

ADVENTIST REVIEW

JULY 2019: TIME WELL SPENT + CREATING A HEALTHY CAMPUS + GETTING ADEQUATE SLEEP + DOES GOD CRY? + DON'T BEAT THE DONKEY + VOLUNTEERING CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE



The Church I Want to Belong to Is...

HEALTHY

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SAFE

READY FOR JESUS

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SELFLESS



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The Church
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With this edition, the men and women who bring you *Adventist Review* each month inaugurate a new series focused on the future to which God is leading His people.

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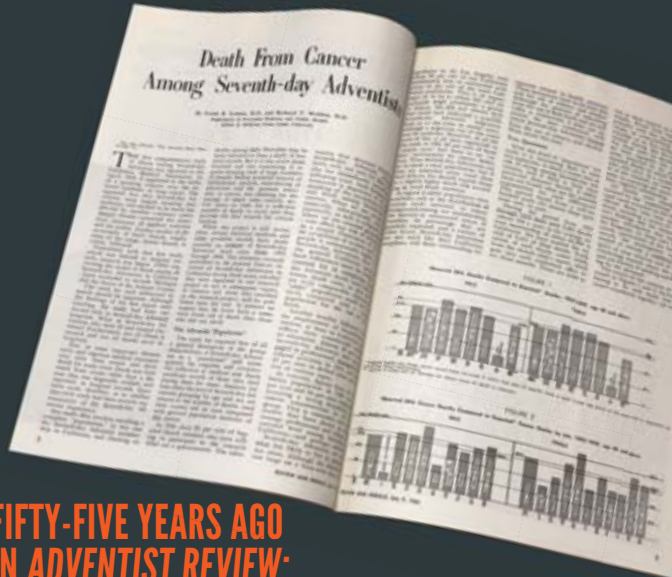
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TRENDING

THE MOST SHARED STORIES ON ADVENTISTREVIEW.ORG LAST MONTH:



- 1 Seventh-day Adventist Elected Prime Minister in Papua New Guinea
- 2 Adventist Military Service Conference Discusses Official Non-Combatancy Position
- 3 Appeal from Seventh-day Adventist World Church President for Urgent Prayer
- 4 For Adventists, Fighting for Religious Liberty Is Not Optional, Advocates Say
- 5 What Every Church Should Know to Prevent Hate Crimes and Targeted Violence



FIFTY-FIVE YEARS AGO IN ADVENTIST REVIEW:

“The first comprehensive study of illness among Seventh-day Adventists was reported to the California Medical Association in April, 1958. It appeared in the midst of a growing concern over the national epidemic of lung cancer. The apparent fact that Seventh-day Adventists were largely escaping that epidemic, and seemed to be much less affected by another—coronary artery (heart) disease—attracted the immediate attention of medical scientists and the public. Further studies of the occurrence of heart disease, emphysema of the lungs, dental disease, et cetera, followed.”

—Frank R. Lemon, M.D., and Richard T. Walden, M.D., in “Death From Cancer Among Seventh-day Adventists, July 9, 1964

**Catastrophic floods & now
high food costs for Mission
schools in Bangladesh!**

**EMERGENCY!
REPEAT
Mission
Appeal**

**FEED
CHILDREN &
HELP
ADVENTIST
MISSION
SCHOOLS**



**CHILDIMPACT
INTERNATIONAL**

PLEASE DONATE AS MANY BAGS OF RICE AS YOU CAN TO ASSIST (\$35 PER BAG)

Last year we had a special rice appeal following the catastrophic Bangladesh flooding in 2017. We are repeating the appeal as food costs have remained high and Adventist Mission schools are still struggling with costs. Because of high food costs, non-sponsored children's parents are having trouble paying fees, leaving Mission schools unable to purchase food and incurring debt. The threat of closure is still real. Your gift to the "HUNGRY MONEY" fund will provide rice & vegetables ensuring food for the children and critical financial relief for the school! The Adventist schools in Bangladesh (with over 9,000 students) are the key outreach for the school in Bangladesh. **PLEASE HELP!**

 : www.childimpact.org | Project "HUNGRY MONEY"  : (423) 910-0667

 : Mail check to Child Impact, PO Box 763, Ooltewah, TN 37363

Child Impact International (previously Asian Aid) is a supporting ministry of Seventh-day Adventist church.

*The Child Impact HUNGRY MONEY fund Bangladesh appeal will only be used to purchase & deliver rice & vegetables to Seventh-day Adventist schools in Bangladesh.

BILL KNOTT



The Church I Want to Belong to Is . . . Healthy

"The only way to keep your health is to eat what you don't want, drink what you don't like, and do what you'd rather not."—Mark Twain

We grimace at the author's sardonic wit, for he has captured in one line our ambivalence about what it means to achieve or maintain personal health. And for a faith movement that for 150 years has promoted healthful living, it doesn't help our moralizing that the cigar-smoking, bourbon-drinking humorist lived to age 74 in an era when the life expectancy for White males was less than 50. Our sense of justice tells us that mocking wit and bad habits shouldn't be so rewarded.

But good health, as we are coming to understand, isn't simply a morality tale about good choices made by persons with advanced willpower. The complex interplay of factors well beyond anyone's personal control—ethnicity, environment, education, heredity, access to health care, and half a hundred cultural factors—may predispose us to either living well beyond the typical life expectancy, or slightly lowering that number by the tiny data point that represents one life.

It's certainly worth celebrating that the life expectancy of the average Seventh-day Adventist on the world's most affluent

continent is nearly 10 years beyond that of the general population. A consistent, church-wide emphasis on choosing better diets, avoiding alcohol and tobacco, and encouraging a lifestyle characterized by healthy habits of more sleep, exercise, good hydration, and fresh air has resulted in what some term "the Adventist health advantage," a phenomenon recently highlighted in numerous high-profile media reports.

But it's also right to ask if the extra decade is actually an advantage if it doesn't result in people living out the abundant life that Jesus taught us we should expect as His followers. Are we known as Christians who both experience and express the "joy of the Lord" across our four-score years? Are we flourishing in warm, hospitable relationships that cross traditional divides of race, ethnicity, and language? Are we warming to the people whose ideas or opinions may, on one level, "leave us cold"? Is there among us a discernible and attractive culture of grace and inclusion—especially for those who haven't shared our advantages in education, supportive families, or access to adequate healthcare?

There's no ultimate value in merely living longer if we aren't also living better—becoming believers known for compassion and commitment to others' well-being. The Gospels never

There's no ultimate value in merely living longer if we aren't also living better.

once record that Jesus put His healthy lifestyle above the needs of broken, hurting people, for it was sinners and not His personal reputation He came to save. And so He taught that it was the "weightier" matters of the law He values most—love, justice, and humility—for they bring the peace with God and peace with others that lays the foundation for flourishing and abundance.

These are the "healthy habits" we learn only in community—in church—where we see modeled the gracious, other-centered life that is our only true fitness for the kingdom. Rubbing shoulders with others who don't share our social or political views, who haven't had our life advantages or made the choices that we've made is a kind of "holy friction," designed by Jesus to work off all our rough and pious edges. In the fullest sense, we are never healthy by ourselves, but only in the community of grace-dependent men and women who are being saved by Jesus.

The church I want to belong to is healthy in every way, living with abundance and generosity, "fit for human consumption," and because of grace, also fit for kingdom living, beginning now. 🍌

I read and enjoyed “Walk It!” (February 2019). I initially thought it would be related to walking, but it’s a great story nevertheless.

CHANTAL SEMBRES, VIA WEB

BEING GREEN: ADVENTISTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Congratulations for focusing on “Being Green: Adventists and the Environment” (April 2019). It is important to distinguish between our God-given responsibility to care for the ecosphere and the global warming industry with its hidden agenda. For readers interested in learning 22 approaches to our divine assignment in caring for our planet, I recommend the book *Entrusted: Christians and Environmental Care*, written by Adventist scientists, educators, and scholars.

Humberto M. Rasi
Loma Linda, California



walking, but it’s a great story nevertheless. I like the way everything happened easily and naturally with successful and happy results. Hope to see more articles like this.

Chantal Sembres
via web

PLASTIC WRAP

I received my April copy of *Adventist Review* to my address in Norway. The magazine was in transparent plastic, and also in a white plastic envelope. In this time of great focus on environmental issues, and particularly the plastic problem, *Adventist Review* should reconsider this unnecessary use of plastic wrapping. A single paper envelope, like most magazines use, should be sufficient. We Adventists should be in the forefront of the environmental work, not the tail.

Kjell Aune
Royse, Norway

HOT FACTS ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

We need to be stewards of the earth by recycling, eating from our own gardens, and not wasting natural resources. By acknowledging that God is in control we can stop worrying about the earth and start preparing others for the best change yet coming to this old earth—the soon coming of Jesus.

Judy Halleron
Marble, North Carolina

WALK IT!

I read and enjoyed “Walk It!” (February 2019). I initially thought it would be related to

WALKING IN THE HOUSE

Peter Landless and Zeno Charles-Marcel had an excellent article: “Walking: Simple, Safe, Successful, Sustainable” (April 2019). My brother and I are graduates of Loma Linda University’s physical therapy program and have 100 years-worth of walking clients, with a lot of them in home health. We liked the phrase “even around the house,” as that is where a lot of our aging home health clients were located. They are unable to consider getting out. So we kindly but carefully explain that “yes, you can walk 500 feet here

We need to be stewards of the earth by recycling, eating from our own gardens, and not wasting natural resources.

JUDY HALLERON, MARBLE, NORTH CAROLINA

in this little house, in this little kitchen or front room. It may be boring, the birds aren't singing, but you will benefit!"

Tom White

Spavinaw, Oklahoma

ADVENTIST MILITARY SERVICE

Until you have served, been drafted, or enlisted, condemnation is not helpful. Unfortunately, our church has not always stepped up with a unified effort to assist service members when desperately needed. We, the church, are not perfect; but Christ is. I love Jesus, and I thank Him for allowing me to serve my country in His name. Longing for the kingdom when there will be no more war!

Joe Wright

via web

DON C. SCHNEIDER PASSES AWAY

I served with Don Schneider on the Lake Union Conference (LUC) executive committee for six years. He truly loved to share his faith with anyone who would listen. I received blessings listening to his Really Living series.

My wife was ill when I served on the LUC executive committee, and I would leave early to attend to her needs. Many times as I

was in the parking lot, Schneider would run to me and ask to pray for me—he knew why I was leaving. I traveled with [Don and Marti] on a trip to Africa, and it was a trip to remember. He will be missed.

Ray Mayor

via web

Don Schneider was education superintendent in the Oklahoma Conference the first year I taught church school. I remember him being nonjudgmental, friendly, and always smiling. He will be missed until that great reunion when Jesus comes!

R. K. Daniels

via web

ADVENTISTS USE STREET CLEANING AS WITNESSING OPPORTUNITY

Thank you for helping the community and being great stewards and keeping the Sabbath by doing this work on

Sunday. Wonderful example for us all.

Lizzi Swane

via web

LOCAL CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA DEVASTATED BY THEFT AND ARSON ATTACK

This is very sad, as these thieves don't know what they are doing. As a church family we must continue to pray for these people, that God's hand may reach them in a compassionate way. We are living in difficult times, and we must be alert, as people's behaviors are changing every day. We must constantly pray, and may God help in moments like this to strengthen our faith through difficult times. May God bless and continue to reveal Himself in moments like this.

Alfred Claude

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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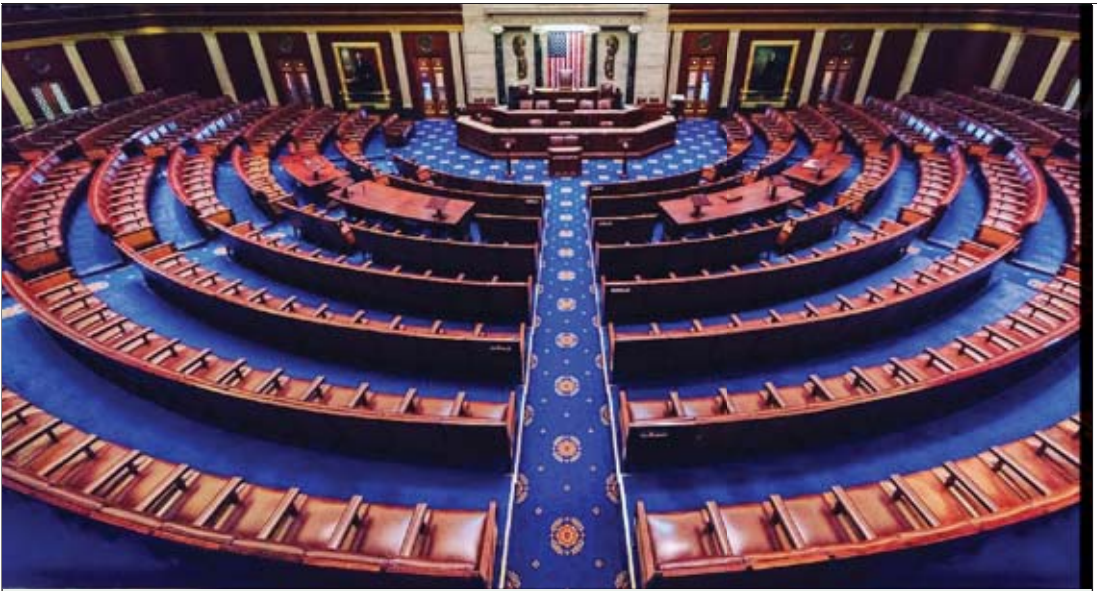


Scan for Life Tips

“Don Schneider’s greatest passion was to introduce people to his best friend, Jesus. He sought to model this to his colleagues in many ways.”

**—G. Alexander Bryant, NAD executive secretary
p. 12**

NEWS



SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH RESPONDS TO EQUALITY ACT

PROPOSED LEGISLATION PASSED BY U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES RAISES TROUBLING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ISSUES

BY GENERAL CONFERENCE AND NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION LEADERSHIP

On Friday, May 17, 2019, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Equality Act (H.R. 5). The bill, if it were to become law, would extend protection to gay, lesbian, and transgender individuals across a broad spectrum of U.S. civil rights laws. This would include employment, housing, public accommodation, and social services.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is concerned that this legislation would further erode the religious liberty of faith communities and their members. This bill makes no allowance for communities or individuals of faith who hold traditional views

of marriage and gender.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church believes that every human being, regardless of their beliefs or choices, is created in the image of God and thus deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. We recognize LGBT individuals often suffer unjust discrimination and are in need of legal protection.

Unfortunately, in attempting to provide protection for some, the Equality Act unnecessarily infringes upon the rights of others.

The way forward means addressing the concerns of both the LGBT and religious communities. We believe

there is a better approach, one that builds upon the civil rights protections offered in the Equality Act by also reaffirming the First Amendment religious freedom rights of people of faith.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church reaffirms its biblical interpretation of marriage, gender, and our long-held commitment to the separation of church and state. The Seventh-day Adventist Church calls on Congress to pass legislation that guards the civil rights of all Americans, while unequivocally protecting the right of faith communities to live, worship, and witness according to their convictions. ▀

ADVENTIST ELECTED TO NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, GIVES GLORY TO GOD

HARVARD PROFESSOR DAVID WILLIAMS IS THE FIRST ADVENTIST TO BE ELECTED TO THE BODY.

BY MARK A. KELLNER, FOR ADVENTIST REVIEW

Ask David R. Williams—a sociologist and educator at Harvard University Medical School—what his election to the National Academy of Sciences signifies, and he'll promptly mention Adventist education.

Williams is the Florence Sprague Norman and Laura Smart Norman professor of Public Health and chair of the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health, as well as professor of African and African American Studies and Sociology at Harvard University. The medical school's website notes he is "an internationally recognized social scientist focused on social influences on health."

Williams is now one of 100 newly elected members of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) and the first Seventh-day Adventist elected to the body. (Albert Reece, an Adventist and dean of the University of Maryland's School of Medicine, was elected to the National Academy of Medicine, a related organization, in 1998 and is currently a member of that group's council. Both of these eminent scholars and researchers are consultants and honorary associate directors in the Health Ministries Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.)

Receiving this honor, Williams said, "says that a foundation of Christian education does not in any way limit the success that one can achieve." And by Christian education, Williams means Seventh-day Adventist education. Williams received his elementary and high school education in Castries, St. Lucia.

Williams completed his undergraduate degree at the University of the Southern Caribbean, a Seventh-day Adventist tertiary institution in Trinidad and Tobago, and subsequently earned master's degrees in divinity and public health at Adventist-owned Andrews University and Loma Linda University. Williams subsequently earned master's and Ph.D. degrees in sociology from the University of Michigan.

"I meet many Seventh-day Adventist professionals who are products of Christian education, and who now think that Christian education is not good enough for their children," Williams told the *Adventist Review* in a telephone interview. "For me, it's an affirmation that preparation in Christian education can still provide you success in the world."

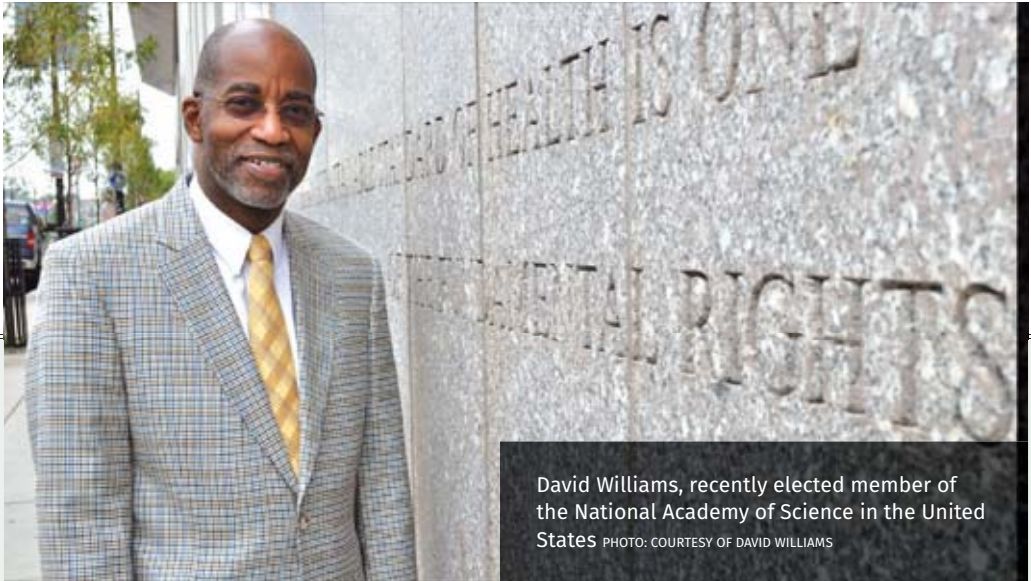
Williams quoted his friend and fellow Adventist Wintley Phipps, a Grammy-nominated singer and Seventh-day Adventist pastor, "You don't have to compromise to be

recognized," and said being faithful to God's rules won't necessarily limit achievement.

"I know that there are some young Adventist professionals who believe that in order to be successful, maybe they have to participate in scientific conferences on the Sabbath," Williams explained. "That in order to be successful, you can't be faithful to God in every respect because there are things that are necessary for you to be successful."

Williams said his election to the academy, the United States' premiere scientific body, affirms that one can be faithful and attain recognition in one's field. There are 2,347 active members of the NAS, chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1863 to "investigate, examine, experiment, and report upon any subject of science," according to its website, which also notes that members are elected in recognition of outstanding achievements, and membership is considered a high honor.

According to Lisa Beardsley-Hardy, Adventist Church education director, "Dr. David Williams is eminently deserving of the recognition, and he is a product of and advocate for [Adventist] education. We congratulate Dr. Williams for this well-deserved recognition of his scholarship on the social influences of health by the National



Academy of Sciences.”

Loma Linda University president Richard Hart added, “As both an alumnus and current board member, Dr. Williams has been closely connected with Loma Linda University Health for many years. His contributions to understanding social behaviors has been foundational, and we add our congratulations to this important recognition by the NAS.”

Williams said he intends to continue his work in research and education, leaving the outcomes in God’s hands. “I would like, as long as God gives me health and strength, to continue to contribute in doing scientific research and training the next generation of researchers. I don’t have any specific goal. I do my part and leave the rest in His hand,” he said.

Williams is also an associate director of Health Ministries for the General Conference (GC), and will present the keynote address at that department’s Global Conference on Health and Lifestyle at Loma Linda in the summer of 2019.

“It is a great honor and privilege to have Dr. David Williams as a friend, and also as a consultant, adviser, and honorary associate director in the General Confer-

ence Health Ministries Department,” said Peter Landless, GC Health Ministries director. “He is not only the quintessential gentleman and scholar, he is an exemplary child of the Lord we love and serve. He has intensively researched the often-ignored but inestimably important areas of health disparities, inequities, and of discrimination, and is an acknowledged, leading world expert in these conversations. We have been blessed and grateful that David and his wonderful wife, Opal, graciously and faithfully share cutting-edge insights on spirituality and wholistic health. They make the difference!”

“I think as needs and opportunities arise, I am more than happy to use whatever gifts God has given me to be a blessing to His people,” Williams said. “And also to equip our health leaders to be the best at doing health ministry and becoming all that God wants us to be.”

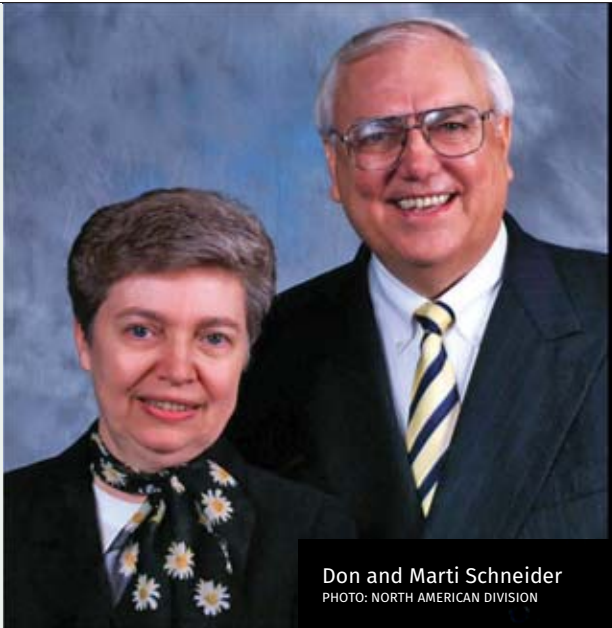
The latter theme of fulfilling God’s vision for one’s life is a theme Williams says he returns to in his talks with young people: “God’s dreams are higher than our highest human thoughts can reach, and the challenge is to give Him everything and let Him use us in ways

that we would never imagine.”

“AS NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES ARISE, I AM MORE THAN HAPPY TO USE WHATEVER GIFTS GOD HAS GIVEN ME TO BE A BLESSING TO HIS PEOPLE.”

“He was a man of impeccable integrity, and a balanced, spiritual leader who was always engaged with people and issues.”

—Juan Prestol-Puésan



Don and Marti Schneider
PHOTO: NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

DON C. SCHNEIDER, FORMER NAD PRESIDENT, PASSES AWAY

HIS GREATEST PASSION WAS TO INTRODUCE OTHERS TO HIS BEST FRIEND JESUS, SAY ADVENTIST LEADERS.

BY NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION NEWS

Don C. Schneider, former president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America (NAD), passed away on May 23, 2019, in Texas, where he was living with Marti, his wife and partner in ministry. He was 76.

Schneider served as NAD president for 10 years. He was elected to the office in 2000 at the General Conference session in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Prior to that, he served as Lake Union Conference

president for almost six years.

Several friends and former colleagues shared the following words upon hearing of Schneider's death.

“Don was ‘the Jesus man.’ There is no more eloquent statement that can be made,” said Daniel R. Jackson, current NAD president. “He traveled throughout the NAD and the world declaring that Jesus was his best friend. His loss will never be equated with being forgotten. He was a ‘one of a kind’ man and leader.”

G. Alexander Bryant, NAD executive secretary, shared that “Don Schneider’s greatest passion was to introduce people to his best friend, Jesus. He sought to model this to his colleagues in many ways, but one comes to mind: he routinely had block ice-cream parties for his neighbors to try to show love and genuine compassion for them. I don’t know how he managed this with his hectic travel schedule, but he did. He truly lived what he preached. It was a pleasure to serve with him. He was my friend; he will be missed.”

“It was a shock for Shirley and me to hear of the passing of Don Schneider,” said G. Thomas Evans, recently retired NAD treasurer. “I have known Don for many years and worked with him at the NAD Office for two and a half years. Don had a great memory and was able to work effectively with committees and in meetings from his vast knowledge. I will remember his fervent faith and his love for his friend, Jesus. Our prayers are with Marti and the family as they mourn their loss.”

Juan Prestol-Puésan, General Conference treasurer and former NAD treasurer, said he had the pleasure of working with Schneider for nine years. “He was a man of impeccable integrity, and a balanced, spiritual leader who was always engaged with people and issues,” said Prestol-Puésan.

Schneider is survived by Marti; a son, Don, Jr.; and a daughter, Carol. ▀



Participants of the 2019 Seventh-day Adventist Church and Military-related Service Conference gather for a group picture. PHOTO: DEENA BARTEL-WAGNER

ADVENTIST MILITARY SERVICE CONFERENCE DISCUSSES OFFICIAL NONCOMBATANCY POSITION

CHURCH LEADERS CALL FOR UPHOLDING IDEAL WHILE MINISTERING TO THOSE WHO SERVE IN THE MILITARY.

BY MARCOS PASEGGI, ADVENTIST REVIEW

Historical reviews, an in-depth textual study of the Bible, lively panel discussions, sobering reflections, and even some tears.

All of these were present as more than 100 Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries directors and church leaders met for the Seventh-day Adventist Church and Military-related Service Conference on April 10 and 11, 2019.

The event, held at the Adventist Church world headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States, sought to create awareness of the denomination's official position on military-related service, and explore how to apply it in an increasingly complex and nuanced international landscape.

CHURCH'S CLEAR OFFICIAL POSITION

The historical Adventist position on military service is clear, Adventist Church president Ted N. C. Wilson reminded attendees in his opening remarks. "The church's position is one of noncombatancy,"

Wilson said as he briefly reviewed the origins of the church's stance during the United States' Civil War in the early 1860s.

It is a position, Wilson said, that is rooted in Seventh-day Adventists' supreme allegiance and relationship to God. Quoting from the church's official statements on the topic, he read, "[Our] partnership with God through Jesus Christ, who came into this world not to destroy men's lives but to save them, causes Seventh-day Adventists to advocate a noncombatant position, following their divine Master in not taking human life, but rendering all possible service to save it."

Ganoune Diop, Adventist Church Public Affairs and Religious Liberty director, agreed. "Jesus chose non-violence, and Seventh-day Adventists must live up to this ideal of Jesus' message and mission," he emphasized. "The Prince of Peace agenda is still to be taken seriously by those who claim Him as Lord and Savior."

Seventh-day Adventists, Diop added, have a historical reason to do so. "The Reformation did not lead to the absolute rejection of violence as Jesus did," he reminded participants, "but as heirs of the Reformation, Seventh-day Adventists must emphasize Jesus' ideals until His second coming and the restoration of all things."

David Trim, director of the Adventist Church's Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, shared some documents showing that an understanding of the historical Adventist position has not always been so clear-cut. "Even when the church advocated for a noncombatancy position, there is some evidence that some members understood it as a prohibition to bear arms, while for others it meant not even entering the military as co-operators [as nurses and cooks, for example]."

Trim also referred to the position of Adventist Church cofounder Ellen G. White, which he defined as "pragmatic." He pointed out that she wrote against active participation in warfare, even though she readily supported, encouraged, and prayed with young men drafted to military service.

A CAREFUL BALANCE

Church leaders expressed that the Adventist Church's emphasis on noncombatancy does not mean that people who choose to serve in the military will be ignored. "Regardless of the individual choice, it is imperative that no one be made



Mario Ceballos, Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries director, speaks at the 2019 Seventh-day Adventist Church and Military-related Service Conference.

to feel denigrated because of their decision to serve,” one of the goals of the conference stated. “Respect for the conscientious decision of the individual church member is crucial.”

Wilson agreed. Noting that in some countries military service is mandatory, he said the church should not abandon those who enlist. “We must be ready to minister to the best of our abilities to those who, for one reason or other, have decided to serve in the military,” he said.

It is something, world church ACM director Mario Ceballos believes, that is backed up by the actions of the world church, including the vote taken at the Autumn Council of the General Conference Committee in Mexico City in 1972. That vote reiterates the Adventist Church’s official position on non-combatancy but then adds, “This statement is not a rigid position binding church members but gives guidance, leaving the individual member free to assess the situation for himself.”

“Without that component we may give the wrong impression on the position of the church,” Ceballos said.

ETHICAL AND PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Following Wilson’s statements in the morning, afternoon panels discussed some of the intersections between God’s ideal, the Adventist Church’s position, and some realities “on the ground.”

North American Division Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries (ACM) director Paul Anderson said he believes supporting noncombatancy does not imply ignoring some of the complex realities around the world. “There is a time and a place for good people to stand for good,” he said.

At the same time, church leaders in panel exchanges repeatedly brought to the forefront the notion of “moral injury.” “We are not programmed to kill another human being,” emphasized Ceballos in defining the term. “There’s a moral price to pay,” he added, referring to veterans’ high suicide rates and, in some cases, the feeling of a rush to keep killing.

In this context, what is the role of the chaplain? “The chaplain should always be a voice of reason, pointing to God’s ideal of peace,” Anderson said. “At the same time, we should not drive people to believe our reality is the only reality.”

Noting the complexity of some real-life situations, Anderson also called for a compassionate approach when ministering to veterans and trauma survivors. “We must walk with [veterans and survivors]

because moral injury does not heal,” he said. “It is our job as chaplains to help people seek and hopefully discover a sense for their life.”

Adventist Church Health Ministries director Peter Landless agreed. Decades ago Landless, who served as a military physician, survived an explosion that sent him 30 feet in the air and took the life of a fellow soldier. “[As survivors,] we need to have a purpose, a calling,” he said with his voice overcome by emotion. “In my life it has lent urgency to my ministry.”

WHAT TO CONSIDER BEFORE ENLISTING

At the same time, in light of the challenges involved in ministering to veterans, Landless emphasized, young people considering enlisting in the military should be aware of what it entails. “We must help people know what they are getting into, because moral injury seldom ever leaves [combatants],” he said.

For Anderson, noncombatancy must become part of the fabric of the home in a child’s early years. “If we want our children to embrace noncombatancy, we cannot start teaching them about it when they are 18,” Anderson said. “It’s too late.” On the contrary, he recommended “to start when they are young.”

Decrying the proliferation of violent video games, Anderson called on attendees to help young people guard the avenues of their souls. “We must teach our children not to learn to feed on violence,” he said. ▀



Inside view of the new Center for Health and Wellbeing in Winter Park, Florida, United States. The state-of-the-art facilities are the result of a partnership between the Winter Park Health Foundation and AdventHealth.

PHOTO: ADVENTHEALTH NEWS

CENTER FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING OPENS IN FLORIDA

FACILITIES ARE THE RESULT OF A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN ADVENTHEALTH AND WINTER PARK HEALTH FOUNDATION.

BY ADVENTHEALTH AND ADVENTIST REVIEW

The Winter Park Health Foundation and AdventHealth recently announced the opening of the Center for Health and Wellbeing.

The facility is designed to provide comprehensive preventative and rehabilitative health and wellness services to improve the overall health of the community of Winter Park, Florida, and beyond.

The center, more than seven years in development, brings nutrition, fitness, medical services, educational opportunities, and more under one roof with the goal of making whole-person well-being convenient and easy for the community to access.

“We’re pleased to be opening this beautiful new facility, which will continue our commitment to the health of Central Floridians for years to come,” said Patty Maddox, president and chief executive officer (CEO) of the Winter Park Health Foundation.

The Winter Park Health Foundation is dedicated to supporting efforts that improve the health of residents in Winter Park and nearby Maitland and Eatonville. Its mission is to make a positive difference in people’s lives by optimizing physical, mental, and social health and well-being.

Located in the heart of Winter Park, the 80,000-square-foot facility offers a wide range of services and opportunities for wholeness, fitness, and medicine in a unique way. “The Center for Health and Wellbeing is a unique facility designed to empower our community to feel whole, by not just taking care of the body but the mind and spirit too,” said Jennifer Wanderleben, CEO of AdventHealth Winter Park.

“We’re thrilled to expand our partnership with the Winter Park Health Foundation and the city of Winter Park to bring this state-of-

the-art center to our community. We’ve had a shared vision of helping our community be the healthiest it can be, and the Center for Health and Wellbeing is the culmination of many years of planning and hard work.”

Leaders reported that the center includes the Peggy and Philip B. Crosby Wellness Center, featuring two pools and the latest in cardio and weight-training equipment. It also has 15,000 square feet (about 1,400 square meters) of various AdventHealth medical practices under one roof, including family medicine, diabetes and endocrinology, and gastroenterology practices.

Other facilities include an indoor walking track open to the public; the BeWell Bar, featuring the latest in health technology; the Nourish Coffee Bar + Kitchen, serving healthy breakfast and lunch cuisine; an outpatient lab and retail pharmacy; and a section for sports medicine and rehabilitation.

“It’s great to be able to offer primary care and so many specialties and healthy resources under one roof,” said Arianna Becker, a family practice physician who will be based at the Center for Health and Wellbeing. “Living a healthy life is so important to preventing chronic disease. By bringing so many components of health and wellness together, our goal is to make it easy for our patients to live whole and healthy in the most convenient way.”



ADVENTIST REVIEW RECEIVES BEST IN CLASS AWARD

ASSOCIATED CHURCH PRESS GIVES FLAGSHIP MAGAZINE ITS TOP AWARD FOR THE FIRST TIME.

BY MARCOS PASEGGI, ADVENTIST REVIEW

Adventist Review, the flagship magazine of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, recently received the Associated Church Press (ACP) 2018 Best in Class award for a denominational magazine. The award was presented by ACP at its annual Best of the Church Press Awards ceremony in Chicago, Illinois, United States, on April 11, 2019.

“For more than 35 years the *Adventist Review* family of magazines have been an active part of the Associated Church Press—the oldest religious press association in North America,” said *Adventist Review* executive editor Bill Knott. “It’s a place to sharpen professional skills and work with other publications to keep faith-based journals available in the public square.”

Each year a juried competition of the best in North American religious journalism is conducted by ACP, explained Knott. “Through the years *Adventist Review*, *Adventist World*, and *KidsView* have collected dozens of awards for excellence in

feature writing, devotional articles, editorials, magazine design, and creative new products.”

This year for the first time *Adventist Review* received the remarkable Best in Class—Denominational or Other Special Interest Magazine award, which is, according to experts in the field, the one that matters most to ACP convention attendees each year. The award is conferred on the faith-based publication that best exemplifies the high standards of excellence in writing, design, and service to its denomination.

It’s a remarkable feat for a 170-year-old magazine, Knott noted.

“As one of the oldest religious journals in North America, the *Review* has reinvented itself as a journal of the contemporary Seventh-day Adventist Church that prizes the rich heritage of this movement,” he said.

Knott pointed to the editorial and design teams that create *Adventist Review* each month.

“I’m enormously proud of the

talented men and women on our team—who write and edit and design this magazine,” Knott said. “This award is a testimony to their amazing dedication and creativity. Knowing that our quality has been affirmed by our peers in faith-based journalism only makes it more satisfying to commit ourselves to a ministry and a church we love.”

NINE OTHER AWARDS

At the April convention *Adventist Review* Ministries products received three awards of excellence, including one for the print publication redesign of the *Adventist World* magazine. An award of merit was given for photography in *Adventist Review*, and five honorable mentions, including one for its Digging Deeper podcast series.

Other Seventh-day Adventist publications that received awards included *Ministry* magazine, *NAD NewsPoints*, the *Canadian Adventist Messenger*, and the *Journal of Adventist Education*.

The Associated Church Press traces its beginnings to 1916, and is a professional organization brought together by a common commitment to excellence in journalism as a means to describe, reflect, and support the life of faith and the Christian community, according to its website. Among its stated purposes is the goal of promoting “higher standards of communication through professional growth opportunities and recognition of excellence.”



SURGEON WHO TRANSPLANTED A BABOON'S HEART INTO A HUMAN

INFANT DEAD AT 76. Leonard Bailey, the Loma Linda University Health surgeon who transplanted a baboon's heart into a human infant known as "Baby Fae," died on May 12, 2019, at the age of 76 following a battle with cancer. Bailey's pioneering and controversial procedure became one of 1984's biggest news stories, drawing the daily attention of national news networks to a case in which the patient died 21 days later. He went on to transplant hearts in 376 infants and became an authority on congenital heart surgery and a consultant to physicians around the world.



SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST ELECTED PRIME MINISTER IN PAPUA NEW

GUINEA. Seventh-day Adventist James Marape, 48, was elected as the eighth prime minister of Papua New Guinea (PNG) in the capital city of Port Moresby on May 30, 2019. Marape, the country's former finance minister, was the member of Parliament for the Tari-Pori electorate in the Hela province. He is an elder of Korobosea Seventh-day Adventist Church and attended Kabiufa Adventist Secondary School in Kabiufa, in the Eastern Highlands province.



5,000 PARTICIPATE IN STREET CLEANING INITIATIVE.

At least 5,000 Seventh-day Adventists in Tuxtla Gutierrez, in Chiapas, Mexico, cleaned streets in support of the city's Let's Clean Tuxtla initiative. Members from Adventist churches in Tuxtla woke up early on Sunday, April 28, 2019, to sweep, clear debris, and collect trash in four areas near the city's main road. Wearing Pathfinder uniforms or special shirts identifying them as Seventh-day Adventists, the group cleared parks and empty lots and held signs encouraging drivers and onlookers to keep the city clean.



YOUTH EVENT EQUIPS 1,600 ADVENTIST MILLENNIALS FOR LEADERSHIP.

More than 1,600 Adventist young men and women from across the Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD) were recently challenged to ask for wisdom at the SSD Youth Leadership Summit at Central Philippine Adventist College in Bacolod City, Philippines. Event organizers encouraged the youth to bravely ask God for wisdom and faith to do mission and take up the responsibility of being the next leaders of the church, said event organizers.



MARANATHA DEDICATES SCHOOL BUILDING IN INDIA. A little more than one year after breaking ground at the Khunti Seventh-day Adventist School in Khunti, Jharkhand, India, the large 12-classroom Elementary Education Center (EEC) on campus is complete. The project has been sponsored by Maranatha Volunteers International, a U.S.-based supporting ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Khunti Seventh-day Adventist School has an enrollment of 1,300, but is forced to turn away hundreds of children each year because of lack of space.



ANDREWS UNIVERSITY INVESTS IN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE.

Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, has approved the concept for an agriculture education center within its Department of Sustainable Agriculture. The new center would be housed in the facilities of the school's former dairy and be designed specifically to emphasize responsible, sustainable agricultural practices that reflect a commitment to serving as good stewards of the environment.



WOMEN COMMIT TO EVANGELISTIC PROJECT IN COLOMBIA.

More than 6,000 Adventist women in northern Colombia committed to reaching and enriching the lives of women through Bible study throughout churches and unentered communities across cities and towns where they live. The mission-driven initiative, coined Chosen and Loved, launched by the Inter-American Division's Women's Ministries Department, seeks to encourage women to nurture other women they connect with through a number of activities planned for this year.



*Does
lifestyle
matter?*

WHOLENESS IN OUR BROKENNESS

PETER N. LANDLESS

She was inconsolable; her husband, Paul, had died. Along with the heartache of being alone came the financial stress—medical bills, difficulty in finding employment, and, of course, the never-ending sadness. This was now two years later—with meals in the freezer she had prepared for her husband that had not been eaten and that she was unwilling to eat herself because they would bring back memories of her beloved.

Then there was that severe chest pain for which she had been urgently hospitalized a month after Paul's death. The diagnosis on admission was an acute heart attack. She had never smoked, was not overweight, and until Paul fell ill and died, she had exercised regularly and faithfully. But she was menopausal, and the risks of heart disease increase as we age.

Following admission to the coronary-care unit came the many tests. The echocardiogram revealed that the heart muscle was not working well. That explained the shortness of breath and the tiredness—she was in heart failure. The next test was an angiogram: a special dye is injected into the coronary arteries (the blood vessels that supply blood and oxygen to the heart muscle).

Surprisingly, the arteries appeared completely normal. How could this be? After all, the symptoms of pain, shortness of breath, and nausea were so typical—and no narrowing or obstructions to account for the poor function of the heart muscle. Also, after six weeks of symptomatic treatment, the heart size returned

to normal, and function steadily improved. Final diagnosis? Broken heart syndrome, officially called *Takotsubo cardiomyopathy*.¹ This condition was first described in Japan in 1990. The name comes from the Japanese term for an octopus trap, because the heart loses its normal shape and becomes more balloon-shaped, the shape of the trap. Takotsubo cardiomyopathy is now being reported in other parts of the world, and 90 percent of cases involve females. It's estimated that up to 5 percent of women treated for a heart attack have this condition. Fortunately, it usually recovers within eight weeks, so even if the actual diagnosis is missed at the time, full recovery can occur.

WHY DOES THIS HAPPEN?

The professor who made the most lasting impression on me as a resident in internal medicine and then as my mentor in cardiology would always come back to the important question: Why does this happen? In Takotsubo cardiomyopathy (heart muscle damage and dysfunction) the heart's main pumping muscle, better known as the left ventricle, is weakened. This is the result of severe emotional or physical distress and usually follows such happenings as the death of a loved one, a sudden illness, domestic violence, a fierce argument, financial loss, or even a natural disaster (and sadly, we are seeing more such disasters).

Under these stressful conditions, and especially when the individual is postmenopausal (with decreased estrogen hormone), the heart is biochemically concussed (stunned), as it were, and its normal function is lost. Thankfully, in most cases it's only temporary. It occurs largely as a result of the high levels of adrenaline and stress-related hormones that are released during the stressful incident/process. Takotsubo syndrome is just one example of the close linkage of the mind, the emotions, and the body. It's sobering that heart disease is not only a consequence of the so-called traditional risk factors of genes, habits, and nutrition; instead, we are wholistic beings.

This whole-person linkage is the focus of seminars and workshops scheduled for the 2019 Global Health Conference to be held in July at Loma Linda Medical Center.² The summit has coined the slogan "Your Brain, Your Body" to use as its theme.

HELP FOR DEPRESSION

Matt sat curled up in the chair, not wanting to do anything, go anywhere, or even eat. Although sleep was an escape from the blackness of his mood, at times even sleep was a stranger. Jason found that his friend's usually tidy apartment had progressively become chaotic; dirty dishes were stacked in the sink, dirty laundry littered the bedroom. This normally would have worried Matt, but now, not so much. This scenario reflected Matt's deep depression. He had a strong family history of depression and had experienced this deep despair before and been treated. The tablets did help, and helped even more when his caring and supportive friend Jason encouraged Matt to join him at the gym, and eventually to buy a bike and ride every weekend.

But then came the rapidly progressing illness and death of Matt's beloved mother. The bicycle tires are now flat, the gym subscription has expired, and the fast-food menus have predominated. Matt is going to need to start all over again. Fortunately, Jason is back from his six-month exchange program overseas and is working with Matt to get help and to restart the vigorous lifestyle program that resulted in much improvement before his mother's death. Jason includes Matt's psychiatrist along with his pastor, Pastor Bill, in his plan. Pastor Bill has completed a mental health first-aid course and is a wonderful support to Matt, as are his fellow church members. They have learned to see mental health problems for what they are—a disease that requires treatment, support, follow-up, spiritual care, and lifestyle intervention. *Your Brain, Your Body*: we are multidimensional beings—mental, emotional, physical, spiritual, social, and relational—with each facet inextricably bound with the others. We are fearfully and wonderfully made.

PHYSICAL ADAPTATION FOLLOWING DAMAGE

She sat in the chair with her bright and intelligent eyes looking at all that was going on around her. She had a slight droop because of some facial weakness. She needed help to walk. She had had a stroke because of an irregular heartbeat. Her words were slurred and unintelligible. Friday evening, as the sun began to set, family and friends drew close around Grandma and started

to sing. Grandma heartily joined in, clearly singing the words of the hymns she had loved for so long and knew by heart. The first time this happened the family was taken totally by surprise: How could this be? This is how it works.

The two main speech centers in the brain are specialized and localized. The perception and understanding of music is also specialized, but also widely distributed throughout the brain. This allows for recognition and recall of words associated with known music even in the presence of localized brain damage. With the professional help of a rehabilitation team, including music and speech therapists, the development of new neural (nerve) pathways can develop and allow speech acquisition through music. It's called neuroplasticity—the ability of the brain to adapt following damage, and for undamaged areas to learn the function of the areas that have been affected by stroke or other disease processes, including the various forms of Alzheimer's disease and dementia. *Your Brain, Your Body*—what a miracle of creation!

WHOLISTIC HEALTH

We focus on the risk factors for physical disease, and rightly so. A wholesome, balanced vegetarian diet, pure water, regular exercise, adequate sleep and rest, fresh air, sunshine, temperance, and trust in God—these great principles of health affect not only our bodies but also our brains. They encompass mental, emotional, and spiritual health as well. Positive and supportive relationships influence and enrich physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health. Healthy spiritual practices, including regular church attendance, result in less hypertension (high blood pressure), heart disease, depression/suicide, and cancers. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has been entrusted with a wealth of information on how lifestyle influences longevity. Lifestyle influences not only the length of life, but the wholistic quality of life. This has been recognized by many internationally influential sources outside the Seventh-day Adventist Church (e.g., *National Geographic*, *Time Magazine*, *U.S. News & World Report*).³ Is it not time for each one of us to embrace the wholistic Adventist health message, not only for our personal well-being, but especially because we have a task to do?

GOD'S TENDER LOVE

Ellen White gives insight as to why we've been given this precious instruction: "I have seen the tender love that God has for His people, and it is very great."⁴

Out of God's great love for us, He has offered us the knowledge on how to have quantity and quality of life—wholeness despite our brokenness—because both our genetics and our planet are broken by millennia of sin. "I [Jesus] have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10).

But there is more! We explore the wonders of health and lifestyle—as in our 2019 Global Health Conference, *Your Brain, Your Body*—for an even nobler reason than just personal health and well-being. We have a commission to share the blessings of good health and the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. Ellen White confirms that our good health is both a blessing to us and lends strength for service:

"I saw that now we should take special care of the health God has given us, for our work was not yet done. Our testimony must yet be borne and would have influence. . . . The work God requires of us will not shut us away from caring for our health. The more perfect our health, the more perfect will be our labor."⁵

Your Brain, Your Body, Your All belong to Him. Let's not just revel in the amazing knowledge and facts shared in the 2019 Global Health Conference. Rather, let's embrace the messages, apply them, live them, and be a blessing to all we meet, by His grace.

Until Jesus comes, may John's prayer for Gaius be answered in each of our lives: "Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well" (3 John 2). 🍀

¹ www.health.harvard.edu/heart-health/takotsubo-cardiomyopathy-broken-heart-syndrome

² conference.healthministries.com

³ Dan Buettner, "The Secrets of Long Life," *National Geographic*, November 2005; "Cancer: The Adventists' Advantage," *Time*, Oct. 28, 1966; "10 Health Habits That Will Help You Live to 100," *US News & World Report*, Feb. 20, 2009.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Early Writings* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1882, 1945), p. 39.

⁵ Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, D.C., Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958, 1980), book 3, p. 279.

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LEARNING MORE FROM THE ADVENTIST HEALTH STUDY (AHS-2)*

New summary of findings



GARY E. FRASER

Large studies of the health of Adventists began 61 years ago. They were funded because Adventists were an especially informative population on which to study the effects of diet and lifestyle. Interestingly, a key reason for this is that the church does not *require* (with a few exceptions) a certain lifestyle, but rather strongly *recommends* it.

Members interpret healthful living very differently, according to their circumstances, and so church members eat in very diverse ways, but with an overall bias toward fewer animal products. This sets up an ideal research situation, where some eat very differently from the average American, and others fall closer to the mainstream North American diet.

The countercultural diets that many Adventists follow have become of great interest, as we and others confirm that they are particularly healthful and much more suited to the health of the planet. In general, studies that relate specific nutrients to mortality, cancer, heart attack, etc., have become somewhat controversial recently, as results often seem to disagree—certainly as reported in the public media without any consideration of study quality. Results pertaining to broad patterns of eating, however, are much more consistent and compelling. This includes diets that trend toward the vegetarianism that many Adventists have followed now for more than 100 years.

More than 400 reports about the health of Adventists have appeared in the medical literature. Before publication, all manuscripts go through a rigorous peer-review process by academics from other (non-Adventist) institutions, where there is no bias toward Adventist dietary positions. So let's look at the broad themes from all these reports, with an emphasis on more recent results.

COMPARING ALL ADVENTISTS TO NON-ADVENTISTS

Studies comparing the risk of dying among Adventists and non-Adventists of the same ages have been unequivocal. Adventists are at lower risk, whether they were from California in the 1960s (55 percent lower), across the U.S. currently (35 percent lower, similar in Black and

White Adventists), from the Netherlands (55 percent lower), or from Norway (35 percent lower in those converting to Adventism before age 35; less in older converts). When we compared nonsmoking non-Adventists to Adventists, similar-sized benefits remain.

Our studies of the health effects of religious practice do find some benefits—particularly with respect to mental health. Those benefits seem to be in addition to dietary effects. In California all this translates to an Adventist longevity advantage of 7.3 years in men and 4.4 years in women. If you are a vegetarian Adventist, these differences swell to 9.5 and 6.1 years. Moreover, an AHS-2 substudy indicates that Adventists also enjoy better mental and physical quality of life, at least through the eighth decade (statistics not available at higher ages). This has led to Loma Linda, representing California Adventists, being identified as a zone of exceptional longevity.

Compared to other Americans, Adventists also experience reductions in risk of all cancers lumped together (by 30 percent); fewer cancers (specifically of the rectum, breast, and lung); also, a reduction of cardiovascular disease (by about 50 percent) and cardiovascular death.

COMPARING VEGETARIANS TO NONVEGETARIANS

Considering the studies that compare Adventists to non-Adventists, it seemed likely that diet was one important cause of the differences seen. But this would be more convincing if more details were available. An obvious dietary candidate was the vegetarian habits of many Adventists, and we had the opportunity to compare the health experience of tens of thousands of vegetarian to nonvegetarian Adventists. Again, the answers are quite clear.

Taking vegetarian Adventists as a group (i.e., putting together vegans, those who eat dairy and eggs, those eating fish as the only flesh food, and those eating meat less than once per week) and comparing to those who eat red meat and/or poultry at least once each week, we find clear and substantial advantages to the vegetarians. This is with respect to overweight, risk of diabetes, blood pressure levels, blood cholesterol

levels, total mortality (about 12 percent less at any particular age), total cancer, cancers of the colon and rectum, and cardiovascular disease (men more clearly than women). Interestingly, it was only the vegans (i.e., strict vegetarians) who had less prostate and probably less breast cancer than nonvegetarian Adventists. Further work about other cancers is underway.

These are challenging tests, as comparing Adventist vegetarians to Adventist nonvegetarians does not contrast a great difference in meat consumption, as the nonvegetarians are mainly low-meat consumers—less than two ounces a day on average (red meats and poultry); yet differences in health experience are found. This is why comparisons in the previous section between all Adventists and all non-Adventists, however, are usually even greater.

COMPARING INTAKES OF PARTICULAR FOODS

What is it about vegetarians that leads to these advantages? We have only a few probable answers as yet, but they are intriguing. Vegetarian Adventists are very different from nonvegetarian Adventists in ways apart from meat consumption. They eat more nuts, fruits, vegetables, legumes, and whole grains, and less animal products, sweets, refined grains, snack foods, and calorie-containing beverages.

Interestingly, even lacto-ovo vegetarians consume only 60 percent of the quantities of dairy as do nonvegetarians. We have recently shown that these different dietary intakes are reflected in the bodily composition of Adventist vegetarians and nonvegetarians, as they have different concentrations of many fatty acids in adipose (body fat) tissue, different levels of most carotenoids in the blood, and different levels of soy isoflavones and the amino acid 1-methylhistidine (from animal muscles) in the urine.

Particular food items appear to be more influential than others when trying to explain the vegetarians' health advantages. We now believe that frequent consumption of small quantities of nuts is probably causally related to substantially less heart disease (associations found in many studies following our initial report); and that red meat consumption is probably causally related to risk of colorectal cancer, cardiovascular disease, and probably risk of diabetes.

Dairy is a tricky case, being associated with less colorectal cancer, but initial indications are of

greater risk of prostate and breast cancers (two hormone-related cancers). Finally, initial findings appear to show that higher tomato intakes (perhaps especially cooked or canned) are associated with lower rates of prostate and ovarian cancers.

It is important to note that in AHS-2 we have also checked all these results in Black Adventists. In no case do we find a clear difference in results according to race. The advantages that we report appear to be equally available to Black and White church members.

BODY WEIGHT AND MEAL PATTERNS

A recent report from AHS-2 received much attention in the press, as we found strong evidence that eating a good breakfast and avoiding calories later in the day (thus a longer overnight fast) was associated with lower body weights. These were relatively small effects that built year on year to become 10 to 12 pounds less weight in older years when an epidemic of obesity results in so many Americans being much heavier than ideal.

WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN?

What is the bottom line? Although by no means alone, Adventists are distinguished among religions by having a particularly strong focus on healthful living. We also believe that we are created and designed by a loving God, who may hope that His creation will be well cared for.

Nevertheless, as Adventists we do not believe that healthful living is a test of religious purity. Decisions that faithful members make on these things can be complicated and depend on many factors often unknown to others. As we consider these matters we can now be satisfied in this age of science that careful peer-reviewed scientific research shows that the dietary advice we received 150 years ago almost certainly does *extend* life; *avoids* premature cardiovascular deaths; and *decreases risk* of many, if not most, of the chronic disorders that impair quality of life in the latter years of so many Americans. Our Adventist health emphasis is now, more than ever, still well worth sharing! 🍌

* publichealth.llu.edu/adventist-health-studies/about

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TIME WELL SPENT

As I walk through the produce aisle, I am aware that someone is watching me. From the corner of my eye I see her. She opens produce bags, does not fill them, moves closer to me.

"Excuse me," I say. "Do you need help?"

Without hesitation she says, "I need your help. My daughter is writing a book. She's in the hospital and will never leave. Can you help her?"

Six days later, after research, permits, I find myself walking the halls of a familiar hospital, to a place I rarely visit: the case study tower. The daughter is Ruth, 19. She has a rare genetic illness. I see arrows pointing toward Suite 401: "Isolation." Ruth and I will speak through a thick pane of glass.

During our first visit we laugh about her initial adventures in the case study. The treatment has not eradicated a precious item: *joy*. The topic of her book surfaces. She holds up a large sketchbook. *The drawings are beautiful!* She is illustrating a book for her younger sister, Isabel. Both were adopted into their current family. Ruth remembers when as young girls they were dedicated in church as "the greatest blessing God has bestowed this family."

Memories presented in sketches, scratchboard images with soft edges. *The lives of two blessed little girls*. The pictures are almost complete. Words are missing. *She needs words*.

For the next weeks I visit Ruth, listen, take notes of her words, view sketches. Ruth decides which of her quotes best describe each sketch. Every visit begins

and ends with prayer, both of us holding our hands against the cold glass between us, inviting the warmth of the Holy Spirit to inspire. On the sixth week final sketches are done and lined up on the glass. *These sketches show when Ruth was diagnosed, everyday Isabel visits; Ruth missing her, proud of her, praying for her. I notice the detail on the "sleepover sketch," when Isabel and Ruth slept in gurneys with the thick pane of glass between them, as close as they would ever be.* Ruth watches me, holding a pen. I shake my head no. *Sometimes it is necessary to put the pen down and let the heart speak.*

Soon the book's cover page is done, and a sealed letter for Isabel is placed on the last page. Ruth smiles: "Every day you visit I pray, 'Heavenly Father, when You close the day, may all we have done please You, and may You say: *time well spent*.'"

At 2:00 a.m. the phone rings. "Hello, it's Frank, Ruth's father. About an hour ago . . ."

Months later I sit in my office, hear the soft knock. "Hello, Dr. Rodriguez? We met briefly, but you may not remember me." *I remember you, Isabel.*

As we sit in the cafeteria, she offers grace over the meal: "Heavenly Father, when You close the day, may all we have done please You, and may You say: *time well spent*." As we share stories, glimpses of Ruth teaching her little sister, the prayer crosses my mind. *Heavenly Father, it was an honest, good book.* ♣

Dixie Rodriguez is a university professor and hospital chaplain, who lives in Texas.

SEARCHING
THE OBVIOUS
DIXIE
RODRIGUEZ



"HEAVENLY FATHER,
WHEN YOU CLOSE
THE DAY, MAY ALL
WE HAVE DONE
PLEASE YOU."



EATING WELL

*Skipping the “good stuff”
may be worse than
consuming the bad!*

FRED HARDINGE

Just ask a few of your friends what constitutes a healthful, balanced diet, and you will likely hear a wide variety of answers! Let’s examine three possible responses:

- A diet without the use of any animal products—no meat, fish, dairy, or eggs (total vegetarian).
- A diet that excludes meat and fish but includes some milk and egg products (ovo-lacto vegetarian).
- A diet that contains not too much of the animal products and lots of fruit, vegetables, and whole grains.

Which one is closest to being correct? Obviously, your answer will depend on your perspective *and* the part of the world you live in! In reality, because of the many variables to consider, there is no simple answer to this question.

It might surprise some readers to consider that the third option might be the best response for certain individuals. Or the first or second response might seem to be best—while enjoying lots of foods like French fries, catsup, cakes, pastries, ice cream (even soy varieties), etc. These kinds of foods are usually high in fat, salt, and sugar, and low in dietary fiber. Just because a dish does not contain any animal products does not guarantee it’s healthy.



NOT ENOUGH GOOD FOODS

A recent publication in *The Lancet* underscored the pivotal role that what we choose *not* to eat plays in the 11 million deaths and 255 million disability-adjusted life years in 2017. Most of these were associated with inadequate intake of healthful foods, rather than the excess consumption of unhealthful ones.¹ The authors suggest that addressing these dietary imbalances could prevent one in five deaths worldwide.

For decades most Seventh-day Adventist nutrition education has focused on cutting down on fat and cholesterol by eliminating red meat. While not always consistent, we also frequently urge a reduction in refined carbohydrates (sugar)—until we arrive at the fellowship meal dessert table! We warn about excessive sodium, too—until soups, chips, and popcorn are served.

While our efforts have been helpful to many, perhaps we should refocus attention on the foods we just don't get enough of in most of our diets, such as fresh fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, milk or milk substitutes, nuts, seeds, and quality polyunsaturated fatty acids.

The conclusion of the Global Burden of Disease 2017 study (195 countries), funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation,² suggests that nonoptimal intake of the "good stuff," along with too much red meat, processed meat, and sodium, and too many sugary drinks, is responsible for more deaths than any other risk factor in the world.

A CLARION CALL

This recent publication should serve as a clarion call for the Seventh-day Adventist Church to continue its health and nutrition education efforts in every corner of the earth. This challenge can best be accomplished by observing the following four principles:

1 Remain sensitive to the complexity of dietary influences and realities in each area of the globe where we work.

2 Recognize that healing comes only through Christ. Health, like salvation, is a gift from our loving Creator. Too often we think we can make healthful choices on our own. Our healthful living must be centered in the grace of Jesus Christ: He gives the desire; He empowers our choices; He makes us loving and lovable health reformers; and He grants us the longevity He sees that we

need. Any other approach makes us health legalists!

3 Base the nutritional principles we communicate on balanced scientific evidence, not hearsay, whim, or personal opinion.

4 Possess a nonjudgmental and balanced attitude. This is so important! Too many health reformers are prickly and unfriendly to those who are struggling at different points of growth. Vegetarians are critical of those who are not vegetarians; total vegetarians look down on those who are lacto-ovo vegetarians, and so forth. We must never forget that "the strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian."³ "God would have us more kind, more loving and lovable, less critical and suspicious. O that we all might have the Spirit of Christ, and know how to deal with our brethren and neighbors!"⁴

NO RIGHTEOUSNESS BY DIET

Because we cannot earn our way to heaven by making all the best choices (there is no such thing as righteousness by diet), we must rely on God's mercy and grace for our salvation and the power to make healthful choices. When we fully grasp this truth, we will not allow differing dietary practices to divide the church. Eating should bring us *together* in fellowship. "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. . . . Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food" (Rom. 14:17-20).

When we gratefully accept the gift of health God has given us, focus our lifestyle choices on what is wholesome, and cheerfully yield our desires and appetites to Christ, we can rejoice in the blessings of a balanced, joy-filled life that will reflect a lovable and loving relationship with all.

"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).⁵

¹ www.thelancet.com published online Apr. 3, 2019 [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(19\)30041-8](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(19)30041-8), accessed Apr. 18, 2019.

² Ibid.

³ Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn, 1905), p. 470.

⁴ Ellen G. White, in *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Feb. 24, 1891.

Fred Hardinge, Dr.P.H., R.D., F.A.N.D., now retired, previously served as an associate director of Adventist Health Ministries at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

DEMENTIA

*Worldwide
growth but
increasing hope*





ZENO L. CHARLES-MARCEL

What a wonder of creation—the human brain! A structural and functional masterpiece composed of 86 billion nerve cells making more than 100 trillion connections and 84 billion supportive (glial) cells of different types designed for nerve-cell nurture and support and for the disposal of toxins and debris. Specialized blood vessels and defense systems collaborate to permit or restrict entrance to the brain’s local environment, regulate brain blood flow, and adjust the chemical composition of the soft and liquid brain tissue to keep the nerves functioning at their peak.

This incredible network of brain cells creates consciousness, thoughts, beliefs, memories, emotions, sensations, movements, and the ability to learn. The brain acts as the master control center for the entire human being, interacting with every other organ system as well as the microbes that live in and on the body. It’s an intricate biochemical “machine” designed with regenerative capacity in key areas (neurogenesis) that persist throughout life and with redundancy and adaptability that permit change according to circumstance (neuroplasticity).

Yet with all of the built-in resilience, one new person somewhere in the world experiences “brain failure” (dementia, neurodegeneration, cognitive decline) every three seconds, while only one case in four is diagnosed as such! The global dementia community is estimated to be approximately 50 million people, about the size of the population of Colombia or South Korea. It’s estimated to double every 20 years, thus reaching about 150 million by 2050—the population of Russia or Bangladesh. Alzheimer’s-type dementia (AD), characterized by the accumulation of tangles of protein fragments called *tau* and plaques of protein called *beta-amyloid* protein (BA), make up 60 to 80 percent of cases. Interestingly, the rate of new-case occurrence is highest among middle- and low-income countries,

even though the number of existing cases is highest in Europe and North America. These alarming statistics have encouraged increasingly greater amounts of research, but a single widely effective drug has yet to be developed. Nonetheless, there is hope on the horizon.

NEW HOPE

The medical and research communities have begun to embrace what Dr. Alois Alzheimer himself hinted at in his reports of Auguste D in 1906 and Johann F in 1911. Dr. Alzheimer was reluctant to have his name associated with the presenile dementia he described because he doubted the notion of monocausality (one sole cause).

Today, more than 100 years later, it’s known that the majority of community-dwelling patients with dementia have mixed pathology, often including BA plaques and tau tangles alongside a wide range of other defects: small artery blockages, lacunae (tiny holes in the brain), the effects of inadequate oxygenation, and small bleeds.

Additionally, there is overlap in these findings among persons with and without AD. These facts, along with the failure of drugs directed to BA and tau, places in question the “one sole cause” idea, and diminishes the likelihood of finding a “silver bullet” drug to deal with this complex, chronic condition. One recent alternative view is of dementia being a kind of “brain failure,” much like heart or kidney failure, slowly, progressively accumulating the effects of multiple insults that silently begin some 20 years before thinking and memory problems become noticeable. Strange as it may seem, this alternative view presents the world with hope.

HOPE IS ALIVE

Once Alzheimer’s-type dementias (ADs) are placed in a multiple-risk-factor basket similar to other chronic diseases, the comprehensive life-

style-intervention approach to prevention and treatment as encouraged by Adventists since the late 1800s becomes reasonable to pursue. But, as with other organ-system failures, a deep and broad understanding of risk factors, pathways of abnormal function, and individual variations in what causes AD and how it shows itself become necessary.

With this view it's easier to accept the idea that plaques and tau-tangles may be a result of or contributors to the processes that lead to a specific kind of brain failure. Rather than initiating AD, plaques and tangles may defend and protect the brain from chemical stress and toxic brain insults, even while their presence worsens nerve-cell nurture and intercell communication.

Embracing multiple potential "causes" and contributors to AD allows consideration of diverse possibilities: invading bacteria from the mouth, abnormalities such as insulin resistance, hormonal deficiencies, excessive blood homocysteine, and zinc deficiency, to name a few. It also provokes examination of how poor air quality, fungal (mold) infestation, dietary inadequacies, herpes virus infection, inability to distinguish between common scents, previous concussion, hyper-caloric diets, inadequate overnight fasting, loneliness, unmanaged hypertension in earlier life (negative), and the development of hypertension in later life (probably protective) modify AD risk. In fact, with this view anything that tips the balance so that nerve-cell death outpaces new nerve-cell birth is a potential contributor and thus a potential therapeutic target. Hope is alive!

HOPE IS HERE—NOW

Reading, learning to play a musical instrument or a new language, creating artistic works, participating in social events, dancing, playing board games, and other activities that require physical, mental, and social engagement are associated with preserved thinking skills later in life and a reduced risk of AD. Music therapy increases self-expression and decreases agitation and anxiety among AD sufferers. Adequate, restful sleep as well as exercise are essential for new cell birth and growth in the areas of the brain that control learning and memory. Sleep improves BA plaque clearance from the brain tissue; exercise stimulates new brain-cell birth through its effects on

chemical growth factors in the brain along with its universal circulatory benefits.

But even though isolated lifestyle interventions have their place, comprehensive, intensive, personalized lifestyle therapy has a growing, positive track record among motivated individuals with early intervention for their chronic diseases. The same appears to be true for AD sufferers. The recently reported cases of more than 100 AD patients treated by different physicians using a standardized, individualizable protocol showed documented improvement in thinking skills, memory and learning ability, and/or improvement in lab and imaging studies.

In another report researchers successfully targeted and reduced the bacterial load of an established brain infection (by an oral bacterium), blocked BA plaque formation, reduced brain inflammation, and rescued damaged nerve cells in the memory areas. A combined approach to mitigating risk factors and treating multiple specific targets simultaneously may be the way to proceed.

The list of risk factors for dementia is long and growing. In addition to those already mentioned, some are potentially modifiable: tobacco smoke, obesity, prior stroke, poor early-life educational attainment, type 2 diabetes, physical inactivity, alcohol use, poor neonatal and infantile diet, less than ideal omega-3 intake, hormonal insufficiency or imbalance, chronic (dis)stress, diets high in processed foods, food sensitivities, poverty, intestinal bacterial imbalance, social isolation, systemic inflammation, gingivitis, and specific genetic-profile carrier status are among them. All may be potential targets to prevent and/or to treat AD.

In London on December 11, 2013, 109 scientists from 36 countries called upon the G8 countries to make prevention of dementia one of their major health aims. They strongly recommended: "Tell people that adopting a healthy lifestyle may help to ward off dementia as it does for other diseases." Could we not add in 2019: Prevention is not only better than cure, preventive measures taken together are the "cure" to slow, halt, or even demonstrably reverse various aspects of cognitive decline?

Hope is here—thank God! 📌

Zeno L. Charles-Marcel, M.D., is an associate director of Adventist Health Ministries at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

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DONAYNE POTTS/LLU

Students help teach health principles before games for the Goal 4 Health community youth soccer league.

CREATING A HEALTHY CAMPUS

Examining the Loma Linda model

Campus life is often that great transition between homes—leaving your parents’ supportive embrace and starting a home of your own. Those of us honored with creating this environment are thoughtful about what to put into it—not too much and not too little.

Perhaps the most distinguishing characteristic of college and university students today is their connectedness with so much around them through social media. While much has been said about the impact of this new technology, pro and con, its reality in today’s world

is one that must be factored into campus programming and communication.

THE GREAT UNIFIER

When your campus is further diversified by many graduate and married students, as we have at Loma Linda University, making a healthy place for personal and corporate spiritual growth is even more challenging. It is in this context that I have become convinced that the great unifier—the healthy growth stimulant—is service to others. This can be accomplished through organized activities by the school, or individual initiatives prompted by exposure to human need and associated with protected space for creativity.

I have watched this progression many times between com-

RICHARD HART



munity programs that expose students to societal issues that then lead to the spawning of new initiatives. Our Goals 4 Health soccer program for local kids (and now their moms), Tigers program for teaching kids how to swim, or the foot-washing service for those who are homeless, sprang from exposure that brought inspiration and commitment to a single student or group of friends. They then have the incredible learning experience of working through organizational issues, continuity and sustainability, finances, recruitment, liability, etc. That is growth at its best, developing leadership skills by trial and error and receiving the satisfaction of creating something yourself.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Many of our campuses are now more culturally diverse than ever before. Students from various countries and religious backgrounds have come to us, wanting to benefit from a safe environment that is willing to understand their own traditions and beliefs. This requires a careful balance between acceptance and sharing with them our ideas and understandings.

Assuring tolerance for their beliefs, as we have coveted for our own unique walk through life, is not always easy. Prayer, music, and worship practices, even among Christians, have wide variation, yet are meaningful to each in his or her own cultural background. This is a growth process for many of our college, and even academy, campuses today as we accept and value these fellow children of our God.

We must not measure their value in dollars only, though their tuition may help balance the budget. Helping their spiritual growth, even within their own belief system, has value to God that we must not forget.

GLOBAL EXPOSURE AND COMMITMENT

Probably the most notable unique aspect of Adventist higher education today comes from our global exposure and commitment. Few schools have the connections and opportunities that we have to go literally anywhere in the world and find an open and supportive church family willing to give our students real-world experiences. All our campuses take advantage of this, leading to a cohort of students who are probably more culturally attuned to the world

than any comparable group elsewhere.

The impact of these “teachable moments,” when students step outside their comfortable cultural and economic boundaries and confront other worlds, is immeasurable. Loma Linda values these experiences so highly that we recently determined to double our students’ opportunities to serve abroad from 10 percent of our student body to 20 percent, or about 800 students, each year. The stories from these “return” missionaries infects the rest of the campus and leads to long-term service commitments.



JANELLE RINGER/LLU

Tevita Palaki, started a self-funded ministry to wash the feet of the homeless while attending Loma Linda University School of Allied Health Professions.”

DON'T FORGET TRADITION

I certainly don't want to overlook the traditional aspects of a quality campus—healthful food, recreational activities, sports, safe dormitories, and stimulating worship services, among many others. But in my view they are the substrate for the truly character-forming service experiences that distinguish Adventist education. Let's value what we have.

I have come to believe that these outside-of-class activities are not “extracurricular” but “curricular.” They are the key to answering Ellen White's call for character-building schools that focus our students on eternal values, like the “needle to the pole.”*

* Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1903, 1952), p. 57.

Richard H. Hart, M.D., Dr.P.H.h, is president and chief executive officer of Loma Linda University Health in Loma Linda, California.



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OAKWOOD UNIVERSITY: HEALTHY AND WELL

Making lifestyle part of the education experience

In March 2019 the Partnership for a Healthier America recognized Oakwood University (OU) with its Crystal Apple Award for building its Healthy Campus 2020 (HC2020) campus wellness program.¹ The journey began in 2013 when former U.S. Surgeon General Regina Benjamin commented to OU president Leslie N. Pollard that Oakwood is a healthy campus because it has been smoke-free since its founding in 1896.

DIGGING IN

Though we welcomed the plaudit, we determined to go deeper in pursuit of a comprehensive response to the healthy campus idea, impelled by the awareness that for our principal demographic, African Americans, health disparities are a matter of public and continuous record. Non-Hispanic Black

adults have the highest prevalence of hypertension, and are at least 50 percent more likely to die of heart disease or stroke prematurely than their non-Hispanic White counterparts. Diabetes and obesity are more prevalent among non-Hispanic Blacks than among other populations.

At least one more compelling health datum is worth acknowledging: a great part of OU's student population has permanent residence in states in which the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have identified health disparities such as those just mentioned. As educational leaders we owe it to all, but particularly to our students, to teach and implement all that we can in favor of good health.

HC2020 is OU's focused plan to study, track, and enrich the health status of the Oakwood student body, the neighborhood, and the nation. A 35-member task force worked for months to design, then win approval for the HC2020 proposal. Its implementation began in August 2015 under the guidance of eight principles that students named STANDOUT² and elaborated in a book, *Eight Secrets to Unlocking Your Potential*.³ Multiple steps have since been taken to enhance the school's building and atmospheric environments in the direction of ever greater health and wellness. They include a 3.2-mile walking/running route marked with STANDOUT messaging, activities that encourage well-being, thrice-per-day media-guided exercises, health education classes, free health transcripts, "point of sale" nutritional information, healthy



vending options, a LifeCycle bicycle rental program, an annual health fair for students, and many other activities led by trained student health ambassadors.

SHINING OUT

OU's health and wellness program has garnered local and national media coverage. CBS-affiliate WHNT provided local coverage of the inaugural student health fair during new student orientation.⁴ In November 2016 David Williams' eye-opening TED Talk cited OU's HC2020 as an example of programs across the U.S. dedicated to dismantling discrimination with its deleterious effects on the well-being of African Americans.⁵ In 2019 WHNT interviewed university administrators on the program.⁶ In April 2019 the state of Alabama awarded a grant to fund an HC2020 student health ambassadors mobile pantry to distribute fresh fruits and vegetables from Oakwood Farms to six low-income food deserts in Huntsville, Alabama.⁷ Health education will accompany the fruits and vegetables, thanks to the generous support of the Magic Johnson Foundation.

Outward-looking initiatives such as the mobile pantry occupy HC2020, Phase II, in which students teach what they have learned—thus reinforcing learning—and take health beyond the campus to the community. Through this signature service-learning project, students will continue to advance OU's mission of transformational education and also the university's age-old motto, "Enter to Learn, Depart to Serve."

Friends and community partners have joined forces with the university to take the comprehensive message of health into communities near and far. OU recently signed an agreement with the American Heart Association to partner for improved heart health. The American Cancer Society has invited OU to join its advisory to develop comprehensive campus wellness models. The American College Health Association invited HC2020 to tell the story of campus wellness design, implementation, and outcomes during a panel presentation on May 31, 2019.

HC2020 is anchored on the belief that the health message is the right arm of the gospel, and that because the work of education and redemption are one, Christian schools and universities should be at the forefront of the health and wellness movement.

This commitment to campus, church, and community well-being inspired the vision for a Community Health Action Clinic and Center that is now attracting financial support from university friends and alumni. The 4,000-square-foot clinic and center will be constructed on the northeast corner of the campus. From this facility the concept of health-as-service will be launched when it opens in 2020.

SUMMING UP

HC2020's student-designed acronym, STAND-OUT, is intended to foster a wholistic approach to health. OU has already been significantly affirmed in its commitment to idealistic campus health goals—to be both a healthier campus and the healthiest campus in America. Certification by the Partnership for a Healthier America was a significant statement of achievement.

OU is the first Seventh-day Adventist university to be recognized as a healthy campus, and university leaders are committed to sharing their plan and programs with other universities. Most recently outcomes from HC2020 were shared at the seventh annual Adventist Human Subjects Research Association conference that was convened at OU. The goal of HC2020 is for all students to experience optimal health, without the limitations and burden of debilitating diseases. By incorporating health initiatives and education into the campus curriculum and culture, students better understand how they are designed in the image of God; and how to make choices to care for mind, body, and being that honor the stewardship of the self. ▀

¹ Oakwood's Healthy Campus 2020 was designed from 2013 to 2015. The university was certified as a healthier campus by the Partnership for a Healthier America in 2018, and the 23 sustainable initiatives remain embedded in the culture and curriculum. Phase II was launched with the Mobile Farmers' Market and design and construction of the Community Health Action Clinic and Center. For information visit: www.oakwood.edu/giving.

² Sunlight, temperance, adequate rest, nutrition, drink water, be outdoors, use physical activity, trust in God.

³ Prudence Pollard, ed., *Eight Secrets to Unlocking Your Potential* (Huntsville, Ala: Oaktree Press, 2015).

⁴ WHNT.com, "Healthy Campus 2020 Adds Wellness to Oakwood University," Aug. 13, 2015.

⁵ David Williams, "How Racism Makes Us Sick," TED Talks, November 2016.

⁶ Prudence Pollard, program creator and supervisor, and Lisa Dalrymple, program director.

⁷ WHNT.com, "State to Fund University's Mobile Farmer's Market for Underserved Communities," Apr. 30, 2019.

Prudence LaBeach Pollard, vice president for research and faculty development at Oakwood University, is the creator of HC2020 at OU.

The Adventist Religion and Health Study, a substudy of Adventist Health Study-2, is following 11,000 Adventist adults in North America to determine how spiritual practices influence health outcomes.*

THE ADVENTIST

Compiled by Adventist Health Ministries at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Sabbath observation was associated with better mental and physical health.

Adventist participants reported better physical and mental quality of life than the U.S. norm.

Participants who do not attend church had worse health outcomes than those who attend church. Not attending church lowered health outcomes more than eating meat.

Overall, those who reported a strong sense of personal spirituality had lower rates of high blood pressure, even after accounting for other variables.

Seventh-day Adventists in the United States live an average of 7 years longer (for men) and 4.5 years longer (for women) than the general U.S. population.

Rates of cancer are 25 to 30 percent lower in Adventists than among those in the general population.



ADVANTAGE



High blood pressure and diabetes are only half as prevalent in **vegetarian Adventists** as in **nonvegetarian Adventists**.

Adventists who eat nuts at least five times each week are half as likely to have a heart attack as those who eat no nuts.



*Adventist Health Study-2 (Loma Linda University) tracked the health habits and outcomes of 96,000 Seventh-day Adventists in North America. These people were enrolled from 2002 to 2007 and have been followed ever since. The data overwhelmingly reveals that the lifestyle principles God has given can help us live both longer and stronger.

CALLED TO MOVE MOUNTAINS





Special needs ministries sees the possibilities.

LARRY R. EVANS

She is blind, but she is teaching me to see. It was my first long walk with a blind person. Her name is Cecilia. I was amazed by what she could “see.” She asked me what color the sky was, and I laughed. “How would you know what color it is?” Then she told me to describe the sky in terms of sound. Bright colors would be high-pitched sounds; dark colors were more bass-like.

She described the world around us as we walked. Sounds, smells, and things we touched developed new meaning for me that day. I was learning to see in ways I never had before. She was my teacher and I her student.

As we came to the end of our walk, Cecilia asked me a question I had not anticipated: “How can I become involved in some kind of ministry? What can I do?”

Often those with various physical limitations are treated with sympathy, and at times their rights have been defended. This, however, is not what Cecilia was asking.

Since becoming involved with special needs ministries,¹ I have been more frequently asked “What can I do?” rather than “What can be done for me?” Inherently placed within the heart of each converted person is a desire to help others and to share the love of God with them in some meaningful way. Cecilia is among that group. She is from Romania, but speaks both Romanian and English. I asked if she would be willing to translate a book into her mother tongue. The book was written about ministry for those who are Deaf. She became excited and readily agreed.

That day I was reminded of a crucial truth: *All* are called to have a part in ministry, but too often

Among the 1.1 billion people labeled as being disabled, there are possibilities that have never been discovered.

they have been denied such opportunities when others fail to see or ignore the abilities the “disabled” have.

When Isaiah wrote that mountains would be leveled and valleys raised (see Isa. 40:3-5), he left no one out. If there are mountains of obstacles that prevent others from sharing, they need to be moved. John the Baptist took Isaiah’s prophecy to heart (see Luke 3:4-6). It wasn’t without resistance, but he responded to his calling by inviting others to remove “mountains” of obstacles that stood in the way of mission—God’s mission. He worked to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah by calling others to repent of perceptions, attitudes, and actions that were hindering the kingdom of God. What we often see as limitations, God views very differently. In fact, He often turns what we “see” as huge impossibilities into highways of possibilities.

THINK POSSIBILITIES

For decades those who have not been able to see, hear, walk, or communicate in the same way as others have often been referred to as “the disabled.” While it is important to recognize one’s limitations, identifying someone as “disabled” emphasizes what that person *cannot* do rather than what *can* be done. Because of this, the General Conference special needs ministries is often referred to as “possibility ministries.” Limitations

are not ignored, but neither are the possibilities.

According to the World Health Organization, approximately 15 percent, or 1.1 billion, of the world’s population live with some form of disability.² What kind of army would ever recruit from a population like that? God’s army!

When I was a young boy and the captain of a softball team, it seemed as if I sometimes got the “leftovers.” You know, the kind of players no one else wanted. These players, however, didn’t know they couldn’t play well—so why would we tell them that! What was important was that they were willing to learn. I worked with them, and they with me. We spoke words of encouragement to each other. We began to believe in possibilities, and in the end we became a winning team. Why? Because we believed in each other and played as a team.

Among the 1.1 billion people labeled as being disabled, there are possibilities that have never been discovered. No one is a “leftover.” God may send the very help the church needs, but it may come packaged in ways that are not expected.

Perhaps this is what Ellen White was referring to when she wrote, “All, whether entrusted with few or with many talents, are to blend together in unity. . . . We should have a word of encouragement to speak to all, remembering that there are a diversity of gifts.”³

SIGNS OF HOPE

A movement that combines compassion and possibility thinking is taking place. Has the “people-possibility movement” touched your home, your church, your office? Think *possibility*, not *disability*. Look for hidden talent and give it an opportunity to flourish. We are a “body,” and every part, every person, is needed (1 Cor. 12).

What “mountains” do you see that need to be moved? Let’s work together to move them! 🍌

¹ Special needs ministries, also called possibility ministries, with its seven categories is described more fully at www.specialneeds.adventist.org.

² World Health Organization, “Disability and Health,” www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health, accessed January 16, 2018

³ Ellen G. White, *The Paulson Collection of Ellen G. White Letters* (Payson, AZ: 1985), p. 12.

Larry R. Evans, D.Min., is assistant to the president for special needs ministries, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland.

A PARENT'S LOVE

A young woman, Michelle Carter, was sentenced to jail after being convicted of the involuntary manslaughter of her boyfriend, Conrad Roy. Michelle had sent Conrad a series of text messages urging him to take his own life.

Initially Michelle had encouraged Conrad to get help for his personal problems. But over time Michelle began to get frustrated and impatient with him. It's been speculated that she wanted to win the sympathy and attention that comes with being a grieving girlfriend.

Without dwelling further on this tragedy, here are two questions:

First, how would you feel about Michelle Carter if you were Conrad Roy's parents? You raise your son. Like many kids, he hits some rough spots in high school. He withdraws socially. You can't begin to imagine when he's upstairs texting in his room that his girlfriend is encouraging your son to take his own life. How would you feel about Michelle Carter if you were Conrad Roy's parents?

Now a second question: How would you feel about Michelle Carter if you were Michelle Carter's parents? You are, of course, beyond horrified to learn that your daughter encouraged another family's son to commit suicide. You can't even bear the thought of facing his family.

But what are your feelings toward your own daughter, Michelle, a 17-year-old you've raised from diapers to onesies to pajamas to prom dresses? Do you still love her with all your heart? Would you do absolutely anything to make all this pain go away?

We don't know exactly what it means that we were made in God's image. But it

must at least mean this: We cannot stop loving our children; we are incapable of it. God also cannot stop loving His children. He also is incapable of it.

After the first humans defected, they experienced for the first time what God Himself experienced: parenthood. For the next 900 years our first parents must have watched in horror as their children and grandchildren fell deeper and deeper into sin. Yet through it all they felt the same thing God did: unshakable love for their children.

When Cain began thinking about killing his own brother, Abel, God spoke these words to Cain: "If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin [or a sin offering] is crouching at your door" (Gen. 4:7).

Some scholars believe that God is warning Cain that sin is crouching at his door, like a ferocious animal. Other scholars, however, suggest a different animal lying at his door: a sacrificial lamb. Indeed, the Hebrew word *chatta't* can mean "sin offering" (see Lev. 4:25), referring to an atoning sacrifice. And the Hebrew word *robo'ts*, translated "crouches" or "lies," can be associated with pasturing a herd or flock (see Gen. 29:2).

God might actually have been telling Cain: "Do what is right, Cain. But if you don't do what is right, it's not over for you. A sin offering is lying at your door. Let yourself be covered by the blood of the Lamb." Was this God's message of grace from the very beginning . . . , from a heavenly Father unable to stop loving His children? Just like His Son.

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THE LIFE
OF FAITH
ANDY
NASH



AFTER THE FIRST
HUMANS DEFECTED
THEY EXPERIENCED
FOR THE FIRST TIME
WHAT GOD HIMSELF
EXPERIENCED:
PARENTHOOD.





GETTING ADEQUATE SLEEP

It's more important than you might think.

DANIEL GIANG

Unlike other healthy choices, sleep can seem sinful. Society honors emergency workers who sometimes work long hours. Consultants ask leaders, “What keeps you up at night?” as if we expect good leaders to lose sleep worrying about complex problems.

Adventist Christians add to this societal disregard for sleep by associating insomnia with being industrious (see Prov. 24:33, 34) or working for Christ’s return (see Matt. 24:42). The writings of Ellen White, sermons, and even the hymns we sing use sleep as a metaphor for spiritual indifference. We are urged to “Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying!”¹ All of this could suggest that Christians should make do with as little sleep as possible.

Human beings, however, require restorative sleep to be truly alert and fully awake. Our psychological and physical health rely on regular, natural sleep. Those leaders wrestling with problems all night would arrive at wiser, less-impulsive decisions by sleeping on them!

WHY DO WE NEED SLEEP?

Most parents of toddlers know the effects of acute sleep deprivation. A sleepy 3-year-old tends to become unhappy, demanding, impulsive, and rude. If the parent suggests, “Honey, you need a nap,” the child is likely to retort, “I am not sleepy!”

Sleep-deprived adults become depressed, inat-

tentive, impulsive, and impatient as well. Adults also underestimate how sleepy they are. You and I make imprudent decisions when sleepy. We also wound those around us by impudent comments.

In addition to these changes in our behavior that occur immediately, science is starting to understand that brain cells need sleep to discharge waste products. During sleep brain cells shrink slightly, allowing waste products to flow out between them. One of these waste products that gets cleared during sleep is a protein called beta amyloid, which accumulates in the brains of patients with Alzheimer’s disease. Hence, good sleep may eventually prove important to our long-term health as well.

NATURAL SLEEP CYCLES

Just being unconscious does not mean our brains are benefitting from restorative sleep. When we sleep naturally, our brains run through a series of stages from light sleep to deep sleep, back to light sleep, and then, briefly, dream sleep (rapid eye movement, or REM, sleep). Each of these cycles is completed in 90 minutes. Unless our brains cycle through these stages, we will not feel rested when we awaken.

We naturally sleep in these 90-minute cycles. Most adults need five or six of these sleep cycles to feel well rested. Most adults get their best-quality sleep earlier at night—before midnight. Those

in their late teen years and young adults, however, often naturally tend to do best by going to sleep and awakening later.

DISEASES AND SLEEP

Certain conditions interfere with natural sleep. Loud snoring is not a joking matter. It can suggest obstructive sleep apnea, a condition in which the snorer stops breathing and briefly awakens many times each night. Those who suffer from this condition will not recall awakening, but will seem sleepy during the day. Obstructive sleep apnea not only disturbs the sleep of others, but it can shorten the life of the sufferer.

“I have never heard of anyone dying of snoring,” some might object. Two prominent people whose deaths have been associated with sleep apnea were U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia and movie actress Carrie Fisher. If someone you know has loud snoring and brief stoppages of breathing, please encourage that person to see a physician who understands sleep disorders and their treatment.

Depression and anxiety disrupt sleep. Poor sleep worsens depression and anxiety. This cycle can feed on itself. While simple measures such as exercise and getting restorative sleep help reduce depression and anxiety, seeking counseling or using antidepressant medications or both help restore natural sleep.

SLEEP HYGIENE

If you usually awaken feeling well rested and ready to start your day, you are likely getting restorative sleep. Keep doing what works for you!

If you feel groggy or need to be forced to awaken, you should consider following a few simple, natural rules to improve your sleep. You can find many of these suggestions online from your friends at the Adventist Health Ministries Department of the General Conference:²

- Keep to a regular schedule of bedtime and awakening.
- Get regular exercise. Even as little as 10 minutes of exercise each day can improve sleep.
- As far as possible, sleep in comfortable, quiet, and dark surroundings.
- Do not use your bed as an office or entertainment center. Reserve beds for sleeping and sexual intimacy. This helps our brains associate the bed with a place to sleep.

- Avoid heavy eating or strenuous exercise just before sleep.
- Plan for sleep not in terms of hours, but rather in 90-minute cycles. For example, if you want to awaken at 7:00 a.m., go to sleep at 10:00 p.m. (for 9 hours, or 6 cycles, of sleep), or 11:30 p.m. (for 7.5 hours, or 5 cycles, of sleep).
- Avoid medicines that disrupt natural sleep cycles. Many such medications, including opiates, benzodiazepines, antihistamines, and barbiturates are often marketed as sleep aids. These drugs make people unconscious but interfere with the natural sleep cycles.
- Do not toss and turn in bed. If you have not fallen asleep after about 20 minutes, get out of bed, go to another room, and do a calm activity such as reading until you feel sleepy. Then return to bed.
- Practice habits that allow your mind to relax.

TURNING YOUR MIND OVER

A search of the Internet will provide many lists of suggestions on sleep hygiene similar to those listed here. But when they come to ways to “turn your mind off” to prevent fretting over worries, these lists offer elaborate suggestions.

Those reading this article, however, likely believe in a God who cares for us. Here are three simple steps to developing a relaxing routine to prepare the mind for sleep.

1. Think of three things that happened that day for which you are thankful. Then thank God for those things.
2. Ask God for help. Worries about situations we cannot control often keep us awake. God cares for His church better than we do; He loves our children more than we do.
3. Finally, contemplate God’s wonders: His creation, His life and death, and His new earth.

If those last three suggestions sound familiar, perhaps your parents or a spiritual mentor taught you to pray at bedtime. It turns out that a bedtime prayer not only helps our relationship with our Father in heaven, but it may also help us to get the restorative sleep we need each night. 🍀

¹ *The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1985), no. 210.

² healthministries.com/sites/healthministries.com/files/resources/Chapter%2006-Rest.pdf

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CHRIST'S HEALING MINISTRY

He combined natural and spiritual remedies.

ELLEN G. WHITE

Christ feels the woes of every sufferer. When evil spirits rend a human frame, Christ feels the curse. When fever is burning up the life current, He feels the agony. And He is just as willing to heal the sick now as when He was personally on earth. Christ's servants are His representatives, the channels for His working. He desires through them to exercise His healing power.

In the Saviour's manner of healing there were lessons for His disciples. On one occasion He anointed the eyes of a blind man with clay, and bade him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam. . . . He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing." John 9:7. The cure could be wrought only by the power of the Great Healer, yet Christ made use of the simple agencies of nature. While He did not give countenance to drug medication, He sanctioned the use of simple and natural remedies.

To many of the afflicted ones who received healing, Christ said, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." John 5:14. Thus He taught that disease is the result of violating God's laws, both natural and spiritual. The great misery in the world would not exist did men but live in harmony with the Creator's plan.

CHRIST THE ULTIMATE HEALER

Christ had been the guide and teacher of ancient Israel, and He taught them that health is the reward of obedience to the laws of God. The Great Physician who healed the sick in Palestine had spoken to His people from the pillar of cloud, telling them what they must do, and what God would do for them. . . .

He said, . . . "I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee." Ex. 15:26.

Christ gave to Israel definite instruction in regard to their habits of life, and He assured them, "The Lord will take away from thee all sickness." Deut. 7:15. When they fulfilled the conditions, the promise was verified to them. "There was not one feeble person among their tribes." Ps. 105:37.

These lessons are for us. There are conditions to be observed by all who would preserve health. All should learn what these conditions are. The Lord is not pleased with ignorance in regard to His laws, either natural or spiritual. We are to be workers together with God for the restoration of health to the body as well as to the soul.

And we should teach others how to preserve and to recover health. For the sick we should use the remedies which God has provided in nature, and we should point them to Him who alone can restore. It is our work to present the sick and suffering to Christ in the arms of our faith. We should teach them to believe in the Great Healer. We should lay hold on His promise, and pray for the manifestation of His power.

The very essence of the gospel is restoration, and the Saviour would have us bid the sick, the hopeless, and the afflicted take hold upon His strength. ▀

This excerpt was taken from *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940), pp. 823-825. Seventh-day Adventists believe that **Ellen G. White** (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.

MENTAL HEALTH AND LIFESTYLE

*Is there a
connection?*

TORBEN BERGLAND

Our lifestyle impacts not only how long we live but also how well we live. Lifestyle is not only about adding years to life but also about adding life to the years. Though we want to live long, it's equally important that we live well, have the best possible quality of life, and be able to do and achieve what we want in life.

A healthful, balanced lifestyle is not a guarantee against physical or mental illness, but it increases our chances of enjoying more years of health and happiness. And although it might be somewhat overlooked, lifestyle is as important to the mind as it is to the body. If we want our mind to be well, healthy, and happy—which in turn helps our bodies to be healthy—I recommend some key lifestyle principles to implement and practice.



SLEEP

Getting adequate amounts of sleep is one of the best things we can do for our minds and bodies. We feel better after a good night's sleep because our brains and our bodies are doing better. Sleep is restorative and rejuvenating. Although we're not fully conscious, a lot of positive and absolutely necessary things are going on while we sleep.

On the opposite side, we feel sluggish after one or more nights of insufficient quantity or quality of sleep because our brains and bodies are suffering. Sleep deprivation destabilizes the brain, impairs memory function, and makes us more likely to swing between extremes of emotions. When the brain is underslept, the frontal lobe's ability to control the centers of the brain that drive emotion, impulsivity, and reward seeking is significantly impaired. Thus, the risk of negative mood, irrational actions and decisions, aggression, behavioral problems, and addictions is significantly increased. Sleep disruption is a symptom of most mental illnesses; but beyond being a symptom, insufficient sleep in itself may lead to mental illness. A lifetime of insufficient sleep may also increase the risk of Alzheimer's disease.¹

Almost all adults need somewhere between seven to nine hours of quality sleep every night. That means seven to nine hours of actual sleep time, not simply that many hours in bed. Kids and teenagers need more. Unfortunately, many fail to get adequate amounts of sleep. When kids and teenagers don't get enough sleep, the effects on mood and behavior are usually quite evident. Sleep deprivation also has the same effects on adults. The price to pay is immediate in the form of tiredness, fatigue, irritability, forgetfulness, irrationality, decreased productivity

and creativeness, and so on.

Sleep is not a waste of time. It is one of the best investments we can make in our health and well-being. Being well rested is a prerequisite for functioning well. From the beginning, as we read in the book of Genesis, the day starts at sunset. Also, the first whole day for humankind was the Sabbath. This may be a reminder that in God's creation, rest precedes activity. Rest and sleep are not what we do when all is done and there's nothing left to do. Rather, let them precede everything we do, that we may do what we do well and enjoy life.



EXERCISE

Physical activity is one of the quickest ways to boost our moods. Within a few minutes of just about any activity we will be reaping benefits. Many of those who exercise regularly say that the positive effects it has on the mind are as important to them as the beneficial physical effects.

But there's more to exercise than instant, desirable, short-term effects. The long-term benefits of exercise are well proven. People who exercise report significantly fewer days of poor mental health than people who don't exercise.² Exercise may have preventative as well as therapeutic benefits on various mental disorders, such as depression, anxiety, and others, as well as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases.³

Our bodies were created to move and be physically active. But all around the world many live very sedentary lives with little if any demands for physical exertion. Physical activity has become optional, no longer a prerequisite for daily survival. But for well-being and long-term survival,

physical activity is not optional. We need the activity our bodies were created for. If we don't get it through our regular daily activities, we need to add exercise to our routines.

Have you ever watched how excited a dog becomes when it's taken out for a walk? Our bodies are truly as happy for exercise as the dog anticipating the walk. It's just that our minds don't always get it. When we are tired or somewhat depressed and feel least like exercising, that may be when we need it most. Unfortunately, when we need it most, that's when we are most likely to skip it. The good news is that anything is better than nothing. Whatever you decide to do, gradually increase from where you are until you get to where you want to be.



NUTRITION

The foods we eat and the fluids we drink become the bodies we are. If we want to build a good body, we have to make sure to use good raw materials. Likewise, if we want to build a well-functioning brain and healthy nervous system, we do well in being mindful of what we eat and drink. What we eat and drink affects not only our general well-being but also our vulnerability for mental illness.

"Diets higher in whole foods, such as vegetables, fruits, whole-grain cereals, beans and legumes, nuts and seeds, fish and olive oil, are consistently associated with a reduced risk of depression."⁴ On the other side, "diets higher in 'junk' foods, such as sugar-sweetened drinks, fried foods, pastries, doughnuts, packaged snacks, and processed and refined breads and cereals are consistently linked to a higher risk of depression."⁵ Similar results for anxiety and other mental disorders have been found. The good news is that a diet that is good for the mind is also good for the body.



RELATIONSHIPS

Beyond what happens inside our bodies, what happens between us, others, and God is of utmost importance for our mental well-being. We need to be connected to other people and to God. We were created as social beings, created for fellowship with God and with one another.

Even before sin entered this world, God declared that there was something that was not good, namely: "It is not good for the man to be alone" (Gen. 2:18). This is a fundamental truth of the nature of humans. We need to be connected. We need intimate emotional bonds in nurturing relationships. In this world, in which we all experience hardships, we need the support and comfort of someone who is with us: the Lord above us and fellow men and women beside us.

Thus, Jesus' command to love God and one another is also most excellent advice for sustaining good mental health. Remember His two commandments: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:30, 31).¹

¹ M. Walker, *Why We Sleep: Unlocking the Power of Sleep and Dreams* (New York: Scribner, 2017).

² S. R. Chekroud et al., "Association Between Physical Exercise and Mental Health in 1.2 Million Individuals in the U.S.A. Between 2011 and 2015: a Cross-sectional Study," *The Lancet Psychiatry* 5, no. 9 (2018): 739–746.

³ R. Walsh, "Lifestyle and Mental Health," *American Psychologist* 66, no. 7 (2011): 579–592.

⁴ F. Jacka, *Brain Changer: The Good Mental Health Diet* (Sydney, Australia: Macmillan Australia, 2019).

⁵ *Ibid.*

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FINDING GOD IN THE JOURNEY TO RECOVERY

A discussion of addiction

KATIA REINERT

Addiction is commonly viewed as the compulsive use of some harmful substance such as alcohol, drugs, tobacco, opioids, marijuana, caffeine, or other. Seventh-day Adventists often think of themselves as being free from addictions, since upon baptism or profession of faith church members vow to abstain from using harmful substances. Many forget, however, that substances are only part of the story of addictions. The rest of the story encompasses behavioral addictions.

Many in churches and communities are engaged in compulsive behaviors that are hurting them and their loved ones, crippling their faith. They may not even realize that they're addicted.


RECOGNIZING AN ADDICTION

Pastor John has a beautiful family and ministry, and is highly respected by his colleagues. His wife and two teenage children have been supportive and proud of him. Lately, however, his wife has noticed a change in his behavior. He seems more distant, preoccupied with other things, and having no time for nurturing their intimacy. He has developed a routine of staying up late working on his computer.

One night his wife found him using pornography. This shocked her, and she wondered why he would do this. Their marriage was now in crisis. John felt ashamed, but denied he was addicted. He prayed and asked God to help, but the drive to use pornography did not go away. Whom could he talk to about this? Where could he find help for this compulsive behavioral addiction?

John is not alone. The struggle with compulsive behaviors is common, but often people do not call it an addiction. Many



A person is seen from behind, running on a dirt path that winds through a misty, mountainous landscape. The person is wearing a dark tank top and shorts. The path is light-colored and appears to be made of gravel or dirt. The background is a soft, hazy view of mountains and trees, creating a sense of solitude and movement.

Christ's forgiveness can bring release from worry, guilt, and regret about the past and present.

continuously overwork while they spend little time with family or friends. Some hide food and binge-eat, making food the center of their life. Others spend several hours a day on the Internet with social media or in gaming. The list of behavioral addictions can include pornography/sex, video gaming, gambling, shopping, food addictions, Internet, plastic surgery, risky thrill-seeking behavior (e.g., skydiving), workaholism, exercise, and so on. Engaging in these behaviors a few times does not necessarily mean you are addicted. But could you recognize it if any of these turned into an addiction?

STAGES OF ADDICTION

Addictions used to be seen as a moral failing or a character flaw. As researchers studied the impact and role of the brain in the addictive process, however, they concluded that addictions are like a chronic illness characterized by impairments in health, social function, and voluntary control over the use of a substance or behavior.¹ Specific regions in the brain are impacted by an addiction disorder, and those who suffer from this condition need to seriously consider treatment as they would consider treatment for diabetes or hypertension.

Researchers have also concluded that as in the case of substance use, several behaviors lead to a short-term reward that can produce an urge to persist in the behavior with diminished control over that behavior, despite negative consequences, following the same route as with substance abuse.² The U.S. Surgeon General's report has identified three stages they follow: binge/intoxication, withdrawal, and preoccupation/anticipation.³

Binge/intoxication is individuals consuming an intoxicating substance or engaging in a behavior, and experiencing the rewarding, pleasurable effects. In this stage, tolerance is built. Tolerance is the need to continuously increase the use of or additional time spent performing the behavior in order to obtain comparable pleasurable effects.

Withdrawal/negative effect follows. In this stage individuals experience highly uncomfortable feelings and enter into a negative emotional state in the absence of the substance or the behavior.

Preoccupation/anticipation is the stage in which one seeks the substance or behavior again after a period of abstinence. The person obsessively focuses on the behavior and is preoccupied with planning how to engage in it. This takes much time

and attention from other important things in life.

These stages become a cycle, and people cannot seem to stop despite adverse consequences. No one should ignore this red flag. Are there any behaviors in your life that follow this pattern? If so, keep reading.

THERE IS HOPE FOR RECOVERY

The struggle against any addiction is real—but there is hope! Many people find lasting recovery if they do the work of recovery and follow the steps for treatment. In the case of behavioral addictions, the first step is to talk to a health provider. The treatment may involve therapy and a recovery program to deal with the root causes of the addiction. Spiritual counseling can also be helpful. In recovery we must remember that an addiction is the unconscious, compulsive use of any psychoactive material in response to the stress of life experiences, typically dating back to childhood. These life experiences are likely to be lost in time, and protected by shame and secrecy. Since the addiction is the tip of the iceberg, and the problem is often the scars that people carry, finding healing for those scars is critical. These scars are often related to trauma or attachment disorder, and dealing with these deep emotional issues must be part of the treatment.

The assistance of a therapist may be needed to help identify the root causes and put people on the path to recovery. Ultimately, however, people can find true and lasting healing in Christ alone. Christ is our Creator and can heal anyone bound by addictive behaviors. He was sent to “bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound” (Isa. 61:1, ESV).⁴ He experienced all forms of trauma, and understands our deepest pain. He can help us find true lasting recovery. How?

In the case of an attachment disorder that translates into a feeling of emptiness and loneliness, understanding and accepting God’s grace and unending love can help these feelings disappear.

Christ’s forgiveness can bring release from worry, guilt, and regret about the past and present.

Those who struggle with low self-worth can know a new love and acceptance of themselves and of others and feel genuinely lovable, loving, and loved. In Christ they have a new sense of belonging and connectedness.

The Adventist Church offers resources that can

help people struggling with any addictions to find recovery in Christ. Some hospitals provide inpatient addiction recovery programs. But churches also offer 12-step groups. Through Adventist Recovery Ministries Global⁵ people can participate in or facilitate a 12-step Christ-centered recovery group that can offer support on a weekly basis. Materials for both facilitators and participants are available, along with a special recovery edition of the book *Steps to Christ*.⁶

Gateway to Wholeness is an evidence-based program to help people struggling with pornography.⁷ This program is anonymous and available free online. It comes with a workbook and eight therapeutic video sessions.

Remember John? He used the Gateway program and found it to be extremely beneficial. He read the *Steps to Christ* recovery edition and fell in love with God all over again. He is experiencing a daily walk with God that he has never had before. He is attending a 12-step recovery group and is committed to helping others in their recovery. He is in individual and couples therapy and feels that his marriage is stronger. He wants to help his church be a center for recovery for others who struggle with brokenness in their lives.

The Bible reminds us, “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty [emancipation from bondage, true freedom]” (2 Cor. 3:17, Amplified).⁸ May we each seek healing for our brokenness in Him, and find freedom from the bondage of our compulsive behaviors so that we can better glorify God with our lives. 🍀

¹ American Psychiatric Association. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), 5th ed. (Arlington, Va.: American Psychiatric Publishing), 2013.

² Jon E. Grant et al., “Introduction to Behavioral Addictions,” *American Journal of Drug Abuse* 35, no. 5 (September 2010): 233-241, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3164585/.

³ *Facing Addiction in America: The Surgeon General’s Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health* [Internet] (Washington D.C.: November 2016), www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28252892.

⁴ Scripture quotations marked ESV are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

⁵ adventistrecoveryglobal.org/

⁶ www.adventistbookcenter.com/steps-to-christ-recovery-edition-english.html

⁷ gatewaytowholeness.com/

⁸ Scripture quotations credited to Amplified are taken from The Amplified Bible, copyright © 1954, 1958, 1962, 1964, 1965, 1987, 2015 by The Lockman Foundation. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

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DOES GOD CRY?

*Understanding
the implications
of Immanuel,
God with us*

MARIA LOMBART

It was one of those days when I had too much to do, and not enough time to do it.

I'd been running on empty for several days; no time to rejuvenate, no time to be still. I had a mountain of homework, a room that needed cleaning, a dusty house, and piles of ironing. Meanwhile, there were changes at work during the busiest time of the year, and I was rushing from task to task, not quite paddling hard enough to keep my head high enough to breathe.

I should have gone home an hour before, but I was stuck writing names on little glass tubes. I was hungry and tired. Another 10-hour day.

CAN'T STOP THE TEARS

I hated walking home in the dark. While I was fit enough to walk, to enjoy the health benefits (and extend the life of my car), I walked whenever I could. But when it came to walking in the dark by myself, I resolutely refused. I called my brother and asked him to drive my car down.

Minutes later he popped in to let me know my car was parked outside. I thanked him and promptly burst into tears.

As I blubbered through all the things that worried me, he gently wrapped an arm around me and let me sob. I'd done my best to hold it together all day, trying to bite my tongue when asked inane questions, or reply appropriately when asked to

take on yet another task that was put on my to-do list without my consent. I'd presented myself as a professional, and I was proud of myself for not being curt during a time of tremendous stress.

But I couldn't be strong any longer. I cried and cried.

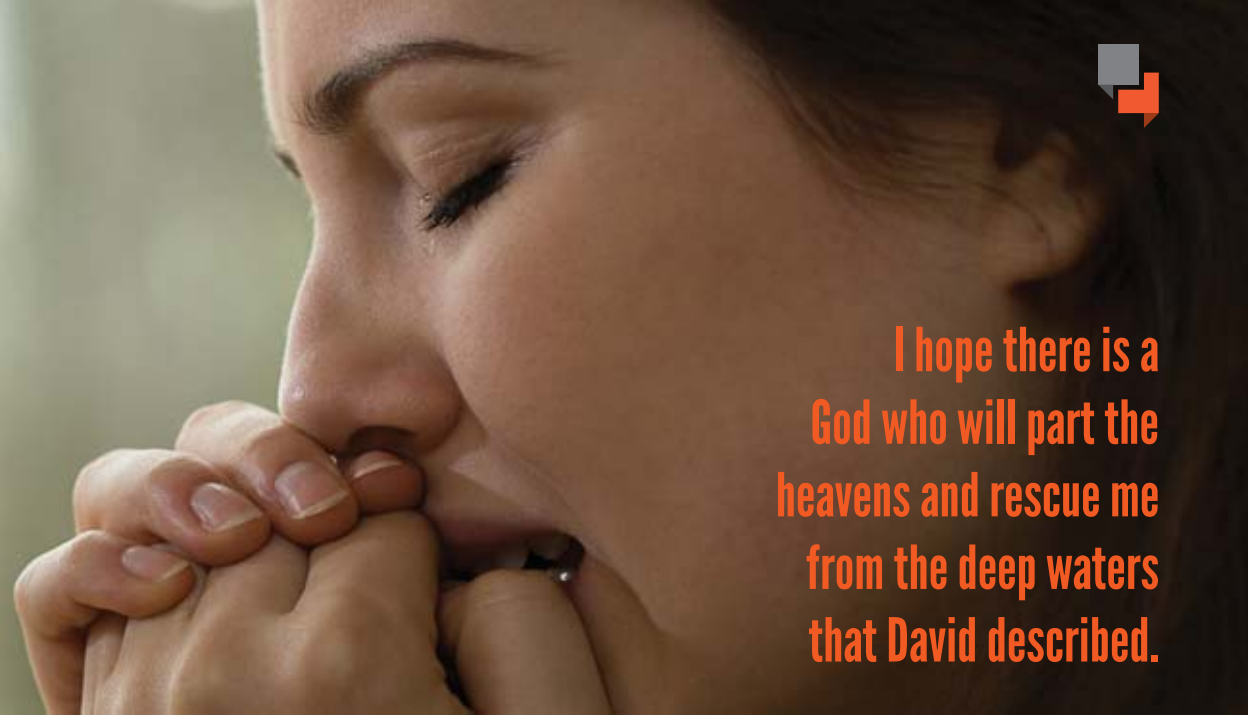
Finally I took a deep breath. Slowly peace returned to my heart and soul.

As my brother turned to leave, I noticed that his eyes were red too. At first I thought he had a cold, but he didn't. His heart felt my pain as he empathized with me. Then a thought came to mind: *What if God cries too?*

That evening, as I sat at the desk laboriously writing out each name in Sharpie on those glass tubes, tears returned briefly. This time, however, they were not tears of sadness or worry; instead, they were tears of contemplation.

KNOWING THE REAL GOD

My image of God is sadly distorted because of an abusive father and men in my life who have focused on themselves rather than on others. While I do my best to change the grooves that insist God is different from what I think He should be, when I'm honest with myself I know that I still have much erasing to do. I struggle trying to understand God as a God of love, compassion, and empathy. Somehow God isn't supposed to have feelings,



I hope there is a God who will part the heavens and rescue me from the deep waters that David described.

even though He created us with emotions, and we are made in His image.

I grew up in an ultraconservative context in which emotions were frowned upon unless they elicited born-again responses or those based on guilt or fear. I remember being surprised when I stumbled across Psalm 18 and read: “The earth trembled and quaked, and the foundations of the mountains shook; they trembled because he was angry” (verse 7). David cried out for help against his enemies, and when God heard David’s cries He was angry.

I imagined Him looking down and hurting along with me, feeling my worry that I wouldn’t get everything done in time, and empathizing deeply with my weary heart. I imagined Him feeling sad with me and for me as He longed to show me how He cared. I imagined God loving me as much as my brother did; then I cried some more. I wanted to know a God like that.

GOD OF MY EMOTIONS

I want to know a God who will rescue me from the deep waters that David described. In moments when I’ve run out of strength and fight, when the slightest hint of compassion threatens to send me into a torrent of tears, I ponder wistfully what it would be like to have a Father like that.

I need God to be more than a Redeemer; I need

Him to protect, to comfort, to understand, to defend. For what good is a Savior if He has not encountered our fears? How can we call Him Immanuel, God with us, unless we have felt His gentle touch?

I felt that touch once. I was lying on a bed in my aunt’s house, fearful and worried about the future. We were waiting for a single sheet of paper that would determine whether we could return to the home we’d known for the past six years.

As I begged God to hear and answer our prayers for a green card, I wondered if He even cared. Then I felt it. It was as if He reached down, and through His touch calmed my soul. I knew His touch, even though I’d never felt it before. Just as sheep recognize the shepherd’s voice, just as children were drawn to Jesus, just as the poorest of society knew that He brought hope, I, too, recognized Him.

This is what I hold onto in dark times: a God who sees my fear; who weeps when I am in pain; who bends down with unreserved kindness to gently reassure me. “The Lord is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate” (Ps. 103:13).*

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Maria Lombart writes from Middle East University. Her passion is living as an authentic Christian.

**MAYBE
YOUR
NAME IS
MOSES**



Mr. Amram's son is an Egyptian prince who has a call from Israel's God.

MOSES, SON OF AMRAM

He dresses Egyptian, sounds Egyptian, and acts Egyptian so much of the time that it's hard to believe there's anything Israelite about him. Besides, he has an Egyptian name.

Mr. Amram says his name isn't Moses; his line is that Moses has no choice, since that's the name they call him in the palace. But none of the family has ever told us—not Mr. Amram, not his wife, not the kids—what his real name is. They say they could get in trouble if they ever did. Everybody and nobody believes they will tell, because that would be awesome! And nothing more than a big joke—that one of the slaves has his own name for the next Egyptian pharaoh; or that some slave says, or two or three or four of them say, he actually belongs to their family.

Mr. Amram's wife, Jochebed, has a story about how their family member got to the palace; but they almost never talk about it. If you did hear it sometime, you would right away understand at least some of the reason nobody but everybody has ever heard anything about the story: it's a women thing—Mrs. Amram, her daughter, the Egyptian princess, some of her girlfriends and servants. . . . Not a single man in it, except Moses, who, of course, is not a man. He's a 3-month-old baby!

What is sure is that nobody could make up that story, so it must be true, true and fantastic—from a realm all its own. Everybody and hardly anybody believes it. Everybody and almost nobody talks about it.

MOSES ACTS UP

Sometimes the confidence of knowing exactly what God wants you to do makes you stagger with excitement—even when nobody understands. It drives you to dizzying deeds for God—nobody will understand anyway, except those crazy ancient Israelite sages who think of themselves as your fathers! So you strike a blow for your fathers and your brothers, sure that they will understand. You act up for them to see what you're up to: somebody is beating your brother one day; you show up; he sees you coming and takes it to the next level; he thinks you'll like him more for being mean to the Israelite. And there's no one

else around to report him for excessive cruelty.

The trouble for him is that he cannot see behind your eyes; he cannot see inside your head; he has no idea how differently you see the world. He's so open to you that he doesn't even get a chance to be surprised. Moreover, you are good at this. So good that the poor, unenlightened Egyptian's life is over before he can say "Hello!" Your Israelite brother streaks out of there as quickly as he can, leaving you to bury the body by yourself.

MOSES CHANGES HIS MIND

So now you get to find out how big a problem it can be to hear God's voice right in your ear: people, your own people, think you're a threat to their stability. Fleishpots and lashes sound much better to them than some fantastic "We Shall Overcome." They've been stuck here already for more than 300 years, and now you want to infiltrate their ranks and steal slave secrets by claiming that you're one of them and that you have a plan. Mr. Amram must be rounding up followers. . . .

Besides, where would this escape plan take them—to the wilderness? Who prefers the desert to life in the Nile delta? Some Israelites—besides Mr. Amram and Company—have their own names for you: what you call confidence they call conceit; when you say self-assurance they say arrogance; when you get all full of passion they say it's self-promotion, polishing your politics; but it's a weird kind, preparing for royal diplomacy perhaps, when you become king and have to deal with foreign nations. What's clear is that you're out of place and need to find your place.

You hear it in the way they look at you. And if you can't hear their eyes, they give you words too plain to be misread. Run for your life, great liberator! Run! The people you so care about don't care about you; they don't care about your liberating crusade on their behalf; they don't even understand that there is a war going on and that you're on their side. They don't need your liberation, Moses; they need to be left in peace and misery. But you need them. You need the words they're giving you: "Who made you a prince or a judge over us? Are you intending to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" (Ex. 2:14).¹

No, no, no! That must be the most stupid thing an Israelite can say right now: *Are you on some killing spree? Am I next?* You thought the answers would

The God of the wilderness made a new man out of Moses.

be on every doorpost by now. But they aren't printed anywhere; only in your head: *Yes, I'm on a killing spree. And: No, of course not! You and I are on the same side. I only look Egyptian.*

IS THAT YOU, MOSES?

Tell me, Christian, have you ever felt that you're the only sensible person around? Your church needs help that God has prepared you to give. But you're not an insider. You're a layperson. Their dedication to traditional ways of doing business makes you just a figurehead on the board they named you to. Maybe you're even tempted to take the Moses route—the one that leads to the wilderness—because you've come to see that your committee has no place for sensible people. You feel forced to choose: resign or live cynical.

But what makes you think your logic works? If Moses was the only sensible one around in his day, then he was the one who should have stayed at any cost. After all, he may have run because he didn't want to die (Ex. 2:14, 15); but he didn't run because he was scared of anybody. If he was so willing to die for his cause, he should have stuck around; he was needed.

You're needed; you've heard God say so; good people who talk with God tell you He's told them so. How is resigning the thing to do? How can leaving, quitting, or cynicism still be right? Does it matter how elegant or crude, accommodating or awkward, supportive or hostile, interesting or boring, fancy or ugly the circumstances are if God needs you? Does applause or criticism matter if you are where God's people need you to be? If God's work needs you, what other considerations need to be present for you to serve: kitchen appliances? massages and backrubs? emergency road service? more flattery?

Moses ran away from his call to Egypt and ran right into God. He lost his way, took the wilderness route, and found his forever God: "Shut in by the bulwarks of the mountains Moses was alone with God."² Now, God could teach him without all the weapons training he had acquired, the other military skills he had developed, the ambition he had harbored. And he spent so much time learning from God in the wilderness that by the time God was ready for him to go back, Moses was sure he wasn't the right person to go.

DON'T CHANGE YOUR MIND, MOSES

"The fact that a man feels his weakness is at least some evidence that he realizes the magnitude of the work appointed him."³ The God of the wilderness made a new man out of Moses. He learned the truth about the great controversy: it isn't how many congregations you raise up, church planter; how many members you baptize, evangelist; how many structures you lay down, builder; or articles and books you publish, writer; or how many grand conferences and major meetings you stage, great organizer. It's a spiritual war. And Moses found the key to victory.

You find it in God's summary that He gave through Zechariah 1,000 years later. It was part of a message to another of God's leaders formed in his own wilderness of national inferiority, recent exile, and sustained colonial status. The Lord's Word there instructs that true success comes "not by might nor by power, but by [His] Spirit" (Zech. 4:6).

So don't quit your job, Moses; just relegate your ingenious humanity to its right location in hierarchies of importance. As your God instructed through Isaiah centuries after you: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways" (Isa. 55:8). His ways are much higher (see verse 9). True success with God means doing God's things God's way.

No need to spurn your call, Moses, for "not more surely is the place prepared for us in the heavenly mansions than is the special place designated on earth where we are to work for God."⁴ And don't surrender your conviction, Moses, for the world needs people of conviction: "There is no limit to the usefulness of one who, by putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, and lives a life wholly consecrated to God."⁵

Don't diminish your passion, Moses—hold on to your first love (see Rev. 2:1-4). Don't change your mind, Moses—just respect God's own. 🗡️

¹ Scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard Bible*, copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

² Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1890, 1908), pp. 248-251.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 255.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1900, 1941), p. 327.

⁵ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940), pp. 250, 251.

Lael Caesar, associate editor at Adventist Review Ministries, has been a lifelong fan of the new Moses.

THE SPIRIT OF GRACE

It's funny how naive you can be at 20—all grown up, finishing school, ready to take on the world. When I married in my mid-20s, I somehow thought I knew how to communicate well. I could handle conflict; I would address any marital issue with ease; I would easily express how I felt. I quickly discovered, however, that I was wrong. Completely. On all accounts.

As our first year of marriage progressed, I found that I didn't even know what I felt inside, let alone how to express it. Greg patiently listened; he encouraged me to discover myself; he made it safe for me to open up and deal with any issue that arose. I learned that open discussion was healthy, that I could disagree and still be a Christian, and that the manner in which I expressed myself mattered most in any dialogue. People are always more important than discussions, and the spirit with which you engage others often determines the outcome.

Years later I discovered again how little I knew when I became a "boss." How do you encourage others to use their gifts while still holding them accountable? How do you foster a spirit of teamwork while recognizing people's individual skills? How do you inspire buy-in for the mission of the organization while allowing people room to follow their own dreams?

A situation recently arose between two coworkers. They were each gifted and creative in their own right, but both believed they were misunderstood, and consequently refused to work with the other. After hearing both sides individu-

ally, we met together in my office to find the best solution. *God, what am I doing here? You know I'm not equipped to deal with this.*

I was glad for the desk that hid my sweaty palms and the quiver in my legs. Forcing a smile, I began to ask questions. The men skirted the issue as they talked, tension hanging in the air. Then something switched in one of them, and the accusations began. I sat back and watched as the heat of anger rose in his neck and face. The man being accused was instantly defensive and angry. But then another interesting shift occurred. I watched as the anger drained from the second man, and when he spoke, his voice was quiet. "Let's separate our emotions right now and focus on the object out here. That's the issue."

The first man began to deflate. The accusations became less, and soon they disappeared altogether. I sat back, saying very little but watching the Spirit of God at work. Two hearts, angry and hurt, brought together by one man's humility. One man's willingness to set aside his anger, his defensiveness, his wounded pride, and react with kindness.

I learned about grace that day. I, who was supposed to be the boss, had been the student. Amazed to see the depth of grace. Astonished to discover its power. Unearned and undeserved, yet freely given. 🍀

Jill Morikone is vice president and chief operations officer for Three Angels Broadcasting Network (3ABN), a supporting Adventist television network. She and her husband, Greg, live in southern Illinois and enjoy ministering together for Jesus.

JOURNEYS
WITH JESUS
JILL
MORIKONE



PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS
MORE IMPORTANT
THAN DISCUSSIONS,
AND THE SPIRIT
WITH WHICH YOU
ENGAGE OTHERS
OFTEN DETERMINES
THE OUTCOME.

SUMMER



**AND ALL
GOD'S
CHILDREN!**

W. EUGENE BREWER

What's your favorite thing to do with a watermelon? Here are some ideas: watermelon popsicles, watermelon ice cubes, a watermelon salad boat—or even watermelon pizza. (Check it out!) Eating aside, you could make an art project out of the seeds or carve smiley faces into your slice. My neighbor never eats watermelon, but loves to grow them in his garden for everyone else.

VARIETIES OF FUN

What would be your favorite summer camp activities—or memories? Water skiing? Canoeing with friends? Crafts? Hiking? Telling stories around the campfire? I know a city kid who once signed up for advanced horseback riding just *because . . .* (it didn't turn out especially well).

Summer usually involves family vacations. Who in your family would enjoy a back road excursion? Jeeping in the mountains? Visiting historical sites? Meeting with friends? Lying around on the beach with a good book? White-water rafting? Summer's choices should be as diverse as the people who choose them. Research on learning styles (also called "cognitive" styles) indicates that families, schools, churches, communities—even summer camps!—should offer choices that reflect individual uniqueness.

Communication networks depend on it. So do lifestyle balance, mental and emotional health, and spiritual well-being. After all, diversity is God's formula for wholeness.

VARIETIES OF LEARNERS

"Learning style" describes an individual's consistent pattern of learning that indicates a unique

bent toward selecting, acquiring, and processing information. Whether eating watermelon, signing up for camp activities, or choosing vacation destinations, learning styles should figure into the many options.

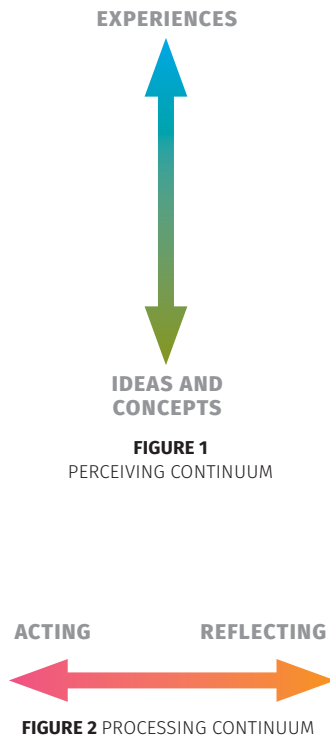
In recent decades educational research has taught us that learning can be explained in terms of the ways people perceive and process information. Perceiving, or taking in new information, occurs in a variety of ways that range between experience and conceptualization (see Figure 1). "Experience learning" is personal engagement through sensations, emotions, and physical memories directly involving the learner.

By contrast, "conceptualization learning" is abstract and detached: it translates experience into conceptual forms involving ideas, language, hierarchies, and naming systems. Some learners "hang around" longer in their experiences and delight in them. Others go more quickly into thinking about them, creating ideas about them. Both ways of perceiving are equally valuable; they are just different.

Processing (see Figure 2), what people do with new information, occurs in a variety of ways that range between reflection and action.

Reflection is transforming knowledge by structuring, ordering, intellectualizing. Some of us need to reflect longer than others. Others jump right in and try things, and it works for them because we process in the doing. *Action* is applying ideas to the external world: testing, doing, manipulating. Schools ask learners to move more and more to the watching end of this line as they leave primary grades, making it comfortable for learners who are willing to be watchers. But what about the doers?

Together, perceiving and processing describe



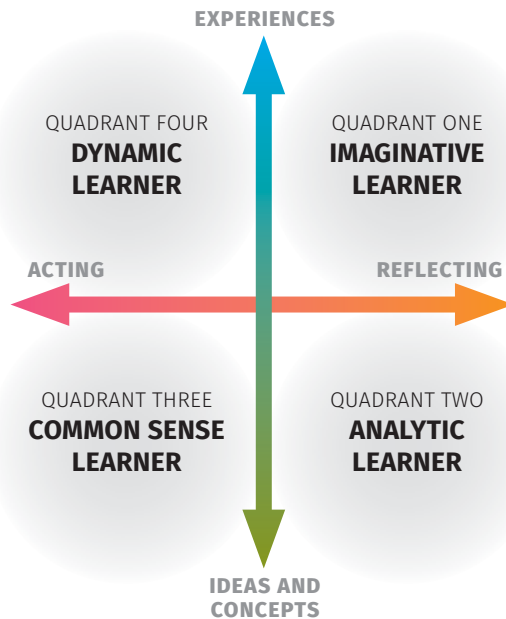


FIGURE 3 PERCEIVING AND PROCESSING

the whole range of the learning experience (see Figure 3). Those who *perceive* through experience and *process* reflectively are called “*imaginative learners*”: they seek personal meaning, and evaluate content in relation to values. For them, learning social interaction is important. Those who *perceive* through conceptualization and also *process* reflectively we call “type 2 learners.” These learners are *analytic*, seeking intellectual competence and evaluating things by factual verification. “Type 3 learners” *perceive* through conceptualization and *process* actively. They are the *commonsense* type, individuals who seek solutions to problems and evaluate content by its usefulness. “Type 4 learners” *perceive* through experience and also *process* actively. They are a more *dynamic* kind, individuals who seek hidden possibilities and evaluate things by gut reactions.

Research aside for a moment, let’s return to our reflections on summer.

BACK TO SUMMER FUN

Some learners are happiest when sharing experiences with others. These “imaginative” learners typically sign up for group activities at camp, invite friends along on a vacation, and take a lot of pictures for a summer scrapbook. Social interaction is important to them, which is why they’ll happily share their watermelon.

The learners called “analytic” thrive on research,

information, learning, and fact-finding. At camp they’ll gladly collect and label items found in the woods or by a lake. They usually enjoy asking questions to experts on wildlife and the environment. On a summer vacation they appreciate going to a museum, reading books about the travel sites, doing research at various locations, and possibly taking notes. Before a picnic, these folk might survey everyone about their favorite dessert. And after a watermelon feast, they could be found discussing the benefits and features of all kinds of melons.

While imaginative and analytic learners are typically watchers, “common-sense” learners are definitely doers. When it comes to sailing—or mountain climbing or putting up a tent or planning a menu for a large crowd—get out of the way and let them figure it out themselves. At camp they might blaze a new trail or build the bonfire. On a summer vacation these people will crave action—and won’t even mind doing it on their own. If you are forming a team to accomplish a task, this learner will gladly participate and make sure the job gets done. They also love to take chances and experiment. So if you see this learner hauling a huge watermelon up a flight of stairs to the roof . . . well, making a fruit salad probably isn’t the plan.

Our fourth type, the “dynamic” learner, is also a doer. On vacation, at church or school or home,

this person thrives on trying new things and seeking hidden “possibilities.” At camp they will make up new songs or create skits. On vacation they’ll want to try something they’ve never done: the term “bucket list” comes to mind. In school they’ll design posters, be on student council, or form new clubs. Church boards and school boards need dynamic learners for planning and vision. And, of course, this person might wonder how watermelon would taste in soup!

There is no right or wrong learning style. Each has strengths, and each has weaknesses. Each learning style is equally intelligent. There is no hierarchy. They are just different—and different is not bad. They approach experience and make judgments, and they reflect and act in different ways.

In summary, imaginative learners are cooperative, thoughtful, friendly, supportive, team-oriented, and responsive. Cooperative learning was a godsend for them. However, we do question their softhearted nature, slowness to act, dependence on details, and lack of initiative. They avoid conflict.

Our Creator God loves and expresses Himself in diversity.

Analytic learners are logical, accurate, dependable, and conservative in nature. But we question their lack of decisiveness, lack of risk-taking, dependence on facts and figures, and their impersonal nature or approach to things. They avoid involvement.

Commonsense learners are efficient, task-oriented, independent, and decisive. They accomplish a lot. You need a number 3 on your team to

get the job done! We do, however, question their hastiness, impatience, bossiness, bottom-line orientation, and critical nature. They avoid inaction.

Dynamic learners are energetic, have a thought-provoking nature, and are outgoing, enthusiastic, and personable. We could question their lack of follow-through, impulsiveness, “rah-rah” approach, and often an inability to perform as stated. They avoid isolation.

WHICH ARE YOU?

Have you identified your own learning style? Great. Then humbly celebrate the way God made you, realizing that those who have different learning styles need to be celebrated as well. Chances are, if you are a parent of several children you notice that each child has unique preferences; which, of course, is why your family activities—including worship, vacations, chores, holiday celebrations—should offer something that appeals to each member.

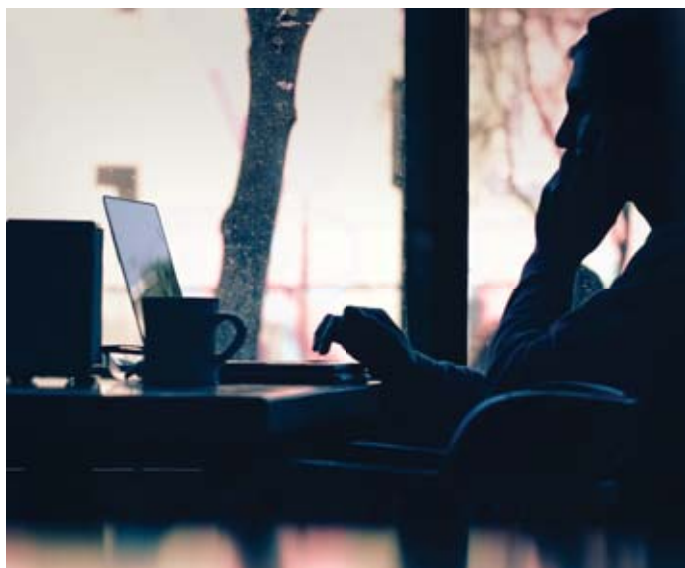
Wherever you go and whatever you do, being around people with differing learning styles can be complicated, as we all know. Our all-wise God gives good reason for creating humans with so much variety: “Each person is given something to do that shows *who God is*. Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits. . . . The variety is wonderful!” (1 Cor. 12:6, Message).^{*} Understanding how others learn and process information, as important as understanding ourselves, inspires our deeper desire and prayer to better know the God who makes and rules all this diversity—the Creator of imaginative, analytic, common sense, and dynamic learning styles, the one in whom I can discover new aspects, and because of whom you and I can be constantly discovering elements of His varied genius in ourselves.

Our Creator-God loves and expresses Himself in diversity. We see it in the seasons; we experience it in ourselves. Honoring each other’s learning style is just one more way to *taste and see* that He is good.

So tell me again: What’s *your* favorite thing to do with a watermelon? 🍉

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W. Eugene Brewer, now retired, served in the Seventh-day Adventist education system for 48 years.



A PRAYER JOURNAL CHANGED MY LIFE

It can change yours, too!

One of the most life-changing things I have ever done is start a daily prayer journal. It's just a basic Word document on my computer. What started out as a few minutes a day has grown into often more than an hour.

I used to think I didn't have time to spend in prayer in the morning. But after I tried it, I began to realize how much more I can accomplish when I take the time to start my day right. When I miss or rush my time with Jesus, I get stressed more easily. I am less kind and helpful to my wife and daughter. I am more vulnerable to pride and less interested in blessing others. *But time with Jesus in the morning with my prayer journal changes all this and more.*

God has grown me, corrected me, forgiven me, inspired me, and transformed me through that

time spent basking in His presence, surrendering to His power, and praising Him for His love. My time in my prayer journal with Jesus reminds me who He is, who I am, and why I am here.

Perhaps that is why even Jesus needed to spend so much time in prayer. The Gospel of Luke portrays Jesus' life as a journey back and forth from the mountaintop (prayer) to the multitude (teaching and healing). Through prayer Jesus was led to being filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:21, 22), humility (Luke 5:16), wisdom (Luke 6:12-16), clarity of His identity (Luke 9:18), God's glory shining through Him (verses 28-36), power against temptation (Luke 22:32-40), surrender (verse 42), strengthening in weakness (verse 43), and sacrificial obedience even to the cross (verses 44-47).

THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER

If prayer was such a necessity for Jesus, how much more is it necessary for us! Perhaps starting a prayer journal can help us become more like Jesus in our prayer life.

Here is what I like to pray about in my prayer journal:

1 My Heart—*"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Ps. 51:10, NKJV).*

I reflect on my recent thoughts, feelings, and actions. Is there evidence of pride, selfishness, self-centeredness, etc.? What do I specifically need to confess to Jesus? What stresses or struggles must I surrender to Jesus? Is there anyone I need to apologize to or forgive? How am I doing at expressing love to my spouse and kids? I feel amazing peace and freedom when I have

surrendered every part of my heart to Jesus.

2 God's Heart—*"Be still, and know that I am God"* (Ps. 46:10, NKJV).

I want not only to talk with God but also to pause and listen to Him. How does God feel about my life and the things I think about? When I realize how much He cares about me, I am far more ready to trust Him. I realize that when I pursue things that are important to Him, He will do whatever is needed most in the big picture.

3 Praise—*"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name"* (Ps. 100:4, NKJV).

I am inspired when I focus on who God is and praise Him for it. I tell Him how amazing He is and why. I often quote Scripture and songs of worship. I become amazed by God's perfect holiness, infinite love, extravagant grace, and omnipotent power.

4 Providence—*"Elisha prayed, 'Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may see.' Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha"* (2 Kings 6:17).

I thank God for the ways I see Him work. I write out stories of answered prayers, divine appointments, and evidences of His love that I experience in my life and family. This grows my faith.

5 People—*"I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people. . . . This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth"* (1 Tim. 2:1-4).

I lift up people and ask God to help them sense His presence in their lives right now. I especially like to pray for people who have not yet made commitments for Christ. Then I thank God for lovingly answering even before I have seen any results. I often reach out to them right then and let them know I'm praying for them. I also ask if there is anything specific I can remember in prayer for them.

One morning I felt impressed to pray for a family I had not seen at church for more than six months. I reached out with a text message to let them know I was praying for them. Little did I know that at that very moment they were going through a very difficult situation. The wife was about to give birth to their second child, but the husband was away on duty with the Navy. About a month later they returned to church. I was overjoyed! The wife shared with me about their recent events and sincerely thanked me for my prayers: "I felt so

alone and stressed out," she said. "It felt so good to know that someone was praying for me."

When I regularly pray for people, I can more clearly see God's dreams for their lives as His devoted disciples. God gives me confidence, wisdom, and a desire to meaningfully encourage them and challenge them to take steps to get closer to Jesus. I've seen many individuals whose names appear in my prayer journal accept Bible studies and attend evangelistic series. I have seen dozens of them make decisions for baptism and become active members in my local church.

A FAITH-BUILDING PRACTICE

Writing on these five aspects in my prayer journal has been faith-building and rewarding. I try not to keep it too structured, because I want to allow my heart to flow in conversation with Jesus. It's OK if I go out of order or focus more on only a couple aspects if that is what is needed most that day.

The practice of daily prayer journaling has impacted not only my life but also the lives of my entire family. My wife, Caitlin, has her own prayer journal. She gave one to our 3-year-old daughter, Quinn. Although Quinn cannot read or write yet, she loves making detailed little squiggles in her prayer journal. It's adorable when she reads us what she wrote to Jesus.

One day when we were in the car on our way home from an overnight trip, Quinn exclaimed from the back seat, "We not have our time with Jesus today!" She had noticed that we had missed our morning devotion routine because we were away from home. I thank God that my daughter is learning to seek Jesus in prayer every day.

The God of the universe lovingly invites us to connect with Him in prayer every morning. He forgives us for the days we have missed in the past. He doesn't ask us to make promises about the future. He asks only for *today*. Our moments in prayer become Jesus' greatest treasures, and ours as well.

Why not give prayer journaling a try? It might change your life. 🍀

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

Dustin Serns, pastor of the Port Orchard Seventh-day Adventist Church in Washington, United States, loves pursuing Jesus and His mission with his wife, Caitlin; 3-year-old daughter, Quinn; and newborn son, Joel.



REMBRANDT VAN RIJN

perilous it is to parlay with temptation: he “loved the wages of unrighteousness” (2 Peter 2:15).¹ Having stated that a “house full of silver and gold” would not cause him to go against the will of God (Num. 22:18), he shows how much he hopes to obtain the offered wealth and still serve God.

Set on getting the money Balaam goes off to offer sacrifices at three different locations. Do we really expect to influence God with sacrifices when our hearts are far from Him? All our “churchy” attendance at services, our offerings and mission trips combined, do not add up to an excuse or compensation for a single sin: “to obey is better than sacrifice” (1 Sam. 15:22).

Moreover, wouldn’t a prophet know that it’s useless to attempt to curse what God has blessed, or get Him to bless what He has cursed. Never mind those troubled souls who have a vendetta against the church in their wish or effort to bring blight upon the object of His supreme regard on earth.² God’s laws—moral, civil, and health—are given not to make arbitrary demands on His people, but to protect, prosper, and bless us. Trying to curse the divine statutes, or the chosen people of God, is doomed from the start to be a failed effort.

As the ancient Israelites went about normal life in their camp oblivious to Balaam and Balak’s efforts, so God’s people today may live our lives in Him with little comprehension of the forces of evil gathered to see us cursed, and little knowledge of God’s constant care over us. Perhaps if we thought more on that constant protection we might be

DON'T BEAT THE DONKEY

subhead??

The story of Balaam (Num. 22) has always intrigued me: it has a lot of twists. A non-Israelite prophet of God; a prophet wanting money for his work, conversing with a donkey, going to a pagan place to pray to God.

THE OFFER

Balak has an offer; Balaam will pray about it. Really? Is there a need to pray about whether or not to curse God’s people? When God’s will is obvious, do we need to pray about it, hoping for permission to do what we want to do?

Balaam’s story shows how

much more exuberant in our appreciation: “Oh, that [men and women and girls and boys] would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!” (Ps. 107:8). It may be that one of the most transformative lessons from this story, if put into practice, would be summarized as “don’t beat the donkey.”

PROVIDENTIAL DONKEY

As Balaam rides along, his donkey sees the Angel of the Lord with sword drawn, standing in the way, and runs off into a field. Balaam beats the animal. Now in a walled pathway the donkey sees the Angel again, and presses against the stone wall, squeezing Balaam’s foot. Balaam beats the ass again. The third time it happens in a narrow place: the donkey simply lies down. In anger Balaam again beats his donkey.

Whereupon the Lord opens the donkey’s mouth and it says to Balaam, “What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?”

And here’s the greatest absurdity: Balaam answers! “Because you have abused me. I wish there were a sword in my hand, for now I would kill you!”

The conversation continues: “Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden, ever since I became yours, to this day? Was I ever disposed to do this to you?” (Think, buddy!)

Balaam responds, “No” (Num. 22:22-30). Then the Lord opens Balaam’s eyes and he sees the Angel, who asks, “Why have you struck your donkey these three times? . . . Your way is perverse before Me. The donkey saw Me and turned aside from Me these three times. If she had not turned aside . . . surely I would also have killed you” (verses 32, 33). The irritating donkey has saved his life. Realizing the grave stupidity of his behavior, Balaam confesses, “I have sinned, for I did not know You stood in the way against me. Now therefore, if it displeases You, I will turn back” (verse 34).

God uses different methods to save us from ourselves. We can be blinded by pride or preference. We should be always ready to ask if there might be a good reason that circumstances seem to oppose a course of action. We have all heard of people angry about the counsel of friends, even calling them ‘donkey!’ and rejecting their counsel. Instead of recognizing God’s providence, they beat the donkey.

Who knows? Unplanned difficulties may be just

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now saving you from something harmful. Will you look for the Angel or beat the donkey? Are you complaining, grumbling, blaming? missing the Angel? Truth is that the extremes of our donkey beating show themselves to be nothing less than pathetic, self-centered whining: “I don’t have cell reception!” “These French fries are cold”—irritabilities of ours not even worth the instant of video or audio, or the fleeting inch of paper space they occupy.

DONKEY OR ANGEL?

Ellen White observed: “Our devised plans often fail that God’s plans for us may be a complete success. Oh, it is in the future life we shall see the tangles and mysteries of life, that have so annoyed and disappointed our fond hopes, explained. We will see that the prayers and hopes for certain things which have been withheld have been among our greatest blessings.”³

So wherever on the spectrum your situation falls, look for the Angel. When emotions flare and people yell, don’t beat the donkey; look for the Angel. When serious problems happen and life is difficult, don’t beat the donkey; look for the Angel. When the teachings and ways of God are puzzling, don’t beat the donkey; look for the Angel. When you see Balak’s offer, both attractive and immoral, don’t beat the donkey; don’t even harness the poor animal. Whatever the circumstance, heaven’s messenger will always represent the better option: look for the Angel—don’t beat the donkey! ♣

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² Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 12.

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**YOU NEED
TO TAKE A
BREAK**





Why NOT taking your vacation time doesn't make you a hero.

WILONA KARIMABADI

Many of us have a real problem. We have a real problem with slowing down, taking a rest, changing our pace. And you know what? It can be really bad for us.

Speaking specifically about the American workforce, consider these bleak statistics:

- » Although Americans have fewer vacation days than people in any other country, they have been taking fewer and fewer vacations over the past 15 years.
- » Fifty-five percent of Americans did not use all their vacation days in 2015.
- » Even when they actually do take a vacation, 41 percent are checking into work while away.
- » Eighty-four percent of U.S. executives have canceled vacations in order to work.¹

Why do I call these bleak statistics? It's because while we pride ourselves on industriousness and a stern work ethic, in the long run prioritizing work over rest is not good for the mind or body. And once we conscientiously apply a Christian viewpoint to the discussion and ask what Jesus would do, we're very likely to hear Him say, "Come . . . rest a while" (Mark 6:31).

IS IT REALLY THAT BAD?

People forego taking earned vacation times for a variety of valid reasons—family logistics, cost, the nature of their work. . . . But a good number fail to take vacations because of fear. Their reasons include worrying over work piling up while away, fear of missing out on key things in the office, the concern that they will be judged negatively for taking time off, and fear that managers will view them as not essential to the organization in their absence.²

But it's so important that we strive for balance in our lives regardless of perceived negative outcomes, because it's not just a luxury to take a vacation—it may actually save lives.

Here's what happens when we fail to take time off or take vacations (and vacations don't have to mean leaving home. [more on that later]).

Are you stressed? If we don't take time off, that isn't likely to improve. Too much stress in our lives can result in compromised immunity, chronic illness, fatigue, and worse. Going and going and going? It gets us nowhere.

Did you know that men who vacationed regularly were more than 32 percent less likely to die from a heart attack? For women, that figure increases dramatically to 50 percent.³ We can't deny those facts!

In addition to keeping our bodies healthier, slowing down, traveling, and/or changing scenery and pace of life

PHOTO BY SPRING FED IMAGES

HOW TO STAYCATION

If you can't take a vacation away from home, you can absolutely vacation at home. But you have to be serious about it. Make a plan and stick to it! Here are some ideas.

1 If possible, don't advertise your plans at the office. If you really want to unplug and have taken care of your responsibilities before you leave, no one should be contacting you unless there is a serious emergency. So it's best if everyone treats you as if you are off the grid.

2 Actually, try to get off the grid. Don't respond to nonemergency e-mails or texts; and honestly, get away from your screens.

3 Research and plan low-key, yet fun activities in your area; www.onlyinyourstate.com is a wonderful resource for that.

4 If your planned activities don't require an early start time, turn off your alarm and sleep until your body tells you to wake up. Don't feel guilty about that. Your body will tell you how much sleep it needs to feel great again.

5 Don't overschedule your fun. Hitting up all the local attractions in a few days is going to sap you of energy in a moment when you need rest. So pace yourself and make restfulness your top priority.

6 Try not to use your staycation time as the time to catch up on household repairs and errands. Treat it as if you are vacationing out of the country.

7 Use this time to increase your self-care. Eat nutritious food (and a few vacation treats), sleep, exercise, pray and reflect, get a massage, and reconnect with your loved ones.

really improve focus, productivity, creativity, and sleep quality. They can even strengthen our relationships (a happy byproduct of not being tired, overworked, and, well, cranky).

HAWAII ISN'T FOR ALL OF US

Vacationing in Hawaii would make most of us happy. But if we're being real, we know that taking a trip like that isn't always accessible to many of us, and that's OK. We don't need to take expensive vacations to far-flung locations to unplug and do ourselves some good.

Have you ever heard of the term "staycation"? It's a thing, and it really can work. With a child in college out-of-state, and another soon to follow, vacations are one of the easiest things to trim off my family's personal budget right now. We love to travel, and have cherished memories of several international destinations. This present season of our lives is a good time to scale back on such things. But that doesn't mean we have to scale back on taking time off.

This past spring break we stayed home. But we hit the pause button on our normal routine of work and school. And you know what? It felt awesome. One of the primary objectives of a week off was to catch up on sleep. And I did—I slept in until my body actually wanted to wake up (work schedules can really mess with normal circadian rhythms). Then I went to the gym, leisurely—without worrying about how much time I had or how fast I needed to shower, get dressed, and be on my way. At home I napped when I wanted to, treated myself to a couple of new paperbacks at Barnes and Noble, and enjoyed a pedicure. We even took a day trip to Philadelphia and ran up the steps of the city's art museum à la Rocky Balboa (that was my son's idea). When I returned to work the following week, I felt utterly rested and ready to be back.

Now, you can certainly enjoy the same benefits of relaxation on a beach or mountain chalet somewhere, but flights, traffic, jet lag, and other snafus that come with long-distance travel can easily sap you of any of the rest you just benefited from. So while those trips bring a lot of wonderful benefits to tired souls, don't feel too bad if your current situation prohibits them at the moment. You can certainly recharge and reinvigorate yourself from the quiet of your own home. Just unplug from your job, OK? Try.



CHALLENGE YOURSELF

If you are not yet at a spot where you can take vacation time off, here are two tricks to bring some variety into your work day and overall life; and help you get a little mental boost.

THE POMODORO TECHNIQUE*

When in the thick of a project, our brains actually benefit from briefly stopping and switching gears. This technique is simple: Alternate 25 minutes of work with five minutes of recreation—play a word game on your phone, look at pictures, or watch a short video of somersaulting, chubby raccoons (it's on YouTube, trust me). Set a timer and try it out.

NEW EXPERIENCES**

Research backs up the fact that exposure to new things boosts creativity. Also, constant connection to our various electronic devices saps us of fresh ideas. So if you feel like your creative spark is fading, on your next trip or staycation, try something a bit drastic (which has been studied and proved effective). Hike in nature for four days in a row and disconnect from devices—keeping that phone charged and out of site, only to be used for an emergency. The study that followed this particular activity showed a 50 percent spike in creativity!

*www.inc.com/minda-zetlin/why-taking-time-off-is-good-for-your-brain.html

**greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/why_you_should_take_more_time_off_from_work

PHOTO BY JORDAN HEATH

A MINI VACATION IN TIME

One of the things I as a Seventh-day Adventist am personally most grateful for is the Sabbath. And not just that it exists, but that we have a belief system that shows us how to live a life built around the blessing of it. Because it is exactly that—a blessing. In our harried lives of work, school, family and social responsibilities, etc., a mandate from God Himself to stop and catch our breath, even for just 24 hours? I'll take it!

Now, I'm fully aware that for many, Sabbath can actually be one of the busiest days of the week. If you have any sort of involvement in your local church in one or more capacities, you know this to be true. So if that is your situation, I pray you can find a way to recharge and gain that blessing even as you try to prevent a classroom of toddlers from wandering off while you attempt to instill some Jesus in them.

We know the Sabbath's benefits to the human soul are actually far greater than just a respite from clocking in at the office. It's a day to rest and change pace, a day to seek God and have Him restore us, and a day to encourage others around us to come away for a while and calm down. Always remember

that even if it may seem impossible to schedule a week away somewhere, we can always take our 24-hour Sabbath break and be comforted that it's God's idea—no manager's approval necessary!

YOU EARNED YOUR TIME—TAKE IT!

As said before, our vacation time doesn't have to involve hiking Machu Picchu—but if it does, more power to you (and please send pictures)! But the overarching theme of this is a reminder that taking time off is really important for our spiritual, mental, and physical well-being. We can make the most of the life we live on this earth by balancing our hard work with hard-earned play. Plan ahead, be creative, and commit to it. After all, have you ever heard of someone coming back from vacation saying they wish they had stayed at work?

I didn't think so. 🍷

¹greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/why_you_should_take_more_time_off_from_work

²www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/lifetime-connections/201807/you-really-do-need-vacation

³www.takebackyourtime.org/why-vacations-matter/10-reasons-to-vacation/

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

Volunteering Can Save Your Life

No doubt at some point in your life you have volunteered and freely given your time and life energy to a cause you considered worthy.

But perhaps you've never thought about how that act of service benefited you. Normally, serving through volunteering is about the need of another and our willingness to contribute toward it without asking or requiring anything in return.

Yet a host of studies have uncovered an encouraging relationship: there are, it seems, tangible health benefits that come with volunteering and serving others.

Several studies have shown that "those who give support through volunteering experience greater health benefits than those who receive support through these activities."

Consider the remarkably similar statement made by Jesus long before social science was a discipline, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

Research at the University of Michigan has shown an association between service and mortality rate—the rate of death in a population. According to the findings, "mortality was significantly reduced for individuals who reported providing instrumental support to friends, relatives, and neighbors, and individuals who reported providing emotional support to their spouse."

The benefits extend to mental health as well, researchers at Duke University tell us. The study found "statistically significant, positive relationships between volunteering and lower levels of depression" for people over 65 years old. Mean-

while a study at the University of Calgary found that "people who did volunteer work for at least one hour a week on a regular basis were 2.44 times less likely to develop dementia than the seniors who didn't volunteer."


Why does volunteering lead to health benefits? Among possibilities is a link between voluntary service and having a sense of purpose. "Evidence suggests that volunteering has a positive effect on social psychological factors, such as one's sense of purpose."

A recent study showed that having a higher purpose in life led to a lower risk of stroke within a four-year follow-up period. Meanwhile, another study suggests that having a strong sense of purpose might be protective against diabetes, since it might help keep blood sugar levels down.

The list of potential benefits is much longer. That's the good news.

The bad news is that not everyone is taking advantage of this benefit. Only a third of the population in the U.S. volunteers at all, and of those who do volunteer, 15 percent end up doing 50 percent of the work.

So consider this a collective challenge. Let's take a moment to consider some of the ways in which we can voluntarily serve the needs of others. Consider also nearby organizations, not the least of which is our local church, and how we can offer ourselves in service.

Whatever we decide to do will be—as it turns out—mutually beneficial. 

*Footnotes are cited on the online version of this article.

Costin Jordache is news editor and communication director for Adventist Review Ministries.

**CONSIDER THIS
STATEMENT MADE BY
JESUS LONG BEFORE
SOCIAL SCIENCE
WAS A DISCIPLINE.**



REMBRANDT VAN RIJN

perilous it is to parlay with temptation: he “loved the wages of unrighteousness” (2 Peter 2:15).¹ Having stated that a “house full of silver and gold” would not cause him to go against the will of God (Num. 22:18), he shows how much he hopes to obtain the offered wealth and still serve God.

Set on getting the money Balaam goes off to offer sacrifices at three different locations. Do we really expect to influence God with sacrifices when our hearts are far from Him? All our “churchy” attendance at services, our offerings and mission trips combined, do not add up to an excuse or compensation for a single sin: “to obey is better than sacrifice” (1 Sam. 15:22).

Moreover, wouldn’t a prophet know that it’s useless to attempt to curse what God has blessed, or get Him to bless what He has cursed. Never mind those troubled souls who have a vendetta against the church in their wish or effort to bring blight upon the object of His supreme regard on earth.² God’s laws—moral, civil, and health—are given not to make arbitrary demands on His people, but to protect, prosper, and bless us. Trying to curse the divine statutes, or the chosen people of God, is doomed from the start to be a failed effort.

As the ancient Israelites went about normal life in their camp oblivious to Balaam and Balak’s efforts, so God’s people today may live our lives in Him with little comprehension of the forces of evil gathered to see us cursed, and little knowledge of God’s constant care over us. Perhaps if we thought more on that constant protection we might be

DON’T BEAT THE DONKEY

*Your donkey
may have a point*

The story of Balaam (Num. 22) has always intrigued me: it has a lot of twists. A non-Israelite prophet of God; a prophet wanting money for his work, conversing with a donkey, going to a pagan place to pray to God.

THE OFFER

Balak has an offer; Balaam will pray about it. Really? Is there a need to pray about whether or not to curse God’s people? When God’s will is obvious, do we need to pray about it, hoping for permission to do what we want to do?

Balaam’s story shows how

much more exuberant in our appreciation: “Oh, that [men and women and girls and boys] would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!” (Ps. 107:8). It may be that one of the most transformative lessons from this story, if put into practice, would be summarized as “don’t beat the donkey.”

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5 Don't overschedule your fun. Hitting up all the local attractions in a few days is going to sap you of energy in a moment when you need rest. So pace yourself and make restfulness your top priority.

6 Try not to use your staycation time as the time to catch up on household repairs and errands. Treat it as if you are vacationing out of the country.

7 Use this time to increase your self-care. Eat nutritious food (and a few vacation treats), sleep, exercise, pray and reflect, get a massage, and reconnect with your loved ones.

really improve focus, productivity, creativity, and sleep quality. They can even strengthen our relationships (a happy byproduct of not being tired, overworked, and, well, cranky).

HAWAII ISN'T FOR ALL OF US

Vacationing in Hawaii would make most of us happy. But if we're being real, we know that taking a trip like that isn't always accessible to many of us, and that's OK. We don't need to take expensive vacations to far-flung locations to unplug and do ourselves some good.

Have you ever heard of the term "staycation"? It's a thing, and it really can work. With a child in college out-of-state, and another soon to follow, vacations are one of the easiest things to trim off my family's personal budget right now. We love to travel, and have cherished memories of several international destinations. This present season of our lives is a good time to scale back on such things. But that doesn't mean we have to scale back on taking time off.

This past spring break we stayed home. But we hit the pause button on our normal routine of work and school. And you know what? It felt awesome. One of the primary objectives of a week off was to catch up on sleep. And I did—I slept in until my body actually wanted to wake up (work schedules can really mess with normal circadian rhythms). Then I went to the gym, leisurely—without worrying about how much time I had or how fast I needed to shower, get dressed, and be on my way. At home I napped when I wanted to, treated myself to a couple of new paperbacks at Barnes and Noble, and enjoyed a pedicure. We even took a day trip to Philadelphia and ran up the steps of the city's art museum à la Rocky Balboa (that was my son's idea). When I returned to work the following week, I felt utterly rested and ready to be back.

Now, you can certainly enjoy the same benefits of relaxation on a beach or mountain chalet somewhere, but flights, traffic, jet lag, and other snafus that come with long-distance travel can easily sap you of any of the rest you just benefited from. So while those trips bring a lot of wonderful benefits to tired souls, don't feel too bad if your current situation prohibits them at the moment. You can certainly recharge and reinvigorate yourself from the quiet of your own home. Just unplug from your job, OK? Try.



CHALLENGE YOURSELF

If you are not yet at a spot where you can take vacation time off, here are two tricks to bring some variety into your work day and overall life; and help you get a little mental boost.

THE POMODORO TECHNIQUE*

When in the thick of a project, our brains actually benefit from briefly stopping and switching gears. This technique is simple: Alternate 25 minutes of work with five minutes of recreation—play a word game on your phone, look at pictures, or watch a short video of somersaulting, chubby raccoons (it's on YouTube, trust me). Set a timer and try it out.

NEW EXPERIENCES**

Research backs up the fact that exposure to new things boosts creativity. Also, constant connection to our various electronic devices saps us of fresh ideas. So if you feel like your creative spark is fading, on your next trip or staycation, try something a bit drastic (which has been studied and proved effective). Hike in nature for four days in a row and disconnect from devices—keeping that phone charged and out of site, only to be used for an emergency. The study that followed this particular activity showed a 50 percent spike in creativity!

*www.inc.com/minda-zetlin/why-taking-time-off-is-good-for-your-brain.html

**greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/why_you_should_take_more_time_off_from_work

A MINI VACATION IN TIME

One of the things I as a Seventh-day Adventist am personally most grateful for is the Sabbath. And not just that it exists, but that we have a belief system that shows us how to live a life built around the blessing of it. Because it is exactly that—a blessing. In our harried lives of work, school, family and social responsibilities, etc., a mandate from God Himself to stop and catch our breath, even for just 24 hours? I'll take it!

Now, I'm fully aware that for many, Sabbath can actually be one of the busiest days of the week. If you have any sort of involvement in your local church in one or more capacities, you know this to be true. So if that is your situation, I pray you can find a way to recharge and gain that blessing even as you try to prevent a classroom of toddlers from wandering off while you attempt to instill some Jesus in them.

We know the Sabbath's benefits to the human soul are actually far greater than just a respite from clocking in at the office. It's a day to rest and change pace, a day to seek God and have Him restore us, and a day to encourage others around us to come away for a while and calm down. Always remember

that even if it may seem impossible to schedule a week away somewhere, we can always take our 24-hour Sabbath break and be comforted that it's God's idea—no manager's approval necessary!

YOU EARNED YOUR TIME—TAKE IT!

As said before, your vacation time doesn't have to involve hiking Machu Picchu—but if it does, more power to you (and please send pictures)! But the overarching theme of this is a reminder that taking time off is really important for our spiritual, mental, and physical well-being. We can make the most of the life we live on this earth by balancing our hard work with hard-earned play. Plan ahead, be creative, and commit to it. After all, have you ever heard of someone coming back from vacation saying they wish they had stayed at work?

I didn't think so. 🍴

¹greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/why_you_should_take_more_time_off_from_work

²www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/lifetime-connections/201807/you-really-do-need-vacation

³www.takebackyourtime.org/why-vacations-matter/10-reasons-to-vacation/

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Volunteering Can Save Your Life

No doubt at some point in your life you have volunteered and freely given your time and life energy to a cause you considered worthy.

But perhaps you've never thought about how that act of service benefited you. Normally, serving through volunteering is about the need of another and our willingness to contribute toward it without asking or requiring anything in return.

Yet a host of studies have uncovered an encouraging relationship: there are, it seems, tangible health benefits that come with volunteering and serving others.

Several studies have shown that "those who give support through volunteering experience greater health benefits than those who receive support through these activities."

Consider the remarkably similar statement made by Jesus long before social science was a discipline, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

Research at the University of Michigan has shown an association between service and mortality rate—the rate of death in a population. According to the findings, "mortality was significantly reduced for individuals who reported providing instrumental support to friends, relatives, and neighbors, and individuals who reported providing emotional support to their spouse."

The benefits extend to mental health as well, researchers at Duke University tell us. The study found "statistically significant, positive relationships between volunteering and lower levels of depression" for people over 65 years old. Mean-

while a study at the University of Calgary found that "people who did volunteer work for at least one hour a week on a regular basis were 2.44 times less likely to develop dementia than the seniors who didn't volunteer."


Why does volunteering lead to health benefits? Among possibilities is a link between voluntary service and having a sense of purpose. "Evidence suggests that volunteering has a positive effect on social psychological factors, such as one's sense of purpose."

A recent study showed that having a higher purpose in life led to a lower risk of stroke within a four-year follow-up period. Meanwhile, another study suggests that having a strong sense of purpose might be protective against diabetes, since it might help keep blood sugar levels down.

The list of potential benefits is much longer. That's the good news.

The bad news is that not everyone is taking advantage of this benefit. Only a third of the population in the U.S. volunteers at all, and of those who do volunteer, 15 percent end up doing 50 percent of the work.

So consider this a collective challenge. Let's take a moment to consider some of the ways in which we can voluntarily serve the needs of others. Consider also nearby organizations, not the least of which is our local church, and how we can offer ourselves in service.

Whatever we decide to do will be—as it turns out—mutually beneficial. 

*Footnotes are cited on the online version of this article.

Costin Jordache is news editor and communication director for Adventist Review Ministries.

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