

# ADVENTIST REVIEW

OCTOBER 2023: ZOMBIES AND THE UNDEAD + THE GREAT CONTROVERSY IS REAL + HALLOWEEN-LESS HOMES + FROM LOVE TO CREATION + WHO JESUS IS TO ME + THE MAN ON THE MIDDLE CROSS



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*How the first lie continues to deceive*



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

# 1



How Not to Keep  
Young Adults in the Church,  
by Shane Anderson

# 2



Hope Channel International Names  
Vyacheslav Demyan as President-elect

# 3



The Granite Bay Church Story,  
by Shenalyn Page

# 4



Adventist Young People Escape the Hawaii  
Fire, Turn to Relief Efforts  
by Danni Thaw

# 5



Science Educators Delve Into a Biblical  
Understanding of Earth History  
by Emerald Victorin Tobias



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JOHN PECKHAM



*Theology and truth are more important than many think, requiring discipleship of the mind.*

## Called to the Work of Studying

She was running hard, rushing to a meeting and pushing a carriage containing her infant son. She made it just in time to board the bus. When the bus reached her stop, she rushed off just as quickly as she had rushed on. But she forgot one thing. Her infant son.

Thankfully, she later caught up with the bus, and her son was fine. In her rush to an urgent appointment, she forgot that which was of far greater importance—her child!

Focusing on the urgent sometimes causes us to lose sight of the important. How often do you step back from the daily grind and ponder the big questions of life? It is all too easy to be caught up in the busyness of life and fail to stop and reflect on what matters most (one of many reasons I am thankful for the gift of the Sabbath).

One might be so heavenly minded that one is of no earthly good—as the saying goes. Likewise, one might become so caught up in mundane matters that one forgets that momentous celestial events are occurring not only in heaven but here and now (typically invisible to us, but real all the same—see, e.g., 2 Kings 6:14-17).

Scripture calls us to look beyond what seems urgent to the truly important, beyond the short term to the long view, remembering that this life is not all there is.

The meaning we invest in today is not all the meaning there is. The sufferings of today are temporary; pain and death will one day be no more. Death, the last enemy (1 Cor. 15:26), will be vanquished. Christ came to defeat death through the cross (see Heb. 2:14), and soon He will eradicate death—forevermore.

This issue of *Adventist Review* focuses on the state of the dead, one of the pillars of Adventist faith, which are bound together by the broader story of the cosmic conflict over *who* is good and *what* is true.

In direct contrast to Satan—the father of lies (see John 8:44)—Jesus came “into the world: to testify to the truth” (John 18:37, NASB). Theology and truth are more important than many think, requiring discipleship of the mind.

Our pioneers understood this well. Ellen White warned, “It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the human mind.”<sup>1</sup> “There are dangerous heresies that will be presented as Bible doctrines; and we are to become acquainted with the Bible so that we may know how to meet them. The faith of every individual will be tested, and everyone will pass through a trial of close criticism.”<sup>2</sup>

Should we not, then, devote great time and resources to making sure we are firmly rooted in biblical teachings? “God calls every one, both old and young, to make a diligent search in His word, that they may discover the rich jewels of truth. . . . All [are] called to the work of studying the Bible.”<sup>3</sup>

Today more than ever, our people need to see the beauty not only of the various theological points to which we assent, but of how those pieces fit together to form a grand picture of who God is, how He loves us, what has gone wrong, what God is doing to fix it, and the part He calls us to play alongside Him (among many other components).

Let us not wait until tragedy or crisis confronts us to ponder the most important matters of life and death. Let us commit ourselves to discipleship of our minds—feasting on Scripture toward “bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5). ♣

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946), p. 589.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 590, 591.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Sabbath School Work* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub Assn., 1938), p. 28.

## LOVE THE MISSION STORIES

I particularly enjoyed the stories by Eric B. Hare in the September 2023 issue of the *Review*. I think it would be advantageous for you to include mission stories like his in every issue. I suspect that many of our younger adult members (especially those who were baptized as adults) have not heard many of these stories and would appreciate them. They may be “old” stories, but so are the mission stories in the Bible. Good mission stories never get old.

**Walter Sumner**  
Canaan, Maine

## AN IMPORTANT TOPIC

The three articles on the topic of suicide, “The Final Good Night,” “Suicide and Suffering,” and “Self-killing in Scripture” (September 2023), address subjects seldom published in Seventh-day Adventist journals. Congratulations to the editors for publishing articles that tackle issues the Adventist Church has traditionally ignored, denied, or demeaned. We’re paying a high price for a closed mind. Thank you for offering a glimmer of openness.

It was also a delight to read the Eric B. Hare articles. Brought



Getting to know Him personally

This sermon was presented at the 2023 Alumni Weekend for Madelon Adventist Academy. Some of the oral presentation has been retained.—Editors.

**T**his is the first time I’ve stood on this stage in 40 years. That’s the same amount of time the children of Israel wandered! Forty years! What has changed? Companies were coming into the school during our winter year. Concrete signs were set after concerts, and we still had shop and home economics classes. Tablets were small pads of paper. Amazon was a region in South America, and Google was an extremely large number. Forty years ago we could not have imagined the changes in

the past several years. You probably remember where you were when the world shut down. For me, it was early Friday morning, and I was still in bed when I got the call announcing school was closed. In one night all schools and most businesses shut down. Who knew how long we would face empty stores, deserted grocery stores, and online school? Society continues to change, but not for the better. Vision searching for someone or something to blame dominates the media. I’ve had one response,

CAROLE HUENEGART FORD

MIKE WEAVER / SHUTTERSTOCK

to its people and to the Gentiles. The apostle Paul counseled, warned, and admonished the Corinthians to study the history of Israel for its examples (1 Cor. 10:1-13). This counsel is pertinent to Christians today. God’s chosen people, upon whom the end of the ages has come, must study the history of Israel.

**Richard Lane**  
Livonia, Michigan

## A SPECIAL YOKE

“Lord, today I surrender not just the burden but my ill-fitting yoke.” These words at the end of Lewis-Watkins’ article “The Yoke” (August 2023) reminded me of yokes in Jesus’ time. In His world, before the invention of mass production, each yoke was handcrafted and individually made. An owner would bring his ox to a carpenter (think carpenter’s shop in Nazareth), who would measure the ox and make the yoke. The owner would return with the ox so the carpenter could make needed adjustments to get the perfect fit. A good fit was necessary so the ox could pull without chafing. Though all yokes were similar, each was uniquely crafted for an individual ox or ox pair.

Yokes were instruments of service. Usually they were used to bring two animals together for

back memories of when we kids sat enthralled when Elder Hare came around to put on his act, often wearing tribal regalia—a spear and shield or other “heathen” paraphernalia—and it was a performance! Believe me, he was a superb actor and took advantage of his skill.

**Lawrence G. Downing**

## STUDY EXAMPLES

Thank you for the theme of “Influence” in the August 2023 issue of *Adventist Review*. It is example that begets influence. Old Israel lost its “chosen” status because of poor examples



service. More could be accomplished with two oxen pulling together—especially with a yoke crafted specifically for them. When I step under Jesus’ yoke, my creating redeeming loving God becomes my pulling partner, and I suspect it is a special yoke crafted for Him and me together.

**Bruce McClay**

*Battle Ground, Washington*

**GET OUT THERE**

I fully resonate with the article by Shawn Brace, “Do You ‘Mingle?’” in the August 2023 issue. In my professional life I once spent a year working with a group of people who were HIV-infected. On

a regular basis I sat at tables with them, sharing meals. Some began to share with me their experience with the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which was sometimes positive. Others were part of our so-called missing members. In my opinion we have not yet developed an effective ministry to identify and reach those who have essentially departed from our congregational life. Yes, we may reach some. All too often we do not even know that they exist within the boundaries of our area of ministry. Getting out into the general public is a start to place us in positions where spiritual ministry can occur.

**Gregory Matthews**

**AT THIS LATE TIME**

I believe “A Christian Power Grab,” by Stephen Allred, and “The Accidental Christian Nationalist,” by Bettina Krause, in the July 2023 *Adventist Review* are extremely timely and important.

I was hosting a live call-in radio broadcast at the very time 2 Chronicles 7:14 was “adopted” by the very militant Christian Right. I was there as one of the speakers thundered, “We have enough votes to run this country exactly as we want—Why aren’t we doing it?” The sincere but gullible Christian “mob” stomped their feet, then rose in a wild, cheering ovation.

In just a few short weeks 2 Chronicles 7:14 found its way into Adventism. Even many of our prominent leaders picked it up. Should we pray? Yes, of course. Should we ask God for forgiveness? Certainly. Should we, at this late time in prophetic fulfillment, be begging God to “heal [our] land”? Should we not rather, as did our faithful forefathers and foremothers of Hebrews 11, pray for and earnestly “desire a better [country], that is, a heavenly”?

**Ken Campbell**

*Deer Park, Washington*

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I certify that my statements above are correct and complete. Justin Kim, Editor		

**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 email messages). Letters will be edited for space and clarity only. Send correspondence to Letters to the Editor, *Adventist Review*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600; Internet: [letters@adventistreview.org](mailto:letters@adventistreview.org).

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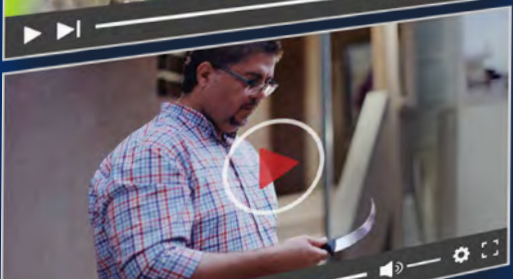
Ranja was held captive by the evil spirits that possessed her . . . until the day she turned on her radio.



## Trading Guns for God

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## Taking a Bold Stand

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**“Being the leader of a team of people sacrificing themselves every day... is a huge responsibility and an amazing opportunity to serve.”**

**Yuri Bondarenko, p. 11**

# NEWS



More than 40 Seventh-day Adventist science teachers embarked on a journey to explore various geological landmarks in the western United States in early August. PHOTO: LAKE UNION HERALD

## SCIENCE EDUCATORS DELVE INTO A BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF EARTH HISTORY

**THE GROUP VISITED GEOLOGICAL LANDMARKS IN ARIZONA, EXPLORING CONNECTIONS TO FAITH.**

**EMERAUDE VICTORIN TOBIAS, FOR LAKE UNION HERALD, AND ADVENTIST REVIEW**

**J**ust before the North American Division Educators' Convention in Phoenix, Arizona, in August, more than 40 Seventh-day Adventist science teachers embarked on a journey to explore various geological landmarks in that state.

The field trip, led by Geoscience Research Institute (GRI) scientists,

offered participants a firsthand experience that enhanced their appreciation and understanding of geology and the history of the earth, organizers said. The goal was to enable them to integrate faith and science more effectively in their classrooms. The group visited the Petrified Forest National Park, Grand

Canyon National Park, and Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument.

At the Petrified Forest National Park, teachers observed the remains of trees that had turned to stone, revealing the wonders of natural transformation. Here they discussed the process of fossilization, how

## We need to address [evolution], and also train [students] in how to see, understand, and stand up for the truth of science from the viewpoint of creation.

long it takes for wood to petrify, and how fossils paint a picture of past animal interactions and their environment. Walking among these fossilized tree logs provided the teachers an opportunity to discuss natural processes and sediment transport rates.

The trip through the Grand Canyon offered a setting for discussions surrounding the origins debate and the geologic record. As the educators gazed into the vast chasm, they could not help being humbled by the scale and complexity of the earth's geological history, organizers said.

Teachers were also presented with the unique opportunity to study the intricate rock formations that can be viewed through the lens of catastrophism or gradualism. Catastrophism is an approach to earth history that suggests that in the past the earth experienced a geological process or event of uncommon scale, such as a flood. Gradualism, or uniformitarianism, is a theory that the geologic record formed gradually and not by sudden change.

The teachers also observed fossilized footprints and other fossils embedded in the rock while hiking down into the canyon on the South Kaibab Trail.

After experiencing the wonders of nature and absorbing the information presented, educators engaged in in-depth discussions

and workshops provided by GRI director Ronny Nalin, along with scientists Ben Clausen, Tim Standish, and Raul Esperante. They explored ways to effectively blend faith and science in classroom teaching, with the presenters suggesting that it is possible to respect science while remaining faithful to God and the Bible.

"As educators," Evelyn Hainey, a teacher at Thompsonville Christian School in Illinois, said, "we stress the importance of learning to read for our students, and this trip gave us the tools we need to begin learning to read the rocks. How the chemical composition of the rocks changes the shapes, colors, and textures of the rocks. How the layers and distribution of fossils within the layers opens a window on how one can use challenge and contrast as a starting point for introducing a biblical time line to a student."

Her colleague, Elizabeth Atencio, said her takeaway lesson was the importance of not trying to hide reality from her elementary school students. "Sheltering them from things like evolution will not help them, as they will simply encounter it later in life somewhere else," she said. "Instead, we need to address it, but also train them in how to see, understand, and stand up for the truth of science from the viewpoint of creation."

Armed with fresh perspectives

and a commitment to nurturing their students' spiritual and scientific growth, participants said they now seek to ignite a transformative spark in the education community. Organizers agreed. "They will be prepared to enrich the lives of their students by fostering a deeper appreciation for the natural world and its Creator," they said.

Rachel Jameson, a teacher at Edenville Seventh-day Adventist Elementary School, said, "I am resolved to make a greater effort to give my students field experience in the sciences and to teach them that although we may not be able to explain all the evidence we find, we can still trust what God says in His Word."

### ABOUT THE GEOSCIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Based in Loma Linda, California, United States, GRI's mission is to explore the natural world, seeking to develop and share an understanding of nature consistent with biblical teaching as expressed in the Adventist Church's fundamental belief on creation. GRI resources available for educators include books, articles, posters, a valuable collection of websites, PowerPoint slides, photos, and videos. These resources can be used to plan and supplement lessons for various natural science subjects. ▀



Angelia mobile clinic is making a difference for hundreds of internally displaced people across Ukraine.

PHOTO: ANGELIA CLINIC

## AMID THE HORROR, ADVENTIST PSYCHIATRIST IN UKRAINE COUNTS HIS BLESSINGS

ANGELIA CLINIC IS PROVIDING LIFESAVING SERVICES TO RESIDENTS IN WAR ZONES.

MARCOS PASEGGI, ADVENTIST REVIEW

Imagine you live in a city, and every day you hear shootings in your city, and you are one of the teachers at a local school. Imagine you don't have the possibility of not going to school, so every day could be your last day. Now imagine this school has a dormitory, and there is a night shooting in this dormitory.

How can you assist those living with such high levels of stress and trauma? By being there to listen, pray, and give a hug, Angelia Clinic CEO and psychiatrist Yuri Bondarenko says. On August 3, at the Adventist-laymen's Services and Industries (ASi) annual convention in Kansas City, Missouri, Bondarenko shared what he and his team are doing to support and encourage people living through this ordeal.

### ANGELIA CLINIC

The clinic, located in Kyiv, opened its doors in 2014 as a social center, helping migrants from eastern Ukraine, people with disabilities, elderly individuals, women, and chil-

dren. Angelia Clinic was born to cooperate with public and charity organizations initiatives such as the ones implemented by the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Ukraine, ADRA Canada, and ADRA Germany, its leaders shared.

In 2016 the center received a medical license. "The creation of this clinic is based on the idea of applying a holistic approach to treatment and disease prevention, combining physical, emotional, and spiritual health," the clinic's website says.

### COUNTING HIS BLESSINGS

"I am experiencing blessings, many blessings" despite the reality of the war in Ukraine, Bondarenko says. "Being the leader of a team of people sacrificing themselves every day, at the clinic in Kyiv and in mobile trips . . . is a huge responsibility and an amazing opportunity to serve."

When the war started in February 2022, the Angelia team decided right away to increase their mobile clinic activities. Angelia leaders got

some vans and turned them into mobile clinics. Now they are the largest mobile clinic group in Ukraine, serving internally displaced people (IDPs) in formerly occupied liberated territories where there is no medical infrastructure.

"We also delivered humanitarian aid with a team of more than 20 doctors and nurses," Bondarenko says, "going there and helping them, praying with them, hugging them, providing professional care."

### HORRIFIC TESTIMONIES

Angelia practitioners also provided much-needed psychological and psychiatric care, as some of the ordeals people went through were horrific.

Bondarenko shared the recent story of a patient who came to talk to an Angelia gynecologist because of her lack of a menstrual cycle. The patient was highly traumatized after witnessing her husband and mother murdered. When the doctor examined her, she discovered that the woman was pregnant. "It was

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the most difficult patient I have had in my professional life," the gynecologist told Bondarenko. "I had to tell her that she was pregnant from her recently deceased husband, and I didn't know what to say."

He also shared about a recent visit to a village where 180 out of the 200 houses in town are in ruins. Most homeowners are farmers with a few acres of land. In two days Bondarenko took care of 17 patients who needed psychiatric care.

"The 17 that I tried to help had lost their homes," he says. "In fact, my makeshift medical office had only two walls and two massive holes. I asked my first patient, 'Where do you live?' and she pointed out to the ruins around her and said, 'This is my home.'"

### PRAYERS AND HUGS

Bondarenko also shared the story of a woman whom he talked out of committing suicide. The woman had two acres of land, and in that relatively small plot, 30 rockets had fallen, five of them without exploding. The territory around her is all mined. In fact, the road to the village is the only safe place right now, Bondarenko says. "I also prayed with the woman, as I often do with many of my patients, even though as a psychiatrist I am not supposed to," he adds. "And she thanked me for listening and even smiled."

He also described a recent visit to a city with three local Adventist churches. "Those churches are filled with 300 visitors every week, and only 20 percent of the visitors are Adventists," Bondarenko says. "Church members feel it is a blessing, because God can always transform evil into good, and He is always faithful."

### STORY OF A MIRACLE

In one of those churches, members experienced what they consider a miracle. One day the local church pastor was in the building, even though his family was already in an underground shelter. Suddenly the pastor felt an urgent need to drink water. As he went to grab a glass of water, a rocket fell through the roof, crossed the corridor where he had been a few seconds before, made a hole in the wall, and blew up outside the building.

"I visited that church, and now you can see the whole neighborhood is attending every Sabbath [Saturday]," Bondarenko says. "There are only 60 chairs in the sanctuary, so every Sabbath 60 people fill the building, even though only five of them are church members."

It is what gives the team strength to keep going. "God is powerful, more powerful than any war," he says. 📌

*Angelia Clinic is an independent supporting ministry and not operated by the corporate Seventh-day Adventist Church.*

## NAD EDUCATORS' CONVENTION ATTENDEES EXPLORE THE EXHIBIT HALL

ADVENTIST SCHOOL PARTICIPANTS GO THROUGH ADVENTURES IN EDUCATION.

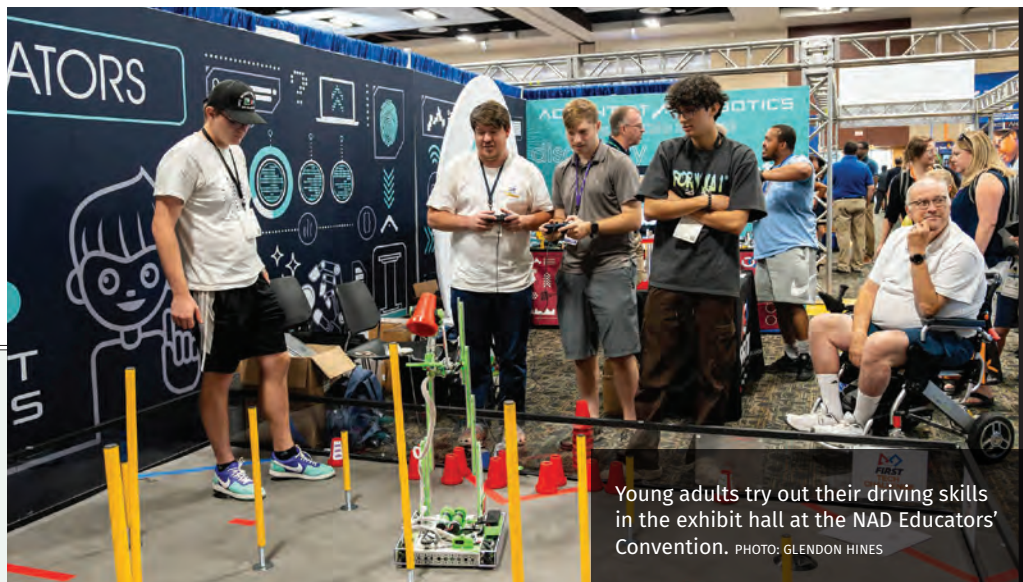
NICOLE DOMINGUEZ, FOR NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION NEWS

At 2:00 p.m. on Monday, August 7, the North American Division (NAD) Educators' Convention Exhibit Hall doors opened. At the "Something Better" convention kickoff event students, educators, and administrators flooded the Phoenix Convention Center in Arizona for a chance to browse the 150 exhibits offering endless tools, ministries, organizations, and resources, each designed to support the needs of Adventist education.

For three days attendees were able to explore a wide variety of exhibitors providing high-tech options, classroom aids, new curriculum programs, and a look at the higher education offerings in the division.

Tertiary institutions such as Southern Adventist University and Loma Linda University operated booths to share their department programs, including master's degrees and STEM programs, such as EXSEED. Loma Linda offered a 360-degree camera at the booth for an immersive experience. Students and teachers alike were able to learn about the university's new programs.

Adventist Learning Community (ALC) was a prominent presence in the exhibit hall, with a seating area



Young adults try out their driving skills in the exhibit hall at the NAD Educators' Convention. PHOTO: GLENDON HINES

and information on programs, courses, and a podcast network. In a mobile podcast studio, educators could book a recording session and a spot where they could be recorded for a segment answering the prompt “Why I Teach.”

“We have thousands of free courses and resources specifically for Adventist educators,” ALC director Adam Fenner said, with each course, podcast, and video designed to “connect with other teachers, collaborate on classroom projects, and utilize our SBL database.”

Across the aisle was an organization that spotlighted film. Son-screen Film Festival rolled out the red carpet for attendees, sharing the booth with other NAD heavy hitters such as the Society of Adventist Communicators and *Adventist Journey*.

Adventist Education Technology, or AE Tech, showed off high-quality production equipment that could benefit educators, from studio-grade microphones and cameras to a re-creation of a podcast set, complete with equipment for live episodes. Desmond Suarez II, a teacher at Richmond Academy in Virginia and a Columbia Union TDEC representative, commented, “We really want to get teachers and

schools excited about producing their own content on their campuses, whether it’s podcasts, school promo videos, recording and broadcasting their live events, or getting students to create films.”

Indeed, technology was a core presence for the exhibit hall through organizations such as AE Connect, NAD Cloud, and Adventist Robotics. Each fills a vital need within every aspect of education, whether helping create a student information system designed for Adventist education or IT resources for Adventist institutions in the NAD, organizers said.

Adventist Robotics incorporated tech development and interactive learning through two obstacle courses designed to test the skill set of robots made by high schoolers and middle schoolers. In the center of the exhibit hall was The STEM Experience, a booth created to highlight didactic learning and new teaching methods for science and engineering for every age with small puzzles, prototypes, and engineering projects.

The STEM Experience was one of many booths to offer an interactive experience for those milling around the hall. Multiple booths, sharing new children’s curricula and new

methods for early education, have found a way to capture the hands-on impact of teaching. Bursting with colors, treats, activities, and information, quite a few organizations and ministries committed to making their booths as playful as possible, capturing the whimsy and curiosity of childhood as well as youthful exuberance for God.

For many of those attending, the NAD Educators’ Convention was a full-circle experience, with the exhibit hall also serving as a place to fellowship. Former coworkers had a chance to reconnect. Colleagues from different unions, conferences, and divisions were able to meet in person for the first time after connecting through the Adventist network. Old classmates were brought together again years after their graduation. And best of all, teachers who have been dedicated to their profession for decades were reunited with former pupils who went on to become teachers themselves.

When exhibitor Suarez was asked what makes the NAD Educators’ Convention such a joyful experience, he said something that many attendees could wholeheartedly agree with: “The best part of any good conference is connecting with people.”

## BRI AND ANDREWS UNIVERSITY RELEASE LANDMARK BOOK ON ADVENTIST DOCTRINE

JOHN C. PECKHAM'S *GOD WITH US* IS A WORK FOR GENERAL AND CLASSROOM READERS.

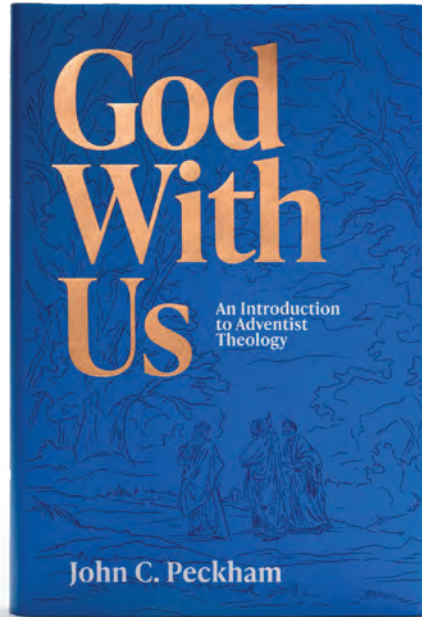
### ANDREWS UNIVERSITY NEWS

The General Conference Biblical Research Institute (BRI) and Andrews University have partnered to publish a book for general and classroom readers that theologically examines each of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's fundamental beliefs.

Titled *God With Us: An Introduction to Adventist Theology*, the book is authored by John C. Peckham, research professor of theology and Christian philosophy at Andrews University and recently appointed associate editor of *Adventist Review/Adventist World*. The book was commissioned and edited by BRI, with its first purpose to be a foundational, accessible, and yet scholarly introduction to Adventist belief for undergraduate and graduate students. Published by Andrews University Press, the world church's primary academic publishing house, *God With Us* is also designed and promoted beyond the classroom for the general readership of the church.

BRI director Elias Brasil de Souza, who wrote the foreword to the book, said, "We are very glad to have partnered with Andrews University to bring this work to the Adventist world and beyond. It is much needed. There have been other textbooks dealing with Adventist doctrine and other presentations of our fundamental beliefs. Peckham's work stands out because of his thoughtful, highly readable presentation, which is informed by his perspective as one of our church's leading theologians."

Broad editorial aspects of Peckham's work were supervised by BRI associate director Frank M. Hasel. In his role as theological editor, Hasel arranged for review of Peckham's work by other theologians and worked with Peckham to put the manuscript in its final form for submission to Andrews for publication. "The title of Peckham's book beautifully describes the organizing principle behind his treatment of Adventist doctrine," Hasel said. "Peckham shows that, in the most profound way, every aspect of foundational biblical theology, as understood by Adventists, is framed by God's desire to be with and for His people. We see that most obviously in Creation, the Incarnation, the Sabbath, the Second Coming, the sanctuary, and, as Peckham skillfully shows, in every other aspect of our fundamental beliefs. His insightful interaction with other theological positions gives the



reader a deeper understanding of the beauty, coherence, and uniqueness of Adventist theology. His book will be a significant reference point for Adventist theology for years to come."

Dwight K. Nelson, former lead pastor of Pioneer Memorial church at Andrews University, said that "*God With Us* is classic Peckham—carefully reasoned, meticulously shaped, yet winsomely user-friendly for life beyond the academy."

Walla Walla University president John McVay wrote, "If you are looking for clear, accessible writing tracing the grandest stories and themes while unpacking gentle, persuasive, reasoned faith, you've found it."

Sung Wook Chung, a well-known evangelical professor of Christian theology at Denver Seminary, endorsed the book by saying, "This excellent piece of theological work will lead to John Peckham being regarded as one of the most authoritative voices alive today on Adventist theology. A must-read for anyone interested in the contemporary shape of not only Adventist theology but also broader evangelical theology."

Peckham was a professor of theology and Christian philosophy at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews before his recent appointment. Previously he taught at Southwestern Adventist University. Several of his previous books have been released to wide acclaim by Baker, Eerdmans, and other evangelical publishers. *God With Us* was released by Andrews University Press in mid-August, and is available now from Adventist Book Centers and from An-



## ALVIN M. KIBBLE, FORMER NAD VICE PRESIDENT, DIES AT 76

HE IS REMEMBERED AS A VISIONARY AND A MENTOR OF OTHER LEADERS.

KIMBERLY LUSTE MARAN, NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION NEWS

**A**lvin Maurice Kibble, former vice president for the North American Division (NAD) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, passed to his rest on Friday evening, August 11, in Temecula, California, after a fall that resulted in a brain injury. He was 76.

Kibble served in ministry for more than 50 years. A seasoned pastor and administrator, he was pastor of eight churches and contributed more than 35 years in church administration.

“Elder Kibble was far ahead of the NAD in terms of how we used big data and social media in a big way. He pressed the administration to jump into that arena,” NAD president G. Alexander Bryant said.

“It was a true delight to work shoulder-to-shoulder with him,” Bryant added. “Elder Kibble was a true visionary; he modeled servant leadership in a supreme manner. He was a personal friend, mentor, and colleague. I often turned to him for counsel and advice in critical matters, and I always marveled at how balanced he could approach almost any issue.”

### REMARKABLE LEADERSHIP

Kibble exemplified servant leadership. He held this as his personal mission statement: “Cooperating

with God in the work of salvation to live a full, rich, well-balanced, and Christ-centered life of disinterested benevolence with eternity in view.”

Kibble began his pastoral work in 1969 in Jersey City, New Jersey, and served in churches in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. He married the love of his life, the former Jewel L. Peck of Cleveland, Ohio, a registered nurse and a musician, in 1971.

He enjoyed a long tenure at the Allegheny East Conference, including positions as conference executive secretary, conference vice president, and later president.

Kibble served as an NAD vice president for 20 years. While at the NAD, Kibble chaired the Breath of Life Television Ministry executive committee, Adventist Information Ministry board, *Liberty* editorial board, Pine Forge Academy and Oakwood University boards, PARL advisory committee, NAD litigation committee, and the Regional [Conference] Scholarship committee.

During a retirement celebration for Kibble in 2020, Carlton P. Byrd, president of Southwestern Regional Conference and former speaker/director for Breath of Life Ministries, said, “A statesman is a skilled, experienced, and respected leader figure. . . . When we think

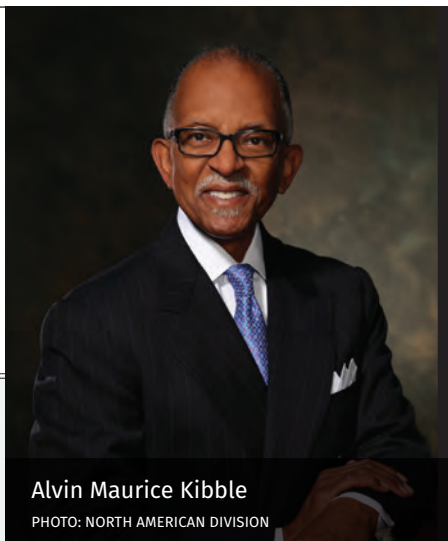
of modern-day statesmen of the Adventist Church in North America, the name ‘Alvin Kibble’ must be called,” he said. “His service, leadership, counsel, and words of admonition have all benefited the Adventist Church.”

At that same event, NAD executive secretary Kyoshin Ahn recalled a specific conversation he had had with Kibble years before.

“We were talking about race and diversity. You were truly concerned for the future of the church, and you even got emotional. There was genuine love shown in that conversation. That day I realized how much you love this church and care about its future,” Ahn said.

In response to this and other comments offered at his retirement celebration, Kibble offered advice drawn from his years of studying golf. “Make every stroke count. Take deadly aim—aim as if your life depended on it. What you’re doing is so valuable and important for this church. Don’t waste anything. And don’t spend your time complaining about what you don’t have, when you have the forces of heaven backing you up,” he said.

Kibble’s life is celebrated by his wife, Jewel, sons Santo and Jason, and four grandchildren. ♣



Alvin Maurice Kibble

PHOTO: NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION



Debra Brill, center, with Bonita Shields (left), and Ella Simmons (right)

PHOTO: NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

## DEBRA BRILL, FORMER NAD VICE PRESIDENT FOR MINISTRIES, PASSES TO HER REST

SHE WAS THE SECOND WOMAN TO HOLD THAT POSITION AT THE NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION.

KIMBERLY LUSTE MARAN, NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION, AND *ADVENTIST REVIEW*

**D**ebra Clements Brill, former vice president for ministries for the North American Division (NAD), passed to her rest on August 27 at her home in Jamaica, Virginia, after an extended illness. She was 71.

Brill retired on October 1, 2019, after serving the division as a vice president for 21 years. “It’s been my great joy to work with gifted leaders who love God and His church!” Brill said upon her retirement.

“My heart sank as I received the news of Debra’s passing. She was a colleague, a friend, and a tremendous example of Christian grace,” NAD president G. Alexander Bryant said. “Debra was an unusual and unique blend of dignified strength, humility, compassion, vision, and calm perseverance. She could always find an encouraging word to say during the most difficult circumstances. She knew how to navigate the complexities of church structure to get things done. I consider it a high honor to have worked beside her for more than 10 years.”

“I would go to Debra’s office when I was faced with a challenging situation and learn from her. I always felt empowered by our conversations,” NAD associate

secretary Bonita Joyner Shields said. “When asked to follow her as vice president, I never felt as if I had to ‘fill her shoes,’ because I knew she was right there rooting me on. Her impact on my life—personally and professionally—was immeasurable.”

In the vice president role Brill served as administrative liaison and chair of NAD committees and boards of several ministries, including the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA); Adventist Community Services (ACS); Adult, Children’s, Deaf, Disabilities, Family, and Health ministries, among others.

Brill, with 33 years of denominational employment, currently holds the record for longest-serving vice president of the NAD; and she was the second woman to occupy a vice president position at the division. The first woman to hold the position had been Rose Otis. Shields replaced Brill in 2019; and was replaced in 2021 by Wendy Eberhardt.

### EMPOWERED FOR MINISTRY AND SERVICE

“I followed in the footsteps of Rose Otis, who was an amazing evangelist, and also a mentor to

me,” Brill said during an interview around the time of her retirement. “At the time there was not a track for women. There were so few women pastors, and there were so few women even in conference leadership, much less union leadership. So I did not feel adequate. But people believed in me, and then NAD president Alfred C. McClure said, ‘We want you to come and work with the leaders here at the division.’ And, in fact, he did poll them, and they were supportive.”

Before her work as an NAD vice president, Brill served as executive director for research and development, Church Resources Consortium, at the Pacific Union Conference, and in the Potomac Conference as associate director for Adult and Children’s ministries and special projects. She was elected as an NAD vice president at the 1998 year-end meeting.

Brill is survived by her husband, George, former associate director for NAD Information Technology Services; their two children and their spouses; and three grandchildren. A memorial took place September 10 at Collegedale Seventh-day Adventist Church in Collegedale, Tennessee. 🍀



**SABBATH GIFT INITIATIVE REACHES 1.4 MILLION VIEWS.** The Sabbath Gift initiative has been designed to draw attention to the benefits of the Sabbath as a time of rest and restoration, community, and connection in today's stressful, face-paced, and isolated world. The initiative intended to share that Sabbath is a gift from a loving God. This innovative social media campaign launched in the South Pacific Division in June. Since its launch, the promotion has drawn nearly 20,000 people to the Sabbath Gift website, which serves as a central hub for engagement.



**PAINTINGS OF JESUS' MIRACLES OFFER HOPE IN SURINAME.** The Adventist Suriname Mission in Paramaribo, Suriname, hosted a special art exhibition in July for the community that showcased paintings depicting the miracles of Jesus. The works were painted by Ludwig Yzer, an Adventist and native of Suriname, who illustrated Jesus in a contemporary setting reflecting the current state of society, with the objective of inspiring believers and nonbelievers about Jesus' parables and miracles. The art exhibition saw more than 450 visitors during the 25 days it was showcased.



**ADVENTISTS IN VIETNAM CELEBRATE HUNDREDS OF BAPTISMS.** The Adventist Church in Vietnam witnessed a historic milestone as a major mass baptism ceremony unfolded concurrently in numerous places across the country on the last Sabbath of July. More than 370 people were baptized. The event marked the culmination of a yearlong effort by the Vietnam Mission. The mission united its people, and hundreds of care groups were formed as part of the preparation to engage with the local community, reaching out to individuals' interests and building connections.



**CAMPOREE PARTICIPANTS IN KOREA ARE CHALLENGED TO "FOCUS ON THE VISION."** From August 1 to 5 the Northern Asia-Pacific Division Youth Department hosted the third regional Pathfinder Camporee at Sahmyook University in Seoul, South Korea. The camporee lasted four days and five nights. Under the theme "Focus on the Vision," more than 2,300 Pathfinder members and leaders from around the world, including Taiwan, Japan, Mongolia, the United States, Mexico, the Philippines, and the host country of South Korea, participated.



**INNOVATIVE EVANGELISTIC SERIES DEBUTS IN NEW ZEALAND.** For the first time, Hope Channel New Zealand partnered with local churches in an innovative evangelistic series titled Unbreakable Hope. The series launched on September 24 and encompasses eight episodes, with the initial six airing on Hope Channel over six weeks. Each episode is repeated at various times over the seven days before transitioning to the next episode the following week. The last two episodes have been produced to show in churches, facilitating a connection between Hope Channel and the local church environment. Viewers will be directed to participating local churches via the show's website.



**HOPE CHANNEL INTERNATIONAL NAMES VYACHESLAV DEMYAN AS PRESIDENT-ELECT.** On August 29 the board of directors of Hope Channel International (HCI) named Demyan as president-elect. He will succeed Derek Morris, who has served as president since 2016 and announced his retirement as of October 31. Demyan joined HCI in 2019 as the vice president of programming after serving as director general of the Hope Media Group Ukraine for 11 years. For the past four years he has guided the development and execution of programming to support HCI's missiological goals.



#### ADVENTIST REVIEW MINISTRIES NEWSLETTER

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# SAME, SAME, BUT DIFFERENT

ADAM RAMDIN



In our home city of Nottingham there is a Thai restaurant I have gone to several times. The food is good, and the ambience feels authentic. There are tuk-tuks (auto rickshaws) you can sit and eat in; the kitchen looks like a street kitchen; and the plates and utensils are rustic. Above the kitchen there are several pictures, signs, and memorabilia to remind those who have been to Thailand of Thailand.

One of the signs, written in neon, says “Same, Same, but Different.” In Thailand it’s a phrase you hear often to express the thought that while things are different, they are still similar. And while we all may be different, we share the same deep questions about life and death: Who am I? Where do I come from? Where am I going? These questions transcend language, race, culture, and religion. Questions that surround the subject of death, where we will end up after death, and what happens to us trouble every person on Planet Earth.

## Deceptive ideas on death have permeated almost every belief system in the world.

The last great deception before Jesus returns will be the same as the first deception Satan told Eve—she would not surely die. In Revelation 16 the Bible describes three unclean spirits coming out of the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet and uniting to deceive many. The dragon is unmasked as Satan in Revelation 12:9, the serpent, which hearkens back to Eden and the first deception regarding immortality and death. It’s same, same, but different.

### THE BIBLICAL BELIEF ON DEATH

The truth about death reveals God as a just, fair, and loving Creator. God never intended for anyone to fear death, which is partly why, I believe, the Bible describes death as a sleep (John 11:11-14). Most people are not scared of sleeping; it is a restful and peaceful experience. In Genesis 2:7 the Bible says that man was formed from the dust of the ground, God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. It’s like a mathematical equation: a human is made from dust and breath, and this produces a living soul. The living soul does not exist unless the dust and the breath are combined.

When a person dies, the dust goes back to the ground, the breath or life goes back to God, who gave it, and the living soul ceases to exist (Eccl. 12:7). There is not another element, a spirit that remains or floats around in the atmosphere. While the Bible also uses the term *spirit* as part of a person, it is a term that is sometimes used interchangeably with breath (Job 27:3; 33:4). The Bible outlines that at death both the living and the wicked sleep in the grave until the resurrection: some to the resurrection of life and some to the resurrection of the wicked (John 5:28, 29).

At the Second Coming the graves will open, and the righteous will ascend to heaven. Prior to the Second Coming, however, there will be a huge deception campaign by Satan himself with the goal of deceiving as many as pos-

Death is an emotional topic to discuss and a difficult experience to go through.

The separation from loved ones is something we all fear.

sible. The deceptions at the end will involve ideas about death, because death concerns every person. While the roots and content of the deception are exactly the same, the actual manifestation of it will look different. Perhaps no one today would be deceived by a serpent talking to us from a tree, but Satan may come from another angle, one we least expect.

The British Museum in London, England, one of the world's premier museums, has a permanent exhibition on death.<sup>1</sup> It shows how various cultures and religions around the world view death: what their rituals are and how their belief system impacts their cultural practices.

Death is an emotional topic to discuss and a difficult experience to go through. The separation from loved ones is something we all fear. Even Jesus, when He was dying on the cross, looked up to heaven and cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46). No one wants to lose connection with someone they love, and the allure of communicating with someone they've lost is appealing. This looks different depending on one's culture or religion.

I once heard a story from an older minister and friend whose son had died in the Vietnam War. Several years after his son's death, when my friend was in his bedroom getting changed, his "son" reappeared to him in full Army dress uniform. To prove it was really him, he lifted his trouser leg to show an ankle tattoo he had. When this spirit was rebuked in the name of Jesus, it instantly disappeared, but it is a clear example of trying to appeal to someone's sense of loss on an emotional level to open them up to further deceptions.

#### MODERN SPIRITUALISM

In the United States and Western Europe the birth of modern spiritualism is linked to the Fox sisters from New York State. Mysterious rapping/knocking sounds were heard in the house, said by many to be the result of supernatural forces. While some have sought to downplay its authenticity, those connected to the cause firmly believe it, and Ellen White confirms that it was true. When I visited the Fox sisters' house to film an episode of *Lineage Journey*,<sup>2</sup> I met the husband of the manager of the site, who told me clearly that it was all real.

“Many endeavor to account for spiritual manifestations by attributing them wholly to fraud and sleight of hand on the part of the medium. But while it is true that the results of trickery have often been palmed off as genuine manifestations, there have been, also, marked exhibitions of supernatural power. The mysterious rapping with which modern spiritualism began was not the result of human trickery or cunning, but was the direct work of evil angels, who thus introduced one of the most successful of soul-destroying delusions. Many will be ensnared through the belief that spiritualism is a merely human imposture; when brought face to face with manifestations which they cannot but regard as supernatural, they will be deceived, and will be led to accept them as the great power of God.”<sup>3</sup>

It’s interesting that the Fox sisters’ house is located just about eight miles from Hiram Edson’s barn, said by many Seventh-day Adventist historians to be the theological birthplace of the Adventist Church. Two major end-time movements being formed during the same decade with roots in such close proximity doesn’t seem coincidental. The spiritualistic movement reborn in modern times in this obscure house in upstate New York has pervaded and permeated all aspects of society and culture. Music, TV, film, children’s cartoons, and video games have been saturated by this ideology.

Horror films are an increasingly sought-after genre, particularly among members of Generation Z, who watch them at a greater frequency than Millennials, Generation X, or baby boomers. Thirty-two percent of Generation Z have watched a horror film during the past month, in comparison to just 20 percent of millennials, 7 percent of Generation X, and 2 percent of baby boomers.<sup>4</sup> In 2000 approximately 200 horror films were produced. That number increased to 1,000 by 2016.<sup>5</sup> This subject matter conditions people’s minds. In addition to this, children’s cartoons frequently have the theme of life after death infused.

While modern spiritualism has impacted mainly Christian and post-Christian cultures in the United States and Western Europe, the deceptive ideas on death have permeated almost every belief system in the world. For example, in Hinduism the belief is that you are reincarnated, not really dead until your soul settles on its true nature. In Sikhism the belief is that the soul reincarnates.

## END-TIME DECEPTIONS PREDICTED

We are told, in Matthew 24, the signs of the end of the world. In this chapter the word “deceive” (or “deception”), or an allusion to this idea, comes up more than five times. We are told that there will be false christs and false prophets that will deceive, if possible, even the elect. In 2 Corinthians 11:13, 14, we are also told that Satan has the ability to appear as an angel of light, as he did when he tempted Jesus in the wilderness. At the end of time he still possesses this ability and will use it to mislead those who are not rooted in Scripture.

If the majority of the non-Christian world already embraces a misunderstanding of death, if the majority of the Christian world believes in a concept of death that’s been heavily influenced by the writings of such philosophers as Plato, and if the majority of the atheistic and agnostic secular society has been influenced by the spread of modern spiritualistic ideology, then the majority are poised to be swept up in the final deception.

In *The Great Controversy* we read this warning: “The last great delusion is soon to open before us. Antichrist is to perform his marvelous works in our sight. So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures. By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested.”<sup>6</sup> May we be vigilant and live our lives by every word of God, that we may not be deceived at the end. 🗡️

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/galleries/living-and-dying>

<sup>2</sup> [https://lineagejourney.com/video\\_episodes/14-the-birth-of-spiritualism-and-the-state-of-the-dead](https://lineagejourney.com/video_episodes/14-the-birth-of-spiritualism-and-the-state-of-the-dead)

<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 553.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.virginmedia.com/virgin-tv-edit/tv/why-we-are-living-in-the-golden-age-of-horror-expert-interviews#:~:text=The number of horror movies,according to The Horror Report.>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1342712/horror-movies-theater-viewing-generation-united-states/>

<sup>6</sup> E. G. White, p. 593.

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**Adam Ramdin** works for the North England Conference. He is also the executive producer and speaker for *Lineage Journey*, a video series exploring our spiritual heritage.

# DEATH:

## IS IT THE FINAL FRONTIER?

I'm thankful my grandma is in heaven now and her suffering is over," remarked a young Adventist on social media recently. Unfortunately, her understanding of what happens when a loved one dies is not unique! Today's world offers various explanations about humanity's state after death, including "sending Grandma directly to heaven." Such human explanations are only theoretical and speculative, however.

For centuries humans have gazed up at the stars and wondered where we came from. What are we? Why are we here? What happens after we die? These are the great mysteries of life, and they continue to fascinate us. Yet scientists, poets, theologians, and world religion pedagogues present conflicting answers to the great questions of human origins and destiny.

CINDY TUTSCH



## **GOD'S WORD PROVIDES AUTHORITATIVE ANSWERS**

So how can we know what happens when we die?

Jesus was no ordinary man. He came from heaven to live on earth as the God-man, entered the mysterious sphere of death, and then rose from the dead. He has the keys to all knowledge of life and death, and He shared that knowledge with humans through the Holy Spirit. The Bible is the result of this divine collaboration, and it contains authoritative answers to the big questions about the universe. In a world that is increasingly secular, it's more important than ever to submit our human thought, reason, and scientific demonstration to God's Word.

## **COSMIC SIGNIFICANCE OF LUCIFER AND CHRIST IN CONFLICT**

Seventh-day Adventists believe that the world is a battlefield between good and evil, between Christ and Satan. You and I are right in the middle of this battle and are picking sides with every choice of our lives. Lucifer, the evil antagonist, is the root of all suffering, pain, disaster, and death. This cosmic conflict is also the key to understanding human history, purpose, and future.

Here's the backstory: Lucifer, chief of God's angelic host, harbored rebellion against God, aspired to become as God and even to usurp His position. Abusing the freedom God gave His created beings, Lucifer persisted in his envy, rebellion, and desire for predominance. Actual war broke out in heaven, and Lucifer was cast down to earth, with the inference of one third of the celestial beings joining the insurgency.

Lucifer now became known as Satan, the avowed adversary of God and the slanderer of His character of love. In this way Lucifer became "the father of lies" and prepared to beguile God's newest creation. Had Lucifer been immediately annihilated, created beings would have served God from fear, rather than from willing hearts.

## **GOD'S PURPOSE FOR HUMANITY'S CREATION**

The triune God didn't just create the world with all its life forms and leave it to its own devices. He had a plan for it from eternity! And the centerpiece of His plan was humanity, you and I. We are created in His own image, capable of love, creativity, and compassion. God's intention was that the earth would be filled with happy and holy friends after His own heart (cf. Gen. 1:28).

## **THE ENTRANCE OF SIN**

Satan determined to ruin the peace and joy of God's newest children in Eden. Of all that was in their garden home, only the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil was forbidden to them. They could obey and enjoy their Eden home forever, or they could disobey, bringing misery, ruin, and, ultimately, death. Adam and Eve were warned that Satan was a deceiver, but Satan, disguised as a serpent, tricked Eve into believing that she wouldn't die if she ate what God had prohibited. Both Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit. Because of their sin, death came to this planet, and Satan became the "god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4, KJV).

Pain, suffering, evil, and death are all consequences of sin. God didn't want any of this to happen, but He gave Adam and Eve—and gives us—free will. We can choose to obey Him or disobey Him.

Though Adam and Eve separated themselves from God, the Source of life, He had an eternal plan for them to be forgiven and brought back into full harmony with Himself. Though the right to eat from the tree of life and live in Eden was taken away from Adam and Eve, God did not abandon His children to perpetual suffering and eternal death.

On the same day Adam and Eve did the very thing God said that they should not do, God called the guilty pair from their hiding place in the garden and offered them hope. Jesus promised, "I will take your punishment. I will stand in your place. You will have another chance." God's irrevocable sentence pronounced upon the serpent because of his deception pointed to Satan's ultimate defeat and destruction.

## **SATAN'S BIG LIE**

Occult and communication-with-the-dead themes saturate today's entertainment media. Through movies, music, popular literature, social media, sitcoms, TV drama, Broadway, and video games, in a thousand forms, Satan attempts to make otherworld communication enticing and credible. How did he convince so many that the dead can communicate with the living?

From the beginning Satan has claimed, "You shall not die!" Classical dualism, based on the writings of ancient Greek philosophers such as Plato, supports that lie by defining death as the

# Jesus compares death to a sleep, a state in which the dead know nothing and cannot communicate with God or humanity.

separation of the soul from the body. This unbiblical view impacts beliefs on humanity's state in death, the resurrection, the final punishment, and the eternal world to come. Such dualism undermines the Bible's teachings on spirituality, salvation, and the second coming of Jesus to redeem His faithful people.

As a result of classical dualism's influence, most people believe that humans have immortal souls. But, especially since the Age of Enlightenment, some have said that humans are just cogs in a machine. This view doesn't promote immortal souls, but neither does it offer hope, since in this interpretation humans can never possess immortality. Humans are just part of a mechanistic universe, their behavior controlled by involuntary forces.

Biblical wholism, by contrast, sees both body and soul as a unit in life and in death. Because the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, both the spiritual needs of the soul and physical needs of the body must be equally maintained. In contrast with classical dualism, immortality was not innate at creation, but rather a gift to be ultimately received at Christ's second coming by those who would be saved through faith in Christ.

## HUMANITY'S STATE IN DEATH

Adam and Eve were immortal only as they continued to partake of the tree of life. When they were barred from its fruit, the warning "you shall surely die" became a grim reality. At his creation in Eden, Adam was perfectly formed, but lifeless until God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (Gen. 2:7).

This "breath of life" combined with the body (the dust of the ground) comprises a living person. When a person ceases altogether to breathe, life stops. There is no indication in Genesis 2:7—or

elsewhere in Scripture—that God gave Adam a spiritual essence that lives independently, outside of the body, after the individual ceases breathing and dies. Thus, consciousness is a combination of the "dust of the ground," or body, and the God-originating "breath of life"; it is dependent on the union of the breath with the body.

When the breath of life departs, there is utter extinction of life. Jesus compares death to a sleep, a state in which the dead know nothing and cannot communicate with God or humanity. Even though the dominant worldview is that the souls of the righteous go immediately to heaven and the souls of the unsaved go somewhere else, this belief is not founded on the Word of God.

## IMMORTALITY AT LAST

Christ alone possesses immortality. He will give it to the righteous who are redeemed at His second coming (a view sometimes described as conditional immortality). That wonderful day will be a party like no other! Imagine it! The dead in Christ will be raised from their dusty graves. Together with the living righteous, they will meet Jesus in the air and travel through the universe with Him to heaven.

This will be a time of great joy and celebration. We will finally be with Jesus, and we will never be separated from Him again. We will live with Him forever in a perfect world, free from sin and suffering. Hallelujah!

## WHY IT MATTERS

One of Satan's last great deceptions just before Jesus comes again is to impersonate beloved friends and family who have died. Satan's disguised angels of darkness will convince most of the world that in heaven Sunday, not the seventh-day Sabbath, is honored by God, and will purport other unscriptural ideas. Only those who have fortified their minds with Scripture and understand the nature of death will avoid falling for this deception.

Amid this last great battle between good and evil, truth and falsehood, God will break into earth's history in a literal, visible second coming and rescue His people who have remained anchored to Jesus and His Word. 📌

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**Cindy Tutsch** is a former associate director of the Ellen G. White Estate. She is semiretired, living in Washington State.

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# The Valley...

**MARVENE THORPE-BAPTISTE**

*Reflecting on  
God's quiet  
protection*

**O**ur Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

The decision to move must have been made prayerfully and carefully. We were leaving our home in the city and moving to the country, more specifically "the valley," with lush green vegetation everywhere.

We kids viewed the move as an adventure, but for our parents it was a necessity.

The house we moved into was located near my father's job, the church school, and the college. In terms of space, the house was big enough to accommodate a large family, and the fact that it

lacked a few amenities didn't bother us kids in the least. We were viewed as the "outsiders," coming into a village in which practically everyone was related. And, unknown to us, the villagers did not expect us to remain for any period of time.

*"Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."*

Our home boasted an adequate vegetable garden, and was surrounded by every fruit tree that our young minds could imagine. We went wild tasting and staking out our favorite fruits, which ranged from different types of mangoes, guava, plums, oranges,

grapefruit, and cherries to tamarinds, bananas, limes, and lemons. There was even a cashew tree from which a few lessons were learned—namely, that the juice produced a terrible stain, and the nut, which grew at the top of the flower, would cause terrible blisters to the fingers or mouth if eaten unroasted. Being able to climb all these trees was a must, so I learned—from my brothers.

To add to this veritable “Eden” was the nearby river with various pools, where we enjoyed many an early-morning bath, much to the dismay of our mother, who always fussed with Dad for taking us out at 5:30 or 6:00 in the morning to bathe in the cold water.

As the summer ended, we discovered just how fortunate we were to live opposite an elementary school. On the first day of classes it became obvious that the previous occupants had made different snack items and sold them to the schoolchildren. My mother, who was quite industrious, realized what was expected, and quickly learned to make such treats as Popsicles, guava candy, peanut butter fudge, pickled plums and mangoes, and tamarind candy—to name a few items. This provided additional income for the family.

To quote Dickens, it was truly “the best of times . . . [and] the worst of times,” especially for some of our family members.

**Our home boasted an adequate vegetable garden, and was surrounded by every fruit tree that our young minds could imagine.**

*“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”*

One night I was awakened by what felt like an earthquake. The queen-size bed I shared with my younger sister was shaking violently! Sitting up, I discovered my little sister huddled in the corner of the bed, terrified, eyes popping out of her head, teeth chattering, hands clutching the blanket so tightly I had to physically pry her fingers open. Being so young, she was unable to say what had given her such a fright. Unfortunately, this was not a one-time incident. This “fright night” continued over a prolonged period of time—each following a familiar pattern. Ultimately, it became a cause for concern for my parents.

Coincidentally, my younger brother complained that something was scaring him at nights. My older brothers joked and accused him of eating



## My parents had an awesome, powerful, personal prayer life in which they presented each one of us before the Lord.

too late at night, thus causing nightmares. He shared a large room with four other brothers. The older boys had partitioned the room by installing a heavy navy-blue curtain. However, they were all in the same room, so why did he not feel safe?

We finally took him seriously when one morning the boys discovered a huge slash in the curtain. Upon questioning, our youngest explained that almost every night he saw what appeared to be a large hand coming toward him as though to strangle him. Therefore, as a form of protection he started sleeping with a pocketknife under his pillow. That night in question he decided to strike out at “the hand,” thus slashing the curtain.

What was scaring these children? Why the two younger ones? And why only at night? These were just some of the questions that swirled in our heads.

Slowly the pieces came together.

In relating the various incidents to our nearest neighbor, Mom discovered that the original owners had often engaged in occult practices and rituals, holding lodge meetings and séances at late hours in the night. The neighbor told stories of different individuals coming and going at various times of the day and night, and of strange, sometimes terrifying, otherworldly sounds coming from the house.

How naive and innocent we had been! There was so much that we didn’t know.

When we first moved in, we never knew what those drawings on the walls, of circles with crosses and other frightful-looking animals in the middle, meant. We simply erased them and removed the strange-looking artifacts found in and around the house. Nor did we understand why our neighbor was so emphatic when she told us to throw away and never, ever, open the many bottles filled with red-, green-, and blue-colored liquid that we uncovered while “digging for treasure” around the house.

It was always a mystery to us why the house seemed to be a haven for all creatures “great and small”—from bats and owls that made their nocturnal rounds *inside* the house to occasional snakes, as well as many scorpions and house lizards, that acted

as if *they* owned the place, not us. We, however, took it all in stride, thankfully never being hurt by any of these creatures, especially the scorpions. Somehow we thought this was normal country living.

*“For thine is the kingdom . . .”*

The drawings, the vials of colored liquid, and the various creatures all meant something, but only to those who fully engaged in the other world.

I thank God my parents did not fall into that category. They never raised an alarm—or gave a name to the terrifying incidents. They realized that we were not wrestling against “flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers . . . in high places” (Eph. 6:12, KJV). They decided to intensify the spiritual atmosphere in the home; we would be awakened very early every morning, rain or shine, for family worship, and end the day with more of the same, especially on Friday evenings.

My parents had an awesome, powerful, personal prayer life in which they presented each one of us before the Lord. My dad would have his personal devotions around 4:30 a.m., and Mom at some point during the day when we were at school. Their prayers, like a huge blanket, cloaked us, the innocent, who had been exposed to the elements of evil. This led to the inevitable triumph over the powers of evil, for in a short time the “fright night” and “nocturnal visitations” declined in frequency and intensity, until they ceased altogether. In fact, things became so normal that my youngest sister was born in that house.

These unpleasant experiences, however, did not dampen our enjoyment of living in a setting in which we were free to roam, explore, and enjoy the bounties of the earth—if only for a short time. By God’s grace the younger ones, to this day, have not suffered any ill effects from having lived in “the valley.” My mom summed it up best when she said, “It was truly God’s mercy and His blessings that brought us through those difficult years.”

*“ . . . and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen”* (Matt. 6:9-13, KJV). ♣

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**Marvene Thorpe-Baptiste** is the editorial assessment coordinator for Adventist Review Ministries.

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# ZOMBIES AND THE UNDEAD

*What page  
are we on?*

**BEN MARTIN**



I find that when I assume everybody is on the same page, it often gets me in trouble. It gets me in trouble with my kids; it gets me in trouble with my wife. Honestly, assuming everyone is on the same page as I am is a foolproof plan for finding trouble. As a church, we have been assuming that our kids are on the same page as we are theologically, and this has been going on for generations. Perhaps it is time to talk about what we believe, and figure out what page everybody is on!

Some years ago I was sitting with a group of Pathfinders around a campfire late one Saturday night. As the stars began to fill the night sky, conversations meandered in all directions. It was then that one of the children asked, "Are zombies real?"

This question did not come as a surprise. Zombies have made their way into every facet of our culture. They have flooded movies, video games, and TV shows. The question did not shock me; it was the answer that caught me off guard. One of our staff members answered, "Zombies could be real. There is no way to know for sure."

Wait! Hold on! What? How did this happen? How do we have people who have grown up in the church, attended Adventist schools their entire lives, not know what the Bible teaches about death? The only logical explanation is that for too long we have assumed that we have all been on the same page. But how can we be on the same page if we are reading different books?

PETER NEUMANN/UNSPLOSH



# The discipleship of the next generation is a continual process.

## ANSWERING THE WRONG QUESTIONS

When we do Bible studies with our kids, we often answer questions they do not have. For years we have used children's Bible studies that are merely simplified adult studies. The adult studies were designed to persuade other Christians to become Adventists. It makes sense that these adults are going to have different beliefs than children who have grown up in the Adventist Church. This is not to say that kids who grow up in our churches and schools do not have questions—they do! They have deep, real questions. They have questions about every one of our beliefs—especially when it comes to death.

It is not just zombies; there are all manner of mythical characters that strike at the biblical teaching of death. Although our kids probably cover the state of the dead in a baptismal study, perhaps in a few Bible classes along the way, and maybe even a little bit in Sabbath School, they are hearing different stories on the same topic everywhere. Movies, TV, YouTube, Netflix, social media in all its varieties, and, of course, books seem to continue that same lie that began in the Garden of Eden, “You shall not surely die.” It only makes sense that all this information swirls together to create quite a unique set of beliefs.

Well, that's a lot of doom and gloom, but what do we do now? If we are going to pass our beliefs on to our children, we need to know what we believe. We need to study and understand what the Bible says about death and how this belief fits into a healthy and wholistic picture of God. Good theology will always be beliefs that are intertwined and inseparable. True theology will also come into the sharpest focus at the cross.

Once we know what we believe, we are ready to share. Whether you are a pastor, teacher, parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, Sabbath School teacher, Pathfinder leader, or anyone working with kids, the answer to the next step is laid out in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. The Shema, found in Deuteronomy 6, teaches us that we must continually teach our children.

The discipleship of the next generation is a continual process. We are told to teach our children what we know about God when we are at home or when we are away—that is, everywhere. We are also instructed to teach our children when they lie down and when they get up—those are bookends for each day. This plainly tells us that we need to be teaching our children about God in every possible moment.

This does not happen through a set of studies. This does not happen in a class where we drop our kids off. This happens in bits

and pieces in the car and at the dinner table. This happens on both good and bad days, with and without words. We cannot continue pretending that our kids' questions do not exist. We must talk to our children about what they are watching and what they are reading. We must be ready to compare these things to what God has told us in His Word.

## BEING HONEST

Adults must also be honest about their own questions. Whether we like it or not, we inherit a lot from our parents. We look like they look, talk like they talk, and often find ourselves thinking like they think. This is good news when it comes to teaching our children, because they will think more like we think than almost anyone else. We are the ones best equipped to answer their questions because they are often the same questions we have wrestled with.

Regardless the topic, our ultimate goal is to connect our children to their heavenly Father. We must teach them, through both word and action, to rely fully on God. This does not mean that we do not have questions. It means that when we do have questions, we go to Him for answers. This means that instead of relying on the answers that we have been given or have given in the past, we open the Word of God and teach the next generation where to find the real answers. 📖

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**Ben Martin** is the Children and Family Discipleship pastor at Pioneer Memorial church in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

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# THE CLOSER YOU COME TO JESUS

**T**he closer you come to Jesus, the more faulty you will appear in your own eyes; for your vision will be clearer, and your imperfections will be seen in broad and distinct contrast to His perfect nature. This is evidence that Satan's delusions have lost their power; that the vivifying influence of the Spirit of God is arousing you.<sup>1</sup>

Though we all know these lines, or should, have we all thought through their implications?

If you are growing in grace, what happens? The "more faulty you will appear in your own eyes"; that is, the worse you are going to feel about yourself, at least in terms of character. Your "imperfections," moral flaws, and faults will be seen in contrast to Jesus' "perfect nature." We, who sometimes can barely stand to compare ourselves to other fallen beings—how do we fare before the "perfect nature" of God Himself?

Two other things happen "the closer you come to Jesus." First, "Satan's delusions" are, she said, losing their power over you; second, the Spirit of God is "arousing you." Arousing you to what? To, obviously, just how sinful and fallen you are. Satan's delusions, in contrast, must involve hiding from you what the Spirit of God is telling you.

Now, the Holy Spirit is not going to lie to you, is He? As Jesus said: "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13), which includes, obviously, "all truth" about your faults and imperfections. So if the Spirit tells you that you are imperfect and faulty, then you are imperfect and faulty. And "the closer you come to Jesus," the more

imperfect and faulty the Holy Spirit shows you to be.

Will you, then, ever reach the point where the Holy Spirit won't have to keep telling you that? Will you ever get to where the Spirit of God says, *You've arrived; hallelujah!* That doesn't seem possible, does it, at least based on what she says, which is that "the closer you come to Jesus" the more faulty you appear? From what she does say, though, Satan would be the one whispering, *You've arrived; hallelujah!* in your ears.

This truth doesn't mean that you can't overcome, or that you can't be a new person in Christ, or that you can't reflect the character of Jesus. Of course not. A few sentences later she says, "The more our sense of need drives us to Him and to the word of God, the more exalted views we shall have of His character, and the more fully we shall reflect His image."<sup>2</sup>

What it does mean is that, however much you reflect Christ's image, however loving, patient, forgiving, and nonjudgmental you become, you are still an inherently fallen being, hard-wired in sin, and that—even if enduring the time of trouble and remaining alive when Jesus returns—you need "the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ" (Rom. 3:22).

In fact, "the closer you come to Jesus," the more you know that you need it. ❖

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1956), pp. 64, 65.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

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

CLIFF'S  
EDGE  
CLIFFORD  
GOLDSTEIN



WE, WHO SOMETIMES  
CAN BARELY STAND  
TO COMPARE  
OURSELVES TO  
OTHER FALLEN  
BEINGS—HOW DO WE  
FARE BEFORE THE  
"PERFECT NATURE"  
OF GOD HIMSELF?



# THE GREAT CONTROVERSY IS REAL

*A personal experience  
with the supernatural*

**TRINA CARTER**

Living in a highly advanced society has caused many of us to forget the realities of the supernatural. We talk about the existence of God and Satan, but more in abstract rather than as an actuality. We forget that the great controversy between good and evil, between God and Satan, is real and includes all the world even in a country as advanced as the United States of America. Recently I was reminded of that reality, as something dramatic and supernatural happened within my own family.

It began with a prayer for our son in the church sanctuary. But this was a different kind of prayer than what you'd expect. It wasn't that I hadn't been praying for him all these years. But although I had been praying daily, I hadn't seen any change in his life. But on that day I gave my son completely to God. What happened next, however, was not what I or anyone else had expected in response.

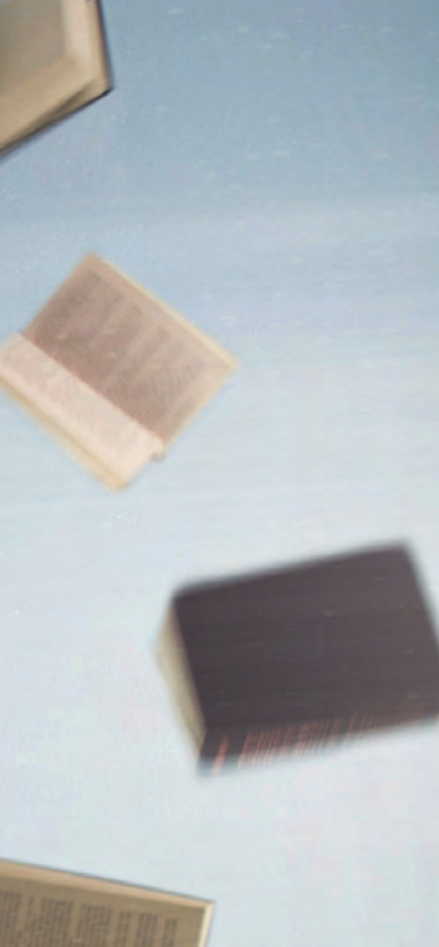
About a week later I received a text message at 1:00 a.m. My son wanted to talk to me. I asked if we could talk at a more reasonable time, but he insisted. It was urgent. It was then I realized that this would be no ordinary call. Something was

wrong. My son was in tears and asked me to pray for him and his wife. The conversation went long into the night. My son and his wife were experiencing supernatural evil powers in their apartment. They were terrified.

## **MYSTERIOUS HAPPENINGS**

He was working on his computer when the electricity suddenly went off. My son went to the electrical panel and turned on the breaker that had gone off. He was unsure of what had happened, but didn't think much about it. As he sat down again in front of the computer, the electricity went off a second time. This happened three times, and each time a different switch of the electrical panel was pushed down.

Then the cupboard doors in the kitchen started opening and slamming all by themselves with great power. Frantically he ran to the bedroom to see if his wife was experiencing anything unusual, but she was sleeping. He woke her and told her what was going on. Then their car alarm went off in the parking lot. He looked through the window, and the trunk



was open. He went downstairs, closed the trunk, and stopped the alarm. As he got back to their apartment, the alarm of the car went off a second time, and the trunk was open again. This happened three times.

They began to realize something evil was happening. As our son described it, he felt evil spirits present. Being raised an Adventist, he grabbed his Bible from the shelf and began praying and asking for God's protection. His wife, a strong believer in the Orthodox Christian tradition, hoped that her icon of Mary with Baby Jesus would stop the supernatural happenings. Both were scared, and decided to call us. My husband and I talked a long time and prayed with them to calm them down.

The reality is that Satan and evil spirits are real. Their tactics are to scare people and make them afraid. God, on the other hand, does not intrude, but gently calls us to follow Him. This experience was a wake-up call for all of us.

### **FIGHTING EVIL**

A few days later the evil spirits returned. This time more violently, trying to physically harm our daughter-in-law and our son. My son described a real fight with the devil for several hours, fighting for his life. A spirit threw our daughter-in-law down the stairs as they left the apartment. When he tried to protect her, my son's shoulder was dislocated. In the car, on the way to her parents' house, the evil spirits hit her head into the dashboard and the car window, injuring her face and making it bleed.

The evil powers didn't hide their true nature. One evening my son and his wife discovered their bed with all the bedcovers on the floor. In the middle of the bed was *The Great Controversy*, a book by Ellen White, that had been sitting on the nightstand before. The book was opened to chapter 31, "Agency of Evil Spirits." While on a video call with them, I saw drinking glasses fly across the room as if with the speed of light and breaking on the kitchen floor. I could see the doors of the kitchen cabinets opening and slamming with power, while objects fell from the shelves.

Our conversations and prayers for our children became a daily activity. We asked a small group of friends and colleagues to pray for them as well. A group of church pastors and elders from the town where they live went to pray and anoint them. The great controversy, the fight between good and evil, was real before our eyes. We prayed and pleaded with God as never before.

Despite our prayers, the encounters with evil continued for some time, resulting in our son's life taking a dramatic turn. He changed completely. One evening he called us in tears. For a few minutes he couldn't speak. Then he began repeating: "God is great . . . God is great . . . God is great . . . God saved my life . . . God saved my life." That evening a demon had literally attempted to choke and kill him. We could see the red marks around his neck. Believing he was dying, through tears he asked God to spare his life. He was ready to follow Him no matter what. As he prayed, the evil spirit left, and has never touched him again. He felt the literal protection of God.

### **GOD KNOWS HOW TO GET MY ATTENTION**

We talked for about nine hours that night. Interestingly, he admitted while these events were ones he would never wish to experience, they did help him better understand the great controversy between good and evil. While my daughter-in-law still struggles, my son has experienced a genuine and true conversion. Like the prodigal son, he came home. Indeed, after this dramatic event, his life hasn't been the same. None of us recognize him, he

## While the devil, like a “roaring lion” (1 Peter 5:8), wants to destroy us, Jesus stretches His pierced hands to protect us.

has changed so much. We still wonder how this all has happened, for there was no previous engagement with the occult of which we are aware. But we know God works miracles.

Our son’s experience reminds me of the meeting between Jesus and Nicodemus (John 3). To the surprise of the Jewish rabbi, Jesus explained that the new-birth experience of “water and Spirit” was (and still is) a miraculous event. “You should not be surprised at my saying,” Jesus said. “The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit” (verses 7, 8, NIV).

Our son has experienced the miracle of the “wind.” For him, God has become very real. His life has a new meaning and purpose. Like William Miller, in Jesus he “found a friend,” and the Bible has become his delight. Our son began to attend church regularly. He started reading the Bible daily and shares many of his thoughts with us. As he says with a smile: “Would you ever imagine that I would call you to talk about the Bible?” In addition, he has read *The Great Controversy* and *The Desire of Ages*. My phone is full of his text messages that include quotes from these books. “It seems that every page was written for me,” he says. With God’s help he stopped drinking and smoking instantly and made a complete change of his lifestyle. He did not want anything to stand between him and his Savior. Instead of playing video games, he watches sermons. In just a few months he had watched more than 200 online sermons. He has no other joy but reading the Bible and books by Ellen White.

### BE ALERT. BE VIGILANT.

The truth is that our son’s dramatic encounter with evil spirits was a real experience for our entire immediate family. Being Adventists for decades, we have read similar stories of Satan and his evil angels, but we never thought this would happen to us. Somehow we forgot that the great controversy is real and ongoing today. In fact, we should not be surprised to see more and more supernatural evil appearances as we approach the end of times. Jesus

is clear that “false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect” (Matt. 24:24, NIV). In the same context, Ellen White notes that “the enmity of Satan against good will be manifested more and more as he brings his forces into activity in his last work of rebellion.” Those who are not “fully surrendered to God, and kept by divine power” will be deceived and join the evil forces.<sup>1</sup>

This is a sobering reality. There is an ongoing battle for each of us. While the devil, like a “roaring lion” (1 Peter 5:8), wants to destroy us, Jesus stretches His pierced hands to protect us. His grace and power are available to us amid our troubles or meetings with evil spirits. Jesus is the only one who can give us peace in a world in which we experience fear, suffering, pain, tears, death, and all kinds of evil. “Satan knows that Christ has purchased redemption for the whole world, and he is determined to wrest from the hand of Christ every soul that he can possibly influence,” we are told. “But believing in Christ, we shall have grace to meet his temptations. Jesus would have us comforted with faith in His goodness. Whatever may be the tribulation that shall come upon us in the world, we are to be of good cheer, knowing that Christ has overcome the world. We will have tribulation in the world, but peace in Jesus Christ. Turn your eyes from within, and look to Jesus, who is your only helper.”<sup>2</sup>

Satan and his evil angels are still alive and real. But God is also real and in control of this world’s history. He is our “helper,” and we know that in the end He is the winner. The promise given by God after the fall of Adam and Eve will finally be fully fulfilled: “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel” (Gen. 3:15, NIV). Satan and his angels will be destroyed, and sin will be no more.

Until then, let us not be complacent, but remember that the great controversy is real. Let us stay close to Jesus and have daily experiences with Him. Let us believe in Him. In the words of Paul to the jailer: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household” (Acts 16:31). May this be our experience. 🍀

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1923), p. 464.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, in *Review and Herald*, May 19, 1896.

Trina Carter is a pseudonym.

# Called to Serve: Daniel & Olga Nicholls

Our path to Holbrook Indian School (HIS) started in 2012 when Olga first learned about the school while serving as a missionary in Cambodia. She was finishing her service as a music teacher there and praying about her next step. That was when she found the Holbrook Indian School website. She was very excited about what the school was doing and started thinking and dreaming about how awesome it would be to teach music at HIS, but it wasn't God's time.

Two years Later, after serving as a teacher in South Korea, Olga decided to contact HIS and send her resume. But it still was not God's time and, after moving back to the US, she pursued other callings. Years passed and she forgot about HIS.

While Olga was serving as a missionary, I was learning about gardening in California. I was not a Christian and I had a large marijuana garden that I took care of. In early 2012, I had several experiences that led me to get out of that life and move to Oregon with my cousins. They were Seventh Day Adventists and it was there that I learned the Truth of the Bible and was converted. By 2014, God had led me to another type of farm—one where I learned how to grow vegetables. It was there where I first got to work for Him with fellow believers, united in mission.

Olga and I met later that year. She went to the ARISE discipleship program and was a classmate of my cousin's. Neither of us knew we had met our future spouse at that time and it took us several years to start courting. In the meantime, she continued pursuing her career and calling as a music teacher and I served with a few ministries learning how agriculture and mission can work together; I even had the opportunity to serve overseas in a closed country helping a ministry start a small farm.

Not long after my return to the US, Olga and I finally started courting and I got a job as a truck driver to support my future family. In early 2020, we were engaged and planning for our life together.

At that time, Olga was a music teacher at a school in Michigan and I had moved there to be closer to her. I was working for another trucking company but I knew that I did not want to do that long-term. I missed farming. My plan was to drive trucks long enough to save up a down payment and buy a farm someday. But God had other plans.

Olga called me one day and let me know that her school needed to make some changes for the following school year and that they could only offer her a part time position moving forward. After praying, we decided to see what other opportunities were available for her. She pulled up the NAD Education website and noticed that Holbrook Indian School was looking for an agriculture director. She could not contain the excitement in her voice. She knew this was for me. I asked if they had any open teaching positions that she could fill but there were none. After I parked my truck for the night, I looked at the website and re-read the job posting. A little-known fact about me is that I wanted to be a science teacher when I graduated high school. I couldn't help but think of that and think of the amazing ways God works that a college drop out would be able to fulfill his long-forgotten dream of being a teacher and his new dream of farming.

Still, I was slow to pursue this opportunity...



To read the full story, visit [HolbrookIndianSchool.org/staff-stories](https://HolbrookIndianSchool.org/staff-stories)



**HOLBROOK**  
**INDIAN SCHOOL**

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# H IS FOR HALLOWEEN

## *One educator's approach to Halloween*

**AMANDA WALTER**

**H**alloween was an extremely perplexing and stressful subject for me when I was growing up. To be candid, it continues to be so. After my parents became Adventists, the Halloween festivities we once eagerly anticipated vanished. Suddenly Halloween was off-limits for discussion. Occasionally on October 31 we tried alternative activities, such as bowling or visiting the mall. Still, more often than not, we found ourselves huddled in the basement watching movies, with all lights, especially the porch lights, switched off to create the illusion of an empty home. With time, we would retreat to our respective rooms, almost afraid to breathe, as the sounds of trick-or-treaters echoed outside.

### **EXPLANATIONS**

One Halloween night, as I slept, a car carrying intoxicated teenagers returning from a party crashed in front of our house. My parents extended their care to the injured youths, calling their

parents and ensuring their safe passage to a hospital. Yet the next day, while they were talking about it with us, their emphasis was not on the importance of showing kindness and helping others in spite of their poor choices, but on how this incident was more evidence that Halloween was really bad news.

To be clear, I am absolutely certain that my parents' intentions were rooted in keeping us safe. Because of the lack of open conversation, however, I felt bewildered and uncomfortable whenever I had to explain why I abstained from anything related to the holiday. Beyond a hurriedly muttered sentence or two about "Satan's holiday," I did not receive an explanation as to why we were to stay away from it. The situation was not any easier at church or school. Halloween appeared to be a mostly avoided topic; some kids celebrated it, some didn't, and that was the end of it. Consequently, my feelings toward Halloween became a mix of dread and aversion, as I lacked my own convictions. I felt that it was bad, but only because I was told it was bad.

Then I became a teacher.

### **THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS**

Navigating Halloween within a public school environment was one thing, but when I began teaching at an Adventist school, I realized that Halloween was not the core issue. It became evident that I needed to refine my decision-making process to reconcile the convictions laid on my heart. Why did Halloween evoke such discomfort? Why did I react the way I did when I learned how others celebrated



(or didn't celebrate) Halloween? Is there an unequivocally "right" way to approach Halloween? How can I navigate this topic with my students who are asking questions?

Perhaps your children are asking more questions about Halloween, and you are unsure how to address this difficult topic. Reflecting on my experiences as a curious child before and a trusted adult now expected to have answers, I've found that addressing tough questions provides an opportunity to teach our values, faith, and discernment. This equips our children to make informed choices and stand confidently in their convictions. As an educator, I have always preferred to provide tools rather than impose my thoughts and opinions. I want to empower students to practice making informed decisions with a touch of guidance.

Here are some strategies that have aided me in discussing this topic with my students—strategies I intend to employ with my own children as they grow up. These adaptable principles can serve as a framework for addressing various challenging topics.

**Understand the Origins:** Take time to educate yourself, enabling accurate answers to questions. Utilize this as a chance to teach your children about discernment and critical thinking. Discuss Halloween's historical and cultural significance while highlighting the differences between its original meaning, its evolution, and the various ways it is celebrated worldwide today. This might also involve exploring other events that share the same date, such as Reformation Day, or other historical Christian holidays, such as All Saints' Day (November 1) or All Souls' Day (November 2).

**Emphasize Faith and Teach Discernment:** Strengthen your children's faith by explaining how it shapes your decisions, including those concerning Halloween celebrations. Guide them in discerning between harmless fun and anything that promotes darkness or evil. Infuse relevant Bible verses into your discussions to illuminate these concepts (such as but not limited to: Phil. 4:8; 1 Thess. 5:21, 22; Rom. 12:9; 1 Cor. 10:21; Rom. 13:12; Eph. 5:11; 4:27; 1 Peter 5:8; Deut. 18:10-12).

**Address Concerns and Facilitate Open Dialogue:** If certain aspects of Halloween cause you concern, address them in a balanced and age-appropriate manner. Cultivate an environment of open communication with your children, encouraging them

**Through thoughtful conversations and a commitment to guiding principles, you can equip your children with the tools they need to make their own informed decisions confidently.**

to pose questions and articulate their thoughts about Halloween. Approach these discussions with attentive listening and offer honest responses tailored to their age and understanding.

**Personalize Your Approach and Respect Differences:** Each family is unique and will tailor their approach to their own beliefs and values. It is acceptable if your approach differs from others. Nurture a sense of respect for differing beliefs and practices, all while instilling in your children the confidence to uphold their convictions. Guide conversations toward the principles of love, kindness, and respect for others, regardless of differing perspectives.

**Lead by Example:** Your attitude and actions wield tremendous influence over your children. By thoughtfully, respectfully, and openly addressing Halloween, you model the behavior you wish to impart. Confidently show up to tackle the hard conversations and let the Word of God guide you. Teach your children to be a beacon of positivity and goodness in all situations, Halloween included, drawing inspiration from the words of Matthew 5:14-16.

Through thoughtful conversations and a commitment to guiding principles, you can equip your children with the tools they need to make their own informed decisions confidently. Remember that your approach to discussing Halloween with your children should come from a place of love and care, and reflect the Bible's beliefs and values. Halloween and the themes that surround it can be a wonderful opportunity to model further how to let God's truth guide your decisions in a confusing and dark world. 🕯️

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**Amanda Walter** is a wife, mother, and seeker. A proud Canadian, she resides in the state of Maryland, where she is embracing the exciting journey of growth, faith, and family.

# HALLOWEEN-LESS HOMES

Four families share how they navigate Halloween with their children and their rationale.



## IT HAD NO ATTRACTION

While we don't recognize Halloween as a holiday worth celebrating, it does give opportunities to train our children. Halloween decorations tend to be ugly, scary, and morbid, and we didn't want these images engraved upon their minds. We are told that we should "guard the senses," for they are "the avenues of the soul."<sup>1</sup> When Halloween decorations were on display, we taught our children to close their eyes or look the other way. Teaching children diligence in guarding their eyes is a principle that will bless and benefit them far beyond the Halloween season, and this is a great time to reinforce that.

Though candy can be an added temptation that attracts kids to Halloween, we were blessed not to worry about that aspect, because our kids were raised without candy and didn't crave it. We were intentional about guarding their sense of taste as well.

If we remove the decorations, scare factor, and candy, perhaps only two other aspects of Halloween might be attractive to kids: dressing up, and going door-to-door. Our kids had many opportunities to do both, though not in connection with Halloween. They had dress-up fun throughout the year. And they didn't need Halloween to go knocking on doors. They had many opportunities throughout the year passing out GLOW tracts and doing other forms of evangelism.

Now that they are older, our kids say they didn't feel like they missed out on celebrating Halloween as children. My son (now 18) said, "We were raised in a culture where nothing about the holiday was promoted or interesting, so it had no attraction. I think [ghosts, witches, graveyards, and other Halloween-related themes] are naturally repulsive unless you encourage them."

**Daniel and Kerri Mendez** live in Ann Arbor, Michigan, with their son and daughter (ages 18 and 15).



## ANSWERING WITH THE BIBLE

As decorations go up and neighborhood kids dress up in costumes, our children often ask questions. *Why don't we celebrate Halloween? Why is our house not*

*decorated? Why can't we get Halloween costumes? Why are we different? Why can't we be like everyone else?* Navigating these questions in a world that seems to have fully embraced the holiday can be challenging.

We have built a tradition for the evening of Halloween. Once the kids get home from school or whatever activity they had that day, we have dinner together. We'll usually have homemade pumpkin or butternut squash soup, homemade bread, and the kids' preferred dessert. For worship we review what the Bible teaches

about the state of the dead and explain why we don't celebrate the event. The kids go to bed a little early, and we turn off both indoor and outdoor lights to avoid the trick-or-treat doorbell ringing.

As the years pass, the children continue to raise questions about our beliefs. We try to answer them with the Bible's teachings. Having our own family tradition on Halloween night has also helped us navigate the challenge of being in the world but not of the world.

**Valmy and Clem Karemera** live in the Houston, Texas, area with their two daughters, Laelle (9) and Arielle (7).



### HAPPY KIM DAY

Halloween always seemed like the one holiday you wanted to ignore. Yet Ellen White counsels, “I saw that our holidays should not be spent in patterning after the world, yet they should not be passed by unnoticed, for this will bring dissatisfaction to our children. On these days . . . let the parents study to get up something to take the place of more dangerous amusements. Give your children to understand that you have their good and happiness in view.”<sup>2</sup>

We call October 31 “Happy Kim Day.” Yes, the name is terrible, but we thought of it just hours before we celebrated the first one, and it has stuck. The kids dress up. Of course, we’re careful about what they pick, and Joe joins in by dressing up too. The costumes are typically made

from stuff around the house, but occasionally we get something simple from the store.

Each year has brought a new theme, but the general idea is that they work together to solve a challenge. When they were younger, we would leave a note or picture in the room as a clue. For example, it might be a simple rhyme that suggested the next clue was by the piano. This would continue all over the house until they finally solved the puzzle in one of the rooms and won a reward. We focused on the kids cooperating. As they have grown, the puzzles have become more difficult and now include more physical and mental challenges. Our eldest son is old enough that much of his job is to help the youngest.

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**Joe and Jacquelyn Kim** live in Yakima, Washington, with their three children, Trey (11), Izabella (9), and Gianna (4).



### A WONDERFUL EVENT TO CELEBRATE

From the time my children were small I knew we wouldn’t participate in Halloween festivities. But what could I offer in its place?

Martin Luther intentionally chose October 31 as the day to nail his 95 theses to the Wittenberg Castle Church door in 1517. He knew more people than usual would frequent the church the next day, All Saints’ Day, to venerate the relics that would be displayed. Nailing the 95 theses to the church door is a wonderful event to celebrate! So,

with my family and friends, we have a Reformation party. It’s so much fun!

After a meal, the kids visit different stations we have set up. They try writing with a quill and ink. They are introduced to the printing press by going through all the steps it requires. We set up a matching game with Luther’s five “*solas*” to see if the kids can match them to their English definition. I have even printed out the 95 theses, built a really cool gothic-looking door, and let the kids each nail a copy onto the door! Finally, we watch a wonderful animated children’s movie about Martin Luther produced by The Voice of the Martyrs as part of their Torchlighters series. This party takes a fair amount of preparation and planning, but it’s well worth it! Kids and adults learn so much and have a great time!

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**Justin and Stephanie McNeilus** live in southern Minnesota with their three children (ages 10, 9, and 7).

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1952), p. 401.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 472.

# CAN OUR DEAD SPEAK TO US?

*Satan's efforts to influence us about immortality and spiritualism*

ELLEN G. WHITE

*Ellen White had much to say about misunderstanding mortality and being deceived by Satan as a result. The following imagined interview highlights her warnings about modern manifestations of spiritualism.—Editors.*

The ministration of holy angels, as presented in the Scriptures, is a truth most comforting and precious to every follower of Christ. But the Bible teaching upon this point has been obscured and perverted by the errors of popular theology. The doctrine of natural immortality, first borrowed from the pagan philosophy, and in the darkness of the great apostasy incorporated into the Christian faith, has supplanted the truth, so plainly taught in Scripture, that ‘the dead know not anything.’ Multitudes have come to believe that it is spirits of the dead who are the ‘ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.’”

## **What is the connection between spiritualism and today's understanding of death?**

“The doctrine of man’s consciousness in death, especially the belief that spirits of the dead return to minister to the living, has prepared the way for modern spiritualism. If the dead are admitted to the presence of God and holy angels, and privileged with knowledge far exceeding what they before possessed, why should they not return to the earth to enlighten and instruct the living?”

“If, as taught by popular theologians, spirits of the dead are hovering about their friends on earth, why should they not

be permitted to communicate with them, to warn them against evil, or to comfort them in sorrow? How can those who believe in man’s consciousness in death reject what comes to them as divine light communicated by glorified spirits?”

## **How does Satan use spiritualism to deceive us?**

“Here is a channel regarded as sacred, through which Satan works for the accomplishment of his purposes. The fallen angels who do his bidding appear as messengers from the spirit world. While professing to bring the living into communication with the dead, the prince of evil exercises his bewitching influence upon their minds.

“He has power to bring before men the appearance of their departed friends. The counterfeit is perfect; the familiar look, the words, the tone, are reproduced with marvelous distinctness. Many are comforted with the assurance that their loved ones are enjoying the bliss of heaven, and without suspicion of danger, they give ear ‘to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.’”

## **Tell us more about these “seducing spirits.”**

“When they have been led to believe that the dead actually return to communicate with them, Satan causes those to appear who went into the grave unprepared. They claim to be happy in heaven and even to occupy exalted positions there, and thus the error is widely taught that no difference is made between the righteous and the wicked. The pretended visitants from the world of spir-

its sometimes utter cautions and warnings which prove to be correct.

“Then, as confidence is gained, they present doctrines that directly undermine faith in the Scriptures. With an appearance of deep interest in the well-being of their friends on earth, they insinuate the most dangerous errors.”

### Why is Satan so successful in these deceptions?

“The prince of darkness, who has so long bent the powers of his mastermind to the work of deception, skillfully adapts his temptations to men of all classes and conditions. To persons of culture and refinement he presents spiritualism in its more refined and intellectual aspects, and thus succeeds in drawing many into his snare. . . .

“To the self-indulgent, the pleasure-loving, the sensual, spiritualism presents itself under a less subtle disguise than to the more refined and intellectual; in its grosser forms they find that which is in harmony with their inclinations. Satan studies every indication of the frailty of human nature, he marks the sins which each individual is inclined to commit, and then he takes care that opportunities shall not be wanting to gratify the tendency to evil. He tempts men to excess in that which is in itself lawful, causing them, through intemperance, to weaken physical, mental, and moral power.”

### How do we recognize spiritualism today?

“It is true that spiritualism is now changing its form and, veiling some of its more objectionable features, is assuming a Christian guise. But its utterances from the platform and the press have been before the public for many years, and in these its real character stands revealed. These teachings cannot be denied or hidden.

“Even in its present form, so far from being more worthy of toleration than formerly, it is really a more dangerous, because a more subtle, deception. While it formerly denounced Christ and the Bible, it now professes to accept both. But the Bible is interpreted in a manner that is pleasing to the unrenewed heart, while its solemn and vital truths are made of no effect. Love is dwelt upon as the chief attribute of

God, but it is degraded to a weak sentimentalism, making little distinction between good and evil. God’s justice, His denunciations of sin, the requirements of His holy law, are all kept out of sight.”

### How can we protect ourselves against Satan’s deceptions?

“None need be deceived by the lying claims of spiritualism. God has given the world sufficient light to enable them to discover the snare. As already shown, the theory which forms the very foundation of spiritualism is at war with the plainest statements of Scripture.

The Bible declares that the dead know not anything, that their thoughts have perished; they have no part in anything that is done under the sun; they know nothing of the joys or sorrows of those who were dearest to them on earth.

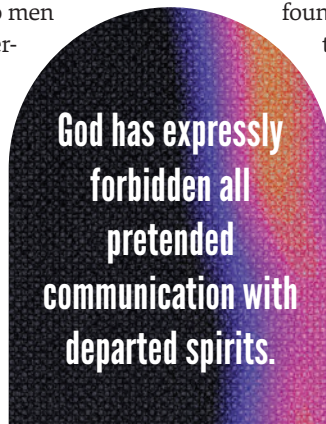
“Furthermore, God has expressly forbidden all pretended communication with departed spirits. In the days of the Hebrews there was a class of

people who claimed, as do the spiritualists of today, to hold communication with the dead. But the ‘familiar spirits,’ as these visitants from other worlds were called, are declared by the Bible to be ‘the spirits of devils.’ (Compare Numbers 25:1-3; Psalm 106:28; 1 Corinthians 10:20; Revelation 16:14.)

“The work of dealing with familiar spirits was pronounced an abomination to the Lord, and was solemnly forbidden under penalty of death. Leviticus 19:31; 20:27. The very name of witchcraft is now held in contempt. The claim that men can hold intercourse with evil spirits is regarded as a fable of the Dark Ages.

“But spiritualism, which numbers its converts by hundreds of thousands, yea, by millions, which has made its way into scientific circles, which has invaded churches, and has found favor in legislative bodies, and even in the courts of kings—this mammoth deception is but a revival, in a new disguise, of the witchcraft condemned and prohibited of old.”

These excerpts are taken from *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), pp. 551-556. Seventh-day Adventists believe that **Ellen G. White** (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.





# REAL OR FAKE?

*Could Artificial Intelligence cause humanity's extinction?*

**DANIEL BRUNEAU**

During a summer school held in the mathematics department of Dartmouth University in 1956, the term “Artificial Intelligence” (AI) was born. At that time AI was articulated quite simply as: “the science and engineering of making intelligent machines.”<sup>1</sup>

Since then, it has grown to be a lot more, and its potential for good is astonishing.

## **THE AI REVOLUTION**

Recently *Nature* published a paper detailing the groundbreaking results of a study that used an electronic implant, aided by AI, to bypass the spinal cord injuries of a paralyzed man—essentially bridging the communication between his brain and spinal cord and allowing him to walk again.<sup>2</sup> The merits of AI in this medical context are outstanding.

But that, perhaps, is only the beginning of the good AI can do.

In recent times the world of AI has seen an enormous surge of global interest across a myriad of domains. This has come with the almost ubiquitous adoption of certain natural language processing technologies, such as OpenAI’s ChatGPT, which provide the end user a more seamless and “natural” human-machine conversational interaction when undertaking tasks and answering our questions, however far-flung they may be.

Although AI appears to provide an almost limitless array of possibilities in aiding human life, are there also dangers of its use that we need to be aware of? Unquestionably, there are, and there’s one story in the Bible that could serve as an example of that potential evil.

## **DISTRACT AND CONTROL**

The interaction between Jesus and the demonic agencies during their encounter on the shore of Gadarenes is insightful (see Luke 8:26-39). After recognizing the deity of Jesus (verse 28), the demons make a purposeful but seemingly unusual request to be cast into a herd of pigs. When the request is granted, great disruption unfolds.

Imagine the pandemonium that occurred when a herd of demon-possessed pigs, squealing and howling, ran to their deaths over the cliffs. It was a cunning tactic to distract from the goodness of God’s healing work and to elicit in the people fear

about Jesus. Indeed, Scripture tells us that they “were seized with great fear” (verse 37).

Ellen White makes plain Satan’s *modus operandi*: “Satan’s influence is constantly exerted upon men to distract the senses, control the mind for evil.”<sup>3</sup>

The point? Whatever good AI can do, and has done, and no doubt will do, it also provides yet another formidable tool kit that Satan can use to exert his influence over humanity.

Take, for example, the prevalence of deep fakes, realistic yet fake images and videos that are created through the use of a form of AI called “deep learning.” Recent research has found that people struggle to distinguish deep fakes from reality.<sup>4</sup> Adopting the seeing-is-believing mindset, people are overconfident in their ability to detect deep fakes and are thus rendered susceptible to being influenced by deep fake content. Indeed, so sophisticated is this technology and widespread its use that policymakers are struggling to keep up with ways in which to regulate it.<sup>5</sup>

In other areas, AI, using real-life inputs from texts, letters, and other records of memories, have been used to transform the “personality” of chatbots to that of deceased loved ones. This allows the living relative to “speak” to lost loved ones as they interact with the chatbot that responds in a manner that mimics the dead person’s personality.<sup>6</sup>

## EVADING DEATH THROUGH AI

A proposed future containing highly intelligent lifelike machines (Artificial General Intelligence—AGI) has recently been given credence by leaders of technology giants and research institutions alike. They published a signed statement, proposing that mitigating “the risk of extinction from AI should be a global priority alongside other societal-scale risks such as pandemics and nuclear war.”<sup>7</sup>

Evidently those who are the biggest proponents of AI are also fearful of where it can go. Though it may sound like science fiction, this statement highlights the serious treatment being given to the once far-fetched topic of living side by side with highly intelligent machines or robots.

Some on the quest for AGI (the kind that tries to imitate human thinking) subscribe to transhumanism. In his book *To Be a Machine*, Mark O’Connell states that “it is their [transhumanists’] belief that we can and should eradicate aging as a cause of death; that we can and should use

technology to augment our bodies and our minds; that we can and should merge with machines, remaking ourselves, finally, in the image of our own higher ideals.”<sup>8</sup>

What is being suggested here is that our own intelligence as humans could create a race of technology-hacked human beings who will outwit death. But would a society driven by this pride be the utopia that humanity longs for in the deepest of questions we ask ourselves about life’s meaning? It is a dystopian view of humanity’s future at its very best.

## CHOOSING AN AUTHENTIC REALITY

The allure of making a race of superintelligent artificial beings, which strikes a chord of fear in many leading technologists and scientists, is simply another way in which Satan seeks to destroy our humanity, as found in God. It is essentially a choice of two realities: one painted by Satan in the context of his lie that we can achieve godlike status and autonomy and the other consisting of living in the awesome reality of God’s eternal love. John Lennox perhaps states it best:

“The wonder is that we can, if we desire, become part of this unending story and live in eternal fellowship with the infinitely intelligent and compassionate Saviour, Jesus Christ the Lord. North-ing artificial can compare with that reality.”<sup>9</sup> 📌

<sup>1</sup> John McCarthy, “What Is Artificial Intelligence?” [www-formal.stanford.edu/jmc/whatisai.pdf](http://www-formal.stanford.edu/jmc/whatisai.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-023-06094-5>

<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940), p. 341.

<sup>4</sup> N. C. Köbis, B. Doležalová, I Soraperra, “Fooled Twice: People Cannot Detect Deepfakes but Think They Can,” *iScience* 24, no. 11 (Nov. 19, 2021): 103364, doi: 10.1016/j.isci.2021.103364, PMID: 34820608, PMCID: PMC8602050.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2023/04/27/1172387911/how-can-people-spot-fake-images-created-by-artificial-intelligence>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2017/07/23/538825555/creating-a-dadbot-to-talk-with-a-dead-father>; <https://www.sfchronicle.com/projects/2021/jessica-simulation-artificial-intelligence>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.safe.ai/statement-on-ai-risk>

<sup>8</sup> Mark O’Connell, *To Be a Machine: Adventures* 6 <https://www.npr.org/2017/07/23/538825555/creating-a-dadbot-to-talk-with-a-dead-father>; <https://www.sfchronicle.com/projects/2021/jessica-simulation-artificial-intelligence> 7 <https://www.safe.ai/statement-on-ai-risk> 8 Mark O’Connell, *To Be a Machine: Adventures Among Cyborgs, Utopians, Hackers, and the Futurists Solving the Modest Problem of Death* (New York: Anchor, 2017)

<sup>9</sup> John Lennox, 2084: *Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Humanity* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020), p. 228.

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# IS UNITY POSSIBLE?

It will come as no surprise to anyone to point out that there have been times in Adventist history that the church has not been unified. Even during the past decade, issues related to fiscal policy, ecclesiology, secular politics, and more have at the very least elicited varied responses, and at times have led to seemingly irreparable fissures in leadership and laity alike.

This leads to an important question: What does Jesus think of our lack of unity? I'm not speaking of the granular specifics of our disagreements, nor whether Christ would take our side or our opponent's on this or that issue. I am referring to the simple fact that we, His people, in His church, are sometimes divided—and at times bitterly so. What does Jesus think about *that*?

Christ strikingly addressed church unity in John 17:22, 23 when, speaking of Christians down through the ages, He said, "I have given them the glory that you [the Father] gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me" (NIV).

Any Christian mulling these verses over cannot help being astonished by what Jesus is saying: The level of unity Christ calls the church to is the same level experienced by Him and His Father! The oneness of purpose, the cohesiveness of action, the pure love for humanity that Christ and the Father shared—who cannot help being awestruck by such synergy? And in a world that specializes in division, Christ intends for His church to reflect this same unity, that all may see that the Father "has loved them even as" He loves Christ. Oh, the astounding power of a unified church!

So again I ask: What does Jesus think of our episodic lack of unity? Perhaps He thinks at least the following:

First, *the pursuit of unity is never optional*. Christ died to "bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth" (Eph. 1:10, NIV). We cannot simply write off those who disagree with us as irredeemable, and thereby excuse ourselves from attempting reconciliation. Those who do not pursue unity in the church—especially in times of disagreement—do not understand one of the fundamental purposes of the cross.

Second, *even in times of deep division, resentment is never appropriate*. The same Jesus who engaged in passionate debate with His enemies . . . also died for them. Are we addressing those "on the other side" of certain issues in the church with this same kind of love?

Third, *lasting unity can ultimately be found only in Christ and His Word*. It is a remarkable fact that high levels of unity can exist in the church even when there are substantive disagreements on important issues (see Acts 6:1-7, for instance). But this is possible only when church members are deeply connected to Christ and to Scripture.

Christ was clear that the unity He enjoyed with His Father was predicated on them being "in" one another (John 17:21). This is equally true for us: Church unity depends on us being in Christ and Christ being in us. Only then can sufficient love, discernment, and forbearance be found in sufficient levels to keep honest disagreements from becoming implacable divisions.

Unity in the church is indeed possible. May God grant us the desire and courage to pursue it. 🍀

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**Shane Anderson** is the senior pastor of Pioneer Memorial, a church located on the campus of Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

THE PIONEERING  
PASTOR  
SHANE  
ANDERSON



WE CANNOT SIMPLY  
WRITE OFF THOSE  
WHO DISAGREE  
WITH US AS  
IRREDEEMABLE.



**FROM LOVE**

**TO**

**CREATION**



## *Meeting God in a storm*

THORSEN HAUGEN

Every manifestation of creative power is an expression of infinite love.”<sup>1</sup> Many years ago I visited Rwanda, Africa. One momentous night while there I had an epiphany about the origin of the universe. I’m not a genius, an astrophysicist, or anything else that might qualify me to make such a groundbreaking discovery. Nonetheless, I’d like to believe my theory is plausible. The “proof,” however, is not simple. It requires a combination of physics, theology, and cosmology—along with a story that ties it all together.

### **A REALITY CHECK**

When I went to Rwanda, I had just finished my undergraduate studies and had six months before beginning classes as a freshman medical student at Loma Linda University School of Medicine. I chose to spend two of those months volunteering at Mugonero Hospital in the tiny, mountainous nation of Rwanda.

At that time I was a passionate and idealistic young man who had led a relatively sheltered life. I knew the world was filled with suffering and injustice, but little of this had touched me personally. And although I was soon to begin medical school, I had little experience in the medical field.

I still remember one of my first patients. She was an attractive young woman, with dark, empty eyes. She lay languidly in her hospital bed, with both feet covered in strange, mushroom-like growths. The next morning her bed was empty.

“What happened to her?” I asked the mission doctor.

“It was AIDS,” he said. “She died during the night from a secondary infection.”

I can also clearly recall my first surgery. This time it was a muscular young man with a fractured femur. By necessity, the mission doctor was a jack-of-all-trades, with a skillset that included a smattering of orthopedics. In the operating room a large incision was made to expose the fracture. A metal rod was then inserted into the bone. The idea was that the rod would be driven into the soft marrow on either side of the fracture, joining the two sections together. Unfortunately, the rod was a tight fit. While the mission doctor stabilized the bone, I was handed a mallet and repeatedly exhorted to “hit it harder.” I did. With one mighty blow and a loud crack, the femur splintered.

Suddenly my world began to lose focus. I stumbled to a wall and collapsed against it with my head between my knees as I fought to maintain consciousness. In the end I did not faint. After several minutes I even managed to return to help deal with the complication and finish the surgery.

There are many other patients who also stand out in my memory. One woman in her early 60s, who came in with her husband, had rectal bleeding. A large tumor was soon identified.

"I can cure you," the doctor told her, "but you will have to have a permanent bag, a colostomy bag, attached to your abdomen to collect your bowel contents." This is a common patient issue in the United States, and many resources are available to help. In Rwanda, however, no such resources existed.

The woman listened quietly, then answered that she and her husband were old now and lived in a small hut. They were grateful for the offer, but this was not something they could do. She would die. I watched as, side by side, she and her husband walked down the dirt road from the hospital toward their humble home. It was undoubtedly many long miles away. She probably died in her mud hut in great pain, but I'd like to think she died with the same dignity she displayed during her clinic visit.

### AN ATROCITY

Eventually the cumulative effects of being far from home and witnessing so much suffering and misery began to take a toll on me. But then, to make matters worse, one afternoon I had a profoundly disturbing experience.

It happened as I was wandering alone on the hospital campus. I'd noticed that everyone seemed to avoid one particular building. Out of curiosity, I pushed open its heavy doors. Inside was a large, empty room—empty, except for five giant wooden crates draped in white sheets against the far wall. Slowly I walked across the room, my footsteps echoing in the stillness. Sunlight fell in patterns on a cracked concrete floor, stained by something dark. The crates, when I reached them, were nearly chest-high. With some effort I raised a lid. As I did, my breath caught—inside lay thousands of human bones. With a sudden chill, I realized the stains on the floor were old bloodstains.

Later, from the doctor, and from a borrowed book, I learned the awful history of the room in which I'd stood. Previously I had been largely ignorant of the details of the Rwandan genocide, which had occurred a decade prior. I now learned that this awful event had hit Mugonero especially hard. The abandoned building, with its five giant crates of bones, had once been a church. Here the pastor, a Hutu named Elizaphan Ntakirutimana, had urged his Tutsi parishioners to take refuge. Three thousand did. For several days the fearful group cowered within the walls of their supposed sanctuary, but as the water lines were cut, and as heavily armed

groups of Hutu surrounded the building, the doomed people within realized what was about to happen. A group of them composed a letter to the pastor who'd betrayed them. A line from this letter, "We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families," later became the title of a book describing this tragic event.

The response came the following day. The church became a slaughterhouse. The victims, weak from hunger and dehydration, were killed mostly with machetes to save bullets. When it was over, no one was left alive.

### TALKING TO GOD

Several days later, with my heart still weighed down by the burden of all I had seen and learned, I went for a long walk. The small village of Mugonero is perched on a hill above the fjords of Lake Kivu. From here a dusty road descends, then follows the shoreline. I began in the late afternoon and went on for miles, as the sun slowly sank toward the horizon. Here and there, along the roadside, stood unoccupied crumbling houses of genocide victims. They served as yet another somber reminder of the dark history haunting this place.

In the fading light I passed through a small roadside village. A crowd of excited children followed after me.

"*Mzungu! Mzungu!*" they chorused, which is Swahili for White man.

Despite Rwanda's horrible history, its people were kind. Most even seemed gentle. The children, of course, were best of all. Normally I enjoyed them immensely; but on this particular night their little hands, constantly tugging and pulling as they excitedly shouted, became more than I could bear. After repeated friendly requests to be left alone were ignored, I resorted to an angry outburst. This was effective, but I felt terrible afterward.

Eventually I found myself alone atop a desolate vista overlooking the lake. Night had now fully descended. The wind picked up. Ominous clouds began to churn while sheet lightning flashed in rapid succession. My own tumultuous thoughts reflected the sky.

In this wild place the gathering storm brought to mind the earth in its primordial state. *Why did You create us, God?* I recalled the suffering patients I'd helped care for. *Life seems so cheap. And inside we're all rotten*, I concluded bitterly as I recalled

# As the idea of love being related to energy passed through my mind, a series of blindingly bright lightning bolts split the sky.

the boxes of bones and my own anger at the laughing children only a short time ago.

“Where are You, God?” I shouted into the wind and darkness.

## THE REVELATION

Then I thought of Jesus in the New Testament. He’d constantly been surrounded by humanity’s sorrows, yet this weight didn’t overwhelm Him. Instead He lifted everyone around Him. No doubt children also constantly clung to Him, but He never lacked patience. It seemed that to truly love people required energy; far more energy than I possessed. Only Divinity, I surmised, had the energy to love like that.

As the idea of love being related to energy passed through my mind, a series of blindingly bright lightning bolts split the sky. My thoughts went back to the world in its primordial state, when “the Spirit of God moved,” then further back to before the universe existed. Having only recently completed my pre-med basic science classes, theories regarding the universe’s origin were still fresh in my mind. .

Notably, many scientists believe the evidence suggests that there was a single point—a singularity, as it’s termed, containing all the energy and space-time of the universe. From this point the universe, like a firework, flowered into existence, flowing from energy into matter and light, as described by the famous mass-energy equivalence formula  $E=mc^2$ . But where did the singularity, the seed of the universe, come from?<sup>2</sup>

God is omnipotent. He is also love. Since loving requires so much energy, perhaps these attributes are two sides of the same coin? *Could perfect love produce literal physical energy?* I wondered. Suddenly I pictured God in the infinite emptiness before anything existed. I imagined from His mouth that first seed, the singularity, floating into the nothingness. Love spoken. God’s words, spoken

in love, issuing forth a force powerful enough to form the estimated 2 trillion galaxies in our universe. From love to energy, and from energy to the universe. God = Love  $\rightarrow E = mc^2$ .

“For by Him all things were created. . . . And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist” (Col. 1:16, 17).

Biblically, humans are dust. I’ve also heard the more romantic notion that we are stardust, since stars are the birthplace of the elements. Perhaps, however, we are ultimately the physical manifestation of God’s love. We, and everything in the universe.

And on that night long ago, this thought filled me with peace as I turned to begin my trek back to the hospital. Is my theory correct? God knows. The idea, however, has remained with me during the many years that have passed since. For me it is a reminder that life is not cheap; it is immensely valuable. It’s also a reminder that God has promised to fill us with that same power, or love.

“Where are You, God?” I had asked. As a Christian, I knew the answer. God was at the bedside the night my first patient breathed her last; He was in the operating room as we struggled with limited resources to help an injured young man; and He was at the side of an old man and an old woman as she lay dying in great pain in their small mud hut. I knew, too, that He had been in the church as 3,000 lives were brutally taken, as well as near a young man with a troubled heart who stood in the midst of an African thunderstorm.

God’s love is everywhere. 

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1890, 1908), p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> See Clifford Goldstein, “The Big Bang Theory,” <https://adventistreview.org/2011-1508/2011-1508-17/>.

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# SHINE

*It's all about  
humility.*



# What tasks seem beneath us? Those are the duties He entreats us to perform in humble service.

BY KEVIN WILKINSON

While serving as one of the night shift supervisors for a Midwestern police department, I arrived at my locker one evening to don my blue uniform, and spotted my boots sitting atop the bench. Someone had shined them. *Whaaat?* Who would polish my boots?

I discovered the deed had been done by Bud, one of the new guys on our shift who had previously served as a paramedic. When the rest of the team learned of it—and I made sure they did—there were hoots and jeers and accusations of ingratiating, though the terms they used were much earthier.

Bud reddened from the teasing, but joined in the laughter. Afterward he sought me privately to clarify his motivation. He hadn't done it to win any points with me. He explained that when he worked at the hospital, there was another paramedic who pastored a church. That man would always polish his coworkers' shoes. It was, he said, his humble service—his ministry. Bud was touched by the man's humility, and decided to bring that servant spirit to the police department. He started with my boots.

His reward, thanks to me, was ridicule. I was moved and deeply ashamed. I never forgot that.

Twenty years later I was serving as men's dean at Wisconsin Academy. I wrestled with how to make the ordinance of humility more relevant to the guys. Washing dust from someone's feet after a long journey once had great utility. But to our Adidas-shod young men, not so much.

Then God reminded me of Bud.

Soon one of the symbols of Sabbath's approach in the dorm was the dean assuming a posture of servitude at the feet of the students, shining their shoes. Sometimes students would volunteer for the duty as well. A paramedic's selflessness was still contagious decades later.

Jesus demonstrated humble service by washing His students' feet. He was flipping traditional roles upside-down: the Teacher serving the students. Then He said, "You should also wash one another's feet." I think it's clear He meant far more than just removing dust. He was talking about doing laundry, changing bandages, cleaning toilets, shining shoes. What tasks seem beneath us? Those are the duties He entreats us to perform in humble service.

It is especially powerful when foot washing, in whatever manifestation it takes, flips arbitrary social strata: elders serving youth; architects serving the homeless; cops with shiny boots serving felons.

Our ordinance of humility is so much more than ritual. It's an exercise—a rehearsal. It is the calisthenics of humble service. Too many people excuse themselves from the opportunity to invigorate their humility muscle. That's sad.

Jesus Himself exhorts us to assume a posture of servitude before journey-worn souls.

And help them shine. ✎

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**Kevin Wilkinson** is a retired police chief who writes from Wisconsin and wherever volunteer opportunities beckon.



KAMAJI OHINO

# THE MIRACLE OF PATIENCE

*Modeling self-control for our children*

RUTHIE REEVES

**B**ang! Bang! Bang! I could hear little hands pounding on the bathroom door as I huddled in my bathroom closet. It was one of those days that would test the soul of any parent. One thing after another had gone wrong. I had a huge project looming on the horizon. The house was a disaster. My young children demanded constant attention. And I was pushed to my absolute limit.

Exhausted from being needed all day, all I wanted was to go to bed. Instead I found myself hiding in my bathroom closet, desperately seeking a moment of reprieve from the overwhelming stimulation and chaos. In that moment I realized I needed a power beyond myself to exhibit the patience and forbearance I expected my children to demonstrate in their own lives. So I cried out to God for help.

## THE PATIENCE CONNECTION

“Love is patient and kind” (1 Cor. 13:4, ESV). The Bible’s definition of love begins with patience. And yet patience can be one of the most challenging aspects of love. As parents, we desire our children

to learn lessons of patience and self-control under provocation. But how will they learn patience if they don’t see it? By beholding we become changed. Children reflect what they observe or behold in parents. The way parents navigate difficult situations easily transfers to children’s characters.

In society today the detrimental consequences of impatience and lack of self-control are clearly evident. Many individuals struggle to respond appropriately when their expectations are disappointed. People are quick to respond with frustration, irritation, anger. This growing impatience is reflected in the alarming increase of road rage incidents. According to a recent study by Everytown Research (2023), deaths resulting from road rage shootings in the United States doubled between 2018 and 2022.<sup>1</sup>

Teachers, too, have witnessed a rise in violent behaviors. In a survey conducted by the American Psychological Association (2022),<sup>2</sup> one third of the participating teachers reported experiencing verbal threats. Further, 14 percent of teachers and 22 percent of other school staff reported being physically attacked by students, up from about 10 percent of K-12 teachers reporting threats of physical violence as recently as 2015-2016.<sup>3</sup> Disturbingly, the high levels of verbal assaults against teachers are not coming just from students. The same study conducted by the American Psychological Association revealed that 29 percent of teachers reported being verbally attacked by parents. From this it is evident



that the lack of self-control displayed by students directly reflects the prevailing atmosphere in their homes.

As people's nerves become more and more frazzled, it becomes that much more important that home is a place of peace and joy. Speaking to the importance of parents setting the right example, Ellen White states: "Parents should exercise self-control, patience, forbearance, gentleness, and love, in dealing with their children. They should remember that the example they give their children, they will see reproduced in them."<sup>4</sup>

When we exhibit harshness toward our children, we distort their perception of God's character and undermine the credibility of Christianity itself. We teach that God has the power to transform hearts, but when our own character remains unchanged, it raises doubts about the authenticity of our faith. Moreover, our impatience "dries up the moisture of love and affection in the hearts of children."<sup>5</sup> Like delicate plants, children easily wither under a lack of sympathy and love, but with the right care and nourishment they can flourish.

### CULTIVATING SELF-CONTROL

Through daily interactions with others we have the opportunity to cultivate patience and self-control in ourselves and in our children. Consider our reactions in different scenarios. How do we respond when someone cuts us off while driving? When our children repeatedly ask about a lost toy, do we calmly respond, or do we let frustration seep in, accompanied by an exasperated sigh? When we feel dissatisfied with our child's teacher, do we confront the situation with anger and veiled threats, or do we make an effort to approach it with patience and seek to understand their perspective?

And what about when we're engrossed in an important project and our child interrupts us to show their latest artwork? Do we dismissively reply, "Not now, I'm busy," or do we take a moment to acknowledge their creativity and bring them joy? It is important to realize that our responses to these inconveniences greatly influence how our children will handle their own challenges in life.

What can we do when everything seems to be going wrong, pushing us to our limits and depleting our reserve of patience? Jesus will walk with us through these big and little valleys if we allow Him. "Mischievous hands and restless feet create

a great amount of labor and perplexity for the mother. She has to hold fast the reins of self-control, or impatient words will slip from her tongue. She almost forgets herself time and again, but a silent prayer to her pitying Redeemer calms her nerves, and she is enabled to hold the reins of self-control with quiet dignity."<sup>6</sup>

As I huddled inside my bathroom closet, it was painfully clear that I could not summon the strength required on my own; I needed Jesus. Desperately I prayed for help from above, seeking the patience and calmness that eluded me. In that moment Jesus filled my heart with peace. Rising from my knees, I emerged from the bathroom in better control of myself. Remarkably, my children noticed the change. After apologizing for my frustration and addressing the previous issue, my 4-year-old son spoke up: "Mommy, I'm so glad you talked to Jesus. He helped you be patient." Even my son knew I couldn't take the credit for myself.

Self-control is a gift from above. It's the miracle of patience. "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience" (James 1:2, 3). And for the one who lacks wisdom to know how to be patient, the counsel continues: "Let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him" (verse 5). As we allow God to transform our own character, we can be more effective in shaping the characters of our children. ✨

**Self-control  
is a gift from  
above.**

<sup>1</sup> Everytown Research, "Reports of Road Rage Shootings Are on the Rise" (Mar. 20, 2023), retrieved from <https://everytownresearch.org/reports-of-road-rage-shootings-are-on-the-rise/>.

<sup>2</sup> American Psychological Association, "Teachers, Other School Personnel, Experience Violence, Threats, Harassment During Pandemic" [press release] (Mar. 17, 2022), <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2022/03/school-staff-violence-pandemic>.

<sup>3</sup> L. Musu-Gillette et al., *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2017* (National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education; and Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice).

<sup>4</sup> Ellen G. White, in *Good Health*, Jan. 1, 1880, par. 6, retrieved from <https://egwwritings.org/book/b440>.

<sup>5</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1952), p. 242.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

**Ruthie Reeves** is founder and president of Starting With Jesus, a ministry committed to helping families embrace a life centered on Jesus. She is also a pastor's wife and mother of two.



# counterscript.



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## *Defiant and true Christianity*

JUSTIN KIM

Throughout church history Christians have faced the challenge of balancing their biblical convictions with the cultural norms and values of the societies in which they lived. Many chose to go against the prevailing culture in various ways and different magnitudes. Faithful Christians opted to remain steadfast in their commitment to God and Scripture. Below are several vignettes that showcase remarkable Christians who, in their unwavering dedication to be true to their faith,

defied the predominant values of culture.

1. **Perpetua** and **Felicity** were two young Christian women who defied the Roman imperial authorities in the third century. Both were arrested for professing the name of Christ. They chose to die for their beliefs rather than renounce Christ.

2. **Martin Luther** challenged the prevailing sixteenth-century culture within the Roman Catholic Church, particularly the sale of indulgences. He believed that according to Scripture, salvation

was by grace through faith alone, not through the authority of the church. Luther's defiance led to the emergence of Protestantism and transformed the religious and cultural landscape of Europe.

3. **William Wilberforce** was an English politician who led the movement to abolish the British Empire's transatlantic slave trade. Inspired by the New Testament, he championed the abolition of slavery and called the culture, as well as the church, to newer heights of spiritual revival.

4. **Sojourner Truth** was an African American woman and a devout Christian evangelist who advocated for women's rights, the abolition of slavery, and temperance. She spoke truth to power, which eventually led to an invitation to the White House by Abraham Lincoln.

5. **Corrie ten Boom** was a Dutch Christian who, along with her family, helped Jews escape the Holocaust during World War II. They were caught and sent to a concentration camp, a harrowing experience later recounted in her book *The Hiding Place*.

6. **Dietrich Bonhoeffer** confronted the cultural evil of Adolf Hitler's regime. A German pastor and theologian, he actively resisted the Nazis, speaking out against their atrocities. His commitment to his faith and the Bible led him to defy not only cultural expectations but also the totalitarian regime that ruled his country.

7. **Mother Teresa** of Calcutta stood for selflessness and compassion in her service to the poorest of the poor in India. She defied the culture of consumerism by dedicating her life to care for the marginalized, quietly challenging the prevailing cultural values of her time.

8. **Desmond Tutu** was an Anglican bishop who advocated for justice and reconciliation. He confronted the deeply ingrained culture of racial segregation and oppression, using his position within the church to speak out against the regime. Tutu's faith in God and his belief in the biblical principle of equality led him to become a vocal and influential leader in the struggle against apartheid.

Undoubtedly there are many more. Although some may associate Christianity with obedience and conformity, history attests to Christians from various backgrounds and time periods displaying disobedience and subversion of unjust systems. They serve as powerful reminders of the power of Scripture and its ability to challenge and transform culture.

## We can make an impact on the world by remaining steadfast in our commitment to God and the principles of the Bible.

As we reflect on the legacies of these faithful Christians, we are reminded of the ongoing importance of living out our faith in a way that challenges the cultural norms of our own time. Just as they did, we can make an impact on the world by remaining steadfast in our commitment to God and the principles of the Bible, even when it means going against the prevailing cultural tides.

The reality is that the world is full of scripts that tell us how to live, think, act, and believe. They've promised happiness, security, and comfort, but they have failed. Scripture compels us to challenge these existing scripts and champion the alternative script, better known as Scripture.

On this premise we are excited to debut *CounterScript*, a show that will dive deeper into the issues that shape our world and culture. We'll explore the biblical and Christ-centered Adventist worldview, one that continues to go against the grain of society. Each episode features thought-provoking discussion with subject matter experts and thought leaders that, in being obedient to Scripture, are also antithetical to the times we live in. 📌

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Justin Kim is editor of *Adventist Review*.

**counterscript.**

**DEBUTING OCTOBER 2023, VISIT:**

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# WHO JESUS IS TO ME

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*Getting to know Him personally*

**CAROLE HUENERGARDT  
FORD**

*This sermon was presented at the 2023 Alumni Weekend for Modesto Adventist Academy. Some of the oral presentation has been retained.—Editors.*

**T**his is the first time I've stood on this stage in 40 years. That's the same amount of time the children of Israel wandered! Forty years! What has changed? Computers were coming into the school during our senior year; cassette tapes were sold after concerts; and we still had shop and home economics classes. Tablets were small pads of paper, Amazon was a region in South America, and Google was an extremely large number.

Forty years ago we could not have imagined the changes in

the past several years. You probably remember where you were when the world shut down. For me, it was early Friday morning, and I was still in bed when I got the call announcing school was closed. In one night all schools and most businesses shut down. Who knew how long we would face empty streets, deserted grocery stores, and online school?

Society continues to change, but not for the better. Voices searching for someone or something to blame dominate the media. I see but one response,



and it's not more laws or initiatives to save the planet or Christian-themed TV and movies. The only solution I see is the need for a sincere thirst for Jesus along with diligent searching of the Scriptures. It's my desire today to lead you to see in Jesus the only hope and answer to our predicament.

### **JESUS IS MY PEACE**

There are two stories in the Bible about the disciples and Jesus on the Sea of Galilee. In the first, Jesus is exhausted after a tiring day of teaching and healing. He wants to cross to the other side of the lake. "The Saviour was at last relieved from the pressure of the multitude, and, overcome with weariness and hunger, He lay down in the stern of the boat, and soon fell asleep."<sup>1</sup> A great storm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, and Jesus slept! He slept through the worst storm in the disciples' memory! They were terrified and knew they'd be lost.

Have you ever been frightened or terrified? I've never been in a storm such as that on water, but what about receiving a call in the middle of the night, or a cancer diagnosis, or being told that your spouse wants a divorce? Maybe for you it was facing COVID or the possibility of losing your job, or a tornado, or experiencing an earthquake. It may not be a big event, but it can bring a lack of peace in your life. There's uncertainty when we look in the mirror and we feel it. It's fear that debilitates us and causes us to forget our Savior. This is what happened to the disciples. "Absorbed in their efforts to save themselves, [the disciples] had forgotten that Jesus was on board."<sup>2</sup> Has this happened to you? We forget Jesus. We claim to be Christians, talk about Jesus, go to church and Adventist schools, even study the Bible. But when calamity strikes, we fall into the devil's trap of depression, worry, fear, doubt, or blaming. I'm so glad Jesus doesn't give up on us when we forget Him!

Jesus asked the disciples, after He calmed the sea, "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" (Matt. 8:26) "If the disciples had trusted in [Jesus], they would have been kept in peace."<sup>3</sup> How do we remain at peace in the midst of our storms? In my journey with Jesus, I've come to understand that as long as I'm with Jesus, if I remember Jesus is in my boat, I have nothing to fear; though I may not understand and the storm is raging outside, I will have peace on the inside. Yes, Jesus is my peace.

### **JESUS IS MY TRUTH**

Is it possible to know truth today? Certainly not from television, the tabloids, science, or social media. People pretend to be someone they are not. We can't believe everything we see. So much information comes from so many directions, it's difficult to know truth from deception. We must look to Jesus, who *is* the truth, and the truth we find in the Bible. Knowing the truth sets us free (John 8:32). If we feel we're losing confidence in the Bible because of science, media, or the majority, I want to encourage you to read the Bible, and trust the Word of God. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow; He never changes! Yes, Jesus, the Word, is my truth!

### **JESUS IS MY SHEPHERD/LEADER**

High school was a time we began to practice our independence. We wanted to be popular, well liked, and respected. Choosing class officers was a big deal. We wanted the right classmates as our leaders. But

## A shepherd leads, cares, comforts, bandages, protects, and provides for the sheep.

everyone follows; even leaders follow. The issue then becomes: Whom or what do we follow, and why?

Throughout Scripture Jesus is portrayed as a shepherd. Why? A shepherd leads, cares, comforts, bandages, protects, and provides for the sheep. A shepherd is the leader of the sheep. But why did the disciples follow Jesus; why choose Him as leader? Jesus brought no assurance of prosperity, safety, food, shelter, or social status. He had no home, was headed to a cross, and to follow Him meant potential persecution and possible death.

While Peter and the others didn't always understand Jesus and often they misunderstood His mission, they recognized Jesus as Messiah. What they heard stirred their hearts as nothing had before! As Peter said: "Where else would we go?" (see John 6:66-68).

I admit to being stubborn. Personally, I've struggled with allowing Jesus to lead me, to be in charge in *all* areas of my life. I have finally recognized that Jesus, the Peacegiver, the Truth, the Good Shepherd, is completely trustworthy. Only Jesus' words of life provide comfort, rest, sustenance, protection, truth, and guidance. Yes, Jesus is my shepherd/leader; I don't want to follow another!

### JESUS IS MY ALL IN ALL

I was 34 years old, single, and ready for my new adventure—moving across the country from California to Maryland. I had a job waiting, a new apartment, and an uncharted sea of unknown friends. I jokingly called myself "Mrs. Abraham." Before I left, my best friend quoted this to me: "For your Maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts is His name; and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; He is called the God of the whole earth" (Isa. 54:5). She encouraged me to seriously apply it to my life. This was a new idea to me—God in the role of husband to His people. How did that apply to my situation? How much I had to learn! Fast-forward 18 years, and this verse has become my mainstay. So what changed? How can one verse go from being highly puzzling to totally treasured? I can honestly say that though I've always been a committed Adventist Christian, I wasn't always in love with Jesus. I didn't see Him as my "all in all," the only one I needed.

In one of the most heartbreaking periods of my life, I was in utter despair. My stomach was in knots, tears wouldn't stop, and sobbing left me exhausted. I felt *so* alone! It didn't last one day or one week, but a few months. Have you ever felt alone, heartbroken, and lost? I finally called out to God, and claimed His promise. "*You said You're the husband to Your people. I need You to care for me, to comfort me. You promised! I need You to do this for me!*" Immediately a total calm washed over me; my tears ceased, my shaking body stilled, and I lay in peace. I will never forget how Jesus tenderly held me that day. I've always believed in Jesus, always believed the Bible, but I had never experienced such a dramatic personal intervention in my life. I began to recognize how much Jesus loved me and how He had always been faithful, always present, always available! His promises became real to me, and I chose to claim them, to trust that He would guide me through life.

Jesus is first in my heart; the one I turn to first for all my needs. I believe that when Jesus holds first place in our hearts, when we love Jesus more than any other, *nothing* can cause us to utterly despair. Yes, Jesus is my husband, for eternity!

Forty years have passed since I walked these halls. Much has happened in that time; some I'm eternally grateful for, and some I'd like to forget. But my greatest lesson was allowing Jesus to become everything to me. I have total peace; I know the truth; I follow the only true Leader; and I rest in His care. The question today is: Who is Jesus to you? Is He someone to talk to throughout the day or just once in a while? Do you claim His promises for yourself? Is He the source of your truth, peace, and wisdom? Today's world is increasing in crime and chaos, liberties are vanishing, and evil is proclaimed as good—all signs that Jesus is coming soon. But we have nothing to fear, because He is our hope and helper! I pray that we all choose Him today. 🦋

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940), p. 334.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 336.

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**Carole Huenergardt Ford** is a retired science teacher living in Oracle, Arizona, with her husband, Rob.

# THE WINNING TEAM

Does your husband like playing football?" Andy Nash asked.

"I don't know," I answered. Rob and I were newlyweds. There was still a lot to learn about each other.

Andy was putting together a team, but not just any team. About half the team would be made up of church members. The other spots would be open for community members to join us. This would be a witnessing opportunity, Andy decided. Even the name that was chosen reflected our beliefs in hope it would prompt questions.

Not only are Rob and I both introverts, but we had both just graduated from more than 15 years at Adventist institutions. I knew I should be witnessing to the non-Adventists around me, like the young couple in our building that we would chat with from time to time, but I was terrified.

"I don't know how to talk to non-Adventists," I admitted one evening at the small group Bible study Andy led.

"It's easy," a group member responded, probably someone who was more extroverted and had spent more time around non-Adventists. "You talk to them just as you would talk to anyone."

But for me it wasn't easy. Adventism was my world, and I felt my tongue tripping all over itself whenever I tried to translate often-used Adventist phrases for those outside the church.

I wasn't ready to witness to non-Adventists yet, but I could watch my husband play football.

Andy's team was terrible. No, that's an understatement. All through the first season the men didn't score a single touchdown.

I sat with the other wives and cheered for them anyway, feeling proud that our husbands maintained a good attitude even if they faced what may be the worst losing streak in the history of community football.

The men befriended the other members of the team, and we wives included the other women in our cheering section. Despite the lack of touchdowns, everyone had fun.

When the next season rolled around, there were a few new community members on the team.

"The team I was on last year won the championship," I heard one of the newcomers say.

I leaned forward in my chair. "This team didn't even score a single touchdown last year," I said. He nodded casually, revealing to me that this was not news to him. "So why did you leave a winning team to play with us?" I asked.

"The other team was too competitive. It wasn't any fun. I saw how much fun your guys were having, and I wanted to be a part of that."

Our husbands had lived their faith on the field and in doing so had drawn someone into their circle.

Maybe that's what it means to be "in the world" (engaging with community members) but not "of the world" (behaving like them).

Perhaps we were the winning team after all. ♣

WITNESSING  
FOR  
INTROVERTS  
LORI FUTCHER



I WASN'T READY TO  
WITNESS TO NON-  
ADVENTISTS YET,  
BUT I COULD WATCH  
MY HUSBAND PLAY  
FOOTBALL.



45



# CHOOSING THE HARD

*What I learned  
from going  
door-to-door*

## JOSEPHINE ELIA LOI

It was a warm and sunny day in Houston, Texas, USA, when President John F. Kennedy stood before a crowd of almost 40,000 persons, many of whom were young Rice University students, and said, “We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard.”

Canvassing, which in Adventist parlance means going door-to-door to spread the gospel through literature, is no moon shot. But I don’t think anyone would contest me if I put canvassing in the “hard” category of spiritual experiences. If there was one thing in my life, though, that I consciously and intentionally chose to do because it was hard, that would be canvassing. And what I reaped from this experience has continued to sustain me in my life to this day.

## HOW IT STARTED

During my junior year of college, while studying chemical engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, I felt convicted that I should spend the summer doing a canvassing program. *Sounds like a nightmare*, you might say, and you could be right. Yet I felt drawn to it because I

sensed my need for solid training to do ministry on a secular campus.

Let me explain my rationale. At 17 I left my home in Indonesia and flew halfway across the world to attend college—an Adventist in a very much non-Adventist environment. Within a few weeks I met fellow Adventists in the Boston area who were also striving for excellence, both academically and spiritually. We lived with a deep conviction that, as He had done with Daniel, Joseph, and Esther, God placed us on these campuses for His purpose, to do something great for His kingdom.

As it turned out, doing something great for God’s kingdom frequently involved interacting with people, strangers, which was a problem for a reserved person like me. As the years of my studies went by, I became increasingly frustrated with my own inhibition and timidity toward reaching out to others. I was afraid of people.

I needed—no, *wanted*—something to tear down my walls, something to break myself open from the safe cocoon of my introversion. And I thought going canvassing would do the job. I thought that it would sort of shock the system and transform me into another kind of Christian, a more confident Christian.

## THE CANVASSING PROGRAM

So I flew to Michigan and took part in a 10-week canvassing program in which a group of students, a mix of high school- and college-aged students, along with a few young leaders, were tasked with the job of selling books door-to-door. The portfolio of books we sold comprised of vegetarian cookbooks, kids’ books, and Spirit of Prophecy books published in magazine-sized print. We formed our home base at a local church, where we slept, showered, ate, and trained. We had to memorize what we had to say to introduce ourselves and to end the conversation at the door. There was also a script that we had to memorize for each book. We had the safety of training for two to three days, and then it was out the door. Open water, meet beginner swimmers!

Every day for the first few weeks, the leaders taught us various skills to use at the door: how to meet objections, how to upsell, how to awaken spiritual interests, how to notice people’s interests from the things around their house, to name a few. No amount of training, though, could prepare you

to meet humanity on the streets. For eight hours a day we met people from different walks of life, in their meanest and kindest versions. We were confronted with brokenness, pride, and our own weaknesses, as well as the joy of God's strength.

## LESSONS LEARNED

I ended up going door-to-door for two summers. Now, almost two decades later, some of the lessons from these summers are still engraved in my mind.

*Practical Spirituality.* You need a strength that comes from above when you spend eight hours each day canvassing. For me, going canvassing was a testing ground for practical spirituality. Before, things like feeding from the Word of God, praying without ceasing, and witnessing to others were more theory than practice. Of course, I read the Bible, but I didn't desperately need it. I prayed, but I didn't crave it like air. I shared my faith, but it didn't feel urgent. But these concepts became very real out there on the street. To keep going each day, I clung to God's promises that I had read in the morning. I prayed constantly on my feet, and I learned to share God's Word with those who needed to be encouraged.

I learned to see each person as a candidate for heaven and to develop the discipline to act accordingly. No matter their race, socioeconomic status, gender, or backstory, they were all God's beloved children. How people could surprise you and turn your presumptions upside down! Some of the meanest people at the door had Christian paraphernalia in their houses, and one of the nicest people I met had just been recently released from prison.

God showed me the sinfulness of my prejudices and that I needed repentance. He showed *me* mercy and how to extend that mercy to the people I met every day. I learned not to look down upon people, and not to fawn over those with wealth, high position, or power. I saw how the gospel lifted those who were downtrodden and humbled those who were lifted up. At the foot of the cross, we were equal—equally sinful and in need of mercy—and every person was first and foremost a human being and a child of God.

*Confronting Greed.* There's a way to do canvassing that's driven by greed. The sales nature of the endeavor makes it too easy for the ministry to be commoditized, but I was determined to have a spiritual experience. I asked myself, *What if I didn't*

*care about how many books I sold? What if I didn't care about the money?*

There was an in-house aspect of the program. Each student was assigned a role for the daily upkeep of life, ranging from kitchen duties, to cleanup duties, to administrative tasks. I was assigned to help count the sales and proceeds from the previous day, entering data and making sure that our finances were balanced.

As part of this responsibility, I was privy to the results of every student's sales each day. This too was spiritual training, because this kind of access revealed my greed and competitive nature. The toxic habit of comparing myself with others was something that I struggled with every day. I was confronted with two poles of emotions. Pride, if I was doing well compared to others, and shame, when someone else did better than I did.

As the weeks went by, however, God taught me that His providence to each person was His business with them, and to have peace with the lot that God had apportioned for me. God did not grant according to what we felt we "deserved," but according to what He knew we needed.

*Faith and Works.* Because we were exchanging goods for payment, there was some confusion about what it meant to have faith. The prevailing narrative was that your faith was correlated to your performance (how many books you sold and how much money you made). We were told to have strong faith in God by having high goals, implying that if you achieved the goals, it meant that you had great faith. I rejected this theory. It smacked of prosperity gospel when I first heard it, though I couldn't pinpoint why it so unsettled me. So I took this issue to God. I wrestled with what to do with goals and what it meant to have faith in God in an authentic way that resonated with me.

As believers we must evaluate every point of belief for ourselves and enter into a conversation with God. It's one thing to hear scripted answers, but we must test them out to see if they are true. With respect to goals, I came to realize that having faith didn't equal achieving my target. My faith was not in my goals; my faith was in God. If I had a high target that I wanted to achieve, I would do everything in my power to make it a reality, but leave all the results to God. If I didn't hit my target, that did not make God any less powerful, nor did

# THE SKILLS THAT YOU REFINE BY GOING DOOR-TO-DOOR ENRICH YOUR UNDERSTANDING AND USEFULNESS IN OTHER AREAS OF LIFE AND MINISTRY LATER ON.

it diminish my faith in His providence. He could grant me my target if He saw fit, but that was entirely up to Him, and I trusted *Him*. And when I settled on this principle, I was able to canvass free from the burden of self-questioning. Yes, I was able to work with a restful heart, having faith in God and whatever He wanted to do that day.

*Contrasting Ministries.* Over the years, I have often referred back to my canvassing experience in contrast to other methods of ministry. Canvassing helped me understand the different approaches appropriate in various situations. It did not, however, train me in *every* skill that I needed to minister to people.

By nature, canvassing trained us only in minutes-long engagement. We only needed to be “loving” for a few moments at the door. Worse, canvassing might even tempt us to commoditize the people at the door to achieve our own goals

or sales targets. The metric might even be noble, such as another Bible study interest, another testimony to share, or another copy of *The Great Controversy* sold, yet as long as people become nothing but a number, we are in danger of turning human beings into a product.

Many other ministries require us to develop long-term relationships, to know how to truly care for people and their lives for years, oftentimes without ever seeing a “result.” There were things I could say boldly at the door that could potentially cost me relationships if I said them to the people in my life. I learned that context matters. In a way, canvassing taught me to be intentional about my ministry approach. The principles of love and gospel sharing are the same, but how they play out in real life depends on the circumstances.

## HOW I THINK ABOUT CANVASSING

We often harbor a fear of being called to do something hard for God and end up keeping God at a distance to avoid challenges. The purpose of life in Christ, however, is not to avoid pain and hardship, but to enjoy fellowship with Him, even when it entails pain as part of the growth process. When you have walked through a spiritual trial, each victory propels you to be a little less fearful of what God has in store for you.

To anyone considering going door-to-door, think of the experience as equipping yourself with a portfolio of skills. God may call some to be literature evangelists as vocations, but statistically speaking, most of us will occupy a different place in life. Wherever you are, however, you can be a missionary for God nonetheless. Canvassing is one of the many forms of training that you may obtain in your life as a follower of Jesus. The skills that you refine by going door-to-door will enrich your understanding and usefulness in other areas of life and ministry later on.

There is no such thing as a perfect canvassing program, nor is canvassing a risk-free undertaking (nowhere is God’s mission field risk-free). Ultimately, however, if God calls you to canvass, then that’s where you need to be, because there is no safer place than being at the center of God’s will. 📌

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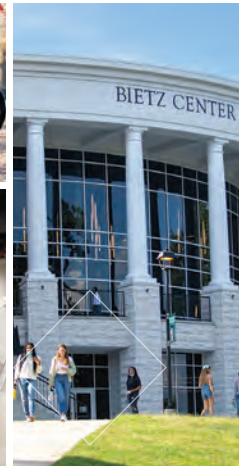
Whether you schedule an in-person or virtual visit, you'll get a guided tour, time with academic faculty, and an admissions consultation while having the chance to ask any questions you want. We can't wait to meet you!

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Power for Mind & Soul

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



Collegedale, TN





PETER N. LANDLESS ZENO L. CHARLES-MARCEL

## INFLAMMATION

*Fast boil or slow simmer?*

**Q:** My nurse practitioner said I have high levels of a blood protein that shows I have inflammation and need to make some changes or take medicine. Can you help me understand this?

**A:** We think your clinician is referring to C-reactive protein. The liver produces this in response to a wide variety of inflammatory triggers: infections; burns (and other kinds of tissue trauma); chronic diseases in which the immune system attacks the body; obesity; smoking; diets high in saturated fats, sugars, and processed foods; and even lack of exercise.

Inflammation is a normal bodily response to an insult or trigger. Some triggers are acute, meaning that the injury or infection provokes a response over a short period of time (minutes to a few days). Because these usually produce redness, swelling, pain, decreased function, or heat at the site of injury, this kind of inflammation is alarming and addressed quickly. Other triggers are chronic and ongoing; their effects accumulate slowly over time and may not be noticed until their often-irreparable dirty work is done.

Our current scientific understanding is that chronic, low-grade inflammation is a silent killer since it contributes to causing cancer, diabetes, dementia, and cardiovascular disease, among others. It is estimated that three out of every five people around the world die from an inflammation-linked condition! If your C-reactive protein is higher than normal and not at the acute injury levels, then a potentially dangerous disease or condition may be “cooking” unnoticed.

Here are SEVEN things that may decrease inflammation while you continue under medical supervision:

Eat a diet rich in color: fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, lean protein, and healthy fats (plant-based sources of omega-3 fatty acids include flaxseeds and walnuts); avoid highly processed and sugary foods. Use spices and herbs with anti-inflammatory properties, such as turmeric, ginger, or garlic.

Engage in regular exercise: move, strengthen, and get flexible. Aim for at least 150 minutes of aerobic activity per week, along with strength and flexibility training.

Ensure adequate, good-quality sleep. Aim for seven to nine hours per night to support optimal immune function.

Maintain a healthy weight by losing excess fat, especially around the waistline (a reflection of the fat around your internal organs)

Breathe free: If you smoke anything, STOP! If you don’t smoke, don’t start. (Research shows that

there can be a dramatic reduction in inflammation within a few weeks of smoking cessation.)

Avoid alcoholic beverages; they complicate and contribute more than they help. There is no safe level of alcohol intake.

Manage stress. We are aware that stress is a major issue these days, and the effects even in children and adolescents are devastating. See a Christian counselor or mental health professional while you seek the help of the Master Physician: “Cast your cares [anxieties, worries] upon Him; He cares for [is concerned about and will take care of] you” (1 Peter 5:7, paraphrased).<sup>1</sup>

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**Inflammation is a normal bodily response to an insult or trigger.**



# 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!

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



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735 E CLARENDON STREET, STE. 107 GLADSTONE, OR 97027

# A SPIRIT OF CIVILITY

Recently I took a private tour of the U.S. Capitol with our youngest daughter. Our host was a family friend—an Adventist young adult working for a U.S. congressman.

While standing on the floor of the House, I asked our friend what relationships were really like among the politicians we see in the media. She said that many political rivals were remarkably congenial off camera; there were legitimate friendships. (She shared some surprising examples.) But when the cameras came on, she said, the politicians reverted to the divisive rhetoric and attacks.

“Why do they do this?” I asked.

“Because,” she said, “that’s what their constituents expect from them.”

“Or they lose support,” I commented.

“Yes,” she said.

So let’s follow this dynamic a moment. Political leaders model divisive rhetoric to their constituents, who then model it back to their political leaders. Where does the cycle stop?

There’s a group of people on my Facebook feed that impresses me. These people have strong personal principles, and I have a pretty good guess at their political leanings. But while they’re loyal to their principles, they’re not blindly loyal to their political leaders. They’re not afraid to constructively criticize the political leaders they voted for. Neither are they afraid to point out something positive in the political leaders they didn’t vote for.

While some might view this type of behavior as weak, I view it as mature. We don’t worship humans; we worship God alone.

Jesus Himself was not afraid to flip the script. He told the Samaritans that Jews had truth; He told the Jews that Samari-

tans had love. So unpredictable was Jesus that the leading voices of the day acknowledged His inner compass: “Teacher, we know that you are a man of integrity. You aren’t swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are” (Mark 12:14, NIV).

We’re living in a volatile season in American politics—in worldwide politics. It’s going to take strong figures to set us free from a culture of division and hatred.

The same day we visited the Capitol my daughter and I also visited Ford’s Theatre—where President Abraham Lincoln was shot. When Lincoln was elected, he received less than 40 percent of the popular vote (split between four candidates). Lincoln was unsupported by the pro-slavery South, and his proclivity toward respectful dialogue frustrated many in his own party. Even as Lincoln evolved into a stronger abolitionist, he insisted on a spirit of civility. By his second term the gentleman had won over the hearts of many, and was elected with 55 percent of the popular vote.

When the Lincolns arrived at Ford’s Theatre, our guide said, they were greeted with warm applause. Two hours later a hateful man broke into their balcony and shot Lincoln in the head.

Just a few weeks before he died, Lincoln spoke these words to a nation on the road to healing: “With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in . . .” (Second Inaugural Address, Mar. 4, 1865).<sup>1</sup>

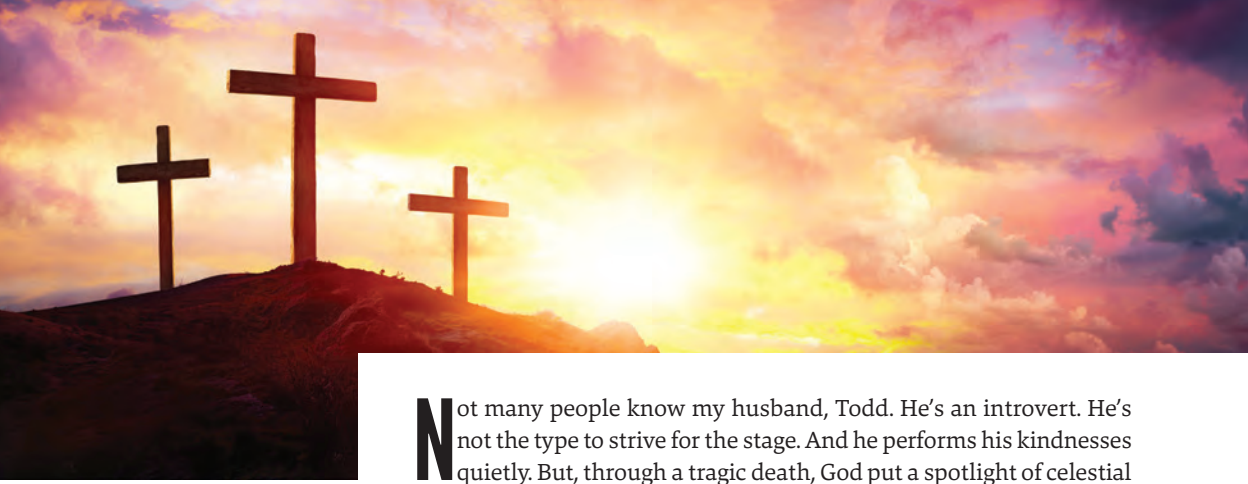
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**Andy Nash** (andynash5@gmail.com) is a pastor and professor who leads study tours to Israel.

THE LIFE  
OF FAITH  
ANDY  
NASH



IT’S GOING TO TAKE  
STRONG FIGURES  
TO SET US FREE  
FROM A CULTURE OF  
DIVISION AND  
HATRED.



## THE MAN ON THE MIDDLE CROSS

JULIE JENSON

**N**ot many people know my husband, Todd. He's an introvert. He's not the type to strive for the stage. And he performs his kindnesses quietly. But, through a tragic death, God put a spotlight of celestial glory on the heart of the man with whom I recently celebrated my forty-fourth anniversary.


The story began when Bob rented a room from us through Airbnb last fall. A retired military man, he'd sustained injuries that challenged his ability to walk. He seemed not to have many family or friends except his son (who occasionally came down from New York), but because of his friendly, personable manner, Bob quickly became like family to us. We ended up selling him a small RV and letting him stay in our yard. He had significant health problems and struggled with alcoholism, but through the ministry of some Christian friends and my dear husband, he stopped drinking and accepted Jesus.

Then, tragedy. His health issues worsened. Todd had given him (without telling anyone)<sup>1</sup> \$3,000 to help get medical care because of the scalping costs of the drug industry. We knew Bob struggled with health issues, so when he didn't emerge from his trailer for a couple of days, and Todd went to check on him, he found he'd passed away.

Not much shakes Todd, but this did. In processing his grief, he watched a sermon in which the pastor tells a story imagining the thief on the cross arriving at heaven's gate.<sup>2</sup> The man claims he has no qualifications to be there, so the angels call the supervisor angel, who asks the man a battery of questions, such as "Are you clear on the doctrine of justification by faith?" No, the man says. "What about the doctrine of Scripture?" He draws a blank. Finally the angel asks, "On what basis are you here?"

The man says, "The Man on the middle cross said I could come."

My husband has cried maybe five times in our married life—once was when his mother died; another time when he told a moving children's story. His tear glands, like many male tear glands, get little exercise. But Todd ugly-cried during the story of the Man on the middle cross. He knew that his friend Bob, like the thief, had not had time to clean up his life. But Todd saw, next to his cold body, a Bible by his bedside.

All any of us have is the Man on the middle cross. Let's stop claiming we have more. All this virtue signaling and self-righteousness we love so much separates us from one another. Ultimately it occludes the cross from our eyes and the eyes of people like Bob, who, as we have just learned with breathless certainty, may be with us one moment and gone the next. 

<sup>1</sup> When I asked Todd about it, he said, "The Man on the middle cross told me to give it."

<sup>2</sup> To watch the sermon by Alistair Begg, pastor of the nondenominational Parkside Church in Cleveland, go here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GDI8euKhd3U>.

Julie Jenson is a pseudonym.



# LOOKING BACK

CONTINUED FROM P. 72

in preparing and translating tracts and other publications. Czechowski left the believers in Italy under the supervision of his new coworker François Besson, but visited them in November 1867, crossing the French Alps by foot in deep snow.

In Switzerland Czechowski labored tirelessly, visiting towns and villages, especially in the region of Lake Neuchâtel, where he settled with his family. His first convert, Mrs. Pigueron, was baptized at night by lantern light in February 1866. In the summer of 1866 Czechowski fulfilled his dream by publishing the first issue of a weekly paper, *L'Évangile Eternel* (*The Everlasting Gospel*).<sup>3</sup> It became the first Adventist publication circulated in Europe, sent out to Switzerland, Italy, France, England, Holland, Germany, Poland, and Hungary.<sup>4</sup> The paper was published until 1868.

Seeing great value in publications, Czechowski printed prophetic charts, tracts, and pamphlets, some authored by American Adventists,<sup>5</sup> in addition to the weekly paper. One of his converts, David Hanhardt, vigorously distributed literature in mountain villages and during Czechowski's meetings. In 1867 he printed an 80-page pamphlet on the Sabbath in German. This was essential for his discussions with the German Baptists, who invited him for their meetings and conventions.

The first Adventist missionary society in Switzerland was formed under Czechowski's watch. But the most influential group he organized was in Tramelan, around the family of Albert Vuilleumier.<sup>6</sup> This became the first Adventist congregation in Europe. Czechowski said the members were "strong in the Lord, giving an excellent example to all around them."<sup>7</sup>

He traveled extensively throughout Europe, giving lectures on Adventist teachings and prophecies. Czechowski had a gift for connecting with influential people such as Louis Kossuth, the former dictator of Hungary, with whom he shared a prophetic chart and *L'Évangile Eternel*.

## NOT IN VAIN

Often living on the edge of poverty and debt, the Czechowski family endured many hardships during their ministry in Europe. In March 1867 their home burned. When the Tramelan church connected with the General Conference, the funds from the first-day Adventists ceased. They were

not happy that Czechowski preached the Sabbath and other Adventist beliefs. In March of 1870 the bank took his newly built house with an office and printing press, and his wife died several months after that.

At the beginning of 1869 Michael moved to the Austro-Hungarian Empire to improve his financial situation. In several months he organized seven small groups in and around Budapest. Then he moved to Romania, where he spent the last seven years of his life. Toma Aslan and his family became Michael's first converts and the nucleus of the Adventist Church in Romania. By the end of 1872 there were more than 10 believers in Pitesti. Adventists in western Ukraine believe that Czechowski brought the Adventist message to Chernivtsi during that time.

In early 1876 Czechowski was in Vienna, possibly looking for treatment, and collapsed on the street. He was taken to a hospital, where he died after three weeks; he was buried in the city cemetery on February 27, 1876.

The Czechowskis laid the foundation for the Adventist Church in Europe, sowing seeds through preaching and publications. When John N. Andrews arrived at his first meeting of believers at Neuchâtel on November 1, 1874, there were representatives from seven places—Tramelan, Chaux-de-Fonds, Le Locle, Fleurier, Neuchâtel, Bienne, and Buckten.<sup>8</sup> Czechowski's efforts were not in vain. ♣

<sup>1</sup> M. B. Czechowski, *Thrilling and Instructive Developments: An Experience of Fifteen Years as Roman Catholic Clergyman and Priest* (Boston: published for the author, 1862), pp. 1-158.

<sup>2</sup> Alfred Felix Vaucher-Rochat, "Michael Belina Czechowski: A Self-sent SDA Missionary to Europe, 1818-1876" (paper, Ellen G. White Estate, General Conference of SDA), p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *L'Évangile Eternel* 1, no. 1 (June 1866), retrieved from <http://www.archivesadventistes.net/EtageresNumeriques/EvangileEternel/Vol1No-1Jun1866.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> M. B. Czechowski, "Mission Letters From Switzerland. Number Thirteen," *The World's Crisis* 24, no. 7 (Jan. 9, 1867): 66, 67.

<sup>5</sup> A. V. Olson, "The Southern European Division," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, May 4, 1944, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> M. B. Czechowski, "Mission Letters From Switzerland. Number Nineteen," *The World's Crisis* 26, no. 6 (Oct. 23, 1967): 22.

<sup>7</sup> M. B. Czechowski, "Mission Letters From Switzerland. Number Eighteen," *The World's Crisis* 26, no. 18 (Sept. 25, 1967).

<sup>8</sup> John Vuilleumier, "Early Days of the Message in Europe," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Mar. 28, 1929, pp. 11, 12, retrieved from <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH19290328-V106-13.pdf>.

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# MICHAEL CZECHOWSKI

*The first unofficial Adventist missionary to Europe*

**B**orn in a village near Krakow to Polish Catholic parents in 1818, Michael (Michał) Belina Czechowski became a Catholic priest at the age of 25. In October of that same year, he sought an audience with Pope Gregory XVI to address his concerns over the discrepancies between biblical teachings and the lifestyle of priests. His desire to reform the Catholic Church was not well received, however. Discouraged, he became involved in the movement of Polish patriots, combining these activities with his service in the Catholic Church's parishes.<sup>1</sup>

While serving in Lancy, Switzerland, Czechowski was introduced to Protestantism by Jean Jacques Caton Chenevière, a pastor of the Reformed National Church at Geneva.<sup>2</sup> Seven years after he had become a priest, in September 1850, Czechowski resigned and married Marie Virginie De La Voit. The next year the couple moved to the Americas and settled in Montréal, where Czechowski worked as a bookbinder and Baptist minister.

In 1856 Czechowski attended a camp meeting at Perry Mills, New York, and was convicted by the Advent message of the soon second coming of Jesus. A year later, he moved to Findley, Ohio, and attended another camp meeting. There he accepted the Sabbath and joined the Adventist Church. He began to work among French-speaking people in northern New York and Vermont with Daniel T. Bourdeau, another Adventist minister.

## MINISTRY IN EUROPE

Czechowski desired to share the news about the soon coming of Jesus with the



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Polish and Slavic people. To do so, he moved to and worked for some time in New York City, trying to reach French, Poles, Italians, Swedes, and Germans. As early as 1858 he expressed his desire to go to Europe as a missionary in a letter to James and Ellen White, but the church was not yet ready to send a missionary overseas, and they were concerned with his financial management. Undeterred, Czechowski secured funds from the first-day Adventists and sailed for Europe with his wife, four children, and his secretary, Annie Eliza Butler, on May 14, 1864.

The Waldensian valleys in Italy became his first mission field. A small community of believers from Torre Pellice and the vicinity formed before he left for Switzerland in September 1865. Well-known Italian converts were Catherine Revel, often referred to as the first Sabbathkeeper in Europe, and Jean Geymet, a great help

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 71**

**CZECHOWSKI TRAVELED EXTENSIVELY THROUGHOUT EUROPE, GIVING LECTURES ON ADVENTIST TEACHINGS AND PROPHECIES.**

# Jim and Donna

are in good health,

happily retired, and love their community. They want to pass on their legacy of giving to their grandchildren and want them to have a say in how they begin to make donations with their funds each year. They've called a family meeting to explore interests and gauge how to move forward with exciting contributions that all can see the fruit of.



To learn more about Jim and Donna's journey—  
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