

MARCH 2016: THE END OF NORMAL + WEATHERING FINANCIAL STORMS + HITLER'S CHILDREN + LET'S CELEBRATE LIQUIDS + CONSIDER THE LILIES

ADVENTIST REVIEW



STORM WARNINGS

WHAT IF...?

According to Jesus' words (Matt. 21:12) it is His will that our church's name and identity "shall be called a house of prayer." As important as preaching is, He never called His church a house of preaching. As essential as music is, He never called His church a house of music.

What if ... as people drove by our church building on a Wednesday evening, they had the distinct sense that something of eternal significance was happening inside?

What if ... when a new school term was beginning, we invited parents from our community – and their teachers – to a special Sabbath (or Sunday?) morning time of prayer for our public schools?

What if ... when the church board met they decided they would spend as much time praying as they did in discussion of the business agenda?

What if ... the mid-week service became prayer meeting night again, and there was such a strong awareness of God's presence you had trouble finding a place to sit?



For sermon-starters, blogs, videos, banners, and other resources go to www.Hope-Heals.org



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TRENDING

THE MOST SHARED STORIES ON ADVENTISTREVIEW.ORG LAST MONTH:



- 1 Brazil's soccer player of the year finds the Sabbath
- 2 First Adventist church opens in northernmost corner of Siberia
- 3 Ted Wilson visits Iraq to encourage believers living 20 miles from ISIS territory
- 4 Mexican governor pledges government support for Adventists to promote religious freedom
- 5 The Government in Dominican Republic now allows Seventh-day Adventist ministers to officiate civil marriages.

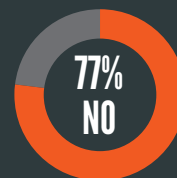
CHARTING AHEAD

This survey of Adventist administrators, pastors, and laity was taken between December 2015 and January 2016. More responses can be seen on p. 35 as well as online by visiting adventistreview.org.

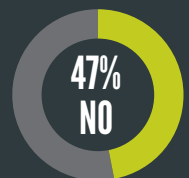
By the year 2035—if the Lord hasn't returned—do you think Seventh-day Adventist Church structure will exist as it does today?



RESPONSES FROM
ADVENTIST
ADMINISTRATORS,
SCHOLARS,
AND EVANGELISTS



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BILL KNOTT



“Trust is the always fragile bloom that we must guard and love and work to keep alive.”

Safety First

It seems an odd way to begin a conversation—with an announcement of what need not be. But many of the talks I have these days would go no further without it.

The voice on the phone cracks slightly, and the words trail off to mumbled sadness and postponement: “Some other time, I’ll tell you what’s really troubling me.” And yet it is the real reason for the call.

The friend in the church foyer studies the carpet pattern as her face takes on the grimace of a story she worries she shouldn’t tell, though it feels urgent, awful, threatening. Even when we lower our voices to a whisper, she wonders if the walls have ears.

A colleague sits on the edge of a chair, eyes brimming with unwanted tears about some matter, personal or professional, that drives him from his cubicle to walk the halls, seeking solace and security.

Slowly, haltingly, after too many fumbles and miscues, I’ve learned to say the thing each conversation seems to need: “Fear not” (Luke 5:10), or as the original language intended, “*You can stop being afraid now.*” “*This is a safe place. You won’t get hurt here.*”

Intriguingly, it is one of the most frequent conversation

starters recorded in the Bible, for fear appears to be the entry point of too many interactions. When angels meet humans, when Jesus performs miracles, when strangers encounter each other, and even when believers gather for fellowship, the words must still be said: “*You don’t have to be afraid here. You are safe here.*”

We could, if we wished, indict the situations that provoke such anxiety. We could critique the power structures, the attitudes, and the oh-so-unsafe encounters that have made the whole world wary, and caused the distrust all too apparent in Christ’s body. Sad as it is, fear is the norm. Those who aspire to some better reality must own the responsibility for creating relationships, structures, and conversations that deliberately reverse the tide toward even greater wariness. Unless we say—and mean—“*This is a safe place. You won’t get hurt here,*” the wounded and betrayed will naturally expect what they have found almost everywhere else.

Believers are believers just because at some sacred moment we placed our trust in what we couldn’t see—the grace of God—and yielded up the control of our lives that sin and fear insist we keep. But faith—in doctrines, practices, and mission—won’t long survive the deadly cold that

freezes dialogue and safe discussion. If I have no place to practice open-heartedness—no “safe room” where what is said is bound by pledge to never leave the premises—my faith will likely wither like a daffodil entombed in ice. In this broken world, and in a church filled up with broken people, trust is the always fragile bloom that we must guard and love and work to keep alive.

How do we become safe persons? How do our congregations grow into safe places? Like every other godly virtue, by practice—long and patient practice. At this moment, and in His church, safety is the first task of “the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5, NKJV). We are never more like Jesus than when we protect the fearful, hold the lonely, and create the spaces where the bruised find both salve and salvation.

So here’s a call to start practicing what we are still learning how to preach—that church must be the safest place there is. Only through persistent effort, with both better days and worse, will we become the fellowship into which Jesus may safely call all those now listening to His voice. ♣

Bill Knott

FIVE STARS

Five stars! That is for the fine articles in the January 2016 *Adventist Review*. Which to mention? For starters, the newsbriefs on page 14: “Academy Picks up Cairo’s Trash” made the expression “actions speak louder than words” ring true. Then the article on page 19, “New Evidence Leaves Macroevolution Dangling,” reinforces the truth of a Creator God. And interesting comment that evolution theory is alive “on artificial life support.” As Christians, we care about our health but the article on page 45, “Christians and Environmental Stewardship,” speaks of caring “for creation and to alleviate human suffering whenever we can...” The two short articles, “Amigas Por Siempre,” on page 42 and “Keep Watch” on page 44, express the heart and soul of Christian living.

Natalie Dodd
Centerville, Ohio

Thank you very much for the well-planned January 2016 issue. From “The Green Repentance” on page 5 to “Of Apple Trees and Solar Panels” on page 64, there are many good articles to stimulate “green thinking.” I especially applaud “Christians and Environmental Stewardship.”

Myron F. Wehtje
South Lancaster, Massachusetts

RECIPES

Thank you for the great recipes in your *Review* newsletter!

Gladys Nagel
Lake Mary, Florida

TRUE GEM

“A Hymn to Coming Justice” (December 2015 *Adventist Review*) was a true gem! We read the article twice! Those who read it will be blessed! In another

article in the *Review*, I read of Dartmore Prison where the men who were conscientious objectors were imprisoned. I am humbly proud that my husband’s father, Eric Beavon, was imprisoned there. Later he went to Africa as a missionary. We want to share the blessings of the *Review* with a younger generation around us and pass the journal around.

Velma Beavon
Dayton, Montana

I am writing to editors and proofreaders about a writing style that has always bothered me. As a math and science teacher I would like to point out an oxymoron that showed up in the article titled “The Black ‘Blue Zone’” in *Adventist Review*, October 2015. On page 57 a paragraph begins with “Melby’s study showed . . .” and ends with the sentence “Exercising vegetarians had a prevalence of hypertension three times lower than sedentary nonvegetarians.” The oxymoron is “three times lower.”

Logically speaking, there is no such situation, because “one time lower” would be zero. This should properly be written as “one third of sedentary vegetarians.” I realize people use this



We want to share the blessings of the *Review* with a younger generation around us and pass the journal around.

—VELMA BEAVON, DAYTON, MONTANA

terminology in their speech, but wrong is always wrong.

Thank you for the article itself. It was very enlightening. Keep providing such a wonderful magazine.

Ron Ritterskamp

via e-mail

LEGAL NOTICE SPECIAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

Notice is hereby officially given that the quinquennial meeting of the members of Oakwood University Inc., a Corporation organized and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the state of Alabama, will be convened in the McKee Business and Technology Building Auditorium, on the Oakwood University campus, 7000 Adventist Blvd. NW, Huntsville, Alabama, 35896, on Sunday, April 17 at 8:00 a.m. (CDT) for the transaction of business that will come before the Corporation. The purpose of the meeting is to receive reports, approve amendments to the Articles and Bylaws of the Corporation and to transact other matters related thereto.

*Dan Jackson, Chairman
Leslie N. Pollard, Secretary*

YOUR TURN

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

IN A FEW WORDS...

NEW EVIDENCE LEAVES MACROEVOLUTION DANGLING (JANUARY 2016)

Very illuminating article. The evidence is compelling. But it won't shatter the lie or myth of evolution. Many people (intellectuals and scientists) will never change their minds. To cite Goethe: "This not to be wondered at; such people continue in error because they are indebted to it for their existence. They would otherwise have to learn everything over again, and that would be very inconvenient."

Elijah Mvundura

CHRISTIANS AND ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP (JANUARY 2016)

Wow! Nice set of articles! Nearly missed them, as they were at the bottom of the Table of Contents. Very balanced message for the most part, offering an informed and nuanced take on important issues that have largely become befuddled by the media.

We need more of this information brought to the forefront of our awareness, not just because it's a spiritual and moral obligation that we care for creation, but because the messages we get from the media are indeed highly politicized. It's difficult for average Christians to see past the frantic arm-waving. Please continue to publish meaningful articles like these.

Jeffrey Kent

RIDING IN THE KEY OF LIFE (JANUARY 2016)

I rode my bike to work one year, along a bike path by a river. About four miles each way. Best commute I ever had. I miss it.

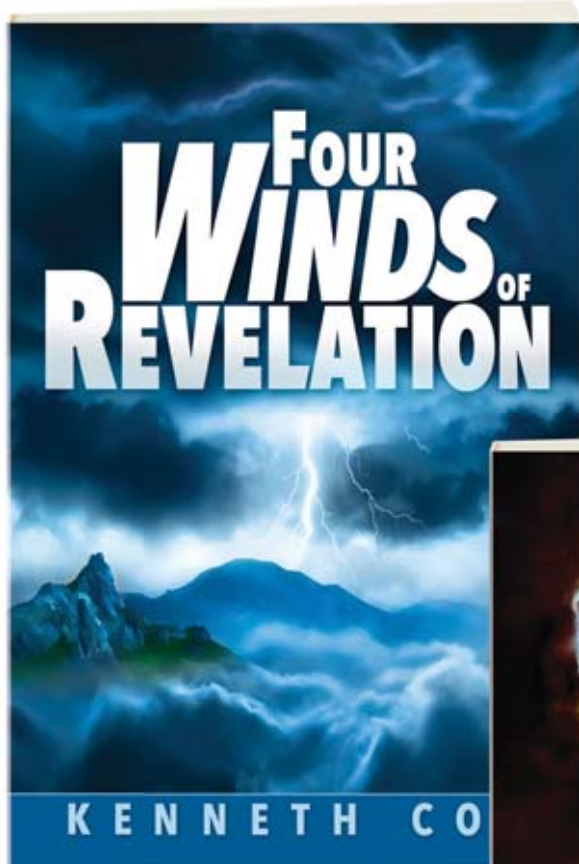
Tim Lale

FOR 42 YEARS I THOUGHT I WAS A GOOD ADVENTIST (POSTED JANUARY 13, 2016)

Great teamwork! Only if we all asked ourselves the same question, we would realize that there is so much for us to do until Jesus comes in our own corners.

Shannon Robinson-Pitkin

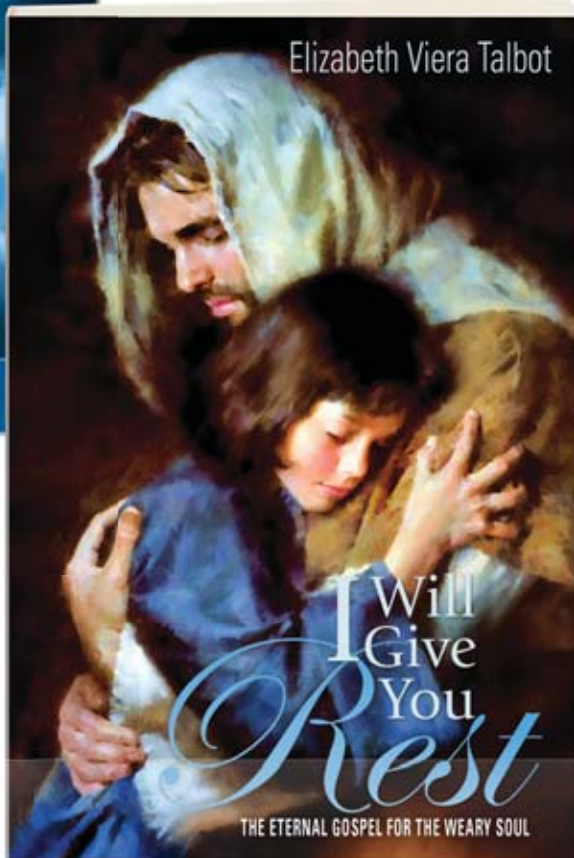
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Kenneth Cox

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Elizabeth Viera Talbot

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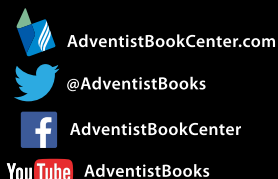


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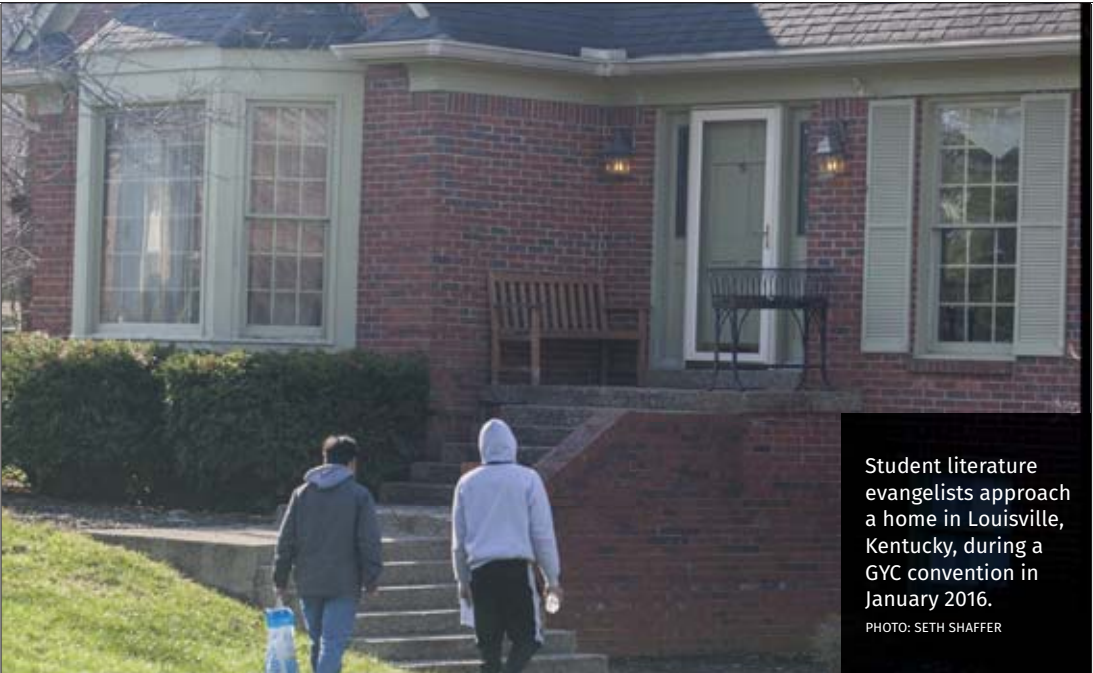
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NEWS



Student literature evangelists approach a home in Louisville, Kentucky, during a GYC convention in January 2016.

PHOTO: SETH SHAFFER

ADVENTIST CHURCH CHALLENGES TOWN'S LITERATURE BAN

COURT IS ASKED WHY ADVENTIST STUDENTS CAN'T SHARE BELIEFS

BY ADVENTIST REVIEW STAFF

A U.S. conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and two of its members filed a lawsuit against an Arkansas town over a local ordinance that prevents door-to-door literature evangelism.

The lawsuit, filed January 19, 2016, by the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference, asks a U.S. district court to declare the ordinance enacted by White Hall, population 5,500, to be unconstitutional and a violation of the First Amendment right to free speech.

City regulations restrict all forms of door-to-door solicitation and

the expression of ideas unless those wishing to share their religious or charitable beliefs obtain a permit from the city, then pay permit fees, share significant personal information, and pass a "satisfactory" investigation and review, the Seventh-day Adventist Church said in a statement.

"If allowed to stand, the type of restrictions White Hall seeks to impose would stop door-to-door literature evangelism," said Todd McFarland, associate general counsel at the world headquarters of

the Adventist Church. "Paying a \$50 fee for every municipality we visit would be a great burden for any program."

Even after the application is made, the ordinance does not explain the standards or time frames needed to obtain the permit, the church said. The decision whether to grant a permit is solely at the discretion of one city official, with no opportunity to appeal this decision.

Courts routinely have rejected similar government efforts that seek to impose this kind of prior restraint on



LLU DOCTOR DIES

Lawrence D. Longo, an internationally renowned expert on prenatal biology and the founder and chairman emeritus of the National Institutes of Health Center for Perinatal Biology at Loma Linda University, died January 5 after a brief

hospitalization, the university said. He was 89.

Longo was widely regarded as one of the most influential figures in the fields of prenatal and perinatal developmental biology, which studies the biology of the developing fetus and newborn infant.

protected speech, the church said.

The lawsuit comes after Ouachita Hills College, a supporting ministry of the Adventist Church that works in partnership with the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference, sought permission for its students to share their beliefs in Jesus and the gospel in White Hall.

“They asked for an exemption from the ordinance on religious freedom grounds,” the church statement said. “The police chief responded that he spoke with the mayor and city attorney, and no exemption would be granted. No opportunity was given for an appeal. While the city said it was open to having a meeting to discuss the issue, repeated attempts to schedule such a meeting went unanswered.”

The statement added, “The church regrets that it must file a lawsuit to protect its religious rights.”

One of the primary tenets of the Seventh-day Adventist faith is to follow the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20, where Jesus says, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

The lawsuit is asking for the courts to protect the rights of people to practice their religion. No financial damages—only a symbolic \$1—are being sought in the case. The church is asking the court to make a decision before April 6, 2016. 📌

HE PROMISED FORTUNE-TELLERS BUT SENT IN DENTISTS

NEW CHURCH DIRECTOR PUTS RENEWED FOCUS ON BIG CITIES.

BY KAREN SUVANKHAM AND ANDREW MCCHESEY

We will bring fortune-tellers in to help you!” the U.S. pastor declared in the Thai language.

The Thai pastor leaned over and gently corrected him. “The word is ‘maw fun,’ not ‘maw fun,’” he said, using a different tone to correctly say the Thai word for “dentist.”

The U.S. pastor, Douglas Venn, had meant to tell Bangkok slum dwellers that the Seventh-day Adventist Church was ready to bring in dentists to treat their needs, but had inadvertently offered them a very different set of services.

Venn, known to friends as “Pastor Doug,” quickly corrected himself.

Venn, will oversee the Adventist world church’s efforts to share Jesus in the world’s big cities as new director of Global Mission’s urban centers. “Too often we think only of preaching, and as a result, preachers are doing what they can. But our cities are unreached,” Venn said. “When we are creative, follow Christ’s method, and mobilize every member to serve, then the doors of the cities can open.”

On the face of it, Venn has a daunting task ahead. A total of 3.6 billion people, more than half of the world’s population, live in cities. Furthermore, 43 cities with a population of more than 1 million have no Adventist presence.

The Adventist Church, which has 18.7 million members worldwide, hopes to reach urban dwellers through Mission to the Cities, an initiative that is now at the center of Venn’s responsibilities.

Most recently he served as director of Adventist Mission for the church’s Southern Asia-Pacific Division. Before that, he worked with hundreds of local church members to oversee the opening of more than 20 new churches in Bangkok from 2006 to 2012. 📌



Director of Urban Mission, Doug Venn (left), is excited by the challenge of coordinating efforts to reach people in the world’s largest cities. GLOBAL MISSION



Stanley Hickerson, pictured in 2012, had a commanding grasp of the Adventist Church's first 50 years. PHOTO: NAD

A PRESERVER AND RETELLER OF EARLY ADVENTIST HISTORY

STANLEY HICKERSON SUCCUMBS TO CANCER

BY ANDREW MCCHESENEY

Stanley D. Hickerson, a pastor with an encyclopedic knowledge of early Adventist history and a passion for church heritage that spurred him into finding two Ellen G. White sites, died after a months-long struggle with cancer. He was 63.

Hickerson served as a pastor of churches in the U.S. states of California and Michigan for much of his life. But it was his fascination with Seventh-day Adventist Church history that prompted him to help preserve historic Adventist sites and work as the Ellen G. White Estate's annotation project editor, the position that he held at the time of his death.

Hickerson died on January 15 surrounded by family in his home in Berrien Springs, Michigan, said Merlin D. Burt, a friend of Hickerson since the early 1980s and director of Andrews University's Center for

Adventist Research, where Hickerson's office was located.

"He was a true pastor who cared deeply for people and put his faith into action in actually helping where there were needs," Burt said. "Of course, he is also known widely for his years of contributions to Adventist heritage ministry."

Burt said he would long remember a 1994 trip that he and Hickerson had taken to Maine in search of information about the early life of Adventist Church cofounder Ellen White. With considerable effort, Hickerson and Burt made two discoveries of a lifetime. They pinpointed a site near the town of Gorham where White may have been born and lived a short time afterward, Burt said. The two men also located the home of Ellen White's parents, Robert and Eunice Harmon, where Ellen lived after her marriage to James White in 1846.

"It was their first married home and also where they probably accepted the Sabbath," Burt said.

ROOTS IN GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT

Hickerson was born on July 15, 1952, in California to a family that traces its Adventist roots to the earliest days of the movement: the Great Disappointment. Among the tens of thousands of people who gathered in the northeastern U.S. to wait for Jesus' second coming on October 22, 1844, were two relatives who lived in despair for decades afterward. Benjamin Franklin Craig heard about the three angels' messages 25 years later in Adel, Iowa, and John M. Robb, heard them 30 years later in Kansas, Hickerson, their great-great-grandson, told *the Adventist Review* in 2014 on the 170th anniversary of the Great Disappointment.

"For all these years they suffered uncertainty about what really happened in 1844 and found peace when they finally understood the ministry of Christ in the Most Holy Place and its relation to the Sabbath truth," Hickerson said.

"Thus the significance for me of the Great Disappointment lies not in the disappointment but rather in the explanation" from the Bible, he said. "Some struggle with the value of the doctrine of Christ in the sanctuary, but for my family it represents the solution to a decades-old inexplicable disappointment."

Hickerson started his pastoral



REFUGEE SUMMIT HELD

Adventist leaders from across Europe met in Zagreb, Croatia, to coordinate a response to the continent's refugee crisis.

The Refugee Summit, held in late January, agreed to create a new position of regional

coordinator to ensure that assistance is available to refugees across Europe; to seek ways to boost funding for refugee efforts; and to develop training materials to help church members better understand how to interact with refugees.

ministry in California and later moved to Michigan, serving as the associate pastor of the Battle Creek church and then as the pastor of the Stevensville church. It was in Michigan—where the Adventist Church was first established, in Battle Creek, in 1863—that his interest in Adventist heritage flourished.

“Stan invariably had better and more detailed information about Adventist heritage than almost anyone else in the room,” Knott said. “He offered it with a lively sense of humor and a trademark passion to help members understand how God led this Advent people through the decades.”

quent presenter at camp meetings and seminars about Adventist history.

Hickerson is survived by his wife, Kathryn, six children from two marriages, and five grandchildren.

A memorial service was held at the Andrews University Pioneer Memorial church on January 18. In lieu of flowers, the family requested that any donations be made to Adventist Heritage Ministry for the Joseph Bates Home Project.

The childhood home of Bates, a cofounder of the Adventist Church, was built in 1742 in Fairhaven, Massachusetts. Most recently Hickerson had been working on restoring the two-story building as a historical consultant.

“He had a knack for researching elusive bits of information about Adventist heritage, including finding early books and photographs,” said James R. Nix, director of the White Estate.

Among Nix's favorite recollections were Hickerson's sharing something interesting he had just discovered, such as a clue to how a historic Adventist building had looked originally.

“He was jealous that everything properly represent His Lord and His church,” Nix said.

“Stan's care for details; his enthusiasm for life; and his friendship with people from all over the world means that many, including me, will miss him as together we look forward to the resurrection, when we, with his family, will see Stan again,” he said. 🍀

“**STAN WAS GIFTED IN TENACIOUSLY PURSUING FACTS ABOUT LITTLE-KNOWN AREAS OF EARLY ADVENTIST HISTORY.**”

ANNOTATING ELLEN WHITE

In 2012 Hickerson accepted an invitation from the Ellen G. White Estate to carry out the task of researching and annotating the second volume of *The Ellen G. White Letters and Manuscripts With Annotations* (1860-1863), continuing a work started by Roland Karlman, chief annotator for the first volume (1845-1859), who had retired.

“Stan was gifted in tenaciously pursuing facts about little-known areas of early Adventist history,” said Tim Poirier, vice director of the White Estate and annotation project manager. “His demonstrated research abilities, coupled with his respect for the writings of Ellen White, made him a perfect candidate to carry on this assignment. But he would never have called it an ‘assignment.’ It was pure enjoyment for him.”

Hickerson had completed the research for all of the documents and was beginning the writing of the annotations when he took ill.

In conjunction with his interest in church history, Hickerson did adjunct teaching for Andrews through the years, and was a fre-

“Stan was an amazing resource about early Adventist history, with a commanding grasp of both the big sweep of the church's first 50 years as well as the details of architectural restoration and preservation that have been vital to the development of Historic Adventist Village in Battle Creek,” said Bill Knott, editor of the *Adventist Review*, who has known Hickerson for nearly two decades. Both Hickerson and Knott have been board members of Adventist Heritage Ministry, an organization that restores and preserves historic Adventist sites such as the Historic Adventist Village.



LICENSED TO WED

When Luis Miguel Acevedo, ADRA director for the Dominican Republic, tied the knot in 2012, he and his bride, Arjoy, had to visit a court to register. Only then could they head to the

local Adventist church for the religious ceremony.

The extra bureaucracy experienced by Adventist couples ended in late January when the Dominican Republic authorized 80 Adventist

ministers to officiate civil marriages, fulfilling a requirement of a 2010 law that allows Protestant churches to officially perform marriages.

NEWS BRIEFS

1



EVERETT BROWN, newly reelected president of the Adventist Church in Jamaica, has implored political candidates to choose their words carefully in national elections after previous campaigns turned violent. The Adventist Church is the single largest denomination in the Caribbean nation, which will hold elections in late 2016 or early 2017.

2



A REMOTE MOUNTAIN VILLAGE SCHOOL in Albania has been renamed the John Arthur School in honor of the retired director for ADRA's UK office who raised funds from ADRA and British donors to completely rebuild and equip it and provide new uniforms for its students. John Arthur did all that from a wheelchair after developing septicemia and double pneumonia.

3



ADRA VOLUNTEERS have helped find emergency accommodation for nearly 100 people affected by a devastating bushfire in Australia after being inundated with 1,500 offers for private accommodation. The Waroona bushfire, sparked by lightning on January 6, burned more than 181,600 acres (73,500 hectares) of land, leveling a town and badly damaging an Adventist campground, Camp Logue Brook.

4



VOLUNTEERS WITH ADVENTIST COMMUNITY SERVICES distributed bottled water and water filters to residents of Flint, Michigan, after high levels of lead in the local water supply left the city without drinking water. Local church members planned to distribute 10 pallets of water a week for five months.

5



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTHERN CARIBBEAN, a Seventh-day Adventist Church-owned institution based in Trinidad and Tobago, has begun a search for a new president after Clinton Valley resigned after four years to "pursue other professional interests," the university said. Sylvan A. Lashley, who served as president of the university from 1990 to 1996, when it was known as Caribbean Union College, has taken over as interim president.

6



WAYNE LESLIE, a lawyer and associate director of the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department of the Adventist world church, has urged companies to respect their employees' religious beliefs, not just because it's the right thing to do, but also because it's good for business. Leslie spoke as a panelist at an event organized by the Religious Freedom and Business Foundation in Washington, D.C.

7



ASIA-PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY, an Adventist-owned institution in Thailand, has appointed veteran Adventist educator and administrator Danny Rantung as its new president. Rantung, who most recently served as education director of the Southeast Asia Union Mission, filled a position vacated when Loren Agrey moved to Kettering College in Ohio to serve as dean for academic affairs.

THE STORY BEHIND THE SONG

HOW TWO OPERA
SINGERS BECAME
FAITHFUL ADVENTISTS.

BY PENNY BRINK



Anina Wasserman and Pierre van der Westhuizen singing on the Hope Channel show "My Story, My Song." PHOTO: HOPE CHANNEL

Pierre and Anina have just spent an entire day on the set of *My Story, My Song*: "Interlude With Kandus Thorp" in the Hope Channel studio.

It went well, but they looked relieved that the day was over. Performing is hard work.

As Pierre relaxed into his chair, I asked what he appreciated most about having grown up in a musical family.

"It's wonderful to think back on all of us standing around the piano, singing the Sabbath in with hymns," he said, referring to his parents and five talented siblings.

"No, I never thought of making music my career," he said. "I only wanted to sing for the Lord. I think that losing my mother in childhood made me quite serious about life and earnest in my faith. Besides, I knew that I would not be able to perform on Sabbaths."

Pierre van der Westhuizen's talent was recognized in 1980 by renowned Adventist music teacher and choir director Wilhelmina Dunbar at Helderberg College in South Africa. She enrolled him for every *eisteddfod* possible, and after that declared that he would simply need to "continue singing in heaven one day." She understood that it was not easy for Adventist artists.

After Helderberg, Pierre studied voice under Eric Muller at the opera school in Pretoria, South Africa. He had to discontinue the course because he could not join in with performances on Sabbaths. He remembered being offered a role in *Salomé*, and, upon turning it down because of the Sabbath, having Mimi Coertse, a South African opera icon, admonish him: "Pierre, the Lord has given you a talent. You must use it!"

"But I didn't feel comfortable

forwarding my own interests on the Sabbaths like that,” Pierre said.

MEETING ANINA

It was at this opera school that Pierre first met classmate Anina Wasserman, who was studying under Emma Renzi, a South African musician who’d had a long career in Italy.

Anina grew up with a mother who was the music leader (organ and choir) in a Dutch Reformed congregation in South Africa. Anina often sang the solo parts in the children’s choir.

Despite her diversity of talents, Anina said it was a natural next step for her to study voice and become a professional musician. Looking back, she saw what a perfectionist she has been, exacting and satisfied with only the best from herself. In this way, her very successful opera career was launched at the tender age of 19.

“It can be tricky being a performer,” she said. “There is no representative body for agents in South Africa, so if you have any complaints, you’re on your own.”

Once, after not being selected for a part promised to her, she was disappointed and asked the Lord why he had allowed people to treat her so unfairly. It turned out that the chosen performer became ill after the opening night, and they called Anina in. She had to master the whole opera, music, and “regie” (dramatic direction) in two days. She did so well in the performance that two audience members offered to send her, all expenses paid, to complete her vocal training in Italy.

There she studied under Franco Corelli, Carlo Bergonzi, and Luciana Serra for two years before returning to the opera scene in South Africa. She said she felt that was a true gift from God.

But Anina had a growing feeling that something was missing.

“In 2001 I was busy with *Lucia*

di Lammermoor, by Donizetti, when I really felt the Lord’s voice urging me to lay down ambition and the self-centered use of my talent. I felt the need to give glory to His name,” Anina said. “You know, music is so powerful, more than the spoken word that we filter rather critically through our intellect. Music takes the message straight to the heart and can make a huge spiritual impact.”

A SPIRITUAL REBIRTH

Over the years, Pierre had busied himself in a successful family business in graphic design and sang mostly in church or for evangelistic campaigns. He sang on and off with a quartet that had actually formed during his school days at the Adventist Sedhaven High School near Johannesburg.

“I even cut a vinyl record and put out some cassette tapes,” Pierre said with a laugh.

He shared that he went through a period of personal discouragement and a sense of loneliness in the church. He felt that “church” was not helping to create a focus on Jesus. He stopped attending church regularly for about 10 years, and although he tried to worship in other churches, he couldn’t reconcile himself with anything other than Adventist doctrines.

In 2005 he experienced a spiritual rebirth and realized that his attitude had changed from “what can the church do for me” to “what can I do for my church,” he said. He was spiritually on fire and fully committed to using his talent for the Lord.

“Our quartet, Melody Four, started up again, and I recorded some CDs,” he said.

He also traveled abroad with evangelists to New Zealand and Russia with a ShareHim campaign by Robert Folkenberg, Sr., in 2008. It was June, and with late summer sunsets, when a Russian pastor named Yevgeny took the visitors on home

visitations after the evening meetings. In one instance a young crippled woman began to feel sensation in her legs as Pierre sang. She stood up and walked with the help of others because her muscles were still weak. A week later they saw her at church. She’d left her wheelchair outside and walked in, still with help, but with evident progress.

REUNION WITH ANINA

In 2010, after Pierre had been commissioned to sing at the General Conference session in Atlanta, Georgia, he bumped into Anina online. He’d known of her progress over the years, but now she was particularly interested in talking about spiritual things. She felt that the Lord was speaking to her about keeping the Sabbath through Isaiah 58:13-15, but wasn’t sure what to do. Pierre was able to put her in touch with a local Adventist church in Pretoria. She also gave voice lessons to one of the church leaders in the region, and he urged her to take the next step and get baptized.

Since then, Pierre and Anina have teamed up in a musical ministry, starting with a campaign by evangelist John Carter in Johannesburg in November 2010. A few weeks ago they spent the day at the Hope Channel studios in Silver Spring, Maryland, for the concert series *My Story, My Song*. The concert can be viewed on Hope Channel’s Web site, hopetv.org.

What’s next?

“We are pleading with the Lord for the privilege to continue ministering in song to the people of the world through the Adventist Church,” Pierre said. “We are open to His guidance, and fully dependent on His grace. We look forward to joining the redeemed in the heavenly choir someday soon in a great and joyful anthem of praise.”

Watch Pierre van der Westhuizen and Anina Wasserman on YouTube. Pierre’s latest albums are available on iTunes.

MASSAGES AND HOPE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

ADVENTIST ENTREPRENEUR MAKES INROADS WITH A BEAUTY SPA.

BY ANDREW MCCHESEY



Susan worked as a banker in her native country. Then she became a high-powered real estate agent.

Today she owns a beauty spa in a Middle Eastern country, where wealthy Arab and expatriate women get body scrubs and massages to the soothing strains of “Amazing Grace.” They ask her advice on how to become better wives, mothers, and citizens.

The tips that Susan shares come straight from the pages of the Bible and Ellen G. White’s writings — and a swelling list of clients are lining up for more.

Susan is on the front lines in a part of the world where it’s difficult to communicate the gospel message. But a small, growing number of Seventh-day Adventists are making inroads by simply befriending people at their workplaces.

“Since I have opened this beauty spa many things have happened in my life,” Susan said in an inter-

view in the spa when female clients are present.

The *Adventist Review* is not using Susan’s real name nor disclosing the location of her business to avoid possible repercussions to her work.

Susan opened the beauty spa several years ago with no previous experience. But she spent many months researching the industry before opening the door. Now she has a team of 10 employees, including five Adventist believers, who offer a full range of beauty and day spa services to a regular clientele of more than 2,000 women.

“Many people back home ask me what I am doing now, and they are shocked to learn that I am doing this,” she said. “I actually am surprised too. But I feel good about it. Now I am working with more clients than I ever imagined.”

Clients learn that something is different about the spa. Hymns set to instrumental music play softly in the background. Repeat customers quickly find out that they cannot receive treatment on Saturdays. When they ask why, they learn that Susan observes the day as the biblical, seventh-day Sabbath. Many have expressed newfound respect and admiration for Susan for her willingness to put her faith before business on a busy day for other beauty spas.

“We have a goal not only to serve people but also to bring them to God,” Susan said. “The staff knows this very, very well.”

“I HAVE A SECRET”

Susan takes extra time to get to know repeat customers, trying to understand what is causing their frequent headaches and other body aches. She grew especially close to one client, the expatriate wife of a wealthy Arab, who began to visit daily, carrying an energy drink in one hand and begging for shoulder massages.

“When I spoke with her, she broke

view in a small café near her spa. “I want nothing more than my life to share God.”

Susan sat down with an *Adventist Review* reporter after offering a morning tour of the spa before the first client showed up. National law strictly prohibits men from be-

down in tears,” Susan said. “She asked me to pray for her, saying she had a secret. She said she had a big problem with drug addiction.”

Still weeping, the woman asked Susan what she needed to do to quit drugs.

Susan replied that she had no idea but promised to do some research. At home she prayed with her husband and researched the matter.

“This was very sensitive,” she said. “We cannot talk about it here, or she would go to jail.”

Susan and the woman began to pray together every morning in person and every night by phone. After a short time the woman announced that she had not used any drugs for two days. When Susan asked how she felt, she replied, “Weak.”

“I told her that the devil was telling her that she was weak, and gave her the books *Counsels on Diet and Foods* and *Steps to Christ*,” Susan said.

The woman eagerly read the books by Adventist Church co-founder Ellen G. White. She expressed joy about what she learned about health. But she also said she felt a great burden of guilt and feared God would not accept her.

The two women kept praying together.

One drug-free week passed. At Susan’s suggestion, the woman stopped spending time with old friends who used harmful substances, instead going to the beauty spa in the mornings and staying home the rest of the day.

Susan ended up giving her free massages for the next two months, telling her, “Don’t give me any money for now, because when you think about money, you get worried.”

“And you know something? Now she is off drugs. She’s a free woman,” Susan said. “She has not taken any drugs for three months. Praise God. Praise God. It’s amazing.”

TENTMAKING INITIATIVE

Front-line, self-supporting Adventists who share their faith in the workplace are often called tent-makers in the Adventist Church’s Middle East and North Africa Union.

“This is the only way to go,” said Chanmin Chung, communication coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa Union. “Other methods are very expensive and complicated in this region.”



Adventist believers are “tent-makers” in beauty spas restaurants, medical centers, and other sectors.

“The importance of the initiative is that these people can legally enter and work in the restricted-access countries in the Middle East and North Africa Union,” said Homer Trecartin, president of the Middle East and North Africa Union. “The gospel finds an entry point through their lives among people who normally would never meet a Seventh-day Adventist.”

At the beauty spa Susan’s burden now is to find a way to share Jesus through Bible studies. She has made friends with many people but isn’t sure how to open the Scriptures to them.

“They know that I am a child of God. They know exactly what I believe. They know that I close my

business on a very busy day to worship,” Susan said. “But I am not sure how to go to the next level with Bible studies.”

A STUBBORN HUSBAND

As Susan ponders the next step, she is continuing to befriend her clients. Some have been beaten by their husbands and ask for body scrubs, hoping to remove the dark bruises. Others simply wish to relax, saying that they sense something special at the spa that helps them unwind.

One woman, a government worker, confided that she had received a visa to travel to Britain to pursue a master’s degree, but that her husband was threatening to divorce her if she went.

“She came to the beauty spa very depressed,” Susan said. “She cried like a baby. She said, ‘What shall I do?’”

The government was prepared to fly her back every weekend, but her husband still kept telling her, “If you go, I will marry another woman.”

“What could I say?” Susan said. “I really thought about it, and then I said, ‘My advice is for the sake of your family. Just do as your husband wants, because he is the head of the house.’”

The woman asked, “Do you believe in this ‘head of the house’?”

“Yes, because it is in the Bible, and the Quran says that also,” Susan said.

The two women prayed about the matter for a week.

Abruptly the husband announced one day that he had decided to go on leave from work for a year so he could accompany his wife to Britain. They would return together after she finished her studies.

“That was something amazing,” Susan said. “The government gave them accommodations, and their nanny was taken care of. They are in the U.K. now as she does her master’s. God is good.”

ALSO IN THIS SECTION:

- » HITLER'S CHILDREN
- » LET'S CELEBRATE LIQUIDS

The End of Jawron



BY SCOTT CHRISTIANSEN

God created the earth in elegant perfection. Each of the awesome and massive individual natural systems created to sustain life on earth combined to form one amazingly complex yet perfect earth system. Our atmosphere and hydrosphere, our climate system, our soil system, and all the others joined in one seamless whole. It was flawless and balanced in its integrated perfection that when God looked at everything He had made, He called it “very good” (Gen. 1:31).

It was so beautiful and amazing that angels sang and the “sons of God” shouted for joy (see Job 38:7). It was so good that its perfection, its complexity, its nurturing design, and the peaceful harmony of every living thing on it together formed a partial reflection of the character of God.

Today the world is a very different place. By mere observation we know there is no harmony among the living things on it, but only selfishness, fear, and conflict. We are reliably informed that there is also no elegant perfection; the natural systems that God created to sustain life on earth—our oceanic, atmospheric, freshwater, climate, and soil systems—are all reported in scientific study after study to be in steep and accelerating decay.

In place of the relatively stable and predictable climate the earth had as little as 50 years ago, we today have a far more chaotic and hostile climate. So hostile and chaotic that a number of individual scientists have recently proclaimed, essentially, “the end of normal,” saying that we have entered a new era of remarkable instability and profound impacts on human society.¹ Looking ahead, some normally staid scientists say they “can’t sleep at night” for fear of what is coming on the world (Luke 21:26) and cite the underlying trends behind current tremendous increases in storms, fires, droughts, hunger, disease, and conflict.²

So what’s going on here? If scientists are anywhere near correct in their measurements and projections, then it can be fairly said that the world, which reflected the character of God at Creation, is increasingly reflecting the character of Satan as time winds down. And if something *that big* is

actually happening, wouldn’t we find it predicted in both Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy? Or is, as some assert, the data fraudulent, the result of a global scheme to manipulate data?

THE GREAT CONTROVERSY

To answer these important questions, let’s go to Scripture and look at the framework that dominates and defines all earthly events: the war between Christ and Satan. Sin is at the heart of this crisis called the great controversy, first in Satan’s rebellion in heaven, then transplanted to earth when humans disobeyed their loving Creator.

Romans 5:12 and 6:23 tell us that the consequence of sin is death. Another effect of the entrance of sin is that humanity’s dominion of earth was usurped by Satan, and that Satan is the “god” of this world (2 Cor. 4:4). Finally, we see in Romans 8:21, 22 that the consequence of sin is not limited to humanity; in fact, “all of creation” suffers from sin. Many texts in the Old Testament support this view (cf. Isa. 24:20; 51:6; Jer. 12:4; and Hosea 4:1-3). Thus we find that not only does sin have an effect on nature, but we can reasonably conclude that the effect of sin on the earth is cumulative.

Death is the ultimate curse and consequence of sin that affects our *entire* planet. Even when we recite Christianity’s most quoted text, John 3:16,

Christ describes a more general state of crisis on earth, where conflict, famine, disease, and significant disruptions in the natural world are omnipresent

we tend to hear “people” instead of “world.” God loved His *entire* creation, and with His Son put in place a plan to restore not part of it, but all of it.

It’s clear that earth itself has felt the impact of sin. Let’s follow that thread a little further. We know from Scripture that humanity will grow more sinful as time winds down (Matt. 24:37), and we can see the fulfillment of prophecy in humanity’s increasing love of sin. But can we see a parallel increasing impact of sin on the earth? And, of critical importance, does it have prophetic implications?

The answer is a “yes” and an “emphatically yes.” Further, the implications of the decay of the earth itself are of particular interest to Adventists because some of this decay will be blamed on Sabbathkeepers and will likely trigger demands for a single day of worship. So perhaps the real question is, can we see these religious restrictions on the horizon?

TOWARD THE FINISHING LINE

Jesus’ discourse in Matthew 24 and 25 begins with a straightforward question by the disciples. “What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” (Matt. 24:3).

Jesus’ answer paints a picture of an earth where sin is rampant and human love has grown cold

(verse 12). His response is also recorded in Mark 13 and Luke 21, and the fullest sense of His response can be gained by reading all three chapters. In addition to sin-filled humanity, Christ also describes a more general state of crisis on earth, where conflict, famine, disease, and significant disruptions in the natural world are everywhere. His description can increasingly be applied to our world today.

Today security experts understand that shortages of fundamental resources such as food or water or fuel rapidly lead to conflict between states and between people groups (cf. Matt. 24:7). We also understand that food and water shortages rapidly lead to an explosion of disease. People who study these things increasingly appreciate that the disruptions we see right now in the earth’s natural systems are leading to truly significant disruptions in human society, including massive increases in droughts, floods, and disasters of all kinds. In fact, we have seen an almost tripling of natural disasters since 1980, a rapid increase that continues to accelerate.³

It seems that what Jesus said would come has started to arrive. Scripture’s testimony seems to be straightforward. But what about Ellen White?

A crucial passage in *Testimonies for the Church* offers more insights. “The restraining Spirit of God is even now being withdrawn from the world.



Scientists who can't sleep at night for fear of what is coming on the world are right: we have come to the end of "normal."

Hurricanes, storms, tempests, fire and flood, disasters by sea and land, follow each other in quick succession. Science seeks to explain all these. The signs thickening around us, telling of the near approach of the Son of God, are attributed to any other than the true cause. Men cannot discern the sentinel angels restraining the four winds that they shall not blow until the servants of God are sealed; but when God shall bid His angels loose the winds, there will be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture."⁴

In the accelerating increase of natural disasters it seems we are seeing the literal and direct fulfillment of "the signs thickening around us." We are also seeing quite a bit of "science seeks to explain all these." That's worth repeating: we seem to be seeing, right now, what Ellen White described would be happening just before Christ's return. The fact that the whole world is increasingly paying attention to unprecedented disruptions in our environment presents an ideal opportunity to present cause and effect within the great controversy context and the plan of salvation. Many will listen to such a message that would not listen otherwise.

CATASTROPHES AND SUNDAY LAW

Ellen White referenced disasters and extreme disruptions in the natural world in many places in her writings.

A crucial Ellen White statement, found in the June 28, 1904, issue of *The Southern Watchman*, identifies disasters and disruptions in the natural world as the trigger for a societal and legislative demand for preserving the sacredness of Sunday: "Men in responsible positions will not only ignore and despise the Sabbath themselves, but from the sacred desk will urge upon the people the observance of the first day of the week, pleading traditions and custom in behalf of this man-made

institution. They will point to calamities on land and sea—to the storms of wind, the floods, the earthquakes, the destruction by fire—as judgments indicating God's displeasure because Sunday is not sacredly observed. These calamities will increase more and more, one disaster will follow close upon the heels of another; and those who make void the law of God will point to the few who are keeping the Sabbath of the fourth commandment as the ones who are bringing wrath upon the world."

The chain is striking: rebellion against God leads to death in both humanity and nature. People and nature increasingly reflect Satan's character. This results in storms, earthquakes, and disasters. The exponential increase in these very disasters leads to a call for Sunday observance, and blame for the continuance of these disasters is placed on Sabbathkeepers. Of this whole chain, all that is lacking is a mechanism that links the health of the environment with Sunday observance. Except that we may not lack this connection; it seems to be quietly inching into place.⁵

Scientists who can't sleep at night for fear of what is coming on the world are right: we have come to the end of "normal." We are living in a time when we can see prophecy being fulfilled. So here is the critical question: Is our sense of urgency and our willingness to loudly and fearlessly proclaim Christ's soon coming matched with the moment of history in which we find ourselves? If "normal" was being sleepy servants of God, then by all means, let's have an end to normal. 🌿



VIDEO PRESENTATIONS RELATED TO THIS ARTICLE ARE AVAILABLE AT ADVENTISTREVIEW.ORG/ARTV.

¹ These proclamations, issued individually, range from comments in an interview, such as www.telegraph.co.uk/news/earth/environment/climatechange/12082013/Global-warming-normal-weather-is-a-thing-of-the-past-claims-scientist.html to a summing up of the view in book form and related to specific systems, such as the excellent *End of the Line*, by Charles Clover.

² There are too many studies in each of these areas to list here. For news and comments on each of these areas, and for frequently updated links to studies, please see the Planet in Distress blog at www.planetindistress.com

³ Some of this increase is attributable to improved reporting, but even so there remains an exponential increase in disasters globally, with disasters more and more impacting human society.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 6, p. 408.

⁵ For a detailed explanation, see www.adventistreview.org/praising-god-for-prophecy-one-adventists-response-to-the-recent-papal-encyclical.

Scott Christiansen serves as communication and trust services director of the Northern New England Conference.

HITLER'S CHILDREN

Most of us were raised by loving fathers. As we aged, our eyes enlarged enough to see their faults. Not that we still didn't love them; on the contrary, we did despite their faults. Some of our best and closest moments can be with our fathers, not just as a toddler adoring daddy, but even as adults (perhaps with a toddler or two of our own), sharing precious experiences with dad.

But what does one do when dad turns out to be a vile and infamous war criminal?

I recently read about and watched video clips of children, grandchildren, and other relatives of top World War II Nazis. How did these unfortunate heirs deal with having a direct bloodline to names like Rudolph Höss, Hermann Goering, and Martin Bormann, or to lesser known but even more complicit murderers?

Bettina Goering, the great-niece of Hermann Goering, fled decades ago to New Mexico. She and her brother were sterilized. "We both did it," she said, "so that there won't be any more Goerings."

Some converted to Judaism. The son of an SS officer became an Orthodox rabbi and moved to Israel. A story circulates about a relative to Hitler by marriage who converted and lives in Israel. One convert undertook a *mikveh*, a ritual bath that symbolized spiritual cleansing. "I almost drowned myself in the place," he said, "because I felt there was just so much inside me that I needed to wash away."

Martin Bormann, Sr., was one of Hitler's confidants, an architect of the Holocaust who disappeared after the war. Decades later, at a memorial march at Auschwitz,

a journalist described the following scene: "The presence of an elderly German would hardly raise eyebrows among the thousands assembled for the March of the Living . . . but the old German, now in his seventh decade . . . had come to Auschwitz to atone for the sins of his country, for the sins of his father."

The elderly German was Martin Bormann, Jr., 16 years old when his father was sentenced to death, in absentia, at Nuremberg.

Another time at Auschwitz, young Israelis watched an old man, an Auschwitz survivor, embrace, and be embraced, by Rainer Höss, the grandson of Rudolph Höss, commandant of Auschwitz (who was hanged there after the war).

"So you ask yourself," said Rainer, "they had to die. I'm alive. Why am I alive? To carry this guilt, this burden, to try to come to terms with it. That must be the only reason I exist, to do what he should have done."

Maybe not the offspring of Nazis, we're all still heirs of sin, the far end of 6,000 years of DNA unraveling at the joints. Guilt, fear, shame, if not exactly bequeathed to us, are so tightly wired within that we don't need the bequest. We generate enough of our own.

Hence, the gospel: "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

At the cross, Jesus took our guilt and shame, because, like "Hitler's children," we can't atone for what we haven't done any more than for what we have done. ♣

Clifford Goldstein is editor of the *Adult Bible Study Guide*. He is working on a book tentatively titled *Baptizing the Devil: Evolution and the Seduction of Christianity*.

CLIFF'S
EDGE
CLIFFORD
GOLDSTEIN



WE'RE ALL STILL
HEIRS OF SIN.

CELEBRATIONS

LET'S CELEBRATE LIQUIDS

L
is for liquids,
water for life.

BY KATHLEEN KUNTARAF

Li Ming was a retired woman who enjoyed working in her garden. Even the unusual heat wave that hit her region one summer didn't deter her from tending her flowers and other plants. The temperature rose above 100 degrees Fahrenheit, and the humidity teetered at 90 percent. On the third day of these record-breaking temperatures, Li Ming called her daughter, Kim, but she sounded confused on the phone. Kim became alarmed and rushed to Li Ming's house, where she found her mother lying on the kitchen floor unconscious. Apparently Li Ming's large fan wasn't enough to fight the effects of the heat and humidity, and she suffered heatstroke, which can be life-threatening.¹

One can lower the risk of heat-related illness, such as heatstroke, by drinking plenty of liquids, particularly water. Next to air, water is the most vital element needed for survival. By weight, a newborn infant is approximately 75 percent water, and an adult about 70 percent.

The gray matter of the brain is approximately 85 percent water, blood is 83 percent water, muscles are about 75 percent water, and even hard marrow bones are 20 to 25 percent water.² Almost every cell and tissue of the body not only contains water but is continually bathed in fluid and requires water to perform its functions.

Water, the liquid of life, is a medium in which metabolism takes place. It is:

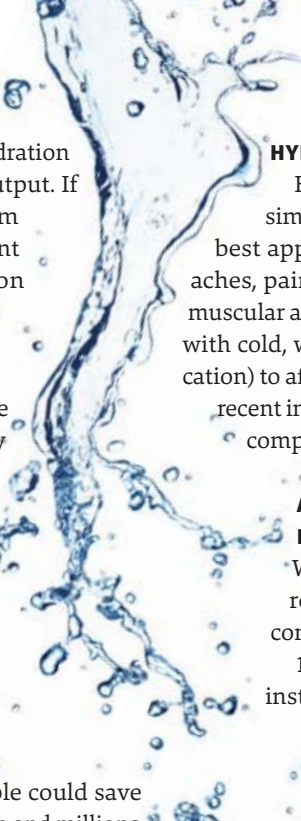
- the transport system within the body
- a lubricant for movement
- the facilitator of digestion
- the prime transporter of waste via the kidneys
- a temperature regulator
- a major constituent of the circulating blood

About two thirds of the water our body requires come from ingested liquid, about one-third from our food, and a small amount of liquid is synthesized during food metabolism. Fruits and vegetables generally have higher water content than other food groups.

Ideally the body maintains a balance between the amount of water lost each day and the amount taken in to replace it. The amount of water lost each day depends on climatic conditions and physical activities.

WHAT IF WATER INTAKE IS INADEQUATE?

When we don't provide our bodies with enough



water, they attempt to avoid dehydration by decreasing sweat and urine output. If this compensatory mechanism proves inadequate and insufficient fluid intake persists, dehydration occurs. Dehydration causes an impairment of the body cooling mechanisms, along with a possible rise in body temperature and an inefficient clearance of body waste. The blood thickens and blood flow becomes impaired, increasing the risk of intravascular clotting. This may manifest as stroke or heart attack. Drinking an inadequate amount of water also increases the risk of developing kidney stones and gallstones. It's estimated that adequate hydration of older people could save thousands of days of hospitalization and millions of dollars each year.

Insufficient water intake also leads to constipation, to the delight of the laxative industry. Exercise and fiber intake play a role as well.

HOW MUCH WATER IS NEEDED?

In a healthy person, a practical guide to water intake is to consume sufficient amounts throughout the day to ensure that the urine is a pale color. (Urine may be a bright-yellow color after taking certain medications, including vitamin pills.)

Begin drinking water in the morning, because the body is relatively dehydrated from insensible (invisible) perspiration during sleep. Then continue to drink water at regular intervals throughout the day.

Be sure to drink water that is pure and clean. It is the most healthfully beneficial liquid we can consume.

WATER AS A CLEANSING AGENT

Another important use of water is cleansing. Regular bathing removes accumulated dirt and contaminating debris, reducing the risk of infection.

Frequent hand washing may reduce transmission of many infectious agents from person to person.

HYDROTHERAPY

Hydrotherapy is the use of water as a simple home therapeutic application. It's best applied as a help for simple muscular aches, pains, and bruises. When dealing with muscular aches, apply hot, wet towels alternated with cold, wet towels (ending with a cold application) to affected areas to improve blood flow. If recent injury and bruising have occurred, cold compresses are more appropriate.

APPROPRIATE CONCERN FOR EARTH'S INHABITANTS

Water is a precious and indispensable resource. It's therefore important to conserve it:

1. Avoid wasting water. When possible, install toilets and showerheads in your home that use less water. When brushing your teeth, turn on the water taps only to wet and rinse your toothbrush; turn taps off while brushing your teeth. Repair leaking faucets.
2. Avoid polluting water. Water can be polluted by human excrement, industrial waste, and chemicals. Animals raised in large agricultural feed-lot operations consume huge quantities of water, and their excrement has the potential to pollute groundwater and nearby rivers and streams. Eating a vegetarian diet helps to conserve water, because foods consumed in a plant-based diet require much less water to produce.

WATER OF LIFE

Life cannot exist without water. All body functions require it. Similarly, in our spiritual lives, we cannot live eternally without the Water of Life—Jesus Christ.

May we be transformed as we drink, bathe, and are soaked in His compassion, love, and acceptance. 

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute on Aging, "Hyperthermia," www.nia.nih.gov/health/topics/hyperthermia. Accessed online Apr. 4, 2012.

² M. G. Hardinge, *A Philosophy of Health* (Loma Linda University School of Public Health, 1980), p. 37.

Kathleen Kuntaraf, M.D., M.P.H., now retired, was an associate director of the General Conference Health Ministries Department.



mind·ful of my real world experience

Bonnie Franckowiak, Nursing Professor

Ms. Franckowiak has been in nursing since 1975 and holds a Doctorate in Nursing Practice (DNP).

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IN THIS SECTION:

- » STORM WARNINGS
- » VOICES
- » THE POPE'S MISSION, OR OURS?

CONNECT



“Those who count on some unvarying unfolding of storm signs will quickly find themselves mistaken.”



CONNECT

STORM WARN

Finding calm amid life's storms

BY JARED THURMON AND BILL KNOTT

*"I lift up my eyes to the hills—
from where will my help come?
My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.
He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.
He who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep"* (Ps. 121:1-4, NRSV).¹

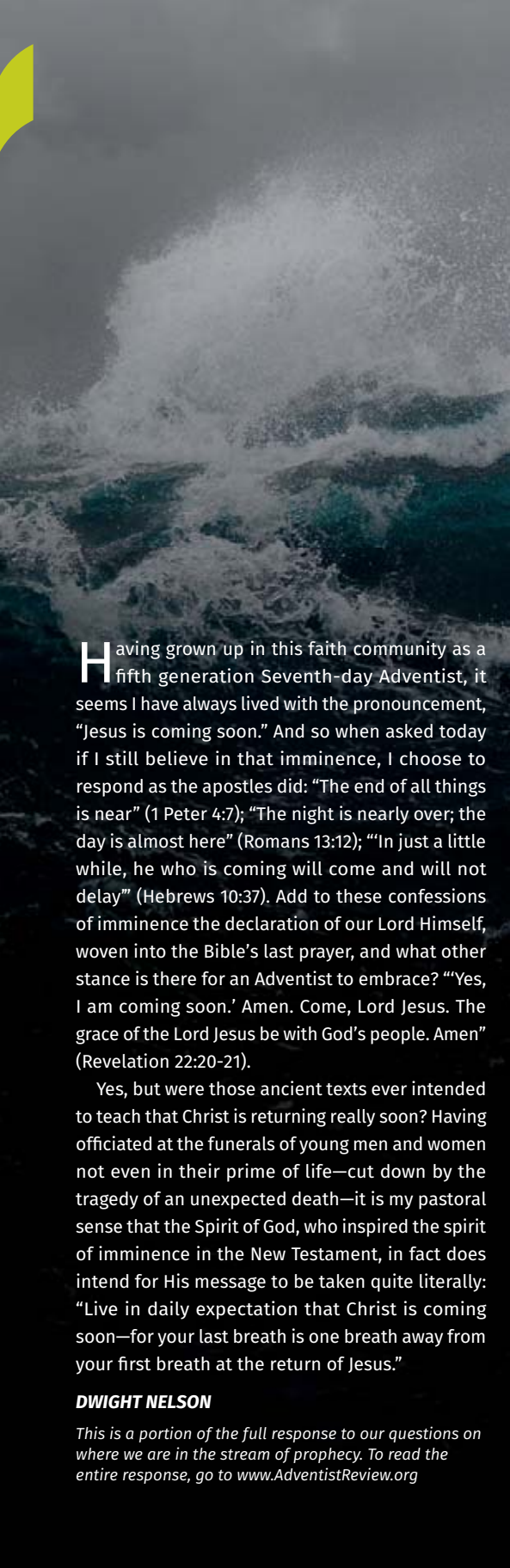
And yet the Keeper of Israel was asleep, His chest rising and falling gently with the rhythm of the waves.

Bone-tired, barely able to lift His hand in one more blessing or bring healing to another sightless eye, Jesus had willed Himself to meet the hundreds who had waited hours for His touch. Now, "virtue had gone out of him" (Mark 5:20, KJV) as quickly as the sun slipped down behind the purple hills. His humanity sank into the brief oblivion of sleep while others steered the fishing boat. His Father would keep Israel tonight.

But the hills were full of eyes, not all of them human. Somewhere off to the east, behind the tombs where madmen roamed and pigs still browsed the evening grass, supernatural beings studied every movement of the wooden boat, each oar stroke in the placid lake, each kiss of wind that filled the billowing sail.

Lucifer and his legion found the evening peace detestable. Hearts that thrive on chaos cannot bear the calm of grace. And when the eastbound sailing boat approached the deeper fishing grounds, the adversary at last upset the heavy silence.

INGS: What Every Believer Needs to Know



Having grown up in this faith community as a fifth generation Seventh-day Adventist, it seems I have always lived with the pronouncement, “Jesus is coming soon.” And so when asked today if I still believe in that imminence, I choose to respond as the apostles did: “The end of all things is near” (1 Peter 4:7); “The night is nearly over; the day is almost here” (Romans 13:12); “In just a little while, he who is coming will come and will not delay” (Hebrews 10:37). Add to these confessions of imminence the declaration of our Lord Himself, woven into the Bible’s last prayer, and what other stance is there for an Adventist to embrace? “‘Yes, I am coming soon.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God’s people. Amen” (Revelation 22:20-21).

Yes, but were those ancient texts ever intended to teach that Christ is returning really soon? Having officiated at the funerals of young men and women not even in their prime of life—cut down by the tragedy of an unexpected death—it is my pastoral sense that the Spirit of God, who inspired the spirit of imminence in the New Testament, in fact does intend for His message to be taken quite literally: “Live in daily expectation that Christ is coming soon—for your last breath is one breath away from your first breath at the return of Jesus.”

DWIGHT NELSON

This is a portion of the full response to our questions on where we are in the stream of prophecy. To read the entire response, go to www.AdventistReview.org

“We have an opportunity,” he growled, and fallen angels leaped to implement his strategy. “If we disturb the peace, excite the wind, bring on a storm the likes of which this lake has never seen, we can put that boat and all within it in the coldest depths of Galilee.”

The malevolence was deadly and undying. It had always been the devil’s purpose to bring his greatest rival to an end before Jesus could accomplish human rescue. “The prince of evil exerted all his power and cunning to destroy Jesus; for he saw that the Savior’s mercy and love, His compassion and pitying tenderness, were representing to the world the character of God.”²

The prince of the powers of the air had more than breezes up his sleeve. “He has studied the secrets of the laboratories of nature, and he uses all his power to control the elements as far as God allows.”³ An updraft here, a forming cloud there; a fiendishly fortunate conjunction of topography, cool night, and dropping atmospheric pressure presented Lucifer with what must have seemed his finest chance to end the Savior’s life. It made no difference to the devil that a dozen dull disciples and those in many trailing boats would meet their end as well. Destructiveness is casual in its counting.

And so the storm began, first with the nearly imperceptible changes in wind direction and the steadily increasing headwind that made the man at the tiller tack his way across the lake—first north, then south—intent on keeping full wind in the sail. Across the hilltops of Gennesaret the evening mist was braided into one, then 20, then 200 clouds, until a swirling mass of lethal wind was concentrated, amplified, and targeted on tiny boats five miles away. Whatever in the roiling night could be used for Satan’s purposes was used. The pent-up fury of millennia blew cold and hot, then hotter still, until a cyclone worthy of some distant delta blew down with bitter, blasting force.

We know the story well—too well. All unconcerned, the followers of Jesus had missed the signs that something big was just about to happen. Wrapped in the false security of sameness and short-sightedness, the twelve had missed the warnings from the One. They were more certain of themselves than they had any right to be, and counted peace with every oar beat. They dropped their guard when guard was just the thing they needed.

What signs were there of an approaching storm?

None they could see or feel or smell: no omens in the sky, or gray-green funnels bearing down upon them. “For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things have continued as they were from the beginning of creation” (2 Peter 3:4, RSV).⁴ They had not yet imagined that they and the One they followed were at the center of a crisis bigger than their lake, their livelihoods, or even their lives. They had missed the clear significance of all that Jesus had been trying to tell them, thinking that the controversies with priests and elders—and each other—were all that truly mattered.

But there was—there is—a controversy larger than we know. Even now the mist is rising, swirling on the peaks of so-called everyday events. The updrafts of false rhetoric; the chill of underpressurized economies; the swirling fog of politics as usual; the heat of blood bespattered on the paving stones by this day’s suicide bombing in—where was it now?—these are the makings of a storm. These are the warnings, often undetected, that nothing is as it appears. “For when they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman” (1 Thess. 5:3, NKJV).⁵

THE GENESIS OF STORMS

How do storms start? The meteorologist at the Weather Channel headquarters in Atlanta allowed for all the variables.

“Here are some things you should know about storms,” he said patiently, as though used to dealing with those naive about his science. “The worst storms in the world are in the United States and Bangladesh”—ironically, two countries with polar opposite economies, great disparities in wealth, and even greater differences in their ability to recover from catastrophes. America’s worst storm—Katrina, in 2005—took 1,464 lives. The November 1970 Bholo cyclone claimed more than 500,000 in Bangladesh’s flooded delta.

Apparently—to those who know—the planet is one vast, substantial storm—still forming, formed, re-forming, and deforming. There is no moment with no “weather,” for even days of sun and gentle breezes are precursors of storms a half world away. All moments of apparent lull are truly just the calm before the ceaseless rhythm of approaching storms.

But what, specifically, is the sequence of a storm, and what would be the first sign of its coming? Would it be clouds piling up in the distance, or

wind swaying in the tops of the mulberry trees?

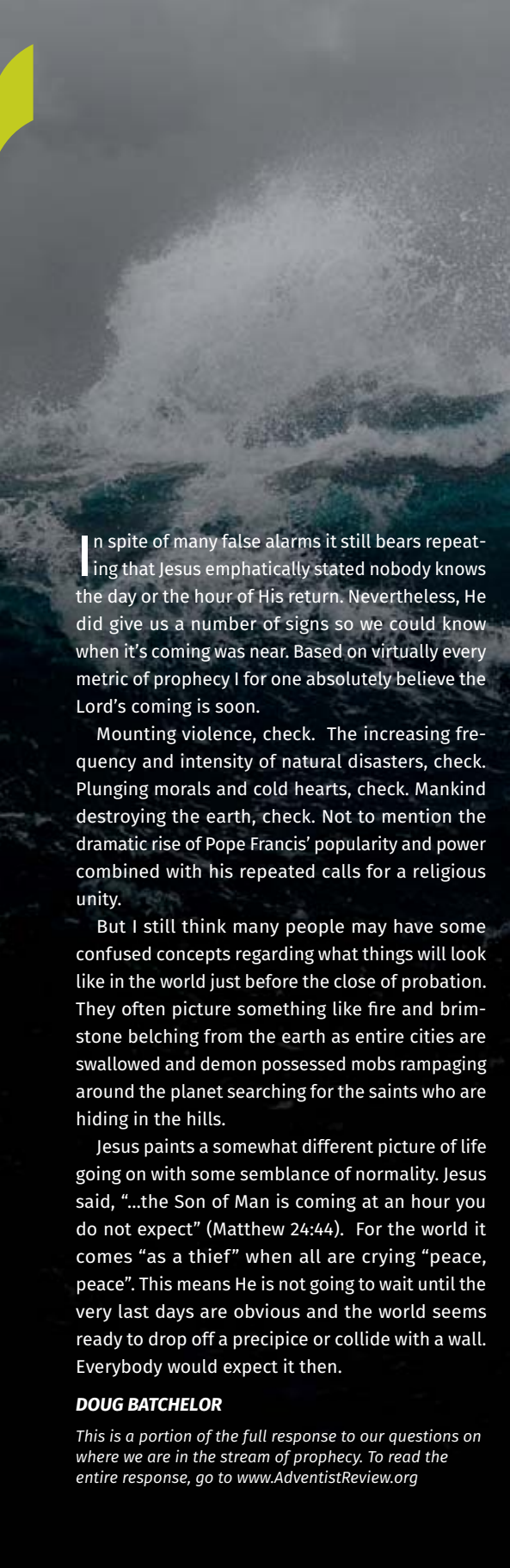
And what of so-called folk signs, such as the seeming silence of the birds, cows unexpectedly lying down in midday, or Grandma’s famous achy joints? How much do storms result from changed humidity, as deserts and rain forests each offer their “push” and “pull”? Or is dropping barometric pressure the clearest sign of change?

“It really depends on where you are in the world,” the meteorologist offered noncommittally. “Almost simultaneously, changes begin to occur—in air pressure, clouds, and the winds.” The belief in a predictable and typically sequential pattern is apparently as unreliable as—well, the weather.

“Almost simultaneously, changes begin to occur.” Those who count on some unvarying unfolding of storm signs will quickly find themselves mistaken, for it is the *confluence* of conditions, not the *sequence*, that takes even experienced weather watchers off guard. Expecting nature to warn us of its plans to wreak havoc with the landscape or our lives is the surest way to get it wrong, and to be unprepared for the crisis soon to break upon our heads.

And so it is with rapidly unfolding political, economic, and environmental events that signal our old world is headed for anything but “business as usual.” The great crisis predicted in Bible prophecy and underscored in the Spirit of Prophecy will likely not pace itself to match our time lines and our charts, elaborate though they be. Since it is the devil’s delight to catch humanity unprepared and sweep so many off to everlasting loss, should we, in fact, expect the final movements to be measured, temperate, and easy to describe? No; in fact, “the agencies of evil are combining their forces and consolidating. They are strengthening for the last great crisis. Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final movements will be rapid ones.”⁶

“Satan works through the elements also to garner his harvest of unprepared souls. . . . In accidents and calamities by sea and by land, in great conflagrations, in fierce tornadoes and terrific hailstorms, in tempests, floods, cyclones, tidal waves, and earthquakes, in every place and in a thousand forms, Satan is exercising his power. He sweeps away the ripening harvest, and famine and distress follow. He imparts to the air a deadly taint, and thousands perish by the pestilence. These visitations are to become more and more frequent and disastrous.”⁷



In spite of many false alarms it still bears repeating that Jesus emphatically stated nobody knows the day or the hour of His return. Nevertheless, He did give us a number of signs so we could know when it's coming was near. Based on virtually every metric of prophecy I for one absolutely believe the Lord's coming is soon.

Mounting violence, check. The increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters, check. Plunging morals and cold hearts, check. Mankind destroying the earth, check. Not to mention the dramatic rise of Pope Francis' popularity and power combined with his repeated calls for a religious unity.

But I still think many people may have some confused concepts regarding what things will look like in the world just before the close of probation. They often picture something like fire and brimstone belching from the earth as entire cities are swallowed and demon possessed mobs rampaging around the planet searching for the saints who are hiding in the hills.

Jesus paints a somewhat different picture of life going on with some semblance of normality. Jesus said, "...the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Matthew 24:44). For the world it comes "as a thief" when all are crying "peace, peace". This means He is not going to wait until the very last days are obvious and the world seems ready to drop off a precipice or collide with a wall. Everybody would expect it then.

DOUG BATCHELOR

This is a portion of the full response to our questions on where we are in the stream of prophecy. To read the entire response, go to www.AdventistReview.org

The experience of the followers of William Miller who formed the nucleus of the Seventh-day Adventist Church more than 150 years ago reminds us how easily even the devout can be mistaken when they assume that their grasp of Bible prophecy—and its fulfillment in their age—is complete and error-free. Only in the aftermath of their Great Disappointment of October 1844 did they come to grasp that while the Bible's 2,300-year prophecy was true, their initial interpretation of that prophecy was fallible and shortsighted. So again in our own age, those who confidently assert that some political event, earthquake, or outbreak of war is the ironclad indicator of a "date certain" for Jesus' second coming will almost certainly experience both the public embarrassment of being wrong and the private anguish of unmet expectation.

The timeless truths of Bible prophecy will yet have their great fulfillment: "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled" (Matt. 5:18, NKJV). But the fulfillment of those inspired words is all about the affirmation of God's truthfulness, not a confirmation of the accuracy of His followers. Far better to say as William Miller himself concluded: "I have fixed my mind upon another time, and here I mean to stand until God gives me more light.—And that is *Today*, TODAY, and TODAY, until He comes, and I see HIM for whom my soul yearns."⁸

OUR PLACE IN THE STORM

The hair-raising storm described in Mark 4 reminds us of life lessons once learned by those who weathered the storm in a sinkable boat. "Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come" (1 Cor. 10:11, NKJV).

First among these is the value of *attentiveness*. While some believers, admittedly, grow hypervigilant—connecting dots between every papal itinerary or Supreme Court ruling and their understanding of events that will precede Christ's coming—the greater danger is the assumption of global continuity and sameness, and that nothing world-changing can happen in, say, less than five years.

Jesus Himself rebuked the most far-seeing leaders of His society for their lack of attentiveness to the great events He had inaugurated. Consumed with dailyness and busyness, they missed the

warnings of the storm about to break upon their heads: "He answered and said to them, 'When it is evening you say, "It will be fair weather, for the sky is red"; and in the morning, "It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening." Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times'" (Matt. 16:2, 3, NKJV).

Preoccupation with everyday life similarly persuaded the residents of the antediluvian world—who had never witnessed a storm—that the idea of the crisis Noah preached was unfounded and unprecedented. But for all but Noah and the members of his immediate family, probation closed upon the world under pink sky and glorious sunset. This is a warning to us upon whom the ends of the world have come that an unwarranted confidence in peace and safety is itself a sign of the times.

As we write this, national economies that were the boast of the stock markets in New York, London, and Tokyo just 12 months ago are teetering on the edge of disaster. Some currencies have floated; others have drowned. Prices for the fuel that fuels our world have plunged by more than half, but even so, so-called recoveries are proving tepid at best. Rapidly shifting political and military alliances have made many national borders mere lines in the sand as mass movements of displaced peoples overwhelm the infrastructures of the past. Tribalism, once thought a relic of the past century, has found new power in Asia, Africa, Europe, and even the Americas, as the current political season well illustrates.

While there is nothing wrong with loving peace and purple sunsets, we ought never to make the mistake of assuming that nothing will change in the night, or that smooth sailing can be expected. *Attentiveness* requires the sober interplay of both facts and faith—all with the goal of being unsurprised by what will surely shock the heedless world about us. The apostle Paul encourages just such watchfulness: "But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; for you are all children of light and children of the day" (1 Thess. 5:4, 5, NRSV).

STAYING IN THE BOAT

At least as important as attentiveness is the value of *togetherness*—of faithfulness—in staying close to Jesus. Those whom John describes in

Revelation as among the redeemed "follow the Lamb wherever he goes" (Rev. 14:4)—including into the boat, even when that seems ill-advised by pundits or popularity.

In Mark's account of the storm on the lake, we find the disciples frantically bailing water and rowing, in part because they didn't grasp the power of the One with whom they sailed. Most of the men in the boat that night were skillful fishermen, with long years of experience in all kinds of weather on that very lake. But nothing in their experience had prepared them for the violence and the drama of those moments. They were convinced that they were going down to the bottom of that lake to rest forever among all the fish they were used to catching. Meanwhile, Jesus lay blissfully asleep in the stern of the boat, completely unaware of all the commotion and the panic all around Him.

It's enough to say that they were furious with Him. Because they were having an emergency in their lives, they assumed that He should be having an emergency in His life. And when He continued to sleep while they continued to panic, they finally woke Him and told Him off in good Galilean fashion: "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" (Mark 4:38).

Those were harsh words to be saying to Jesus. For months He had shown His deep affection for them by countless acts of generosity and thoughtfulness. He had patiently tried to teach them about God when their minds were full of earth. He had rescued them when they got themselves in dangerous and embarrassing situations. He had settled their incessant squabbling with each other about who was going to end up in the top place, and given them the first truly noble work that any of them had ever done.

And now, here they were, accusing Jesus of not caring enough about them. They were blasting Him because in the middle of a storm they thought impossible, He was sleeping the sleep of the imperturbable.

You know the story well. When Jesus finished calming the storm—and it must have taken Him all of three seconds—He turned to them and reminded them again of how little they understood the rhythms of His life. "Why are you so afraid?" He asked them. "Do you still have no faith?" (verse 40).

If they had been in step with Jesus; if they had been in harmony with Jesus; if they had been

living their lives by the rhythm of His life, they would have known that nothing bad could happen to them unless Jesus allowed it to happen.

Had they fully valued the privilege of being in the company of Jesus, they would have known that the safest place in the entire universe at that moment in time was actually in that sinking boat in the middle of the sea of Galilee, because Jesus was in it.

And how is it with you as you read this? Are you anxious today? Are you fearful, clamoring for God to do something, to fix something, to intervene somehow in your life or in the lives of those you love? Does it seem to you sometimes that Jesus must be asleep, that He isn't listening to all your urgent, impassioned prayers? Do you find yourself frequently on the verge of "telling God off"—telling Him how uncaring He seems, how uninterested He seems in the emergencies and crises of your everyday life?

If any or all of those things are true of you, then it's time to stop at least long enough to ask yourself if it is really a disciple's life you are living. Does your life move to the rhythms of Jesus' life? Do you enjoy being alone with Jesus each day? Do you regularly create time for your family, for your friends, for worship, for "renewing experiences"? Are you living your life by the rhythms of Jesus, or are you dancing frantically to the rapid beat of our secular and restless generation?

Jesus, the great Rabbi of your life, says to you today what He once said to His restless and frightened disciples: "Come unto Me, . . . and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28, NKJV). Do you hear Him today? Can you quiet your racing heart and your frazzled nerves long enough to really hear His invitation?

Can you put aside—put out of your head—the never-ending to-do lists of life? Can you set these aside long enough to hear the voice of Him who loves you with an everlasting love?

"I will give you rest," Jesus says, "and not only rest in your bed at night, when you can sleep like a child with a clear conscience, but I'll give you rest in the middle of all the rushing, frantic world around you. I'll walk lonely roads with you, and hold you when the boat appears to wallow. I'll talk quietly to you when everyone else in your life is yelling at you or barking orders at you. I'll heal you from that awful sickness that makes you think you must take everything in your own hands and struggle with and make it work."

"I'll teach you how to sleep on stormy nights, and how to find real peace in the midst of all the crash of thunder."

More than a century ago Ellen White looked down through time and saw our day—and our night. "A storm is coming, relentless in its fury," she wrote. "Are we prepared to meet it? We need not say: The perils of the last days are soon to come upon us. Already they have come."⁹

The storm just ahead is neither mythical nor avoidable. It may yet surprise us, as the storm on Galilee surprised Jesus' disciples, with its awfulness and power. All that can be shaken will be shaken. We should get accustomed to the howling of the wind and the groaning of the planking underneath

our feet. All that seems secure just now will prove illusory: "Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found" (Rev. 16.20, NKJV).

But we are never left alone, or to the mercy of the waves. He who began this great work—in this remnant movement and in our lives—will fulfill His promise and bring it to completion. That One standing in the stern, raising His hands over the chaos and quieting our hearts—"He is before all things, and in him all things hold together" (Col. 1:17, RSV).

*"Be still, my soul: thy God doth undertake
To guide the future as He has the past.*

Thy hope, thy confidence, let nothing shake;

All now mysterious shall be bright at last."¹⁰

¹ Bible texts credited to NRSV are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Used by permission.

² Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 501.

³ Ellen G. White, *The Faith I Live By* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958), p. 328.

⁴ Bible texts credited to RSV are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright © 1946, 1952, 1971, by Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Used by permission.

⁵ 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.

⁶ Ellen G. White, *Welfare Ministry* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1952), p. 134. (Italics supplied.)

⁷ E. G. White, *The Faith I Live By*, p. 328. (Italics supplied.)

⁸ William Miller, in *The Midnight Cry*, Dec. 5, 1844, pp. 179, 180.

⁹ Ellen G. White, *Reflecting Christ* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1985), p. 311.

¹⁰ Katharina von Schlegel, translated by Jan Borthwick, "Be Still, My Soul," *The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, no. 461.

Jared Thurmon is strategic partnerships liaison for *Adventist Review*. **Bill Knott** is editor and executive publisher of *Adventist Review*.

SURVEY SAYS...

The following are responses to surveys that the *Adventist Review* sent to 3 different groups of individuals:



Administrators, Scholars, and Evangelists (via password)



Pastors (via password)



Church Members (via Facebook/Twitter)

Do you believe the Second Coming will take place in your lifetime?



Have your beliefs on prophecy changed in the last 20 years?



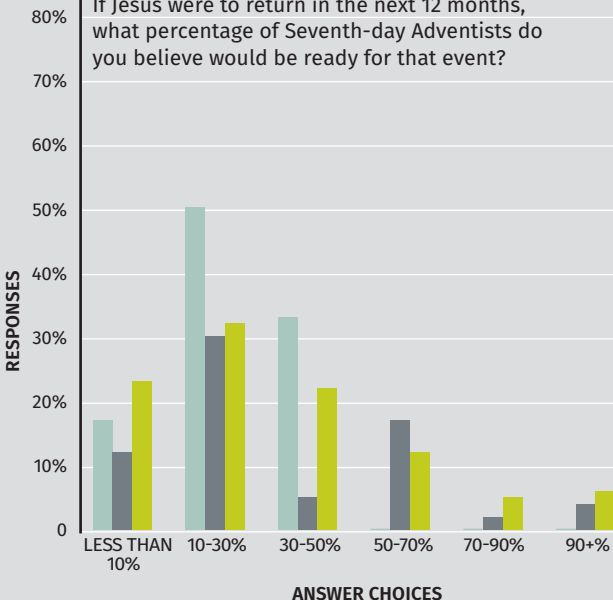
Do you believe Islam will play a role in last day events?



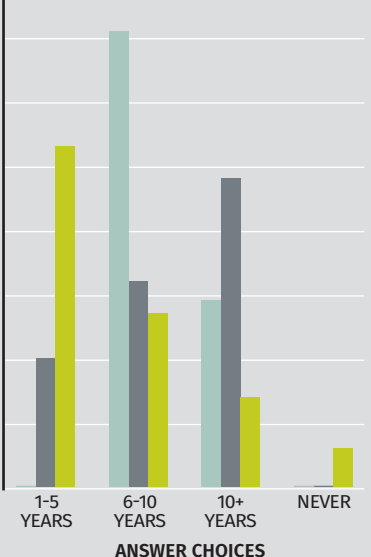
Will the Papacy play a dominant role in last day events?



If Jesus were to return in the next 12 months, what percentage of Seventh-day Adventists do you believe would be ready for that event?



I believe a National Sunday Law will take place:



The data gathered was a small sampling (in the hundreds) of the many diverse and valid opinions of leaders and members around the world. This data is by no means comprehensive or a final word on Adventist beliefs about the nearness of the Second Coming.



The Day of the Lord and the second coming of Christ are themes that pervade Scripture. We recently asked some Adventist thought leaders about the implications of living in the last days. Here is a sampling of their responses.

—Editors

QUESTION:

Where do you believe the Adventist Church is in the stream of Bible prophecy?

From my position at Loma Linda University, I have the privilege of meeting people from many cultures, traveling globally, and connecting with the young people of our church at home and abroad. I also follow cultural conflicts and security issues closely as we make decisions about programs and people in many countries. These observations have led to a growing recognition that current global issues could easily coalesce into a world catastrophe.

RICHARD HART, president, Loma Linda University

Prophecy has never been, nor will ever be, about one group or denomination. If we are asking whether or not the Adventist Church can be found in the Bible as a prophetic movement, my answer is “Yes! Absolutely yes!” The Adventist Church, based on Revelation 12, is the woman (church) that came from the wilderness (North America) after the 1,260 days (A.D. 1798) to proclaim a message that includes both time prophecies and commandment keeping (including, but not limited to, the fourth commandment). If, however, the question is asking how close the world—and by default the Seventh-day Adventist Church—is to the close of human history, then to borrow a phrase from my late friend Paul Tolbert: “We are in the fungus on the toenails of the image of Daniel 2.”

MARQUIS JOHNS, pastor, North Philadelphia Seventh-day Adventist Church

Prophetically, the Adventist Church exists at the intersection between its “remnant” identity, with all its latent potential, and its “Laodicean” identity, with all its self-deceived blindness. Adventism is a mass of unrealized potential! Problem is, we live under the persistent, self-inflicted illusion that “we are finishing the work.” We imagine that if we just say what we’re saying loud enough and far enough, that if we just come up with the right program or system,

that if we just get ourselves on the biggest television networks, our mission will be completed.

Only one move can thrust the mission of Adventism forward: We have to retrace our historical steps and go back to where we last saw the light. We last saw the light when the prophet to this movement went to her death urging that the gospel of righteousness by faith must be pervasively incorporated into our doctrinal construct, our missional methods, and our ecclesiastical systems.

Our current predicament is twofold: 1. Strident voices on the right have redefined “righteousness by faith” as “victory over sin” and “obedience to the law,” which keeps the emphasis and onus on the human agent as the primary locus of forward thrust. Therefore, it is merely a retooled continuation of the egocentric, legalistic orientation God has been attempting to correct in Adventism since 1888. 2. Strident voices on the left have merely reacted to the legalism on the right by marginalizing or denying key Adventist doctrines while adopting a weak sentimentalism wrongly called “grace.” So swings the great Adventist pendulum!

TY GIBSON, codirector, Light Bearers, a supporting ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

Where is the Adventist Church in the stream of prophecy? *Overdue!* As early as 1883 Ellen White said that Christ could have come “ere this,” a statement she repeated with growing urgency in 1890, 1898, and finally 1901, when she warned the Advent might be delayed “many more years” because of disobedience. Evidently heaven wanted the Advent message to be usurped, for a time, by Karl Marx, who wrote his first draft of *The Communist Manifesto* in 1844! But there is a point beyond which heaven cannot wait.

LEWIS WALTON, author and attorney

QUESTION:

**Are we in the
last days?**

If so, why?

If not, why not?



How soon could these events become the final Hones and precipitate the rescue plan from our Lord? I'm not brave enough to guess at that, but it clearly weighs on my mind more than it used to. I'm sure there have been other times in history when clear-thinking individuals said, "We are at the end; it can't get any worse." Yet we're still here. But one can easily foresee how various forces could coalesce to create global calamities. It could be a financial meltdown, emerging infections, growing resistance to antibiotics, environmental disasters, renewed terrorist threats, or simply another escalating war precipitated by a perceived slight or threat. The real danger is how our societies react to these threats.

So what do we do? Should we keep planning to build a new hospital at Loma Linda, which we are required by state regulators to do by 2020? Should we continue training young people for careers they may never have a chance to pursue? Should we invest in mission hospitals and training programs that may never be realized? These are not easy questions. Good development projects have to be based on five-, 10-, even 20-year plans. Can I safely predict the future that far? While I cannot know the future, seeking to accomplish good things, right things, is appropriate even in the face of ultimate destruction. "Occupy till I come," Jesus said (Luke 19:13, KJV).

RICHARD HART

The last days been happening since Paul wrote to Timothy: "Mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. . . . Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these teachers oppose the truth. They are men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected" (2 Tim. 3:1-8). Paul doesn't seem to be speaking about the last days as though they were in the future, but rather as something that had already begun, that would continue to brighten the horizon until it reached its noontime.

MARQUIS JOHNS

In modern social and market trends the principle upon which this variable operates is called "the tipping point," the point at which the cumulative

directional weight of a trend builds momentum sufficient to become normative or profitable. This principle applies not only to economics but also to psychology, politics, and morality. There is a line that the corporate mass of humanity may cross, beyond which no additional time or mercy would have any redemptive effect. We might call it an *irrevocable moral slide*. We should be watching for a phenomenon of convergence, not merely of critical mass.

TY GIBSON

How soon is soon? That question suggests another: *How much more dangerous can our world get before we wake up?* We are living in a fool's paradise if we can watch this happen and retreat into the anesthesia of amusement parks and wide-screen TVs. What a tragedy it would be if those entrusted with the Advent message woke up, only to discover they had slept 1,000 years too long.

LEWIS WALTON

Jesus anticipated our desire to know more precisely the timing of the last days. He cautioned: "But about that day or hour no one knows" (Matt. 24:36). We need to hold specific speculation in check. The signs of His return should be a source of assurance, not of mental torment. Taking Jesus at His word shifts our focus from the question of precisely how soon He will return to being ready every day and actively waiting.

RICK REMMERS, president, Chesapeake Conference

I hope Jesus comes soon. While there is much that is beautiful in this life, at least for some, the acceleration of tragedy and injustice is painful to watch, and even more painful to experience (I was less than a kilometer away when the recent shootings took place in San Bernardino, California). But more than 40 years of pastoral experience has taught me to balance my eager expectation of Jesus' return with a strong focus on the mission that lies before me every day. Like Jesus, we must ultimately leave the timing to God.

JON PAULIEN, dean, School of Religion, Loma Linda University

QUESTION:

Was your perspective the same at the beginning of your Adventist experience, or has it changed over time? How have your views changed since the year 2000?

My perspective has changed significantly. In 2000 I wasn't even a Christian, let alone an Adventist. September 11, 2001, was the turning point for me. Before September 11, authors like Noam Chomsky, John Coleman, and William Cooper informed my understanding of what was going on in the world. Afterward, I had a deep desire to understand and share with others what the Bible has to say about these events, and the role Jesus would play in them.

MARQUIS JOHNS

Over the years my perspective has not changed substantially. As world events unfold there is more detail and many more examples of signs fulfilled. Every day brings us one day closer to the culmination of all things.

The disciples discovered on the Sea of Galilee that when they were with Jesus it did not matter how severe the storm was or how long it would last. They were safe with Him. The storms in our personal lives and around the world will become increasingly fierce. But with Jesus we can always be ready and be at peace.

RICK REMMERS

We must resist the urge to interpret prophecy with the newspapers, as some are doing with the threat of Islam at the moment.

**GERHARD PFANDL, retired associate director,
Biblical Research Institute**

I distinctly remember a sermon I preached in 1972, where I gave multiple evidences from science and current events that earth's history had less than twenty years to go. I am also distinctly aware of how wrong I was. Continually hyping the End without an outcome can kill people's interest in eschatology. That's where things are in most of the Western world. In the United States, Bible prophecy can serve as an "entering wedge" for maybe 10 percent of the general population. The rest are turned off by it. In Europe the lack of interest is even more dramatic. People are

interested in end of the world issues, but many no longer think Christians have relevant answers. You can only cry "wolf" so many times and people turn you off.

Careful Bible study over many decades has taught me that Bible prophecy was not given to satisfy our curiosity about the future, it was given to teach us how to live as we approach the End. When we experience the eschatological Kingdom Jesus introduced, we are motivated to lay large plans for building up that Kingdom while at the same time living as if He was coming today. That tension is not easy to balance, but it is at the core of preparation for the Second Coming.

JON PAULIEN

The year 2000 marked a major change in geopolitical and global economic situation. It marked a turning point towards the very last days. Economic winter has arrived. Subsequent events since 2000 have sharpened my understanding of end time prophecies.

**TIMOTHY AKA, associate treasurer,
General Conference**

Has my Adventist perspective changed over time? Yes! Early generalizations about end time crises are now clarified by a reality so obvious that even newscasters are starting to get it—and I can say that, having once been a newscaster. How does one recognize we have reached the last moments? Jesus warned that when the abomination of desolation predicted by Daniel sought entry into holy ground, the end was near. For Jerusalem, this was Roman invasion into the holy ground near the temple. But a physical temple no longer stands. Today, the holy ground is the temple of the mind ("which temple ye are.") When religious coercion, contrary to the express command of God, demands entry into the mind, it is high time to turn loose of this world!

LEWIS WALTON

QUESTION:

What events will indicate that we have reached the last moments of earth's history?

We have been given some pretty clear signposts from both the Bible and Ellen White, but they are always couched in unpredictable phrases. It seems the plan is to warn and prepare while avoiding predictions. But we are also given great reassurances that we have nothing to fear, except that we forget how we have been led in the past. So I'm wary but encouraged, anxious but confident, that God is following events closely while watching and waiting.

I can't really know how my church, my community, even my family, is preparing for these events in their minds and hearts. But it seems incredibly important that I remain vigilant, watching, and trying to interpret signs and events that tell us about the future of our world. My spirit of adventure has always made me want to be part of these last-day events. But on a much deeper level I look forward to meeting my Savior, and I sense my hope may be realized.

RICHARD HART

Popes will come and go, times will be hard, darkness will spread, humanity can, and will, get worse, and deception will be rampant. We can focus on those things, or we can make sure Christ lives in our own hearts. We can offer relief to the least and lowest; we can keep our lamps trimmed and burning; we can be better Christians.

MARQUIS JOHNS

When we witness within the church the love of Christ in our dealings with one another, and when the focus of the church shifts with significant focus and passion to the message of righteousness by faith, we can know that we have reached the final moments of earth's history.

TY GIBSON

The only sure sign of the end is the fulfillment of Matthew 24:14: the gospel is proclaimed to the world, and "then the end will come." Today's social media and 24/7 news could accomplish that in a matter of days once end-time truths become worldwide issues. They will be catalyzed by people who deliver the Advent message by living it.

LEWIS WALTON

When Protestantism shall stretch her hand across the gulf to grasp the hand of the Roman power, when she shall reach over the abyss to clasp hands with spiritualism, when, under the influence of this threefold union, our country shall repudiate every principle of its Constitution as a Protestant and republican government, and shall make provision for the propagation of papal falsehoods and delusions, then we may know that the time has come for the marvelous working of Satan, and that the end is near" (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* [Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948], vol. 5, p. 451).

GERHARD PFANDL

Since the great prophetic time line has literally run out, Jesus' followers, to keep vigilant, must focus their attention on the "signs of His coming." We find these "signs" primarily in Matthew 24; 25; Mark 13; Luke 21; 2 Timothy 3; and Revelation 13. Knowing that the great prophetic time line has run its course, and that the signs Jesus gave to announce the nearness of His coming and the end of this world are being displayed in abundance, we can logically conclude that the coming of Jesus is very near, "even at the doors" (Matt. 24:33, KJV).

Ellen White described the finishing of the great commission this way: "There will be an accumulation of divine agencies to combine with human effort that there may be the accomplishment of the work for the last time. The work will most assuredly be cut short in a most unexpected manner. . . . There will be thousands converted to the truth in a day, who at the eleventh hour see and acknowledge the truth and the movements of the Spirit of God. . . . The accessions to the truth will be of a rapidity which will surprise the church. God's name alone will be glorified. Finite man will wonder and adore" (*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials* [Silver Spring, Md.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1987], vol. 2, pp. 754, 755).

What an exciting time to be alive and be involved in giving the most relevant, timely message ever given to the world. Jesus' promise still rings true: "I will come back" (John 14:3). Let us be of good courage.

G. EDWARD REID, assistant to the president for planned giving, Adventist World Radio

THE POPE'S MISSION, OR OURS?

Unless you've been living under a rock, you're undoubtedly aware of Pope Francis' whirlwind tour of the United States last fall.

Francis' visit might be *the* story of 2015, and with good reason. The highlight of his rockstar-like tour was a keynote address in Washington, D.C., as he became the first pope to address a joint session of Congress. Without question, Francis has a number of endearing qualities: his compassion for the poor, concern about the climate, support for traditional family values, and the sanctity of life among them.

But don't be fooled. Even if 99 percent of Francis' message is commendable, he has, like every other papal leader before him, a greater mission: to return the Vatican to the prominence it once enjoyed as the most influential power in the world, to heal the deadly wound (see Rev. 13:3).

Adventists should be paying attention. It's important to follow current events along with the light we've been given through our understanding of the books of Daniel and Revelation and the counsels of Ellen White. But at the same time, this should not be our greatest concern.

The Adventist movement is *not* rooted in the proclamation of a national Sunday law or warnings about the mark of the beast.

The first angel of Revelation 14 is seen flying through the heavens with an eternal gospel to share with the entire world. This sequence culminates with the message of the third angel in verses 9-14.

Ellen White called this third message "the theme of greatest importance."¹

So what, exactly, is this theme? Again, White brings clarity: "The message of Christ's righteousness is to sound from one end of the earth to the other to prepare the way of the Lord. This is the glory of God, which closes the work of the third angel."²

Are we better versed in the pope's encyclicals than the truth of the third angel's message? We Seventh-day Adventists have the privilege of introducing the world to this theme of greatest importance: the righteousness of Christ.

In Revelation 14:10 those who receive the mark of the beast are faced with having to drink "the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength in the cup of his wrath."

These words point us back to the experience of Jesus in Gethsemane. With blood dripping off His forehead, He begged the Father to "take this cup from me" (Matt. 22:42). Thankfully, He drank that cup by yielding Himself to death and complete separation from His Father, a separation so complete that Jesus wasn't sure He'd see the Father again.³

No one has to perish. In the end, the only people who will drink the cup of God's wrath are those who don't accept that Jesus already drank it for them. His righteousness frees us from the law of sin and death. Our faith in His righteousness gives us power to "keep the commandments of God" (Rev. 14:12, KJV).

I wonder if we've been dwelling on lesser themes to the exclusion of the greatest one. The pope has a strategy to fulfill his mission. It's time that we focus on fulfilling ours. 🌱

¹ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946), p. 196.

² Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 6, p. 19.

³ See Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898), pp. 755, 756.

Jimmy Phillips is executive director of marketing at San Joaquin Community Hospital.



INTRODUCING
THE WHY
JIMMY
PHILLIPS

IT'S IMPORTANT
TO FOLLOW
CURRENT EVENTS.

ALSO IN THIS SECTION:

- » WILL NOT YOUR CREDITORS RISE UP SUDDENLY?
- » CONSIDER THE LILIES
- » LESSONS FROM NATURE
- » A PIPE ORGAN, A CATHOLIC CHURCH, AND A GROUP OF ADVENTISTS
- » WORDS TO LIVE FOR

WEATHERING FINANCIAL STORMS

The year 2016 has been off to a rocky start for financial markets. Stock markets across the globe fell sharply in January as concerns about China's economy, plummeting oil prices, and the Federal Reserve raising interest rates made investors wary. The economic outlook, in turn, also worsened, as a growing number of observers fear the U.S. economy is getting closer to a recession.¹ Even the International Monetary Fund downgraded its forecast for global economic growth.²

So what are Seventh-day Adventist Christians to make of this economic uncertainty? How should believers respond with their time, wealth, and talents to such financial volatility? These are important questions, but they are not new. Church members had to wrestle with them during the Great Depression of the 1930s and more recently during the Great Recession of 2007-2009. Many Adventists viewed these economic crises as signs of the times, and were sure they indicated that Christ's return was imminent. Others were perplexed as to why God allowed such trying times.

As Seventh-day Adventist economists, we too have grappled with what these questions mean for believers. While there are no easy answers to these questions, we have identified



BY DAVID BECKWORTH AND JOSEFER MONTES

three important principles in the Bible that can help us weather these financial storms.

STAY ENGAGED

The first principle is to “occupy till I come” (Luke 19:13, KJV). The word “occupy” here means to conduct trade, and is the reason the New King James Version translates this passage “Do business till I come.”³ This well-known passage from the parable of the minas (talents) is a reminder that we are to be actively engaged in our calling regardless of the state of the economy. We are not to be fearful like the servant who hid his mina, but are to employ our time, wealth, and talents at all times. Financial crises should not stop us.

Some Adventists, however, are more prone to act like the fearful servant. We know, for example, Adventists who have forgone education, starting a business, and marrying because they were worried that the end was near. Only later in life did they realize that these missed opportunities might have been their calling, their way of most effectively sharing God with the world.

Many time-meaning Adventists succumbed to these same fears during the Great Recession of 2007-2009. They sold their businesses, cashed out their savings, and quit their jobs because they were certain it was the end of time. But this is not what God has called us to do. He calls us to “occupy” until He returns. And since no one knows the “day or hour” (Matt. 24:36), we are called to use our time, wealth, and talents until the very end. Doing so will not only be a blessing to others, but it will keep us from getting worked up by the latest economic crisis.

STAY EFFECTIVE

The second principle builds upon the first one. Not only should we “occupy” until He comes, but we should do so in a manner that most efficiently uses our time, wealth, and talents. To make the best use of our time, we are called to engage in time management (Eph. 5:15, 16; Col. 4:5) and in taking care of our health (1 Cor. 6:19, 20). The former helps us organize our time, while the latter improves the quality of our time. People who are both good time managers and healthy are better prepared to handle the vicissitudes of economic crises.

The Bible is also very clear about engaging in good wealth management. In Ecclesiastes 11:2 it explicitly directs us to diversify our asset holdings

by dividing our “portion to seven, or even to eight, for you do not know what misfortune may occur on the earth” (NASB).⁴ The same chapter also tells us to take measured risks. Together, this implies Adventists should have a portfolio of assets adjusted for their age and risk preferences. Not only is it biblical, but it also better insulates one’s wealth against the financial market’s volatilities.

We have all been given a calling and the talents to accomplish this calling (1 Peter 4:10; Rom. 12:6). We will be most effective for God if we discover and act upon that calling. God can use us no matter what choices we make, but we will be the most productive and satisfied when we put to use the specific talents God has given each of us individually. We will also be more capable of responding to the whims of business cycles.

TRUST HIM

The third principle to help us weather financial storms is to recognize only God knows “the end from the beginning” (Isa. 46:10). Consequently, we should leave the worrying about end times to Him. This, however, is often tough for Adventists given our understanding of prophecy. We know earth’s time is short, so it is hard for us not to see the latest economic calamities as signs of Christ’s soon return.


For example, during the Great Depression of the 1930s editors of both the *Review and Herald* and the *Signs of the Times* were certain that the end was near. They saw the Depression as a “striking fulfillment of prophetic prediction”⁵ and a precursor of a soon-to-be “religious dictatorship.”⁶ More recently many Adventists saw the Great Recession of 2007-2009 and the unprecedented federal government response to it as a sign of the end. Yet seven years later Christ has still not come. This should give us pause.

We should have the humility to recognize that we do not have it all figured out. We do not “know the works of God who makes everything” (Eccl. 11:5, NKJV) and changes “the times and the seasons” (Dan. 2:21, NKJV). Once we accept this reality, we will spend less time worrying about the eschatological meaning of the latest financial crisis and instead simply trust that God is working out all things for the good (Rom. 8:28).

One of our fathers, while still in college and searching for God, happened to take a class from an old economics professor at a large state university. The class was macroeconomics and the

Many Adventist saw the Great Recession of 2007-2009 and the unprecedented federal government response to it as a sign of the end.

professor spent the semester trying to explain the inner workings of the U.S. economy. At the end of the semester, however, the professor made a startling confession to the class. He said that in the end only God knows what really drives the economy. The professor's humility stunned the class, but it convicted the heart of my searching father.

As Adventists, we need to have this same humility. We also need to "occupy" until God comes in the most productive manner possible. If we do, we will be able to weather the financial storms that lie ahead. 

¹ See www.cnbc.com/2016/01/18/us-recession-probability-at-highest-levels-since-fall-2011-survey.html.

² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/01/19/imf-downgrades-outlook-for-world-economy/>

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⁴ 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.

⁵ See *Review and Herald*, Mar. 23, 1933, p. 2.

⁶ See *Signs of the Times*, Feb. 21, 1933, p. 2.

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WILL NOT YOUR CREDITORS RISE UP SUDDENLY?

BY TIM AKA

Are you in debt? Just a little bit? Of course you live in a home, drive a car, and wear nice clothes. But are these things actually yours? How many credit cards do you have? Do you have any car loans or a mortgage? Maybe you're a recent university graduate with more than US\$80,000 of student loan debt. *But, you argue, everyone has debt. It's necessary. Isn't it?*

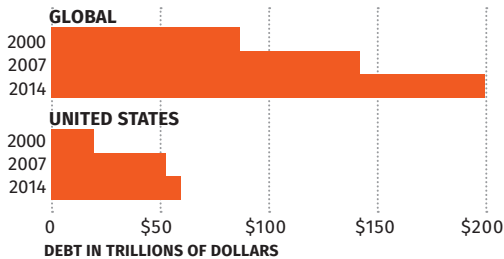
It has become painfully obvious that the world is drowning in debt. We see the results of heavy indebtedness simply by looking at the events surrounding Greece, watching the slow decay of the Japanese economy, or seeing the personal pain of people who lost their houses in the real estate collapse. Governments, businesses, and people have taken on too much debt. Some to try to improve their place in life, some just to try to maintain the status quo, and still others because it's what everyone else is doing.

The scale of our debt is staggering. This dependence on debt is leading the world to the brink of another financial crisis. What does the Bible say about debt and end-time events? Is there any specific guidance uniquely relevant today?



WE ARE DROWNING

Last summer McKinsey Global Institute published a study that put global debt at US\$200 trillion. The amount of debt has grown US\$57 trillion since 2008, the start of the global financial crisis. China accounts for about US\$25 trillion of the increase since 2008. The incredible growth of that economy has been fueled largely by debt. The United States has added about US\$40 trillion in debt since 2000. It has managed only to create gigantic financial bubbles.



The prophet Habakkuk wrote about a debt crisis. More than 2,500 years ago he wrote warnings that seem keenly appropriate today. “Woe to him who increases what is not his—how long? And to him who loads himself with many pledges? Will not your creditors rise up suddenly? Will they not awaken who oppress you? And you will become their booty” (Hab. 2:6, 7).*

The prophet’s words are very poignant today. They describe Western society and materialism well. We have indeed tried to increase our possessions by loading ourselves with many pledges or debt. We can add another US\$25,000 to our credit line—after all, it adds only a couple hundred dollars a month to our payments. “How long?” the prophet asks. How long until it catches up with us?

The prophet’s warnings should be well heeded, as creditors can “rise up” suddenly. But just what does “rise up” mean? Governments have “kicked the can down the road,” trying to give an impression of stability. The limits of borrowing are being reached, and now the clouds of collapse are looming on the horizon. When governments run out of money and banking systems become unstable, even those with significant savings may quickly find themselves without access to their cash. Is that really possible? Can the government hold personal savings or wealth?

SOME BACKGROUND

Habakkuk was writing about the king of Babylon, although ancient Babylon did not ultimately succumb to a debt crisis. Perhaps he was warning a future Babylonian “kingdom.” We do know that there have been many debt crises in the world throughout history, but the crisis today is of unprecedented proportions as it impacts the entire interconnected global economy. Yet many are completely unaware of the situation.

Listen to Habakkuk’s description of this nation. “He is a proud man, and he does not stay at home. Because he enlarges his desire as hell, and he is like death, and cannot be satisfied, he gathers to himself all nations and heaps up for himself all peoples” (verse 5). Who is this nation of insatiable appetite? Who tries to gather up the entire world for himself? And how does this fit in with today’s economic situation?

The locus of the current crisis can be largely attributed to changes that took place in the 1980s. The United States transformed from an industrial economy to a consumer-based society built on the increase of the easy availability of debt. Corporations began offshore production, sending jobs overseas to countries with cheaper labor. Technology allowed for great increases in productivity. The results were tremendous gains in the stock markets, real estate prices, and wealth.

Other developed nations followed suit, though not to the same extent as the United States. Emerging economies were quick to seize the opportunities and become industrialized nations. They jumped onto the economic bandwagon that promised a more lucrative and prosperous future. They built gadgets and technology to ship back to developed nations, who eagerly bought them with their borrowed money. The global economy was hooked to easy money like addicts are hooked to their favorite new drug. The global economy became addicted to debt and the need for an ever-expanding supply of funds and material things.

Think about it: How much stuff do you have that you didn’t even know you wanted until you were out shopping and saw it? Worse still, think about all the stuff you’ve purchased that is packed away somewhere in a box, or worse, in a rented storage unit each month.

Since the mid-1980s interest rates around the world have been falling. They have fallen steadily

Debt is quickly becoming unsustainable no matter how low the interest rates. This isn't just true for the individual. It's impacting everyone.

from about 15 percent to the nearly 0 percent rates today. This drop in interest rates has allowed the continued increase in debt over the past three decades. With interest rates near zero, it was believed that debt could be increased without limit. But many nations have found that this situation can turn against them in a flash, with creditors rising up suddenly to demand payment.

Smaller nations with large debts have been the first to be impacted. Larger debtors in the world are now beginning to be affected: China, the Eurozone, and the United States. The United States is seemingly being forced into a corner to raise interest rates. How long will it be until many indebted companies and individuals find themselves in default on their loans? Can most families afford mortgage payments if the interest on the loans doubles or triples?

The societal impact of this growth in debt has been and will continue to be devastating. My parents moved to Toronto, Canada, in the early 1970s and bought their first house for around C\$30,000. They sold it 25 years later for more than 10 times that amount. This was certainly not unique to them. And don't get me wrong: They were delighted about the increase in the selling price. Their story was reflective of massive gains in real estate prices in the 1980s and 1990s. This was facilitated by the rapid increase in the availability of debt. Although in Canada this real estate bubble continues to grow, the rest of the world saw prices collapse in 2008. Many families lost their homes or watched their homes suddenly lose more than half their value.

Since 2008, housing prices have partially recovered, but are still regionally inconsistent. Household income gains, however, continue to lag behind. Housing remains a large cost to families. Unlike my parents' generation, today both husband and wife need to work full-time to afford to own a home. Children are often sent to daycare while parents work. Have parents become less

available to guide their children in their formative years? Are families more stressed than they used to be? Are money worries becoming a major factor in marital strife?


IS THERE MORE?

Another aspect of debt was the media onslaught that was just starting in the 1980s. *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous* was a popular TV show. A generation of TV watchers grew up worshipping celebrities and desiring their opulence. Covetousness was turned into an art form called advertising or marketing. Extracting money from consumers became a science. We were led to believe that prosperity could last forever, without limit. We just needed to apply for more credit cards. Financial freedom was just around the corner. But did our growing mountain of debt give us financial freedom?

Now, 45 years after going off the gold standard and printing unimaginable amounts of fiat currency, we may be on the verge of the fulfillment of these words of Hosea 8:7: "They sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind."

Debt is quickly becoming unsustainable no matter how low the interest rates. This isn't just true for individuals; it impacts everyone. Countries, corporations, and individuals are teetering on the brink of financial ruin. Commodity prices and currencies are crashing. Countries are defaulting on their obligations. Economic growth is

stagnating. Even the stock market, the last beacon of financial hope, is faltering. Our economic doctrine that requires an ever-growing level of output funded by an equally growing amount of debt to be sustainable is being exposed as the ultimate Ponzi scheme. "Woe to him who increases what is not his—how long? And to him who loads himself with many pledges? Will not your creditors rise up suddenly?"

We are called to manage all aspects of our lives in a way that reveals to the world around us that this earth is not our home and that the long-expected Second Advent is near, even at the door. 

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CONSIDER THE LILIES

Life in Christ ought to be a banquet of spiritual delights; there's more than enough gourmet nourishment for everyone. However, in these days of political, religious, and social polarization, many believers are starving to death.

The reason can be summed up in one word: anxiety, the kind of chronic distress or unease of mind caused by fear that distracts us from that which is real. Jesus chided Martha for being distracted with many preparations while missing the opportunity to spend time with Him (Luke 10:38-42).

Regrettably, this seems to be the condition of many Christians. Everyone, at some time or another, experiences feelings of insecurity or anxiety regarding health, age, finances, or physical appearance. And if asked "What makes you insecure or anxious?" we would almost certainly point to some outside condition, not realizing that insecurity or anxiety isn't generated by things outside, but by our emotional programming from parents, education, society, religion, self-interest, and so on.


If we understand that we are conditioned to think and behave this way, with God's help we can change that program and change our world. When we wake up and become aware of God's realities, these insecure feelings will vanish, even though everything in the outside world remains exactly as it was. Jesus urged us to understand this chronic characteristic. He commanded us not to harbor the habit of petulant worry about food and clothing, but to consider the lilies instead (Matt. 6:25-29).

It is futile to be anxious about things outside of us. Our efforts may be momen-

tarily successful, but they will not last. They may even bring temporary relief, but it will be short-lived. So it is not worth the energy and time spent worrying about our physical appearance, about making more money, or about getting further assurances of love from family and friends.

Understand also that this anxiety was picked up when we were young and impressionable. We learned from the behavior and reactions of those around us. Every time the outside world didn't conform to a certain pattern, we created an emotional turmoil within ourselves called anxiety, paranoia, or insecurity. Then we did everything in our power to rearrange the outside world so as to make more money, seek more reassurances, placate and please people in order to make the insecure, anxious, and negative feelings go away.

We don't have to do this. Whenever we are insecure or anxious about what may happen in the future, we do well to remember Matthew 6:30-34 and not act like pagans who don't know God. They spend their time running after material goods, only to worry about keeping them once they are acquired.

When the ghosts of tomorrow stalk with hobgoblins of doubt and distrust, remember: when we were insecure about future events, we were able to handle them with success because God provided for all our needs in that particular moment. Therefore, seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness, believing that "all these things will be given to you as well" (verse 33). 

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

**CURE FOR
THE COMMON
LIFE**
HYVETH
WILLIAMS



**IT IS FUTILE
TO BE ANXIOUS
ABOUT THINGS
OUTSIDE
OF US.**



THERE IS STILL BEAUTY

Revealing glimpses of God's love

BY ELLEN G. WHITE

"His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise" (Hab. 3:3, KJV).

In the varied scenes of nature also are lessons of divine wisdom for all who have learned to commune with God. The pages that opened in undimmed brightness to the gaze of the first pair in Eden bear now a shadow. A blight has fallen upon the fair creation. And yet, wherever we turn, we see traces of the primal loveliness; wherever we turn, we hear the voice of God and behold His handiwork.

From the solemn roll of the deep-toned thunder and old ocean's ceaseless roar, to the glad songs that make the forests vocal with melody, nature's ten thousand voices speak His praise. In earth and sea and sky, with their marvelous tint and color,

varying in gorgeous contrast or blended in harmony, we behold His glory. The everlasting hills tell of His power. The trees that wave their green banners in the sunlight and the flowers in their delicate beauty point to their Creator. The living green that carpets the brown earth tells of God's care for the humblest of His creatures. The caves of the sea and the depths of the earth reveal His treasures. He who placed the pearls in the ocean and the amethyst and chrysolite among the rocks is a lover of the beautiful. The sun rising in the heavens is a representative of Him who is the life and light of all that He has made. All the brightness and beauty that adorn the earth and light up the heavens speak of God.

Shall we, then, in the enjoyment of His gifts, forget the Giver? Let them rather lead us to contemplate His goodness and His love. Let all that is beautiful in our earthly home remind us of the crystal river and green fields, the waving trees and living fountains, the shining city and the white-robed singers, of our heavenly home—that world of beauty which no artist can picture, no mortal tongue describe. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." 1 Corinthians 2:9, KJV.

To dwell forever in this home of the blest, to bear in soul, body, and spirit, not the dark traces of sin and the curse, but the perfect likeness of our Creator, and through ceaseless ages to advance in wisdom, in knowledge, and in holiness, ever exploring new fields of thought, ever finding new wonders and new glories, ever increasing in capacity to know and to enjoy and to love, and knowing that there is still beyond us joy and love and wisdom infinite—such is the object to which the Christian's hope is pointing, for which Christian education is preparing. To secure this education, and to aid others to secure it, should be the object of the Christian's life.

Let us never lose sight of the fact that Jesus is a wellspring of joy. He does not delight in the misery of human beings, but loves to see them happy. ▀

This is taken from *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1913), pp. 54, 55. Seventh-day Adventists believe that **Ellen G. White** (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.

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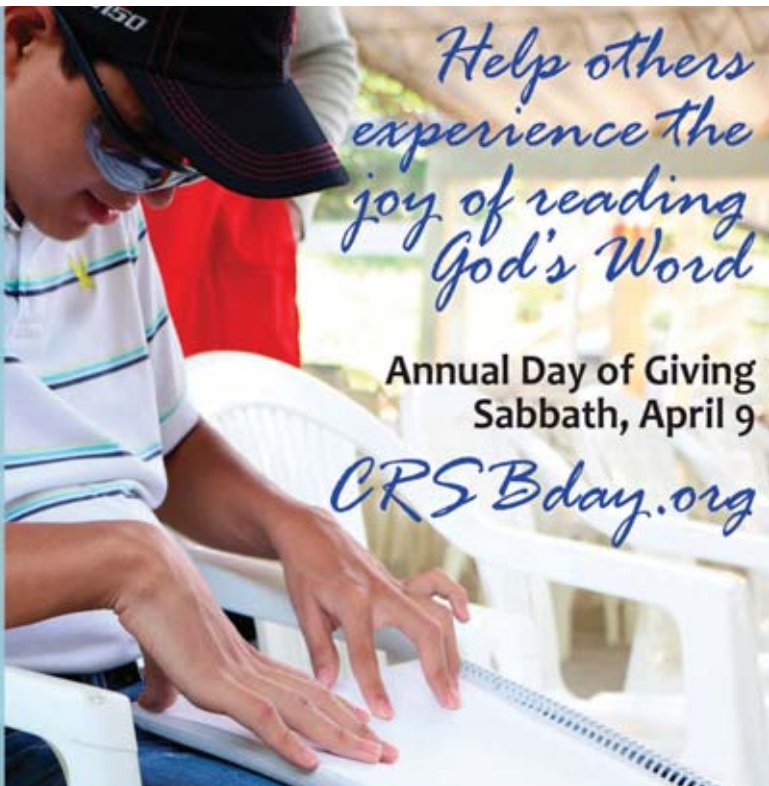
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The inner workings of Arpad's pipe organ



The Adventist congregation in Fond du Lac now worships in this church, owned by the Muranyis. Community concerts and recitals are also often held here because of the excellent acoustics.

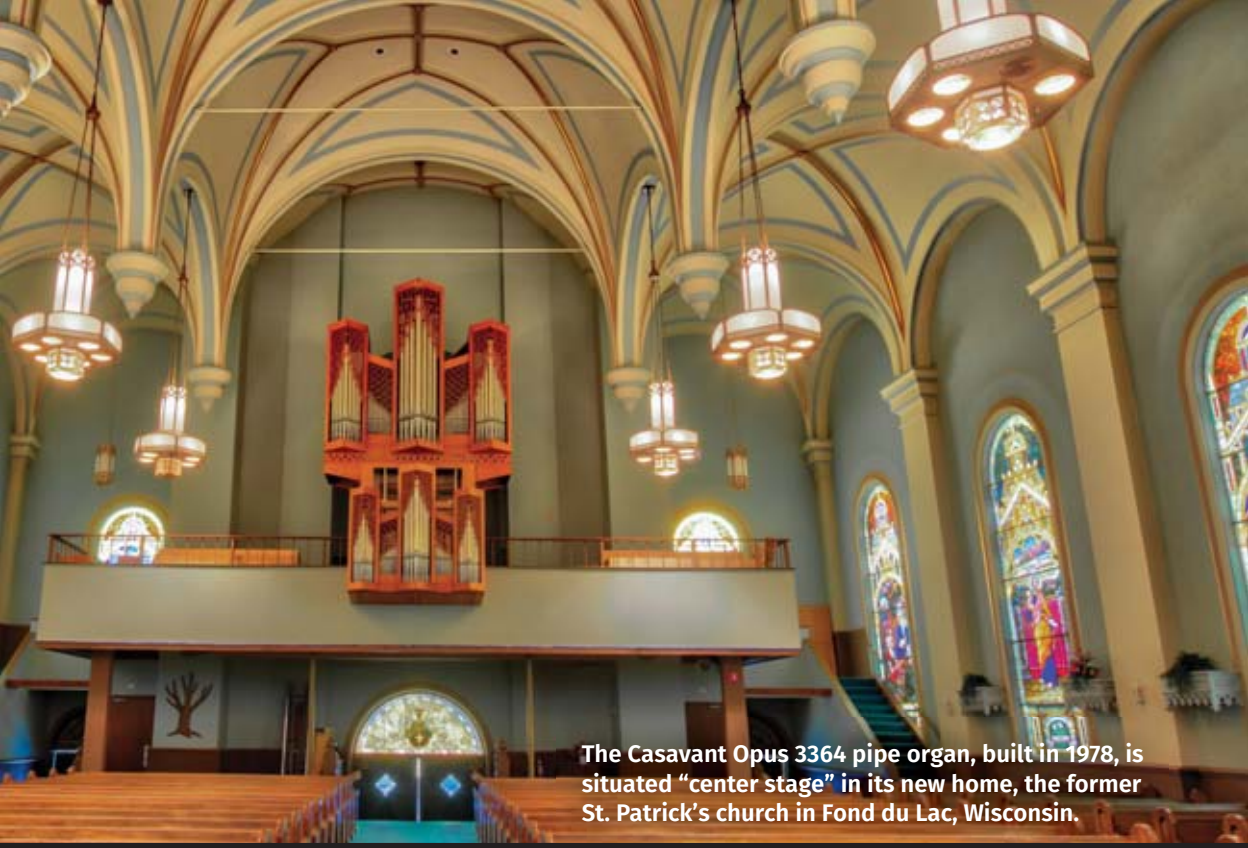
A PIPE ORGAN, A CATHOLIC CHURCH, AND A GROUP OF ADVENTISTS

A recipe for evangelism?

BY SANDRA BLACKMER

Thinking outside the “evangelism box” isn’t the typical perception people have of classical musicians. But when it comes to Arpad Muranyi, we may need to alter our views.

His quest began simply enough. A musician and engineer originally from Hungary who now resides in Wisconsin, Muranyi wanted to own a pipe organ. Not just any pipe



The Casavant Opus 3364 pipe organ, built in 1978, is situated “center stage” in its new home, the former St. Patrick’s church in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

organ, but one of such high quality and majestic sound that it would thrill the soul of anyone who heard it, or any skilled organist who sat down at its keyboards. What he ended up with is not only such an instrument but also a former Catholic church and school, an Adventist congregation that now meets each Sabbath in his “living room,” and a local outreach that is touching hearts in the community.

A HERITAGE OF MUSIC

Muranyi was exposed to organ music even before he was born. His mother, while pregnant, would often listen to her musician husband practice the organ.

“I’ve loved organ music all my life,” he says.

Muranyi’s father, however, didn’t encourage him to pursue a career as an organist, saying he didn’t think it would provide a good living.

“In Hungary during those Communist years the churches were poor, and the Communist system was not very supportive of church organists,” Muranyi explains. “So I got my professional music training in cello playing. But I still love the organ

and have played it in church since I was 11.”

Muranyi also became curious about how organs work, and was frequently found climbing inside them and “fixing things.” The more he learned, the more he became interested in organ building and pursuing a career in engineering.

His dad insisted, though, that he first complete his cello training—which he did. After graduating from the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest, Hungary, Muranyi received a scholarship for the prestigious Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory. After studying there for a year, he came to the United States on a scholarship to continue his musical studies. In 1989, when Muranyi was 31, he obtained a position with the Sacramento Symphony Orchestra in California. It was then he changed directions.

“I decided to enroll in engineering school,” he says. “I landed an internship with Intel Corporation in Folsom. When I finished my education in engineering, Intel hired me full-time. I loved what I was doing there and worked in Folsom for 17 years. During all that time I continued organ playing and choral conducting, but not on a professional level.”

Then a desire to have his own pipe organ began to develop.

THE SEARCH BEGINS

In the late 1980s and early 1990s digital technology in electronic organs significantly improved their quality and sound, but “electronic speakers will never be able to reproduce the sound of a pipe organ and the acoustics of a cathedral perfectly,” Muranyi says. “My desire was to have my own pipe organ.”

At first his plan was to buy a small pipe organ that would fit into the living room of his California home. But an architect looked at Muranyi as if he were crazy, Muranyi says, and quoted him a price tag he considered “outrageous and unaffordable.” A friend then suggested he check out churches for sale.

“I started to shop around, and I found this church in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, which was in relatively good condition. It was just right for what I was looking for in an acoustical sense for music purposes. It actually had an organ in it already, but the organ wasn’t what I wanted in terms of size and quality. I ended up buying the church complex in 2007.”

The “complex” consisted of not only a church that seats more than 500 people but also a school with a gym, and two houses that formerly served as a convent and a rectory. Muranyi and his wife, Estie, and their son, Andras, age 15, set up house-keeping in rooms of the church, using the kitchen adjoining the church and school to prepare the family meals.

Soon after, Muranyi found and purchased a Casavant Opus 3364 pipe organ (built in 1978) from a church in Princeton, New Jersey, and began the process of disassembling it, moving it to Fond du Lac, and putting it back together, with some modifications. The first phase of the process took several years to complete. While all this was happening, however, the Muranyi family didn’t let the property remain idle.

CONNECTING WITH LOCAL ADVENTISTS

In Fond du Lac small Adventist groups had been meeting and worshipping together off and on for some years. Then about 2005, following a Wisconsin Conference evangelistic thrust in the area, a branch Sabbath School of about 10 members

began to develop into a more established presence. They first met in community buildings and various group members’ homes, then later rented a small conference room at the local fairground. But after Muranyi purchased the church in Fond du Lac and learned of the Adventist group, he thought, *Why can’t they meet here?*

So the families began holding Sabbath worship services at the church, and their number has grown.

“This was like an answer to prayer,” says Le Suong Cina, whose family, together with two other families, was part of the core group that has now blossomed into a solid and consistent presence of Adventist believers in Fond du Lac. “We no longer needed to hunt for a place to gather every Sabbath; it gave us stability. It’s also a landmark location, so it is visible and well known, giving the Adventists an obvious presence in the community. The location is in a populated and central part of the city, which aids in outreach. The potential for growth and networking is great, and there has been continued growth in numbers as well as activity within the church and in the community.”

“It was just a natural continuum to bring the people here to meet,” Muranyi says. “I joke sometimes about it, that the members of the congregation are our guests every Sabbath. The church building could basically be considered our living room, and the group that comes here to worship are our guests every Sabbath.”

MUSICAL OUTREACH

The church group, now comprising about 32 members, is active with community outreach and giving Bible studies. The church building, with its good acoustics and high-quality pipe organ, is also a compelling draw to those in the community who love music.

“We have concerts here,” Muranyi explains. “I also rent out the church to groups for classical musical performances. When a choir performs, sometimes there are 300 to 400 people in the audience. I’ve been told that some people come to the concerts because they want to see their former church again. They have an emotional attachment to the place.

“The choral director of the former Catholic parish comes to many of the concerts as well, and he pointed out to me that some of the people who

used to be members of the parish sit in the same exact spots during the concerts as when they attended Mass here. They come back and sit in the same place every time.”

He adds, “It’s a family church for them.”

Describing the music world as relatively small, Muranyi says performers and concert organizers have learned about the church being used for concerts by word of mouth. There are musicians who are looking for a place to do recitals, and chamber music groups are drawn by the good acoustics.

“We had a 110-member choir perform a Christmas concert here in 2012,” Muranyi says.

A UNIQUE MINISTRY

Recently retired Wisconsin Conference president Don Corkum jokingly says that when he and others prayed for a facility in which the Adventist group in Fond du Lac could meet, God provided a cathedral! And they’re grateful He did.

“Arpad and his family are very gifted people, and they’ve used music as an entering wedge in the community,” Corkum says. “We often think of health outreach in this way; Arpad thinks of music.”

Corkum, who has attended some of the concerts and initial Adventist group meetings at the Fond du Lac church, remembers the former Catholic pastor of the church coming to the concerts, and says that the community people identify with the church and are grateful that it’s still being used for worship.

“This is a great story of how God has put together a person’s need for music and a pipe organ with the need of an Adventist church for a facility and an opportunity to reach out to the community. It’s unique,” Corkum says. “It seems that all these things have come together to celebrate and to make an impact for God.”

Samuel Garbi, a former pastor in the district, also credits the Muranyi family with playing a large role in the growth and establishment of the Fond du Lac church group.

“Arpad’s passion for quality music and the organ, coupled with his and his wife, Estie’s, commitment to pouring all their family resources into evangelistic involvement in the community, were a major force that enabled the Fond du Lac church group to officially acquire company status in the Wisconsin Conference,” Garbi says.

Garbi was a professional violinist before entering the pastoral ministry, and studied at the National Conservatory of Music in Paris, France, as well as at the Rubin Academy of Music in Jerusalem, Israel, so he was particularly impressed with Muranyi’s musical and evangelistic focus.



Arpad and Estie Muranyi

“[The Muranyis] contributed a permanent home for the church, quality church programs, delicious potlucks, and leadership,” he says. “It was delightful for me to get acquainted with these fellow Europeans and to play music with Arpad.”

ONGOING PLANS

The two houses on the complex are currently being renovated; the Muranyi family plans to eventually move into one of them. A local Baptist church rents the school building.

“I have to have rentals or I wouldn’t be able to afford all this,” says Muranyi, who is personally footing the bill for the project.

So has it all been worth it? Muranyi says “Yes!” “While moving to Fond du Lac and working on this project presented numerous challenges and unforeseen difficulties, we feel that God gives us many opportunities to meet and reach out to people whom we would have otherwise never met,” Muranyi says. “Music is a very powerful tool for reaching the souls of people. We pray and hope that God will use us for His purpose in all we do here.”

Sandra Blackmer is an assistant editor for *Adventist Review*.



AARON KITZO

Approval runs deep in the veins of human beings. It meets us at the crossroads of what we have become and what we can become. It is the fuel that helps us escape the gravity of our constant self-doubt and our steady wonder about self-worth. It propels us upward toward the sky. It shakes off the lead of our failures and eases our flight into new endeavors. It strengthens the muscles of our enthusiasm at the triumphs of others, and settles us into a deeper conviction that we are valuable. Always hungry for its renewing energy, we soak it in as the earth absorbs lightning bolts. Ever thirsty for its invigorating freshness, our hearts swell with joy as air expands when it rises higher and higher . . .

“Well done”—words we live for.

“BUT” CAN BE A PROBLEM

“Well done”—words to live for, words from Jesus’ lips, remembered from a story patterned on parables: the master gives each servant talents to invest while he is away. At his return, he will receive back his possessions with interest. Disrupting the symmetry of the story is the twice-mentioned adversative conjunction “but.” Its awkward conspicuousness invites me to deal with it first.

“But” is the third servant’s problem. We hear it

when he hides his talent (Matt. 25:18), and again when the master replies to him upon returning (verse 26). The third servant’s

voice brings a discordant note into the music of the story. What goes wrong?

The conversation between this servant and his master makes up almost half of the story, and is critical to understanding the story’s deeper issue. The slave’s attitude toward the master suggests some tension between the two. When his turn comes to give an account, he, unlike the other two servants, makes no initial reference to the amount received.¹ Openly, almost abrasively, he calls his master “a hard man.” Then he describes him in words of accusation over alleged unfairness, using two illustrations:² (1) “reaping where you did not sow”; (2) “gathering where you scattered no seed” (verse 24).³

One example will not do for him. His charge to

WORDS TO LIVE FOR

Guidance from Jesus on investment strategies

the master is: "You're tough and unfair, and I shouldn't have to do the work for you. Administering your goods is not my job."

The servant also invokes an element of fear, damning the master in a way he probably expects will work in his favor: the master's rough unfairness is so intimidating that he was paralyzed into inaction. He buried his entrusted talent to protect it. The implications of his accusations of harshness, unfairness, and intimidation are that (1) he should not be punished, because it wasn't his fault he did not earn anything; and (2) the master could do with some character improvement. Perhaps he should repent of being harsh and unfair; he would become a better master for it.

THE MASTER STANDS ACCUSED

This servant's style bears Lucifer's personal stamp. As his master is harsh, unfair, and fearsome, so Lucifer's God is mean and unworthy of service and obedience. The spirit of the third servant is the spirit of original cosmic rebellion. And as with Lucifer, his master now stands accused. How will he respond to the charge?

Unexpectedly for the denouncing servant, his master makes no effort to defend himself. Instead, he lets the accuser's words hit back like a boomer-



THE MASTER DOES NOT KEEP THE PROFIT FOR HIMSELF

ang: far from exonerating him, the servant's own words condemn his inaction as wicked and lazy (verse 26). Though the servant has tried to point accusing fingers at his master, his motives are unmasked by the discrepancy between what he knew he should do and what he did.

His choice to bury the talent was conscious and deliberate. He never intended to invest it. His laziness was not a matter of naïveté, but expresses the rebellion of a spirit that is hostile to whatever may be the master's interests. "The servant, as a self-seeker, separated his own interest from his lord's, and therefore reckoned his lord to be a self-seeker also."⁴ The wickedness and laziness with which he charged his master

were projections of his own character. Where the other two servants saw opportunity, the lazy one saw domination.

Ironically, the servant demonstrates his flawed perception of the master even while he protests to know him (verse 24). The roots of his selfishness have spread from the core of his heart to the pupils of his eyes. His vision and entire being are corrupted by the spirit of selfishness of Satan, who blamed God for a character he himself wore.

THE FAITHFUL ARE REWARDED

After rebuking the slothful servant, the master entrusts the unused talent to the servant who has 10. This suggests that the master has returned the 10 talents to the first servant and points to a principle of stewardship highlighted in his commendation of the good servants: "You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things" (verses 21, 23). The talents earned are back into the hands of the servants for further investment, and "the reward of the use of opportunities was a greater charge."⁵

Giving the sloth's talent to the holder of 10 also enacts a general stewardship principle: "For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he

will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away" (verse 29). The withdrawal of the talent is not a reactive, vengeful attitude. It

is an application of a general principle that guides the relationship between the master and his servants. This relationship is based on trust and loyalty.

Those who prove themselves trustworthy, those who invest their talents for further gain, will be given more. Those who do not prove worthy of trust not only will not receive more, but even what they have been given is taken away. It also shows that the master does not keep the profit for himself. His goal is not personal appropriation of what his servants earn. Rather, he wills to endow those under his authority with gifts and opportunities for making themselves useful in the service of others.

FAITHFUL SERVANTS SEE AND SEIZE OPPORTUNITY

In the end, the wicked servant is thrown into outer darkness, a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth. Matthew uses these metaphors to describe the final punishment of the wicked.⁶ The wicked servant loses his life as a result of his choice. His tragic fate provokes a question: How could eternity hang on the matter of investing a talent or not? Isn't salvation by grace?

Our answer, from a review of the master's and servants' attitudes, is that the deeper theme of this story is not money but loyalty—loyalty to the master demonstrated in obedience through faithful stewardship. The talents present the servants with an opportunity to manifest their loyalty and obedience to the master. Two of them see and seize the opportunity. The third servant proves disloyal and disobedient. The difference between the two kinds of responses is each servant's attitude toward the master.

At the beginning of the story we read that the kingdom of heaven is "like a man about to go on a journey, who called *his own* slaves and entrusted *his possessions* to them" (verse 14). The possessions, as well as the servants, belong to the master. The servants are therefore dependent, possessing nothing on their own. In their poverty and nothingness their master designs for them major opportunities for work, service, and development.

The talents given are a measure of the breadth of their master's trust. The value of one talent was equal to a laborer's wage for half of a lifetime!⁷ A common laborer would be paid one denarius (a penny) per day's work. It would take 6,000 days' wages for him to earn a talent.⁸ Thus every servant was entrusted with a considerable sum, from half a lifetime's earnings to more than would be earned in two lifetimes. Amazingly, the master calls these apparently monumental sums "a few things" (verses 21, 23).

Clearly, though, belonging to this master and being stewards of his goods is not something all servants cherished. As with Lucifer's fall, we don't have enough details to help us understand the servants' choices. And as with the first rebellion, more details would still not provide any clear or satisfactory explanation for why one servant manifested the spirit of Satan.

What we do know is that the loyalty of the two faithful servants effected proper stewardship of the

talents entrusted. For stewardship is decidedly more than an abstract concept that hovers over us Sabbath after Sabbath, reminding us to return our tithe and give our offerings. Stewardship is a lifestyle. It is the lifestyle of one who accepts God as a loving Maker and Savior. It is the lifestyle of one who accepts God as owner by creation and redemption.

Our perception of God affects our living at every level. If we see Him as good, we will be intentional about caring for all He entrusts to us: our body, our affections, our relationships, our material possessions, our time, our money—everything. Alternatively, a careless or selfish attitude about our gifts is more consistent with rejection of the biblical account of God as Creator of all things good, including ourselves and our fellow men and women. As the parable suggests, such a rejection could stem from a misunderstanding of God's character. As one writer succinctly puts it: "Grudge against Christ underlies all unfaithfulness in the use of spiritual gifts."⁹

JESUS WANTS TO SAY "WELL DONE"!

Practicing good stewardship is not about earning eternal life. It is about understanding what that eternal life is going to be like and choosing to live its joy and rewards from now on. It is the result of a profound understanding of who God truly is, longing to be like Him, and being transformed more and more into His likeness until He returns with the most beautiful reward on His lips: *Well done, good and faithful servant.*

This is approval that will be worth it then; and this is the joy of pleasing Him that should guide our every day between now and then. 📌

¹ Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew, Word Bible Commentary* (Dallas: Word Books, 1995), p. 735.

² John Peter Lange, *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), p. 444.

³ Scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard Bible*, copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

⁴ Lange, p. 444.

⁵ Philip A. Micklem, *Saint Matthew* (London: Methuen & Co., 1917), p. 240.

⁶ See Matthew 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51, and Hagner, p. 736.

⁷ Leander E. Keck, gen. ed., *The Gospel of Matthew, New Interpreter's Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), vol. 8, p. 453.

⁸ Hagner, p. 734.

⁹ Lange, p. 441.

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Coping With Stress and Anxiety

Q: I am health-conscious and female, and watch my diet very carefully. I exercise sporadically, but have never had a weight problem. I am excited as I observe the literal signs of the times; however, I have anxiety about last-day events that sometimes keeps me awake at night. I often have sweaty palms and tightness in my throat. Have you any advice for me?

A: We are indeed living in exciting—"grand and awful"—times! The news media reflect an end-time urgency and imminence of Christ's soon return. And yes, you are right, much of that which is so graphically portrayed is distressing and sometimes repulsive! It is difficult to fathom the cruel and inhumane acts perpetrated so widely and on such a large scale, and to think that we as human beings are capable of such deeds!

You do not mention your age, but if you are experiencing tightness in your throat at times, you should consult your physician. This could be a symptom of coronary heart disease and an equivalent of angina (sign of decreased blood supply to the heart muscle), which is usually experienced as chest discomfort or pain. Women tend to have what is called atypical (or not usual) angina. There are other causes, including stress, but cardiac disease must be excluded. At the same time it would be good to have a thyroid blood test done. A lump or tightness in the throat, also called *globus pharyngeus*, may be caused by a problem of coordination of the muscles involved in swallowing. As mentioned, this can be aggravated by stress.

It is good that you are careful

with your diet. A balanced vegetarian diet promotes physical and mental well-being—wholeness. In fact, the dietary counsels we have received as a church, if followed, will positively affect our emotional wellness as much as they will keep us physically healthy.

I am concerned that you exercise only sporadically. Daily exercise is a great way to promote mental health and emotional wellness. It has been shown that people who exercise regularly (at least five days a week, and optimally seven days a week) have less depression and anxiety. Regular exercise even reduces suicide rates. Exercise may also improve cognitive (thinking/memory) functions and decrease the progression of dementia, and even its onset. Physical activity also decreases the incidence of diabetes and helps maintain ideal

body weight.

If, after following all of the above, you are still struggling with anxiety over last-day events and the coming crisis, I would urge you to speak with your pastor, who may even refer you to a Christian counselor. Cognitive behavioral therapy can be very helpful in such settings. I have no doubt that you are already claiming God's many promises to give us peace. Please continue to do so, but seek the needed help as well.

Remember in all circumstances that our God, who is faithful, has promised: "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God" (Isa. 41:10).

Maranatha! 



I have no doubt that you are already claiming God's many promises to give us peace. Please continue to do so, but seek the needed help as well.

Peter N. Landless, a board-certified nuclear cardiologist, is director of the General Conference Health Ministries Department.

CLOSER LOOK



The Journey Home Melissa Otto

(Available on iTunes and at www.melissaotto.com).
Reviewed by Gerald A. Klingbeil, associate editor of *Adventist Review*.

I met Melissa Otto; her husband, Jason; and their young daughter Nyah from Down Under at a camp meeting on the South Island of New Zealand. I thoroughly enjoyed her acoustic songwriting style—she played very competently a guitar and a ukulele without any playback. If you like the sound of unplugged and engaging lyrics, this is definitely something for you. *The Journey Home* is her latest (2014) album, preceded by *Blue Sky* (2011) and *Opened* (2008).

Melissa started singing early with her siblings and parents, and the group became known in Australia as the Otto Family. In 2010 Melissa was awarded Best Christian Artist in the prestigious Music Oz awards and was also one of five nominees for best songwriter that same year.

The clarity of Melissa's voice and her unique melodies will engage your ears very quickly. However, it was the deeply spiritual and personal texts that made me listen—even after a late night of preaching. "When it all goes quiet, and I stop trying/To fill all the spaces, I remember/I hear a still small voice, from the one I know/Calling me

home, when it all goes quiet" calls followers of Jesus to become quiet and relearn the art of hearing God's love calling.

"Just You And Me" is an intimate love ballad reminding us that we need that safe place called family. I imagine that Melissa's husband, Jason, a lecturer at Avondale College, smiles every time he hears this love song. "Rise Again" starts off with a wonderfully arranged a capella anthem: "Do not boast over me my enemy/For my Father is the victor/Your darkness only makes Him brighter/He'll make me more than a conqueror/When I fall I will rise again." We are reminded of the real battle going on around us—where we often find ourselves center stage.

In "You'll Never Leave" we hear about a Daddy (with capital D) who watches over His children, even when "we keep performing to try to keep up." We can follow Melissa's ongoing conversation with God throughout the CD. Here is someone who asks deep questions and expresses doubts. "Why should I be afraid, because I have a Father who is with me all the way," however, is not just a nice line in "Why Should I" but rather a deeply held conviction helping us overcome doubt and pain.

The last song, "Can You Hear," is a worthy song to cap the CD. "Father, we could hear Your voice/Singing us through the night/Just the knowing of Your love/Gave us the courage to fight." In fact, that's a great way to end this review as well. Those interested in hearing the sweet melody of an unswerving commitment to God that sings us through the night will enjoy listening to this fellow traveler. By the way, I heard that Melissa and her young family are planning to come to the United States in 2016 for an extended concert tour. You won't want to miss hearing her sing "When It All Goes Quiet." 🎵

Check out samples of Melissa's music at:



What I Learned From Backyard Chickens

Every spring local feed stores in my town advertise “Backyard Chicken-raising 101” classes, right about the same time the adorable little puffballs arrive for sale. I’ve been intrigued, so out of curiosity I decided to attend. What I learned was fascinating.

Backyard chickens that either roam free or are kept in large, well-maintained pens with lots of space and access to outdoors repay their good care by producing truly superior-quality eggs. Compared to store-bought eggs, studies indicate that backyard chicken eggs: have one-third less cholesterol; are twice as high in omega-3 fatty acids; have seven times more beta-carotene; are truly fresh; and are much richer in color, boasting dark-orange yolks versus pale-yellow ones.

**HAPPY PEOPLE
ARE OFTEN
HEALTHIER
PEOPLE.**

The class instructor, Gretchen Anderson—author of *The Backyard Chicken Fight*—sparked chuckles when she told of giving a dozen of her chicken eggs to a neighbor, who promptly threw them out after the first crack.

“She had never seen an egg with an orange yolk before,” Anderson explained. “She thought they had gone bad.”

So I asked, “Why the difference?”

Her answer? “Happy chickens.”

Anderson laid out a stark contrast between the living conditions of factory-farmed chickens and those of backyard chickens. Well-cared-for chickens that are allowed to live in a way that’s natural and healthful are happy chickens, she said, and the results are obvious.

I then wondered, “Could the same be true for people? Would a *person’s* level

of happiness have as dramatic an effect on their own health as well?”


Studies abound indicating a strong connection between emotional and physical wellness. According to the University of Minnesota, for example, chronic stress from negative attitudes and feelings of helplessness and hopelessness can upset the body’s hormone balance and damage the immune system. And poorly managed or repressed anger is related to such health issues as hypertension, cardiovascular disease, digestive disorders, and infection.¹ Evidently, happy people are often healthier people.

Many, however, are not happy. Chronic stress from the myriad of hard knocks and hurdles that life throws at us takes a toll. Even people whom we would label as “well cared for” aren’t always happy; they’ve discovered that money, ease, and comfort—as inviting as they sound—don’t necessarily result in happiness.

So what’s the solution? As with everything else, it’s Jesus.

“A wise heart, molded by the Holy Spirit, . . . is the foundation of all true happiness,”² Ellen White writes. “You need to understand how to repose in God.”³

“Come to me . . . and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28), Jesus tells us, adding in John 14:27: “My peace I give you.”

As we prepare for the approaching “storm,” let us find health and happiness by resting and trusting in Jesus—and perhaps by raising a few backyard chickens! 

¹ www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/enhance-your-wellbeing/health/thoughts-emotions/how-do-thoughts-emotions-impact-health

² Ellen G. White, *Sons and Daughters of God* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1955), p. 298.

³ *Ibid.*

Sandra Blackmer is an assistant editor of *Adventist Review*.

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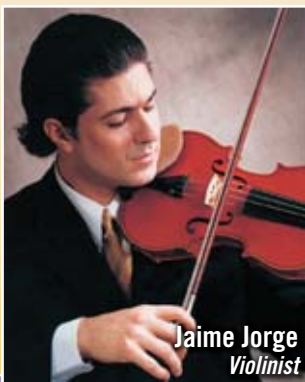
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