

AUGUST 2017: WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME? + HANDLING LIFE'S HOLES + TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL YEAR + REDEFINING MISSION + THE HARVEST IS READY + HOW DO YOU MEASURE LOVE?

ADVENTIST REVIEW



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TRENDING

THE MOST SHARED STORIES ON ADVENTISTREVIEW.ORG LAST MONTH:



- 1 Sports and the Sabbath
- 2 Mom Studies the Bible with Her Son's Murderer
- 3 Triplets Get Baptized at the Same Moving Ceremony
- 4 "People in Bright White Clothes Were Walking Around"
- 5 Two US Adventist Hospitals Now Offer World's Smallest Pacemaker

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BEYOND GUILT

Once a Sudanese child soldier, Emmanuel Jal reveals how he dealt with guilt overload. Learn the difference between healthy and unhealthy guilt in this episode of the *Beyond the Search* series.



IT'S NOT ABOUT ME

Jeremy Anderson, speaker and director for Next Level Living explains how to live a life infused with God's purpose in this segment from the *Fruitition Lab*.



A JOURNEY WITH JESUS

What does it mean to know Christ? Find out what the patriarchs and disciples discovered about walking with God in everyday life on this earth.

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BILL KNOTT



Religion on a Stick

The waffle vendor around the corner is doing brisk business as hundreds of tourists stream down the cobbled alleys of this ancient Belgian town. His sweet creations, individually dipped in chocolate and pistachio—each mounted on a stick—are carried triumphantly by pilgrims headed toward the square where the rock band is warming up.

Guttural throbs from an electric bass reverberate in this medieval quadrangle, raucously incongruous in a place bedecked with symbols of gentility and wealth. Tonight 10,000-watt amps will be loosening the mortar on a dozen aging structures.

At 2:00 p.m. the pilgrims take their final hasty bites and solemnly enter the Basilica of the Holy Blood, a twelfth-century chapel containing the region's most sacred relic. Tradition says that the clear crystal cylinder preserves the blood of Jesus, caught by Joseph of Arimathea as he helped entomb the dead Saviour.

Dozens of the faithful line up to mount the white marble altar on which the reliquary rests, each carefully placing their hands on the clear glass panel above the venerated blood. Some linger for a moment, deep in prayer; others glide with the practiced pace of those intent on keeping their itinerary.

Five minutes after ringing the bell and urging veneration of the relic, the robed young priest who spoke so movingly is changed into a flan-

nel shirt and corduroys, selling postcards in the gift shop.

It is temptingly easy for a Protestant like me to scorn the crass commercial culture that mingles waffles, Pink Floyd, and the blood of Jesus without a hint of irony—as if the life of faith could be so neatly compartmentalized. The errors of another's cultural religion—the specks (or spectacles) in another's eye—are easier to spot than the well-worn plank obscuring my own eyesight.

This October, what remains of Protestantism will celebrate 500 years since Martin Luther nailed his arguments to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. Thousands of PowerPoint presentations will image the tonsured priest, hammer in hand, to megachurches everywhere, while worship bands search hymnals for that venerable relic Luther penned—"A Mighty Fortress." Much will be said—and some of it heard—about *sola scriptura* and salvation by faith. And then 170 million North American Protestants will hurry home to munch fried chicken and thin pizza while waiting for the Bears to maul the Saints.

The differences separating Protestants from Rome are still real enough in doctrine and theology, despite a century of overtures and undertones about a grand reconciliation to reunite what the Reformers divided. The fundamental biblical distinctions about how lost human beings are saved—trusting only in the merits of Jesus; unaided by the good we sometimes do;

without the intercession of the saints—remain, unaltered by the passing of centuries.

But culturally the movement now celebrating its half millennium is increasingly akin to the one that Martin Luther, John Calvin, and John Knox protested. The truths for which 50 million martyrs died are now curious relics in many churches, replaced by softly styled worship songs comparing Jesus to new love. We take our faith in bite-sized pieces now—religion on a stick—all interspersed with cultural "norms" that biblical Protestantism should make us reconsider, and reform.

Where is the protest when the gospel of prosperity is welcomed in so many congregations? And where the cry when "optimism" and "positive thinking" replace the preaching of the cross? Where do we find a true, reforming spirit—challenging the accepted (and unbiblical) day of worship; questioning the doctrine of eternal torment; plainly stating that the dead await the coming of the Lord? Who raises the alarm when militant Christians use the power of civil government to enforce their angry views on justice, warfare, and the sacred freedom of minority religions?

I know one faith that, in its core, is still supremely Protestant. It is the faith to which, through grace, I have been called to faith, and even to minister the everlasting gospel, heralded by angels.

So here I stand; I can do no other. So help me God. 🖊

"The movement now celebrating its half millennium is increasingly akin to the one that Martin Luther, John Calvin, and John Knox protested."

Everywhere we had a table to which we could invite people, we did. Sometimes it was hard work, but we enjoyed it.

SHARAN BENNETT, LOMA LINDA, CALIFORNIA



SOCIAL ACTION

I congratulate *Adventist Review* for the topics you are addressing, particularly in the June issue, involving encouraging the young; God's care and concern for those who are vulnerable; resolving conflicts—there are too many to mention. But the illustrations are memorable.

On one topic I would like your interest: the urging to invite the stranger into our homes. The idea of a duty to make ourselves and our homes vulnerable to people whom, though obviously needy in many ways, we know nothing else about. These exhortations move us, whether we are young or old, living with our family or alone, whether we have much or little to offer. Having answered them throughout our adult life, my husband and I are well acquainted with the joy that can come with such encounters.

We have served long- and short-term mission assignments in several countries. Everywhere we had a table to which we could invite people, we did. Sometimes it was hard work, but we enjoyed it. There are ways to serve, no matter our age or our living situation. The same Lord who told us to be "harmless as doves" also warned us to be "wise as serpents." Practical advice. I'd like to read and hear more of it.

Sharan Bennett

Loma Linda, California

THE LONG VIEW OF THINGS

I've appreciated the conversation with Jon Paulien! As a theologian and especially a Revelation expert, I was inspired by his views of our times and prophecies.

Having served our church

worldwide, I've been asked many times about world events and their relationship with the second coming of our Lord. I like what Paulien said about when the disciples questioned Jesus. He said that 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.

I hope and pray that we should be more preoccupied in being ready for the coming of our Lord than to jump to conclusions and set timetables. Our major task is to preach the gospel. We have counsel from the Lord and Ellen White about last-day events and our glorious future!"

Leo Ranzolin

Estero, Florida

TO EAT OR FIGHT

I was enlightened by the article "To Eat or Fight" (May 2017). It made me wonder why the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church is presently involved in how administrative church structures function when doctrine is not the issue. It appears to me that the cultural majority want to protect their turf at the expense of the minority. Maybe the time will come when each member will have to decide to follow church governance or not. We all live on a rebellious earth. After all, it started in heaven.

William Zelenak

Greensboro, North Carolina

I've been asked many times about world events and their relationship with the second coming of our Lord. I like what Paulien said about when the disciples questioned Jesus.

LEO RANZOLIN, ESTERO, FLORIDA.

DOES GOD LIKE ME?

Regarding the article "Does God Like Me?" (March 2017): I wish it had made the distinction between God's love and God's favor. Yes, God loves and cares about everyone. But unless we are willing to obtain His favor by the process of conversion, we will all be lost. What we do or not do does not change how much God loves us. But it most certainly can affect whether or not God can bless us with His favor.

Our salvation depends on obtaining and retaining His favor, not merely that God cares about us as He does all of humanity in general. Though God loves everyone, only those who respond to the gospel through repentance and a life of obedience by grace receive and retain God's favor. We must be careful not to give sinners a false sense of security that since God loves them, they are automatically in a saving relationship. Only a daily new-birth experience can do that.

Leonard Lang

Newcastle, Wyoming

IN A FEW WORDS...

ADVENTIST HOSPITAL IN THE US WILL CLOSE NEXT MONTH

I hope and pray that whatever may happen may God's will prevail over this. To all the believers who faithfully worked in this beautiful hospital (though I may have not seen it, I believe many of God's wonderful miracles have taken place and were experienced by you all). May God bless you all and thank you for being selfless witnesses to people like us. Don't give up until God tells you to.

Janelle Vedamony, via Web

FIRST CAFÉ CHURCH OPENS ITS DOORS IN NEW YORK CITY

I do believe you will all make great strides for Jesus and many in attendance will be better for it.

Robert Leo, via Web

ADVENTIST INSTITUTE TO LAUNCH INITIATIVE TO REACH THE COMMUNITY

Amen! May this catch on at all our campuses. It is high time we have education reform, reform that begins in selflessly serving others, from the freshest freshman to the professional professors. May the reform begin with me.

Wyatt Allen, via Web

YOUR TURN

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

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Ben Carson, secretary of Housing and Urban Development, addresses attendees at the annual Religious Liberty Dinner organized by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

PHOTO: MARIA BYRK

BEN CARSON SPEAKS AT RELIGIOUS LIBERTY DINNER

EVENT HONORED ADVOCATES OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

BY SIERRA EMILAIRE, NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION NEWS

More than 150 diplomats, religious liberty advocates, and guests gathered on June 1, 2017, for the fifteenth annual Religious Liberty dinner. The annual event, held in the Religious Freedom Center of the Newseum Institute in Washington, D.C., celebrates a central human right: the freedom of religion or belief.

Ben Carson, U.S. secretary of Housing and Urban Development, delivered the keynote address. In his message Carson made the clear distinction between being free to worship and free to exercise reli-

gion, not only in the public sphere, but in private businesses and institutions. Carson praised the United States' stance on religious liberty.

"The Founding Fathers were very aware of the sectarian strife that affected Europe," Carson said. "They thought of a better way; they instituted a better way: a government that would not establish a single religion. They left the choice of religion up to each individual. This was more than tolerance; it was religious liberty."

Carson further encouraged attendees to promote mercy and com-

passion, rejecting hateful speech and actions in response to the recent murders of two Portland, Oregon, men who were killed by a White supremacist for intervening when two Muslim women were confronted with hate speech.

"While he represented the worst in humanity, his victims represented the best," Carson said.

Two awards and a special recognition of service were presented during the dinner to honor national and international religious liberty pioneers and advocates.

Kimberlee Colby, director of the



UNENCUMBERED WORSHIP AT ANDREWS UNIVERSITY.

Koinonia Day was organized on the campus of Andrews University as a next step following the #ItIs-TimeAU campaign. On April 29, 2017, New Life Fellowship, a historically Black congregation that meets in Seminary Chapel,

and the historically predominantly White congregation of Pioneer Memorial church, swapped worship spaces for that day's service. A fellowship meal facilitated further discussion, using randomly assigned seating and discussion starters at each table.

Christian Legal Society's Center for Law and Religious Freedom, was given the national award for dedicating more than 35 years to domestic religious liberty cases.

Colby commented on the importance of religious freedom and the recent cultural lack of respect for religious freedom, voicing concerns regarding the repercussions this shift may have on the capacity for people to live according to their religious convictions.

"I think if you want religious freedom for everyone, the golden rule is that the religious freedom you wish for yourself, you must extend to others," Colby said. "[Religious freedom] is really the basis for tolerance."

Thomas Farr, president of the Religious Freedom Institute, was given the international award for more than 20 years of advancing the cause of religious liberty.

Farr believes religious liberty is the first freedom of not only the Constitution but of the human soul. He shared concerns about the currently skewed perception of religious liberty both domestically and internationally. Farr then proposed ways to become involved in the fight for religious liberty.

"Individuals can live their lives and do what they do as citizens by protecting religious liberty," said Farr. "If they happen to be religious people, exercise religious liberty publicly, not just in your church, synagogue, or house of worship. If you are an entrepreneurial type or working in an allied field, get involved either with your church or religious organization, or with a separate NGO that advocates religious freedom. Finally, if you're an American, push your own government to do what it's required by law to do but is not doing very well: advance religious freedom in our foreign policy."

The third person honored was Bert Beach, longtime religious liberty leader for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Now nearly 90, the man known to have defined his church's interdenominational relations responded with self-effacing humor to the well-deserved honor.

The annual religious liberty dinner is sponsored by *Liberty* magazine, the International Religious Liberty Association, North American Religious Liberty Association, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and the Religious Freedom Center at the Newseum Institute. 🍴

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THE RELIGIOUS
FREEDOM YOU
WISH FOR
YOURSELF, YOU
MUST EXTEND
TO OTHERS.
//

REFUGEE SABBATH HIGHLIGHTS A "SANCTUARY CHURCH"

SHOCKING STORIES DRIVE VOLUNTEERS TO TEARS AND ACTION.

BY VICTOR HULBERT, TRANS-EUROPEAN DIVISION, AND INTER-EUROPEAN DIVISION NEWS

Jean* faced a stark choice: Take over leadership of her father's animist faith or face deadly consequences. Jean is a Christian. Her only choice was to leave not just her community but her country. She made it to Libya. That's where she planned to stay until a civil war started and the regime fell. Then she had to get out. She couldn't go home. The deadly peril of the Mediterranean was her only hope.

Patrick* also left his village in fear of his life. Tribal chiefs were fighting. In aiming to escape death at home, little did he realize how treacherous the road would be that would take him across deserts and mountains. He saw his friend die of dehydration by the roadside, not the only one to die on that journey.

Ray* shared how human smugglers dumped his group in the middle of the desert, where they had to walk with neither food nor water.

Ruth,* a Nigerian, had to leave



ADVENTISTS INVEST IN RESOURCES FOR DEAF MEMBERS.

Deaf members and residents in eight South American countries are benefiting from programs and resources developed by the Adventist Church in that region. In Brazil alone the church has approximately 1,500 members who

need special resources to study the Bible and share it with others. The country has launched 164 initiatives for the deaf, including worship programs designed exclusively for those who are deaf, and professional training courses.

home after her husband ran off with another woman. She could not support her two children and her mother. She did not want to go, but she had no choice. Pregnant and terrified, she traveled north by truck, then van, and eventually on foot. During her journey she saw women being raped, pushed into prostitution, and beaten and abused. But she praised God that even though she spent four months in a Libyan prison, she escaped the worst of the harm. She lost her baby at seven months; she suffered food poisoning. But with the help of friends she eventually made it onto a boat that was rescued by the Italian coast guard.

These stories are not designed to shock, but to share that in desperate circumstances people are forced to make extraordinary choices. They are not looking for the Promised Land in Europe; they are looking for security.

A SPECIAL CHURCH, A SPECIAL MISSION

The sad truth about Global Refugee Sabbath 2017 is that refugees are still with us. While news broadcasts may have moved on to other topics, refugees still take dangerous, sometimes fatal, boat trips across the Mediterranean. They are still struggling, trying to make the best out of desperate situations. Their stories cannot be forgotten. A statement made during a Saturday morning worship service live-streamed from a mostly refugee church in southern Italy, "Today's

businessperson can rapidly become tomorrow's refugee."

The church is in Castel Volturno, some 21 miles (35 kilometers) northwest of Naples. Here Seventh-day Adventists welcome migrants who have made the dangerous crossing from Libya to Italy, and who are now trying to build a future safe from

itself and constantly breaks down.

Refugee stories were told during the live-streamed services, a concert, and a series of heart-wrenching interviews for World Refugee Sabbath on June 17, 2017. The live-stream also included reports from Adventist Help in Mosul, ADRA Serbia, and from refugee camps of



Attendees and guests greet each other at the Castel Volturno Seventh-day Adventist Church in Italy for World Refugee Sabbath. EUD/TED/ADRA

the horrors they left behind.

David Malaguarnera, and a small group of caring members, share their love with about 70 asylum seekers who have settled in the area, many working as day laborers in fields and local factories. Others find menial jobs, anything that will give them a small income. The church is open for Italian lessons, and an ADRA Italy cosponsored agricultural project provides some job training and employment. ADRA Italy even runs a much-needed minibus service to help refugees go to work in a town so poor that bus service has been canceled. The minibus is as poor as the town

northern France, together with groups that are helping throughout Europe in countries such as Slovakia, Denmark, Germany, and Romania.

Most of the migrants in Castel Volturno are from sub-Saharan Africa. Some were Adventists before they arrived. Others found faith on their journey, or, like Jean, were befriended after arriving in Castel Volturno. Often exploited as day laborers and living in squalid accommodation, the church is their security and joy, as well as a base for witnessing. They worship, scrimping to find money for Sabbath clothes, or, as one woman told us, getting up at 5:00 a.m., scouring



ADVENTIST COOKBOOK NAMED BEST IN THE WORLD.

A cookbook authored by a Seventh-day Adventist nutritionist and printed by Signs Publishing, the Adventist publishing house in Australia, has been named the best in the world. *Food as Medicine*, which had been launched in Australia in November 2016, was named the Best Health and Nutrition Cookbook in the world for 2016 at the prestigious Gourmand World Cookbook Awards, held in Yantai, China, May 26-29, 2017.

the streets to find clothes discarded by partygoers the night before.

They sing, they worship, they pray, and they continuously rejoice that even in difficult circumstances God is with them. Other Christian churches also provide support.

PERSONAL STORIES

Dave is a big man. He moved from a rural farm in Ghana that was not large enough to support his family. He moved to Libya and worked successfully in construction. Life was better for him, and he sent money home to his family. He, too, was affected by the civil war and the consequent breakdown of law and order. He was targeted and threatened, even by little children. Teens picked on him, wielding planks of wood with nails hammered through them. But for the intervention of a brave Libyan, he would have been killed.

He no longer felt safe, but he couldn't go back home. Fully aware of the danger of the old wooden boats that smugglers cram with human cargo, often at gunpoint, then set adrift at sea, Dave saw this as his only chance. It took two attempts. The first time he was at sea for five days without food or water.

Eventually, the boat, with 200 passengers, drifted back to the Libyan shore and broke up on the beach. His fellow passengers called him "Padre," because he prayed with them and encouraged them with hope.

Today Dave works on an agricultural project partially sponsored by ADRA Italy, Lavoriamo terre mi-

granti (We Migrants Work the Land), learning both farming skills and people management. He is a leader in the local church, often supporting, praying with, and counseling new arrivals. His family is still in Ghana, and he works to send money home to support them.

Camera operators, journalists, and the entire Global Refugee Day volunteer team from ADRA Italy, the Trans-European and Inter-European divisions, Hope Channel Italy, and Radio Voce della Speranza (Voice of Hope) Rome, often found themselves near tears as they listened to the stories. But they also felt the warmth and hope in the hearts of the members.

ONE FAMILY

One Adventist transferred from the Naples church to Castel Volturno to help with translation. Her heart opened, and she fell in love with the refugees. "We are all one family," she said. "In this church, there is no skin color or prejudice; we are family."

That was what David Malaguarrera emphasized in his sermon, noting Paul's words that in Jesus Christ "there is neither Jew nor Greek, . . . bond nor free" (Gal. 3:28, KJV). For those who had found themselves in forced labor, or worse, during their journey, these words had real meaning.

For Corrado Cozzi, Inter-European Division communication director, who took a primary lead in organizing Global Refugee Day 2017, his purpose was clear. "We can create this contact today with the rest

of the world and say, 'We are with you; we know your story; we pray that the Lord could recover your deep wounds made by the challenges you had to escape from the tragedy of your life.'"

Cozzi, a newly blessed grandfather, found himself spontaneously cuddling babies, expressing the hope that these children now have a future.

Brimming with enthusiasm, Dag Kristian Pontvik, ADRA Italy country director, is seeking ways to do more for the migrants in this area and other parts of Italy. In addition to the great need to replace the local minibus, he wants to expand the project, and he encourages other churches in Italy to open their doors and hearts to the migrant community. Theology students at Villa Aurora, the Adventist college near Florence, are giving football training and companionship to a group of under-16 migrant boys housed in a nearby hostel.

Pontvik's plea goes far beyond Italy and a once-a-year event. His plea goes to the heart of Christianity and Total Member Involvement, noting the effectiveness of joining the compassion of Jesus for the dispossessed with the way people in transition are often more open to the gospel, especially when that gospel is expressed in practical ways.

There will be another refugee day next year. But he pleads, "Don't wait until then to get involved; see how you can make a difference now." 📌

**Names have been changed to protect privacy.*



MARANATHA FOUNDER JOHN FREEMAN PASSES TO HIS REST.

John Freeman, founder of Maranatha Volunteers International, passed to his rest on May 22, 2017. He was 95. Maranatha started

in 1969, when Freeman, an amateur pilot, contacted private pilots he knew and asked them to fly with volunteers to help build a church in Grand Bahamas. Freeman is survived by his wife of 74 years, Ida Mae Freeman, and five daughters.

NEWS BRIEFS

1



PAPUA NEW GUINEA HEADS TOWARD 300,000 MEMBERS.

If trends continue, Adventist membership in Papua New Guinea is set to reach 300,000 before the end of 2017. The growth is attributed to a groundswell of enthusiasm for discipleship and the Total Member Involvement initiative. Among many community-centered activities, youth groups are planting churches; ADRA volunteers are delivering Bibles to struggling families, along with food and household necessities; classrooms are being built; and free health care is being provided.

2



CAFÉ CHURCH OPENS IN NEW YORK CITY. In upper Manhattan, the MyGen Seventh-day Adventist Church recently opened its doors for its first official service. Among other things, the café-style church features round tables instead of pews. Organizers saw the need for a safe, judgment-free space for young people to attend. They emphasize that MyGen is a space where God can be worshipped in an interactive environment while fellowshiping with people who are uplifting and encouraging.

3



TOWARD A SHARED ETHICAL IDENTITY. Five Adventist health systems are pulling together to share bioethics resources and expertise, as well as consider some of today's most urgent issues of ethics in medicine. Members of the Adventist Bioethics Consortium include Adventist Health System, Kettering Health Network, Adventist Health, and Adventist HealthCare. This group comprises some 80 hospitals and 130,000 employees across the United States and is the second-largest faith-based health system in the United States.

4



ADVENTIST CONDUCTOR WINS AWARD. The Brahms Prize was recently presented to Swedish Seventh-day Adventist conductor Herbert Blomstedt. Since 1988 the prize, which honors an artist who has contributed to care for the music of Johannes Brahms, has been awarded to such musicians as Leonard Bernstein, Yehudi Menuhin, and Anne-Sophie Mutter. Blomstedt, who turned 90 in July, is known for his performances with world-renowned orchestras of music composed by German and Austrian composers.

5



ADVENTIST PASTOR MINISTERS TO FORMER DICTATOR

MANUEL NORIEGA. José Daniel Sánchez recently visited Manuel Noriega in prison, ministering to the former dictator who in 1992 became a baptized Adventist. According to Sánchez, Noriega enjoyed books by Ellen White. "I am a different person since I have given my life to Christ," Noriega told Sánchez. "I talk to God every day, and I know Jesus is my Savior who has forgiven my many sins." Noriega died on May 29, 2017.



William Clinton Scales Jr., former director of the Ministerial Association of the North American Division, passed away on May 27, 2017.

PHOTO: NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION NEWS

WILLIAM SCALES, JR., PASSES TO HIS REST

**FIRST MINISTERIAL DIRECTOR IN NORTH AMERICA
WAS A WELL-KNOWN EVANGELIST.**

BY KIMBERLY LUSTE MARAN, NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION NEWS

William Clinton Scales, Jr., a pastor and evangelist who spent his life in service to the Lord, passed away on May 27, 2017, near Birmingham, Alabama. He was 82. Approximately 750 attended a celebration of his life and legacy on June 11, 2017, at Oakwood University church in Huntsville, Alabama.

Throughout his career Scales conducted public evangelism campaigns, baptizing thousands and establishing new churches. "He was a true gentleman," said Daniel R. Jackson, president of the North American Division (NAD) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. "A great preacher, W. C. Scales served the Lord wholeheartedly."

This year, despite being ill, Scales was planning an evangelistic campaign for this summer. At the time of his death Scales was serving as pastor of the Bessemer First and Brent Seventh-day Adventist churches after the South Central Conference called him out of retirement in 2012.

"William Clinton Scales, Jr., represented a genre of Adventist preachers who clearly saw their ministry as a 'calling' rather than a 'profession,'" said Alvin Kibble, vice president for the NAD, and friend and colleague of Scales. "He

was a minister who, in my estimation, 'knew himself' and perceived the work of ministry in the light of his God-given abilities and character. He fully and graciously committed himself untiringly to the vision God had for his ministry, and successfully completed it."

Scales officially retired in 1997, after being appointed the North American Division's first Ministerial Association secretary in 1986. During this time Scales helped train hundreds of pastors using evangelistic materials he helped create. In 1997 he was inducted into the Martin Luther King, Jr., Collegium of Preachers and Scholars at Morehouse College. Before his tenure with the NAD, Scales served as an associate secretary of the General Conference Ministerial Association from 1978 to 1985.

Scales was born in Charleston, West Virginia. He gave his heart to Christ after almost dying in a car accident when he was 8. Scales promised God that he would become a preacher and devote his life to evangelism. This promise charted the course of his life. Scales graduated from both Oakwood University and the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University.

During college Scales sang with the Cathedral Quartet, a group that traveled during summers with Scales' mentor, E. E. Cleveland, and continued to perform for many years. In 1956 he graduated with a B.A. in Religion and Theology. Scales married Lois Yates (1934-1998) and continued his education, earning his master's degree from Andrews in 1958. Both institutions later honored Scales as an Alumnus of the Year.

Scales began pastoral ministry in the Central States Conference. Ordained in 1962, Scales served in the Allegheny Conference (later in the Allegheny East Conference) for many years. He worked with Cleveland to hone an evangelistic ministry approach known as the Real Truth program. This program, strongly influenced by the book *Evangelism*, by Ellen G. White, promotes a wholistic approach to evangelism. The program included presenting the gospel, health principles, family enrichment, youth outreach, music, literature evangelism, and special emphasis on lay member involvement.

Scales is survived by his wife, Pat, whom he married in 1999; two children; three stepchildren; nine grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren. 🕊



Donovan Mitchell, mayor of Mandeville, gets his blood pressure checked from Kadia Sinclair, a nurse at the Mandeville Comprehensive Clinic. PHOTO: NIGEL COKE

BUS AND TAXI DRIVERS GET FREE HEALTH SCREENINGS

CHURCH INITIATIVE SEEKS TO INSTILL A DESIRE FOR A HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE.

BY NIGEL COKE, INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION

Scores of bus and taxi drivers were the beneficiaries of free health checkups during a “Know Your Numbers” health drive organized by the Three Angels Pharmacy, with support from members of local Seventh-day Adventist churches, health agencies, and companies in Mandeville, Jamaica.

Two hundred forty of the approximately 400 persons registered were bus and taxi drivers who received the opportunity to be tested for body mass index (BMI), blood glucose, cholesterol, blood pressure, eye, and HIV, on May 27-28, 2017. The volunteer team also offered healthy lifestyle tips and general counseling, along with prayers for those who requested it. A volunteer medical doctor was also available.

“In general, the concern is that most of the persons who came were hypertensive,” said Leonie Bailey, a retired nurse. Many were also prediabetic based on their numbers, she added.

“They need to make lifestyle changes to correct the current trajectory,” explained Bailey. “They need more rest, exercise, a diet

with more fruits and vegetables, and also to trust in God.”

Seventh-day Adventist entrepreneur and Three Angels Pharmacy owner Rohan McNellie felt satisfied that he, along with the team of volunteers, did their best to share the love of Jesus through his recently launched mobile clinic.

The idea of this outreach to the men and women who are responsible for transporting members of the public in Mandeville came about when a taxi driver friend of McNellie died suddenly a few months ago, explained McNellie. “It struck me that maybe if he knew his ‘numbers,’ he could have made the necessary change to his lifestyle and could have been alive today,” he said.

“It is very important that people be made aware of their health conditions. I know many of these drivers are so busy that they will not find the time to do health checkups until it is too late,” added McNellie. “This is my gift to the community because I want all of us to be in good health.”

The mayor of Mandeville, Coun-

selor Donovan Mitchell, who also had his “numbers” checked in the park, commended the Seventh-day Adventist Church for reaching out to this special sector of the business community.

“What I see here today is the epitome of Adventism: knowing that a number of known Adventists are out here doing what they have to do on the Sabbath, which is doing what the Lord said in Matthew 25:40: ‘Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me’ [KJV],” said Mitchell. “It is not just about churchgoing, but about what you have to do to help humanity,” he added. “I am sure the taxi drivers and the general public appreciate what is being done by the church.”

“This is a marvelous initiative; I love this,” exclaimed taxi driver of more than 20 years Garfield Preddie. “It helps me to know my body status, and puts me on my p’s and q’s to correct the areas that are not in line with good healthy norms.”

The Mandeville Police Department has asked assistance from the Three Angels Pharmacy Mobile Clinic for their upcoming health drive.

Since its launch in March 2017, the Three Angels Pharmacy Mobile Clinic has offered free medical checkup to several communities in Manchester, Trelawny, St. Ann, and Clarendon. More health screenings are scheduled for the future. ▀



ADVENTIST CENTENARIANS FEATURED ON NATIONAL TV

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS ADVANTAGES OF ADVENTIST HEALTH PRINCIPLES.

BY MARCOS PASEGGI, SENIOR CORRESPONDENT, ADVENTIST REVIEW

A group of Seventh-day Adventists from California were recently featured on *The Today Show*, a talk and news program followed by millions of viewers every weekday morning. As part of “Eating to 100 TODAY,” a series about the secrets of a long and healthy life, NBC News special anchor Maria Shriver visited Loma Linda, California, not far from Los Angeles. The town, known for its sizable population of Seventh-day Adventists, is one of the “blue zones,” places in the world with the highest percentage of people living healthfully to age 100.

“Some of the most amazing people making it to 100 are just one hour east of Los Angeles,” said Shriver as she introduced the segment. She then summarized some of the major health habits of the town’s Adventist residents, including abstaining from eating meat and never touching alcohol or tobacco.

In her visit to Loma Linda, Shriver was accompanied by Dan Buettner, author of *The Blue Zones*, a book

that followed Buettner’s article in *National Geographic* magazine, where he first described these areas in the world known for people who seem to thrive even in old age.

Buettner, a National Geographic Fellow, shared with the audience that the Adventist Health Study has shown that Seventh-day Adventists live seven to 10 years longer than the general population of North American. He also emphasized some of the main tenets of Adventist health, including Sabbath rest.

“Here Sabbath is very powerful, from sunset on Friday until sunset on Saturday. You are focusing on your family; you are focusing on your God,” Buettner said. “In the afternoon [Adventists] take a nature walk, where they can reverse the information of the worry and the hurry of our everyday lives.”

After Shriver mentioned that the origins of this lifestyle can be traced back to Adventist Church cofounder Ellen White, Buettner said that the diet followed by many Loma Linda residents comes directly from the

Bible. “This is the diet of the Garden of Eden,” he said. “Some of the greens [people eat here] have five times the antioxidants of wine.”

Shriver had lunch with a group described in the show as “some of the sharpest centenarians you’ll ever meet.” The event itself was described as “a lunch hundreds of years in the making,” as the combined age of guests was nearly 800 years.

“When you come here and start meeting these centenarian people, you find they are all likable people,” said Buettner. “They’ll touch when they talk to you, and they love telling you their stories.”

Shriver also made a point that it is not only about age but about how you get there. “These people, as you can see, are cognitive-healthy as well,” she said.

Buettner, whose follow-up book, *The Blue Zones Solution*, became a best seller after it was published in 2015, said that it is never too late to start. “You can be 90 years old, and you go plant-based, and you will add to your life expectancy,” he said. Buettner is working on a third book that will include some of the recipes he learned and tried at Loma Linda.

Shriver closed the segment by summarizing some of the latest health findings as embodied in most of Loma Linda centenarians, especially as Americans try to curb and even prevent Alzheimer’s. “[We must] eat properly, exercise, sleep, and be around positive people,” she said. ▀



THE HEAT IS TURNING UP

SIGNS OF JESUS' COMING CALL US TO EMBRACE GOD'S MISSION.

BY DWIGHT NELSON, PASTOR, PIONEER MEMORIAL CHURCH

The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and the sun was allowed to scorch people with fire. They were seared by the intense heat and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify him” (Rev. 16:8, 9).

Let me be clear: I don't believe we're in the midst of the seven last plagues. But let's go apocalyptic for a moment. That is, after all, the point of my weekly blog “The Fourth Watch.” I scan rapidly mounting harbingers that civilization is in the throes of its final watch, what the Romans called “the fourth watch”—the darkest period of night before dawn.

On June 19, 2017, the journal *Nature* published a study, “Global Risk of Deadly Heat.” Commenting on the study, news media reported: “Deadly heat waves like the one now broiling the American West are bigger killers than previously thought and they are going to grow more frequent, according to a new comprehensive study of fatal heat conditions. . . . A team of researchers examined 1,949 deadly heat waves from around the world since 1980 to look for trends, define when heat is so severe it kills, and fore-

cast the future. They found that nearly one in three people now experience 20 days a year when the heat reaches deadly levels. But the study predicts that up to three in four people worldwide will endure that kind of heat by the end of the century, if global warming continues unabated.”

No doubt inhabitants of the cities experiencing the sun's deadly scorching recently would be inclined to concur: Phoenix, 119 degrees (with planes grounded because it was too hot for them to take off); Las Vegas, 117 degrees; Sacramento, 107 degrees; Death Valley, 127 degrees.

Camilo Mora of the University of Hawaii, lead author of the study, predicted, “The United States is going to be an oven. . . . This is already bad. We already know it. . . . Empirical data suggest it's getting much worse.”

Only in the United States? Back in May, Turbat, Pakistan, registered a lethal 128 degrees, ranking it “among the five hottest temperatures reliably measured on Earth.”

The death tally isn't in yet, of course. But a sober reminder of how high the human toll can be is the 2003 heat wave in Europe that

claimed more than 70,000 lives. The 72 deaths in Portugal in June from dry, sun-ignited wildfires are a reminder that no place is exempt from deadly heat.

“And the sun was allowed to scorch people with fire.”

We are not experiencing the fourth plague, whose apocalyptic proportions will surely dwarf the statistics scientists are scrambling to interpret. Nevertheless, Jesus warned His followers that before His return, “There will be signs in the sun. . . . For the heavenly bodies will be shaken” (Luke 21:25, 26).

Shall we be afraid? No. Shall we be reminded that we live on the edge of God's escalating endgame? We must.

I was on assignment recently in Washington, D.C. The chaotic mix of fear (my plane landed just hours after the shootings at the congressional baseball practice), confusion, and capricious volatility the world over surely compels those of us who call ourselves Adventists to shake off the numbing lethargy that paralyzes the heart of our faith community and our own souls as well.

Now more than ever, the masses that live in Washington, D.C., and Chicago, Detroit and Los Angeles—the scores of urban centers in this nation—must be warned that “the end of all things is near” (1 Peter 4:7). It is simply not enough for us to comfort our end-time-hungry souls with the reminder that Jesus is coming soon. You don't win this game by guessing how close we are to the end. The only winning left on this deteriorating planet is the mission of the Almighty to save every lost earth child of His while there is still time. Forget the signs: we must embrace the mission now rather than later.

Because later will one day be too late.

So what, pray tell, are we waiting for? ♣



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- » HANDLING LIFE'S HOLES
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DISCOVER



**“Our living transcends the now
while demonstrating its
relevance to the now:
we live with a view to tomorrow
that constantly makes for
a better today.”**

Being Seventh-day Adventist, p. 30

*Taste and see:
the Lord is good!*

MERRILL, WISCONSIN

“It doesn’t make any sense to me, either,” complained my father to his workers in the basement of a church in Merrill where they were installing a new furnace. “I told the church leader that while we wouldn’t be done with the job by morning, we could work straight through the night and have the furnace producing some heat for them before their services, which are scheduled for Saturday morning.

“But the elder rejected the offer. ‘No,’ he said. ‘It is unacceptable for you to be working here during the night,’ which he referred to as the Sabbath. So we’ll have to come back on Monday to finish the job. I told him we even brought food with us to last until it was time for their services to begin; but he would not give an inch. He said it would be the Sabbath, and we would not be allowed to work here on the Sabbath. We will need to be out of here in a couple hours.”

My father and the men soon packed up their tools and left. The following morning church

Academy. Refreshments were set out. When her boyfriend came, they started passing around the cookies and drink; but we were confused. At our house, drinks were black coffee, beer, and other alcoholic beverages. But the elder served water and orange juice. “Is your daughter sick?” my father asked. For us, orange juice was used when one was unwell.

“No, she isn’t sick,” the elder said, “but we don’t have time now to explain. I’ll be glad, though, to come to your house to explain.” We agreed on a time. We didn’t know it then, but we had just agreed to take Bible studies.

As we drove away, my mother said with some insight, “Dad, I’m afraid that you have gone and done it this time. I’m afraid our life will never be the same again.”

The elder came to our house every week to study with us. At the end of the lesson series, the elder brought the pastor, who invited us to be baptized. My father declined, but said that he would like to study the materials again if the elder would leave them with us.

THE DIFFERENCE

members came to worship in an icy, cold church.

A few months after the job at the church was completed, the same head elder came to my father’s place of business. While they chatted, my father asked about the furnace in the elder’s house. He had a plan to do more business with the elder. Soon he had an appointment to go to the elder’s house to measure for a new furnace. The elder had a plan too—to witness to my father!

When my father and mother arrived, the elder’s daughter was packing to go back to Wisconsin

The elder explained, “We don’t do it like that, but I’ll come back next week.” He did. And by the time he had completed the lessons with us the second time, we had started attending church. Soon we were baptized. In one day my dad stopped smoking and drinking, and we became vegetarians.

What a difference Jesus made when He entered our life and our home!

Even though I was only in second grade, I decided not to taste alcohol anymore. In fact, with



JESUS MAKES

DON SCHNEIDER

sorrow I quit playing with my special Roy Rogers toy guns that had been given to me by my favorite uncle. I just couldn't imagine Jesus going around shooting people with a pistol. What a difference Jesus made, not only in our family but specifically to this 7-year-old boy!

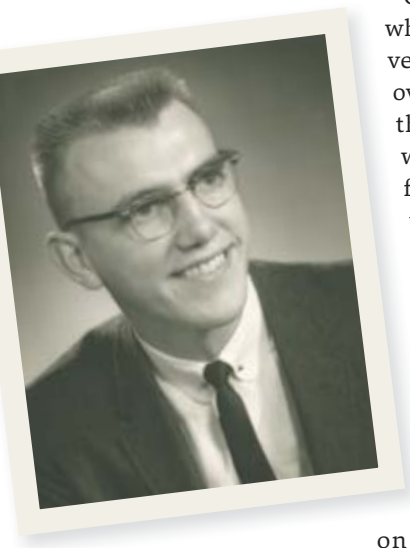
COLUMBUS, WISCONSIN

A few years later I was a student at Wisconsin Academy. But my experience with Jesus was not

as strong as it had been when I first met Him. I didn't give up on Him completely, but I certainly didn't have that earlier excitement about Him. I actually thought I could be more popular on campus without Jesus.

But Jesus didn't give up on me. He sent one of my friends to preach a very powerful sermon to me. I was getting my hair cut by one of the students when he said, "How long are you going to fool around like this? If you want to be a Christian,

then be one. If not, then just forget it; but don't be a hypocrite." For months his direct speech really bothered me.



One Friday night when the academy vesper service was over, I left alone. At the boys dorm, I walked past the first entrance to the main door, up the few steps, and turned left. I went to the second room on the left, Room 139—my room. My roommate was gone. I sat for a moment on the bed, then

went over to the door and locked it. Turning again to the bed, I knelt and gave my life to Jesus once again. Knowing that He forgave me, I asked Him to take charge of my life.

The very next morning I was up and ready for breakfast. As I walked across campus to the cafeteria, I was not the same person who had entered the dorm the night before. I was singing "I've wandered far away from God, now I'm coming home. The paths of sin too long I've trod; Lord, I'm coming home."

My friend Jim Clizbe walked with me. He laughed, "You have changed keys three times already."

But that did not matter to me. I was back with Jesus. I kept on singing, and I'm still singing. I notice that whenever I am the closest to Jesus, I am the most eager to witness about Him—my feelings about Him just seem to spill out.

ABA, NIGERIA

My wife, Marti, and I had agreed to conduct a series of meetings in Nigeria. We didn't know what to expect. Our meetings at the soccer stadium in Aba would be sent by satellite to many locations all over Africa: an hour of music by local choirs; a short break; an item by the series choir, followed by the Heralds Quartet. Then Marti's short talk describing people she had met while she had been

exploring that day. Standing at the edge of the platform, I heard the union ministerial director introduce me: "The next voice you hear will be man of God Don Schneider."

I whispered, "Lord, let it be so."

The weather was so hot that my suit was soaking wet by the time I concluded my sermons each night. After the workers in the meetings were served a light supper, we would head back to the hotel. One evening while listening to the choirs, I began to feel sick—not just a little sick, but really sick. It was only minutes until I was to begin, but I saw no way for me to preach. I found Marti, and told her about my condition, instructing her to tell no one. I told her that she should watch me, and that if I began to hang on to the pulpit, she should get the quartet and have them sing until I could recover.

But Marti had her own plan. She spoke to our leader, Bob Folkenberg, who spoke with the local conference president, who found a local doctor, who gave her a handful of pills for me to take. In addition, she also enlisted the quartet to stand by and be ready if they were needed.

It is so moving to know Jesus is with you at a time like this. He was with me as I was introduced, and as I began to preach. But as I neared the end of the sermon, I realized that Jesus was working a miracle. I continued to preach, all the while praying that Jesus would help me finish. Then I prayed that He would help me make the appeal. Soon I realized that Jesus *had indeed* worked the miracle. The sermon was done, and I was walking off the platform.

But the miracles didn't stop there! Yes, Jesus allowed me to be part of a miracle so that many thousands of people all over Africa might hear God's message. But there were more to come that same evening.

As I stepped down from the stage the pain returned with a vengeance. Marti met me, showing me the several pills that the local doctor had provided. In another few minutes we were taken to the hotel a mile away.

I was in terrible pain and knew that I would need some special help if I was going to be able to preach the following night. "Let's try to call our son, young Don," I urged. (He is a physician in Juneau, Alaska.) It would take a *string* of miracles to get that done.

Marti picked up the hotel phone, and for the first time, she got through to the front desk. A miracle! She explained that we needed to reach my office in the General Conference building in Washington, D.C. The call went through! Another miracle! Marti actually reached Janet Aldea, my secretary, several time zones and half a world away. Miracle upon miracle! Marti explained to Janet that we needed to talk to our son in Juneau. Janet reached the clinic where young Don is one of the partners; but the receptionist kindly explained that it was Don's day off, that he was probably on the mountain skiing and wouldn't be able to be reached until the next day.

Suddenly the woman interrupted herself: "Oh, he just walked past the back door. Hold on, I'll run and get him." Janet told Don that we needed to talk to him, and he immediately began trying to call us at our hotel. Another miracle . . . the call got through to the hotel, then to us.

Marti gave Don a quick explanation and described each of the pills—eight pills, two of each kind. About some Don said, "It's OK to take those." But about others he said, "Those are so powerful that if you take those there will be no way you'll be able to preach tomorrow." Actually I did *not* take any of them. However, Marti and I prayed together. In minutes the miracle happened. I drank water and went to sleep. Jesus was there with us in our hotel room. He healed me!

As we rode to the meeting the next evening, I began talking with our driver. "Isaac, last Sabbath was a wonderful day." He asked why. I told him that it was because my doctor had been baptized. Then I said, "This Sabbath is going to be really wonderful too. You know why? Because this Sabbath *our driver* will be baptized! We can't talk more now, but please talk to your wife this evening, and we will visit tomorrow."

The next Sabbath, both Isaac and his wife were baptized. That too was a miracle. It is so exciting when Jesus is with us.

JOSHUA, TEXAS


Just a few Sabbaths ago while I was writing this, our pastor needed to be gone. He asked me to preach for him. I agreed, but I told Jesus, "I'll do it, and I will give an appeal for someone to make a commitment to be baptized. Lord, would You give us an answer to the appeal?"

Jesus was there with us in our hotel room.



Marti and I prayed a lot, and on Sabbath there was another miracle: a man sent me a note after the sermon that he wanted to be baptized.

What difference does Jesus make? My own story tells us that Jesus changes our interests, our desires, our cravings; and He lives in our lives every day "to will and to do for His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13, NKJV).^{*} What a miracle that is!

What a difference Jesus makes! 

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Don Schneider was president of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists from 2000 to 2010. He and Marti live—and still serve—in retirement in Denver, Colorado, United States.

The Lazy Days Of Summer



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HANDLING LIFE'S HOLES

Albert Einstein once said, "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." Are we doing the same things and expecting different results? That's insane. Or are we in tune with life lessons and learn from them? That's sanity.

In *There's a Hole in My Sidewalk** Portia Nelson shares a remarkable poem, *An Autobiography in Five Short Chapters*, which implies how we can choose a life of sanity over insanity.

"Chapter One of My Life. I walk down the street. There is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I fall in. I am lost. . . . I am helpless. It isn't my fault. It still takes forever to find a way out.

"Chapter Two. I walk down the same street. There's a deep hole in the sidewalk. I pretend I don't see it. I fall in again. I can't believe I'm in the same place! But it isn't my fault. It still takes a long time to get out.

"Chapter Three. I walk down the same street. There's a deep hole in the sidewalk. I see it there. I still fall in. It's a habit! My eyes are open. I know where I am. It is my fault. I get out immediately.

"Chapter Four. I walk down the same street. There's a deep hole in the sidewalk. I walk around it.

"Chapter Five. I walk down a different street."

People use this poem in a variety of ways. It has been applied to personal growth: how can I improve my life and help others improve theirs? Others see it as a spiritual analogy about how the human race fell into sin, and how the plan of salvation can provide a way out.

Still others argue that it outlines the anatomy of temptation and how to discover the way of escape (see 1 Cor. 10:13).

Whatever your perspective, believers can gather seven practical insights about how to handle the holes of life in a *careful* manner. Here we go:

1. *Be Conscious.* Life is full of pitfalls, detours, roadblocks, dark holes. Don't be surprised or shocked. Expect them.

2. *Be Aware.* An evil enemy is deliberately, systematically creating holes for us to fall into and never get out of. Avoid them.

3. *Be Responsible.* Our actions have implications. A ripple effect impacts our lives and futures, and those around us. Protect them.

4. *Be Efficacious.* Through the combination of our will with God's we can successfully avoid holes and be champion hole avoiders. Facilitate it.

5. *Be Faithful.* It's not about how we feel about holes, whether we like holes; it's about giving glory to God and avoiding debilitating holes. Resist them.

6. *Be Useful.* With the grace gathered from dealing with the holes of life, become an expert on hole avoidance. Advocate it.

7. *Be Loving.* Holes can make us compassionate about the hole proneness of life, and give us grace and strength to be saved from it. Share it.

Hence a sane way to handle life's holes. What will be our response? 🍀

*Beyond Words Publishing, 1993.

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TRANSFORMATION TIPS
DELBERT W. BAKER



LIFE IS FULL OF PITFALLS, DETOURS, ROADBLOCKS, DARK HOLES. DON'T BE SURPRISED OR SHOCKED.



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I AM THE GREATEST

But are you, really?

Muhammad Ali may well have been the most famous boxer of all time. Through his boxing career he won 56 of his 61 fights, 37 of them by knockouts. Yet the dimensions of his fame relate much more to what he said than to what he did in boxing rings. His oft-repeated declaration, “I am the greatest,” may be his most memorable proclamation. Much of it was clearly tongue-in-cheek: “If you even dream of beating me you’d better wake up and apologize.”

GREATNESS ACCORDING TO ALI

Ali may also be the biggest braggart of all, though he would say, “It’s not bragging if you can back it up.” His bragging may also have served for more than tongue-in-cheek, attention-getting, or intimidating opponents.

Maybe he was also psyching himself: “I am the greatest, I said that even before I knew I was.” And again: “It’s the repetition of affirmations that leads to belief. And once that belief becomes a deep conviction, things begin to happen.” And here is another of his quotations about convincing the world that apply very well to convincing oneself: “I figured that if I said it enough, I would convince the world that I really was the greatest.”

Ali’s bold claim, “I am the greatest,” sets him apart from those of us who tend to speak more softly. The difference in volume may well be more a function of our inferior giftedness, hubris, or lung capacity, than abhorrence of Mr. Ali’s riveting capers. More than a few venerate rather than abhor Ali for his ability to make out-

geous predictions that he then fulfilled at least a half dozen times. Not his ruckus, perhaps, but maybe we could find his grand self-centeredness uncomfortably close to the calculations that settle our choice of career, circle of friends, or life companion; or the data that define our decisions on saving and owning instead of donating and sacrificing.

GREATNESS ACCORDING TO JESUS

The disciples of Jesus were not immune to this way of thinking, as the Gospels show them, on more than one occasion, bickering over who was the greatest. In Matthew 18 they come around to asking Jesus to settle the argument: naive perhaps, but proof that they were serious about it.

Jesus gives them an answer that sets the standard for them and for all time. Combining all that the Gospels record on this question, I find three ways in which Jesus would have us practice greatness.

The first of these illustrates the unity of simplicity and profundity that characterize God's requirement for heaven: "Unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3).¹ But what does that mean? Aren't these grown disciples already acting like little children as they bicker among themselves? Yet this is clearly not what Jesus means, since He insists that to achieve that state they need to be converted.

The English word "converted" bears a Latin root, *vert*, that means "turn." And physical import of the Greek word Matthew uses for "converted" requires the same action—turning away or turning around, as when Mary, on Resurrection morning, is stooping to peer into Jesus' tomb. Two angels in there engage her in conversation, and Jesus is standing behind her, but she cannot see Him until something makes her turn around (John 20:14).

Spiritually speaking, the more grown-up we become, we and the disciples of Matthew 18, the less prepared we are to enter God's kingdom and the more we need something to make us turn around. The more responsible we are, the less we need to depend on anyone else to take care of us. Jesus knows, because He knows everything. He knows, because He shared and observed Nazarene and Galilean growing up, that the processes of our acculturation make people less and less ready to

enter God's kingdom. So that we cannot be ready for heaven except something makes us turn around, except we are changed, converted, and remade as little children.

And Jesus is ready to help. According to Ellen White: "When, in the place of leaning upon human understanding or conforming to worldly maxims, we sit at the feet of Jesus, eagerly drinking in His words, learning of Him, and saying, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?' our natural independence, our self-confidence, our strong self-will, will be exchanged for a childlike, submissive, teachable spirit."²

Second, Jesus' prescriptive answer also involves the combined questions of respect and the value of a soul: children in their meek unpretentiousness deserve equal respect, and as high an evaluation as He. Greatness in His kingdom is childlike humility (Matt. 18:4).

"And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me" (verse 5). Whereas in your world greatness is lordship and authority exercised over others, in Mine, greatness is service: "Whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave" (Matt. 20:27). Horrifying and offensive it may be to the unconverted world, but in the

Children in their meek unpretentiousness deserve equal respect, and as high an evaluation, as He.

kingdom of Jesus the post of servitude is the highest, noblest choice. Ministry to others, a life surrendered for the sake of others, is the incomparably noble option.

The third and best application of Jesus' prescriptions is His own person and life: "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (verse 28). Even "while His disciples were contending as to who should be greatest in the promised kingdom, He girded Himself as a servant and washed the feet of those who called Him Lord and Master."³ They would never forget the lesson of that act of humility on

The crucifixion Paul shared with Christ we also share: it is the daily opportunity to make a choice based upon love and duty instead of inclination and self.

the part of the one whose powerfully efficacious sacrifice liberated them from sin's slavery.

AMBITION ACCORDING TO PAUL

Paul did not always follow the Jesus model. But considering the faces and manner of those he persecuted, seeing Stephen die, and, finally, meeting Jesus on the Damascus road, taught him the difference that self-abnegation makes. After that encounter Paul could no longer find anything in his heritage or accomplishments to extol. Being like Jesus became his goal and his message (Phil. 2:5-11). "I have been crucified with Christ," he says (Gal. 2:20). Which may cause someone to wonder: What does he mean? Crucifixion was nothing to brag about: the cross stood as a symbol of ultimate cruelty. As a means of eliminating criminals it stood as a testimony of shame. But one weekend would change everything.

It was the weekend that Rome's procurator, Pilate, authorized the killing of Jesus of Nazareth, God's perfect Innocent (1 Peter 1:18, 19), as Judea's ultimate criminal, impaled between two guilty scoundrels (John 19:19; Matt. 27:38). Followers of the Nazarene witnessed His abuse and murder; observed and assisted in His burial; and retreated to places of concealment in case the murderous authorities were planning to come after them too.

But before the weekend was out, those same followers who saw Him die were walking and talking and feasting with Him; embracing His feet and exclaiming upon His deity (Luke 24:13-49; John 20:19, 28). Everything changed for follower and nonfollower, for believer and unbeliever. Devotees and skeptics all now possessed evidence never before available: God the Father had declared Jesus of Nazareth to be "the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4).


Being like Jesus mattered: the humility of His incarnation and the humiliation of His execution, as He sacrificed Himself to save the sinners who

murdered Him, had brought Him the highest exaltation. Now He possessed a name above every name, the name at which earth and heaven shall bow, and before which all would confess His Lordship (see Phil. 2:5-11).

NOT I [OR ALI], BUT CHRIST

The crucifixion Paul shared with Christ we also share: it is the daily opportunity to make a choice based upon love and duty instead of human inclination and self. Ellen White observed, "The mind must be trained through daily tests to habits of fidelity, to a sense of the claims of right and duty above inclination and pleasure."⁴ Those daily tests, successfully negotiated, prepare us for the kingdom of God, where no position is gained through favoritism. "The crown and the throne are the tokens of a condition attained; they are the tokens of self-conquest through our Lord Jesus Christ."⁵

Unrelenting fighting that brings you out on top in the corporate world may define greatness for some. Awkward contention within the church for some post or other, deemed significant, may define greatness for others. "You win some, you lose some," we say. Ali's greatness is of that sort: winning some, and also losing some.

But Jesus has never lost either a skirmish or a round or a battle. In fact, He has already won the war of all the ages by His triumphant emergence from Joseph's tomb. In His life on earth He faced every temptation of the flesh and never yielded. Unlike Ali, His winning streak against Satan and sin goes on to infinity. He is the great one who has shown us, and who can teach us how to attain our own victories through every round against sin (Heb. 4:14-16). Through Him and through His love we can be "more than conquerors" through every day and every challenge of our lives (Rom. 8:37). 

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

² Ellen G. White, *Our High Calling* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1961), p. 99.

³ Ellen G. White, *Lift Him Up* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1988), p. 240.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 3, p. 22.

⁵ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898), p. 549.

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BEING SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST



DAVID EDGREN

What's in a name? A lot, when it comes to the name Seventh-day Adventist. Understanding our name leads us to a greater understanding of and involvement in the great controversy between good and evil. It demonstrates and challenges involvement in both God's glory and His creation.

Here's what it means to be focused on and driven by two elements—Seventh-day, Adventist—that identify the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

SEVENTH-DAY

The first element, "Seventh-day," reaches back.

For ancient Israel, Moses' sermons on the Plains of Moab show the Sabbath as a distinct reminder of freedom from the oppression of Egypt: "Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out of there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. That is why the Lord your God has commanded you to keep the Sabbath day" (Deut. 5:15).*

The Israelites were slaves in Egypt. Humanity is enslaved to sin. God rescued Israel from Egypt, and all of earth's creation from sin. Through His death Jesus destroyed "the one holding the power of death—that is, the Devil—and [freed] those who were held in slavery all their lives by the fear of death" (Heb. 2:14, 15). Sabbath recognizes and remembers our freedom from sin, our salvation, our abandonment of all that characterizes the old life of enslavement. Sabbath says we no longer sigh and cry in Egypt (Ex. 3:7-10). We rest. We worship. We reconcile. We celebrate. On Sabbath we remember.

But "Seventh-day" reaches even further back than God's rescue from Egypt. It reaches to a time before humanity needed saving from anything. A time of perfection, a time of beginnings. A time when God walked the earth with humankind. Sabbath is a reminder that our God is the Creator of all that is good. "By the seventh day God completed His work that He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work that He had done. God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it He rested from His work of creation" (Gen. 2:2, 3).

We were created to live in cooperation with creation. We are to care for it, to work the ground, to rest the ground. "God created man in His own

image; He created him in the image of God; He created them male and female" (Gen. 1:27). And the next day, He rested—as a memorial celebration of creation; an act that highlights creation's value. Sabbath rest makes a conspicuous statement on caring about creation. We are not to overuse or abuse the earth or our own bodies. Each week the seventh day is a day to remember all this. Isaiah, speaking for God, promises that this special day of communion, memory, and promise will exist forever: "All mankind will come to worship Me from one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another" (Isa. 66:23). For earth's inhabitants the worth and meaning of the seventh-day Sabbath embraces creation and endures through eternity.

But "Seventh-day" is only half of what the name Seventh-day Adventist represents.

ADVENTIST

The second element, "Adventist," reaches forward.

The hope for humanity's salvation is embedded in history, Scripture, and faith from the moment of God's first prophecy, His promise to Satan: "I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel" (Gen. 3:15). From day one, God had a plan to undo the devil—to conquer evil. The first couple, Adam and Eve, knew this promise would come through their "seed": a Messiah would be born.

Like David, he would rule as a powerful king. Like Moses, he would stand against evil oppressors and deliver God's people from bondage. Like Abraham, he would follow God with conviction. Like Noah, he would build a safe place to protect people from death and destruction.

But when the Messiah came, He came like Adam, a new Adam, the first of his kind. Jesus was both God and man. One hundred percent God, 100 percent man. In this God-man state He showed the best of God and the best of humanity. But He looked like any other average man. Until he opened His mouth in parables, His hands in healing, and, ultimately, His heart in death. This first advent appearing of God, was expected, yet a surprise.

The Second Advent, the return of this God-man as king of the heavenly kingdom He talked so much

On Sabbath we rest. We worship. We reconcile. We celebrate. On Sabbath we remember.

about, is imminent. Just as Scripture spoke of the Messiah coming to save Israel, so it promises His return to save earth, to re-create creation, to end death, to destroy the devil—to make all things new (Rev. 21:5).

The prophets look forward to the Second Advent by reflecting back. Kingdoms have risen and fallen, Daniel said, from Babylon to Media-Persia to Greece to Rome to kingdoms that will fragment and fray at the edges until an eternal kingdom comes—represented by a Rock falling from the sky obliterating all other kingdoms and working like yeast in dough to envelop the whole earth (Dan. 2:44).

The book of Revelation, in parable and metaphor, reveals the fall of Satan, the return of Jesus, and the ultimate fulfillment of the Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come." Jesus speaks. Churches remember. A dragon falls. Angels bring messages. Beastly powers rule. Bowls overflow with wrath. Trumpets blare. The New Jerusalem. Re-created earth. Eternal Emmanuel: God with us.

But for now we wait. Yet in patient angst with hopeful hearts we dare not sit by quietly. We call all humanity to Jesus: "Hear the three angels' messages!" You can hear the death rattle in the throat of Satan even now. Wars. Rumors of wars. Hate. Murder. Money. All the thrashing of a desperate dragon who knows that his time is short. Signs are all around us: this is what it means to be an "Adventist"—eyes peeled for the return of Jesus and a megaphone to our lips, calling the world to ready itself for the kingdom of the Rock coming to replace this fragmented world of sand.

We need both parts of the name—law-abiding, climax-anticipating. And we need them to work together—perfect creation, total restoration; resting in God, going all out for God; looking backward, going forward in wait and work till kingdom come and Jesus' prayer is answered: "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10).

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

The title "Seventh-day Adventist" takes in the entirety of the great controversy, from Eden to eternity. The first part, Seventh-day, reflects back on human history—Creation: the moment of earth's beginnings, a time before sin; and individual spiritual history—salvation: our moment of new beginnings when we received forgiveness for and freedom from our slavery to sin. Weekly we celebrate the Sabbath at the call of our Creator and in worship of our Redeemer. Weekly we look back.

As Adventists, we peer forward to a time to come when all prophecies will be fulfilled, all sin will be destroyed, and all righteousness will be revealed. With anticipation we prepare ourselves and whosoever wills, through word and action. We look forward to a time and place where "death will no longer exist; grief, crying, and pain will exist no longer, because the previous things have passed away" (Rev. 21:4).

"Our citizenship is in heaven" (Phil. 3:20), for which God the Spirit has us in constant training (Phil. 2:13). That heavenly orientation leads us to constantly make choices for the highest quality of life; more abundant living that begins, as Israel's nationhood did, and as salvation does, with liberation. Hence our celebration of freedom from unhelpful lifestyle practices to the best in diet, nutrition, rest, or action; our investment in good medicine; our aggression for disaster relief and development. Hence our passion for good education and personal intellectual growth; our zealous labors for freedom of conscience—our personal freedom and everyone else's as well, to worship or not worship, to believe or not believe.

Our living transcends the now while demonstrating its relevance to the now: we live with a view to tomorrow that constantly makes for a better today. So that through us God may disclose to everyone everywhere that citizenship in His kingdom makes for the best citizenship in any current order than may precede His final restoration. Being Seventh-day Adventist makes for blessed heavenly mindedness that makes for the blessing the world needs right now, in whatever place we are. 🌱

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David Edgren is an author, pastor, parent, and believer in the power of stories.



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HOW DO YOU

MEASURE LOVE?





Spiritual ambassadors provided 69,000 pre-packaged meals to people in Haiti.

Evaluating the ministry of spiritual ambassadors

SPERANTZA ADRIANA PASOS

Intensive-care unit nurse Jean Zepeda wanted to go home, but God wouldn't let her. *God, I'm tired*, she thought. *It's been a long 12 hours*. But the feeling persisted: she should go back to visit a patient she had already seen.

JEAN ZEPEDA, SPIRITUAL AMBASSADOR

Zepeda isn't only a nurse; she also bears the title spiritual ambassador. She returned to the patient and said, "I came back because something told me I couldn't leave tonight without speaking to you again. I know the future seems uncertain, and the diagnosis you received is scary. But there is Someone who's able to calm my fears and bring me hope. May I tell you about my friend?"

As Jean said those words, emotions bottled up inside her patient exploded. Through her sobs Jean heard her say, "I'm scared. Will you help me? Will you tell me about your friend? I'm scared to die."

Holding her patient's hand, Jean told her about Jesus and His love for her, about His sacrifice on the cross and the gift of eternal life. Her patient wanted to know more.

"I told her about heaven," Jean said, "and a day when there will be no more pain, no more suffering, no more tears, and no more fear. I prayed with her and watched her face transform from utter despair to complete peace."

When Jean returned home that evening, she too had a feeling of peace wash over her. Despite her exhaustion, she was grateful to have listened to God's voice. She felt blessed that she was able to provide hope to a patient in need.

When she returned to work, Jean learned that her patient hadn't survived. "I prayed that she found comfort in our conversation about Christ's love," Jean said. "I can't put into words what a privilege it is to work for an organization that not only allows me the opportunity to pray and share my faith, but encourages me, as a spiritual ambassador, to live it out. This brings me to life. Having the opportunity to touch lives not only reconnects me to my purpose—it is the very reason I became a nurse."

Jean's story represents the heart behind each of Adventist Health System's (AHS) 3,000 spiritual ambassadors who stand united in their purpose of *extending the healing ministry of Christ*. The value of their work transcends numbers, and their impact is felt for years. They are foot soldiers, actively living out the mission to spread God's love and guide everyone toward wholeness.

This program allows team members to do more than treat the body; they are empowered to treat the whole person: body, mind, and spirit. In so doing, they not only improve the lives of those they serve—they better themselves and strengthen their connection with God.

MEASURING LOVE

So how is love measured? How do you measure purpose? How is the impact of such an experience, or the countless others that occur every day in our hospitals, quantified?

Sometimes we measure love through stories shared, relationships built, or imprints left on



Spiritual ambassadors are reminded of the spiritual component of the role during their commitment service.

people's lives. Other times we may be blessed with numbers that affirm the impact of the work done each and every day inside our facilities.

From the stories we hear, we know that spiritual ambassadors fuel mission and employee engagement, but we struggled to identify a tool that would enable us to quantify the impact of the program.

One leader suggested expanding our existing partnership with the Gallup organization to develop

a stratified Gallup report for spiritual ambassadors that might show how this group of employees compare to others within the organization.

THE GALLUP PROCESS

A lot of science goes into measuring engagement. The Gallup organization works with hundreds of organizations around the world to measure engagement levels among employees. They use a survey tool containing 12 core questions that have been scientifically proven to accurately reflect satisfaction and engagement. Each question is presented on a scale of one to five, with five being extremely satisfied, indicating that employees believe their organization offers that component 100 percent of the time. Responses are aggregated across the workforce, and an average rating, known as the Gallup GrandMean, is established.

GALLUP RESULTS

In 2015 we began by getting a report for one of our flagship campuses, Florida Hospital Orlando. The results showed spiritual ambassadors as a best practice employee group, with a GrandMean of 4.59 out of 5, and a Gallup health-care percentile of 83 out of 100. The health-care percentile is a ranking among all the health-care organizations Gallup surveys each year.

We expanded the scope of our measurement in 2016 and requested a stratified Gallup report for spiritual ambassadors to include 10 Adventist Health System hospitals within central Florida and our Adventist university. The spiritual ambassadors' data was measured and compared, not only to the other employees within their own hospitals, but also to all Adventist Health System employees as a whole.

The numbers again showed spiritual ambassadors as a best practice group on the eighty-sixth percentile of Gallup's health-care percentile ranking, with a GrandMean of 4.64.

But perhaps most meaningful was the GrandMean assigned to specific areas of mission and purpose: it ranked spiritual ambassadors at 4.82, on the eighty-ninth percentile.

These numbers indicate that employees in the spiritual ambassador program within Adventist Health System are more engaged compared to the rest of their team because mission gives them



Orlando police officers who were among the first responders at the Pulse nightclub shooting, received care packages in appreciation for their service.

MORE ON SPIRITUAL AMBASSADORS

TRAINING AND GROWTH

Since 2008 the Spiritual Ambassadors program has experienced:

- » **266 percent growth** within Florida Hospital System
- » **457 percent growth** within Adventist Health System as a whole
- » **3,470 employees** trained
- » **125 seminars**, training sessions, and presentations
- » More than **500 hours** of training

REACHING OUT

Spiritual Ambassadors has developed a curriculum for churches, “In His Footsteps.” It empowers members to engage through trust, belonging, and hope. Florida Hospital’s mission is to integrate and continue building synergy with local churches and engage faith communities and organizations through CREATION Health and the Spiritual Ambassadors program.

purpose. More engaged employees provide better care, inspire their coworkers and patients, and actively strive to exceed the needs of others. They connect at a heart level that brings meaning to their work and reminds them that whatever position they hold within the organization—whether in nutritional services, nursing, medicine, or administration, etc.—they make a difference every day. Being spiritual ambassadors allows them to be God’s hands, unites them in purpose, and gives them a solid platform for impacting lives now and for eternity.

“Mission plays a pivotal role in the engagement of our employees,” says Robyn Edgerton, director of mission strategy for AHS, “and spiritual ambassadors are a multiplier of that mission throughout the organization in an organic way. They ensure that we are truly providing whole-person care.”

For many the mission of extending the healing ministry of Christ drew them to the organization. It allows those called to connect to something larger than themselves, to be part of something more.

One spiritual ambassador shared, “I have worked at another health-care institution as a nurse leader for nearly 20 years. But when I heard about spiritual ambassadors from a friend, I resigned and applied for a job with AHS. I can’t tell you what this means to me to now work for an organization where I can share my faith, pray, and encourage my patients and coworkers.”



Following their orientation, a new class of spiritual ambassadors prepare to serve others in Christ's name.

MEASURING COMMUNITY IMPACT

The spiritual ambassador program is not limited to the walls of one of our facilities. Its impact can be felt within the communities we serve, even worldwide. From providing 69,000 meals to children in Haiti, to the nurse who, instead of going home at the end of her shift, stayed and prayed all night with a patient who needed support. This is the work of spiritual ambassadors.

These are individuals called to do God's work, whether that means holding someone's hand or writing handwritten notes of encouragement to first responders and those affected by the nation's largest mass shooting at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida. They filled 5,000 gallon bags full of food and water after the tragedy affected so many.

How do you measure the time and love spent spreading God's love, praying with families who need support, and giving back to those who need it most?

It may be seen in the smile of a little girl who received her first meal in days; or the first responder who is inspired by words that keep him going amid tragedy.

THE FINAL COUNT

Some stories may never be heard or told. But the impact of our caregivers—spiritual ambassa-

dors and chaplains—is constantly extending Christ's ministry throughout our hospitals. Our community is being felt, noticed, and accounted for by God in ways we may never know, because, according to Orlando Jay Perez, Adventist Health System vice president for institutional ministries: "Ministry takes place when divine resources meet human needs through channels of love for the glory of God."

Yes, numbers count. Yes, statistics show in part what's been accomplished. But the impact Christ makes through each one of us—for one soul, one life, one family, or for multitudes—whether it can be measured or not, may be seen only in the light of eternity, when Jesus will say, "I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me' . . . 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me'" (Matt. 25:35-40).

When we serve as Christ served, when we love as Christ loved, lives are transformed. That is measurement enough. 

Sperantza Adriana Pasos coordinates the Spiritual Ambassadors program for mission integration and culture at Florida Hospital.

ALSO IN THIS SECTION:

- » TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL YEAR
- » COMMUNION
- » WHEN THE LOUD CRY SOUNDS
- » NAKEDNESS: A DREAM AND OTHER THINGS

CONNECT

THE DIFFERENCE THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Living kingdom values until Jesus returns

Growing up Adventist, I was aware of how important it was to maintain our distinction from the world. For most of my elementary education I attended a two- or three-room school with 50 or so other students, that stood next to the Adventist church. At the end of the street where the church stood was a road leading into town: where the “world” began, with all the influences we should be wary of.

My grandparents on both sides were staunch Adventists; all of them had served the church in overseas fields. I was inspired by their example and did my best to fulfill their expectations from my youth up. I embraced the church’s



RICHARD RICE

mission, and I did my best to live up to its high standards of Christian behavior. I knew there was a distinct difference between the church and the world, and I knew which side I wanted to be on.

SABBATH DIFFERENCE

Our family moved to the Southwest when I was 13, and I found myself attending a large public high school with 2,500 students, in Tucson, Arizona. Quite a contrast to what I was used to! One of the attractions of a large high school was its marching band. It had 125 musicians in it, and I was happy to be one of them. However, there was a major complication. One of the band's major responsibilities was performing at halftime during Friday night football games.

When I explained the Sabbath to the band director, he graciously excused me from those Friday appointments. Now and then fellow band members asked why I wasn't with them on weekends, and when I told them, they always expressed admiration for my religious dedication. At the same time, no one ever said, "Sabbath sounds like a great idea. I wish my family kept Sabbath too." They respected the difference that Sabbath made in my life, but that was it.

Years later, when my wife and I were living in Chicago, we became close friends with a couple who gave us a new perspective on the Sabbath. They worked in the city and lived in the suburbs. And though they went to church on a regular basis, their weekends were filled, before and after church services, meeting their home responsibilities.

In contrast, they noticed that Sabbath for us was strikingly different from the rest of the week. We not only took a break from our weekly occupations—we took a break from other responsibilities to enjoy time for worship and fellowship. Our friends admired that. They not only admired it: there were times they wanted it. When we were planning to do something with them on a Saturday evening, they would typically say, "Could we come to your place a few hours earlier and share some of the Sabbath with you?"

They saw Sabbath as a difference that could really make a difference. Their appreciation for the Sabbath helped me see that one of the most distinctive things about our faith is the difference

it makes in our lives. Sabbath is one of the things that gives life meaning and value.

Sabbathkeeping goes beyond keeping a commandment. It contributes meaning and purpose to our lives in ways that nothing else does. Sabbath protects us from the drudgery of endless work. It reminds us that our true identity is entwined with our relationship with God, and that God values us for who we are, not just for what we may accomplish. Work is a blessing, to be sure; but there are greater blessings, and the Sabbath is a welcome reminder of them.

While the Sabbath takes us out of the world in one sense—to a renewed appreciation of our true value—in another sense it takes us into the world. The Sabbath is a reminder of how important the world is to God; how much He values the world. It sanctifies what we do during the week to make the world a better place by extending and demonstrating God's care for the world.

SECOND COMING DIFFERENCE

Another important doctrine that moves us between heaven and earth, so to speak, is the hope of Christ's return. It nurtures us and encourages us to look forward to the time when God's purposes for us will be fulfilled and the sorrows and sufferings of this life will be distant memories.

Our belief in Christ's return reminds us of the world to which Christ is returning: a world God brought into existence with divine hopes and dreams of all that creation would be; a world to which God remains committed through all that has happened since then; a world that God continues to serve, and invites us to serve with Him.

In His last night with the disciples, Jesus asked the Father not to take them out of the world but to be with them as He sent them into the world (John 17:15, 17). "In the world, not of the world": this is the paradoxical place that Christians occupy.

When I was a youngster, I had one line in a play some people in the church were performing about the soon return of Jesus. I don't remember what I had to say, but the play made a lasting impression on me. It depicted in a vivid way early Adventists' fervent assurance that this world was soon to pass

away and they would be with Jesus forever.

A few years later I remember a devout aunt proclaiming to me with great conviction, “Ricky, time cannot last more than five more years. There’s just no way.”

To live in lively expectation is a remarkable element in the Adventist experience.


SERVICE DIFFERENCE

This movement between heaven and earth is something we see in a variety of places. One is the last sermon Jesus preached, according to Matthew’s Gospel. It began with Jesus’ descriptions of turbulent, cataclysmic events, and urgent warnings of the difficulties God’s people would face. Toward the end, however, it talks about the things God’s people should be doing to face these ultimate upheavals.

They involve serving the Master faithfully in their appointed tasks, caring for those who suffer, for those who are downtrodden, for those considered outcasts and neglected by society. To be ready for the Lord to come is, evidently, found in doing what God has asked us to do, working with Him in meeting human needs.

This commitment to human service is something we see in the early history of the Christian church. When Christians in the Roman Empire were no longer the object of persecution in the waning years of the Roman Empire, they became a remarkable force for good. One historian remarked that a conspicuous feature of Christianity from its beginning was an emphasis on charity as the paramount Christian virtue. Christianity’s corresponding affirmation was that human beings have unique dignity and unqualified value, whatever their social status or physical condition.

Early Christians, following the example of Jesus’ life of self-sacrificing service, were open to people of all classes and cultures. Members of the community devoted themselves to the welfare of others, including those who were diseased and destitute. This contribution to human values was revolutionary. Nothing in the world of late antiquity, nothing in classical culture, compared to the willingness of Christians to jeopardize their own well-being in serving others. Greek and Roman paganism acknowledged no such duties.



“In the world,
not of the
world”:
this is the
paradoxical
place that
Christians
occupy.



We are
deeply
committed
to improving
human lives
here and
now while
we fervently
anticipate
the life
to come.

INSTITUTIONAL DIFFERENCE

Christians not only cared for people individually, but established institutions to provide for care: hospitals for those who were sick and welfare centers for those who were needy. Indeed, says the same historian, “Christianity planted the hospital.” As time went by, Christians established hospitals throughout the empire, and they all shared a common ethos of charity.* What Christians believed made a real difference in the world.

Another example is the active involvement of Adventists in the temperance movement, the largest, most inclusive attempt during the nineteenth and early twentieth century to transform American society for the better. Adventists promoted personal abstinence from alcohol, along with its legal prohibition, and developed their own organization to promote these objectives: the American Health and Temperance Association.

Ellen White spoke widely about temperance, and encouraged church members to cooperate with such organizations as the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WTCU). She also strongly urged Adventists to vote in favor of prohibition.

The record of Adventist involvement in the temperance movement presents us with the fascinating spectacle of people who believe that human history is fast moving toward its end, yet devote themselves diligently to improving human life in the short time remaining, and doing so in a variety of ways.

Adventists are widely known for our educational system, our various medical institutions, and for our willingness to serve in areas where human needs are most pressing. We are deeply committed to improving human lives here and now while we fervently anticipate the life to come. Is there an inconsistency here? Are the two in competition with each other? Should we choose between being this-worldly and other-worldly?

To the contrary, they go together. The prospect of a life to come does not detract from the value of life here and now. In fact, it enhances it.

Several years ago I invited a retired physician to speak to one of my religion classes. He almost lived during three centuries. He was born in 1900 and passed away not long after the twenty-first century arrived. He had been a lifelong Adventist, and after he told the students what medicine was like in the early years of his practice, I asked him about his personal faith. “Which of the various things Adven-

tists believe is most important to you?” I asked.

His response was immediate. “Why, the second coming of Christ, of course!”

“You’ve been looking forward for Christ to come longer than anyone I know,” I said. “Do you think you’ll live to see it happen?”

“I hope so,” he replied. “But if I don’t, if my life comes to an end before, I know that Jesus’ face is the first thing I’ll see when I wake up.” The good doctor spent his life in faithfully serving others, but he never lost sight of the goal to which all history moves.

CHANGE DIFFERENCE

If we wonder how to connect these concerns, how to find a balance between them, we may find some help in the famous prayer of Reinhold Niebuhr, one of America’s best known theologians.

“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.”

We need serenity, Niebuhr suggests, because there are things about the world we live in that we cannot change, and it would be self-defeating to try to do so. At the same time, there is much we can do to make this world a better place, to help the people around us flourish and thrive, and we need the courage to pursue them.

Sharing the gospel is the most obvious, but seeking to live generously and helpfully—loving our neighbors in any way we can—is important as well.

Then we need something else: We need wisdom to know what’s worth trying to change and what isn’t. Some objectives are simply too idealistic. It would be a waste of resources to attempt them.

Perhaps here, we need to remember something else Jesus told His disciples, when He sent them out to witness to the world they lived in. “I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves” (Matt. 10:16).

To live in the hope for a future filled with meaning and to confront the challenges of this world with realism and determination reflects the Adventist spirit at its best. It’s the difference that makes a real difference. 🌱

* Roy Porter, *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind: A Medical History of Humanity* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997), pp. 87, 88.

Richard Rice, a theologian, is a member of the Biblical Research Institute Committee of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL YEAR

How do teachers see it?



ELEMENTARY TEACHER: EILEEN WILLIAMS

TIPS FOR TEACHERS:

Find your support system. Teaching is both an exhausting and an exhilarating journey that is best experienced when you find others to take it with you. I have found the most support, understanding, and inspiration from those teaching around me in my own school community, as well as from fellow education graduates.

Recharge and reflect. Take time to remember why you became a teacher, write down

BY ADVENTIST TEACHERS

As students, parents, and teachers gear up for that first day of school, AR editors asked three teachers—elementary, academy, and university—from various regions in North America to tell us their top five tips for a successful school year. Here is what they said.—Editors.

the things you are thankful for, and spend time with the ultimate Teacher, Jesus.

Take plenty of photos. By the end of the year I have forgotten most of the fun and engaging learning we and the students had accomplished, so revisiting my pictures helps me remember what a truly amazing year we had together. Then share the photos with parents. They love to know what their kids are learning and experiencing in the classroom.

FOR PARENTS:

Don't underestimate the importance of your role in your child's education. The time you spend with your child after school hours and the habits you encourage them to develop help establish their value system and

can determine how successful they will be throughout their academic career!

FOR STUDENTS:

Develop good study habits even in your elementary years. Although it's important for young students to have plenty of playtime after school, routinely setting aside 10 minutes of study time for spelling or learning memory verses can help teach you the importance of preparing for assignments. Putting off studying until the night before a test doesn't help develop the strategic habit of studying that will be more useful later in academy and college. 🍌

Eileen Williams teaches second grade at Kirkland Seventh-day Adventist School in Kirkland, Washington, United States.



**ACADEMY TEACHER:
DUNBAR HENRI**

TIPS FOR TEACHERS:

Spend time getting to know each of your students personally. Find out their birthdays and provide fruit or candy to help them celebrate their special day. Also develop a seating chart so you can get

to know their names quickly. Prepare at least a week in advance what you want to accomplish in class. Plan! Plan! Plan! Success for me comes when I prepare ahead and am organized.

FOR PARENTS:

Get to know your child’s teachers and communicate with them. Talking with the teacher in person or on the phone works best.

FOR STUDENTS:

Talk with your teachers. Get to know them and understand

what they expect from you. If you don’t understand something, ask. If you need extra help, make an appointment to meet with the teacher after school or another convenient time.

Don’t procrastinate. When a teacher assigns a major project with a due date, don’t wait until the last minute! Complete the assignment in advance, and ask if you can turn it in early and get feedback. This practice will help you to excel. 🍌

Dunbar Henri is the Religion Department chair at Takoma Academy in Takoma Park, Maryland, United States.

**UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR:
COLIN HILL**

TIPS FOR TEACHERS:

Get involved with your students outside the classroom. These experiences will provide opportunities for your students to see you as a real person they can relate to. You will also see what makes them “tick,” so you can appeal to that in your teaching. Let them see your faith in action.

Don’t be afraid to try a new technology, method, or even fad. Have a plan, but keep it flexible and adjust as you perfect it. Use your students as a resource; they probably know more about some current tool or app than you do.

Clearly communicate your expectations and rules, and be consistent with your consequences for not following them. Remember, however, that there may be times that the message that grace provides will be worth considering.

FOR PARENTS:

Be involved and supportive but not overbearing (known as helicopter or bubble-wrap parenting). Give your children room to make their own decisions and to learn from them. Provide reasons along with advice; personal experiences can help build trust and understanding. Keep the communication lines open.

FOR STUDENTS:

Ask yourself, “If school were my job, would I be fired or promoted?” Prioritize tasks and expectations, then create a workable schedule, avoiding procrastination. Try different study techniques and find what works best for you. Some may find studying alone beneficial, while others may retain more by studying with a group. Above all, be balanced, and include

time for physical and spiritual exercise as well as rest in that schedule. 🍌

Colin Hill is director of computer services at Burman University in Alberta, Canada.



Colin Hill (second from top/facing right) during a mission trip to Kenya with the Burman University Acronaires.

A person wearing a yellow helmet and black clothing is rappelling down a reddish-brown rock face. The background shows a vast landscape with a snow-capped mountain peak under a blue sky with scattered clouds. The text is overlaid on the upper right portion of the image.

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want to do
this again.**

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SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST
HIGHER
EDUCATION

COMMUNION

In the first century, when a young Jewish man wanted to marry a young Jewish woman, he went to the woman's father and purchased the right to ask her. (He wasn't purchasing the woman, only the right to ask.)

Next, the hopeful young man approached the woman and held out a cup filled with grape juice. This was the cup of his covenant. If the woman drank from the cup, she was accepting his marriage proposal.

At that point, the young man would return home and prepare a place for them to live by building an extension onto his own father's house. During the time the bride and groom were apart, he would send her messages via his best man.

When the groom finished building the place for his bride, it was not the groom, but the groom's father, who declared it ready. Then with great fanfare and the blast of the shofar, the groom would rush to his bride, sweep her off her feet, and bring her home to live with him forever.

"Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom'" (Matt. 26:27-29).

Christ himself had led the children of Israel by the hand into the land of abundance. "Out of all nations," He lovingly promised her, "you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is

mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:5, 6).

But again and again the unfaithful wife wandered from her husband, breaking his heart. He desired to commune with his beloved, yet her love was like the morning mist. Was there no hope? His words are heavy with finality: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate" (Matt. 23:37, 38).

Yet, here He is again, in Jerusalem, before His own, selected from His own to whom He had come though they would not receive Him. He is here to raise the cup that betokens His death and God's undying love for those who within hours will abandon him again. Still, He reassures them and us that his love will endure through their unfaithfulness, and ours too.

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am" (John 14:1-3).

Andy Nash (andynash5@gmail.com) is a professor and pastor at Southern Adventist University who leads summer study tours to Israel.

THE LIFE
OF FAITH
ANDY
NASH



IF THE WOMAN
DRANK FROM THE
CUP, SHE WAS
ACCEPTING THE
MAN'S MARRIAGE
PROPOSAL.



WHEN THE LOUD CRY SOUNDS

The work, process, delay, and soon coming of Jesus Christ

ELLEN G. WHITE

The end is near, stealing upon us stealthily, imperceptibly, like the noiseless approach of a thief in the night. May the Lord grant that we shall no longer sleep as do others, but that we shall watch and be sober. The truth is soon to triumph gloriously, and all who now choose to be laborers together with God, will triumph with it. The time is short; the night soon cometh when no man can work" (*Testimonies for the Church* [1909], vol. 9, p. 135).

"The time is coming when there will be as many converted in a day as there were on the day of Pentecost, after the disciples had received the Holy Spirit" (*Review*

and Herald, June 29, 1905).

"Many have let the gospel invitation go unheeded; they have been tested and tried; but mountainous obstacles have seemed to loom up before their faces, blocking their onward march. Through faith, perseverance, and courage, many will surmount these obstructions and walk out into the glorious light. . . .

"Prophets have discerned this grand work afar off, and have caught the inspiration of the hour, and traced the wonderful description of things yet to be" (*Review and Herald*, July 23, 1895).

"When the storm of persecution really breaks upon us, the true sheep will hear the true Shepherd's voice. . . . Many who have strayed from the fold will come back to follow the great Shepherd. . . . The love of Christ, the love of our brethren, will testify to the world that we have been with Jesus and learned of Him. Then will the message of the third angel swell to a loud cry, and the whole earth will be lightened with the glory of the Lord" (*Testimonies for the Church* [1900], vol. 6, p. 401).

"God will soon do great things for us, if we lie humble and believing at His feet. . . . More than one thousand will soon be converted in one day, most of whom will trace their first convictions to the reading of our publications" (*Review and Herald*, Nov. 10, 1885).

REASONS FOR THE DELAY

"The long night of gloom is trying, but the morning is deferred in mercy, because if the Master should come, so many would be found unready. God's unwillingness to have His peo-

ple perish has been the reason of so long delay" (*Testimonies for the Church* [1868], vol. 2, p. 194).

"Had the purpose of God been carried out by His people in giving to the world the message of mercy, Christ would, ere this, have come to the earth, and the saints would have received their welcome into the city of God" (*Testimonies for the Church* [1900], vol. 6, p. 450).

"I know that if the people of God had preserved a living connection with Him, if they had obeyed His Word, they would today be in the heavenly Canaan" (*General Conference Bulletin*, Mar. 30, 1903).

"The angels of God in their messages to men represent time as very short. Thus it has always been presented to me. It is true that time has continued longer than we expected in the early days of this message. Our Savior did not appear as soon as we hoped. But has the Word of the Lord failed? Never! It should be remembered that the promises and the threatenings of God are alike conditional.

"God had committed to His people a work to be accomplished on earth. The third angel's message was to be given, the minds of believers were to be directed to the heavenly sanctuary, where Christ had entered to make atonement for His people. The Sabbath reform was to be carried forward. The breach in the law of God must be made up. The message must be proclaimed with a loud voice, that all the inhabitants of earth might receive the warning. The people of God must purify their souls through obedience to the truth, and be prepared to stand without fault before Him at His coming.

"Had Adventists, after the great disappointment in 1844, held fast their faith and followed on unitedly in the opening providence of God, receiving the message of the third angel and in the power of the Holy Spirit proclaiming it to the world, they would have seen the salvation of God, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts, the work would have been completed, and Christ would have come ere this to receive His people to their reward. But in the period of doubt and uncertainty that followed the disappointment, many of the advent believers yielded their faith. . . . Thus the work was hindered, and the world was left in darkness. Had the whole Adventist body united upon the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, how widely different would have been our history!

"It was not the will of God that the coming of

Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel.

Christ should be thus delayed. God did not design that His people, Israel, should wander forty years in the wilderness. He promised to lead them directly to the land of Canaan, and establish them there a holy, healthy, happy people. But those to whom it was first preached went not in 'because of unbelief.' Their hearts were filled with murmuring, rebellion, and hatred, and He could not fulfill His covenant with them" (manuscript 4, 1883).

"We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel; but for Christ's sake, His people should not add sin to sin by charging God with the consequence of their own wrong course of action" (letter 184, 1901).

CHRIST'S SOON COMING

"By giving the gospel to the world it is in our power to hasten our Lord's return" (*The Desire of Ages* [1898], p. 633).

"It is the privilege of every Christian, not only to look for, but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain" (*Testimonies for the Church* [1904], vol. 8, pp. 22, 23).

"It [the coming of the Lord] will not tarry past the time that the message is borne to all nations, tongues, and peoples. Shall we who claim to be students of prophecy forget that God's forbearance to the wicked is a part of the vast and merciful plan by which He is seeking to compass the salvation of souls?" (*Review and Herald*, June 18, 1901). 🌟

This material is excerpted from the book *Evangelism* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946), pages 692-697. Seventh-day Adventists believe that **Ellen G. White** (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.

NAKEDNESS:

A DREAM AND OTHER THINGS

*Do you prefer
guilt to shame?*

MACK TENNYSON

I am in class, carefully taking notes. Suddenly I notice that I have forgotten to get dressed—I'm completely naked. I hope no one notices.

Now to figure out how to get out of class without anyone seeing me. I try walking nonchalantly. No one notices. *Whew! That was a close call.* The naked dream has struck again. Unscientific research has shown that almost everyone everywhere experiences the phenomenon. And there's something spiritually and theologically significant about it.

GUILT VERSUS SHAME

Which is worse: guilt or shame? Our sins bring us legal condemnation: "For in the day that you eat from it you will surely die" (Gen. 2:17).¹ Sin also brings shame: "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself" (Gen. 3:10).

In my own day-to-day living I find shame to be more painful than guilt. Guilt will keep us out of heaven. But shame can generate in us an embarrassment that freezes us from ever talking with anyone, of ever seeking or finding help from any source, including Jesus.

In Eden's tragedy Adam seems more concerned about appearance than moral reality. Note his response to God: "I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself" (Gen. 3:10). Even though the guilt of his sin has placed him under a death decree (Gen. 2:16, 17), Adam seems more worried about

something else. To judge by his words, the shame of nakedness, the superficiality of appearances, is uppermost in his mind.

GUILT AND SHAME

According to Paul, we may be guilty without knowing it. Having a clear conscience does not guarantee innocence: "For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted" (1 Cor. 4:4).

On the other hand, we may experience shame without deserving it, without performing any act of transgression. As the psalmist once lamented: "My face is covered with shame at the taunts of those who reproach and revile me. . . . All this came upon us, though . . . we had not been false to your covenant" (Ps. 44:15-17, NIV).² Job, celebrated for his integrity, nevertheless spoke of being "full of shame" in the time of his affliction (Job 10:15, NIV).

Shame is so built into human DNA that there seems no limit to our power to feel it, even when our circumstances involve no actual connection with sins committed or sinful attitudes. Elements of the superficial play powerfully in the realm of shame: I may feel that I look either too fat or too thin, too tall or too short; too straight or too stooped; that I move too slowly or even, perhaps, too fast, or at least, that I eat too fast. I may have lost my job, my cash, or my keys.

Dress, a contrived layer over my skin, may be the most awkward and painful of all, echoing

Adam: a zipper down; shoes that don't match my dress; shoes that don't match each other—as was once the case with a friend of mine who arrived at school to teach.

For whatever historical reason, my colleague's discipline is heavily gender-biased, and generations of coeds have learned to admire her for her choice of footwear. Imagine her chagrin when their exclamation on her shoes one day was not of admiration, but of embarrassed astonishment! My friend looked down where they were pointing to discover that she was wearing shoes that did not match!

YESTERDAY'S SHAME

Besides fighting currents of cultural and moral shame, we carry around personal loads from our past, comprised of the shame of sin or stupidity that God and others have long forgiven: rudeness, disobedience, or something else equally out of place.

Or it may involve some social catastrophe that will not cease to torment you though everyone else loves to recall it just for hilarity's sake—like the embarrassment of a ridiculous date in high school or college; or an incredible mess-up at your first summer job. Isaiah's address to this pain is most precious: "Do not be afraid; you will not be

Rationalizing the shame of our nakedness has brought us topeless dances and nudist beaches.

put to shame. Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated. You will forget the shame of your youth" (Isa. 54:4).

GOD, GUILT, AND SHAME

While Adam's response to God from some hiding place in the garden suggests his preoccupation with shame, God is totally focused on delivering us from the guilt of sin. He knows what is primary and what is secondary. He does not ignore our shame problem, but knows full well that simply psyching and flattering away our bad feelings doesn't lead to restoration and proper covering.

The book of Revelation shows Laodicea, God's last-day church, in the middle of an apocalyptic

naked dream. The passage seems to support the idea that the shame of nakedness is a major burden and that the church needs to wake up and get out of its crisis as soon as possible. Jesus' concern about delivering His people from their embarrassing situation is central to His counsel to the church in Laodicea: clothing and reasons for having it dominate the single verse of positive advice from Jesus for Laodiceans: "I advise you to buy from Me . . . white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and *that* the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed" (Rev. 3:18).

The white raiment shows up later as the Lamb's wedding feast approaches. Universal excitement rings out as a multitude thunders forth the cry, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty reigns" (Rev. 19:6). Then attention turns to the Lamb's bride: she is dressed and ready for the party, "given the finest of pure white linen to wear" (verse 8, NLT).³ Nakedness out; pretty clothes in!

But these clothes are no superficial pretense. They represent total transformation from self-centered, self-displaying modes of life and attire, to the selfless, other-oriented service God's people give the world as they are inspired, directed, and empowered by the Spirit of Jesus. They wear new clothes that are their own (verse 8) because they have accepted by faith the inheritance of righteousness (Heb. 11:7), a heritage they receive from the Lord of their salvation, who took Adam's nakedness and mine to the cross that we might be clothed in the garments of His righteousness.

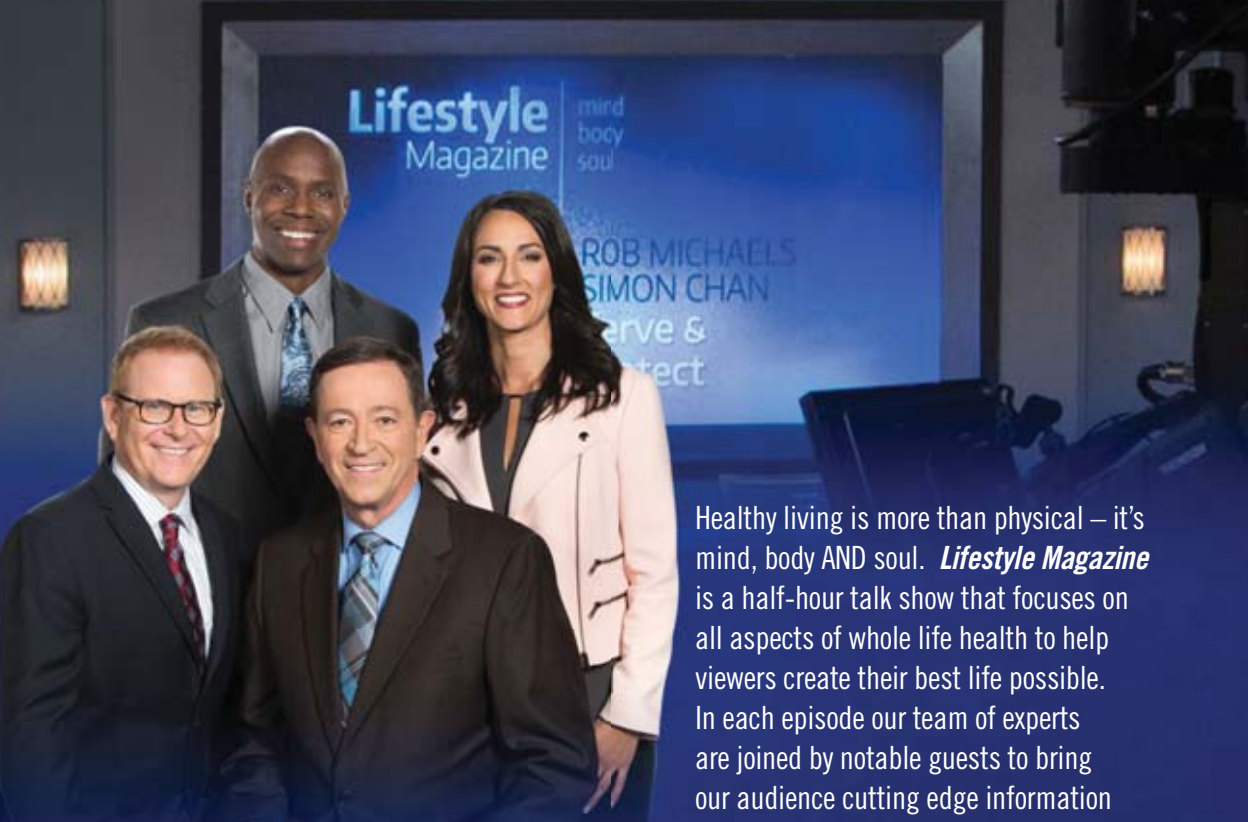
He has enveloped His bride in the robe of His own righteousness (see Isa. 61:10) so His glory and perfection will shine in her through endless ages of celebration. Want to party forever? Get dressed. 🍷

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Mack Tennyson directs the SunPlus project, a program for strengthening financial processes across the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He and his wife, Sharon, assistant to the marketing director of Adventist Review Ministries, are proud parents of five daughters.



Lifestyle Magazine

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body
soul

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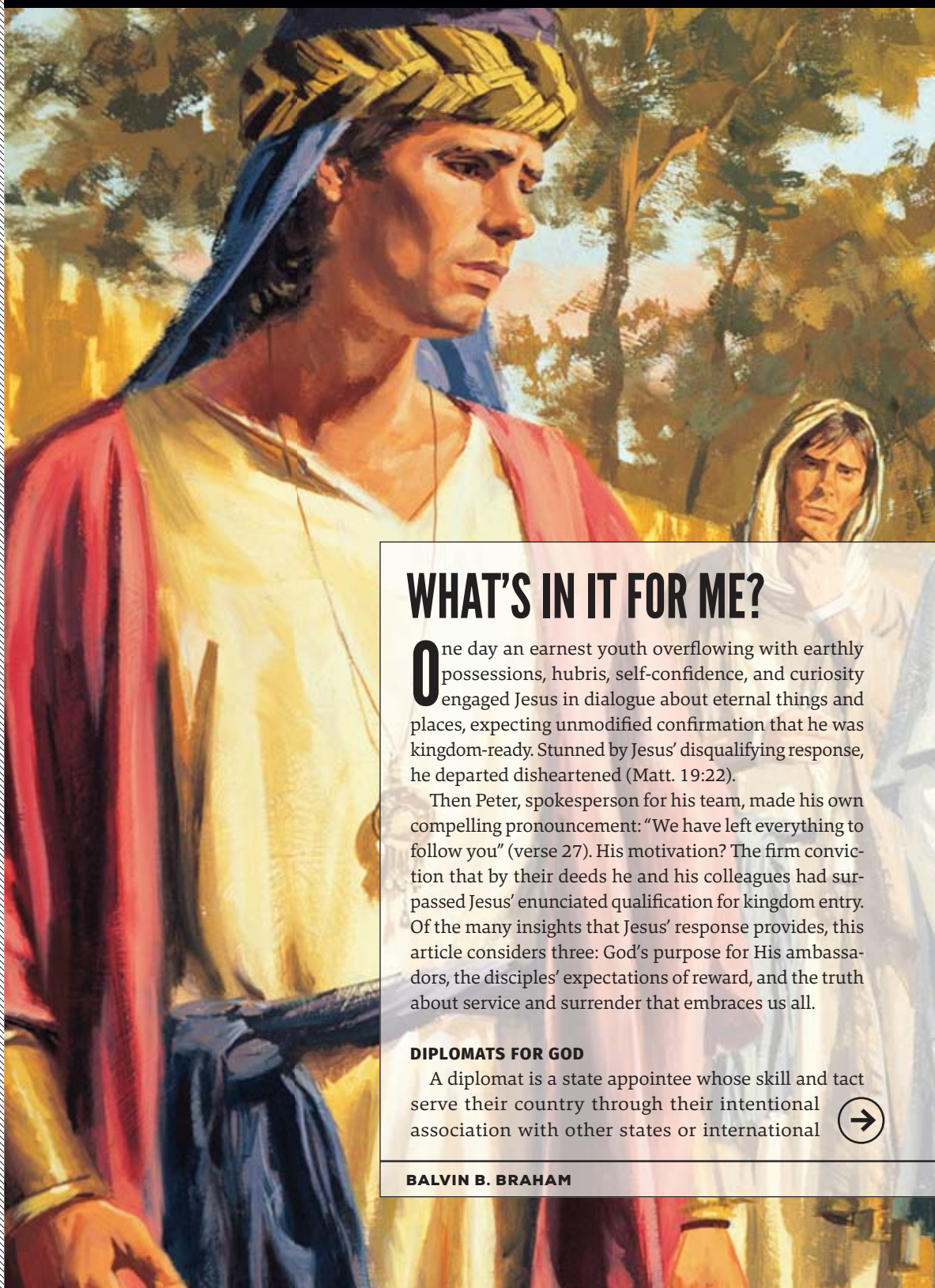


ALSO IN THIS SECTION:

- » THE PATH TO HEALING
- » A JOURNEY FOR TRUTH
- » SEEING THROUGH GOD'S EYES
- » MORE THAN A BOOK: A MINISTRY ON A ROLL

- » REDEFINING MISSION
- » THE HAPPINESS QUOTIENT
- » THE HARVEST IS READY
- » WERE YOU THERE?

ENGAGE



WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

One day an earnest youth overflowing with earthly possessions, hubris, self-confidence, and curiosity engaged Jesus in dialogue about eternal things and places, expecting unmodified confirmation that he was kingdom-ready. Stunned by Jesus' disqualifying response, he departed disheartened (Matt. 19:22).

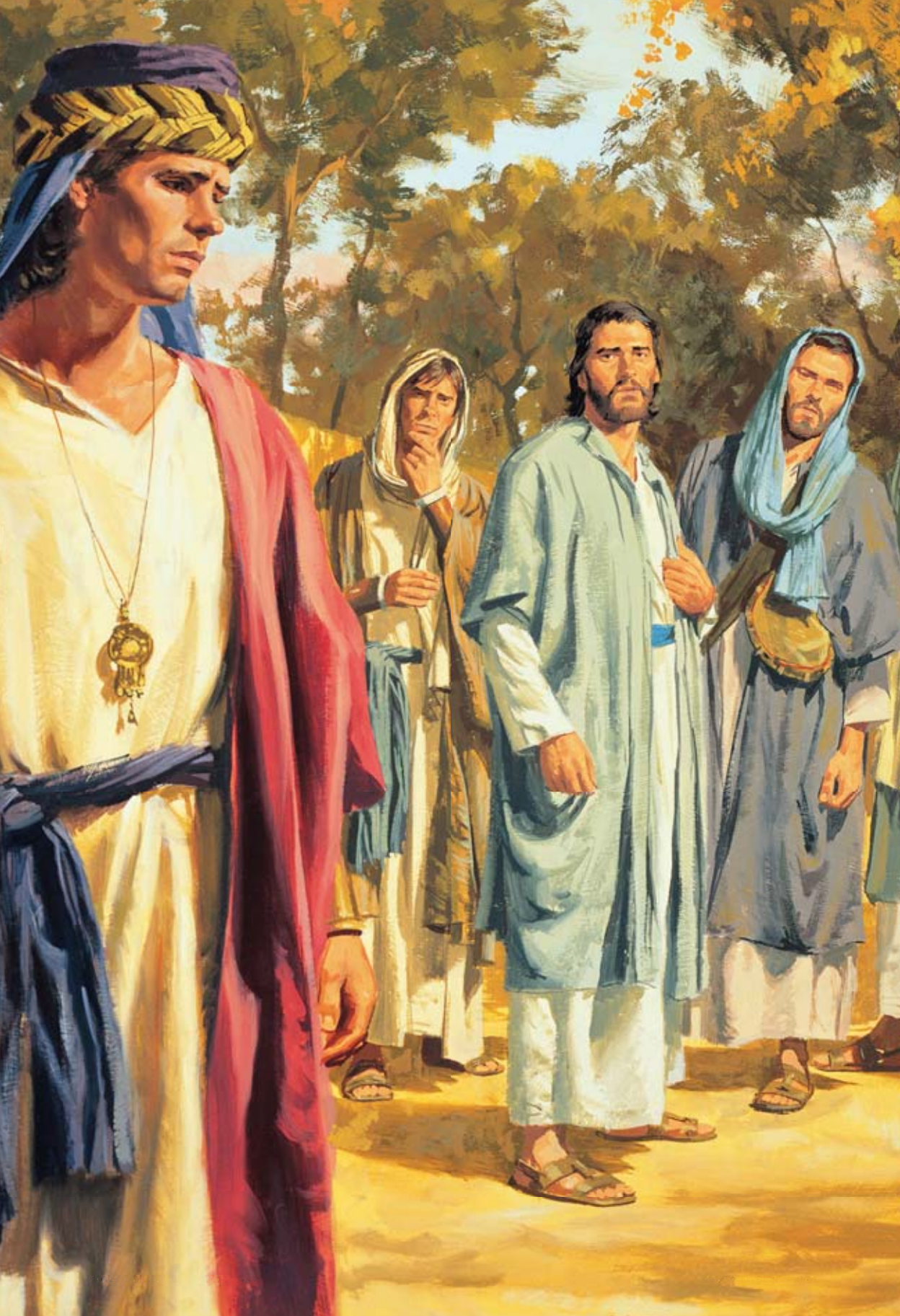
Then Peter, spokesperson for his team, made his own compelling pronouncement: "We have left everything to follow you" (verse 27). His motivation? The firm conviction that by their deeds he and his colleagues had surpassed Jesus' enunciated qualification for kingdom entry. Of the many insights that Jesus' response provides, this article considers three: God's purpose for His ambassadors, the disciples' expectations of reward, and the truth about service and surrender that embraces us all.

DIPLOMATS FOR GOD

A diplomat is a state appointee whose skill and tact serve their country through their intentional association with other states or international



BALVIN B. BRAHAM





organizations. They conduct the foreign policy of, and represent the political and economic interests of, their country, while interacting with governments, private business, and civil society in its varied articulations, to create links through common ideals and united actions. The gospel commission is definitively a diplomatic assignment: “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation” (Mark 16:15). Every follower of Christ is His ambassador, a diplomat of His kingdom to all the nations of this world.

God emphatically outlined his ambassadorial honor and duties to Jeremiah: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations” (Jer. 1:5).

And hundreds of years prior to Jeremiah’s conception, He explained the basis of their ambassadorial selection to Abraham’s descendants through Isaac: “The Lord did not set His affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the Lord loved you” (Deut. 7:7, 8).

The God who is love explains to His appointees that the basis of their appointment is Himself, His own nature. Nothing outside of Him, no virtue inherent in the objects of His affection, persuades Him to act. He acts according to His nature of love, to commission His chosen to represent their celestial country in communicating to all those with whom they interrelate, His character and principles of unselfish love.

Naive or uninformed, Jeremiah thought it appropriate or helpful,

perhaps, to raise objections to his selection (Jer. 1:6), as had Moses at Midian several centuries earlier: “I do not know how to speak,” Jeremiah argued (Jer. 1:6). He had not learned from his people’s history: “I have never been eloquent” was Moses’ manner of raising the same objection (Ex. 4:10). To Moses, the Lord directed pointed rhetorical questions: “Who gave human beings their mouths? Who makes them deaf or mute? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? Is it not I, the Lord?” (verse 11).

Admittedly, unlike Jeremiah and Moses, Peter would not at any point have been found bashful or slow of speech. Perhaps it would be this distinction on his part that facilitated his daring where others before him had been apologetic. Yet his courage and their fear are both at fault for implying that God needed to be reminded of something—whether of human inadequacy (*You’ve forgotten who we are*) or divine obligation (*Don’t forget: You owe us something*). Their common flaw does remind us all that divine diplomats are not immune to weaknesses, so that our own do not disqualify us from serving as representatives of His mercy and grace (Rom. 8:29, 30).

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Commenting on Matthew’s Gospel, Leon Morris asks, “If it is true that a person can gain salvation and enter the kingdom only by God’s power, then could the disciples be completely sure that they were saved?”¹ The celebrated assertiveness of Peter’s challenge may also conceal a note of uncertainty: they had indeed given up everything (Matt. 4:18-22), but had they really done all that was necessary?

When God sent us into His vineyard, He already knew the endgame.

Peter's challenge both drew on résumé ("we have left everything to follow you") and pulled rank: his first person plural "we" differentiated his group of insiders from others who shared no such closeness to Jesus. Whereas it is through His power that eternal life is obtained, Jesus should not lose sight of the fact that they had left everything to follow Him. They had not just spent some brief while before turning away, as had the rich youth, and perhaps other members of the community (see Luke 9:57-62).

Moreover, Peter's concern, voiced for all, is quite distinct from the secretive effort of his ambitious best friends forever (BFFs), James and John, who sneakily attempted, with the aid of their mother, to secure highest places in the coming kingdom (Matt. 20:20-23). And Peter's inquiry is also significantly broader than the rich youth's challenge: he does not just ask about the end, for he and his fellow disciples were already giving Jesus all of now in full-time mission service. They were interested to know what they were in line for, having sacrificed much for Jesus' sake.

Considering that someone had just chosen earthly possessions over Christ, Peter's was a legitimate question. Unlike the rich youth who made the poor choice, he and his companions had demonstrated sacrificial obedience at Christ's command to follow Him (Matt. 4:18-20). In practical terms Peter was calling Jesus' attention to what they all, Jesus included, were engaged in doing: attending needs of the poor, liberating prisoners, restoring sight to the blind and release of the oppressed from captivity (Luke 4:16-20). They had also gone out in pairs to reap the spiritual harvest He indicated was awaiting them, healing the sick and preaching the imminence of God's kingdom (Luke 10:1-12). They had returned home animated about demons being subject to them.

In spite of those positive outcomes, they still anticipated quantifiably more. Jesus' comment about how difficult it is for the rich to enter heaven (Matt. 19:23) constituted a significant complication. He had mentioned no specific incentives at the time

of their commissioning, except, perhaps, for catching men (Matt. 4:19). So Peter's question would bring everything into proper and deserved focus.

As Ellen White wrote: "They had been taught to look upon the rich as the favorites of heaven; . . . if the rich were to fail of entering the kingdom, what hope could there be for the rest of men?"² Their interest in money was no doubt as normal then as it is now. But Peter's question "revealed a spirit that uncorrected would unfit the disciples to be messengers for Christ; for it was the spirit of a hireling."³

THE TRUTH ABOUT SERVICE

To the disciples' question "What will we get?" Jesus gave a straightforward response. Your reward is in heaven: "you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones" (verse 28). When God sent us into His vineyard, He already knew the endgame. But the disciples' fixation on position and sequence had to die before they could ever appreciate His prize. For He does not think of us as peddlers. Neither should we think thus of ourselves. We are servants whom His grace has privileged with ambassadorship to all the peoples and nations of earth. He needs no coercion to reward us. He responds to Peter's emphatic "we" with His own emphatic "you": "you, you will sit enthroned" (verse 28, author's rendering). But it would not be because we aspired to exaltation. Rather, because His magnetic love so controls our hearts and minds that we abandon convenience, family, and all material possessions to follow the one who abandoned everything for us.

CONCLUSION

All Jesus' followers are His ambassadors and destined for eternal reward. The kingdom of eternal life is predestined for everyone who meets the conditions He has determined. We bear no badges of superiority, and our only glory is in His cross, by which the world is crucified to us and we to it (Gal. 6:14). We may leave all to follow Him. But we can never forget that only by His unmerited grace can we find entrance into His kingdom. 🏹

¹ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), p. 494.

² Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1900), p. 394.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 396.

Balvin B. Braham is field secretary for the Inter-American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, and assistant to the president for evangelism and leadership development.

At its annual convention, ASI in North America celebrates God's leading in its scores of supporting ministries. On the next few pages we share a fraction of its many stories.—Editors.

THE PATH TO HEALING

When all seemed hopeless, hope appeared.

LINDSAY PHILPOTT

Johnny Stricker grew up in a Christian home. In spite of that, Stricker grew up ignorant about what it meant to truly live as a Christian.

When Stricker was 5, his family moved to Belgium to do mission work. When they returned to the United States three and a half years later, they were on fire for the Lord. They wanted to get their home church involved in evangelism.

A STEADY DESCENT

But by the time he was in high school, Stricker had stopped studying the Bible. Instead, he spent his time reading other material, watching movies, playing video games, and listening to music that wasn't good for him. He eventually questioned what he believed. "I believed in the Bible and had heard the prophecy seminars, but what do I believe?" he asked himself.

He had many friends, but instead of leading him



in the right direction, they were a bad influence. He was getting depressed, but he didn't want to admit it.

Stricker decided to experience all the pleasure he could find. He started using drugs and got into partying. When he got in trouble at school for using drugs, he had to go to an intensive outpatient program. No matter how much information he heard, he lived life as he pleased.

A SPIRITUAL COMPONENT

Stricker's mom prayed for him, because she knew something was wrong. His parents soon learned that Stricker had depression and suicidal thoughts. They began talking to different church

His mom left a bible beside his bed, embraced him, and said, “You’re in the Lord’s hands now.”

members, and one of them suggested Dr. Neil Nedley’s Depression Recovery program. “My parents were desperate, so they wanted me to try it,” Stricker said. But he had no intention of honoring their request.

Yet the Lord had different plans. “The Holy Spirit was working,” he said. “A week later I woke up and thought that maybe this program does have something for me.” So Stricker called Weimar and took the survey for the program. “When I was told I couldn’t take drugs while at the program, I said, ‘OK, sure.’ I thought to myself, *I won’t do drugs for 10 days so that when I get back home I can get twice as high.*”

Then Stricker’s parents dropped him off at the Depression Recovery program. His mom left a Bible beside his bed, embraced him, and said, “You’re in the Lord’s hands now.”

He thought, *I’m going to do the best I can. If it doesn’t work, I’ll go back to drugs.*

INCREMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

Soon after the program started, Stricker’s mind cleared up, and he started to think clearly again. He hated it, because all the old questions about religion started coming back. Each morning he had to go to lectures. Because he often felt like crying, it was hard for him to get through them. After one lecture Stricker went back to his room, opened the door, and started weeping. He picked up the Bible his mom had left.

“I opened my Bible, but I didn’t know where to read,” he says. “So I randomly pointed at a verse, but it didn’t make any sense to me. I thought maybe the New Testament had something for me, so I started reading some of what Paul had written. Again, it didn’t apply to me or make any sense.”

Then he thought, *Maybe I should pray.* He prayed, “God, I don’t even know if You’re real. If You are real, and if You care, show me what I can relate to in this Book.”

Stricker continued to do the program; the hydro-

therapy, the exercises, and the lectures. Dr. Nedley presented one lecture on pride, and how pride can lead to depression. He gave two examples. After hearing the second example, Stricker knew that God was real.

The person Nedley spoke about was a drug addict, also addicted to pornography and alcohol, with suicidal thoughts. God helped him to change to live a happy, fulfilling life. “If there was any guy in the universe who could relate to me, it was this guy,” said Stricker. “I knew God was real after that.”

As Stricker continued the program, he saw the care that each person gave him; he saw their love for him. He saw Christ through them. He started to change. He started reading his Bible and realized that God was asking him to give up his friends. “I said, ‘Lord, I don’t want to give up my friends.’ I wanted them to have what I had.”

Stricker prayed as he never had before. He prayed that his friends would have the same experience he had had. Stricker knew he had things he had give up too. He called his parents and asked them to throw away the things he wouldn’t need anymore. “They didn’t see that coming,” he said. He was at peace; he was happy. He had become a new person.

EDUCATION QUEST

Stricker wanted to attend Weimar College, but he wasn’t accepted. He attended a HEALTH program instead. Afterward he finished the prerequisites to get into nursing school. He applied for the Weimar Institute nursing program and was accepted. He is eager to see how the Lord can use him in this ministry to reach a hurting world.

He claims the promise: “To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me in my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne” (Rev. 3:21). 📖

Lindsay Philpott is a student at Weimar College.

A JOURNEY FOR TRUTH

An education in the United States was just the beginning.

LINDSAY PHILPOTT

Shimpei Suzuki grew up in Japan. When he was ready for college, he decided to study in the United States. He wasn't a Christian. In Japan only 1 percent of the population are Christians.

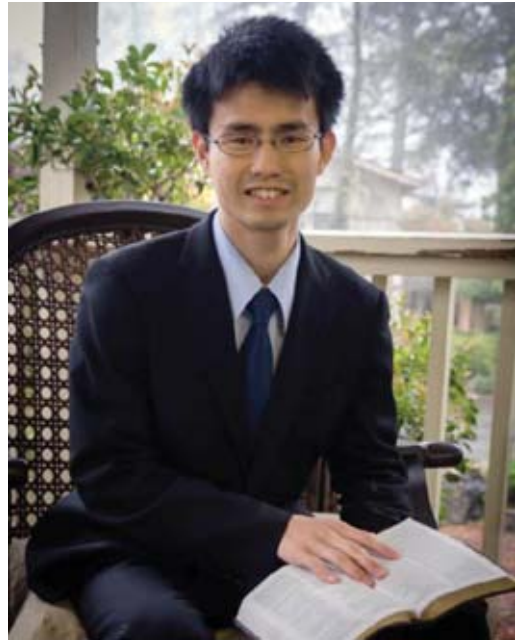
Suzuki's first stop was in the San José, California, area for a six-month course to learn English. During that time his next-door neighbors were Christians who invited him to attend church. "I was afraid of religion," he said. His mother had told him he should never get involved with religion because he wouldn't be able to get out of it. "She told me it would mess up my life."

After Suzuki was done with his language course, his next-door neighbors again invited him to church. This time he knew more about American culture and Christianity, and he wanted to know more. So in the summer of 2013 he agreed to go to church with them. As he started to attend church and Sabbath School, he started asking questions regarding how life should be and what truth was. "I was craving the truth, and the Bible was an answer to my questions."

While Suzuki was learning English, he had plans to study philosophy. But after he started going to church and learning about the Bible, he decided to study theology instead. He started Bible studies with two Adventist pastors, one Japanese and one American. The Bible studies were in both Japanese and English. Six months after he started Bible studies he was baptized on his birthday, July 19.

ANOTHER GOAL

Suzuki had heard through a Japanese pastor about Weimar Institute. He visited the campus a couple times and knew that it was the place for him. He liked the smallness, uniqueness, and Weimar's spiritual environment. He also liked the practical applications that Weimar offered along with education, such as agriculture and construction. He also appreciated that Weimar's medical missionary focus involved every student, even




theology students. The Lord made it clear to him that he should go there.

As he started his education at Weimar, Suzuki found it difficult at first. Not only was the English language a barrier—he didn't know anyone, and he also was a new Christian. He still didn't know much about the Bible, so he had to catch up. As he moved forward, he started to understand the Bible better, he appreciated the love of God, and learned more about theology.

"I like the environment of the theology program," he says. "There are no worldly distractions here, and I can focus on studying. If I were constantly distracted by worldliness, I wouldn't have had the same spiritual growth."

Not only is the theology program helping Suzuki grow in his knowledge and understanding of the Bible—the program has helped him academically, and with his writing skills as well.

Being a theology student has helped him to realize the need for spiritual leaders on campus. The program strengthened him to be a spiritual leader and prepared him for ministry. 

Lindsay Philpott is a student at Weimar College.

SEEING THROUGH GOD'S EYES

Transforming interests to friends and neighbors

CONRAD VINE

As the predawn glow edged the Sahara sand dunes, Abdullah knelt on his prayer rug outside his humble home—a cement slab ringed with chicken wire, sheltered by a blue tarpaulin tent and furnished with a few threadbare rugs. He was saying his Fajr, the first of five daily Muslim prayers.

Suddenly his mind was flooded with a vision of Jesus Christ in heaven. Jesus said to him, “I want to live in a home in Africa.” The vision ended as suddenly as it had begun, and Abdullah was left to ponder its meaning. Maybe Jesus wanted to live in his home.

Abdullah set off on a quest for truth that would consume his life for the next seven years. He approached many Westerners, pleading for a Bible, but nobody would give him one for fear of Al-Qaeda, which is very active in that country. He even went to the airport to plead with departing Westerners for their Bibles. Finally someone gave him a New Testament. He rushed home with his prize and started reading it with his wife. As they read, they fell in love with Jesus, and the Holy Spirit convicted their hearts of their need to become His disciples.

But how? In this country there are no Christian Web sites, broadcasts, bookstores, or churches. Under Sharia law it is illegal to convert to Christianity. If the government doesn't imprison you, Al-Qaeda will kill you. So Abdullah began praying that God would send someone to guide him.

“CAN YOU HELP ME?”

This is where God brought me into Abdullah's story. Early one morning I found myself seated on a rug in Abdullah's tent on the edge of the Sahara. He had many twins in his family, and I am a twin, so we discussed the most famous twins in history—Esau and Jacob—and God's promise to Abraham. Abdullah shared how the Holy Spirit had been convicting his heart every time he read his

Bible, which he kept in a secret place.

“When I pray my Muslim prayers,” he said, “they are dry like the bones in my arms. But when I pray to Jesus Christ, it is like living marrow in my bones!” He pointed at his skinny arms with joy on his face. “How can I learn more about Jesus? Can you help me?”

How could I help him? I thought back to my shelves at home, laden with a rich banquet of spiritual literature. And here was Abdullah pleading for just a few crumbs. We prayed; then I had an idea: I would send him a Kindle loaded with digital books written in Arabic. He could keep an entire library on it, and nobody would ever know. Abdullah was overjoyed.


We passed the day in happy communion. As the sun began to dip toward the Atlantic Ocean, a cool breeze sprang up, and mice scampered around the edges of the tent. Abdullah gently shoed them away as our conversation continued to the ultimate question on his heart. “Will you please baptize me?” he asked. “I want to accept God's gift of grace and eternal life by faith.”

I thought for a long moment, my heart torn. “Abdullah,” I finally said, “if I baptize you alone, you will be killed. However, when your entire clan is ready to stand together for Jesus, I will return and baptize you.”

Abdullah's face lit up. “Yes!” he said. “I will start sharing my faith with my extended family this very evening!”

© JAMES SPARSHATT





“Do you believe that Jesus is in heaven now,” he asked, “preparing a home for all who believe in Him?”

“CAN WE BE NEIGHBORS?”

Arm in arm Abdullah and I walked over the dunes back to my taxi, he in his white robes and I in my jeans and shirt. “Brother Conrad,” he said, “do you believe that Jesus is in heaven now, preparing a home for all who believe in Him?”

“Yes,” I replied. “He said that in John 14:1-3, a most beautiful promise.”

Abdullah continued, “When Jesus returns and takes us all to heaven and gives us new homes, can we be neighbors?”

My heart skipped a beat. Nobody had ever asked me that before. I was humbled by this man’s profound faith. “Abdullah,” I said, “it will be my privilege and joy to be your neighbor in heaven.”

We prayed together before parting, and Abdullah kissed my cheek. As I pulled away in my taxi,

I watched him turn and walk back into the Sahara until he disappeared among the dunes.

God taught me a powerful lesson that day. When I view the world through Western eyes, I see Islam as a rising existential threat to civilization. But when I see the world through God’s eyes, I see men and women who are sincerely seeking the Savior.

God challenged me that day to pray for the salvation of my Muslim neighbors, and to love them as He does. Although Abdullah and I live in different countries, we both live in God’s kingdom of grace. I look forward to being his neighbor in heaven. 🍌

Conrad Vine is president of Adventist Frontier Missions, which establishes indigenous Seventh-day Adventist church-planting movements among unreached people groups. To learn more, visit www.afmonline.org.

MORE THAN A BOOK: A MINISTRY

The printed page is still an effective tool.

JEFF SCOGGINS

In Harrison, Arkansas, someone left a copy of the book *The Called . . . the Chosen*, by Ken McFarland, on a table at the post office. A woman picked up the book and laid it on her coffee table at home, intending to read it. A friend read the book and called the local Adventist pastor, asking if she could visit his church; she was eventually baptized there. In Florida a stranger handed the book to a woman, which led her to be baptized also.

Stories like this keep coming to Alice Scarbrough, publisher and promoter of *The Called . . . the Chosen*, in spite of the fact that her phone num-

ber should be read by every Seventh-day Adventist.

The Called . . . the Chosen was written specifically for new church members to give them an overview of the story of the Seventh-day Adventist Church: how God led in the birth and growth of the church, and how He will continue to lead to the very end. Even though the book was designed for new members, the stories that are pouring in show that God had an even broader idea for it, including helping to restore the faith of former and inactive members, and even bringing new people to the church.

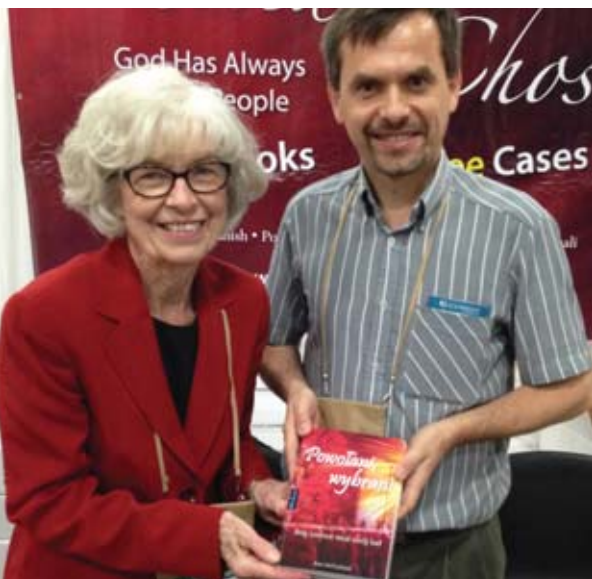
INTERNATIONAL REACH

The Called . . . the Chosen has grown to be more than just a book. With Scarbrough's tireless dedication and support, the book has become an entire ministry. Commissioned by Scarbrough's late husband, Hollis, in 2006, *The Called . . . the Chosen* has been printed and reprinted numerous times and in several languages. To fulfill her promise to her husband, to whom this project meant so much, Alice has continued to publish and promote the book. Nearly 700,000 copies have been printed in English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Russian, Romanian, and Swahili. In process are editions in Polish, Korean, German, and Tamil.

Scarbrough has been a member of ASI for 23 years, and has attended all but one of the ASI national conventions during that time. Alice, or someone else involved in this ministry, is often found at one of the booths taking orders for *The Called . . . the Chosen*. And why wouldn't people order them—by the case, even? The books are free. The only cost is for shipping, and they are yours to use to bless others.

For more information, visit www.thecalledthechosen.com. To order single copies, visit www.adventist-bookcenter.com. To order bulk copies, call Pacific Press, 800-600-7197. 📖

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



Alice Scarbrough, along with the translator, exhibits the Polish translation of *The Called . . . The Chosen* at the General Conference session in San Antonio in 2015.

ber is unlisted. Somehow people manage to track down her number, calling to say thank you, to ask how they can get more books, to inform her they are using the book in their study group, to ask for a translation into Urdu or some other language, and to express their conviction that the book

ON A ROLL

Evangelistic tool combines technologies past and present.

NORMAN REITZ

Who doesn't remember picture rolls? The New Beginnings picture roll concept resonates with many church members.

In the hallways of my own church someone said, "That reminds me of going to Sabbath School in Samoa" (most likely a reference to the Sabbath School Picture Roll sponsored by ASI years ago).

The New Beginnings picture roll, however, is not intended primarily for church use, but for public evangelism.

STILL NECESSARY

In 2016 of the many baptisms obtained through evangelism meetings in Rwanda, an estimated 20 to 30 percent of new believers were converted at sites where there was no electricity. New Beginnings sermon manuals in the Kinyarwanda language, along with the Bible, were the only materials used. So when the East-Central Africa Division planned for meetings in the late spring of 2017 in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, they asked for picture rolls with evangelistic content.

ASI Missions, Inc., had made producing a picture roll based on 26 sermon subjects of New Beginnings a major priority. At its February 2017 board meeting, members pledged \$500,000 for printing the first of 10,000 sets of picture rolls (approximately \$100,000 had previously been raised for creating and developing the rolls).

Under the evangelism portfolio of ASI a group was assembled in January 2017 to create the evangelism picture roll. A horizontal format of four feet wide by three feet high was chosen for high visibility in outdoor or low-light settings. Seven Bible pictures plus one health poster make up each of the 26 presentations.

Dawna Sawatzky, a health educator, was primary scriptwriter for the health talks. Pat Arrabito, of LLT Productions, served as editor. Artwork was provided by the Justinen Creative group, illustrators of the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*,



The ASI evangelism leadership group

Our Little Friend, and *Primary Treasure*. Contributions were also made by Health Education Resources. The result is one of the highest quality sets of health materials ever produced within the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Jim Wood of LLT productions, a former missionary in Africa and scriptwriter for Faith for Today, renders the New Beginnings in a style suitable for presenting with the seven pictures for each subject. Early samples were vetted by Adventist evangelists. Based on their feedback, the scripture content was enhanced, and for each sermon there is now a complete list of scriptures to track with the actual New Beginnings sermon scripts.

STILL COMMUNICATING

To ensure that the pictures are the best available to accompany the Bible stories, ASI evangelism leaders met in Sacramento, California, in June 2017. Picture by picture the group evaluated possible images from Goodsalt, Sermon View, It Is Written archives, Nathan Greene artwork, and other sources. Painstakingly, prayerfully, and often with vigorous discussion, each picture was selected. Once selected, Joe Garza, a contract employee of ASI, began rendering the images in a high-resolution format for printing.

Printing of the rolls is likely to occur in Asia. Two rolls, each containing 13 sermon sets, will be included with accompanying health posters. The two rolls, along with the evangelism and health scripts, will be encased in large, waterproof tubes. The scripts are written in simple English, making it easy for appropriate translation to occur in the field. A single person can carry a roll to remote sites.

Truly we are almost home as we see the gospel being preached in the ends of the earth through something as simple as a picture roll. 🍌

Norman Reitz, a former president of ASI, is an attorney, lay evangelist, and vice president of evangelism for ASI.

REDEFINING MISSION

*Taking the gospel where
Christianity isn't allowed*

DONALD SELF

Sheik Hanif* was a devout and respected leader who prayed five times a day. In the prime of his career he was responsible for organizing communities and building new mosques in his native country.

Yet he had a deep longing for certainty about his status with Allah (God). He was troubled by the violence emerging in his country, and the lack of compassion he saw. He had many questions but few answers about life's struggles.

One night he was awakened by a dream, a dream that offered him hope. In his dream a handsome, graceful Man with a shining face addressed him by name. He wanted Hanif to serve Him; He also issued a warning that Hanif must obey all His instructions.

Hanif asked, "Who are you?"

"I am Isa al Masih [the Quranic term for Jesus the Messiah], and if you obey Me, you will receive what you have longed for all your life."

"What shall I do?" Hanif asked.

He was shown a familiar place in the city, as well as the face of a man. "Find this man, and he will show you the answers to all your questions about God."

DIVINE APPOINTMENT

Hanif arose before dawn to arrive at the location he was shown. For years he had prayed for God to show him the right way; he would not miss this opportunity. Through the long day he looked at every face of every person who passed on the busy road. Finally, at the close of day he saw the man he had seen in his dream.

Walking with two young men whom he was mentoring was Wafi,* the leader of nPraxis' work in the country. Wafi also had a dream in which God told him, "I will give you a sheik."

In his anxious delight Hanif ran to Wafi. "My friend, Isa al Masif, Himself, requires that you answer my questions tonight."



XINHUA VIA ZUMA WIRE

After months of study, prayer, and rejoicing, Hanif and his family were baptized. He has shared his newfound faith and has planted seven new home churches. He has also mentored two new leaders, who are now planting churches in other areas of his country.

The "underground" work among Muslims in some of the most closed countries in the world is one of three primary focuses of nPraxis International. There is also a rapidly growing work among Hindus, and an amazing, expanding tribal work among animist groups. nPraxis now operates in 40 countries with indigenous workers, who work in their own homelands for their own people. Their average stipend is US\$150 per month.

God has used visions and dreams, miraculous healings, and unexpected personal encounters to build a ministry of more than 50,000 house churches, each with eight to 15 believers studying and sharing their faith. They are supported by more than 300 indigenous workers who are dedicated to empowering new followers of Jesus through training in effective (and safe) methods of witness.

The need is great for more workers. We have requests for more than 350 more workers right now. We believe the number of house churches—and followers of Jesus—could be doubled in about three years.

nPraxis provides Bibles and other materials to new believer groups in some of the countries of the world that are most closed to Christianity. We have an urgent need for 45,000 Bibles in one country where thousands of believers have embraced Bible truths but must share a single Bible among dozens of families.

To learn more about the work of nPraxis International and read more stories of God's Spirit in Action, visit www.npraxis.org.

*Names in this article are pseudonyms.

Donald Self is retired after directing development campaigns for many non-profit organizations.



PETER N. LANDLESS

ZENO L. CHARLES-MARCEL

THE HAPPINESS QUOTIENT

Raising the level

Q: I struggle with making good choices, especially related to lifestyle. Is it true that people of faith are healthier? Is all this worthwhile?

A: Behavior change of any kind is very difficult to make. We are faced with many choices every day, and the healthful options are not always the easiest ones to make. This reminds us of Paul's confession: "For what I want to do I do not do" (Rom. 7:15).

It's important to have health knowledge that is reliable, sound, and balanced. For example, we know we should engage in physical exercise daily. We need to process this, consider the needed changes, and prepare to start the new health habit or behavior. Knowledge now informs the choices and actions to be made according to our physical and environmental circumstances.

We need to select a form of exercise: walking, jogging, water aerobics—any or all these or many others. The next step is implementation. These stages have been described by Drs. James Prochaska and Carlo DiClemente as precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, and action.¹ The new action needs to be practiced for three to six months and then maintained as a habit.

We are blessed to know and understand the importance of whole-person health, even in our inevitable brokenness. The scientific literature in general and the physical and mental facets of the Adventist Health Studies confirm that people of faith indeed have a health advantage. People who attend church services live longer; have less depression, hypertension, cancer, and suicide; and generally enjoy better mental and physical health.

Twenty-year-olds who attend services once a week or more live 7.5 years longer than those who

never attend; this benefit virtually doubles to 13.7 years in African Americans. Religious attendance reduces the negative effects of stress, promotes healthier behaviors, provides social support, provides meaning, and fosters forgiveness. A general disposition to forgive is associated with decreased levels of depression, anxiety, anger, stress, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), along with increased levels of well-being. Careful Sabbath-keeping is associated with better mental health; it may be that the Sabbath ends up "keeping" us. What a thought!

Yes, it is all worthwhile! There are benefits to be enjoyed now, as well as the promise of eternity with our heavenly Father and Best Friend. We make choices and changes not to make Him love us, but *because* He loves us, and because we have accepted and love Him.

Be encouraged and reassured by these words penned by Ellen White: "As the will of man cooperates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings."² As always, she underscores the Greater Light: God's Word.

Paul's prayer is applicable to our House Call today: "Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1:6).

It is worthwhile *and* possible—by His grace! 🍏

¹ <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.47.9.1102>.

² Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1900), p. 333.

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THE HARVEST IS READY

While His disciples left to buy food some distance away, Jesus' passion for souls was ignited by a woman who showed up at noon to fill her waterpot in the ancient city of Sychar in Samaria (John 4).

When His disciples returned, they were shocked to find Jesus speaking with a woman, by Himself, at noon. It seemed so scandalous that the disciples jumped to the wrong conclusion. They turned the conversation to concern about His empty stomach, while He was more conscious of filling a famished soul with the bread of life.

Then the disciples changed the conversation from food to farming as they looked across the plains where grain had recently been planted. They called Jesus' attention to the first blades popping out of the ground, and remarked that it would take another four months before the crop would be ready for harvest. But while they were speaking of the future, Jesus anticipated a real and present spiritual harvest. He asked: "Don't you have a saying, 'It's still four months until harvest'?" (verse 35). As He spoke, He could see a procession of villagers from Sychar in the distance, eagerly making their way across the plain toward Him, led by the woman from the well. He exclaimed: "I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest" (verse 35).

Perhaps if those disciples had been from an organized church committee inquiring about the possibilities of a successful soul-winning venture, their resolution would have been: "Let's wait and watch the crop for four more months; then it will be ready." Some committees, like the disciples, are ready to recognize needy com-

munities; but are just as likely to find good reasons to do nothing at the moment. However, the harvest for conversions isn't the same as the time line of crops.

That's why there's a divine urgency to reap God's harvest. For, as with grain that rots when it's ripe and not reaped, Satan spoils those who are ready and ignored. Many obvious signs indicate that it's harvesttime. These are reflected in everyday "breaking news," when most people outside our church are apparently indifferent to organized religion and paying dearly the wages of sin. They have nowhere to turn when their relationships fall apart, when their children take guns and knives to school to resolve their conflicts, when they are laid off or fired from their jobs.

In recent outreach to various neighborhoods in South Bend, Indiana, we discovered these striking and unmistakable signs that people without Christ are unhappy with their lives. We saw signs in increased police patrols and reports of people shooting each other for nonessential material things; signs in groups of children and youth wandering aimlessly, searching for a purpose or a personal hero; signs in the confession of a man who admitted he's an alcoholic who no longer finds pleasure in its numbing promise to fill the infinite abyss in his heart without God.

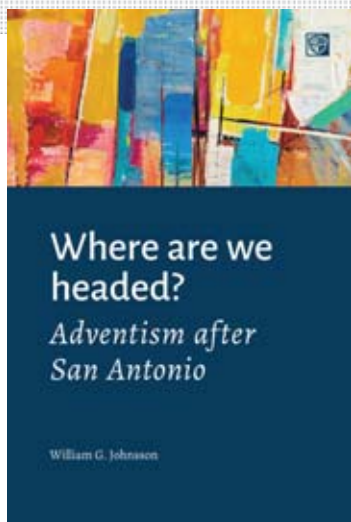
In neighborhood after neighborhood residents were ready and waiting for the authentic proclamation of the gospel. The field is white for harvest. It's time to reap!

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



**THERE'S A DIVINE
URGENCY TO REAP
GOD'S HARVEST.**



WHERE ARE WE HEADED?

Where Are We Headed? Adventism After San Antonio, William G. Johnsson, Oak and Acorn Publishing, Westlake Village, California, 2017, 162 pages, US\$12.95. Reviewed by Nathan Brown, book editor, Signs Publishing, Warburton, Victoria, Australia.

When retired leaders choose to speak out about the state of the nation or the church, their interjections are often met with some scepticism, and with inevitable questions about why they are speaking now. The suspicions are that they are exercising their greater sense of freedom after stepping away from their previous responsibilities; that they might be more honest now that they have less to lose; or that they are trying to fend off a growing sense of irrelevance and reinsert themselves into the debates.

Such are the risks that come with a book such as *Where Are We Headed?* by William Johnsson, now retired from his long-standing role as editor of *Adventist Review*. But Johnsson's strident new book has a different motivation: the church he served has changed, and, in his view, not for the better. For him, the climax of that change when it came—you'll have to read the book to find out when—was "a truly

GRACE 101

Grace 101: Heaven's Healing for Human Hearts, Richard D. Martin, self-published, 2017, 73 pages, US\$7.99 (Kindle edition). Reviewed by Lael Caesar, associate editor, *Adventist Review*.

Richard D. Martin, youth pastor of Emmanuel-Brinklow Church, Ashton, Maryland, when he wrote this, now leads the congregation of New Life church in Hampton, Virginia. His book is a one-month devotional of 31 brief readings consisting of personal stories and biblically based spiritual applications, calculated to inspire readers again, or for the first time, with the wonder of divine grace.

Martin leads with the identification of salvation as first a medical term. Being saved first meant being set free from danger, restored to some place of safety and wholeness. Martin shows that a proper understanding of this fact allows one to better appreciate what is involved in God's salvation.

sad day for the Seventh-day Adventist Church."

Where Are We Headed? identifies several related features of the changed church Johnsson now sees. He worries about evidence for a tendency to "remnant" arrogance and exclusivity; mantra-like statements about the soon coming of Jesus; statistical focus of mission; the fundamentalism and "flat" literalism creeping into our reading of Scripture; continuing discussions of the role of Ellen White's writings; and the misuse of calls to "unity." Johnsson's "lover's quarrel" is with what he fears the Adventist Church is becoming: "two radically different versions of Adventism competing for the future."



Pursuing the theme of restoration, Martin invokes the word “algebra,” which once referred to surgical treatment of broken bones. His alertness to culture and his ability to help people connect the Word of God with the world of their daily living, show up in his live titles: “Mission Impossible”—echoing the name of a TV series from the 1960s and 1970s, whose Hollywood namesake

releases its sixth chapter in 2018; “Despicable Me”—title of another movie series whose third installment was due to open June 2017; or “Pep-to-Bismol,” the name of a medication available over the counter for acid reflux.

Martin concludes (Day 31) that every one of us has a story, unique to us individually, yet inescapably containing one truth pervading all: a testimony called “grace.”

For more about “salvation,” “algebra,” and “grace,” read, reread, and apply Martin’s brief essays and apropos applications whenever and as many times as you can, focusing particularly, no doubt, on God’s “Equation of Salvation.” That equation is God’s approach to solving the “problematic equation” of Day 4 (“Doing the Math”), which follows Day 3’s “Infamous Miscalculation.”

Martin has succeeded in providing a brief and intriguing book of godly thought on a subject, grace, that will be studied through eternity’s endless years. The book is also available at his Web site: RichDMartin.com. 🍌

While *Where Are We Headed?* is open-ended, Johnsson’s burden is to call us back to “Adventism at its best” and ultimately to Jesus. This discussion is never far from our need for Jesus, the sufficiency of Jesus, and that the church should be shaped by the presence and ministry of Jesus. While Johnsson writes about big issues in a global church, he draws regularly on his lifetime experience of following Jesus, and writes with a grace and passion that is both Jesus-like and statesman-like.

Where Are We Headed? should not be tarred with the scepticism that sometimes meets postretirement publica-

tions. Johnsson is speaking to, with, and for a broad spectrum of the church, and is still held in high regard across multiple generations of Adventists.

As we continue to wrestle with the complicated issues of a worldwide church, we need wise voices that can offer circuit breakers to our arguments and their continuing faith as a guidepost for our progress. *Where Are We Headed?* does this, calling us to find our best in Jesus, and offering hope for a thoroughly authentic Adventism in the church that still embraces us all, however much frustration it may cause for us sometimes. 🍌

UNTIL JESUS RETURNS

We recently asked our Facebook friends this question: **If you knew you only had one week to live before Christ's return, or your death, how would you live? Would you live differently, or the same? Here are their responses.**—Editors.

I would do a quick review of Hezekiah's story to see if I could bargain or plead for more time. Then I would get back to the assurance I have of life eternal with Jesus.

NADINE BARCLAY, JOPLIN, MISSOURI

I would live so differently.

FEDHASAA BONJAA

I would first find a place of solitude and make things right between me and God. Then resting in His love, spending time with my family and friends in celebration, knowing it is only a brief time of separation.

DEB CASH, HAWTHORNE, NEVADA

Romans 8 gives me the abiding assurance of God's dimensionless love and preparation for eternity. The coroner will not need to write a death certificate saying, "Scared to death by a beast-frightened imagination." Instead I can declare a welcome confidence of being fully clothed by the righteousness of Christ.

CHRIS DALEY, SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND

I would live] the same, day by day, ready to meet Christ every day.

SHARLENE ELDRED, GOBLES, MICHIGAN

I would live an improved quality lifestyle.

EMMANUEL, ACCRA, GHANA

I would live for Jesus. That is what I want to do for Jesus before I die.

MASESEKA HENRY, KAMPALA, UGANDA

No one knows when Jesus will return. It will be like a thief. We're required to be ready all the time. If we knew, we'd pretend to be good.

MUJANAMA JULIUS, KAGADI, UGANDA

As St. Francis of Assisi was hoeing his garden, he was asked, "What would you do if you were suddenly to learn that you were to die at sunset today?"

He said, "I would finish hoeing my garden."

If I'm trusting my relationship to my Lord, my death, His second coming, will be the same.

STEVE NICOLA, AUBURN, CALIFORNIA

I would continue to do as much as I can to tell people about Christ. [I would] ask for forgiveness from people I've wronged, and visit those whom I've been meaning to visit but never had the time. [I would] tell my loved ones that I love them.

LINA J. ROPATI-TOOALA, AMERICAN SAMOA

I would definitely live differently. I would devote all my time to studying the Bible and begging for forgiveness. I would also celebrate.

NICOLAS SALOMON, ST. IGNATIUS, MONTANA



If I knew that Christ would return next week. I would spread this message to my family first, my relatives, my friends, and the people around me. I would live differently. [I would] walk with God and make changes that reflect Christ.

NIEL SHILLONG

Same.

SALAYNA STAGGERS, BROWNSVILLE, OHIO

As much as I would like to say I am living the kind of life I need to see Christ face to face, in reality I am not. I would definitely live differently.

JORGE VALEZ, KEENE, TEXAS

I would quit my job to spend more time with family.

NICOLE WALL

I would live a bit differently. I try to stay within God's laws, but I often fail, as we all do. It is important to learn to be as good as we can be without making excuses for our failings.

IVAN WHITE, SOUTH DAKOTA



Were You There?

Every time I read the Gospels, I try to imagine myself in the scenes I read (it's not hard; I have a fertile imagination).

What must it have been like to feel the wind and the water, see the waves, and experience the panic that comes from being caught in a small fishing boat during a ferocious storm at sea?

How would it feel—more important, how would it taste—to eat bread and fish provided by a miraculous act?

After being declared unclean, banned from human contact, how incredible would have been the sensation of a human touch, and hearing the words “Be clean.”

A lot of the interactions about Jesus recorded in the Gospels happened in the presence of more than one person. Sometimes there were several; often there were dozens or thousands. Almost always there were people who hung on every word, every gesture, in an attempt to get closer to Christ.

Mary abandoned Martha so she could be close to Jesus. Zacchaeus climbed a sycamore fig tree to be close to Jesus. Mothers brought their children to be close to Jesus. A woman crashed a private dinner party so she could anoint Jesus with expensive perfume—and be close to Jesus.

Also, in almost every story, Jesus' detractors were never far away. And often religious leaders were His fiercest critics; they were the ones who condemned what Jesus said and did. They should have known better. After all, they were steeped in the Scriptures, they knew the prophecies (at least theoretically). But they were also bound by their traditions.

Because Jesus didn't fit their preconceptions about the Messiah and His ministry, religious leaders dogged Jesus, looking for anything they could use to discredit Him and His ministry. When they saw Him perform miracles, they explained them away by saying that Jesus had a devil.

They so resisted the Holy Spirit's influence that Jesus had to warn them: “Every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven” (Matt. 12:31).

So we see in the Gospels a rather sharp dichotomy. From the common people who heard Jesus' stories, experienced His miracles, and were inspired by His ministry, Jesus was honored and affirmed. “They were all filled with awe and praised God. ‘A great prophet has appeared among us,’ they said. ‘God has come to help his people’” (Luke 7:16).

“But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple courts, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David,’ they were indignant” (Matt. 21:15).

Sadly, faced with the loss of status and authority, religious leaders were the ones most determined to get Jesus out of the way. We know how that ended.

I like to think that if I heard Jesus describe the kingdom He came to set up, if I witnessed His miracles, if I saw how He related with everyone—young or old, rich or poor, educated or uneducated—I'd be captivated by His character and want to live as He lived. Given the opportunity to choose between Jesus and tradition, I choose Jesus. ▀

Stephen Chavez is an assistant editor of *Adventist Review*.

A WOMAN CRASHED
A PRIVATE DINNER
PARTY SO SHE
COULD ANOINT
JESUS WITH
EXPENSIVE
PERFUME—AND BE
CLOSE TO JESUS.

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