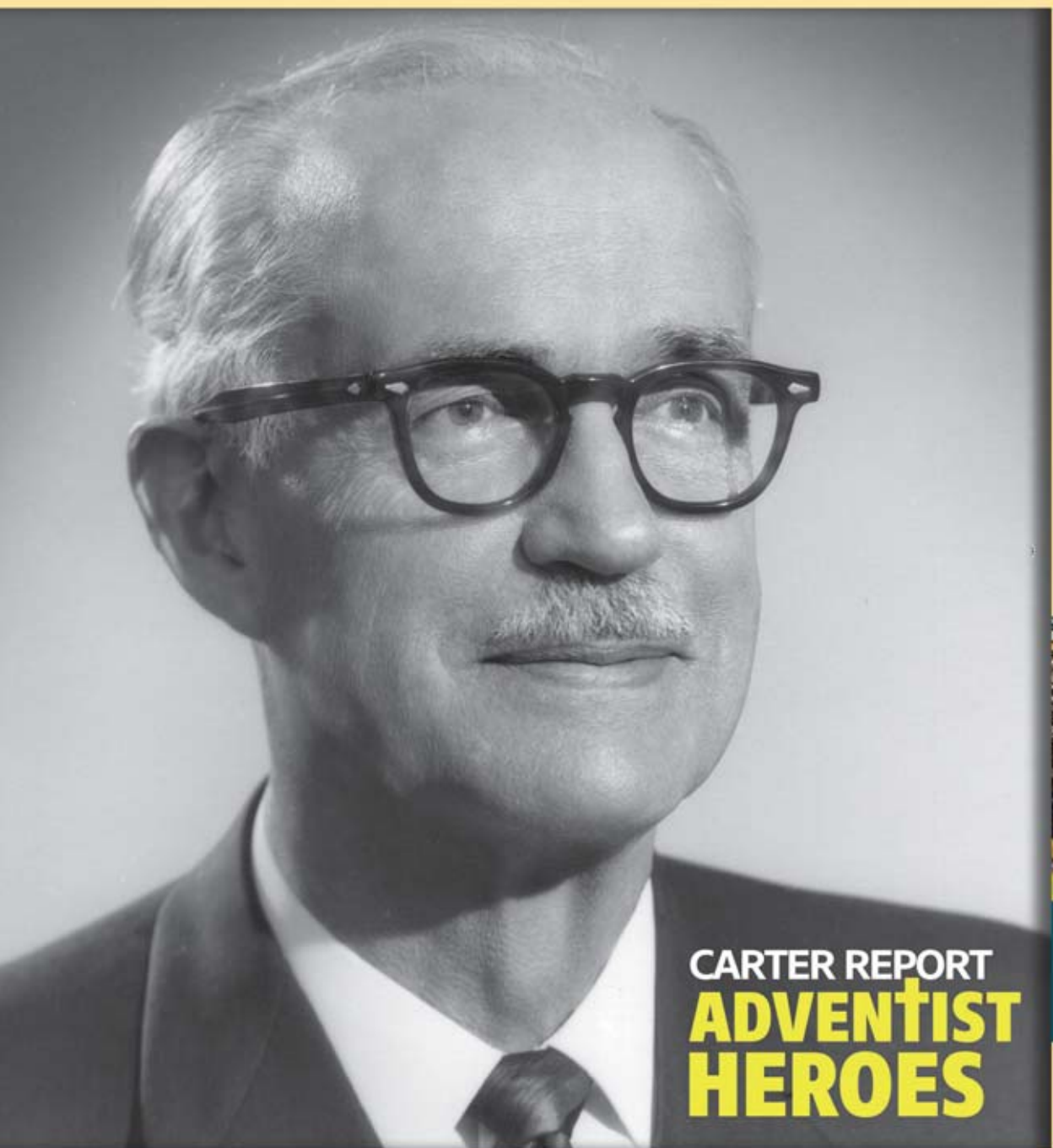
I'll always remember your first name; it's the same as my mother's. You worked at the Review and Herald Publishing House and were the epitome of love and Christian fellowship. I still have a picture of you that I took that day in 1980. You may not know it, but you are the reason my life did not go down a very different path.

Thank you. Thank you for coming back. Thank you for seeing my loneliness and my need of Christian fellowship. Thank you for Chubby Chicken and coleslaw on a hot Sabbath afternoon. Thank you for demonstrating true Christianity, which I have used as a measuring rod over the years. ♣

Valerie Shoop-McCreery lives in Hazelton, British Columbia.

AMERICAN PREACHER

Wows Aussie College



CARTER REPORT
**ADVENTIST
HEROES**

H.M.S. Richards, speaker and founder of the Voice of Prophecy, shook up Avondale College when he preached

there in 1961. His sermon was so powerful that it is still remembered after more than 50 years...

John Carter with his peers was a bit of a theological know-it-all. He sat in the College auditorium as Pastor Richards preached. What he heard powerfully impacted his life forever. Elder Richard's sermon title was, "The Unsparring God." From his Bible he read how God had not spared the angels that sinned. Neither had He in His righteous wrath spared the Antediluvians or the Sodomites. Then he turned to Romans 8 that tells us that God did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. His message was that our holy God cannot justly condone iniquity, and transgressors will receive their penalty paid in full. But God in Christ took our place and suffered the wages of sin for us on the cross, so that we should not perish but have everlasting life. Then this tall imposing American told the moving story of how his mother had taught him the Gospel as a rebellious teenager.

H.M.S. was always teasing his younger brother, sometimes almost to the point of distraction. Pleas from his mother made little impression until one day she decided to bare her back and commanded her boy

to beat her with a thick reed taken from the creek bank. The punishment he deserved, she took. Or at least tried to take until her wayward boy broke down in tears of repentance. It was that day that H.M.S. Richards understood the story of the Gospel. It broke his heart.

When Pastor Richards preached at Avondale, his sermon demolished our know-it-all attitude, and gave us an insight into the heart of God. It showed us what great Gospel preaching really was. It inspired a new generation of preachers and evangelists.

John Carter has never forgotten H.M.S. Richards or his "Unsparring God" sermon, preached with passion and power so long ago at Avondale College. It helped shape his life as a Gospel preacher who has now shared God's Good News with millions around the world. ❖

We proudly proclaim Elder H.M.S. Richards, founder of the Voice Of Prophecy, a distinguished Carter Report Hero.



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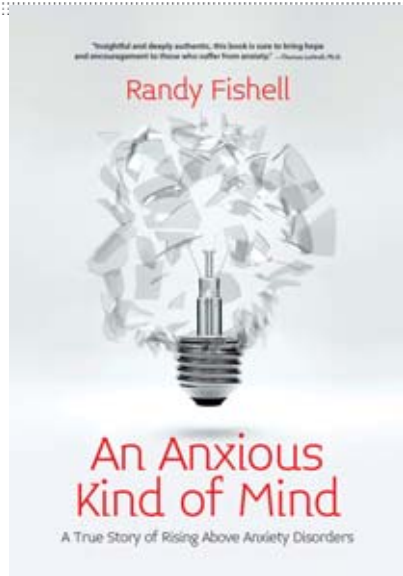
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CLOSER LOOK



An Anxious Kind of Mind

An Anxious Kind of Mind: A True Story of Rising Above Anxiety Disorders, by Randy Fishell (SBC Books, 2017), 281 pages, \$14.99 (paperback); \$2.99 (Kindle edition). Available at www.amazon.com. Reviewed by Gerald A. Klingbeil, *Adventist Review*.

Randy Fishell is a household name in Adventism in North America, especially for the junior-age set. As a former editor of *Guide* magazine he has influenced and shaped thousands of young Adventists who enjoyed his engaging, creative, and always surprising writing style in that magazine.

This volume, directed at adults and sharing his true story of facing an anxiety disorder, will not disappoint readers. Written in a conversational, extremely readable, but at the same time authentic autobiographic style, it tackles a topic that is often taboo in Christian (and Adventist) circles. Adventists often struggle with stories about dys-

Food as Medicine

Food as Medicine: Cooking for Your Best Health, by Sue Radd, Signs Publishing, Warburton, New South Wales, Australia, 2016., 396 pages. Hardcover, A\$40. Reviewed by Stephen Chavez, *Adventist Review*.

Food as Medicine is an imposing book. Not just because of its size (11.5 inches x 9.25 inches and weighing nearly five pounds), or because of its nearly 400 pages, or because of full-page photographs of many of the various recipes described, but because of the comprehensive way good health is directly related to a healthful diet. In the words of the author: "To live well, you need to eat well."

Readers will find it nearly impossible to turn the pages of this book without coming across a recipe just begging to be tried. The stunning photographs and simplicity of the recipes promise tasty, nutritious entrees, salads, side dishes, and desserts, suitable for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. The mere look of all these recipes is a marketing triumph for those who prefer a vegan diet. The recipes also suggest substitutions to add variety to any dish.

The book ends with nearly 80 pages of solid, science-based instruction about how our diets contribute to our physical and emotional health, as well as to the health of the planet. The articles address topics currently being discussed in the general pop-

functions; we love stories that emphasize triumph and healing and transformation, and often secretly wonder why Jesus focused so much on those who are downtrodden, weary, sick, and dysfunctional.

Fishell tells his own compelling story of learning how to live with anxiety disorders (including obsessive-compulsive disorders [OCD], panic attacks, agoraphobia, etc.). His journey starts on the Dan Ryan Expressway in Chicago, when, as a young man visiting a young woman in Wisconsin, he suddenly faced a paralyzing panic attack that left him stranded on the South Side of Chicago.

ulation: supplements, processed foods, animal protein, antioxidants, dairy products, sustainable agriculture, alcohol, organic foods, etc. Also included are raw food swaps for butter, chocolate, meat, milk, and cream. It also features a seasonal menu planning guide.

The book's author, Sue Radd, is one of Australia's leading nutritionists and health communicators. In 2017 Gourmand International honored *Food as Medicine* as the best cookbook in the world.

The one downside to the book is buying it. A title search on Amazon.com yielded 20 results on the first page, some with the exact same title, and some with variations on the title, but none that brought up this particular book. Putting "Sue Radd" in the search box brought up a cover photo of her book—printed in German.

The best way to get a copy of *Food as Medicine* is to go to the Amazon Australia Web site: www.amazon.com.au/Food-as-Medicine-Sue-Radd/dp/1925044629. It's worth the effort.

Don't be afraid of the imposing size and comprehensive content of *Food as Medicine*. It is a wonderfully practical book that will provide you and your family with an endless variety of simple, healthful meals well into the future. 🍴



Most readers will not put down the book as they share a number of significant moments in Fishell's life journey. It's an arresting read. It's also a disturbing read in its, at times, casual and humorous descriptions of fears and angst that seem to be all too familiar. Readers will cheer when they come to the place where a doctor finally utters the words that nobody, and especially not Fishell, could have anticipated: "I think I can help you!" (p. 225).

The way to recovery, however, is never straight, starting with Fishell's reluctance to actually take the prescribed SSRI medication (for those outside the medical fraternity that is "selective serotonin

reuptake inhibitors"). Yet once he accepted the fact that help (including medication and counseling) was needed, healing could begin.

I found Fishell's book compelling and enlightening. I plan to keep it on my short list of recommended reading for friends, colleagues, and church members who struggle with similar disorders. Kudos to someone who is willing to share his vulnerabilities and pain so that others can be blessed and find healing too. And doing it in an engaging and at times even fun way surely represents the extra blessing. 🍴

WHEN WE HEAR THE WORD “JUDGMENT”

Judgment, the concept that everything will be set right in the universe eventually, is a fundamental truth about the God of the Bible. But through the years that concept has inspired both dread and anticipation. We asked readers to respond to this question: Judgment: What comes to mind when you hear that word? Share your response in one or two sentences. Is it positive, negative, neither, both?—Editors

There are definitely Scripture reasons to fear judgment, not least of which is the three angels' messages (Rev. 14:6-12). However, there is also reason to look forward to judgment, because it will be “made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time [comes] for the saints to possess the kingdom” (Dan. 7:22, NKJV).*

BERT, CALIFORNIA

Something that is God's job, not mine.

BETTY, KANSAS

Mercy triumphs over judgment” (James 2:13).

BEVERLY, OREGON

Think of judgment as a balance (weighing device), where the good is weighed with the bad, similar to a court of law. Jesus tilts the balance in our favor.

BILL, MARYLAND

The judgment is highly positive; it's very good news. This awful mess we humans are in will come to a welcomed end. Then all will be made well forever!

CAROLYN, WASHINGTON

Our Judge is also our Advocate.

CARROL, WASHINGTON

Negative. Whether that means people judging me unfairly, or God's judgment, for which I'm unprepared.

CHARRIE, OKLAHOMA

Getting whatever we deserve. It's positive for some; but, sadly, negative for most.

DEB, WISCONSIN

Positive: accountability and justice. All that is wrong will be made right.

ESTHER, GEORGIA

If we have nothing to fear, judgment will bypass us. Even in the final judgment, Jesus will show His scars, letting us go free. It's the same as keeping our receipts in case the Internal Revenue Service calls for an audit. That box and its contents will set us free.

DAN, MARYLAND

Who is doing the judging, by whose standards, and by whose authority? Are these standards those with which I agree, by an authority with whom I have mutuality?

DANEEN, CALIFORNIA

A final, irreversible determination: guilty/not guilty.

DARREL, NEBRASKA

God hates sin. But He sent Christ to be our substitute. When God judges Christ, He judges those who accept Him. Even the Flood was merciful. God protected the last of our race from oblivion.

ELLA, MARYLAND



Someone has to answer for an awful lot of pain and suffering in the world. I need to know why an all-powerful, all-loving God did nothing about it promptly. I'm not so much a doubter, but I would like some clarification.

FRED, CALIFORNIA

A decision or ruling made after careful examination of the evidence.

JAMES, MARYLAND

Judgment is good news! All the wrongs ever committed during the history of the earth will be made right.

JARED, WEST VIRGINIA

In court you pray for a prudent judge to make considered decisions. We express appreciation to our loving God who gives His grace so that we have a chance of reaching heaven.

JOYCE, CALIFORNIA

Judgment is truth brought to the point of crisis and tested. What remains is established forever.

KAREN, OREGON

You're driving down the interstate at the speed limit. You see a patrol car in the median. You tap the brakes, because human beings inherently fear judgment.

KERMIT, MARYLAND

I'm a mess, but He is not. I'm inadequate, but He is not. His love, patience, and mercy are forever. We may be surprised by who shows up in the kingdom and who doesn't. I may be surprised to see myself there.

LINDA, CALIFORNIA

Because we are sinful people, it's easy to fear God's judgment. But when we look at it from God's point of view, we realize it's a time when He rejoices, celebrates, and enjoys the company of those who have chosen Him.

LLOYD, NEBRASKA

The word has some rather scary and negative connotations. Christians judge other Christians; non-Christians judge Christians. But when it's judgment by God, the outcome is guaranteed to be a good one.

LYNETTA, OKLAHOMA

My mind goes from the quick decision (judgment) I must make to avoid a collision, to the harsh criticism given to many who have not yet matured the way I think they should. Fortunately, I settled on the merciful action of our loving God, determining whether or not we would be delighted to spend forever in His presence.

MICHELLE, NEVADA

It's positive. It means the end of sin and suffering forever, and the beginning of unimaginable peace and joy.

MONIQUE, NORTH CAROLINA

Judgment from God: loving, compassionate, forgiving, gentle, accepting. Judgment from others: damning, rejecting, condemning, unforgiving.

NATALIE, CALIFORNIA

Not my job, thankfully. I'm glad it's in God's hands, not in other people's hands.

WALLY, CALIFORNIA

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The Numbers Game

Some people just love numbers. I am always amazed by the detailed statistics sport fans remember for baseball greats or entire basketball teams. Numbers seem to quantify what we struggle to qualify. Back in the days of TV, ratings determined the survival or death of every show or series. Today marketers are getting their hands on even more detailed metadata gleaned from search histories, cookies following our every move on the internet, social media clicks, or relevant GPS data taken from our cellphones.

Adventists also love numbers. No, I don't mean the 2,300 evenings and mornings or the identity of the 144,000. I mean numbers that reflect the triumph of the gospel—and the advance of this church. In July 2016 we reported on 100,000 new family members in Rwanda as the result of evangelistic outreach.¹ That article was shared more than 13,000 times on Facebook. Its reach was huge.

Less than a year later, in March of 2017, we all read the good news that church membership had just passed 20 million members.² Triumph is undoubtedly part of the biblical story line of God's end-time remnant. Yet this triumph is closely associated with God's presence as He returns to earth to make things right. Could it be that our infatuation with numbers and good news is often directly linked to our need for affirmation and the hope that we are still on the "right" path?

Here is another story involving numbers. This summer I preached at two small churches on the eastern shore of the Chesapeake Bay. Each church boasts 10 to 15 members. They are long-established churches in struggling communities. As we were driving to church I asked my wife to pull up census data for one

of the towns. Population, 2,675; a mixed community with 50 percent Caucasians and the other 50 percent made up of African Americans and Hispanics; the median income per household was \$27,593; more than 37 percent lived below the poverty line; single-mom households reached about the same number.

How do we tell the stories of these numbers and the churches and communities they represent? How do we encourage, engage, and equip church members who make up the core of these churches? How do we prepare pastors, including young seminary graduates, to minister in these communities without feeling disheartened or discouraged?

God counts too. He sees and knows the very number of hairs on my head (Luke 12:7). He is content to spend three and a half years with a core group of only 12, one of whom ultimately ended up selling Him to His enemies. While I am sure He cherishes the triumphs and victories of the 20 million, His heart hurts for the other 7.5 billion who share this planet with the 20 million.

Since the beginning of time on earth God's concern has been for individuals, up close and personal. He wondered about Adam and Eve, about Abraham and his clan, about Rahab the Canaanite, Ruth the Moabite, and Gerald the German. Today, let the gentle voice of the Spirit remind you of the names of individuals (neighbors, colleagues, friends, family members) and small communities struggling to translate the 20 million into their reality. 📌

¹ "Baptisms Reach 100,000 in 'Wonderful Miracle' in Rwanda," *Adventist Review*, July 5, 2016, at www.adventistreview.org/church-news/story4172-baptisms-reach-100000-in-wonderful-miracle-in-rwanda.

² news.adventist.org/en/all-news/news/go/2017-03-01/propelled-by-total-member-involvement-adventist-church-tops-20-million-members

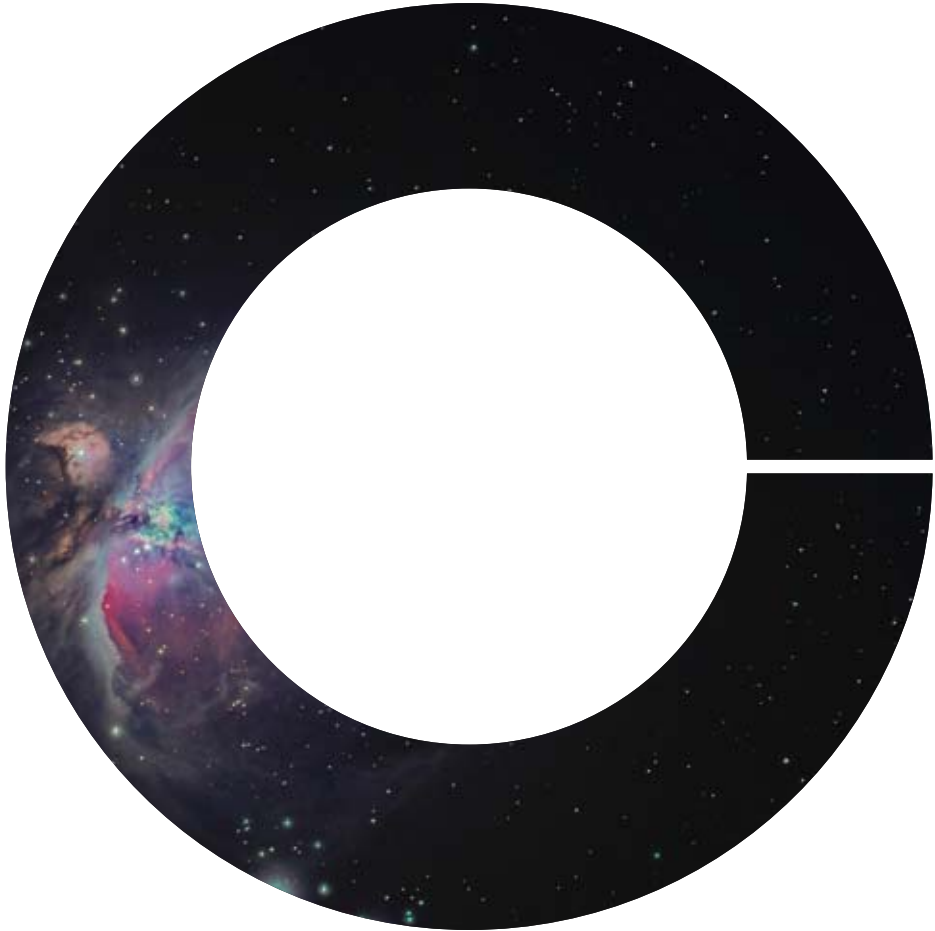
Gerald A. Klingbeil is an associate editor of *Adventist Review*.

NUMBERS SEEM
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STRUGGLE TO
QUALIFY.

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