





ADRA

# Thank You!

Your generosity allows ADRA to deploy help and assistance globally within hours for all kinds of emergencies.

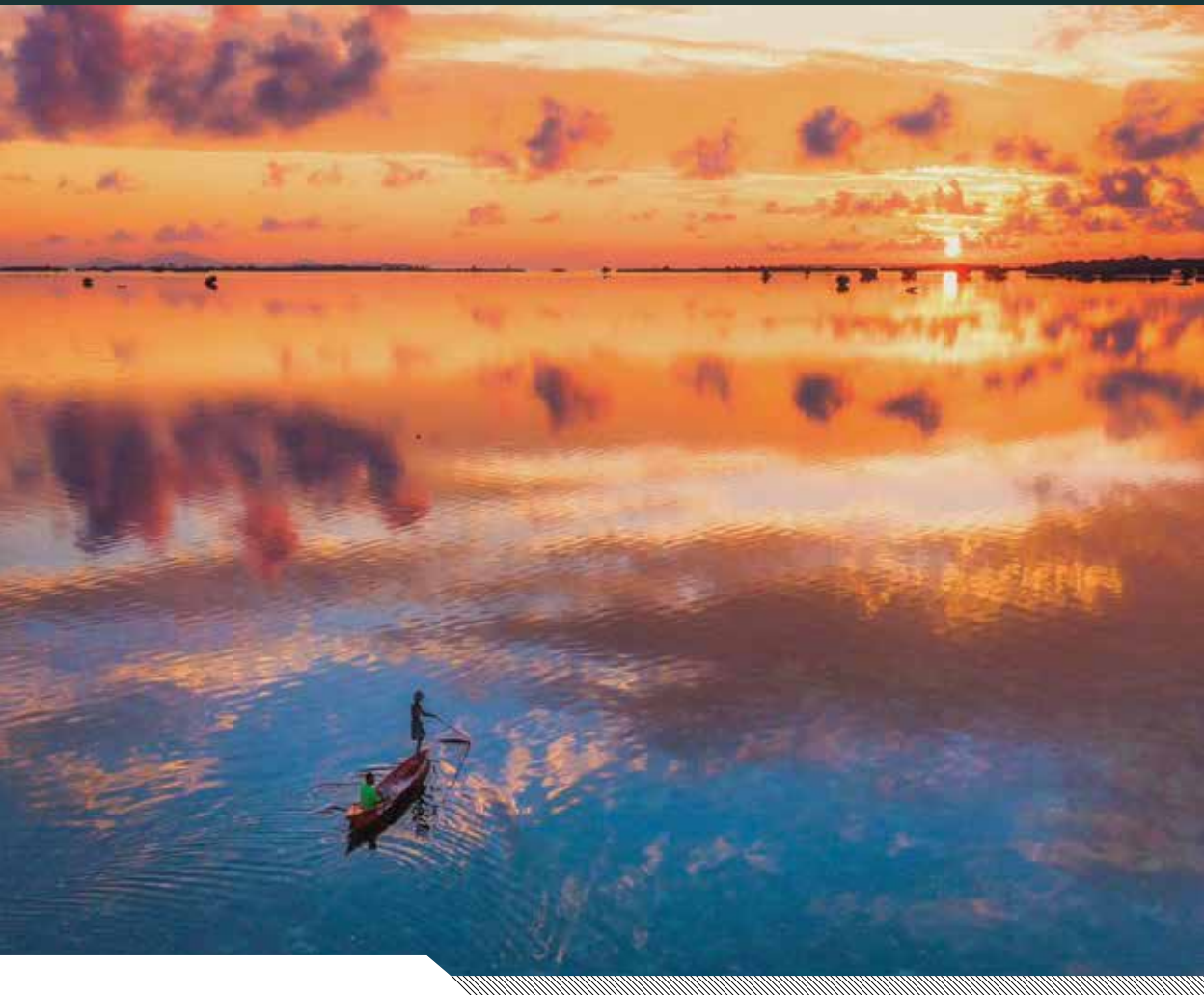


Scan to learn more about your impact and ADRA's response to the Türkiye & Syria earthquake



[ADRA.org/Turkiye-Syria-Earthquake](https://ADRA.org/Turkiye-Syria-Earthquake)





## FEATURES



18

18 **MANNA FROM THE WEB** | WILONA KARIMABADI  
The ministry COVID inspired



30

30 **MORE SOCIAL, LESS SOCIAL** | JARED THURMON  
Beware: Digital ministry may lack one key ingredient.

**“Fellowship is that elusive thing: the less you have, the less sure you are that you need or want it. But the more you have, the more you realize that you need and want it.”**

30

## ARTICLES

34 **THE LORD IS RISEN INDEED**

ELLEN G. WHITE

Spending time with those at Jesus' tomb

36 **PRAYER AMID DOUBT**

DEBBIE HOWELL

A peek into a prayer “closet”

38 **AT ANY COST**

MARTIN MATO

A father's story reminds us of the One who saves.

42 **WHEN THE CLOUD MOVES**

GERALD A. KLINGBEIL

It's an old story that's still playing out today.

48 **WHISTLEBLOWING CHRISTIANS**

MERLE POIRIER

Finding the courage to deliver an urgent message to a world in crisis

50 **BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR . . .**

KAY D. RIZZO

What we want and what God wants for us might not be the same.

52 **THE COLOR OF LOVE**

DOUGLAS JACOB

Why we love others

59 **EVERY TIME**

JODY BLOOM

We read the words, but it's our experience that creates our story.

60 **UNEXPECTED OUTCOME**

BRUNO LOURENCO

From disappointment to a worldwide movement

64 **THE PRICELESS BLOOD**

SARAH ROGERS

Spilled blood made a difference then, and it does today.



42

## NEWS | OPINION

- » Adventist University in Argentina Opens New Creation Center
- » How Adventist Food Companies Support the Church's Mission
- » Church Mission Brings Hope to Dozens of Abandoned Children
- » Containers With Much-needed Supplies Arrive in Cuba
- » European Experts Discuss Issues of Religion, Conscience
- » AdventHealth Global Program Welcomes Chile as a Thirteenth Partner



### EDITORIAL

- 5 **GERALD A. KLINGBEIL**  
IN SEARCH OF COMMUNITY

### DEPARTMENTS

- 6 **LETTERS**  
69 **HOUSE CALL**  
70 **CLOSER LOOK**

### COLUMNS

- 29 **CLIFF'S EDGE**  
CLIFFORD GOLDSTEIN  
41 **CURE FOR THE COMMON LIFE**  
HYVETH WILLIAMS  
57 **WITNESSING FOR INTROVERTS**  
LORI FUTCHER  
67 **THE LIFE OF FAITH**  
ANDY NASH  
72 **IN OTHER WORDS**  
SIKHULULEKILE DACO

FOUNDED 1849. PUBLISHED BY THE  
GENERAL CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS®

## PUBLISHING BOARD

Ted N. C. Wilson, *chair*  
Guillermo Biaggi, *vice chair*  
Justin Kim, *secretary*

Audrey Andersson, G. Alexander Bryant, Williams Costa, Paul H. Douglas,  
Mark A. Finley, James Howard, Erton Köhler, Peter Landless, Geoffrey Mbwana,  
Daisy Orion, Magdiel Perez Schultz, Artur Stele, Maurice Valentine, Ray  
Wahlen, Karnik Doukmetzian, *legal advisor*

**EDITOR** Justin Kim

**ASSOCIATE EDITORS** Sikhululekile Daco, Gerald A. Klingbeil

**ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR** Greg Scott

**COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR/NEWS EDITOR** Enno Müller

**DIGITAL PLATFORMS DIRECTOR** Gabriel Begle

**ASSISTANT EDITORS** Wilona Karimabadi, Beth Thomas

**FINANCE MANAGER** Kimberly Brown

**MARKETING** Jared Thurmon

**ART DIRECTION AND DESIGN** Bryan Gray, Ellen Musselman/Types & Symbols

**LAYOUT TECHNICIAN** Fred Wuerstlin

**COPY EDITOR** James Cavil

**OPERATIONS MANAGER** Merle Poirier

**EDITORIAL ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR** Marvene Thorpe-Baptiste

**SENIOR ADVISOR** E. Edward Zinke

**AD SALES** Glen Gohlke

**CIRCULATION/DISTRIBUTION** Rebecca Hilde, Sharon Tennyson

**TO WRITERS:** Writer's guidelines are available at the *Adventist Review* Website: [www.adventistreview.org](http://www.adventistreview.org) and click "About the Review." For a printed copy, send a self-addressed envelope to: Writer's Guidelines, *Adventist Review*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904.

**E-mail:** [revieweditor@gc.adventist.org](mailto:revieweditor@gc.adventist.org).

**Web site:** [www.adventistreview.org](http://www.adventistreview.org).

Unless otherwise noted, Bible texts in this issue are from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. All rights reserved. Bible texts credited to NIV are from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. Bible texts credited to NRSV are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. Scripture quotations marked ESV are from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Scripture quotations marked NASB are from the *New American Standard Bible*, copyright © 1960, 1971, 1977, 1995, 2020 by The Lockman Foundation. All rights reserved.

Unless otherwise noted, all prominent photos are ©Getty Images 2021.

The *Adventist Review* (ISSN 0161-1119) is the general paper of the Seventh-day Adventist® church. It is published monthly by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists®, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904. Periodicals postage paid at Silver Spring, MD, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *Adventist Review*, P.O. Box 5353, Nampa, ID 83653-5353.

Copyright © 2023, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists®.

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS:** Twelve issues of the monthly *Adventist Review*, US\$19.95, plus additional postage outside North America. Single copy US\$2.00 plus shipping and handling.

To order, visit [adventistreview.org/subscriptions](http://adventistreview.org/subscriptions) or send your name, address, and payment to: *Adventist Review* subscription desk, P.O. Box 5353, Nampa, ID 83653-5353

## ADDRESS CHANGES AND SUBSCRIPTION QUERIES:

[adventistreview@pacificpress.com](mailto:adventistreview@pacificpress.com) or call 1-800-545-2449

**ADVENTIST REVIEW MINISTRIES OFFICE:** [support@adventistreview.org](mailto:support@adventistreview.org)

## THE MOST SHARED STORIES ON ADVENTISTREVIEW.ORG LAST MONTH:

# 1



Adventist Medical Helicopter Goes Missing in the Philippines, by Edward Rodríguez and *Adventist Review*

# 2



A Heartfelt Plea to My Fellow Adventists, by Janel Tasker

# 3



WYSIWYG, by Justin Kim

# 4



Created in the Image of God, by Torben Bergland

# 5



God Loves Those Who Died as Much as Those He Saved, by Middle East and North Africa Union Mission and *Adventist Review*



# HIS Impact On Me

## Finding Change

**Trujuan's first year at Holbrook Indian School (HIS) will also be his last. As a senior, he came to HIS seeking positive change in his life. Trujuan says he came with lots of emotional baggage and little guidance in healthy means of coping. As he approaches graduation, he can happily say that he has found the guidance to create the change he has been longing for.**

I wanted to change my life. I was chewing tobacco, smoking weed, and I felt depressed. I had self-esteem problems and pretended to be happy like most of my peers. Last school year, I was dealing with that and trying to learn in school. I tried to numb it with these things. It would go away for a while, but after that, it would build up. I really wanted something different.

My uncle attended HIS and graduated in 2013. That is how I first learned about the school. I had three options for where to go to school for my senior year. I could return to my previous school, attend a school in California, or go to HIS. I felt like returning to my previous school was the worst of the three options. I guess my mom had done some research. She told me I would have the opportunity to be more active and engaged at HIS because of the small size of the school and the family atmosphere. I live in an area that is not so populated, and although my previous school

was pretty big, I didn't get much interaction. She also told me I could have opportunities for visiting various universities. I chose HIS to give it a try and see how it would go.

When I came here, I had a faculty family dad and mentor. We would pray one-on-one. During our first meeting, my mentor said that he had already noticed some changes in me since the beginning of the school year.

When I came here, I realized there was more to learning than teachers teaching on the whiteboard. Here they let you learn at your own pace. At HIS, the staff want to get to know you. What I see in the faculty family, I see in the mercy and loving-kindness of God, and it's peaceful here.

This is why I chose to be baptized during the school week of prayer. I always wanted to, and I finally got the opportunity.

You can help other students like Trujuan find the change that they are searching for.  
To make a gift, visit [HolbrookIndianSchool.org/donate](https://HolbrookIndianSchool.org/donate).

GERALD A. KLINGBEIL



*Jesus' community was never perfect or polished.*

## In Search of Community

The person who loves their dream of community will destroy community, but the person who loves those around them will create community,”<sup>\*</sup> wrote German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer in 1938 following the closing of the seminary of the underground Confessing Church, with Nazi Germany gearing up for all-out war against its neighbors and an ever-diminishing internal opposition.

Community is costly and can be painful, for it requires authenticity, transparency, and openness to meet another person on their own terms.

We all need community and yearn for it—and yet we struggle to find true community because we all imagine a community on our own individual terms. Within the walls of our churches, we tend to use labels to describe different communities, hoping that these labels will provide clarity. Conservative, liberal, progressive, orthodox are the most well known used to describe potential theological leanings.

But we have more. Some are linked to what we eat or do not eat and what we wear. Others seek to pinpoint differences in musical tastes. We use all these labels (and many more) to filter, screen, sift, and sieve the faithful from the unfaithful. To rephrase Bonhoeffer, we yearn for real community but often get sidetracked by our “dream of community.”

Jesus' short ministry may offer us a corrective perspective on God's idea of community. Jesus' community was never perfect or polished. He limited His teaching effort to 12, yet was never exclusive. The Gospels are full of references to a much larger group of disciples, including many women, who were part of the new community of spiritual Israel that God envisioned. We can also read of constant engagements with people who had questions, different opinions, or hostile convictions, or who just needed to find the Healer.

In Jesus' community the weak, the helpless, the unimportant (aka children), the poor, and the marginalized found their home. When they heard Jesus, they sensed that He was different from all the other itinerant rabbis who crisscrossed first-century Palestine (Matt. 7:29). He spoke with authority and clarity—yet we can hear gentleness, tact, and love even in His difficult conversations.

He shared meals with tax collectors and sinners—not the dream company that any Jewish mother would have wished for her son. His inner circle included a Zealot, rough fishermen, a tax collector, and others whose pedigrees we don't even know.

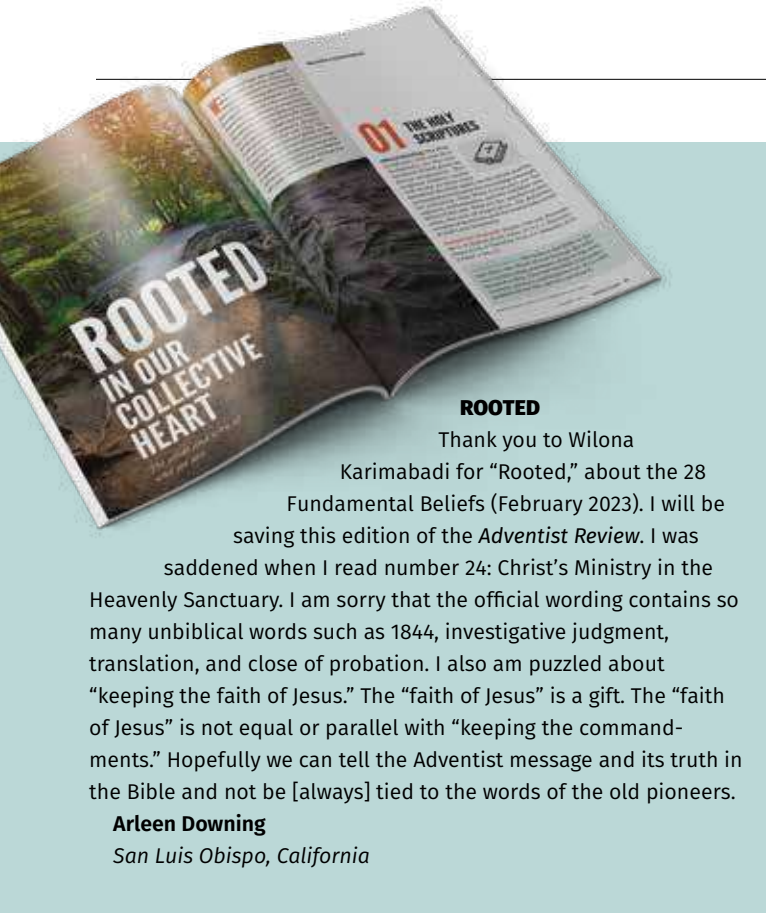
The community that Jesus envisioned is not a perfect community. In His high-priestly prayer in John 17:20-23 He prays for the unity of a very diverse

group of people who often didn't see eye to eye. He prays for courage and clarity—and deep roots in the Word that anchors His disciples in God's grace while living in a world that often stands in opposition to God's values.

How can we find God's ideal community? We will first need to surrender *our* dreams of community and allow Jesus to transform and shape our innermost worldview and values with His love. Only when God implants in our hearts that love that surpasses all understanding and knowledge (Eph. 3:19) can we truly become “one.”

Do we love our dream above the reality of brokenness that we can plainly see in ourselves and in our congregations? Are we ready to put everything on the table and plead for that life-transforming love that has characterized God's church throughout all the ages? Only as we become willing to surrender our dreams of community and learn to love and accept others unreservedly as Jesus showed us will we find and truly become a part of the community that He had in mind when He prayed for us. This in turn will become our most effective outreach tool: “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35).

<sup>\*</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Christian Community*, trans. John W. Doberstein (New York: Harper Collins, 1954), p. 27.



## ROOTED

Thank you to Wilona Karimabadi for “Rooted,” about the 28 Fundamental Beliefs (February 2023). I will be saving this edition of the *Adventist Review*. I was saddened when I read number 24: Christ’s Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary. I am sorry that the official wording contains so many unbiblical words such as 1844, investigative judgment, translation, and close of probation. I also am puzzled about “keeping the faith of Jesus.” The “faith of Jesus” is a gift. The “faith of Jesus” is not equal or parallel with “keeping the commandments.” Hopefully we can tell the Adventist message and its truth in the Bible and not be [always] tied to the words of the old pioneers.

**Arleen Downing**  
*San Luis Obispo, California*

I believe the time has come for us to be true believers in God’s Word through His church. The *Adventist Review* listed the 28 Fundamentals Beliefs, as did *Adventist World*, and the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*. After I attended church for one year, my pastor, Max Torkelsen, Jr., encouraged me to think about baptism. So I took the 27 Fundamental Beliefs (27 in the 1970s) and read all the verses

to each belief. God’s Word came to life in such a remarkable way, and I took the steps. That fateful day I was waiting to enter the water, and this thought came to my mind. *God would forgive all the sins I had committed in my 34 years*. It blew my mind. Coming out of the water, I expected to see a light flashing and hear a voice saying, “This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.” Of course, it did not

happen. It was just a hope. After changing into my earthly hippie rags, this peace that passes all understanding overwhelmed me, and I knew that the 27 Fundamental Beliefs had merit and that I had made the right decision. We should all consider reading more of “the 28.”

**Robert Rouillard**  
*Lakewood, Washington*

## WE NEED FELLOWSHIP

Thank you, Becky St. Clair (February 2023), for an apt description of why church fellowship is so critical in our lives. Your article illustration was well chosen, and the article was well written. Thank you for a relevant church magazine.

**Nila Salsberry**

## LEARNING TO LOVE MYSELF

I want to commend Gerald Klingbeil on his article “Learning to Love Myself” (January 2023). It was well written, to the point, balanced, and succinctly said. All healthy self-worth and self-esteem are securely anchored in the cross. It reminds me of Ellen White’s words: “The Lord is disappointed when His people place a low estimate upon themselves. He desires His chosen heritage to value themselves according to the price He has placed upon them”



---

All healthy self-worth and self-esteem are  
securely anchored in the cross.

JERRY JOUBERT, OREGON

---

(*The Desire of Ages*, p. 668). Your article clearly articulated this point. Right on!

**Jerry Joubert**

*Oregon Conference*

### **A BOOK WE NEED**

I am wondering and hoping that all of Bill Knott's articles as associate editor and then the editor will be put into a book for us to buy so we can read his wonderful writings in the future. Please consider it!

**Beverly Neuman**

*Palmer, Arkansas*

### **COMMENTS FROM ADVENTISTREVIEW.COM**

### **HOW ADVENTIST FOOD COMPANIES SUPPORT THE CHURCH'S MISSION**

God bless the entire nation, globally, with healthy food—spiritually and mentally.

**Bushy Harvey**

### **EXPLOSIVE GROWTH DRIVES ADVENTIST CHURCH IN AFRICA**

God is doing great things in Kenya. I'm so pleased with the response Elder Ted Wilson received from the president of Kenya. Please remember in your prayers all the people who will come to Christ.

**Pastor Moses Brown**

### **NEW PLANS FOR ATLANTIC UNION COLLEGE (AUC) PROPERTY**

It would be wonderful if AUC could reopen in some capacity. In its "heyday" it was truly one of our great schools. It was such a disappointment to see it close.

**Jeremy Vandiemer**

### **A HEARTFELT PLEA TO MY FELLOW ADVENTISTS**

I have met and worked with many "Carries." I too have been grieved at the lack of quality representation of biblical Adventism. I admit that there have been times that I likely didn't represent it perfectly either. May God forgive us. We are a peculiar people. The message we give will not always sit well with everybody. There are people who are turned off just by the fact that we promote a plant-based diet—even if it's done in the most tactful way. We must also consider that there are many seekers into the Adventist Church who themselves are quite

a bit off-base. Many try to bring their Babylonian or fanatical ideas and gaslight us into thinking we're the weird ones for not believing them.

One sister who is preparing for baptism asked me why we have so much focus on Ellen White. It's true that some members—especially during Sabbath School—quote Ellen White like they quote the Bible. This can be a turnoff to guests and truth seekers. But even if we're careful about that, there can be no doubt that as a church we have the gift of prophecy, and we are not shy about it. God knows whether a person is using something as an excuse or if there's a genuine biblical objection.

I appreciate the general admonition. There is an important truth often not acknowledged that could leave God's people unbalanced. We would do well to take heed.

**Wyatt Allen**

### **YOUR TURN**

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

# BE INSPIRED.

Download the brand-new AWR360° app!

Inspiration and a full media library at your fingertips!



visit: [awr.org/apps](http://awr.org/apps)



**AWR360°**  
CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

Adventist World Radio 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904

**“One notes a growing tension . . .  
There is a tendency to silence  
the voice of those with faith.”**

**—Paulo Macedo, p. 15**

# NEWS



Partial night view outside the entrance of the new Creation Research Center at River Plate Adventist University in Entre Rios, Argentina. PHOTO: RIVER PLATE ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY

## ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY IN ARGENTINA OPENS NEW CREATION CENTER

**FACILITIES INCLUDE A MUSEUM AND A LABORATORY AND GEOSCIENCE RESEARCH CLASSROOM.**

MARCOS PASEGGI, ADVENTIST REVIEW

**A** new resource center officially opened on the campus of River Plate Adventist University (RPAU) in Argentina in March. The new venue houses a museum and a laboratory and geoscience research classroom.

Geoscience Research Institute leaders and school officials held a ceremony and preview of the facilities in late 2022. During the event, leaders shared a brief outline of the project, including its physical plant specifications and goals.

Special guests at the ceremony included General Conference Geoscience Research Institute (GRI) director Ronald Nalin, South American Division GRI director Marcos Natal, and paleontologist and former RPAU GRI director Roberto Biaggi. RPAU leaders also attended the ceremony.

“I thank God and the GRI leaders for their support and active participation to make this center come true,” RPAU president Horacio Rizzo said. “This center will exert a powerful influence in our region and

beyond to promote a creation-based worldview.”

Natal agreed. “I thank the Lord for being able to witness this moment. This kind of project is extremely important for the Adventist Church’s mission and the identity of its members as God’s people,” he said.

Nalin also shared his joy at participating in the ceremony and emphasized its significance. “This is another example of education within a framework of the connections between science and faith,” he said.



Church leaders and school officers participate in the ribbon-cutting ceremony of the new resource center. PHOTO: RIVER PLATE ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY

UAP

The new RPAU GRI director is Samuel Abdala, who previously worked on projects at the GRI headquarters in Loma Linda, California, United States.

After the traditional ribbon-cutting ceremony, leaders and guests toured the venue and checked the resources already on display.

“This center has two people groups in mind especially,” Nalin said in an interview on the sidelines of the ceremony. “First, students, who often arrive at this higher education institution without knowing enough about earth origins. This place will provide them with the knowledge, the didactic and educational tools, that will help them find valuable answers to their questions,” he said.

The second group, Nalin emphasized, is the general public. “Undoubtedly, this center will generate a network of connections with other educational institutions in the area who will visit the center,” he said. “It will also draw researchers with geological or paleontological knowledge, who will be able to contribute to the discussions. Interactions such as these are usually very productive.”

Rizzo agreed. “This center is more than a museum. It is a custodian of local resources, with the goal of increasing, from a scientific point of view, the arguments that support a creationist worldview,” he said. “This is a space that will welcome area residents to explore resources that are usually not so easy to see. An example of these resources are fossil remains to be displayed.”

Beyond the scientific approach to the center, Rizzo emphasized, “one of the stated objectives of the new center is to acknowledge God’s creative hand in everything and admire the bountiful evidence found in our region.”

The new center will include the David Rhys Museum and the Geoscience Research Laboratory and Classroom, and it will serve as the branch office of Geoscience Research Institute at RPAU.

The David Rhys Museum will encourage the conservation and protection of the local paleontological, geological, and biodiversity heritage. “The museum will have five areas that represent the origin of life according to the Bible,” bi-

ologist and RPAU GRI activities coordinator Evelyn Montes said. These areas include Creation in Seven Days, Intelligent Design, The Magnificent Universe, Rocks and Minerals, and Animal and Plant Fossils. The goal, she added, is that people who walk through the museum “can learn about the Bible, science, and faith, and discover that they are not separate but compatible fields.”

The Geoscience Research Laboratory and Classroom will help students learn more about topics related to biodiversity and earth sciences. It anticipates fostering the study of species of reptiles, amphibians, preserved birds and mammals, invertebrates, vertebrates and fossils, and rocks and minerals coming from the local area and other regions of Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay.

The new Creation Resource Center is part of a network of university-based centers in the Adventist educational system. The GRI was created with the mission of discovering and sharing an understanding of nature and its relationship to the biblical revelation of God as the Creator. ▀



Sanitarium executive general manager Todd Saunders helps to serve children during one of the company's breakfast clubs in Australia. PHOTO: SANITARIUM HEALTH AND WELLBEING

## HOW ADVENTIST FOOD COMPANIES SUPPORT THE CHURCH'S MISSION

**EXECUTIVES SHARE INITIATIVES THAT HELP SPREAD THE HEALTH AND GOSPEL MESSAGES.**

MARCOS PASEGGI, ADVENTIST REVIEW

**H**ealth food companies managed by the Seventh-day Adventist Church often make unsung contributions to the church's mission, several of their managers recently said. Dozens of these health food executives from around the world met for the 2023 Adventist Health Food Association (AHFA) Conference in Auckland, New Zealand, February 12-17.

The AHFA Conference, the first such in-person event since the COVID-19 pandemic, allowed health food executives to share updates on their physical plant investments, signature and novel products, and outreach programs. Several of them highlighted initiatives that seek not only to convey a message of healthy living but also to increase their market share to continue growing and to fund mission initiatives.

### DIRECT MISSION FUNDING

The connection between the health food companies' perfor-

mance and the church's mission is straightforward.

"God has been very good to us [in 2022]," Grupo ICOLPAN manager Hugo Vega Arrieta from Colombia said. "We can now show a positive balance to support the mission of the church." Arrieta, who manages three factories across Colombia, explained how outreach activities sponsored by Grupo ICOLPAN connect local communities not only with the brand but also with the Adventist message.

According to biblical principles, financial contributions to the church organization usually start with 10 percent in tithes. But they rarely stop there. Several food company managers\* explained how a voted, set percentage is generally sent to the local church field—usually a union conference or a division—as a preestablished, fixed contribution with no strings attached.

"Our territory's church organization board has voted the set per-

centage amount that we send yearly to fund mission," one CEO reported. "At the same time, we receive specific requests to fund one-time initiatives. We support them as much as possible within our capabilities," he said.

Another company's CEO detailed how 20 percent of its annual profits go to fund Adventist education and another 5.5 percent to build churches. Yet another food company shared that 30 percent of its earnings fund Adventist education initiatives and evangelism within its church territory. "All in all," one manager reported, "we are contributing millions [of U.S. dollars] every year to support the mission of the church."

One of Argentina's three Adventist-managed food plants is located in Baradero, two hours from the Granix food company headquarters in Buenos Aires. In that town of 28,500 residents, the plant, which specializes in healthy crackers, has helped to launch and fund Baradero Adventist Institute. In 2023 the K-12 school will hold its first grade-12 graduation ceremony. It is a success story that, with some variations, has been repeated by health food companies across several continents, other CEOs revealed during the AHFA Conference.

### REACHING OUT TO THE COMMUNITY

Beyond direct and indirect mission funding, community outreach is an area where food companies seem to make a more

## Outreach is an area where food companies seem to make a more visible contribution to the name and reach of the Adventist Church.

visible contribution to the name and reach of the Adventist Church. By doing so, they help to improve people's lives. Health food companies managed by the church are sponsors of health-promoting events and sport activities for all ages; support health fairs and food banks; engage the public in recycling initiatives; and offer healthy cooking classes, food tasting, and recipe-sharing events.

In Trinidad and Tobago, Caribbean Health Food Company, Inc., has donated boxes of cereal to support three communities of Venezuelan refugees now residing in their island nation. At the same time, the company is investing in health and well-being education initiatives. "Our focus is cancer, cholesterol, and diabetes prevention," company manager Clifford Balgobin reported at the AHFA Conference. "We know that if we keep our customers alive and well, we'll have customers for life."

### HEALTH EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE

In Australia, Sanitarium Health and Wellbeing Company's engagement with communities and organizations that support them reveal clear objectives and report record-setting figures. According to company leaders, Sanitarium is committed to "delivering campaigns and resources that aim to make healthy eating easier and reduce the burden of noncommunicable disease in the community."

Working toward that goal, the

company has contributed 1.8 million servings of its signature cereal Weet-Bix in 20-ounce packages to a food bank organization as part of a 12-year sustainable program. Sanitarium has also invested \$200,000 in nutrition education for primary schools across Australia, provided nutrition and health workshops funding, and supported the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) in Australia with 250,000 servings of food for families in need during the 2022 floods.

Sanitarium's breakfast clubs are also changing how many people eat in the morning. In 2021 and 2022 the initiative provided 4.2 million servings for 3,240 breakfast clubs across Australia. In New Zealand the Kickstart Breakfast Program from Sanitarium, a joint initiative with other organizations and New Zealand's Ministry of Social Development, has provided 7.5 million servings since its launch in 2009.

Vitality Works, the Sanitarium Workplace Initiative, has touched 592,000 lives, encouraging people to adopt "a permanent lifestyle change" that "feels good inside and out." Among their clients are now most of the largest and most recognizable companies in Australia, as well as city governments, services, and utility companies, both public and private. The program includes specific initiatives for work safety, such as SafeSpine and SafeMind, which, in the words of one of the

companies who adopted them, "has allowed our people to thrive and give their best."

### ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE INITIATIVES

Other companies include recycling and upcycling (reusing discarded objects to create a product of higher quality or value) programs in their initiatives to connect with customers and promote responsible stewardship principles.

In Argentina, Granix partnered with a plastic lumber company and the Botellas de Amor (Love Bottles) charity to recycle and upcycle their single-use packaging. Thanks to this joint initiative, the discarded wrappers for Granix crackers, cookies, and other products are pushed into plastic bottles, which are then eventually turned into plastic wood beams. These beams are used to build furniture, playground sets, lounge chairs, and decks. "Please join us in this effort toward a more sustainable future," a company promotional video says.

Overall, Adventist health food companies' CEOs emphasized how their focus on optimal financial performance and results never obscures the fact that the companies they lead are to support the church's mission of sharing a message of wholeness. Martín Saldaña, CEO of Productos Unión in Peru, said it clearly. "We have our minds on the market, but our hearts are on mission." 🍌

\* Some names have been withheld because of safety or privacy issues.



Jubilant children of Tumaini Children's Home, after completing their Vacation Bible School program.

NEWLIFE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

## CHURCH MISSION BRINGS HOPE TO DOZENS OF ABANDONED CHILDREN

MINISTRY IN NAIROBI, KENYA, IS CHANGING LIVES OF THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST.

JASON NYANTINO, FOR ADVENTIST REVIEW

**W**hen you chat with Sarah Maria, 19, it is difficult to know that her start in life as a baby was unusual. She is full of life and determined to shatter glass ceilings as a young woman. The University of Nairobi in Kenya has admitted Sarah for a prestigious course in pharmacy.

On the other side of town is Fredrick Okango, 23, who is determined to gain continental honors as one of Africa's finest music video directors. Fredrick is pursuing a diploma in film technology at KCA University in Nairobi.

Maria and Okango have one thing in common. They were both brought up in a home for abandoned children on the outskirts of Nairobi.

"I came to Tumaini Children's Home in 2003 as a baby since my mother could not take care of me. She was a teenager abusing drugs," Maria told *The Newlifer*, a publication of the Newlife Seventh-day Adventist Church in Nairobi. "Tumaini is the only home I know. Besides having met my basic needs here, I have had an opportunity to mingle with other children in school,

church, and other social places like any other child out there."

Okango came to Tumaini back in 2005 after facing a lot of harassment and beatings from his violent father and stepmother. "I decided to run away from home and ended up in the Kiambu police station. At just 6 years old, with no one to turn to, I ended up in Tumaini Children's Home, where I have spent all my life," he said. "I am deeply grateful to the home. It has really impacted my life greatly. They have provided me with a home, brothers and sisters, and also people I can call parents."

Maria and Okango, who are not church members, are just two out of the 44 children in Tumaini Children's Home ("Tumaini" is Swahili for "hope"). It is there that the Newlife church has been conducting evangelistic programs.

In February 2022 a church group dubbed Missionaries Group decided to hold a weekend retreat. They needed a venue near Nairobi, and a Google search led them to Children of Hope Retreat Centre near Kikuyu, a town west of Nairobi.

"We visited the place preretreat and found it attractive and serene

enough for people who needed to spend quiet time with God. In the same compound there was a children's home," Sarah Wekesa, one of the group members, said.

"We decided to visit the children's home on the final day of the retreat, and after spending a few hours with the children, they did not want to let us go. Little did we know that God was piecing together a story of hope between our church and the children," Wekesa said.

Samson Kamata, Tumaini Children's Home manager, requested that the church members create a program during which they would spend more time with the children. It was then that the idea of a week-long Vacation Bible School in Tumaini Children's Home was born, Wekesa said. "We found it was a God-given chance of molding the children to be good citizens. We named our mission Beyond Church Walls Ministry."

So far the Newlife church, through the small group of missionaries, has carried out several outreach activities in Tumaini. The church's ministries occasionally invite the children and staff to Sabbath services, where they participate in a whole day of fun-filled ministering.

"Since the Newlife church came into my life, my relationship with God has been fundamentally transformed," Maria said. "It has given me an opportunity to share my story and experience spiritual growth through Bible study."



Cuban Union Conference president Aldo Pérez (right) helps unload some of the supplies from the first container sent by Maranatha. PHOTO: MARANATHA VOLUNTEERS INTERNATIONAL

Okango believes many boys and girls will be written in heaven's book of life thanks to the ministry of the Newlife church in Tumaini.

"I greatly enjoyed the way the Word of God was taught. Seeing so many of us young people enjoying the Word of God not only inspired me but also filled me with the hope that come resurrection morning, when Christ shall come, all of us in Tumaini will go to heaven," Okango said.

A strong bond of love and spiritual connection between Newlife and Tumaini has been created. On the last day of the VBS program, children, staff, and church members let their tears flow freely. "It is very emotional yet fulfilling that the mission has indeed touched lives," Newlife members explained.

"The children have realized that nothing is impossible with God," Beyond Church Walls Ministry member Nelson Okenye said. "They now know that it is possible to love and serve God when young and at the same time excel in their studies and careers. Now several of them are regularly attending our services. We look forward to their baptism."

Tumaini Children's Home management has asked for a long-term relationship with Newlife Adventist Church, with a regular holiday program when children are home from school.

"This mission has had a tremendous impact on Tumaini," home director Abraham Kiboki said. "The children learned good morals from the Newlife youth and how to be respectful and hardworking. They were able to study the Bible together and learn new gospel songs."

According to Kiboki, as a result of this interaction, primary and secondary school children are reporting better grades in school. What is more important, he said, is that they are also growing spiritually.

"Let's brighten the future of these children with food items, bedding, and learning materials," he said. ▀

## CONTAINERS WITH MUCH-NEEDED SUPPLIES ARRIVE IN CUBA

MARANATHA INITIATIVE IS ASSISTING PEOPLE IN A DESPERATE SITUATION.

MARANATHA VOLUNTEERS INTERNATIONAL AND ADVENTIST REVIEW

In December 2022 Maranatha Volunteers International donors helped to raise more than \$250,000 (the total has since grown to more than \$300,000) to send aid to Cuban people stuck in a desperate economic situation.

The aid, consisting of food, medicine, and other essentials, was sent in the first two of three shipping containers and arrived in the port of Havana for inspection. Sometimes these containers become stuck in port for months, and Maranatha leaders credit God with what they called "a blessing"—the fact that the first container was recently released and transported to Maranatha's warehouse.

In early February the supplies were moved to three distribution points: the Seventh-day Adventist Cuban Union Conference headquarters, Cuba Adventist Theological Seminary, and the eastern city of Holguín.

With joyful smiles, recipients said they were thankful for this timely aid and expressed their gratitude for the Maranatha donors who made it possible. The second shipping container has arrived in the port of Havana, and a third container will soon be on its way.

"It's pretty meaningful to see the reality of the people for whom you were actually raising the money picking up the food, and you know it's changing their lives," Maranatha president Don Noble said. "Some of them are laughing; some of them are crying. There was a mix of emotions because they didn't know what to do with themselves. They didn't know how to respond."

Since 1994 Maranatha has been working in Cuba to build and renovate Seventh-day Adventist churches. Political circumstances make work in Cuba complicated, and projects can take years to get off the ground and completed. But Maranatha has been successful in building or remodeling more than 200 churches all over the island. ▀





Group photo of participants and attendees to the 2023 Conference on Conscience and Liberty in Lisbon, Portugal, February 7-8. PHOTO: INTER-EUROPEAN DIVISION NEWS

## EUROPEAN EXPERTS DISCUSS ISSUES OF RELIGION, CONSCIENCE

CONFERENCE IN PORTUGAL ADDRESSED CURRENT TENSIONS.

### INTER-EUROPEAN DIVISION NEWS AND ADVENTIST REVIEW

**R**eligion and Freedom of Expression” was the theme of the 2023 Conference on Conscience and Liberty, organized by the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty (AIDLR) in Lisbon, Portugal.

“All those who came here did so with the aim of creating a more just society, where people can get along, with trust,” AIDLR president Mário Brito said in an interview for Portuguese public television. “We came to think [of] how we can make the best use of religion, also [making] room for difference, with respect. We want everyone to be able to express themselves, to say what they think . . . and we work for this.”

Brito acknowledged that there are those who try to prevent this from happening, but “we cannot remain silent,” he said. “We add our voice to those of people of good will, in a clear way . . . which is part of preaching the gospel.”

The February 7-8 conference brought together renowned experts and thinkers in freedom of conscience, worship, and religion. They delved into the topic from the perspectives of law, history, theology, and culture, along with

presenting practical cases in which these two freedoms conflicted or were in danger.

“The theme of this conference was chosen as a response to a deep concern about the current tension between the freedoms of religion and expression,” AIDLR secretary general Paulo Macedo said. “There is a history of study and legislation in relation to the protection of religious speech, about religion, and in relation to religion. But one notes a growing tension. . . . There is a tendency to silence the voice of those with faith.” Macedo emphasized that it is necessary to reflect and try to help resolve the current tension, seeking to maintain respect for both aspects of freedom.

Two of the speakers were Nazila Ghana, United Nations special rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief (FoRB), and Ibrahim Salama, chief of the Human Rights Treaties Branch of the UN Human Rights High Commission. Ghana spoke about the role of the special rapporteur, the priorities of her mandate, and an overview of the state of religious freedom today. Salama gave an in-depth presentation on the role of education for the relationship between faith and

human rights through the UN’s #Faith4Rights program.

Attendees also included International Religious Liberty Association (IRLA) director Ganoune Diop; former IRLA director John Graz; Francesco de Lillo, from EPRID, the platform of European NGOs against religious intolerance; and João Martins, Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) executive director in Europe.

In addition to official representatives, the event was attended by approximately 80 participants and other speakers, including academics, clergy, and religious community leaders. It also included journalists and students. Among them were the secretaries-general of the national AIDLR chapters from Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Bulgaria, Romania, and Portugal. The involvement, growth, and expansion of the AIDLR national chapter network is a high priority for AIDLR, according to its board of trustees.

“This conference has challenged national sections to continue to work and deepen their efforts in bringing these and other issues related to religious freedom to their countries,” Adama Dieng, chair of the Honorary Committee of AIDLR, said at the closing ceremony. “It is important that this movement is taken to the people, closer to those who suffer and experience the problems, and can help change the situations for the better through education, dialogue, and understanding.”



Signing of the partnership agreement between AdventHealth Global Missions and Chile Adventist University in December 2022.

PHOTO: ADVENTHEALTH

## ADVENTHEALTH GLOBAL PROGRAM WELCOMES CHILE AS THIRTEENTH PARTNER

INITIATIVE KEEPS EXPANDING INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS TO ENHANCE CARE SERVICES.

GRACE DANCE, ADVENTHEALTH NEWS, AND ADVENTIST REVIEW

**A**dventHealth has expanded its international partnerships to Chile, welcoming two new institutions to the Global Missions program. It will now include the Adventist Hospital of Los Angeles (CLINALA) and Chile Adventist University (UnACh), to form the thirteenth partnership in the program. This is the first time a university has been included.

“It’s really great that we have the opportunity to partner with the [Seventh-day] Adventist Church and its health and higher learning institutions,” Jennifer Wandersleben, regional president and CEO of AdventHealth in west Florida, said. “We can share best practices with one another and enhance the care we deliver to our communities.”

The relationship between the institutions was officially launched when Wandersleben traveled to Chile in December 2022 with an AdventHealth delegation, which included Jason Newmyer, president and CEO of AdventHealth Riverview, and Monty Jacobs, director for Global Missions. Wandersleben and Newmyer will serve as the executive sponsors for this partnership, and both feel a connection to Chile through family ties and Newmyer’s Hispanic heritage.

“It’s a blessing to serve abroad,

as it showcases our commitment to humanity and fellow Christian brothers and sisters in other parts of the world,” Newmyer said.

The partnership will focus on seven core areas, including exchanging clinical education content in areas that include patient safety and quality assurance, improving clinical and operational processes, and supporting education and training for physicians and clinical staff. It will also include developing strategies for filling health-care occupations experiencing shortage, exploring research opportunities, and sharing equipment and supplies. Finally, it will work on enhancing delivery of the partners’ common faith-based mission and focus on whole-person care.

AdventHealth and AdventHealth University (AHU) had previously collaborated with CLINALA and UnACh more informally. In March 2019 Global Missions representatives met in Chile with key leaders from CLINALA and UnACh to discuss future collaboration. After COVID-19-related travel restrictions were lifted, a delegation from Chile traveled to the U.S. to meet with the Global Missions team and the executive sponsors.

The partnership seeks to expand

access to health care in Chile; support the growth and quality of medical services; and provide greater investments in those services.

“We have an opportunity to serve through sharing our experiences as a world-class health-care organization, participating in brainstorming sessions regarding their strategic opportunities, exploring creative solutions to solve complex issues, and encouraging their adoption to new care pathways,” Newmyer said. “These moments can positively impact lives on the other side of the world.”

In addition, AdventHealth Global Missions will organize mission trips related to its work in Chile. “There are areas of Chile with underserved people groups that will likely be a focus,” Jacobs said. “These trips would be a collaborative effort, with CLINALA and UnACh serving as the host institutions.”

CLINALA, founded in 1979, is located in the city of Los Angeles, a commercial hub for agriculture, factories, mills, and lumber yards. Its mission is to promote and restore comprehensive health by offering an excellent service inspired by the ministry of Christ.

UnACh, near the city of Chillán, was founded in 1906 and relocated to its current site in 1922. In 2022 the university had more than 2,500 undergraduate students and 82 graduate students. “UnACh has a deep desire to collaborate on health-care education and build clinical operations related to its educational programs,” school leaders said. ▀



### ADVENTIST HOSPITALS OFFER CLUBFOOT TREATMENT IN RWANDA.

In 2006 Global Health Initiatives (GHI), an international outreach program supported by five AdventHealth Denver-based hospitals, began a partnership with Mugonero Adventist Hospital in Rwanda. The objective was to advance health-care capacity at Mugonero by sending clinical and surgical teams, providing leadership training and educational opportunities, and much more. After several years GHI expanded its services to include one of the most popular programs—the clubfoot sponsorship program. Since its inception the program has helped 101 children. These children are now living with fewer limitations and with hope for a better future.



### ADRA HELPS HUNDREDS COMPLETE LITERACY PROGRAM IN EL SALVADOR.

More than 500 people in El Salvador have learned how to read and write in 2022 thanks to an initiative supported by the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) and a partnership with the Ministry of Education in El Salvador. Hundreds gathered at the Adventist Training School in San Juan Opico, Libertad, in the Central American country on January 21 for a special graduation ceremony, where 521 received diplomas for completing their one-year literacy program—an ongoing annual program since 2002.



### NEW PLANS VOTED FOR ATLANTIC UNION COLLEGE PROPERTY.

Delegates of the Atlantic Union College Corporation constituency session voted on February 14 to approve a recommendation to negotiate with Seventh-day Adventist higher education institutions to create a “hub of education,” where higher education courses and degrees will be offered on the campus, located in South Lancaster, Massachusetts. The delegates voted unanimously to authorize the board to begin implementing steps to create a “hub of education” on the college campus.



### ADVENTIST CHURCH PLANTS FIRST GREEK-SPEAKING GROUP IN CYPRUS.

On February 18, Seventh-day Adventist church members and leaders met in Nicosia, Cyprus, for the official opening of the first Greek-speaking congregation on the island. Together they celebrated the birth of the new congregation, Nicosia Greek Seventh-day Adventist Church. During the ceremony, 19 members signed their commitment to serving the church faithfully.



### CHURCH LEADERS WELCOME JORDAN'S U.S. AMBASSADOR.

Her Excellency Dina Kavar, ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the United States, visited the headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Silver Spring, Maryland, on February 24. General Conference president Ted N. C. Wilson welcomed Kavar and second secretary Raad Elfawair in a courtesy visit that highlighted religious freedom and ongoing collaboration between the Adventist Church and that Middle Eastern nation.



### EUROPEAN ADVENTIST COMMUNICATORS MEET FOR SHARING AND GROWTH.

Forty communication professionals from 13 Seventh-day Adventist media centers across Europe met February 24-27 on the premises of Hope Media Europe in Germany. During the four days of meetings, church media professionals had the opportunity to present their current projects, exchange experiences related to their challenges, and find new paths together for the church's mission through communication. Media centers represented were from Austria, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Spain, England, Iceland, Ireland, and Latvia. A special invitee was Maksym Krupskyi, director of the church media center in Ukraine.



### ADVENTIST REVIEW MINISTRIES NEWSLETTER

To receive our weekly newsletter highlighting current news, inspiring stories, thought-provoking commentaries, engaging features, and other media, sign up today.

[www.adventistreview.org/newsletter-signup](http://www.adventistreview.org/newsletter-signup)

# MANNA FROM THE WEB

---

*How one conference's first completely digital church is accomplishing the Great Commission.*

**WILONA KARIMABADI**



**T**hat first Sabbath at home came as a welcome change of pace three years ago—true rest from the busyness of the week. As the world rolled into lockdown in 2020, transitioning work, education, and worship to home quickly became the norm for many.

But here we are three years later, most of us back in our weekly congregations on Sabbath, and church life has resumed as normal. Lessons were learned and new horizons opened during those months of mandated stay-at-home life. And what initially looked like a giant setback actually pushed the church forward into the future of digital ministry whose entire existence is made possible by online technology.

“Living Manna online church is the first Adventist church [in the Northeastern Conference] to be organized as a fully digital church,” says its pastor, Ivor Myers. In fact, his official installation as full-time shepherd of this innovative congregation took place recently—this past January. While Living Manna is officially part of the Northeastern



Conference, which is based in New York, Myers lives—and broadcasts—from Alabama.

### **A DIFFERENT PATH**

Myers' road to digital pastoring was unconventional. It started with a New York-based nineties hip-hop group called the Boogie Monsters. Myers, known then as "Yodared," was part of this four-man group that included his brother and two friends. "We had a million-dollar contract with EMI records, and [there was] Soul Train, MTV, BET, the whole thing," he says.

One night there was a gathering at the band's New York house that included all the things—alcohol, marijuana, meeting and greeting. "A friend of ours invited a friend of his that night, and we had

all kinds of people coming and going," recalls Myers. "It was just before our album had been released. There was buzz, and people were coming and meeting us and everything. We were all roughly around 19 or 20 years old at the time. Then there was this guy hanging out with us whom we didn't know was Seventh-day Adventist."

The group began talking about the New World Order while really having no idea what they were talking about. "Out of the blue this guy asked us what day we thought was the Sabbath. We just looked at him like, 'What a stupid question—we're here having serious discussions about the New World Order,' which was a popular topic in hip-hop at the time," Myers remembers.

“‘Sunday. Everyone knows it’s Sunday.’ The guy told us to think again. We looked at our friend to say, ‘Man, who did you bring here?’ And then he said, ‘What’s the seventh day of the week?’ We were like, Sunday . . . Wait a minute! What did you just do?”

That night an out-of-the-blue question turned into a four-hour Bible study.

And so the boys of Boogie Monsters and many of their friends at the party embarked on a trip into the Word of God having no idea that such a thing as Adventism even existed. But as they searched the Scriptures with their new friend, they soon found themselves at Sabbath services at a small church in Queens, New York—all 20 to 30 of them. Almost the whole band and crew were eventually baptized, and in another eight months Myers and his brother left the Boogie Monsters life for good.

While discovering there was an entire world associated with his newfound set of beliefs, Myers learned of Oakwood University and soon enrolled. He studied there for one year, met and married his wife, and began ministering in California right away. As the Lord opened doors leading to his ordination in the Central California Conference,

Myers began moving forward in a pastoral ministry career that would quickly make inroads into the digital world.

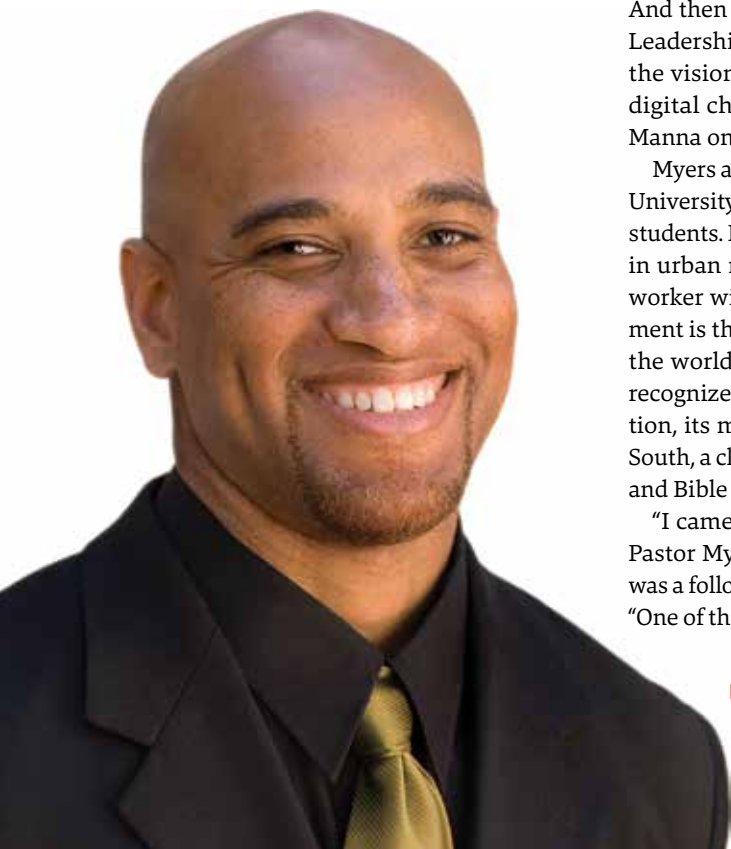
#### **GOING ONLINE**

By early spring 2020 most churches worldwide were affected by lockdown mandates. Congregations from all religions found themselves taking to the Internet to keep going. At the time, Myers was pastoring in the Bay Area of northern California, and his church followed suit with great success. Once services could resume safely in person, many churches embraced a hybrid method of doing things—a congregation that met regularly in person with meetings and activities centered on a brick-and-mortar church structure with streaming capabilities. Myers’ congregation of a few hundred soon found an online viewership of 500 with the capacity to reach thousands, if not more.

Thus for Myers and his congregation, reentry into normalcy came with a profound switch. “When COVID hit and we went strictly online, it was just a stark difference between [online viewers] being the secondary audience and [those viewers] being the primary audience,” he says. And then they knew they were onto something. Leadership at Northeastern Conference caught the vision, and Myers was invited to grow this digital church concept fully online. So Living Manna online church was born.

Myers and his wife, Atonté, moved to Oakwood University, where their daughters are enrolled as students. He is also working on a master’s degree in urban ministry there. But as many a remote worker will tell you, the beauty of that arrangement is that a job can be done from anywhere in the world. And though Living Manna is a fully recognized Northeastern Conference congregation, its members are served by a pastor in the South, a clerk in Pennsylvania, and guest teachers and Bible workers from all over as well.

“I came to Living Manna at the invitation of Pastor Myers, who reached out to me because I was a follower,” says church clerk Patrice DeLisser. “One of the things I think is very important to the



Living Manna pastor Ivor Myers

**“You would think we knew each other for years, and yet people have met each other only once or twice and only through technology. But that coat of love and nonjudgment and welcoming spirit—it is palpable even through the screen of a laptop.”**

vision of Living Manna, particularly with Pastor Myers, is not looking to [“poach”] people who are already members of a Seventh-day Adventist church. Rather, Living Manna is predominantly tailored to people who don’t have access to an Adventist church at all, or one that is not as welcoming.”

Part of DeLisser’s job as clerk is to respond to all emails and messages, requests for the pastor, prayer needs, etc. She also processes membership requests—a task that currently takes a lot of time to accomplish, given the church’s unique situation. DeLisser also plays a part in helping to organize activities and events for the congregation—that’s right, activities and events for an online congregation! Even an in-person Living Manna convocation is in the works.

#### **WHERE’S THE COMMUNITY BEHIND A SCREEN?**

How does this all work? You start at Living Manna’s website (see the QR code on p. 23). You will notice a bar at the top of the page: “Register for Live Church.” Once you click, you will be directed to a page within the Altar Live platform (also available as an app). Once you create a login and set up a profile, confirm your account through the email address you provide, and you will be directed back to find your community. Click on “Living Manna First Online Church of Northeastern Conference.” As of this writing, there are 1,504 members of this online community. If that doesn’t seem like anything to take a second look at, imagine 1,504 people sitting in your local church building.

All services can be livestreamed through the website, which carries a link to a platform called StreamYard, as well as through YouTube, where previous sermons are housed (search Living Manna SDA Church). But here is where Living Manna takes things a step further.

“The overall picture is that we operate like a regular church,” says Myers. “Financially, offerings stay for the church and tithe goes to the conference. We have a board and a treasurer, and everything is accounted for like a normal church. The

blessing of this is that when it comes to offering, we’re not spending it on carpets or the typical things churches have to allot their budget toward.” Living Manna community members send their tithes and offerings through regular mail, Cash App, and Adventist Giving online.

What this means is that there are more resources available for ministry and the very element that powers this church: technology. Because while there are currently 80 members on the books, Myers reports that there are between 400 and 600 worshippers viewing live every Sabbath—from Jamaica, Trinidad, all over the U.S., India, Canada, Europe, etc. Do these viewers stop in just for a great sermon and move on? That’s where the tech takes things to another level. Through Altar Live’s app, once you are admitted into the live service, you find a virtual seat in a virtual row to occupy with others in that same row with you.

“After church, we have our Altar Live meeting. During this meeting everybody communes together,” says Myers. “We talk about Sabbath School, church service, what people learned, and that is where community forms. Right now, if you were to talk to these people you would think they all live in the same town. People from different sides of the globe, different sides of America, are forming bonds.”

The Altar Live breakout room link (for your row) is sent to everyone registered during the Sabbath School or sermon portion to facilitate their convening together immediately after the service—much like the in-person chitchatting that occurs in the foyers or pews before the sanctuary empties for the day.

“Now you get to see each other, carry on with each other. You hear people sharing their stories, praying for one another,” says DeLisser. “You would think we’ve known each other for years, and yet people have met each other only once or twice and only through technology. But that coat of love and nonjudgment and welcoming spirit—it is palpable even through the screen of a laptop.”



ANDREY POPOV / ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES PLUS

### REACHING THE “REACHABLE”

Most of us know at least one person in their social or professional circles whom you can't picture setting foot in your local congregation. This is a person who either has no spiritual belief system and is adamant about not needing one or for various reasons does not find the sanctuary of a local Adventist church a comfortable environment. While sad, this is reality. But as there is such a thing as “cyber-courage,” doing church in an online environment lessens the fear factor for a great many who would never consider a faith community otherwise.

Not only does the online environment of Living Manna provide a safe space to test the waters of Adventism and Christianity as a whole, but the entire ministry is also geared toward those especially searching for that. “Our goal is to reach people who have never set foot in a church, or who would never set foot in a church. Everything we're doing is geared toward a non-Adventist audience,” says Myers. Sabbath School programming does not follow the typical quarterly lesson, but is rather conducted in a panel/interview format with different guests coming on to address specific topics. During sermon time Pastor Myers tackles tenets of Adventist belief through multiple series on different topics, such as the sanctuary and marriage.

Churches wanting to make an impact strive to meet their community in more ways than Sabbath services. Usually that involves various ministries and perhaps a Wednesday night prayer meeting or Friday evening vespers. Living Manna, however, provides something for its community nearly

every day. Wednesday prayer meeting, for example, is done entirely on Altar Live, allowing virtual attendees to personally connect and fellowship. Then there are such nights as Mental Health Mondays, True Health Tuesdays, and a Thursday night meet-up specifically for anyone who just doesn't believe anything at all, or is doubting and struggling.

“The success of this is being able to reach people who were not reachable before. People who sometimes have had church hurt—not just in Adventist churches, but other denominations as well. But this success is God's success,” DeLisser says.

### CARING FOR THE FLOCK

A key function of a pastor's job description is caring for the congregation—ministering to spiritual needs and helping with life's challenges. It's a part of the job traditionally accomplished through face-to-face visitations at home or meeting up for lunch, or just a quick chat when running into a member at the local Target. How then is that type of connection accomplished in an entirely digital context?

Providing community in as many ways as possible is key, and for Living Manna the Altar Live platform facilitates that. “We are actually in the process of implementing small groups now. We've been talking about it forever, but to create ministry-oriented groups in which we are encouraging people to form digital ministries through TikTok, Facebook, YouTube, etc. This is one way that we foster community,” says Myers. “As far as access to myself, members have my personal contact so they can call their pastor. But it's clearly a little different in terms of visitations.”



Baptism is also a regular function of church life that a digital congregation has to find innovative ways to accomplish. But as with most things, “where there is a will, there is a way.” If an interested viewer wants to learn more, they are connected with a dedicated Bible worker who will study with them. Then, if baptism is requested, Myers will fly to that person to do so. If there is a local congregation and that person would like to join, Myers is happy about that. If that person wants to be a full-fledged Living Manna member, that’s wonderful too. He will try to connect with the pastor of the local church (if any) for use of their baptismal facilities and if there are other interested candidates who are in the area or who would be willing to make the trip, several people can be baptized that Sabbath, with their membership going wherever they would like it to go.

While children’s programming isn’t available currently, there are certainly children participating with their families. But Living Manna is eager to move in the direction of providing all that is needed to all who want it. “The nice thing about this is we have so many people volunteering. It’s really neat because people say, ‘Hey, I did this many years of children’s ministry; are you open to looking at forming something?’ And I’m a visionary. I like it when people bring ideas and are capable of running with them,” Myers says.

The community-building aspect of Living Manna also serves to make members feel well cared for, as any congregation should. Patrice DeLisser recalls a trip to Atlanta this past summer, just a few months after Living Manna officially formed in the spring of 2022. “That Sabbath weekend I went to a local church, just making sure I stayed in the fellowship, and when I walked in, someone said, ‘Hey, Patrice!’”

“I said, ‘Happy Sabbath; nice to meet you!’ but [this woman] knew me from Living Manna. So now you take that to the next level, where people are seeing you on Altar Live, and you’ve got people from all around the world calling your name and you’ve never met them in person. It’s a welcoming feeling.”

From that feeling of belonging to a welcoming community where you could bump into a fellow

online brother or sister anywhere in the world, there comes a galvanizing of a strong flock of believers. And while technology is a key component, it’s really about the precious task of gathering God’s people together—regardless of where they come from. “Every single one of us is Living Manna church, because we carry God’s Word—the manna within our hearts,” says DeLisser.

#### WORTH IT

Groundbreaking endeavors usually have their share of hiccups, and for a digital church, technology issues are an important one. Myers preaches from a garage studio set up in his home. His Oakwood University son provided initial tech support, but that is an ongoing need. For any of us who have transitioned to Zoom work environments or streamed church services from around the world, we know how unintentional tech malfunctions can easily derail a good presentation. And yet Living Manna continues to grow and reach a world in need of the gospel—currently without a dedicated technical team. To Pastor Myers, churches of this nature existing in every conference are a no-brainer, as there is so much potential for soul winning to be harnessed.

In the end, churches forming entirely online is not only an option in the future but will meet a real and palpable need—something that has to happen if the Great Commission is to be fulfilled. Going into all the world? It’s happening right now—on the web. “I have members of Living

Manna who say they have never experienced fellowship in any of the churches they’ve been to,” says Myers. “I think there is a place for both models—[in-person and online]. But there are so many people we’ve talked to who say ‘I’m so glad you are online; I’m sick and shut in’ or ‘I had this bad experience in a church, and my kids refuse to go.’ So many people have been in one way or the other cast out from other churches who are not even Adventist, and they say, ‘You know what? I’m not going to church. It’s just me and God.’ But then they find us.”



**Wilona Karimabadi** is an assistant editor for *Adventist Review*.



# FAITHFUL THROUGH THE LENS

A digital  
content creator's  
innovative take on  
working for God

Faithfulness to that which is least," says Jasper Iturriaga, a multihyphenate digital content creator using his skills for the kingdom of God. "If you are faithful to that which is little, you'll be faithful to that which is much."

Iturriaga is talking about building a digital ministry from the ground up; about how a young man with a gift for photography and filmmaking, a small budget, and no fancy sponsorships serves a mission of packaging the image of an incredible God that appeals to a world hungry for Him.





"Pastors in Southeast Asia [as he was when he got started] don't have much," Iturriaga says. "We didn't know how to get a camera, but we had YouTube and a cell phone. So I thought, *Why not? What if I could still make films and take pictures with just my phone?* Because the whole concept was that if I'm faithful with it, God will increase it." While pastoring in Indonesia, Iturriaga started filming videos of different church activities and events. And then he started snapping pictures of the beautiful people and scenery he was surrounded with—which, truthfully, is plentiful in Southeast Asia. "Ellen White said that light increases only when you're faithful to the light that is received," he says.

### STARTING WITH A CAMERA

Born and raised in the Philippines, Iturriaga's love of cameras and photography began early. But like many children, the call of video games became much more attractive, and he forgot about his burgeoning hobby for a while. But the young pastor found it again in one of his first church assignments in Indonesia after graduating from Central Philippine Adventist College. The rest is digital, photographic history.

Social media, especially through platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, have created a powerful place for anyone with a penchant for content cre-

ation in this type of modality. No longer are the Ansel Adamses or Dorothea Langes of the world the only people whose images receive worldwide attention. Anyone—literally anyone—with skills can take a photo or film a video and connect with millions.

Iturriaga really resonates with what Ellen White says in *The Ministry of Healing*: "Grace is an attribute exercised toward undeserving human beings. We do not seek for it, but it was sent in search of us."\* As a very young man, he was healed from a brain tumor and committed his life to ministry as a result. But through testing the waters of digital ministry with his camera and cell phone, he soon found that the Lord was trying to tell him something he didn't expect to hear—something that would pull him out of the pulpit. And soon a calling to minister to the world in an innovative way beckoned. "The whole concept of photography for me was never to get clout or followers," he says. "It was really about how I could incorporate spirituality in media, through media ministry, to my work, and to reaching out to people."

With not much of a reference point for grassroots media ministry to look to, Iturriaga ventured out in faith. "I started making videos at church, showing them every Sabbath, and people would be blessed by them. Then came mission opportunities in the Philippines and Indonesia that I would make videos about," says Iturriaga. "I would go to all these places and make videos supporting ministries that had no exposure." It wasn't long before he realized this very exposure led to an audience ready and willing to donate to worthy projects. Using a drone, Iturriaga created a video of one of the most beautiful spots in the world—El Nido in Palawan, Philippines. After editing together this footage into a gorgeous compilation and popping it on Facebook, he woke up to a viral video with 1.4 million views. And people wanted to know more.

### THE POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA

After completely stepping away from full-time pastoral ministry a few years back, Iturriaga began working on such Adventist media projects as the Lineage programs (viewable on [Adventistreview.tv](http://Adventistreview.tv)) and began full-time traveling and creating, now serving Chattanooga, Tennessee-based ministry Child Impact International. "I always tell people attention is the new currency. Response is the new currency. How many people can we get

to respond to our project?” Through his travels and documentation in the jungles of the Philippines, Iturriaga was drawn to finding ways to help this remote population with no access to proper education for their children. “I had this crazy idea. Imagine what would happen if we had a social media-funded school,” he mused. So Iturriaga posted a plea on his Instagram stories and, in less than a week, reached a \$10,000 goal. The following week the goal was increased, and they were able to finish construction on this school—with 120 children enrolled. Thus, a school hidden deep in the jungle was born of funds 100 percent generated by social media, and last year they raised \$100,000 to further the work of this project.

One of the best parts of this type of content creation is that it reaches people far beyond the Seventh-day Adventist community—people who are eager to get involved. “We still have people who are unchurched selling NFTs, cryptocurrency, all this stuff, saying, ‘Hey, we want to be a part of this jungle school project.’” Big companies have been taking notice too. H&M sponsored water tanks, Procter & Gamble sent supplies, digital creation platform Canva took notice—all of this from Instagram. “Our Adventist message is not detached from the world,” Iturriaga adds. “I think people are attracted to it; it just needs to be packaged right.”

In many places well-meaning churches go about ministry in ways that are more odes to nostalgia as opposed to strategically primed to meet the needs of an audience not yet dreamed of. It’s as if we are more concerned with honoring tradition than banking everything on accomplishing something incredible for God. “God does not ordain methods. He ordains people to make methods,” says Iturriaga. “When people are filled with the Spirit of God and they make new methods, I really hope our churches embrace them.”

“God has given me more of an audience than if I had stayed [pastoring] in a church,” he says. “I’m a firm believer in the three angels’ messages, but I think they should be packaged in a way that will draw more people to them. Past methods don’t always need to be applied now—and that has been my passion.”

\*Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1905), p. 161.

**Wilona Karimabadi** is an assistant editor for Adventist Review Ministries.



## Jasper's Tips for Digital Ministry Mavericks

*Is there a way for you to create digital content that will contribute to building God's kingdom? Indeed, there is. But as you think of ways to harness your creative capabilities, take some time to read Jasper's thoughts on how to get started, find your voice, and meet a need.—Editors.*

- 1. Be faithful with whatever you have.** Faithfulness will create opportunities. Whatever you have in mind, be faithful to it, and God will increase it.
- 2. Ask yourself the question: “What breaks your heart?”** What breaks your heart is often what God has called you to do. What is it in the community that breaks my heart that I want to share and expose the world to? For me, it was the people of the jungles.
- 3. Don't be so focused on the audience.** Focus on the quality. And if you focus on whatever it is you do best, people will find the quality in your work. I never really wished for a large following; rather, it was always “What can I do best?”
- 4. Are you willing to do it for free?** It should never be the income, but always the outcome. It's not what we can gain, but what we can give. And be prepared to step outside of your comfort zone. If you are not willing to do that, you're just going to make mediocre work. You need to be willing.
- 5. It's important to be authentic.** You attract people that like your personality, so you will not attract everyone. And that's OK. We have this idea that everyone needs to watch our videos. But God has given each of us a unique personality, and He will also give us people who are attracted to our personality. What you create should look like you. Don't try to become like someone else.

# New Year's Resolutions Falling Flat?



Get a boost from  
**Lifestyle**  
Magazine  
[www.Lifestyle.org](http://www.Lifestyle.org)



## Healthy Living Is More Than Physical... It's Mind, Body & SOUL

- Find resources to keep you motivated and focused at [www.Lifestyle.org/life-blog](http://www.Lifestyle.org/life-blog)
- Sign up to receive weekly "Life Tips" from Lifestyle Magazine



Scan Here to Get Tips Now

# A STEP TOO FAR

I had walked into a café; men were sitting around a table. Their open Bibles caught my eye. They noticed me looking, and after a quick exchange, I mentioned that I was a Seventh-day Adventist. They said nothing; they didn't need to. Their body language uttered contempt.

Recently my wife and I discovered a Messianic Jewish ministry based in Israel. These are Jews who believe in Jesus. Sabbath after Sabbath I'd listen to the stories of how these Jews had found the Messiah (actually how He had found them), and at times I'd pace the floor, almost unable to take any more. These were such *Jewish* stories so parallel to my own that I could barely stand it.

I contacted them, willing to share my story. Silence. I tried again. Silence. And again—silence. Later a well-known Messianic Jew and my friend for decades, and who knows them, told me, “Cliff, I think Adventism is just a step too far.”

We've all been there, haven't we? You meet other Christians, but as soon as they discover you're an Adventist, things get cool, cold, perhaps even hostile.

I understand it. When approached by a Jehovah's Witness, or a Mormon (especially a Mormon), I respond to them the way others sometimes respond to us. Of course, we're not Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons, not even close—and so the reactions are often built on ignorance. And that is what frustrates me the most—the ignorance. Knowing what we believe and rejecting it is one thing (at least this leaves open the door to intelligent dialogue), but

to be scorned by someone who confuses us with Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons—that hurts.

Since joining in 1980, I've had, so far, an incredibly positive experience with the Adventist Church. More important, I believe that Seventh-day Adventists have more light, and more truth, than anyone anywhere else. And it is my love for this truth as it is in Jesus—and *this love alone*—that keeps me here. As I told some of my Adventist friends, “I have bought the whole package. And the thing is, I really believe it too.”

But still, this either subtle scorn or outright disdain has been the only consistent negative. I didn't like it in 1980. And I don't like it now. But I'd better get used to it. After all, what about when the mark of the beast comes? “If you have run with the footmen, and they have wearied you, then how can you contend with horses?” (Jer. 12:5).

The negativity is, really, an exceedingly small price to pay for the knowledge of truths so precious, so hopeful, so biblical, and (for me at least) so rational and sensible. Thus, claiming the righteousness of Jesus, “the righteousness of God” (Rom. 1:17) Himself, as my own, I press on in faith, praying that, by God's grace, I will be always “ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3:15). 📌

---

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

CLIFF'S  
EDGE  
CLIFFORD  
GOLDSTEIN



WE'VE ALL BEEN  
THERE, HAVEN'T WE?  
YOU MEET OTHER  
CHRISTIANS, BUT AS  
SOON AS THEY  
DISCOVER YOU'RE  
AN ADVENTIST,  
THINGS GET COOL,  
COLD, PERHAPS  
EVEN HOSTILE.

MORE  
SOCIAL,

*Avoiding the siren's song*

LESS  
SOCIAL





## JARED THURMON

**T**he siren song of the digital age is that we can reach more people with the gospel, far more efficiently, through technology than in person.

Just as a refresher, the siren song's origins are rooted in Greek mythology. The sirens were beautiful women depicted with human upper bodies and mermaid lower bodies. They sang their bewitching songs and lured sailors to their doom on rocks near the shore.

Temptation is a funny thing. It looks good. It sounds good. It smells good. But somehow, deep down, we all know it doesn't end well. We often realize that the moment we crash just as we are about to reach our intended destination. Though sirens are mythical, the application is real.

I have had the privilege over the past four years to learn the ins and outs of the wonderful world of the Internet and social media. This has included finding ways to get content to rank highly in organic searches, finding ways to get simple videos on biblical topics to get millions of views, and how paying to boost content can put it in front of millions of people.

I'm often tempted to listen to worldly sirens—just put the gospel on the Internet and let people hear it. The truth is powerful, and the rest will figure itself out. I've also learned that's laziness and not the calling of Matthew 24 to take the gospel into all the world.

### THE TANGIBLE ANSWER

The theory of the truth is a beautiful thing, but it's not what people want to know deep down. They want to know the same thing humanity, especially some of Israel's longing hearts, wanted to know 2,000 years ago. Is God good? Does He transform someone's life? Is love real or just a fantasy? To the heart cry of humanity, God sent His Son into the world to answer those questions. Jesus' life was the tangible, the practical, that so many needed.

Think about it: the Father could have easily looked down from heaven and declared with

thunder and lightning or even in kind, subtle tones that He was good and trustworthy and to have faith in Him. The earth and His people would have heard a beautiful message, and the rest would have been history.

But for some reason even the God of heaven, our heavenly Father, did not think that people just hearing or watching something was what they needed. He knew what humanity needed: a revelation of who God was. Someone who walked and dwelt among us. Jesus, the Desire of Nations, was the answer.

Being around Jesus, not just His existence on earth, was the answer. You may hear that someone is kind, but what about when they are treated rudely? The disciples got to witness Jesus in moments like that.

### MAINTAINING A SENSE OF FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship, connection, is an important aspect of a felt human need, and this is especially true in the digital age. Fellowship refers to a feeling of camaraderie and togetherness that people experience when they are part of a group. This sense of belonging can be fostered through various activities, such as shared interests, common goals, or simply spending time together.

Maintaining a sense of fellowship is even more important in the digital age, during which people are increasingly connected through technology. The shocking thing is that more social media makes people feel less social and ultimately lonelier.

With more ways to check in on each other, say "Hi," make jokes, and wish someone well, people are feeling more alone than ever! Not just lonelier. We have a crisis in our youth with anxiety and depression, largely related to how much time we are "on social" rather than being social.

I'm a huge believer that content is king. If we don't have the ideas and concepts that will get people's attention in this digital age, we are dead in the water. But just as important as the ideas we share is our connection with others in real life.

## Maintaining a sense of fellowship is even more important in the digital age, during which people are increasingly connected through technology.

The Adventist Church increased its reach on social media drastically during COVID. Yet talk to any of our conferences, particularly in North America, or go to any of our churches, and you may notice something. Many of the pews are empty—at least more than they were three years ago.

The messaging had the chance to get to people, but it's not the whole package. In an age in which social media use continues to climb, we should realize that something is wrong. We can't listen to the siren song that technology is able to supersede real human interaction. Why? Because the data is screaming that it's not.

### WHERE THE RUBBER MEETS THE ROAD

What people want to see is the regenerative power of the gospel in people's lives. This happens only in fellowship with one another. Ellen White makes this case. "Many take it for granted that they are Christians, simply because they subscribe to certain theological tenets. But they have not brought the truth into practical life. They have not believed and loved it; therefore they have not received the power and grace that come through sanctification of the truth. Men may profess faith in the truth; but if it does not make them sincere, kind, patient, forbearing, heavenly-minded, it is a curse to its possessors, and through their influence it is a curse to the world."<sup>1</sup>

Here's where this hits home. We all crave fellowship. But it's that elusive thing: the less you have, the less sure you are that you need or want it. But the more you have, the more you realize that you need and want it.

Hebrews 10:25 is a familiar verse for many. "And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near" (NLT).<sup>2</sup>

But how many of us are putting it into practice?

Though I'm a huge believer that we need to do all we can while we can to press together and fellowship in person, we don't have to be in the same room to experience fellowship. We can experience it over the phone if we make time for that phone call. We can experience it over Zoom if we have real dialogue and not just sermonizing. We can experience this via text. Some of my closest friends and I "fellowship" daily via text, and I feel loved by them and they by me, and yet we haven't been in the same room in years.

### THE CHALLENGE

I read a book last year about managing organizations in which some employees are remote and some are in person. I think the lesson can apply to us as members of the body of Christ. Some of us can be in-person often. Others, not so much. But one of the keys is doing it at least every quarter. There is something about individuals getting together in the same room and spending time together, eating together, asking each other how life is, and lowering our guard to enjoy some candid conversation.

Keeping our conversations solely in the digital space isn't ideal long-term. But while we are away, just like those amazing letters from Paul in the New Testament, fellowship and love can be conveyed until we meet again.

What the sirens don't often say is that technology can sometimes create a feeling of isolation and disconnection, even as it helps us connect with others. In the digital age, spending all our time in front of screens rather than engaging others personally can be tempting.

I want to challenge you to prioritize real-life connections. Like Jesus, be there for people. Be present. We are told there is only one effective method to reach people with the gospel: we mingle, sympathize, minister, win their confidence, and then—and only then—do we invite them to follow Jesus. ▀

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940), pp. 309, 310.

<sup>2</sup> Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

---

**Jared Thurmon** resides in north Georgia and loves finding new and innovative methods to present the gospel to people who have never heard it.

# MEET JESUS **HERE**

Research shows that students who attend an Adventist university are 7x more likely to form a deep relationship with Jesus\* than their peers at public universities.

At Southern Adventist University, we're committed to providing quality education in a Christ-centered environment.

**Come see for yourself what makes Southern special!**

Whether you schedule an in-person or virtual visit, you'll get a guided tour, time with academic faculty, and an admissions consultation while having the chance to ask any questions you want. We can't wait to meet you!

**[southern.edu/visit](https://southern.edu/visit)**



Power for Mind & Soul

\*For more research, visit [southern.edu/100reasons](https://southern.edu/100reasons).



Collegedale, TN





REVIEW & HERALD PUBLISHING ASSN.

[Mark 16:3.] They knew that they could not remove the stone, yet they urged their way forward. But, lo, the stone is rolled away, and the grave is empty. The women see an angel whose countenance is as the lightning. But this sight does not strike them to the earth as it did the soldiers. A voice as sweet as music says to them, "Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here; for he is risen as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead." [Matthew 28:5-7.]

## THE LORD IS RISEN INDEED

*Recounting some of the marvelous events surrounding Christ's resurrection*

**T**he women that stood by the cross of Christ waited and watched for the hours of the Sabbath to pass. On the first day of the week they rose very early, and made their way to the tomb, taking with them precious spices to anoint the Saviour's body.

They did not think about Christ rising from the dead. The sun of their hope had gone out in darkness, and night had settled down on their hearts. As they walked, they recounted Christ's works of mercy and His words of comfort. O if they had remembered His words, "I will see you again." [John 16:22.]

### A JOYFUL DECLARATION

Ignorant of what had happened, they drew near the sepulcher, saying as they went, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulcher?"

He is risen, he is risen! The women repeated the words again and again. No need now for the anointing spices. They remembered that when speaking of His death, Jesus had said that He would rise again. Their understanding was enlarged. They saw the deep and broad character of the Master's glory. Many things that had appeared incomprehensible to them were now clear.

What a day that was to the world! The Saviour was living, and not dead. But with a desperate effort to disprove the testimony of the guards, the priests affirmed that Christ's body had been stolen. In the terrible darkness that came on the earth as Christ hung on the cross, when nature was convulsed and the earth quaked, priests and rulers, the centurion and the hardened soldiers, received all the evidence they desired.

"When the centurion and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God." [Matthew

27:54.] But the priests were determined to reject the light, and everywhere the words were sounded, the body of Christ was stolen, the grave robbed.

### **A WONDERFUL REVELATION**

But the disciples, calm and joyful in the belief of the truth, declared that Christ had risen from the dead. The resurrection of Jesus was certain. On every hand the Sanhedrin was met by facts. The testimony borne by the risen saints contradicted the lie that the Roman guards had been hired to report.

Abundant evidence was given the disciples of the resurrection of their Lord. As two of them walked to Emmaus, Christ joined them, and beginning at Moses, He opened to them in all the prophets the things concerning Himself. In the upper chamber He revealed Himself to the eleven as one risen from the dead.

Unflinchingly the apostles bore evidence that early in the morning of the first day of the week they went to the sepulcher, but found it empty. They saw the shroud that had been wrapped about Christ's body and the napkin that was about His head, but they did not find their Lord's body. They bore evidence that the Lord had indeed risen, that His body had not seen corruption, that they had seen Him, and talked with Him. It meant everything for the disciples to bear this witness. It was a decided triumph, and made of none effect the falsehood of the Jewish priests. Christianity was established by evidence that could not be controverted. . . .

Christ's resurrection is placed in the very foreground of the foundation of the Christian church. This is a matter of the deepest importance. The future of the church militant depended on the fact that the same One that was crucified should come forth from the grave, proclaiming, "I am the resurrection and the life." [John 11:25.] The resurrection of Christ is to Christianity as the soul is to the body. It is the sum and substance of the truth of the inspired Word. Christ's life is the verification of the written Word.

### **MARY MAGDALENE**

Christ had risen. Peter and John came to the sepulcher on the morning of the first day of the week, and finding it empty, they returned to their home. Mary had followed them, and she remained beside the tomb. Her heart was full of sorrow, for she loved her Master. Had He not broken the

power of the demons . . . ? Satan had controlled her, but Christ had rebuked the evil spirits, and they had left her.

As she looked into the empty tomb, grief filled her heart. Looking in, she saw two angels, one at the head and the other at the foot of the place where Christ had lain. "Woman, why weepest thou?" they asked her. "Because they have taken away my Lord," she answered, "and I know not where they have laid him." [John 20:13.]

Then she turned away, even from the angels, thinking that she must find someone who could tell her what had been done with the body of Jesus. Another voice addressed her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" Through her tear-dimmed eyes, Mary saw the form of a man, and thinking that it was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if thou have borne him away, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." In His old familiar voice, Jesus said to her, "Mary." Now she knew that it was not a stranger addressing her, and turning, she saw before her a living Christ. Springing toward Him, as if to embrace His feet, she said, "Rabboni." But Christ raised His hand, saying, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." [Verses 15-17.]

These words are a refutation of the theory that Christ was with His Father the day that He pardoned the thief on the cross. He could not have been understood to mean that on that day the thief would be with Him in Paradise, for He did not go to Paradise Himself that day. "Verily I say unto thee today, Thou shalt be with me in Paradise." [Luke 23:43.]

While the death of Christ was a hellish triumph over His humanity, it was a victory so free and abundant that it encompassed the earth. On the cross the thief was promised a home with Christ in Paradise, from which Satan, because of his rebellion, was cast out. By pardoning the dying thief, what an evidence Christ gave that He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. He bore also our griefs and sorrows. That heart of divine-human love was exercised in a variety of ways for the relief of men, and all who come to Him will find life. ♣

---

Seventh-day Adventists believe that **Ellen G. White** (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry. This excerpt was taken from *Letters and Manuscripts*, volume 12, manuscript 94, 1897, p. 354.

# PRAYER AMID DOUBT

*You can go to Him  
no matter what.*

**DEBBIE HOWELL**

AMAURY GUTIERREZ / UNSPLASH

**S**ome say that pain can be a motivator. Pain can also cause us to question God. Whether it's the pain we are struggling with or the suffering we witness in the world around us, all of it can cause us to begin questioning God's love or even His existence.

I've been dealing with a lot of loss in my life during the past few years. Most recently I've had to face the loss of my mother. They say that with Alzheimer's disease, you lose a person twice. I've now experienced that reality.

How do we pray when we are grieving? Is it OK to have times when we doubt?

I believe that sometimes we put pressure on ourselves—or even worse, on others—with what we believe about prayer. For example, the belief that we must have perfect faith when we pray; that it's a sin to voice our doubts.

But it's OK to doubt. It's OK to question, for in that space there exists a real and legitimate place to encounter God. If anyone has ever tried to shame you because you wrestled with your beliefs, I'm truly sorry. But one thing I'm sure of is that God will never shame you for it.

God doesn't want us to go to church just because that's what we were taught to do. In that place of worship, He wants us to question and seek and discover Him for ourselves. And we do that through prayer—not just in church but in every part of our lives.

I've been a Christian my whole life and I'm now working as a pastor, but I still wrestle with God. When I feel loss and grief, I don't go to God with the words I think He wants to hear. I speak the truth of how heart-wrenching the pain is, and I use the pain to seek Him at a deeper level as I listen for His voice with greater intensity.

## **A PRAYER JOURNEY**

I'd like to use the rest of this article to take you on a prayer journey. I'm inviting you into my prayer "closet" to show you how my prayer life grows as I wrestle with the pain and questions that life brings.

The first thing I do is search for the light of truth in my darkness. God's Word has become the place I meet with Him in prayer. We all know that the harder life becomes, the more we struggle with what to pray about. I believe that's one of the reasons God gave us His Word. It teaches us how to pray.

Here's a scripture/prayer that I've held on to for the past three years. It's given me hope and kept me from getting stuck in a place of doubt and despair.

*"Do not gloat at my fate, my enemy; although I am down now, I will rise up.*

Although I am in darkness now, the Eternal One will be my light” (Micah 7:8, Voice).<sup>1</sup>

As I find powerful scriptures like this one, I hold on to them throughout the day. Whether I write it in a journal or put it on my phone, I take moments throughout my day to read it out loud and make it my prayer.

The other thing I do that brings me to a deeper place of prayer is listen to praise music while I’m praying God’s Word.

I want to encourage you to practice this right now. Type out or write down the scripture above and read it as you listen to your favorite worship music.

Worship and prayer invites God into our lives. He has always been faithful to lead me forward during the darkest of times, even as I’m waiting for Him to answer the cry of my heart. And as I look back on the past three years of my life, I remember moments of pain I’ve never experienced before; but more than that, I see the unbelievable ways that God has opened doors for me personally and spiritually.

My struggle led me to a greater revelation of Him. And your struggles can do that too.

We need Christians who will struggle, dig deeper, and listen for the almighty voice of God! We can learn from the giants of faith, such as Martin Luther. His doubts and questions were a huge part of that desperately needed Great Awakening.

Some of my deepest prayers occur when I meditate on God’s Word over and over. I love to put my name in the scriptures and imagine God speaking His Word to me, personally. Here is one that I wrote in my journal and have gone back to again and again.

“Debbie, I will guide you forward and repay you with comfort, giving your place of mourning the language of praise” (see Isa. 57:18, TPT).<sup>2</sup>

Take a few minutes to pray this scripture as you put your name in it. While you read it, listen to some praise music.

Prayer is meant to be a beautiful journey of revelation and healing. Praying God’s Word helps us to speak with Him from a higher place of wisdom, love, and grace. Worship centers our lives on Him as we struggle with doubt or fear.

I think that another part of prayer that can be difficult is our being made to feel as if we have to be in a certain place spiritually before we can honestly pray to God. If you remember only one thing from this article, let it be this—if shame is keeping

**But it’s OK to doubt. It’s OK to question, for in that space there exists a real and legitimate place to encounter God.**

you from praying, know that your shame is not from God. God will convict us and lead us to grace and repentance, while shame keeps us stuck.

God calls us to pray because He loves us and He wants to set us free from the things that bring us shame. We can pray to God any time, from any place, so don’t let other people or your thoughts make you think that you aren’t good enough to pray.

To think that someone is not good enough to pray is like holding a lifebuoy on a boat while watching someone who is drowning. Could they ever be drowning “too much” to need the lifebuoy thrown to them? Should we expect them to improve their swimming skills before they are good enough to be rescued?

The most powerful words we can pray are God’s words. And when we choose to pray *from the place of doubt and loss*, we will receive a greater revelation of God.

My testimony is that *in the middle of doubt and pain*, we can encounter the truth of God’s glory. His Word is full of incredible promises that become a reality to those who aren’t afraid to wrestle and dig deeper.

Make this scripture your own prayer. “There’s a private place reserved for the lovers of Yahweh, where they sit near him and receive the revelation-secrets of his promises” (Ps. 25:14, TPT). I pray that you will be led to a higher place of worship and an ever-deepening revelation of God as we come before God in this beautiful place called prayer. 🍀

<sup>1</sup> Scripture quotations credited to Voice are taken from *The Voice Bible*. Copyright © 2012 Thomas Nelson, Inc. *The Voice* translation © 2012 Ecclesia Bible Society. All rights reserved.

<sup>2</sup> Scripture quotations marked TPT are from *The Passion Translation*. Copyright © 2017, 2018, 2020 by Passion Fire & Ministries, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. [ThePassionTranslation.com](http://ThePassionTranslation.com).

**Debbie Howell** is currently working with the Beltsville Seventh-day Adventist Church pastoral team in Maryland as their online pastor. She also recently stepped in as interim pastor for their Tech Road campus.



# AT ANY COST

*The prospect of “perishing” was final in effect.*

**MARTIN MATO**

Furious black billows of smoke rose through the dry, dusty air, distant and ominous. We knew only too well what that meant. There had been statewide tension for weeks between two prominent tribes in Kaduna State, Nigeria. A few weeks earlier there had been bloodshed in villages not far from the state’s capital city (also called Kaduna), and following that, there had been widespread rumors that the antagonistic faction planned on

bringing the fight to the city. The smoke made it frighteningly clear that they had made good on their threat.

The city was far from where my family lived (more than six miles [10 kilometers]), and we would be safe if we stayed home. The rising panic within us was not for ourselves, but for my younger brother and sister who had gone to school that morning, far away on the other side of town. That town had now become a cluster of mini war

JASON YANG / LIGHTSTOCK



zones. We worried, too, for my father, who had told us almost casually before he left three or four hours earlier that he was going to “pick them up.”

The usual amount of time it took to “pick them up” passed. Nothing happened. Daddy didn’t return. We waited and waited. Suddenly we saw our little red car turn a nearby corner and drive in our direction. With amazement and joy we watched the car approach, and when it stopped, out came my father, my brother and sister, and four soldiers, all unharmed. All seven of them had somehow managed to cram themselves into that tiny two-door sedan.

I will never forget the words, spoken in Hausa, of the first soldier that stepped out: “*Baban ku nan, shi ma soldier ne.*” Translated into English, what he said meant: “Your dad, too, is a soldier.” Then he proceeded to tell us of how my dad had arrived at a soldier-erected roadblock, of how they had tried to prevent him from going farther by explaining that there were many dangerous places between where they were and where he wanted to go, and of how he had replied, “My children are out there. If you will help me, join me. If not, give me way. I must go.”

### **ANOTHER RESCUE**

It was about 2,000 years ago. The moon was full that night. The sky was clear. If you didn’t mind straining your eyes a little, you could read off a scroll in the bright moonlight. The garden was quiet as usual, and the four individuals in it were no strangers to its peaceful groves.

The difference that night was that the Leader of the company wasn’t Himself, not by a far cry. He was clearly burdened. He had walked to the garden as one trying not to buckle under a heavy weight. He was sweating profusely, although the weather was mild. At this moment He was praying, not in His usual posture, but prostrated facedown, His hands clutching the ground with desperation. His companions lay fast asleep just a little distance away.

But even if they had been awake and could see the great drops of blood on His forehead and hear His unintelligible moans, they surely would not be able to fathom the magnitude of what was going on. They wouldn’t have been able to see that His Father had all but withdrawn every token of His presence from their agonizing Leader. They wouldn’t have been able to comprehend how

## Nothing would deter His laser-like focus on ransoming the inhabitants of this speck of a planet.

alone He felt or feel the crushing weight of the eternal decision that was before Him.

The issues were clear to the Sin-bearer Himself, though. He knew that He could call off the rescue mission and just go back home, home to the adoration of thousands and thousands of angels and all the unfallen beings on countless planets. He could justly leave the ungrateful humans to their fate, save Himself from what looked like certain and eternal death, and be perfectly right in doing so.

But “He sees that the transgressors of the law, if left to themselves, must perish. He sees the helplessness of man. He sees the power of sin. The woes and lamentations of a doomed world rise before Him. He beholds its impending fate, and His decision is made. He will save man at any cost to Himself. He accepts His baptism of blood, that through Him perishing millions may gain everlasting life.”<sup>1</sup>

### **FACING THE UNKNOWN**

The prospect of “perishing” was final in effect. It didn’t look to Him as though He would “rise again on the third day,” as He Himself had said with assurance in vastly different circumstances. What happened that night was that the Creator of the universe saw that we would be hopelessly lost if we were left to ourselves, and decided to die in our place “at any cost” to Himself.

Even if His Father rejected Him forever for taking my place, as vile and wretched as I am, He would do it. Even if His mighty throne was to be forever empty so that salvation and sanctification would be sure for the fraction of the human race that would accept His sacrifice on their behalf, He would do it. Whatever the cost might be, if it saved us, He was ready to pay it. This was the tenor of His whole life on earth, and now it was revealed for the whole universe to see.



In the hours that followed, one disgraceful scene after another took place in quick succession, calculated to try the Lord to the utmost, but His mind was made up, and He didn't change it to the bitter end. A mob handled the Prince of Peace as if He were a common criminal. A late-night court that lacked even a semblance of justice tried and condemned the Judge of all the earth. Ignorant Roman soldiers spat on and laughed at heaven's finest Soldier. A cowardly ruler questioned the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Another vile, murderous despot commanded "the Resurrection and the Life" to work a miracle. Demons in human form initiated and swelled the cry to crucify Michael, the Archangel. But nothing would deter His laser-like focus on ransoming the inhabitants of this speck of a planet.

Even as He hung upon the cross, Satan with his fierce temptations wrung the heart of the despised and rejected Man of sorrows. "The Saviour 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."<sup>2</sup>

A song I grew up loving is wrong. He didn't tell the soldiers to "go ahead, drive the nails through My hands," assured that He would "rise again." He more likely told them to "go ahead, drive the nails through My hands," for by this many would be saved. "Maybe not I myself, but many."

Elder Tambaya Mato is a bent-over septuagenarian now, and the love that moved him to risk his life to save his two children many years ago lives in our minds as a testimony of fatherly love. But as high as the infinite is above the finite, so high is the Savior's love for humanity above an earthly father's love for his children. Tongue cannot explain, nor can human minds fully comprehend, His sacrifice, but the Infinite One ordained and foretold it; and as if to make sure that we would not forget it this side of heaven, He made the Savior's very name on earth a promise. This was He that the angel announced would "save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940), p. 690.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 753.

---

**Martin Mato** lives in Kaduna City, Nigeria, where he works as a Linux administrator. He has a wife and two children.

# COMBATING A CONSPIRACY

**A**lmost everyone in twenty-first-century America affirms the importance of education. Although there are issues and controversies regarding best practices in this discipline, no one aims to be a champion of ignorance. A particular conspiracy of concern ever on the rise is racism, a scourge buried deep in the psyche of many Americans and exacerbated when socialized motives mingle with political opportunity.

This cultural conspiracy is a manifestation of a symptom of heightened fear because of perceived danger, but the bottom line is this ulcer is activated by sin in the heart and life of its proponents. Exodus 1:8-13 says: "Then a new king, [or Pharaoh,] to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt. 'Look,' he said to his people, 'the Israelites have become far too numerous for us. Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us, and leave the country.' So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh. But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites and worked them ruthlessly" (NIV).

As in Egypt then, cultural conspiracies today are often perpetuated by powerful people motivated by racialized biases. Born in 1875, Carter Godwin Woodson was the son of freed slaves and a strong supporter of education, particularly for African Americans. He achieved four degrees: a Bachelor of Arts, two master's degrees, and a Ph.D. from Harvard (where he became only the second African American to earn a Ph.D., after W.E.B. DuBois). He is recognized as the father of African

American history and what is annually celebrated as Black History Month. Woodson was motivated by a lifelong concern that there was an ever-increasing cultural conspiracy in American education, where white-dominated writers of history textbooks and the teachers who used them were deliberately ignoring and suppressing aspects of African American history.

So disturbed was he about this that in 1826 he endeavored to break through such destructive mind control by declaring the second week of February Negro History Week. Woodson endeavored to educate all Americans—white and black—to recognize the overlooked achievements of African Americans. Sixty years later, in 1986, what Woodson started as an annual weeklong celebration of African American history each February was designated by Congress as National Black (Afro-American) History Month.

Though we've come a long way, we still have a long way to go. For there remain many barriers and walls built by systemic injustice and racism in our society. As Amos 5:24 declares: "Let justice roll down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream." To accomplish such a noble social agenda, we must preach and teach to each generation till Christ comes to take us home.

In the Bible, God has laid out spiritual laws that preserve the dignity of all human beings, and we must be persistent in practicing them so that the next generation can learn. This, added to rigorous academic education, will increase awareness and positively change the world for Christ's sake. ♣

---

**Hyveth Williams** is director of the Doctor of Ministry program and professor of Homiletics at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary.

**CURE FOR THE  
COMMON LIFE**  
HYVETH  
WILLIAMS



**THOUGH WE'VE  
COME A LONG WAY,  
WE STILL HAVE A  
LONG WAY TO GO.**

# WHEN THE CLOUD MOVES

*God is eager  
to be close to us.*



GERALD A. KLINGBEIL

The story is told of a young woman who tragically lost her eyesight in an accident. After months of rehabilitation, it became clear that she would never be able to see again. She was placed on a waiting list to receive a seeing-eye dog trained to give her back some of the freedoms she had lost and enable her to live an independent life.

After months of waiting and training, the dog and new owner met and connected well. Soon they became an inseparable team. The young woman restarted her career and was able to live a “normal” life. One evening, after she heard the familiar “bling” sound announcing the arrival of the elevator and the opening of the door to take her from her eleventh-floor office to the entrance area of her building, she was taken aback when her dog did not start moving. Though she prodded her dog using the guide frame, he would not move. She spoke to him firmly and commanded him to move forward, but he did not move. Exasperated, she started to push toward the open elevator door, trying to avoid having to wait more time for the next one. In response, her dog moved quickly right in front of her and pushed back against her with all his might. Suddenly a coworker shouted a warning to the young woman. The elevator door was open—but there was no elevator waiting in the gaping black hole.

#### BY CLOUD AND BY FIRE

We often wonder about God’s leadings in our lives. We may struggle to hear His voice. We may doubt

that what we heard *was* His voice. Sometimes we just don’t like what we’re hearing, and stop moving.

God knows the complexity of our lives—after all, Jesus was one of us—and He also knows how we often vacillate in our lives. That’s why He is eager to engage with us—even when we are wondering which direction we should take or when we have wandered astray. His goodness, mercy, and compassion help us realize that He wants only our best. As our Creator and our Redeemer He wants to remind us that His thoughts are good thoughts toward us (Jer. 29:11).

The story of Israel’s departure from Egypt and their journey to the Promised Land offers us many lessons of how God leads and how He yearns to be part of the equation of our lives. The cloud and the pillar of fire leading Israel through the wilderness offer us examples of visible divine communication. Let’s revisit some of these important moments in Israel’s history that may stir our own memories as we remember God’s leadings in our lives.

#### MOVING—AND BEING MOVED

Israel’s exodus from Egypt following the tenth plague (or “sign”) and Pharaoh’s surrender to YHWH’s lordship and power represents an important moment in the history of God’s people. Freedom and the Promised Land are just around the corner. But before reaching home, they will have to cross a wilderness, for God doesn’t take them the direct route “by way of the land of the Philistines” (Ex. 13:17), but by the way of the wilderness (verse 18).

God leads them all the way—and He chooses visible manifestations of a pillar of cloud (during the day) and a pillar of fire (during the night) to remind them that He is at the helm and close by. Exodus 13:21 introduces us to the specifics of God’s leading. “And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night.” Intriguingly, between the departure notice from Egypt (Ex. 12:31-39) and the description of the wilderness way (Ex. 13:17-22) the biblical text inserts two significant elements: the prescription of two important festivals associated with the Exodus (namely, the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread [Ex. 12:43-13:10]) and the law of the firstborn (Ex. 13:11-16), one of the key principles of communal living that is rooted in the Exodus experience. Both the festivals and the firstborn principle are intended to remind future generations of this crucial event.



JORDAN CHRISTIAN / UNSPLASH

Note to self: if we forget God’s past leadings, we become anchorless and directionless—we start wandering about without a way to orient ourselves.

### THE PILLAR OF CLOUD AND THE PILLAR OF FIRE

The Hebrew phrases *‘ammud ‘anan*, “a pillar of cloud,” and *‘ammud ‘esh*, “a pillar of fire,” do not always appear in all texts describing God’s leading of Israel. Often the biblical text uses abbreviations. In Exodus 40:38 it has contracted to “the cloud of YHWH” and “a fire.” In Numbers 9:15-23 it has morphed into *he‘anan*, “the cloud” (verses 15, 16). The cloud’s importance can be seen by its repeated use in Numbers 9. The term appears 11 times in only nine verses (verses 15, 16, 17 [2x], 18, 19, 20, 21 [3x], 22). Repetition points to importance—also in biblical texts.

Readers of the Torah will remember that “the cloud” that filled the tabernacle during its inauguration is twice set in parallelism with “the glory of YHWH” (Ex. 40:34, 35; cf. Ex. 16:10). The close association of cloud and fire with YHWH’s glory is a good illustration for God’s immanence and His transcendence, for God is present in His sanctuary. In fact, through the cloud He “settles” (or “tents,” using the Hebrew *shakan*, the root that is also underlying the noun *mishkan*, “tabernacle”) in the camp (Num. 9:17, 18, 22).

The New Testament uses the concept of “tenting” to describe the incarnation of Christ (John 1:14) and underlines the Old Testament notion of divine presence in the sanctuary/temple. Jesus not only claims to be the “cornerstone” of the temple (Mark 12:10; Matt. 21:42); He uses the temple in reference to Himself in an exchange with the Jewish leaders (John 2:19-21). As noted by New Testament scholar Gregory Beale, Jesus essentially takes over the function of the temple by His ministry and sacrifice.<sup>1</sup>

The divine presence is witnessed by not only the priests and Levites, the cultic professionals, in the wilderness sanctuary, but by all people with a clear view toward the tabernacle. At the same time, however, the amorphous and “intangible” nature of a cloud reminds us that God is always the completely Other, who cannot be fully grasped by His creation and who is distinct from all other gods (Ex. 15:11).

When Israel camped around Mount Sinai, God provided a veritable light-and-sound show to communicate His presence to them. The cloud covering the top of the mountain is associated with God’s appearing or theophany. Sinai was the place Israel received the law and committed formally to the covenant requirements (Ex. 24:16; cf. verses 7, 8). The visible means of God’s leadership of Israel is really forward-looking—to the Promised Land, to saving His people from themselves, and to becom-

ing a light for the nations. The distinct cloud imageries used in the Pentateuch highlight God's omnipresence, as noted by Old Testament scholar Walter A Maier III: "The pillar of cloud, the mountain cloud, and the atonement-cover cloud reminded the Israelites that God could be at different locations at the same time. They could speak of Yahweh's presence being localized but also confess that Yahweh was omnipresent."<sup>2</sup>

### **FROM SIGNS AND WONDERS TO CLOUD AND FIRE**

Some have noted that God's leading through cloud and fire following the more dramatic divine manifestations during the Exodus (involving the 10 signs and wonders), through the parting of the sea, and the impressive multimedia production from Mount Sinai suggest a "downshift" from power to presence.<sup>3</sup> Instead of a downshift, however, it may be better to think of a "normalization" of God's leading. God's power is clearly visible through the remainder of the wilderness journey as He supplies all of Israel's needs—physical, spiritual, emotional—even in the midst of repeated rebellion and distrust (Num. 11-14). He hasn't suddenly walked away from His people, even though at times there would be good reasons. Instead, His presence is felt in more subtle ways. "God is equally present, though in subtler form, in the people's journey under the guidance of clouds," argues Carey Walsh. "This theophanic shift offers a theology of hope, not in miracles or divine power, but in the efficacy of worship, where God's presence is still encountered."<sup>4</sup>

Through the sanctuary Israel was able to observe God and approach Him daily. And while we don't look at a physical wilderness sanctuary

**God's power is clearly visible through the remainder of the wilderness journey as He supplies all of Israel's needs—physical, spiritual, emotional—even in the midst of repeated rebellion and distrust.**

or an impressive church building covered in a cloud, we are told that we can find Him when we gather together—two or three of us—in His name. Worship is the key to enter into His presence wherever we are because we realize our needs and focus on our High Priest, who understands us and ministers on our behalf.

### **AND THEN IT MOVED**

Israel experienced God's constant protection and presence visibly when they looked to the sanctuary or followed the pillar of cloud or the pillar of fire when it moved. During the day it offered protection from the scorching sun. At night it dispelled the darkness and gave hope and warmth.

When God moves, we'd better follow. Israel at its best followed the cloud and the pillar of fire wherever it led them. At times they got distracted and murmured and rebelled, but they always returned to the faithful cloud and the warm, glowing fire.

How do we respond to God's leading in our lives? How closely do we follow? How clearly do we see? How fully do we trust Him?

Thirty-eight years ago God called me to ministry—somewhere high up in the Swiss Alps—in the midst of a terrible storm amid thunder and lightning.<sup>5</sup> His call was unmistakable. Yet when I responded to that call, I couldn't always see around the corner God's leading for me and, later, my family. When I said yes to His call, I thought of pastoring a local congregation somewhere in Germany. God, however, had other plans. They were bigger and broader, yet also at times scarier. I had to travel across an ocean and an entire continent to find the love of my life. When Chantal and I got married in November 1990, we never imagined that we would serve around the world. We both knew ourselves called to ministry, but what would that ministry look like? Where was the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire that we could follow?

We believed in the principle of open and closed doors and moved forward when a door opened unexpectedly. We sent out our résumés and finished our education. We listened to

## Worship is the key to enter into His presence wherever we are because we realize our needs and focus on our High Priest, who understands us and ministers on our behalf.

counsel and spoke with people who had clearly followed the cloud. We wanted to be open to God's leading and make ourselves available.

We waited for what felt like a long time (most likely about six months)—and then, in the middle of the night, we received a fax with an invitation to serve on the other side of the world. We knew little about Peru, but after many discussions, much prayer, and putting out our fleece, we decided to go.

Looking back, I now realize that this was the most transformational decision of our lives. We had seen the cloud; we had looked at the fire, and decided to follow. We immersed ourselves into a new culture. We learned a new language from scratch. We experienced hardship and cried our tears—and yet we never doubted the cloud or the pillar of fire. God had called us. God had guided us. God was working—even if His workings were veiled at times and not always immediately recognizable.

After six years of teaching in Peru, we followed the cloud to Argentina and spent five important years at River Plate Adventist University. Our three daughters were born in South America and, like us, had become global citizens. I'll never forget the day I saw them playing "airport security" at home using a wooden spoon as a portable metal-detecting wand.

From Argentina we followed the cloud to the Philippines and spent four wonderful years on the campus of the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS). This was a place we could grow and expand, together with our children and as a family. It was also a place where we recognized that we serve a global church.

### NEW VISTAS

The call to serve at the *Adventist Review* came unexpectedly. We had just arrived at AIAS when

I received the first feeler—and we felt that this was neither cloud nor fire. We were in the process of adapting culturally from a Spanish-speaking country to an English-speaking campus.

Two and a half years later the call came again—and this time we accepted after lots of prayer and hours of seeking to hear God's gentle voice. It wasn't an easy decision. We loved raising our children in an environment that didn't suffer from plenty and the drive for always more. The transition wasn't always easy, but we saw God's leading in the big and small things—and moved forward.

Fourteen years later we see the cloud move again. Before our move to the United States we had never lived in one home for 14 years; we had never worked at one place for 14 years. But we clearly heard the call to care for family and decided to dare to jump. "Transitions are often challenging," I wrote in my first editorial in the *Adventist Review* in 2009.<sup>6</sup> That's still true today. But when we follow the cloud, when we track the fire, we know ourselves to be in the right place.

The past months have been full of goodbyes and change. Selling a home, furniture, cars; sifting through what has been accumulated over 14 years; saying goodbye to wonderful neighbors, dear colleagues, and a special home congregation is not for the faint-hearted. It's heart work and involves difficult decisions and sometimes painful moments. Yet amid all this we have seen the cloud and the fire. And like ancient Israel, we trust that He who never sleeps nor slumbers will continue to walk ahead of us and use us to bless people in another part of His world. We trust Him in that—and we follow. 🍀

<sup>1</sup> Gregory K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), pp. 632, 633.

<sup>2</sup> Walter A. Maier III, "The Divine Presence Within the Cloud," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 79 (2015): 101, 102.

<sup>3</sup> See Carey Ellen Walsh, "Where Did God Go? Theophanic Shift in Exodus," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 43 (2013): 115-123.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>5</sup> You can read the full story in Gerald A. Klingbeil, "Life Maps: Remembering the Reality of God's Call," *Adventist World*, July 2013, pp. 24-27, at <https://www.adventistworld.org/nad-july-2013/>.

<sup>6</sup> Gerald A. Klingbeil, "Transitions," *Adventist Review*, May 28, 2009, p. 6.

**Gerald A. Klingbeil** serves as an associate editor of *Adventist Review* and is trying to follow the cloud wherever it leads.





**20**  
YEARS  
**SHARING  
HOPE**  
FOR ETERNITY  
2003-2023

# Start the new year with Hope Channel!

Sharing God's good news for a  
better life today and for eternity!



Scan here to learn more about  
Hope Channel and our  
upcoming new programs,  
events, and much more!

**HopeTV.org**





# WHISTLEBLOWING CHRISTIANS

*We too are called to  
a prophetic voice.*

## MERLE POIRIER

**T**oday they might be called whistleblowers. Whistleblowers, by definition, tell the right information to the right people. More specifically, the information they tell is generally evidence of wrongdoing. Often seen as troublemakers, tattletales, or squealers, whistleblowers often require a strong amount of moral fortitude before stepping forward with truth. While the definition might be stretched a bit when applied to Bible prophets, one can be sure that those called to prophetic ministry could relate.

The Bible has a variety of prophets. Ezekiel was called to do strange things. Isaiah preached a pattern of judgment followed by hope followed by judgment that was sometimes confusing. Jonah, of course, didn't

appreciate his call, because the message wasn't one he wanted to deliver. Daniel dreamed unusual dreams and, for the most part, remained safe in his role as a prophetic messenger. And then there was Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, one of the few that actually experienced the results of his predictions. His counterintuitive message of "surrender and you will be saved" didn't sit well with the leadership or the people.

Roger Boisjoly was a rocket engineer for Morton Thiokol, a NASA contractor. In 1985 Boisjoly discovered that if exposed to unusually cold conditions, the O-ring seal of the space shuttle could fail. O-rings were elastic seals at the joints of the booster rockets. They were small and seemingly insignificant, but their job was important. The O-rings sealed the area so that the gases from the fuel and the fire from the boosters remained separate. Alarmed, Boisjoly immediately wrote a memo to the vice president of engineering: "It is my honest and very real fear that if we do not take immediate action to dedicate a team to solve the problem . . . then we stand in jeopardy of losing the flight along with all the launchpad facilities."<sup>1</sup> In essence, he said that if the seals failed, the shuttle would explode. But nothing was done, and no one heeded the warning.

One wouldn't think cold temperatures would be a problem in Florida, but the forecast for the morning of January 28, 1986, the day the *Challenger* would launch, predicted a temperature potentially as low as 30°F. A space shuttle had never lifted off in temperatures that low. For hours Boisjoly and three colleagues fought and argued to delay the liftoff. But NASA overruled the engineers. The launch would go as planned.

The atmosphere in the room in which the engineers watched the liftoff was tense. They were fairly confident the space shuttle would explode on the launchpad as they predicted. When it lifted off, there was audible relief. But 73 seconds later the *Challenger* exploded in the air, killing all onboard, including Christa McAuliffe, a New Hampshire schoolteacher.

The *Challenger* explosion is one of the memorable events in American history, the kind one can remember exactly where they were when it hap-

pened. In a marketing move CNN, then a relatively obscure cable network, decided to livestream the liftoff. Many, including classrooms of children, watched the event unfold in real time on their television screens. "I'm very angry that nobody listened," Boisjoly told an NPR reporter in 1987. "We were talking to the right people who had the power to stop that launch."<sup>2</sup>

Like Boisjoly, Jeremiah urged Judah to return to God or face destruction. For 40 years he preached his salvific message, but they turned away. At one point the king listened, but like the Thiokol managers, he didn't have the moral courage to stand against public opinion. When no one listened to Boisjoly, the *Challenger* exploded. When no one listened to Jeremiah, Jerusalem was destroyed.

Roger Boisjoly was never the same after the *Challenger* accident. Although he did all he could to stop the launch, he felt responsible for the disaster. He initially spoke anonymously to the press of what happened behind the scenes, and eventually went public. An esteemed engineer, he was now shunned and belittled by colleagues, sending him into deep depression. He ultimately found peace by spending the rest of his life visiting engineering schools and impressing upon students the importance of following the data and making wise, even courageous, decisions in spite of the circumstances.

We may not be called to be prophets, but we are called to deliver a message. Our message is as urgent as the one given NASA officials. We can persistently seek ways to sound an alarm even if no one appears to listen. We know with certainty that the "O-ring" for this planet has failed, sending it toward eventual destruction. But there is an Engineer who saves. Let's recommit ourselves to the prophetic voice—the voice that calls to the people, "Surrender to Him and live." 📌

<sup>1</sup> [www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1986/02/26/thiokol-engineers-tell-of-being-overruled/3627b12c-e28f-4461-b20e-ca4e21be144c/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1986/02/26/thiokol-engineers-tell-of-being-overruled/3627b12c-e28f-4461-b20e-ca4e21be144c/)

<sup>2</sup> [www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2012/02/06/146490064/remembering-roger-boisjoly-he-tried-to-stop-shuttle-challenger-launch](http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2012/02/06/146490064/remembering-roger-boisjoly-he-tried-to-stop-shuttle-challenger-launch)

---

**Merle Poirier** is the operations manager for *Adventist Review*. She also writes a weekly devotion ([www.startingwithjesus.com/Renew/](http://www.startingwithjesus.com/Renew/)), from which this thought was taken.

# BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR . . .

*Toddlers aren't the  
best decision-makers.*



## KAY D. RIZZO

**B**e careful what you wish for," or, grammatically correct, "Be careful for what you wish." Either way, we've all half-jokingly said it. And if one lives long enough, we've experienced it as well.

Weeks before the Schaghticoke County Fair, I campaigned to ride on a "real horsey" at the fair. I recall scrambling out of the family car onto the fairgrounds parking lot. I was so excited. Daddy promised I could ride on a real horsey.

At the horse corral I stared in horror at the size of the animals plodding around in circles with children seated on their backs. My father bought a ticket and lifted me onto one of the mangy creatures. I screamed in terror. "No! No!" I flung my arms around my dad's surprised neck.

"Kay, what's wrong?"

"No! No!" I buried my face in his neck. "I want to ride a horsey!"

"But these *are* the horses." My mother tried to pry my arms from my dad's neck, but I clung to him with all the strength of a frightened 5-year-old.

"No! No!" I screamed. "I want to ride a horsey!"

As my father lowered me to the ground, he patiently inquired, "If these horses aren't what you had in mind, can you show me the ones you're talking about?"

Wiping muddy tears from my cheeks, I took his hand and led him to the twirling carousel. "Those horseys. I want to ride those horseys!"

### **SAME IDEA, DIFFERENT STORY, LESSONS LEARNED**

Be careful what you wish for . . . Years later my husband interviewed for a job in a seaside town—a beautiful place to live. While we waited for the committee's decision, we walked along the beach and asked God to open the job to us. Like 5-year-olds we begged, cajoled, kicked, and fussed. He granted our wish. In less than a year the position dissolved, and we were desperate to know what to do next. Looking back, I see the troublous year as a monumental learning experience.

Be careful what you wish for . . . So, when our younger daughter, her husband, and our two grandsons moved four hours away, Richard and my first instincts were "Let's move too." But try as we might to sell our house, we couldn't. This time, remembering our earlier fiasco, we resisted the urge to play the "toddler game," and instead prayed through our tears, "Thy will, not our will. Your way, not ours, Lord."

One year passed, two, three, five; we made the long drive north for visits. We couldn't understand why God didn't move us as we'd asked, until the bottom fell out of the housing market. Homes that were selling for \$450,000 dropped more than half their value. Jobs dried up. If God had granted us our wish, we would have been so upside down in house payments that we would have lost our home and our peace of mind.

Psalm 37:4 says: "Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart." God truly knows our hearts. His promise to grant us the desires of our hearts goes beyond our day-to-day whims to the inner core of our beings. God's wisdom is greater than ours. Like a 5-year-old wanting to "ride the horsey," we don't always know what we want. What looks good or sounds good may not be so good. We see snapshots of our lives, while God views the entire video. So be careful what you wish for. He does know what's right for you. 📌

---

**Kay D. Rizzo**, who passed away June 22, 2022, was a prolific author, writing more than 50 books and many articles, including for the *Adventist Review*. This unpublished reflection was found in our archive. We honor her contribution to ministry with this last publication.

# THE COLOR OF LOVE

---

*Reflecting God's love  
to people who deserve  
justice and punishment*





## DOUGLAS JACOBS

**W**e pulled up to a stop sign behind a large black SUV. Suddenly the driver jumped out. I thought he was rushing to help someone in need until a woman opened the passenger door shouting, “Come back!” When the man kept walking, she screamed, “I hate you!”

As we pulled around the still-running SUV and turned right onto the cross street, the man strode down the sidewalk, ignoring both the pleas and abuse hurled at him by the woman.

My wife, Lanell, and I drove away deeply disturbed by the couple’s anger. Why were they so angry that he could abandon her at a stop sign, that she could stand on a city street corner shouting curses at the man she once must have loved?

## ANGER AT INJUSTICE

It’s easy to say: “Thank God, I’m not like that couple!” But how often do we get angry at:

- » The driver who darts into the parking space we’ve been waiting for.
- » Coworkers who talk nice to our face but spread lies behind our back.
- » A classmate who cheated on an exam and received a better grade than we did.
- » Church members, supposed brothers and sisters in Christ, whose cold, cliquish ways finally snap our last nerve.
- » Racist or sexist comments by close friends or family members who try to justify their views with biblical references.

Anger and punishment seem the appropriate responses to people who have harmed us.

Jesus’ disciple John and his brother James knew what it was like to get angry over the actions of others. They erupted so often that Jesus called them “Boanerges, which means ‘sons of thunder’” (Mark 3:17).\*

But after following Jesus for six decades, John was transformed from a son of thunder to an apostle of love. John answers the question “Why should I love someone when their actions deserve not love but justice and punishment?” in 1 John 4:7-12.

## WE LOVE BECAUSE GOD IS LOVE

*“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love” (1 John 4:7, 8).*

John calls us to base our love for others not on their nature, but on God’s nature, because God is the source of love. Our love for others identifies us as God’s children.



MONKEYBUSINESSIMAGES / ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES PLUS

“This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us.”

When we deserved justice and punishment for walking away from God, God showed how much He loved us by sending “his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins” (verse 10). Jesus died the death we should have died as sinners. Instead of judging us for our sins, He justified us by taking our pain and punishment so that we could be free of guilt.

We often define justice as punishment because we misunderstand the relationship between love and true justice. The strongest form of human justice, the death penalty, may prevent the murderer from murdering again, but it’s incomplete justice, because it can’t revive the dead. Only Jesus’ death and resurrection provide true justice, because He has destroyed the enemy of death and promises to reverse the effects of sin and restore us to our pre-sin condition. That’s the power of Jesus’ death and resurrection. But we still face the question “Why then should we love someone when their actions deserve not love but justice and punishment?”

John’s first answer is *Because God is love*.

John’s second answer is *Because God loved us so much that He sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins*.

If someone saved me but died in the process, I would certainly owe them my life and love. But how would their actions motivate me to love someone else?

John adds in 1 John 4:8: “Whoever does not love does not know God.” Why? Because “God is love”! If we don’t love one another, we don’t possess God’s DNA; we don’t really know Him.

Some time ago Lanell spotted peaches growing on the hill below our deck. The idea of peach trees surviving amid the thorns and vines covering the hill seemed impossible, but when we hacked a trail down the steep bank, we harvested juicy, sweet, freestone peaches. The surrounding thorns and vines had no effect on what fruit the trees bore.

Why should we love one another? Because our love for others shows we are born of God and know God. Other people’s actions have no effect on the love we share.

Jesus’ reaction to His disciples’ ill-treatment of children (Mark 10:13-16), to leaders who accused a woman of adultery (John 8:1-11), and to leaders who used the temple services to enrich themselves (Matt. 21:12, 13) shows that our love for others cannot ignore or excuse injustice. But how can we love the unjust while defending their victims?

### **GOD’S SPECIAL LOVE MESSAGE**

*“This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1 John 4:9, 10).*

Because we rebelled against God, we deserve justice and punishment. When we walked away from God, He could have abandoned us, but instead the good news is that God “sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.”

Let us misunderstand the radical nature of God’s love, John makes it explicit in 1 John 4:10.

### **LOVING OTHERS BECAUSE GOD LOVED ME**

“You won’t believe who I saw today,” my older daughter told me on the phone.

“Tell me.”

“I saw Dr. Habal in Staples!”

Thirty-five years earlier Dr. Habal had given our 1-year-old Janell the gift of life. Born with a closed left suture line, Janell’s head grew asymmetrically, her left eye socket and forehead unable to expand as her brain grew.

Janell’s questioning look as an orderly carried her through the doors into the operating room haunted us until six hours later Dr. Habal emerged from surgery and said, “I did a perfect job.”

He had cut Janell’s scalp from ear to ear, pulled



# Our love for others is the visible reflection of God's light in the world.

her face down, rebuilt her left forehead and eye orbit so her face was now symmetrical, cut a half-inch expansion space in the top of her skull to allow for future growth, pulled her face back up, and sewed everything in place. He had done a perfect job.

From the moment Dr. Habal resculpted Janell's head, she began to thrive. On the day when she called, she had stopped at Staples and recognized the surgeon who had operated on her and followed up with her for years. She walked up to him and asked,

"Dr. Habal?"

"Yes, but how do you know who I am?"

"You operated on me when I was 12 months old."

Why did Janell speak to Dr. Habal? She wanted to thank him for saving her from physical and mental disability. But she also told him that she was now a nurse practitioner because the gift of life he had given her had inspired her to help and heal others.

Why do we love others? Not out of obligation, but out of sheer thankfulness for what God has done for us. Jesus' atoning sacrifice for our sins transforms us. We want to pass on the blessing to others by loving them!

## WHEN GOD'S LOVE BECOMES VISIBLE

*"Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us" (1 John 4:11, 12).*

First John 4:11 seems the perfect ending for John's call to love one another, but John continues in 1 John 4:12 with a strange interjection: "No one has ever seen God."

Why does John mention God's invisibility after he calls us to "love one another"?

In today's selfie-focused world, image is more important than character. One's outward appearance—the hairstyle, clothing, the carefully curated social media photos—often count more than listening to a friend fighting cancer, being a big brother or sister to a foster child, volunteering at a hospice for homeless veterans, or leading a small-group Bible study.

God loves beautiful images—look at His creation that surrounds us—but that's not how He has chosen to reveal Himself to a sinful world

addicted to selfie photos. Instead John writes, "No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us" (1 John 4:12).

Rainbows help us understand the relationship between God's invisibility and John's call for us to love one another.

Sunlight is invisible until it passes through a medium such as airborne water droplets or vapor. Each wavelength of light travels through a raindrop at a different speed and is refracted or bent at a different angle, separating sunlight into the visible color bands of the rainbow.

It's no accident that John says in 1 John 1:5 that "God is light" and in 1 John 4:8 reiterates that "God is love." Our love for others is the visible reflection of God's light in the world. As we love others, each act of love becomes a different color in the portrait of God we are revealing to others. And the colors of love's rainbow are as infinite as those through whom it shines.

Each person we meet needs God's love. Some may deserve justice and punishment, but what they need is to know that first, God is love; second, God sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for their sins; and third, the same God who lives in us wants to live in them.

When God lives in us and His love shines through us, John concludes, "His love is made complete in us." At first I thought John meant that my ability to love was made complete, but when I considered the infinite different colors that make up the spectrum of light, I realized there is a unique color of God's love that only I can reveal. The way we reflect and refract God's love in this world completes the portrait of God. His love is invisible. It is incomplete without the colors of love we reflect to others. That is ultimately why John tells us, "Dear friends, let us love one another." 🌈

\* All Scripture quotations have been taken from the New International Version.

**Douglas Jacobs** retired after teaching church ministry and preaching in the Religion Department at Southern Adventist University for 16 years. He is married to Lanell and is the proud father of two daughters, Janell and Katie.

1888 MESSAGE NATIONAL CONFERENCE



THE UPLIFTED  
SAVIOR

**July 12 – 15, 2023**

Southern Adventist University - Lynn Wood Hall  
4881 Taylor Circle, Collegedale, TN 37314

**Want to know more?**

**Visit:** [www.1888msc.org](http://www.1888msc.org) **Email:** [info@1888msc.org](mailto:info@1888msc.org) **Call:** (269) 473-1888

# CRISIS IN THE COURTHOUSE

The woman's deep sobs echoed through the courthouse as she crumbled into a chair across from me.

My heart ached for whatever pain she was experiencing. At that moment I wanted to be some kind of hero to her—to replace her tears with peace, her anguished wails with hope. But my insecurities kept me strapped to my seat.

Would she appreciate a stranger approaching her in this time of deep grief, or would she resent my intrusion? What would I say, anyway? I couldn't promise that things would get better when I didn't even know the source of her pain or her backstory, and this didn't feel like the right time for an uninvited sermon. And so I sat, silently praying, but other than that, doing nothing to help.

Over the years I have never stopped wishing I had done something that day to bring that woman some much-needed comfort. But I still have never known quite what that would have looked like.

That is, until my friend Heidi shared her story. Heidi was returning from a convention, and her plane had just landed in Chicago. As soon as cell phone use was permissible, she could hear the woman in the seat in front of her having an animated conversation. Heidi heard the frustration and anger in her voice and could see the woman visibly shaking.

As the plane arrived at the gate, Heidi felt prompted by the Holy Spirit to gently poke between the seats to get the woman's attention. "Are you in crisis?" Heidi asked. "Are you OK?"

After the woman spilled out a story of personal and professional pain, Heidi

said what may be the only words that can provide true comfort amid crisis: "I believe in prayer; may I pray for you? Like right now?"

The woman eagerly accepted her offer. The two exchanged names, and Heidi introduced her colleague sitting next to her; then the three women bowed their heads as Heidi offered a brief prayer before leaving the plane.

Meeting up again in the terminal, the women exchanged business cards, and the one who had been grieving just a few minutes earlier now stood with her new friends, recording a couple of selfie videos to share with others how God had brought Heidi and her colleague into this woman's life.

Hearing Heidi's story gave me a stronger resolve to speak up the next time I see someone in crisis. Through Heidi's experience I have learned that I may not have anything to offer those who are experiencing unspeakable pain, but God does. God can give me the right words to say. And most important, I can always share the peace that prayer brings to hurting souls.

It isn't just the woman in the courthouse who missed out that day when my fear left me seated in silence. I missed the opportunity to experience God working for me. That's an opportunity I hope I don't pass up next time. ♣

---

**Lori Futcher** (Lori.Futcher@gmail.com) is working on her M.F.A. in creative nonfiction and does freelance writing and voiceover work from her home in Nampa, Idaho.

WITNESSING  
FOR  
INTROVERTS  
LORI FUTCHER



GOD CAN GIVE ME  
THE RIGHT WORDS  
TO SAY. AND MOST  
IMPORTANT, I CAN  
ALWAYS SHARE  
THE PEACE THAT  
PRAYER BRINGS TO  
HURTING SOULS.



# The Gift of Hope

**Give a young refugee the opportunity to receive vocational training at the Center for Hope in Rwanda!**

After graduating high school, refugees in Rwanda face the challenge of finding a job. Impact Hope's vocational training program empowers young adults to launch their careers!

The Center for Hope provides vocational and entrepreneurial skills to start a business and become self-reliant. This year-round program offers trades in tailoring, hairdressing, culinary arts, agriculture and more!

## **How you can help:**

\$50 a month gives the opportunity for a young man or woman to pursue a trade at the Center for Hope.

**[WWW.IMPACT-HOPE.ORG](http://WWW.IMPACT-HOPE.ORG)**



# Every Time

## JODY BLOOM

I didn't see the earth appear  
As life flowed from His lips,  
Or a human form be molded  
Between His fingertips.

I didn't see the brilliance  
Of stars flung into space,  
Or the love in Adam's eyes  
As he gazed upon Eve's face.

But I have seen how His power  
Has changed me from within.  
I felt His peace and joy  
When He pardoned every sin.  
My life has been transformed,  
My stony heart made flesh,  
And I'll lift my voice in thanks  
Every time that I draw breath.

I didn't feel the chisel marks  
Of law engraved on stone,  
Or the thickness of the smoke  
As God descended from His throne.

I didn't feel the mighty wind  
That split the sea in two,  
Or the shake of tumbling walls  
From the city God overthrew.

But I feel His presence near me  
When fear has filled my soul,  
I've learned to claim the promise  
That He'll make the broken whole.  
My life has been transformed,  
My stony heart made flesh,  
And I'll lift my voice in thanks  
Every time that I draw breath.

I didn't hear the clash of waves  
That struck the fishing boat,  
Or the screams of His disciples  
As they tried to keep afloat.

I didn't hear the words of Christ  
That made the blind men see,  
Or the shouts of joy or singing  
When He set the captives free.

But I've heard that still small voice  
That fills my heart with peace.  
That breaks the chains of sinfulness  
And gives me sweet release.  
My life has been transformed,  
My stony heart made flesh,  
And I'll lift my voice in thanks  
Every time that I draw breath.

So while I've never seen or felt  
Or heard the things I've read,  
I know from my experience  
The power of what is said.

For the words of ancient Scripture  
Cut deeper than a knife,  
They pierce the soul and spirit,  
But yet they give us life.

My praise will never cease  
To the One who died for me,  
Who shed His blood for sinful men  
And hung upon a tree.  
My life has been transformed,  
My stony heart made flesh,  
And I'll lift my voice in thanks  
Every time that I draw breath. ♣

---

**Jody Bloom** is an archivist at an archaeology company in Oxford, UK.

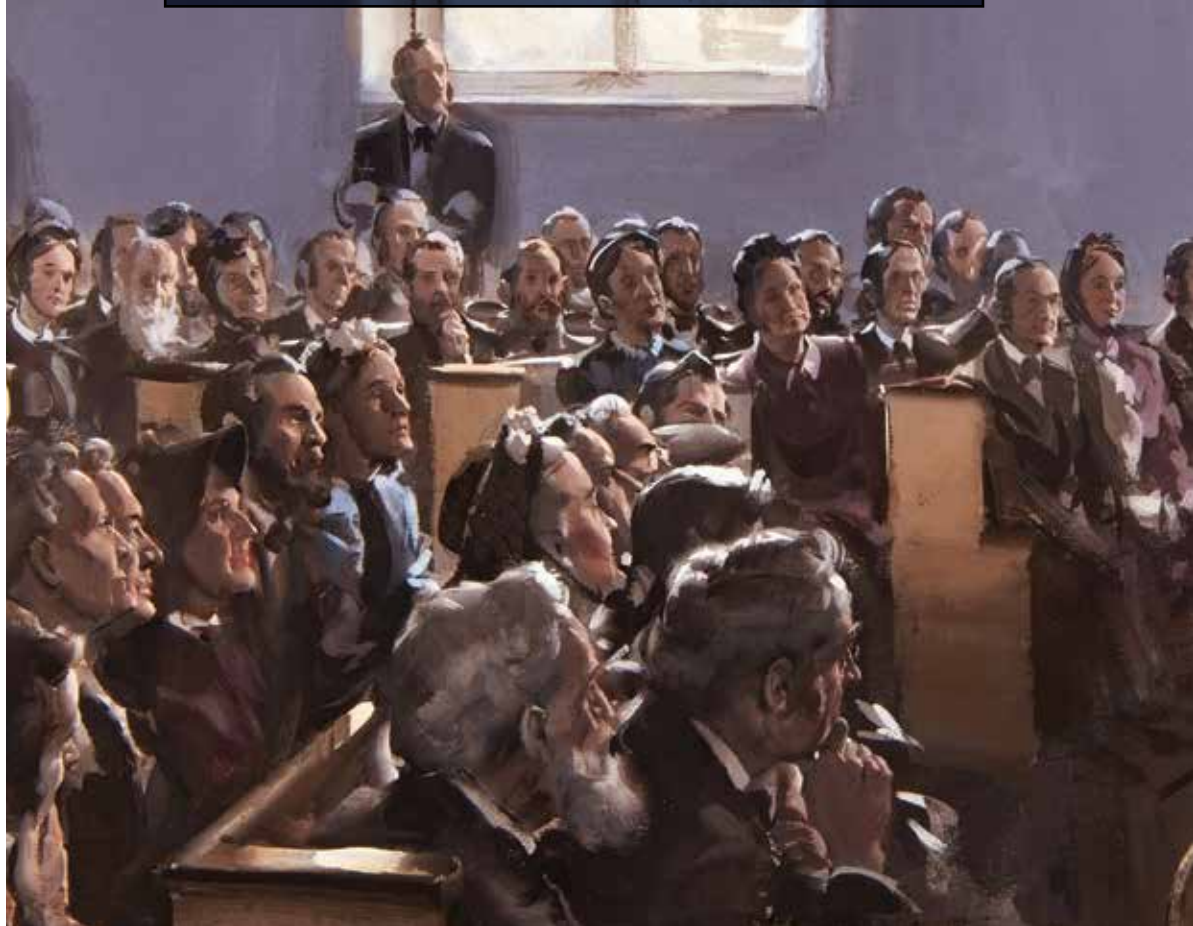
# Unexpected Outcome

**BRUNO LOURENCO**

**O**ur expectations were raised high, and thus we looked for our coming Lord until the clock tolled twelve at midnight. The day had then passed, and our disappointment had become a certainty. Our fondest hopes and expectations were blasted, and such a spirit of weeping came over us as I never experienced before. It seemed that the loss of all earthly friends could have been no comparison. We wept and wept, till the day dawn.”<sup>1</sup>

This was how Hiram Edson depicted the sentiment of that faithful group. Restless efforts through sermons preached, articles written, and uncountable hours of travel to spread the good news of the second coming of Jesus on October 22, 1844. The next day dawned, and Christ had not come. One would assume that a group with such a tremendous disappointment would simply fall apart to complete extinction.

However, the smallest portion of that sorrowful group persevered and





# As heirs of so great a legacy, we must bring onward the message that granted us an identity and a mission.

became a church with more than 22 million members almost 180 years later. What was the secret to that unexpected growth? Even though it does not make any sense at first, the Sabbath message studied by Joseph Bates, the doctrine of the sanctuary, and the three angels' messages played a significant role in this process.

## RECOVERING FROM THE DISAPPOINTMENT

After the Great Disappointment the vast majority of the more than 200,000 Millerites either gave up on their faith or kept studying to set other dates for Christ's return. A small group wiped their tears and went back to the Scriptures to understand what happened and look for a deeper understanding of God's plan.

The investigation of the sanctuary in correlation with the three angels' messages of Revelation 14 was one of the most important keys to unveiling the mystery. The Millerites initially believed that the fulfillment of the first angel's message began in 1798 with the preaching of Christ's return (Rev. 14:6, 7). The message of the second angel began in 1844, mostly with the proclamation of the Midnight Cry and the call out of "Babylon" (verse 8). The third angel emphasized the sanctity and validity of God's commandments (verses 9-12).

In 1845 some Adventists began keeping the seventh-day Sabbath as a result of the influence of the Seventh Day Baptists. Right after that, Joseph Bates began to preach more emphatically about the importance of that day, stating that this commandment had to be restored so Jesus could come.<sup>2</sup>

At first Ellen White did not understand the reason for emphasizing so much the fourth commandment over the other nine,<sup>3</sup> but after reading a tract written by Bates in September of 1846, Ellen and James White accepted that truth. The trio began to preach more boldly about the seventh-day Sabbath. God used Joseph Bates to accomplish one of the most crucial discoveries in Seventh-day Adventist history.

## THE DISCOVERY THAT MADE A REAL DIFFERENCE

Bates became more acquainted with the significance of the third angel's message and connected this context with the Sabbath theme and Revelation 11:19, which says: "Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and a severe hailstorm" (NIV).

He concluded that the Ten Commandments played a special role in the end-time, and linked the seventh-day Sabbath to the third angel's message. A few months later Ellen White had a vision in which God took her on a tour through the heavenly sanctuary. When the veil between the two apartments was lifted, she saw the ark of the covenant.

Inside the ark she observed an interesting detail. "I saw the ten commandments written on them [the tables of stone] with the finger of God. . . . But the fourth, the Sabbath commandment, shone above them all; for the Sabbath was set apart to be kept in honor of God's holy name. The holy Sabbath looked glorious—a halo of glory was all around it. I saw that the Sabbath was not nailed to the cross. If it was, the other nine commandments were; and we are at liberty to break them all, as well as to break the fourth. I saw that God had not changed the Sabbath, for He never changes."<sup>4</sup>

Bates's suggestion of tying those three aspects together was confirmed as correct. After Jesus' passage from the holy place to the most holy place in 1844, He approached the ark with the Ten Commandments, which include the fourth commandment, the only precept left behind by most Christians in history. Therefore, the last message of exhortation and salvation should include the restoration of the seventh day as the genuine day of rest. The connection between the Sabbath, the sanctuary, and the three angels' messages gave them a prophetic identity.

After the Great Disappointment, predicted in Revelation 10:8-10, Jesus says in verse 11 that



they still need to prophesy “about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.” The same words are used to introduce the message of the three angels in Revelation 14, giving them a clear hint of what God wanted from them.

Furthermore, the words used by the first angel in his message to “worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water” (Rev. 14:7, NIV) is not new in Scripture. “This language makes an unmistakable allusion to the Sabbath command with reference to creation (Ex. 20:8-11), thus indicating that the Sabbath has particular relevance in end-time gospel proclamation. . . . The admonitions to ‘fear’ and ‘worship’ in this verse are placed directly in the larger immediate context of keeping God’s commandments (see Rev. 12:17; 14:12), with obvious references to the Decalogue.”<sup>5</sup>

Seventh-day Adventists did not simply have those beliefs because they were Bible-based and should be preached. It went far beyond that. They found themselves in the midst of that prophecy, and they perceived God delegating them to spread a specific message to their generation. At first Joseph Bates’s belief in the sanctity of the seventh day presented in his book *The Seventh-Day Sabbath, A Perpetual Sign* reflected essentially what the Seventh Day Baptists believed, that the seventh day was the correct day to be kept and that it should never have been changed.

But now the seventh-day Sabbath belief was strengthened by the prophetic message that God would restore the seal between Him and His people. James White stated: “Our past Advent experience, and present position and future work, [are] marked out in Revelation 14 as plain as the prophetic pencil could write it.”<sup>6</sup> The prophetic identity resulted in the urgency to preach that message throughout the world. Their hearts were filled with a missional ideal, and from that moment on, no barrier was too great for that brave group. They went through a great disappointment, but now they were invigorated to spread the gospel to all the world.

## URGENT MISSION

The difference that this prophetic identity and their calling to preach made becomes clearer when the Seventh-day Adventist movement is compared with other similar groups at that time. Seventh Day Baptists grew from an estimated 6,000 mem-

bers in the 1840s to 50,000 in the 2010s. Today they are present in 22 countries around the globe.

On the other hand, according to the first census made of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, there were an estimated 3,500 members in 1863. This number jumped to almost 22 million members in 2020 in 213 different countries.<sup>7</sup> As the Advent Christian historian Clyde Hewitt said: “The tiniest of the Millerite offshoot groups [Seventh-day Adventists] was the one which would become by far the largest.”<sup>8</sup>

The difference in growth between these denominations was the prophetic understanding of this message as part of a larger plan, with an urgent call for it to be preached throughout the world. Sabbatarian Adventism understood that Sabbath-keeping was not a means to salvation but a part of a prophetic identity to be shared with “many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings” (Rev. 10:11).<sup>9</sup>

Seventh-day Adventism is the most widespread unified Protestant church in the history of Christianity. Why? Because we believe that God has a message to be preached that nobody else is preaching. This has given people the dedication to give of their money and their lives to the cause.

As members and heirs of so great a legacy, we must bring onward the message that granted us an identity and a mission, a reason to go “to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people” (Rev. 14:6). Our DNA was essentially composed in mission, which clearly was the key to the church’s increase. Now the torch of truth is in our hands, and we hear a voice from heaven with the straight appeal: Preach! Preach! 🗨️

<sup>1</sup> Hiram Edson, unpublished manuscript on his life and experience, in *Review and Herald*, June 23, 1921, pp. 4, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Gerard P. Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-Day Adventist Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), pp. 136-142.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 1, pp. 75, 76.

<sup>4</sup> Ellen G. White, *Early Writings* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1882, 1945), pp. 32, 33.

<sup>5</sup> Study note on Revelation 14:7, in *Andrews Study Bible* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 2010), p. 1677.

<sup>6</sup> James White to Brother Bowles, Nov. 8, 1849, in George R. Knight, *If I Were the Devil* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 2007), p. 140.

<sup>7</sup> “Seventh-day Adventist World Church Statistics 2016, 2017,” <https://www.adventist.org/en/information/statistics/article/go/-/seventh-day-adventist-world-church-statistics-2016-2017/>.

<sup>8</sup> In Knight, p. 142.

<sup>9</sup> See also Matt. 28:18-20; Rev. 5:9, 10; 7:9.

**Bruno Lourenco** is senior pastor at the Highland View church in Hagerstown, Maryland.



## THE PRICELESS BLOOD

---

*Bloodstains that save*

**SARAH ROGERS**

It was a heart-wrenching situation. As worried parents watched, their 5-week-old baby boy was slowly dying. The doctors told them his little body was beginning to shut down. His oxygen levels were dropping; his heart, so small, was beating faster and faster, and he no longer had the energy to eat or cry. Surrounding this little one in his unit, the medical team told his parents the last resort left that could save their child was to have a blood transfusion. They anxiously agreed, and immediately the doctors and nurses went to work to provide the baby with the life-giving substance.

As the blood flowed from the bag to the newborn's arm, something miraculous occurred. The once-lethargic, weakened baby suddenly began to move. Tiny arms and legs started wiggling and stretching with newfound energy. His face, which had been without expression, changed, and

his little mouth began to smile. Contented cooing sounds emerged from his lips that within minutes grew to a full wail to alert his mother of his intense hunger. Within five minutes of administering the blood, his oxygen levels were high, his heart was beating at a normal rate, and he was able to eat his fill. A while later, as the mother rocked the peaceful, contented, sleeping baby, a nurse reported that the bag of dark rich blood was now empty and it was time to remove the tubing.

### PRECIOUS BLOOD

As the nurse began disconnecting the bag attached to his arm, several drops of blood fell, splattering onto the mother's clothing. The flustered nurse apologized profusely, professing her embarrassment; she had never spilled blood on anyone in her entire career. The mother quickly brushed the minor offense aside as she watched the drops of red begin to spread into the fabric. Although fully forgiven, the nurse immediately began to do what she could to remove the stain; as she did, the mother had new insight. To the nurse, this was bodily fluid, something to wipe away. But to the young mother, what she saw in that fresh stain was the new life that had been given to her son. To her, that blood now had *value* . . . and it was priceless.

Pilate stood before a mixed crowd calling for the crucifixion of Jesus. He offered them Barabbas, but they refused. He offered them reason. Again, they refused. He finally laid the truth before them: choosing Jesus for crucifixion would mean they were responsible for shedding innocent blood. And the people, Pharisees, and priests alike in unison responded: "His blood be on us and on our children!" (Matt. 27:25).<sup>1</sup> While their cries reflected their readiness to accept responsibility for Jesus' death—the shedding of His blood—could it be that these very words were what they needed most?

### IT'S NOT JUST A STORY

The story of the newborn receiving new life from new blood may have touched your heart, but for me it was much more than that. You see, I was the mother in the story, and the dying newborn was my second son, Kodiak. Tears still come to my eyes when I recall the life-giving blood that saved my son's life. I am forever grateful to the anonymous person from southwest Michigan who donated their blood type (O-negative); for what



**Kodiak hugging his little sister, Kalaya.**

they didn't know then, but I know now, is that their gift gave me back my son! And while I see the obvious analogy to Jesus giving His blood for me and my son, if honest, I have to stop and ask myself: Would I have been any different from that crowd back at the pre-crucifixion scene?

You see, initially, my husband and I didn't want that donated blood. We tried everything we could to prevent a blood transfusion in the beginning stages of our son's illness. We were blinded by the risks and what we had heard about the procedure. In hindsight, we took for granted this opportunity for healing! But our son's condition worsened, and in the end we surrendered. It was the best decision we ever made, one that ultimately saved his life.

What then could the crowd standing before Pilate have seen had they not been so blinded? What could they have seen as they followed Jesus as He stumbled up Golgotha's hill to a cross where His blood was shed? They could have seen the same thing I saw as drops of life-giving blood dripped on my clothing that day: priceless, precious blood. Had they surrendered their hearts, they might have understood that the drops of blood from that cross that day were for them, to save them, to demonstrate the full love of God for His children!

Let's make the cry today, "His blood be on us and on our children!" This priceless, precious blood, if accepted, will save us for all eternity. ♣

<sup>1</sup> Read Matthew 27 for the full account.

**Sarah Rogers** ministers with her husband and four children in Langley, British Columbia. She is currently serving as the prayer coordinator for the British Columbia Conference. Kodiak is a thriving 9-year-old in grade 4 at Fraser Valley Adventist Academy.

# Always Fresh Always Relevant

*Join us for an insightful commentary of the Sabbath School lesson every week!*



## **3ABN Sabbath School Panel**



- Watch it on demand on YouTube, anytime
- In-depth Bible study
- Share a program link on social media

# HOLY LOVE

**J**esus cared about holiness more than anyone who's ever walked the earth. Jesus cared about love more than anyone who's ever walked the earth.

Followers of Jesus must recognize both of these: how much Jesus cared about holiness, and how much Jesus cared about love.

Some of us naturally, and rightfully, bear a burden of holiness for our world. We look around at culture and, like the prophets Isaiah and Nehemiah—and also Peter and Jude—feel a deep sadness and concern for what we're witnessing. It should hearten us that Christ Himself cares about holiness even more than we do.

Others of us naturally, and rightfully, bear a burden of love for our world. We look around at the bruised and broken and, like the prophets Amos and Micah—and also John and James—feel a deep sadness and concern for what we're witnessing. It should hearten us that Christ cares about love even more than we do.

It should not be one or the other.

Those of us who focus on holiness must ask ourselves: Do we truly and deeply love people as Christ does? Do we delight in people as Christ does? Because the people who met Jesus knew that He delighted in them. That's why they listened to and trusted Him. They could tell how much He loved them—how much He liked them. A bruised reed He did not break; a smoldering wick He did not snuff out. The call to holiness must be accom-

panied by love. If the former Pharisee Saul of Tarsus recognized his need to love, then we must as well. Otherwise, we will be nothing more than "sounding brass or a clanging cymbal" (1 Cor. 13:1).

Those of us who focus on love must ask ourselves: Do we love only as the world does? Or do we love differently than the world does? Because Jesus loved differently than the world does. Jesus didn't settle for hanging out with sinners; He called "sinners to repentance" (Matt. 9:13). He cared about not only their earthly lives but also their eternal lives. What's more caring? To say "I love you—don't do this"? Or to say, "I love you—go ahead and do this"?

It's true that the world, like the good Samaritan, has often cared for people's physical needs better than the church has. But the other ditch is caring only for people's physical needs while ignoring their spiritual needs. Be wary of calls to love—even among Christian leaders—that don't include the name of Christ. Humans are not the solution to every problem; only Christ is. It's not unloving to share the holiness of Christ with someone. It's unloving not to.

Filled with grace and truth, Christ lived a life of holy love, calling His followers to do the same. 🍀

---

**Andy Nash** (andynash5@gmail.com) is a pastor and professor who leads study tours to Israel for all ages.

**THE LIFE  
OF FAITH  
ANDY  
NASH**



**FOLLOWERS OF  
JESUS MUST  
RECOGNIZE BOTH OF  
THESE: HOW MUCH  
JESUS CARED ABOUT  
HOLINESS, AND HOW  
MUCH JESUS CARED  
ABOUT LOVE.**

# Sophia

## just lost her husband

One of her most important questions is how to take care of her daughter and still make a significant impact on her local church. Her friend Susan has given her some ideas, but she's still navigating the details.



To learn more about Sophia's journey, scan the QR code or visit [Sophia.willplan.org](https://sophia.willplan.org)



Planned Giving  
& Trust Services

Experience  
the Joy of Giving

[willplan.org](https://willplan.org)



PETER N. LANDLESS ZENO L. CHARLES-MARCEL

## TREATING DISEASE WITH LIGHT

*God's natural therapy shines!*

**Q:** I have a friend who swears by light therapy for her psoriasis. Can light (and sunshine) be used to treat other diseases, too?

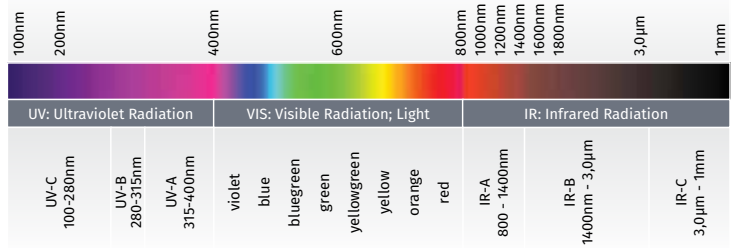
**A:** Heliotherapy, the therapeutic exposure to sunlight, was very useful in the preantibiotic and preantidepressant eras. Sunshine produces much more than meets the eye, literally! Our eyes detect the visible part of sunshine, i.e., from violet to red (see diagram). Invisible ultraviolet (UV) is responsible for suntans, sunburns, and some skin cancers. It is involved in treating psoriasis and eczema. UV facilitates the production of vitamin D, which itself has many healthful effects, including cancer and diabetes prevention.

Blue light is used to treat seasonal affective disorder, neonatal jaundice, and skin diseases (including precancerous skin lesions), but should not be used in individuals with lupus or porphyria. LED lights are very energy-efficient and produce more blue light than other bulb types. Blue light, more than any other color, can disrupt our brain's circadian clock and the complex array of hormones and neurotransmitters the clock regulates. It can also cause poor sleep by suppressing melatonin.

On the other side of the light spectrum are red and infrared. Visible red light is most effective for use on the surface of the skin. Invisible infrared may be felt as heat. It can penetrate the skin to about 1.5 inches into the body. Red light therapy is used cosmetically to stimulate the production of skin protein (collagen) to speed up wound healing, reduce wrinkles, treat acne, and tighten the skin. There is evidence that red light therapy may stimulate new hair growth in both men and women experiencing specific kinds of hair loss. It has also shown promise in treating people with mild to moderate psoriasis and herpes-related cold sores.

During the 1800s Niels Ryberg Finsen researched

light therapy (phototherapy) treatment of smallpox and other conditions. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Medicine and Physiology in 1903 for his work. John Harvey Kellogg invented a lightbox to provide phototherapy at the Medical and Surgical Sanitarium of Battle Creek, Michigan. He published his research about phototherapy in his book *Light Therapeutics* in 1910.<sup>1</sup> Today physical therapists, sports medicine, and physical rehabilitation doctors in the military and amateur and professional sports arenas treat a wide variety of acute and chronic musculoskeletal injuries and pain with phototherapy.



Unsubstantiated reports of light therapy's marvels abound. Two recent ones look promising: Harvard researchers found green light helpful in patients with migraines,<sup>2</sup> and near-infrared phototherapy helped patients hospitalized with COVID-19.<sup>3</sup> In the latter study, respiratory function and almost every important parameter measured significantly improved in patients with pneumonia without negative side effects! Hospital stay was reduced by four days with phototherapy, in conjunction with the standard treatment, when compared with matched patients who received standard treatment and sham phototherapy. Another one of God's natural therapies shines! 🌟

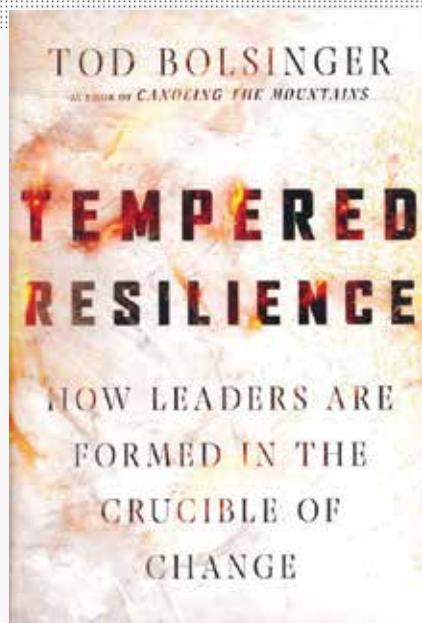
<sup>1</sup> John Harvey Kellogg, *Light Therapeutics* (Kessinger Publishing, LLC, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> *Brain* 139, no. 7 (July 2016): 1971-1986.

<sup>3</sup> *Journal of Photochemistry and Photobiology, B: Biology*, January 2023; 238:112619.

**Peter N. Landless**, a board-certified nuclear cardiologist, is director of Adventist Health Ministries at the General Conference. **Zeno L. Charles-Marcel**, a board-certified internist, is an associate director of Adventist Health Ministries at the General Conference.

# CLOSER LOOK



## Molded in the Fire of Opposition

Tod Bolsinger, *Tempered Resilience: How Leaders Are Formed in the Crucible of Change* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2020), 256 pages, hardcover. US\$26.00, available through [IVPress.com](http://IVPress.com) and other sellers. Reviewed by Jared Thurmon, who has advised the *Adventist Review* with strategy and content curation since 2015.

**I**t's not often I read books written by trained Jesuits. And with that opening line, I hope I've got your attention.

I firmly believe that every one of us is called to lead in some capacity. Whether you're a mom, dad, grandparent, coworker, or somewhere in the mix of life, you will no doubt have people who look to you for input, guidance, and support.

A good friend shared the book *Tempered Resilience* with me several months ago. It is written by Tod Bolsinger, who spearheads leadership formation at Fuller Theological Seminary on how leadership and, particularly, leadership resilience are learned.

One line does a great job of summing up a central point from the book. Andrew Zollie defines resilience as "the capacity of a system, enterprise, or a person to maintain its core purpose and integrity in the face of dramatically changed circumstances."

The book makes the case repeatedly, with stories from Scripture and history, that resilience is the key attribute of good leadership.

The author brings out a beautiful point by Cynthia Erikson. "Courage requires a Christian identity of knowing you are loved and affirmed by God, and that your identity is not in your achievements or titles. Then you can take risks and risk failure."

It made me think about two points Ellen White makes about risk: "He [Jesus] not only became an exile from the heavenly courts, but for us took the risk of failure and eternal loss."<sup>1</sup>

And this: "Remember that Christ risked all; 'tempted like as we are,' He staked even His own eternal existence upon the issue of the conflict."<sup>2</sup>

I've learned a hard lesson in life. Titles don't



## Do our leaders feel empowered and entrusted to take risks, fail, and still feel valued?

make you a leader. We all can cite example after example of men and women with positions of responsibility who are not living up to their title or office.

What I loved about this book is what I love about the best books I read. The truth resonates to your very core. So many things I've read in Scripture and Ellen White's writings ring true with points made in the book.

Seventh-day Adventists sit on the largest gold mine of truth ever entrusted to humanity. Whether that be in education, wellness, health care, leadership, geopolitics, parenting, or relationships, I could go on and on.

I want to touch on education for a moment.

In her book *Education* Ellen White states, "Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and do. The men and women in whom this power is developed are those who bear responsibilities, who are leaders in enterprise, and who influence character. It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train young people to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other [people's] thought."<sup>3</sup>

Bolsinger brings out an amazing point that made me think of the statement above. So often over the past 100 years, we have adopted a manufacturing method of education in which students are taught information, and tested to determine if they remember that information, rather than taught the vital skills on how to create, innovate, and become resilient. Far too often the classroom is a place of nice theories that get shattered when someone enters the real world.

The book makes the clear case that leadership, especially resilient leadership, happens only in

the crucible, in the fire, where we can be molded and shaped and can adapt to the need. The author put it like this: "We can't learn to lead without entering into the actual place where the work gets done."

Once we determine our most cherished values and ethics—those we will not compromise on—we are then called to be willing to change everything else.

Do we foster this type of experience in Adventism today? Do our leaders feel empowered and entrusted to take risks, fail, and still feel valued? Angela Duckworth studies leaders across industries and says, "What ripens passion is the conviction that your work matters." What more can we do for our teachers, pastors, administrators, and future leaders to help them understand their work matters not only for time but for eternity?

I've read many books on leadership, and I have to say this is one of the best. So many leadership books deal with theory but don't talk about the fire of opposition and how to survive it.

Many of my pastor friends are struggling with the temptation to give in—to the tide of public opinion or to ultimately give up. The enemy of souls wants nothing more than men and women in leadership to have a failure of courage or a failure of heart and give up and stop trying.

I encourage anyone who feels called to lead, or knows someone in leadership, to get this book. The lessons you learn will be priceless through the storms of life. 🦋

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940), p. 131.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, "Seeking the Lost," *General Conference Bulletin*, Dec. 1, 1895.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1903), p. 17.

## WHEN OBEDIENCE IS FREEDOM

In our fear of legalism, many of us have come to mischaracterize obedience, as though obedience, in and of itself, constitutes legalism (it does not). Without the necessity of obedience in a life of faith, the cross loses its value. Think about it: Were obedience not required for eternal life, then Christ would not have needed to die in our place to fulfill the requirements of the law. No, obedience is not the problem in legalism. The problem is thinking we could ever

fully obey God's holy law in our own strength.

But that is not what I would like to focus on in the next few paragraphs. With the anti-obedience rhetoric out of the way, a different and, I would argue, more subtle mischaracterization emerges, in which we too narrowly define obedience.

When it comes to our actions, is there a black and white, a right and wrong, so to speak? Well, yes, of course! But does that mean there's only ever one option for what we ought to do in every situation? Well, no, not at all. How do I arrive at that conclusion? Let me explain with my favorite portion of Scripture: Genesis 3.

God had placed Adam and Eve in the pristine Garden of Eden with but one prohibition: They were not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It was this singular restriction that the devil amplified in his temptation of Eve. "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'" (Gen. 3:1) he

quipped, magnifying the stipulation as though it outweighed what God had permitted.

In reality God's command was phrased first in the positive, highlighting all that humanity could do in obedience. He had said, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat" (Gen. 2:16). By the sheer proportion of permissible fruit to forbidden, the opportunity to obey far outweighed the temptation to sin. With respect to the forbidden fruit, there was only one right choice: do not eat it. But when it came to options for what to eat, the garden was filled with more possibilities than Eve could exhaust in a day!

It is too narrow to define obedience by what we must avoid doing. As long as we live our lives on the edge of what God has forbidden, we will find His prohibitions too restrictive. But if we determine, by His grace, not to disobey, if we stay away from the forbidden tree, then our minds are opened to the plethora of possibilities before us.

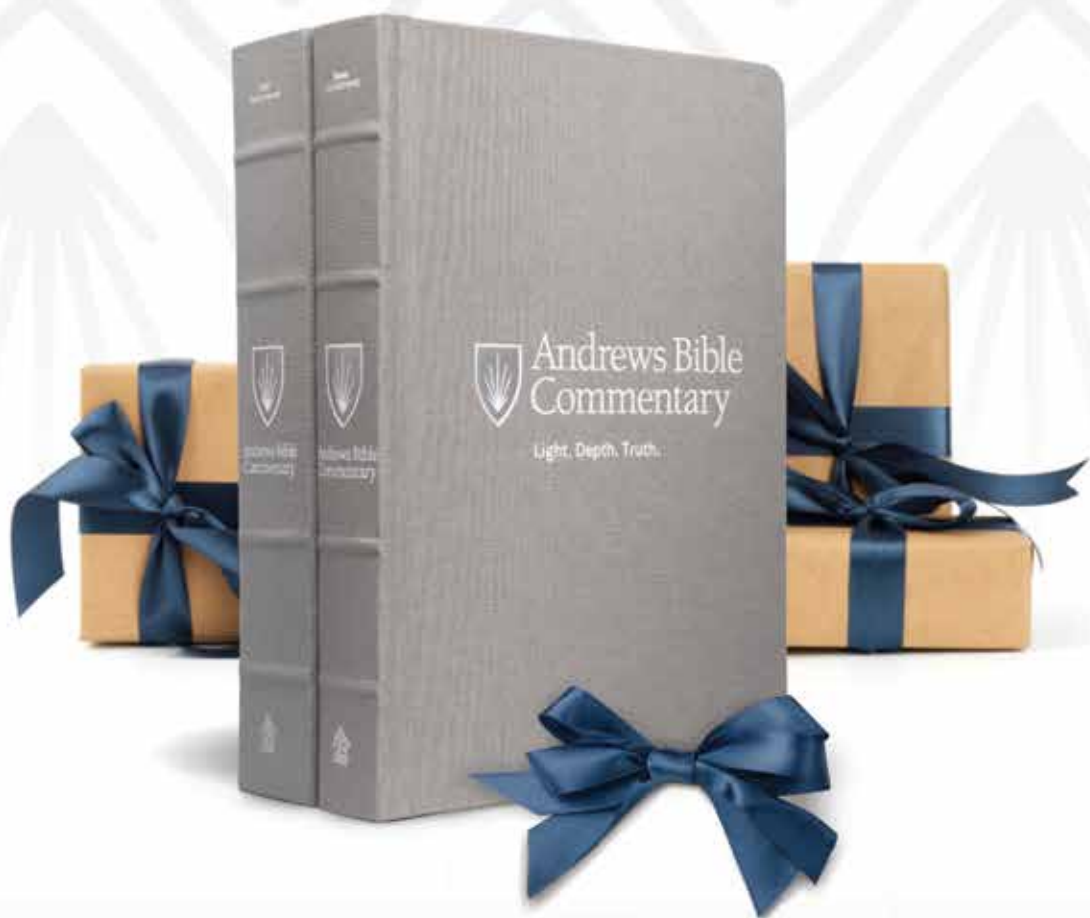
In other words, a commitment to obedience is not restrictive. Rather, it is productive of the greatest freedom possible. A freedom free of guilt, grief, and fear, and one that is bursting with possibilities. That's how it is possible to be "the strictest observer of [God's] law," as Ellen White says of Jesus, and yet move "in perfect freedom."<sup>\*</sup>

<sup>\*</sup> Ellen G. White, *In Heavenly Places* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1967), p. 54.

**Sikhululekile Daco** serves as an associate editor of *Adventist Review*.

AS LONG AS WE LIVE  
OUR LIVES ON THE  
EDGE OF WHAT GOD  
HAS FORBIDDEN, WE  
WILL FIND HIS  
PROHIBITIONS TOO  
RESTRICTIVE.

# *Give the Gift of Light. Depth. Truth.*



---

***The Adventist standard for the next generation***

---

Now complete in two rich and concise volumes  
10 years in the making | Written by 60 Adventist scholars

Adventist Book Center: 800-765-6955   Andrews University Press: 800-467-6369

**[universitypress.andrews.edu](http://universitypress.andrews.edu)**

# Exciting New Magazine About the Three Angels' Messages!

BRAND  
NEW FROM  
AMAZING  
FACTS

Perfect for Sharing and Mass Mailing!



## Earth's Final Warning: The Three Angels of Revelation

This captivating, beautifully designed, full-color magazine makes essential prophecy easy to understand and is the perfect resource for sharing with friends, family, and neighbors!

This attention-grabbing magazine, as well as Amazing Facts' 11 other sharing magazines, are available at great bulk prices—so stock up today! Please call us at 800-538-7275 for more information about tax-deductible mass-mailing opportunities!

**BK-3AMR ... \$2.95**

### BULK PRICING:

10+ \$2.45 ea. | 25+ \$2.10 ea. | 50+ \$1.95 ea. | 100+ \$1.50 ea. | 500+ \$1.20 ea. | 1,000+ \$1.10 ea.

### Or you can check out our ...

#### MASS-MAILING OPPORTUNITY

Mass mail *Earth's Final Warning: The Three Angels of Revelation* for as low as \$1.26 per home.\*

Now you or your church can share the truth in every home in your community for a low price. Reach more people with less expense by mass mailing *Earth's Final Warning: The Three Angels of Revelation*!

#### MASS-MAILING DISCOUNTS

Our mass-mailings offer the same product prices as buy-in-bulk; the prices below also include shipping costs to homes:

500+ homes, approx. \$1.88 per home\*

1,000+ homes, approx. \$1.56 per home\*

5,000+ homes, approx. \$1.26 per home\*

\*Prices are subject to change. Please call 800-538-7275 for current prices. Price per home includes both material and postage.



**AMAZING FACTS**  
INTERNATIONAL

ORDER NOW at [afbookstore.com](http://afbookstore.com).

Or call 800-538-7275, Mon–Thu, 8:30 AM – 6:00 PM PT.