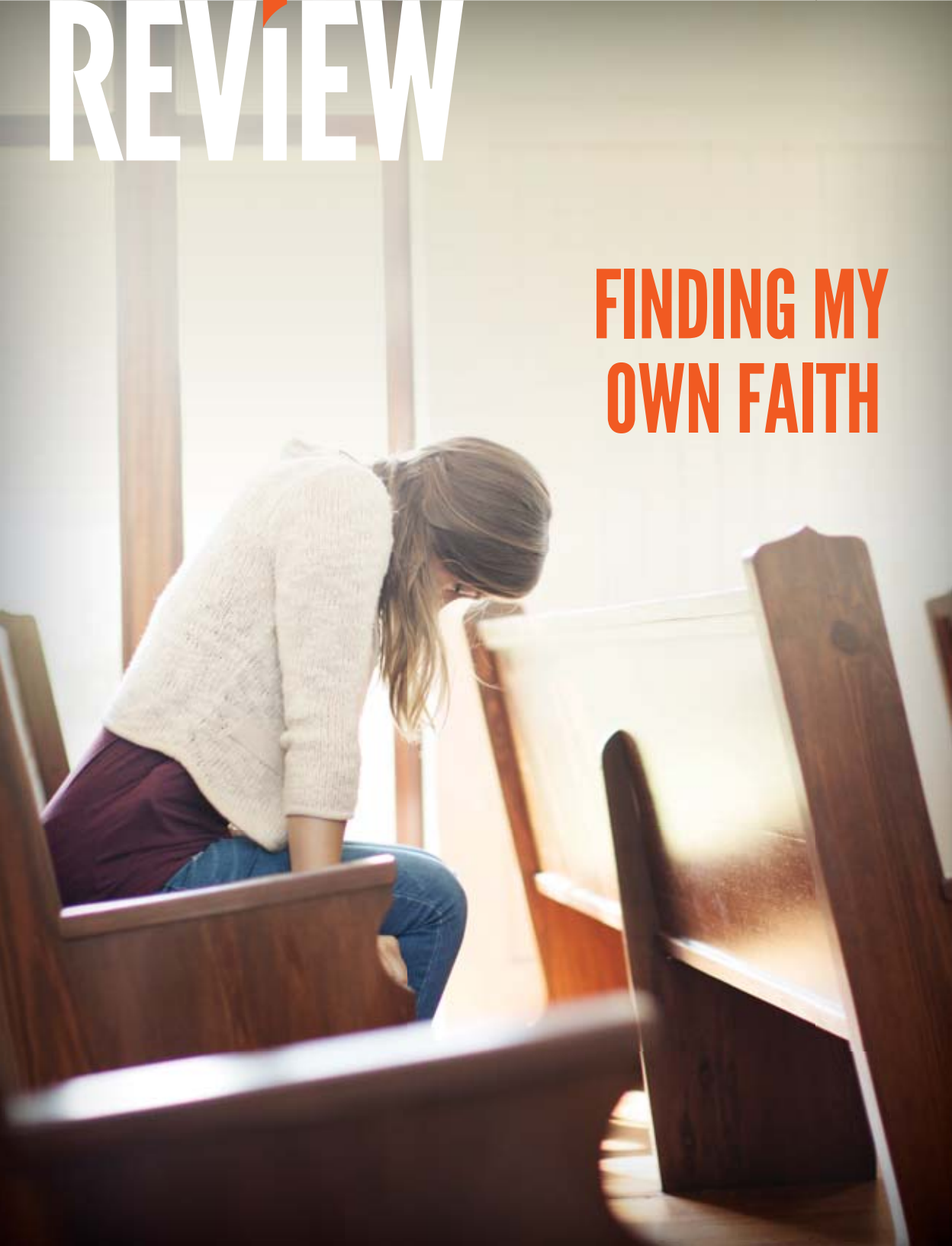


ADVENTIST REVIEW

NOVEMBER 2017: PROPHETS OF HUMAN SOLIDARITY + STARTING IN THE MIDDLE + HOW IS YOUR BIBLE MARKED? + DO IT YOURSELF FAITH + WAIT FOR IT + WHAT GOD DOES WITH FAILURE

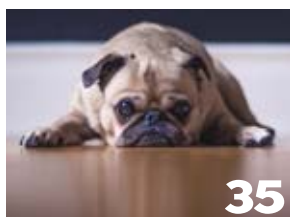
FINDING MY OWN FAITH





Sticky Free KIDS

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TRENDING

THE MOST SHARED STORIES ON ADVENTISTREVIEW.ORG LAST MONTH:



- 1 One Hour Before the Shooting in Las Vegas
- 2 29 Adventist Churches, 4 Schools Flattened in Dominica
- 3 Adventists Provide Support to Crisis in Las Vegas
- 4 With Prayers and Blessings, North American Church Moves to New Headquarters
- 5 Adventist Church Releases Statements on Las Vegas Shootings

VIDEO RESOURCES FROM ARTV



NINETY-FIVE

Adam Ramdan travels back to the old country to bring the story of Martin Luther forward to a twentieth first-century audience. From the darkness of a medieval dungeon, see how Luther's courageous act of protest sparked the Protestant Reformation.



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Sickness has no chance against this precocious posse of health advocates, not even their nemesis, Sickness, the Blue Guy. Join these seven- and eight-year olds as they thwart Sickness' efforts with amazing health facts faster than he can say "achoo!"



REFORMATION JOURNEY

The hosts make a personal journey to six key reformation sites to bring the story to life, talking to experts in each location.

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BILL KNOTT



The Year of Grace and Vulnerability

See them clearly. You first noticed them after the Adventurer Club registration a year ago—the nervous thirty-something couple following their irrepressible six-year old, Jacob, into the church fellowship hall after the worship service. From your favorite spot near the dessert table you watched them taking in the scene—new place, new faces, new food, new day of worship.

Amy joined the pastor’s Bible study class in January, followed three weeks later by Arlen—towed to Sabbath School each week by their son’s desire to spend ever more time with his friends. In April, they signed up to help with the Adventurer Club campout, and spent the rainy weekend flipping pancakes and swapping stories with a dozen other parents.

Eight months in, you heard a passing reference to a plan to “join the church.” Two months ago, a date for baptism was announced. And just last Sabbath, streaming wet, Amy and Arlen embraced the pastor in the baptistery—as Jacob beamed with satisfaction from the front row.

You see them clearly now.

They’re new, and they’re believers—welcomed into the worldwide fellowship of Seventh-day Adventists through the mysterious but wonderful process by which the Spirit still moves in human hearts. And while the hugs are genuinely warm and the friendships quickly

forming, this is still the most vulnerable moment for those like Amy and Arlen—and Jacob.

A dozen voices in their families and jobs will question their decisions. Awkward, even painful moments will unfold as they align their lives with Scripture’s teaching about the Sabbath. Older and still powerful connections to other faiths will tempt them back from all the change now flooding through their lives.

It is the Year of Grace and Vulnerability—those crucial first 12 months when new believers either successfully transition into God’s remnant people or slip back into the worlds from which they came.

And you can do something to help.

This is the twentieth year that *Adventist Review* has turned to its readers and asked them to support the New Believer project—a simple \$15 gift to put one full year of this faith-building magazine in the hands of every newly baptized person across North America. You’ve responded with uncommon generosity—with checks and notes and prayers that move our staff to tears as we record your gifts and thank you for your kindness.

Because of you, tens of thousands of new believers have been anchored in their new-found faith during their first year of membership by the most trusted voice in this movement: the *Adventist Review*.

Tens of thousands of new believers have been anchored in their new-found faith during their first year of membership by the most trusted voice in this movement: the Adventist Review.

This year, you can make it even more personal.

For every four new believers whose one-year subscription you sponsor (a \$60 gift), you can designate one more individual—a friend, a former member, a child or grandchild, another specific new believer—who will receive 12 months of *Adventist Review* for free, and year-round access to the most engaging website in the church. The multiples apply: for \$120, you can add two names for free; for \$500, give us eight. We want to encourage you in well-doing—and make your gift go even further.

If you wish, those whose names you designate will know of your gift when their first copy arrives within six weeks. If you prefer to stay anonymous, we’ll simply say that they are “highly valued by a friend.” The result will be the same—for all like Amy and Arlen, for Jacob laughing through the puzzles in his copy of *KidsView* that arrives with each month’s issue.

Call at 301-680-6639 to make your gift by credit card. Send your check to: New Believer Project, *Adventist Review*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904.

You know Amy, Arlen, and Jacob.

Now keep them firmly in mind. ♣

Bill Knott

Some have said we have to take care of our “own,” but these are our “own.” Our heavenly Father is their Father also. Our elder brother Jesus is their brother too.

DORIS KOPKO, ROSEVILLE, CALIFORNIA

OUR OWN

I’ve never had as much trouble reading an article as I did with “Refugee Sabbath Highlights a ‘Sanctuary Church’” in the August issue. It was so difficult because it was impossible to see through my tears. To read the horrific experiences refugees have had to face through no fault of their own, along with ADRA’s acts of mercy, brought to mind Jesus’ words: “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these . . . , ye have done it unto me” (Matt. 25:40, KJV). Some have said we have to take care of our “own,” but these are our “own.” Our heavenly Father is their Father also. Our Elder Brother, Jesus, is their Brother too. We are all family. What a privilege to support ADRA and their volunteers with this lifesaving mission!

Doris Kopko
Roseville, California

JESUS SETS YOU FREE

I thank God for the article “When Jesus Sets You Free,” by John McVay (May 2017). The words that meant so much to me are: “We serve a God who hears the prayer that falters toward the precipice of doubt and unbelief. He hears that prayer as it is translated into the language of heaven by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:26, 27).”

The prayers of that early Christian small group are rooted in unbelief. The sublime language of their prayers belies the faithlessness in their hearts. Yet—and please don’t miss this—the risen Jesus, our gracious Lord, hears and answers those prayers anyway. I have been so troubled by the text in James 1:6, 7: “Only it must



be in faith that he asks with no wavering (no hesitating, no doubting). For the one who wavers (hesitates, doubts) is like the billowing surge out at sea that is blown hither and thither and tossed by the wind. For truly, let not such a person imagine that he will receive anything [he asks for] from the the Lord” (AMPC).*

Betty Ora
San Clemente, California

POSITIVE CONNECTIONS TO THE PAST

I just happened across the story of Dr. Gus Foster in Brawley, California, that was posted on the Internet in a *Review* from 2002. It was written by a niece of Dr. Foster’s. I was born at Pioneers Memorial Hospital in Brawley on February 10, 1943. My parents, James and Marjorie Gillespie, were church school teachers in Brawley at the time of my birth. Dr. Foster was a good friend of theirs, and he delivered me. Dr. Foster’s son later lived with them while he and my parents were attending Pacific Union College (PUC). I googled Dr. Foster and came up with the *Review* article about the wonderful things he did to

It is heartbreaking that Christians were not always in the forefront speaking about racial injustice because their personal bias blinds them to the obvious.

SYLVIA CALLENDAR, VIA WEB

help Japanese Americans in internment camps during World War II.

I was thrilled to find this gem because I knew some who were listed when I was a child. We lived in Los Angeles in the mid to late 1940s; my father was principal of Lincoln Park Union School. Later I attended PUC and ended up teaching there in the 1970s and later at Andrews University in Berrien Springs. I knew very little about the doctor, but was thrilled to see this article, which connected with my past. Thank you for posting this article on the Internet. It was a very nostalgic moment to read it.

Don Gillespie

St. Joseph, Michigan

OUR SIBLINGS: REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS

Perhaps I'm missing something here, but the Adventist Church isn't bringing the refugees into the country. It is the government that allows them in because of their plight, and this is usually done legally. Caring for refugees and ministering to their needs—or doing the same for anyone else, for that matter—is the duty of Christian believers, in my opinion. Yes, there are risks—there will be always be risks, but

IN A FEW WORDS...

MILLENNIALS, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

It is heartbreaking that Christians were not always in the forefront speaking about racial injustice because their personal bias blinds them to the obvious.

Sylvia Callendar, via Web

WHO IS MY BROTHER? AM I HIS KEEPER?

The Scriptures do not really say that all people in the world are my brothers, and let's add sisters, mothers, neighbors, but those who "do the will of My Father." Jesus asked, "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Matt. 12:49, 50, KJV). That means I am to love all and let God decide at the proper time who were those who did the will of His Father.

Robert Leo, via Web

caring and loving are done by principle from the heart. "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it

unto me" (Matt. 25:40, KJV).

Trevor Hammond
via Web

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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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Trafficking takes place in high volume at sporting events, state fairs, casinos, and business conventions. “Every time I travel, I look around and wonder who on my airplane and at my hotel are being trafficked.”

Renée Battle-Brooks, page 12

NEWS



A street in Houston after Hurricane Harvey.

HISAM SAKER, NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION NEWS

“GOD SPOKE TO ME THROUGH HURRICANE HARVEY”

ADVENTISTS AFFECTED BY MONSTER STORM SHARE WHAT THEY LEARNED.

MARCOS PASEGGI, *ADVENTIST REVIEW*, WITH NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION AND ADVENTIST NEWS NETWORK

The transient nature of our earthly homes. The preeminence of our relationship with God. The importance of witnessing in any circumstance. The centrality of helping others with no strings attached. These are some of the spiritual lessons some Seventh-day Adventist members who were in the path of Hurricane Harvey say they learned since the monster storm hit southeast Texas, United States, in late August.

“Even amid the devastation and loss here in the Greater Houston area, we have seen the hand of God at work!” said Carlos Craig, president of

the Texas Conference. While he acknowledged eight churches took on water and The Oaks Christian School was severely flooded, he was glad to report no loss of life among church members. He said he felt refreshed after witnessing how members went out of their way to assist those in need. “The opportunity for our churches to serve the communities they reside in has been glorious to watch! God is good all the time, even in the midst of trials,” he said.

A HURRICANE NAMED HARVEY

The first major hurricane to make landfall in the U.S. since 2005, Hur-

ricane Harvey caused not only destruction to homes but catastrophic flooding in southeastern Texas on August 25, 2017. According to various weather reports, in a four-day period some areas in eastern Texas received more than 40 inches (1,016 millimeters) of rain. With peak accumulations of 51.88 inches (1,318 millimeters), Harvey caused hundreds of thousands of homes to be flooded and resulted in dozens of deaths. According to several reports, more than 30,000 people were displaced.

Harvey also caused catastrophic inland flooding in the Greater

“Water flowed in freely. It went up to six to seven feet high, and even reached 15 inches in our highest building.”

Houston metropolitan area, where millions of people live. The hurricane is considered by some experts to be the worst disaster in Texas history, with losses estimated to be from US\$70 to \$190 billion. Recovery is expected to take many years.

GETTING READY FOR THE STORM

Even before the storm hit, the Adventist Community Services Disaster Response (ACS DR) for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America had convened a meeting with 25 union conference and local conference ACS DR personnel from across the territory. Church institutions in southeastern Texas, which had gone through severe storms before, did all they could to get ready for Harvey’s arrival.

“We moved our computers and piano up to the highest buildings on campus,” explained James Friesen, principal of The Oaks Christian School in Houston. “We covered doors and windows, and sealed gaps on the wall bricks with silicone glue.”

ACS DR reported volunteers had stocked trailers with clothing, hygiene kits, flood buckets, and other items. Both the Southwest Region Conference and Texas Conference prepared with plans for warehouse and supply management in Houston and surrounding towns.

Harvey, however, surpassed all preparations. Because of massive and widespread flooding, the needs

soon became greater than anticipated. At The Oaks the barriers couldn’t hold.

“Water flowed in freely,” said Friesen. “It went up to six to seven feet high, and even reached 15 inches in our highest building.”

MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS STEP UP

As soon as the storm moved on to Louisiana, Adventist agencies and local churches stepped up to assist those in need of water, food, shelter, and support. As requests for donations started pouring in, ACS, in partnership with the Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA) led the coordination of the relief efforts. Local Adventist churches, World Harvest Outreach and Beaumont, became warehouses for stocking and distribution of supplies.

In a letter, Larry Moore, president of the Southwestern Union Conference, a church region which includes Texas, shared some of the rescue and recovery activity that took place in the area after the storm.

“Teams of pastors and members helped evacuate other members and their neighbors; a group of Master Guides pulled together to evacuate nearly 90 people using inflatable mattresses in the floodwaters . . . ; members from hundreds of miles away organized and delivered truckloads of donations of food, water, and emergency supplies to local churches and where needed; the Texas Adventist Book Center provided food for those evacuees;

and the Southwest Region Conference opened its summer camp to shelter evacuees,” wrote Moore.

In addition, the Southwest Region Conference began operating a citywide distribution center in partnership with the city of Houston. “We have been providing clothing, food, water, and more as we have received truckloads of goods from all over the country, from as far away as California, Missouri, and New Hampshire,” said Calvin Watkins, president of the Southwest Region Conference.

The relief organizations were joined in their efforts by Southwestern Adventist University students. The Adventist-managed institution based in Keene, Texas, a four-hour drive from Houston, sent a group who spent Labor Day weekend—a public holiday in North America—assisting in The Oaks demolition and cleaning efforts.

“Volunteers came from all over,” said Friesen. “Even when the place was not yet accessible by car, teachers and young volunteers put on their mud boots and began to work on site. They were a godsend.”

They were assisted logistically by other local churches and institutions. Houston Central Seventh-day Adventist Church not only distributed clothing and supplies every day at its Community Services center, but also helped house students and volunteers from other locations who volunteered in the cleanup.

Amid so much devastation, the school has witnessed God’s abundant blessings, said Friesen. “Peo-

Members embrace each other during the moving apology offered at the South New South Wales Conference session.

ADVENTIST RECORD



ple brought tractors and backhoes to support the cleaning process,” he said. “A restoration company 200 miles [320 kilometers] away lent us professional fans and dehumidifiers to speed up the drying process.”

SPIRITUAL LESSONS

Church leaders and members affected by Harvey agree that their experiences during the past couple of weeks hold powerful spiritual lessons that they were fortunate enough to learn or relearn.

“It’s amazing to see how God has spoken to me through the Hurricane Harvey tragedy,” wrote Mark Valadez, pastor of the Orange and Groves Seventh-day Adventist churches. “The fact that my family and I were displaced from our home . . . reminds me that this world is not our home. We may lose earthly possessions, but our relationship with God is what is most important and will get us through.”

Friesen agrees. “The catastrophe has reminded us that this is temporary and that we are not taking anything home,” he said. “Our home is to come, so we shouldn’t get used to this one.”

His words were echoed by Valadez, who said it was powerful to see God’s love shine through people of all cultures as they joined as one. “We are all God’s children helping one another,” he said. ▀

For complete coverage of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, José, and Maria along with the earthquakes in Mexico, visit AdventistReview.org

LOCAL CHURCH APOLOGIZES PUBLICLY TO ITS PASTORS

THE GRIFFITH CHURCH ACKNOWLEDGES POOR TREATMENT OF MINISTERS

JARROD STACKELROTH, ADVENTIST RECORD

A recent South New South Wales (SNSW) Conference constituency session in Australia began in an unusual way: with a reconciliation ceremony and a public apology from a church to its ministers.

The Griffith Seventh-day Adventist Church publicly repented and apologized for the way it had treated its pastors in the past, extending its apology to the conference and its fellow churches.

“We have sinned against God, the South New South Wales Conference, our sister churches, and the ministers who have come to minister to us along with their wives and families,” said a statement, signed by the church members.

The letter drew comparisons with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram and their rebellious criticism of Moses, as well as being based on Daniel’s prayer of repentance (Dan. 9:4-19).

The statement was voted by a church business meeting and presented at the constituency meeting. So far 70 church members have signed it. It was run in the church bulletin for a number of weeks, giving all members and regular attendees a chance to read and sign it.

Australian Union Conference secretary Michael Worker, who attended the meeting, reported “the day started off in a poignant way with a heartfelt apology. . . . This set a reflective yet positive tone for the day.”

“Members of the Griffith church set a wonderful example of Christian spirit in presenting an apology for the hurt the local church had afflicted on those who in the past served them as pastors and conference leadership,” said Mike Faber, SNSW Conference president. “It was a moving and overwhelming experience to be the recipient of such kindness, and many hearts were touched. God’s presence was felt, and the atmosphere of love and peace remained with us right through the day.”

The process has been a long one to bring the church to this point. Jim Tonkin, current Griffith church pastor, said that for the past 18 months the church has been working on trying to

“The apology is drawing a line under the past and taking ownership of our church’s failure, and we are praying for a new beginning.”

change its culture “from one that is performance based to a relationship with Jesus Christ.”

According to Tonkin, some of the members had acted with a critical and confrontational attitude, which caused some pastors to leave the ministry and some members to leave the church. Church members who were not involved in this behavior acknowledged that they stood by and let it happen.

“The church has tried to deal with the main people who have caused the problem, but some have resisted and have been disfellowshipped while others have taken ownership of the actions and are working with the church,” Tonkin said. “The apology is drawing a line under the past and taking ownership of our church’s failure, and we are praying for a new beginning.”

As well as the presentation of the open letter, the church drew on the cultural heritage of its members as part of the reconciliation ceremony. With a large Pacific Island community in Griffith, the different groups all drew upon their traditions: Fijians presented a number of *tabua* (whale tooth), Samoans covered themselves in mats until their apology was accepted, and Cook Islanders proclaimed they were “sorry” from the front.

“The service on Sunday will be something I will never forget,” Tonkin said. “As a pastor, I’ve never seen repentance of this level before. We saw God work miracles in business meetings and in people’s lives.”

It has been a challenging journey for the Griffith church, but they feel optimistic about the future. “We plan to move forward and are planning a revival program in the church starting in October to reconsecrate ourselves to God, [to the vision of the church becoming] a place of hope and a safe place for people to worship and to learn the love of God and be able to build a vibrant relationship with Christ,” Tonkin said.

The church is hoping to engage in planting churches in some of the towns around Griffith, and it now has a solid base from which to achieve this. “I’d say there are churches and others who should consider taking ownership of their history and bring it before God,” Tonkin said. 🍀

ANTI-SEX TRAFFICKING EVENT CONFRONTS CRIMINAL ENTERPRISE WITH AWARENESS

ADVENTISTS GATHER IN KANSAS CITY TO PROVIDE TRAINING AND PREVENTION EDUCATION

BRENDA DICKERSON, COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR, MID-AMERICA UNION

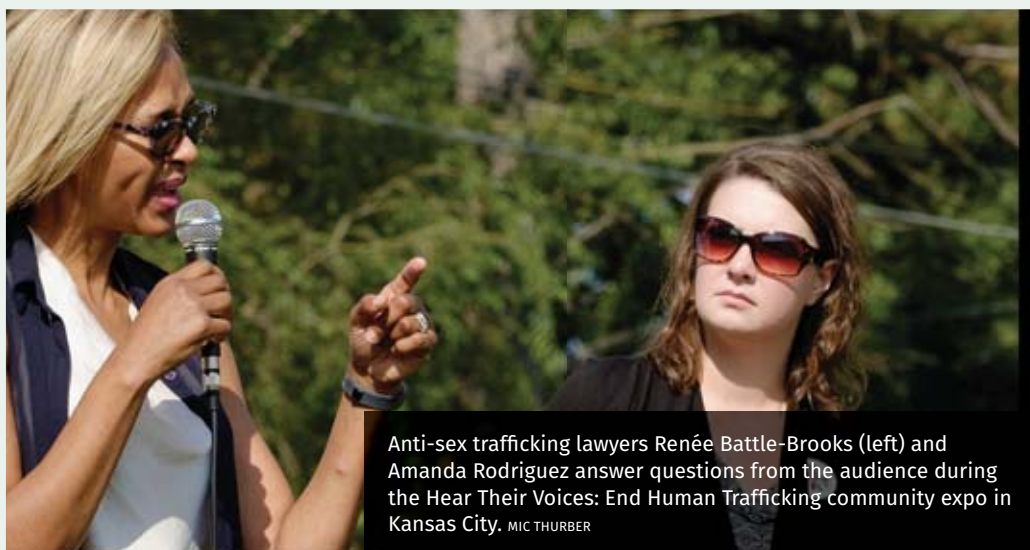
Representatives from the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Veronica’s Voice, and other community organizations hosted Hear Their Voices September 9-10, 2017, in Kansas City, United States, to offer education for prevention of human sex trafficking and to provide support to existing survivors.

The two-day initiative included door-to-door distribution of awareness-raising information to 1,000 area homes, prayers for youth safety, and a symposium/concert at the Jack Reardon Convention Center featuring more than 20 musicians and guest speakers Renée Battle-Brooks, an assistant state’s attorney who prosecutes sex trafficking cases in Maryland, and Kristy D. Childs, founder of Veronica’s Voice, a Kansas City organization providing safe housing, health care, and a two-year life skills training program for survivors of commercialized sexual exploitation.

Ivona Bernard, coordinator of the event, stated that one of the main goals of Hear Their Voices was to provide “an emphasis on human sex trafficking prevention, in order to keep people from being lured into exploitative situations.” While reports show that sex trafficking happens in every town and across all socioeconomic and cultural demographics, the Kansas City metropolitan area has the second-highest incidences of domestic minor sex trafficking in the United States.*

During her presentation Battle-Brooks stated that trafficking takes place in high volume at sporting events, state fairs, casinos, and business conventions. “Every time I travel, I look around and wonder who on my airplane and at my hotel is being trafficked,” she said. Battle-Brooks pointed out how pop culture glamorizes commercialized sex through music and movies. “The evil of human trafficking will continue as long as society allows it,” she declared.

Childs, herself a trafficking survivor, talked about the unfathomable trauma experienced



Anti-sex trafficking lawyers Renée Battle-Brooks (left) and Amanda Rodriguez answer questions from the audience during the Hear Their Voices: End Human Trafficking community expo in Kansas City. MIC THURBER

by victims of trafficking. She reported that the average age for entry into sex trafficking is 11-14, and most victims live for less than seven years. Childs described how after her many years of abuse and multiple abortions she decided that suicide was her only option and had planned how to end her life. "But God spoke into my spirit," Childs said, "and assured me He would free me and my unborn son. God didn't make people to be bought and sold," she added.

"We each dream of a world that will be better when we leave it than when we came into it," concluded Clarence Small, emcee for the event that raised several thousand dollars for the safe house operated by Veronica's Voice. After the program some attendees said the most powerful moments of the evening for them occurred when three trafficking survivors (silhouetted for protection) shared their stories by video. One survivor said, "I knew I would die if I didn't get out." Another stated, "I'm learning how to have a voice . . . and it feels really good."

SHAPING A BETTER WORLD


The following day organizers from the North American Division

(NAD), Shawnee Mission Health, the Mid-America Union Conference, and four state conferences held a community expo on the campus of the Central States Conference of Seventh-day Adventists geared toward informing families in a safe and engaging environment about how children and teens become ensnared in sex trafficking. Interactive learning stations focused on awareness and prevention of trafficking through multiple activities, including conversations with representatives from the Kansas City Police Department, Veronica's Voice, and Sunflower House, a Kansas City organization working against child abuse.

Throughout the afternoon, attorney Amanda Rodriguez shared insights about trafficking from her work with the FBI, Homeland Security, and Turn Around, Inc., while explaining how children become trapped in sex trafficking. "Love and belonging is a huge part of it," Rodriguez said. "Everyone needs a sense of community. Pimps and groomers are smart, crafty predators, skilled at finding out what someone's needs are and promising to meet them."

According to Rodriguez more

than 100,000 children are being sex trafficked every year in the United States. Worldwide, trafficking has now surpassed gun-running as the number-two illegal commercial crime, and may overtake drug dealing and become the leading criminal enterprise in the world, Rodriguez said. She emphasized that awareness is the most important aspect of prevention. "Once you have the information, you can reduce vulnerability."

Donna Jackson, associate ministerial director for pastoral spouses for the NAD and one of the main event planners, said she was excited to see the power of effective collaboration between Kansas City Adventist churches and community organizations in raising awareness and support for Veronica's Voice in helping people reestablish their lives. "I'm praying that this event will have a wide influence by challenging people to become aware of what is happening in their own communities and support local organizations fighting human trafficking," Jackson said. 

*moschoolcounselor.org/human-trafficking-right-here-in-kansas-city

“I’m thrilled that for generations to come I won’t have to look at a kid after handing out a trophy and say, ‘Congratulations on running so well, but you can’t go to nationals.’”



Athletic directors Patrick Creary, Washington Adventist University (left); Javier Krumm, LSU; LSU president Randal Wisbey; Jordan Stimmel, WWU; and Brittaney Brown, Pacific Union College, at the NAIA convention in April. DON OTT, PACIFIC UNION RECORDER

U.S. NATIONAL ATHLETICS ASSOCIATION VOTES TO ACCOMMODATE SABBATH-OBSERVING TEAMS

DECISION WILL BENEFIT CROSS-COUNTRY TEAMS FROM FOUR ADVENTIST HIGHER EDUCATION MEMBER SCHOOLS.

DARLA MARTIN TUCKER, PACIFIC UNION RECORDER

In a move that thrilled its Seventh-day Adventist member teams, the U.S. National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), through its National Administrative Council (NAC), officially transitioned cross-country national championships away from traditional Saturday competitions beginning in 2018.

The national race next year will occur on either Friday before sunset or on Monday, the council ruled, to accommodate the Sabbath hours of Adventist college and university cross-country teams belonging to any of 21 conferences operating under the NAIA umbrella.

“NAIA has long been an organization focused on inclusion and providing a positive student-athlete experience,” said Rob Cashell, NAC chair. “The decision to increase flexibility with national champi-

onship scheduling, thereby allowing our Seventh-day Adventist members to participate, supports both these ideals and was widely supported by the NAC.”

NAC voted to approve the motion June 15, 2017, at the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics conference in Orlando, Florida. The NAIA formally announced the decision in a statement on July 31, 2017.

Four Adventist higher education institutions are now part of the NAIA: La Sierra University (LSU), Pacific Union College, Walla Walla University (WU), and Washington Adventist University.

NAIA is attractive to faith-based schools in part because of its Champions of Character program that emphasizes building character through the teaching of five core

values: integrity, respect, responsibility, sportsmanship, and servant leadership. La Sierra University moved from the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division III to the NAIA in 2011.

Javier Krumm, La Sierra athletics director, and Randal Wisbey, LSU president, appeared at the April NAIA national convention in San Diego. They were accompanied by Don Ott, commissioner of the California Pacific Conference, of which La Sierra and Pacific Union College are members. Commissioner Ott, a former Baptist pastor, has spearheaded the effort for a Sabbath accommodation policy for Adventist schools’ cross-country programs over the past several years.

“It was a very meaningful and important conversation for Adventist athletics. [This resolution] will be seen as a significant decision long into the future,” Wisbey said. “We represent a system of 25,000 students around North America. Though not all are NAIA schools, this decision sends a clear message that Adventist students are welcome to play in NAIA championships.”

LSU’s cross-country coach, Erin Lowry, a Seventh-day Adventist, said the decision “means everything to us. We will now be able to advertise that we can go to the national championship meet. Before, the farthest we could go was the conference finals.”

Key influencers in the cross-country championships policy change included support from the Cal Pac member schools, advocacy from

the Association of Student Athletes, and the April meeting between the Adventist athletics directors, Wisbey, and NAIA leaders, Ott said. "I'm thrilled that for generations to come I won't have to look at a kid after handing out a trophy and say, 'Congratulations on running so well, but you can't go to nationals.'"

In its July 31 statement the NAIA also addressed a joint request submitted in February to the NAIA and NAC from the presidents of its four Adventist institution members. The four schools sought the creation of a Saturday Declaration of Intent, an official document that would create a policy whereby Saturday conference and national championship competitions for NAIA sports would be avoided except under mitigating circumstances.

The NAIA administrative council has directed the NAIA Championships Department to "make reasonable accommodation whenever possible" for the Adventist teams' Sabbath observance and noted that a precedent for such accommodation has already been established through championship scheduling. "Regarding our request to have a Saturday Declaration of Intent, we will continue our conversations with NAIA leadership," Krumm commented. "Our students and schools need this foundational policy accommodated, not only for our present needs but also for those of other individuals with the same beliefs coming into the association in the future."

An original version of this story was published in the Pacific Union Recorder.



Covers of the new *MyBibleGuides* Sabbath School lessons, scheduled to be released in January 2019.

GENERAL CONFERENCE SABBATH SCHOOL AND PERSONAL MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT

PREPARATION CONTINUES FOR NEW SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

CHILDREN AND YOUTH BIBLE STUDY GUIDES
SCHEDULED FOR RELEASE IN JANUARY 2019

JACKIE ORDELHEIDE SMITH, GENERAL CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

The General Conference Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department is preparing new Sabbath School lessons for beginners through collegiate/young adults, to be released in January 2019. The new lessons, for infants through academy-aged youth, are called *MyBibleGuides* and will follow the Bible time line over a two- to four-year period, depending on the division, and will provide a daily Bible study lesson for each age level.

"*MyBibleGuides* lessons will be Bible-based, Christ-centered, doctrinally sound, and grace-filled," said Ramon Canals, General Conference Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department director. Lessons will contain many new features, including parenting tips for beginners, nature nuggets, health tips, and Adventist history stories. Lessons have gone through a number of screening processes and committees, and have also been vetted by the General Conference Biblical Research Institute.

The objectives of *MyBibleGuides* are to lead children into an experiential and saving relationship with Jesus Christ, to help children better understand the character of God and the love of Jesus, and to give children a clear understanding of key biblical teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, department leaders said.

The new young adult Bible study guides will be called *inVerse*. Updating the almost 40-year-old *Collegiate Quarterly*, the new name departs from focusing simply on university students but branching out to all young adults. Each quarter will address unique biblical topics such as apologetics, sexuality, spirituality in the professional life, missions, and leadership.

Following the values of being Christocentric, pragmatic, contemporary, and uniquely Adventist, the studies will approach Sabbath School with a devotional journal perspective, emphasizing group discussion on Sabbath mornings as well as assimilation and complementization of both digital and analog platforms. The *inVerse* Bible study curriculum will eventually accompany the currently televised *inVerse* program on Hope Channel, leaders said.

“WE ARE AMISH. AND WE ARE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS.”

IT ALL STARTED WITH A PIECE OF LITERATURE.

MARCOS PASEGGI, ADVENTIST REVIEW



Naomi and Andy Weaver.

WEST SALEM MISSION FACEBOOK

Andy Weaver always loved his quaint Amish community in West Salem, Ohio. He treasured the joys of simple life and the natural rewards of hard work and communal living.

His people’s Christian religion, however, presented him with some challenges.

“I never found peace in the Amish religion,” said Andy. In his communal church he heard a lot of “fire and brimstone” preaching. *How can a merciful God torture sinners in the lake of fire for eternity?* he wondered.

Andy’s community loved discussing Bible topics, among them, “the mark of the beast” (according to Adventist eschatology, a religious-political power that opposes God). Some of the community elders thought it referred to a computer chip implanted under one’s skin. In that conservative community, members were not supposed to read other books—either secular or religious.

A LIFE-CHANGING ENCOUNTER

About five years ago Andy met a Seventh-day Adventist who shared

some literature with him. After discussing Bible teachings on the end-times, the Adventist encouraged Andy to read the Bible.

“When I first started reading the Bible,” said Andy, “[My wife] Naomi was very receptive. She liked the idea of having a deeper understanding of the Bible.”

Before long, however, the couple understood that following Bible teachings would get them excommunicated from their community. “It put me in a hard spot,” said Naomi in an interview. She felt they would dishonor their parents by keeping the seventh-day Sabbath and following all the Bible teachings foreign to their community.

“I knew he was on the right track, but I was way behind,” she said. “I knew that what we were reading made sense, but I didn’t want to lose anybody.” Eventually she decided to do “what God wanted [them] to do.”

A NEW LIFE

In February 2014 the Weavers began to keep the Sabbath, and that August they were baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Their worst fears came true. When the community found out, they were shunned, barred from attending community or family meetings and gatherings.

“The elders forbade everyone to even talk to us,” said Andy. “We were shunned from doing business with the community, and our kids were not allowed to keep attending Amish schools.”

While during the first few months the Weavers went through financial hardships, they believe that God opened a way for them to make a

living. Through a series of miracles a property was provided with a small two-bedroom house on acreage. There they launched the West Salem Mission in June 2015, with the goal of sharing the Bible’s message with others in the community.

The house was quickly converted into a small worship center, and now doubles as a space for the home school group. “We are dreaming of building a new church and a school,” said Andy. “God willing, it will be the first Amish Seventh-day Adventist Church that we know of.”

AMISH, AND ADVENTIST

The Weavers, who attended the Adventist-laymen’s Services and Industries (ASI) Convention in Houston, Texas, in early August, are happy to report that two other Amish families are keeping the Sabbath and getting acquainted with the Adventist message.

“Several Amish brothers are reading the Bible in English,” said Andy. “They are reading [Adventist Church cofounder] Ellen G. White’s books.”

The inroads of the Adventist message among the Amish seem to affirm a decision the Weavers made soon after being baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. “When we became Adventists, we had to decide whether we would leave our Amish lifestyle behind, or keep it,” said Andy. “We chose to stay Amish.”

“We’d like to maintain our lifestyle,” Andy said, “not because God requires it, but to be the conscience of our people.”

They are glad they did, even though they affirm the privilege they have to belong to a worldwide denomination.

“I grew up in a community based on uniformity, but the variety and diversity I see in God’s remnant people are fantastic!” he said. “We love being part of this movement!”



NEWLY ELECTED PRESIDENT OF NORTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION.

Si Young Kim was elected president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Northern Asia-Pacific Division, a region that encompasses several Asian countries, including Korea, Japan, China, Taiwan, and Mongolia. Kim replaces Jairyong Lee, who is retiring. Kim has served as a pastor, conference youth director, hospital chaplain, 1,000 Missionary Movement director, Seventh-day Adventist Language Institute director, Korean Publishing House president, and North Korean Mission director.



NEW LAKE UNION CONFERENCE PRESIDENT ELECTED.

Maurice R. Valentine II was elected president of the Lake Union Conference. Valentine has served as a pastor, vice president for administration (executive secretary), and ministerial director for the Mid-America Union, as well as executive secretary of the Lake Union Conference. Outgoing president Don Livesay, who served as Lake Union Conference president for nine years, retired on October 1.



MASTER GUIDES RESCUE 60 FROM FLOODING.

As heavy rains and winds from Hurricane Maria hit the east coast of the Dominican Republic on September 21, a handful of Master Guides from two Adventist churches in Hato Mayor rescued dozens of people, including children and the elderly. Approximately 60 people were rescued by the Master Guides and church members. In addition, the Adventist Church assisted in providing breakfasts and suppers to those displaced by the flooding, along with 360 hygiene kits.



INTERACTIVE DISPLAYS FEATURE DESIGN IN NATURE. The Geoscience Research Institute (GRI), located in Loma Linda, California, is creating a series of scientifically accurate and faith building displays. The exhibit opened during this year's Annual Council of the General Conference Executive Committee at the world headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The displays offer tangible evidence of design in nature and catastrophe in the rock record. The displays were created to coincide with Creation Sabbath, commemorated worldwide on October 28.



POLICE CHIEF IN GHANA ENVISIONS ADVENTIST COLLABORATION.

Inspector General of Police of Ghana David Asante-Apeatu recently called for greater collaboration with the Adventist Church as the law enforcement agency embarks on a transformational agenda to improve service delivery as well as train its personnel. Asante-Apeatu emphasized an increased relationship with ADRA, and with Valley View University, an Adventist institution of higher learning.



ADVENTIST STUDENTS IN AUSTRALIA LESS LIKELY TO BE OVERWEIGHT.

Students in Seventh-day Adventist schools are less heavy than and less likely to become as heavy as other adolescents in Australia, a first-of-its-kind study shows. Rates of obesity are between 5 and 18 percent lower among students in Adventist schools than among adolescents in other Australian schools, finds a study published in the August issue of the *Journal of School Health*. Despite a national increase in the prevalence of overweight and obese adolescents over the past 30 years, the study found no increase in Adventist schools.



ANDREWS UNIVERSITY RANKED FIRST FOR ETHNIC DIVERSITY. The 2018 *U.S. News Best Colleges* rankings included Andrews University as one of the country's most ethnically diverse universities. The ranking comes after a decade of significant diversification for Andrews University; in recent years, the university was listed as second most diverse in these *U.S. News* rankings. A decade ago the university ranked thirteenth in the same campus ethnic diversity category. Andrews University recently appointed its first vice president for diversity and inclusion, Michael T. Nixon.



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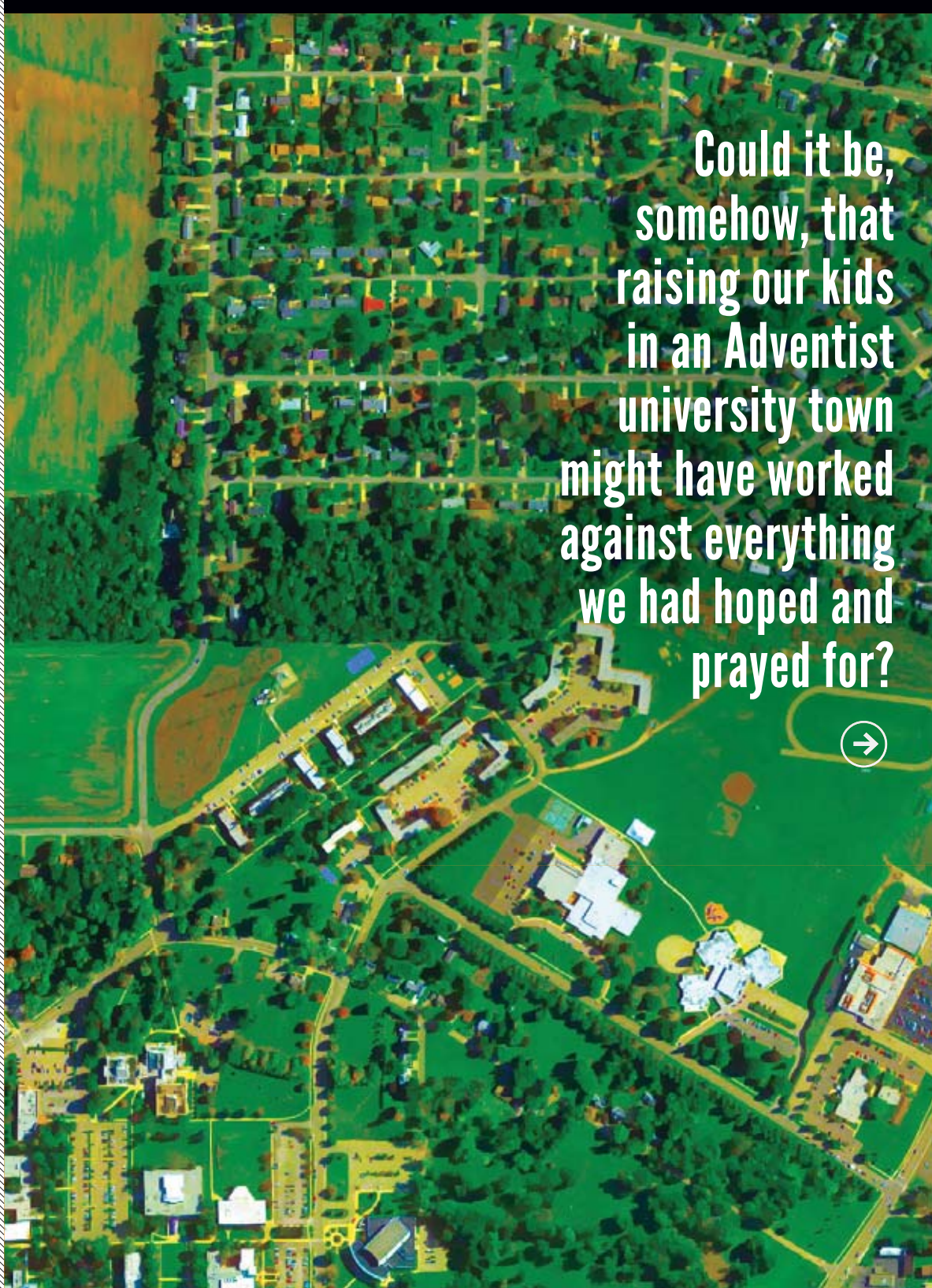
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DISCOVER

Could it be,
somehow, that
raising our kids
in an Adventist
university town
might have worked
against everything
we had hoped and
prayed for?



SURVIVOR[S]



How we made it through the Adventist ghetto

You are a healthy, experienced, and well-liked church employee. You have a deserved reputation for capable management, dedicated service, or inspiring classroom technique.

What you are really passionate about, though, is your kids. Ever since they came into your life, you have made sure to provide them with everything you could so that they might come to know and love this God that you adore.

YOUR PARENTS AND YOUR PARENTING

Your parents did the same for you, in the ways that they were able. You remember those days well—when your parents joined the church. You were very young, living in a small house with thin walls when a colporteur brightened your doorway and sold your mother a small red book with golden letters and precious words. That’s how it began for your family, and you watched a great controversy unfold as your mother clung to a newfound faith and your father clung to his old ways. You witnessed in that struggle the immense power of faith. And while you didn’t always understand everything that was going on around you, you knew that God was real, that God was present.

Remembering those times—and how your parents, reconciled, sold off their small but precious inheritance to put you through Adventist education—made it a given that you would provide your children the same opportunities. Unlike your parents, though, you were able to do one better: you moved your family to an Adventist university town. In addition to family worships and church activities, you were able to afford them a K-through-12-through-university education, all in the same, safe, loving and supportive Seventh-day Adventist community.

AFTER A WHILE

But that was a few years ago now. Your kids have moved away from that serene, semirural university town to hip, coastal urban centers

where they have high-paying jobs in tech and finance. Long gone are the evening family worships, the weekly choir practices, the happy bustle of Sabbath mornings, and the joy of sitting as a family in your spot on that pew.

And for some of your children, long gone is their commitment to Adventism. The passion you had hoped to pass down—that you have been praying for every evening and morning since the day they were born—it isn’t there for them. Lately the thought has begun to occur to you: *Could it be, somehow, that raising our kids in an Adventist university town might have worked against everything we had hoped and prayed for?*

We’re not sure. We’re not your children. But we’re friends with your children, and we’ve often found ourselves asking a similar question: Is there something about growing up in a tight-knit, Adventist community that can be more challenging than growing up outside of one?

It’s an idea that we’ve heard come up a bit, and sometimes seems to be an assumption. When, in Boston, our other Adventist friends wryly ask how we survived growing up our entire lives in a place like Berrien Springs, there is in that an acknowledgment that so many who grew up in similar situations to ours no longer attend church or identify as Adventists.

ONE GUESS ABOUT LEAVERS

Whether or not the retention rate of Adventists who grow up in such a community is actually different than the retention rate of those who don’t is something we’re not actually too sure of (and something the reports we’ve seen don’t seem to get into). Anecdotally, however, it seems true. And while there are certainly many suggestions why such a thing *could* be the case, one suggestion we’ve become quite fascinated with has been posited by some former Adventist/Adventist adjacent authors:

In their somewhat notorious *Seeking a Sanctuary*, authors Keith Lockhart and Malcolm Bull (in a bit of high-context wordplay) suggest that the Adventist Church—for all its shut-door and open-door origins—functions like a *revolving* door: bringing in low-income, uneducated families, and

spinning out affluent, non-church-affiliated professionals who feel they have need of nothing.

They suggest that this occurs because Adventist institutions function as an insulated and highly structured alternative society, instilling in members the ideas that health and education are extremely, even *religiously*, important. Those being major factors in upward mobility, the assertion is that once these third- and fourth-generation Adventists find themselves in more privileged positions than those of the grandparents who first decided to join the church, they outgrow their faith tradition. To these authors, one of the many notable things about Adventism is that it can serve as an incredibly effective program for behavioral change—and the end result of that can lead, in many cases, to its undoing.

Admittedly, Lockhart and Bull are just a couple of really serious journalist/academic types who did a ton of research and have a massive bibliography and a lot of notes, making some not-always-perfectly-backed or flattering observations about their former faith tradition. *But* as we look around at the dwindling numbers of our peers, parts of their analysis make a lot of sense to us. When we look back across the history of Adventism in our own families and recognize the immense privilege we now have as a result of our Adventist upbringing, it does feel a bit as though Lockhart and Bull have got us institutional Adventists figured out.

SOME GUESSES AT WHY WE STAYED

So how is it that we survived the Adventist ghetto? Why is it that we remain deeply engaged with and excited about our faith tradition, even after leaving that tiny, unrealistic, potentially dangerous, and beautiful bubble? Why, in spite of our many disappointments with and questions about the church, do we still persist? We're not entirely sure. We don't know that we *can* be sure this side of the thousand-year Sabbath. But what follows are some things that meant a lot to us:

Our parents articulated their faith. We're both pastors' kids. In our cases, that meant that we were raised in homes where Jesus was a member of the family and where we learned to love Him ever since we could say His name. Even though our parents spent good money to send us to a school where we'd be taught about God every day, we still had family worship and always prayed together. Throughout all of that, they were honest about their faith jour-

Why, in spite of our many disappointments with and questions about the church, do we still persist?



neys and told us so many stories about how God was real in their own lives. Not only did they train us up—they told us why *they* were Adventist.

Our Bible teachers mentored us. Though everyone going through Adventist education has some religious class requirements, we were the students who lingered in our Bible teachers' offices, who stopped in frequently just to chat. These teachers gifted us books that grew our faith and encouraged us to lead the morning prayer group, give chapel talks, or run for the pastoral positions in student government—all things that forced us to participate with them in caring about and developing the spiritual life of our school and, along the way, ourselves.

We fell among saints. Throughout high school and college, we happened to meet people whom we really liked and who were similarly wrestling with questions of what it means to follow Christ. On prayer retreats and in small groups and on many late-night drives, we met our people—those people with whom we discovered the most beautiful strain of Christianity, and with whom we hope to work together in the future to expand the kingdom of heaven on earth. This was also how we met each other.

We dabbled in theology. While we both now work in the design and tech industry, we were privileged to study some theology in school. In doing so, we came to understand that there is sometimes a gap between what the theologians of our church understand and what prevails in the pews. When, even from pulpits, we occasionally hear things that sound just a little bit off—whether it is poor exegesis, reductionist arguments, or non-centrist

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REFRESHED IN CHRIST

CARLOS J. CRAIG,
PRESIDENT OF THE TEXAS CONFERENCE

Most of my adult life I have been disconcerted with the words found in Revelation 3:16, 17: “So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.”

Over the years I have remarked in conversation that I am supremely blessed to have grown up in an Adventist home and gone to Adventist schools from first grade through college. Moreover, I've labored in Adventist ministry for nearly 30 years now. People often respond by saying, “You're so blessed!”

My answer often shocks them. “It could be a curse.”

Sometimes, when you're handed something extremely valuable on a platter every day of your life, you come to the point that you don't appreciate it any longer. For those of us who are lifetime Adventists, we desperately need to seek the Lord each and every day. It requires earnest prayer, at least as earnest as the effort and diligence we exert with those little devious devices in the palms of our hands.

It also requires diligent effort to reach out into the communities that surround us. In serving others, we burn off the excess spiritual calories that we binge upon Sabbath after Sabbath, thus creating a constant hunger for more of the righteousness of Christ and avoiding becoming spiritually obese.

There's nothing like a refreshing shower after sweating away in the gym on a Peloton stationary cycle, or having run a marathon. That's why tireless service to humanity drives us back to the presence of God to receive showers of blessings He desires to flood upon us.

So let's find ourselves eager to be in His presence every day, that we might have the joy of Jesus as a permeating influence in all we do.

GROWING SPIRITUALLY

CHARLES A. TAPP, SENIOR PASTOR, SLIGO SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

One would think that spiritual development for a pastor would be a no-brainer. After all, don't pastors spend a great deal of their time in the Word for sermon preparation?

Having been a pastor for the past 35 years, I can tell you that such is not the case. Although we spend a great deal of time in the study of Scripture, because this is also a part of our profession, pastors can feel that every time they pick a up Bible it's time to go to *work*. Because this is one of the occupational hazards of pastoral ministry, it behooves us to have something we can do to grow spiritually without it turning into preparation for a sermon.

One of the things I have found to be extremely beneficial for my own personal spiritual development is to find a book that speaks to me, not as a pastor, but as a disciple who is on the journey, just like the members who sit in the pews each week.

I've discovered that sometimes I find the book, but other times it has a way of finding me. And when I say I find a book that *speaks* to me, it doesn't have to be about some deep theological topic, or an issue currently being debated within the church.

Recently I came across a book on the topic of prayer that truly resonated with my soul. No, it's not one of those that give you the secret on how to get your prayers answered. Rather, the author approaches the topic in a way that is theological, but speaks to me, not as a pastor, but as another thirsty soul who has come to the well to drink.



hermeneutics—we remain aware that there is a kind of Adventism where nuance, honesty, and intellectual rigor are valued, one that leads to richer, fuller, and more beautiful views of God.

We went through the J. N. Andrews Honors Program. This is where we learned to ask questions and to be comfortable with questions we couldn't answer. We learned about critical thinking and citing your sources and how to engage with challenging ideas at their strongest points. We were taught to identify our presuppositions, to keep asking the question "Why do you think that?" and most of all, we learned to be open to the idea that we're wrong. This made our faith resilient. If indeed Adventism is the truth, it can stand up to questions or doubts or books by non-Adventist (or formerly Adventist) authors. Our faith won't shatter if we come across challenging ideas; it will only grow.

We learned grace. The Adventism preached at Andrews asserted that salvation is about a personal relationship with Christ and the change that that relationship creates. While we took this for granted, we've learned from so many people that this way of understanding the gospel isn't preached from every pulpit. Friends would tell us of a God

that they feared and constantly tried to appease. That kind of a God is so entirely foreign to us. The God we find familiar is one who again and again turns out to be better than we had thought, who continues to grow and transform us along the way.

OUR HOPE

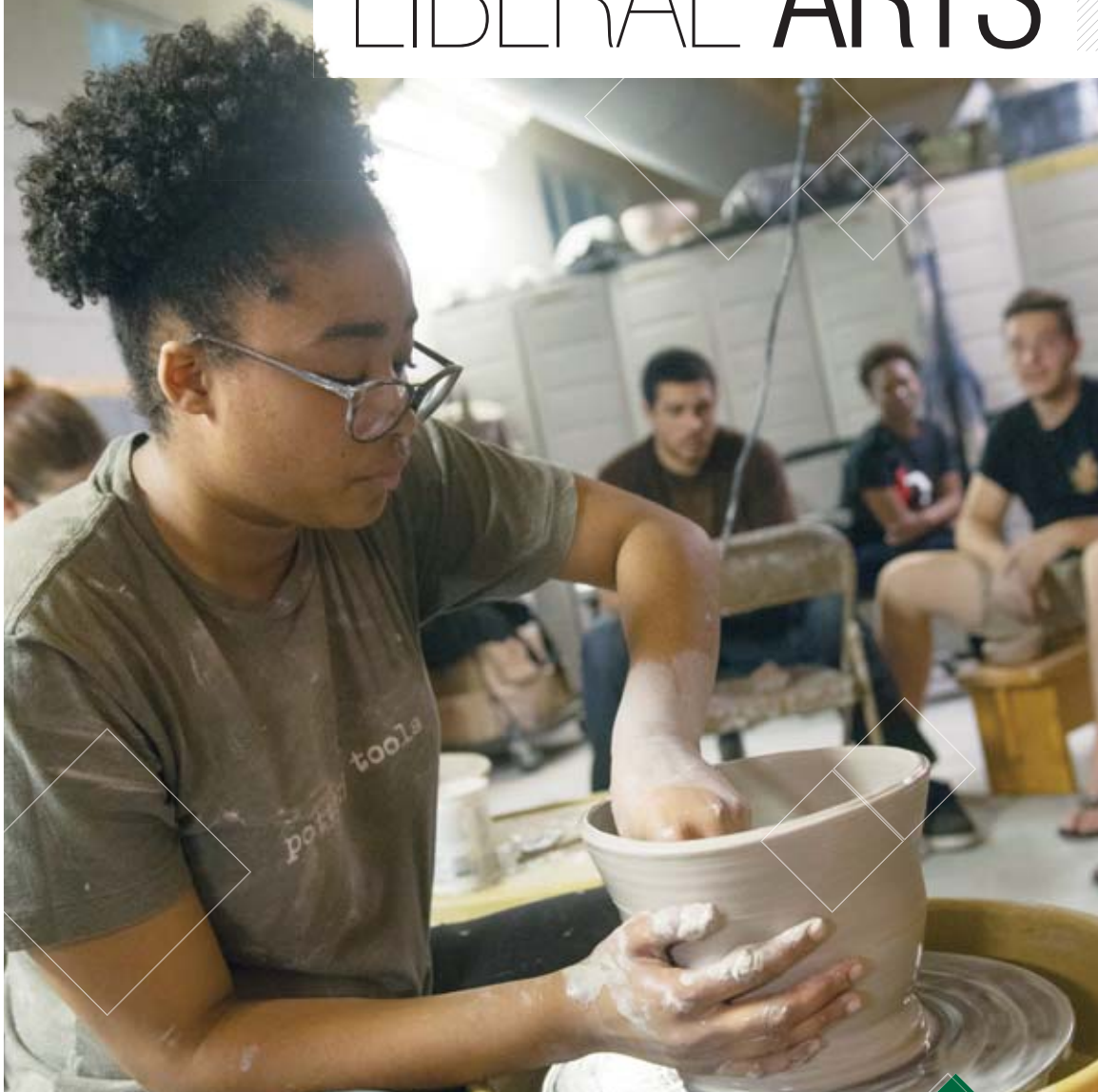
Why these elements of our time in the Berrien Springs area seem so significant to us—why it is that we were able to make Adventism our own from these things while others perhaps didn't—is a bit of a mystery to us still. The wind blows where it will, and maybe some of our friends (maybe some of your children) just missed it. And by whose fault?

We're not invested in labeling or finger-pointing. What we believe, though, is that it is rare for someone to reject the beautiful, life-giving, liberating good news of Adventism *properly understood*. So we pray for a chance to communicate it well; for a chance to communicate it again.

That passion for God that you had hoped to pass down—that you have been praying for every evening and morning since the day your children were born—we are praying for it too. 🌿

Ivan and Olivia Ruiz-Knott live in wedlock in the hip, coastal urban center of Boston. They dream of starting an intentional Adventist Christian community.

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ZACHARY STAINES

TENTMAKERS

Working outside the box

Some years ago an Adventist couple in Atlanta, Georgia, felt a growing burden to work for the thousands of people who lived in a low-income housing project. The conviction that they had to move there with their children became stronger and stronger.

But as they planned their move, the couple discovered that they earned too much money to live in the project's government-subsidized housing. In a simple yet transparent way, that family's answer to God's call was a replication of

the eternal mystery of Jesus' own incarnation: "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling [literally, "tented" or "tabernacled"] among us" (John 1:14).

The family quit their well-paying jobs, took lower-paying positions, sold their middle-class house, and moved into the projects. They began visiting their neighbors, organizing community cookouts, arranging games and activities for neighborhood kids. They were tentmakers.

DEFINITIONS

Tentmaking is a ministry that may be understood both in practical human terms and in the most profoundly spiritual sense.

Tentmakers are those who commit to making a difference for Jesus, but aren't employed by the church. They typically move into areas where it is extremely difficult to plant the gospel and work for some company or business that not only provides for their living needs but also gives them access to people they would otherwise not be able to reach.

The life of Paul defines, and is our prime example of what it means to be a tentmaker: preacher Paul lived by literally making tents (Acts 18:3). Highly confident in both his evangelistic success and his tentmaker status, Paul gave up his right to be paid, and preached free of charge so that no one could say he did it for money.

Tentmakers cannot be accused of doing what the church tells them just so they can keep their job. In fact, in some parts of the world, what they are doing could jeopardize their jobs, even their lives. They aren't witnessing

from selfish motives of increasing their income.

I'm not a tentmaker. I work for the church. When I lived in Lebanon, my residency permit said "missionary" on it. If I applied for a visa to visit Algeria, its embassy in Lebanon would look at my residency permit and say, "Missionary? We don't want you in Algeria!"

But a tentmaker doesn't have that stamp in their passport. It may say "plumber," "computer programmer," "nurse," "cell phone tower engineer," "professor," or "geologist." And that would be true. Those individuals can go where I may not be allowed.

Tentmakers don't cost the church anything. Someone else arranges their visas, ships their belongings, and pays their salaries. The church supports them socially and emotionally, but it doesn't have to help financially, because they earn their own living.

The church back home can pray for them. The church where they live can pray with them (if there is a church in the new place). But the church's resources are not required to support their ongoing physical needs.

PAYING FOR THE PRIVILEGE

Roger^{*} lives in a country in which it is difficult to spread the gospel. A few years ago he traveled back to his country carrying a number of books we had given him. He had done this many times before. Each time he had witnessed small miracles as God helped the customs agents skip right over him, or even search his bags and not see the books.

But this time the customs agents saw the books. Their eyes narrowed. Their lips grew hard. Angrily they ordered him out of line and took him from one office to another, where he was roughly interrogated most of the night.

Finally, he was fined \$800, which he had to pay on the spot. Then they released him saying they would be reading these books and get back to him.

Roger left tired, frightened, and overwhelmed. Why had God let him down? These were God's books. Why did God waste all this money and time?

Then a thought popped into his mind, almost as if God said to him, *Roger, you're right; these are My books. And the money is Mine. And you are Mine. And so are those customs officers.*"

Roger told me about it later. "Think of it, Pastor," he said. "For years I would have gladly paid \$800

for the chance to give books like that to government officials, without knowing whether they would read them or just throw them into the trash. Now several of them have been assigned to read our books, and it only cost me \$800."

Roger was, and still is, a tentmaker. The church doesn't pay him, but his witness is powerful.

CO-MINISTRY

"Pastor," Janet said, "I'm a failure! For 17 years I have been working in this Middle Eastern country, and no one has been baptized, no one has come to church, no one is even taking Bible studies. Sometimes I think I've been wasting my time."

A few days later Janet invited my wife and me to visit a friend with her. As we drove through town, I realized we were driving into more expensive areas. Finally, we turned a corner and pulled up to a massive mansion.

I knew that just inside the door would be an ornate visiting room. Men are not allowed into a house unless they are part of the family, so we would be taken there and would visit with the men of the family. Women would slip in only occasionally (veiled, of course) to serve us.

But when the door opened and the people saw Janet, the family welcomed us all in and took us right upstairs to the living room. Obviously, this family felt really close to Janet; and because we were with her, we were also treated as family.

We sat in the family room and talked—with the whole family. The women and girls didn't slip in and out; they weren't even wearing veils. They were in jeans and T-shirts and sat and visited with us as though we were extended family.

Soon the men excused themselves to go to the mosque. After a few minutes the women went to the other room to pray. This was a devout Middle Eastern family.

As they left the room, Janet stood up and whispered, "Look, Pastor."

She walked to the massive entertainment system on the wall with the big-screen TV and pushed the start button on the remote. Instantly up popped the last thing they had been watching: an Adventist TV program. I gasped and whispered, "Janet, is this family watching Adventist TV?"

"Yes," she said, "they watch it a lot."

"How did that happen," I asked?

Janet laughed, "I tried to get them to watch one



This young man accepted the new truths he was learning and was finally baptized. Today he is a pastor.

of our Adventist cooking schools, but they just never got around to it. So one day I asked if I could program it into their favorites. They let me, and I put it right on top. They started watching a little of it—just to humor me, I think. But they liked it and watched more and more. Soon they started watching a little of what came before and after. Now they watch all our Adventist programs. They know Mark Finley, Doug Batchelor, Dwight Nelson, and all the others.”

“Janet,” I asked, feeling sure I already knew the answer, “have you done this with anyone else?”

“Yes,” she replied thoughtfully. “I guess I’ve done it with most of my friends and coworkers.”

As we left that home I said, “Janet, don’t tell me you’ve been wasting your time here. These people may not be taking Bible studies from you or sitting in church with you, but all across this city are people who are watching Adventist TV. Some of them will be on streets of gold in heaven

as a result of your time being here with them.”

Janet was a tentmaker. She worked as a nurse and was paid by a local hospital. But she worked closely with the organized church. Her work was effective because there were also employees working for the church producing TV programs. And their work was effective because she was there on the ground making friends.

ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL

An Adventist from Africa was working in a bank in one of the countries of the Middle East/North Africa region. One day she stopped by a shop and began visiting with the young cashier. During the conversation a topic came up, and she said, “I’ll be praying for you.”

She smiled and left, but the young clerk couldn’t get that comment out of his mind. God answered the prayer. So when she came back a few days later, he excitedly told her about it and asked if she was a Christian.

Our Adventist tentmaker wasn’t sure how to answer this young man. He saw her hesitation and whispered, “I’m a believer, too.”

A friendship began to develop. One day this Adventist bank employee invited the young man to church. Little by little this young man accepted the new truths he was learning, quit smoking, and was finally baptized. Today he is a pastor in that region.

But it would never have happened if an Adventist woman hadn’t gone there to work, live, and love the people. It would never have happened if a pastor (a paid employee) hadn’t been sent to that country to work. It is because a tentmaker and a pastor worked together that that young man is an Adventist pastor today.

THINK OF THE FUTURE

Being a tentmaker isn’t always safe and easy work. People won’t always notice what’s being accomplished. But in heaven the results will be clearly seen. I’m praying that God will lay a burden on the hearts of many dedicated Seventh-day Adventists to become tentmakers.

For more information about being a tentmaker, visit www.te.adventistmission.org.

*Names used in this story are pseudonyms.

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THE DEAD IN ROMANS 5 (A MODEST PROPOSAL)

In an attempt to harmonize Darwin (or some version thereof) with Scripture, a theistic evolutionist bandied about the following argument: when Paul said that Adam's sin brought death, he meant only human death. "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned" (Rom. 5:12). This text referred, he argued, to humans, not animals, dying as a result of the Fall.

Of course, one could argue that Paul meant that all death, animal and human, originated with Adam's first transgression. However, given the context of Romans, salvation by faith, Paul emphasized the human aspect alone because this was his immediate concern: what Adam's fall did to humanity and what Christ did to reverse it. "For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous" (verse 19).

Let's, however, do a theological thought experiment. Let's give our theistic evolutionist his interpretation of Romans 5, which is that only humans faced death after Adam's fall, and that animals had been dying for eons as part of evolution, which in his argument is how Jesus created humanity. What scenario unfolds under this model, and how well does it harmonize with Scripture?

Well, God used billions of years of violence, predation, extinction, disease, suffering, and animal death to, finally, create the first homo sapiens, Adam. The baby Adam (after all, in an evolutionary model he couldn't start out as an adult, could he?) matures, without sin, into a holy adult.

And if this holy adult stayed away from the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" and ate only from the "tree of life" (Gen. 2:9, 17)—both of which, I assume, evolved (though how does a tree evolve so that if one eats from it one will never die?)—Adam would have lived forever, in contrast to billions of previous deaths part and parcel to the process God used to make Adam to begin with.

Meanwhile, simultaneously, Jesus evolved a female version of the species, Eve, built and equipped quite differently from Adam, but who grows from infancy into a holy and sinless adult destined for immortality as long as she, like her male counterpart, obeys.

Makes perfect sense, doesn't it?

I'd like to offer my theistic evolutionary friends a modest proposal, an escape from the obvious absurdity of trying to jam evolution into any reasonable interpretation of the Bible. Why don't they just state what must seem obvious to them, perhaps something like this? *While we respect the Bible as the Word of God, because of the latest teachings of modern science we now know that Genesis 1-11 does not depict historical events and, as such, teaches us nothing useful or truthful about origins in general, and about human origins in particular.*

Wouldn't that be the more honest approach? Instead they move from one failed argument to another (such as the one that Romans 5 refers only to human death), illustrating why attempts to harmonize theistic evolution with Scripture always end in farce. 🍌

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CLIFF'S
EDGE
CLIFFORD
GOLDSTEIN



ATTEMPTS TO
HARMONIZE
THEISTIC EVOLUTION
WITH SCRIPTURE
ALWAYS END IN
FARCE.



WHAT GOD DOES WITH FAILURE

He's bigger than our messes.

BY CHELSY TYLER

I had failed God. Back then I was a theology student, a pastor in the making, the one who was supposed to represent God, and there I was—a failure. I got caught up with people I shouldn't have.

COULD NOT BE WORSE

You should have seen the looks on my family's and friends' faces, the disappointment in their words, the way they all shook their heads and turned away, as if my guilt were too much to behold. My guilt was certainly too much for me to bear. I don't know how often I berated myself, thinking, *Why did I do that? Am I really a Christian? If I really were following Christ, I wouldn't have done something like that. God, what if they reject You because of me? I know I wanted to be a good example, to show them the way to You, but now all they likely see is hypocrisy. I've failed You, God. Forgive me.*

Maybe you have known similar shame. Perhaps you cut corners when no one was looking; maybe your spouse caught you doing something you shouldn't have; or maybe someone you cared about needed help but you were too busy. Sometimes we hide skeletons in our closets and pray no one discovers them. But whatever the scenario, we fight this throbbing guilt that whispers, "You've failed God."

What does God do with failures like ours, with failures like us? We can draw insight from Numbers 20, where God deals with a major failure in Moses' life.

The next generation of Israelites was in the Wilderness of Zin, where their parents had been before. But no water was to be found: no wells, no springs, and their personal water jugs were completely empty. So they complained to Moses and Aaron. When Moses and Aaron took the matter up with the Lord, He told them to take Moses' staff, gather all the people before the rock, and *speak* to it to yield its water.

But in his anger, perhaps frustrated with the Israelites' complaining and faithlessness, Moses struck the rock instead of speaking to it. Water

gushed forth and the people and their animals' thirst was still quenched. But God told Moses (verse 12), "Because you did not believe in me, to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them."¹ After all those decades of wandering in the desert, Aaron and Moses would not enter the Promised Land. Can you imagine being in their shoes, having led Israel so far, tolerated so much, yet hear that you would no longer reach the Promised Land?

FAILURE 1 LETTING EMOTIONS OVERRIDE FAITH

At first glance God's sentence seems harsh. How bad was Moses and Aaron's offense, after all? The answer deserves our careful attention. First, Moses let his emotions override his faith. If we're honest with ourselves, we sometimes let emotions get in the way of better judgment as well.

A story in the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* told of Judge John Weeks, who spotted a man in the rear of his Minneapolis courtroom wearing a hat. Disturbed by this disregard for court decorum, Judge Weeks ordered the man to leave. Then the clerk called for the burglary case of George Rogde, who had been freed on bond, but Rogde didn't come forward. "Your Honor," said the prosecuting attorney, "that's the man you ordered out of the courtroom."

Our emotions, particularly anger, often imperil good judgment, and sometimes impel us to do things we regret. In his anger Moses ended up gravely disobeying God.

FAILURE 2 USURPING GOD'S CREDIT

Second, Moses usurped the credit due God. In Numbers 20:10 he said, "Shall *we* bring water for you out of this rock?" as if he and Aaron, not God, would bring the miracle.

The story is told of two ducks and a frog who were all best friends. All day long they played in the pond where they lived. But as the hot summer days came, the pond began to dry up, so they had to find a new place to live. The ducks could always

Moses may have failed God, but God didn't fail Moses.

fly to a different pond, but what about the frog? It was decided that the two ducks would each hold the ends of a stick in their bills, and the frog would hang on to the stick as they flew together to another pond. As they were flying, a farmer in his field looked up, saw them, and exclaimed, "Well, isn't that a clever idea! I wonder who thought of it!" The frog said, "I did!" The frog took the credit.

Moses and Aaron did the same. But it was God performing the miracle; they were merely conduits of His power.

FAILURE 3 OBSTRUCTING GOD'S HOLINESS

Third, as God's representative, Moses in anger failed to uphold God's holiness.

I remember when I learned to write cursive. My teacher gave me a worksheet covered in rows of lines. Each row began with an example of that letter in cursive: a capital "A" and a lowercase "a"; a capital "B" and a lowercase "b," and so on. We were told to write each letter a certain number of times. I started each row by copying the perfect cursive example. But as I continued writing along the row, I'd copy my previous messy letter. So as the row went on, each letter became less like the perfect original. So it often is with the nature of our character: we copy our familiar imperfections rather than the perfect original, God. Thus we fail to uphold His holy character.

GOD'S RESPONSE TO FAILURES

This is not to say that there is no hope for us when we fail God. For what did God do when Moses failed Him? He punished him for his disobedience, but He still extended mercy. Why did God still bless despite His leader's failure? Numbers 20:13 says, "These are the waters of Meribah, where the people of Israel quarreled with the Lord, and through them


he showed himself holy." If we as God's chosen people fail to rightly represent Him, a God gracious and full of mercy, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, He will do it Himself.

Moses' story doesn't end with his punishment. We aren't left with a tragic picture of a man of God allowed only to glimpse the Promised Land from afar. Instead, Moses was called to a better Promised Land. Jude 9 says, "But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you.'"

Ellen White wrote, "In consequence of sin Moses had come under the power of Satan. In his own merits he was death's lawful captive; but he was raised to immortal life, holding his title in the name of the Redeemer. Moses came forth from the tomb glorified, and ascended with his Deliverer to the City of God."² Though Moses failed God and rightfully deserved the punishment pronounced upon him at Meribah, God again upheld His own holiness by granting Moses grace through passage to a more glorious Promised Land. Moses may have failed God, but God didn't fail Moses.

So it is with us. Though we may fail God, God doesn't fail us. God has chosen each of us to lead people into greater understanding of who He really is. He has chosen each of us to reflect His holiness. But inevitably, there are times we fail. In those times it's easy to be overwhelmed by guilt. It's easy to wonder, "Have I really been transformed by Jesus?" It's easy to wonder, "What if someone rejects God because of my failure?"

But our story doesn't end there. God still shows Himself holy even when His people don't. Though we may fail God, God doesn't fail us.

As we recall our failures, instead of getting lost in guilt, let's give our failures to God. Confess them and repent of them, but then surrender all the shame that comes with them. Don't give in to the lie that God has abandoned you. Though we may fail God, God doesn't fail us. 

¹ Scripture quotations are from *The Holy Bible*, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

² Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1890), p. 479.

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PETER N. LANDLESS ZENO L. CHARLES-MARCEL

FASTING

Benefits to spiritual health

Q: In a previous House Call we addressed physical health aspects of fasting;¹ now we will look at some psycho-spiritual and social ones from a biblical perspective.

A: Biblical fasting is an act of intentional self-denial to draw closer to God, to hear Him better, to seek and to yield more readily to His will, or to plead your or another’s case. It is not a form of spiritual arm-twisting. Daniel, Esther, and Jesus fasted, but physical deprivation alone, no matter how severe, does not in itself constitute a biblical fast. While the heart is estranged from God and determinedly hardened by a wrong course of action, food deprivation provides no spiritual benefit. The sacrifice that God desires is a broken spirit and a contrite heart. When we fast, we shouldn’t show off or attract pity; that would be the only reward we would get (see Matt. 6:16-18). We should wisely use the time gained and the food not consumed by giving time to God and family and food to the hungry. We instead should “hunger and thirst for righteousness” (Matt. 5:6). Daniel’s experience and Isaiah’s prescription will form the basis of our comments.

Daniel is perhaps one of the best-known Bible figures who fasted. Daniel’s motives for fasting were quite unlike the motives of those engaging in the contemporary, popular “Daniel fast,”² whose most common purpose for fasting is financial. The 10-day dietary “experiment” of Daniel 1:8 was the outworking of Daniel’s upbringing and determination to not eat what would weaken rather than strengthen him. So he requested his preferred and accustomed diet (which ended up sustaining him and his friends for three years); this was not a fast. Note, also, that Daniel did not fast when asking God to tell him Nebuchadnezzar’s dream and its interpretation in order to save his life, but he did fast when confessing and interceding on his people’s behalf and for God’s mercy and honor (Dan. 9:3). He later fasted (mourned) for three weeks on

an austere diet to gain understanding (Dan. 10:2). Notice his motives and desired outcomes in each case. Biblical fasting gets us in tune with God’s agenda; it does not force God to work on ours.

Isaiah 58 describes God’s perspective on fasting and is relevant even today. The Israelites wanted God’s blessing but were not interested in allowing God to change their hearts (attitude and actions). They wanted their food deprivation to move God to give them success in the struggle for power, position, and possessions. God’s response: self-centeredness, greed, and strife produce darkness. This is the opposite of emotional, relational, and spiritual well-being. Yet, as we practice justice and benevolence, God’s overwhelming light bursts forth; healing and restoration of body, mind, and spirit follow; our recovery springs forth speedily. God’s righteousness guides and protects when we think and act like Him. He becomes our vanguard and our rearguard, and He will be there for us!

“Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: ‘Here am I’” (Isa. 58:9). 🍌

Adverse Side Effects of Incorrect Fasting

- Self-pity
- Self-abuse
- Self-centeredness
- Attention seeking
- Superiority complex
- Legalistic inclination
- Perception of duality
- Frustration toward God
- Physical health deterioration
- Incorrect theology of punishment and penance

¹ House Call, *Adventist Review*, October 2017, p. 59.

² See daniel-fast.com/ and draxe.com/daniel-fast/.

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THE BENEFITS OF A CHARITABLE BEQUEST



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

If you have children or own real estate it's important to have a plan. If it's time for you to create or update your will or trust, we can provide you with a free Wills Planning Guide to help you get started.

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- » STARTING IN THE MIDDLE
- » PRAYER: THE HEART OF MINISTRY
- » SPUR-OF-THE-MOMENT WITNESS
- » DO IT YOURSELF FAITH

CONNECT



Yes, waiting can be daunting and boring. But “they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint.”



WAIT FOR IT



Letting God do God's work

BY TRICIA PAYNE

At times a Christian leader is challenged to do what has never been done before; instances when they are called upon to develop and direct such plans as have never before been attempted; tasked to “go where no man has gone before,” to undertake assignments personally impossible and humanly unreasonable.

ASSIGNMENT AND PERPLEXITY

They shared three years of Jesus' life. They experienced the devastation of His death, the joy of His resurrection, and the comfort of His 40-day intensive thereafter. Classes done for the day, they considered their final assignment: Do the impossible; go make disciples of all nations; go teach them everything I taught you.

It's still impossible today: for the single seminarian not yet recovered from Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic, now hurled into a multichurch district with one congregation dying, another dead, the third riven with cliques of strife, and a collective history of five previous pastors all documented as “unsuccessful.” Or the conscientious first elder confronted by the spiritual lethargy, multiple personalities, mania, schizophrenia, and other unaddressed psychological dislocations that bless the fellow saints of his congregation. Or your neighbor the Christian nurse, forever facing the demands of irritated *prima donna* surgeons. Or the blue collar journeyman trying to keep a clean mouth and mind in the midst of the vile rivers of language that flow all around him and threaten to overflow him. Or the conscientious freshman coed so earnestly desiring mental sanity and sexual purity in the midst of what seems an ocean of frat and sisters and intoxication and hazing.

Yes, but the Lord has a way of commanding and expecting the inconceivable: staying faithful to a cheat who seems determined to destroy his family

and sink the marriage boat; staying clean when you know that inside your firm's accounting operation there is dedication to sustaining some vast financial fraud; being compassionate to the cruel, caring to the chauvinistic, calm with the combative, constant with the capricious: loving much because you've been forgiven much—though friends and loved ones cannot understand the insanity of your love. You love as you do because you've heard the voice—the voice of the Lord who reached you first, doing the improbable in and for you, and now commanding and expecting you to do the impossible.

UNDERSTANDING “GO!”

In your fervor for obeying Jesus' “Go!” command you almost missed another word of His final instructions to His disciples. Luke lays it out: “Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). Again, Jesus “being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me” (Acts 1:4).

Jesus' final order to His followers was not simply “Go!” It was also “Wait!” And it was a plural “Wait!” “All of you: wait!” Delivered in the tone of a general commanding his soldiers, Jesus ordered: “Wait.”

Where? “In Jerusalem.”

What for? “For the promise of the Father.”

And who must wait? “All of you, wait together!”

There must be no leaving, departures, or separations from one another. All must unite in waiting—and in the very place that seemed adverse to them; the place that opposed Him and was hostile to them. “Wait!” He ordered, in an uncomfortable place where He would redefine their experience and their most recent memory of the populace in this place. They needed to wait so

they could do things right, once He had fixed them.

The “Wait!” command has nothing to do with inertia or stasis. It is a wait of expectation, not for just a transient moment, but until the promised gift arrives. It is the command to keep on waiting, discomfort notwithstanding; threats of the place notwithstanding. The Lord who commands and expects the impossible has given the command: “Wait!”

Wait?

Yes. Wait. Sara failed to wait, and surrendered her husband to the arms and legs of a younger woman, only to find herself a desperate housewife with baby mama drama.

Moses failed to wait, and ended up in exile. Samson failed to wait, and ended up blind, eyes gouged out. David failed to wait for God’s voice, and spoke the lie that led to the slaughter of a whole city of priests (see 1 Sam. 21:1-7; 22:1-19).

The prodigal’s failure to wait has given us the ultimate story of being in the pits.

WAITING TOGETHER

We wait together. In the words of Aristotle: “Patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet”

Ask Israel about waiting: they’ll point you to Jericho, where seven patient days of doing the same thing over and over—together—brought the walls down. Ask beauty queen Esther: she’ll tell you of three days of fasting together that stopped a genocide. Waiting may be boring, but it’s pregnant with life if we’re waiting on the Lord and by His instructions. Job pledged to long waiting, “till my change come” (Job 14:14).

Ask even of secular history, and learn its lessons on the blessedness of waiting: generations of Black slaves in America dreamed of change, and were waiting for it when it came, when centuries of cruelty and exploitation endured, brought December 6, 1865, and the abolition of slavery.

Ask God-inspired activists for justice and learn how they worked and waited until change came and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 became the law of America. Ask Blacks and Whites in America to recall one more momentous change, January 20, 2009, when what had seemed impossible became possible, as a Black man became president of the United States and moved his family into the White House.

Yes, waiting can be daunting and boring. But “they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as

eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint” (Isa. 40:31).

In obedience to Christ’s command His disciples waited together in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father. They did not wait in idleness, but “were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God” (Luke 24:53). They “met together to present their requests to the Father in the name of Jesus. They knew that they had a Representative in heaven, an Advocate at the throne of God.”² They waited, humbling their hearts; they waited, in true confession and repentance; waited, reconciling; and waited, confessing; they waited, worshipping; they waited together, fervently praying for fitness to function right in leading sinners to Christ. They waited, putting away all their separating differences, abandoning all desire for supremacy, coming together to each other, and closer and closer to God.

They knew they needed more than what they had. Waiting would make the difference; waiting until they were baptized with the Holy Spirit: “For John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now” (Acts 1:5, NASB).³ John fully submerged you in water, but if you will wait, you will soon be fully submerged into the Holy Spirit. Skin may be impermeable to water, but you will be permeated with the Holy Spirit penetrating every membrane, transforming every cell.

People craving personal performance enhancement have traveled illicit paths in their search for glory: Ben Johnson, Marion Jones—Olympic sprinters; Lance Armstrong, Floyd Landis, cyclists.

But Jesus’ promise for performance enhancement is neither an over-the-counter drug nor a physician’s prescription. Nor is it simply a recipe for lasting longer or finishing faster. Jesus’ gift of the Holy Spirit comprehends and transcends any simple physical human accomplishment. The Spirit brings physical strength, emotional stability, and spiritual power, imparting new abilities and functionalities to its recipient. Did you say you needed more? Well, here is where you get it—in Spirit power: price already paid, guaranteed delivery, better than Amazon! But wait for it. Wait for the power.

RECEPTION HOUR

For you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes. It’s power of a different sort than that which Jesus mentioned in Acts 1:6, 7: that “power” (Greek,

exousia) refers to authority, the Father's exclusive prerogatives; this one (Greek, *dunamis*) means "dynamite"!

For the mission Jesus calls us to requires dynamite power: dynamite power to reach and win the heart of communities long underserved, underprivileged, and plagued with gun violence, promiscuity, and drug addiction; dynamite power to reach sophisticated, post-Christian, postmodern post-absolutists whose idea of human generosity is a political correctness that absents the name of Christ from Christmas; dynamite power to reach people for whom greatness is tied up with notions of ethnic superiority.

Luke put it this way: "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power [Greek, *dunamis*] from on high" (Luke 24:49).

In the movie series *Mission Impossible* agents receive special gadgets and weapons to combat the enemy: a special camera pen, a rocket, a wall climbing suction device—whatever it is that equips them for the mission. Jesus' words tell us that His disciples have yet to be fitted with the arsenal needed.

This mission requires dynamite power. We find ourselves hitting our head against the proverbial wall: why? Our blood pressure is up: why? We crave spiritual victory over vices that we resist but cannot quite shake: why? Worse yet, we hate ourselves for secret sins that are more pattern than exception: why?

Jesus' answer is that we need more than we have. And we need to wait for it! "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down [and dismantling] of strong holds" (2 Cor. 10:4).


NEXT

Once we've been saturated, clothed, empowered, we go—according to the qualification of Jesus' adverb "therefore." "Go therefore," He says. The disciples' advance, proclamation, and soul winning would thrive exclusively on the grounds of the Spirit's empowerment. Undereducated cowardice would hardly represent Jesus. They would soon find themselves burnt out, worn out, stretched out, and, of necessity, faded out. Hence Jesus comes and speaks to them, saying, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

**They waited, . . .
coming together
to each other,
and all, together,
closer and closer
to God.**

Go ye therefore" (Matt. 28:18, 19). His words make the difference that matters. We go, now, with His authority, ever aware that the final say in our effort will be Jesus' word. He will have the final say; speak the last word.

Others, misguided others, sometimes conceive of themselves in the Jesus role—having the last word. But neither parent nor mentor, employer nor administrator, determines whom God may or may not call. No board or committee has the final say in any of our lives. Jesus does. The power and authority and dynamite are all His. His jurisdiction embraces heaven and earth: from Africa to Australia; from North America to South America; from Triangulum to Antarctica; from the Milky Way to Andromeda, Centaurus A to Bode's and beyond.

Power—all power—belongs to Jesus, the One who bled a fountain to wash away our sins; who laid down His life, then took it up again, because by the surrender of His perfect innocence for our perfect perversity, He conquered the devil and won the keys to death, hell, and the grave. At His departure He left us the promise that guarantees that power. For it all belongs to Him, guaranteed to you if you'll wait. So: believing His promise, grounding yourself in Him, and, looking forward to victory, wait for it! 

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 35.

² Scripture quotations marked NASB 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.

Tricia Payne pastors the Tabernacle of Hope and Muncie Philadelphia congregations in the Lake Region Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

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STARTING IN THE MIDDLE

Early Sunday morning I am one of many professors finishing up online course information for the new academic start. Years ago an academic semester had a certain predictability on start and end dates. That is not the case now. With the great demand of online courses, dual enrollment, the practicality of the eight-week term and weekend classes, it sometimes feels as if I am constantly preparing for a new academic start, even in the middle of one.

A guest speaker from the Education Department provided a lecture entitled “Students and Netiquette” (online etiquette) and delivered a preformatted paragraph regarding social media, one now required in every syllabus: “No hate speech, intended violence, bullying, slander, disparagement, of peers can be posted online or in any form of social media.” The paragraph outlined online content supervision outside the classroom. Somehow the fact that professors were now required to place this paragraph in the syllabi hurt my feelings. As a communications professor, was that not part of my ethical language choice-based curriculum: to make students aware of how language choices create or diffuse problematic situations? complicate relationships? hurt or encourage others?

Will students notice this policy? What will they learn from it? As it turns out, I do not have to wait long to find out.

First day of class, walking to my assigned classroom with a colleague, I hear him wish me well and say: “Time to teach.”

In the halls young people enter classrooms, talk to one another, laugh, check text messages. In the past 10 years teaching has become an interesting challenge

of example and practice versus academia. As Christians, do we not all teach others every day by our very presence, example, and communication? There in the hall I pray: “Heavenly Father, grant me wisdom to teach well.”

Minutes later I walk around the classroom, reading through the syllabi posted on the electronic blackboard. I casually read the “netiquette” paragraph, and I am quickly interrupted by a student: “What if I really don’t like someone? It’s my right to give my opinion. Why would the school monitor that?”

I walk slowly, as if to avoid the awkward land mines hidden all over the classroom. It’s time to teach: a new academic start in the middle of this young student’s life.

“What about this statement should make us all take pause?” I watch as students wrestle with the question. Finally a young woman’s voice pierces the silence: “It’s the golden rule. Not to sound religious in a philosophy class, but the Bible says, ‘Do unto others.’ How difficult is it to treat others with respect? Even if you don’t like them?”

Students nod in agreement and glance at the student who initiated the conversation. Our eyes meet, and he asks, “What do you think, Professor?”

There it is, the open door to speak of language choices that demonstrate who we are and what we believe in. An invitational opportunity (vetted in caution and wisdom) to search the obvious with students. An answered prayer and challenge to “teach well”: a new academic start in the middle of my own life. 🌱

Dixil Rodríguez, a university professor and volunteer hospital chaplain, lives in Texas.

SEARCHING
THE OBVIOUS
DIXIL
RODRIGUEZ



I WALK SLOWLY,
AS IF TO AVOID THE
AWKWARD LAND
MINES HIDDEN ALL
OVER THE
CLASSROOM.

PRAYER— THE HEART OF MINISTRY

It has more benefits than you might think.

CRAIG CARR AND S. JOSEPH KIDDER

While speaking to a group of schoolteachers, Sabbath School teachers, elders, and other key church leaders, I [JK] encouraged the teachers to pray daily for their students and their families. I suggested they arrive early at church or at school and pray for each child at the chair or desk they would occupy. I encouraged the elders to divide up the names of the congregation and visitors of the church and pray for them, and make at least one contact with them. This could be done on the phone, in person, or via e-mail.

I recommended that they look at their leadership roles beyond curriculum and classroom programs, beyond just Sabbath School lessons, to the context of leading children and young people into a deeper walk with Jesus. I reminded the elders that their role is not simply reading Scripture or making decisions at board meetings, but providing spiritual leadership and encouraging meaningful connections with Jesus.

When I returned to that same conference a few years later, some who were in the first seminar shared with me their experiences. Teachers who had prayed for their students and their families soon found that their attitude toward teaching was improved, their level of engagement with parents was increased, and, most dramatic, the experience

of the students was greatly enriched because of a renewed commitment to Jesus. These improvements were also the observations shared by several parents, who noticed that their children were more cooperative and better behaved, more open to spiritual things. Sabbath School teachers said their enthusiasm for teaching was at an all-time high. Kids loved coming to church, and more adults and kids started to attend. Elders told me the more they prayed, the more members volunteered, that a spirit of grace and harmony had come to the church.

THE HEART OF MINISTRY

This supports the conviction that prayerful intercession is the heart of ministry, leadership, and education in which training, seminars, and curriculum can become even more effective.

This article is primarily focused on the importance of personal spirituality and devotion to prayer and intercession for those who teach, mentor, and lead others and thus set the spiritual tone in the church. Local church leaders are called by God to be *spiritual* leaders and prayer warriors for their congregations. Even the effectiveness of the early church was attributed to active prayer life: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42).

BREATH OF THE SOUL

Leaders' prayer lives are the foundation for their walk with the Lord. Regular, earnest prayer is the breath of the soul, but busyness can so easily choke it out. No one was as busy as Jesus, yet we see His unwavering commitment to prayer and quiet time with the Father.

One day Jesus went up on the mountain to pray. But a crowd gathered around Him, and He spent the entire day healing, teaching, and simply being with the people. But we must not miss the personal discipline demonstrated by Jesus by caring for His own soul. As daylight faded, Jesus sent the multitude away, including His disciples, to reclaim the solace of quietness on the mountain and to live in the joyful awareness of His Father's presence (see Matt. 14:13-23).

As church leaders we often find ourselves in the same predicament. Our greatest danger is not that we stop praying, but that we settle for a mediocre prayer life as the result of our harried, busy life. Jesus' example encourages us to keep prayer

at the top of our to-do list. By doing this, we will comprehend and enjoy God more richly, for we know that in Christ is the life of the soul. Ellen White counseled, "Cultivate the habit of talking with the Savior when you are alone, when you are walking, and when you are busy with your daily work. Let your heart be continually uplifted in silent petition for help, for light, for strength, for knowledge. Let every breath be a prayer."¹

Church leaders are encouraged to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of God, reflecting on Scripture and lingering at the throne of grace in prayer. God's first desire is not our service; it is our companionship. "He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach" (Mark 3:14). When Jesus calls us into leadership, He first calls us into intimate relationship with Him. It was only through being with Jesus that the disciples were empowered to do ministry.

SOURCE OF EFFECTIVENESS

Leaders' prayer lives are the source of their effectiveness. Oswald Chambers reminds us, "The lasting value of our public service for God is measured by the depth of the intimacy of our private times of fellowship and oneness with Him."²

I [CC] remember a devoted children's ministries leader who invested a great deal in updating the Sabbath School rooms and ensuring that effective curriculum was being taught. She rallied volunteers and raised money for new paint, carpet, and updated furniture to create an inviting atmosphere. But she was frustrated to see that about the same number of children attended every Sabbath. This led to a conviction that perhaps she and her team were measuring the results differently from the way God did.

She then gathered a few of her fellow teachers, and they began to pray. What they saw in the coming

Our greatest danger is not that we stop praying, but that we settle for a mediocre prayer life.

In these modern times, where the latest and greatest methods fall short, true effectiveness in ministry comes through reliance on God.

weeks and months was children becoming more deeply engaged in Sabbath School and asking their parents more questions about spiritual things. Several young people showed an interest in local and overseas mission projects, and five of the children requested Bible studies to prepare for baptism.

A hundred years ago E. M. Bounds said, “What the church needs today is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more and novel methods, but [men and women] whom the Holy Ghost can use—[men and women] of prayer, [men and women] mighty in prayer.”³

The story of the children’s ministries’ leader illustrates how strategy and methods often fall short, and how the local church reflects the spiritual experience of its key leaders.

KNITTING HEARTS TOGETHER

Leaders’ prayer lives bind their hearts with others. Interceding for others reminds us that the Lord Jesus intercedes for them, and for us. God calls church leaders to pray boldly and serve diligently.

One of the greatest, most consistent examples of intercessory prayer is found in the ministry of Paul to the churches. He thanked God for them (Phil. 1:3), he cheered them on (Col. 1:13, 14), he prayed for their endurance (Rom. 15:5, 6), for spiritual gifts (Rom. 1:8-12).

The apostle Paul was more traveling evangelist and church planter than resident church pastor. We see him constantly praying for local church leaders (2 Tim. 4:22) and members by name (Philemon 1-4), and for God to work mightily through them (Eph. 6:19, 20). It appears that Paul prayed for the church as much as he preached and planted churches. Amid the busyness of life and ministry

today, praying for your church is one of the best uses of a leader’s time. Leaders who pursue an active life of prayer, together with their church, will reap the rewards of a healthy and spiritually vibrant congregation.

What a contagious example we have in the apostle Paul, which inspires us today to pray more earnestly for others (2 Cor. 13:7-9), for their continued spiritual growth (Gal. 6:18; Phil. 4:23; 1 Thess. 5:28), and for God’s kingdom to grow and expand (Col. 4:2-4).

A CHURCH’S GREATEST NEED

More than anything else, our churches need leaders of high spiritual integrity who pursue intimacy with God. In following the examples of Christ and Paul, we quickly see how the benefits far outweigh the investment of time spent in prayer. Prayer life in individuals is a strong indication of the closeness of their walk with the Lord. Peter urges us to keep prayer a number-one priority: “The end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers” (1 Peter 4:7, NKJV).⁴ In these modern times, where the latest and greatest methods fall short, true effectiveness in ministry comes through our reliance on God.

Amid our busy days and crowded calendars, our appeal to all members and church leaders is that whatever we do, we must begin the day with God. We must daily resist the temptation to fill our calendars with events and activities before we fill our hearts with God’s Spirit. The precious morning moments spent in communion with God and study allow for God’s presence to linger with us and serve as a holy influence for the rest of the day. Give God ample time to reveal Himself each day, and through His Spirit comes the power to fulfill His purposes in us, and in the hearts of those we serve. 🌱

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1905), pp. 510, 511.

² <https://boardofwisdom.com/togo/Quotes/ShowQuote?msgid=19722&msgid=19722#WbGar9VSz4Y>, accessed Sept. 7, 2017.

³ Edward M. Bounds, *Power Through Prayer* (Grand Rapids: Martino Fine Books, 1913), pp. 5, 7. Republished Feb. 6, 2014.

⁴ Texts credited to NKJV are from the *New King James Version*. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

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SPUR-OF-THE-MOMENT WITNESS

A lifetime journey begins with an impromptu conversation.

In 2005 I had just arrived in Miami Beach, Florida. I had no intention of finding God, or, should I say, God finding me.

Soon after my arrival, as I searched for employment, I spotted a “Help Wanted” sign in the window of Johnny Rockets, a 1950s-style hamburger joint. With good food and music, it wasn’t a bad place to work. So there I was, Johnny Rockets’ newest dishwasher.

A PILGRIMAGE OF SORTS

I had recently been on a road trip that had taken me all over the western United States, then across the South to Florida. This excursion took place over a period of about five months. I carried two duffel bags that contained the basics: clothes, hygiene supplies, etc. In one of the bags I carried a Bible and a few books by Ellen White.

When I left California, I was not a Christian. To be honest, I didn’t have much of a desire for spiritual things. I simply felt the need to bring along these books, Bible included, in case I felt the desire to open them.

Seven months after I left California, I hadn’t opened the books, including the Bible, even once, until the night I met Josh.

A SCHEDULE CHANGE

There were two Johnny Rockets in Miami Beach. One on Ocean Drive, and one on Lincoln Road. I worked on Lincoln Road. Josh worked on Ocean Drive. One night shift I showed up ready to wash dishes as usual. The unusual thing was that I had a helper, Josh.

Josh was a Christian, and he shared with me his faith in the Lord. He was a thin, clean-cut young man, 21 or 22 years old. He was well-mannered and kind, and spoke sincerely and earnestly.

As we came to the end of our shift, about midnight, we realized we would be sharing a bus across the bay. As we waited for our bus we stopped in a nearby store to get some juice.

As we talked, I mentioned that I had a knowledge of God, that I was taught about Him since I was a child. But I obviously wasn’t doing anything about it.

Josh asked, “What are you waiting for?”

Of course, I had no logical explanation. What *was* I waiting for?

To follow up his question, Josh presented me with a simple truth. He stated plainly, “You’re literally playing with fire.”

That simple statement brought conviction. It reflected the reality that those who put off knowing God face a lake of fire!

MAKING A CONNECTION

Soon our bus arrived. As we rode across the bay and through the streets our conversation continued. We sat across from each other, with the aisle between us. I remember him saying, "God wants to know us personally."

Short, simple, and powerful! This portrayal of God was entirely new to me, or maybe it wasn't new to me at all. Perhaps it was the fact that Josh had a living experience with God, and I had never actually witnessed such true religion before, that of the Holy Spirit living within someone and speaking through them. I knew Josh had discovered something wonderful.

He asked, "Have you ever asked the Lord to come into your heart?"

"No."

"Would you like to?"

We were on a public bus. I had never prayed out loud in front of another person before, except for maybe my parents as a child. I thought about Josh's question and responded, "Right now?"

"Sure," he answered.

"I don't know how."

"That's OK," he said. "I'll lead out, and you follow."

Then he added an important detail: "But you have to mean it."

So there it was, the moment God had been drawing me to: the moment He had waited for, the moment Jesus had died for. On a city bus, in the middle of the night, in downtown Miami, with Josh leading in prayer, I asked the Father to send His Son, Jesus, into my life.

God seeks us in the darkness. He seeks us where we are. He comes to us while we are sinners. He heard that prayer and answered it.

As we finished praying I remember looking up and smiling. I said, "I can't stop smiling."

With a smile on his face Josh looked at me and said, "We're going to heaven!"

THE SPIRIT'S VOICE

As we approached the place where we had to transfer, with him going one way and me another, instead of going separate ways Josh invited me to spend the night where he was staying.

We went to his place and talked until about 4:00 a.m. He continued to share about his walk with the Lord. I noticed that he didn't have a television.

I asked, "Why don't you have a TV?"

"There's nothing good to watch," He said. "And besides, it only takes time away from the time I can spend with God." He shared how he began every day in prayer. He shared that when we pray we are going before the very throne of God. He said solemnly, "He speaks to me."

Prior to working at Johnny Rockets, Josh was living on the streets. When I met him, he was doing well. About six months before, about the time I left California, he began reading the Bible. This young man is proof that a supernatural power attends the reading of the Bible.

Josh didn't belong to any church; he didn't have any Christian friends to guide him (that I know of). He had the Bible and the Holy Spirit. He even understood the Sabbath, and clearly understood the way of salvation. Most important, he had a relationship with Jesus Christ. And all that in six months of Bible reading!

As the early-morning hours wore on we decided to call it a night. A few hours later it was time for me to head home. Josh and I made plans to find

**Josh looked at me and said,
"We're going to heaven!"**

a church to attend together. Since he was already aware of the Sabbath, and I was raised a Seventh-day Adventist, I suggested we try an Adventist church. He liked the idea.

We said our goodbyes, and I headed toward the train station to catch my ride home. After months of carrying my Bible, it was time to open it. Thus began my walk with the Lord.

A short time later I left Miami for Key West. I haven't seen Josh since the morning we said goodbye.

I often think of Josh. It would be nice to see him again. What a joy it will be to see my friend in heaven. I know he will be there. God's timing is always right on. He knows who to send, and just when to send them.

I remember asking Josh, "Why do you live in a city like this?"

He replied, "This is where the Lord wants me." 🍌

After graduating from the Mission College of Evangelism, **Don Whitley** taught Bible at a mission academy in Guyana, South America.



PAINTING FROM THE CATACOMBS OF ROME

DO IT YOURSELF FAITH

How one woman reached out and touched

What a commotion that must have been when one woman decided to take matters into her hands and literally grab on to the hem of Christ's robe for healing. Let's talk with Ellen White to get her perspective on that scene, which was perhaps one of the most public demonstrations of faith.—*Editors.*

Q: Mrs. White, could you set the scene a bit for our readers?

To talk of religious things in a casual way, to pray for spiritual blessings without real soul hunger and living faith, avails little. The wondering crowd that

pressed close about Christ realized no vital power from the contact. But when the poor, suffering woman, in her great need, put forth her hand and touched the hem of Jesus' garment, she felt the healing virtue. Hers was the touch of faith.

Q: In the midst of the crowd, Jesus asked what sounded like quite a preposterous question: "Who touched My clothes?" What do you think He experienced when He asked that bewildering question?

Christ recognized that touch, and He determined there to give

a lesson for all His followers to the close of time. He knew that virtue had gone out of Him, and turning about in the throng He said: "Who touched My clothes?" Surprised at such a question, His disciples answered: "Thou seest the multitude thronging Thee, and sayest thou, Who touched Me?"

Q: Expand on the woman's "state of being" now that she was placed under the spotlight.

Jesus fixed His eyes upon her who had done this. She was filled with fear. Great joy was hers, but had she overstepped her duty? Knowing what was done in her, she came trembling and fell at His feet and told Him all the truth. Christ did not reproach her. He gently said: "Go in peace, and be whole of thy plague."

Q: Explain the different "types of touch" in relation to Christ.

Here was distinguished the casual contact from the touch of faith. Prayer and preaching, without the exercise of living faith in God, will be in vain. But the touch of faith opens to us the divine treasure house of power and wisdom; and thus, through instruments of clay, God accomplishes the wonders of His grace.

Q: Give us a bit more perspective on this type of faith: does it hold any application for us today?

This living faith is our great need today. We must know that Jesus is indeed ours, that His spirit is purifying and refining our hearts. If the ministers of Christ had genuine faith, with meekness and love, what a work they might accomplish! What fruit would be seen to the glory of God!

What can I say to you, my brethren, that shall arouse you from your carnal security? I have been shown your perils. There are both believers and unbelievers in the church. Christ represents these two classes in His parable of the vine and its branches. He exhorts His followers: "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing"

There is a wide difference between a pretended union and a real connection with Christ by faith.

A profession of the truth places men in the church, but this does not prove that they have a vital connection with the living Vine. A rule is given by which the true disciple may be distinguished from those who claim to follow Christ but have not faith in Him. The one class are fruit bearing, the other, fruitless. The one are often subjected to the pruning knife of God that they may bring forth more fruit; the other, as withered branches, are ere long to be severed from the living Vine.

Q: How much should we emphasize faith in our daily lives?

I am deeply solicitous that our people should preserve the living testimony among them, and that the church should be kept pure from the unbelieving element. Can we conceive of a closer, more intimate relation to Christ than is set forth in the words: "I am the Vine, ye are the branches"? The fibers of the branch are almost identical with those of the vine. The communication of life, strength, and fruitfulness from the trunk to the branches is unobstructed and constant. The root sends its nourishment through the branch. Such is the true believer's relation to Christ. He abides in Christ and draws his nourishment from Him.

This spiritual relation can be established only by the exercise of personal faith. This faith must express on our part supreme preference, perfect reliance, entire consecration. Our will must be wholly yielded to the divine will, our feelings, desires, interests, and honor identified with the prosperity of Christ's kingdom and the honor of His cause, we constantly receiving grace from Him, and Christ accepting gratitude from us.

When this intimacy of connection and communion is formed, our sins are laid upon Christ; His righteousness is imputed to us. He was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. We have access to God through Him; we are accepted in the Beloved. Whoever by word or deed injures a believer thereby wounds Jesus. Whoever gives a cup of cold water to a disciple because he is a child of God will be regarded by Christ as giving to Him. 🌿

This excerpt is taken from the book *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), volume 5, pages 227-229. Seventh-day Adventists believe **Ellen G. White** (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.

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ENGAGE

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We suffer, but not alone.

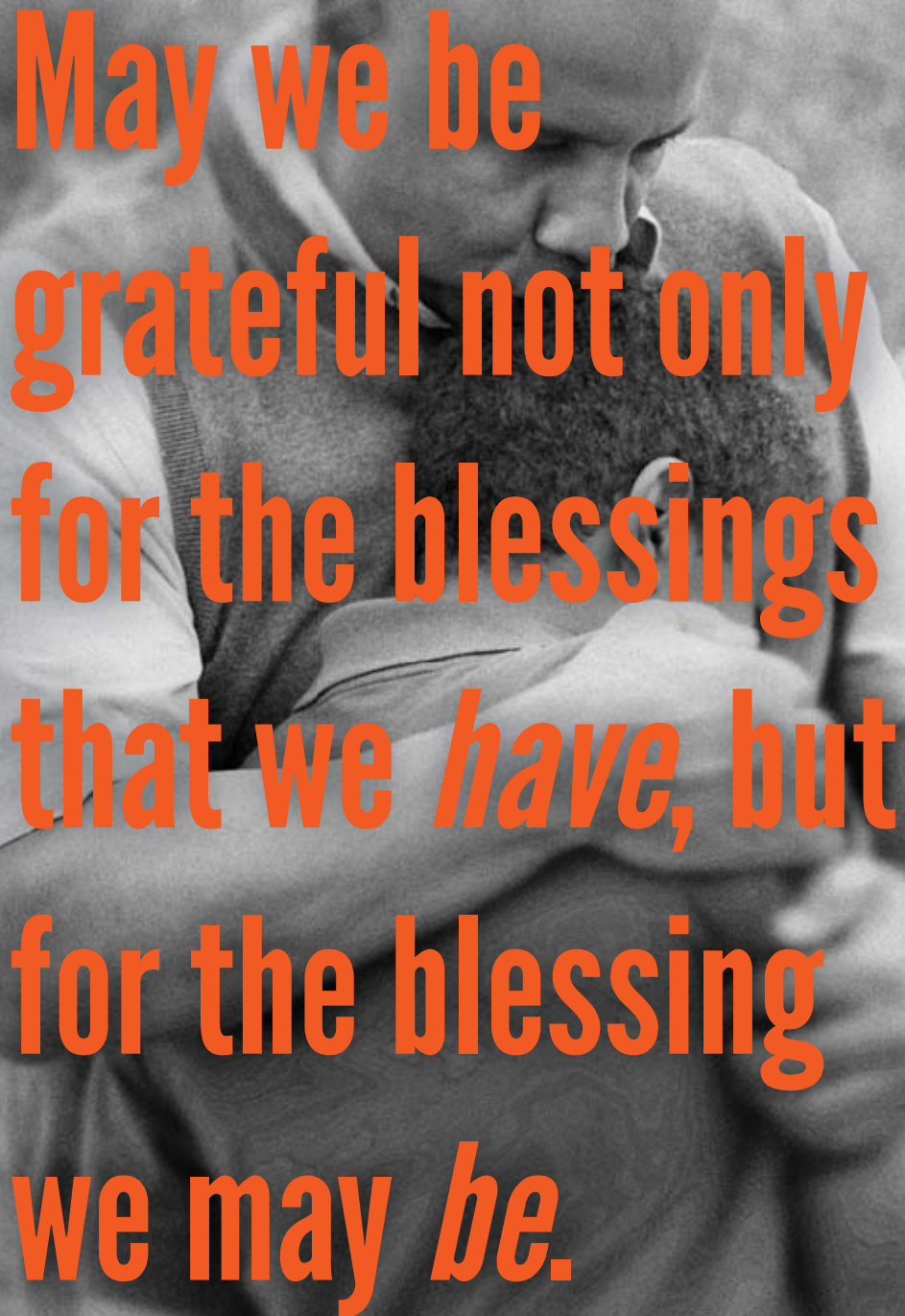
It was an oft repeated scene: the 2:00am attacks; rousing me from restless sleep; following their ruthless pattern: unable to breathe while lying on my back, I'd toss from side to side, trying to relax my tensing chest and shoulder muscles, willing the wheezing to stop, clinging for comfort to the prevailing mind-over-matter mind-set that never brought relief to my mind *or* my matter.

When I propped my thin frame against plumped pillows, the wheezing would ease a bit, allowing me to fall into a fitful doze. Waking again, woozy from hypoxia, I'd roll into a fetal position, somehow creating space for a little



LESLIE KAY





May we be
grateful not only
for the blessings
that we *have*, but
for the blessing
we may *be*.

more oxygen to seep into my swollen lungs.

Finally, I'd abandon my miserable bed for the dining room table, laying my head on its cool, hard surface; gasping and wheezing until the faint rays of dawn brought relief. Then I'd wearily trail back to bed, thinking dully, *Asthma, I hate you.*

MISERY WITHOUT COMPANY

These miserable memories of my childhood were all the more painful because I endured them alone. While my family slept in ignorant bliss, I slumped over the table in the breathless dark, feeling as if I were free-floating through space, searching for a friendly planet to take me in.

It had been better before the divorce. Then, my father would gently rub my back to relax my rigid muscles, or drive me around the city while the damp night air cooled my inflamed lungs. But my now-single mother had no patience for an inconveniently ill child, so I knew better than to wake her. Born before the advent of effective asthma treatments, I had no way to help myself.

So with my mother's oft-repeated line "It's all in your head" ringing in my ears, I learned to suffer in stoic solitude.

Purposeless and unredeemed, chronic suffering in isolation can lead to black despair. With the psalmist we cry to a distant and inscrutable God: "I have been sick and close to death since my youth. I stand helpless and desperate before your terrors" (Ps. 88:15).¹

Like Job, we cry out for a full and fair hearing against our seemingly senseless victimization: "If only I knew where to find God, I would go to his court. I would lay out my case and present my arguments" (Job 23:3, 4).

In my case, chronic illness led to the formation of an identity that pendulated between victim and martyr, the shame of being a "burden," and the perception that my lot in life was to suffer as stoically and inconspicuously as possible.

What, then, to do with the intractable mystery of suffering on a personal, experiential level? Austrian psychiatrist Viktor Frankl has proposed that suffering can only be redeemed through the attribution of meaning. Frankl lost his wife, health, and most of his family to the concentration camps of the Holocaust. He wrote: "In some way, suffering ceases to be suffering at the moment it finds a meaning. . . . It is by giving meaning

to our suffering that it becomes bearable."²

I wholeheartedly agree and embrace its implied corollary: When someone outside our sphere of suffering cares enough to *voluntarily* identify with us in our pain, it becomes truly bearable, even transcendent. For me, even more precious than the comfort of meaning is the consolation of solidarity.

MEANING IN COMPASSION

This conviction compelled me toward a late-life career in counseling. One painstaking class at a time, I inched toward a B.S. in addiction counseling while homeschooling our two daughters. After a stint working in community mental health and a state prison, I was off to grad school to complete a full-time master's program in clinical mental health counseling. By the time the nest was empty the objective had been achieved: graduation, employment as an inpatient addiction counselor, and enough anxiety and self-doubt to qualify me for a DSM-5³ diagnosis commensurate with that of my patients.

Textbooks and didactic instruction have their place, but they cannot adequately prepare an entry-level counselor for working with a young heroin addict who is sweating, shaking, and vomiting his way through early withdrawal, half-crazed by cravings and the horrifying realization of the wreckage he has left in his drug-induced wake.

They cannot prepare you for the vicarious trauma you experience as you listen to a female patient, through racking sobs, relive the systematic physical and sexual torment she has suffered at the hands of a father who should have protected her from such atrocities. I think I could be forgiven for wondering, at times, if I'd wandered into the wrong profession.

Gradually the miracle occurred. As I slogged through the fog of competing theories and fears of professional incompetence, I remembered to focus on what mattered most: the hurting human being before me, drenched in shame and craving empathy, just as I had when I'd suffered through those long, lonely nights.

Then, the realization and the swelling gratitude: my suffering found meaning and redemption as I identified with the pain of "fellow travelers"⁴ who had also been wounded along the way. I was no longer a victim or a martyr. God enabled me to

flip the equation and engage with my patients as a “wounded healer,”⁵ bound to them by the bonds of solidarity in suffering.

As psychotherapist Irvin Yalom notes: “Many individuals enter therapy with the disquieting thought that they are unique in their wretchedness, that they alone have certain frightening or unacceptable problems, thoughts, impulses, and fantasies.”⁶ How grateful I was to be part of a therapeutic community that worked together to assure our patients that they were not alone, that there were compassionate, kindred spirits who did not judge them but identified with them in their frailty.

I could convey to patients the import of Donna Jean Nakazawa’s words: “It’s important to know that you are not alone in your feelings of loss, shame, guilt, anxiety, or grief. When you reach out to others who understand” “you see that your own story is one of many stories that make up the larger hurt of humanity.”⁷

Caught between the dependent status of adolescence and the autonomy of young adulthood, the “feeling in between” demographic of my current university setting wrestles with many significant developmental challenges in an ever-changing personal and professional landscape: personal identity, gender identity, relationships, student loan debt, life’s calling and career choices.⁸

The psychological toll of these concerns, along with previous environmental stressors and adverse childhood experiences, can include anxiety; panic disorder; depression; mood, body image, and eating disorders; substance use; suicidal thoughts; and self-harm.

What does this enumeration of issues and disorders look like with skin on?

It looks like the stricken freshman who sobs out her fears that her parents and her God will disown her if she admits, even to herself, that she is experiencing same-sex attraction.

It looks like the chagrin of the theology major who prayed throughout Sabbath for deliverance from his porn addiction, only to restart the cycle of shame after vespers.

It looks like the emaciated frame of the film major who has been cutting and starving herself because she is only acting out the inward pain inflicted by her parents’ cutting and wasting words.⁹

The litany is long, and the burden of shared suffering can sometimes feel unbearable. Yet I pray

that I never lose sight of the *privilege* of being entrusted with this precious freight by fellow humans whose load is lightened in consequence.

LIGHT IN DARKNESS

Dietrich Bonhoeffer found it impossible to remain safe on American soil while his countrymen were being oppressed and while millions of European Jews were being slaughtered by Hitler’s death squads. So he sailed back to Germany to do what he believed Christ would do. He shared in the fate of his people while he worked toward alleviating their suffering. As one scholar has summed up Bonhoeffer’s theology of solidarity: “God does not offer Christians a rational, logically ordered answer to the why of their afflictions. God suffers with them. . . . God in Christ will not offer glib, evasive explanations for the agonizing problems faced by those whose lives have been menaced by the murderous forces of . . . evil. God chooses to suffer with those who suffer, all the while raising up prophets of hope who are spiritually empowered to free God’s people from their captivity.”¹⁰

During this season of gratitude, may we be grateful not only for the blessings that we *have*, but for the blessing we may *be*. May we voluntarily take up burdens, lighten loads, find meaning in shared suffering, and acquit ourselves as humble prophets of human solidarity. 🍂

¹Scripture quotations in this article are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

²Viktor E. Frankl, *Man’s Search for Meaning* (New York: Pocket Books, 1985), p. 135.

³The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition* (DSM-5) is the current source for standard classification of mental disorders used by mental health professionals in the U.S.

⁴Irvin D. Yalom, *The Gift of Therapy: An Open Letter to a New Generation of Therapists and Their Patients* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2002), p. 8.

⁵Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer* (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, Ltd., 2010).

⁶Yalom, p. 6.

⁷Donna Jean Nakazawa, *Childhood Disrupted: How Your Biography Becomes Your Biology, and How You Can Heal* (New York: Atria Paperback, 2015), p. 185.

⁸Christopher Munsey, “Emerging Adults: The In-between Age,” *American Psychological Association Monitor* 37, no. 6 (June 2006), <http://www.apa.org/monitor/jun06/emerging.aspx>.

⁹Details have been changed to protect client confidentiality.

¹⁰See Josh Valley, “Bonhoeffer’s Ethic of Suffering Solidarity,” *Jesus for Humans*, Apr. 9, 2016, <http://joshvalley.com/2016/04/09/bonhoeffers-ethic-of-suffering-solidarity/>.

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SOLA

Protestants often use the phrase *sola scriptura* to emphasize that we are nothing but Scripture. And that's true. Scripture alone is our final authority.

But *sola scriptura* not only means "nothing but Scripture"—the absence of something, it also means the presence of something. *Sola scriptura* also means Scripture.

If, as Protestant Christians, we are not studying Scripture for ourselves, we are not *sola scriptura*. We are *sola*. We are alone.

Too many believers don't study Scripture regularly on their own. They may go to church and hear someone preach or teach Scripture, but that's where it stops. They don't wake up Monday morning—or go to bed Monday night—reading God's Word for themselves. This results in the sad combination of someone who says they have the truth but don't personally enter into the truth. It's not unlike someone who worships on Sabbath morning but lives like the world the rest of the week.

Every moment of every day, God's living Word waits for us to enter in. "For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart" (Heb. 4:12).

So what keeps more church members from entering into God's Word for themselves? In many cases, people simply don't know how. They grow up seeing preachers and teachers masterfully hopping around Scripture, and they don't know (or where) to hop.

But Scripture really wasn't meant to be hopped around in. It was meant to be walked in, step by step. Scripture was meant to be read as it was written, verse by verse.

Ironically, only when we've walked in Scripture do we know how to hop in Scripture.

WALKING THROUGH SCRIPTURE

To begin (or renew) your walk in Scripture, here's a pathway:

1. Select a book of Scripture, such as Genesis, John, or Ephesians.
2. Select a good commentary or two, perhaps the Andrews Study Bible.
3. Study one chapter at a time. First read the biblical passage, underlining and writing notes in the margin. You'll see things you've never seen before. Consult your commentaries after you have given thought yourself to the meaning, in context, of your text. The voices you hear in the commentaries may help to balance your own findings.

4. Move on to another book, then another. As you go to and fro, you'll begin to notice beautiful connections within God's Word.

RUNNING THROUGH SCRIPTURE

Along with walking through Scripture, there's also a time to take a run. Years ago a friend shared his practice of reading through Scripture in a month—every January. A spiritual jumpstart. The key is to read without stopping—like an unfolding story. As you jog through the carnage of the Old Testament, you'll begin to feel desperate for the Messiah of the New Testament. The day you reach Matthew will change your life.

Reading through the Bible in a month isn't as hard as it sounds: about 40 pages a day. You'll not only wake up and go to bed with Scripture; you'll have it for breakfast, lunch, and supper as well. Scripture will become your daily bread.

Sola scriptura. 📖

THE LIFE
OF FAITH
ANDY
NASH



EVERY MOMENT OF
EVERY DAY, GOD'S
LIVING WORD WAITS
FOR US TO ENTER IN.

Andy Nash (andynash5@gmail.com) is a professor and pastor who's leading an Israel tour in Jesus' steps June 3-12, 2018.

THIS DAY WITH GOD

A healthy devotional experience is essential to living a balanced, fulfilled Christian life. Prayer, Bible reading, and community service are key ingredients in remaining spiritually grounded.

Yet we're not all the same. Our different backgrounds, educations, and interests mean that we will approach our devotional activities differently.

Here we offer a glimpse of how some of our friends find spiritual refreshment.

Enjoy your walk with the Lord as you use devotional methods suited to you and your temperament. —Editors

THAT I MAY KNOW HIM

STANLEY PONNIAH

When I was a child, it was a normal occurrence in our home to find my parents on their knees in the wee hours of the morning. It was habitual for them to read the Bible and to lift up every member in the immediate family specifically by name in prayer, then list various members of the extended family facing a challenge. In the quiet, dark hours of the morning, before the break of dawn, when the world was fast asleep, they found sweet communion with the Father in prayer and Bible study.

As a young man I came to appreciate the quiet hours of the morning. Initially the need for scheduled devotional time stemmed from having the schedule of a young person filled with the demands of an academic life, living in a dormitory. Early morning afforded me the silence and solitude that precedes daybreak, before the hustle and bustle that make it nearly impossible to spend some quality time devoted to nurturing my relationship with the Lord. Over the years this has become the most integral part of my day. Nothing has kept me more engaged with God on a daily basis than seeking Him every morning in devotion and prayer. Instead of being a challenge on the long days, it fuels me physically, emotionally, and spiritually to power through them.

Prayer and devotion are inextricably intertwined. I read those precious words breathed by the very Creator in my Bible, all the while beseeching God to send His Spirit to help me glean from it the lessons He has in store for me. I ask God to empty my mind of all preconceived notions that I may have, and give me the ability to apply immediately what I have learned in my life.

God loves to send us the Holy Spirit, but we have to ask! If our devotional life is in a rut, He welcomes our humble confession of our lukewarm condition as we ask Him to breathe His sweet Spirit back into us.

Paul expressed the passion of his life in Philippians 3:10: "That I may know Him" (NKJV).^{*} Knowing Christ is what spiritual growth is constantly accomplishing. It is what my soul ever craves.

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Stanley Ponniah works as a senior accountant at Adventist Church headquarters, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.

CLEAVING TO THE LORD

CLIFFORD GOLDSTEIN

I'm an early riser, and when I say early, I mean early. If I sleep to 4:30 a.m. my day, I think, is almost shot. I get to the General Conference early, too. That way I have much of the building to myself, and it's during this time that I often have my personal devotional.

I generally walk the halls, reading my Bible. If I'm reading the Old Testament, I read it in Hebrew. Though I am amazed at the miracle of language, and how one language can translate into another and keep most of the original meanings, there's no question that working in the original is a blessing.

In my morning walks I truly try to connect to the Lord through His Word. I take the Word as *The Word*. Even what I don't understand I seek to submit to, accepting it as from the Lord and, to whatever degree, applicable to myself here and now. I especially love reading about the power of God, the presence of God, and the love of God. The God revealed in the Bible is the God to whom I pray as I walk and read, the God whose promises I claim for myself, despite my unworthiness.

Every morning I think about my blessings. Like everyone, I have painful struggles, things I don't like and cannot understand. But, as I think about all that I have to be grateful for, and all that I have to thank the God I'm reading about, I get comforted and hopeful. I also love to recount the Lord's leading in my life. The God who spoke the world into existence (Gen. 1), the God who freed my people from Egypt (Ex. 12), the God on Calvary (Luke 24:20) is the God who in a stunning way intervened in my life in 1979, and hasn't stopped since. Some of my favorite texts, which read wonderfully in Hebrew, are Deuteronomy 4:1-9, with verse 4 being my favorite: "But ye that did cleave unto the Lord your God are alive every one of you this day" (KJV).

Worship, for me, is learning how to, indeed, "cleave unto the Lord."

No question, some mornings I feel close to the Lord; others, I don't. But it doesn't matter; what matters is that I believe, trust, and cleave to the Lord, who, through His Word, speaks to me early in the morning in the quiet halls of the General Conference building. 🍁

Clifford Goldstein is editor of the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*.

FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING!

MELODY MASON

I know what it means to “live in survival mode” spiritually. That’s how I spent much of my young adulthood. I was busy doing many good things, traveling the world working for God. I sincerely loved the Lord, but something was missing. Finally, I told God, “I don’t want to settle for ‘half-baked wilderness Christianity’ anymore. I want the full deal. I’m daring to ask for more.” And more is what He gave me (Eph. 3:20).

Several spiritual keys help me keep my walk with God fresh and vibrant, even while juggling life and full-time ministry.

Jesus captured my heart. I value my daily time with Him. I ask God to wake me up *early enough* each morning to enjoy a “spiritual feast” in His Word and in prayer. I find a solitary place, turn my phone off, and enjoy worshipping Him with songs of praise. If I’m feeling a little dry, I even fast from any spiritual distractions (see the third point) for a few days until I more earnestly hunger for the things of heaven.

I’m always on guard against self-sufficiency, recognizing I desperately need my Savior. When I’m about to do a task, when dealing with trials or temptations, when being applauded for achievements, and even when I fall, I always seek the Lord in prayer, for apart from Christ my own efforts are futile. I claim the promise from *The Desire of Ages*: “From the soul that feels his need, nothing is withheld. He has unrestricted access to Him in whom all fullness dwells.”*

I’m always on guard against spiritual desensitizers and breaches. These “spiritual desensitizers” take myriad forms: while shopping at the mall, on the magazine rack at the grocery store, in conversation with others, on my dinner plate, and probably most often during my *down time*, while browsing the Internet, or reading posts on social media. I have learned that I must be especially vigilant in guarding my five senses: sight, sound, smell, taste, even touch—for these senses can quickly become captives to the enemy. I must keep open the channels between myself and the Lord; otherwise I go spiritually dry. That’s why I don’t just read the Word, I pray the Word. This has given strength and victory to my daily life.

Jesus came to give us abundant life (John 10:10). Let’s not settle for wilderness Christianity! 

*Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898), p. 300.

Melody Mason is the author of *Daring to Ask for More: Divine Keys for Answered Prayer*.

HEMMED IN? OR HELPFUL?

SHARLENE LECLERC


It starts when I get in the shower—the exact point of my morning that sets the course of my day. You see, a certain number of things have to happen after that point, with little wiggle room, in order for me to get out of the house and to work on time. There is no wiggle room there, either. I usually have patients already waiting to see me when I arrive.

While hopping into the shower sets my temporal course of the day, it is what happens before that sets my mental, emotional, and spiritual tone for whatever is ahead. It's during the early-morning hours of the day, before the hustle and bustle of the daily grind, that I spend a few precious minutes with my Friend, Jesus.

There are days I long to be free from the demands of my daily routine, where I am free to do what I want, when I want. Interestingly, I have noticed that during my “free time” I am less likely to pursue moments with Jesus. I seem to find other things of importance; a project, time with a friend, or some leisure activity. It is really during my regular daily routine that I find the consistency of time spent in Bible study and prayer.

From a behavioral perspective, routines serve useful purposes in our lives. They build efficiency into regular activities and conserve energy that can be better spent for other mental activities. I do not need to plan my routine every morning; it is almost automatic. Building a routine around valued activities can increase the likelihood that those behaviors will occur. These behaviors might include such things as family dinners, date nights, or designated time for physical activity. Less time is spent thinking about what to do and when to do it. Valued activities become woven into the pattern of our lives.

Recently my morning routine changed, forcing me to leave the house 35 minutes earlier than usual. I struggled to think about how I was going to adjust my schedule to accommodate this new need and not give up my precious devotional time. As the new schedule drew near my son asked, “Mom, when are you going to do your Bible study?” I treasured this simple question, for in it lay some important implications. First, there was an implicit challenge, the challenge not to let go of an important activity. Second, there was an acknowledgment that others are paying attention to my choices. My choices affect not only me, but those around me.

I thank God each day for our precious time together, and I pray that He will strengthen me even when I feel tired and distracted. Each day as I head out to face the challenges of the day, I say, “Here I am, Lord. Send me” (see Isa. 6:8). 

Sharlene LeClerc, a clinical psychologist, lives in Charleston, South Carolina.

**HOW IS
YOUR
BIBLE**

MARKED?

Our notes say a lot about what we consider important.

KEN REETZ

Aiden, my 11-year-old grandson, attended a Vacation Bible School two summers ago and was promised a Bible for perfect attendance. He never received it because the supply ran out.

I overheard him talking to his cousin about this and knew it had to be made right. So a few weeks later I gave him my study Bible; I do most of my Bible reading online these days.

We did a little review of how the Bible was set up: Old Testament, New Testament, why some sentences were in red, notes in the back, maps, and so forth. I told Aiden that this was God's Word to us.

NOTES AND LINKS

I had forgotten how extensively the Bible was marked; verse after verse linked in a chain to support various doctrines. A dozen verses linked together to explain the doctrine of the seventh-day Sabbath, another dozen linked to explain what happens when a person dies, another set of verses linked to show how Christ will return to earth, and so on.

Daniel and Revelation had the longest chain of verses by a wide margin.

Thinking about all of this fine Bible study and how it might help my precious grandson learn the important truths of the Bible was exciting at first, but then my mood turned to a strange sadness.

Where was the chain of verses that linked us to our Creator? Would Aiden find Jesus if he followed all those verses I had linked together? Would he understand why we were created, and the great plans God has for us? Would he know what went wrong to cause all the misery we see around us? Would he figure out how God fixed our sin problem? Would he discover how much he is loved by God and desire to be part of His family? Finally, would my precious grandson realize what kind of hope is within easy reach?

I had to ask myself where the chain was that linked all the many verses to the assurance we have in Christ, promises that He will never turn away anyone who comes to Him with a humble, contrite heart. A lot of important questions and nothing to show for an answer, at least not in the verses I had marked.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

My study Bible was shining a bright light on why I was able to walk away from God some years ago and seek instead the friendship with this world, a friendship that lasted almost 30 years, until God's whisper in my conscience was too persistent to ignore. The Holy Spirit kept urging me to settle the critical issue about God once and for all.

Knowing true doctrines did not keep me from walking away from the church; but knowing the true God does. When Jesus is the reason for everything, there is no reason and no place to wander. I'm praying that Aiden will discover that in his new Bible.

Some have defined Revelation's mark of the beast as a form of religion that does not have God at the center. Was my original Bible marking an example of focusing on doctrines and not on God? That may be taking things too far, but the idea did cross my mind.

Knowing true doctrines did not keep me from walking away from the church; but knowing the true God does.

By the way, these verses that linked together various doctrines in my marked Bible were not only for my own benefit, but were marked so I could methodically make the case of truth to those who wished to study Scripture with me.

That was years ago. Now I will be marking in a new Bible, linking more verses together so that the gospel of Christ is the center of all good and true doctrine. I think I'll also buy and mark a new Bible for Aiden. 🍏

Ken Reetz, a real-estate agent in Oregon and Idaho, grew up attending Adventist schools. It took him more than 60 years to understand what Christ has done for humanity through His great love and amazing grace.



Members of the University of Tennessee Knoxville Adventist Christian Fellowship chapter

overwhelming, are a critical decision-making time. Welcome Week exposes students to a thousand new ideas that include a plethora of faith systems. They begin to seriously question (some for the first time) what they believe, their “version” of truth.

How do we help them stand on their own feet, spiritually, emotionally, and socially? I would propose that we do what we’ve been doing, but do it better.

COMMUNITY: A PLACE OF EMOTIONAL SAFETY

For the past 37 years Advent House has been a unique ministry within the Adventist Church. It sits on the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, just down the way from undergraduate dorms and in the midst of everyday college rhythms. I spent eight years there connecting with students and developing a clearer understanding of how the public context shapes student life.

Across the North American Division and the world, there are official Adventist student organizations on a number of public campuses. In some regions we call them Adventist Christian Fellowship (ACF) chapters. When I’ve talked with students who really enjoy being part of an ACF chapter, one of the reasons they give is that it’s safe. As they describe that safety, they may say something along the lines of “I don’t feel judged there”; and what I’ve come to understand as a “judge-

NO WALLS

What Advent House does for university students

Adventist students attending a public college or university* are sometimes more lost than they’d like to admit. Often enough it is the first time that they are so separated from lifelong support systems—parents, home churches, neighbors who have known them all their lives, and extended family in all its forms. So their typical checks and balances aren’t close by, making it difficult for them to know how best to engage with their campus. Even for those who are close to home, the public sphere is often very different from the student’s norm, and neither they nor their families know how to navigate it well.

The first few weeks of freshman year, while incredibly

MICHAELA LAWRENCE JEFFERY

ment-free zone” isn’t simply the absence of criticism, but the presence of much more.

It is a space in which students know they can speak their mind and be heard, not merely tolerated. They encounter (and become) people who will listen, respond honestly and kindly, desiring to learn with, and also teach/advise when needed—the context is dynamic. The space isn’t only for vetting ideas; students also have a lot of fun there. The space isn’t divorced from the university. It functions in such a way that students see their lives as a whole rather than in compartments. That’s the ideal, anyway. And though this is a college context, the communities that thrive are, somehow, intergenerational.

Not every Adventist student will show up, but it’s still vital that we develop more campus communities. This requires intentional people and pieces, and the absence of walls.

NO WALLS: FREEDOM TO COME OR GO

Walls on a house serve us well, protecting us from the elements and from critters. They can be welcoming, but they often give others reason to pause. *What happens in that house? Will I belong?* While we do not propose knocking down any literal walls, we must find a way to operate whereby those walls aren’t hindrances either to students coming in or students going out.

Three realities that help to fashion a “no walls” approach in which students still feel safe while growing in their faith are an on-campus presence, a faculty/staff advisor, and a spiritual home, typically, a local church.

PRESENCE: BEING THERE FOR THEM

Years ago a mentor pastor encouraged me to develop the ministry of presence, the gift we give someone by simply being where they are, journeying with them. I fear that we’re sometimes helping Adventist students develop absence instead. Many are afraid to engage beyond the classroom; and classroom engagement may boil down to basic attendance. Implicit support of their apprehensions may misinterpret, for them, being in the world but not of the world. And with that misinterpretation, they sometimes seek an Adventist space out of fear rather than out of a desire to grow. However they initially engage, it’s important for us to be able to support them in

ways that move them from fear to faith.

A strong on-campus presence, then, includes regular meetings (on campus, not at a nearby church or home) during which students build friendships, share meals, and seek to bless the campus through outreach and by joining the campus (as a group) in activities that the university organizes. From prayer vigils after a major crisis to a regularity of community service, there’s no shortage of ways to bless the campus. This helps more people become familiar with Adventists (a vital step) and helps the ACF chapter develop an open and welcoming, noninsular identity.

Being present on campus is also influenced by family. In earlier years many of us were happy to

There’s no shortage of ways to bless the campus.



Rachel Keele shares her testimony

be far away from home, not because we disliked our family, but because we wanted a new experience. Today many students are attending schools close to home, sometimes for financial reasons and sometimes because they simply want to be close to home. There’s nothing wrong with that. However, it’s always more difficult for those who are already close to home to develop an on-campus presence. Family members can help such students by encouraging them not to return home every weekend, and talk with them about ways to invest beyond the classroom.

THE ADVISOR: BEING THE SURROGATE MOM

A chapter's presence is facilitated, in significant ways, by the advisor. Space reservations are more secure when made by advisors than by students. In addition, advisors have more insight into the various ways that students can meaningfully connect with the university: from keys to open up meeting rooms to knowing key steps for building campus relationships, advisors help provide ACF chapters with a greater sense of purpose and clarity. And as students graduate and new students join the group, advisors provide continuity that helps a group keep moving forward.

In my first year with Advent House I was sharing some of my challenges with a church member. I'll never forget her words: "You're their mom." Students still need parental figures while in school, people who are connected enough to talk frankly about life. Even if they happen to be fairly close in age to the students, advisors are campus moms and dads, aunts and uncles, and have a level of relational access to the students.

The longer an advisor has worked on a public campus, the more ably they navigate being a person of faith, and specifically an Adventist, in that realm. This gives them the ability to advise in ways that help students establish a healthy identity that maintains an outward focus.



Michaela Jeffery served as director of Adventist Christian Fellowship for eight years.

THE SPIRITUAL HOME: BEING THEIR PASTOR

The location of an ACF chapter's spiritual home depends on several factors, including campus culture, student habits, and local church connection. The first of those just mentioned, campus culture, is shaped by whether students live mostly in dorms or depend mostly on commuting; also, the administration's vision for and drive toward the institution's future, e.g., their commitment to raise the school's rank and academic status; and the rural or urban location of the campus. In day-to-day terms a 7:00 p.m. Bible study makes sense on a dorming campus, while a lunchtime Bible study or a Friday night at someone's home will make more sense for a commuter campus. As a result, creating a spiritual home *on* campus is going to be more doable for the

dorming campus, where it's easier for students to come together and do so for longer stretches of time.

Family can also positively influence a student's ability to create or join a spiritual home. One key factor would be encouraging them, if students are dorming, to stay on campus and to participate with a congregation that's local to their campus.

The local church can become a spiritual home by developing a church culture that students can readily relate to, and giving students opportunities to serve according to their gifts. This goes much further than putting on student-focused programming. It can create an intergenerational connection, and helps the students develop a community, beyond their peer group, that they enjoy spending time with.

The bottom line is that the chapter needs a consistent space where students can worship Jesus and study the Bible. Also, a space that helps students to intentionally grow in their faith.

HOW DO WE DO BETTER?

Together, the on-campus presence, the advisor, and the spiritual home may provide excellent opportunities for Adventist students to develop a surer footing while attending a public institution. These elements will move beyond a "safe space" to a space

that helps students grow in their desire to reach beyond themselves for God's glory.

And there is so much more to doing better: we could, for example, have mentioned and explored the role of a chaplain or campus minister, and the need for many more. We could also have talked about how to better resource chapters and train advisors and local churches to better understand their roles. Reluctantly, these must be left for another day. Meanwhile, we work with what we've considered today: an on-campus presence in as many college campuses as possible; campus advisors who are good mothers and good fathers; and a safe location students can own as their spiritual home. 🍌

**"College" and "university" are here used interchangeably.

Michaela Lawrence Jeffery is pastor of the Athens Seventh-day Adventist Church in the state of Georgia, United States.

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KEEP GOING

*Hard road,
good company*

DANIELLE N. QUAILEY

God is our . . . strength, a . . . help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear" (Ps 46:1, 2).¹

Joseph believed that. Jesus believed that. Do you?

FAVORITE SON

Joseph was the favorite son of his father, Jacob. God blessed him with dreams about his future standing in the family, much to the outrage of his older brothers. When Joseph was 17 years old, his brothers sold him into slavery and convinced his father, without explicitly saying so, that his favorite son was dead (Gen. 37:17-28, 31-35).

Once his father's pampered

child, Joseph was now just another item in Ishmaelite business transactions, a thing for buying and selling. He hadn't said goodbye before leaving, and now it seemed he would never say hello again. The "tenderly cherished son" had suddenly become "the despised and helpless slave"² to be hawked for cash or kind at the next market stop.

Time to quit? Was God still Joseph's strength? Should he be afraid? As he watched the tents of his privilege and paternal indulgence disappear against the horizon he was indeed afraid: "For a time Joseph gave himself up to uncontrolled grief and terror."³ But as he thought of the blessings of his childhood, remembering his father's stories of divine encounter and providence, Joseph made a simple decision: *The God of my fathers shall be my God.*⁴ After that, you couldn't scare him anymore.

The stories of Joseph in Egypt show his chutzpah and equanimity, his kindness and morality. They never show him scared. Lower and lower life's circumstances would drag him down. But he never seemed to find any reason to quit, or fear. Fear of God, yes, even when it cost him his house slave status. Fear, no.

Over time Joseph became the favored attendant of his master, Potiphar, steward over his entire household, second in authority to only Potiphar himself. Now people noticed Joseph a lot, Potiphar's wife included. She looked and liked what she saw, and took an inappropriate liking to Joseph. She knew her way with men, but seduction does not always work. When Joseph chose to honor God by refusing

to sleep with her, she falsely accused him of trying to take advantage of her. Burning with rage—perhaps—Potiphar had Joseph thrown into prison, where he remained confined for years.

WHERE IS GOD?

At this point Joseph might have concluded that God had forgotten about him, or worse, that God really didn't care.

But Joseph didn't quit: he kept trusting and believing and going. The difficult situations of his life only brought out his grit, his determination to keep going. And through the darkness of it all, God was working for his good.

Remember the prophetic dreams at the beginning of the story? Well, the God who gave those dreams gave Joseph the ability to interpret other dreams; to begin with, the dreams of two of his fellow prisoners, one of whom, as Joseph predicted, would be reinstated as Pharaoh's cupbearer (Gen. 40:13).

After a while Joseph was interpreting Pharaoh's dreams. His interpretation landed him in an Egyptian palace, second in command over all Egypt (Gen. 41:38-44). In his new position Joseph became the savior of nations, including the lives of the very brothers who had sold him into slavery years before (Gen. 45:3-7).

Joseph's story illustrates how God is with us, working for us even in the midst of the most devastating circumstances. God sees the end from the beginning and already has a plan that will knit our pains into patterns for good. All He asks of us is to trust Him and keep going as He guides us through the night of storm.

Through all the hardships Joseph faced he kept going: through betrayal by his brothers he kept going; through the abuses of a slave's existence he kept going; through success with his master he kept going; and through the slander of his master's wife he kept going; through the ungrateful forgetfulness of the reinstated cupbearer he kept going. He continued to honor God with his actions, and allowed God to use him for His glory in every circumstance. He could not have known what God's ultimate plan was, but He did know God's character and trusted in Him.


DON'T QUIT

God wants us to keep going too. His steady eye is on us, and He will bring us through to the other side of pain if we trust Him and persevere.

God keeps going too. He is determined to save us.

Jesus Himself, God's beloved Son, faced humanly insurmountable trials while living on earth. In the depth of His passion in Gethsemane, overcome with anguish, He pleaded with His Father, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will" (Matt. 26:39). Sweat fell from His brow like great drops of blood (Luke 22:41, 42). On the cross, struggling under the weight of our sin, Jesus still kept going. He did because He knew that only by Him bearing our shame could He accomplish our redemption. In Gethsemane, when the burden was beyond His bounds, God the Father sent Jesus comfort to show that He was there with Him (verse 43). God will do the same for us during our trials.

God keeps going too. He is determined to save us. Through our hardships we are encouraged to remember "that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28). God's genius can use the devil's worst crime, the crucifixion of His Son, to bring us the miracle of redemption and the glory of the resurrection of the righteous. God weaves our pain and His gift of joy into a beautiful masterpiece: hearts restored into His image, and lives that through eternity will reflect His goodness.

So the next time you feel overwhelmed or tempted to doubt or quit, remember that God has a plan that will bring you everlasting profit, regardless of what you're going through. Trust in His sovereign will, believe that He is working all things for your ultimate good, and just keep going! 

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

² Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1890), p. 213.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 213, 214.

Danielle N. Quailey is a young adult writer and editor from New York City who is passionate about spiritual growth and diving deeper into the heart of God.

Make Your Voice Heard in Heaven

Make Your Voice Heard in Heaven: How to Pray With Power, by Barry C. Black, Tyndale Momentum, Carol Stream, Illinois, 2018, 147 pages. Softcover, US\$14.99. Reviewed by Stephen Chavez, *Adventist Review*.

No Adventist pastor has a larger platform on which to preach the principles of God's kingdom than does Barry C. Black, chaplain of the United States Senate. For more than 14 years Black's measured, baritone cadence has read the invocation at the beginning of each session of the Senate's debate and discussion. He has prayed at inauguration events and at weddings and funerals for those whose names are regularly mentioned in news headlines. He also cares for the spiritual needs of his "parishioners" and leads a Bible study for members of congress and their staffs.

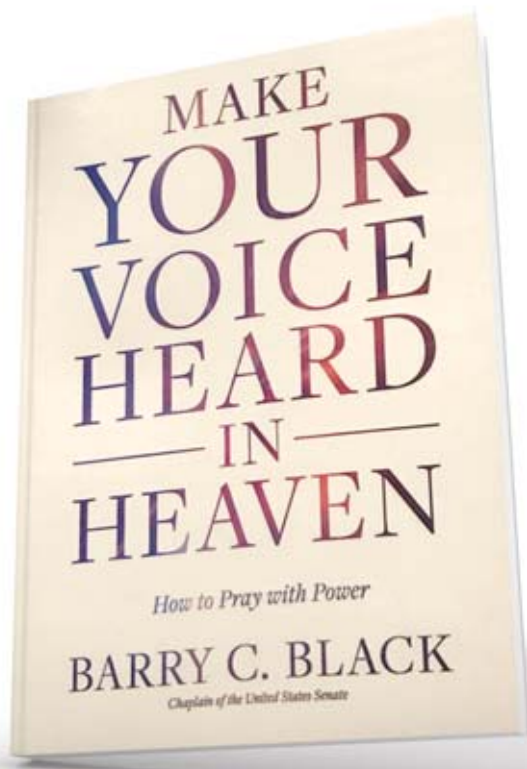
The book, *Make Your Voice Heard in Heaven*, is the result, says Black, of being invited to be keynote speaker at the National Prayer Breakfast in 2017. "With about three months to prepare," he writes in his introduction, "I began to sleep, eat, think, walk, and talk about prayer."

Anyone who has heard Black preach will immediately recognize his voice in his writing style. The book is saturated with Bible quotes, Bible illustrations, and bits of verse taken from hymns and spir-

itual poetry. Black could have filled pages of his book with anecdotes and illustrations taken from a life in which one mixes freely with Washington, D.C., powerbrokers. Instead, Black's counsel about prayer is beautifully balanced and biblical.

The counsel offered in *Make Your Voice Heard* is not unique, as far as books about prayer go. Without making extravagant or unrealistic promises, its basic premise is that prayer not only lets God know what's on our minds and hearts, it's also one of the best ways for us to stay grounded spiritually.

Make Your Voice Heard is not only a great book to read, but also a great book to share with others. 🍌



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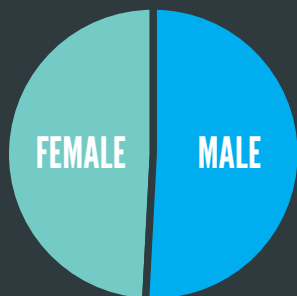
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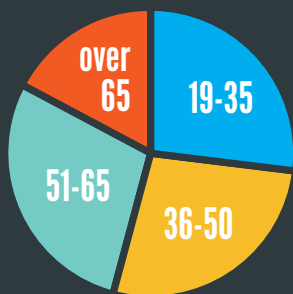
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HOW CONNECTED?

The Bible says that Jesus occasionally spent all night in prayer. That's a habit most of us don't have, at least most of the time. Yet connecting with the Lord on a daily basis is a vital practice. When we asked our readers about their devotional practices, these are some of their responses. Our thanks to those who responded.—Editors



Gender of respondents

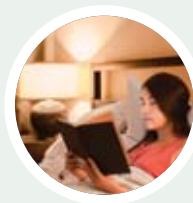


Age of respondents



When do you typically have your devotions?

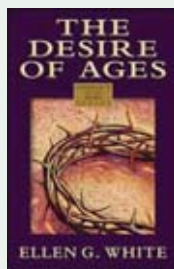
- Morning (34)
- Evening (5)
- Morning and evening (4)
- Anytime (4)



Do you have a favorite place to do your devotional exercises?

Those mentioned the most:

- Bedroom (11)
- Living room (10)
- Office (6)
- Outdoors (3)
- Dining room (2)



Ellen White books mentioned most:

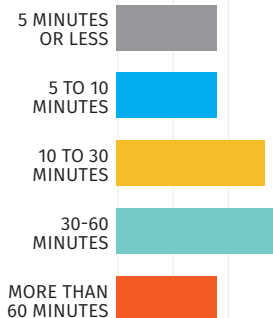
- *The Desire of Ages* (14)
- *Steps to Christ* (13)
- *The Great Controversy* (5)
- *Christ's Object Lessons* (4)

Other devotional authors:

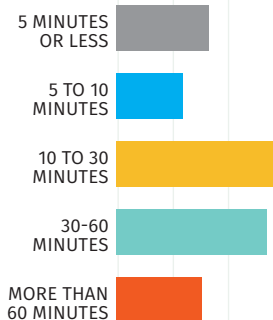
- Doug Batchelor
- Greg Boyd
- Frederick Buechner
- Oswald Chambers
- Ty Gibson
- Mark Finley
- Richard Foster
- Bob Gass
- George Knight
- C. S. Lewis
- John Piper
- Novia Reid



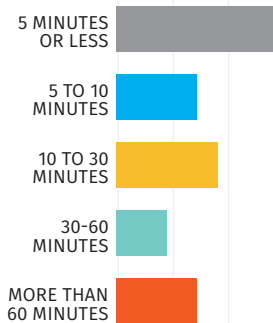
How long do you typically spend reading the Bible each day?



How long do you typically spend engaged in your devotional practices?



How long do you typically spend in some type of community/mission activity each day?



0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Give Thanks With a Grateful Heart

What being thankful is all about

“Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song” (Ps. 95:2).

Being grateful should constantly be a part of how we celebrate life. Gratitude enables us to acknowledge everything that God has given us. With the intake of every breath we ought to exhale a prayer of praise, love, and thankfulness for His grace and mercy.

Because I had come from a country where there was no designated “Thanksgiving Day,” my initiation into this celebration made an indelible impression on my mind and instilled in me a true sense of belonging and the meaning of family. I drank in all that the celebration of that day entailed: the food in particular, which in my view served as the obvious conduit to meeting, greeting, and fellowshiping with family, some of whom I was meeting for the very first time. I decided then to treat that day with the importance it deserved without overshadowing my Christmas joy.

Thanksgiving Day is now that special day set aside to celebrate on a grand scale all that we are thankful for in our lives. It’s a day to count our blessings and reconnect with family and friends around a dinner table weighed down with copious amounts of delectable dishes. It is a gathering of the very young, the old, and all others in between, the rousing babble of voices vying to outdo each other in greeting as young ones gleefully dart in and out among the adults while the host silently prays that no one bump against the table

already groaning under the weight of its delicious fare. For some that picture may appear to be utterly chaotic. For me it is the very embodiment of thanksgiving!

Then, with the meal safely tucked away, we sit, stand, or recline—whatever position appears most comfortable—and remember, reminisce, and reflect together on God’s rich blessings and our ability to share these blessings with others. W. Clement Stone has said: “If you are really thankful, what do you do? You share.” A selfless sharing honors God. So we remind the younger ones that our doors should always be open, ever ready to welcome those who are less fortunate, to offer a meal or a place to rest awhile, because, according to W. T. Purkiser, it is “not what we say about our blessings, but how we use them, [that] is the true measure of our thanksgiving.”

We remember the loved ones we have lost, and rejoice in the wonderful additions made to the family during the year. We are happy to have made it through another year; we are thankful for health, and shelter, and the joy of just being with each other. In fact, it is as Paul says: Our hearts “overflow with thankfulness” (Col. 2:7, NLT).*

I contend that if we are confident of God’s daily blessings we should be giving thanks on a daily basis. And I echo the statement of an unknown author: “While it’s true that Thanksgiving only comes but once a year, we should actually celebrate each and every day. It’s just a matter of learning to live with a spirit of gratitude.”

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**IF WE ARE
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