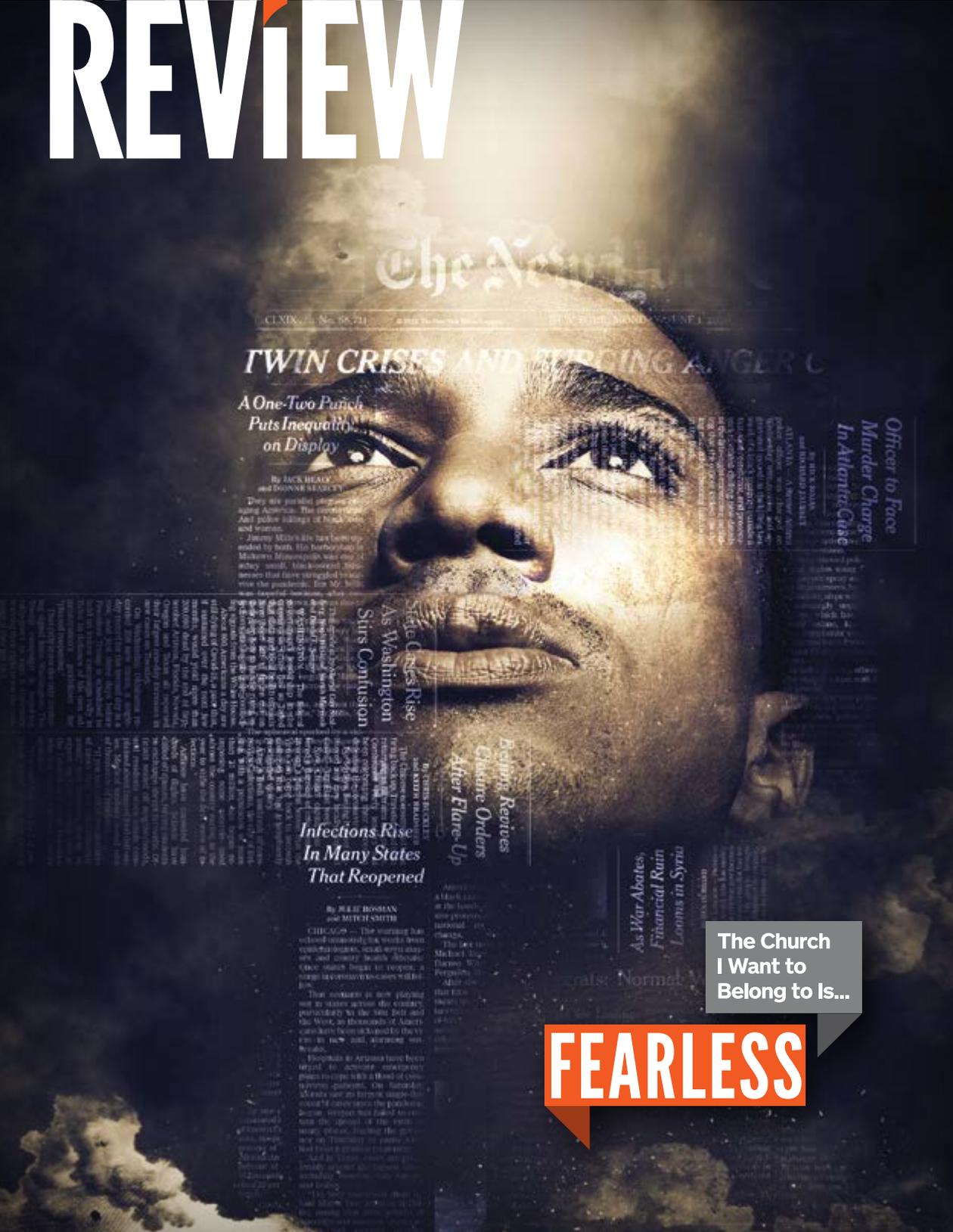


JULY 2020: LOVE IS AN ACTION WORD + DIDN'T SEE THIS COMING + A SABBATH MORNING PRAYER + IN THE WAITING + FEAR, ANXIETY, AND MENTAL HEALTH + THE TRUTH ABOUT SALVATION

ADVENTIST REVIEW



The News

CLIXD, No. 58,711 A MAGAZINE OF THE ADVENTIST CHURCH PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE ADVENTIST PUBLISHING BOARD, WASHINGTON, D.C. JULY 2020 \$5.00

TWIN CRISES AND SURGING ANGER

A One-Two Punch Puts Inequality on Display

By JACK HEALY and DOONNE SEARLEY
They are parallel problems plaguing America. The coronavirus and police killings of black men and women.

As Washington Stirs Confusion

By KATHY BRANTLEY
The White House's handling of the coronavirus pandemic has left many Americans confused.

Expiring Reverses Evacuation Orders After Flare-Up

By KATHY BRANTLEY
After a health scare, the U.S. government has reversed its decision to evacuate people from the West Coast.

Infections Rise In Many States That Reopened

By JILLIE ROSSMAN and MITCH SMITH
CHICAGO — The relaxing of lockdown measures, social-worship activities and online health education have helped begin to reopen a state in many instances.

As War Abates, Financial Ruin Looms in Syria

By KATHY BRANTLEY
As the conflict in Syria shows signs of ending, the economic devastation is deepening.

Officer to Face Murder Charge In Atlanta Case

By JACK HEALY
A former Atlanta police officer is facing a murder charge in the case of a black man's death.

The Church I Want to Belong to Is...

FEARLESS

New Release:

Digital Discipleship & Evangelism Guide

By Jamie Domm

A practical guide for using technology to spread the gospel.

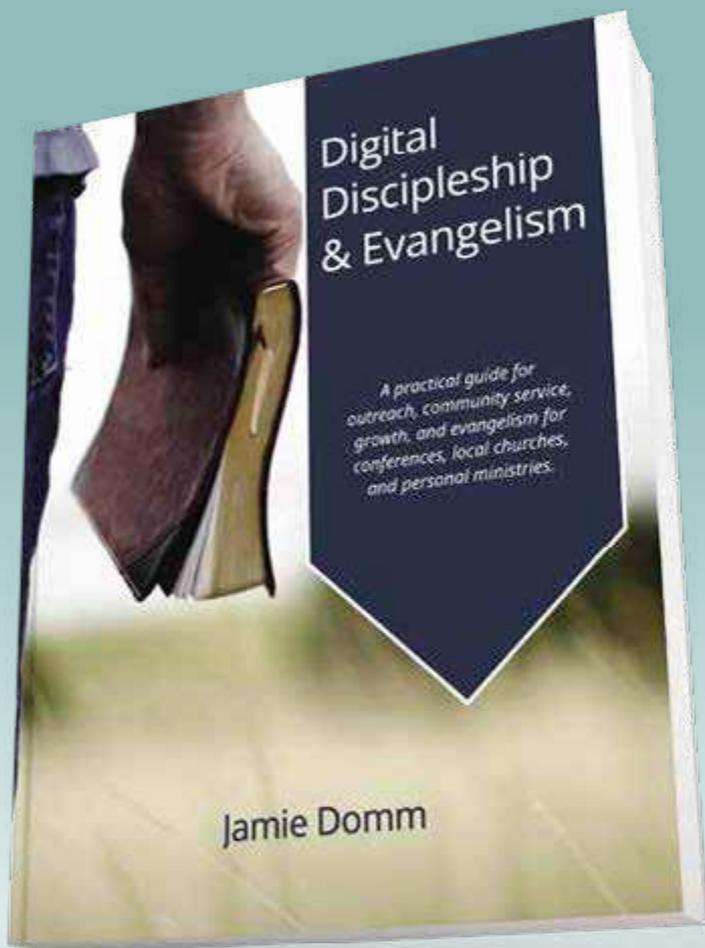
The North American Division has released its first guide to digital discipleship and evangelism! This book is a practical guide for outreach, community service, growth, and evangelism for conferences, local churches, and personal ministries. It digs deep into content evangelism, effective writing for online audiences, and practical tips for community care and engagement. This comprehensive resource is packed with practical “how-to” nuts and bolts that will help you establish or grow your digital ministry.

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TRENDING

THE MOST SHARED STORIES ON ADVENTISTREVIEW.ORG LAST MONTH:



- 1 Oakwood Establishes George Floyd Scholarship to Support Education
- 2 Retired Breath of Life Speaker Walter L. Pearson, Jr., 74, Whose Ministry Spoke Across Generations, Passes to His Rest
- 3 This Intractable Lie
- 4 The Gospel Defeats Racism
- 5 Deeds, Not Only Words

105 YEARS AGO IN ADVENTIST REVIEW:



Death of Sister E. G. White

We stop our presses to announce the sad word of the death of Sister E. G. White, which occurred at her home, near St. Helena, Cal., Friday afternoon, July 16.

After a life of nearly eighty-eight years of faithful, untiring labor for God and for her fellow men, a truly noble woman, a devoted servant of the Master, rests from her labors. The influence of her godly life will live on to gather with Christ till the final harvest.

After a funeral service in St. Helena, the remains will be taken to Battle Creek, Mich., where a final service will be held in the Tabernacle next Sabbath, July 24, in charge of Elder A. G. Daniells.

With the relatives, who sorrow in their great loss, the church in every land grieves. We shall miss her kindly admonitions, her loving counsels. But God still lives, and upon his power his work in the earth securely rests. Relying upon him, let us labor more faithfully to bring to a speedy completion, through his grace, the great work to which our sister devoted her life. Full particulars will be given later.

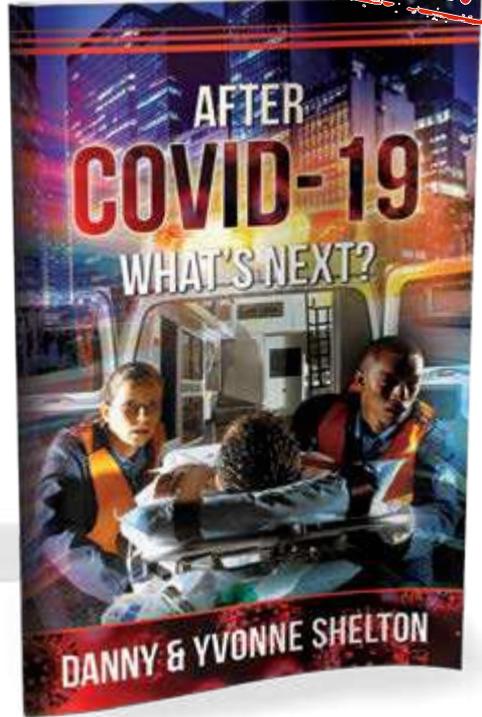
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BILL KNOTT



*Christ's church began its story
with bright tongues of fire.*

Carrying the Fire

There is no greater temptation for the church of Jesus today than the desire to be liked by those with power, and thus conform its message and its mission to preserving the status quo.

But at its core, the church always carries a molten gospel in its life, a force so powerful and clear that it remakes a million lives a day, inflames their new imaginations with visions of a different world, and sets in motion deep movements that inevitably change this world as well.

Thus the earliest followers of Jesus stood against the establishments and elites of the Roman world to announce a gospel still unfolding in our world today: *"There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus"* (Gal. 3:28, NRSV).^{*} In a culture that awarded social value by ethnicity and race, by economic status and by gender, the manifesto of first-century Christianity was correctly read as undermining the foundations of an evil social order. And so we read of confrontations and martyrdom, of countless lives expended on the sands of amphitheaters, in dungeons, and at the stake. Make no mistake: the enemies of truth were entirely clear-eyed about the change the gospel always brings.

Tell the child of a despised people that he is, in fact, a valued son of an omnipotent Father, and he will never fully acquiesce to tales of his inferiority. Tell a slave that the only Master who truly matters has announced the coming death of slavery, and you strike sharp sparks to tinder in her mind. Tell women that the Word of God, from Genesis through Jesus, recognizes in them the image of eternal God, and you may reasonably expect changed families, new congregations, and yes, reformed societies.

You cannot preach the authentic gospel taught by Jesus and simultaneously plan for only sweetly devotional outcomes—for things-as-they-were; for unruffled times and unyielding authority; for victims of this world's way to never challenge how things work.

It must be said: Christ's church began its story with bright tongues of fire. And even on its darkest days—when the church itself forgot its truth, and used the corrupting power of the state to suppress the incendiaries of freedom, Sabbath, and salvation by faith—the embers never died away. Some lips were still anointed with the coals from heaven's altar. Some minds could still imagine a day when every prisoner will go free. A thousand hidden campfires burn with dreams to live within God's better world.

We ought never be surprised when both our culture and our church stir with the power of a better dream—a vision of a just society; a call for fairness in the public square as well as in the congregation. The censer swung for centuries in rituals and ceremonies had real fire within it. And the incense reaching to the sanctuary has identified ingredients: *"Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?"* (Isa. 58:6, 7).

We are still learning from this gospel that we carry—still realizing how vast is its ability to remake lives and families and movements. So make a covenant with me that we will yield to the message that we bear—that we will not domesticate it; or make it tame; or make it sound like corporate press releases.

The church I want to belong to is . . . **fearless.**

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

I'm a . . . fan of Dixil Rodriguez's articles. Writing is a gift, and she is blessed with it.

JOHN BRIDGES, FORSYTHE, MISSOURI

THE WAY FORWARD

Some call it the coronavirus, some call it COVID-19, but whatever the case, it is not likely to go away anytime soon! It has certainly changed our everyday lives, with more than 100,000 lives lost in the United States. So yes, we have on our hands a pandemic of epic proportions. A global challenge that has the potential to affect every man, woman, and child alive today.

In the meantime, how shall we Seventh-day Adventist Christians, and Christians in general, relate? The first thing we need to know in this crisis of a lifetime is that God knows and God cares. The second imperative is a conscious acknowledgment that we are all sinners saved by the grace of God. In other words, the sin virus has invaded every human, except our Lord, since the Creation and subsequent Fall. Consequently, there is only one way, one passport, out of this sin-infected world, and that is through the love and righteousness of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Albert Manning Ellis
Apopka, Florida

DIXIL, KEEP WRITING!

I'm a retired pastor and fan of Dixil Rodriguez's articles. Writing is a gift, and she is blessed with it. I hope she keeps it up, and I thank her for sharing her talents. She is touching many lives, and I am so proud of her.

John Bridges
Forsyth, Missouri



Continued blessings to you at the *Review* who put pen to paper, fingertips to keyboards, and thoughts to language while praying for guidance. You're appreciated.

Darlene Grunke
Nordland, Washington

COMMENTS FROM ADVENTISTREVIEW.ORG

ONLY CONNECTION WITH GOD CAN OVERCOME GLOBAL RISE IN EVIL

Seventh-day Adventists cannot take a seat at the table until we take our heads out of the sand and deal with racism within our church.

Merlene Peters
via web

IT'S NOT THEM. IT'S US.

We absolutely need to hear from those not in our demographic. Thank you, Wilona Karimabadi, for your transparency and your courage. I teach family life. I tell my students that men ought to stand up for women. Married people ought to stand up in support of singles. Seniors ought to stand up for youth. Youth ought to stand up for seniors. And yes, Whites ought to speak up, stand up, and stand with Black people. "If one part suffers, every part suffers" (1 Cor. 12:26).

JOY

What joy! Spiritual articles and editorials, news, information. April's issue includes Ellen White, Christopher Hitchens, Edvard Munch, William Shakespeare, Ludwig von Beethoven, coming full circle to Christ and infallible Scripture.

There is no way we could ever remain silent in the midst of such terrible injustice and awful actions.

JOY PHILIP, VIA FACEBOOK

Jeffrey Brown

via web

Possibly one of the best articles I've read. Thoughts and prayers? Sure. But action also. Stepping out of our bubbles and actually doing something to help.

Margaret Mielczarek

via Facebook

There is no way we could ever remain silent in the midst of such terrible injustice and awful actions. We are all part of the human race; when one of us hurts, we all hurt. We all must scream at the top of our voices: Enough! No More!

Joy Philip

via Facebook

12 THINGS SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS CAN DO DURING QUARANTINE

Amen. What a wonderful summary of all we should be focused on. May God help us stay focused on what is important for our salvation.

Robin Mose

via web

TWO REASONS SPIRITUAL MENTORS CAN MAKE OR BREAK A CHRISTIAN

The article is so important. So many new members are abandoned after they join the church. One mechanism worth mentioning is a new believers class that concentrates on

reading the Bible and exploring basic themes. Another mechanism is to establish a formal sponsor.

Twelve-step programs use this approach to thoroughly ground a recovering sinner's personal journey into freedom from sin.

Milton Hare

via web

CLIFF'S EDGE—THE PAST HYPOTHESIS

Where there is bread, there must be a baker. Where there is a painting, there must be a painter. Where there is a sculpture, there must be a sculptor. Where there is design, there has to be a designer. We were created for a purpose—friendship with God.

Stephen Beagles

via web

HOW MY COVID-19 EXPERIENCE CHANGED ME

Thank you for your testimony. Your story is an inspiration.

Bob Switak

via web

NORTH AMERICAN CHURCH PRESIDENT SET TO RETIRE IN JULY

We thank Dan Jackson for his good service to our beloved church. We will now be fervent in prayer that his replacement will be filled with the Spirit, committed to the everlasting gospel, focused on revival and reformation, faithful to the Scriptures, exemplary in character, unapologetically Adventist, uncompromisingly humble and kind.

Wyatt Allen

via web

YOUR TURN

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

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“If we disdain and denigrate others on the basis of race, gender, [and] economic status, . . . then we are not Christians,”

Dan Jackson, NAD president, page 10

NEWS



A solidarity vigil was held on the Loma Linda University Health campus for students, employees, and faculty to express their emotions and come together as a community on Tuesday, June 2. PHOTO: LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY HEALTH

ADVENTIST LEADERS AND SCHOLARS DECRY RACISM, APPEAL TO PROACTIVE CHANGE

AMID RACIAL TENSIONS, THEY CALL FOR TRANSFORMATION AND ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT.

MARCOS PASEGGI, *ADVENTIST REVIEW*

Seventh-day Adventist leaders and scholars from various backgrounds and church positions decried racism in all its forms and committed to working toward a more just church and society. The move came in the wake of the killing of George Floyd, an African American man in police custody in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on May 25, 2020,

which in subsequent days triggered massive protests across the United States and the world.

“As Seventh-day Adventists we stand together worldwide in condemning racism, bigotry, hatred, prejudice, and violence in all its myriad forms,” wrote Adventist Church president Ted N. C. Wilson in a message to church mem-

bers on June 1.

ORIGINS AND REACH OF RACISM

Gary Thurber, Adventist Church president for a group of nine central U.S. states, reminded his constituency on the origins of racism. “We need to remember that since the beginning, when sin first raised its ugly head, we have been wrestling not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers. The devil wants to keep us divided,” he wrote.

Racism affects God’s image in every human, wrote Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) president Michael Kruger on June 3. Thus, “when our fellow humans suffer, . . . we suffer



because every human life is made in the image of God," he said.

In an official statement, Seventh-day Adventist Theology Seminary leaders at Andrews University, Jiří Moskala and Teresa Reeve, commented, "Treating a person as less of a human because of skin color . . . is wrong, a sin in the eyes of God." They emphasized, "Every individual on this earth is created in the image of God, and is our neighbor whom we are commanded to treat with love and respect."

For Kayle de Waal, seminary head at Australia's Avondale College, the issue is simple and complex at the same time. "Racism is sin," he wrote, "and because it is sin, it doesn't always manifest itself . . . with a knee on [the] neck [but] in subtle and nuanced ways in institutional prejudice." Adventist pastor and singer Wintley Phipps agreed. "It is a disfiguring trait, a profound moral deficit," he wrote.

Thurber emphasized that because Adventists know the origins of humanity and at the same time racism, we are responsible for tackling the issue. It is also connected to Adventist mission. "Seventh-day Adventists have a rendezvous with history as we show genuine solidarity with the whole human family, people of every tribe, people group, nation, and tongue." It is something, he wrote, inscribed "with a direct reference to the creation of one human race."

UNITED STATES AND THE WORLD

Several leaders and scholars acknowledged that racism transcends geographical borders. "In every place I've worked—New Zealand, Australia, and South Korea—I've seen racism," wrote de Waal, a native of South Africa. "Current protests are global because racism is part of the human condition."

The current situation in the U.S., however, seems to zero in on a particular experience of historical discrimination. "We . . . can no longer address injustice worldwide without acknowledging injustice here where we reside in the United States," Kruger said.

The lie of racial superiority "is [the U.S.] original and enduring sin, . . . [which] has given birth to unspeakable horrors and indescribable ugliness," wrote Phipps. "We must find ways of loving the nation while hating its sins."

AN ADVENTIST CHURCH PROBLEM TOO

The prejudice about the inferiority of Black people has deep religious roots, added Ganoune Diop, the Adventist Church's director of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty. "Two centuries ago partisans for slavery evoked the Bible to justify this traffic."

"If we disdain and denigrate others

on the basis of race, gender, economic status, and so on, then we are not Christians," emphasized Adventist Church president in North America Dan Jackson on June 7. Jackson, who recalled when African Americans were not allowed to eat in the same cafeteria or go to the same washroom as Whites even in Adventist institutions, told Adventist African Americans that he was deeply sorry. "I am saddened that you have experienced prejudice and bigotry even in the church. . . . As a White man, I know little of your suffering, but I suffer with you," he wrote.

PERSONAL AND CORPORATE TRANSFORMATION

Several Adventist leaders stressed that fighting racism implies a personal transformation first. "It is time for us all to do some soul-searching," wrote Jackson. Thurber seconded, adding that in his case, current developments have prompted him to ask himself why he has been silent so many times. "I regret I have not always been a stand-up guy. Too many times, I have been on the sidelines," wrote Thurber.

Personal and corporate transformation are linked, leaders said. "If change is to take place in the church, it needs to take place first in me," wrote Jackson.

At the same time, several leaders emphasized that as our denomination moves to tackle racism, we should remember that the gospel of Jesus

“Let no one tell you that the work of ‘standing for the right, though the heavens fall’ is incompatible with the life of faith!”

—Leslie Pollard, president, Oakwood University

Christ is active, not passive.

“It isn’t appropriate for us to remain silent when others suffer, are victimized and marginalized,” wrote Jackson. “We cannot remain bystanders,” added AdventHealth president and CEO Terry Shaw. “While there is breath in us, silence is not an option.”

The church cannot sit on the sidelines, emphasized Andrews University professor and religious liberty leader Nicholas Miller. “The church needs to recover its voice, and many Christians need to find theirs for the first time,” he wrote.

La Sierra University president Joy Fehr agreed, calling many, including “those who are followers of Christ, including ourselves, to act courageously, to care compassionately, to love deeply, to creatively construct new ways, new patterns of being in this world that honor all members of God’s good creation.”

IN LINE WITH ADVENTIST HISTORY AND MISSION

Leaders emphasized that advocating for those oppressed and who suffer is at the core of Adventist early history. It is something, they said, that should become our rallying cry again at a time we are called to move from words to actions.

“It is no longer good enough to personally acknowledge that we are not racist,” wrote Shaw. “We must become anti-racist advocates.”

Oakwood University president Leslie Pollard agreed, adding that fighting for social justice is part of a legacy of faith. In a letter to the community of the historically Black Adventist uni-

versity, Pollard wrote, “Let no one tell you that the work of ‘standing for the right, though the heavens fall’ is incompatible with the life of faith!”

On the contrary, advocating for others with love is what gives meaning to the Adventist Church’s mission, Jackson emphasized. “No program or busywork will solve the problems of the church, as important as they may seem,” he wrote. “We must go to our knees and ask God to make us His agents to demonstrate His love. Then our programs and objectives will take on a new meaning.”

GOD’S LOVE, JESUS’ VALUES

Leaders acknowledged that becoming active should be based on a love that originates with God. “God’s kind of love means we will connect with our brothers and sisters and seek to understand life through their eyes,” Moskala and Reeve wrote. “It means allowing God to reveal our erroneous hidden assumptions and misconceptions and attitudes, and repenting of them. It means speaking out when we witness an act of injustice. It means caring enough to act with compassion.”

De Waal agrees. “The immeasurable and unfailing love of God manifested in the gospel of Jesus Christ empowers new living,” he wrote. But “we need to repent of our racism—corporately, personally, socially.”

“We are the family of God,” added Thurber. “We need to look for opportunities to come alongside our Black brothers and sisters in our communities and churches to offer support and

to be part of the solution for change.”

According to Loma Linda University president and CEO Richard Hart, the values to be defended do not originate in the mind of people, but come from Jesus Himself. Jesus’ values, such as justice and compassion, “need to permeate all that we do and think,” wrote Hart. “They need to be so clear . . . that we become a refuge for those now suffering.”

Hart added that he understands it is not an easy task. Adopting Jesus’ values “will not be a struggle of weeks or months or even years, but of a lifetime,” he acknowledged. “We are wired in ways that make it difficult to overcome ingrained biases or beliefs from our own past. But surely this is a task we must embrace, . . . and one for which we seek divine help.”



Elie S. Honore, president of Adventist Health Service, Inter-America, speaks earlier this year at Haiti Adventist Hospital in Port-au-Prince.

PHOTO: LIBNA STEVENS, INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION FILE PHOTO

ORGANIZATIONS JOIN FORCES TO SUPPORT ADVENTIST HOSPITALS IN INTER-AMERICA

ADMINISTRATORS AND LEADERS PRAY FOR STRUGGLING HEALTH-CARE INSTITUTIONS ACROSS THE TERRITORY.

BY LIBNA STEVENS, INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION NEWS

Seventh-day Adventist hospital administrators and church leaders throughout the Inter-American Division (IAD) church region recently took time for spiritual reflection and prayer for physicians, other health professionals, and general staff as they care for patients during the pandemic crisis.

During a May 31, 2020, video conference, they reaffirmed the mission of spreading hope, love, and compassion, even in the midst of stringent limitations of operation across the 14 Adventist hospitals in the IAD.

Elie Henry, president of IAD, addressed dozens of leaders. “The work that you are doing as frontline workers, sacrificing family, your personal life, to save people in service to the community, is essential as part of the [health] ministry,” he said. “To be the hands of God like this. . . . Thank you for who you are and what you’re doing as a physician, as a nurse, as a medical professional. . . . Please know that God will not abandon you.”

TOGETHER IN SOLIDARITY

The encouragement came as health ministries leaders from the Adventist world church pointed to the Bible and the storms God’s people had to face in the past.

“We come together in solidarity during this time of unprecedented challenge, grief, loss, and opportunity,” said Peter Landless, health ministries director for the world church. “We are here to agonize, trust God, and share. We are all in the same storm in different boats, struggling with these issues. But each of you represents the right hand of God’s message to a broken world.”

It’s not only about the health message but a health mission to extend the healing message of Jesus, Landless said. “Thank you for your dedication, your work, your commitment, and service. Your church is with you.”

Hospital administrators were reminded about how to deal with stress and approach pressing challenges, their special calling, and their reliance

on God through the pandemic. Prayer sessions included specific requests for protection among health professionals and their families, and wisdom to make the right decisions focused on the mission of serving with love and compassion.

FACING DIFFICULTIES

The meeting was not held to deal with current or prior concerns to the pandemic throughout the hospital institutions, stressed Elie S. Honore, president of Adventist Health Services–Interamerica (AHS–IA). “Yes, we were facing difficulties in our hospitals before the pandemic hit, but thanks to our financial partners, hospitals are still running and providing medical services to the community,” he said.

Hospitals are running with fewer staff, less compensation, and more challenges, he said. But “we must keep together in this effort by praying for each other every day at midday.”

Honore explained that soon after pandemic restrictions went into effect in countries across the IAD, hospital administrators had to adjust quickly to face three priorities: cutting salaries; obtaining personal protective equipment such as face shields, masks, and gloves; and procuring supplies for the hospitals.

“All our hospitals were forced to reduce staff, cut down elective surgical cases, and cut pay to the rest of the working staff to up to 50 percent compensation,” Honore said. Some hospitals, such as Vista del Jardín Adventist Hospital in the Dominican Republic and Bella Vista Hospital in Puerto Rico, have been able to take in

COVID-19 patients. Many administrators have been forced to cut down on the ratio of nurses to patients from one nurse to five patients to one for 10 patients, Honore explained. In addition, medical professionals have been exposed to and infected by the coronavirus. Thankfully, no deaths among physicians and staff have been reported.

HOSPITAL OPERATIONS

Because some of the 14 Adventist hospitals in IAD lack the proper equipment to treat COVID-19 patients, those facilities have taken in patients with regular medical needs from nearby public hospitals, freeing up space for COVID-19 patients in the public hospitals, Honore said.

In Honduras, Valle de Angeles Adventist Hospital had one positive case of the coronavirus, but that patient had to be moved to another hospital because the main service it offers is long-term care. The medical staff has been taking precautions as they care for elderly residents across their nursing home wing, according to Honore.

The same challenges have been experienced at the Adventist hospital in Haiti, where nonelective surgeries and nonessential services such as physical therapy had to close, and operations were reduced by more than 25 percent. "The hospital usually sees approximately 200 patients in their outpatient clinics per day. Now it's been less than 100, sometimes 60 or 40 patients, because of distancing measures and reduced staff to provide care," Honore said.

PARTNERS' SUPPORT

Yet amid the reduced operations, Honore said, he sees God continuing to sustain the hospitals. Thanks to AHS-IA, which is affiliated with Adventist Health International (AHI), medical staff have been compensated for their work during the past two months,

matter what, God is in charge," said Honore, who said he spends many sleepless nights, and most of the day on the phone, involved very closely with hospital management issues and decisions.

Honore said that in the past he prayed for God to make him wealthy



Valle de Angeles Adventist Hospital in Honduras is one of 14 hospitals across the Inter-American Division. It serves dozens of elderly residents in its nursing home. PHOTO: VALLE DE ANGELES ADVENTIST HOSPITAL

Honore explained. AHI is an organization based in Loma Linda, California, United States, that strengthens and assists Adventist health-care institutions. Nine of the hospitals in the AHS-IA system received help to compensate their working staff.

In addition, AdventHealth, a Seventh-day Adventist health-care system based in Altamonte Springs, Florida, United States, and its network of hospitals, in coordination with ADRA International, is providing containers of personal protective equipment to four of their footprint institutions in Honduras, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Haiti.

"I keep reminding myself that no

so that he could take care of institutions." "But I didn't realize how wealthy we are in the amount of assistance from our partners. It tells me that God is looking after the hospitals, and that quiets my soul a lot. Instead of fretting, I rejoice in those opportunities that help our institutions serve," he said.

The biggest concern is to avoid having a permanent dependency on donor institutions, Honore said. "We want all our hospitals and clinics to be self-reliant."

The pandemic situation has brought

about opportunities for hospital administrators and board members to meet more often online, pray more together, and provide more training. Starting in mid-June 2020, board members and chairpersons will meet once a month as part of ongoing continuing education for general training



Vista del Jardín Adventist Hospital in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, has cared for coronavirus patients and has seen pay cuts to its medical staff during the pandemic.

PHOTO: DOMINICAN UNION

of hospital leaders and more, Honore said.

ADVENTHEALTH LAUNCHES IMMUNOTHERAPY, CLINICAL TRIAL FOR BLOOD CANCER PATIENTS

FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND TREATMENT IS EXPECTED TO BENEFIT SPECIFIC CASES, EXPERTS SAY.

BY ADVENTHEALTH, CENTRAL FLORIDA DIVISION EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

AdventHealth physicians are the first in the world to launch a pioneering treatment targeting certain blood cancers for patients who have exhausted all other types of therapy.

Antigen-specific T-cell therapy, which is the subject of a clinical trial at AdventHealth Orlando, uses the immune cells to target cancer cells and provides what is often the final treatment opportunity for people suffering from certain types of acute myeloid leukemia (AML) and myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS).

The first patient to receive this therapy was treated in late April 2020 at AdventHealth Orlando and is recovering at home. He will be monitored to determine the efficacy of the treatment, which may take several months.

According to the National Cancer Institute, more than 19,000 people will be diagnosed with AML this year in the United States, and more than 11,000 people will die from it. The five-year survival rate for AML is 28.7 percent, while in comparison, the five-year survival rate for leukemia is 63.7 percent.

The number of people diagnosed with MDS in the country each year is uncertain, but is estimated at 10,000 or higher, the American Cancer Society reports.

"The best attribute of an immunotherapy treatment like this one is that it's a precise, customizable, and personalized way to treat cancer for those who have no options left," said Juan Carlos Varela, hematology oncologist at AdventHealth and principal investigator of the trial. "The relapse after traditional forms of treatment for these patients is around 40 percent. That relapse is the number-one cause of death for this patient population. Their options are very limited, and there's an urgent need for potentially lifesaving treatment options like this one."

Antigen-specific T cells are made by removing white blood cells from a donor (who had previously donated stem cells to the patient), generating immune cells that are tumor-specific, then infusing the generated cells back into the patient's bloodstream. Antigen-specific T cells can attack specific cancer cells.

"Being the first in the world to launch this therapy, and to have the lead investigator on our team, shows our commitment to personalized medicine, which is the future of cancer care," said Mark A. Socinski, executive medical director of the AdventHealth Cancer Institute. "We're excited to bring this innovative therapy to our patients and allow them to access this potentially lifesaving treatment close to home."

The antigen-specific T-cell therapy clinical trial and the blood and marrow transplant program are made possible by the generous support of community donors, including the AdventHealth Foundation of Central Florida.



The production team behind Hope Awakens poses together in the It Is Written studio after the completion of the series in May 2020.

PHOTO: IT IS WRITTEN

MORE THAN 3,500 DECIDE TO FOLLOW CHRIST

MORE THAN 1 MILLION PEOPLE RESPONDED TO IT IS WRITTEN SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN.

ELLEN HOSTETLER, IT IS WRITTEN

Hope Awakens, a global, online evangelistic series recently conducted by the media ministry It Is Written, concluded May 16, 2020.

The series of twenty 60-minute live-streamed meetings began April 17. That had been the date set for the beginning of a series called Revelation Today in a number of cities in Indiana, including Indianapolis. Because of COVID-19, those in-person meetings were canceled. Within a matter of days It Is Written had planned a virtual series that would reach North America and the world.

The meetings aired on HopeAwakens.org, ItIsWritten.tv, Facebook, Roku, YouTube, Apple TV, Google Play, Amazon Fire, and through the It Is Written mobile app. More than 1 million people responded to the ministry's social media advertising campaign. Almost 750,000 people responded to It Is Written directly. Tens of thousands of people registered to attend Hope Awakens. More than 3,500 people made decisions for Christ during the meetings and are

being mentored by volunteers from the 600 churches that signed up to be a part of the initiative.

Many attendees of Hope Awakens are attending local virtual communities to continue their studies with Bible workers, who received specialized training by the It Is Written Soul-Winning and Leadership Training (SALT) team. Stories are pouring in from people blessed by Hope Awakens.

Denise worked on a cruise ship and was quarantined onboard the ship off the Florida coast after a crew member was diagnosed with COVID-19. Denise found It Is Written online and discovered Hope Awakens. She began watching and looking into the Bible to study the texts that were being shared.

Denise's sister wrote, "She loved the presentations and learned so much and was fascinated to learn about how the Sabbath was changed. In fact, she was angry when she discovered this truth, knowing what God says had been kept from her for so long. On May 2, 2020, right on the ship, she kept

her first Sabbath, and she did the same the following week. What a God!"

Another viewer wrote, "During the past four years I've been praying for my son Chris, who struggles with addiction. He's been watching the Hope Awakens meetings every night and requested that I call him after each meeting to pray with him. One night his girlfriend (who also struggles with addiction) asked to join us, and tearfully surrendered her heart to Jesus while praying. Last night I heard my son pray for the first time. I am so thankful for these meetings. Jesus is changing my son's life, and I've been given the privilege to witness it!"

In addition to being streamed in American Sign Language, Hope Awakens has been translated and shared in seven Indian languages. Meetings are also being held in French, Italian, and several languages for refugee groups in the United States. It Is Written's Robert Costa has completed a companion series in Spanish. The English meetings were aired in New Zealand and Australia. ▀



Walter L. Pearson, Jr.

PHOTO: BREATH OF LIFE TV

RETIRED BREATH OF LIFE SPEAKER WALTER L. PEARSON, JR., PASSES TO HIS REST

PASTOR, EVANGELIST SERVED THE CHURCH AND CAMPAIGNED FOR JESUS AROUND THE WORLD.

BY MARK A. KELLNER, WITH REPORTING FROM NAD COMMUNICATION

Evangelist Walter L. Pearson, Jr., former speaker/director for Breath of Life TV media ministry, passed to his rest on June 7, 2020. He was 74.

“He was one of our greatest communicators, particularly in his narrative preaching and ability to tell a story,” said Carlton Byrd, who at the end of 2010 succeeded Pearson as speaker/director of the ministry.

“His ministry was intergenerational,” added Byrd. “Some pastors are great in evangelism, some in doctrinal preaching, [but] Elder Pearson had that gift to reach everybody in multiple settings.”

North American Division (NAD) president Daniel R. Jackson said, “Walter was passionate for the gospel of Jesus. While his powerful messages had been carefully thought through, they were delivered with ‘Spirit power.’”

G. Alexander Bryant, NAD executive secretary, added, “Walter Pearson was a great warrior of God. He was one of the most gifted homiletics of our day. His ministry and his leadership as the Breath of Life speaker will result in countless thousands being saved in God’s kingdom.”

NAD vice president Alvin M. Kibble said, “Pearson was the quintessential

pastor/preacher. He preached with the fervor of the old-time evangelists and the eloquence of a master wordsmith. His timing, his style and humor, were artfully and effectively crafted to deliver the message God had ordained.”

SERVED AT LOCAL DENOMINATIONAL LEVELS

Pearson was born on November 18, 1945, in Mobile, Alabama. He earned a degree in religion and theology from Oakwood College (now Oakwood University) in 1967. Shortly after graduation, he married Sandra Holland.

Pearson joined the Adventist ministry in 1969, and was ordained in 1971. Because of his ability to relate to young people, Pearson was invited to be director of Youth and Urban Ministries for the Allegheny West Conference.

In 1991 he became the first Seventh-day Adventist inducted into the Martin Luther King, Jr., Board of Preachers and Collegium of Scholars at Morehouse College in Atlanta. Since that time Pearson’s influence has led to the induction of numerous Seventh-day Adventist pastors into that group, including Byrd in 2008.

In 1993 Pearson was called to the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists world headquarters. Following a brief stint at the Ellen G. White Estate, Pearson moved to the world church’s Ministerial Association, where he was part of a team that trained Adventist pastors and those of other denominations.

In 1998 Pearson became speaker/director of Breath of Life. Pearson’s determination to deliver the gospel message allowed him to lead successful evangelistic meetings nationally, as well as in 67 different countries around the world.

STROKE NEARLY CLAIMED EVANGELIST

In February 2006 Pearson suffered a stroke that nearly ended his life. By November of that year he told the NAD year-end meeting, “I promised God that if He raised me up and gave me a voice, I would thank Him publicly. I thank you for giving me that opportunity. I want to praise His name.”

Sandra Pearson passed to her rest in 2009. Two years later Pearson married educator Patricia Patterson, who had also lost a spouse. Byrd performed the ceremony.

Along with his wife, Patricia, Pearson is survived by three adult children, Ericca, Walter III, Mia-Liani; and four grandsons. ▀



SOUTH PACIFIC CHURCH REGION INCREASES ISLAND MISSIONS BUDGETS. The South Pacific Division of the Adventist Church has established a financial plan to sustain its island missions economically impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The plan will help keep leaders focused on sharing the gospel. Unlike in Australia and New Zealand, no government financial support is available to employers in Papua New Guinea and Pacific countries.



MEDICAL STUDENTS WRITE, PUBLISH ILLUSTRATED CORONAVIRUS CHILDREN'S BOOK. Devon Scott and Samantha Harris, class of 2021 Loma Linda University medical students, have produced a children's book, *Why We Stay Home*, that educates children about the coronavirus through conversations between older sister, Millie, and little sister, Suzie. Authors Scott and Harris hoped their book would reach 100 families, but within its first month it was downloaded 35,000 times.



ADRA HELPS BANGLADESH AS CYCLONE AMPHAN DEVASTATES. May 20, 2020, Cyclone Amphan struck coastal and southwestern districts of Bangladesh with wind speeds of 100 miles per hour (160 kilometers per hour). Before the storm Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), the Adventist humanitarian arm, circulated early-warning messages in the Khulna district of Bangladesh. ADRA has invested in development in the region for more than 15 years, and is now cooperating with authorities to provide ongoing aid relief.



NEW ONLINE PLATFORM FOR STUDENT LITERATURE EVANGELISTS IN MEXICO Student literature evangelists (LEs) in Mexico are now participating in a first-of-its-kind online platform run by Montemorelos University's LE program called *Emprendum*. Anyone visiting the page can purchase books from any student registered with the program. Profits from sales enable student LEs to finance their college education at any of three different Adventist universities across Mexico.



PROGRAMS ON MISCARRIAGE, RACIAL INJUSTICE WIN AWARDS. In May 2020 *It Is Written* (IIW) won five Telly awards for two programs dealing with difficult subjects: "Innocents Lost," on miscarriage, won one bronze Telly Award; "The Scottsboro Nine," on racial injustice, earned three silvers and one bronze. In the episodes, IIW speaker/director John Bradshaw interviews persons directly involved to share insights about a God who cares and suffers, and a God who is just.



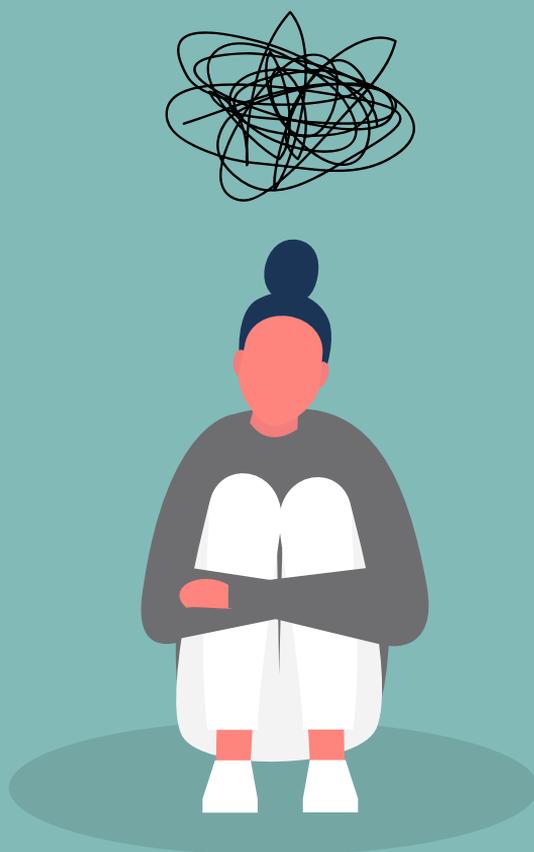
ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY IN JAMAICA LAUNCHES US\$1 MILLION SCHOLARSHIP FUND-RAISER. Northern Caribbean University alumni are being challenged to donate US\$1 million to support students financially affected by the coronavirus pandemic. A mediathon, conducted May 24, 2020, to launch the fundraiser, was endorsed by Jamaican prime minister Andrew Holness and Peter Buntinge, member of Parliament for Central Manchester, where the university is located. The launch raised US\$350,000 in pledges and donations.



IN EL SALVADOR, ADRA SUPPORTS ADVENTIST FAMILIES AFTER TROPICAL STORM AMANDA. Families in El Salvador experienced a second disaster in 2020 following the COVID-19 pandemic. Tropical storm Amanda struck Sunday, May 31, killing 17 people and affecting 24,000 families across the country. ADRA distributed clothing items for children and seniors to 100 families, and contacted providers to purchase food for 800 families.

FEAR, ANXIETY, AND MENTAL HEALTH

*Familiar emotions—
but how do we deal with them?*



*“Peace I leave with you,
My peace I give to you;
not as the world gives
do I give to you.
Let not your heart be troubled,
neither let it be afraid”
(John 14:27).¹*

BY HELGI JÓNSSON

Emotions such as fear or anxiety are not unfamiliar to us these days. They’re probably some of the most common emotions we experience, but often we’re more reluctant to admit to our fearfulness or anxiety than to joy and happiness. Shame and stigma are often connected to them, and many emotions are related to weakness. We’re supposed to be strong; we’re always supposed to cope.

According to neuroscientist Lisa Feldman Barrett,² emotions are made when the brain is predicting the body’s energy need in any given situation and responds to that need by releasing hormones into the bloodstream, which releases the energy from our stores. We call these hormones stress hormones. Perhaps we should, instead, call them energy hormones. When they’re released, they give us a certain bodily sensation. Based on the situation we’re in, we’ve given these feelings names, such as anticipation, anxiety, disgust, joy, fear, and so on. These concepts differ by culture. We don’t all have the same emotional

concepts of the world, and therefore the brain doesn’t have specific areas for specific emotions. The brain is so brilliant and efficient. So well designed.

This prediction is constantly taking place all day long. Throughout the day we’re usually in familiar situations where there’s no uncertainty; and because of prior experiences, the brain’s system knows how much energy is needed. We are, therefore, in a neutral emotional state.

MEETING BIGGER ENERGY NEEDS

But what makes us expect a bigger need for energy? That would be our thoughts and ideas. Our brain doesn’t predict a greater energy need unless we feed it with a certain interpretation of the present or the future.

If I think, for instance, that there’s a big, venomous spider in the kitchen sink, I might think I have to fight it or run away; therefore, I need more energy. Automatically, the brain makes available all the energy needed. I can sense it in the rush



The more chances we take on trusting God, the more our trust in Him grows.

that goes through my body. If I just think that the black thing in the sink is a bundle of hair, there's no greater energy need. I just reach out, grab it, and throw it into the bin—until I realize it's a spider!

These predictions are based on our thoughts, beliefs, and trust. Our beliefs are based on our prior experiences or other knowledge we've gathered on our journey, and on what kind of environment we were raised in. For instance, I never worry about snakes when I'm out in nature. No matter where I travel, they never cross my mind. To me, they could just as well not exist. I wasn't raised with snakes around me. But should I hear a sound resembling howling winds, my heart might skip a beat, because I've experienced the destructive powers of strong wind. Different experiences make for different reactions and emotions.

ANXIETY

Anxiety is characterized by catastrophic ideas. It's like Murphy's law: "Anything that can go wrong will go wrong." There's no end to our ability to cook up catastrophes in our minds. But also, in that respect, we're not all alike. Some of us think about all the possible worst-case-scenario outcomes, while others don't seem to worry hardly at all. Both abilities are good; they just need to be in balance.

Imagine two friends who want to go on a road trip together. The anxious one might foresee a punctured tire, running out of gas, motor failure, bad weather conditions, and whatnot. That person

will pack accordingly. The friend is focused only on the sunshine being anticipated, so a pair of sunglasses and some summer clothes are the main concern. They're both going on a trip to unknown places, and both of them feel a tingling sensation in their abdomen. The anxious one calls it a knot in the stomach, and the other one a butterfly, because that person's anticipating joyful things. Two different concepts based on two different interpretations of the same situation. I'm not saying they're feeling the same thing, but similar things are going on in their bodies—perhaps with a difference in magnitude.

It's good that the first friend has packed all kinds of things in case they do have a punctured tire; then they're prepared. Summer clothes are of no help in such conditions. So foreseeing negative outcomes isn't a bad thing, as long as we don't become too preoccupied with them.

NO ONE IS IMMUNE

Although I'm a trained psychiatrist and cognitive behavior therapist, I'm not immune to emotions, such as anxiety. Working with it every day doesn't make me unfamiliar with it on a personal level.

I remember my first year at university. I had an exam in chemistry that was scheduled for a Sabbath. It wasn't as if I hadn't been in a similar situation in primary or high school, but this was different. This was university, the mecca of science. Why would anyone here care about my religion or beliefs? They would probably just decline my request to take the exam on another

day. My thoughts took me all the way to being expelled. I would never live my dream of becoming a medical doctor, and would probably end up doing something I had no interest in. A life of unhappiness would await me. (I know; a bit over the top!)

Those were my thoughts, but not my reality. When I mustered the courage to call my chemistry professor and plead my case, she said she wouldn't be able to comply with my request at the time. But she was surprisingly supportive and was willing to have the next exam on a different day so that I could take both at the same time. Throughout my six years at the university, I had to request a change of exam dates almost every semester. The examination supervisor got to know me, and whenever I entered his office, he would greet me with "Oh, hi! What do you need to change this time?" I had a special deal with him: I could always take the exams a day before my classmates, and he trusted me not to tell anyone about the questions. This was far from what I had anticipated a few years earlier. This taught me not to worry as much and to trust in God's providence when I follow His will.

LEAVE OUR CARES WITH JESUS

Jesus pointed toward the birds in the air and the lilies in the field (Matt. 6:25-34). He said they are taken care of. The birds don't need to worry about getting enough to eat, because our heavenly Father will provide them with everything they need. Don't worry about tomorrow, He said. Live today; live now. Whatever will happen comes later, and that comes soon enough. When that happens, you'll know what it is.

Sometimes that's easier said than done. But the more chances we take on trusting God, the more our trust in Him grows. That has been my own experience—both personally and professionally.

TODAY'S FEARS

During the past few months almost all of us, no matter where we live on the planet, have been threatened by possible COVID-19 infection. People have feared the illness itself, but more than that, people have feared the effects of isolation and the financial implications of the government response in many countries.³ The news we're bombarded with every hour of the day isn't always helpful

either. Some of the worries are based on a reality we cannot change. What we can change is how we interpret it. We can change our thoughts from "I can't" to "It's difficult, but I will manage." Devastating things may happen, but we must live on. And we can live on. We can continue. When Jesus talked about the birds in the air, He was pointing out the fact that God values us much more than them and that He will not leave us or forsake us. When we need Him, He is there. In our ordeals we must focus on who He is.

Feelings or emotions shouldn't be frowned upon or ridiculed; not by others and not by ourselves. They're just reactions to our thoughts and experiences. We shouldn't bottle them up, but rather talk about them. That way our thoughts can be questioned, new interpretations explored, and emotions normalized. Sometimes our thoughts are so rigid and ingrained in our way of being that we can't get rid of them without professional help. We shouldn't be ashamed of seeking it.

But even if we seek professional help, we shouldn't forget that God cares about us and is fully aware of our temporal needs.

"For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble" (Matt. 6:32-34).

We should focus our thoughts on the good things in life, the true and honorable. Focus on the Word, who came into this world to make it better. To heal and to comfort. To give a hopeful future.

He assures us: "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand" (Isa. 41:10).

¹ All Bible texts are from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

² Lisa Feldman Barrett, *How Emotions Are Made: The Secret Life of the Brain*, Kindle edition (New York: Harcourt Mifflin Harcourt Pub., 2017).

³ See Emily A. Holmes et al., "Multidisciplinary Research Priorities for the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Call for Action for Mental Health Science," *The Lancet Psychiatry*, April 2020.

Helgi Jónsson, M.D., is director of Health Ministries for the Trans-European Division of Seventh-day Adventists in St. Albans, England.

LOVE IS AN

ELLA SMITH
SIMMONS

It is positively amazing: this rare blend of voices throughout the world denouncing racism in word and deed through their supportive responses to the public protests in the United States. Surely this movement is more than human. I am convinced and encouraged that God is working in supernatural ways in aligning conditions for these final days of earth's history.

With this I am compelled to an even greater degree to address the fact that after the shock and outrage at painful atrocities, such as the heinous killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and most recently, Rayshard Brooks, some seem ready to return to an unhealthy, inhumane business and ministry as usual, only praying and hoping for that better day of change somewhere in a nebulous future. Some meekly acquiesce to a misguided inertia that forbids responsibility to address these sins in this life and relegates harmonious human relationships to heaven and the new earth.

HOW CAN THIS BE?

How can this be? I ask this of all of us who consider ourselves converted and reasonably mature spiritually. How can we claim justification and sanctification in Jesus Christ and turn a deaf ear and a blind eye to racism and its ravages in any form? How can we proclaim the gospel to all the world if we will not live it properly? Has the power of systemic racism rendered us numb? Do we just try to fly under society's radar to avoid its ire? Have we fallen into a spirit of fear?

Yes, there have been improvements

in our society over time. But there have been too many setbacks, and victory over the sin of racism is still very far away. Langston Hughes captures the journey for some of us in his poem, "Mother to Son," in which he declares through the cadence and dialect of old southern vernacular, that however difficult the journey, we must continue to climb. God is calling us to new heights:

Well, son, I'll tell you:

Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

It's had tacks in it,

And splinters,

And boards torn up,

And places with no carpet on the floor—

Bare.

But all the time

I've been a-climbin' on,

And reachin' landin's,

And turnin' corners,

And sometimes goin' in the dark

Where there ain't been no light.

So boy, don't you turn back.

Don't you set down on the steps

'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.

Don't you fall now—

For I've still goin', honey,

I've still climbin',

And life for me ain't been no

crystal stair.

ACTION WORD



NASHVILLE METRO POLICE/TWITTER

The church as an institution must acknowledge that racism and oppression exist and that racism and oppression are sin. There must be an honest admission that we all are susceptible to its effects.

Hughes' poem is illustrative of Paul's observation: "We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body" (2 Cor. 4:8-10).

A FEARLESS STAND?

This unequivocal statement articulates both our firm belief and our obligatory responsibility to each other and to all humankind. Racism, classifying groups of people as either inferior or superior inclusive of its related practices, is clearly antithetical to our stated beliefs. Indeed, it violates all elements of biblical injunctions and models for human relationships. Jesus said that all people will know that we are His if we love one another as He loves us.

The converse is obvious: if we do not live this love for and with all human beings, it casts doubt on any claimed relationship with Jesus. Salvation is impossible without that relationship.

We people of the Book know the origin of racism. As with all other schemes of the enemy, we must reject it, call it out wherever it exists, and actively oppose it within the church and throughout society. We must be on guard to discern all of its cunning deceptions and must respond fearlessly in the spirit, authority, and power of Jesus, who calls us into His service "to break the chains of injustice, get rid of exploitation in the workplace, free the oppressed, cancel debts" (Isa. 58:6, Message).¹

We recognize racist myths and deceptions for what they are—slurs on the character of God, our common Father. Creationists by the millions have bought into Darwinian mendacity about ethnic differences ascribed to fictional stages of evolutionary development from animal to human. Even many

who declare the equal value of all people act sometimes as if they believe God created different races or ethnic groups for different purposes, some for leadership or management, some for the performing arts, or athletics, or slavery, etc. Surely we people of the Book do not ascribe any credence to these.

So what is the problem? Fear, pride, desires for power and control?

I wonder about our theology: are we waiting for some supernatural power to impose a new relational order in which we as a body actually model our fundamental beliefs? While many individuals are faithful, should not a great majority of Seventh-day Adventist Christians exemplify the character of Christ? Who can say we should not lead society's search for common justice?

We love Micah's call to act justly, love mercy, and live humbly under God, not taking ourselves too seriously, but taking God seriously (see Micah 6:8, Message). We are called to act justly, not just think and preach about justice.

In avoiding this responsibility, many shrink behind admonitions to refrain from involvement in politics. But if secular society is pursuing and achieving constructs and dynamics congruent with God's will and plan for human relationships, why would Christians resist their emulation? God has used secular powers repeatedly to do His will (see Isa. 45:1; Jer. 25:9; Dan. 2:21; 4:17).

Unfortunately, we have gone along with unsavory elements of public policy and the practice of oppression at times. We have held to divisive practices far beyond the need to preserve our church's unique witness. Those postures cannot continue. A pervasive change has to come among the people of God if we truly aspire to the blessed hope.

Whether laws change hearts or not, we need to be held to correct behaviors. Moreover, correct behavior must sometimes precede the internalization and ownership of laws and values. If we take to heart our fourteenth fundamental belief, toleration and facilitation of injustice among or around us is inconceivable or a function of hypocrisy.

TIME FOR ACTION

The United States is under the world's magnifying glass with a focus on the inevitably explosive consequences of its racism, the knee on the neck. A writer in the current issue of *National Geographic* likens the killing of George Floyd to the lynchings

of days gone by and “the ultimate display of power of one human being over another.”²

The words of Frederick Douglass, former Maryland slave, scholar, orator, writer, social reformer, anthropologist, statesman, and friend of his Adventist contemporaries, spoken August 1857 in Canandaigua, New York, are apropos at this point. He said, “The whole history of the progress of human liberty shows that all concessions yet made to her august claims have been born of earnest struggle. . . . If there is no struggle there is no progress. . . . Power concedes nothing without a demand.”

When we see what the process of struggle looks like in the public arena, we wonder if the Adventist Church believes Douglass. We know that for gain there must be struggle, but ours should be one in which things are spiritually discerned and accomplished. The church as an institution must acknowledge that racism and oppression exist and that racism and oppression are sin. There must be an honest admission that we all are susceptible to its effects.

Humans are being born in this sin and shaped in its iniquity, and Adventism has become “so well-adjusted to [the] culture that [we] fit into it without even thinking” (Rom. 12:2, Message). Thank God this is not our unalterable fate! We can overcome by the grace and power of the Almighty, working both in and through us—and it must be both. While the slower of us try to figure it out, let us just do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.

We must act. I pray that we muster the courage to return to historic Adventism when we led in the public square; when we fought against slavery, racism, and the marginalization of minorities. We need that now—in the pulpit, classroom, boardroom, hospital, mission field, private home, wherever. We as a church body need to preach and teach against racism and other oppressive structures, and in favor of healthy God-ordained human relations as much as against harmful substances and in favor of healthy eating. We need God’s Word as teacher, and Jesus, the Word made flesh, as the gold standard.

Jesus both in word and deed fought all forces of evil including racism and oppression. We see this in His deliberately orchestrated meeting with the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well to the dismay of His disciples, who demonstrated unapologetically the accepted racist practices of their day. We hear

His parable of the good Samaritan, calling the church to task—not to condemn, but to grow and to save.

And for our own times He has given His special messenger. She writes, “Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family.”³ She urges, “The last message of mercy to be given to the world is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them.”⁴ She encourages: “In visions of the night, representations passed before me of a great reformatory movement among God’s people. Many were praising God. The sick were healed, and other miracles were wrought.”⁵

MY FAITH SAYS YES

This reform movement includes the eradication of racism and healing of its oppressive effects among us and the achievement of that love to which Jesus called us—that love by which the world will know we are Christians. Isaiah says: “Shout! A full-throated shout! . . . Tell my people what’s wrong with their lives. . . . To all appearances they’re a nation of right-living people—law-abiding, God-honoring. They ask me, ‘What’s the right thing to do?’” (Isa. 58:1, 2, Message).

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is blessed with God’s complete message for these last days. We are a wonderful, worldwide fellowship of loving people. So this time, after the shock, the outrage, and the pain of the enemy’s atrocities, let us not return to an unhealthy, inhumane business and ministry as usual, only praying and hoping for that better day of change.

It’s time to get off our knees, like Joshua (Joshua 7:6-13); time to stop praying and move forward. So let us arise and “let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!” (Amos 5:24).

I can feel the moving now.

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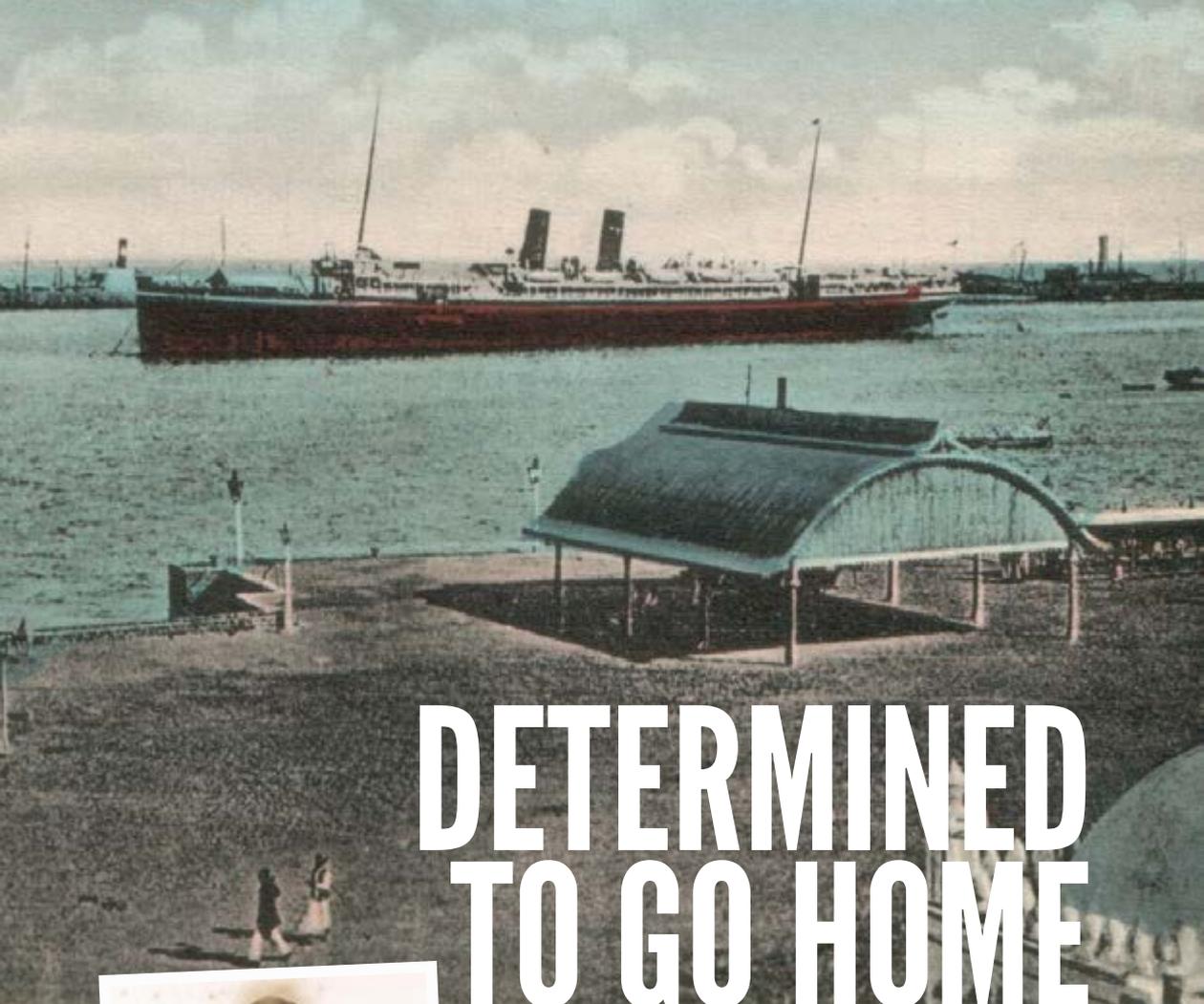
² www.nationalgeographic.com/history/2020/06/history-of-lynching-violent-deaths-reflect-brutal-american-legacy/

³ Ellen G. White, *Last Day Events* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1992), p. 200.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 200, 201.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

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DETERMINED TO GO HOME



Homer Salisbury patted his vest pocket. It held his ticket for the S.S. *Persia*, the last leg of his journey home to India. He had to admit that it seemed like it was taking forever to get back to his work and his wife. But then he smiled. It certainly wasn't taking as long as it could have. Had he listened to others, he'd still be waiting before a ship was available. It was December 1915. The new year was upon them. Everything looked bright.

FIRST TEACHER, THEN MISSIONARY

Homer Russell Salisbury was born May 27, 1870. He attended Battle Creek College, in Battle Creek, Michigan, United States, before leaving as a teacher first to South Africa, then back to Battle Creek.

In 1896, he and his wife moved to England, and in 1901 opened a training school (eventually Newbold College). From there he became president of the Foreign Mission Seminary (now Washington Adventist University).

After 10 years of teaching, he served the General Conference

as secretary of the Department of Education. He made his first trip to India in 1912, spending five months visiting the mission stations. Upon his return, it was decided to send him to India again, this time as superintendent of the Indian Union Mission. Salisbury and his wife, Lenna, arrived in October 1913.

He served faithfully, and the Indian people quickly grew to love the couple. A. G. Daniells, then president of the General Conference, visited in 1914 and, with Salisbury, toured the mission offices. It was a profitable visit. Daniells, sympathetic to the needs, urged Salisbury to continue with him to China, and then to Manila, where they could further plan the work for the greater Asian population. After a long time away, Salisbury returned to India. The work had grown in his absence, and he was ready to settle in and stay home. Then he received word that he must attend Autumn Council in Loma Linda, California.

The last thing Salisbury wanted was a long trip. His wife was in poor health. His work was too great. He resisted the invitation as long as possible. The pressure from leadership, however, was too great. He left September 11, 1915, for the United States, determined that if he must go, he would make it his objective to press the need for personnel, better facilities, and more supplies for India.

His trip to California appeared to be worthwhile, as letters home were of good cheer. He reported that his going “had not been in vain,” and he looked forward to his return.

DON'T GO!

“You really shouldn’t travel back to India via Europe,” Homer Salisbury heard that repeatedly from colleagues. No one seemed to understand. While, yes, there was a war going on, word was his wife wasn’t well. He’d been gone three months. Just thinking of the work on his desk made him wince. He needed to be home.

“I’m sorry, sir; no ships are traveling via the Pacific until March.” Always the same response.

He had a choice. Remain in California for another four months or go home via Europe. If he left now, he could be there by the first of the year. His heart gave him the answer—go east, go with God, continue the mission, and support his wife. Decision made; in spite of continuing protests, Homer Salisbury left California. Next stop, New York City.

Salisbury arrived in England on December 13 after an uneventful Atlantic voyage. He preached in London at various churches before boarding the S.S. *Persia*, a ship that routinely traveled between London and Bombay.

The *Persia* left London December 18, 1915. It stopped in Marseilles, France, for Christmas. As the ship pulled away on December 26, Homer Salisbury stood quietly at the rail. He was almost home.

As the *Persia* passed southeast of Crete, it was torpedoed without warning by a German submarine. The torpedo hit a boiler, and the ship sank rapidly. Of the 501 people onboard, 334 died at sea, including Homer Salisbury.

Later, when survivors revealed details of the event, several spoke of the quiet, kind, and thoughtful man who was seen entertaining some of the children onboard. He had distributed literature to passengers. It is reported that while in the water, he removed his life belt and gave it to another passenger.

The last sighting was him wearily clinging to a sea locker as the sun set on the stranded passengers. It is thought he slipped into the sea during the night.

Homer Salisbury went fearlessly and unafraid toward home. His decision to travel east was made because he put mission, his wife, and India first. The *Persia*, alleged to have treasure in its cargo hold, was salvaged in 2003. Salisbury, a committed worker for the gospel, awaits an even more wonderful “salvage operation,” when his Lord and Savior returns to rescue him from his watery grave, taking him to his ultimate home, where he will live forever. ♣

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MALCOLM RUSSELL

What does it mean for Adventists, for Christians in general, that the COVID-19 pandemic has killed hundreds of thousands across the globe and deprived millions of their jobs? How should faith guide us in this time of disaster, in which truth was one of the earliest casualties?

PANDEMICS: A BRIEF REVIEW

When plagues and pandemics struck in ancient times, they often attacked societies whose natural resistance was already weakened by other events, particularly famine and wars. The worst, the Black Death of the fourteenth century, killed 75 to 200 million people. Approximately one European in three died.

By about 1900, however, scientific medicine was discovering the causes, transmission mechanisms, and cures of traditional epidemics such as smallpox and malaria. They were gradually confined mostly to parts of the tropics. Nevertheless, the twentieth-century's misnamed Spanish flu of 1918-1919 killed 17 to 50 million people, perhaps 3 percent of the world population.

More than 400,000 lives (about 0.05 percent of the world's population) have been lost during the six months since COVID-19 reportedly struck Wuhan, China. Despite unscientific claims that it is

**THE PANDEMIC,
SOCIOECONOMIC
IMPACTS, AND
ADVENTISM**



caused by bacteria, science clearly demonstrates that the SARS-CoV-2 virus carries the disease. The virus is particularly adept at spreading from one person to another in droplets from coughing, sneezing, singing, even breathing.

Most of those infected suffer mild cases similar to the flu, colds, and allergies, and continue to work or interact with others. Thus they spread the disease to victims—including those weakened by age, asthma, cancer, diabetes, obesity, and certain other conditions—who may have severe or even fatal outcomes. Infected individuals may exhibit no symptoms, but nevertheless spread the virus.

Because there is no known vaccine or cure, prevention is humanity's primary defense. Public health efforts have limited its deadly toll through social distancing, stay-at-home/lockdowns, and testing to identify those who have contracted the disease, tracking their contacts to identify others who may be infected, and isolating those who carry the virus.

In Wuhan the virus initially raged out of control and overwhelmed the hospital system. But strict isolation resulted in a recorded death toll of only about 4,000. By contrast, in New York City tests and tracking were delayed. Nearly 21,000 have died, despite the heroic efforts of medical personnel.

While public health saved lives, the fallout resulted in enormous social and economic costs. Lockdowns or stay-at-home orders closed businesses, schools, entertainment, and churches. The United Kingdom suffered its greatest economic catastrophe of the past 300 years. In the younger United States, unemployment took two months to soar to levels experienced only during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Socially, family gatherings became impossible, weddings were canceled, and stay-in-place orders increased anxieties and domestic violence. Students and teachers had to cope with sometimes-unfamiliar distance education. As Jeffrey Cole, a research professor at the University of Southern California, has commented: "Although none of us volunteered or gave permission, we are in the midst of the greatest social science experiment in history."¹

SOCIAL ISOLATION: HOW CHRISTIANS SEE IT

Christians are dramatically divided about the appropriate response to the coronavirus. One survey claimed that 29 percent of the sample believe the crisis is a sign of the last days.² Other

perspectives range from "If you are a believer, God will not allow the virus to touch you!" to the claim that such disasters are God's punishment of one particularly hated sin or another.

In the Calvinist and Baptist perspective of theologian John Piper, disasters are a "thunderclap of divine mercy" calling sinners to repentance. And, citing the death of Herod in Acts 12, he goes further: "God sometimes uses disease to bring particular judgments upon those who reject him and give themselves over to sin."³ Taken out of context, such quotes easily support blaming the victim.

More philosophically, R. R. Reno, the conservative Catholic editor of *First Things*, claims that a "mass shutdown of society" is too high a price just to fight the virus. "The mass shutdown of society to fight the spread of COVID-19 creates a perverse, even demonic atmosphere. . . . Officials insist that death's power must rule our actions. Religious leaders have accepted this decree, suspending the proclamation of the gospel and the distribution of the Bread of Life. They signal by their actions that they, too, accept death's dominion."⁴ It's not completely surprising that secular critics point out the absurdity of this position: staunch pro-life advocates anxious to save every fetus from abortion categorically demand an end to lifesaving isolation measures for adults in order to allow normal living and the economy to proceed regardless of the resulting deaths.

At the other end of the spectrum, Christian social activists and liberals express concern for the impacts suffered by society's have-nots, including refugees, children, vulnerable women, religious minorities, and immigrants. To quote Leonard Gashugi, professor in the Department of Health Policy and Management at Loma Linda University, the burdens of the plague are not evenly distributed: some "had the option of working from home and hiding from the virus. Others had no such option but to expose themselves at the cost of their lives, sometimes at low wages."

Then Gashugi asks, "With whom have Christians cast their lot?" His own response is pointed, instructive, and challenging: "Christ always cast His lot with the afflicted and oppressed. We need to take a good look at ourselves and see if we truly qualify for the label [of Christian]. We have come to live in a society where greed and arrogance dominate and those in authority have done more to entrench it. The Christian church has mostly

aligned behind it, and others have chosen silence.

“Where will Adventists stand, individually and collectively?”⁵

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY: ARE PANDEMICS A THREAT?

In the United States the great religious liberty topic during the pandemic has been the legitimacy of state orders to close churches, along with public gatherings at movie theaters, concerts, sports events, and restaurants. Most congregations accepted the restrictions and shifted to online services. Indeed, when regulations loosened, many churches chose not to reopen immediately, lest the virus spread and they harm their “neighbors” in the pews. Church closures were more difficult for Catholics, who could not attend Mass, and Pentecostals who believe the Holy Spirit is especially present when the congregation meets.

The orders to close churches split public opinion along the nation’s liberal-conservative political divide: despite evidence that specific gatherings by Protestant, Catholic, ultra-Orthodox Jewish, and Muslim worshippers had increased the spread of COVID-19 among worshippers, their families, and friends, some conservative pastors and Catholic priests discerned the closures not as common sense, but as radical measures of anti-religious politicians. With support from evangelicals, who sometimes distrust science and believe the mainstream media produces fake news, they challenged church closures as a violation of the religious exercise clause of the constitution’s First Amendment.

After lower-court judges issued conflicting decisions and the president called for churches to open, an appeal from California reached the Supreme Court. The chief justice wrote the majority opinion, stating that the closures supported the First Amendment, because, unlike grocery stores, churches were classified with activities in which large groups of people gathered for an extended period.

CHRISTIAN FAITH: DO PANDEMICS ACTUALLY STRENGTHEN IT?

Across the centuries, religious believers have responded to plagues and other disasters with

both greater faith and increasing doubt. When death smote relatives and friends, many hurried to put both their material and spiritual affairs in order. Others, however, blamed God for ignoring human suffering, and turned to drink and sexual immorality.

Today the response is strongly one-sided. According to a survey by the Pew Research Center, 35 percent of American Christians (and 46 percent who attend services at least monthly) agree that the pandemic has strengthened their faith. Only 2 percent think their faith was weakened.⁶ Evangelical and especially historically Black Christians reported higher rates of strengthening, compared to Catholics and mainline Protestants. Apparently, church closures have done little harm to believers’ faith.

IS THERE A CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO SUCH FINE POINTS AS WHO BENEFITS FROM A BAILOUT?

ECONOMICS: WHY IS THE PANDEMIC SO BAD FOR OUR FINANCES?

Even if a safe and effective vaccine is discovered in the next year or two, Adventists and other Christians will suffer from the economic effects of the great 2020 shutdown. With businesses slowly reopening, firms filing for bankruptcy, millions unemployed, and stock

markets gyrating, both Christians and their secular neighbors are suffering financially. Nearly all Americans are poorer than we were just six months ago—even if we were not laid off, and even if we are retirees on fixed incomes who actually received a stimulus check.

The reason is simple: massive federal spending of nearly \$4 trillion (and more to come), along with falling tax receipts and the existing deficit of \$1 trillion, will drive the 2020 deficit to about \$5 trillion, equal to \$63,000 per American. High debt affects behaviors of families, businesses, and governments. Debts of this magnitude will cost further billions in interest payments, take decades to repay, and cost further billions in interest payments. Meanwhile, governments will impose higher taxes on citizens, or provide lower government benefits. Nearly every country faces enormous financial challenges.

The pandemic also impacted specific types of businesses. Meat packing plants, restaurants,

SORRY
WE ARE
CLOSED

COVID-19

hotels, airlines, mass entertainment, and the cruise industry have suffered the worst. One wonders: should that fact affect the careful Christian's employment plans or investments?

As for politics, the impacts of the debt are divisive. While fiscal conservatives attempt to cut government spending, the progressive left will argue that to prevent other disasters, governments should tackle poor housing, inadequate health care, and other social issues. So great is the pandemic's economic catastrophe that political ideologies fail to provide good answers to many questions. For example, should a free-market government do nothing when a major airline faces bankruptcy, knowing the result could be greater monopoly power in the future?

I ask again: is there a Christian approach to such fine points as who benefits from a bailout?

CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATIONS: WHICH ONES WILL SURVIVE?

Three months after the shutdown many congregations already face tough financial difficulties. Donations in the weekly offering basket ceased. Even with online giving, many members' tithes and offerings have fallen because of lost income. More broadly, the appeal of online speakers and the convenience of scheduling them may encourage some members—even many—to catch what religion they want from the web, rather than live as faithful members of a spiritual community.

Will congregations that flourish in postpandemic years attract and hold their members through activities that build a sense of community as much as attending a sermon? The follow-on effects for Adventist organizations—from local conferences to the General Conference—seem vast, and merit a separate analysis.

DUTY: PANDEMICS AND THE CHRISTIAN'S CALLING

Today secular humans across the globe feel greater levels of uncertainty about the future than at any time since the Cold War, with its threat of nuclear annihilation. But as Adventists, to quote the song, "we have this faith" in God's presence

and guidance despite the coronavirus and economic turmoil. Nevertheless, our Christian lives may change.

Those whose living is at least moderately well-to-do may be forced to postpone some cherished purchases. Safe travel will become less frequent, even impossible.

But there is more that is impossible: ignoring the plight of others—the plight of thousands who lack the clean water or soap to wash the virus off their hands; the thousands of our Christian brothers and sisters who work in dangerous professions; the millions more who live in poverty, poorly housed, badly fed, and suffering dangerous illnesses.

With eyes open to these realities, Adventists and other Christians may respond to life's possibilities, including pandemics, with enlightened perspectives. Our positions will be grounded in truth, both the gospel truth and scientific discoveries, rather than rumor and popular opinion. Regardless of the direction of events, our lives will be guided by the promise of a trustworthy God: "Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for

I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand" (Isa. 41:10, NLT).⁷

¹ Jeffrey Cole, "Welcome to the Coronavirus Zone," Center for the Digital Future, <https://www.digitalcenter.org/columns/coronavirus-zone/>.

² Paul Bedard, "Poll: 29% See Biblical 'Last Days,' 44% Say Virus Is God's 'Wake-up Call,'" *Washington Examiner*, March 31, 2020, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/washington-secrets/poll-29-see-biblical-last-days-44-say-virus-is-gods-wake-up-call>.

³ Interview with John Piper, "How Do We Make Sense of the Coronavirus?" *Desiring God*, February 28, 2020, <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/how-do-we-make-sense-of-the-coronavirus>.

⁴ R. R. Reno, "Say 'No' to Death's Dominion," *First Things*, Mar. 23, 2020, <https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2020/03/say-no-to-deaths-dominion>.

⁵ Personal e-mail, May 25, 2020.

⁶ Claire Gecewicz, "Few Americans Say Their House of Worship Is Open, but a Quarter Say Their Faith Has Grown Amid Pandemic," Pew Research Center, Apr. 30, 2020, <https://pewrsr.ch/3eZzW8V>.

⁷ Bible texts credited to NLT are from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Raised by missionaries in Beirut, **Malcolm Russell** taught economics and honors at Andrews University, and retired from Union College as academic vice president.

**REGARDLESS OF THE
DIRECTION OF EVENTS,
OUR LIVES WILL BE
GUIDED BY THE
PROMISE OF A
TRUSTWORTHY GOD.**

THE POWER OF GOD

In 1 Corinthians 2, the apostle Paul, dealing with the troubled church at Corinth, wrote that he had come to them, not with fancy speech nor with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in the power of the Spirit “so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God’s power” (1 Cor. 2:5).

Look out through your window. Look at the trees, the grass, the flowers, the birds, the sky, the stars. None of these came about by human wisdom, but only by the power of God. Human wisdom can’t understand fully what these things are, much less create them. Human wisdom cannot create a blade of grass, not even a cell of a blade of grass, nor even a cell wall of a cell of a blade of grass. A cell wall of a single cell of a blade of grass presents mysteries that all the accumulated human wisdom through the ages cannot touch; mysteries so deep that human wisdom can’t even formulate the right questions to ask about them. Yet the power of God has created untold billions of them right out of the dirt.

We sit here for a spasm of time on a speck of cosmic dust, itself suffused with things that we barely understand, and much of what we do understand is surely wrong. Perched in our little corner of the creation, like mice in a hole, we peer into the infinite cosmos and make bold declarations about where it came from and how it arose that are no closer to the truth than was the Babylonian myth in which Marduk, battling Tiamat, split her body, half to make the heavens and half

the earth. To study reality from within that same reality is like characters in a book making pronouncements about the book itself. Whether creating idols of stone and worshipping them or arguing that our universe arose out of nothing by pure chance alone, human wisdom doesn’t always necessarily progress as much as it morphs, exchanging one form of foolishness for another.

In contrast, there’s the power of God. Where does it begin? Where does it end? We can barely grasp the creation—how much less the Creator? God not only created all that exists, but sustains it all as well. “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word” (Heb. 1:3; see also Job 38:33-37; Col. 1:7; 1 Cor. 8:6). No human idea touches it; inspired ideas alone approach it, and then only in questions: “Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance?” (Isa 40:12).

Human wisdom in contrast to the power of God? Humanity, in its wisdom, crucified God, who, despite His power, let them. ♣

Clifford Goldstein is editor of the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*. His book *Baptizing the Devil: Evolution and the Seduction of Christianity* is available from Pacific Press.

CLIFF'S
EDGE
CLIFFORD
GOLDSTEIN



WE CAN BARELY
GRASP THE
CREATION, HOW
MUCH LESS THE
CREATOR?

FEAR NOT

We all have to face our fears.

Some of history's greatest moments happened because average men, women, and children defied their fears and failures and persevered. Today is one of those moments in which the foundations of society seem to be crumbling. It's time to reexamine our priorities in light of our faith in God's Word and power and move forward to make a positive difference in a world that needs healing.—Editors.

"Our greatest fear should not be of failure but of succeeding at things in life that don't really matter."

—Francis Chan, *American pastor and author.*

"If you want to conquer fear, don't sit home and think about it. Go out and get busy."

—Dale Carnegie, *twentieth-century motivational speaker and author.*

"Nothing in life is to be feared. It is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less."

—Marie Curie, *Polish/French physicist and chemist.*

"Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts."

—Winston Churchill, *twentieth-century English statesman.*

"Overcoming what frightens you the most strengthens you the most."

—Matshona Dhliwayo, *author and entrepreneur.*

"One of the greatest discoveries a man makes, one of his great surprises, is to find he can do what he was afraid he couldn't do."

—Henry Ford, *American inventor and industrialist.*

"There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear."

—Apostle John (*1 John 4:18*).

"Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than

outright exposure. The fearful are caught as often as the bold."

—Helen Keller, *twentieth-century author and activist.*

"One person can make a difference, and everyone should try."

—John F. Kennedy, *twentieth-century U.S. president.*

"Reality is the name we give to our disappointments"

—Mason Cooley, *twentieth-century American aphorist.*

"I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear."

—Nelson Mandela, *former political prisoner and president of South Africa.*

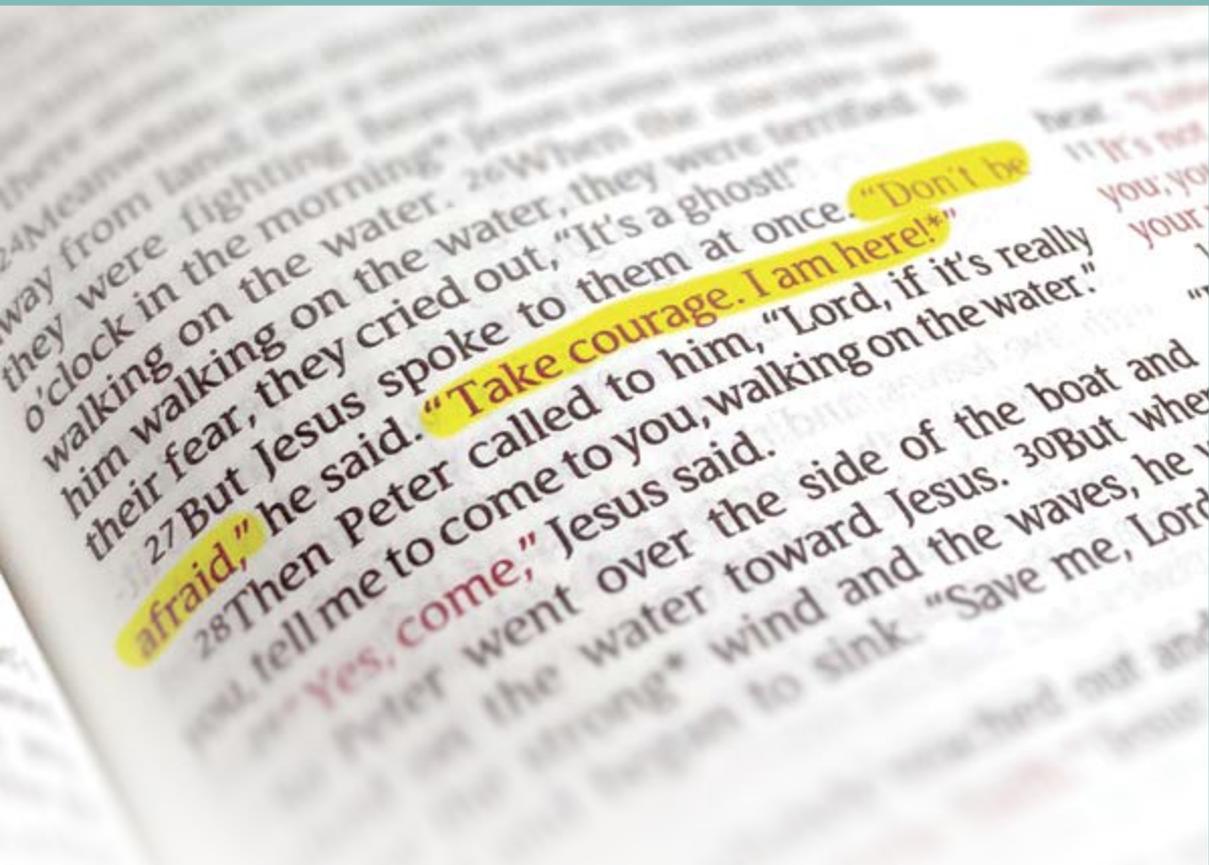
"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of [the Canaanites], for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."

—Moses (*Deut. 31:6*).

"I have learned over the years that when one's mind is made up, this diminishes fear; knowing what must be done does away with fear."

—Rosa Parks, *twentieth-century American activist.*

"You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself,



"I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along."

—Eleanor Roosevelt, former U.S. first lady and delegate to the United Nations.

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."

—Theodore Roosevelt, twentieth-century U.S. president.

"Never let the fear of striking out keep you from playing the game."

—George Herman "Babe" Ruth, twentieth-century professional baseball player.

"Thinking will not overcome fear but action will."

—W. Clement Stone, twentieth-century businessman and philanthropist.

"Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, not absence of fear."

—Mark Twain, nineteenth-century author.

"When the whole world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful."

—Malala Yousafzai, student activist, and Nobel Peace Prize co-winner.

"Failure is a detour, not a dead-end street."

—Zig Ziglar, twentieth-century American motivational speaker.



GARY KRAUSE

One day, Mr. Jonah, a small-town man from Gath-hepher, ran off to the seaport of Joppa on a mission to avoid an assignment in big city Nineveh. I imagine he scanned the sailing times for ships, searching for the best option. Perhaps there were tantalizing discounts for prophets, even minor prophets. Finally, a ship bound for Tarshish caught his eye. He thought he'd purchased a standard Mediterranean cruise, but soon discovered that it included free underwater adventure activities.

MR. JONAH AND NINEVEH

We don't know much about Mr. Jonah. He came from an insignificant village—Gath-hepher—near Cana, in Galilee. Prophets often had to deliver bad news, but Mr. Jonah got to prophesy good things, such as the restoring of Israel's boundaries (2 Kings 14:25). There, in his quiet rural parish, he quietly did the things minor prophets did. But then God turned his little world upside down: "Go at once to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it" (Jonah 1:2).¹

Israel was a whole world away geographically, culturally, and religiously from Nineveh. This pagan city, capital of the Assyrian Empire, was one of the largest in the ancient world. Another prophet, Nahum, described it colorfully: "Ah! City of bloodshed, utterly deceitful, full of booty—no end to the plunder! . . . Who has ever escaped your endless cruelty?" (Nahum 3:1-19). No doubt Jonah had heard stories of the brutality of the Assyrians and their finely nuanced methods of torture and killing. Certainly no place for a small-town prophet to run public evangelistic meetings. So he began his Mediterranean cruise. Mr. Jonah's response was clear: "I will not go."

PARALLEL UNIVERSES: JONAH AND BAR-JONAH

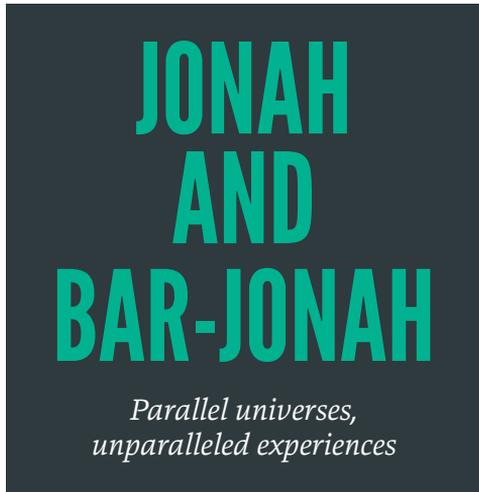
Several centuries later, God issued a mission call in Joppa (Acts 9:36-43). This time it's to a man Jesus nicknamed Simon, son of Jonah (Matt. 16:17). The man is Peter, and the location is only

the first of many parallels between Gath-hepher's Jonah and Simon, son of Jonah.²

Although the theme of God's strategic plan to reach all peoples is woven throughout Scripture, somehow it had been overlooked. God had to shatter the comfort zones of Jonah and Peter, Simon bar-Jonah, and introduce them to the wideness of His mercy. With Jonah he uses a fish (Jonah 2:1). With Peter He uses a vision of unclean animals (Acts 10:9-16). In both cases the Gentiles—Nineveh (Jonah 3:5) and Cornelius's household (Acts 10:43)—believe and are forgiven. But in both cases there's also a hostile response. In the story of Jonah, he's the one who responds with hostility; in Peter's case,

it's the leaders in Jerusalem (Jonah 4:1; Acts 11:2).

But most significantly, God gives Jonah and Simon Bar-Jonah exactly the same command: "Get up, go" (Jonah 3:2; Acts 10:20). God's command echoes down the centuries to us today. "Get up" tells us to move from our current position into an active stance. "Go" tells us what to do. It's God's briefest job description.



I WILL GO

The Reach the World: *I Will Go* strategic plan is the Seventh-day Adventist Church's response to God's call to "arise and go." It's a five-year plan that builds on and updates the previous Reach the World strategic plan. It's the result of many hours of prayerful work by a special Future Plans Working Group at the General Conference, which was guided by extensive qualitative and quantitative research of the world church. The draft plan was taken to the General Conference Executive Committee for consideration, and the final version was voted in October 2019. *I Will Go* represents our best attempt to set a direction for being a church that faithfully participates with God in the world today.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church's official mission statement says: "Make disciples of Jesus Christ who live as His loving witnesses and proclaim to all people the everlasting gospel of the three angels' messages in preparation for His soon return." The

I Will Go: Key Objectives

Mission Objectives

- To revive the concept of worldwide mission and sacrifice for mission as a way of life involving not only pastors, but every church member, young and old, in the joy of witnessing for Christ and making disciples
- To strengthen and diversify Adventist outreach in large cities, across the 10/40 Window, among unreached and under-reached people groups, and to non-Christian religions
- To make developing resources for mission to non-Christian religions and belief systems a high priority
- To strengthen Seventh-day Adventist institutions in upholding freedom, wholistic health, and hope through Jesus, and restoring in people the image of God

Spiritual Growth Objectives

- To disciple individuals and families into Spirit-filled lives
- To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults
- To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview

Leadership Objectives

- To strengthen the discipleship role of pastors, teachers, and other frontline workers and provide them with regular growth opportunities
- To align world church resources with strategic objectives
- To enhance the transparency, accountability, and credibility of denominational organizations, operations, and mission initiatives

Holy Spirit Objectives

- *To be defined as the Holy Spirit leads*

I Will Go plan connects to that goal, and is framed as a positive affirmation to join Jesus in His continual mission of healing and redemption. It's also a candid acknowledgment that in many areas the church needs to improve. It's not some type of edict, trying to dictate how every part of the church must do its work. Instead, world divisions are encouraged

to adapt the plan to their situations, aligning resources with key objectives.

I Will Go is a thoughtful tool to help us respond the best we can to God's call and to what current data show us.

What do we do when surveys show us that globally 40 percent of members are leaving the church?³ What do we do when we discover that almost a third of church members believe that the soul lives on after death, and in one world division nearly 43 percent of church members believe the dead can communicate with and influence the living? What do we do when nearly 50 percent of those responding to surveys think that following the Adventist health message ensures their salvation? What do we do when we discover that we've been putting most of our resources into rural areas, and have virtually been ignoring the great urban centers of the world? What do we do when some church members question the transparency, accountability, and credibility of church organization and activities?

The *I Will Go* strategic plan is a response to issues, to enhance our effectiveness in answering God's call.

"WORKABLE PLANS"

In 1935 a memorial service was held for A. G. Daniells, former General Conference president. One of the speakers at the service, F. M. Wilcox, looked back on the life of Daniells and praised his "clear vision." Wilcox said: "He proposed means and measures which might be adopted, he presented concrete and workable plans"⁴ Note the phrase "concrete and workable plans" They're the kind of plans we still need. Not plans dreamed up in some committee and forever buried in the minutes. Not plans gathering dust on shelves. Plans that will work.

I Will Go is not an addition to the canon of inspired writings. It's a workable instrument to help the church focus on priorities and be more effective.

"Well, I have different priorities," you might say. And so you should. Each of us must take responsibility for our own lives, aligning who we are and what we do with biblical, Christ-centered principles. Different church entities also carry specific strategic priorities unique to their situations and spheres of influence. Many wonderful mission and discipleship endeavors will not be directly mentioned in this plan.

But surely every church institution, church, and church member can join in and support the direction of *I Will Go*. You don't have to be a foreign missionary,

Clarification: Step Versus Goal

I Will Go is summarized in 10 key objectives, and the full plan also contains workable specifics. There are four mission objectives—with 24 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), three spiritual objectives—with 20 KPIs; and three leadership objectives—with 15 KPIs. KPIs are vital to a strategic plan because they provide concrete action steps that will be measured toward achieving the key objectives.

A common error in strategic planning is to confuse action steps with the goal. Consider KPI 2.4: “At least one Center of Influence operates in each urban area of 1 million people or more.” Urban Centers of Influence are terrific initiatives, but they’re not our goal. Rather, they’re just one important action step to achieve objective 2: “To strengthen and diversify Adventist outreach in large cities across the 10/40 Window, among unreached and under-reached people groups, and to non-Christian religions.”

Yes, we need to carefully pray and plan in establishing Centers of Influence. But they’re only one step toward a larger goal to “Arise and go.”

for example, to accept the call of reviving “the concept of worldwide mission and sacrifice for mission as a way of life” (objective 1). *Worldwide* here includes unreached people groups of the world and our local neighborhood. *Mission* includes preaching and teaching, and also caring for people on the margins, such as orphans, widows, and the poor. *Sacrifice* includes our mission offerings, and it also includes our time. *Way of life* means the trajectory of our lives, not a series of events. It’s something we’re all called to do.

IMPROVISING ON A THEME

In Sidebar 1, after the 10 objectives, another category appears: “Holy Spirit Objectives: *To be defined as the Holy Spirit leads.*” This acknowledges that even though the *I Will Go* plan is thorough and detailed, life is fluid. We need to remain open to the Holy Spirit leading us in fresh directions. People change, circumstances change, and we must be agile and responsive to the Holy Spirit’s guidance.

King Frederick the Great of Prussia once tried to play a trick on the great composer and musician Johann Sebastian Bach. The king told his court musicians to create a tune that would be terribly difficult to turn into a fugue—a musical composition with several interweaving melodies. Bach didn’t hesitate. He sat down at the keyboard and improvised on the spot. He effortlessly composed a fugue with three different intertwining melodies. The king and his musicians were dumbfounded. Then a few weeks later, Bach sent the king a written-out fugue on the same tune—but now in six parts. Six separate and distinct melodies, uniting together, and all based on one exceedingly difficult tune. Howard Goodall says that this is still “considered by musicians and composers the greatest,

most complex feat of counterpoint of all time.”⁵

For Bach, music was a religious exercise. “He believed what he was doing was the musical embodiment of God’s master plan for humankind,” writes Goodall, “a recognition of the intricate mathematical beauty of the natural order as ordained by the Almighty.” It was with good reason that Bach wrote the words *Soli Deo Gloria*, Glory to God Alone, at the end of each of his compositions.

The *I Will Go* plan is like sheet music. Sheet music contains detailed information, but how it’s translated into actual music depends on how it’s interpreted. A skilled musician such as Bach can go further than mere interpretation—improvising on the melody, creating something totally new. *I Will Go* lays out key objectives in an organized plan. By the grace of God, one church, varied yet united and spread all over the world, will turn this gospel initiative into audible and compelling music with different harmonies, tempos, rhythms, and improvisations, all to the glory of God alone.⁶

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

² Robert W. Wall, “Peter, ‘Son’ of Jonah: The Conversion of Cornelius in the Context of Canon,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 29 (1987): 79-90.

³ Supporting research findings are available at documents.adventistarchives.org/Resources/Global%20Church%20Membership%20Survey%20Meta-Analysis%20Report/GCMSMetaAnalysis%20Report_2019-08-19.pdf

⁴ *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Apr. 18, 1935, p. 11.

⁵ See Howard Goodall, *The Story of Music* (Pegasus Books: Kindle Edition, 2014), pp. 106, 107.

⁶ For more information and to download the complete *I Will Go* strategic plan, visit iwillgo2020.org.

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PETER N. LANDLESS ZENO L. CHARLES-MARCEL

LOVE AND PAIN

Is there a connection?

Q: My husband's job is out of state. This last time he was gone I was home alone for four weeks because of the pandemic. I have arthritis and fibromyalgia, and whenever my husband's not here, my pain gets worse. This is very distressing to my husband, and he worries about me. Could this just be all in my mind?

A: We sympathize with you and your husband. Chronic pain affects more than 75 million Americans—more people than cancer, diabetes, and heart disease combined. It can last for months or years and is a major source of disability. Many pain sufferers and their spouses have similar questions but may never ask them. Thank you for giving us this opportunity to help, even in some small way, by easing the minds of you and your husband.

Pain is a complex phenomenon. Joint and tissue inflammation and damage induce painful stimuli in arthritis. With fibromyalgia, it appears that repeated nerve stimulation causes the brains of affected individuals to abnormally increase the levels of certain chemicals that signal pain (neurotransmitters). Additionally, the brain seems to become sensitized to the pain stimuli from the muscles and soft tissues of the body and can overreact to pain signals.

Since all feeling, even pain, is perceived in the mind, you can say that what you experience is in your mind; but because of the conditions you describe, you have a physical basis for pain. Yet the amount of pain perceived by anyone is governed not only by the amount of tissue damage or inflammation but also by emotional and psychological factors. This is where your husband's presence or absence may be affecting you.

Here are some interesting facts. When a loved one holds a pain sufferer's hand or strokes an arm, pain perception typically decreases. The utterance of supportive, sympathetic words by a romantic partner or caring confidant has an analgesic effect. The mere presence of a loved one reduces the



perception of pain even without touch or the exchange of sympathetic or supportive words.

Even more incredible, looking at a picture of one's romantic partner can increase tolerance of moderate pain by 40 percent above that of looking at a picture of a casual acquaintance. So your ability to tolerate pain may really be less when your husband isn't there or when you're alone, and can improve when he comes home and you have the pleasure of his company. Romantic love activates the brain's dopamine system, so that even looking at a photo of your husband may cause your brain systems to release natural painkillers. Of course, the quality of your relationship is important; the more empathetic the relationship, the lower the pain perception.

So loneliness and social isolation can provoke emotional pain and amplify physical pain. We advise visual and audio connection with your husband while he's away. Laughing, singing, and praying together even at a distance can help. Other caring connections are also healthy. God made us for togetherness, even at a distance.✍

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“WHOEVER WATCHES THE WIND WILL NOT PLANT”

*How COVID-19 has
taught us what
psychologists have
urged for decades*

MORGAN NASH

It was 5:00 in the morning, but I was wide awake. My foot was tapping on the airplane floor while I gazed out the window. I felt myself going back and forth between worry and hysteria. *What had just happened?*

Less than 24 hours before—the day before spring break—I had been sitting in my Research in Psychology course whispering back and forth with my classmates about the recent news: our sister school, Andrews University, had shut down for the rest of the semester because of the coronavirus. We thought that was ridiculous.

A few hours later we got an e-mail from our own university: We, too, were shutting down. In an instant, it seemed, students were crying, frantically emptying out their dorm rooms (tossing in the dumpster anything that they didn't have room for—mini-fridges, food, furniture), hurriedly saying goodbyes to friends and expressing gratitude to professors. Some departments rushed to hold impromptu graduation ceremonies for the seniors who were suddenly losing their last moments on campus.

I dashed to my apartment, hugged my housemates, and tearfully looked for boxes to throw my belongings into. We had no time to process what was going on, and frankly, even if we did, we wouldn't know how to. This was bigger than all of us.

Turning my phone to airplane mode, I got a text from a close friend—some verses from the Psalms: “Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? . . . If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. . . . Even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for the darkness is as light to you” (Ps. 139:7-12).

After this brief calm, feelings of anxiousness flooded back. Surely this would be a season of darkness. But no darkness is too dark for my God.

LIVING A NEW WAY

Since I left campus, my life has changed dramatically: sleep terrors, appetite changes, adjusting to being home again. I was curious about how my friends were doing—and of course, being a clinical psychology major, I felt it was my duty to find out.

So I posted an Instagram survey, inviting my followers to share their own COVID experiences.

“What has COVID-19 taken from you?” I asked. “What has it given you? Have you added anything new into your usual routines? Are you staying connected with others? Have you felt your stress/anxiety levels increase or decrease?”

With responses from more than 60 people, I was struck by something: We're learning to live in a way that psychologists have been urging for decades. Here's what I mean:

1. We are giving ourselves permission to be vulnerable with our emotions.

Many of my respondents were refreshingly honest about their struggles and frustrations with their lives being suddenly uprooted. They felt robbed of their plans and dreams: graduations, spring break trips, even weddings.

I could relate. The first time my small-group Bible study met over Zoom, my university chaplain, Anna Bennett, opened up the session by asking us all a question: “What has COVID-19 taken from you?”

We went around the circle and shared. For me, it was a summer internship that I had been looking forward to. For another, it was a student teaching opportunity. For yet another, it was the safety of living on campus away from a hurtful family environment.

At the end of the session we all took a deep breath, and many of the girls admitted to feeling so much better. It was as if we had let our bodies clench up for the past three weeks and we were finally giving ourselves permission to breathe and to feel.

Psychiatrist and trauma expert Bessel van der Kolk explains that our bodies do a remarkably good job of propelling us forward through stressful or traumatic circumstances or crises. But “long after the actual event has passed, the brain may keep sending signals to the body to escape a threat that no longer exists”—tricking us into thinking that the only way we can remain autonomous is by continuing to suppress our “inner chaos.”

There's a reason that so many individuals who have experienced extreme trauma either go numb for years or find themselves triggered with bitterness or fear when they are reminded of past events. They keep their bodies in defense mode, and they never allow themselves to acknowledge what they have been feeling. This can result, says

One of the biggest favors we can do for ourselves is to allow ourselves to be honest with our emotions.

Van der Kolk, in “a whole range of physical symptoms, including fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue, and other autoimmune diseases.”

One of the biggest favors we can do for ourselves in a crisis is to allow ourselves to be honest with our emotions, mourn what has been taken from us, and just be real about being humans whose lives have been altered. Journaling can be an especially healing practice. “By putting our feelings into words,” writes Sheryl Sandberg, author of *Option B: Facing Adversity, Building Resilience, and Finding Joy*, “we give ourselves more power over them.”

2. We are choosing to focus on the good, and our gratitude levels have increased exponentially.

The Bible says, “Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap” (Eccl. 11:4). After we allow ourselves to mourn our losses, we’re better able to focus with clear lenses on what has been given to us, on doing what we’re supposed to do next.

“Intense emotion and anxiety,” writes Ethan Kross, “can zoom us into our threats, which impairs decision-making skills and [our] ability to perform. Overfocusing on the threat will take away from [our] ability to be creative” in a crisis.

Just as we have promoted “social distancing” to maintain physical health, Kross suggests that we promote what he calls “psychological distancing” to encourage individuals to allow themselves distance from their worries and fears. Psychological distancing, according to Kross, incorporates a process called emotion regulation, in which we challenge ourselves to align how we currently feel with how we want to feel. By doing this, we are not shutting off our emotions, but reining them in so that we can think about our situations more objectively.

Many respondents shared how grateful they are to have time for self-care, deeper family relationships, and new things in their daily routine: walking more, digging into the Bible, cooking, baking, painting,

reading for pleasure, and peppermint tea before bed.

Respondents also mentioned their shared gratitude for the people in their lives, including health-care and food-service workers. In the checkout aisles and drive-through lines, we are looking the workers in the eye and thanking them for what they’re doing.

3. We are learning to give ourselves grace.

My counselor, Tiffany Bartell, has been taking care of clients during the crisis. When I asked her about what she was seeing, she said that while she’s seeing increased levels of post-traumatic stress, she’s also seeing something else: post-traumatic growth. “One thing that I’ve been telling a lot of my clients,” she says, “is that just because something is hard doesn’t mean you’re doing anything wrong. This is a hard situation, and I’ll have students that say, ‘I’m doing terrible.’ Then I’ll hear what happened in their week and tell them, ‘You are coping so remarkably well with what happened.’”

Tiffany says that it’s important to learn how to give ourselves grace. “If you are standing up in your life, and you are putting one foot in front of the other, you are doing marvelously well! It’s not about roses and sunshine all the time; it’s about making healthy choices, then making another healthy choice. Are you going to feel like not getting out of bed sometimes? Absolutely! Going through tough times can be exhausting! But when you get up and get out of bed, and you have that drink of water and you take that walk, you won—even if it was hard.”

Tiffany says an experience such as a pandemic can bring us lasting cultural change. “I imagine a world,” she says, “in which we are better than we were before this happened—we’re stronger, we’re more tenacious, we’re resilient.”

At the close of my Instagram survey, I asked: “What’s your biggest fear in all of this?”

Most respondents shared their fear that life wouldn’t go back to normal—but one had a different response: “I’m scared that we *will* go back to normal!”

This stood out to me. After all that we have learned, I too hope for a new normal. One in which we will continue to prioritize intentional relationships, to look the drive-through workers in the eye, to get excited about nightly peppermint tea, and most important, to give ourselves grace.

Morgan Nash is a senior clinical psychology major at Southern Adventist University. In addition to her passion for mental health, she strives to empower young women to find their voice.

HOW NEW TESTAMENT HEROES HANDLED CRISES

In the book *A Walking Disaster: What Surviving Katrina and Cancer Taught Me About Faith and Resilience* (2018), Jamie Aten, a Christian disaster psychologist, confronts the conundrums and ensuing confusion that come with crises.

Aten's story begins in 2005, when Hurricane Katrina struck his community. After experiencing the destruction caused by the storm, he dedicated his lifework to investigating how people respond to and recover from disasters and crises. He later founded the Humanitarian Disaster Institute at Wheaton College, Illinois. His expertise, however, was little comfort when a visit with his oncologist revealed that he had advanced stage IV cancer. "You're in for your own personal disaster" was his doctor's prognosis.

Aten's book examines the pressure one goes through when faced with personal or global crises. Is it possible to maintain hope in the midst of tragedy and death? Can we return to normal after a crisis devastates our lives and the lives of those around us?

The answer is a resounding "Yes." We can experience a productive life of confidence and contribution after a crisis. But it doesn't happen by accident. It takes an intentional reordering of our attitudes and actions.

The Bible is full of principles about how to successfully survive, even thrive, during a crisis.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, embraced her destiny rather than trying to escape her duty (Luke 1:26-56). God sometimes asks us to do things that seem too much to handle, even impossible. So it was with Mary when the angel told her she was pregnant. Although shocked, she accepted the charge.

Lesson: Whatever God's providence gives us, let's accept it with intelligence

and initiative because He will be with us.

The woman with hemorrhages chose radical action over passive resignation (Luke 8:43-48). Some crises require bold, sweeping actions that don't have scripts and guidelines. Like the ill woman, believers have to act courageously and seek Jesus for answers and healing.

Lesson: Calculate the obvious needs, and with the Holy Spirit and passion trustingly pursue what you are led to.

Peter overcame failing crises with faith (John 18:15-18; 21:15-19). Like Peter, sometimes our crisis is magnified by how we handle the crisis confronting us. Our fumbles and failures sometimes make our crises messier than they were. But by God's grace we can get it together and come back into relationship and alignment.

Lesson: Don't give up even when you fail in a crisis. Get up and get it right.

John put eternity over present problems (Rev. 21). John witnessed the death and ascension of Christ, the martyrdom of fellow disciples, the ascendancy of evil secular and spiritual kingdoms, persecution, then banishment to Patmos. Through it all, he kept faith in God and in eternity's promise.

Lesson: Discipline yourself to look beyond the present pain to providence and eternity.

Paul pursued purpose while facing his fears (Acts 20:22-24). Paul, a prisoner, was traveling to Rome to be tried as a criminal. He endured trials, persecution, shipwreck, and privations. Yet he stood strong by talking and living his faith.

Lesson: He spoke and modeled faith while pursuing his mission; helping others, even as he was in the midst of his own crisis. ✦

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TRANSFORMATION TIPS
DELBERT W. BAKER



CAN WE RETURN TO NORMAL AFTER A CRISIS DEVASTATES OUR LIVES AND THE LIVES OF THOSE AROUND US?



DIDN'T SEE THIS COMING

The future has very few things we can count on.

KIM PECKHAM

I thought the world would end differently. I imagined we would all be hiding in the mountains around Collegedale, living in caves and making haystacks with dandelion greens. But here I am in suburban comfort following minute-by-minute updates on the coronavirus on my laptop.

Some people might say it isn't the end of the world. But it feels

like it to me. Maybe it's because my generation came after polio and Vietnam, and we haven't dealt with any trying times, unless you count the era of dial-up Internet.

OK, so we are at least one swarm of locusts short of a true apocalypse. We can't really match COVID-19 to Revelation. But maybe we can find something similar in Genesis—that other time the world ended.

THE DAYS OF NOAH

The Bible doesn't give details about Noah's stay in the ark, but I'm convinced it was a lot like quarantine. Our biblical hero had to be stressed and irritable. Probably there were sharp words in the family about whose turn it was to shovel out the elephant stalls. Everyone was looking as furry as the animals, but their hair salon had gone under. The kids got annoyed when Noah kept saying, "What we're going through is unprecedented, but at least we're all in the same boat. Heh, heh, heh."

Perhaps the introverts in Noah's tribe were fine with a year of introspection—until they discovered they were stuck on a ship with a couple of loud extroverts who were always trying to organize a game of Rook. The pandemic reminds us that (1) we need people and (2) we need them to be elsewhere.

You used to be able to send your kids to school before your home turned into an episode of *The Jerry Springer Show*, but now they never leave. Plus, they need you to help with distance learning, so you're pulled into service as an unpaid teacher's aide. It's like you're doing all the work of

homeschool without the reward of feeling superior about it. Before long you're playing rock, paper, scissors with your spouse to see who will watch the kids for the next hour.

Sometimes you have a Zoom meeting, and the kids start parading through your room like the stars of *Kids' Time*. This is particularly annoying, because everyone else in the meeting seems more delighted with seeing your kids than hearing the brilliant points you're making about the marketing campaign. And pets also cause a distraction. "What kind of dog is that?" shout the other viewers on Zoom. It's show-and-tell for grown-ups.

What I enjoy most about Zoom meetings is scoping out everyone's houses. It's like HGTV without the commercials. *Oh, so they've got crown molding. I wish she would move her head so I could see that painting better.*

You can also do this during Zoom Sabbath School, with the added interest of looking for racy novels on the saints' bookshelves. Incidentally, some of you are a little too casual for Sabbath morning. This is not the time for your Red Hot Chili Peppers T-shirt.

I'm also aware that online church has tempted some sheep to stray from the fold. I'm not talking about switching denominations, but some believers have been flipping the channel to big-time preachers. What's to stop a member from taking in a sermon from Carlton Byrd or Dwight Nelson, speakers so eloquent they can't even call in a pizza order without bringing the Domino's manager to tearful repentance.

For once, church options are richer than opportunities for watching sports. The absence of live sports has made my neighbor so desperate that he recently tuned in to a rebroadcast of a golf tournament. At this point, some Americans may even be open to watching soccer.

CAN YOU SEE IT?

These are uncertain times. You can't really be sure about your job. You can't be sure about the economy. You can't be sure if that cough is a sign of something serious. The odds are good that you will live, but they aren't good enough. The people you love are pretty safe, but not safe enough. The news can't stop reporting how many people are dying in your state, which is like having your mortality featured in a national advertising campaign.

The news can't stop reporting how many people are dying in your state, which is like having your mortality featured in a national advertising campaign.

We know we should trust God with the future, but it's no easier than other things we know we should be doing, like eating more kale or returning the pastor's texts. Back in the ark, I think Noah's family also had a fog of stress hanging over them. They were in the middle of one of the biggest miracles in the Bible, but they were unable to see into the future any more than you or I can now.

When it was over, Noah and his family started breaking the ark apart, which I take as a sign of how fed up they were with the shelter-in-place order. They couldn't endure one more hour of being cooped up with those orangutans and in-laws. Then they looked out at a world as empty as a church parking lot during COVID-19, and they realized their time of trouble wasn't over.

How will this work? they wondered. The new normal didn't have home-improvement stores, YouTube tutorials, or free breadsticks at Olive Garden. And that's the moment God showed up. The story says He put a rainbow in the sky. That vision must have hit the group like a fireworks show at the Magic Kingdom. It was amazing. It was exactly what people emerging from lockdown needed to see.

So what do you need to see? Will God send you a sign? Maybe. In the meantime, you have something else. It is a memory from an earlier time of loss or pain when the world as you knew it seemed to end. And somehow, by some almost forgotten miracle, Jesus brought you through. That is your rainbow. ♣

Kim Peckham shelters in place in Lincoln, Nebraska, with his wife, Lori, and teenage son, Reef. He helps with communication at Union College.



KEEM IBARRA/UNSPLASH

FEARLESS AND COURAGEOUS IN MISSION

Trust in God eradicates anxiety.

ELLEN G. WHITE

There is no reason for discouragement. The good seed is being sown. God will watch over it, causing it to spring up and bring forth an abundant harvest. Remember that many of the enterprises for soul saving have, at the beginning, been carried forward amidst great difficulty.

I am instructed to say to you: Move guardedly, doing always that which the Lord commands. Move forward courageously,

assured that the Lord will be with those who love and serve Him.

He will work in behalf of His covenant-keeping people. He will not suffer them to become a reproach. He will purify all who yield themselves to Him, and will make them a praise in the earth. Nothing else in this world is so dear to God as His church. He will work with mighty power through humble, faithful men. Christ is saying to you today: "I am with you, cooperating with your faithful, trusting efforts, and giving you precious victories. I will strengthen you as you sanctify yourselves to My service. I will give you success in your efforts to arouse souls dead in trespasses and sins."

Unswerving faith and unselfish love will overcome the difficulties that arise in the path of duty to hinder aggressive warfare. As those inspired by this faith go forward in the work of saving souls, they will run and not be weary, will walk and not faint. . . .

PERSEVERANCE IN PRAYER

Remember that prayer is the source of your strength. A worker cannot gain success while he hurries through his prayers and rushes away to look after something that he fears may be neglected or forgotten. He gives only a few hurried thoughts to God; he does not take time to think, to pray, to wait upon the Lord for a renewal of physical and spiritual strength. He soon becomes weary. He does not feel the uplifting, inspiring influence of God's Spirit. He is

not quickened by fresh life. His jaded frame and tired brain are not soothed by personal contact with Christ.

“Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.” “It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.” Psalm 27:14; Lamentations 3:26. There are those who work all day and far into the night to do what seems to them must be done. The Lord looks pityingly upon these weary, heavy-laden burden bearers and says to them: “Come unto me, . . . and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28.

God’s workers will meet with turmoil, discomfort, and weariness. At times, uncertain and distracted, they are almost in despair. When this restless nervousness comes, let them remember Christ’s invitation: “Come ye yourselves apart, . . . and rest awhile.” The Saviour “giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.” Isaiah 40:29.

GIVING HIM PRAISE

Difficulties will arise that will try your faith and patience. Face them bravely. Look on the bright side. If the work is hindered, be sure that it is not your fault, and then go forward, rejoicing in the Lord.

Heaven is full of joy. It resounds with the praises of Him who made so wonderful a sacrifice for the redemption of the human race. Should not the church on earth be full of praise? Should not Christians publish throughout the world the joy of serving Christ? Those who in heaven join with the angelic choir in their anthem of praise must learn on earth the song of heaven, the keynote of which is thanksgiving.

Never let your courage fail. Never talk unbelief because appearances are against you. As you work for the Master you will feel pressure for want of means, but the Lord will hear and answer your petitions for help. Let your language be: “The Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I *know* that I shall not be ashamed.” Isaiah 50:7. If you make a mistake, turn your defeat into victory.

WALKING AND WORKING BY FAITH

The lessons that God sends will always, if well

Should not the church on earth be full of praise? Should not Christians publish throughout the world the joy of serving Christ?

learned, bring help in due time. Put your trust in God. Pray much, and believe. Trusting, hoping, believing, holding fast the hand of Infinite Power, you will be more than conquerors.

True workers walk and work by faith. Sometimes they grow weary with watching the slow advance of the work when the battle wages strong between the powers of good and evil. But if they refuse to fail or be discouraged they will see the clouds breaking away and the promise of deliverance fulfilling. Through the mist with which Satan has surrounded them, they will see the shining of the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness.

Work in faith, and leave results with God. Pray in faith, and the mystery of His providence will bring its answer. At times it may seem that you cannot succeed. But work and believe, putting into your efforts faith, hope, and courage. After doing what you can, wait for the Lord, declaring His faithfulness, and He will bring His word to pass. Wait, not in fretful anxiety, but in undaunted faith and unshaken trust.

“If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? . . . Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.”

Seventh-day Adventists believe that **Ellen G. White** (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry. This excerpt was taken from *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif., Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1902), vol. 7, pp. 242-245.

Alone time with God will do your soul good.

KANDACE ZOLLMAN

Isolation. After weeks of social distancing, quarantine, and sheltering in place, the word “isolation” may sound like the very last thing you’ll ever want to experience again. Ever. Extroverts have been beside themselves from “day one” of this totally unfamiliar state called “isolation,” and even introverts have begun longing for eye-to-eye contact with something other than a computer screen. And all those people who had been talking about “living off the grid” went quiet, seeming to have lost most of their audience.

The Bible often speaks of seeking one-on-one time with God, and Jesus frequently exited the frenetic pace of ministry to spend time alone communing with His Father. Jesus invited His disciples to “come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest” (Mark 6:31). Spending weeks in quarantine does not necessarily mean that we have been increasing our time alone with God—or that we came out of it feeling particularly “rested.” “Isolation” seems to speak more about whom we *don’t* see than whom we actually *do* see.

PLANNED ISOLATION

Have you ever considered a planned time of “isolation” with God—one that you *chose* rather than one mandated by government? For those who have never journeyed alone, such an adventure sounds curious at best and dangerous at worst. For the past 10 years, however, such a trip has become a focal point in my life—a retreat with Jesus that has become the very center of who I am and how I view the world. During that week I have no responsibilities and no schedule—and as an extra blessing, little cell phone reception!

When I head home again, I have cleared up questions, worked through anger, and spent an amazing amount of time with the One who loves me most. I come back feeling “still” inside, secure in the work He has given me to do, and sure of who He is and His limitless love for me.

If anticipation is half of the joy, then the joy

of this time of escape begins at Christmas each year when my husband hands me my gift. I smile knowingly, but he always comes up with a creative way to express the this-coupon-good-for-one-week-in-Maine idea. He repeats his yearly quip that this is the perfect gift because he doesn’t have to enter a mall, it is always the right color and size, and he doesn’t have to worry about me returning it! (And every year I still laugh!)

From that moment I begin counting the days until I pack up and head north. Right about the time spring graduations are over, I am on the road!

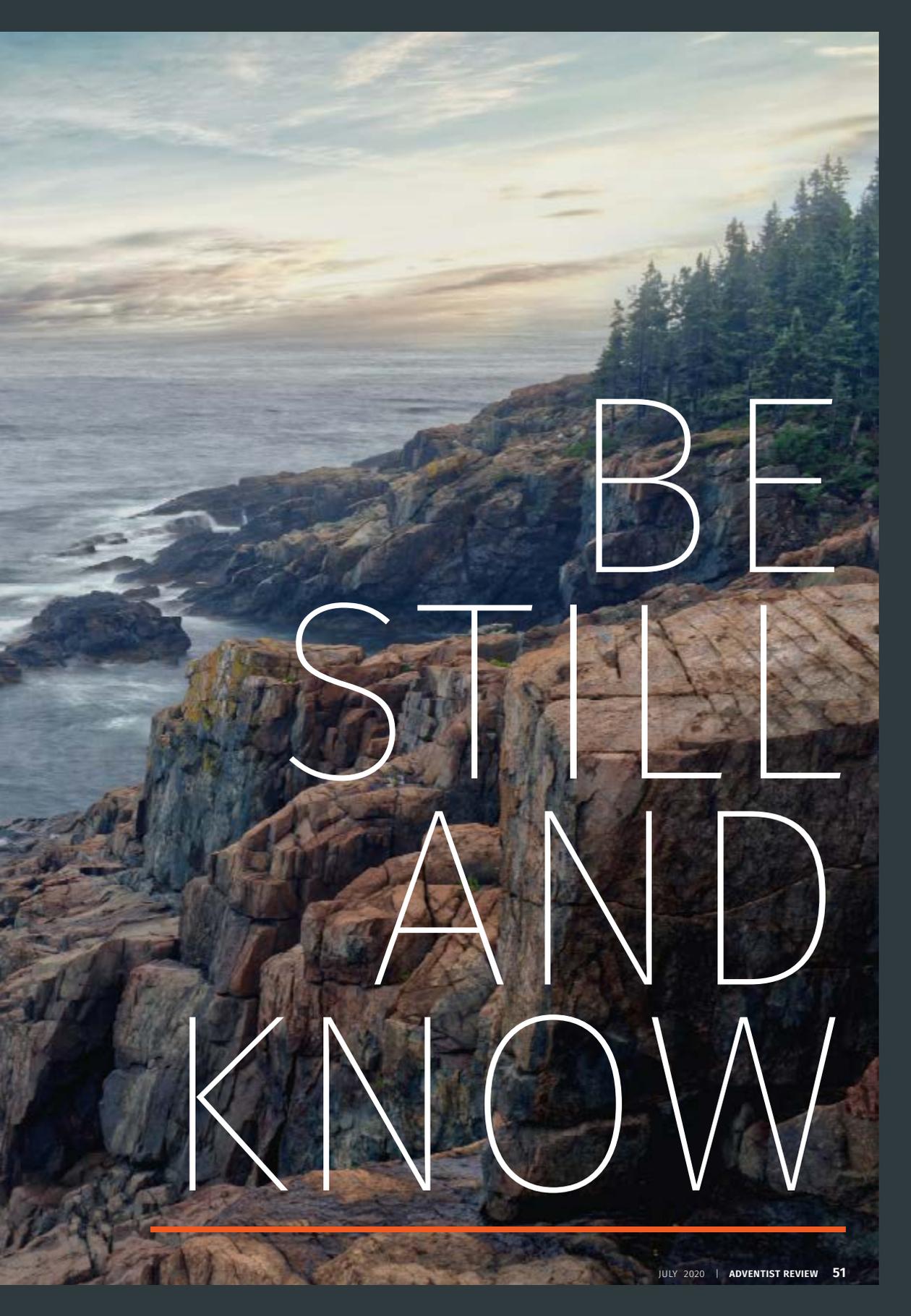
My days in Maine are like no other. I wake up long before sunrise, so I can hike to my favorite rock and watch the first drop of the red sun peek over the sea. It is there in those early-morning hours that I most feel Jesus’ presence. There is something about experiencing the magnificence of sunrise alone with Him that confirms who He is as Creator and God of heaven’s armies. I listen to music that is sequestered in a playlist for this week alone—music that expresses His splendor and His intimate presence. I sing. I journal. I photograph. I walk along the massive rock admiring the view and talking to Him.

And as the sun rises higher, dispelling the sacred morning ambiance, I scramble down from my rock and return to my room. There I prepare simple meals, indulge in deep, uninterrupted Bible study, write thoughts and prayers on paper, and take out brushes and paint to share a tiny bit in what it feels like to create.

But it is the outdoors that is always calling me, and it is not long before I am pulling on my hiking shoes once again and disappearing down pristine trails of pines or hopping rocks along the coast. The tourist season in Maine doesn’t begin until July, so as I walk the empty trails, I just talk to Jesus out loud.

As I look back, it seems there is always something specific God is trying to teach me on our rendezvous together. One year, I had to struggle with my own heart, wrestling to release my

PHOTO BY GIBSON HURST™ ON UNSPLASH



BE
STILL
AND
KNOW

Before you go, think things through to assure yourself the best experience possible.

adult son to the Father's superior parenting. Another year, I felt hushed as He told me to slow down and look closely, not missing the details around me. Last spring, I, like Moses, asked Him to show me His glory—and I understood the copious nature of God in a whole new way.

Sometimes we discuss problems in my church. Sometimes we discuss problems in my family. Most of the time we discuss problems in my heart—and how I struggle to give them over to Him. It usually takes me two or three days to finally get quiet enough inside to slow my normal racing thoughts and actually listen, but during those last few days I feel as close to heaven as I imagine I will ever feel on earth.

ARE YOU UP FOR IT?

Have you had enough of “isolation,” but need something that can fill up whatever it is that feels so empty inside you? It could be Jesus calling you a little closer and wanting you all to Himself for a while. But before you go, think things through to assure yourself the best experience possible.

Talk to Jesus about it. If this is a “getaway” for the two of you, give Him some weigh-in on the plans. He knows a great deal about timing and weather and other factors that simply are not available to you. Ask Him if there is something special the two of you need to talk about while you are alone together.

Choose a quiet place away from normal vacation chaos. Each of us has different preferences regarding locale, and you want to choose somewhere that feels like “a happy place,” but keeps the distractions at an absolute minimum. If you are going to a place you have never been before, research the site carefully so you have accurate expectations. Remember that your personal safety is always a primary consideration.

Research supports the idea that it takes two to three days to really break from your normal thought patterns, so plan on being gone at least five or six days.

Pack comfortable clothing, appropriate footwear, and any necessities you will need. Shopping is not the focus of this trip, so try to plan ahead so you won't have that distraction.

Include in your packing the things that foster

peace in your heart: Bibles, books, journals, pens, art supplies, music, instruments, binoculars, camera. This is your time to indulge in all the I-don't-have-time-for-that activities. Before you leave, make a plan about screens and technology, leaving behind what is unnecessary so that you can truly “be still and know that [He is] God” (Ps. 46:10). Let your friends and family know when you will be available for them to check on you—but turn off your phone at other times.

Be patient with yourself as you learn to be quiet. We have very little in our culture that fosters this type of experience, and it takes some concentration and determination to stop “doing” and just “be.” Practice being constantly in God's presence—and never let yourself entertain the idea that you are alone.

During the time I am *not* in Maine, I often go there in my mind. When I cannot sleep, I lie in bed talking to Jesus and revisiting the refuge we share. I close my eyes and retrace the familiar paths, reliving what it feels like to walk them again.

Stumbling down the rugged path, I smile at the vast blue sea stretching out to my left. I always catch my breath when I round the bend and see the mammoth rock in the distance, lying close to the rocky shoreline like an enormous beached manatee. Wild cherry blossoms scatter like snow in the ocean breeze, and all colors of brave spring wildflowers find ways to grow in the unlikeliest places. I weave my way between the rocks until I get to the base of the giant mountain I call “my rock.” Centering my loaded backpack, I start the familiar 75-foot climb to the top. Balancing on the narrow ridge of rock, I jump up a boulder to a diagonal slide of limestone that leads to a small flat area where some scraggly grass dares to grow. Getting to the final steep ascent, wedged in a spiny crevice, I heave myself up the last 20 feet to the top. Golden lichen covers the rolling waves of stone, and I jump from rock to rock until I stand at the highest point. My backpack falls to the ground as I face the rising sun and tears roll down my cheeks.

Once again, I stand in His presence. My heart is at home. ♣

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SWINGING INTO CHANGE

Remembering that whatever God calls us to, He guides us through.

One of my favorite pastimes as a little girl was swinging, especially on the really tall swing sets that allowed me to soar to great heights. I craved the sensation of speed, of propelling to the top, to that sweet second where you just hang in space before falling into the momentum to do it again. Sometimes my hands would slip, or I would let go, and, losing my balance, fall flat to the ground. The impact would knock the breath out of my body. I would wallow on the ground struggling to breathe until I could finally relax enough to inhale. Then I'd reclaim my swing to do it all over again.

I've had the proverbial wind knocked out of me as an adult. One of the most profound instances came when I felt I was soaring into comfortable retirement only to hear that my job

would be ending with the closing of a church publishing house. It was a devastating blow, and the relentless question at work was: "What do we do now?"

I was just catching my breath when I got a call from my parents. "We need you. Please come help us adjust to this new life stage." Not only was I losing my job and my ministry, but a move leaving my home and my independence behind was required. The need to catch my breath was overwhelming.

IT'S OK TO GRIEVE

There was so much loss happening all at once, it was difficult to process and still keep a semblance of control. The need to be strong was ever-present, and it felt wrong to grieve the losses. But grief is a natural and important process. We all experience loss in our lives, and how we manage it determines our physical, mental, and spiritual health.

Thoughts of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane came to me often. I realized that faced with His own inevitabilities, Jesus grieved deeply. This gave me permission to work through my own denial, anger, bargaining, and depression to final acceptance of the changes happening in my life. Please don't mistake this for a fast process; even today that grief can be triggered, and I have to step away and be kind to myself.

TRUST WHAT YOU KNOW, NOT WHAT YOU FEEL

Unexpected and/or unwanted change is challenging and brings circumstances and events that are out of our control. It even causes us to question God's place in our world. Surviving tough circumstances is part of life, but thriving

in them is something else. So how do we find a new reality when the old one is taken from us? How do we adjust to losing our “calling” to someone else’s bidding? How do we *live* under the fear of a life-threatening pandemic?

These questions are legitimate, and it’s not bad that we think them. But just as the fall from the swing caused real fear when I had the wind knocked out of me, I knew that if I waited, the sensation would pass, and I would breathe and swing again.

Sometimes the loss is so devastating that we question God’s presence. “Why would God let this happen?” “Where is God in all of this?” This is when we go to what we know. God has given promises that He will never leave us, for He is steadfast. It’s changing feelings that are not to be trusted.

FIND YOUR MULTITUDE OF COUNSELORS

The day the publishing house closing was announced, I did what I always do. I sought out the most trusted people in my world: my husband, my children, and my parents. My family listened and asked a crucial question: “If you could do anything, what would you do?” They didn’t cluck with me in my discontent; they used their words to help me change my perspective.

For me, whatever new path was chosen, it had to include some sort of service to others. The decision was made to pursue a Master of Science degree in Marriage and Family Therapy. Knowing I had three years of school ahead of me, it was daunting, freeing, exhilarating, and scary all at the same time. I put my desires before the Lord, and He opened the doors. I was starting to get my breath back.

To say things were smooth sailing would be a flat-out lie. The immediate self-doubt fell on me like a ton of bricks, and I struggled to get out from under it. “I can’t do this! I’m 57 years old! The other, *much* younger students will laugh at me. I’m not smart enough.” The negative self-talk was never-ending, and with each statement said out loud, my husband would counter with the simple words “You are stronger than you think you are. Honor the strength God gave you.”

I have used these statements with my clients, reminding them that God has created all of us with strengths and gifts. Discovering those

strengths and using them to follow God’s leading require replacing negative self-talk with positive, faith-filled statements of His gifts and presence.

THERE IS GREAT VALUE IN SELF-COMPASSION

Intrusive and negative thoughts have been a continual battle during my time as a student, and even now as a professional therapist. Some days the only solution is stepping away and realizing a short break is needed. The concept of perfection is replaced with the acknowledgment of doing the best we can with what we know. It’s during those times I remember the blessings that have come to my life.

I wasn’t too old for school. I wasn’t laughed at; in fact, quite the opposite. My classmates thanked me repeatedly for the perspective my age and experience brought to our classes. My brain survived the onslaught of learning a stringent curriculum—I was not only stronger than I thought, but smarter too.

I have been seeing clients for almost two years, and there is no doubt that this reinvention of my life was God-led. I still have some days of self-doubt, during which I grieve some of the losses that are ongoing with being a caretaker of aging parents. But there is always the knowledge that God has been with me all along, He is with me now, and He is going before me to show the way.

My husband and I now live with my aging parents. With all that we have been through with the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, I am reminded—and my clients are reminded—that it is absolutely OK to grieve; that what we know about God is far more powerful than what we may feel in any given situation; that seeking advice and fellowship from those who show wisdom and seek God is worth more than all the gold in the world.

God has given each person strengths that not only allow for survival but can lead us to thrive in the midst of the sometimes-unsolicited necessity for reinvention. So be kind to yourself. Be as compassionate as you know Jesus would be with you. Change and hardship may be inevitable during this time, but it never comes without a greater measure of God’s grace and presence. 🍀

Candy Graves DeVore is a marriage and family therapist serving as counseling coordinator on the pastoral staff at the Forest Lake Church in Apopka, Florida. She is thriving in her new career and is grateful for the twists and turns of life that necessitated this reinvention.

“You are stronger than you think you are. Honor the strength God gave you.”

This Hallowed Ground

What makes
something
holy?



ROGER L. DUDLEY

The year 1863 was a crucial one in the American Civil War. The fighting began in 1861; the early battles all took place on Southern soil. But in the autumn of 1862, Robert E. Lee and his Army of Northern Virginia invaded Union territory for the first time. The two armies fought at Antietam Creek, near Sharpsburg, Maryland, in what has been called the bloodiest single day of the Civil War, with more than 3,600 killed and more than 17,000 wounded on both sides. Lee then withdrew his forces back into Virginia.

By the summer of 1863, Lee had regrouped and once again invaded Union territory. The Army of the Potomac, now under the command of General George Gordon Meade, moved into northern Maryland to intercept Lee. One evening, Meade and his staff were in a tent studying maps and comparing reports from observers. One officer leaned over the map and remarked: "According to our information, the armies should intersect here." He put his finger on an obscure town named Gettysburg. One writer wrote: "Thus, groping through the fog of war, the fingertips of the vast armies had chanced to touch at Gettysburg."

The town is no longer obscure. The three-day encounter during July 1-3, 1863, cost more casualties than any single battle the United States has ever fought. From both sides more than 40,000 were killed or wounded (many of whom subsequently died), and another 11,000 were captured or missing. Today millions visit to pay respect to Cemetery Hill, Cemetery Ridge, the Round Tops, Seminary Ridge, the Peach Orchard, Devil's Den, and the vast national cemetery.

Even as the war still raged in other locations, the government took action to set aside the former battlegrounds for the Soldiers' National Cemetery.

The dedication was held on November 19, 1863. The primary speech was given by Edward Everett, one of the nation's leading orators. He spoke in beautiful and inspiring language for two hours, but few today remember what he said.

Then President Abraham Lincoln was invited to "set apart the grounds to sacred use with a few appropriate remarks."

The president's brief address is still remembered as one of the most famous ever delivered. In part he said: "In a larger sense, we can not dedicate, we can not consecrate, we can not hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract."

THE STAMP OF HISTORY

Here we have a clue as to what makes a particular place holy. Something very special has happened there. Something that reminds us of overwhelming sacrifice. Something that reaches deep within us. It is no longer an ordinary location, but has entered a new dimension. The poet Mark DeWolfe Howe wrote:

"The village sleeps, a name unknown till men
With life blood stain its soil, and pay the due
That lifts it to eternal fame, for then
Tis grown a Gettysburg."

Bruce Catton, Pulitzer Prize winner for his one-volume history of the Civil War, borrowed from Lincoln's speech for his title: *This Hallowed Ground*. I have borrowed my title from Catton.

The Bible points us in the same direction with an old story from Genesis. "When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, 'Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it.' He was afraid and said, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than

A seminary colleague of mine used to say that the secret to being on hallowed ground is found in this simple phrase: be with. That's it.

the house of God; this is the gate of heaven” (Gen. 28:16, 17). After praying for God’s continued protection, Jacob vowed: “This stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God’s house” (verse 22).

Since most of us have experienced a variety of buildings, from simple churches to magnificent cathedrals in which to worship, it may seem strange to label a small rock in the open country as the house of God. So we are faced with the question: What makes any particular place holy? Certainly, not a rocky field. May I suggest that even a dedicated church building in itself is not necessarily holy ground. After all, it is just wood and brick and stone with (we hope) some comfortable seating.

But during a worship service when God’s presence is felt in a mighty way, it becomes a holy place.

The story of Jacob suggests at least two qualifications for any spot to qualify as “holy ground.” First, the presence of God is manifested there. Second, worshippers have an awesome, life-changing experience and will never be the same again. As Jacob’s story illustrates, this can happen in any location. Sacredness depends not on structures but on events.

Another biblical illustration is the transfiguration of Jesus (Matt. 17:1-8). Jesus took Peter, James, and John on a hike up a high mountain. There was nothing special about that location. But then an awesome experience occurred. Jesus’ face shone like the sun; His clothes became white as light; Moses and Elijah appeared and talked with Jesus; a bright cloud enveloped them; and a voice from heaven acknowledged Jesus as the beloved Son of God.

Years later Peter wrote of his experience: “We were eyewitnesses of his majesty. . . . We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain” (2 Peter 1:16-18). For the rest of their lives this mountain would remain, for them, hallowed ground.

OUR BRUSH WITH HOLINESS

We might experience this holiness in a chapel where we sense God speaking to us in a personal way, in an awesome view of a natural wonder, or on a hallowed spot like the home of a spiritual giant like William Miller, or his church, or other special site. Many of us have sensed holy ground in Oak Hill Cemetery in Battle Creek, Michigan, as we viewed the gravesites of dedicated Adventist pioneers. Although I have not personally visited the Maeda Escarpment on Okinawa, where Desmond Doss, under heavy fire, single-handedly saved the lives of 75 soldiers, just watching this story on film creates in me a sense of the sacred.

Most of us will not have as dramatic an experience as Jacob, watching angels climb a ladder into heaven; or Moses, taking off his sandals before the burning bush; or Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration. Yet, we also may enter the presence of God and find ourselves on hallowed ground. We may do this by prayer in which we do more listening than talking. I realize that we often think of prayer as confessing our sins, agonizing with God, or pleading for specific requests. Certainly there is a place for that. But I’m thinking here of just relaxing in the presence of God, just being with Him without asking for anything.

A seminary colleague of mine used to say that the secret to being on hallowed ground is found in this simple phrase: “be with.” That’s it. Being in the presence of Jesus, whether waking or sleeping, is the best place to be. Sleeping in His arms, waking up in His presence—next to His heart—this is bliss indeed.

As hymn writer Harriet Beecher Stowe put it:
“Still, still with Thee, when purple morning
breaketh,
When the bird waketh and the shadows flee;
Fairer than morning, lovelier than daylight,
Dawns the sweet consciousness. I am with
Thee.”

I may not have the experience of Jacob, Moses, Peter, James, or John, but in God’s presence I am on hallowed ground. It is my Bethel. ♣

* *The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1985), no. 498.

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WITH JESUS IN THE STORM

Meteorologists use color codes to describe the severity of storms. They range from code red, the worst, to light yellow, the least powerful.

I sometimes wonder how we've made it this far through the many storms of life without color-coded warnings. Imagine what life would be like if colors appeared in the sky for some of the personal storms we encounter.

For example, green could indicate incoming trouble, such as getting ready to leave for work and finding you've misplaced your car keys or wallet. A yellow-coded storm would be when the car won't start and you're already late for an important appointment. An orange-coded storm would be an accident in which you or a family member experience some life-threatening trauma. Red-coded storms, would be those no one wants to experience, for when they hit, life just stops. Nothing else seems to matter.

Four code-red storms are recorded in Scripture, each representing experiences we've either had or will encounter while waiting for the second coming of Christ.

The first is in the Old Testament book of Jonah, in which the Lord Himself hurled a great wind on the sea so that the ship was about to break up. What do we do when it's God, not Satan or nature, who hurls a huge storm into our lives? Do we drown in despair, or will we sing, "Purify my heart, let me be as gold and precious silver"?

The other three code-red storms are in the New Testament. One occurred when Jesus walked on water to meet His disciples (Matt. 14:22-33). One involved the apostle Paul on his way to Rome for trial (Acts 27).

The fourth code-red storm is so significant it's reported in three of the four Gospels (Matt. 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25). Jesus' disciples felt that they were going to perish in a storm on the lake.

Here are a few lessons we can learn from those storms:

Like Jesus, we have to know when to leave the crowd behind, not just people who disrupt peaceful protests, but also those with personal doubts, fears, anger, and attachments to things or persons without whom they think they can't be happy.

Remember, even when Jesus was asleep, in His divinity God was still very present. "He who watches over you will not slumber" (Ps. 121:3).

When code-red storms of life come, especially when life seems to be going fine, before accusing Jesus of not caring, we must ask, "Where is our faith?"

God sometimes allows fierce, violent storms of life. If you don't know that yet, ask the Christians whose loved ones are numbered among the more than 100,000 U.S. victims of COVID-19, or the families of those whose lives were snuffed out because of the color of their skin.

The apostle Paul said, "No temptation [not suffering or untimely death, but temptation] has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted [not suffer, "tempted"], he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it" (1 Cor. 10:13).

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**CURE FOR THE
COMMON LIFE**
HYVETH
WILLIAMS



**GOD SOMETIMES
ALLOWS FIERCE,
VIOLENT STORMS OF
LIFE.**

THE TRUTH ABOUT SALVATION



LEE VENDEN

Over the course of the 18 years that I taught religion classes in Christian high schools, I repeatedly gave a quiz intended to take the spiritual temperature of my third- and fourth-generation Seventh-day Adventist students. The results were consistently shocking. Ninety-five percent believed if they were killed later that day, they'd come up in the wrong resurrection. In every case their lack of assurance was based on an inability to behave well enough.

I have a preacher friend who ministers primarily to seniors in one of our largest Seventh-day Adventist churches. He routinely concludes in-home visits by asking for prayer requests. He told me that almost without exception, lifetime Adventists express uncertainty regarding their salvation. Their most common prayer request is that they might find assurance.

Why does uncertainty haunt both young and old? Is it actually possible to have "blessed assurance"?

I suggest that many in my Seventh-day Adventist subculture have tended to be more focused on keeping the *law* than on knowing the *Lord*. Too often we've been more concerned with knowing the *facts* than having a *Friend*. This leads to lack of assurance.

"SINS AND SHORTCOMINGS"

Sometime in my youth I got the idea that one unconfessed sin could keep me out of heaven. My

definition for sin centered on behavior, and my thoughts and actions missed the mark far too frequently. Fearful that my memory was inadequate to the task, I began praying generic prayers that God would "please forgive me for all my sins and shortcomings." I figured His memory was better than mine and hoped that He'd cover what I might forget.

My working definition for sin was *extracted* from one verse: "Sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4, KJV). I'd overlooked crucial parts of that passage. Consequently, my behavior became a major focal point. I want to come back to this verse, but first let's consider three other passages.

When asked regarding the most important commandment, Jesus summarized the law as loving God with all our hearts and our neighbors as ourselves (Matt. 22:37-40).

Likewise, Paul wrote: "Love is the fulfillment of the law" (Rom. 13:10).

John's definition for God is "love" (1 John 4:8).

In algebra we learn that two things equal to the same thing are also equal to each other. The transitive property states: If A = B and B = C, then A = C. For the purpose of illustration, let A represent the law, B represent love, and C represent God.

A = Law

B = Love

C = God

Now if the law (A) equals love (Jesus' and Paul's definition) and love (B) equals God (John's defi-



There's a reason it's called "good news."

When we enter into a personal relationship with Jesus, our name is written in the Lamb's book and we become legal owners of eternal life.

nition), then God (C) equals law. Because if $A = B$ and $B = C$, then $A = C$.

God and His law are equal. In fact, the law is simply a transcript of God's character. Therefore, breaking the law (lawlessness) is actually the same as separating from God (godlessness). *At its heart sin is not primarily a broken rule: it's a broken relationship.*

Let's look again at 1 John 3:4—this time in context. “Whoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law” (KJV).

Note the sequence: whoever commits sin (they've already committed sin) transgresses the law as well. So committing sin precedes, and results in, transgressing the law. Transgressing the law was *not* the sin—it was the result of sin.

My preacher father asked biblical language experts at several universities for their scholarly rendering of 1 John 3:4. They said that properly understood, the passage reads: “Whoever commits sin (lives life apart from Jesus) transgresses also the law: for sin (living apart from Jesus) results in the transgression of the law.”

Rather than being *behaviorally* focused, 1 John 3:4 is actually *relationally* focused. This makes a huge difference in terms of application. If I think the core issue in sin is *behavioral*, I endeavor to overcome sin by *not* misbehaving. I strive to gain the victory over my temper, my covetousness, my lust, my impatience, etc.—something as doable as changing my skin color or removing spots from a leopard. My assurance or lack of assurance is directly related to my performance.

When I understand that the core issue in sin is *relational*, I seek to overcome sin by spending time

with Jesus. I fight the good fight of faith by nurturing a personal relationship with Him through Bible study and prayer. My assurance is based, not upon my *behavior*, but rather upon my *Savior* and a daily acceptance of Jesus' grace.

FAITH, NOT FEAR

A behavioral definition of sin can create challenges to understanding Scripture that a relational definition for sin handles easily. For example, if the core issue in sin is behavioral (breaking a *rule*), then a literal reading of Romans 6:23, “the wages of sin is death,” would read, “Break the rules and God will kill you.” Hardly an endearing picture of God.

A Christian high school classmate of mine broke his leg while skiing on Sabbath. Church members discussing the accident concluded, “Too bad he was skiing on Sabbath!” The resulting picture of God is “Break My Sabbath, and I'll break your leg!”

Such a picture of God produces fear-based obedience. One problem with such obedience is that fear doesn't last long as a motivator. Hence, one needs new and fresh dosages of fear (maybe last-day events) in order to continue “obeying.” Furthermore, Scripture is clear that God's government is based on love. It is also clear that “perfect love drives out fear” (1 John 4:18). Therefore, fear-based obedience could not be of God; Satan uses fear.

On the other hand, if the core issue in sin is relational (breaking a *relationship*), Romans 6:23 is easily reconciled. God is our source of life. “In him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). Therefore, the “wages” of separating from my Source of life would be death in the same way that pulling the plug on life support results in death. God isn't out to get us for breaking His rules. He actually begs us not to separate from Him (see Zech. 1:3; Isa. 44:22; Matt. 23:37).

In the light of Scripture, this becomes exciting. “Whoever abides in Him does not sin” (1 John 3:6, NKJV).¹ If whoever abides (relationship word) in Him doesn't sin, then sin would be *not abiding*. Once again, we're reminded that the core issue in sin is *not* about breaking rules, but a broken relationship. A personal relationship with Jesus, then, is worth understanding and experiencing.

Are we seeking to become better acquainted with Him? Are we spending meaningful time each

day contemplating His life through His Word and communing with Him in prayer? Are we so excited about our friendship with Him that it's easy to tell others how wonderful He is? These are the building blocks for relationship—whether with others or with God. If we can answer “Yes” to these questions, we *have* a relationship with God, and 1 John 5:11-13 is for us:

“God has given us eternal life [note what kind of life is being referred to here], and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son [that is, has a relationship with Jesus] has life [eternal life]; whoever does not have the Son of God [doesn't have a relationship with Jesus] does not have [eternal] life [regardless of whether that person keeps the rules]. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so *that you may know that you have eternal life.*”

Can we know whether we are saved? YES! What are the conditions? Having [think relationship] the Son.

OUR NAMES, HIS BOOK

A young single man longed to own a shiny red Corvette. One day he met a young single woman who owned just such a car. He fell in love (he even thought the girl wasn't too bad). They married, and she added his name to the vehicle's title. Oh, happy day! He was now legal owner of a red Corvette.

Sadly, my parable has their relationship ending in divorce. Is he still legal owner of a red Corvette? Not in the state where I live. Possessions acquired prior to marriage revert back to the original owner in case of divorce.

Does that mean he wasn't a legal owner? No. He was a legal owner by virtue of his relationship with the girl. Hang on to the girl, hang on to the Corvette. Break up with the girl, lose the Corvette.

When we enter into a personal relationship with Jesus, our name is written in the Lamb's book and we become legal owners of eternal life. The same principles apply. Hang on to Jesus, hang on to eternal life. Break up with Jesus (permanently), lose eternal life.

I believe in “once saved always saved”—as long as we stay saved. I believe in once married always married—as long as we stay married. Remember, marriage is about relationship. Nurture the

Are we so excited about our friendship with Him that it's easy to tell others how wonderful He is?

relationship, and it will endure. Neglect the relationship, and it will dissolve.

But salvation is even better than marriage. We've been adopted into the family of God as His sons and daughters (Rom. 8:15, 16). If a child spills the milk or soils its diaper, does that impact its standing in a healthy human family? Not at all! Healthy parents clean spilled milk and change soiled diapers. In fact, they are committed to doing that as the child grows and matures. Its family standing isn't based upon its bladder control.

Our heavenly Father's love is even better than that of earthly parents. He is committed to cleaning my spiritual messes as I grow and mature. He doesn't kick me out because of my faults and failures. In fact, He promises to complete the work He has begun in my life if I stay in relationship with Him (Phil. 1:6).

When we enter the “relationship elevator” with Jesus, He presses the button for the top floor. We may stumble in the elevator as we learn to depend upon Him more and more, but if we fall in an elevator we don't stop going up.

Jesus Christ “guarantees right up to the end that you will be counted free from all sin and guilt on that day when he returns. God will surely do this for you, for he always does just what he says, and he is the one who invited you into this wonderful friendship with his Son, even Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 1:8, 9, TLB).²

If Jesus is ours, we *can* have blessed assurance! 

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² Verses marked TLB are taken from *The Living Bible*, copyright © 1971 by Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Ill. Used by permission.

Lee Venden serves with his wife, Marji, as a revivalist for the Arizona Conference (AllAboutJesusSeminars.org).



A COMMENTARY FOR OUR TIMES

The Andrews Bible Commentary of the Old Testament is published.

Highlighting the Bible's message of hope, along with detailed exposition of the Old Testament, the first of two volumes of the *Andrews Bible Commentary* will soon be in bookstores and available through online booksellers, according to Ronald Knott, director of Andrews University Press. The second volume, covering the books of the New Testament, is expected to arrive sometime next year.

Eight years in the making, the project is led by general editor Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, former director of the world church's Biblical Research Institute. The project was funded by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and Andrews University.

With a total of just under 1,200 pages, the first *Andrews Bible Commentary* volume pro-

vides a comprehensive survey of the first 39 books of Scripture. This first volume also features overview articles about the Bible's message of hope, faith, and science, as well as introductions to major sections of the Old Testament and introductions to each book. Numerous "sidebar" articles are found in many of the individual commentary sections as well, touching on major doctrinal themes and biblical issues.

A GROWING BODY OF SCHOLARLY WORK

Planning for a Bible commentary accessible to a wide range of readers began not long after the 2010 release of the *Andrews Study Bible*, the first such study Bible prepared with the support of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Knott said the new commentary project has enabled him to focus even more on the Bible's message. "With the beginning of the *Andrews Study Bible* project in 2007 . . . then moving into this project, so much of my professional life has been specifically focused on the Bible," he said. "It brings to my mind William Miller's own experience when he spent two years going through the Bible verse by verse and saying, as a result of that process, that 'the scriptures became my delight and in Jesus, I found a friend.'"

Andrea Luxton, president of Andrews University, said the new volume is an extension of the school's history of bringing Bible knowledge to the global Adventist community.

"The important thing is that this would be an easy, concise way for people to quickly understand a passage from an Adven-

tist perspective,” Luxton said. “We see ourselves as [being] there to support the church with theology, so it’s a natural fit for us.”

According to L. S. Baker, Jr., an archaeologist and associate director of Andrews University Press, the new volume contains much that will interest readers: “Reading through every single word and wrestling with concepts, [I discovered that] there were some fantastic nuggets in this commentary that are going to be extremely helpful.”

WHOLISTIC VIEW OF SCRIPTURE

Unlike the decades-old *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (SDABC), the new volumes take a more wholistic view of Scripture, said Rodríguez.

“There have been new discoveries in archaeology, in linguistics, and in Old Testament, New Testament backgrounds” since the original SDABC was published, Rodríguez said. “So the backgrounds for the study of the Bible have changed quite a bit. We have now, in many cases, gained a better understanding of some of the important Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic terminology,” he said.

Rodríguez emphasized that the new volumes offer a cohesive survey of Scripture, as opposed to the SDABC, which in many cases highlighted specific phrases. He also noted that the new volumes will reference the message of hope found throughout the Bible’s contents.

“When we were shaping the concept of the commentary, we concluded that it would be very, very good to take a particular theological topic as the guiding principle,” Rodríguez said. “And, of course, what came to mind was hope. Because if there is something that defines Adventists, it is hope. If there is something that runs throughout the Bible from beginning to end, it is the concept of hope.”

He added, “We’re not saying that this is the central theological topic of the Bible. We’re saying that for our purpose, we’ve decided to exercise this, keeping in mind that in the Bible, God is the God of hope. In the New Testament, Jesus is our living hope.”

Though planned long before the 2020 global COVID-19 pandemic, the commentary’s concentration on hope seems particularly timely, said Deborah L. Everhart, Andrews University Press editor.

“It really is a key distinctive feature that this commentary has its emphasis on a biblical topic of hope. Even though it was planned long ago, before we knew the book’s time of release, it now

seems to be perfect timing for that theme,” Everhart said. “Hope is desired by so many right now.”

A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

Assisting Rodríguez in editing the commentary are three noted Seventh-day Adventist biblical scholars: Daniel Kwame Bediako, vice chancellor and an associate professor of Old Testament at Valley View University in Oyibi, Ghana; Carl P. Cosaert, dean of the School of Theology and professor of biblical studies at Walla Walla University in College Place, Washington; and Gerald A. Klingbeil, associate editor of *Adventist Review* and *Adventist World* magazines, as well as research professor of Old Testament and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Along with the editors, Rodríguez emphasized the global group of contributors to the volumes: “For the Old Testament we have no less than 34 Adventist theologians writing for us. In the New Testament no less than 23 are from around the world, from every division” of the Seventh-day Adventist world church, he said.

Early readers of the commentary have responded with enthusiasm.

“The *Andrews Bible Commentary* is a monumental work produced by outstanding theologians and scholars in a readable, inspirational style that is understandable for the average person,” said Adventist evangelist Mark Finley.

Ella Smith Simmons, a noted educator and a general vice president of the Adventist world church, added, “The *Andrews Bible Commentary* is a superb companion to the *Andrews Study Bible*. Its publication opens up new opportunities for expository Bible study for many who have not had the tools readily at hand for in-depth examinations of Scripture. Its overarching theme of hope and general articles guide perspective and process, and along with its rich introductory sections and expansive time line, establish valuable context for the study of each Bible book. Though one typically does not read through a commentary, this one will make a good read from cover to cover.”

Details of the volume’s price are available at the Andrews University Press website, universitypress.andrews.edu, as well as its Facebook page, www.facebook.com/andrewsuniversitypress. 📖

Mark A. Kellner is a freelance journalist.



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A SABBATH MORNING PRAYER

ANDREW HANSON

I took the time to thank Debby, again,
For carefully placing the *Bee and Enterprise Record*
On our doorstep—she is an early riser
and likes doing it.
She was planting flowers next to her front door.

I paused to listen to the cries
Of the red-shouldered hawk twins
In the top of the Tulip Poplar
In our neighbor's backyard.

A long narrow puddle on the road
Reflected the bright-blue sky.

I wondered how Muggins, our Boston terrier,
Could not just sniff but
Wind himself around a holly bush
And remain unstuck.

I noticed a tiny spider
Flying an impossibly long strand of web
When she drifted out of the shadows
of the trees.

Renee, a frail cancer survivor,
Was putting out pots of red geraniums
Next to her garage.
She said she was late getting them out.
I told her I had missed them.
I said they were beautiful
And at the same time thought
That her tremulous smile
Was far lovelier.

Even though the sunlight had
penetrated my bones
And made me smile,
I was happy to get home,
To walk though my front door
one more time
To Claudia
and banana toast with blueberries
And strawberries and walnuts.

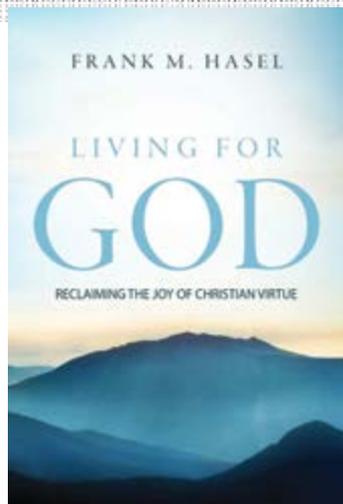
Thank You, Lord, for a taste of heaven,
For Sabbath morning walks.

Amen.

Andrew Hanson writes from Chico, California.



CLOSER LOOK



Living for God: Reclaiming the Joy of Christian Virtue.

Frank M. Hasel, *Living for God: Reclaiming the Joy of Christian Virtue*, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2020, 128 pages, US\$14.99. Reviewed by Gerald A. Klingbeil, Adventist Review.

We don't talk much about virtues. The term *virtue* conjures imageries of monastic life and self-flagellation. Virtues are seldom referenced in our cultural discourse, and I can't remember when I last saw a sermon title that included the word *virtue*. This may be, perhaps, because of some misconceptions. Virtue is *not* something that we accomplish in our lives. Rather, it's "a quality of moral excellence or goodness" (p. 13) that transforms lives.

Frank M. Hasel, an associate director of the Biblical Research Institute, manages to write about a complex issue in very readable and relatable language. One can hear the heart of a pastor when he notes in his introduction: "As you practice virtuous living, you will experience life more meaningfully, adding a depth and quality that you didn't know before. Virtue is a true blessing, bringing joy to God, others,

Reviews and commentaries about books, films, or other items do not constitute endorsement by the editorial staff of Adventist Review Ministries.

28 Ways to Spell Your Faith

Gerald A. Klingbeil, ed., *28 Ways to Spell Your Faith*, Adventist Review Ministries and Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2020, 160 pages, US\$14.99. Reviewed by John McVay, president, Walla Walla University.

28 *Ways to Spell Your Faith* features essays that cover the preamble and the 28 fundamental beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists, framed by a helpful introduction and an important afterword. That description may risk a yawn. Why would dedicated, knowledgeable Seventh-day Adventists need another summary of their beliefs? Wouldn't that be like poring over the manual for a household appliance that is used every day and thoroughly known?

What sets this book apart is both what it *is not* and what it *is*. It is not written by a single individual or a committee, offering carefully vetted and sanitized commentary on Adventist beliefs. By design, the authors represent a diverse chorus of voices from around the globe. An essay by a screenwriter lies alongside one by a noted evangelist; one by a

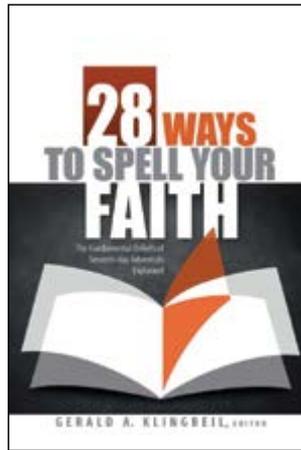
and ourselves. Virtues enlarge the quality of our relationship and elevate the level of our social abilities. But they are more than just markers of interpersonal excellence. Ultimately, virtues are living expressions of God's characters. When manifested in our lives, they bring healing to others and glory to Him" (p. 15).

Following a brief introduction, the volume is divided into 13 chapters, ranging from a focus on waiting (as a virtue), humility, gratitude, prayer (including intercessory prayer) to highlighting challenges to virtuous living, such as envy or our relationship to social media. Intriguingly, Hasel doesn't offer a discussion of the virtue of Jesus at the outset of the book (perhaps as a model to be emulated), but decided to include this discus-

technical communicator precedes one by a well-known systematic theologian. These are the heartfelt reflections of real, live Seventh-day Adventists describing how their fervently held beliefs function in the world.

The volume is not long and ponderous. The essays are brief; consistently just four pages in length, and often leave you wishing for more. The book offers no wooden consistency in treating the beliefs. Some authors touch on all major aspects of a doctrine, while others choose only a central implication or two. Some emphasize the content of a belief, while others accent practical application.

Lothar Wilhelm's essay on the often-overlooked preamble to the beliefs ensures that the book, while confident, is not arrogant but humble. The belief summaries are "useful statements of the church's understanding while not limiting or closing off that biblical understanding" (p. 14). The book is not only humble but also authentic.



The hardest questions are not dodged but pondered, questions about how beliefs apply in the nitty-gritty of life. Especially notable in this regard are Robert McIver's sketch of the Christian experience, Chantal Klingbeil's discussion of the church's flaws and God's plans for it, and Carol and David Tasker's description of

family life that highlight the profound hope that "in the Bible, we see God moving remarkably among dysfunctional families" (p. 120).

I read this inspiring book over a few days. It left me with a buoyant sense of belonging to a global church inspired by a Christ-centered, hope-filled faith, one that is robust enough to be forthright about questions and challenges. I experienced a cohesive, coherent system of truth that is meeting needs and inspiring positive engagement while looking toward the grand, ultimate event of Christ's return. I am confident that it will do the same for you. ♣

sion as the final chapter functioning as the climax of his book, for Jesus always is and must be the expression and focus of everything good and true and pure and noble and lovable and excellent and praiseworthy (cf. Phil. 4:8).

Each chapter opens with a thought-provoking or inspiring quote or Bible text and contains at its conclusion a number of stimulating questions that could be used for personal reflection or as a starting point for a group discussion. Always the scholar, Hasel has included references to quotes and ideas at the end of every chapter for those who would like to dig deeper.

Chapter 9 deserves particular attention. Entitled "Virtuous Living Through Suffering and Loss," it focuses on the question of how to live virtuous lives in the midst of suffering and loss. The author shares part of his own experience when he lost his wife, Ulrike, to cancer in 2009. Hasel's prose

is moving, yet never sentimental or looking for effects. Any reader will be able to relate to his experience—for we all have walked through dark valleys and along circuitous paths, even though we may not have lost a spouse at a young age.

Living for God tackles an often-overlooked quality of Christian living without falling into the trap of being overly prescriptive or offering lists where those yearning for virtuous living can rate their performance. It also avoids the potential pitfall of righteousness by merits and virtues and focuses solidly on Jesus as our model of virtuous living. I read the volume as part of my early-morning reflection on God and His Word and always felt blessed. Sometimes I read an entire chapter; other mornings I managed a single page. Always I felt both encouraged and challenged to live up to God's ideal for His creation. My guess is you will too. ♣

WITHOUT JESUS *Where would you be?*

We've been doing some new things with social media as of late. Among our initiatives to better engage with our community of readers is to ask them questions. We hope you find some inspiration from the selection of responses we've highlighted from our *Adventist Review* Facebook page. —Editors.

FILL IN THE BLANK:

Without Jesus I'd be _____

Lacking so much. This world can bring you down so fast. Jesus keeps balance and peace in the midst of every storm I face.

DEBBIE YORK

Lost forever.

HEATHER ROBINSON

Growing selfish and boastful. It was such a turning point knowing Him in my young age.

KRISHA MAE WAKIT BUGALING

Weak to battle the circumstances I face every day. He is my strength.

CARLOS APOLONIAS

Nothing in this world. So let's praise and do good for others.

CHOJUAN ESJOSAN

Dead. Hopeless. In a mess.

ANGELO PACULABA LAYOSA

Without hope of entering heaven.

SIMEON TOPOK

Nothing. He is my everything.

ALBERT OIREDAF ARUTLUCSE

Empty. Useless. Hopeless. Nothing.

DARKUS SHANTELLA SCIPIO

Lost spiritually, emotionally, and mentally.

TANYA COLEMAN

In the great unknown.

CHRISTOPHER BALUYUT FIGUEROA

Nothing. Thank You, Lord, for being with me all the days of my life.

FERTILICIA PHANBUH

Hopelessly in bondage to sin. Completely lost.

CARLOS VEGA

Zapped of life.

DORIS LEESON

Unloved.

ANITSUGUA SEWISTA

Controlled by sin.

JOHN MAGUIRE

Nothing, for He alone is my strength and hope.

ESOR RODATSAB ANTAWA



All alone in a room full of darkness and feeling hopeless.

JANIELLE DIMALA

Dead among the living.

JAMES METZGER

Hopeless.

WASIM RAZA

Lifeless.

PATIENCE AUGUSTINE

Lost.

MITA RASOLO

Nothing.

JOSHUA PILAR.

FILL IN THE BLANK:

If I could change anything about my local church, I would _____

Add young people, middle-aged people, and older people who are on fire for Jesus Christ, ones who are not looking to be entertained but who want to step up and do the work needed to finish. I would gladly turn over the running of my church to any young person who fits the above and is willing to take on a challenge.

JUTTA KARIN SCHULTZ

Change nothing, but instead pray that the Lord would change me and strengthen me. Everything will be put in its rightful place by the leading of God's Spirit.

GRAY LIN

Have them be more involved in the community. Doug Bachelor put it this way: "If your church closed today, what kind of an impact would that have in the community where your church is?" Almost all Adventist churches are in what I call the Adventist bubble. It's a closed community. They accept all who come to the church, but do very little to be part of the community. So there would be no impact on the community if the church I attended closed, and that's very sad. How can we reach souls for Christ? Is no one willing to step outside the bubble?

PATTI ROBERTS

Figure out a way to get more 18- to 35-year-olds to attend regularly. This doesn't apply just to my church, but to Adventist churches in general.

MICHAEL BRADLEY-ROBBINS

Change the energy level.

HAZEL D. RILEY

Make it more about Jesus.

ELIZABETH PINK

Hope it would truly become a church centered on Christ through prayer, study of the Word, and community service; not just services inside a building.

FESANMIE AMARILLO

Pray that it would be more Christ-, other-, and mission-centered, and less about group thinking in decision-making; less territorial in leadership positions, and more open to dialogue without fear of repercussions.

DIANE R. WALLACE

IN THE WAITING

Patience is hard, especially when you're waiting for something good to happen, something better to come, or something worth the wait.

If you've passed quarantine time (at the time of this writing we are still in it) scrolling through any number of social media platforms, you might have noticed a "toddler patience challenge." Any kind of social media post showing small children being, well, small children can be quite entertaining. So it was in the quest

for amusement that I clicked on the first (of many) videos of a toddler's patience being tested.

On this particular day, a curly-headed bundle of love and giggles was presented with half a doughnut. Her eyes lit up like fireworks streaking a Fourth of July skyline. Before she lunged at the tasty treat, her dad, having strategically set up his phone camera, gave her instructions. "Daddy has to go do something really quick," he said. "If you can wait and not touch this half doughnut until I get back, you can have a whole one." She looked at him, looked at the doughnut, looked at him, at the doughnut again, and nodded her agreement.

Daddy safely offscreen, the little doughnut lover looked around and around. She picked up the plate and sniffed the doughnut. Then she put it down and brought her head closer and took in a lengthy inhalation of its sweet scent, repeatedly. Smart girl—using her olfactory senses to try to cheat the system! She touched the plate, got a tiny crumb on her finger—which she promptly

licked—and stared longingly at the prize within her reach.

Luckily, the challenge lasted less than a minute—some hungry adults wouldn't have been able to last even that long. When her father returned and asked if she had eaten any, she shook her head no. (Does a crumb really count? I don't think so.) The doughnut half was indeed intact, and she was rewarded with not only the rest of the doughnut, but the accolades of the Facebook community for being such a patient little wonder.

This 3-year-old's wait may not have been long, but it also wasn't easy. Isn't that the very crux of waiting on something good to come? We wait for the births of longed-for babies and for children to return from a week at summer camp. When a college kid is coming home for Christmas, those first few weeks in December drive a parent bonkers with anticipation. Waiting on a bride to make her appearance sends many a groom into tears when at last she appears.

We also wait for things that demand much more from us. Exam scores that determine destinies, medical test results that shape futures. And our greatest waiting period—for Christ's return. That waiting has been long, and it may be longer still. But the prize in sight is worth it.

Stay the course and "inhale" wafts of the best yet to come, for our patience will be rewarded beyond anything we can imagine. For what we will receive then will clearly be so much better than the best doughnut that ever was. ▀

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

**"STAY THE COURSE
AND "INHALE"
WAFTS OF THE BEST
YET TO COME."**

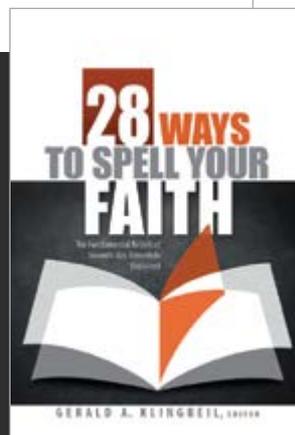
DISCOVER

THE JOY OF BIBLE STUDY

Joy is one of the emotions that we seem to emphasize least when we think and talk about reading the Bible. Spiritual nourishment—yes. Deep convictions about eternal truths—by all means. Encouragement and direction—we need that too. But joy?

When we make time for God to speak to us, when we see how the dots are connected, when we begin to recognize the intricate bigger picture in Scripture—that's when things begin to happen.

As you begin reading these engaging chapters focusing upon Adventist fundamental beliefs, you will discover not only spiritual nourishment, truth, and encouragement, but also joy—the joy of spending time with God's personal message for humanity.



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