

# ADVENTIST REVIEW

**JUNE 2017: HOW WE COMMUNICATE + MARCHING  
DOWN PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE + WHEN YOUR  
BEACH BECOMES YOUR DESERT + PECULIAR PEOPLE  
SHOULDN'T BE ISOLATED + IDENTITY THEFT**

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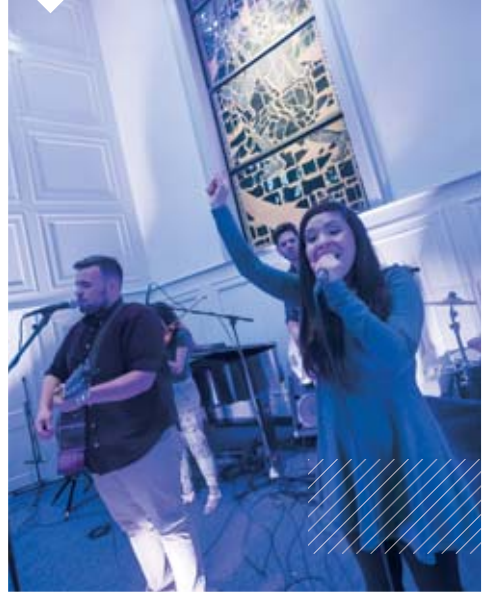
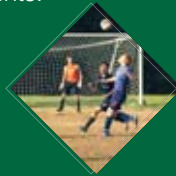
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# TRENDING

THE MOST SHARED STORIES ON ADVENTISTREVIEW.ORG LAST MONTH:



- 1 Don't Let Your Kids Read This
- 2 World Church Executive Committee Votes Statement on Transgenderism
- 3 Adventist Professor Inspires His Students Just Before Passing Away
- 4 After Decades of Prayer, Adventists Dedicate State-of-the-Art Church in Cuba
- 5 Jews Revive the Sanhedrin With Plans for a Passover sacrifice

## VIDEO RESOURCES FROM ARTV



### A BEAUTIFUL LIFE

Many boys connect with their fathers through playing football and other sports. Fourteen-year-old Espen can't do that because he's in a wheelchair. But in the water, he's like a fish.



### BREXIT AND PROPHECY

Details from the biblical book of Daniel continue to unfold before our eyes today. Find out what else we can learn about European tension from a king and his dreams thousands of years ago.



### NAOMI STRIEMER EVEN NOW (MUSIC VIDEO)

News reports are often full of violence and hot button issues. Fight feelings of anxiety and hopelessness with this music video by critically-acclaimed singer-songwriter and author Naomi Striemer.

# Need More Faith?

Faith may  
be closer than  
you think...

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

HEBREWS 11:1



Mike Tucker,  
Speaker/Director

## SUMMER SCHEDULE

June 1-3	Lake Junaluska, NC – Carolina Camp Meeting
June 6-8	Hutchinson, MN – Minnesota Camp Meeting
June 9-11	Blue Ridge, VA – Potomac Southern Camp Meeting
June 24	Mississauga, ON – Ontario Camp Meeting
June 29 – July 1	Ruidoso, NM – Texaco Camp Meeting
July 16-22	Bowden, AB – Alberta Camp Meeting

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BILL KNOTT



## Securing the Future

*“Urging young adult Adventists to ‘make more sacrifices’ at just the moment when they are facing that huge debt burden and starting families is disingenuous at best.”*

It’s entirely predictable that one generation will end up fretting about the merits of the next. Call it a lament of aging—or an expression of latent self-congratulation—but no age cohort ever seems enamored of the one that follows it. Those younger than the group now holding power are often deemed less focused, less thrifty, or less committed.

Some of this is simply nostalgia, by which we attribute the life skills we learned by 60 to the selves we were at 30. We conveniently forget the many missteps, foolish errands, and embarrassments that marked our story, too.

So when I began hearing complaints from same-age colleagues in church leadership about the difficulty of finding talented, younger leaders for this movement, I chalked it up to evidence that my generation is aging—and not slowly. At first it seemed another illustration of a familiar if unspoken thought: *“No one could ever be quite so good as we are.”*

But dozens of conversations and increasing empirical data have now persuaded me that the concern is real enough—even if not for all the reasons my generation cites.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in many world regions, and especially in North America, is struggling to attract and train the men and women it will need to lead its churches, administrate

its schools, direct its ministries—and thus equip new generations of believers. This isn’t, then, a complaint about young adult Adventists in their 20s, 30s, and 40s who are deficient in commitment, but instead a public warning that we’re failing to mentor these gifted younger believers and give them invitations and opportunities to use their skills for the cause they deeply love.

**Later, Older.** The message, intended or not, received by those we may rightly call the best and brightest of our movement is that their opportunities to lead, innovate, and create change will be delayed a minimum of 20 years. Although no leader in my generation is probably tactless enough to say to a gifted young adult, *“You’ve got to serve your time and earn your way,”* that’s what they are hearing—and the reason they are taking their gifts and passions to other nonprofits, advocacy groups, and even the corporate world. Those organizations, driven by both dreams and dollars, have learned how to reward passion and incentivize leadership by promoting talent with less regard for age.

Starting in the mailroom and working your way to the boardroom was a favorite myth of twentieth-century corporate culture. It’s not a myth that today’s young adult Adventists believe—and they won’t stay around to see if it might become true for them.

**Sacrifice Until It Hurts.** Today’s graduates, most of whom now need at least a master’s degree to meet the basic competencies required in teaching, pastoring, church finance, or technology, are emerging from universities with staggering debt loads on a scale unknown to previous generations of church employees. It’s not unusual for even the frugal graduate of an Adventist education to have accumulated up to \$60,000 worth of student loan debt in a five- or six-year span—and to enter the workforce at the low end of the church’s below-market pay scale.

Urging young adult Adventists to “make more sacrifices” at just the moment when they are facing that huge debt burden *and* starting families is disingenuous at best. The church must—quickly—explore creative ways for its prospective employees to retire their educational debt in their first years of service at an advanced rate (say \$10,000 per year of service) that offers hope for sustainable families and careers.

Every organization that believes in the future must prepare leaders for that future. Holding our collective breath and crossing our twitching fingers is not a plan. ♣

*Bill Knott*

If we do everything the way God wants us to, it is because we agree with Him; we like to do things His way.

—KARYN WHITLEY, BERRYVILLE, ARKANSAS

## DOES GOD LIKE ME?

In the March 2017 *Review* I enjoyed the article “Does God Like Me?” I have one disagreement with the writer, David Asscherick. I’m quoting the article here: “Let’s go now to Luke 1. A woman named Mary is pregnant, and she’s confused about her pregnancy. An angel appears to Mary and says, ‘You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus [Yeshua, Deliverer]’ (verse 31).”

“Is” pregnant as opposed to “will conceive” doesn’t fit. Mary was not pregnant when the angel came to her. This is not the way my God of love works! If you read on, she did not get pregnant until after verse 38, where she, Mary, agreed to it.

Keep up the good work. I enjoy all of the *Review*, especially Dixie Rodriguez. I read her first.

**Dottie Guth**

*The Dalles, Oregon*

Regarding “Does God Like Me?” by David Asscherick, my question is: Is God’s love unconditional? Most Christians would say “yes.” In order to save us, did Jesus have to live a life of obedience to God’s law? Most Christians would say “yes.”

Therein lies the problem. If

God’s love is unconditional, then there is no reason for Christ’s sacrifice, because under the umbrella of “unconditional love” it doesn’t matter what we do, whether we sin or not, for God’s love is without conditions.

Ellen White employed many

words to describe God’s love, but not once did she write that His love was unconditional. It would be better not to use the expression “unconditional love” when describing God’s love. There are plenty of other good words that do not skew His love or character with psychological distortion.

**Howard Loewan**

*Hohenwald, Tennessee*

*The fact of God’s unconditional love doesn’t mean that He will not allow us to experience the result of our bad choices—including the loss of salvation. God’s unconditional love doesn’t guarantee our salvation, but only makes it available through Christ to all who choose Him.*

—Editors

I’m sorry to have to disagree with the article “Does God Like Me?” (March 2017).

God likes things the way He created them, not the way they’ve been perverted by sin. There can be a big difference between “love” and “like.” Love can be extended, not only to friends, but even to enemies who hate us and curse us, who spitefully use and persecute





I enjoy all of the *Review*, especially Dixil Rodriguez. I read her first.

—**DOTTIE GUTH**, THE DALLES, OREGON

us. But we generally like people who are like us.

Jesus told His disciples, “You are My friends if you do whatever I command you” (John 15:14, NKJV).<sup>1</sup> If we do everything the way God wants us to, it is because we agree with Him; we like to do things His way. Jesus calls Abraham “my friend” because he commanded his family in such a way that they would keep the way of the Lord. Jesus spoke with Moses face to face as a friend, because Moses, like Jesus Himself, was the meekest man on earth in his day. He called David “a man after my own heart,” because He sees the end from the beginning.

God did not like it when Moses disobeyed an important command and consequences were demanded. He did not like it when David was embroiled in sin; He sent the prophet to confront him. God loves the world, even though it hates Him. He really likes His friends, whom He has chosen out of the world, because they are so much like Him that they can show Him to the world, just as Jesus did when He was here.

When the time is right, He will endow them with eternal life, so they can be with Him forever and

## IN A FEW WORDS...

### DON'T LET YOUR KIDS READ THIS

As an elementary school teacher in a public school in the United States, I read this article with keen interest. We occasionally use “bring your electronics” as a reward for good behavior, etc. The reward is probably as much for us teachers as it is for the students. They are relatively quiet and absorbed in their screens. But something seems intrinsically wrong with that. We are a long way from education in the outdoors.

**Brian Wilcox, via Web**

### ONE BULLET AWAY

We will join in the choruses of prayer warriors for your Ralph, as well as the many law-enforcement officers like him as they perform their civic duties each and every day. Likewise, prayers for those who are under Satan’s torment, that God’s angels will overcome the evil that has overtaken them and that they may find relief and grace. May Ralph be used by Him each day to show Jesus to those he serves.

**Daniel Chin, via Web**

reflect Him to His whole creation for all time.

**Karyn Whitley**  
*Berryville, Arkansas*

### LEGALLY IMPOSED LAW?

I am having a difficult time reconciling Clifford Goldstein’s legally imposed law construct of

God (March 2017) with the following statement from Ellen White: “A legal religion can never lead souls to Christ; for it is a loveless, Christless religion.”<sup>2</sup> I cannot see the character of God in this article.

**G. Hahn**  
*Hastings, Michigan*

## 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](mailto:letters@adventistreview.org).

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A view of the new Cardenas Seventh-day Adventist Church building, which seats 500 people and includes a second floor with closed-circuit TV for hundreds more. PHOTOS: MARCOS PASEGGI

## STATE-OF-THE-ART CHURCH DEDICATED IN CUBA

**FUNDED BY PRIVATE DONATIONS, FACILITIES ARE READY FOR EVANGELISTIC MEETINGS FROM DAY ONE**

MARCOS PASEGGI, SENIOR CORRESPONDENT, *ADVENTIST REVIEW*

**Y**ears of earnest prayer came to a happy ending for the 200 members of the Cardenas Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cardenas, Cuba, as they dedicated a new church building on April 22, 2017. More than 1,200 church leaders, members, government representatives, and guests from across the island and other countries met for a three-hour dedication program of the new facilities, which included music, testimonies, and a baptism.

The Cardenas project was funded by Maranatha Volunteers International, a supporting ministry of the

Seventh-day Adventist Church with a worldwide presence. Its president, Don Noble, said he was happy to report that since 1994 Maranatha has completed more than 200 projects in Cuba, including the building of the Cuba Adventist Theological Seminary near Havana. “We have a special working relationship with Cuba,” said Noble.

“When Maranatha first came to Cuba, we prepared a list of more than 100 remodeling and construction projects on the island, but Cardenas was not part of the original list,” said Daniel Fontaine, then

president of the Adventist Church in Cuba and now an assistant to the president of the Inter-American Division church region. “God, however, knew the time would come for Cardenas.”

National, provincial, and local government officers attended the dedication service of the new church, the largest building project in Cardenas—a town located 90 miles (145 kilometers) east of Havana—in more than 50 years. Officials attended to celebrate this important milestone in the history not only of the Adventist Church but also of religious liberty in Cuba.

“I am glad you are now able to enjoy a new, bigger, and more beautiful church building,” said Sonia García, deputy secretary of the Office of Religious Affairs of Cuba. “It



Church members, community members, and guests waited eagerly and patiently for the doors of the new church building to open.

## EGGS, TOMATOES, AND PRAYER

Indeed, the Cardenas project had been on the mind of church members and leaders for decades. Years ago a dozen Adventist members in Cardenas began to pray, asking God to give them a new church building. The garage-sized run-down building was an eyesore in the neighborhood.

“People would walk by the building and throw eggs at us,” said Ismelia Aballi Segundo, a former deaconess and one of the founding members of the congregation. “When eggs were not easily available, they would throw tomatoes.”

Segundo, who travels 90 minutes by bus every Sabbath to get to “her” church, as she calls it, recalled how Adventists were mocked and looked down on. “In a time when it was fashionable for girls to wear miniskirts, they knew who of us were heading to church because we were the only ones wearing longer skirts, she said.

In spite of it all, the congregation grew, and they soon ran out of space. “Rain or shine, people would follow services from outside,” said Hilia Villafranca, a member of the Pinar del Río church who visited the old church building in the past and traveled more than five hours to be present at the dedication. “When visitors came, members would give them their seats and watch from outside.”

At that time members began to pray for a new church building. Among them were María and her

gives me pleasure to see you so happy.”

García, who said her office is working to make Cubans freer and happier, reiterated her government’s commitment to support the work of Seventh-day Adventists on the island. “My office doors are open,” she said. “You can count on us to promote and support the work you do.”

The president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cuba, Aldo Pérez, thanked the Cuban government for its support. “This new building is a living proof of the religious liberty we enjoy in Cuba,” said Pérez. He made clear that Seventh-day Adventists are eager to work toward the well-being and unity of Cuban society. “You need to know that Adventists are eager to make a positive contribution to our wonderful island,” he said.

## A LONG LOVE STORY WITH CUBA

The new facilities carry the name of Melvin and Barbara Sickler, an American couple who served in Cuba at Antillian Adventist College from 1950 to 1956. Their son, Donald Sickler, who spent part of his childhood and teenage years in Cuba, attended the ceremony with his wife and adult sons. “It is with great emotion that I am here today

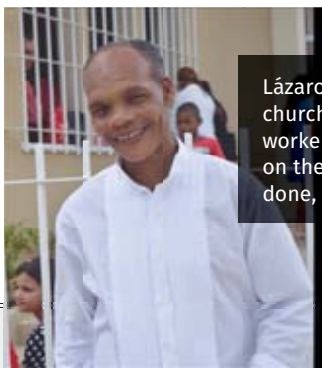
as part of [the Maranatha] group,” said Sickler just before unveiling a plaque in honor of his parents.

A few years ago Sickler, a retired neurosurgeon in the United States, had called Maranatha to offer his financial support for a project in Cardenas. At the time, however, the nonprofit organization, known for building and remodeling churches and schools, as well as drilling water wells around the world, had just completed some projects and were ready to pull out of Cuba.

“For years Maranatha had tried to get the various authorizations to build a church in Cardenas, but to no avail,” said Sickler in an interview with *Adventist Review* on the sidelines of the event. “So when I called they told me, ‘It’s too late; we are leaving Cuba.’” A few months later, however, Sickler got an unexpected call from Maranatha president Don Noble. “Get ready; we are going to Cuba!” he said.

Sickler, Noble, and others flew to Cuba. A few days later they learned that final authorization had been granted.

“It was an up-and-down journey, with roadblocks and complications,” said Pérez when tracing the story of the project. “But in His wisdom God chose the right time for the church to be built in Cardenas.”



Lázaro Leal, a deacon of the Cardenas church and one of the local construction workers hired by Maranatha to work on the project. "Now that the project is done, I'll be a fisher of men," he says.

daughter, Maritza Cevallos Piedra, who made it their personal spiritual project to ask God to intercede on behalf of the Cardenas church. "Mom prayed and prayed," said Maritza. "She prayed so hard and so much that she developed calluses on her knees." Both Maritza and María, who is now 95, were present at the dedication to see firsthand the answer to their prayers.

For years it seemed that it was not in God's plan to grant the members' wish. But members never stopped praying. A number of members fondly remember that among those pleading to God was a 10-year-old girl who would start her prayers by saying, "God, I thank You for giving us a new church building." In His divine wisdom the Lord finally determined that the time for Cardenas had come. "Make no mistake about it, it was God's initiative to build this church," said Pérez. "This is God's own doing."

### NEW FACILITIES

Maranatha, which spent several years on the project, hired international volunteers and local workers to build the church. One of them was Lázaro Leal, a deacon of the Cardenas church turned construction contractor. "I am acquainted with every single wall of this building," said Leal, beaming as he acknowledged that before being hired to work on the project, his experience in construction was rather limited. "I relived the experience of the people of God who built the

wall of Jerusalem," he said, referring to the story recorded in the book of Nehemiah in the Bible. "Against all the odds I did my best, and God took care of the rest."

The new sanctuary, which seats 500 people and has a second floor connected by closed-circuit TV screens with capacity for several hundred more, is now the largest Adventist church building in Cuba. The new facilities also include a kitchen, a state-of-the-art audiovisual system, and an artistically appealing baptismal pool where two new members were baptized as part of the dedication ceremony.

"This will be a place to meet God every week," said Pérez during his dedication message. "Let's make this place a place of peace, of hope, of worship. Let's come here every Sabbath to give God the glory."

The Adventist Church in Cuba also plans to use the facilities for church convocations. "This building will be our meeting point, our hub for church workers and member gatherings and activities on the island," said Pérez.

### TICKETS TO EVANGELISTIC MEETINGS

Church leaders and local members made clear, however, that their goal was not to keep the new building for themselves, but to use it as a tool for outreach and mission.

"This building is to be shared," said López. "Let's share this church building with other Christian de-

nominations. Let's share it with the community. Let's share it with our brothers and sisters across the island."

Church members and leaders are making sure that this is the case, as they planned an evangelistic series that was launched just a few hours after the dedication service. When meetings were advertised some weeks ago, they elicited such a positive response that organizers were forced to offer numbered tickets for the event.

"Tickets are free," said the organizers, "but they are needed so that we can make sure that everyone has a place to sit."

Don Kirkman, the architect behind many Maranatha construction projects in Cuba and around the world, said that while exciting, these developments are not uncommon. "Maranatha is a powerful mission tool," he said. "After we dedicate a project and leave, membership usually doubles."

Cardenas members do not want to be an exception. Indeed, every member who was asked by *Adventist Review* how he or she felt about the new building answered in almost identical words. "We are happy because it is a dream come true," they said, though they instantly added: "Now it's our challenge and duty to fill it up as soon as possible."

Leal concurs. When asked what he was going to do now that the project was over, he gave a big smile. "From now on I'll be a fisher of men," he said. ▀

**PASTORAL ETHICS DOCUMENT VOTED**

The International Board of Ministerial and Theological Education (IBMTE) voted recently to accept adjustments made to a Ministerial Association document on pastoral ethics. The document—an appendix of the IBMTE handbook—advocates for a unified

system of ethical principles. Revisions include a completely new subsection entitled “Child Safety,” and revamped subsections that are now called “Physical Facilities,” “Supervision,” and “Staff Background.” Read the full article at [goo.gl/KKyK15](http://goo.gl/KKyK15).



Costin Jordache, newly appointed director of communication and news editor for Adventist Review Ministries with Bill Knott, executive editor.

PHOTO: BRENT HARDINGE

## ADVENTIST REVIEW APPOINTS COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR AND NEWS EDITOR

COSTIN JORDACHE WILL OVERSEE THE MINISTRY'S COMMUNICATIONS AND NEWS OPERATIONS

BY ADVENTIST REVIEW STAFF

**A**dventist Review Ministries (ARMies) recently welcomed a new director of communication and news editor to oversee related operations and projects.

Costin Jordache, who previously served as vice president for communication in the Central California Conference church region, was named to replace Andrew McChesney, who became an editor at Adventist Mission in November 2016. Jordache's news editor role, however, has been significantly expanded, as ARMies moves the 168-year-old magazine—the oldest religious publication in North America—forward as a multiplatform media publication tuned to twenty-first-century faith.

The expanded role of director of communication includes the

development of strategic partnerships with other church communication entities around the world. The defined goal is “to enhance the exposure, effectiveness, and missional reach” of the *Adventist Review* Ministries publications “with print, television, radio, Web-based, social media, and video production ministries and organizations.”

“The old adage says, ‘Make no little plans,’ and Costin makes no little plans,” said Bill Knott, executive editor of *Adventist Review* and *Adventist World* magazines. “The fundamental difference between his vision and that of so many others is that he also has the management skill and determination to make those plans realities.”

Jordache will also serve as the official spokesperson for *Adventist*

*Review* Ministries, interfacing with both internal and external media outlets. In that capacity he is expected to coordinate an increased interaction between *Adventist Review* Ministries and major news outlets both inside and outside the church as new stories develop.

“The challenge ahead is sizable,” said Jordache. “We are all quite passionate about striving for a culture in which Adventist news and developments from every part of the world are available to a global audience on a consistent and timely basis.”

Jordache also plans to emphasize the intersection of the Adventist Church and global news events, as well as developing trends, conversations, and initiatives as they arise. His plan includes underlining “the contribution the church makes to the communities in which it exists, and its willingness to partner with communities to improve living conditions, health outcomes, and access to services.”

Knott believes that Jordache, a pastor and communication professional who earned a B.A. in theology from Southwestern Adventist University and also holds an M.A. in radio, television, and film from the University of Texas and an M.B.A. from California State University, is uniquely qualified for the expanded role at ARMies.

Jordache, in the process of moving to Maryland, is married to Leah, also a pastor. Costin and Leah are the parents of two sons: Roman and Lance. ▀

Full article available at [goo.gl/kpzdN1](http://goo.gl/kpzdN1).



### BRAZIL OPENS ADVENTIST THEME PARK

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Brazil recently inaugurated Terra de Zion (Zionland), the first Adventist theme park, which will focus on teaching children about sustainable development,

healthy foods, and nature preservation. Zionland provides opportunities to reconnect with the natural world, while instilling values that children may take with them for good. Read the full article at [goo.gl/DphfMt](http://goo.gl/DphfMt).

## NEWS BRIEFS

1



**STATEMENT ON TRANSGENDERISM VOTED:** The members of the Executive Committee of the Seventh-day Adventist Church voted to accept a statement on transgenderism on April 11, 2017. The document defines key terms, reviews biblical principles, and includes advice for church leaders and members engaging with transgender visitors or adherents in their local congregations. During the discussion, church leaders emphasized a spirit of love and compassion in engaging with transgender individuals. Read the full article at [goo.gl/c7zZgm](http://goo.gl/c7zZgm)

2



**FINANCIAL TURNAROUND ANNOUNCED:** World church treasurer Juan Prestol-Puesán recently reported that the General Conference finished 2016 \$1 million in the black, compared to a loss of \$20 million in 2015. Prestol-Puesán explained that significant prayer, together with a concerted effort by General Conference employees to limit spending, contributed to the positive outcome. Read the full article at [goo.gl/1TS8LB](http://goo.gl/1TS8LB).

3



### HISTORIC APPOINTMENT AT JOHNS HOPKINS:

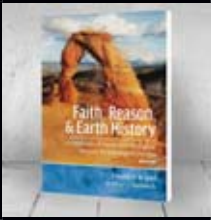
Nancy Abu-Bonsrah, a Seventh-day Adventist, is the first Black female neurosurgical resident to have been accepted into the Johns Hopkins program in its history, which spans more than 100 years. The prestigious program, ranked second in the United States, accepts just two to five residents per year. Read the full article at [goo.gl/cqjHsK](http://goo.gl/cqjHsK).

4



**LITERACY PROGRAM CHANGES LIVES:** The North American Division (NAD) and *Adventist World* magazine have partnered with the Inter-American Division to provide literacy training as part of a program called “Partners in Mission.” Dan Jackson, NAD president, and Bill Knott, *Adventist World* executive editor, recently reported on progress in El Salvador, where more than 200 “literacy circles” throughout the country allow residents to enroll in multimonth courses. Read the full article at [goo.gl/qNGdLa](http://goo.gl/qNGdLa).

5



**CREATION SCIENCE TEXTBOOK NOW FREE:** Students, teachers, and general readers anywhere in the world eager for access to the acclaimed go-to textbook on the latest in creation science studies can now get it for free in digital format, thanks to a unique partnership among three Adventist entities. The Faith and Science Council, the North American Division Adventist Learning Community, and Andrews University Press have cooperated to make the updated third edition of the popular text available for free download worldwide. Read the full article, including download link, at [goo.gl/FesjFh](http://goo.gl/FesjFh).

6



**ADVENTIST FILMMAKERS MEET:** More than 200 student and professional filmmakers and guests attended the 2017 Sonscreen Film Festival held at Loma Linda University. The three-day festival, run by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America, screened 39 official selections from student filmmakers, and featured multiple keynote presentations. Read the full article at [goo.gl/EXJs1n](http://goo.gl/EXJs1n).



### DIVISION PLANS FOR FUTURE LEADERS

The Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD), based in South Korea, is adopting a proactive approach to leadership development by offering to train young church workers years before they are tapped for top administrative or

ministerial positions. The NSD has trained more than 100 leaders and leaders-to-be since 2008, offering both leadership training and immersive environments for learning the English language. Read the full article at [goo.gl/re7G1v](http://goo.gl/re7G1v).

## MEMO OF UNDERSTANDING SIGNED WITH FRENCH NATIONAL ACADEMY OF MEDICINE

**"I WANT TO LIVE HEALTHY" PROGRAM ENGAGES BROAD COMMUNITIES.**

**ABDIEL HERNÁNDEZ, INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION STAFF**

**T**he Seventh-day Adventist Church in Northern Mexico, which has spearheaded the "I Want to Live Healthy" initiative in churches, schools, and communities across Northern Mexico and other countries, has signed a memorandum of understanding with the French National Academy of Medicine. The memorandum was signed in March at the

headquarters of the French National Academy of Medicine, in Paris, France.

It is the first such collaboration between the church and the international organization that is dedicated to the advancement of medicine within the public sector. Last year the church in Northern Mexico signed a memorandum of understanding with the city of Monterrey

educational models to improve the health and well-being of the Mexican population, exchange information, and better public health practices and medical attention in Northern Mexico, church leaders said.

The church's Montemorelos University and Navojoa University will take part in collaborative efforts to incorporate the spiritual health element in NutriNet, a research project led by the Mexico-French Medical Foundation with the EPODE International Network—a not-for-profit, nongovernmental organization that seeks to support childhood obesity-prevention programs across the world by way of best practice sharing and capacity building.

Church leaders in Mexico are delighted with the agreement because the memorandum helps the "I Want to Live Healthy" program position itself as a great health-viable project for governments and institutions.

"This type of agreement opens the door to the church's health message, and shows how science supports what God has revealed to His church," said Arturo King, president of the church in Northern Mexico and chair of the "I Want to Live Healthy" program.

The program is of particular

to promote a healthy lifestyle in more than 300,000 homes. The church's "I Want to Live Healthy" program centers on the Adventist health message, which focuses on physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.

The collaborative understanding is meant to coordinate research efforts to implement sanitary and ed-



Juan Caicedo, president of the Adventist Church in Colombia; André Parodi, Daniel Couturier, president and secretary of the French National Academy of Medicine; Arturo King, president of the Church in North Mexico; and Armando Barriguete president of EPODE in Mexico, pause for a photo after signing the Memorandum of Understanding, in Paris, France

PHOTO: NORTH MEXICAN UNION CONFERENCE



interest to Dr. Armando Barriguete, president of EPODE in Mexico, who coordinated the memorandum of agreement with the National French Academy of Medicine. Barriguete said that the difference between the church's program and others is that the "I Want to Live Healthy" program has the spiritual health element that can carry the program successfully.

The National French Academy of Medicine will serve as scientific advisor in the development of successful models for adolescents, women, and NutriNet for the church's health network.

The memorandum of understanding was signed by French National Academy officials André Parodi, president, and Daniel Couturier, secretary; Armando Barriguete, president of EPODE; Arturo King, president of the church in Northern Mexico; Zeno Charles-Marcel, associate Health Ministries director for the Adventist world church; Saúl Hernández, president of Navojoa University; Roel Cea, executive director of the "I Want to Live Healthy" program from Montemorelos University; and Juan Caicedo, president of the Church in South Colombia.

"I Want to Live Healthy" program associates include Montemorelos University, Navojoa University, La Carlota Hospital, Alimentos Colpac, Montemorelos Editorial, GEMA Editors, and the South Colombian Union Conference. 🍌

—Benjamin Garcia contributed to this article

## ADVENTIST CHURCH DEFENDS SABBATH KEEPERS

OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL APPEALS RULING AGAINST TWO FORMER KELLOGG WORKERS

BY KIMBERLY LUSTE MARAN, NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

**O**n March 22, 2017, two former Kellogg employees made their appeal to the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit after a lower court found insufficient evidence that the two Adventist plaintiffs were treated unfairly when they were fired for failing to work on Sabbath. A decision from the court of appeals, located in Denver, Colorado, is expected in approximately three months.

The United States District Court for the District of Utah granted Kellogg's motion for summary judgment on the claims for disparate treatment, reasonable accommodation, and retaliation on July 7, 2016. At that time, the court also accordingly denied Richard Tabura and Guadalupe Diaz's motion for summary judgment.

Tabura and Diaz were both terminated in 2012 from their manufacturing jobs at a Kellogg USA, Inc., plant in Utah for missing work on Saturdays as they honored their religious beliefs to observe the seventh-day Sabbath. In 2011 Kellogg increased production and implemented a new work scheduling program known as "continuous crewing." This program created four separate, rotating shifts in which employees were to work approximately two Saturdays a month—26 Saturdays a year. While both plaintiffs made attempts to use paid days off and work swaps with other employees, they were eventually assessed too many absence points within a 12-month period and, after what Kellogg describes as "progressive-discipline measures" were exhausted, were terminated.

"The plaintiffs lost at the trial court level," said Todd McFarland, an associate general counsel for the General Conference (GC) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. "The court said that Kellogg offering the use of their vacation time and swaps was enough. They didn't have to actually eliminate the conflict; they just had to give them the opportunity to do it, and that the fact that there wasn't enough vacation time or enough people to swap with wasn't Kellogg's problem."

The GC Office of General Counsel was part of the Tenth Circuit appeal. The appeal argues that the district court erred in holding that an "accommodation" can be legally sufficient even if it does not eliminate the conflict between a work requirement and a religious practice. It also contends that treating the forfeiture of vacation and sick time as a legitimate accommodation is not appropriate.

Kellogg, a food manufacturing company, was founded as the Battle Creek Toasted Corn Flake Company in 1906 by Will Keith Kellogg and John Harvey Kellogg. John Harvey Kellogg was, at the time, a Seventh-day Adventist and director of the Battle Creek Sanitarium, owned and operated by the Adventist Church. The sanitarium's operation was based on the church's health principles, which include a healthful diet, regimen of exercise, proper rest, and abstinence from alcohol and tobacco. 🍌



Les Pollard, Oakwood University president (second from left), is pictured with representatives from Historically Black Colleges and Universities at a meeting convened by President Trump at the White House.

PHOTO: AP/OAKWOOD UNIVERSITY

## ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT ATTENDS MEETING AT THE WHITE HOUSE

OAKWOOD UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT WAS PART OF A DELEGATION OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERS.

BY MARCOS PASEGGI, SENIOR CORRESPONDENT, ADVENTIST REVIEW

**O**akwood University president Leslie N. Pollard recently attended, as part of a group of more than 60 leaders of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), a meeting convened by President Donald J. Trump at the White House. The purpose of the meeting was “to confirm a national agenda for assisting HBCUs’ [to] continue and strengthen their contribution to the nation’s graduation rates.”

While HBCUs make up only 3 percent of all institutions of higher education in America, HBCUs graduate annually 21 percent of all African Americans that receive bachelor’s degrees from all institutions. On his Twitter account, Pollard also retweeted some facts provided by Terri A. Sewell, U.S. Congress representative for Alabama’s seventh congressional district. Sewell echoed a February 27, 2017, report from the *Washington Post* that while “many HBCUs were founded by churches and former slaves to educate the children of former slaves,” presently “75 percent of all black officers in the Armed Forces, and

80 percent of all black federal judges, graduate from an HBCU.”

The “listening session” was convened by President Trump before he signed “a new and stronger” executive order, recognizing the importance of HBCUs, on February 28, 2017. Pollard also explained that HBCUs and partner organizations, which provided input to the White House staff in the days leading up to President Trump’s signing, included “a request to increase . . . grant funding.” Still, “we seek investment, not charity,” tweeted Pollard, who remarked that “the HBCUs’ output is a national gift.”

On the same note, Sewell explained that “the top HBCUs in the country have only a fraction of the endowment that top predominantly white institutions (PWIs) have,” and that “the endowment gap between the top HBCUs and the top PWIs has doubled in the past 20 years.”

At the signing of the new executive order on HBCUs on February 28, Trump remarked that “HBCUs have been . . . pillars of the African American community for more than

150 years . . . and a grand and enduring symbol of America at its absolute best,” according to the White House Press Office. Addressing HBCUs specifically, Trump pledged his support to those schools, their mission, and to “our shared mission of bringing education and opportunity to all.”

Pollard’s visit to the White House garnered mixed reactions, mainly expressed through online comments about a photo taken at the Oval Office meeting that the school posted on its Facebook page. Some questioned the purpose of the meeting and its tangible effect on Oakwood University.

Others, however, opted for finding a silver lining. “We prayed for [President Trump]. Now we need to be an influence for good,” a man wrote.

Still others stressed the importance of continued involvement in worthwhile causes. “We can’t expect anyone to understand [the HBCUs’] needs and relevance if we refuse to articulate them in the appropriate setting,” a woman wrote.

Pollard justified his decision to attend the meeting in three words: “Because I’m fighting.” He explained that his resolve is to seize every opportunity to garner support for Oakwood University and its mission.

“My job is to make sure that Oakwood’s agenda is always on the table,” said Pollard as he recalled one of his favorite leadership sayings: “If we are not at the table, our agenda is not on the table.”



### TABERNACLE OF ICE

A local church and school in North Dakota have engaged their community in a creative way: by constructing a replica of the Old Testament tabernacle, made of multicolored ice blocks. The

project made the news and has encouraged church members to use the school's new facilities to provide space for community events throughout the year. Read the full article at [goo.gl/fstNPr](http://goo.gl/fstNPr).

## ADVENTIST AWARDED GRANT FOR PROJECT IN INDIA

U.S. EDUCATOR RECEIVED A FULBRIGHT GRANT FOR RESEARCH IN HER HOME COUNTRY

BY DARLA MARTIN TUCKER, LA SIERRA UNIVERSITY

**M**argaret Solomon, an education administration and leadership professor at La Sierra University—an Adventist-operated school in Riverside, California, United States—will be able to carry out an educational leadership training program in her native India, thanks to a recent Fulbright grant award.

The e-mail announcement that popped up in Solomon's inbox in February came as a nice surprise. Issued by the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board chair Jeffrey L. Bleich, the announcement noted Solomon's approval for a 2017-2018 Fulbright U.S. Scholar grant. The award will cover travel expenses and a monthly stipend for at least four months to conduct an Educational Leadership Institute at three colleges in India. One of them is Lowry Memorial College, a Seventh-day Adventist school in Bangalore.

"Without worrying too much about winning the award, I wrote it, prayed about it, and left it in God's hands," Solomon said. "I was pleasantly surprised when I got the letter."

The award is Solomon's second Fulbright grant; she obtained her first in 2010. "That project was about the education of poor children in the slums and emphasizing teacher preparation to meet their needs,"

she said. "During those times I recognized the need for good school leadership in the schools and did more research on that."

Solomon said she wrote the Fulbright proposal last summer. The overarching goal of the project is to fill a need in leadership training in India's educational sector, Solomon noted in her project proposal. She cites the country's low student performance figures and the work of a consultant from Hyderabad who studied the dearth of leadership development programs in India's educational institutions.

"I personally witnessed ineffective leadership and poor quality of education in the rural and urban government schools I visited in the past five years," Solomon wrote. "The intent of this teaching project is to provide a blueprint for higher education institutions to train effective educational leaders to lead schools that would teach all children to succeed."

The Fulbright Program was established in 1946 under legislation introduced by then-Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas. The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs sponsors the program that operates in more than 155 countries and awards approximately 7,500 new grants annually.

Solomon is from the southern portion of India, where she attended the first Seventh-day Adventist church established in that country in 1906. In 1978 she and her husband, P. R. Solomon, immigrated to the United States, where Solomon pursued a master's degree in curriculum and instruction



Dr. Solomon (far right), poses with students she met at a school in Pune, India, while conducting teacher training and exploratory studies.

PHOTO: LA SIERRA UNIVERSITY

at Andrews University, while her husband entered the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. She was hired by the Grand Rapids, Michigan, public school district as a special education teacher in 1980. Her 23-year public school teaching career included five years as vice principal of Union High School in Grand Rapids, the largest high school in that district.

After completing a doctorate in K-12 educational administration at Michigan State University in 1999, Solomon taught for seven years at Redlands University in Redlands, California. She arrived at La Sierra in 2010. ▀

# THERE'S A WAY TO DO IT BETTER — FIND IT.

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*THOMAS A. EDISON*

WE NEED YOU TO FIND A BETTER WAY.

IF YOU HAVE AN INNOVATIVE IDEA, WE WANT TO HELP IT BECOME A REALITY. IF YOU ARE LOOKING TO JOIN AN INNOVATIVE TEAM, WE WANT TO INTRODUCE YOU TO THEM. IF YOU ARE LOOKING TO INVEST IN THE BEST PEOPLE AND THE BEST IDEAS, WE'D LOVE TO SHARE OUR VISION WITH YOU.

[SUBMIT A PITCH](#)

[JOIN A TEAM](#)

[INVEST IN THE FUTURE](#)

**ALSO IN THIS SECTION:**

- » TEN COMMITMENTS TO RESOLVE CONFLICT
- » THE LONG VIEW OF THINGS
- » WHEN WINDS ARE STRONG AND WAVES ARE ROUGH

# DISCOVER

**“Prophecy was not given  
to satisfy our curiosity  
about the future; it  
was given to teach us  
how to live today.”**

*The Long View of Things, p. 26*



# ETHICAL FURY

*Prophets and their passion*

**LAEL CAESAR**

**S**abbath is a happy day; I love every Sabbath": sing it or say it, I do. But does God?

The details evade my proper recall, but not the occasion or the student involved: it was, in all likelihood, from Isaiah's opening salvo. One outraged student of mine felt that my quotation and commentary, whatever they were, misused God's Word. I sounded too hostile; whatever I had said gave not enough deference to the sacred Sabbath institution. Sabbath was very precious to him. As it is to me.

Sabbath is a happy day. I love every Sabbath: regular sunset-to-sunset Sabbath; even fasting and prayer Sabbath, where you spend the entire day at church, and go out at midafternoon to share faith on an empty stomach; and, of course, Thirteenth Sabbath, the one at the end of every quarter (whether Thirteenth or not!) that you need to pick if it's your first random attendance at what Adventists call Sabbath School.

For Thirteenth Sabbath may well be Adventism's most consistently spectacular Sabbath around the world. It's the Sabbath when the church's finest—cutest babies, irrepressible 3- to 5-year-old toddlers from kindergarten, the primary division's 6- to 9-year-olds, juniors and teens from 10 to 14 years old—all get to parade, sing, distract, amuse, and totally entertain adult attendees for 30-45 minutes or so of Sabbath School time; they and the precious, unsung saints of our congregations—those gentle, sensitive, untiringly patient women (mostly) who dedicate themselves, year upon year, to teaching rambunctious and vulnerable tiny tots who Jesus is. So, yes, I love God's gift of Sabbath.

But the God of Sabbath has come, at times, to such outrage about my Sabbathkeeping that He repudiates it in absolute terms. Feel the fury: "Stop

bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations—I cannot bear your worthless assemblies. Your New Moon feasts and your appointed festivals I hate with all My being. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them" (Isa. 1:13, 14, author's rendering).<sup>1</sup>

Fighting, unsettling words! Words of "some of the most disturbing people who have ever lived," writes Abraham Joshua Heschel: ancient Israel's prophets.<sup>2</sup>

## **PROPHETIC PEDIGREE OR OTHERWISE**

Their royal blood, sacerdotal heritage, or access to the king's ear may establish that prophets were people too—with relatives, backgrounds, and friends. But none of these details is definitive of prophecy or the prophet: Isaiah's royal blood didn't protect him from being murdered by his youthful cousin, evil King Manasseh; Jeremiah would hardly care to brag about his priestly background: it simply meant that he had inherited his family's 500-year-old curse from weak-willed Eli (1 Sam. 3:11-14) and politically bumbling Abiathar (1 Kings 2:26, 27); and Elisha's great advice to King Joram (2 Kings 6:8-12) didn't keep the king from swearing to take off his head later on (verse 31). Divine calling notwithstanding, prophets were more the plagues of their society than its heroes.

Unlike priesthood and royalty, prophets enjoyed no natural heritage. Nor were they allowed to submit job applications, affirming testimonies, or recommendations, whether glowing or other. Hence the inappropriateness of both youthful Jeremiah's and seasoned Amaziah's application forms for and against the role (Jer. 1:6; Amos 7:12). God, by His personal determination, exclusive of Samuel's and Elisha's schools,<sup>3</sup> or Amaziah's and



Jeremiah's *curricula vitae*, called and commissioned, appointed and anointed, His prophets (Heb. 1:1). Neither status, nor ritual, nor some experience of the nocturnal subconscious, established the credentials of God's prophet (Num. 12:6; Deut. 13:1-5; Jer. 23:27-34; 27:9, 10, 14, 15).

Popular acceptance played no role (Jer. 1:10, 17-19; Matt. 23:34; Acts 7:52), and frauds whose folly exposed their alternative authority could incur the death sentence (Deut. 13:5). In the ninth century B.C. Elijah burst from nonentity onto Israel's national stage to harangue and humiliate King Ahab with the same humanly unverified yet imperious authority displayed a millennium later by his holy antitype. Crowds poured out to the desert from the region's secular, religious, and commercial centers to hear the voice of John the Baptizer commanding all humanity to get things ready and to get themselves ready to meet God (Matt. 3; Mark 1; Luke 3).

Divine determination alone established the one variously known as seer, prophet or prophetess, man of God, or servant of God,<sup>4</sup> as a messenger appointed to live out and lift up heaven's truth on earth.

### PROPHETIC DISTURBANCE

Israel's prophets thoroughly validate Heschel's disturbing claim—disturbing because their impolitic metaphor and ethical standard will not adjust to our civilized notions on language and conduct; and disturbing for the level of disruption their intervention brought to their own society. They confounded their contemporaries in more ways than need be listed here—their programmatic uncouthness of manners;<sup>5</sup> their choice for public contention at the sites of public reverence and deference;<sup>6</sup> their abrasive confrontation with all and sundry authority and power;<sup>7</sup> their straightforward exposé of the pretenses of the pretender prophets,<sup>8</sup> and the divinely derived authority they exercised to denounce everybody everywhere in the world.<sup>9</sup>

More often than not, prophets could be counted on to violate the public taste, hew the politically incorrect line, and articulate offensive pronouncements that generated public spats. Thus Jeremiah, messenger of doom, proclaiming imminent destruction and extended exile (Jer. 27), comes up against optimistic Hananiah, who predicts total national restoration in two years' time (Jer. 28:1-4, 10, 11). The confrontation ends tragically for the

## He was not just another city planner or social engineer: He was their Saviour.

nationally inspiring Hananiah.<sup>10</sup> But futuristic prediction was not the primary burden of God's prophets. Their *raison d'être* was promoting His character among His people. Their rage against ungodliness among their neighbors, indignation against immoral law making, offense at high-level unethical living, and lament on the national degradation to which it led were only what He asked.

Their goal was not desirable political outcomes, and their divinely directed idiosyncrasies only secondarily related to their kids' peculiar names,<sup>11</sup> 65-year horizons,<sup>12</sup> or being remembered as gauche. Their undergirding, overriding motivation was the glory of the God who commissioned them. The prophets were not "social reformers. They were theological reformers."<sup>13</sup> "What does the Lord require of you . . . ?" (Micah 6:8).

God's will for His people was no secret: He was not just another city planner or social engineer—He was their Saviour. When He rescued them from Egypt to take them to Himself, He delivered the instructions on their relationship for life with all the visual and auditory reinforcement necessary to convey the uncompromising importance of everything He said. The roar and fire of the encounter overwhelmed and terrified them (Ex. 20:18, 19).

God and Moses wrote it all down (Ex. 24:4; 31:18)—moral rules, health rules; social relationships, including those with strangers: "You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Ex. 22:21). You must not oppress strangers: you know how it feels to be a stranger (? Ex. 23:9). You must care for foreigner, widow and fatherless, or I shall be angry and "kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless" (verses 23, 24).



Half a millennium later the Sabbathkeeping continued, but solicitude for widows, strangers, and orphans had gone by the board. God could see that they thought everything was fine: “They seek me day by day and delight to know My ways,” behaving like “a nation that has done righteousness. . . . They ask Me for just decisions, they delight in the nearness of God” (Isa. 58:2).

In their new status quo some stood in prosperity while others sank into starvation. It had not just happened *ex nihilo*, but the contrivance was wholly legitimate, and the people were baffled that their fasting didn’t seem to impress God. But God would have none of their postured decency: “Woe to those who enact evil statutes and to those who constantly record unjust decisions, so as to deprive the needy of justice and rob the poor of My people of their rights, so that widows may be their spoil and that they may plunder the orphans” (Isa. 10:1, 2).

Their Sabbath practice proceeded according to the letter of divine law while they made laws to legitimize their ethical abuses. God called them murderers, hands “covered with blood (see Isa. 1:15-17). Their covenant breaking was at its worst here, and God’s prophets were at their most furious. They could not help denouncing the hypocritical legislators who enshrined injustice while calling out “Lord, Lord” (see Luke 6:46).

## PROPHETIC HOPE

It was a crude socioreligious ethic that could, each seventh-day Sabbath, celebrate God’s authoritative love for the whole of creation, while disregarding, even extorting, His most vulnerable children. But the voice of prophecy that denounced injustice also taught a better way to fast and keep Sabbath, a way that attended to society’s excluded and marginalized as God Himself attends to all human vulnerability. The fast that God marks out eliminates all the binary dichotomies—between God and me, between us and them (the strangers). It celebrates the end of all sin’s divisive and dividing hierarchies that save some and lose others, feed some and starve others, house some and dispossess others, or include some while excluding others.

It turns to togetherness of the intimate kind—beyond mere handshakes and theoretical consensus. More than visiting the urban center to serve at a soup kitchen, it integrates the margins into

my family, bringing society’s desperately wretched home to my house (Isa. 58:7), as He will take us all to His (John 14:3). The genius of the gospel is not accommodation. It is reconciliation (Rom. 5:10; Eph. 2:14, 15; 2 Cor. 5:19).

Glory in the earth renewed will feature no housing projects for the poor or centers for the indigent. It will climax the prophetic message of justice: You fed me when I was hungry; you quenched my thirst; you sheltered me when I was a stranger; you invited Me home (see Matt. 25:35).<sup>1</sup>

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

<sup>2</sup> Abraham J. Heschel, *The Prophets*, with an introduction by Susannah Heschel (Heschel, 2001), p. xxi.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Kings 20:35; 2 Kings 2:3-7, 15-18; Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1903), p. 46; White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 260.

<sup>4</sup> Ancient names for prophets: *ro’eh* (“seer,” 12 times—1 Sam. 9:9, 11, 18); *choz’eh* (“seer,” 17 times—1 Chron. 21:9; 2 Kings 17:13); *nabi’* (“prophet,” 317 times—Gen. 20:7; Ex. 7:1; Num. 11:29; also used along with *choz’eh* in 2 Sam. 24:11: “the prophet Gad, David’s seer”); *nebi’ah* (“prophetess”—Judges 4:4; 2 Kings 22:14; 2 Chron. 34:22); “man of God” (76 times—Deut. 33:1; 1 Sam. 9:8; 1 Kings 13 [15 times]; 2 Kings 1:9-13 [5 times]; 2 Kings 4 [11 times]); “servant of God / the Lord” (25 times; 21 times “Moses the servant of God / the Lord”—1 Chron. 6:49; Neh. 10:29 // Deut. 34:5; Joshua 1:1); also more than 50 times, when the Lord designates someone (Moses, Job, David) as “My servant” (Num. 12:7; 2 Sam. 3:18; Job 42:7, 8).

<sup>5</sup> Isaiah’s public nakedness (Isa. 20:2-4); Ezekiel’s lying out in the open for months on end (Eze. 4:4-8), as well as his cuisine (verses 9-17); Hosea’s marriage to “a wife of harlotry” (Hosea 1:2).

<sup>6</sup> Amos at the site of the king’s sanctuary and residence (Amos 7:12-15); or Jeremiah at the Temple gate (Jer. 7:1-15) demanding repentance of “all you of Judah, who enter by these gates to worship the Lord” (verse 2), implicitly denouncing the wrongness of their current behavior (“Amend your ways and your deeds” [verse 3]) and, consequently, the hypocrisy of their current worship practice.

<sup>7</sup> Against political power: see Jeremiah’s messages to and about Judah’s last four kings (Jer. 22, 32); or consider the “hairy man with a leather girdle” interrupting King Amaziah’s messengers (2 Kings 1:1-8); or Amos’ fight with Amaziah, priest of Bethel (Amos 7:10-17); Amos 3, and 4:1-3, against unbalanced economic influence.

<sup>8</sup> Jer. 27:12-22.

<sup>9</sup> Aram, Philistia, Tyre, Edom, Moab, Judah, Israel (Amos 1; 2), Dedan, Tema, Buz, Arabia, Zimri, Elam, Media (Jer. 25:15-29; Jer. 46-51); in Jeremiah 27 the ambassadors visiting in Zedekiah’s court become Jeremiah’s ambassadors bearing the Lord’s message back to the kings who had sent them to Jerusalem. And the Lord guarantees His punishment on any nation that refuses to serve Nebuchadnezzar, His appointed servant (verse 8).

<sup>10</sup> Jeremiah warns of national doom (Jer. 27), and against lying prophets preaching against Babylonian victory. Hananiah opposes him with optimism. God predicts through Jeremiah that Hananiah will soon be dead. Three months later he is.

<sup>11</sup> Such as “God-is-with-us”; “hasten-the booty-hurry-the-loot”; “a-remnant-will-return” (Isa 7:14; 8:1-3; 10:21).

<sup>12</sup> Isa. 7:8.

<sup>13</sup> C. Hassell Bullock, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophetic Books* (Chicago: Moody, 1986), p. 25.

**Lael Caesar**, *Adventist Review* associate editor, prays not to miss sharing his next cup of water with Jesus.

# FIND YOUR PLACE IN GOD'S STORY

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# TEN COMMITMENTS FOR RESOLVING CONFLICTS

**A**rguably the most important element in resolving conflict is to keep communicating. Communication with oneself, with God, with others about one's beliefs, coupled with a desire to seek peace and a mutually acceptable outcome, is the noble goal (Rom. 12:8).

Inspirational author Shannon Adler describes the anatomy of conflict: "If there is no communication, then there is no respect. If there is no respect, then there is no caring. If there is no caring, then there is no understanding. If there is no understanding, then there is no compassion. If there is no compassion, then there is no empathy. If there is no empathy, then there is no forgiveness. If there is no forgiveness, then there is no kindness. If there is no kindness, then there is no honesty. If there is no honesty, then there is no love. If there is no love, then God doesn't reside there. If God doesn't reside there, then there is no peace. If there is no peace, then there is no happiness. If there is no happiness—then there is conflict, because there is no communication!"

Whatever the conflict, having clearly defined commitments will provide a solid platform from which to operate. Personal conflict commitment will cause us to keep our eyes on the big picture and bind us to godly principles. It has been said that commitment means staying loyal to what we said we were going to do long after the mood has left us.

Make your own set of commitments to keep yourself on track in the midst of a conflict. Here are 10 such commitments to start with.

**Reality Check:** I embrace the reality that believers will have conflicts, and there will be injustices. My response will be to seek

truth and reconciliation (2 Tim. 3:12).

*Exemplary Models:* I accept my models for reconciliation to be such persons as Abigail (1 Sam. 25:23-35), Daniel (Eze. 14:14), Joseph (Gen. 50:20); and Jesus (1 Peter 2:23, 24).

*Personal Examination:* I humbly remember my personal sins/shortcomings, even though the wrongs/faults of others may be obvious (2 Cor. 13:5).

*Deliberate Acceptance:* I submit to suffering and injustice for righteousness' sake as my highest calling and greatest privilege (Matt. 5:11, 12).

*Modus Operandi:* When in conflict I will first, speak; second, speak truth; third, speak truth with love (Eph. 4:15, 16).

*Persistent Mission:* I will remain loyal to God, His people, and His church as my highest goal and lifelong mission (John 8:31, 32).

*Daily Discipline:* I will study, commune with God, and serve His church as effective tools in response to offenses (Heb. 10:25).

*Unearthly Forgiveness:* I fully forgive any offending party regardless of whether or not they are worthy, have good motives, or have repented adequately (Matt. 18:21, 22).

*Overarching Sovereignty:* I believe God is providentially in charge of all conflicts, whether the outcome is desirable or not (Matt. 6:10).

*Final Outcome:* In the aftermath of conflict, I will nurture a clean heart, pure speech, and gracious actions, and seek to learn from and be better because of it (Ps. 51:10-13).

May our commitment to love and resolve conflict be unstoppable. 🌱

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

TRANSFORMATION TIPS  
DELBERT W. BAKER



WHATEVER THE CONFLICT, HAVING CLEARLY DEFINED COMMITMENTS WILL PROVIDE A SOLID PLATFORM FROM WHICH TO OPERATE.

## A conversation with a missionary-minded theologian

**W**e've called this a conversation to suggest how meaningful and satisfying was our interchange with our guest. We learned much as Jon Paulien, dean of the School of Religion at Loma Linda University, shared with us. But it was a conversation, not a monologue. If, as you listen, you find yourself drawn into participation too, there is a way for you to do just that: send the editor your thoughts and ideas. Put our title, "The Long View of Things," in the subject line, and send your e-mail note to [letters@adventistreview.org](mailto:letters@adventistreview.org). If you're sending it to a physical mailbox, your address would be Letters to the Editor, Adventist Review, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600. —Editors

**As I explained about our title, we want to share with the public a biblically enlightened perspective on yesterday, today, and tomorrow; one that is both historically aware, and informed by responsible interpretation and application of biblical principle and prediction. For starters, given our own tumultuous times, I wonder if your reading of history points you to other times that might have seemed as dramatic to those who lived through them.**

One that comes to my mind is World War II, in which more than 80 million lives were lost, 20 million in the Soviet Union alone. Then we could think of the Black Death in medieval times, which took one third of Europe's population. I also remember the imminent sense of doom during my childhood as the threat of all-out nuclear war loomed over our lives. These earlier situations were at least as dramatic in the lives of people as today's events. But there is much greater awareness today of what is happening all over the world, because of the near-universal reach of various media.

### The world is much smaller now.

Right. If much of the world were devastated by some Ebola-type virus and one third of the population died, most of us would be thinking, just as several New Testament writers did [1 Cor. 7:26-31; Col. 1:23; Rev. 1:3], that the coming of the Lord must be near.

### Maybe I'm changing the focus, but the United States is grappling with a plague of obesity at the same time that there is famine in Somalia. What does that mean to the follower of Jesus?

Feast, famine, and their consequences are, to a considerable degree, the result of human choices. War, abuse, neglect, genetics, and self-indulgence all play their part. As followers of Jesus we must do all we can, socially, economically, or otherwise, to alleviate all kinds of suffering. But our efforts don't always accomplish what we hope.

Recently I read about the experience of a man in Africa who had been the beneficiary of a microloan from a Christian organization. Microloans are usually small loans for short term, at low interest rates, that are given to small businesses or self-employed persons to alleviate extreme poverty. The loan provided the man with the ability to increase his economic resources. Five years later, though, it was found that the man and his family were still starving in the same hovel they had occupied before he received the loan: he had spent his increased resources on alcohol and prostitutes. Without the gospel, increased resources can sometimes do more harm than good.

**This reminds me of an experience of a friend of mine, teaching at a state university, who was once asked if she was a Christian. Given her careful avoidance of anything that smacked of proselytizing, the question sur-**



# THE LONG VIEW OF THINGS

prised her. It also gave her the opportunity to say “Yes!” and thus simply, but gladly, confess her Lord. The student’s rejoinder floored her: “Oh, that’s why you’re so pessimistic.” Tell me, how do you escape the label of ‘pessimist’ when you make comments like the one about using improved finances for alcohol and prostitutes? Are Adventists in particular, and maybe other Christians besides, too tied to the idea that the world is going from bad to worse?

My previous answer may have seemed pessimistic, but actually God has given Adventists, through the ministry of Ellen White, a very unusual perspective. While the apocalyptic side of Adventism is not optimistic about the future of the present order, we have nevertheless been encouraged to activism in behalf of the world. We advocate for religious liberty and for an end to war. We seek to alleviate poverty and hunger [ADRA]. We seek to mitigate the consequences of

One common element I have seen in those who speculate about the timing of the end is that these schemes almost always involve one or several leaps of logic—assuming things God has not revealed, because people want to reach a certain conclusion.

I recall a particular case in which a very earnest individual kept urging me to read through some material he had put together, predicting a catastrophic event in my neighborhood on the basis of his reading of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. I identified six leaps of logic in the first six paragraphs. So I felt obliged to tell him that if the Lord was going to reveal anything like this to my community, it would surely have to come from someone else, as the quality of his arguments had destroyed his credibility in our community.

**Hal Lindsey still seems to be an expert on Bible prophecy, though his predictions fizzled more than two decades before Camping. We defined “the long view of things” as a perspective on history, current events, and the future that protects us from seeing everything as proof that the world is ending next fall. Or, perhaps, tonight. How does your study of the book of Revelation—one of the areas of your expertise—teach you to relate to the long view?**

I think we get a great lesson from Jesus’ response to the disciples’ questions about “When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming?” [Matt. 24:3, KJV]. Jesus does not answer the disciples’ “When shall these things be?” questions. He warns them, instead, to watch, and points to a lifestyle rather than a timetable. Keeping the prophetic waymarks lined up is important. But what we

do with our talents [Matt. 25:14-30] and how we treat people [verses 31-46] is even more important. Prophecy was not given to satisfy our curiosity about the future; it was given to teach us how to live today.

When it comes to the book of Revelation, the title is not “The Revelation of the Papacy” or “The Revelation of Middle Eastern Oil”—it is “The Revelation of Jesus Christ” [Rev. 1:1]. That means that if your expositions of Revelation do not expose a clearer picture of Jesus, you have not truly understood the book. Prophecy is designed to motivate



**Jon Paulien (right) shares his insights with *Adventist Review* editor, Lael Caesar.**

sin on human health [Adventist hospitals and health clinics around the world]. It is as if we want to make this world as close as possible to the heaven we anticipate before long. Apocalyptic pessimism and activism are an unusual combination, and we owe that to our unique heritage.

**Some time ago Harold Camping, president of Family Radio, predicted worldwide judgment in 2011 and the end of the world in October of that year. We’re still here. What are we to make of these kinds of prophecies?**

behavior [verse 3] and commitment [Rev. 22:16, 17] in the reader. It just uses a different kind of language to achieve that goal. This is not to minimize what Adventists have taught about Christian history, but to recognize the divine purpose of those teachings.

**What about all the work you've been so committed to in the Muslim world? The 200 Adventists in Cairo are swallowed up in the city's population of 9.5 million people; nationwide it's 741 Adventists in a population of more than 90 million. How do you relate events and work in the world of Islam to what we're calling "the long view of things"?**

Well, my study of prophecy tells me that the gospel is going to reach the entire world, everybody [Matt. 24:14; Rev. 7:9-12; 14:6]. God's eye runs to and fro throughout the whole earth in search of His children [2 Chron. 16:9]. Frontier missionaries have frequently discovered that the Holy Spirit was already working in a place before they got there. We haven't been doing very well with the non-Christian religions, because they don't respond to our traditional methods of evangelism. But if God is already at work among Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists, we need to engage them by listening and learning first, finding out what God is already doing in their lives.

After September 11, I led a group to New York City. We wanted to minister as best we could to people who had been devastated by a unique tragedy. The daughter of one of the members of my group was Muslim. At one point the young woman felt a desire to go to a mosque and pray. So we found a major one and went there. There may have been a hundred Middle Eastern-looking men there for the evening prayers, which we were allowed to observe. Just one of the hundred who were praying looked like me. As soon as the prayers were over, he came over to talk with me. Each of us wanted to know what the other one was doing there. Finding out that I was a Seventh-day Adventist, he asked me a rather direct question: "What do Adventists believe about the judgment?" I gave him a short overview, maybe about three minutes, on what the Bible teaches about the pre-Advent judgment, Christ's coming, the millennium, and the final executive judgment. When I concluded, he stood there with his mouth

open. Then he said, "That is amazing. It puts everything together; it makes so much sense. That's what I'm going to believe from now on." It was my turn to be amazed. God had prepared his heart for the message long before we ever met.


You see, given the Adventist view of the great controversy, God and Satan are both working to influence every person and every religion throughout the world. The mission of the gospel is to find kindred spirits everywhere, people whose hearts God has "touched" [1 Sam. 10:26]. And we must begin with Spirit-led listening and learning.

**At the General Conference session in 2015, someone said, "I want to see the Lord come in the next five years." What do you make of that? Is it still time to lift up the trumpet?**

I agree. I would love it if Christ came before 2020. And if He does, it will be the most exciting three years in all of human history. But we cannot force it. God is ultimately in control, and He knows the when and the how in which this will best happen. If Jesus does not come by 2020, the long view first means my being faithful unto death [by whatever means]. Then, since the dead know nothing, the very next thing I will experience is to see Jesus face to face at the resurrection.

**What's the role of "present truth" for Adventist witness today?**

If we want to reach the world with the Adventist message, we need what I like to call "double exegesis": we need a people, generation after generation, who combine humble, earnest, and ever-fresh exploration of the Word with careful study of the culture around us, engaging the world with our questions and a listening heart, seeking to understand those we need to impact with the gospel. At the intersection of studying God's Word and our world is "present truth" that brings the gospel home with power in surprising places. We need to share that present truth by every means possible, both by snatching out of the world everyone we can, and by seasoning the world to make it better than it would otherwise be.

Jesus compares His church to salt. Especially when it comes to non-Christian religions, God is calling for more courageous and careful students of His Word to "get out of the saltshaker and into the world." 

*We may not realize it,  
but Jesus is not far away.*

**COSTIN JORDACHE**

One of my favorite Scripture passages is captured in John 6.

It had been a rather challenging day for the small band of traveling missionaries, better known as disciples. Originally Jesus had intended the day to be a relaxing retreat, a holiday of sorts for the hard-working evangelistic team that had recently returned from a mission trip. Jesus had sent them out two by two, with no provisions, to “proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick” (Luke 9:2).

Around the same time, devastating news came that John the Baptist had been executed by Herod Antipas, appointed ruler of Galilee. Matthew records that when Jesus heard about it, He withdrew to a solitary place, inviting His disciples to rest with Him for a while.

The plan would change, though, in response to the gathering crowds that learned of the secret hideaway. Jesus took time that day to meet the needs of those who had come, some 20,000 people, including men, women, and children. Of course, no fellowship lunch had been planned, which first led Jesus to challenge His own disciples to feed

# WHEN WINDS ARE STRONG



everyone, then ended with His demonstration of how a very small resource brought to Him could accomplish a much larger goal.

That day 20,000 people ate five loaves of bread and two fish and were more than satisfied. It was a miracle beyond comprehension, and the crowd realized it. John records that the congregation became so animated by this that they began to put the messianic puzzle together and intended that day to crown Jesus King of Israel, by force if necessary.

Imagine what that moment must have felt like. Exhaustion mixed with excitement, anticipation, and uncertainty.

Only Jesus fully understands the moment. It is not His time nor His mission to wear an earthly crown. So He does the unthinkable: He respectfully declines the offer of a lifetime, then turns to His disciples and instructs them to sail across the Sea of Galilee by themselves. Meanwhile, He dismisses the agitated crowd and retreats to the hill alone (Mark 6:45, 46).

What a tense moment in Scripture. A confused crowd shuffles home, disappointed disciples work the sails to the opposite shore, and Jesus has apparently left the scene.

Lest we think that things couldn't get worse, John records in his Gospel that as the disciples were sailing, a strong wind began to blow, and the waters became rough (John 6:18). It's easy enough to read that mild description in the comfort of a warm, dry place. In fact, for years I studied the account of that ancient day without truly understanding the gravity of the moment. That is until one day I was invited to go sailing.


#### **FIRSTHAND EXPERIENCE**

My father-in-law, Michael Sulen, is an avid sailor, and that's an understatement. His passion for sailing is only slightly bested by his passion for pastoral ministry. His vessel of choice is the catamaran, and he has owned large ones, small ones, and everything in between. Over the years he has bought ones in need of serious TLC and has painstakingly rebuilt them into marvelous watercraft.

One day several years ago he invited me to go sailing along the Pacific coast. It was an intimidating offer because, having observed him in action, I knew that sailing with him was not for the faint of heart. It's an activity that requires almost constant action, since navigational success comes



# AND WAVES ARE ROUGH



God shows up.  
Except that  
when He does, we  
sometimes don't  
recognize Him.

from a masterful knowledge of how a dozen ropes and several hanging sails capture the wind to provide intentional forward motion.

I was up to it, though, especially knowing that we would not venture out until I had gone through the School of Sulen, becoming a full partner in the sailing experience.

Except that the experience would not go as planned. Once we were out on the water “a strong wind began to blow, and the waters became rough.” So rough, in fact, that the swells were easily four feet high.

I failed to mention a couple things. First, the particular vessel we were on that day was on the small side; and second, it was one of those in need of TLC that had not yet gone through the extreme makeover. Battling the unexpected wind and waves on the largest body of water in the world was bad enough, but I never anticipated what happened next. A loud snap shocked both of us (not a sound anyone wants to hear in those circumstances).

Upon investigation, we realized that the gooseneck that connects the boom to the mast had exploded. That created a scenario in which the sails could easily be torn to shreds. Being a mile from shore with no motor, we were now in a perilous situation.

My father-in-law struggled to create a plan B in the midst of it all. Meanwhile, I was rehearsing the milestones of my life, which I assumed would be over momentarily. After what seemed to me like an eternity, the master sailor made sense of the circumstances and used the crippled sails to capture the wind and get us back to safety.

#### **A FAMILIAR SCENE**

I have felt compassion for the pain of those disciples ever since. They were already exhausted and confused by the events of the day, now rowing for miles and hours amid the wind and waves in a small vessel, not knowing with any certainty that they would ever reach the shore. And Jesus is nowhere to be found.

I'm sure all of us can relate to this scene to one degree or another. Life at the moment may not be smooth sailing. The waves and wind are beating down. We've been rowing and struggling with the sails, but we simply aren't getting anywhere. Perhaps if we could just rest for a while, enjoy a moment of retreat with Jesus, it would be better. An impossible goal, it seems. Life is increasingly

full of the demands of work, the complexities of raising a family, the need to keep finances coming in, and the legitimate needs of other people.

Finally, the circumstances of the world in which we live are uncertain. Political unrest, polarized groups digging in their heels, and voices everywhere calling on God to wear the crown and solve the problems.

We can relate to those disciples. We're in the middle of a storm. And Jesus is seemingly nowhere to be found.

Yet the scene changes. Mark records that back on shore, Jesus is fully aware of the circumstances, fully aware of their struggle. The author records that as Jesus was sitting on the shore, "he saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them" (Mark 6:48).

What a tremendous source of hope—to know without a doubt that Jesus sees us; to know that His perception of our need is not defined by our perception of His presence.

But Jesus does more than just see them; more than just watch them with love and compassion from a distance. Before the sun had a chance to rise, Jesus "went out to them, walking on the lake" (verse 48).

It's a powerful visualization of the Incarnation: God with us, not just for us; God pursuing us, not just longing for us. He "went out to them, walking on the lake."

### **A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY**

But consider their reaction. As Jesus approaches in the middle of the storm, the disciples don't recognize Him. They're so immersed in the moment, so caught up in the storm, that they don't even recognize Jesus. They assume that they are seeing a ghost.

This, too, is familiar. We pray for help, rescue, or clarity. From the middle of the whirlwind we ask God to intervene, to orchestrate, to lead, and to influence. And God shows up. Except that when He does, we sometimes don't recognize Him. Perhaps He doesn't look like we expected Him to, or sound like we imagined Him, or dress and act like we were told He would. Perhaps He simply doesn't show up *when* we expected Him. "He was about to pass by them, but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, because they all saw him and were terrified" (verses 48-50).

Jesus recognizes this tendency in us: our penchant to contain Him in our handmade boxes, built from our preconceived notions and ideas. Jesus knows full well that we have a difficult time perceiving Him in ways outside our experience or imagination.

And here is yet another piece of good news: He doesn't judge us for it, He simply reaches out His hand and says, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid" (verse 50).

All three of the Gospel writers who chronicle this event emphasize Christ's compassionate response to fear and doubt: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

### **A COURAGEOUS DECISION**


Now we get to one of my favorite verses in the Bible. John records that they finally recognized Jesus. "Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading" (John 6:21).

What a remarkable miracle that speaks hope into our circumstances today! Mark adds that in that moment the wind and waves died down as well. The windblown disciples recognize their need and allow the Master Sailor into their boat, He who is undaunted by the broken masts and wind-crippled sails, whose only concern is for the fear-crippled sailors. With only a thought He captures the wind and gets them back to safety.

Yet perhaps the greater miracle was not that the waves and wind were harnessed and tamed, nor that they reached the shore immediately. Perhaps the greater miracle is that they were willing to overcome their fears and preconceived notions and recognize and accept Jesus in a form in which they were not familiar.

Consider, then, these challenges meant for us all. First, begin to look for Jesus to show up in ways that are unfamiliar, foreign, and even frightening; knowing that regardless of our circumstances, regardless of the size of the storm around us, Jesus not only perceives our need, but is already on the way to meet it.

And when we do recognize Him, let's not hesitate to invite Him into the boat of our lives, our families, our organizations, our plans and strategies.

I'm sure that not a single one of us would ever be disappointed by the results of that decision. 

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**Costin Jordache** is news editor and director of communication for Adventist Review Ministries.



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# CONNECT

## BREXIT OR **FIX IT**

*Adventism for today's tumultuous world*



Lael Caesar, associate editor of *Adventist Review*, spoke with Andrea Luxton, president of Andrews University, about religion, theology, and Brexit. —Editors.



**H**ere we are, out in God's beautiful world, on the grounds of the headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Silver Spring, Maryland. For company we've got the best—Andrea Luxton, president of Andrews University, the church's flagship liberal arts institution. An intellectual and academic, she's also British.

**Tell me, Andrea, even before we talk about the spiritual or other significance of the vote on June 23, 2016, I'm wondering what you thought of the vote, because it wasn't a general election, it was a referendum, and you folks don't have a history of referenda. What made this one special or need-**

**ing a referendum?**


It's actually interesting. After many years of not having a referendum, Britain had two in reasonably quick succession. One was about whether Scotland wanted independence. The second was Brexit. I think in both cases there was this feeling that these actions really impacted the whole country and every individual in a very particular way, and I think that's why this was something that they decided they needed a referendum for rather than work through regular government processes.

**Scotland hasn't settled on that result.**

No. They thought they had, but now that Brexit has come along they're thinking, *Well, I don't know. Maybe we made the wrong mistake the first time.* Yes, that's another question, another issue.

**Of course you can't tell me what everybody was thinking, but if you had to select two or three elements that you think contributed particularly to the vote and the outcome, what might they be?**

It's a little bit hard, but listening to people who voted in favor, I think one big thing over many, many years has been the feeling [about] the European Union [EU], some of its legislation being very bureaucratic and really taking away the individuality of countries. I remember when I was a kid going around markets, and every store looked different. With EU everything became so

A young boy with dark hair, wearing a grey and white patterned sweater, is crying. He is being held and comforted by a man with grey hair and a woman with blonde hair. The man is wearing a gold thermal blanket. The woman is wearing sunglasses. The background is blurred, suggesting an outdoor setting.

**“The gospel talks about us being there to hold out for justice and hold out for those who do not have what they should have.”**



To watch the video or listen to the full podcast, search for this article at [AdventistReview.org](http://AdventistReview.org).



**“You can’t talk theology when people are hungry, when their basic needs are not met.”**

regimented that everyone was buying through the same place, and so everything started looking the same even though there were different suppliers. That kind of individuality, I think, is something that through the years has bothered Britain some.

I think the second thing is that, as the European Union has expanded and you have free flow of people around Europe, especially with England being an English-speaking country, there’s tended to be more flow into the country than flow out of the country. I think some British feel, “Well, maybe if we didn’t have this free flow, there would be more jobs for us, there would be more money for us,” and so I think [they had] a reaction to that.

**I’ve read that polls taken subsequently indicate that a lot of people who wished they had got a different result were people who didn’t participate in the vote. It makes me think of the responsibility that sometimes I feel I have. The Holy Spirit nudges me to do something and I say, “Oh, somebody else will do that.” Is there really a spiritual reflection to be had on the basis of an event like that?**

I think there is. You’re right. In that particular case I think people were so convinced that it was going to go a particular way. Those that were going to vote against leaving the EU just felt, “OK, I’ll leave it up to others to vote,” and didn’t feel the importance of it. That’s just such a natural thing for all of us to do. We don’t want to be in the lime-light. We want to see what everyone else is doing. We want to be one of the group, or we just can’t be bothered. So we just step back and don’t do things, whether it comes to things as a Christian that we should be doing in our community and looking out for each other, whether it is with talking to people about our faith. It’s just very easy to say “Oh, tomorrow” or “Oh, someone else will do it,” and let it go. That’s a problem.

**Everybody thought somebody else would. . . [A while] ago the Occupy movement here [in the United States] was very active and raised its voice and railed against the unevenness of gains from the economic growth the nation had experienced; and around the world [they] railed against the 1 percent. Do Christians have any business being preoccupied with or speaking up on economic**



### **and social and political issues like these?**

The way we raise our voices becomes important. Do we, if we see something that we see is unjust, something in which people are being disadvantaged, have responsibility to speak? We do. But I think there's a way of speaking up. We need to do so responsibly, but absolutely. The gospel talks about us being there to hold out for justice and hold out for those who do not have what they should have. Yeah, we have a right.

If you look at the Gospels, the only times you see Jesus really angry are those during which people exploit other people. Then He really threatens, almost, those that take that route.

### **He says awful things, such as "Better for you if you had not been born if you exploit one of My children."**

Yes, absolutely. Just think about the way He went about His own ministry. Yes, He talks about God the Father. Yes, He talks about who He is and His mission. But He's also just out there doing good among the community. He does that not with expectation. It's not, "Well, if I do this, are you now going to come and follow Me?" No, He doesn't do that. Some just go away and never come back. Nine out of 10 lepers. But it doesn't matter. He still does it.

### **I'm interrupting you perhaps, but if you'd been Australian instead of British, you would be with the Australian Union Conference, because they have joined a number of other churches to ask and require and urge their government to be more invested in social issues.**

I don't think this is about being a conservative or being a liberal, being Republican, being Democrat, or whatever other.

### **Or being British or Australian.**

Exactly. I don't think this has to do with any political group that is in authority. That's where I don't want to go as a Christian, or because I'm a Christian. But I think the whole issue of our policies, the way we live, the way as a country we work with other people and accept other people is how we should be as a nation and as Christians. If we aren't, then, yes, that's when we speak out.

### **How does our practice reflect God's attitude to those who are needy, to those who are orphans, not just**

### **the needy in terms of those who are on the street where I live, but the needy everywhere?**

That's where we have a responsibility, and that's a difficult and challenging thing. I don't envy governments, because they have so many conflicting pressures on them to use money here or resources there or stand up for this. But the Christian perspective has to be, straight down the line, the concern about people and the quality of life that they are able to have just with basic things, with rights.

### **Today I heard a devotional that was given by a Dr. Priester, whose heart is in Malawi. She served as a missionary there for several years. She's not there anymore, but she keeps going back and serving on a short-term basis. She talked about the poverty line in Malawi and said that more than 50 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. Then she said the poverty line is about \$1.50 per day. I imagine she probably means U.S. dollars. That is what they identify as the poverty line.**

You can't talk theology when people are hungry, when their basic needs are not met. Or, getting away from basic needs, if they are in a difficult, challenging personal environment, it's no good talking theology to them. It's got to be how the gospel transforms and changes their lives, and Jesus is part of that.

### **There's a social question I must ask about something that you were as deeply involved in as you could be as president at Andrews University: I saw a video, and it was put out by some students of Andrews University who are African American who feel that it's time that they be recognized and their needs be recognized, and the misuse and the unfairness and the injustice of many years be addressed. Then you responded. For us it was astonishing. If you don't mind me picking on you, could you tell me a little more about that?**

Sure. When the video came out we had to decide, or I had to decide along with my team, What do we do with this? The first thing to do was just to listen to all the comments coming in. While quite a lot of people from all racial groups did not like the way the students put things out, they said, "You know, I was at Andrews University back in 1960..." and then along comes a story. Or "I never

# We've got to say, "Where does the gospel take me in this situation?"

was at Andrews University, but I went to this place and . . ." and now comes a story. It seemed to me that we had to deal with the issue, not the manner of approaching it, that maybe was a problem to some. That's why we addressed it the way we did.

Probably, talking about the gospel, the way I presented it when I spoke back to the students in our chapel, I gave the story of the miracle concerning a man coming down through the roof to Jesus. When the hole was cut in the roof and this man was propelled down in the middle of the crowd, Jesus didn't say, "What are you doing here?" He didn't say, "Why have you cut a hole in the roof?" He just said, "You're in pain. I need to respond." That was how we felt. We felt [that] was the gospel response.

There were genuine issues, historic. We're not perfect now; we just had to say, "Let's deal with what's in front of us. Let's deal with the pain. Let's deal with the hurt. That's where our attention needs to go at this time." That's how we responded.

**It just struck me, as you were responding to earlier questions, that you aren't just saying that. You live that. So I hope you don't mind me wandering from the issue, because . . .**

No. It's very easy when it comes to anything that is political or socially charged for us to get our intellects in the way of it and forget the gospel and start on our rights rather than asking, "What does the gospel tell us to do?" I by no means always get that right, but I think that's really critical for the way that we build our community and the way we respond to the wider community around us. We've got to say, "Where does the gospel take me in this situation?"

**Maybe this is that question put in different words: What most needs fixing in our world today, and what should we do about fixing it?**

In two sentences? It strikes me that we spend far too much time talking and worrying about positions or ideas where we may differ. We sap our energy disagreeing. If we took the same amount of time, or even half that time, sitting down and listening to each other, understanding each other's perspective, praying together, and then saying, "OK, where do we meet, and how do we focus our energies together on mission in areas where we can combine and where we can connect?"

I guess I'm really saying we have to focus on communication, on understanding, on the unity of Christ, recognizing our differences and how those differences bring strength and shouldn't pull us apart. That's a little bit idealistic. It may not work just like that, but if that's where we start, we can go a long way. If we get too hung up on "How does this make me look?" or "They shouldn't be saying that to me" or "How dare they disagree with my opinion!" we lose our way.

**Thank you, Andrea. Maybe you have a last word for somebody who's out there waiting to hear from you because the Spirit tells them, "Luxton has a word from Me for you." What might that word be?**

If I look back over my own career and the people who have most encouraged me and mentored me, what I remember most is not the skills that they may have presented to me. It's always been about the way they have lived their faiths and the way they have lived their Christianity. That is what has influenced me more than anything else. That is what I want to do as a leader, as an administrator, and that's what as a church we need to do. I think of the Ellen White statement that is often cited but is so true, that the best witness in the world is a loving and lovable Christian. That doesn't deny the vital importance of theology and our unique theology as Adventists.

**I know you're not swearing off theology. You are a theologian.**

Absolutely. I absolutely do not want to separate that, but our theology is also best understood through the gospel. 🍌

# Caring Hearts. Skilled Hands.

*Erica Edwards RN, BSN  
Southern Adventist Graduate*



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RANDY FISHELL

I've always regarded hospitals as places to be eluded. Having avoided an overnight stay in such a facility for some 40 years, I should have figured my luck would finally run out.

I write from Room 1522 in the Meritus Medical Center in Maryland. A whopping sepsis infection carried my fever to new highs and my blood pressure to personal-worst lows.

But the past few days showed me there's another kind of sickness that pervades this facility, and no amount of hygienic scrubbing has proved effective in providing a lasting solution. I'm talking about the gigantic cyclops of a TV screen staring back at me from high atop its wooden perch.

By choice I've not watched much TV over the past few decades. My life has enough drama in it without worrying that a Kardashian might have acid reflux or was caught picking her nose in public. (OK, maybe if I could figure out how to make millions from being a nonproductive member of society, I might give it a shot too.) But with

# THE HOSPITAL TV AND ME

*The screen in my  
room awakened  
me to some  
harsh realities.*

nothing to do but scan through dozens of TV cable channels, I decided that doing so would be better than just lying here in my hospital bed going into a boredom-induced coma.

I was wrong. My disbelief at what was apparently considered engaging entertainment soon morphed into genuine despair. Not so much for me, but for a society—and maybe an entire planet—that actually tunes into such garbage on a regular basis: judicious demeanor that makes illicit sexuality seem normative; more bleeped-out swearwords than actual verbiage, pointing to the accuracy of the late comedian Steve Allen’s book on the subject of modern media: *Vulgarians at the Gate*.

### WHO IS OUR AUDIENCE?

Now comes a startling twist for the reader: this article is not about the vast sewage pit that passes as modern entertainment. Rather, *my concern is how the Seventh-day Adventist Church plans to engage those who don’t see a problem.*

Almost two years ago a decision was made to close my former place of employment, the Review and Herald Publishing Association. Many of us had known for years that we must change quickly

or die, and the latter ultimately took its natural course. As editor of *Guide* magazine, the church’s official publication for 10- to 14-year-olds, and former employee representative to the Review and Herald board of directors, I accept my own portion of responsibility for not being able to implement many of the course corrections that I viewed as essential.

Yet my purpose is not to point fingers regarding that very difficult situation. What I want to share is my firm conviction that unless we learn from this experience, Adventist media in general will not only become increasingly ineffective, but also perhaps even grow silent (trust me, it can happen).

Toward that end, I suggest it is prudent to admit that Adventism’s propensity for giving the trumpet a “certain sound” more often results in simply blowing our own horn, with few paying attention to what it all means. If we are going to make a difference to a culture swept away with *American Pickers* and *Dating Naked*, we have to make some serious adjustments, and some of them aren’t going to be pleasant.

No, I’m not suggesting we jump headfirst into the network, cable, and online sewage pits, but I am saying that an awful lot of what we think is connecting with the world isn’t.

### ENGAGING THE CULTURE

Some leaders get it. When it became clear that the Review and Herald would be pulling up stakes from its Hagerstown, Maryland, moorings, a series

Don't tell me  
Adventists don't  
harbor the talent to  
turn heads.

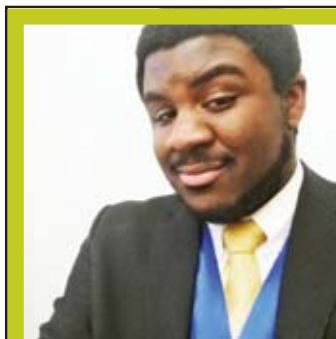


of town hall meetings was held with employees. During one such gathering, from the back of the huge room I cried out to the denominational representative chairing the meeting (I was no longer on the board), "Please, whatever decisions you make, engage the culture!"

I simply meant that if Adventism's flagship publishing house was ceasing print operations,

that did not require completely throwing in the evangelistic towel. If our publications weren't working (and some of them weren't, in my opinion), we needed to try something else.

As I finished my plea, North American Division president Dan Jackson leaped from his chair on the platform, strode purposefully toward the microphone, and leaned into it. I'd been scolded



## KENDAL BROUET: ANIMATOR ON A MISSION

### What is your current job position?

I am a digital animator at Mercury Film Works in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. That means I work with characters on the computer rather than on paper. We work on a lot of shows for Disney and Disney XD.

### Please describe what you do.

Well, the goal of an animator is to act and portray emotion through visuals. I'm given a storyboard (which is like a comic book panel), as well as the characters, music, voices, and sound effects, and told to make it look as believable as possible. It might not look like "real life," but you need to be able to believe it's happening in the cartoon world.

That means the movements

have to be fluid; the character has to look like it has weight and life. My goal is to make it so that when you watch it, you feel that the character is alive.

### What projects are you especially proud of being involved with?

I'm blessed that my first job was with two of my heroes, Chris and Martin Kratt, who made shows that I grew up with, such as *Kratts' Creatures* and *Zoboombafoo*. Once out of school, I went straight to their studio and worked on the third and fourth seasons of *Wild Kratts*.

I'm also excited that I've gotten my first Disney franchise position on Disney's *Tangled* series.

### Where did you receive your education/training?

I attended Algonquin College in Ottawa for both animation and preanimation. I was actually a drama kid in high school, but I was always "drawn" to animation (pardon the pun).

### What is your hope for Adventist media, especially visual media?

Since I was in high school I've watched shows on Hope Channel and 3ABN.\* There isn't yet a lot of animation on either of those channels. I see that as an area that we can work in. I grew up on lots of Christian cartoons,

such as *Veggietales*, *Adventures in Odyssey*, and Hanna-Barbera's *The Greatest Adventures: Stories From the Bible*. Those messages stuck with me.

My point isn't that we need flashy, exciting media, but we do need engaging entertainment with a message. The messages we have as a church are treasures we should share through visual art, whether it's animation or film.

Personally, I'm creating a short series of Bible-based animations called *Lil' Prophets*. It is a series that walks kids through the Bible and shares important themes of our faith.

### What suggestions do you have for Adventist media creators and producers?

I suggest you pray about all that you do. Let God lead you as you work in this profession. Also, connect with as many other artists of faith as you can. So many out there want to be part of something. Don't be discouraged: God gave you that ability, and just like Esther, you might have those skills for "such a time as this."

\*3ABN is an independent ministry supportive of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

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in public before (not by him), and I wasn't sure what nerve I might have hit this time. I needn't have worried. The president looked directly at me and said with conviction, "Randy, I couldn't agree more." He repeated the same statement, then returned to his seat. I think he got it, and I think he still does.

This all had to do with print publishing, of course, but here's my concern: Is it possible that at least some of the same dynamics that led to the end of Review and Herald's print operations might lead to the same sad end within the broader context of Adventist media? Have we learned anything from our propensity to provide content and packaging too often targeted toward an Adventist audience of yesteryear, let alone a "secular" person?

The challenge at hand is not easy; that much I understand. The hospital TV remote led me to astonishingly childish, morally crude, and highly scripted "reality shows." Since at least many viewers have apparently developed a taste for such fare, where does that leave Adventists who hope to convey "present truth" to this very same audience? What can be done to gain viewership numbers closer to that of *Downton Abbey* rather than those associated with *Fantasy Island* reruns? Here are a few considerations.

**1** *Don't rely on the Adventist Church to take the lead.* I write this with all due respect and admiration for Adventist leaders at many levels, but the truth is, the Adventist Church as a corporate entity simply cannot take the kinds of risks that independent Adventist content creators and producers can afford to take. Denominational leadership must rightly strike a balance in many areas that embraces and reflects the wide range of values and spiritual understanding of a worldwide body of believers. But godly Adventist media creators whose paychecks do not come from Silver Spring must use their gifts and seize the moment. There is astonishing talent throughout the Adventist Church, and current church media is exploding in powerful ways.

Still, we do our Creator proud by truly reflecting His creativity in media. That means that while there is certainly a place for denominationally

## A FILMMAKER'S PERSPECTIVE

TOM PAUL WHEELER

**A**dventists are incredible at building institutions. The church has blanketed the world with schools and hospitals. Reaching out to anyone and everyone, Adventists are the most racially diverse religious group in the United States. And in scarcely a dozen years its official television network, the Hope Channel, has grown to nearly 50 channels worldwide, in dozens of languages, from Romanian to Mandarin.

The breadth is dizzying. But when it comes to

media, the depth is still lacking. Today's technology makes it cheaper than ever to produce media (the newest iPhones shoot cinema-quality video), but creative, high-quality productions that use the medium to their fullest still take a lot of dedicated hours, and Adventists are still reluctant to invest.

Television is a visual medium, powerful at telling stories that change lives and shape culture. But church television is still predominantly talking heads delivering lectures.

The church is finally investing in creative filmmakers' education through its colleges and universities, but the corporate church still doesn't often give them a voice or empower them to create. It's time to add depth of content to the church's breadth of media resources. That means redirecting funds and resetting priorities, and creating content for people who may have never seen the inside of a church. And it means broadcasting in one more language—the cinematic language.

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**Tompaul Wheeler** is an independent film and TV producer. He holds a Master of Fine Arts in Film and Creative Media from Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tennessee. You may communicate with him at [TompaulWheeler@gmail.com](mailto:TompaulWheeler@gmail.com).

**"It's time to add depth of content to the church's breadth of media resources."**

affiliated media production, only when independent Adventist media creators foray into areas that the official church structure cannot tread will we begin to capture greater attention with those who most need what we have to offer.

Bottom line: no single denominational media entity can be everything to everyone. We're in this together, and independent creators must step up.

**2** *Become a patron to the best creative Adventist minds.* Producing truly effective media is unbelievably expensive. If you or a group is in a position to help financially, I urge you to find those who possess the talent and vision to create breakthrough productions that take the gospel message to startling new levels. This does not mean lowering media standards, but rather raising the creative bar so high that others cannot help paying attention. Find out which students from your local church or conference are enrolled in media classes and find out how you can help to support their efforts.

Why not make it a church project to contribute regularly to these students' and others' media production dreams? Several Adventist universities are taking strong leads in the area of media production.

**3** *Foster a culture of wise risk-taking in Adventist media production venues.* This includes filmmaking, animation, print media, and other content created for a wide range of distribution. A strong professional mentorship component in educational settings can help students and educators alike learn to discern wise from foolish risks.

Limiting our media adventures to those involving the least risk will undoubtedly produce the least results. Tapping into the knowledge and expertise of a wide range of media producers and leaders can result only in a more effective use of talent and funds.

**4** *Encourage postgraduate media production work in non-Adventist settings.* While there are strong undergraduate media programs, to understand fully what captures secular viewers' attention, it may be necessary to venture onto non-Adventist turf. It seems unlikely that Adventist creators will ever fully connect with a secular audience unless we learn from, and alongside, those who think differently than us.

I'm not talking about checking our values at the door. But if we think we're going to not only compete with but also rise above much of secular media's appeal, it's not going to stem solely from holding creative sessions with ourselves. We can continue to admire our own brilliance as the rest of the world ignores our work, or we can do something Adventists aren't always very good at: we can change and grow.

**5** *Drop the "We can't compete with the world" mentality.* Instead, focus on outfoxing them. The devil will always find a warm welcome in Hollywood, but sex and violence won't satisfy the heart's deepest longings. Don't tell me Adventism doesn't harbor the talent to turn heads.

We boast some of the best authors, scriptwriters, producers, and others whose work is second to none. We must find ways to bring to market their stunning, captivating, and evocative work that reaches into the neediest places of the human soul.

Whatever genre we work in, we must never settle for mediocrity in writing or presentation.

#### **A WAKE-UP CALL**

My physical illness was pretty serious this time around. The docs had to pump me full of some big-gun antibiotics. But a combination of modern science and some very bright medical professionals who knew how to employ medicine and various technological devices brought me back from the edge. Could the next generation of Adventist media accomplish something similar in the spiritual realm?

I don't envision pitching a new reality show based on my recent ordeal. One of the scariest parts was being short of breath. The caregivers cranked up the oxygen, and that helped get me over that particular hump. My hope is that Adventist media creators will increasingly—and prayerfully—conjure up content and productions that do take people's breath away, minus the pathogens.

We Adventists have a job to do, one that involves alerting a choking world that an eternal change looms just over the horizon. Getting that message out is worth taking some huge risks, maybe one that involves you. 🍀

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**Randy Fishell** is honorary editor of *Guide* magazine.





PETER N. LANDLESS ZENO L. CHARLES-MARCEL

## Can Some People Get By on Less Sleep?

**Q:** My wife says I need to sleep more, but I'm fine with 4 to 4.5 hours of sleep per night. That gives me more time every day. It's not like I'm always sick or anything. I'm a 37-year-old, reasonably healthy, a little overweight, and a father of two. I played football in college. Help me convince my dear wife . . . please!

**A:** We assume from your question that rather than having a medical sleep disorder you choose to extend your day to "optimize your time." We also assume that this is a long-term plan. Consistently getting healthful, restful sleep benefits the *whole* person; it promotes physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and relational health.

In a study of 1.1 million people who were followed for six years, the researcher took into consideration 32 different health risk behaviors to isolate their effects. The death rate was lowest for those who reported 6.5 to 7.4 hours of sleep per night on average.

Your sleep pattern would place you short of "optimal" and at increased risk. Reviewing multiple studies, self-reported shorter sleep time (i.e., six hours or less) was associated with overweight, obesity, heart disease, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, strokes, mental stress, unhappiness, and depression. You would fall into the "at risk" category.

In an Internet-based study of users of the Luminosity.com Web site, user-reported sleep times were correlated with mental performance. All three measures of mental sharpness peaked in those users who reported seven hours of sleep. Furthermore, insufficient sleep is associated with mental and physical impairment, accidents, marital dissatisfaction, and decreased productivity. Do you see yourself in this picture?

For the record, and for your children, sleep need in humans starts off high at infancy (14-17 hours), declines to 9-11 hours in preteens, tapers off to



8-10 hours for teens, then stabilizes at 7-9 hours/night thereafter until we reach age 65 (7-8 hours). An important issue is that sleep lost is never fully restored, even if you oversleep to compensate. As a matter of fact, chronic "oversleeping" more than nine hours per night may increase your risk of poor health outcomes, much like too little sleep.

Here's the bottom line: you will do better with 7 to 8 hours of sleep than with 4 to 5 hours, even though more than one third of U.S. residents report getting less than seven hours of sleep nightly.

We are told that in the celestial city there will be no night (Rev. 22:5). We will have glorified, spiritual, imperishable bodies and immortality (1 Cor. 15:42-54). Since we will be as the angels of God in heaven (Matt. 22:30), and our lowly bodies will be transformed to be like His glorious body (Phil. 3:20, 21), there may be no need for sleep. But while we are here on this earth, we must sleep to live; and optimal health favors optimal sleep.

Your wife is right on this one. Go ahead and thank her for her encouragement. ✨

**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.

# YOU ARE NOT TOO YOUNG TO NEED A WILL OR TRUST



## YOU MAY THINK THAT YOU ARE TOO YOUNG TO PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

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# WHEN YOUR BEACH BECOMES YOUR DESERT

Three summers ago I was swimming with my wife and three daughters in one of the most beautiful places on earth: Krabi, Thailand, on the Andaman Sea. It was a perfect day: water so blue, sand so soft, food so good. Yet, as we floated in those heavenly waters, I still had the most earthly of feelings: never quite being fulfilled.

As I looked up into the sky, I suddenly found myself quietly singing: “Blessed be Your name, in the land that is plentiful, where Your streams of abundance flow, blessed be Your name.” Within seconds I felt completely different: a created being worshipping the Creator, not creation.

The following summer I was back on the very same beach, this time with a tour group I’d taken to Thailand. We’d capped our week of history, culture, and ministry with a visit to the same spot on the Andaman Sea—everyone loving the sheer beauty as my own family had. “Blessed be Your name,” we had sung, at my urging, for worship together, “in the land that is plentiful, where Your streams of abundance flow.”

On our final morning we were rolling our suitcases to our longtail boat when suddenly, somewhere, a plaintive scream pierced the beach air.

What was going on? Who was screaming? Nothing made sense.

I ran to the resort office, where Lili had fallen into her husband’s arms, weeping.

Someone told me: “They just got a phone call. Their son was killed in a car accident.”

*What?* My knees weakened. In a blink everything had changed.

The boat ride was frantic: people holding the trembling couple, two of us phoning airlines, everyone reeling, hurting, praying for our friends.

How quickly our beach had become our desert.

We got them on the first flight home—24 hours of grieving at 30,000 feet. A week later many of us attended the funeral of a young man we didn’t know . . . yet did. Forever we would be bonded with this mother and father. No one else would ever understand what we witnessed that day on the Andaman Sea.

There is a second verse to the song we sang on that trip: “Blessed be Your name, when I’m found in the desert place, though I walk through the wilderness, blessed be Your name.”

The second verse speaks not of beauty and abundance but of loneliness and devastation. Yet the chorus was the same for both verses: “Blessed be the name of the Lord. Blessed be Your name.”

Both times on that seashore—at both extremes—our hearts went to the same place.

In life’s beaches, in life’s deserts—and in all places in between—may we instinctively call on the name of the Lord. 🌿

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**Andy Nash** (andynash5@gmail.com) is a professor and pastor who leads summer study tours to Israel and other countries.

THE LIFE  
OF FAITH  
ANDY  
NASH



SUDDENLY,  
SOMEWHERE,  
A PLAINTIFF  
SCREAM PIERCED  
THE BEACH AIR.



## THE CHOICE OF A LIFETIME

*Counsel on the importance of spiritually fulfilling relationships.*

**H**ave you ever wondered what it would be like to receive a letter from a prophet? Would you have the courage to open the envelope and read its contents?

*Even though the language is rather forthright, these letters were written under the inspiration of God and addressed to young people to help them make the right choices relating to their courtship and marriage.*

*At no time in life is the right kind of counsel so important as when two young people contemplate marriage. The Lord loves us and wants us to have both eternal life and happy homes. Perhaps the reading of this letter will help us have both. So open Mary Anne's envelope and read what the Lord wrote her that may also have been written for you.—Editors.*

Essex Junction, Vermont  
August 22, 1875

Dear Mary Anne:

I have been shown some things in reference to you which I dare not withhold longer because I feel you to be in danger. God loves you and He has given you unmistakable evidences of His love. Jesus has bought you with His own blood, and what have you done for Him?

You love yourself, love to enjoy pleasure, and love the society of young men; and you fail to discriminate between the worthy and the unworthy. You have not experience and judgment and are in danger of taking a course which will prove to be all wrong and result in your ruin. You have strong affections, but

your inexperience would lead you to have them placed upon improper objects. You should be guarded and not follow the bent of your own mind.

We are, my dear child, living amid the perils of the last days. Satan is intent upon corrupting the minds of youth with thoughts and affections and sympathies that they think are real genuine love which must not be interfered with. This I was shown is your case. You little know how very anxious and how great burdens your parents have borne for you.

You have not honored your father and your mother as God requires of you. The sin which exists in this generation among children is that they are “disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.” And this state of things exists to such an extent that it is made a subject of prophecy as one of the signs that we are living in the last days of time.

God has claims upon you. He has blessed you with life and with health and with capabilities and reasoning powers that you may, if you will improve, or you may greatly abuse by yielding these powers or qualities of mind to the control of Satan. You are responsible for the ability which God has given you.

You may, by making the most of your privileges, fit yourself for a position of influence and duty.

I was shown in my last vision that there are many of the young in Battle Creek who have not the fear of God before them, who are not at all religiously inclined. And there is still another class who are scoffers. Among the latter is Arthur Jones. He has all his life been rebellious. He has dishonored his father and his mother. The restraint of home and parental authority he has despised and rebelled against. He has not been subdued. A rebellious spirit is as natural as his breath. He is quarrelsome at home, disobedient, heady, high-minded, unthankful, and unholy. Such a spirit you are favoring. You are allowing your affections to go out after this boy. Stop just where you are. Do not allow this matter to go one step farther.

I was shown that he was a scorner of religion, a miserable unbeliever, a skeptic. He makes sport of religious things. He puts on a fair exterior to keep favor with you, but his entire life has been rebellious at home and rebellious against God.

No matter how he talks and deceives you, God looks upon him as he is, and I warn you not to

**He is quarrelsome at home,  
disobedient, heady, highminded,  
unthankful, and unholy.**

cherish feelings of affection for this young man. Sever all intimate and close connection with the young man. He is unworthy of your love. He will not respect you if he will not respect and honor his parents.

You must not be ready to dispose of your heart's affections. You are young and you are unsuspecting. You will surely be deceived unless you are more guarded. God has purposes for you which Satan wishes to defeat. Give yourself unreservedly to God; connect with heaven.

Do not be led away from your Redeemer by an irreligious young man, a scorner of sacred things. Sever the intimacy existing between you at once. Do not follow your inclination, but follow your Savior. Eternal life, my dear child, eternal life you want at any cost. Do not sacrifice this for your pleasure, to follow your own feelings, but give yourself to Jesus, love Him and live to His glory.

Take these words written, act upon them and God will bless you abundantly. Take reproof as from God, take counsel and advice given in love. . . .

Will you, from this time, make an entire change in your life and seek to know what is the will of God concerning you? Neglect not this time of privilege, but here, right here, lay all at the feet of Jesus and serve Him with your individual affections. God help you to break off the shackles Satan has sought to bind upon you.

In haste and much love,



Letter 30, 1875

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This excerpt is taken from the book *Letters to Young Lovers* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1983), pages 53-55. Seventh-day Adventists believe **Ellen G. White** (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.

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**ALSO IN THIS SECTION:**

- » NEITHER TO THE RIGHT NOR TO THE LEFT
- » IDENTITY THEFT
- » HOW WE COMMUNICATE
- » CELEBRATING A MILESTONE BIRTHDAY
- » PECULIAR PEOPLE SHOULDN'T BE ISOLATED

## MARCHING DOWN PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE WITH JESUS

I grew up in the hot phase of the Cold War. People in Europe and all around the world, frightened by the prospect of instant annihilation, began to demonstrate against nuclear weapons on their territory. The nuclear holocaust was a real possibility—so people marched.

Following the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the same generation discovered nature and ecology. In Europe, new political parties emerged, seemingly out of nowhere, to defend the ecological balance against roughshod capitalists clearing tropical forests in the Amazon basin at an alarming rate so that fast-food chains had a secure supply of beef for their increasing number of global customers.



**GERALD A. KLINGBEIL**

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Today our world is not less polarized. Media has moved us even closer to one another. I can know about an important event happening on the other side of the globe in minutes—especially if I’m plugged into social media. People chanting on the streets of Moscow, a horrific accident in Texas, a terror attack in London, a devastating chemical attack in Syria—we get it all on multiple screens within minutes.

This increase in information, however, has not led to better decisions. In fact, it feels as if societies all around the world have become more polarized. We “like” what we like to hear; the danger of digital

ghettos where everybody thinks the same and those with different opinions are just not heard seems to be more of a reality today than 20 years ago.

### WWJD

What would Jesus do if He lived in 2017? Would He march down Pennsylvania Avenue in support of women, science, immigration reform, the Constitution, or unborn life? Would Jesus enter the discussion about sustainability and limited natural resources and privacy rights? Would He speak up for the poor, the marginalized, the illegal immigrant, and the teenage girl who just found out that she is pregnant?

These are penetrating questions requiring a careful look at what Jesus was passionate about during His ministry less than two millennia ago.

Right from the outset we know He loved us unconditionally; His mission was to save the world (John 3:16). Yet as He engaged with the world around Him, He often spoke purposefully about

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choices and values and principles that continue to affect our lives as well. Salvation and grace were not separate from justice and righteousness and mercy and compassion in Jesus' heart. His ability to see the big picture while helping us notice the little, yet relevant, choices transformed the world.

#### **THE KINGDOM IS AT HAND**

John the Baptist's announcement that the kingdom of God was at hand (Matt. 3:2) offers a good introduction to Jesus. The longed-for Messiah introduced sweeping hope and a new dimension that most of His audience was not ready to grasp.

Yes, Jesus stood in the tradition of the prophets.

**Repentance and prayer are foundational elements of social action. Jesus teaches us to repent, to pray, and then to go.**



## Jesus didn't liberate all slaves, but He started a movement that ultimately would change the world—from inside out.

His first sermon in Nazareth clearly illustrates this. After reading from Isaiah 61:1, 2, Jesus simply states, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21).<sup>1</sup> You remember the essence of this message. Jesus is ready to "proclaim good news to the poor," "to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind," to "set at liberty those who are oppressed" (Luke 4:18). That not only sounds radical—it was radical and, considering the response of His audience, it was not appreciated. Jesus proclaims God's kingdom: He does not reinvent it, though. In all He is doing and saying, He is deeply rooted in Scripture.

His Beatitudes (Matt. 5:1-12; Luke 6:20-23) and the subsequent expanding of these kingdom principles (Matt. 5-7) are truly countercultural. The poor in Spirit, the meek, those who are mourning, or thirsting for righteousness, the merciful, the peacemakers: they are all blessed in God's kingdom—not the powerful, the mighty, the great, the haves, the VIPs, or royalty.

Jesus touches the blind, the cripple, the leper (Matt. 8:1-4; 9:1-8, 27-31). He has fellowship with tax collectors, prostitutes, and sinners (Matt. 9:10, 11; Mark 2:13-17).<sup>2</sup> He tells stories about *good* Samaritans (Luke 10:25-37)—people that any Jew living in first-century Judaism *knew* to be bad. In His stories sinners receive a feast instead of a rebuke; they are embraced and transformed (Luke 15:11-32). Jesus welcomes outsiders and invites them to become insiders in God's kingdom.

### JUSTICE FOR ALL

Jesus' concern is clearly not only about healing, feeding, and proclaiming good news. His repeated cleansing of the Temple (John 2:13-16; Matt. 21:12-17) suggests also a focus on economic justice. God's Temple was not to be a place

to make a quick buck (Mark 11:12-17).

His proclamation of liberation involves all. While He purposefully preaches to Israel, the chosen people, the freedom He offers affects all—including the stranger and the alien living in Israel who were considered eligible for the jubilee legislation found in Leviticus 23-25.

When Jesus talks to the faithful about the judgment at the end of times He purposefully includes in His parable about the sheep and goats (Matt. 25:31-46) the stranger (or foreigner). *You serve Me when you serve those you do not normally recognize*, He whispers to our hearts. *Pay attention, open your eyes, and see the brother or sister who doesn't look like you.*

### GROW THE KINGDOM

Kingdom business is not just about understanding grace and reaching those who cannot reach for themselves. When we have recognized that we are already living in His kingdom,<sup>3</sup> we join the ranks of His disciples. Jesus uses several surprising metaphors to illustrate the role of His disciples in society. Matthew 5 tells us that we are to be salt and light (verses 13-16). Salt gives taste to otherwise bland food; salt conserves food in a freezer-less world; salt fertilizes, which was an important use in first-century Judaism.<sup>4</sup>

Light is needed to see a way and orient oneself in darkness. While Jesus is *the* light of the world (John 1:6-9), His disciples are called to point the spotlight on Him. Their actions, values, and commitments echo His actions, values, and commitments.

Beyond light, Jesus also compares the agents of His kingdom to yeast (Matt. 13:33). Yeast is often used to illustrate that which is evil or unclean. Here, however, it is a symbol of unstoppable growth. Jesus' disciples are *in* this world (though not *of* this world; cf. John 17:14-16), and their influence should penetrate everything. We are called to be engaged as Jesus was engaged in His world.

Finally, true heart conversion always must involve the element of repentance. Israel's great revivals were always associated with repentance and changed hearts—not just with changed circumstances. Jesus recognized that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?" (Jer. 17:9). Repentance and prayer are foundational elements of social action. Jesus teaches us to repent, to pray, and then to go.

## THE POWER OF CASH

Biblical thinking about stewardship begins at Creation. As created beings, we recognize our indebtedness and His Lordship. We recognize that there is a special time, after every six days, that belongs to Him. The making of the Sabbath represented the highlight and conclusion of the Creation week. It set aside time—one of our most precious commodities—as belonging to the Creator, forever.

Yet Jesus does not only speak about time when He introduces the principles of God's kingdom. He speaks of treasures, hard cash, and our attitudes to cash (Matt. 6:19-24). Building up treasures on earth is a futile exercise in a time rife with bank crashes and out-of-control capital markets. Building up treasures in heaven, where no one but God can see the ledger, will help us focus upon things of eternal value.


True discipleship means that all our resources (time, cash, energy, influence, and creativity) are at the service of the kingdom. This radical vision lies at the heart of Jesus' vision of His kingdom. "[Jesus'] teaching establishes that Christians should be socio-politically involved and that this involvement is motivated by the character and activity of God as displayed in Jesus' ministry, the hope of the consummation of the kingdom of God at the new creation and the Spirit's present activity," writes theologian Wesley Chiang. "Christ's universal Lordship over all time and space motivates Christians to be championing his kingdom in every sphere of human life."<sup>5</sup>

## GOD'S CALL TO ACTION

Social action encompasses three main dimensions: relief, development, and structural change. Jesus was involved in all three areas. He offered relief to the needy, the sick, and the hungry. He invited them to follow Him, making disciples of tax collectors, fishermen, and even political activists. When He spoke about the kingdom of God, the most important recurring topic of His preaching, He introduced radical structural change. Yet the principles He preached were solidly anchored in earlier revelation. He who inspired prophets and poets did not reinvent the wheel. Rather, He reminded His audience that their reading of Scripture was not without bias; that their understanding of the law was colored by their own preferences; that their commitment to grace lacked the existential experience of grace.

Ellen White's take on social engagement seems to echo Jesus' understanding. "Any human being who needs our sympathy and our kind offices is our neighbor. The suffering and destitute of all classes are our neighbors; and when their wants are brought to our knowledge, it is our duty to relieve them as far as possible," she writes. "Our neighbors are the whole human family."<sup>6</sup>

Yet Jesus, our human Brother, was, at the same time, also the completely Other. His sense of mission helped Him to know intuitively which areas of His society needed His engagement. He didn't liberate all slaves, but He started a movement that ultimately would change the world—from inside out. His commitment to the principles of God's kingdom moved Him to search out the marginalized as well as the powerful. He often surprised and irritated His disciples as He engaged the world around Him. Ultimately they understood that morality based on self-interest and self-justification is not God's morality but human-made fig leaves flaunted in open rejection of God's kingdom.

Would Jesus march on Pennsylvania Avenue? I really don't know. But I do know that He continues to challenge His church, individually and as a corporate body, to search for the principles of His kingdom in all we do. As the Creator He cares for His creation. As the Savior He yearns to relieve suffering and pain and extend grace and mercy to a sin-sick world. As the Judge He desires righteousness, transparency, and equity in His followers as they too engage the world surrounding them. 

<sup>1</sup> All Scripture quotations have been taken from *The Holy Bible*, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

<sup>2</sup> "Sinners" was often a code word for prostitutes (cf. Matt. 21:32, 33, where the link between prostitutes and tax collectors is spelled out by Jesus Himself).

<sup>3</sup> We need to remember that since the arrival of Jesus in a manger in Bethlehem, the kingdom of God has come (cf. Luke 17:21).

<sup>4</sup> See Anthony B. Bradley, "You Are the Manure of the Earth," *Christianity Today*, Sept. 23, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Wesley S. Chiang, "To What Extent Does Jesus' Teaching About the Kingdom of God Provide a Helpful Basis for Christian Socio-political Thinking Today?" *Evangelical Quarterly* 83, no. 4 (2011): 319.

<sup>6</sup> Ellen G. White, *Welfare Ministry* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1952), pp. 45, 46. See also the discussion in R. Clifford Jones, "Social Issues," in *Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, ed. Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 2013), pp. 1174-1176, for more quotes and examples. Compare also Chantal J. Klingbeil, "In the World, but Not of It," *Adventist Review*, October 2016, pp. 26, 27.

**Gerald A. Klingbeil** is an associate editor of *Adventist Review* who often wonders about the principles of God's kingdom in his own life.



## NEITHER TO THE **RIGHT** NOR TO THE **LEFT**

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*A Christian response  
to partisan politics*

**DON W. MC FARLANE**

**M**y wife and I carry British passports. So our eyes were glued to the television on the evening of June 23, 2016, as the results of the United Kingdom's referendum on whether or not to remain in the European Union came in (Brexit). We were as surprised as most Brits that the "Leave Europe" supporters won that referendum.

### **PEOPLE, OR PIGEONS?**

The decision by the United Kingdom to leave the European

Union is seen by some as a victory for the political Right. Modern society seems to have a fascination with pigeonholing everyone politically. No longer is it enough to see someone as just a citizen. Everyone now seems to be left wing, right wing or moderate. Political scientists see right-wing politics as appealing to conservatives, traditionalists, reactionaries, and fascists; while left-wing politics attracts progressives, socialists, and communists.



Several European countries appear to be lurching more and more to the right. “Across the once-placid political landscape of Western Europe, right-wing upstarts have created what Jean-Claude Juncker, president of the European Commission, recently termed ‘galloping populism.’ He was referring to movements like the Sweden Democrats, the National Front in France, the Party for Freedom in the Netherlands, and other voices on the far right calling for their once-open countries to close up and turn inward.”<sup>1</sup>

The result of the 2016 presidential election in the United States is seen by many observers as the triumph of right-wing politics. Simon Shuster commented, “All the rising rightist parties [in Europe]

are aligned with Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump in what they encourage voters to fear: migrants taking your jobs, Muslims threatening your culture and security, political correctness threatening your ability to speak your mind and, above all, entrenched elites selling you out in the service of the wealthy and well-connected.”<sup>2</sup>

“The movement generally referred to in the U.S. as the Religious Right came of age in the late 1970s. While it’s extremely diverse and shouldn’t be characterized in simple terms, it’s an ultraconservative religious response to the sexual revolution. It’s a response to events that are seen by Religious Right proponents as being connected to the sexual revolution. Its goal is to effect this religious response as public policy.”<sup>3</sup>

On the surface it might seem that Christians should feel obliged to cast their lot with the Religious Right, as it purportedly is concerned with returning to traditional family values and saving America from sliding down the slippery slopes of hedonism, moral relativism, and decadence. Who can successfully argue with the need to safeguard Christian values, and for Christians to stand as a bulwark against the tide of self-indulgence that threatens to destroy Western civilization?

The “Religious Left” now apparently seeks to assert itself in the United States as a foil to the “Religious Right.” Serene Jones, president of Union Theological Seminary, and one of the leaders of the Religious Left, said, “The election of Trump has been a clarion call to progressives in the Protestant and Catholic churches in America to move out of a place of primarily professing progressive policies to really taking action.”<sup>4</sup>

The Religious Left seems to have as strong an argument as the Religious Right’s for Christian adherence and unreserved support. The Christian Left’s official Web site, [www.thechristianleft.org](http://www.thechristianleft.org), clearly states that this movement is based on Jesus’ teaching to love our neighbors as ourselves, and the Christian obligation to care for those in need: the “lost, ignored, excluded, overlooked, abandoned, uncared-for.” Who can argue against this?

#### **JOHN AND JAMES: A METAPHOR**

The powerful arguments of one side are met by the equally compelling arguments of the other. So on which side of the religious-political fence should the church be sitting? A particular

# The church needs to be where Jesus is: among the people.

illustration I occasionally use to address this dilemma goes like this:

Two men, one of whom I will call John and the other James, are members of their local Adventist church. John is present in church every Sabbath. He is meticulous in returning tithe. He does not drink, smoke, or swear. He is seen as one of the fathers of the church, and is known as a moral and upright man. However, he is critical of those who do not measure up to his expectations. He never offers a word of encouragement or support to others or places a comforting arm around anyone.

James's life is marked with many personal disasters. He drinks like a fish and swears like a fisherman. He attends church only occasionally and seldom gives money to the church. But James would give his last dollar to feed someone who is hungry and the shirt off his back to clothe another. He seeks out those who are lonely and depressed to befriend and encourage them. He always has a word of encouragement for those who need it.

After describing the two men, I ask, "Which of the two is a Christian?" One or two hands go up for John and several for James, but most would not commit one way or the other—a wise response. The fact is, Christians are the ones who combine the positive characteristics of John and the positive characteristics of James, being mindful at the same time that they are capable of slipping into the negative modes.

What does this tell us about where we should pitch our tent as far as the divide between the political Right and the political Left is concerned?

## LIFE ABOVE POLITICS

If my illustration has merit, the answer is neither Left nor Right. My 44 years of ministry have taught me that the greatest challenge that the church and its individual members face is that of being true to its values and ideals, while at the same time applying them sensitively and compassionately to people

who are broken, depressed, hopeless, and weak.

It's fairly easy to throw those ideals and values at broken people and tell them to strive to be like us. Often members who take this approach are considered by some to be the guardians of the church and the defenders of the faith. The "defenders of the faith" are usually ambivalent as to how to view those who sit and walk with the needy, without obvious reference to Christian values, viewing them at times as preaching a social gospel or even abandoning the principles of the church.

Again I ask: On which side should we pitch our tent as Christians? Bill Miller, president of the Potomac Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, in an address to conference employees on April 3, 2017, said, "We must rise above politics and be Christians." Another way of articulating this point is that we must follow the example of Jesus.

Jesus understood people more than anyone else did. He would have made a great politician. However, He chose not to involve Himself with politics, even with the various religious movements of His time. His focus was people and their needs, whether those needs were material or salvific.

The church needs to be where Jesus is: among the people, irrespective of political views, religious persuasion, nationality, residential status, or sexual orientation, in an effort to reflect God's love and grace to those who are seeking meaning and hope.

Seneca, a contemporary of the apostle Paul, said of the time in which he lived that all humans were looking *ad salutem* (toward salvation). "What we needed, he said, was 'a hand let down to lift us up.'"<sup>5</sup> Epictetus wrote that men were seeking a peace "not of Caesar's proclamation, but of God's."<sup>6</sup>

It is the work of the church to be the channel through which God's hand touches everyone, offering a peace that comes only from being citizens of God's kingdom. 🏹

<sup>1</sup> Simon Shuster, "European Politics Are Swinging to the Right," *Time*, Sept. 22, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Tom Head, "The Religious Right Movement and the Sexual Revolution," *ThoughtCo*, Mar. 19, 2017, [www.thoughtco.com/the-religious-right-721631](http://www.thoughtco.com/the-religious-right-721631). 4 In Ann Corcoran, "Religious Left' on the Rise in Response to President Trump's People and Policies," <https://refugeere-settlementwatch.wordpress.com/2017/03/28>.

<sup>5</sup> William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible: The Letter to the Romans*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975), p. 19.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

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# IDENTITY THEFT

**H**ave you ever been the victim of identity theft? Identity theft occurs every two seconds in the United States, and could happen to anyone at any time. In 2014, 17.6 million people, 16 and older, had at least one incident of identity theft.\*

Identity theft is an illegal, injurious act in which an imposter steals key pieces of one's personal information in order to deliberately impersonate the owner. Stolen information is then used to provide thieves with one's image and identity to make false credentials, obtain credit, merchandise, bank accounts, and provide false identification to police, or create a criminal record. If your identity is ever stolen, you will discover that it is a most frightening and frustrating experience. You may not know for months or years if or when your identity is stolen; and the burden of proof of your innocence is on you!

Although identity theft is a most despicable crime, there's a far more dangerous form that threatens our passion for and purpose in Christ. It is demonstrated when: (1) pastors, leaders, and officers prefer programs over people and call unending committee meetings, conduct long surveys, polls, and panel discussions instead of going out and getting involved in real, life-changing ministry; (2) congregations mingle the Bible with human traditions to rob others of freedom in Christ; and (3) there's insensitivity to the voice of God, the guiding impressions of the Holy Spirit, and loss of usefulness as God's instruments in the mission of seeking and saving those who are lost.

Satan was the first spiritual identity thief. His purpose is to steal, kill, and destroy believers (John 10:10). One of the many ways he steals our spiritual identity

is by convincing us that Jesus cannot remove effects of our checkered past. He employs some to repeat unfounded, unproved accusations, to find fault, criticize mercilessly, gossip incessantly, betray confidences, and break up friendships or fellowships. He convinces us of his lie that we are unworthy to be called children of God and must work to win the love, forgiveness, and acceptance of God.

Although Satan's hand is in every evil, he's not always the only spiritual identity thief. We ourselves can be spiritual identity thieves—imposters—especially when we present ourselves as Christians, yet are unwilling to live up to our claims, or incapable of demonstrating that we are new creations in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). Spiritual identity theft occurs when we have some of God, but not all of Him; and God has some of us, but not all of us. Such pious pretensions cause us to live as tepid Christians who disguise spiritual destitution with fake smiles; happy, insincere greetings; snappy contemporary choruses in worship; and vain repetitions in prayer.

So how can we protect ourselves from spiritual identity theft, from being spiritual identity thieves? It is written: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).<sup>†</sup>

\*Bureau of Justice Statistics.

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**CURE FOR THE  
COMMON LIFE**  
**HYVETH  
WILLIAMS**



**SPIRITUAL IDENTITY  
THEFT OCCURS  
WHEN WE HAVE  
SOME OF GOD, BUT  
NOT ALL OF HIM.**







*Are we building  
bridges or walls?*

**WILLIAM G. JOHNSON**

**E**ach day the young Swiss pastor sat silent. Each day he brought two massive folders and flopped them down on the table in front of him. His body language shouted unhappiness. We wondered: *What is in those folders?*

We were meeting on the campus of the Baptist seminary in Prague, Czech Republic, for an official dialogue between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA). The latter, with more than 600 million members, had selected their team from several different nations. For many years the Evangelicals, who emphasize the Bible as the

# HOW WE COMMUNICATE

## We Adventists hold strong convictions, but we don't always need to present them strongly.

Word of God, conversion, salvation in Jesus, and belief in the Second Coming, had been uncertain how to relate to Adventists. Are we a genuine Christian body, or are we a cult?

I could feel the tension building in the young pastor. Just before the end of our week together, the dam broke. We Adventists had presented our position on the Scriptures and Ellen White—while we believe that she was a messenger inspired by God, we look to the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice. Opening up the large folders, the pastor launched into a tirade against Ellen White. He had gathered reams of material from the Internet, which includes several bitter Web sites run by former church members and pastors.

On this contentious note the week together came to a close. A second round was scheduled for the following year, when the venue would be Andrews University, with Adventists serving as hosts.

I came to the dialogue with grave doubts that anything good would emerge from it. As we got under way, my misgivings seemed about to be confirmed. The Evangelicals handed out a draft of the consensus statement of the joint conversation. The document was altogether unacceptable to us: it asserted that Adventists base their distinctive beliefs, including the Sabbath, on the writings of Ellen White, not on the Bible.

We Adventists protested: the draft statement was inaccurate and misleading. But the Evangelicals stood their ground; the dialogue was at an impasse. Then Bert B. Beach, veteran Adventist administrator, broke the ice. He stated, "If you insist that Adventists base their teachings on Ellen White's writings, we insist that the statement also indicate that Evangelicals base Sunday observance on tradition, not on the Bible!"

*Touché!*

"Well, then," the Evangelicals responded, "why don't *you* develop a draft that we can work on together?"

Bert Beach went to work. He put together a statement that pointed out similarities, differences, and areas of possible cooperation. After considerable discussion and several adjustments, both parties were ready to adopt it.

The upshot? The WEA now regards Adventists as Christians with whom they can fellowship. (Adventists are not members of the WEA.)

For some 25 years I was involved in interchurch conversations with a variety of denominations. Several of these dialogues began like the meeting in Prague: cold as ice. But in each one the ice eventually melted, and we concluded on cordial terms. After I left the *Adventist Review* office, I served as assistant to General Conference president Jan Paulsen in developing relationships with leaders of world religions. Most of these conversations involved civic and religious leaders of Islam. Once again we were able to develop positive relationships, some of which grew into close friendships.

### THE AGE OF NASTINESS

All around us today we see the collapse of polite discourse. Means of communication continue to burgeon, but every advance seems only to feed the worst tendencies of our fallen human nature. Talk shows are an abomination, the nadir of nastiness as guests from opposite ideologies shout, interrupt, lie, and insult. Their object is not truth but scoring points for the other side.

How should Christians relate in this age of nastiness? By seeking to build bridges instead of walls. We are followers of Jesus of Nazareth, who in His famous sermon on the mount declared, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matt. 5:9, NRSV).\*

Building bridges isn't complicated. The principles that led to an amicable outcome between Adventists and the WEA still work:

*Having the right attitude:* We should look on everyone we meet as a child of God, created in His image. The old adage still holds: We all have one Father, so we are brothers and sisters. We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, not their destroyers.

*Taking time to make friends:* Building bridges

takes time. Before we can begin, maybe a wall has to be torn down. That wall may be in our minds as much as the other party's. Only as we become acquainted and begin to understand do we see how wrong our thinking has been, how different the reality from our preconceptions.

Some of my closest friends are Muslims. When Noelene and I meet with them, they overwhelm us with love, kindness, and generosity. Some of our Adventist brothers and sisters find this extremely difficult to accept. They have heard so many negative reports about Muslims that they conclude that we have been deceived.

If only they would take time to befriend a Muslim! Their thinking would undergo a radical transformation.

*Eating together:* From ancient times a shared meal has worked to knock down walls and to build bridges. To sit down at the table with the "enemy" means to cease being enemies.

*Seeking common ground:* We Adventists hold strong convictions, but we don't always need to present them strongly. The apostle Peter advises: "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15, KJV). Paul tells us: "Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone" (Col. 4:6).

*Joining hearts:* The strongest bridges are held

together with heart cement, when friendship has led to trust and trust to love. This is the ultimate blessing that the peacemaker experiences.

### **BEGIN NEXT DOOR**

Of all the people with whom Noelene and I tried to build a bridge, the most difficult were with the next-door neighbors. We had nothing in common. Their values and lifestyle were the opposite of ours. We barely exchanged greetings.

Our son and his wife came for a visit with our first grandchild. We organized an open house for friends and neighbors. Those from next door came, for the first time without cigarettes in their hands. Tasting the punch and noticing it wasn't "spiked," he quickly put it down. Nevertheless they stayed on.

Long story short: slowly the wall came down. We invited them for a meal; they reciprocated. When they retired and moved away, they kept in contact, urging us to retire near them. We visited them in their new home, and with pride they shared that it was smoke-free.

Yes, we can build bridges. It may be one of the most important things we can do. 🏠

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**William G. Johnsson**, now retired and living in Loma Linda, California, is former editor of *Adventist Review*.





## CELEBRATING A MILESTONE BIRTHDAY

*From father to son*

**H**appy fortieth birthday, son. You're probably not very excited about entering the midlife portion of adulthood. But it can be the most productive and exciting time of your life. It certainly has been so for me.

### REORDERING OUR DREAMS

Moses probably thought his life was a total failure when he found himself herding sheep instead of using his elite training to become the next pharaoh of Egypt. Prior to turning 40 he

imagined himself championing the overthrow of Egyptian bondage for God's chosen people, and leading His people to liberation.

Little did he know that at 40 he was entering a different school to help him become the most powerful man, outside of God's Son, this world has ever known. Who could put up with a nation so rebellious that only two adults 20 years old and older would actually make it from Egypt to the Promised Land? Yet who could make water come out of a rock, especially when God did not sanction it being done as Moses did?

But Moses wasn't the only one to find out that there is life after 40.

Sam Walton founded his first Walmart store when he was 44. Gary Heavin opened the first Curves fitness center when he was 40. And one of the world's largest clothing chains, The Gap, got its start when its founder, Donald Fisher, opened his first store when he was 40, and that with zero experience in retail.

Some people built on their earlier training. But many others didn't. Moses certainly didn't. In fact, he had to unlearn much of it. The main thing is to keep an open mind and be honest with yourself.

We humans all have limitations. And the sooner we own up to them, and not allow them to affect our self-worth, the sooner we will find happiness and contentment.

### WE NEED EACH OTHER

There are ways around limitations and weaknesses, and not by ignoring or rejecting

them. Once we identify our weaknesses, whatever they may be, we can look for ways to strengthen them, and even excel in those areas. It's likely some of your strengths may make up for your weaknesses.

Make new friends, if you need to. God did not make us to be islands to ourselves, independent of others. Neither did He intend for us to become stripped of all self-worth, totally dependent on others.

Instead, the Creator designed us to find our joy and value through becoming part of a family where benevolence rules and everyone shares a common interdependence. The only *independence* we celebrate on July 4 is freedom from oppression. And the only reason we can is that we are a nation ordered by *interdependence*.

Take your health seriously, son. Leave behind those things you know aren't good for you. God will help you. It won't kill you. But if you don't leave them behind, they might. The vitality of your youth has mostly become a memory now, so you will find it harder to bounce back from foolish decisions.

But your brain, where life's greatest accomplishments originate, becomes more adept with age,

as it learns from failures and becomes stronger. Only a fool's brain doesn't.

You will develop your greatest strength in the relationships you keep and form, whether it's in the family, on the job, or just being a good neighbor. This is just as important vertically as it is horizontally.

Your children are, and will be, entering the period of life when a strong father/friend image will mean the world to them. And being a true husband to a wife who is also finding her independence is the kind of stuff God loves to honor.

I am proud of your excellent work ethic, and I believe God will build upon it in ways yet unknown to you. Continue to let high standards direct your choices.

Remember, your good works don't determine the depth of our love for you. They only bring us honor, which is the solace of gray hair (or no hair). You are dearly loved, not because of your accomplishments, but because you are part of us, whatever you become.

Love,  
Dad

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**Robert E. Blum** lives in College Place, Washington, with his wife, Annette.



# CLOSER LOOK

## MISSION SHIFT

*Mission Shift: Multiplying Disciples in Your Community*, Kayle B. de Waal, Signs Publishing, Warburton, Victoria, Australia, 2017, 135 pages, US\$9.99 (Kindle edition). Reviewed by Stephen Chavez.



**W**e are living in one of the fastest periods of change in human history, and the local Adventist church is in danger of becoming irrelevant, even outdated.” If that sentence, in the introduction of *Mission Shift*, doesn’t capture the attention of twenty-first-century Adventists, nothing will.

We Adventists have prided ourselves on “having the truth.” Yet we are often overlooked in our local communities. Says the author, “My conviction is that a multiplying local Adventist church will thrive in a fast-changing world.”

*Mission Shift* is unapologetically Christ-centered. The emphasis is not on what we, as local church members, can do for the institutional church—it’s about what we, as disciples, can do for Christ and His kingdom.

Another welcome ingredient in this recipe for congregational health is its emphasis on the Holy Spirit, and on the gifts Christ’s disciples receive to advance His kingdom. The author, head of Avondale seminary and senior lecturer in New Testament at Avondale College of Higher Education in Coorabong, Australia, has filled the book with references to the New Testament church, and how the organic growth experienced among early believers was directly related to how it listened and responded to the Holy Spirit.

If you want your congregation to operate in an activist role instead of a maintenance mode, read *Mission Shift*. Get others to read it too. 📖

## AN AMERICAN CONSCIENCE: THE REINHOLD NIEBUHR STORY

*An American Conscience: The Reinhold Niebuhr Story*, a film by Martin Doblmeier, 60 minutes, 2017, US\$19.95. Reviewed by Stephen Chavez, assistant editor, *Adventist Review*.

**I**f the name Reinhold Niebuhr isn’t familiar to you, perhaps you’re familiar with the “Serenity Prayer” he wrote: “God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.”

A couple generations ago Niebuhr was well known in the United States, even appearing on the cover of *Time* magazine and being interviewed on network television. This prominence was the result of his penchant for applying biblical principles to the societal issues with which culture was grappling.



Niebuhr’s was a seminal voice in the civil rights movement in the United States, for example. He influenced activists such as Martin Luther King, Jr.; and his books and lectures crossed sectarian lines. One of his closest friends (who spoke the eulogy at Niebuhr’s funeral) was Jewish theologian Abraham Joshua Heschel.

Martin Doblmeier, one of the nation’s premier documentary filmmakers, has once again put the spotlight on someone who powerfully influenced secular as well as religious thought. Doblmeier’s specialty is chronicling the intersection between religion and society, as he did in his films *Chaplain*, *Bonhoeffer*, and *The Power of Forgiveness*.

A companion book is also available ([JourneyFilms.com](http://JourneyFilms.com)). 📖



AdVENTURE  
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(FORMERLY ICC AUSTRALIA)



A Microfinance  
loan changed  
my world...  
but Jesus  
changed my life.

Joanna  
Philippines

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AdVenture Fund Global (formally ICC Australia) is a recognized supporting ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the SPD, SSD, NAD and is a member of ASI and OCI. AdVenture Fund Global funds 134 staff in six countries. Joanna was empowered by a microloan, started a small business, repaid her loan and heard the Good News of Jesus Christ's soon return.

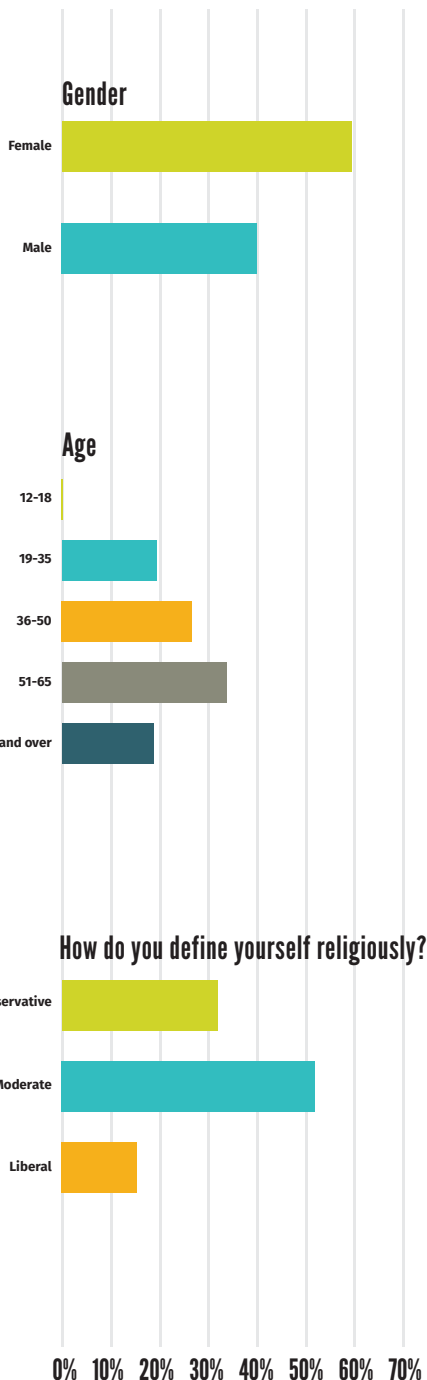
Sponsoring microloans is a wonderful way of providing a hand-up, not a hand-out, for impoverished mothers like Joanna. Hearing about the Hope in Jesus, is transforming lives, while their small business is supporting an education and nutritious food for their children - giving them a bright future.

[www.avfg.org/ar](http://www.avfg.org/ar)



## WE ASKED, YOU ANSWERED\*

*Adventist Review* thinks highly of your opinion. We're delighted and privileged to hear from you. The range and variety of your views is both fascinating and instructive. It's wonderful that we can share and exchange sometimes very different opinions and views in thoughtful, civil, constructive, and Christlike conversations. With your support and participation our dialogue has a bright future, and we expect to be better because of it. Thank you again. —Editors

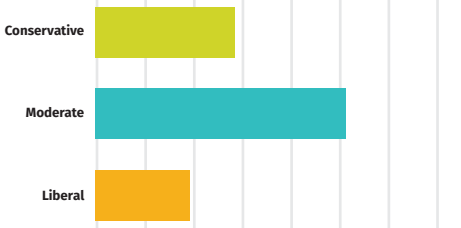


\* A total of 589 people responded to our posts on Facebook.

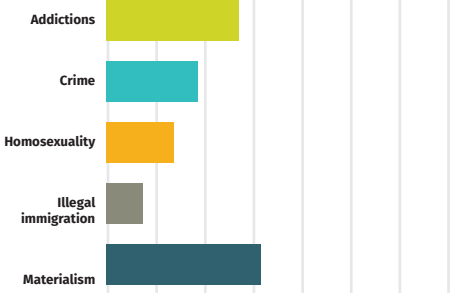




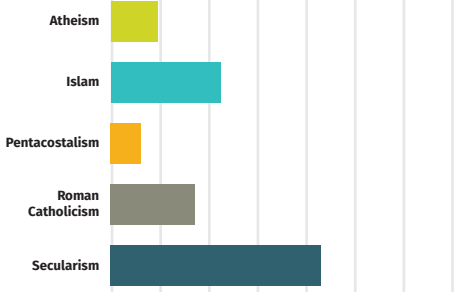
### How do you define yourself politically?



### About which of these social issues are you most concerned (choose one)?

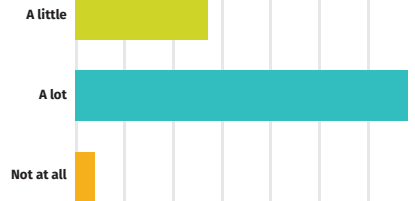


### Which of these religious movements concerns you the most (choose one)?

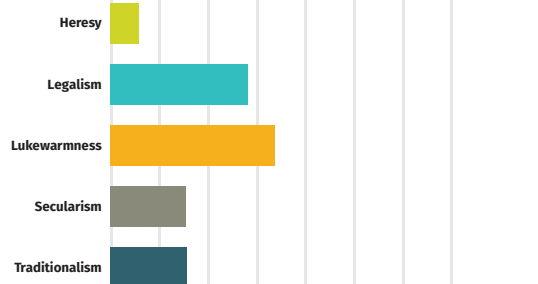


0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70%

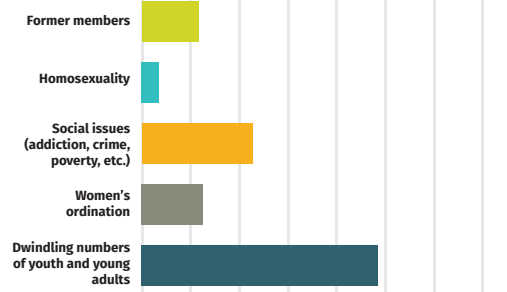
### How much should Adventists be involved in social issues?



### What do you see as the biggest threat to the success and vitality of the Adventist Church?



### On which issue do you wish the church would spend more time (choose one)?



0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70%

## Peculiar People Shouldn't Be Isolated

**O**ne thing I really enjoy about General Conference sessions is the opportunity to be around so many of my “own.”

If you've been to one, you've likely picked up on the special feeling in the area, a palpable vibe that comes only from being among like-minded people in the same place, for the same purpose.

Human nature supports the saying “Birds of a feather flock together,” which rings so true where Adventists are concerned. We definitely feel most comfortable around our own.

But if we spend our lives ensconced in only Adventist bubbles, I think we are actually flying in the face of the gospel commission.

That commission is all about going out. Going forth. Leaving where we are. Moving outward. Yet so many of us seem to prefer waiting for those we are meant to reach to come to us only when they are ready to change to *our* ways.

How fiercely do we cling to our “safe zones,” shunning the “nons” because we don't understand them, or worse, fear their influence on our way of thinking. When we do that, how exactly are we spreading the gospel?

One of the first and easiest places to start is within your community, deliberately seeking out opportunities to be among people who are not Adventist.

So if you comfortably exist within

Adventist campuses of your own making, get out of them. Don't fear the corruption of your values and beliefs from sheer exposure to the world. Instead, operate with the confidence that that which is true will surely stand. Right?


Join exercise classes or studios where you might befriend someone that you might have the opportunity to serve one day. And if the music has too much of a beat for your taste, just know it's designed to raise your heart rate. Smile and go with it.

If your new friend invites you to hang out at a certain café with worldwide locations, enjoy your herbal tea or juice, maybe split a lemon cake slice, and be a listening and laughing friend who loves unconditionally.

Are your neighbors having a picnic as you are returning from church? Don't be afraid to join them. Go enjoy the picnic lunch; make more friends; or strengthen neighborhood friendships as the Holy Spirit guides you in discovering more and more ways to bless and be blessed in service and joy.

Is there is a concert, charity drive, or other opportunity to be involved stemming from your local public school? Go and learn more about the things going on in your community, and see how you might be a better fellow citizen, ready to serve.

We have to go. We have to find. We have to serve. And we have to love.

None of that will happen if we live like we have to be isolated, because Jesus never asked us to. 

IF THE MUSIC HAS TOO MUCH OF A BEAT FOR YOUR TASTE, JUST KNOW IT'S DESIGNED TO RAISE YOUR HEART RATE. SMILE AND GO WITH IT.

CENTRAL CALIFORNIA CONFERENCE  
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