

ADVENTIST REVIEW

NOVEMBER 2016: HEALING THE HATE + FAITH IN A
WORLD OF UNFAITH + GOD'S ON OUR SIDE
+ LET'S CELEBRATE NUTRITION + SABBATH AND
THE BOTTOM LINE + EXPECTING THE UNEXPECTED



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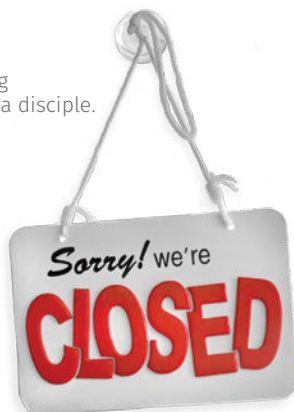
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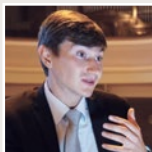
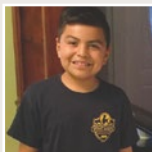
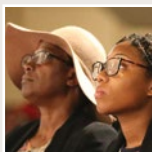
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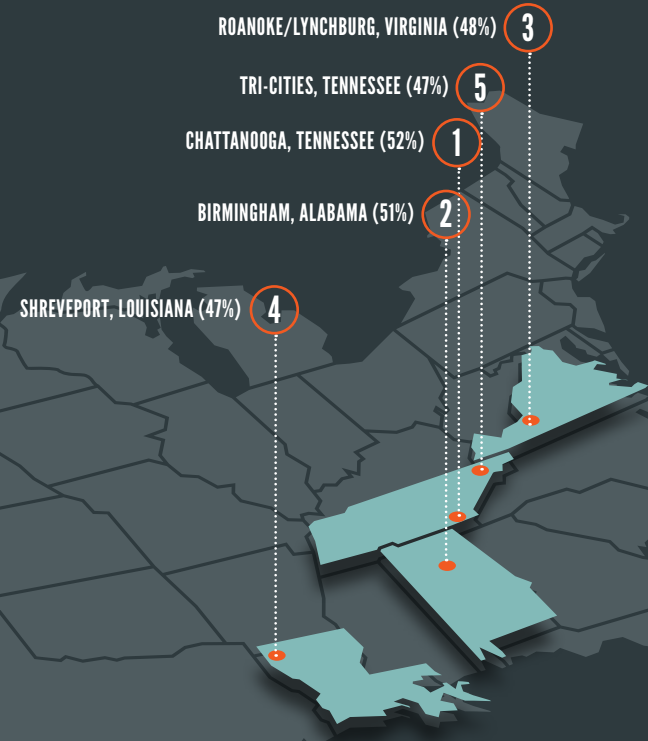


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THE TOP 5 MOST BIBLE-MINDED CITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

Findings based on percentage of respondents who reported reading the Bible within the last seven days, and who agree strongly in the accuracy of the Bible.

Source: American Bible Society/Barna Group



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body
soul



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Connect with Faith



BILL KNOTT



“Young in faith” is always an “at-risk” category.

Dear Adrian:

“I’m writing you by e-mail in hopes of reconnecting again—soon! I’ve left voicemail messages four or five times, and tried texting you half a dozen times too. I stopped by your house last Thursday evening with a loaf of Kathy’s whole wheat bread, but only heard Ranger barking in the backroom when I rang the bell. Hope you got the bread on the front porch before the squirrels did!

I keep getting the sense that something must be wrong—something must have happened that has discouraged you. It’s nearly four months since we saw you at church, and at least six weeks since we bumped into each other at the convenience store. Gaps like that aren’t usually good for faith. Maybe yours is struggling a bit just now.

I know that Fatima has always been unsure about your new relationship with Jesus. She loves you deeply, and she’s really loyal, but I can feel the pull of her own faith background and the concerns of her family. I was just looking at the photos of your baptism on my iPhone yesterday: there was worry in her eyes as she stood beside you and Pastor Rick. I wish she could have joined you more evenings during the “Revelation Speaks Peace” seminar in May. I remember how important it was to me that Kathy and I could talk and pray about the whole new world of Bible truth we were discovering when we got baptized six years ago.

I’ve been collecting the Bible puzzles each week in Serena’s Primary class at Sabbath School. I’ve got quite a stack of them now, and I can just imagine the big grin on her face as she dives into solving all of them. Tell her “Uncle Ernie” misses her—and has a lot of puzzles for her.

Adrian, I pray for you each day—because I know how hard it is to be a new believer. Learning how to keep God’s Sabbath; discovering how to build daily Bible study time; getting used to a whole new identity as an Adventist—those aren’t easy things to navigate, especially alone.

Take a moment and let me know how you’re doing, or call anytime.”

Ernie

Each year, 40,000 new believers join the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America. And each year, nearly half of them disappear within 12 months, pulled away from a new faith in Jesus by families, jobs, and the doubts that always come to those who have

made life-changing decisions.

Tens of thousands of young adult Adventists also disappear each year, many of them not formally cutting ties to their childhood faith, but simply going quiet when they don’t find meaning any longer, or the relationships that sup-

port them in turbulent times.

That’s why the *Adventist Review* for nearly 20 years has been offering its readers a practical way to build support into the lives of those who most need it—the newly baptized, and those trying to discover the faith of Jesus for themselves. “Young in faith” is always an “at-risk” category, and the readers of this magazine have contributed more than \$1 million since 1998 to put a free subscription of this faith-saving journal in young hands.

You can help again this year. Give one new believer or one Millennial a full year of all the hope, courage, and Bible truth that the *Adventist Review* offers for just \$10. Reach out to five for only \$50. Bless ten with your gift of \$100—or more. We partner with generous conferences across the continent to supply the balance.

Simply go online at www.adventistreview.org/subscriptions to make your credit card contribution to our New Believers campaign, or better yet, call 1-800-447-7377 to make your gift by phone. When you see our letter in your mailbox this month, send a check to “Adventist Review—New Believers” in the enclosed business reply envelope.

Keep reaching out to Adrian.

Bill Knott

If Goldstein or some other writer could write a small leaflet that could be directed toward a non-churched person and general audience, a great service would be performed.

WILLIAM ZELANEK, GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA



INFORMATION WELCOMED

Clifford Goldstein's article "Marx, Darwin, Nietzsche, and 1844" (July 2016) is very informative. If Goldstein or some other writer could write a small leaflet that could be directed toward a non-churched person and general audience, a great service would be performed.

William ZelaneK
Greensboro, North Carolina

THANKFUL FOR THE LIFE OF C. D. BROOKS

C. D. Brooks's dramatic image in the August *Adventist Review* and the comprehensive life story of this global godly preacher remind me of a Mount Vernon Academy camp meeting I shall never forget.

In 1980 Brooks led out in the Communion service. I was invited to pray for the bread and had all Friday afternoon to recall Jesus' sacrifice long ago.

Later, on the lawn of the girls' dorm, Brooks reached out to me in appreciation and encouragement. I thank God for C. D. Brooks and his service.

Keith R. Mundt
Riverside, California

SWEET MEMORIES OF JUDY

I am 84 years old. Seeing Judy Olson in the article "Never Too Old" (June 2016) brought back a flood of memories.

1 PERCENT

After reading the article "The 1 Percent Club," by Julian Archer (August 2016), I was reminded of a recent survey listing the 10 wealthiest pastors in America. These pastors would do well to get together and follow the ways of Jesus and eradicate poverty in any one of our major cities. I wonder if David, Solomon, Job, and the many others in Old Testament days ever surpassed this kind of wealth. Praise God we can give according to our own blessings.

Robert Rouillard
Lakewood, Washington

SABBATH IS A HAPPY DAY

The July 2016 *Adventist Review* message: Sabbath is a happy day as well as a holy day! All the articles expressed Sabbath blessings, from the news coverage of marathon runners in South Africa to "I Skipped Sabbath Classes in Russia." Our

family also uses the hymn "Day Is Dying in the West" to welcome the Sabbath. Honoring the Sabbath is a privileged time with our God, who created the Sabbath.

Natalie Dodd
Centerville, Ohio

I owe much to her beautiful Christian character as I recall her life with our family.

BEVERLY NEUMAN

Judy was living and going to school in a Lutheran boarding school when my parents hired her to babysit us while they went to a PTA meeting in Fergus Falls, Minnesota. A friendship developed, and when my dad built his greenhouse, Judy moved with us to help do flower design work. She and my mom (who was Baptist) studied the Bible and were eventually baptized at the Anoka camp meeting in 1944.

I remember her praying with me beside my bed and teaching me how to talk to God. I owe much to her beautiful Christian character as I recall her life with our family. Thank you for featuring her and her dedication.

Beverly Neuman
Paradise, 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.

IN A FEW WORDS...

15-YEAR-OLD RUGBY PLAYER WHO HONORED SABBATH IS BAPTIZED

What a testimony! I am so proud of this young man who was not ashamed to take his stand for the Lord. As I work with our Pathfinders here in Canada, I will be sharing this testimony with them. They need to know that nothing is too hard for the Lord to do for them. We saw what He did for Joseph, Daniel, his friends, and other Bible characters. He could, and is still doing the same, for His children today once they invite Him into their lives.

Praise God!

Catecha Francis, via Web

JUDGE IN KENYA REFUSES TO WORK ON SABBATH

I now have more reasons to trust God, even when situations look impossible. When David Maraga first declared his stand, I was personally encouraged never to be ashamed of my faith, no matter the situation. God will forever be faithful to those who are obedient. Maraga has been appointed as a new chief justice, and my prayer is that God sees him as he remains true to duty as a needle to the pole. Indeed, there are still many who can be neither sold nor bought.

Nelly Manyala, via Web

FORTY DOLLARS AND A PRAYER

Absolutely inspiring! Thank, thank you, thank you to Tony Williams, Byron Greenberg, David Reile, and Sandra Blackmer for this story with its numerous levels of support for Adventist Christian education. While so many have loudly noted the “failings” of Adventist Christian education, this story reminds us that God is at work in His schools! Bless the Lord!

J. Phillip Williams, via Web



ADVENTIST REVIEW

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People attending an evangelistic meeting during the "The Right Time, The Right Message" series in London. BUC

MIRACULOUS STORIES EMERGE FROM LONDON

3ABN AND ADVENTIST CHURCH HOLD MAJOR EVANGELISTIC MEETINGS

BY ANDREW MCCHESEY

She was preparing to be a high priestess for Satan.

She hated Seventh-day Adventist evangelist John Lomacang.

Every time Lomacang appeared on television in her home in South Africa, she asked her daughter to switch off the television or change the channel.

This fall she felt an urge to go to the Croydon Seventh-day Adventist Church in London, her new home. She didn't realize that the church was one of 11 London sites holding a two-week evangelistic series organized by the Three Angels Broad-

casting Network (3ABN) in partnership with the local Adventist Church.

"To her amazement, she saw Pastor Lomacang preaching on the power of prayer," said Emmanuel Osei, acting president of the church's South England Conference, whose territory includes London. "Only God could've led her, because this wasn't planned."

The woman, who was once deep in the occult, is among dozens of people whose lives have been affected through the September 3-17 evangelistic series, titled "The Right Time, the Right Message," organiz-

ers said. A total of 87 people were baptized during the meetings, and several hundred others are taking Bible studies in preparation for baptism.

Britain and the rest of Europe are among the most challenging places in the world to share the Adventist message. Overall church attendance is low, and the largely secular society shows little interest in spiritual matters. The Adventist Church's Trans-European Division, comprised of 22 European countries, including Britain, has only 85,000 members, the smallest mem-



SABBATH LAWSUIT

A U.S. cement maker will pay \$42,500 to a Seventh-day Adventist worker whom it fired for declining to work on the Sabbath, the U.S. government said. Greenville Ready Mixed Concrete, a company based in North Carolina,

agreed to compensate truck driver Michael Cole and to take steps to prevent future religious discrimination with its settlement in a lawsuit filed by the government's Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

bership of any of the church's 13 divisions.

The evangelistic series, 3ABN's first major international event in about a decade, might have yielded significantly more baptisms if it had been held in some other country, said Danny Shelton, president and CEO of 3ABN.

But he and other 3ABN leaders said they believed that God had led them to London for a reason. "God is not done with London yet," said Lomacang, 3ABN's director of world evangelism, who led the main evangelistic meeting at the Croydon church. "Seeds have been planted, and the wave of evangelism must not cease."

The meetings were live-streamed online and with a two-day delay on 3ABN television.

LIVES CHANGED

The occultist from South Africa sensed a deliverance and her burden lifted as she listened to Lomacang speak at the evangelistic meeting, church leaders said. She returned to the meetings night after night. Then she and her husband responded to a call to surrender their lives to Christ.

"The Croydon church will work with them for the future that God has in store for them," Lomacang told *Adventist Review*. "She told me, 'I now know that it was not you I did not like. It was your message about Jesus. I am glad that we met and that the Lord used you to lead me to Christ.'"

Lomacang said nothing thrills

him more than seeing people surrender to Jesus, including a young woman, came to his church on the night he preached about the biblical seventh-day Sabbath. She accepted the message and was baptized. "What's interesting is that she is the daughter of the pastor of a Sunday church," Lomacang said.



Richard Daly, left, pastor at the Croydon church, thanking John and Angie Lomacang on the final Sabbath.

3ABN

"She was baptized without her parents knowing of her decision."

Across town at the Stoke Newington church, a Pentecostal pastor made his first visit to an Adventist church on the night that Shelley Quinn, 3ABN program development manager, spoke on the topic of tithing.

"He attended under protest because he had forbidden his church members from entering any Adventist church," Quinn said.

After the meeting he announced he had learned something new and was firmly convinced by Scripture that God's system of tithing was still in force. "He said he had been

in error all his life, teaching that tithing was not for New Testament believers," Quinn said.

A MARRIAGE SAVED

A remarkable story about a saved marriage emerged from the Walthamstow church.

A carpenter named Ricardo was in the middle of a painful divorce from his wife when he decided to seek baptism, speaker John Dinzey said. First, however, he wanted to make sure he was right with God, so he decided to apologize to his wife for the way he had behaved and to seek her forgiveness. "He tried to reach her by phone, but he was blocked from calling her," Dinzey said. "He then sent her a message on Facebook: 'Please call me. I would like to talk with you.'"

His estranged wife thought he wanted to pressure her to hurry up with the divorce paperwork. When she called him, she blurted out: "Don't worry. I'm already getting the paperwork ready," according to an account shared by Dinzey.

Ricardo said, "No, no, please wait." Then he asked for forgiveness.

"I'm giving my life to the Lord," he told her. "I'm getting baptized. I want your forgiveness. I also want to know if you want to get back together."

His wife began to weep. "I've been praying for this," she said.

The couple reconciled.

"After his baptism he and his wife were going to take a second honeymoon," Dinzey said. 🍷



Wayne Blakely, one of the subjects of *Journey Interrupted*, says he believes the new film “speaks to God’s remnant people.”

COURTESY OF JOURNEY INTERRUPTED

JOURNEY INTERRUPTED DOCUMENTS SAME-SEX ATTRACTION

THE FILM’S PARTICIPANTS POINT TO GOD’S POWER.

BY MARK A. KELLNER

A new film is reaching out to Seventh-day Adventists and others struggling with same-sex attraction: there is a way through the struggle, and it involves a total reliance on God’s power.

Journey Interrupted is a 60-minute documentary chronicling the lives of five Adventists dealing with the issue of same-sex attraction. Of these, four have found an answer to their struggle, while one has not done so yet.

“We wanted to let people know that people are very aware of their struggles with same-sex attraction and don’t know what to do, and even when they know what to do, they’re held by their ‘feelings’ and do what comes naturally to them,” said Wayne Blakely, cofounder of “Coming Out” Ministries, who is featured in the film. “We know because we’ve been there, and we know it’s a struggle to sacrifice what you feel for a relationship that is in agreement with Jesus Christ.”

Filmed in the United States, Brazil, and Europe, *Journey Interrupted* began as 25 hours of recorded testimonies from the participants. Filmmaker Danny Woods from Johnstown, Ohio, was introduced to Blakely by Brian and Anne Savinsky, ministry board members, who

later became the film’s producers. Though initially reluctant to do the film, Woods, who is not an Adventist, after praying about the project, said that “it was just one of those things where I kind of felt like being pushed toward it. . . . It was a ‘Jonah’ thing; if I didn’t do this, I wouldn’t feel OK.”

Woods said the film presents “something that is not talked about in churches,” which is how faithful Christians deal with the question of same-sex attraction.

“Whenever I mention it, they’re very fascinated,” he said. “It’s not a topic they talk about, and when they do, it’s in a negative context without any answers. It’ll help a lot of people who are struggling and don’t know what to do.”

The original 25 hours of recorded interviews and other filming ended up as one hour and 40 minutes of footage, which was believed to be too long for many audiences. Blakely then found Troy Homenchuk of Niles, Michigan, at a 2015 GYC event in Louisville, Kentucky, who expressed an interest in helping.

“This is much more than a film about people who were once sinning in a particular way,” Homenchuk said. “It’s more about the gospel and your identity in Christ.”

He said that viewers might be confronted with a way of thinking they didn’t consider before. “It’s a film that can change that point of view [about sin] to how God wants to deal with us, as seen in His Word, as seen in the Bible. Not in terms of what culture says, or what some well-meaning Christians say.”

The editing task fell to Jonathan LaPointe, of Berrien Springs, Michigan, who is the assistant media director for Pioneer Memorial church at Andrews University.

“I think the biggest challenge with the film was trying to figure out what the core message really was,” LaPointe said. “There is only so much you can ask your audience to take away. [We needed to find] the theme that runs through all five of these stories, then to parse out what contributes to that core theme and what is not relevant in this context.”

Blakely said the film is already drawing interest worldwide.

“Our schedules are beginning to fill up with premieres, even out of the country,” he said. “More people are contacting us now about finding out how they can have a screening where they are located.”

Asked what his hope was for the project, Blakely said that *Journey Interrupted* is a film that “stands alone, with respect to the Christian faith. It’s not a denominational issue; it’s a faith concern. So the film certainly reaches far beyond the borders of Adventism. It speaks to God’s remnant people, wherever they might be found.”



FRENCH TV OPENS

The Adventist Church has launched its first global television channel with French-language programming, the Inter-American Division reported. Hope Channel International executives joined division leaders to launch the channel,

Esperance TV Interamericaine, as well as two other channels, Hope Channel Inter-America in English and Esperanza TV Interamérica in Spanish. The French channel is available online and on Roku, while the other two are also on satellite.



10-YEAR-OLD LEADS EIGHT CHILDREN TO BAPTISM

BOY GIVES BIBLE STUDIES IN NEW JERSEY.

BY CRISTINA MACENA

A fourth-grade boy in the U.S. state of New Jersey has led eight children to baptism through a Bible study group in his home.

Jaffet Vazquez, 10, uses information learned in classes at the local Seventh-day Adventist elementary school to lead the weekly group of 13 children, ages 5 to 10, in his home in Vineland, a city of 61,000 people.

"I am really happy to learn more about Jesus and teach my friends," Vazquez told the *Columbia Union Visitor* magazine. "They come over to my house, and we learn more

about God together and also get to play."

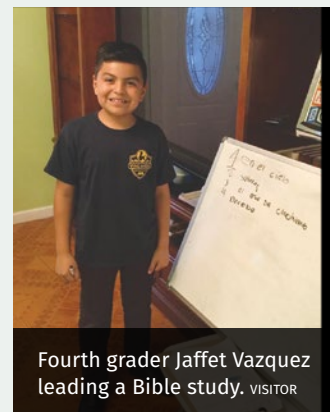
When Vazquez first decided that he wanted to share his love for Jesus with the neighborhood children, his mother prayerfully visited every mother on the street to extend an invitation to the Bible studies. Many mothers said their children could attend.

Vazquez shares with his friends what he has learned about God's love and gift of salvation during classes from teachers Violeta Molina and Raul Rivero at the Vine Haven Adventist School. Rivero

is also pastor at the Bridgeton Spanish church, which Vazquez attends with his family, and he helps the boy's friends prepare for baptism.

When Vazquez started teaching, only one child from his block went to church regularly. Now many of the children attend Sabbath services at the Bridgeton Spanish church, and their parents are more open to Bible studies for themselves, *Visitor* reported. Eight children have been baptized because of Vazquez's ministry.

The boy encourages the children to study the Bible for themselves, using his allowance money to buy prizes for those who excel. His mother prepares snacks for the children to eat at the end of their study.



Fourth grader Jaffet Vazquez leading a Bible study. VISITOR

"The children say they are excited to learn new worship songs and learn how to pray," *Visitor* said. ▀



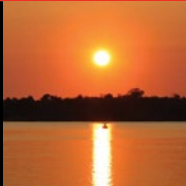
THIRTEENTH SABBATH OFFERING

A small clinic constructed through a Thirteenth Sabbath Offering has resulted in two baptisms, requests for 23 more baptisms, and the establishment of an Adventist congregation in a remote area of Papua

New Guinea, South Pacific *Adventist Record* reported. A Thirteenth Sabbath Offering in 2013 identified Arufi village as a place that could benefit from a medical outpost, and a fly-and-build team from Australia built it in 2014.

NEWS BRIEFS

1



A CAMP MEETING ENDED in tragedy in Zambia when a building collapsed amid strong winds, killing a woman and a 3-year-old boy, local church leaders said. More than 500 church members were attending the Sabbath afternoon program at the 2016 annual camp meeting near the provincial town of Chinsali at the time of the incident on September 3, 2016.

2



AN ADVENTIST HAS CREDITED GOD and the Adventist Church for her appointment as the deputy governor of the British Virgin Islands, the Inter-American Division said. Rosalie Adams became the first Adventist to hold such a high government post on the British Virgin Islands with her appointment by Queen Elizabeth II through Britain's foreign minister, Boris Johnson. Among other things, Adams will function as acting governor when the governor is away.

3



BIRTHDAY CAKE, BALLOONS, AND LAUGHTER punctuated fiftieth-anniversary celebrations for Asian Aid, an Adventist supporting ministry that sponsors the education of children and young adults in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, India, Nepal, and Bangladesh, South Pacific *Adventist Record* reported. Asian Aid, with offices in Australia and the United States, has sponsored more than 6,000 children.

4



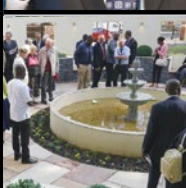
THE ADVENTIST CHURCH IN MEXICO plans to gather more than 500 deaf people from across Mexico next June for a first national conference as it steps up efforts to reach the hearing impaired, the Inter-American Division said. The church in north Mexico has begun producing video *Faith of Jesus* Bible lessons in sign language for church members to share. Leaders hope to complete the 20 Bible lessons by the conference.

5



GANOUNE DIOP, public affairs and religious liberty director for the Adventist world church, addressed the challenges of human rights and peace at an interfaith conference held on the sidelines of a Group of 20 summit in China, his office said. Diop was invited to address some 40 scholars and religious leaders at the G20 Interfaith Summit in Beijing as global political leaders gathered in Hangzhou, China, in September.

6



AN ADVENTIST PUBLIC GARDEN—spotlighted at night, with seating in tranquil surroundings and a three-tier fountain—is now a national British memorial to Adventist soldiers during World War I and all those who stand for peace in wartime, the Trans-European Division said. The Watford Peace Garden, located between the Stanborough Park church and the British Union Conference headquarters, opened on the International Day of Peace on September 21, 2016.

7



SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY has opened an exhibit at its Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum that Benjamin Foster, curator of the Yale Babylonian Collection at Yale University, declared “the finest exhibition on ancient seals in terms of presentation, approachability, and scholarly input that I have ever seen.” The exhibit uses digital technology and careful design to present a key communication tool of ancient societies to a twenty-first-century audience.



Salesperson Klea Radovic working at the Knjigolovka bookstore in central Belgrade, Serbia. VICTOR HULBERT/TED

ADVENTISTS SET UP SHOP NEAR ORTHODOX CHURCH

KNJIGOLOVKA IS A GROWING CENTER OF INFLUENCE IN SERBIA.

BY ANDREW MCCHESENEY

Seventh-day Adventist books filled the shelves of ordinary bookstores in Serbia's capital for about six years, so church leaders became concerned when the stores began to reject the books last year.

No store owners would explain why they had changed their minds. Church leaders suspected the behind-the-scenes involvement of the influential Serbian Orthodox Church.

The solution? Open a bookstore.

But Knjigolovka in central Belgrade is not just any bookstore.

Nestled among school supplies such as backpacks, pencils, and notebooks are Serbian-language editions of such books as *The Great Controversy*, by Adventist Church cofounder Ellen G. White, and *The Lost Art of Thinking*, by Adventist physician Neil Nedley. The store, which opened in late February, is located near an elementary school

and just down the road from one of the largest Orthodox cathedrals in the world, the Church of Saint Sava.

The Knjigolovka bookstore is already a growing center of influence in a society wary of Protestantism, said Djordjija Trajkovski, president of the Adventist Church's South-East European Union, whose territory includes Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Montenegro.

"When parents enter our bookshop to buy supplies for their children, they become interested in our books," Trajkovski said as he drove two visiting Adventist journalists to the bookstore. "They often declare that they have never seen these kinds of books in any other bookstore in town."

He was echoed by Klea Radovic, a pastor's wife, who works as a salesperson at the bookstore. She

said many customers rush in and out for school supplies, but some linger to look at the books. When they do, they often exclaim with astonishment when they realize that the books aim to improve physical, psychological, and spiritual health, Radovic said.

A BIG SALE

But some customers just want to be left alone. Radovic spoke of a man who took a book off the shelf, read through part of it, put it back, and took another one.

"I was thinking that he's just going to leave and not buy anything, but he bought eight of our books," she said. "But he wasn't interested in conversation. He was just, 'I'm just looking' and very quiet. But then he took all eight."

She said *The Lost Art of Think-*

Ellen White more than a century ago, said Dragan Pejovski, director of the Adventist-owned Euro Dream Publishing House outside Belgrade. He came up with the idea for the bookstore and serves as its manager.

He said the store was already breaking even, and he was looking to buy the place once its two-year lease ends. The store's first-year rent of US\$8,750 was nearly covered by a private donation from a church member in Australia, while the publishing house covered the rest from its profits.

"We have good and positive feedback from the people who are buying books there," Pejovski said.

FIVE BOOKS SOLD A DAY

The store sells an average of five books a day, while the most books

Knjigolovka—whose name is a wordplay on the Serbian words for "book" and "pencil" and can also be read as "Hunting for Books"—is not the only Adventist bookstore to have found success in the church's Trans-European Division, which encompasses Serbia and 21 other countries. In Denmark's capital, Copenhagen, the Helping Hand store is flourishing with a mix of books, secondhand goods, and a café, said Victor Hulbert, communication director for the division.

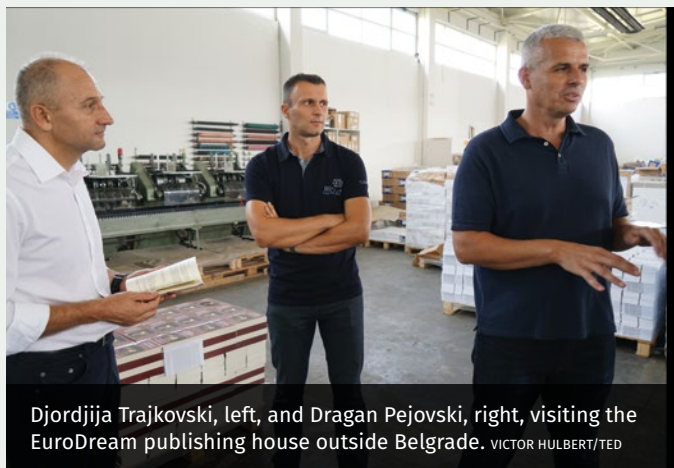
"It is building bridges and making friendships," said Hulbert, who visited Belgrade with an *Adventist Review* journalist. "It is also attracting a range of people. Refugees come in because there is good-quality secondhand clothing, and Danes stop by for a drink and a book."

Helping Hand is so successful that a second store was recently opened in northern Denmark, and plans are being laid out to open a third in the town of Daugård, where the Adventist-owned Vejle fjordskolen junior college is located.

Church leaders have no plans to add secondhand clothes to the Knjigolovka bookstore in Belgrade, although two secondhand clothing stores were recently opened in Bosnia, and they are thriving, Trajkovski said.

He said Knjigolovka will, however, stock a growing number of titles from Euro Dream, which produces 25 to 30 titles a year and has released about 150 titles since it opened in 2010. A room on the second floor of the store is to be converted into a hall for book signings and new book presentations. Healthy food products may also be added to the store shelves.

Knjigolovka is meeting a need not only in the community but also in the church, Trajkovski said. "We have a good variety of books, but we are not very good at advertising them." ■



Djordjija Trajkovski, left, and Dragan Pejovski, right, visiting the EuroDream publishing house outside Belgrade. VICTOR HULBERT/TED

ing is the store's best-selling book, while *The Great Controversy* is also a hot item and always on sale. Shelves under the store's checkout counter were lined with copies of *The Great Controversy* on a recent visit.

The book is especially popular because of its cover, which describes how modern-day events such as the United States' role as a superpower were foreseen by

sold in a day was 10.

Pejovski compared the store's sales to that of local literature evangelists, mentioning that one couple called him recently to joyfully announce that they had sold 15 books over the past month.

Pejovski is already drawing up plans to open a second bookstore in Novi Sad, Serbia's second-largest city, situated about 55 miles (90 kilometers) north of Belgrade.



Mārtiņš Subatovičs conducting at 120th-anniversary celebrations of the Adventist Church in Latvia. VICTOR HULBERT/TED

FORMER AGNOSTIC HEARS ANGELS SING

MĀRTIŅŠ SUBATOVIČS SHARES HIS DAMASCUS ROAD EXPERIENCE.

BY ANDREW MCCHESENEY



Mārtiņš Subatovičs, who pastors three churches, says he sees his choir as a fourth church.

VICTOR HULBERT/TED

The first time he set foot in a Seventh-day Adventist church, the 17-year-old Latvian boy prayed to somehow serve God.

The second time, he found himself playing the piano for the Sabbath worship service.

A decade later Mārtiņš Subatovičs is pastor of the same church in Latvia's capital, Riga. He also serves as music director for the Adventist Church in Latvia, a role that was on full display in late September when he sang and conducted a 100-member choir during celebrations to mark 120 years of Adventism in the Baltic country.

"I think God answers those prayers very quickly," Subatovičs said about his first prayer in the Riga church. "Other prayers may require a wait for a reply. But when you pray to serve, God answers quickly."

Subatovičs, 28, is among a group of young people at the forefront of the Adventist movement in this small country of 2 million people and only 4,000 Adventists. One of Subatovičs' close friends is Valdis Zelčs, the 27-year-old co-owner of a flourishing health food store just up the street from the Riga church. ADRA's country director for Latvia is Madara Daukste, a 26-year-old

woman eager to serve others.

Subatovičs, the only Adventist in his family, said he saw his first miracle when he was accepted into Latvia's top choir-conducting school, the Riga Dome Choir School. Teachers tested candidates with a new piece of music. This was Subatovičs' weakness. Although he had finished at the top of his eighth-grade class, he was not able to perform a new piece at first sight. So when the Riga Dome teacher gave him the piece, he was surprised to find that he was familiar with it. He performed it well.

Then the school abruptly canceled a second exam, on music theory, because the testing room needed repairs. Subatovičs said he would have failed that exam.

"This school was at a professional level that was much higher than I was able to perform at, and God did a miracle that allowed me to pass the entrance exams," he said in an interview in the Riga First Seventh-day Adventist Church, where he serves as associate pastor.

DAMASCUS ROAD MOMENT

The first year was tough for Subatovičs. He lived in a dormitory and struggled with his studies.

The second year brought a friend, a girl named Daina, who had been baptized into the Adventist Church a few months earlier. Subatovičs plied her with questions about her faith during the next two years. He said he learned everything about Adventist doctrine—from the Sabbath to the state of the dead—without once opening the Bible. Then Daina left to study medicine.

Subatovičs thought about God once in a while, but remained convinced that he would never believe unless God appeared to him. That all changed at the age of 17 when he experienced what he describes as a mini version of Paul's journey to Damascus. Acts 9 says the Lord appeared to Paul during that trip.

Subatovičs was thinking about God during a walk near a Riga park when he suddenly realized that God exists. "I stopped, and at that moment God gave me this gift of faith," Subatovičs said. "For some people it's a lifelong journey. For me it was just at that moment. I received faith."

Subatovičs struggled to put into words what took place. "I always thought I would never believe unless I saw God. But now I know that God can reveal Himself in many different ways," he said.

"I realized at that moment that I was 100 percent sure about God, just as sure as I am that I can see my hands and you," he said, looking at a journalist.

The experience confused Subatovičs. He didn't understand what was happening. But he immediately texted Daina on his cell phone, thanking her for teaching him to believe in God. Daina couldn't believe it, Subatovičs said. After two years of answering his questions, she had given up hope.

A NEW LIFE

Subatovičs said everything changed for him that day. He wanted nothing more than to serve God. He returned to the dormitory filled

with joy. He knocked on the doors of his classmates, asking what he could do for them.

"I couldn't keep it in myself," he said. "I did not witness to them, or talk about Jesus or the Bible. I just said, 'I want to do something for you. Do you have anything I can do for you now?'"

His classmates were surprised to see him take out their garbage and perform other tasks. Soon they began to ask him why he was so happy. He told them about his belief in God.

Subatovičs wanted to do more, and he wanted to be baptized. So he headed to the Riga First Seventh-day Adventist Church, which is the largest Adventist church Latvia, with seating for about 450 people. He had never taken a Bible study in his life, but he believed every word that the Bible said based on what Daina had taught him.

He shyly slipped into the church on a Sabbath morning and prayed silently from his seat: "I want to serve. I didn't come just to sit. I came to serve."

God answered his prayer the next Sabbath, he said.

"Something strange happened," he said. "In the past 10 years it has never happened again." The church had no one to play the piano.

Music is very important in Latvia, which is known as "the land that sings." Many musicians were always in attendance in the First church. But the pianist was missing that Sabbath. The worship leader asked whether anyone in the congregation could play. No one stirred.

"I didn't think I would be very good at playing new Adventist songs at first sight," Subatovičs said. "But somehow I lifted my hand."

He played well.

A FOURTH CHURCH

By the time he had completed Bible studies and was baptized the next year, Subatovičs had already

founded a church youth choir, a position he holds to this day. The choir performs about 10 concerts a year, usually at venues other than churches. Subatovičs, who now pastors a total of three churches in Riga, considers the choir to be his fourth church.

"We have members who are not Adventist," he said. "They are friends of Adventist choir members. Through music they come to Christ."

The choir is open to nearly anyone, even those without a singing voice. Subatovičs recalled that when he first formed the choir, two of three members "were singing their own melody." He winced as he conducted the choir.

"The sound that we made was not a heavenly sound," he said. "But we wanted to serve God."

God made up for the choir's deficiencies at its first concert, he said. When it came time to sing, he lifted his hands to conduct, the accompaniment music started playing, and "the most heavenly sound" rose from the choir, he said.

"I realized that this was not a sound that we could perform," he said. "I was confused. I was surprised. I had to conduct, but I wondered where this sound had come from. This was not our choir."

Subatovičs believes angels joined the choir that day. He pointed to a passage by Adventist Church co-founder Ellen G. White, where she wrote, "When human beings sing with the spirit and the understanding, heavenly musicians take up the strain and join in the song of thanksgiving."*

Subatovičs said he believes that angels have sung at nearly every subsequent concert.

The people who heard his choir sing in a Riga music hall during the 120th-anniversary celebrations of the Adventist Church in Latvia would no doubt agree. ♣

*Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 9, pp. 143, 144.



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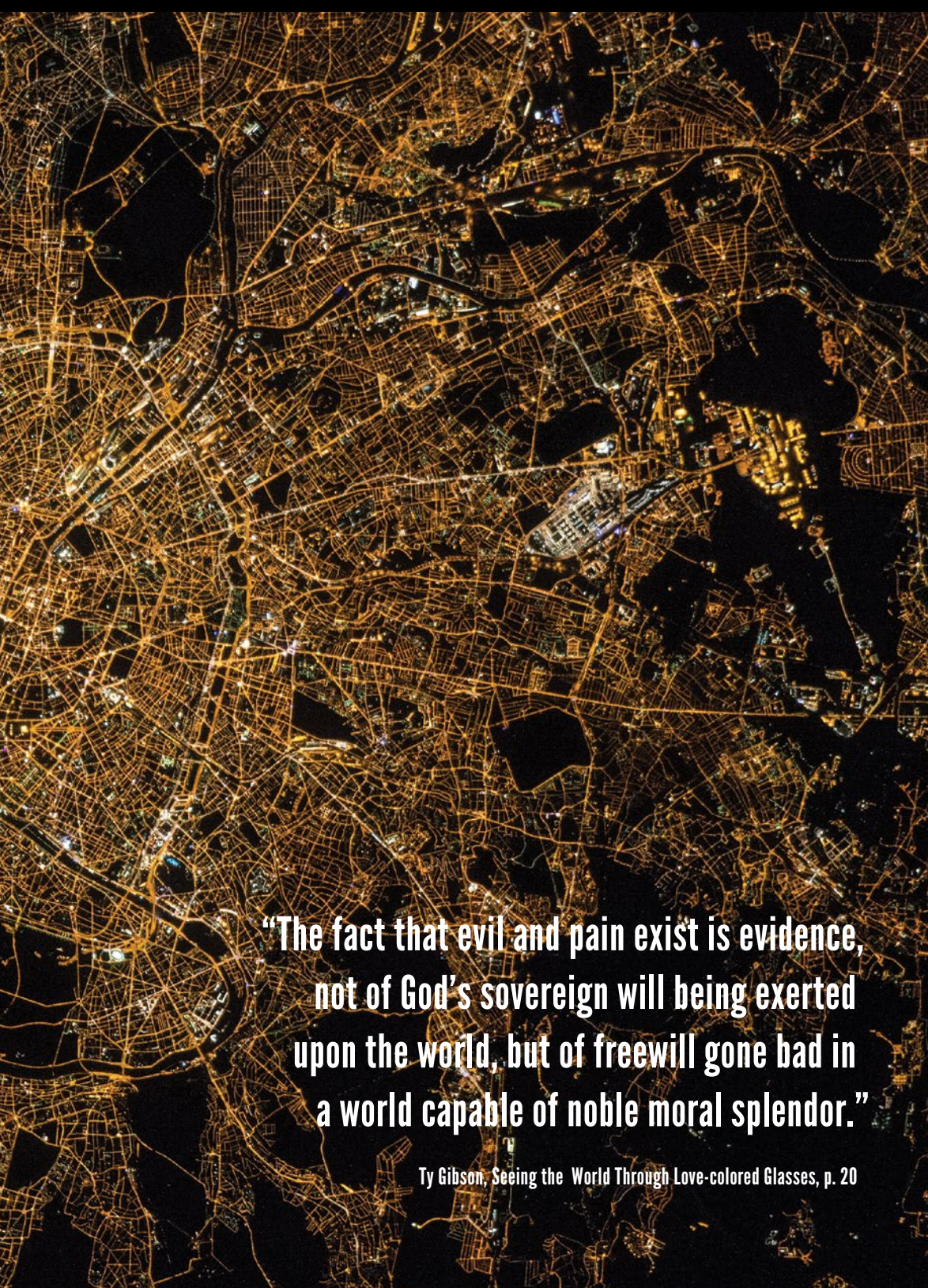
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DISCOVER



“The fact that evil and pain exist is evidence, not of God’s sovereign will being exerted upon the world, but of freewill gone bad in a world capable of noble moral splendor.”

Ty Gibson, *Seeing the World Through Love-colored Glasses*, p. 20





SEEING THE WORLD THROUGH LOVE-COLORED GLASSES

How can Adventism
help us navigate an
ever-changing world?

TY GIBSON

When I was a kid, there were only two things I knew with absolute certainty: pain and love. Suffering defined my existence. Horrors haunted our little home: the horrors of rage and drug abuse and, worst of all, the horror of violence regularly inflicted upon my mother. But then, in

the midst of it all, there was a contrary mystery.

There was love.

I loved my mom, and I knew she loved me. I loved my younger brothers and my little sister. Growing up, I struggled mightily over the contrast between suffering and love.

MOM GOES WEIRD

Fast-forward a few years, and my mother came home one day announcing that she had become a “born-again Seventh-day Adventist Christian,” whatever that was. She declared with a smile, “All of you are henceforth vegetarians, and you will never watch TV again.” What had happened to Mom? Was she going to be OK? Would *we* be OK? Or would we all die for want of cartoons and what she was now calling “flesh foods”? Well, we soon learned what had happened to her. A strange person called an “evangelist” had rolled into our city and filled her “gullible” head with a bunch of weird new ideas.

God had never been mentioned in our home before, but mom had heard of the Bible as “the Word of God.” All he had to do was quote Bible verses, frequently saying with an air of authority, “The Bible says,” with the strongly implied “Therefore, you ought.” Mom accepted what the Bible man told her, got baptized, and immediately deployed the evangelist to me. But much to his frustration when he quoted the Bible to me, I just stared straight through him with a look of “So what?”

No disrespect was intended. To my mind, the Bible was just more “literature,” like Shakespeare and Dickens. The evangelist, who was known to baptize anyone who gave him a hearing, told the church members, “If I’ve ever met a lost soul beyond hope, it’s that Ty Gibson kid.” He had given up.

EMPATHY WINS

Mom never did. Soon a youth pastor showed up at our house to “befriend” me. He kept trying to act “cool.” It was awkward. But he was different than the other guy. He didn’t come at me with authoritative religious declarations. Still, I found the idea of “God” ridiculous. To end his efforts to “win” my soul I decided to unload my unbelief on him.

“Listen, dude, you apparently find the idea of

‘God’ believable, but I don’t. Just look at this world. I don’t love everybody like you say God does, but if I saw little kids starving to death, I’d feed them. I’m not all-powerful like you say God is, but if I saw a man beating his wife, I’d stop the monster. So don’t tell me about God, because $2 + 2 = 4$, not 56, and this God idea does not match up with reality.”

“Yeah, this world is pretty messed up,” he said, “and I don’t understand why God lets it go on for another day.” In that moment I felt a little bit of respect for the guy. At least he could see the world I saw and feel the feelings I felt. He promised to stop bothering me if I would simply read the first chapter of a book my mom had acquired from one of the church people. Wow, what a deal.

NEW EQUATION

Later that evening I reluctantly opened the book and read the first sentence: “God is love” (1 John 4:8). I rolled my eyes and sighed, “Here we go.” But by the time I had finished the chapter, a simple deduction with massive explanatory power had formed in my mind: Love—>Freedom—>Risk.

Love requires freedom in order to exist, but freedom carries the risk that things might go against love. I sat there in a flooded state of “wow.” Suddenly things began to make sense. The emotional weight I’d been feeling my entire life began to float above my heart. Within the space of an hour a whole new way of viewing reality was dawning upon my mind: “God is love.”

Those were the first theological words I ever read. Adventism gave me those words and the expansive perception of reality to which they grant access. What I needed was a way to make sense of the diametrically opposed forces of selfishness and love so obviously waging war within human beings. What I needed was a way to comprehend what’s going on in this world of ours so drenched in blood and tears. What I needed, in other words, was a worldview. And that’s precisely what Adventism gave me.

WORLDVIEWS

Everybody has a worldview—a lens through which they try to make sense of life. But while there are 7.3 billion people on the planet, and hundreds of religions and philosophies, there are only five basic belief systems.

Naturalism—the atheist worldview—says that there is no such thing as evil as a moral category. All there is is natural process. Suffering is part of that process and is necessary for the evolution of the strong and the elimination of the weak. Human beings are evolving animals governed by natural forces and therefore possess no actual free will. All notions of right and wrong, love and hate, mercy and justice, and accountability to a higher power are cultural constructs with no intrinsic basis in reality itself.

Pantheism—the all-is-god worldview—says that there is no personal God that exists distinct from the material world. Rather, nature itself constitutes a collective consciousness of divine proportions. Evil is a balancing force in nature, and suffering is part of the eternal cycle of life. Pantheism is basically a spiritualized version of naturalism.


Deterministic theism—the control worldview—says that God’s main characteristic is power and His primary objective is control. God predetermines all events, both good and bad, including each person’s eternal destiny, whether that be heaven or hell. Human beings are the subjects upon which God’s sovereign will acts, and do not possess free will. Evil and suffering are ordained by God for His inscrutable purposes.

Appeasement theism—the merit worldview—says that God’s main characteristic is wrath. If we try hard enough, our deeds of obedience can earn His favor and avert His anger. Suffering is orchestrated by God for the satisfaction of His will.

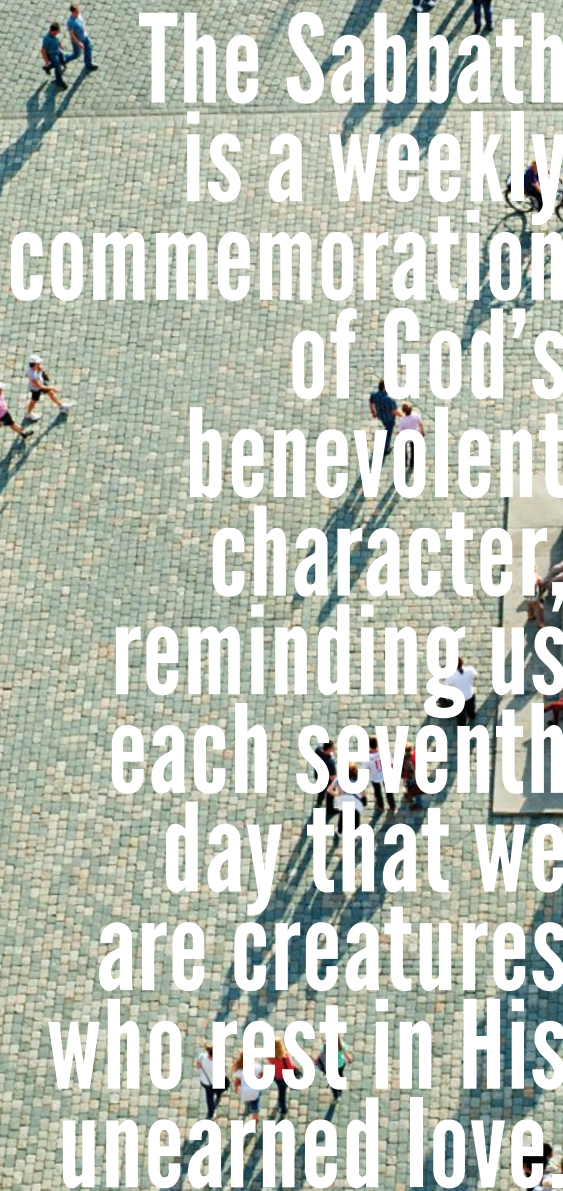
Benevolent theism—the love-and-liberty worldview—says that God’s defining characteristic is love and His main objective is that we would be voluntary reciprocators of His love. Evil and suffering proceed from the misuse of free will for anti-love purposes, and the plan of salvation is the means by which God eradicates evil from the world while preserving free will.

WORLDVIEW MATTERS

OK, but why does a person’s worldview matter? Quite frankly, because what a person believes about the basic content and configuration of reality will be the primary factor that shapes their character, behavior patterns, and relational dynamics. Worldviews are not irrelevant. Rather, each worldview constitutes a psychological template that drives quality of life. In the words of Ellen White: “The



What I needed
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tears.



The Sabbath is a weekly commemoration of God's benevolent character, reminding us each seventh day that we are creatures who rest in His unearned love.

whole spiritual life is molded by our conceptions of God; and if we cherish erroneous views of His character, our souls will sustain injury.”*

As a theological system, Adventism falls into the benevolent theism category. I suggest, in fact, that Adventism has the unrealized capacity to articulate for the world the most compelling, coherent, and consistent rendering of benevolent theism conceivable.

But allow me to qualify. This article is intended to cast a vision of the potential that lies within Adventism’s theological portfolio. It is not an examination of how we have failed to steward that potential. There will be those who will respond by saying something like “What! That’s not the Adventism I know.” To you I would say that the first step toward changing any situation is to articulate positively what it can be and to begin acting as if what we want to be true were true.

So what might that theological vision look like?

GOD

Well, for starters, if we begin with the premise that “God is love,” we are face to face with the most beautiful core belief imaginable. To say that “God is love” is to say that God is essentially other-centered and self-giving. The idea is, quite frankly, breathtaking. From this foundation the doctrine of the Trinity is logically deduced. What we mean here is that God as God is love apart from the existence of any created beings; that God is love within the parameters of the divine reality itself, before and beyond the existence of any contingent beings; that God has never existed in an ontological state of isolation, in which no other-centeredness was flowing. Hence, the Trinity is a doctrine that informs us that God as God has always been more than one and yet one. Knowing God in this light is both rationally compelling and emotionally satisfying.

CREATION

Because God is love, God was impelled from within His own other-centered nature to create others with whom to share the bliss of love-actuated existence. We believe then that creation is God’s love actualized in material form. In order for love to exist within creation, free will was necessarily built into the system. By definition, love is voluntary.

When Scripture says that God made humanity “in His own image,” this means that human beings were psychologically, emotionally, volitionally engineered for other-centeredness.

But right here it becomes immediately evident that there is a potential upside and a potential downside to free will. If we are free to love one another, then we are also free to live for ourselves, to the hurt of one another.

THE FALL

Because God is love, it follows that God does not exert exhaustive control over His creation. Tragically, the risk inherent in free will was realized in the fall of both humans and angels. As a result, we find ourselves living in the throes of a great controversy between good and evil, a war of wills, a conflict between other-centeredness and self-centeredness. Two diametrically opposed modes of existence are vying for our allegiance.

Sin is not merely the breaking of rules imposed by a God of sovereign power, but the violation of relational integrity that was engineered into reality by a God of sovereign love. The fact that evil and pain exist is evidence, not of God’s sovereign will being exerted upon the world, but of free will gone bad in a world capable of noble moral splendor.

SALVATION

Again, because God is love, God could not, would not, abandon us to deception and destruction. God knew that the moment He brought us into existence, He would love us above Himself. He knew, also, that if we were to turn from love to selfishness, He would keep on loving us at any cost to Himself and pursue us to the complete end of Himself.

We see, then, that the the cross was in God’s view from the start. And He still created us! Sin is anti-love. As such, sin is also an anti-creational force that throws everything it enslaves into chaos, suffering, and death. Salvation is God’s plan for restoring love to humanity as our only mode of existence.

THE LAW

Because God is love, He has revealed to us the essence of His character in the form of His law, the Ten Commandments. The law is not a list of arbitrary rules that have no grounding in reality, but

rather a description of what love looks like in action. As such, the law is not a means of salvation, but a revelation, by contrast, of our fallen condition, awakening in us a sense of need for a Savior.

THE SABBATH


Because God is love, we are Sabbatharians. The Sabbath is embedded within reality, in the very cycle of time and in the very makeup of humanity. The Sabbath tells us who God is, and who we are in relation to God. He is the Creator, and we are the created. He is the Redeemer, and we are the redeemed. In both Creation and redemption God accomplishes the work, and we are dependent recipients of His gifts. The Sabbath is a weekly commemoration of God’s benevolent character, reminding us each seventh day that we are creatures who rest in His unearned love. The Sabbath truth is, therefore, the antithesis of legalism and self-dependence, when rightly understood.

ESCHATOLOGY

Because God is love, our entire eschatology centers on the difference between force and freedom in matters of worship. The crucial point of Daniel and Revelation is that religious systems that resort to coercion are diametrically opposed to the character of God. Love alone is the basis for all true worship.

You get the picture. Of course I’m just scratching the surface here, but along with the sanctuary and the judgment, death and hell, the Second Coming, the millennium, and the earth made new, Adventism possesses the raw theological materials from which to construct a worldview so rationally convincing and emotionally attractive that it very well could illuminate the whole earth with God’s glory (Rev. 18:1).

Our total theology is simply and profoundly this: “God is love.” Then, operating from that premise, we can formulate an understanding of the world and our place in it, the nature of evil and suffering, and the principles by which God has embarked upon the glorious enterprise of human salvation.

God is love in the most beautiful, meaningful, and liberating sense imaginable. That’s all. And that’s a lot. 

*Ellen G. White, in *Review and Herald*, Jan. 14, 1890.

Ty Gibson is director/speaker for Light Bearers.

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Pastor David Klinedinst is the evangelist for the Iowa Missouri Conference in the St. Louis metro area and speaker for the Discover Prophecy Seminar. He has served in full time ministry for 20 years as a pastor, personal ministries director, and conference evangelist.



THE SEARCH

Though most of us don't remember the moment we first heard about the earthquake and tsunami that devastated Japan in 2011, who can forget the amazing video footage of the water, like something from a 1960s Japanese monster movie, sweeping away everything in its path?

Of course, numerous calamities have caught our attention since then, and—let's face it—however bad we feel over each one, we move on.

But for Yasuo Takamatsu, whose wife, Yuko, was swept off a bank roof in the Japanese tsunami, moving on has not been easy, especially because Yuko's body has never been found, at least on land, which is why he turned to the sea. Yasuo has learned to scuba dive and, since 2013, has been diving off the coast in a search for his wife's remains, or for her jewelry, clothing, her wallet—anything of hers to help give him closure.

"I expected it to be difficult," Takamatsu said, "and I've found it quite difficult, but it is the only thing I can do. I have no choice but to keep looking for her. I feel closest to her in the ocean."

We often hear the motif "humanity's search for God," or the like. And though some truth to this idea exists, the overarching story of Scripture is more about "God's search for humanity." Scripture is the ongoing story of our Creator's desire to find lost humanity and return us to Himself.

How fascinating that the first recorded words in Scripture after the Fall—instead of the commands of Genesis 1 ("Let there be . . .")—were in the form of a question, "Where are you?" (Gen. 3:9), a question

God has been asking ever since. What was Christ's coming to earth, after all, other than a search for fallen humanity?

In Mark 3 Jesus entered a synagogue where a man with a withered hand sat as some religious leaders waited to see if Jesus would heal on the Sabbath. "He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored" (verse 5).

Jesus, the Creator, the one through whom God "made the worlds" (Heb. 1:2, KJV) (that's worlds, plural), would not use that incredible power to force anyone to love or follow Him, including these religious leaders. Instead, He performed a miracle that would not only help the ailing man physically but would touch the hearts of these lost men He was seeking to bring to Himself.

How well did it work? How did they respond to God's search for them?

"Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus" (Mark 3:6).

Yasuo Takamatsu's love for his wife compels him, against tremendous odds, to keep searching for her. God's love for us compels Him, also against tremendous odds (after all, the human heart is a dangerously wild card), to keeping searching for us as well. 🍀

Clifford Goldstein is editor of the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*. His next book is tentatively titled *Baptizing the Devil: Evolution and the Seduction of Christianity*.

CLIFF'S
EDGE
CLIFFORD
GOLDSTEIN



YASUO TAKAMATSU'S
LOVE FOR HIS WIFE
COMPELS HIM TO
KEEP SEARCHING
FOR HER.



GOD'S ON OUR SIDE

One inescapable fact is part of every election.

Two days after the greatest upset in United States political history, President-elect Harry S. Truman was handed a copy of the *Chicago Tribune*. The bold headline on the front page read, “Dewey Defeats Truman.” The photo of President Truman posing with the newspaper has become one of the most famous political photographs ever taken.

The headline—printed several hours before the election results were in—reflected the feeling that ran through much of the United States at the time. Thomas Dewey, the Republican governor of New York, was apparently unbeatable. Truman

simply had no chance of winning the 1948 U.S. presidential election.

By election night several of Truman’s aides had left his campaign to accept jobs elsewhere. Truman’s poll numbers had been so low that some party officials at the Democrat National Convention wanted him dropped as their party’s nominee for president.

Truman simply wasn’t supposed to win against Dewey. But win he did, comfortably. It may have been the greatest upset of all time.

NOT EVERYONE WILL WIN

Every four years, United States citizens go to the polls. And—regardless of which candidate triumphs—the election result turns out to be a massive disappointment for roughly half the electorate.

This year’s presidential election is notable for several reasons. Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is the first major female presidential candidate in U.S. history. Businessman Donald Trump has never before run for public office. And Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton are two of the least popular presidential candidates in United States history.

It seems that every four years a group of people threaten to move to Canada if candidate X is elected president. What are people to do if their candidate comes up short in this year’s presidential election? Is it time to shop for Canadian real estate?

It might be helpful to remember that the future of the United States doesn’t actually depend on who wins the race for the

White House. Our system of local, state, and federal politics means that no president can unilaterally impose his or her will on the American people. In all reality, a president's ultimate impact on life in the United States is not as remarkable as a presidential candidate might have us think.

But whomever is sworn in as the forty-fourth president of the United States will not prevent God from ultimately fulfilling His will.

In ancient Babylon, Daniel told King Nebuchadnezzar that God "deposes kings and raises up others" (Dan. 2:21), that "the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of people" (Dan. 4:17). Could God be preparing to set Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump up to lead one of the kingdoms of earth?

Stranger things have happened.

A KING'S CONVERSION

In the sixth century B.C. Nebuchadnezzar spent 40 years or so on the throne of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. Nebuchadnezzar was a bloodthirsty, power-hungry, megalomaniacal idol worshiper. Nebuchadnezzar sentenced his closest counselors to death because they couldn't comply with a request that was both irrational and absurd (Dan. 2).

The contumacious Nebuchadnezzar built an image of gold and boastfully said, "Is not this the

The future of the United States doesn't actually depend on who wins the race for the White House.

great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?" (Dan. 4:30).

Most people wouldn't want someone with Nebuchadnezzar's character anywhere near a position of power. Yet God called Nebuchadnezzar "my servant" (Jer. 25:9; 27:6).

Lest you think God didn't really mean what He said, God not only used Nebuchadnezzar to further the advancement of His kingdom, but also saved Nebuchadnezzar to be part of that eternal kingdom.

While Nebuchadnezzar was conquering nations, destroying cities, and bowing before idols, God wasn't finished with him. God saw Nebuchadnezzar not as he was but as he might be through the grace of God. God saw where Nebuchadnezzar fit into the big picture. He saw how he could affect the world in such a way that God would ultimately be glorified. As the wise man wrote: "In the Lord's hand the king's heart is a stream of water that he channels toward all who please him" (Prov. 21:1).

ANOTHER LOOK AT THE CANDIDATES

Christians have a remarkable capacity to smile and say "God bless you" on cue, while at the same time espousing raw hatred for political figures.

Like them or not, Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton are children of God. Jesus died for them. While some might paraphrase David and say, "What are Clinton and Trump that you are mindful of them?" God sees in both candidates something so magnificent that He gave Jesus to die for them. They might not get your vote, but as candidates for eternity they get God's vote. Whether or not Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump make it to the White House, God wants them in His house.

Whether or not Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton succeed in their run for this country's highest office, God's plans for this earth will not be hindered. Believers' reaction to the election results will speak far more of the depth of their Christianity than about the results themselves.

When the dust settles on this election, and the Obamas have moved out of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, and the Clintons or the Trumps have moved in, the greatest challenge facing our country will still remain. Jesus urged His followers to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19).

After the last vote has been cast in this year's presidential election, the mission of the church remains unchanged. There is a world to win with the saving message of God's unfailing grace.

Trump or Clinton? Clinton or Trump? More than half of the population will be disappointed with this year's election results. But God won't be taken by surprise. He still sits on the throne of heaven. He still knows the end from the beginning.

God has this covered. 

John Bradshaw is speaker/director of It Is Written, a media ministry of the North American Division.



PETER N. LANDLESS

What Did You Say?

Examining hearing loss

Q: I'm in my late teens and struggling to communicate with my father. We're best friends, but he doesn't always hear what I say (although I think he's listening). My paternal grandfather became deaf as he grew older. Is deafness hereditary? Will I lose my hearing?

A: Communication depends not only on listening but on the ability to hear and be heard. So many of us take the five senses for granted—until we begin to lose them.

There are many causes of deafness. When hearing loss is present from birth, we speak of congenital deafness. Genetic factors account for more than 50 percent of congenital deafness; simply stated, it may be transmitted through one parent (dominant gene) or both parents (recessive gene), or linked to the X chromosome and passed on to males but not females. There are also rarer genetic syndromes in which hearing loss may be a feature. Nongenetic causes of congenital deafness may be related to illnesses suffered by the mother during pregnancy, including viral infections, maternal diabetes, and exposure to toxins.


Another common cause of hearing impairment in children is recurrent and untreated infection, especially of the middle ear, or otitis media. Often the deafness is temporary, but it may become permanent if not diagnosed and appropriately

treated. Surgical intervention may sometimes be required.

Other common causes of hearing loss include exposure to loud noises, such as industrial machinery and power tools. Sudden loud noises such as gunfire and explosions can cause temporary and sometimes permanent deafness. I had the unpleasant experience of being in a vehicle that detonated three land mines; my eardrums ruptured, and I was unable to hear well for about two weeks. By God's grace my hearing recovered, as miraculously as my life had been spared during this life-changing event.

The most common cause of hearing loss is age-related hearing loss, or presbycusis. This often runs in families and usually affects both ears. Your father possibly falls into this category. Most adults will experience some degree of hearing loss with age, which may be progressive. According to a 2011 study, almost 45 percent of Americans between the ages of 60 to 69 suffer from hearing loss. Unfortunately, fewer than half of those who complain of hearing loss seek professional help. It's important to see an ear specialist, be tested (audiogram), and ensure that it is not just wax buildup. If it's not, then a person can benefit from the wonderful technology that has allowed hearing aids to prevent our suffering in silence.

Young people in this connected age live with earbuds or headphones as an almost permanent fixture, and loud music is taking its toll because studies show an alarming increase in adolescent deafness. This may well be related to long-term exposure to loud music, so keep the volume down!

Most important: always *listen* for the voice of God's Spirit: "Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it'" (Isa. 30:21). 

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



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“ FAITH IN A WORLD OF UNFAITH ”

How to share Christ with unbelievers

KLEBER D. GONÇALVES

It happened on a flight from São Paulo to Chicago. It did not take long for my seat neighbor to ask the typical question: “What do you do for a living?”

“I am a pastor,” I proudly answered.

“Oh, reeeaaally?” he interjected, then immediately added: “I am an agnostic.” I had no idea what would come next. A full flight; an 11-hour trip; no place to hide! The “perfect” situation for two people willing to do whatever was necessary to demonstrate what was wrong with the other’s viewpoint.

For hours the conversation went from one issue to another as he tried to convince me of the shortcomings of a religious worldview, mainly Christianity. I, in turn, tried hard to share my faith in a convincing way. He was an agricultural engineer from Brazil coming to the United States for a conference. I was a church planter who had just started a church plant focusing on people who did not have God as a priority in their lives. I had everything under control. I could do it. At least that’s what I thought.

What a mistake! That night, as we crossed the Americas, I learned a vital lesson: the importance of being intentional and sensitive about how to share my faith with people who do not have the same beliefs and worldview I have.

After all, no one is born a skeptic. Atheism comes out of a belief system that involves a decision. Christians have to make a similar kind of choice: to live by faith. To some extent, atheism requires “faith” that God does not exist. But how can we share our belief in the living God with nonbelievers in order to crack open a door instead of building a taller wall? How can we Seventh-day Adventists have a normal conversation about Jesus Christ in the twenty-first century without

accidentally (or unconsciously) sounding aggressive, narrow-minded, or intolerant? Here are some suggestions:

1 Keep a humble, prayerful attitude, speaking the truth in love.

The number-one step as we engage in conversations with unbelievers is to keep a humble, prayerful, and loving attitude. It’s not our role to change worldviews. Actually, we can’t do this! This is the work of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-11). So we must not be self-assured in our own wisdom (Prov. 3:5). As disciples of Christ we have been called to share with people around us the reasons for our faith (1 Peter 3:15). But, we may ask, how can we do it effectively?

We speak truth in love (Eph. 4:15). We pray for them. During my conversation at 31,000 feet there came a moment where I had to say a silent prayer: “Lord, help me share in love what You want me to present to this man. Please, give me wisdom. Use me.” When we have opportunities to share our own walk with God with other people, especially nonbelievers, we do not try to win debates. It doesn’t work like this. We are called to sow the seed of possibility, the possibility of God’s existence and His personal care for all, including the person we interact with. We treat them with respect and kindness, trying to lead them to Christ, not to our own expertise, or to make them feel bad by losing an argument.

2 Pay attention to the reasons for their unbelief. Even

though most skeptics will affirm that they decided not to believe by using logic and reason after evaluating evidence (or the lack thereof, as they often say), many of them decided to reject religion because of bad past experiences involving family, friends, church members, or personal

Unfortunately, too many times apologetics has been used in hurtful ways.

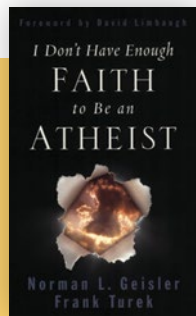
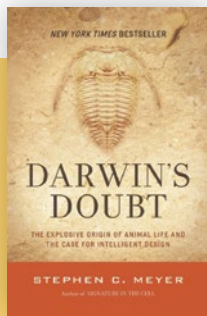
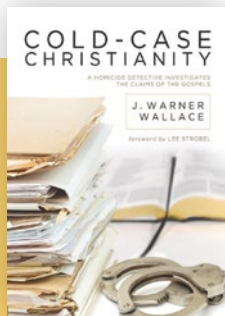
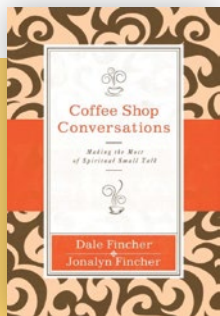
expectations about God. Often there is a reason behind the “disbelief” they embrace. Some saw suffering loved ones who did not recover. Others felt the pain of a failing marriage or a broken home, in spite of their prayers. Many felt treated badly by the church. We simply cannot ignore their pain or dismiss it as unimportant.

A major cause of unbelief, however, is the lack of understanding about the Word of God, the true meaning of Christianity, and the knowledge of God’s purposes with humanity. Most skeptics do not know who Christ is, or what He has taught and done. They don’t get His grace, mercy, and justice. But “how can they believe in him if they have never

heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?” (Rom. 10:14, NLT).¹ So, as we share our beliefs with nonbelievers, we should never underestimate the need to understand what they think and value, and how they feel and respond to our arguments.

Following hours of intense discussion, when I asked my flight companion about his past experiences with Christianity, he told me that his mother was a negative and judgmental churchgoer and that the only things he remembered of his childhood were the things he could not do in order to please her religious views.

3 Use Christian apologetics with wisdom and tact. The art of persuasion—through the use of knowledge and reason—plays an important role in Christian apologetics. The English word “apology” comes from a Greek term that basically means “to give a defense.” Thus, asking honest questions with wisdom and prudence is crucial in this process, especially taking into consideration that there are different types of unbelievers. Some are



RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS

The following books may not fully represent Seventh-day Adventist beliefs. Nevertheless, they offer readable introductions to Christian apologetics and introduce the readers to helpful arguments:

- Dale Fincher and Jonalyn Fincher, *Coffee Shop Conversations: Making the Most of Spiritual Small Talk* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010).
- Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2004).
- Stephen C. Meyer, *Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design* (New York: HarperOne, 2013).
- J. Warner Wallace, *Cold-Case Christianity* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: David C. Cook, 2013).

curious, others indifferent. Eventually we will come across those who are hostile, but many are sincere in their doubts and questions. Each requires a different approach and response.

Since arguments *against* unbelief are to some extent arguments *for* God, some classic arguments may be helpful in sharing our faith with skeptics.² Undoubtedly the use of Christian apologetics gives us a tremendous opportunity to share our faith in Christ with nonbelievers. We should not, however, forget the second part of 1 Peter 3:15: “But do this with gentleness and respect.” Unfortunately, too many times apologetics has been used in hurtful ways.

Defending our faith should always be done in a Christlike manner, being sensitive to those who disagree with our perspective (2 Tim. 2:23-26). If an argument is won but, because of our attitude, the final result is pushing someone even further away from Christ, we have lost the real reason for Christian apologetics. Besides, we should not attempt to prove the reality of God’s existence beyond all reasonable doubt. It is much more prudent and productive to argue that theism (the belief in God) is more reasonable than atheism (the rejection of belief in God), or agnosticism (the belief that is impossible to know anything about God).

4 **If possible, invite them to your home first, then to your church.** Skeptics are normal people with ordinary feelings and struggles. They talk, cry, laugh, worry, and interact like everybody else. The problem arises when we treat them as trophies to be conquered rather than people to be appreciated and loved. So whenever possible, invite them to your home first, rather than to your church; it’s more effective. Our personal life story is one of the most powerful evidences of God’s existence because of the real and lasting transformation that Jesus Christ has brought to our lives.


Building trust with those we want to share our beliefs with has solid biblical support. In his efforts to communicate the gospel effectively, Paul identified himself with very diverse groups of people (1 Cor. 9:19-22). By intentionally connecting with them, he developed the amazing ability to reduce the gap between himself and those he wanted to reach. Besides, to simply plant the seeds of belief, we must stay in touch with our unbeliever friends. They will probably be more open

to accept our views after we establish friendships and demonstrate real interest in them and their families. This may open the door for us to explain the “proofs” of our faith, leading them to accept Jesus as their personal Savior.

Toward the end of our conversation I told my newly found engineer friend that beyond all the evidences for my faith and Christian beliefs I had, one of the most precious things in my relationship with God is the hope He had brought to my heart. Then I gently asked him: “What kind of hope do you have?”

The problem arises when we treat them as trophies to be conquered rather than people to be appreciated and loved.

He slowly turned his head to look through the small airplane window, where we both could see a beautiful and bright full moon outside. Then he said sadly: “I have no hope.” After a few seconds he repeated, “I have no hope.”

I often remember this conversation, and pray that somehow what we spoke about will bring hope to the heart of a hopeless man. Nonbelievers around us do not look only for knowledge or arguments; as we engage intentionally with them we realize that they really long for a personal experience with Jesus Christ, the real source of love, grace, and hope. 

¹ Scripture quotations 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.

² Such as the argument from design, the argument from causality, the moral, the ontological, the teleological, and the cosmological arguments—among others. For further information, see William A. Dembski and Michael R. Licona, eds., *Evidence for God: 50 Arguments for Faith From the Bible, History, Philosophy, and Science* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000).

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CELEBRATIONS

LET'S CELEBRATE NUTRITION

N
is for Nutrition,
the fuel of life.

BY FRED HARDINGE

Imagine that you have just come into possession of the sports car of your dreams! Money was no issue in its design and manufacture. On the outside the doors and fenders are aligned perfectly. The finish sparkles with perfection. You pop the hood and are greeted with the sight of an engine that is made with the craftsmanship of a fine Swiss watch. When you open the car door you savor the smell of soft, subtle leather. As you sink into the wonderfully padded seats and turn the ignition key to start the engine, you hear the *purr* from the powerful engine. The moment has come for you to take this—your car—for a drive!

After a few hours of pure enjoyment, you notice that the fuel gauge is showing close to empty, so you pull into the first gas station you find. Looking in the owner's manual, you see that the manufacturer has recommended only premium fuel for the high-compression engine. You decide, however, that any grade fuel will do, and fill it with "regular" instead. *After all*, you think, *they look and smell the same*. Later, when you check the engine oil, you top it off with a little water!

With that kind of care, how long do you think your dream car will last?

Our bodies are far more beautiful and complex than the finest machine ever made by humans! Like a fine sports car, our bodies need fuel to power our lives, and that fuel comes from the food we eat. A balanced diet chosen from the best foods will provide the essential nutrients needed for growth, maintenance, and energy. If we choose low-quality foods, or do not eat enough of even the best foods, the body machinery will suffer. Too much food may result in obesity, and excessive amounts of some nutrients may cause toxicity.

THE RIGHT BODY FUEL

In each meal one can enjoy the cornucopia of nutrient-dense, whole-grain breads and cereals, along with rich, colorful fruits and vegetables containing abundant amounts of vitamins, minerals, dietary fibers, and phytochemicals. Enjoy essential fats in crunchy nuts and seeds, bone-building calcium from low-fat milk or a fortified soymilk, and healthful proteins from satisfying legumes (beans, peas, and lentils) seasoned delicately with herbs and small amounts

of salt, sugar, and vegetable oil as needed.

These energizing, body-building foods consumed daily in appropriate quantities can reduce the risk of cancer, coronary heart disease, hypertension, intestinal disease, obesity, and osteoporosis.

UNDERSTANDING NUTRITION

Our bodies get the nutrients we need from the food we eat. The nutrients our bodies need include:

Carbohydrates: The largest portion of our diet should come from these in as unrefined a form as possible. Whole grains, legumes, fruits, and vegetables are rich in these.

Proteins: Every cell in the body contains proteins. Tissue repair and growth require them. While almost all foods contain some protein, particularly good sources are milk, eggs, and other animal products. Legumes are excellent plant sources.

Fats: These are a concentrated source of energy. We often get too much fat in our diet because we like the flavor it imparts to foods (i.e., boiled or baked potatoes versus French fries).

Vitamins

Fat-soluble

Water-soluble

Minerals

Trace minerals

Antioxidants and phytochemicals: These substances protect the body from disease and some of the effects of aging. They are found primarily in whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and nuts.

ESSENTIAL FOOD GROUPS


There are five essential food groups:

- Cereals and grains
- Fruits and vegetables
- Legumes, nuts, and seeds
- Dairy and eggs, or fortified equivalents
- Fats, oils, sweets, and salt (these foods are required only in small amounts)

One of the most important keys to eating a balanced plant-based diet is selecting a variety of foods whose color, texture, and flavor add interest to the diet. These foods are best when consumed as they come from nature: not refined, not pulled apart, not fractionated. Whole foods should be the goal.

“Use plant foods as the foundation of your meals. . . . Eating a variety of grains (especially whole-grains), fruits and vegetables is the basis of healthful eating.”¹ This recommendation has been simplified in the 2010 “Dietary Guidelines for Americans” to “make half your plate fruits and vegetables.”²

SPIRITUAL FOOD

A healthful diet can increase lifespan and the quality of life. God loves us and desires that we lead healthy, productive, and happy lives. We can celebrate His goodness as we appropriately enjoy the many products of the earth He has given us. 

This article is a condensed version of a chapter taken from the General Conference Health Ministries book CELEBRATIONS (healthministries.com).

¹ United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), “Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2000”; www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dgac/. Accessed June 19, 2012.

² USDA, “Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010”; www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/fruits.html. Accessed online June 19, 2012.

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*In everything
give thanks:
really?*

LAEL CAESAR

Four days ago, September 4, 2016, I buried my kid brother. Now his four children are orphans—their mom died suddenly about eight years ago. But it wasn't supposed to be like that at all. In the beginning, when God made all things very well (Gen. 1:31), there was no grief and death and loss. There was no grief in the garden, only oblique intimations of it. Messengers from glory talked with Earth's two people about it as related to the realm of things to abstain from and places, and an enemy, to be avoided.¹ They simply didn't need either the tree or the enemy. There was so much else to do.

THERE WAS GRATITUDE

For example, there was gratitude. Every day for them was Thanksgiving Day. However little they understood about grief, they could not be more effusive in, and about, gratitude. They could invest themselves forever in pouring out gratitude to the Lord God (Gen. 2:7-9, 15-23). Their gratitude was for life—this mystery of self-and-other-consciousness with which He had honored them. Everything every day joined them in thanksgiving; all of which inspired ever more thanksgiving, as they considered the scope of the dominion that the Lord God insisted they should have. He too had warned them about grief.

They knew they hadn't grasped it all completely. What was clear from His counsel was that grief

GRIEF AND GRATITUDE

was not necessary, that they missed nothing by not knowing it, and would gain nothing profitable by coming to experience it. As they came to self-awareness, He had insisted, against a multitude of arguments on their inexperience, unfamiliarity, and youth, that they would do fine in the gorgeous garden He had made for them.

They thanked Him for allowing them some time to embrace and fathom and rightly serve their floral home and all its denizens that He said were under their care. They could not understand why He had, as He said, put all these things "under their feet" (see Ps. 8:6): every infinitesimal mote





Satan could not predict God's awesome, instant, and unfathomable response to the grief he brought to heaven.

floating on a sunbeam and every humongous creature of the woods or the deep, He said, was theirs to love, care for, and manage for Him. They tried to convince Him that His managerial plan, with them as chief stewards, would come to grief. But He almost laughed them off, almost but not entirely.

He told them that they had no idea what grief meant. But when He said it, He was only half kidding. They could see that there was more to grief, more than He could nonchalantly shrug off. They understood that grief, whatever it really was, did not comport with His world—the one He gave them to dominate with service—in any way. It belonged to the same company as the enemy, Satan, and the certain death that would come from eating the forbidden fruit. A longing love for them showed in His eyes when He looked at them and mentioned “grief,” or “sorrow,” or any of the words that were part of that idea that they neither understood nor needed. It made everything seem more solemn than before.

SURPRISE

The God-gifted reality of existence they enjoyed was a paradox of unlimited freedom within a context of unimprovable stipulations: there was food, and times to savor it; there was work, and times to revel in it; there was fellowship with God, and particular seasons for celebrating it—the cool of evening to evening, or the delectable warmth of the entire seventh day of every week. There was so much easy order about life that spontaneous joy seemed to erupt at every other moment. Even the birds sang happy songs.²

One day something surprising happened that should not have surprised them at all. After all, they had already been told to avoid the tree with the long name. If they ate its fruit, they would die. Whatever that meant, it would be something very different, too different, from their current living.

They could see that deeply caring look in His eloquent eyes when He mentioned dying, the same one they had seen when He only half-laughed at their mention of grief. Those were the times His love for them felt stronger than ever—times He counseled about the tree or warned about the enemy. The tree was their test of loyalty, showing how much they loved the Lord God. The loyalty test would be only for a limited period, after which the enemy wouldn't be able to reach them at all.³

The unsurprising surprise came to Eve one day as she was training grapevines, smiling back at a great bank of sunflowers, and teaching two roosters to fly. Something seemed to say, *Go find Adam*, a fleeting thought that her maturity could not encourage: she was a smart enough woman. Moreover, an esthetically gratifying scene was unfolding before her: the splendid fruit of this much-ignored tree; the marvelous voice of that wisest of creatures, the serpent—both wise and dazzling; the subtle compliments about “her surpassing loveliness”;⁴ the intellectually stimulating question about the actual rules governing her relation to this particular tree.

It was all so invitingly sophisticated. The snake's reputation for brilliance was well earned. He could speak. And what excitement his conversation engendered! He alluded to the value of testing boundaries and challenging established facts; minds grew when they explored; God's intelligent creation was designed so their possessors could range and wander without lifting a leg; that was the true freedom—liberation to probe old ground and discover new truth, to acknowledge the independence of the individual self by defying long-standing authority and proposing fresh answers to familiar questions. He said such provocative things that if he had been the enemy she would have sped away from his revolutionary suggestions. But he was not the enemy. He was just one very smart snake.⁵

Beguiled and excited, Eve followed his directions, accepted the fruit he offered, and felt the lift of spirits he had told her would follow as she ate. But how many hands does a snake have? She could not think that clearly. She was caught up in magic, deceived to the core, enough to become his agent for reeling her husband in on the bait of forbidden fruit, and helping the enemy realize his goal, viz., to “cause grief in heaven”⁶ by inveigling the man and woman into sin.

BLIGHT AND BLESSING

The enemy knew all along that his success in deception would affect everything. The effects of sin on earth would not be limited to the ones who committed it. Its damage would show across the cosmos: extremes of temperature, fading flowers, falling leaves. Its blight would endure through all the ages of life on earth.


I write this four days after laying my brother’s remains in the ground. It is the consequence of the enemy’s success, so broad in the tragedy of its consequence that no single example or sheaf of examples of earth’s pain and anguish is enough to illustrate: no example, that is, but heaven’s response to the grief it brought there.

For Satan could not predict God’s awesome, instant, and unfathomable response to the grief he brought to heaven. He gagged when he heard it: God would undermine his evil by forever uniting heaven’s grief to the songs of gratitude that would spring from heaven’s response. By God’s genius of love, sinners brought to grief by the devil will sing praise to the God who would bear that grief Himself, and carry our sorrows (see Isa. 53:4, 10), so that we, in exchange, might have life again.

God would give a seed to the woman that would crush the enemy’s head and destroy his works (Gen. 3:15; 1 John 3:8). Satan could never know that every shameful crime to which he would drag the human race would draw out sweeter chords of gratitude from our hearts in response to the love that God would show. Because his soul is already too hardened to recall God’s long-suffering toward him, he could not know that wherever he succeeded in making sin abound, God would answer in having grace much more abound (Rom. 5:20). He could not imagine, so blinded has long rebellion made him, that his ultimate crime in

murdering the Son of God, the woman’s God-sent Seed, would make of the cross of Calvary the science and song of the redeemed of the ages,⁷ the focus of greatest intellectual fascination and exercise, and the ultimate thrill of all celestial and new earth literary and poetic creativity. That holy Seed would swallow up the griefs of all the ages into Himself and banish it to hell so that whosoever believes in Him would escape grief’s doom to become a hymn singer, a voice of gratitude that would never be silenced.

Satan could not look down the ages and see how the grief he wrought to the heart of God and the center of the universe would become the key in which sinners, first lost, then found, would sing their mightiest choruses of thanks: for the lower that sinners fall, the further that God reaches down; the greater our shame, the clearer the revelation of the divine character; the deeper He reaches down for us, the higher our praise when He lifts us up! Satan could not see that, in such a sequence, the greater his cruelty, the more telling his grief, the more powerful the lesson of trust for God’s children, until faith would teach them to give thanks “in everything” (see 1 Thess. 5:18, NKJV; see also Eph. 5:20; Phil. 4:6; Heb. 13:15).⁸

Satan could not know, when he made humanity sin, and exulted because he had brought grief to heaven, how God’s love gift of His Son would conquer all, as the Son’s gift of Himself (see John 3:16; Gal. 1:4; 1 Tim. 2:6; Titus 2:14) would save those he had brought down to wretchedness. He would not know that forever thereafter every song of grief would be but the feeblest stanza of lyrics of gratitude that the saved will shout and sing to God’s honor and glory when time shall be no more! 

¹ Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1890), pp. 48, 52, 53.

² *Ibid.*, p. 50.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁵ *Ibid.*: “Had she been addressed by a being like the angels, her fears would have been excited; but she had no thought that the fascinating serpent could become the medium of the fallen foe.”

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

⁷ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), pp. 650, 651.

⁸ Texts credited to NKJV are from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.



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CONNECT



THE DATE DEBATE

A young adult tries to make sense of dating in today's world.

ANNA BARTLETT

My eyes blazed and my mouth dropped open in shock at what I had just heard.

"I'm serious," repeated the gentleman leading out the adult Sabbath School class. "Adventist education is the most expensive dating service you can pay for."

At first I thought he was joking, but the concerned father was, as he put it, serious. As he went on to contrast how his two sons were taking advantage of this most expensive dating service, I sat back to nurse my shock. Didn't we go to college to, you know, get a degree?

For young Adventists, the university setting, while offering academics, also offers a student the opportunity to meet a special someone. However, along the way concepts and guidance for relationships and



finding your significant other have varied from “date everyone” to “date no one and wait for God to bring the right person into your life.” Confusing?

But perhaps the reason the sometimes skewed path to marriage is so confusing for some can be traced back to a book.

DATING IS BAD. OR IS IT?

In 1997 a book was published that changed the dating landscape for many young Christians. Joshua Harris’ *I Kissed Dating Goodbye* hit bookstores, and readers ate it up faster than post-breakup ice cream. The book offered a new, more God-centered approach to finding a spouse: courtship.

While Harris took a stand not to date until he was ready for marriage, many young people took anti-dating to an extreme, deciding not to date until they believed they identified “the one.” Then and only then could courting enter in.

The definitions of both dating and courtship are similar. Basically each is a period of time in which two people are (1) interacting socially as a couple, and (2) examining each other on a deeper level to explore whether they are compatible for marriage.

In his article “Why Courtship Is Fundamentally Flawed,” PracticalCourtship.com founder Thomas Umstattd, Jr., breaks down how it really should work:

- The man must ask the woman’s father’s permission before pursuing the woman romantically.
- High accountability (chaperones, monitored correspondence, etc).
- Rules about physical contact and purity (specific rules vary from community to community).
- The purpose of the courtship is marriage.
- High relational intentionality and intensity.
- High parental involvement. Fathers typically hold a “permission and control” role rather than the traditional “advice and blessing” role held by their fathers.”¹

When I was in high school, courtship sounded like a good plan to me. My dad could weed out all the bad boys because they would have to go through him first. The plan seemed foolproof, especially when Harris argued that traditional dating had many flaws.

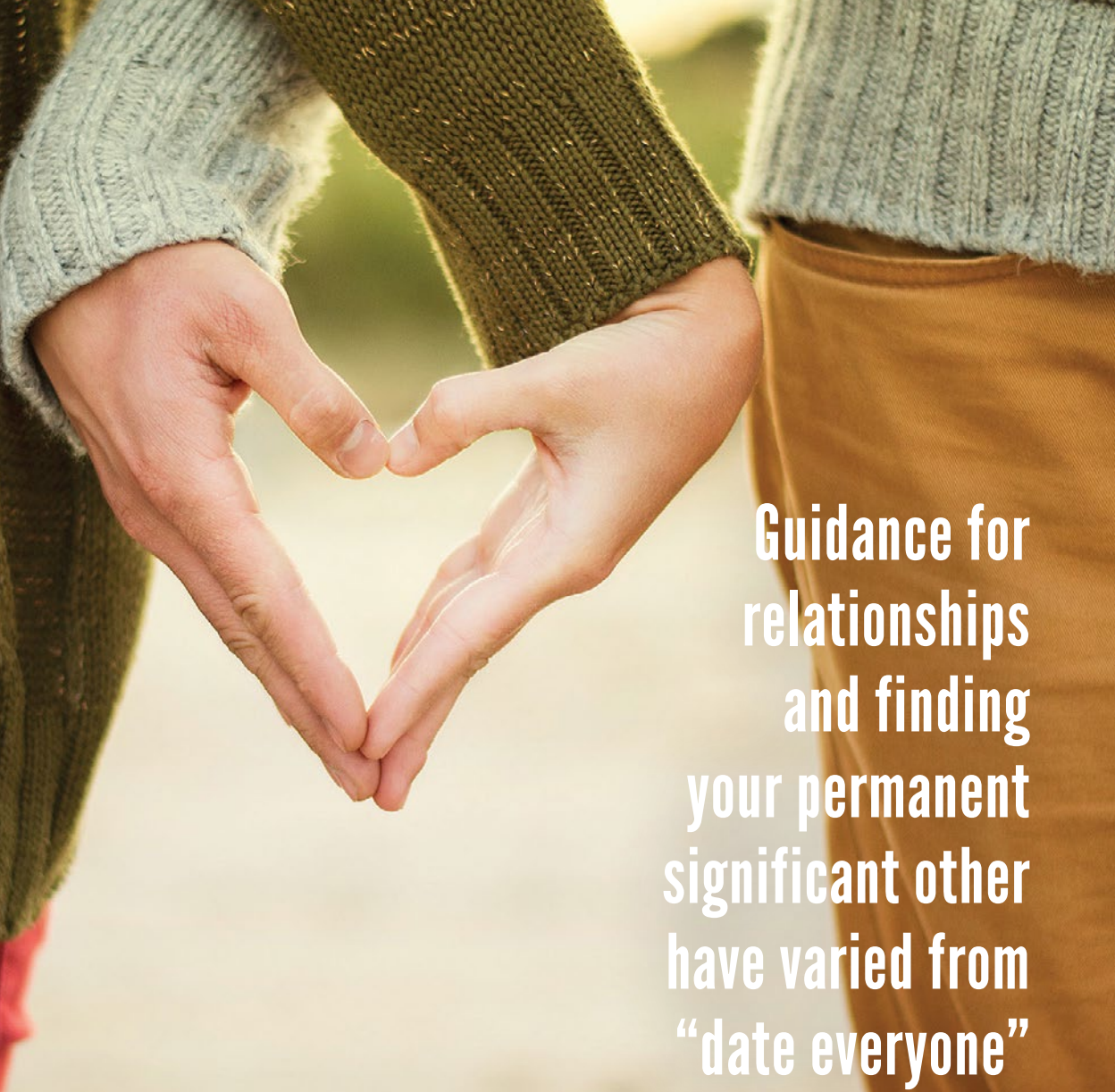
According to Umstattd, those in favor of courtship were trying to return some sanctity to the process of finding a spouse. Courtship was a way

to compensate for the hookup and breakup dating culture that took root in the 1960s and 1970s. What we are left with today can be considered a hybrid of courtship and dating methods.

However, many stories have since surfaced from people hurt by the more extreme view of not dating anyone until you believe God presented “the one.” Tales emerged from those who never dated and are still single in their late 30s and early 40s, and other stories come from those who married the first person they courted, only to divorce. Because of personal accounts like these, Harris has recently publicly apologized to those hurt by the message in his books.²

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DO WE KNOW WHAT WE ARE DOING ANYMORE?

My parents always told me I would go to college, meet a nice guy, graduate, get married, and live happily ever after—in that order. So when I went to college and met a nice guy and started dating with the intent to get married, I couldn't understand why they were mortified. Wasn't I following their perfect plan?

During that relationship my mom told me I should be “dating around,” meeting lots of people, and getting to know different personality types. This was the same advice given to a young Umstatt by his grandmother when he first discussed dating with her. Years later, when he was researching his

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Life doesn’t have to begin only
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article, he went back and asked Grandma why she said what she said. She then broke down the difference between dating and going steady as she understood it. Dating in Grandma's generation meant dating casually and getting to know many different people. Going steady meant you were exclusive. Today we'd look at it as the difference between hanging out and being in a relationship.

For the most part, hanging out and hooking up is the direction the secular dating scene has gone. With many young adults working on establishing careers and feeling unready to start families, they keep it simple—perhaps too simple—by turning dates into just hanging out. Casual dating can keep relationships relaxed and allow one to meet lots of people, but it can also keep dating so casual that hanging out never has the opportunity to turn into something more.³

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ADVENTIST SINGLE ADULTS TODAY?

"I don't know if I can do this again, but I don't want to end up alone." My heart bled for my friend as she said this to me. Getting over a breakup is rarely easy, but her words resonated with me in an uncomfortable way. While many are quick to repeat the cliché that we have to be happy alone before we will be happy with someone else, few of us see ourselves remaining alone forever. So what's the answer? Do we date? Do we court? Do we care?

First and foremost, I suggest young adults take a page out of *I Kissed Dating Goodbye* and invest ourselves in getting to know God better. Part of Harris' message was for people to build a relationship with God before building a lifelong relationship with another person. As the Creator of humankind and the world's first matchmaker, God can teach us more than a few things about finding the person who is right for us.

Second, instead of fixating on being single or on finding someone, seek to really know yourself. Start doing all the things you've wanted to do to create the life you want to live. Wendy Powell of Greenville, South Carolina, who has three children with her husband of almost 20 years, said young adults today should be "traveling the world, exploring, having fun, and relaxing." Life doesn't have to begin only with the addition of someone else. God has plans for you regardless. Big ones.

In addition to investing in ourselves, we should also invest in other people. I agree, as Umstadd suggests, that we shouldn't discard the good things that can come from a casual date. Live and date with the intention to meet and make lasting relationships, whether that relationship turns into marriage or not.

Marcus Keenan, who married his fiancé the day after they graduated from college in 2014, said young adults today should meet many different people, because "you won't know if they are someone you could marry if you won't get to know them in the first place." Let's focus on making our lives and relationships more meaningful overall.

THE MOST EXPENSIVE DATING SERVICE

While I attended college at Southern Adventist University, a professor who still believed in the concept of "Southern Matrimonial College" introduced one of his former students to the class. This student had met his wife in that very class, and the teacher wanted to show us that we too could find someone special in school. While it was a nice gesture, I didn't buy it. There isn't a magic formula for finding "the one": not courtship, not dating, and not going to an Adventist university.

At this point in my life, instead of focusing on being single or married, it's more important to focus on being happy and living the fulfilling life God wants with the people I enjoy being with. "Lead an active life serving the Lord, and be happy and content being who you are," says Laura Davidson of Crossville, Tennessee, who got married at age 25 after God dropped Mr. Right on her doorstep that same year.

That's a solid recipe for personal happiness, and a great place to be while we wait on the Lord for whatever He has in store for us. 🍌

¹ Thomas Umstadd, Jr., "Why Courtship Is Fundamentally Flawed," *ThomasUmstadd.com*. Accessed on Sept. 1, 2015. <http://www.thomasumstadd.com/2014/08/courtship-fundamentally-flawed/>

² Leonardo Blair, "Abstinence Author, Pastor Joshua Harris, Apologizes for Telling Christians Not to Date in 'I Kissed Dating Goodbye,'" *ChristianPost.com*. Accessed on Sept. 9, 2016. <http://www.christianpost.com/news/abstinence-author-pastor-joshua-harris-apologizes-for-telling-christians-not-to-date-in-i-kissed-dating-goodbye-168650/pageall.html>

³ Alex Williams, "The End of Courtship?" *NYTimes.com*. Accessed on Sept. 1, 2015. http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/13/fashion/the-end-of-courtship.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1&

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CHARMED BY FAITH

*When people care more about
what we do than what we say*

ELLEN G. WHITE



The leaders in God's cause, as wise generals, are to lay plans for advance moves all along the line. In their planning they are to give special study to the work that can be done by the laity for their friends and neighbors. The work of God in this earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers.

The salvation of sinners requires earnest, personal labor. We are to bear to them

the word of life, not to wait for them to come to us. Oh, that I could speak words to men and women that would arouse them to diligent action! The moments now granted to us are few. We are standing upon the very borders of the eternal world. We have no time to lose. Every moment is golden and altogether too precious to be devoted merely to self-serving. Who will seek God earnestly and from Him draw strength and grace to be His faithful workers in the missionary field? . . .

REGIONS BEYOND

There should be a well-organized plan for the employment of workers to go into all our churches, large and small, to instruct the members how to labor for the upbuilding of the church and also for unbelievers. It is training, education, that is needed. Those who labor in visiting the churches should give the brethren and sisters instruction in practical methods of doing missionary work. All the preaching in the world will not make men feel deeply the need of perishing souls around them.

Nothing will so arouse in men and women a self-sacrificing zeal as to send them forth into new fields to work for those in darkness. . . . It is the positive duty of God's people to go into the regions beyond. Let forces be set at work to clear new ground, to establish new centers of influence wherever an opening can be found. Rally workers who possess true missionary zeal, and let them go forth to diffuse light and knowledge far and near. Let them take the living principles of health reform into the communities that to a large degree are ignorant of these principles.

Men in humble walks of life are to be encouraged to take up the work of God. As they labor they will gain a precious experience. There is a dearth of laborers, and we have not one to spare. Instead of discouraging those who are trying to serve the Master, we should encourage many more laborers to enter the field.

All who commune with God will find abundance of work to do for Him. Those who go forth in the spirit of the Master, seeking to reach souls with the truth, will not find the work of drawing souls to Christ a dull, uninteresting drudgery. They are charged with a work as God's husbandmen, and they will become more and more vitalized as they give themselves to the service of God. It is a joyous work to open the Scriptures to others.

Young men and women should be educated to become workers in their own neighborhoods and in other places. Let all set their hearts and minds to become intelligent in regard to the work for this time, qualifying themselves to do that for which they are best adapted.

ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT

Many young men who have had the right kind of education at home are to be trained for service

and encouraged to lift the standard of truth in new places by well-planned and faithful work. By associating with our ministers and experienced workers in city work, they will gain the best kind of training. Acting under divine guidance and sustained by the prayers of their more experienced fellow workers, they may do a good and blessed work. As they unite their labors with those of the older workers, using their youthful energies to the very best account, they will have the companionship of heavenly angels; and as workers together with God, it is their privilege to sing and pray and believe, and work with courage and freedom. . . .

There should be no delay in this well-planned effort to educate the church members. Persons should be chosen to labor in the large cities who are fully consecrated and who understand the sacredness and importance of the work. Do not send those who are not qualified in these respects. Men are needed who will push the triumphs of the cross, who will persevere under discouragements and privations, who will have the zeal and resolution and faith that are indispensable to the missionary field. And to those who do not engage personally in the work I would say: Do not hinder those who are willing to work, but give them encouragement and support.

All this work of training should be accompanied with earnest seeking of the Lord for His Holy Spirit. Let this be urged home upon those who are willing to give themselves to the Master's service. Our conduct is watched by the world. Every act is scrutinized and commented upon. There must be diligent cultivation of the Christian graces, that those who profess the truth may be able to teach it to others as it is in Jesus, that they themselves may be ensamples, and that our enemies may be able to say no evil of them truthfully. God calls for greater piety, for holiness of life and purity of conduct, in accordance with the elevating, sanctifying principles that we profess.

The lives of the workers for Christ should be such that unbelievers, seeing their godly walk and circumspect conversation, may be charmed by the faith that produces such results. 🌱

This excerpt was taken from *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Asn., 1948), volume 9, pages 116-120. Seventh-day Adventists believe that **Ellen G. White** (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.



SABBATH AND THE BOTTOM LINE

Can Sabbathkeepers do better in the business world?

At first glance, it doesn't add up. How could someone who works six days a week be more successful than someone who works all seven?

If your worldview is one in which evolution and the Cambrian explosion form its foundation, then naturally life's motto is focused on survival of the fittest, or fastest, or actually just being the hardest-working dude or woman in the room. If you believe that life gets better the harder and the more we work "at it," then you would have a "work more, get more" stance.

JARED THURMON

But if your worldview begins with nothing and ends with a planet flourishing with life and highly complex ecosystems six days later, then you have a different foundation on which to build. You then have a faith component in your psyche that leads you to believe something can be created from nothing. And perhaps it would be more fair to say that something can be created from nothing more than an idea. After all, with the words "Let there be . . ." the rest is history.

STANDING OUT

Scripture tells us that each of us have been given a "measure of faith" (Rom. 12:3).¹ So within all of us is the ability to hope and believe in things we cannot see, nor do we have any evidence of.

Seventh-day Adventists are a unique group, truly "a peculiar people." Thus some of us shy away from standing out in this world. I personally don't understand that. No business succeeds just by going with the flow and doing what others have done or are doing. Take a page from a book in my library called *The Deviant's Advantage*, which points to zigging when others zag.

So how does one's worldview relate to their business acumen and success? How can a person get ahead in this world by working less?

THE FAITH AND RISK CONNECTION

What is it about Seventh-day Adventists that could be advantageous in the world of business? It's pretty simple: it's our ability to step out in faith believing something better is coming,

and the idea that our friend Jesus is the greatest risk taker. Consider this statement from Ellen White that profoundly addresses the notion of God as the ultimate risk taker. “Satan with his fierce temptations wrung the heart of Jesus. The Savior could not see through the portals of the tomb. Hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a conqueror, or tell Him of the Father’s acceptance of the sacrifice. He feared that sin was so offensive to God that Their separation was to be eternal.”²

Jesus was not sure what His tomorrow would look like, but He ventured out anyway based on His past experience and faith in His Father God. With that example, Adventists can be the most calculated risk takers in the world. Take a moment to contemplate the risk that the King of heaven took in creating and redeeming humanity.

We have so much potential to make a larger impact in the world if we embrace the business world as a mission field. My favorite quote has led me to realize this is true: “Religion and business are not two separate things; they are one.”³

By celebrating the Sabbath and all that God has intended it to be, we are making a bold statement. We are saying that we are not the sole holders of our destiny. We are saying that we hold strong to a worldview that proclaims God did something beyond the scope of any business plan by creating the world from nothing in just a few days. By holding to that, we can be the biggest dreamers with the most hope and faith in the room. And here’s how.

We celebrate the Sabbath each week as a reminder of two things. First: “Also I gave them My Sabbaths to be a sign between them and Me, that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifies them” (Eze. 20:12). That means that each week the Sabbath is a day during which I cease from the work I’m doing to maintain this life and remember that God has not, nor ever will, cease His work in my life. It is a day that gives me confidence that He who began a good work in my life will one day bring it to completion (see Phil. 1:6).

Second, Sabbath is also a weekly reminder of our origin, identity, and destiny. Understanding and enjoying the Sabbath can drive business decisions. Without this weekly reminder, one may easily forget who owns the world and all that is in it. If I forget that, then I may begin to treat my

“There is nothing so powerful as an idea whose time has come.”

—Victor Hugo.

employees as if I were God and they were my subjects. I might naturally begin to manage in a way that aligns more with being my brother’s owner than my brother’s keeper.

Seventh-day Adventists have the potential to be the best businessmen and businesswomen in the world because we, perhaps more than anyone else, understand the very purpose for which God raised up this movement. And I daresay our inspired name is key.

Seventh-day: to remind the world of the Creator and the sustainable principles that He entrusted to Adam and Eve in the garden 6,000 years ago. **Adventist:** to inspire us with hope that though we may see resources dwindling or selfishness increasing, we have a hope that one day this earth will be re-created to enjoy the destiny for which it was created from nothing.

Risking, dreaming, and doing: it’s in our very DNA. So “Press On” is our battle cry. Ponder these hopeful words: “There is a fearfulness to venture out and to run risks in this great work, fearing that the expenditure of means would not bring returns. What if means are used, and yet we cannot see that souls have been saved by it? What if there is a dead loss of a portion of our means? Better work and keep at work than to do nothing. You know not which shall prosper, this or that.”⁴ 🌱

¹ 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.

² Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898), p. 753.

³ Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1900), p. 349.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Welfare Ministry* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1952), p. 266.

Jared Thurmon is director of marketing and strategic partnerships for Adventist Review Ministries.



LINDSEY GENDKE

At the age of 20 I was a newlywed in a new state, looking for a new start. I had moved 1,000 miles to marry my husband, so no one at my new church knew about my past, which included a broken family and two suicide attempts. No one knew about the depression and bulimia that lingered, because no one asked.

Please understand: my then-church was full of lovely Christians, people who loved to help others. But sadly, most of our ministries were geared toward Christians who were hurting physically or financially, or for sinners who needed saving. There simply existed no programs for broken people who had been sinned against; nowhere for me to unpack the devastation my parents' divorce had left in my heart and in my life.

For the next five years I pleaded to a silent God to take my depression away. Finally, when I was 25, He did.

HABIT-FORMING

In my second year of teaching high school English, I asked my students (and myself) what one habit they (and I) could form that would make the biggest difference in their lives.¹ For me, the habit was to read Scripture every day.

After three weeks of reading God's Word every morning, I heard the Lord speak hope to me. For the first time in my adult life I didn't feel depressed. For the first time ever I wanted to share Christ because I finally knew His Word had power over depression.

JESUS, SAVE ME

Fighting depression with discipleship

But there was a problem: Even though I had found some healing, my depression was only a secondary problem. I was still a broken person; I still needed freedom from my broken past.

So I told the Lord that if He would provide some ministry, some knowledge, something to help heal me from my past, I would use it to help others.

Shortly afterward, a pastor named Paul Coneff, founder of Straight 2 the Heart Ministries, came to my church to start a prayer and discipleship group. Attracted to his focus on the heart, I joined immediately. Over the next year I benefited from four acts of discipleship I didn't even know I craved.

1 MENTORS

For the next four months our small group prayed with each other and learned how to pray for others. As time wore on, I marveled at how Christ's Spirit was reflected among us. Not only were we trained to pray for others about their hurt places—we also prayed about ours.

2 A SAFE PLACE TO TALK

Depending on whose night it was to receive prayer, we took turns sharing our stories while the rest of the group just listened. There was no condemnation for past sins or current struggles; we created a safe place for our pain to come out so the Lord, the Wonderful Counselor, could deal with it.

3 A RELEVANT JESUS

The Jesus we learned about was the suffering Messiah of Isaiah 53, who not only saved people from sin, but also saved people from suffering.² Using Scriptures such as Hebrews 2:17, 18; 4:14-16, we understood how to relate the negative beliefs and experiences we had gone through to the hardships Jesus suffered. We took seriously and literally the fact that Jesus suffered “in every way” we did, including being lonely, abandoned, betrayed, abused, and tempted, especially in the hours leading up to His death on the cross.³

Because Jesus suffered as we had, yet remained connected to His heavenly Father, we gained hope that we too could overcome our struggles through Jesus.

4 HONEST TESTIMONIES

Besides meeting my suffering Messiah, the most powerful aspect of our small group was

I benefited from four acts of discipleship I didn't even know I craved.

hearing the stories of my group members: their stories helped me feel less alone. Honestly sharing our struggles (and later our victories) was a powerful step toward wholeness.

Just as the woman at the well (John 4) met Jesus and immediately went to tell others, we encountered Jesus; and that created in us the desire to spread the good news. And we did!

After our training concluded, I started sharing my testimony at lunch dates with girlfriends, through writing, and with two successive prayer groups I co-led. Over the course of the next year, because of my openness, many women opened up to me, and I gained more friends than I could keep up with. Finally, I found some safe and sacred places—living rooms, prayer circles, blogs—where I could be real about my struggles and get help.

SETTING CAPTIVES FREE

Christianity at large is still hurting, and still has a long way to go before we can truly fulfill Christ's mission to heal those who are brokenhearted and to set captives free.

But I haven't lost hope. My own story is proof that hurting Christians can change into whole, healthy people open to conversation and honest prayer. Then we can become Christ followers who reach other broken people, one messy act of discipleship at a time. 🌱

¹ Based on Stephen Covey's *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, a book my older brother had recommended to me the previous summer.

² Read more about Jesus as the suffering Messiah in the book I cowrote with Paul Coneff, *The Hidden Half of the Gospel: How His Suffering Can Heal Yours*.

³ When our stories didn't quite match up with Jesus' story, we could still connect our negative thoughts and temptations to those negative thoughts with which Satan tempted Jesus.

Lindsey Gendke is a writer, wife, teacher, and mom who doesn't mind sharing that she used to be depressed. Read her blog at lindseygendke.com.

BODY AND SOUL

In America, image is everything. For many, how we look is more important than who we are. Men and women are judged by the luminescence of their skin

rather than the content of their characters. Countless of them, at the top of their games, throw away their reputations and professional futures for just a few moments of stolen pleasure without considering the costs or consequences.

The apostle Paul urged believers to “flee from sexual immorality. All other sins that a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own” (1 Cor. 6:18, 19). The devastating consequences of immorality are not just mental or emotional; they are also spiritual and physical, ranging from loss of fellowship with God and others, loss of reputation, estrangement from family or friends, haunting guilt, inestimable financial and psychological losses, damage to the personhood of all involved, and a litany of other destructive, even deadly, outcomes.

This reality should scare everyone from sin. Unfortunately, it doesn't! For if we are honest with ourselves, not only as Christians but as Seventh-day Adventists, some seem to think that commitment to Sabbath observance and a vegetarian diet exempts them from the consequences of immorality in the sight

of God. They go on their merry way participating in, practicing, and even promoting abhorrent behaviors.

Many twenty-first-century Christians inherited, and seem to embrace, a Hellenized concept of spirituality in which we believe our bodies are ours to do with as we please. Thus we ignore Paul's argument that the body plays a significant part in the entire plan of salvation.

The human body is the crowning act of creation. Instead of speaking a body into existence, God made the first human with His own hands, and breathed into it the breath of life so that it became a living being. When we are born again, the Holy Spirit, or breath of eternal life, takes up residence in our physical body. At the resurrection our bodies will be raised up through Christ's power and the breath of God (1 Cor. 6:14).

New Testament writers emphasized the importance of our physical bodies because they saw Jesus after He was resurrected. Although His essence was different (He could walk through closed doors and disappear in the blink of an eye), Christ's structure and substance were the same: flesh, blood, and bones, just as theirs. Indeed, we will be like Him at the resurrection of our own bodies.

Sinful behaviors are especially difficult to avoid for those who previously practiced them, because the bodies we have now as born-again believers in Christ are the same ones formerly ruled by the disposition of sin. However, we can overcome by grace when we daily claim: “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20). 🌱

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



CURE FOR THE
COMMON LIFE
HYVETH
WILLIAMS

THE HUMAN
BODY IS THE
CROWNING ACT
OF CREATION.

ALSO IN THIS SECTION:

- » THAT'S HOW MUCH I LOVE THEM TOO
- » EXPECTING THE UNEXPECTED
- » WATCH!
- » A TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY FAITH

ENGAGE



HEALING THE HATE

The hidden effects of racism



BY CHARLES MILLS

Kim Anderson went into labor with her first child two and a half months early. “I didn’t get to take my baby home,” she remembers. “Instead of gently laying my newborn in the soft bassinet in her own little bedroom, I had to travel back to the hospital each day to look down at my precious creation tethered to wires, monitored by machines, and sleeping fitfully in an environmentally controlled incubator.”

It’s long been known that a nutritious diet; exercise; the avoidance of alcohol, drugs, and cigarettes; along with sound prenatal care usually lead to a “good” pregnancy and birth. Another of the best predictors of a healthy pregnancy is higher education. Kim had them all. What happened?

The answer uncovers a long-hidden danger to the unborn.

According to a 2006 study by the National Center for Health Statistics at the Centers for Disease Control, infant mortality for children born to White college graduates is about 3.7 deaths per 1,000 births. For African American college graduates such as Kim Anderson, that number rises to 10.2 deaths per one thousand births—almost three times higher.¹

“As a mother you’re thinking, *I did all the right things*,” Kim says. “*Then why is my kid sitting here with all these needles? You feel really helpless.*”

Thankfully, little Danielle survived and today attends Emory University. But the emotional scars still linger in her mother. Some of those scars scientists are only now beginning to identify.

Research conducted by Chicago neonatologists Richard David and James Collins rules out genetics as a factor in the rise of infant mortality in minorities. They cite information gathered during the civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s that showed a marked improvement in healthy birth rates for African American women as society

became more supportive and racial prejudices faded somewhat.²

But as social programs lost support during 1980s and 1990s and overt racism once again flowed unchecked across American society, those healthy birth rates quickly fell. In contrast, the numbers have always remained on the positive side in countries other than the United States.³

Genetic adjustments take generations. Hate works very quickly.

How does hate do its damage? By changing chemistry. “The body’s response to stress can involve more than fourteen hundred chemical reactions,” says cardiologist James Marcum in the book *The Ultimate Prescription*. “When the body is under chronic stress from whatever the cause, cortisol levels, for instance, remain elevated. . . . Our entire beings are impacted.”⁴

The creation of life within a mother’s womb requires an ongoing symphony of chemical reactions—all working in perfect harmony. But if enough wrong notes are generated through chronic stress, the end result is dangerous discord leading ultimately to low healthy birth rates. During the civil rights movement, healing hope filled hearts and minds. But when racism returned, so did the unique stress it creates.

WHAT’S IT FEEL LIKE?

I asked Kim Anderson, now CEO of Families First, a nonprofit organization headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, what racism felt like. She cited instances in her life in which it reared its ugly head, such as the time she stopped at an upscale Atlanta boutique to do some shopping. She soon became aware that the salesperson was not letting her out of her sight, following her and observing her every move. “I’m not going to steal anything,” Kim told her uninvited companion. “I’m only here to shop.” But the shadowing continued.

Such scrutiny also exists in the job market, where Anderson admits economics plays a role. “When things are difficult and competition is high,



**RACISM NOT ONLY DISRUPTS THE
LIVES OF THOSE TARGETED BY IT;
IT CAN ALSO BE DEADLY TO THEIR
UNBORN CHILDREN.**

we tend to want to get rid of competition,” she says. “We justify our actions through hatred. That hatred can take the form of racism, classism, or discrimination against people we perceive are threats to us. If there are 12 of us in line trying to get 10 jobs, I have to justify why I’m better than somebody else, and sometimes I do that using what I can see. You can almost track the rise in racism in this country by the economic conditions we face.”

Anderson added that unfounded presumptions also carry a lot of weight concerning those who aren’t like us—underscoring the example in the boutique. But, she says, that knife cuts both ways. “I as a Black woman anticipate certain things, and that leads to greater tension. I anticipate that if I walk into a boardroom and I’m the only African American female, I believe there are going to be certain things said or certain things thought or certain things felt. That insecurity causes a physiological response in me, which, according to scientific research, generates a physical impact on my mind and body.”

Those presumptions often make the leap from boutiques and boardrooms to places of worship.

RELIGIOUS RACISM

History is rife with cultures or entire civilizations in which religion wasn’t just a set of long-treasured traditions. Religion wasn’t just what you did; it was who you were. An aggressive move denouncing someone’s faith was considered an affront to the very core of their being. You didn’t insult their religion. You insulted *them*.

This type of fervor has led many to war, the results of which have created embers of revenge that burn even to this day. To Christians, who passionately support the basic tenets of religious liberty, extra care must be taken when coming face to face with those of other faiths—or those with no faith at all. Why? Because we’re supposed to project Christ—Someone who not only brought comfort and hope to those struggling with life’s inequities but offered healing as well. To do, say, or infer anything that paints a less-than-supportive picture of another person’s beliefs can generate scientifically measurable damage to that individual’s mind *and body*. Our actions can affect their health and well-being in some profound ways.

When we turn our backs on people or show

little or no respect for what they believe, we’ve stopped reflecting the very God we’re trying to represent.

Conversely, religious acceptance, respect, and freedom carry the power to heal. When we wave and smile at that new student from another culture, when we strike down long-held ordinances in our school or community that discriminate on the basis of color or creed, when we support religious accommodation in the workplace, when we look upon people as equal and insist that they enjoy the very same rights and freedoms that we demand, we’re making a difference in lives clear down to the cellular level.


THREE STEPS TO HEALING

Kim Anderson says there are three steps to healing racism, and it begins with intent.

“We need to be intentional about our desire to learn, intentional about broadening our horizons, intentional about our positive interactions with one another. If we work hard to build relationships with people who are different from us and demonstrate through our positive interactions that we’re doing it just because they’re a person of value, this begins to break the cycle of ignorance.

“Then we have to model that for our children and grandchildren.

“And finally, we can use media to respond to inequalities when we see them. Everybody has the power of the pen these days on the Internet. Speak up! If we don’t lovingly challenge our friends or the people with whom we go to school, church, or work, ignorance perpetuates itself.”

We’ve all been given the opportunity to join in a heaven-ordained healing ministry by expressing—with our words and actions—the full intent of Christ’s powerful invitation found in John 13:34: “A new command I give you: Love one another.”

¹ National Center for Health Statistics, CDC, 2006, www.cdc.gov/nchs/.

² As presented in *Unnatural Causes* documentary DVD series, chapter 2: “When the Bough Breaks,” California Newsreel, 2008, www.unnatural-causes.org.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ James L. Marcum, *The Ultimate Prescription* (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2010), pp. 24–26.

Charles Mills, a West Virginia-based author and a former editor of *Vibrant Life* magazine, hosts health programs on the LifeTalk and 3ABN radio networks. He’s also the host of LifeQuest Liberty, a radio show produced by *Liberty* magazine.



**WHEN WE TURN OUR BACKS ON
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THAT'S HOW MUCH I LOVE THEM TOO

One night last year I was lying in bed having a difficult time with something. It was the night before our daughter Ally's eighteenth birthday, and I knew it would be her last birthday at home before heading off to college. I didn't care that college was only five minutes away! Ally was leaving, and I felt as if I were dying inside.

How were we supposed to live without Ally at the breakfast table in the morning; without Ally lounging on the sofa in the evenings; without Ally to hug good night? Ally's laughter was the music of our home. How could we stand the quiet?

My face in my pillow, I hid my tears from Cindy, at the same time hoping she would notice. "Oh, what's wrong?" she finally said.

I managed to whisper: "I'm really going to miss her."

Cindy said nothing, then said in a whisper: "Me too."

Eighteen years earlier we were, as ecstatic parents-to-be, anticipating Cindy's scheduled C-section the next morning. Cindy had spent the entire summer on bed rest; doctors feared that Ally was coming too early.

She came right on time, happy and beautiful. And after a few days in the hospital, we all came home together. Placing her in bed between us, we marveled how we could already love someone so much.

How many mornings over the next 18 years had she snuggled in bed between

us? How could these days possibly be coming to an end?

I reached for my phone and texted Ally in her bedroom: "Come tuck us in."

Moments later she walked in laughing. "Oh, Dad, it's going to be OK." She sat on the edge of our bed, roles reversing.

"I happened to look at next year's calendar," I said businesslike. "Looks like your nineteenth birthday will be on Sabbath. Maybe you can come home that weekend?"

"I will," she said, reassuring the pathetic.

After she left again, I wept uncontrollably deep into the night. I just can't do this . . . I just love them so much.

As I lay in bed, my heart full of love for my daughter, I suddenly felt a strong impression: "That's how much I love My children too."

The realization startled me. Was it possible that this is how God Himself feels about every single one of us? That He weeps into the night with love for us?

I realized that my life was not over. I am called to love not only my own children, but all God's children. Just as He would do anything for my children, I should be doing more to help bring His children home.

Tomorrow Ally is coming home—for her nineteenth birthday. 🍂

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THE LIFE
OF FAITH
ANDY
NASH



HOW WERE WE
SUPPOSED TO LIVE
WITHOUT ALLY AT
THE BREAKFAST
TABLE?



EXPECTING THE UNEXPECTED

*Living in light of the
Second Coming*

ERIK C. CARTER

How much do you long for “the coming of the Son of Man?” And how could there be anything wrong about such desire? The Gospel of Luke offers cautionary wisdom on just such longing, suggesting that it comes with perilous pitfalls that may lead to either grave disappointment or profound deception. As Christians living in light of Jesus’ soon return, we must carefully con-

sider the seemingly paradoxical words of our Lord, and be mindful to expect the unexpected.

DISAPPOINTMENT

Luke’s discourse on the kingdom of God and the Second Coming (Luke 17:20-37) begins with a query from the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming (verse 20). Based on Jesus’ previous interaction with this popular Jewish sect, some

may be ready to deem this query as the initiation of yet one more act of hostility, another attempt at Jesus' entrapment.

However, in this particular instance, the Greek text suggests that the Pharisees' approach is not one of interrogation but rather of consultation. Whereupon Jesus seeks to "correct the Pharisees' information, not thwart their evil plot" (e.g., Luke 15:2, 16:14, and 18:9-14).¹ Based on this understanding, Luke has given us a glimpse of the Pharisees' longing to genuinely know when the Messiah would come, which makes Jesus' response all the more surprising: "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed. . . . For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst" (Luke 17:20, 21).²

Jesus' response to the Pharisees by referring to signs is worth particular attention. Despite the negative way the Pharisees are often portrayed in the Gospels, they were held in high esteem by the people, and known, among other things, for their keen interest in signs and their ability to interpret them.

In Matthew, Jesus acknowledges their aptitude in this regard, but also notes a significant shortcoming: "You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but [you] cannot discern the signs of the times" (Matt. 16:1-3). Luke wants his audience to be aware of Jesus' warning on the limitations of observable signs in relation to the coming kingdom of God. However valid the awareness that God gives us signs, we need to realize that longings for, anticipations of, Jesus' return that are based merely on looking for signs can be a prelude for profound disappointment, especially if those all-important signs are not rightly interpreted.

Hence Jesus' words of warning. Despite noble intentions and diligent Bible study, early-Advent believers remain an example of misguided enthusiasm. Remarkably enough, their belief that Jesus was going to return to this earth on October 22, 1844, signified a failure to understand the plain words of Jesus properly: "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone" (Matt. 24:36; cf. Acts 1:7). This resulted in what has come to be known in Adventist history as the Great Disappointment.

Faithfully watching for signs of the times is clearly within the scope of Jesus' teaching about

His return (e.g., Matt. 24). Indeed, God-given signs should never be ignored, because they give us an approximation of the Second Advent. But we must not confuse approximation with actuality. Signs can be taken only so far, for our longing for Jesus' return involves much more than sedentary positions on the front porch looking out for the arrival of grandpa's black Model T Ford. Anyone who waits for Jesus in such a passive manner is waiting to be disappointed.

DECEPTION

After engaging the Pharisees, Jesus turns to His disciples. He peers through the portals of time and declares to them as to us today: "The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man" (Luke 17:22).

I have a dear loved one who is losing function of his muscles, and the worst thing of all is that nobody knows why. He has gone through a battery of tests by professionals in a variety of specialties who, despite all the advances in modern medicine, cannot render a diagnosis. With his condition worsening by the month, it is emotionally wearing to see a man who was once in peak physical condition reduced to a walker. It is heartbreaking to listen to a man once graced with the "gift of gab" now have his speech slurred, virtually unintelligible. During these times of tremendous pain, suffering, and loss, believers in Jesus long all the more poignantly for their Master to return.

Yet despite our heartfelt longing to "see one of the days of the Son of Man," Jesus says, "You will not see it" (verse 22). And our disappointment at Jesus' failure to come when we so long for His appearing may leave us at our most vulnerable. God's enemy and ours is capable of using our orientation toward times and signs to our spiritual and emotional undermining. Confidence in the next specific time prediction, whatever lift it may bring to our spirits, will, in the end, be only temporary, lasting until the next passing of the time.

Predictions and expectations based more on longing than on exhaustive Bible study, based on misunderstanding of our own role in relation to the coming climax, give the enemy more opportunity to manipulate our emotions and dash our ship of hope against the rocks again because our anchor is too light or our cables too weak to hold when the storm is as fierce as it will be before the end.

Not all ministries have to involve major events.

REACTION AND RESOLUTION

Hence the following warning that makes up Jesus' seemingly disparaging reply: "They will say to you, 'Look there! Look here!' Do not go away, and do not run after them" (verse 23).

Jesus, who knows our hearts, knows well that great adversity will only intensify our longing to see Him return in the clouds of glory. He has left us unbeatable counsel, counsel that cannot be improved upon, about the best approach to the challenge of waiting with hope that will not die, that will not fade only to leave us to the devil's exploitation and manipulation. This counsel, made more explicit in Matthew 24 than in Luke 17, is as spiritually compelling as it is emotionally sound: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matt. 24:14).

These words are both the answer against the depression of passive waiting, and the revelation of our true understanding of the significance of "the coming of the Son of man." The Son of man for whose coming we long is the Son of man who came once before "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Those who share His longing for the salvation of the lost, those who join with Him in His passion to save everyone possible for His eternal companionship in glory, will not be able to sit on the front porch and look out. They, in His spirit, will pursue lost sheep as He does (Luke 15:3-7); they will race down the road to embrace their brothers and sisters, His returning children, drawn back home to His arms by the power of His longing love (verse 20); they will host welcome parties that leave their once-lost siblings with no doubt whatsoever that they are welcomed home (verses 22-24). Their focus will not be on signs to the exclusion of souls, but increasing energy and self-investment for the rescuing of even one more soul, given the testimony of the signs.

It's no coincidence that this account of Christ's

exchange with the Pharisees occurs between the miraculous healing of lepers (Luke 17:11-19) and the persistent and pervasive prayers of a widow in desperate need of justice (Luke 18:1-8). Taken together, the sequence of narratives constitutes a powerful testimony to the nature of God's kingdom as both a present reality and a future hope.

For those whose longing for Jesus to return is guided by their understanding of the signs of the times, acting out the healing, restoring reality of the kingdom, will already demonstrate the truth that the kingdom of God is in our midst (verse 21).

After the lone leper, healed from his infirmities, returned to worship Jesus, Luke adds: "And he was a Samaritan" (verse 16). In context of the Second Coming, Luke shows that ours is not just to have a discerning eye on how history coalesces with prophecy; it is also about an ear and heart in tune with the needs of the world around that allow us to minister in the Spirit of the Lord of the kingdom to which we already enjoy the privilege of belonging.

For those whose longing for Jesus' return is particularly intensified by the suffering and sorrow of injustice, to avoid deception that can emerge from our emotional vulnerabilities Jesus would have them know that the Lord of the kingdom is as aware as they are. He would have them be, and abide, in synchrony with His Spirit through the instrument of prayer; He would have them be as importunate as the pleading widow in their demand for justice; He would have them pray and "not . . . lose heart" (Luke 18:1).

CONCLUSION

Luke's answer to our question on how we should live in light of the Second Coming may not be the text we would have expected. But by accepting Jesus' counsel, we may overcome disappointment and avoid deception, two snares of those who long for Jesus to return. And when Jesus does return, He will, because of us, find faith and faithfulness in the earth (verse 8). 🍌

¹ François Bovon, *Luke 2: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 9:51-19:27*, Hermenia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), p. 514.

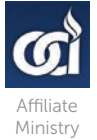
² Scripture quotations in this article are from the *New American Standard Bible*, copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

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IT'S MORE THAN A MATTER OF WHEN.

“Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. It’s like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’” *(Mark 13:33-37)*.

“WATCH!”

In the 1920s Colonel William “Billy” Mitchell of the United States Army, having seen the effectiveness of aerial bombardments during the First World War, issued a dire warning: America’s naval fleet based at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, could be struck by imperial Japanese aircraft virtually at will. (One oft-repeated but difficult-to-document quote attributed to Mitchell is that an attack could strike “one fine Sunday morning at 7:30 a.m.”)

More than 15 years later Mitchell’s prophecy came true, almost to the minute: The Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor began on Sunday, December 7, 1941, at 7:55 a.m.

Between the 1920s and 1940s Mitchell’s warning was belittled; the colonel himself was court-martialed and convicted of alleged “insubordination,” and he resigned his commission. In 1946 Mitchell posthumously received the Congressional Medal of Honor (he died in 1936), having been proved correct about the importance of military airpower.

FIGHTING COMPLACENCY

It’s worth remembering the story of “Billy” Mitchell not as a reason to advocate for war—heaven forbid—but to note that many important voices are ignored or actively discouraged in the face of reality. Mitchell’s correctness about what airpower could do was abundantly clear to just about anyone looking objectively; America’s leaders ignored his words at their peril.

Two thousand years ago Jesus told His followers, including you and me: “Watch!” We are to watch for signs of His return, to be aware of what’s happening around us. But are we doing this?

Many things distract us: home and family needs, the pressures of work (even with a weekly Sabbath to give us rest!), and many leisure activities. If our circumstances are less comfortable, we may find ourselves working all six days out of seven, struggling to provide for those we love.

For others, it might be a matter of complacency or even disdain: Some of us have heard from the time we were very young that “Jesus is coming soon!” Years, even decades, have passed, and the world may *seem* no closer to the realization of “the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,” as Paul renders it in Titus 2:13. Why should we get excited about

this now, when our hopes have been dashed so many times before?

No one knows the day and the hour of Christ’s return, and those who have attempted to set a date—from William Miller, a forerunner of the Seventh-day Adventist movement, to the late Harold Camping, an engineer and radio broadcaster—have been bitterly disappointed. But because we don’t know exactly *when*, we should remain focused on the fact that it *is* going to happen, and soon.

Why do I say this? Because so many of the signs Jesus spoke about in Matthew 24 are showing themselves: wars and rumors of wars, natural disasters, famines, interfamily strife and religious persecution. Just recently, if you can believe it, the chairman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights issued a report saying nondiscrimination laws must—must—take precedence over deeply held religious beliefs. He said “religious freedom” was, to at least some, “code words for . . . Christian supremacy” and intolerance.


GET PRACTICAL

How shall we watch? Here are some suggestions:

Get to know the world around you. Not long ago I met a young woman from the tiny nation of Malawi, in Africa. She was amazed I knew about her country, that it was relatively young, is small and even landlocked. How well do you know the nations of the world?

Get to know people and cultures. You might have the opportunity to do this in church or at work. But seek out others who might help you understand what’s taking place in the world. You’ll be better off for it, I promise.

Stay close to God, to Jesus, and the Word. It is only through studying the Bible and the inspired counsels we call the Spirit of Prophecy that Seventh-day Adventists will keep their understanding of last-day events.

Ellen G. White, that remarkable woman to whom God gave so much insight, put it well: “The words of Christ to the first disciples are applicable to His followers to the close of time: ‘What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.’ Mark 13:37.”* 

* Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 57.

Mark Kellner is online editor of *Adventist Review*.

21ST CENTURY FAITH

Students from Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee, respond to questions about whether it's easy or difficult to be an Adventist in the world in which we live.

I sometimes find it difficult when it comes to keeping the Sabbath, with things like abstaining from all the distractions or the entertainment that is around us. Where I am right now [SAU] has good influences, so it isn't too difficult. You have a lot of influences to study the Bible and talk about Jesus. I'm reminded that God is in our lives.

ANDRES CALLES

I haven't found it that hard to be an Adventist. I've been fortunate to be in supportive circles and with Adventists most of my life. I didn't go to Adventist schools, but went to a private Christian school for high school, and they were supportive. I'm sure it will be hard when I go out into the world. But I think that if I'm strong enough in my faith, I can stand for what I believe in.

VICTORIA HANSBURG

I don't find it hard to be an Adventist, but I think it depends on the circumstances a person is facing. I was in a secular environment over the summer, and because of the situations I encountered, it tested my faith more. It was easier to be an Adventist because I had to rely on God more. Here on an Adventist campus, because we are surrounded by Adventism, we relax our guard against things that aren't spiritual and can become complacent. So living out a Christ-centered life can actually be harder when we are surrounded by Adventism.

MICHELLE WISE

I don't find it too difficult to be an Adventist, especially here at Southern. We have vespers, religion courses, and churches all around giving us options. But one area that might be difficult is keeping the Sabbath. There's lots of homework, so it is tempting to do it, but then it is also relaxing not to do work. [As a film student] I want to work in Hollywood. I have struggled. How am I going to show God and spread the Word if I'm in a known non-Adventist area? But I've talked to people who have worked in the industry. It is all about showing your character so people can see God in you. If you say at the beginning you won't work on Sabbath, they will respect you. God will provide.

JAKE STRAUSS

“Being at an Adventist school does make it easier. I’m still tempted, but we have friends here that support and help us through things.”



“Living out a Christ-centered life can actually be harder when we are surrounded by Adventism.”

In my life I don't think it has been quite difficult to be an Adventist. My dad is a pastor, and we moved around. Some of the cities where he pastored didn't have an Adventist school, so I went to public school. I didn't like telling people my dad was a pastor. I couldn't go to homecoming on Friday night or to prom. Because of those times, it was hard for people to accept a pastor's daughter and my beliefs and morals. But overall I don't think the world damages my beliefs in Jesus. In sixth grade, my teacher randomly selected my dad to come for career day. I wasn't thrilled with him being there. I thought people were going to laugh at me. But they didn't. Instead, the kids asked me more and were interested. It was a wake-up call for me. After that experience, I tried to stay true to myself.

MELANIE RAMIREZ

My perspective on Adventism has changed since starting college. As a kid I thought it was the most difficult thing ever. It meant I couldn't watch TV on Saturday. It meant I couldn't play with my friends on Saturday. I had to wake up early to go to church, and that was difficult. Now that I'm in college and I work and study every day, Sabbath is just the time I can forget about all of that, disconnect, and rest from everything. Being at an Adventist school does make it easier. I'm still tempted, but we have friends here that support and help us through things.

HARO LORENZO

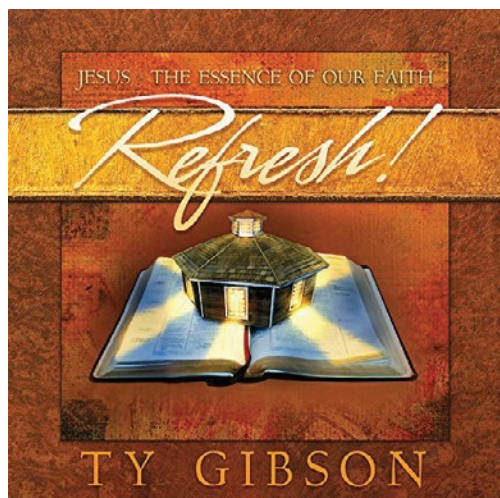
It depends on the person, but I don't find it difficult to be an Adventist today. I'm from Egypt and used to be a Coptic Christian until I went to an Adventist academy in Cairo and decided to be an Adventist. I realized I wasn't studying the Bible, so Adventism brought me to understand the Bible better.

MAGED GADEIRAB

At this point in my life I don't find it difficult to be an Adventist. However, when I was growing up, it was a little bit restrictive. I couldn't play, watch TV, or do a lot of things I wanted to do on Saturdays. Now it is a lot easier, because going to an Adventist school does help. Sabbath is now a rest time from school. The whole point of Sabbath is to get this healthy rest and focus on God and strengthen that relationship.

JOSHUA MCKEEVER

CLOSER LOOK



REFRESH

Refresh! Jesus: The Essence of Our Faith, Ty Gibson, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2016, 94 pages, US\$12.99. Reviewed by Jarod Thomas, communication director, General Conference Ministerial Association.

God specifically called the Seventh-day Adventist Church into existence as a prophetic movement, to proclaim a message to the world that vindicates God¹ So begins Ty Gibson in his latest work *Refresh*, a joint effort between the author and the General Conference Youth Department.

In this book, Gibson observes that Adventists have traditionally taken up the work of sharing their faith with those who have a prior knowledge of Christ and, lamentably, have minimized the gospel while choosing to focus on Adventist distinctives. The result has been an articulation of biblical facts while neglecting the broader context of God's nature and character of love in the light of the great controversy worldview.

To remedy this deficiency, Gibson seeks to present the truth as it is in Jesus. He proposes an octagonal structure, each side possessing a "perceptual window." These windows—eight core teachings of Scripture as understood by the Adventist Church—are portals that give us clearer

insights into the person of God. The eight doctrines include the law and the Sabbath, the heavenly sanctuary, the Second Coming, and an understanding of end-time events. The subject of the triune nature of God is also approached with clarity and beauty.

The author is not argumentative or apologetic. He doesn't simply present a laundry list of recited biblical facts. At the same time, he does not sweep away doctrine in favor of a nondoctrinal Christ. Instead, he places Christ in His rightful place at the center of Adventism's pillar teachings, and he does it well. This book embodies Ellen White's statement that "the last message of mercy . . . is a revelation of His character of love."²

Though the introduction is written by Gilbert Cangy of the General Conference Youth Department, the book's concepts go far beyond youth ministry. Indeed, some of the suggested group activities at the end of the book that correspond to each chapter seem disanalagous to the deep concepts and block quotes from Ellen White. The material could serve well as discussion fodder in a small group of young adults, a tool to empower personal witness, or a resource to enhance a pastor's evangelistic sermon series.

I have been familiar with Ty Gibson and Light Bearers ministry for many years, and anticipated his approach before picking up the book. Even so, I found this resource to be refreshing and compelling. It left me in a state of gratitude to God for who He is, and the richness of the message that He's given for this time in earth's history. 🍏

¹ *Refresh*, pg. 12

² *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1900), p. 415.

Giving Back

My golden retriever, Brody, recently earned national certification for dog therapy/crisis therapy. It was a milestone I wasn't sure we would ever reach. I've been taking Brody weekly to evening dog training classes since soon after I first brought him home in the summer of 2015. When the trainer initially asked my goals for Brody, I said, "For him to walk



BRODY

on a leash without pulling me off my feet, not to jump up on people, and to come when called." In time we accomplished all that—but also much more.

Together Brody and I have gone through months of basic and then advanced group training, with a few one-on-one sessions thrown in. These were followed by special dog therapy classes to help prepare us for more intense training with an instructor from a national dog therapy/crisis organization.

During those final "military-style" sessions Brody and I—together with about 20 other dogs and handlers—began with bus etiquette. We eventually shortened the time it took all of us to load onto the bus and sit down with the dogs under our seats from 15 minutes to less than a minute. Next we were transported to the local airport, where we learned to safely take our dogs up and down escalators and through airport security. Then a trip to a local fire station tested our dogs' ability to deal with loud noises by remaining calm while the fire engine blasted its siren.

Our instructor made it clear that unlike service dogs, therapy dogs are not allowed into restaurants or to fly free on airplanes;

in times of crisis, however, our team of dogs could be called in to provide comfort and distraction that might require approved air or bus travel. This training was to prepare us for such events.

The most vital training of all, though, took place in assisted living centers, where residents crowded lobbies and hallways for the opportunity to meet our dogs. Many of them held and petted the calm canines as if they were long-lost friends. Some shed tears as they recounted stories of former pets. They also shared other memories of life's joys and heartaches. They opened up in ways they may not have done as readily without the dogs. It was an enlightening experience.

Taking a dog to visit a lonely nursing home resident or a struggling hospital patient or a highly stressed college student during exam week or a child in a library who wants to read a story to your dog—these all are very simple ministries. They can, however, make a difference in a person's life, if only to provide a few minutes of happy distraction. These experiences have reinforced that not all ministries have to involve major events. Instead, they can be ordinary, everyday, small acts of kindness and caring interaction. The list of possibilities is endless—and they don't have to involve a dog!

In other words, even simple ministries can be meaningful. It just means choosing to do them. 🍂

To read a recent Washington Post article that discusses the benefits of pet therapy, go to <http://wapo.st/2dgwEMN>.

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

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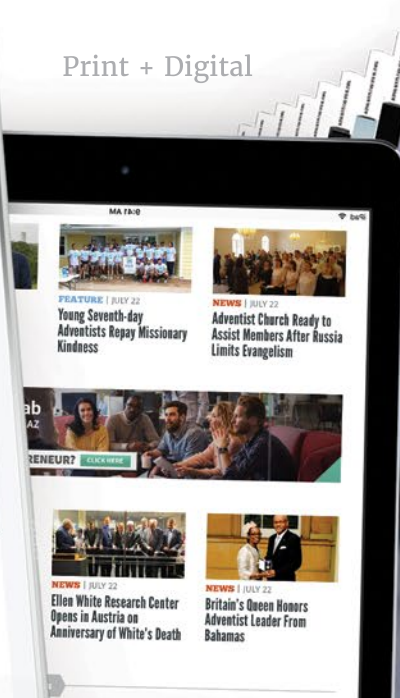
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