

# ADVENTIST REVIEW

APRIL 2016: LEARNING TO LOVE LIFE + SIMPLE  
STEPS FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH + LET'S  
CELEBRATE THE ENVIRONMENT + A LESSON  
IN PATIENCE + MAKING THE GRADE



# LIFE STORIES

THE FASCINATING WAYS GOD LEADS



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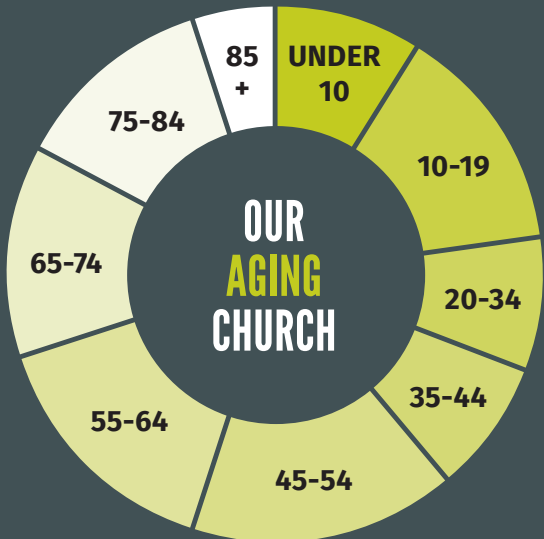
THE MOST SHARED STORIES ON [ADVENTISTREVIEW.ORG](http://ADVENTISTREVIEW.ORG) LAST MONTH:



- 1 Unprecedented 100,000 Baptisms Expected in Rwanda in May
- 2 International Women's Day Video - South American Division
- 3 Baptism Marks 150 Years Since the First Baptism in Switzerland
- 4 Adventist School Baptizes 97 Students in Papua New Guinea
- 5 To Serve the Sheikh or Observe the Sabbath

The following graph illustrates the age demographic reflected by the members of the North American Division.

(Source: North American Division Secretariat)



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BILL KNOTT



*"Of all the hours I spent as pastor there, that one haunts me most."*

## The Shadow Church

At first glance it looked like a Victorian sewing cabinet—a polished oak front with miniature drawers just the right size to hold collections of buttons, patterns, and spools of thread. Among the unused furniture in the church's back closet, it seemed a handsome, well-turned piece.

But the threads the cabinet held were living, and the patterns they revealed were ominous. Drawer after drawer held neatly typed and alphabetized cards for each person who had ever been a member of that congregation, then more than 100 years old. Generations of church families yielded to my scan: birthdates, baptisms, marriages, and deaths—all carefully recorded with a church clerk's yen for vital data.

I smiled to see the names and birthdates of my senior members: how had they aged so gracefully? But I also winced at the final entries made on dozens—hundreds—of small cards: MISSING; DROPPED FOR NON-ATTENDANCE; APOSTATIZED; DROPPED BY REQUEST.

An hour in the dim light of the storage closet made the sobering reality clear. Beyond the roster of the current church, whose names by then I knew by heart, lay a shadow church of former members five times its size, though never gathered in one spot. Accounting for the usual demographic data of my region—life

expectancy; job moves because of Rust Belt economics—I could quickly estimate a living population in our city of former or missing Seventh-day Adventists three times our current membership.

For every member I knew and visited, there were three others still living who had once been part of our church—not even counting those still “on the books” who never found their way to worship or to fellowship.

Of all the hours I spent as pastor there, that one haunts me most. In what other arena of our lives—business, medicine, education, or even (dare we say it?) friendship—would we tolerate such losses? Where else would we accept the disappearance of colleagues, companions, and even family members with the stolid equanimity that accompanies the disappearance of fellow believers?

Some of our coolness in the face of loss may itself be owing to the stories we tell each other. Didn't Jesus Himself say, *"Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it"* (Matt. 7:14)?\* For too many who understand themselves as part of God's end-time remnant, the expectation that they will be part of a dwindling number of the faithful makes tolerable what should normally cause tears, inspire compassion, and incite activity.

But Jesus told as many narratives of multiplication and

growth as He did of loss and deficit: why should our self-understanding as His disciples embrace only the latter? The shepherd wasn't satisfied with 99 still in the fold, nor the woman who could safely touch 90 percent of her wealth. The father's love went seeking both the prodigal among the pigs and the elder brother still at home. It's in God's nature never to settle in the face of loss, or be satisfied when some modest and righteous remnant chooses heaven.

As with the Lord, so with His church. It's time for Adventists in every congregation to begin a strong and systematic seeking of those no longer with us. The work begun in dusty closets and old records is fully as important as the time and treasure we commit to winning new disciples.

Apologies in hand, kind hearts and listening ears wide open, we join with Jesus in His never-ending work of reclamation. The names still buried in old clerk's reports, like dry bones in Ezekiel's vision, may yet live again. The hope they find, the heaven they gain, are real enough, and worthy of our finest effort.

The Great Reclaimer said it best: *"There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance"* (Luke 15:7).

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I am encouraged to read a Bible-based treatment about the immigrant/migrant situation facing so many countries of the world.

ANDREW ERICKSON, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

## SURVIVING AND THRIVING

Greetings to my “precious *Review* people!” When the change from a weekly magazine to a monthly one was announced, I was distraught. Now, some months late, I want you to know, I’ve survived. I’ve adjusted my reading rhythm, and the blessings continue to flow. Thank you! I value the variety, the depth, the insights, the attempts to make the gospel relevant, real, and relational. The rest is up to us and where we place our priorities. Thank you for accepting my (and others) pleas not to change, but forging ahead anyway, because you had a prayerful vision. I continue to love the *Adventist Review* (and *KidsView*), and praise God for the blessings I receive!

**Linda Steinke**

*Via e-mail*

## TIMELY REMINDER

Thank you for Gerald A. Klingbeil’s article “The Gift of the Stranger” (December 2015). I am encouraged to read a Bible-based treatment about the immigrant/migrant situation facing so many countries of the world.

I applaud those governments that are trying to respond in a humanitarian way. But the backlash from individuals both public and private I find frightening. May God give us grace—as individuals and as Christians—to do the right thing.

**Andrew Erickson**

*San Francisco, California*



## MRS. WHITE’S GREAT-GREAT-GREAT-GRANDSON

Thank you for sharing the story about Justin Torossian, the great-great-great-grandson of Ellen White ([www.adventistreview.org](http://www.adventistreview.org)). I have known the Kubrock family [Torossian’s grandparents] since 1958, when they came to Pennsylvania and his grandfather Daniel became my local pastor.

I have been trying to find out whatever happened to that lovely family. Pastor Kubrock helped to

finish our sanctuary, and performed the marriage of my brother in May 1961 in the newly finished sanctuary. Torossian looks so much like his grandfather Daniel. In 1964, the last time I saw his grandmother, Gladys, she looked exactly like Mrs. White.

**June Kaiser**

*Elizabethville, Pennsylvania*

## MUCH NEEDED

Anthony Kent’s “From Fear to Ecstasy” (December 2015) was a much-needed study. What a sermon! This will help some of us who are trying to understand, “Sometimes God needs us to get out of His way so that He can do what He has to do.” It did for me. His power is overwhelming for us finite beings. I can understand why fear might be experienced.

**Robert Rouillard**

*Lakewood, Washington*

## JESUS OUTSIDE SCRIPTURE

Andy Nash’s article “Jesus Outside Scripture” (September 2015) reminded me of my own discovery while studying for my degree from the University of London, which required a knowledge of history from



Satan knows he has but a short time and is determined to hurt the heart of God.

NATALIE DODD, CENTERVILLE, OHIO

ancient to modern times. Secular literature contained references to Jesus of Nazareth by the Jewish historian Josephus, and others. We can rest assured that the Jesus of the Bible was a real, historic human being.

**Linbrook Barker**  
*Riverside, California*

#### HOPE GROUNDED IN THE LORD

The November and December 2015 issues of *Adventist Review* carried news briefs regarding tragic deaths of several church members via plane, automobile, and militant gunfire. We pray the families have their hope grounded in the Lord's return as they have to experience the loss of their loved ones.

Satan knows he has but a short time and is determined to hurt the heart of God. Thank you also for the story of Albin Conrad (November 2015), which told of his loyalty and courage to stand true despite the cruel treatment by the military when he refused to work on the Sabbath.

**Natalie Dodd**  
*Centerville, Ohio*

## IN A FEW WORDS...

### IT'S STILL GOOD

Though I have subscribed to the *Adventist Review* since 1950, I don't recall ever receiving an issues that is as relevant to the times as the March issue is. It teaches "present truth" as far as I am concerned. Keep up the good work.

**Marwusa, via-email**

### GOOD NEWS TO SHARE!

I like the new *Adventist Review* size and look. I appreciate you putting it in plastic. It used to get torn in the mail. Thanks for good articles. My focus needs to be on Jesus Christ and His righteousness to save me. That's good news to share!

**Pamela Cross via e-mail**

### A THOUGHTFUL CRITIQUE

I am a longtime subscriber of the *Review*. I have received a few copies, and I'm writing to give you my impression of the present format.

I have good eyesight, and read several magazines. The size [of the magazine] is OK. The print size is OK, but it would be better if it were just a little larger. Two-column articles and one-column articles are OK. But three columns are "uncomfortable," especially if the adjoining page is "busy." So I often don't read them. Some pages are a bit chopped up, but that tends to be the style in magazines these days. I guess I prefer plainer pages overall.

I enjoy most of the articles, especially Andy Nash and others.

**Eleanor Morrison**  
*Citrus Heights, California*

## YOUR TURN

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

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# NEWS



Jerry and Janet Page, from the General Conference Ministerial Association, used this table as their pulpit to speak to those assembled in Kibuye, Rwanda, in February. PHOTO: JERRY PAGE

## 100,000 BAPTISMS PLANNED FOR RWANDA

**MASS BAPTISM WOULD BE LARGEST IN CHURCH'S 153-YEAR HISTORY.**

BY ANDREW MCCHESEY

A series of evangelistic initiatives organized by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in recent years is expected to reach new heights in Rwanda in May with the largest mass baptism in the church's 153-year history.

Thousands of local pastors and church members are giving Bible studies, sharing health tips, and engaging in community service in the run-up to two weeks of evangelistic

meetings at 2,200 sites across Rwanda. The meetings will culminate on Sabbath, May 28, with the anticipated 100,000 baptisms, church leaders said.

Duane McKey, a coordinator of the Rwanda event and director of the Adventist Church's Personal Ministries Department, said even 100,000 baptisms, which church leaders had initially projected for Rwanda, would represent a

milestone for the church. "I've never seen 100,000 baptisms before," he said in an interview. "It would be thrilling to see that many."

Rwanda is the latest country where the General Conference has placed a renewed emphasis on large-scale evangelism. In May 2014 more than 10,000 people were baptized in the Philippine capital, Manila, and other places following months of Bible studies and community programs and two final weeks of evangelistic meetings. A similar effort unfolded in Zimbabwe in May 2015, resulting in 30,000 baptisms, and the U.S. city of San Antonio last summer, resulting in several hundred baptisms.

## “There’s nothing like preaching the message and inviting people to accept the message because our own hearts are touched in doing so.”

The Zimbabwe baptisms represent the largest group baptism in the church’s history. The Adventist Church, founded with just 3,500 members in 1863, has nearly 19 million members worldwide.

While most of the Rwanda meetings will be led by local members, employees of the Silver Spring, Maryland-based General Conference are especially encouraged to participate this year, McKey said. “It’s an opportunity for people at the General Conference to model what we hope will happen around the world with the world church,” he said. “There’s nothing like preaching the message and inviting people to accept the message because our own hearts are touched in doing so.”

ASI, a supporting ministry of the Adventist Church, is supplying 2,500 sermon presentations on DVD and in printed form. The General Conference’s Total Member Involvement Department, which is overseen by McKey, is providing 1,000 DVD players. Not all 2,200 sites have electricity and are able to use DVD players.

Meanwhile, 40,000 Voice of Prophecy Bible study lessons are being distributed in the run-up to the May meetings. Many lessons are going to small group leaders only, allowing each lesson to go further, McKey said.

Thousands of Rwandan church members flocked to prayer and revival meetings led by Jerry Page, secretary of the General Con-

ference’s Ministerial Association, and his wife, Janet Page, associate secretary, at each of Rwanda’s seven conferences, missions, and fields during a 15-day visit in February.

“We have been saying that in Rwanda there is a receptivity to hard work, Bible studies, and involving

many people in the methods of evangelism that work here,” Jerry Page said. “However the real greatest need still is a revival of true godliness among God’s remnant people that will lead to results far beyond what anyone humanly can envision.”

The Adventist Church has about

## WILSON PRAYS AT NEW CHURCH IN IRAQ

**ADVENTIST LEADER ENCOURAGES ERBIL CONGREGATION TO REMAIN FAITHFUL.**

BY ANDREW MCCHESEY

**T**ed N. C. Wilson, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, prayed at the construction site of a new church in Iraq as he made a weekend visit aimed at encouraging Adventist believers living 20 miles (30 kilometers) from Islamic State-occupied territory.

Wilson, accompanied by his wife, Nancy, and a small group of church leaders, visited the city of Erbil, the bustling capital of Iraq’s autonomous region of Kurdistan. Kurdish armed forces vigilantly guard the region’s borders, rebuffing militant advances and creating a refuge for hundreds of thousands of people displaced by violence elsewhere in Iraq and in Syria.

Wilson praised Kurdish authorities for preserving religious freedom and urged the Erbil Adventist Church’s small but growing congregation to remain faithful. “God is calling us to come into his church, His ark of safety,” Wilson said after noting that Noah’s ark probably came to rest on mountains north of Erbil.

“No matter what happens this coming week, never give up your faith,” he said in a Sabbath sermon.

In the afternoon Wilson visited the gray concrete shell of the new Adventist church, a three-level, 4,305-square-foot (400-square-meter) building that will also house a pastor’s family and a small school. He paused to pray in the main sanctuary, which will have seating for about 100 people.

The Adventist Church, established in Iraq in 1924, formed





### MEET SAU'S NEW PRESIDENT

Southern Adventist University has chosen David C. Smith to succeed Gordon Bietz as president. Smith worked as professor and chair at Southern's English Department for 17 years, leaving in 1998 to serve as

president of Union College for 13 years. He returned in 2011 as senior pastor for Southern's campus church. Before becoming president, Bietz also served as pastor of the Collegedale church.

645,000 church members in Rwanda, which has a population of 12 million.

The projected baptisms in Rwanda would be triple the number witnessed in Zimbabwe. It isn't a matter of competition, as McKay said, noting that it would be "pretty

difficult" to match either figure at the General Conference's next major evangelistic event, scheduled for Romania in 2017. Although Romania has one of the largest Adventist populations in Europe, with 66,500 members, the Adventist Church has found it a challenge to baptize

new members on the increasingly secularized continent.

After Romania, the General Conference will hold similar evangelistic initiatives in Japan in 2018, India in 2019, and Papua New Guinea and the U.S. city of Indianapolis in 2020. ▀



Ted Wilson (center), visits the new Adventist church in Erbil, Iraq, currently under construction. He is accompanied by his wife, Nancy; George Yousif (left), and Tibor Szilvasi (right). MENA

in Erbil in 2012 when two families decided to worship together, said George Yousif, leader of the Adventist Church in Iraq. The church has since grown to 25 members, a mix of Iraqis and expatriates and many guests.

The church currently meets in a rented building, but its growth prompted church leaders to begin construction of the new building in October 2014. Liquidity problems

in Iraq's banking system have indefinitely delayed the church's scheduled opening, but Wilson, who was on a week-long tour of the Middle East, arrived at the invitation of local Adventist leaders anyway.

"People are more important than buildings," Tibor Szilvasi, executive secretary of the Adventist Church's Middle East and North Africa Union, said in introducing

Wilson before the sermon. "We are glad that Elder Wilson came."

The Adventist Church, which has about 100 members in Iraq, has struggled in recent years in the country of 30 million people. Suicide bombers have twice targeted the Adventist church in Iraq's capital, Baghdad, but no one was injured, and property damage was minimal.

In Mosul, located a short distance from Erbil, the Adventist Church has two church buildings, but doesn't know their status since the Islamic State seized the city and turned it into its capital in Iraq. Yousif said the church hoped to reclaim the buildings one day.

Wilson was the first Adventist Church president to visit Iraq since 1990, when Robert Folkenberg attended a special session of Christian churches in Baghdad.

Wilson also visited two camps for internally displaced Christians on the outskirts of Erbil. One camp has restrooms built by the Adventist Church in Iraq with the help of a donation from Adventist Frontier Missions, while the other has a children's center that ADRA began to operate in January. ▀



Brad and Kandus Thorp report from the General Conference Session in San Antonio, Texas, in July 2015." HOPE CHANNEL

## HOPE CHANNEL'S PRESIDENT STEPS ASIDE

**BRAD THORP SAYS THE HOLY SPIRIT GREW THE GLOBAL NETWORK.**

BY ANDREW MCCHESENEY

**B**rad Thorp, who has steered the Seventh-day Adventist Church's Hope Channel from its origins as a NET satellite uplink in the 1990s to becoming a global television network, is stepping aside as president.

Hope Channel's board of directors set up a search committee with the goal of recommending a successor on April 11, 2016, church leaders said. That date falls during the Spring Meeting, an annual, week-long business meeting of the Adventist world church at its headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland. Hope Channel's main offices occupy a south wing of the headquarters.

Thorp told a meeting of Adventist world church leaders in late February that he had led Hope Channel to the best of his ability over the past 22 years and wanted his successor to take it to the next level, according to those present.

He also likened Hope Channel to being a fourth child in his family, saying he had raised the channel and, like with his own three adult sons, was ready to let it go. "Having been with Hope Channel from the beginning and sharing in all the stages of growth, we feel like Hope Channel is one of our children," Thorp told the *Adventist Review*.

His wife, Kandus, Hope Channel's vice president for international development, added: "Hope Channel has never been 'ours,' but we have had the sacred privilege of nurturing and developing it, and God has abundantly blessed. We have witnessed so many incredible miracles and answers to prayer. It is a humble privilege to be a part in this ministry."

Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the Adventist Church, said Brad and Kandus Thorp's commitment to take "a small initial idea of part-time satellite broadcast and turn it into an extensive 24/7 international television network is a testimony of hard work, determination, creativity, and complete trust in God's power to miraculously open doors for the proclamation of the three angels' messages around the world."

Thorp, a native of the Canadian province of British Columbia, first got involved in religious television programming in 1993 when the world church leaders asked him to coordinate NET 95, a satellite uplink that ended up ushering the church's public evangelism meetings into the digital era. The hugely popular NET 95 beamed presentations by evangelist Mark Finley from Chattanooga, Tennessee, into church

sanctuaries across the United States and elsewhere in 1995.

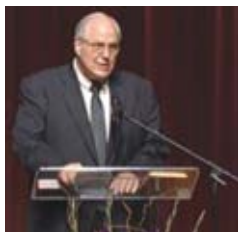
The next year Finley led NET 96 from Forest Lake Academy near Orlando, Florida. More than 1,500 churches participated in North America, and an additional 2,000 churches were involved in other parts of the world.

The next major series—NET 98, which featured Andrews University pastor Dwight Nelson speaking from Berrien Springs, Michigan—left an enormous impression on Thorp. "This is the closest to the day of Pentecost that I have ever seen," he said, referring to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit depicted in Acts 2:1-13. "Amazing! In NET 98 we had 40 translators simultaneously translating Dwight Nelson in our global broadcast. The Holy Spirit's presence in those rooms was incredible."

By 2010 the NET events had contributed to more than 2 million baptisms around the world, Thorp said. The Adventist Church has nearly 19 million members.

After a number of successful NET events, thousands of churches found themselves equipped with often-idle satellite equipment and began calling for full-time broadcasts, Thorp said.

The Adventist Church selected the name "Hope Channel" in 2002, and the first full-time channels began to broadcast in 2003. Today Hope Channel's 43 full-time channels broadcast in 41 languages. Six more channels are in development. ▀



### SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS

The Charles Elliott Weniger Society recognized former General Conference treasurer Robert E. Lemon and two other leaders with its 2016 award for their contributions to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

## NEWS BRIEFS

1



**IN A FIRST**, doctors at Loma Linda University Children’s Hospital successfully reimplanted a portion of a 2-year-old girl’s face after she was attacked by a dog. The procedure, which took five hours of intensive work under a surgical microscope, is unprecedented for a patient so young.

2



**NINETY-SEVEN STUDENTS** have been baptized in Papua New Guinea after their Seventh-day Adventist school decided to offer a year of Bible studies. The students from the Kama Adventist Primary School are 12 to 16 years old.

3



**KENYA’S PRESIDENT**, Uhuru Kenyatta, commended the Adventist Church for helping transform the African country during a speech at the inauguration of the West Kenya Union Conference headquarters. “You have uplifted communities, empowered our citizens, and built our nation,” he said at a ceremony attended by 3,000 people.

4



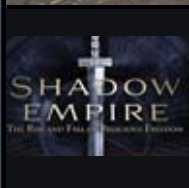
**THE FIRST ADVENTIST SCHOOL** in East Timor is seeking student missionary teachers after an unexpected surge in enrollment. The Timor-Leste Adventist International School had planned to enroll about a dozen children when it opened last September, but now has 35 students. For more information, visit: [tais.edu.tl/support](http://tais.edu.tl/support).

5



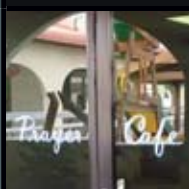
**ADRA PROVIDED \$8 MILLION** in food supplies to more than 100,000 people displaced by violence in eastern Ukraine last year and is continuing its relief efforts as an uneasy calm settles over the region. The Ukrainian branch of ADRA, working in partnership with the United Nations’ World Food Programme, distributed the food to internally displaced people from Ukraine’s Donetsk and Lugansk regions.

6



**THE VOICE OF PROPHECY** is repositioning itself to promote local congregations as a point of contact for listeners, beginning with a four-day streaming evangelistic series. The media ministry will host “Shadow Empire,” designed for viewing in local Adventist churches, beginning April 28.

7

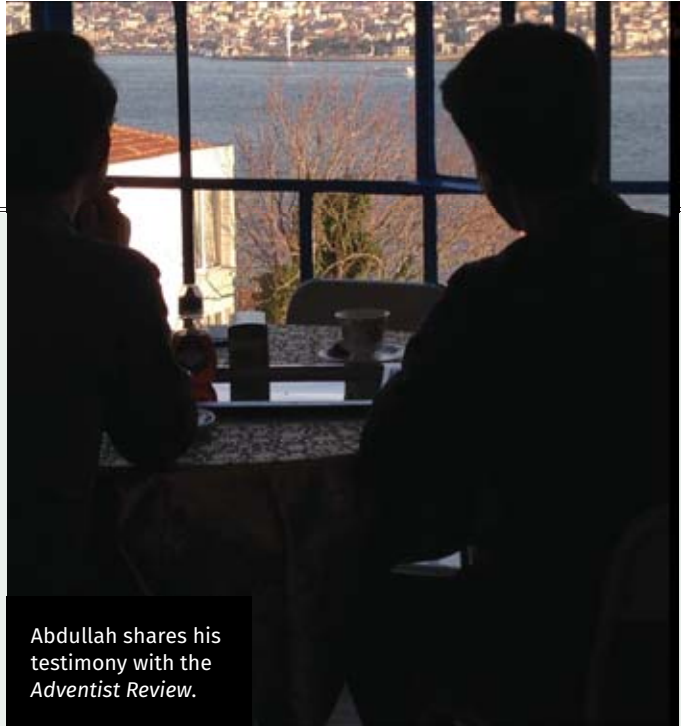


**A NEW CAFÉ OPENED** by Adventist believers on the U.S. Virgin Island of St. Thomas is becoming a hot spot at a popular strip mall. The only item on the menu: prayer. People can sign in, have someone pray for them, and write prayer requests to be placed in a prayer box at the prayer café, located on the third floor of Foster’s Plaza.

# I HAD TO FLEE A MUSLIM COUNTRY

**SATAN IS ON THE ATTACK.**

BY ABDULLAH, AS TOLD TO ANDREW MCCHESENEY



Abdullah shares his testimony with the *Adventist Review*.

**A** friend surprised me three years ago by disclosing something I never expected to hear. When we met one day, he exclaimed, “I have a very good feeling!”

“Why?” I asked.

“I feel like a newborn, innocent baby,” he said. “

“Why do you have such a feeling?” I said.

“Because two days ago I was baptized.”

“Oh,” I said. “I have been to such a church.”

Several years earlier a group of my countrymen had met my wife and me on the street while we were on vacation abroad. They gave us a Bible and invited us to visit their church.

We didn’t believe in God, but we weren’t atheists. My wife and I were curious to know about Jesus Christ, so we went to the church. But we were not impressed. The

men kissed one another at the door. The worshippers walked backward into the rented hall, which was filled with icons and idols. It was all new to us.

But my newly baptized friend said his church was nothing like any church I had ever seen. He said his church followed the Bible, and its beliefs and doctrine were different from other denominations.

I wanted to learn more. I felt I needed something, and hoped that God would lead me in the right way.

My friend gave me contact information for a Seventh-day Adventist pastor.

I immediately called the pastor and asked if my wife and I could study the Bible with him.

“Yes, of course,” he said.

## SHARING MY HOPE

My wife and I studied with the pastor for nearly a month. I was





## MISSION ADJUSTMENT

Christian Record Services is implementing a restructuring plan intended to help it overcome heavy financial losses and maintain its ability to fulfill its mission. The board's decision

to eliminate jobs and end field operations and print production, with the exception of material published in braille, was painful but necessary, said Daniel R. Jackson, board chair and North American Division president.

attracted to the Adventist lifestyle of a healthy diet and no smoking or drinking.

The pastor asked if we were ready for baptism. We said "yes" and were baptized in secret a short time later. People who are baptized are often arrested by the authorities.

Just a few months after being baptized, I began taking biblical materials and Ellen White books to various cities. I also gave Bible studies and led lifestyle seminars, while holding on to my job in the private sector. Because of the need for secrecy, it is often hard to know who is a believer and who isn't.

Once I was eating at a café and overheard the waiter, a relative of mine, ask a group of foreign tourists if they could tell him anything about Jesus. I pulled my relative aside and whispered: "I can do better than that. Would you like a Bible?"

He was surprised and asked if I was a Christian.

I gave him a Bible, and he read it with great interest. Today he is a member of the Adventist Church.

## SOMETHING GOES WRONG

I'm not sure what went wrong, but I know Satan is on the attack in every possible way.

For some reason, the authorities started calling me about six months after I was baptized. They asked my wife and me to come to their offices. They asked me to come by myself. They asked if my

parents were Jews. I don't know how, but they knew I kept the Sabbath.

One day they told me: "You know English well. You can help us. We want you to work for us." They asked me to keep an eye on my work colleagues.

At first I thought they were looking for a spy, because they asked if any had any shown an interest in nuclear technology. I said, "No."

Things got worse. They approached me on the street one evening instead of calling me to go to their offices. They asked a

"What's the problem if people become Christians?" I asked.

The man spoke at length about house churches, where many Christians worship in my country. He seemed to know everything about them.

## WHY I FLED

An Adventist friend heard about the authorities' sharp increase in interest in my activities and advised me to leave the country as soon as possible. He had been arrested and tortured for several weeks.



**PEOPLE WHO ARE DISCOVERED TO HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED ARE OFTEN ARRESTED BY THE AUTHORITIES.**



lot of questions. I didn't want to lie, so I answered their questions with questions. When one of them asked whether I had been baptized, I said, "What does it mean to be baptized?" The man explained everything that could be said about baptism, facts I knew very well. He obviously knew a lot about what was going on.

"Many people are interested in Christianity and Jesus Christ. We don't want this to continue," he told me.

So I left my homeland. I don't know what's going to happen next. I'd like to further my education while I continue to pray for the people of my country. Please pray for us, and for the many people in my country who hunger and thirst to know more about Jesus. ▀

*Abdullah, a Seventh-day Adventist, was forced to flee his homeland in the Middle East. To protect his safety, we have changed his name and we are not identifying his country. —Editors*



Anna read to the ill Syrian refugee, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!"

# TEACHING MUSLIMS THE POWER OF JESUS' NAME

**ADVENTISTS SPEAK ABOUT OVERCOMING THEIR FEARS OF SHARING JESUS.**

The refugee approached Anna with worried wrinkles etched across her face.

Zada confided that she was suffering significant health problems that caused hard lumps to form just under her skin. The lumps came and went, and the doctor said they weren't an issue. But a large, painful lump had recently formed near her heart, and she was afraid it could prove deadly. "I haven't told my kids about the lumps," Zada said. "Can we pray about it?"

Anna, who directs a Seventh-day Adventist "center of influence" in the Middle East, began to pray silently. She had long guarded her speech with Muslim refugees, but now she saw an opportunity to speak about the power of Jesus' name.

Should she take it?

Anna and Zada agreed to meet that evening at Zada's home. "As I was going through the day, I thought this was a really great opportunity, because we were going

to pray about something very specific," Anna said in an interview at her center of influence. "Maybe I should use this opportunity to have a little Bible study about praying in Jesus' name."

A center of influence is a place used by the Adventist Church to connect with a local community. Centers can feature a variety of activities, including lifestyle education, bookstores, reading rooms, and restaurants, depending on a local community's needs. Because of the delicate nature of her work, the *Adventist Review* is not identifying Anna's center of influence or the country in which it is located. Names also have been changed in this report.

## PRAYING IN JESUS' NAME

Zada and her three daughters welcomed Anna when she arrived. Anna cautiously asked whether they could have a Bible study together.

"Yes, sure," Zada said, as Anna recalled.

Anna opened her Bible to the Acts 3 story of the apostle Peter passing by the lame man at the Temple gate. When asked for money, Peter replied, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6, ESV).<sup>\*</sup> The man got up and entered the Temple with Peter, "walking and leaping and praising God" (verse 8, ESV).

Anna then asked Zada: "What do you think about that? Can we pray in Jesus' name? Would that be a problem?"

"Sure, but why would you think that that's a problem?" Zada said. "We pray in Muhammad's name."

Anna was speechless. She remembered her fears. Yet she also saw a new opportunity.

"So you have been praying in Muhammad's name for many years and you still have this problem?" she said.

"Yes, yes," Zada said.

"So why don't we try something different and pray in Jesus' name?"

Zada agreed.

All five people in the room prayed: Anna, Zada, and her three daughters.

The next morning Anna asked Zada how she felt.

Zada exclaimed: "This was the first time in a week that I slept the whole night without any pain; and I could breathe!"

A few days later Anna again asked Zada about the lumps.

"Every night I have been praying in Jesus' name as I run my hands up and down my body from top to bottom, and I've had no problems," she said.

Anna was thrilled. In the interview she stated that her fears about mentioning Jesus proved unfounded.

"Many times the barriers we have are barriers we create, not barriers that are actually there," she said.

## PRAY FOR PERFECT TIMING

Anna's realization about being more open about her faith was echoed by other Adventist believers interviewed by the *Adventist Review* during an extended visit to the Middle East in February.

Adventists do need to be sensitive and prayerful as they develop friendships, but they shouldn't live in fear, said Homer Trecartin, president of the Adventist Church's Middle East and North Africa Union.

"Each person we encounter is a unique situation," Trecartin said. "Some just want to argue, and that rarely accomplishes anything. Some have a heart hungering for something, but don't know what. We need to pray for the Holy Spirit to guide us in just what to say and when so that their hearts will be touched and not turned away."

He underscored the importance of building relationships, especially in the Arab world.

"When people know that we love them and are becoming a trusted friend, they are open to hear about who we love and what influences our lives," he said. "There is power in the Word of God. As they hear it from the lips of one they have grown to love and trust, their hearts are opened to the message. May God give us the opportunity to become a trusted friend and then the perfect timing to share what and who is so special to us."

## POWER IN THE WORD

Linda, a former atheist from a European country, shared a story similar to Anna's. She lived for a year in the Middle East without mentioning Jesus' name to any Muslims. She was also reluctant to cite Jesus' Word, the Bible. While Muslims revere the Quran, many view the Bible as an error-filled text.

"We were really too scared. When we hear the word 'Muslim,' we

freeze," Linda said. "But it's all in our heads, perhaps because of the media."

She said she has come to understand that Muslims are "ordinary people like us."

"I was an atheist, so I can see now that they have the same longings I had," she said. "We all want something better."

One person who wanted something better was Abbas, a Syrian refugee who expressed deep sadness about his life. His wife had tried to commit suicide twice, and his eldest son had joined a street gang.

While visiting his home, Linda told Abbas that it wasn't only what he ate but also what he thought about that affected his health. She read aloud Paul's words in Philipians 4:8: "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (ESV).

As Linda prepared to go, Abbas repeated the Bible verse to her.

"This is so plain," he said. "Now I am going to think about these things."

Linda said Abbas' sadness has lifted, and his family's home life has significantly improved in recent months. She said she was glad that she had taken the risk of reading from the Bible. "As a church we are generally very careful when it comes to Islam," she said. "But I have found that God's Word has power. People hear a power that they cannot deny when you share a verse or a story. People accept it because it touches their hearts and lives." 🍀

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



### CROSSING THE FINISHING LINE

Teenie Finley, 71, ran her second marathon in as many years to raise the last \$75,000 needed to construct the Living Hope Seventh-day Adventist Community

Church, a \$4.5 million church and evangelism center that she and her husband, evangelist Mark Finley, are constructing in Haymarket, Virginia.

## ADVENTIST PHYSICIST HELPS FIND GRAVITATIONAL WAVES

A CONVERSATION WITH ANDREWS UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR TIFFANY SUMMERSCALES

BY ANDREW MCCHESENEY

**A** Seventh-day Adventist is on the international team that made worldwide headlines by announcing the first detection of gravitational waves, a discovery that promises to open a new era in astronomy.



Tiffany Summerscales

Tiffany Summerscales, an associate physics professor at Andrews University, assisted in the research by the LIGO Collaboration that detected gravitational waves caused by the collision of two black holes a billion light-years from Earth. The discovery, published in the journal *Physical Review Letters* in February, gives scientists a new tool to explore the universe, Summerscales said in an interview.

"I like to think of gravitational waves as being the true 'music of the spheres,'" she said. "The LIGO detectors are the radios that we have built so that we can hear that music. So far we have gotten just

the first note—well, chirp, actually—but we know there is more that we will hear as we learn to tune our radios better."

Summerscales, a 1999 graduate of Andrews University, started working with the LIGO Collaboration's team of physicists while studying for her doctorate at Penn State University in Pennsylvania. She spoke about the significance of the discovery with *Adventist Review*.

### What exactly was your contribution to this project?

I have been a member of the LIGO Collaboration for the past 15 years or so. This is the group of people who help with the design and improvements of the detectors, analyze the data they produce, and do science with that data.

Specifically, I have worked on two kinds of projects. My students and I are a part of a team that works on the development and testing of one of the computer algorithms that analyzes the data and tries to characterize the gravitational wave signals that are found. We also participate in education and public outreach activities.

### What does the discovery of the gravitational waves mean to you personally?

It is very exciting. All of us in the

collaboration have been working toward this moment for a long time, some for decades more than I have. It took a long time to make the detectors sensitive enough to measure these faint ripples from space. Now that we have measured them, we can become the gravitational wave astronomers that we have always wanted to be. Using gravitational waves to investigate the universe's mysteries is going to be great. I am hoping there will be surprises.

### What does this discovery mean for Adventists?

Since Adventists are human, it means we have a new kind of astronomy to learn more about the universe. I find learning more about the universe to be very inspiring since it contains echoes of God's greatness.

### Expanding on that thought, how do you see God's hand in your work?

Space is vast, awesome, and jaw-droppingly beautiful. (Just think of your favorite Hubble photos.) Of course, on a daily basis I spend even more time working with students. There is a lot of opportunity there to see God working in their lives and growing them into young adults with great potential to impact the world positively. 🍀



**ALSO IN THIS SECTION:**

- » CHINESE BUDDHIST DAUGHTER
- » COMMUNIST PARTY SON
- » NOW OR NEVER
- » WHY GOD SENT ME TO GUAM

# DISCOVER

**I wondered if God even existed.  
And if He did, what kind of God  
would give people cancer? I had  
many more questions about other  
topics, such as heaven and the  
meaning of life in general.**

**HE FOUND ME, P. 20**

# HE FOUND ME

*How Christ came into my life and never left.*

BY GLEN GOHLKE

I was living a very average, normal American life. I grew up in the central part of lower Michigan; my family were Christmas/Easter Christians. My mother was raised Catholic and my dad was Lutheran, though we were never consistent churchgoers of either faith. There were rare appearances at Vacation Bible School during the summer, a visit to a friend's or relative's church, or a funeral, but we had very little knowledge of the Bible or God.

## SCHOOL DAYS WERE HAPPY DAYS

Sports occupied my developing years. I played organized sports most summers through grade school and all year long during junior high and high school. In fact, I was a pretty good football player and really excelled in baseball. Accomplishing goals through teamwork may be one of the most rewarding life skills I ever acquired.



The author and his wife, Karen, visit with friends in Estes Park, Colorado in 1985, two years after Glen's brother, Bobby, died.

## He was there, and He knew I was hurting.

My grades were not the strongest, and coupled with limited family resources, it became apparent that college would probably not be in the plans for me. The possibility of a sports scholarship was on the table early on, but an injury in my junior year of high school put that dream to bed. Life after high school would be a little challenging, but I believed it could work out. My dad had been an hourly factory worker his entire life, and he did fine. So with that mentality I finished high school by giving in to peer pressure and started drinking, smoking, and experimenting with drugs.

### ALCOHOL WAS STANDARD FARE

Where I came from, drinking alcohol was not only accepted but encouraged. Going out to a bar on your eighteenth birthday to have a beer with your dad was not only an honor but a rite of passage. Social drinking and smoking is still so widespread that many people live for the weekends. Sadly enough, most of those who inherited this lifestyle are empty inside and don't know anything else.

Life in my mid-20s went pretty well. I had a steady job at a large printing company and made good enough money to consider marrying my steady girlfriend, Karen. I had an older brother who had recently gotten out of the Marines, and a brother and sister three and seven years younger, respectively. My parents were both alive, and we all lived in the same area. We got together to share meals on occasion, and things for the most part were pretty good. Then we received the shock of our lives.

### THINGS CAN TURN SOUR QUICKLY

My younger brother had been working out of the country for a number of months and started getting really bad headaches. Shortly after he returned to Michigan, he had a large tumor removed from his brain and was diagnosed with brain cancer. The doctor said they got most of it, but couldn't get it all. With radiation and chemotherapy he might live six to 12 months. The

following days, weeks, and months were tough. I often took Bobby to his treatments. We even lived together for a short time, and I wanted him to be the best man at my wedding.

I remember wishing I had some answers for him. I was his big brother, but I had nothing to offer. So a close friend of mine set up a meeting with a Presbyterian minister to talk about things. When the minister asked Bobby why he thought he got cancer, he replied that God gave him cancer because He had a better job for him to do. The minister agreed that this was a good possibility and left it at that. It sounded comforting, and Bobby seemed to be at peace. All I could do is be supportive. Bobby died September 25, 1983, 20 days before our wedding. He was just 23 years old.

My bride, Karen, and I settled in Edenville, Michigan, where we found a small A-frame home on a lake, not far from our hometown. However, my experience with Bobby began to wear on me. My brother's idea that God had a better job for him haunted me to the point where I became angry at God. In fact, I wondered if God even existed. And if He did, what kind of God would give people cancer? I had many more questions about other topics, such as heaven and the meaning of life in general. Unfortunately, alcohol, tobacco, and drugs became a bigger part of my therapy as their use became abuse.

The next six years were filled with ups and downs. For the most part, Karen and I were happy, even with some struggles. Karen was concerned about my level of substance abuse, while I denied having a problem. But I was really hurting. I missed my brother and I tried to speak with him, but there was no reply.

### GOD KNOWS WHERE YOU ARE

Even though I denied God at the time, He was there, and He knew I was hurting. One day, after a late night of work followed by drinking with coworkers, Karen told me we had received a *Signs of the Times* magazine in the mail. I had no





Karen and Glen pose with their son, Branden, after his marriage to Vivian Dye on September 13, 2015.

An elderly man came to our door that Tuesday, looking somewhat unkempt with a dirty overcoat, a ripped brown paper bag, and an armful of books.

response until she said it came with a card to send in for free Bible studies. She wanted to send it in. I didn't care.

I made up some work-related excuse so I could miss the first night of studies. Karen said two elderly men came to study with her and left some additional study guides. They would return the following Tuesday, and I reluctantly agreed to be there.

An elderly man came to our door that Tuesday, looking somewhat unkempt with a dirty overcoat, a ripped brown paper bag, and an armful of books. His name was Paul, and he came alone on this second night. He told us he wanted to begin with the book of Daniel, his favorite book of the Bible. Reaching into his brown paper bag, Paul pulled out this statue of a metal man that looked like a child's toy. Amazingly, this metal man served as



a great visual aid as we began reading the book of Daniel together.

Paul gave us a great history lesson that night that grabbed my heart and mind, as he showed us the correlation between the Bible and history. My wife and I were both fascinated and actually looked forward to our next visit, when we'd discuss Daniel 7. After a few weeks Paul invited us to a Revelation Seminar. We agreed to postpone our personal studies to attend the meetings.

### STEP BY STEP

I have to admit, some nights I just didn't want to go. What we thought might be a weeklong commitment turned into several weeks. Working all day, rushing to eat dinner, then making it to the meetings on time was a challenge. But we persevered and learned more about the true character of God and His love for humanity, how He cared so much for each and every person, even me. I felt my heart melting as I learned about what Jesus had done for me, and how the Ten Commandments are like a mirror that shows us sin in our lives. Then I learned about what happens to people when they die. I came to understand that Bobby was not in heaven watching his family suffer, nor was he burning for eternity. Our God is a loving God and a righteous judge.

The next night Karen and I went forward during the altar call! Although we weren't too sure what the next steps would be, we were willing to go forward. I felt God had taken me light-years ahead of where I had been just a few months before. But I still had to get rid of a lot of baggage. After everything God had done for me, I had to clean myself up. Feeling like a hypocrite and unworthy of the blessings I had been given, I began to purge myself of those bad habits that gripped me.

When I shared with my parents some of the truths we had learned, I didn't receive a lot of support. They had no knowledge of Seventh-day Adventists, and they thought we were joining some cult. This made things more difficult, as I was already going through so many changes. I knew what my parents wanted, what my wife wanted, and what God wanted. But what did Glen want? Glen wanted to do the right thing. But the devil was busy; he was using those old habits to

plant seeds of doubt and unworthiness in my mind.

### REAL CHANGE


After the meetings ended, we did not join the church right away. There were some things we felt we needed to work through first. We were soul searching—with family, friends, Sabbath, and other obstacles to work through. We were convinced, but not fully convicted. My substance abuse issues were still there, though I had done a pretty good job of hiding them from Karen. When she smelled cigarette smoke on me after a weekend ski trip, I came to the realization I had a problem. I confessed that I was still smoking and drinking. I felt ashamed, and committed to quitting once again. But the lies and deception continued.

While driving to work one morning, I reached under the seat for my Ziploc bag of cigarettes and almost drove off the road! As I regained control of the car, I looked at the cigarettes in my hand and felt so hopeless. Tears of sorrow flowed down my face as I cried out to God. He had done so much for me, but I couldn't do even this for Him? As tears continued to run down my face I asked God to take this habit from me. I couldn't do it by myself.

And He did! In a matter of seconds my tears of sorrow turned to tears of joy. Something came over me, as if God simply said "OK" and that was it. I felt His peace, and for the first time, I experienced faith. From that instant I completely lost the urge to partake of any of those substances.

Karen and I were baptized two months later in the Seventh-day Adventist church in Edenville, Michigan, June 7, 1990.

### GOD IS GOOD AND MORE

I was lost, but the Lord found me, taught me, cleansed me, and healed me. I could go on about how God cleared up my mind, took away my selfishness, gave me compassion for others, and blessed me with an opportunity to serve the church as well. Eternal life came with so much more! What a God! What a message to share with the world! 

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**Glen Gohlke** worked at the Review and Herald Publishing Association for 10 years. He now serves the church selling advertising for *Adventist Review* and *Adventist World*.



# CHINESE BUDDHIST DAUGHTER

*The difference forgiveness makes*

BY LAEL CAESAR

**S**om Tessalee squeezes an astonishing amount of living into life. From Swissair flight attendant, to rare antique furnishing gallery sales manager, to human resources and more, this Thai Chinese American has tasted more of life's varied flavors—cultural, professional, spiritual—than many people twice her age.

## ESPECIALLY SPIRITUAL

Through her remarkable spiritual journey she has observed how a God of constant, guiding love has charted the route of life that provides her the delectable satisfactions of all those other experiences. And nothing has meant as much to her as the amazing truth of divine forgiveness.

As a 14-year-old attending a Christian camp, Som Snamthong found people's friendliness quite uncomfortable. *They're trying to make me a Christian*, she thought.

She knew a bit about Christianity. In the village of Hau Khoon Chae, Chonburi, Thailand, where



**The author's conversion took place around the world over several decades.**

she had lived with grandmother Im and aunt Saichon, she had attended Khoon Chae Christian Wittaya School, a Baptist school. The village's best schools were usually Christian, she says. But singing Christian songs and praying before meals didn't mean God to her. She was just doing as she was told. Buddhism was a family commitment. Her father and two older brothers had all once been monks.

When she was 10 years old, her mother brought her to the city of Bangkok. She couldn't adjust very well to her new schools. Besides, living with Grandma had been nicer. Napawan and Chatjawan, her mom and dad, worked hard; and sometimes he was as far away as Saudi Arabia, working as a mechanical engineer. Som's keen mind and restless spirit wrestled with every little thing. She sensed that what she was living didn't bring the happiness a kid should have. Mom should divorce Dad. Maybe that would help. She should pray more. Maybe that would help. She would sit or kneel before the Buddhas and the Chinese goddess Guanyin in Dad's prayer

room, searching for a god that would free her from a weight of distress that would burden someone much older than she.

### THE RETREAT

Then came the invitation to attend the retreat at Sammuk Christian Academy, Chonburi. She was back in her village with Grandma when a friend invited her. Mom, in Bangkok, thought attending would be fine, and Som went off to the retreat that would change her life forever.

Som was one of only two non-Christians among the almost 80 people there, and her Christian hosts made life surprising for her. They were too nice. She enjoyed introducing herself, meeting and greeting, and the small group dynamics; but people seemed to be a bit pushy. Gradually the skepticism wore off. By the third day she didn't feel as put upon when a friend, Kai, offered, "Would you like to pray?"

"I don't know how to pray," she replied. She thought of the language she had read in Thai Bibles. They used the same "hifalutin" speech for dealing with God that one would use when speaking to the Thai royal family. She didn't know how to speak that way, so she knew she didn't know how to pray.

The next day Kai met her again: "You don't have to speak to God in a special language, in a high vocabulary. Just speak of things in your heart," she assured. The kindness of this Christian woman was getting through to her heart, and Som thought maybe she could try to talk to God, though she knew neither Him nor what to say.

Tentatively she began to pray: "God, I don't really know You, but I'm going to pray. If You're real, just show me." Her heart was burdened about many things. Her parents had transferred her to another new school. But she had joined class a year after the other kids. Besides, they were all wealthy; she didn't fit in. She wished she could have a dad at home all the time to love and talk with. For 10 minutes she poured out her heart to this God she didn't know. He was listening; she

## She would sit or kneel before the Buddhas and Chinese goddess Guanyin in Dad's prayer room.

felt it. He was right there, and she knew it. He was showing her that He is real. He assured her that He would go through life's difficulties with her.

She opened her eyes. She was a believer. She wanted to become a Christian, she told people the next day. And so it was. Jesus came into her life, and everything changed. But she couldn't tell Grandma. Grandma considered Christianity a foreigners' religion. It was disrespectful. Christians didn't worship their ancestors. But Mom in Bangkok would understand.

### LIVING AS A CHRISTIAN

Som told Mom. She thought Mom would be excited. But it didn't quite go that way. Still, Som got permission to attend church when she got back to Bangkok. Then Mom decided she couldn't go to church anymore. It was that way for almost three years. No Bible reading. Som could not live without her Jesus. She secretly read her Bible in the bathroom and attended a church. She loved Jesus. She was thrilled to be a Christian.

Mom grieved for her daughter. Som was being unfaithful to her training. She no longer cared about the Buddhas and Guanyin. It pained her mother's heart. Meanwhile, Som was thinking up a scheme: "Dad, could you take me to the tutoring school?"

Dad agreed. For months Dad took Som to tutoring.

One day after dropping her off, he went to visit a secondhand goods and spare car parts market. He was standing on the sidewalk when a bus passed by with Som sitting at a window. They looked straight at each other. Som was embarrassed. Her dad was heartbroken. His daughter

## She knows that the God who led her is still leading her loved ones to embrace the truth she now loves.



The author celebrates the beginning of life as husband and wife with her husband, Peter.

had been lying to him, taking a bus to church when he left her at school. When she came home about 8:00 p.m. neither he nor her mother spoke to her. The silence was painful.

Som knew she had been living two lies: attending church when her parents thought she was at tutoring; and participating in ancestor worship at home. That was a lie too. She prayed, "God, please forgive me; I don't have the courage not to participate. Please understand."

In New York, as a 17-year-old exchange student, God provided Som with a double miracle. Two Thai women drove her from Northport to Yonkers from time to time on Sunday so she could worship as she desired. At the church in Yonkers another wonder awaited her: the pastor's wife, Ilada, had been her third-grade teacher in the Baptist school back in her village. Before her exchange year ended, Som was baptized. She even had family members to accompany her; her American host family attended as her parents.

During the next eight years Som completed college, worked in marketing, traveled the world as a flight attendant with Swissair, earned a graduate degree in organizational communication in Kentucky, and met her husband in Chicago. For five years they attended the Thai community church of Chicago without any interest in each other. Then something happened. Now they are married members of the Fil-Am Seventh-day Adventist Church family in Hinsdale, Illinois.

### GRATITUDE

Som Tessalee now works in human resources and compliance for a home health agency in Chicago, Illinois. She thanks God for bringing her to Christianity and specifically to Seventh-day Adventist understandings of His Word. She still prays for her mom and dad. When they visited and attended the Thai church with her in Chicago and he joined the hymn singing, she wept. She knows that the God who led her is still leading her loved ones to embrace the truth she now loves, leading us all to the place where, forever, we shall share and savor infinitely more of the flavorful delights of His glorious truth.

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Lael Caesar is an associate editor of *Adventist Review*.



# NOW OR NEVER

*Following Him means setting self aside.*



**From novelist to believer to editor**

**BY CLIFFORD GOLDSTEIN**

From childhood onward, I wanted to be a novelist or nothing. In my junior year at college I started a novel that, before long, consumed me. The book controlled my life more than I controlled the lives in it. Everything external—friends, family, finances—was interpreted, qualified, and analyzed through the template of how they would impact my writing the novel.

One early evening in the late summer of 1979 I wandered back to my room in Gainesville, Florida, to continue writing. I had, at this point, poured two and a half years into the novel, more than 10 percent of my life (I was 23), and that evening I felt more excited about the project than ever before. Never had it been going better.

In the room I stuck a sheet of paper into the typewriter, and when I struck the first key—as real as anything that’s ever happened to me, the Spirit of the Lord Jesus came and said, “Cliff, you have been playing with Me long enough. If you want Me tonight, burn the book.”

This didn’t happen in a vacuum; the Lord had long been working to bring me to this moment, in which He showed me that the book was my god, and if I wanted the true God, the false one had to go. *But why tonight, when I was more enthusiastic about the book than ever? Why couldn’t the Lord have asked me to do this at a time when it wasn’t going too well?*

After a night of wrestling I burned the novel

and went to bed amid a cloud of smoke (I burned it in my room).

Within days the devil whispered in the ears of this new believer: *Oh, you burned the book because you needed an excuse to get out because you knew you couldn’t do it.* A wave of doubt swept through me. But as I recounted the experience of that night, I thought, *On the contrary, I was never more sure of the book than I was that night. That’s why the Lord had me burn it then! Get thee behind me, Satan!*

Ellen White explains so much: “At the moment of success, when the nets were filled with fish, and the impulses of the old life were strongest, Jesus asked the disciples at the sea to leave all for the work of the gospel. So every soul is tested as to whether the desire for temporal good or for fellowship with Christ is strongest.”\*

No fooling.

By uprooting us from the world when our roots are the deepest in the world, the Lord makes it more difficult (though not impossible) for those roots to take hold again. We have to commit ourselves at the lowest common denominator, that of ourselves; otherwise, it’s no commitment, only a handshake with our fingers crossed. 🍀

\*Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898), p. 273.

Clifford Goldstein is editor of the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*. He is writing a book tentatively titled *Evolution and the Seduction of Christianity*.



# GOD SENT ME TO GUAM

*From Roman Catholic to Adventist chaplain*

BY LEO POIRIER

I was born and raised a Roman Catholic, and schooled in Massachusetts near Atlantic Union College (AUC). But my first contact with Adventists was at a roller-skating rink, where I met a pretty, young Seventh-day Adventist named Lois.

Since I had recently enlisted in the Navy, our relationship grew mostly through letters. After three years, against some well-meant advice from our families and churches, we were married. Returning to my duty station in North Africa, we set up our first home.

During a transfer to my next duty station, Lois convinced me to attend her home church. Her pastor, Donald Sandstrom, and his wife invited us to their home, where I soon realized I had better get and read a Bible to defend my beliefs and convert Lois to them.

While stationed in Maryland, we attended a program in Washington, D.C., where H.M.S. Richards, Sr., spoke. The man and his message impressed me. Soon after, my Navy chief and I were needed for special duty in Germany. He was ordered there, but I ended up being transferred to Guam. Lois and our 2-year-old daughter, Maureen, joined me there several months later.

One Sunday I recognized the voice of H.M.S. Richards on the radio. At my wife's urging, we listened to the Voice of Prophecy radio programs, and sent for and completed the Bible course together.

About the same time Pastor Vernon Kelstrom, at the Seventh-day Adventist church on Guam,



The author joined the Adventist Church while serving in the U.S. Navy in Guam.

presented a series of prophetic lectures. The topic for the third night was the Dark Day and the falling stars. I had read about them and decided to attend that meeting and all the rest.

At the end of the series we invited the pastor to our home, which led to more study, and finally, my decision to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I was baptized in Tumon Bay, Guam.

Leaving the Catholic Church strained my relationship with my parents for many years. I received a letter from my 12-year-old sister saying she was going to enter the convent to make up for my sins. My other sister defended me to my mother by saying: "Well, Mom, it's not as if he robbed a bank."

Impressed to become a Navy chaplain, I left the military after nine years and went to Atlantic Union College and Andrews University and began pastoral ministry, intending to reenter the Navy. One year later, while preaching a Sabbath sermon, I collapsed because of a brain aneurysm. Military chaplaincy was suddenly an impossibility.

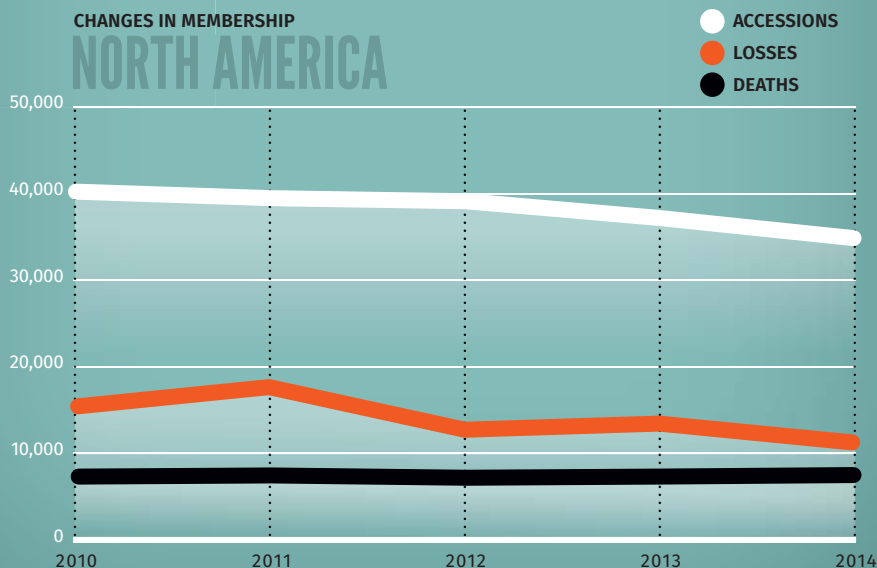
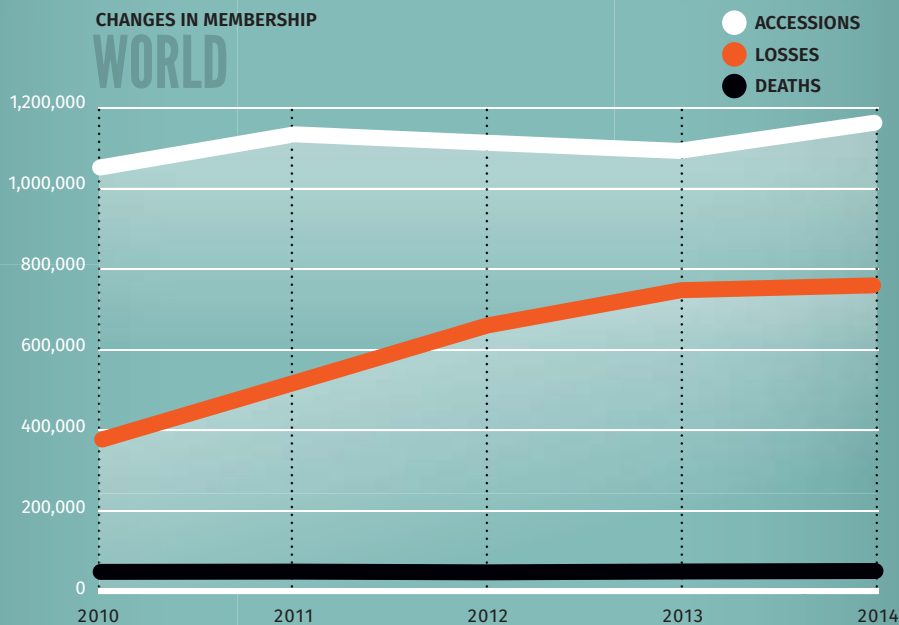
An anointing service and many prayers resulted in a miraculous recovery. Six years later I began a 44-year ministry as a hospital chaplain. Now I understand why I was sent to Guam instead of Germany.

During our 65 years of marriage Lois and I, along with our daughter, Maureen, and our son, Tim, have experienced many miracles and blessings, for which we are grateful to God. 🙏

**Leo Poirier** is retired, living with Lois in Stoneham, Massachusetts.

# HOW WE GROW

A lot of factors have to be taken into consideration when tracking the growth of a movement as large as the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Accessions (baptisms and professions of faith) and losses (dropped, missing, and audit adjustments) are two of them, and arguably the most important. Another reality is losses because of member deaths. Here are those indicators for the last five years, both in North America and around the world.—Editors



SOURCE: GENERAL CONFERENCE OFFICE OF ARCHIVES, STATISTICS, AND RESEARCH



# COMMUNIST PARTY SON

*How I joined Christ's healing ministry*

BY CRIS REYES

Maybe I was an agnostic before I became a Christian rather than an atheist, since I was more ignorant than a complete non-believer. The Philippine Communist Party was my father's passion, though that didn't bring any wages into the house. It landed him in prison, and I lived there with my parents until I was about 1 year old.

## GROWING UP HARD

Once my father was out of prison, my mother became the breadwinner, leaving me with grandparents. She worked in a factory for minimum wage, and visited her father and me every two months or so. I wept bitterly every time she had to leave.

About age seven I started caring for several carabaos, water buffalo my grandfather used for milk and farming. I also began attending school. When I was in fourth grade, my mother took me back home.

School went better for my older brother than it did for me. He lived with my paternal grandfather, and eventually became an accountant, whose income became a great help to our family. He was the smart one; and Dad, with his Communist dedication, wanted him to go study medicine in Russia. But with the family needing my brother's accountant's income, and my life at increasing risk through my participation in street protests, dad decided that I should take up the Russian study offer, though medicine was not a likely



**Cris poses with his mother, Julia, just before he left the Philippines to study in Russia.**

course for me. At least Dad got me to read Marx and contribute to Communist-organized unrest. At 19 I set off for the Soviet Union to be trained as a Communist leader.

## AN INEXPLICABLE CHANGE

I still cannot explain the odd circumstances that got me into seven years of medical school instead of one year of Communist leadership training. But I've concluded that it was all part of God's different and much better plan for my life.

Back in the Philippines for the first time in seven years, I passed the Philippine medical board examination and started a postgraduate internship in Manila Doctors Hospital.

I met a woman named Victoria there, and she won me over. Let's say we won each other. But Victoria was bound for the United States. After two years she came home, we got married, and three years later I joined her in the United States. I passed the U.S. medical board examination, completed a residency in internal medicine, and settled down to live the good life.

We had everything we could dream of: a beau-



## I drove 90 miles each way every night.

tiful house, luxury cars, my own medical practice, fine dining, and exotic vacations. Religion meant occasional visits to Catholic Church Mass to play guitar for the choir.

### A TRAGIC TURN

Then, just as we started looking for something spiritually satisfying, Victoria was diagnosed with stage IV ovarian cancer. During her first hospital stay, I saw a picture frame in the lobby with words to the effect: “You are going to look for Me when you have nowhere to go.” Later I found a large children’s Bible, read it through, and discovered a ravenous hunger for truth.

I sought out a regular Bible at a bookstore. I discovered many different Bibles. I chose a students’ Bible. Then, as I was about to leave that aisle, I was impressed to pick up Lee Strobel’s book *The Case for Christ*. That book, and my Bible study, provided the answers I needed; answers I was groping for while heartbrokenly caring for my wife, knowing she would not recover.

We studied the Bible together with an Adventist minister who came to our house three times a week. I read *The Desire of Ages* and *The Great Controversy* in a couple of months, and kept searching. I bought DVDs by Doug Bachelor, John Carter, and others. I listened and read during my days off.

Before Victoria passed away, we both accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior. We became baptized members of Hinsdale, Illinois, Fil-Am Seventh-day Adventist Church in February 2004. Three months later I lost my Vicky, nine months after her first diagnosis. It was the most difficult and painful time in my life.

God and His truth became very precious to me. During Kenneth Cox’s evangelistic series at my church, I drove 90 miles each way every night to absorb everything taught so I could find answers to so many questions in my life. I knew that there had to be more to life than what I was living! Someone gave me Ravi Zacharias’ book *Can Man Live Without God?* It dealt with deeper questions of life’s meaning and purpose according to Jesus’

words. I was amazed by the truth I discovered through my reading. It was pure joy to share it with others.

### AND NOW

The Lord has always had better plans for me than I’ve known, “plans for good and not for disaster.” He’s always meant to give me “a future and a hope.” And He promises, “In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me” (Jer. 29:11-13, NLT).\*



**Cris (left) leads The Seekers musical group at the Fil-Am Seventh-day Adventist church in Hinsdale, Illinois.**

God has been with me all along. His leading in my life shows purpose and reason. I may not know all about it, but I know with all my heart that I can fully trust Him. God is in control. He has given me a new love, Susan, a mother of three who lost her husband to cancer. We are content to live and work for Jesus. I am involved as director of men’s ministries at my church, I teach a Sabbath School class, and I look forward to opportunities for missionary work.

If I were to leave a message with you it would be only three words: “Keep the faith!”

\*Bible texts marked NLT are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

**Cris Reyes**, a physician, has practiced in Watseka, Illinois, United States, since 2004.

# CELEBRATIONS

## LET'S CELEBRATE THE ENVIRONMENT

**E**  
is for environment,  
a sustainer of life.

BY ALLAN R. HANDYSIDES

Several years ago my wife, Janet, and I began searching for a country cabin to purchase for weekend retreats. North of Toronto in the Muskoka district we found some beautiful turquoise lakes. We were deeply impressed and admired their tropical colors, only to be told that the lakes were “dead.” Acid rain, caused by industrial pollution of the atmosphere, had acidified the water to such a degree that the lakes were devoid of flora and fauna. Beautiful to look at but toxic for any kind of life within them, such lakes have become sterile.

Pollution of water and air, destruction of natural habitats, and massive industrialization threaten the continuation of life as we know it; therefore, environmental awareness is important to the maintenance of health.

### OVERPOPULATION: AN ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN?

Many people are beginning to voice what has sometimes been labeled a “politically incorrect” viewpoint: that overpopulation is the worst environmental threat we are faced with today.

Current projections still predict a global population somewhere between 8 and 10.5 billion by the year 2050.<sup>1</sup> The effects of overpopulation depend on the ratio of population to sustainable resources, as well as on the distribution of such resources, including clean water, clean air, food, shelter, and appropriate climatic conditions.

Destruction of forests to support the growing population results in loss of animal habitats as well as loss of plant species and their capacity to remove carbon dioxide and produce oxygen. Overpopulation also presents serious difficulties to effective governance and stress; consequently, strife and turmoil often ensue.

### DEFORESTATION

Deforestation on a massive scale often results in damage to the quality of the land. Although some 30 percent of the earth’s surface is still covered by forest, large tracts of land are lost annually to deforestation.

Deforestation contributes to climate change. Moist forest soils quickly dry out without the shade of a forest canopy. Forest lands can quickly become deserts. The role played by forests in absorbing greenhouse gases is a central one.

Poverty and the impact of climate change are felt much more acutely where drought and desertification take place.

### CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change may influence food production. Yields of grain, for example, have been shown in many situations to vary with temperatures. The International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines<sup>2</sup> found that rice production declined by 10 percent for each 1-degree-centigrade increase in growing season nighttime-minimum temperature.

### ENERGY CONSERVATION

Reliance upon fossil fuels has characterized much of the energy utilization during the past century. It's likely that the increased cost of such energy will drive the move to alternate energy sources. Regardless of cost issues, energy conservation is an important part of environment preservation.

### POLLUTION

Two areas of pollution that are particularly concerning are water and air pollution.

Industrialization has produced massive amounts of collateral waste material. Plastics, for example, are derivatives of petroleum-type products, and they do not naturally degrade easily. It's been shown that plastic can persist for multiple decades. Plastic particles, called "nurdles," have been found in the digestive tracts of krill, which are the ocean's basic food source for most marine life.

Industrial waste—which includes such heavy metals as lead, mercury, and cadmium, as well as toxic dioxin compounds—is contaminating underground water. Radioactive contamination following the 2011 earthquake and massive tsunami off the coast of Japan will likely render the Fukushima area uninhabitable, perhaps for centuries. The Chernobyl disaster in Ukraine in 1986 resulted in increases in thyroid and other cancers. Radioactive isotopes leached into the water are a form of silent yet lethal pollution.

### DOMESTIC AND AGRICULTURAL WASTE

Outbreaks of disease are frequently related to viral and bacterial contamination by human and

## Pollution of water and air, destruction of natural habitats, and massive industrialization threaten the continuation of life as we know it.

animal waste. The Blacksmith Institute Technical Advisory Board<sup>3</sup> reports that persons living in polluted regions may not have immediate health problems, but may later develop cancers, lung infections, and mental retardation.


The American Lung Association<sup>4</sup> estimates that roughly 50 percent of Americans live in counties that have unhealthy levels of either ozone or pesticide pollution.

### SOLAR IRRADIATION

Much of the sun's radiation is important to well-being, but overexposure to ultraviolet radiation can be harmful.

Sunshine also converts cholecalciferol into the active vitamin D we need for so many bodily functions. Dermatologists, however, have noted the association between sunburn and skin cancer and advocate the avoidance of overexposure. On the other hand, vitamin D is probably an important factor in controlling the growth of other cancers, such as prostate cancer.

### RESPONSIBLE STEWARDS

Health, God's gift to us, is best maintained in the most natural state of unpolluted and hygienic purity. We are stewards of the earth, responsible for managing the earth's resources and the environment of our bodies. 

<sup>1</sup> Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision*, June 2009.

<sup>2</sup> S. Peng et al., "Rice Yields Decline With Higher Night Temperature From Global Warming," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 101, no.27 (2004): 9971-9975.

<sup>3</sup> Blacksmith Institute Technical Advisory Board, e-pub, June 28, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Report of the American Lung Association, "The State of the Air," May 2, 2011.

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Allan R. Handysides, a board-certified gynecologist, is a former director of the General Conference Health Ministries Department.

# THE JOSEPH DECISION-MAKING MODEL

Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus, provides a helpful model for decision-making. There are enough salient insights in the Matthew 1 account to provide a simple blue-

print about how to make decisions with confidence and compassion. Further, they reveal principles about how to do so while treating people with dignity and respect, even when they're apparently in the wrong.

Few situations in life could be more socially awkward and spiritually challenging than the one in which Joseph found himself. A carpenter in Nazareth, he had proposed to young Mary, and she had accepted. According to Jewish custom, they entered the engagement phase of their marriage.

Then a major problem surfaced: Mary was found to be pregnant, clearly one of the most calamitous events that could happen to an engaged Jewish couple. Mary explained that she was impregnated by the Holy Spirit. To complicate matters, after this announcement Mary immediately left town to visit her relative Elizabeth, who lived some 70 miles south toward Jerusalem.

Joseph was in a serious dilemma. The Bible says he was a righteous man, committed to following the law of God. In spite of his love for Mary, Joseph concluded that she had done wrong and that he must do right.

Five principles reveal Joseph's exemplary decision-making construct.

*First, contemplation (thinking thoroughly):* Before deciding what to do, Joseph considered the familial, social, and spiritual dimensions of his dilemma. Though he


deeply loved and believed in Mary, according to the Word of God he would not go through with the marriage and be complicit with Mary's "sin" (see verse 19).

*Second, compassion (exercise kindness):* In a magnanimous show of kindness, Joseph decided to help Mary. Instead of having her stoned or publicly embarrassed (Deut. 22:23, 24), he would quietly divorce her and facilitate her departure from Nazareth. The truth would eventually get out, but it would be easier on her this way.

*Third, meditation (spiritual reflection):* After making his decision, Joseph entered a deep state of thought, meditation, and prayer (James 1:5, 6). No doubt he reflected on the narrative shared by Mary, the angel, and the message about the holy seed and Son of God. In spite of Mary's sterling reputation, her story was too unbelievable to accept.

*Fourth, confirmation (remain open):* Joseph was now ready to act, but remained open to further insight. At this point God intervened and provided an alternate perspective (verse 20). The Bible says during this time an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream. He assured Joseph that Mary had been chaste, that the Holy Spirit had planted the seed within her womb, and that he, Joseph, should go through with their marriage and cooperate in the plan of incarnation.

*Fifth, completion (act decidedly):* Amazingly, Joseph didn't object. He willingly cooperated with the divine initiative, though he understood that he might be accused of immorality with Mary before their marriage was complete. Nevertheless, he reconciled with Mary, confirmed their accounts, and went through with the marriage ceremony. Mary became his lawful wife.

So there you have it. This decision model worked for Joseph, and it can work for us all. 

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



TRANSFORMATION TIPS  
DELBERT W. BAKER

JOSEPH CONSIDERED  
THE FAMILIAL,  
SOCIAL, AND  
SPIRITUAL  
DIMENSIONS  
OF HIS DILEMMA.



**ALSO IN THIS SECTION:**

- » MY CONVERSION
- » SIMPLE STEPS FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH
- » A LESSON IN PATIENCE

# CONNECT

# SERVANT OR FRIEND?

BY GERALD A. KLINGBEIL



Friends stick around where servants have long bolted.

Friends hear your heart where servants hear your voice.

Friends share your vision where servants get the job done.

**T**hen the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: ‘Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you’” (Jonah 3:1, 2).<sup>1</sup>

It’s a familiar story. Illustrators of children’s Bibles love to give it prominent treatment; the more “enlightened” of our contemporaries wink knowingly when they hear about the great fish that became Jonah’s home for three days and three nights. Jesus did not wink.

Generally, prophets do what they are told to do. They hear, they listen, they see—then they speak, preach, or write God’s message. Jonah, however, is different. He hears—then he runs in the opposite direction. Together with a boatload of hardened but frightened sailors he experiences a terrible storm. Finally, Jonah is going down, down, down; right to the bottom of the sea and straight to certain death. “You hurled me into the depths, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me” (Jonah 2:3). Yet in the midst of the storm, while Jonah is sinking to rock bottom, God waits for him in the belly of a very big fish. Listen to this imagined conversation between God and Jonah:

God: *Jonah, Jonah, can you hear Me?*

Jonah: Um, it’s so dark in here—where am I?

God: *Jonah, it’s Me, your heavenly Father. I am right next to you.*

Jonah: Why are You persecuting me? Why didn’t You let me go to Tarshish?

Imagine all the good I could have done for You there.

God: *But Jonah, I need you in Nineveh.*

Jonah: Well, I didn’t know that this was so important to You. If you insist . . .

So the runaway prophet goes back to “Start” and begins all over again. In fact, the first verses of chapter 3 sound almost exactly like the first verses of chapter 1.

#### SECOND CHANCES

Can you see Jonah making his way from the Mediterranean coast to Nineveh, right in the heart of dry and sizzling Mesopotamia? He has plenty of time to work on his preaching. He has plenty of time to consider his message. He has plenty of time to converse with the Master. The God of second chances has sent him to Nineveh—one of the capitals of the cruel and hated Assyrians. But Jonah doesn’t like his mission. Jonah is walking in the right direction, saying the right words, but his heart is not in Nineveh.

Then Jonah begins to preach: “Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown” (Jonah 3:4). What a sermon! No careful and logical development, no illustrations, no calls—just a judgment message in its starkest and darkest form.

*Jonah, where is your heart?* we want to ask the prophet who already knows that God is to blame. Jonah doesn’t like the God of second chances when it comes to Nineveh. (I’m sure he liked the God of second chances in the belly of the fish.) “Isn’t this what I said, Lord, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who



## God continues to ask the right questions. God always asks the right questions

relents from sending calamity” (Jonah 4:2).

*I knew what would happen, Jonah says, and I just don't like it.*

### WHERE IS YOUR HEART?

We can think of other biblical stories where feet move in one direction but hearts are somewhere else. The feet of Lot's wife may have been heading out of Sodom after the angels literally dragged the entire family from the city that was about to be incinerated—but her heart remained in Sodom. Perhaps she felt that she had been dragged out against her will. As soon as she could, she turned around and looked back. With her heart and mind back in Sodom, she shared the fate of Sodom (cf. Gen. 19:16-26).

What about Balaam, son of Beor, the prophet whose curses were to bring destruction to Israel? He didn't drag his feet. In fact, he ran miles ahead of God when he saw the cash offered by Balak, the king of Moab. Curses for cash must have been one of Balaam's specialties—why else would Balak have chosen someone living hundreds of miles away?

Unlike Jonah, Balaam was eager to go. But just like Jonah, he didn't like it when he heard God speak (Num. 22:12). Balaam's response to the Moabite delegation the next morning is quite instructive: “Go back to your own country, for the Lord has refused to let me go with you” (verse 13). Indeed, God *refused* the generous offer, for these were His people.

The story doesn't end here. Balak increases the pressure. Balaam keeps insisting—and, finally and reluctantly, God lets Balaam go. He is, after all, a God who cherishes freedom and choice—unlike His demonic opponent who specializes in manipulation and arm-bending. “But,” God reminds Balaam, “do only what I tell you” (verse 20).

Balaam is delighted. Finally here's an opportunity to fill that retirement fund—and fill it well. Balaam is so eager to catch up with the Moabite

envoys that he beats his donkey mercilessly. In fact, he is so fixated on going that he even has a verbal argument with his miraculously talking donkey. In Jonah's case, it's the big fish that hears, obeys, and follows God's instructions. In Balaam's case, God uses a donkey that sees (an angel with a drawn sword), understands, and speaks to stop this prophet from mindlessly galloping into certain death.

Balaam's story, unfortunately, doesn't have a happy ending. His curses-turned-into-blessings make him lose all the promised cash. He returned empty-handed and angry because God, somehow, had not allowed him to do what he really wanted to do. He dies in battle with Israel some time later (Num. 31:7, 8), after his advice of using sex and idolatry prevail where curses and confrontation have not.

### BEYOND A SERVANT

Service lies at the heart of Christianity. Christ came as a servant—the Suffering Servant (Isa. 53)—to save a planet in rebellion. He washed the feet of His disciples (John 13:1-10); He carried the burden that we cannot carry; He touched lepers and embraced outcasts. Yet, in His last words to His disciples, He invites us (as He invited Peter, John, James, and the rest of the lot) to move closer. In Greek the term translated as “servant” is *doulos*. It actually means “slave.” With this background, let's listen to Jesus as He shares His heart with His disciples: “You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants [*doulos*], because a servant [*doulos*] does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you” (John 15:14, 15).

Did you catch it? Jesus introduces a new dimension as He relates to the disciples. “I no longer call you servants [*doulos*]” is His way of



## that are aimed straight at our hearts, because a friend asks the hard questions.

saying that He wants more. Servants usually don't know what their Master is up to—friends do. Servants obey the Master's commands—friends anticipate them.

It's time to catch up with Jonah in Nineveh. Following the big fish episode, Jonah was an obedient servant. He did what he was told to do, yet the question is: was he ready to be God's friend? Did Jonah understand why he was sent to Nineveh? Could Jonah distinguish between the right behavior and the right heart?

His conversation with God in chapter 4 suggests that he still has a long way to go. His anger at God, the God who loved even Ninevites (as well as their animals), was so raw and hot and honest. But God continues to ask the right questions. God always asks the right questions that are aimed straight at our hearts, because a friend asks the hard questions—then listens and waits and prays.

### **SOMETHING BIGGER**

Some time ago I heard this story about a traveler in the Middle Ages who happened upon a large worksite in the center of a village. Since he had spent weeks traveling alone through dense forests and sparsely populated mountains, he was eager to talk to people.

After looking around, he walked up to a worker and asked, "Sir, may I ask what you are doing here?"

The worker frowned slightly with a bit of irritation and said brusquely: "I am cutting stones." With that he turned around and moved away.

Clearly, there is not much of a conversation here, thought the traveler, and he tried the same question on another worker. The worker straightened his back, paused for a moment, and then explained that he was cutting stones so he could support his family. He then went on to talk about his wonderful wife and the two small children who depended on him to provide them with food and shelter.

After a few minutes the conversation ebbed away, and the worker turned back to his large pile of stones.

*Let's try again*, mused the traveler, and he walked to a third worker. "Sir, may I ask what you are doing here?"

The worker put down his tools, stood up tall, looked the traveler in the eye, and said with a warm smile: "I am building a cathedral. It will be the tallest and most magnificent structure for miles around. Its beauty will delight people for centuries to come. The stone I am now working on will go near the front door, where people will enter for shelter and fellowship. I will, most likely, not see the final building, but I know my work is part of something very important."

All three workers were obediently doing the same job, but each had a different vision of its purpose, and each had a different level of commitment.

*Friends stick around where servants have long bolted.*

*Friends hear your heart where servants hear your voice.*

*Friends share your vision where servants get the job done.*

As I consider my walk with Jesus, I wonder about my own heart. How often do I walk in the right direction, but my heart is somewhere else? How often do I just go through the motions of being a servant, and forget that God really wants me to be His friend—just like Abraham (Isa. 41:8; 2 Chron. 20:7) or Moses (Ex. 33:11)—or the disciples?

"I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you." 🌱

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



*Everyone's conversion story is different. Long before she became known for her visions and spiritual insights, Ellen White responded to Christ's invitation as a child. Here she tells us how it happened.*

—Editors.

# MY CONVERSION

*An interview with Ellen Gould White*

## **When did you first hear the message of Christ's second coming?**

In March, 1840, William Miller visited Portland, Maine, and gave his first course of lectures on the second coming of Christ. . . . I attended these meetings and listened to the startling announcement that Christ was coming in 1843, only a few short years in the future. Mr. Miller traced down the prophecies with an exactness that struck conviction to the hearts of his hearers. He dwelt upon the prophetic periods, and brought many proofs to strengthen his position.

## **Were you confident about your conviction, or did you have some struggles or doubts?**

When sinners were invited forward to the anxious seat [front pew], hundreds responded to the call, and I, among the rest, pressed through the crowd and took my place with the seekers. But there was in my heart a feeling that I could never become worthy to be called a child of God. A lack of confidence in myself, and a conviction that it would be impossible to make anyone understand my feelings, prevented me from seeking advice and aid from my Christian friends.

## **Surely, you trusted someone enough to voice your fears and seek counsel.**

My brother Robert and [I] were returning home from a meeting where we had listened to a most impressive discourse on the approaching reign of Christ upon the earth. . . . My soul had been stirred within me by what I had heard. And so deep was the sense of conviction in my heart, that I feared the Lord would not spare me to reach home. . . . I tried to explain my feelings to my brother Robert, who was two years older than [I]; I told him that I dared not rest nor sleep until I knew that God had pardoned my sins.

## **What was his response, and your subsequent reaction to it?**

My brother made no immediate reply, but the cause of his silence was soon apparent to me; he was weeping in sympathy with my distress. This encouraged me to confide in him still more, to tell him that I had coveted death in the days when life seemed so heavy a burden for me to bear; but now the thought that I might die in my present sinful state and be eternally lost filled me with terror. I asked him if he thought God would spare my life through that one night, if I spent it agonizing in prayer to

Him. He answered: "I think He will if you ask Him with faith, and I will pray for you and for myself."

### **How did you, being so young, handle these feelings of doubt and despair?**

I spent most of the long hours of darkness in prayer and tears. . . . My hope was so small, and my faith so weak, that I feared if another took a similar view of my condition, it would plunge me into despair. Yet I longed for someone to tell me what I should do to be saved. . . . The following summer my parents went to the Methodist camp meeting at Buxton, Maine, taking me with them. I was fully resolved to seek the Lord in earnest there, and obtain, if possible, the pardon of my sins. There was a great longing in my heart for the Christian's hope and the peace that comes of believing.

### **Was there any particular scriptural passage or sermon that gave you encouragement or clarity?**

I was much encouraged while listening to a discourse from the words I will "go in unto the king," "and if I perish, I perish." In his remarks the speaker referred to those who were wavering between hope and fear, longing to be saved

from their sins and receive the pardoning love of Christ, yet held in doubt and bondage by timidity and fear of failure. He counseled such ones to surrender themselves to God, and venture upon His mercy without delay. . . . All that was required of the sinner, trembling in the presence of his Lord, was to put forth the hand of faith and touch the scepter of His grace. That touch ensured pardon and peace. Those who were waiting to make themselves more worthy . . . were making a fatal mistake. . . . It is only by connecting with Jesus through faith that the sinner becomes a hopeful, believing child of God. These words comforted me and gave me a view of what I must do to be saved.

### **Tell us about that moment you felt true conversion.**

While [I was] bowed at the altar with others who were seeking the Lord, all the language of my heart was: "Help, Jesus, save me or I perish! I will never cease to entreat till my prayer is heard and my sins forgiven!" I felt my needy, helpless condition as never before. As I knelt and prayed, suddenly my burden left me, and my heart was light. At first a feeling of alarm came over me, and I tried to resume my load

of distress. It seemed to me that I had no right to feel joyous and happy. But Jesus seemed very near to me; I felt able to come to Him with all my griefs, misfortunes, and trials, even as the needy ones came to Him for relief when He was upon earth. There was a surety in my heart that He understood my peculiar trials and sympathized with me. I can never forget this precious assurance of the pitying tenderness of Jesus toward one so unworthy of His notice.

### **What happened after your conversion experience?**

One of the mothers in Israel came to me and said: "Dear child, have you found Jesus?" I was about to answer, "Yes," when she exclaimed: "Indeed you have, His peace is with you, I see it in your face!" Again and again I said to myself: "Can this be religion? Am I not mistaken?" It seemed too much for me to claim, too exalted a privilege. Though too timid to openly confess it, I felt that the Savior had blessed me and pardoned my sins.

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These excerpts are taken from *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 1, pp. 14-18. Seventh-day Adventists believe that **Ellen G. White** (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.

# SIMPLE STEPS FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

*It's challenging,  
but we never  
have to do it  
alone.*



**W**hen do followers of Christ reach spiritual maturity? What are the identifying characteristics that declare one to have reached that goal? And how might we acquire those characteristics in our lives?

Any type of maturity requires time. A baby develops into a child, then a youth, then a young adult. We generally connect maturity with time. So it seems logical to expect one's spiritual maturity to be obtained much later in life, and often that seems to be the case. Those years of living give us a better understanding of life with its trials and victories. They also allow us time to experience God's revelation of Himself.

In the Holy Scriptures, however, are some wonderful examples of spiritual maturity reached quite early in life.

#### TAKEN CAPTIVE

When Babylonian armies conquered Jerusalem in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, a number of individuals were taken captive to Babylon. Some of those young, healthy individuals were apparently more promising, intellectually brighter, and more responsible than others. We immediately think of Daniel and his three friends: Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. We know these individuals better by their Babylonian names, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Their story in the book of Daniel is highly complimentary of these four captives. They had high principles, and a strict and healthy diet; their appearance was appealing, and they passed their exams with honors. "To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds" (Dan. 1:17). They soon filled responsible positions in Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom.

Adhering to God's commands, maintaining high standards, rejecting those things that harm us and others, often protects us from many of the problems that we might otherwise suffer. But with Daniel and his three friends, the very things that gave them success as they arrived in Babylon later became obstacles in serving the king. Daniel and his three companions' unwavering dedication and determination to serve God rather than obey the king placed them in their dilemma.

When King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that neither he nor his counselors could understand, Daniel was brought forward to explain the king's dream. "Your Majesty looked, and there before you stood a large statue—an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance" (Dan. 2:31). Then Daniel told him, "You are that head of gold" (verse 38).

Nebuchadnezzar apparently concentrated on the head of gold and the fact that it represented his kingdom, rather than considering that other world powers would follow.

#### THE ULTIMATE TEST

Shortly after that dream, Nebuchadnezzar made an image 90 feet tall and nine feet wide and placed it on the Babylonian plain of Dura. Instead of having only a head of gold, the entire image appeared to be made of gold. He apparently wanted to leave the impression that his kingdom would last forever.

Power always demands respect, and it was no different with Nebuchadnezzar. The day came when all the rulers and officers of his kingdom gathered at the site of the golden image. They were commanded to fall down and worship the statue.

Daniel 3 tells the story. The three Hebrews refused to fall down and worship the golden image. When confronted by Nebuchadnezzar, they were offered another opportunity to show their allegiance to him or risk being cast into a fiery furnace if they refused.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered, "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up" (Dan. 3:16-18).

#### ACCEPTANCE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Two A's of spiritual growth are found in Daniel 3:16-18.

The first A stands for acknowledgment. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego knew God personally and acknowledged His right to demand total allegiance. Thus they could not bow down or worship any image.

Most important, however, the three young men

acknowledged the possibility that God might choose not to intervene and spare their lives. Their obedience did not depend on God sparing them from death.

The second A of spiritual maturity is likewise found in the conversation between the three Hebrews and Nebuchadnezzar: “But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up” (verse 18). Acceptance is the second A in spiritual growth. The three young men accepted the fact that God might choose not to spare their lives. They would accept death rather than betray God.

It’s interesting to observe God’s timing in this story. If God intended to prevent their death all along, why not thwart Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from even being thrown into the fiery furnace?

Spiritual growth often requires that our faith in God is tested. The miracle of surviving the furnace that killed those who threw the three Hebrews into the fire, yet did not as much as singe a single hair on their heads, could be explained only by a power that far exceeded any earthly power. Nebuchadnezzar recognized that power in the fiery furnace when he observed: “Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods” (verse 25).

Remember, the three were bound when they were thrown into the furnace. But when the king saw them they were loose, walking in the furnace unhurt and unharmed. When they came out of the furnace, “their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them” (verse 27). Perhaps the test and the miracle of survival were given more for the benefit of Nebuchadnezzar and other onlookers than for those who were saved.

The spiritual maturity of the three young men is shown by their acknowledgment of God’s power to intervene. Coupled with that, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego accepted the fact that God might not save them. They determined to be faithful, no matter what. Acknowledgment of what God can do and acceptance of what He chooses to do shows the maturity of our spiritual growth.

This narrative also shows Nebuchadnezzar taking some of his first steps in spiritual understanding when he acknowledged and declared, “Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and

Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him” (verse 28).

### **A THIRD A: APPLICATION**

The story of Daniel’s three friends took on special meaning when my mother-in-law developed cancer some years ago. After all treatment options were exhausted, she asked to spend her final days in our home. We gladly took her in and provided for her care.

One day when I returned from the office, I found Grandma greatly distressed. That day a friend from a nearby church had come to visit and give her words of comfort and counsel. He told her she could be healed if she truly had faith. This greatly distressed her to think that after serving God all her life she was now somehow preventing His healing because of her lack of faith.

She asked, “Am I dying because I lack faith?”

In what seemed an instant, the answer came to me in the story of the three Hebrews. Grandma’s hearing was greatly impaired from all the chemotherapy, so I raised my voice so she could hear me and asked her two questions as part of my answer to her question.

The first question: Do you believe that God in an instant could restore you to perfect health? Her answer was a bit weak but positive “Yes.”

The second question: Will you continue to have faith in God and accept His will in your life if He chooses not to heal you? Her answer was a bit stronger: “Oh, yes.”

I assured her that she had true faith indeed, the kind of faith that is acceptable to God. A short time later she closed her eyes for a last time, assured of the great resurrection when all sickness and disease will be replaced by the gift and miracle of everlasting life. Her healing will come; it will be at the sound of the last trumpet; and it will take place in the twinkling of an eye.

The question we have to answer is this: How do we grow and mature spiritually? God’s Word gives us the answer. We are admonished to pray without ceasing, be thankful in everything, search the Scriptures daily, encourage others to love and serve the Lord, and meditate each day on the great sacrifice of Calvary. These are the nutrients that will help us grow and reach spiritual maturity. 🌱

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**James Hagele**, an ophthalmologist, lives in Nevada City, California.

# A LESSON IN PATIENCE

I took a deep breath and exhaled slowly. “For English, press 1. *Para Español, número dos.* Why did automated phone systems bother me so much? I reached out and pressed “1.”

Suddenly I heard it again, “For English, press 1. *Para Español . . .*” Breathe, Jill, I reminded myself, as I pressed “1” again.

I always put off calling this particular company. It seemed impossible to get to a “real” person, and when I did, they always seemed robotic. Like they were reading off a script or something. I’ve talked to fabulous customer service representatives many times, but this company seemed different somehow. Even the way their people spoke was mechanical. Measured. Impersonal.

Since I call them often for work, I’ve tried to ask questions and develop a relationship with the person on the other end of the line. But it never works. One time I asked the woman what her weather was like. She said, “Excuse me, ma’am. What was your question?”

I smiled. Finally I’d gotten her off script. “What’s your weather like? We’re pretty cold here; in fact, we even have snow!”

She paused for a moment, but then her voice came over the wire. Very clipped and metallic. “I’m sorry, ma’am. We don’t have an answer to your question. I cannot help you.”

The automated voice jarred me back to the present. “For English, press 1 . . .” I groaned. Today was not my day. *I’ve already pressed 1 several times. What’s wrong with their system?*

Suddenly I realized the automated voice was still speaking. “Please hang up and try your call again from a touch-tone

phone.” I hung up and spoke aloud in the office. “Lord Jesus, please give me patience! I need it!”

Dee, my coworker, laughed from her desk. “Be careful what you pray for, Jill. You never know what’s going to happen!”

I nodded and picked up the phone again. This time I actually reached a person, but they couldn’t help either. After a while they finally said, “I’m sorry, ma’am. I cannot help you. I’m transferring you to my supervisor.”

The supervisor was much less mechanical, more human somehow. After listening, he said, “Ma’am, please turn your company’s phone off right now.” I pressed the button, but it refused to cooperate.

As I struggled, he spoke again, “Now, your phone should be turning on.”

“I’m sorry,” I said. “I’m still trying to get it turned off.”

He took a deep breath. “Ma’am, I’m telling you for the last time, *turn your phone off!*” Suddenly our roles reversed, and I realized he’d had a tough day too. I had become the frustrating customer.

I struggled to keep the laughter out of my voice. “Yes, sir, I’m doing that now. What’s next?”

Soon our problem was solved. I’m sure he hung up quite relieved to be rid of me. And me? I couldn’t get the phone down fast enough. I laughed until the tears ran down my cheeks. God had given me a good lesson. One in patience, in not taking myself so seriously, and, most important, in seeing life through someone else’s eyes. 🍀

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**Jill Morikone** is administrative assistant to the president of 3ABN, a supporting Adventist television network. She and her husband, Greg, live in southern Illinois and enjoy ministering together for Jesus.

JOURNEYS  
WITH JESUS  
JILL  
MORIKONE



SUDDENLY OUR  
ROLES REVERSED,  
AND I REALIZED  
HE'D HAD A TOUGH  
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**ENGAGE**

# MAKING THE **GRADE**

The (struggling)  
economics and  
governance of  
**Adventist education**

BY RON VYHMEISTER



**M**uch has been written recently about the struggles of Adventist schools. This struggle is not limited to North America, or to one type or level of school. We regularly hear of schools that are closed (remember, most recently, Mount Vernon Academy) or in danger of closing. There are conversations, prayers, and much hand-wringing, but our fundamental process for operating schools has not changed—at least not in my lifetime.

What's happening? Why are these schools struggling? What can we do to improve our schools and make them successful? These are questions I've asked myself for some time. As a business professor and the financial administrator of an Adventist school, for me these questions are not merely academic, but practical and pressing concerns. Our schools are an integral part of our God-given mission. If they fail, we are not delivering on what God has asked us to do.

#### **FACT CHECKING**

In the “normal” Adventist model the local church runs elementary schools; academies are run by the conference; and union conferences run colleges and universities. Education today is far more complex than it was 100 years ago. The amount of paperwork needed to run any school is significantly higher, thanks to governments and accrediting associations. Regulations reduce the flexibility that schools at all levels used to have. The costs of laboratories (science, computers, etc.) have outpaced inflation. Many expenses are on a per-school basis, rather than on a per-student basis.

Other circumstances have also changed. Families used to have many children. Today there are often only one or two. We have seen a shift from rural to urban societies. In my grandparents' generation, a secondary school diploma ensured employment for life. A college degree was for the elite. For my

**Our schools are an integral part of our God-given mission. If they fail, we are not delivering on what God has asked us to do.**



children today to remain employed in a professional capacity, they will likely be required to earn a graduate degree.

Distance is no longer the barrier it used to be. When Adventist schools started, traveling 100 miles a day was a significant journey. Today we fly 2,000 miles without letting it interfere with our sleep schedule.

Technology has also changed. Postal mail across country took weeks. Now, with cell phones and the Internet, communication at a distance is not an issue (even internationally). Physical presence is no longer the critical element it used to be.

### WHY ARE OUR SCHOOLS STRUGGLING?

Here are some crucial factors I have identified as I have puzzled over this problem for the past few years.

**Size.** In today's environment, with major governmental and accreditation requirements, it is very difficult to meet these requirements without allocating additional personnel, infrastructure, and finances. Because of the nature of the requirements, the necessary work is not directly proportional to the size of the institution. An academy with 100 students and one with 500 students must complete the same reports. The cost per student of the smaller school is therefore higher. Higher costs make it more difficult for parents to afford (or justify) the cost of Adventist education.

Another size issue involves the necessary laboratories (particularly for academies and colleges/universities). The facilities needed for computer or chemistry labs are not different if you have one group of 25 students or six groups of 25 students. Small is nice but expensive. Not long ago I asked about the size of the Spanish program at one university. I was told that they averaged only two graduates per year, and that there were (at that time) six or seven Spanish majors offered across all Adventist universities in the United States,

graduating fewer than 15 students per year. Is this affordable?

**Demographics.** Today's church is rapidly becoming an urban church. In an urban context we have multiple congregations within a small radius, yet the elementary school typically belongs to a single church. That church has to budget for it, and hope and pray that enough students will come to make the budget work. In a city, day academies spring up to serve local members, enabling them to attend an Adventist school. This reduces the pool of students for the conference boarding academy, creating more economic pressure.

People no longer stay in the area where they were raised. In the nineteenth century many people lived and died within 50 miles of their birthplace. Today it is common to live on the other end of the country. The more educated a person is, the less likely they are to remain where they grew up.

**Tradition.** Generally, we don't like change. We fight to keep what we've always had. During the past decade one conference in the U.S. with a struggling boarding academy (which they considered closing) received a multimillion-dollar offer to purchase the land and the buildings of the acad-

**If the “product” is not perceived as being significantly different from the alternatives, why should parents pay money plus have the inconvenience of the location?**





emy, located in a rural setting. The proposal was to sell the academy and use the proceeds to clear the school's debt, then invest the remainder as an endowment to fund students from that conference to study at nearby boarding academies.

The proposal was defeated, and the academy remained open for another two or three years. It is now closed, and the land was sold for 30 percent of the original offer. The new payment had to cover not only the earlier debt but also the additional debt from running the institution at a loss for the extra time the school operated, as well as the time that the institution was not used before it was sold. The remaining endowment (after clearing debts) is less than 15 percent of what it would have been, severely limiting the assistance the conference can provide.

The neighboring academies (four of them) cannot therefore receive the hundreds of thousands of dollars that the endowment would have provided every year, nor the additional amounts that parents would have contributed! We don't like moving our schools, even when it makes economic sense. Even Ellen White saw this. The move of Healdsburg College (which she had been involved in setting up) to Angwin as Pacific Union College in 1909 had her full support. The church sold the land in Healdsburg and used the proceeds to purchase the land they currently own. Even though she had advised the church to build in Healdsburg at first, when times changed, she advocated changing the location.

**Identity.** We need to recognize that the largest single source for funding education is tuition, which comes mainly from students' parents. In today's environment parents are concerned with getting value for the money they spend on their children's education. Adventist education is not cheap, so parents ask themselves: "What value am I getting for what I spend?"

They look at public education as well as other private schools. From marketing we know that

consumers make choices on price, product, promotion, and place. Adventist education is not normally the cheapest; it is often not well marketed; the location of our schools is often not the most convenient. Therefore, what's the selling point? It has to be *product*. If the "product" is not perceived as being significantly different from the alternatives, why should parents pay money plus have the inconvenience of the location?

How is our "product" different? Can it be different if our faculty and employees are non-Adventists, or have not received a solid Adventist education? Do we have a program that requires new faculty (Adventist or not) to have training in Adventist beliefs and educational philosophy? Do we require a statement of belief and practice from our employees, as many other faith-based schools (at all levels) do? I know that I have not signed a single such statement in my entire work experience, all of which has been spent in Adventist schools. We have plenty of opportunity to have a distinctive product, but we often don't use it. If something does not contribute to the mission of the church, it becomes a distraction and, according to business theory, should be disposed of. Do our schools truly contribute to that mission? What can we do to improve on that contribution?

### SOME POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

We live in a vastly different world than we did when Adventist education began. In reality, we live in a time of rapid changes, and it's time to act creatively and decisively if Adventist education is to continue to be a vibrant contributor in fulfilling the mission God has given us. I suggest the following areas be addressed:

**Governance.** Considering today's reality, it's time for elementary schools to be attached to the local conference. The ability to coordinate between churches and districts, and to coordinate the governmental requirements, creates significant efficiencies. Textbook purchasing can be coordinated,



and in some cases the sharing of specialized faculty (music, computers, art) could be advantageous both from financial and quality perspectives.

At the secondary school level, schools should be attached to union conferences. The decision then on how best to serve the members who don't have access to day academies (or would prefer their child to attend a boarding school) can be done for a larger region. Efficiencies in supervision from coordinating across many secondary schools include the ability to share in purchasing and the potential (using technology) to share faculty so that specialized courses, particularly in key subjects such as mathematics and sciences, can be shared. This increases the system's capacity to offer quality teaching without significantly increasing costs, making the product more attractive.

Colleges and universities need to be attached to the division. Looking across the fence at the Mormon Church in North America, it's plain that they have focused all their efforts on Brigham Young University, thus creating a world-class school.

I would not argue that we should close all of our institutions and take them to one location. Rather, I would suggest that the model of the University of Wisconsin System, with its multiple campuses, could be used, where transfer between campuses is seamless.\* Just imagine the Adventist University of North America, with 13 campuses. Yes, it's painful to think of giving up control (and perhaps even names). But such a model would enable a student to start on one campus and move to complete at another campus without fear of the dreaded "transfer credit" problems. It enables coordination of offerings so that class sizes are maintained at reasonable levels to make programs more affordable. Certain campuses could specialize in specific areas, while high-volume degrees could be offered at all locations. Students who wish to stay closer to home might be able to study two years in Berrien Springs (Andrews University), and then move to Loma Linda or Walla Walla to complete their studies.

**Identity.** I've worked in Adventist education for more than 30 years. I've been privileged to travel the world and see Adventist schools in almost all regions of the church. As I look at schools of every level, I've seen one consistent thing: With very

few exceptions, whenever I see schools in systemic trouble (I'm not talking about the momentary crisis), I've seen schools that are not following the clear instructions we have from the Bible and the writings of Ellen White. Even non-Adventist leaders recognize the Adventist philosophy of education as very sound, yet we tend to forget it. We often sacrifice our Adventist philosophy on the altar of financial expediency, or we try to compete with the "world" rather than being a distinctive light upon the hill. We cannot expect God to bless us when we are doing things that are contrary to explicit instructions we have been given.

#### WRAP-UP

I know it sounds simplistic to say that with addressing the governance and identity issues, we will have "solved" the problem. However, if we agree that the core issues are size, demographics, tradition, and identity, we will be much further down the road to resolving these issues than we are under the current model. It will not be easy for organizations to give up control of what they have "owned," but it's not impossible. Financially, if each organization continues to contribute the same amount to the operations of the schools, the school's finances will improve rapidly, because of efficiencies of being part of a larger system. As part of a more cohesive system, the issues that are driven by size, demographics, and tradition should be able to be overcome.

But without a clear Adventist identity, what is the purpose of having a school? How does it support the mission of the church? Let's not lose our focus. The purpose of Adventist education is not to provide employment for members, or merely a protected haven where parents can have their kids in a "safe" environment for a bit longer. Anything and everything we do must be focused on preparing those around us for the Second Advent. If we do not agree on and work toward this goal, our investment may be in vain. 📌

\*University of Wisconsin System, "UW Colleges' Transfer Guides" (2015), <https://www.wisconsin.edu/transfer/guides/>, accessed May 15, 2015.

**Ron Vyhmeister, Ph.D.**, served as deputy vice-chancellor for financial administration at the Adventist University of Africa while writing this article. He and his wife, Shawna, have just moved to Middle East University in Lebanon, where he will serve as academic dean.



## HYPERTENSION: GUIDELINES FOR COPING

**Q:** I am 62 years old and have moderate high blood pressure. Over the past year I have read conflicting reports as to the target blood pressure reading I should be striving toward. What is your advice?

**A:** High blood pressure is a common and dangerous condition if not adequately treated. It has been named the “silent killer” because there are often no symptoms until significant damage to the heart, kidneys, and brain—or even death—occurs. Untreated high blood pressure may result in a heart attack or stroke (“brain attack”). Symptoms may be less dramatic, such as unusual shortness of breath with mild exercise. There is no doubt that with adequate treatment of blood pressure, there has been a significant decrease in strokes and other complications. Sadly, however, undiagnosed and untreated hypertension is still common even in developed countries. It is important for one to have blood-pressure screening and to know one’s numbers in order to take the necessary treatment as needed.

Even in the 1960s an increasing level of the systolic blood pressure (or upper reading: e.g., the 120 of 120/80 millimeters of mercury) with age was accepted as normal. In fact, the norm was calculated as age in years *plus* 60; so for a 60-year old, a systolic blood pressure of 120 + 60, or 180 millimeters, was considered normal. Epidemiological studies in the latter part of the twentieth century, as well as the advent of clinical trial studies, debunked this concept, showing that active treatment of even isolated systolic hypertension in the older patient resulted in less complications of the disease. Landmark clinical studies in the 1990s onward showed that the outcomes for patients with a blood pressure reading of 120/80 or less were better than those who remained above 140/90. This led to a much more aggressive management of high blood pressure, even in older patients.

It was quite surprising when in 2014 the Eighth Joint National Committee panel suggested that it was safe to treat patients over the age of 60 years to a level of below 150/90 millimeters of mercury, and for patients aged 30 through 59 be treated to a level of less than 140/90. In November 2015 a large NIH-based study of more than 9,300 patients was stopped prematurely because it was shown that more intensive treatment of hypertension showed significant benefits, with decreased deaths, strokes, and heart attacks with systolic

**High blood pressure has been named the “silent killer” because there are often no symptoms until significant damage—or even death—occurs.**

blood-pressure readings of below 120. The results were so clear that the trial was stopped prematurely, as it would have been unethical to withhold intensive therapy from the comparison group, who were targeting a systolic level of below 140.\*

In consultation with your physician, who knows your risk factors for cardiovascular events, it makes sense to aim for a systolic blood pressure of 120. Home blood-pressure readings are helpful, and electronic monitors have become more affordable.

Take the pressure off your heart: measure and record your numbers, and follow up with your physician regularly. 📌

\*Report from the panel members of the Eighth Joint National Committee, *Journal of the American Medical Association* 311, no. 5 (2014): 507-520. doi:10.1001/jama.2013.284427.

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



## LEARNING TO LOVE LIFE

*For some, life is dark and forbidding.*

BY CECILIA LUCK

I'm a missionary. On July 1, 2015, I threatened suicide. I didn't act on it; it was simply a threat.

Which part of the previous paragraph caught your attention most? That I'm a missionary, or that I threatened suicide?

Would I have ever acted upon the thought? No. The threat itself was a desperate cry for help.

The point is: I wasn't well. I had hit rock bottom.

### SILENT SUFFERERS

I suffer from depression: a mental illness. Did I just say that out loud? How does that make you feel? Nervous? Awkward?

Would it be easier if I said that I was in an accident and broke some bones? Would a physical illness be easier to pray for? Would it be easier for me to talk about?

In my roughly 18 years as an Adventist, I have never heard any mention of depression in a church service. No sermons preached. No prayer requests mentioned aloud. I've heard it addressed in our seminars, and since I haven't attended every church on every Sabbath since becoming an Adventist, my perspective may be a bit skewed. But I still wonder why I have not heard about depression at least once in the past 18 years. Isn't the wellness of our minds just as important as the wellness of our physical bodies?

Paul thought so, and so does God. Why then does it seem as though mental wellness (or the lack thereof) is one of those hush-hush topics?

In my host country as a missionary, I lived near a small community known for its mental (or "crazy") hospital. In fact, the way you catch a minibus to this particular community is moving your hand in circles over the right side of your brain. But not everyone who suffers from a mental illness lacks a sound mind.

My depression took center stage while I was in mission service. I love the people and culture where I served, but I still felt out of place. It was my heart. Within the financial, social, and

career walls in which I served I wasn't equal to the other missionaries. I'm single; the other missionaries my age weren't. I was on a slightly elevated volunteer stipend. The other missionaries my age, well . . . you get the picture.

The other major issue was that I wasn't doing what I really wanted to do. Teaching isn't my calling; I was doing what God had opened to me at the time. I was also in the final stages of my M.A. degree. I was both a teacher and a student, a mid-30s single among married couples the same age. I wasn't making enough income to do anything more than basic travel, etc.

With my emotional and mental state, my feeling out of place even in the country I loved to serve, the sadness and frustration of not living the life I really wanted to live eventually overwhelmed me. The gifts and abilities God gave me weren't being utilized.

My depressed state didn't begin during my time of service in the host country, however. I hadn't been able to put a label on it, but for the longest time I felt a deep sadness, even on the greatest days. There were moments of laughter, of course, but an overall sense of peace and happiness just didn't exist.

My family background isn't that great. In fact, it would take a book to share all the reasons my family is a big factor in my mental wellness. From a human perspective I have a lot to be sad about. My depression and other circumstances interfered with my mission service. Yet as a daughter of God, I have much for which to be thankful.

I'm a missionary. I claim this.

### **EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL HEALTH**

Here's the thing: Just because followers of Jesus suffer from mental illness doesn't make them any less followers. I love Jesus, and even though I currently am experiencing this internal mental and emotional battle, I spend time with Him every day, talk to Him, and want His will to be done in my life.

As we look in God's Word, we find a number of people who suffered from depression. Have you read through some of the psalms lately, or Lamentations? David and Jeremiah, just to name a couple, experienced mental and emotional distress. In this sin-sick world Satan has so many avenues through which he can destroy the peace

**Let's be more aware of the inner battles people face. It's not easy to struggle alone.**

of mind and abundant life God intends for us.

And this brings me to my final point: Can one truly be in the mission field and suffer from depression? Think about that. It surely hinders the fullness of life that service requires. However, there is hope. Through years of distress David could still be a man after God's own heart. And thankfully, God has provided resources that work through His awesome power to overcome this illness. Here are some verses that speak directly to depression. Read them if you need help, or share them with others to encourage those who suffer from depression: Psalm 13; Psalm 34:18; Psalm 42; Lamentations 3:19-24; Philippians 4:6-9; Matthew 11:28; 1 Peter 5:6, 7.

Once overcome, missionaries—and everyone else who suffers from depression—are all the stronger in their partnership with God. I can live with that hope.

Let's be more aware of the inner battles people face. It's not easy to struggle alone. And those of us who suffer from this type of illness need prayer and tender loving care just as much as anyone who suffers from a physical illness.

I'm a missionary, and I suffer from depression, but not forever. I'm back in the United States regrounding my life and becoming a stronger woman in my Savior. Then, by His grace, I will return to the mission field and serve people in a way that glorifies Him through the gifts and abilities He has given to me.

Jesus promised: "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10). That is my prayer for us all, especially for those of us who suffer from depression. 🍏

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**Cecilia Luck** is working on a graduate degree in global community development at Southern Adventist University.



# THE LORD'S DAY

The phrase “the Lord’s Day” of Revelation 1:10 is unique in Scripture, and Christians interpret it many ways.

It’s most commonly argued that the Lord’s Day means Sunday, the first day of the week, in honor of Christ’s resurrection. It’s true that Sunday would someday be called the Lord’s Day, but this didn’t happen for 100 years, as Christians began abandoning the Sabbath to distance themselves from the Jews. But John was a Jew, and Jews rested on Sabbath, as did all Christians at this point.

So can we conclude that the Lord’s Day means the Sabbath? After all, Jesus once said that the Son of man is “Lord of the Sabbath” (Luke 6:5), and throughout Scripture the Sabbath is called God’s “holy day.” This interpretation is possible, but to be fair to the text it seems unusual that John would suddenly use the term the “Lord’s Day” rather than just “Sabbath,” which he used throughout his Gospel. It might very well have been Sabbath when John was “in the Spirit,” but his use of the term “Lord’s Day” isn’t watertight evidence of this.

There are other suggested meanings of the Lord’s Day: Easter Sunday? Emperor’s Day? But these lack strong support.


What about the Lord’s Day being the apocalyptic “day of the Lord” mentioned throughout the Old and New Testaments? To the saints in Thessalonica Paul

writes, “You yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night” (1 Thess. 5:2), clearly indicating the coming of Christ.

This interpretation of the “Lord’s Day” has strong support from the immediate context of John 1:10. John says that he’s “in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day” (the sentence structure in Greek); then a voice tells him to write what he sees. What’s John already seeing? What’s the only thing that John has seen so far?

Just three verses earlier: “Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen” (Rev. 1:7, 8, NIV).<sup>2</sup>

Here John is witnessing the coming of Jesus Christ at the end of time. Whether it’s John or an angel (see Rev. 1:1) shouting, “Look,” John is clearly seeing the return of His Lord and Savior. This is the same coming with the clouds of heaven that Jesus Himself prophesied to the high priest Caiaphas (see Matt. 26:64). It got Jesus killed; He was claiming to be God.

This suggests how pregnant with meaning is John’s introduction of Jesus’ revelation. The one who declares Himself Lord of the Sabbath is the same Lord who comes for John and for us in the clouds of glory. 

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, Bible texts in this article are from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

<sup>2</sup> Texts credited to NIV are from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

**Andy Nash** (andynash5@gmail.com) is the author of *The Book of Matthew: Save Us Now, Son of David*. He is coleading a tour to Patmos, Turkey, Greece, and Rome this summer.



THE LIFE  
OF FAITH  
ANDY  
NASH

“I WAS IN THE  
SPIRIT ON THE  
LORD’S DAY”  
(REV. 1:10).<sup>1</sup>

**BY DEBORA PRATI**

I'm a 23-year-old from the city of Forlì in Italy.

When I was about 6 years old, I almost drowned in the warm Mediterranean Sea. I was underwater, and fearing all was lost, when a hand yanked me out of the water and brought me ashore. My parents came to hug me, and in that split second my unknown savior disappeared. That night we celebrated and thanked God for saving my life.

#### **PICTURE OF MY LIFE**

This short story, in a way, describes what has happened to me in life:

In my adolescence I drifted away from anything related to God—prayer, Bible study, church... Instead I frequented places and parties I should not have, with people who influenced me for the worse. I forgot what it was to have a relationship with Christ, and I believed there was no need for Him, since I had everything I needed. I had found new “friends,” I was having fun; I felt free to live without rules and limits.

But I soon hit rock bottom, and the side effects of my lifestyle took a toll on me. Suddenly I was always mad, lost, and frustrated with the world without really understanding why. Most of all, I felt empty, and completely lost confidence in myself.

#### **JESUS FINDS ME**

In 2014, in my lost state, I traveled to Rwanda to volunteer at an Adventist orphanage near Kibuye. I met great people in Rwanda, friends that lived out their faith in God in great ways, and showed confidence that God was in fact in control of their lives. Through them God began to get through to me. Still feeling unworthy to be forgiven, I began to discover that I was the one who wouldn't forgive myself! Then and there, far from home, God knocked on the door of my heart. Kneeling on the floor, broken and crying, I opened the Bible randomly to Isaiah 51. I received my answer.

I have not always been as close to God as I should, but He has always been my salvation, my strength, my refuge. He has forgiven me, and given me new life! He is changing my heart, and I have started a journey that I will never end. Before I had no self-esteem, no confidence. But God has slowly put me back together, and He is helping me understand that I am precious in His eyes. I began to understand that He loves me for who I am, and He has a future of hope for me.

Just as when I was a little girl, life almost drowned me. But God reached out and yanked me out of the water. I now live because Christ lives in me. 🌿

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**Deborah Prati** was a sociology major at the University of Bologna when she wrote this story. She is passionate about living the gospel of Jesus Christ in her secularized European homeland.

# RESCUED FROM DROWNING

*My savior was a stranger.*

**I wouldn't  
forgive  
myself.**

## Fourteen ways to keep track of the rest of the flock

BY GORDON AND WAVENEY MARTINBOROUGH

**W**e all know the story: the church had 100 members. But when just one got lost, the loving Caregiver risked His life to retrieve it. Today's church would be very satisfied with a 1 percent rate loss, but He was not! The reality is that when we compare the number of members lost to members gained in a given period, our church reports a greater than 34 percent loss!

We say we care, but do we care enough to act? What can we do to stem our painful loss? Here are a few simple ideas for connecting with new believers.

Gordon and Waveney Martinborough, now retired, live in Orlando, Florida, and are co-directors of Happy Family Bible Seminars International, a supporting ministry of the Adventist Church.

### 1 Introduce yourself.

Identify one or two new believers for whom you would like to care. Introduce yourself, talk with them, get to know them, and build a positive relationship.

### 2

#### Pray for them.

Pray for them by name in your personal devotions. When we pray for someone, we form a spiritual connection with them.

### 3

#### Supply their needs.

As you get close to each other, you will be able to identify their felt needs. Choose one of their needs and try to satisfy it.

### 4

#### Prayer partners.

Invite them to become your new prayer partner. Tell them that you have needs for which you would like them to pray, and that you will be happy to pray for their needs as well. Establish a weekly time when you can call and pray with each other.

### 5

#### Visit the sick.

If sickness visits the new believer, or a family member, make sure you visit also. Visiting shows we care.

### 6

#### Welcome the Sabbath.

Offer to visit new believers on Friday evenings and welcome the Sabbath together.

# BE A CAREGIVER!



A flock of sheep is grazing in a lush green field. The sheep are in the foreground and middle ground, with some facing left and some facing right. The background shows rolling green hills under a clear blue sky. The overall scene is peaceful and pastoral.

**7**

**Provide transportation.**

If there is a need, offer to provide transportation to church, as well as on weekdays for running errands.

**8**

**Care for the children.**

Take a special interest in the children of new believers and make friends with them. When we win the heart of a child, we often capture the hearts of the parents.

**9**

**Share Sabbath lunch.**

Invite new converts to your home for Sabbath lunch. Don't strive for perfection; it's the fellowship that counts.

**10**

**Remember special days.**

Remember the special times of their lives—birthdays, anniversaries, or Christmas—and give a gift. Books such as *The Desire of Ages* make great nurturing gifts.

**11**

**Recreate together.**

Invite families for social activities. These could be a game, a party in a park, a social event, or watching a film together.

**12**

**Teach new skills.**

Teach your new friend a skill you have and they like, such as learning another language.

**13**

**Celebrate family.**

Create a small-group meeting of your families that meets regularly to share sorrows and joys, talk together, pray together, and fellowship together. This can be priceless!

**14**

**Be a mentor.**

Live an authentic life. If your new friends think you are genuine, they will model your behavior forever!



## FINDING MY FAITH

What keeps you grounded? What or who keeps you connected to Christ and the church?



**W**hat keeps me grounded was the great church I had growing up. It really set the foundation for me to continue growing and never wondering. We had a great choir and an awesome Pathfinder Club, where we learned about Christ. Now we all are separated because of life. But many of us continue growing and remaining in Christ because we had a great foundation.

**Oscar E. Chavez**, Wilmington, Delaware

**I**'ve been following Kent Hansen's blog, *A Word of Grace*, for several years. His essays are spiritual and thoroughly based on the Bible. They are so uplifting I often find myself reflecting on their messages throughout the week.

**Ruth Ellis**, Atlanta, Georgia

**A**llen and Rose Nell Brandt: for a 140-mile ride in their RV when my wife had to be transported to a pain clinic, where they accidentally discovered a clue that led to treatment of my wife's chronic, excruciating pain.

Sakae and Hatsumi Kubo: never walked away without vegetables or fruit from their garden and the blessing of their lives.

Ernie and Beth Bursey and Larry and Arlene Downing: kindred, loving spirits. Arlene was a resident in the ward when my 5-year-old son had heart surgery.

PUC profs Paul Stauffer—just had his 100th birthday—and Alice Babcock Stauffer: Paul was my roommate for a three-month Western arts tour of Europe and the Middle East, and Alice required me to read the book of Job.

My grandkids: don't want them to start praying for me for just yet.

My Sabbath School class: for putting up with me.

**Andy Hanson**, Chico, California

**Y**ears ago a dear friend gave me a copy of the little pamphlet *My Heart, Christ's Home*, by Robert Boyd Munger. It's based on Ephesians 3:16, 17: "I pray that out of his glorious riches [God] may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith."

The idea that Jesus wants to live in my life and share my everyday experiences revolutionized my life. It still amazes me. I love His invitation: "If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me" (Rev. 3:20).

**Robin Metaxas**, Chicago, Illinois

**B**eing connected to Christ is a choice. It's like being a young child in a busy parking lot: choosing to hold Dad's hand makes life less scary. I choose to spend time reading His Word in the morning so that I have something to think and pray about during the day. I read His Word in the evening so that I have something to sleep on. Is it easy? No, it's a choice, a choice that makes life worth living.

**Lloyd Peterson**, Columbus, Nebraska

# THE CARE AND FEEDING OF ADVENTISTS

Current and former Adventists in North America were asked about the congregational care they received before and after they became members.

## TOP FIVE REASONS PEOPLE LEAVE THE CHURCH (RETURNED MEMBERS):

- » I thought highly of it, but I had lost touch.
- » I thought highly of it, but I felt I could not live up to its standards.
- » It had become irrelevant to my life.
- » I was angry at the way it treated me.
- » I felt that it was cold and inflexible.

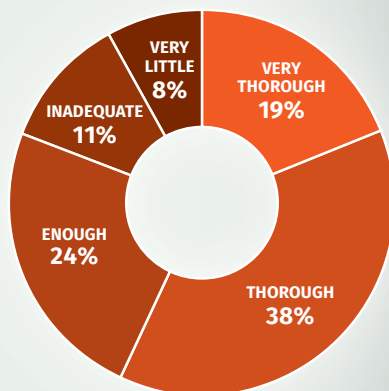
## TEN SIGNIFICANT LIFE EVENTS IN THE YEAR PRIOR TO NO LONGER ATTENDING CHURCH:

- » Serious illness
- » Married/divorced
- » Relocated
- » Death in the family
- » Marital conflict
- » Graduation
- » Job change
- » Poverty
- » Illness in family
- » Lost job

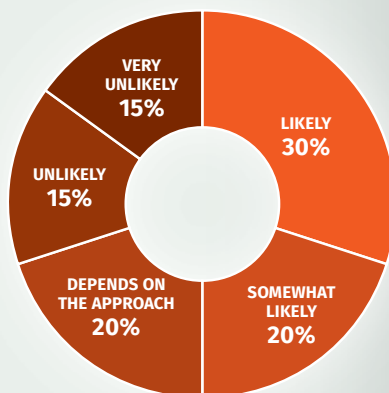
## TOP REASONS GIVEN TO STOP ATTENDING CHURCH:

- » No big issue; I just drifted away.
- » Lack of compassion for those hurting
- » Moral failure on my part
- » I did not fit in.
- » Too much focus on minor issues
- » Conflict in the congregation
- » Moral failures of members
- » Moral failures of leaders
- » Pressure from family or friends
- » Race, ethnic, or tribal issues

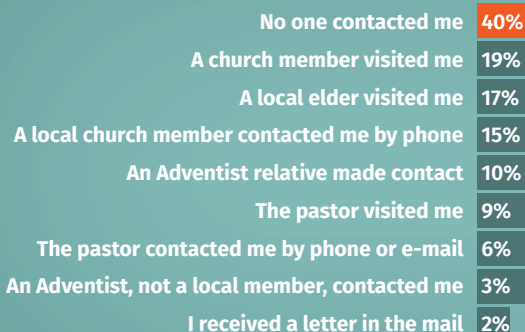
## HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE INSTRUCTION YOU RECEIVED WHEN YOU JOINED THE CHURCH?



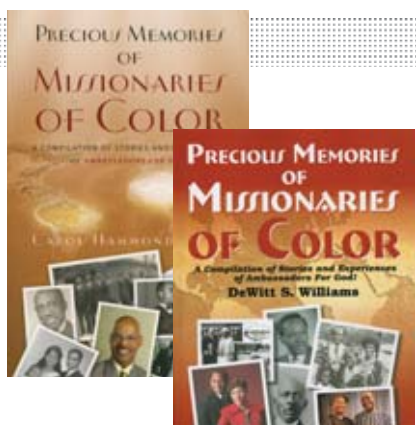
## HOW OPEN ARE FORMER MEMBERS TO RECONNECT WITH THE CHURCH?



## WHAT HAPPENED WHEN YOU STOPPED ATTENDING CHURCH?



# CLOSER LOOK



## Precious Memories of Missionaries of Color, 2 volumes

**C**arol Hammond's volume 1 (Pleasant Word Publishing, 2008), and DeWitt S. Williams' recent complementary volume (TEACH Services, 2015), with a preface by Gary Krause, director of the Office of Adventist Mission, are a unique mine of inspiration on the yeoman service of Adventist African American overseas workers between 1892 and 2008. Williams has enhanced Hammond's work by continuing her title, clarifying information on some of her subjects, covering individuals not mentioned in volume 1, and providing alphabetical indices that integrate his data and hers. Both volumes are well supplied with historically significant photography.

Hammond's 458 pages dedicate 49 chapters to telling of the service of 86 individuals between 1892 and 2008. A final section that might have been labeled "Appendix" begins with an alphabetical list of 187 heroes, the "Black Seventh-day Adventist Mission Service Honor Roll," a third of whom (63) were single missionaries. Next, Maurice Battle's letter from his mom, dated September 6, 1956, adds a quaint touch that startles by the nature and currency of its content: "As for news not much," she says: approaching elections, race agitation, crime. Her words of love came at

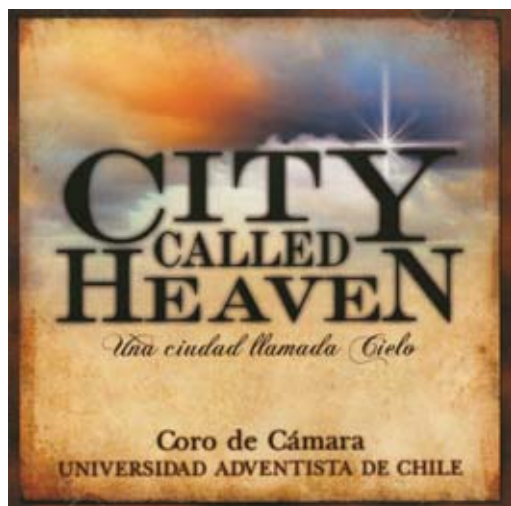
## A City Called Heaven Ambassadors for God and country

**T**his CD destroys stereotypes—of Chile, of Adventist education, of Seventh-day Adventism in this stereotype-defying land. Consider, for example, Chile's dimensions—18 times as long as it is wide at its widest point. Again, consider its diplomatic strategy: A City Called Heaven is a product of the Universidad Adventista de Chile [UnACH], whose Coro de Cámara [Chamber Choir] was selected as the nation's ambassadors to tour the United States of America at the nation's expense.

The strong, steady pulse of the CD's opening title number confounds standard anticipations with the soulfulness of its sound. It moves to the measures of a heaven-bound rhythm that nothing will swerve from its purpose. Youthful voices from the south of South America pour out a sound of gospel soul most know to belong to southern America. That sound, the glorious demand to take your stand ("De Pie"), the saturated progressions

the beginning of Maurice and Esther Battle's service to five overseas territories, one of the longest terms of service recounted (1956-1979), surpassed only by Dunbar and Lorraine Henri (1945-1973), and Leola and Walton Whaley (1968-1998). A poem of 111 four-line stanzas concludes the section, rhyming a-b-c-b all the way through. It is Edward Dorsey's "Dolly Dot and Me: Our Call to Florida," a poem mostly about service in Liberia, a long way from Florida.

Chapters are numbered in volume 2: 95 in all. Williams' 372 pages lead off with eight names of individuals already covered in volume 1 on whom he has gathered new information. The most



and adept modulations of “Fija Tus Ojos en Cristo,” all fill you, fellow Seventh-day Adventist, with admiration and holy pride at the competence, musicality, vocal quality, genre versatility, and spiritual sincerity of these messengers for God and country. You hear and know that director Susana Ovalle Miranda knows the journey that her singers need to take, that she means for them

to take us with them, and that she knows how to get us all there. Also, that the foreign ministry’s judgment in selection of these ambassadors is more than merely wise. It is inspired.

Their final plea [song 9, “Señor Jesús el día ya se fue,”] will be yours too, “Abide With Me,” for as the spirit of their selections and interpretations shows they are aware, we all need Him at every step if our journey will ever succeed.

Listen to the message, delivered in both English and Spanish, admire the orchestration of the Nashville String Machine and the Symphonic Orchestra of Prague, and be blessed, inspired, and lifted.

A City Called Heaven *may be obtained through several avenues, including (1) the university (rectoria@unach.cl); (2) director Susana Ovalle (susana.ovalle@unach.cl); codirector Sergio Leiva (sergioleiva59@icloud.com).*

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**Lael Caesar**

interesting of these duplications is probably a single woman missionary to Liberia and Sierra Leone. Though Williams correctly identifies her as Caucasian, he might also have noted her preferred spelling of her name: Hannah More. His alphabetical listing of names on pages 361-365 would read better if last names in the list were placed first (Battle, Maurice & Esther, under “B,” instead of Maurice and Esther Battle under “B”). A listing of countries would well complement the names list and the chronological listing of periods of service (pp. 367-371). Pioneer James E. Patterson opens the chronological list with his service to the Caribbean islands of Jamaica, Barbados, and Haiti,

and to Panama in Central America (1892-1896). Williams’ 249 subjects include 27 singles and 111 couples, ending with Timothy and Beverly McDonald in Kenya, 2003-2007.

We all need the inspiration of these books’ history. Forgetting the Lord’s leading inspires fear. Remembering through these stories helps prepare us to say, “Here am I, Lord, send me.”

Precious Memories, *volume 1, is available on Amazon; volume 2 may be obtained at your local book center; or directly from the author (mdwilliams39@gmail.com).*

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**Lael Caesar** is an associate editor of *Adventist Review*.



## Tossing the Gospel

It was one of those deceptively cold days, the kind that trades sharp wind and paralyzing temperatures for a dull chill that seeps in over time. The kind that tempts you to leave the house without gloves or scarf; but I was wearing both, expecting to be outside for several hours.

That Saturday afternoon our group was unpacking the church van to serve a warm meal to the homeless. Looking at the faces lining up, I found it hard not to think about how long they'd been out in the elements that day.

Up to our table came a mother with two small daughters. Next, a man approached asking for an extra plate of food for his homeless father. Then a woman appeared, wound tight with so many layers of clothes that she could barely carry her tray of food. I shivered and pulled my scarf a little tighter, but purposely left my face exposed to offer a welcoming smile to our guests.

Suddenly, in front of me was a sharply dressed man, his leather-gloved hands toting a briefcase. I hesitated and glanced around at my fellow group members for guidance. It was that very human moment we all face sometimes when trying to make a judgment about someone. *Why is he here? Does he really need this food?*

Almost immediately another thought forced itself on my mind: *Does it actually even matter?* No, it didn't. There was no shortage of food, no reason to withhold

an act of kindness from a soul who, for all we knew, could be facing anything from a lost job to simply a bad day.

It hurts to think that I and other Christians indulge that same scrutinizing attitude when dispensing a gift we've been given in far more copious amounts: the good news of salvation in Jesus. We do it so unconsciously—yet so scrupulously—with such thoughts as: *those people have already been preached to . . . my neighbor would never listen to my testimony . . . my coworker doesn't want to talk about faith.* We then allow these thoughts to paralyze us out of sharing the gospel, and instead wait for the next carefully planned mission trip or evangelistic meeting.

How sad that we often miss an important point in Jesus' parable about the sower. In Matthew 13 the sower in the story is not your typically precise farmer; he scatters seed all over the place. From him we learn to focus less on evaluating the ground and more on being so radiant with the truth and love of Jesus Christ that we saturate everywhere we go with seeds of faith.

Think of those to whom the Savior spent time revealing the truths of the kingdom: sick individuals, Pharisees, Gentiles, family members, a tax collector, even the one who would betray Him. If Christ can so easily and openly toss the seeds of the gospel, shouldn't I—a human with no knowledge of the future or conversion matters of the heart—be even more willing to do so every single day? 🌱

**Kristina Penny** is digital editor of *Adventist Review*.

THE SOWER IN  
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# 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?



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