

ADVENTIST REVIEW

SEPTEMBER 2019: INVISIBLE SPIDERS FROM MARS +
DANGEROUS KISSING COUSINS + THE TASTE OF
GRATITUDE + SCARED SAFE + THE AUDIENCE OF ONE +
KIDSAFE CHURCH



The Church I Want
to Belong to Is...

SAFE



MATTERS
THAT
MATTER
TO YOU

WATCH OR LISTEN AT
14thU.com



The Church
I Want to
Belong to Is...

SAFE

READY FOR JESUS

PROPHETIC

CHRIST-CENTERED

SELFLESS

FEATURES

- 18 **SEE ALL THE PEOPLE** | STEPHEN CHAVEZ
We tell people church is a safe place. But how safe is safe?
- 22 **HIS MERCY MADE ME WHOLE** | GRACE BONDURANT
When our sins feel like quicksand
- 26 **DANGEROUS KISSING COUSINS** | CLAUDIO AND PAMELA CONSUEGRA
Pornography has a close relative: find out who.
- 30 **MEN? VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?** | WILLIE OLIVER
Stereotypes can be dangerous.
- 32 **KIDSAFE CHURCH** | DAVID FOURNIER
Our most precious resource deserves our greatest protection.
- 36 **COURAGE AND BETRAYAL** | WILONA KARIMABADI
How does one cope with the unthinkable and unimaginable?
- 38 **LOOK OUT FOR THE CHILDREN** | JON DAGGETT AND PHIL HIROSHIMA
When predators come to church
- 40 **SPIRITUAL ABUSE** | LAEL CAESAR
Some of those who speak for God may not actually know Him.
- 44 **EYES WIDE OPEN** | SCOTT RACKLEY
Shopping, walking, eating out; what can we do if someone wants to do us harm?

“Most, if not all, of those who use porn say that watching porn is simply a private matter; that it doesn’t hurt anyone.”

27

ARTICLES

48 GOD’S LONG-SUFFERING NATURE

ELLEN G. WHITE

Our reliance on God must be unreserved.

50 THE FIRST HISPANIC ADVENTISTS IN NORTH AMERICA

MANUEL VASQUEZ

Their story begins with a commitment to follow the truth.

54 ¡ANDALE!

Tony Anobile, vice president for Multilingual Ministries for the North American Division, reflects on recent growth among Hispanic Adventists.

56 ¡COCINEMOS!

As long as we’re celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month, we might as well try some of their recipes.

58 INNOCENT SUFFERERS: WHY?

MARIO OLIVEIRA

Understood: bad things happen to good people. Now what?

64 THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR

DEREK O’HARE

Who could be knocking at this time of the morning?

56



NEWS | OPINION

- » Evangelist Kenneth Cox Passes to His Rest
- » “Health Is More Than Tofu and Triathlons”
- » Stepping Forward During the U.S. Border Crisis
- » How to Understand and Prevent Fanaticism
- » New Guide to Help Online Ministries Increase Visibility
- » “Poverty Plants Seeds of Violence”
- » Loma Linda Health Stories Win Emmy



EDITORIAL

- 5 BILL KNOTT**
BETTER SAFE

DEPARTMENTS

- 6 LETTERS**
63 HOUSE CALL
68 CLOSER LOOK

COLUMNS

- 25 CLIFF’S EDGE**
CLIFFORD GOLDSTEIN
47 SEARCHING THE OBVIOUS
DIXIL RODRÍGUEZ
61 JOURNEYS WITH JESUS
JILL MORIKONE
72 IN OTHER WORDS
LAEL CAESAR

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

PUBLISHING BOARD

Ted N. C. Wilson, *chair*
Guillermo Biaggi, *vice chair*
Bill Knott, *secretary*
Lisa Beardsley-Hardy, Williams Costa, Daniel R. Jackson, Peter Landless, Brad Thorp, Geoffrey Mbwana, G. T. Ng, Daisy Orion, Juan Prestol-Puesán, Ella Simmons, Artur Stele, Ray Wahlen
Karnik Doukmetzian, *legal advisor*

EXECUTIVE EDITOR/DIRECTOR OF ADVENTIST REVIEW MINISTRIES Bill Knott

ASSOCIATE EDITORS/DIRECTORS, ADVENTIST REVIEW MINISTRIES

Lael Caesar, Gerald A. Klingbeil, Greg Scott

COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR/NEWS EDITOR

Costin Jordache

DIGITAL PLATFORMS DIRECTOR Gabriel Begle

ASSISTANT EDITORS Sandra Blackmer, Stephen Chavez, Wilona Karimabadi

FINANCIAL MANAGER Kimberly Brown

MARKETING Jared Thurmon

ART DIRECTION AND DESIGN

Bryan Gray/Types & Symbols

LAYOUT TECHNICIAN Fred Wuerstlin

COPY EDITOR James Cavil

OPERATIONS MANAGER Merle Poirier

EDITORIAL ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR

Marvene Thorpe-Baptiste

EDITORS-AT-LARGE Mark A. Finley, John M. Fowler

SENIOR ADVISOR E. Edward Zinke

AD SALES Glen Gohlke, Seth Hill, Carlos Medley

CIRCULATION/DISTRIBUTION

Rebecca Hilde, Sharon Tennyson

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

E-mail: revieweditor@gc.adventist.org

Web site: www.adventistreview.org

Unless otherwise noted, Bible texts in this issue are from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. Unless otherwise noted, all prominent photos are © Thinkstock 2017.

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

Copyright ©2019, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists®. PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

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

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

ADDRESS CHANGES AND SUBSCRIPTION QUERIES:
adventistreview@pacificpress.com.
OR call 1-800-545-2449

TRENDING

THE MOST SHARED STORIES ON ADVENTISTREVIEW.ORG LAST MONTH:



- 1 Students Equipped to Share Jesus on Secular Campuses in Australia
- 2 Families Left Homeless Because of Wildfires in Italy
- 3 Playhouses, Doghouses, Birdhouses
- 4 Adventist Lay Members Earmark \$1.5 for Mission Projects
- 5 New Generation Witnesses in Israel

129 YEARS AGO IN ADVENTIST REVIEW:

A dedication services for the schooner Pitcairn was held during the California camp meeting on September 25, 1890, and was attended by about 1,500 persons. The boat was used by Seventh-day Adventists to transport missionaries from the west coast of the United States to the islands of the Pacific from 1890 to 1900.



M. C. Wilcox, editor of *Signs of the Times* and present at the Pitcairn's dedication, described the schooner as follows: "The length of the ship is 100 feet [30 meters], breadth of beam 27 feet [eight meters], depth of hold 10 feet [three meters]; and it is of about 120 tons [110 metric tons] burden. It is made of the very best timber, and the workmanship is of the best character."

The decision to build a missionary ship was made at the General Conference session of October 1889, and construction began soon after. The ship was paid for by Sabbath School offerings.

**Short.
Shareable.
Unexpected.
On-Demand.**

ARTV
artvnow.com

iOS fireTV Roku tvOS
android  XBOX androidtv

BILL KNOTT



Better Safe

The wiry baserunner sprints the last 30 feet toward home plate, then glides beneath the catcher's outstretched mitt. He is . . . *safe!*

The young mother holds three children closely, watching smoke billow from a forest fire across the valley. When the wind at last changes direction and the threat is past, she posts to her Facebook account that she and her children are . . . *safe*.

The 17-year-old with the pierced lip and the purple hair clutches the invitation to the vegetarian cooking school in her left hand as her right reaches for the front door. She has walked past this church for three years now, but this morning she is ready to take a chance. She summons her most confident self and steps into the shadowed foyer. She is . . . *safe?*

We describe so many different life experiences with one short but multivalent word. There's little in common between the elation of the baseball fan when the umpire shouts a judgment and the unmeaning silence that greets newcomers in a somber sanctuary, and yet we reach for the same adjective. One moment is transient and forgettable. The other is life-altering, offering either warm community or continued isolation for days, months, or years.

It's ironic that remnant people painfully aware of the devil's historic hostility toward both faith and the faithful have had remarkably little to say about the church as a place of safety. We haven't lost our confidence in Revelation's vivid depiction of last-day events, but we rarely see the gathered church as the primary actor in the drama.

We typically frame the struggle in highly personal terms: we're tempted to overeat at potlucks; lose our tempers with colleagues at work; visit websites where no Christian ought to go. The church as we often imagine it is chiefly a collection of individuals, each fighting private wars within a larger conflict. Sabbath morning too often becomes only a rendezvous where solitary soldiers reconnect after six days of skirmishing.

But the apostle Paul reminds us that "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Eph. 5:25). "From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" (Eph. 4:16). John the Revelator consistently pictures the gathered church as the great object of the plan of salvation, the focal point of a massive, heaven-guided protection plan.

So it is that we who are protected and made safe in the

The vigilance we expect in protecting our children from predators must become a vigilance to protect those young in faith from the loveless lectures of some seasoned "saints."

conflict of the ages must think seriously about how we offer the Lord's safety to all who seek shelter and fellowship with us. This requires not only that we remove tripping hazards from the church sidewalk, but that we create a caring, hospitable environment when newcomers make it halfway down the center aisle. The vigilance we expect in protecting our children from predators must become a vigilance to protect those young in faith from the loveless lectures of some seasoned "saints." Pierced lips and purple hair can be—should be—welcomed with the same protective love that guards against piercing words. The Lord reminded us, "Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered"—including any purple ones.

Jesus offers us the standard of care in His great prayer for His church: "While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me" (John 17:12). He who kept us—keeps us—safe expects that we will do the same for all the broken, wounded people He is calling to His remnant in these last days.

That's why the church I want to belong to is . . . *safe*.

Bill Knott

Reading the author’s reflections on her dad made me grateful that there are people on this earth who are truly like Jesus.

CAROL SERLE, CHEWALA, WASHINGTON

ON HEALTH

Thank you for the outstanding issue on health in the July edition. Adventists have the advantage, as Bill Knott mentioned. We have to be thankful for the counsel of Ellen White for our lifestyle. During my ministry with young people, I have often quoted Psalm 139:14: “I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made” (KJV). I told them that people take better care of their cars than their bodies. We can leave an automobile engine working day and night for a few months and I don’t think that it will survive.

I’ve heard that our body has 60,000 miles of arteries through which eight to 10 pints of blood circulate pumped by the heart at the rate of 10 to 15 pints per minute. This heart created by God can go on from birth to 80 to 100 years, nonstop. This edition of AR should be kept to help us realize that we must take better care of God’s amazing creation.

Leo Ranzolin, Sr.
Estero, Florida



Global Health Conference and its slogan, “Your Brain, Your Body,” but it might be appropriate to increase the emphasis on weight control in all health talks.

Larry Neumann
Leominster, Massachusetts

DOES GOD CRY?

A special thank-you to Maria Lombart for her article “Does God Cry?” (July 2019). I know the anguish and pain she has felt at times. In those moments I recall the empathy God has for us in the pain we suffer.

Allan Freed
Lacombe, Alberta, Canada

FAITHFUL TO THE END

Thank you for printing “Faithful to the End,” by Karen Birney (June 2019). Reading the author’s reflections on her dad made me grateful that there are people on this earth who are truly like Jesus. Many of us have met some of them, and this article brought some of them back to mind, including my parents. Thank you for helping us see their beauty

Obesity is often mentioned in many publications as a risk factor for health. Peter Landless’ article, “Wholeness in Our Brokenness” (July 2019) does not include this in his discussion of the risk factors of physical disease.

As a person who struggles to keep my weight down, and who is often struck by the prevalence of overweight leaders in the church, it puzzles me that this issue has been ignored. Granted, Landless’ focus was on the

The way he opened up his wallet and gave of his free hours is, for me, the epitome of pure Christian faith in action.

DAVID B. SMITH, HIGHLAND, CALIFORNIA

through your reflections on your dad.

Carol Serle

Chewalah, Washington

CAMP MEETING MEMORIES

For quite a few years I hit the camp meeting circuit on behalf of It Is Written, Voice of Prophecy, and other groups. I still recall one location (which now escapes me) at which a saintly fellow brought his RV to the campsite and cheerfully offered a kind of hospitality buffet night after night. I don't remember if he had vegeburgers and lemon pie or just what, but the joy and camaraderie of that guy's largesse was legendary on that campground. The way he opened up his wallet and gave of his free hours is, for me, the epitome of pure Christian faith in action.

David B. Smith

Highland, California

HIS STEWARDS

Thank you for the April edition of *Adventist Review*, which highlights the need to care for God's earth. He gave us a job: we are His stewards.

J. Schafer

*Vernon, British Columbia,
Canada*

IN A FEW WORDS...

MAYBE YOUR NAME IS MOSES

An insightful discourse that one resonates with in these end times of the "greatest want of the world." May our good Lord continue to bless and keep you.

Emeka Abaribe, Via Web

NEW BIBLE SUPPORTS PEOPLE FACING LIFE'S CHALLENGES, CHURCH PUBLISHERS SAY

Surely this Bible will be a blessing to many. A lot of time and effort has gone into the preparation of the new Bible, and it has in it the basis for many studies. It will be a blessing to many who have lost hope, or need their remaining hope strengthened. Yes, there is a place for excellent "studies," as some may be concerned about, but our distinctive doctrines are presented in their fullness and we need to inspire hope. Let's all rejoice in this new production to inspire hope and prepare people to be ready for more advanced light.

John Blake, Via Web

DISABILITIES ARE NOT BARRIERS BUT POSSIBILITIES, ADVENTIST LEADER SAYS

Interesting. As a parent of a child with special needs, it is exciting to see the idea of including people with special needs as part of the church body. But when are we going to actually start doing it? We have been blessed by multiple church families who have taken on the challenge of a special needs child, but we have also had the experience of administrators telling us that they could not open their doors to our child. It will be nice to be part of a church that is open to all people, not just the ones that look and act like them.

Jacob Bindernagel, 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.

A song of
love and grace
will be the
anthem
of the future.



GraceNotes

For weekly messages on the power
of Grace visit moregracenotes.com
also look for GraceNotes on Facebook

“If our goal is to address religious freedom violations, the place to start is addressing poverty.”

—Jonathan Duffy, president, Adventist Development and Relief Agency. p. 16

NEWS

KENNETH O. COX, ADVENTIST EVANGELIST, PASSES TO HIS REST AT 84

BY MARK A. KELLNER FOR ADVENTIST REVIEW

Kenneth O. Cox, whose career as a Seventh-day Adventist evangelist spanned decades, continents, and time zones, passed to his rest on July 3, 2019, at the age of 84. Cox, who lived near Loma Linda, California, United States, succumbed following heart surgery.

“Kenneth was the real deal,” recalled Phillip Lynn Draper, communication director for the Arizona Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, who worked with Cox for 10 years in the 1970s and remained a lifelong friend. “He studied, he planned, he was a workaholic, his whole life was ministry—and his family, too—even till the day he died.”

Born on August 22, 1934, in Chicago, Illinois, Kenneth O. Cox was the son of two Oklahomans, Otto and Laura Cox. The family was in Chicago because of Otto’s work but eventually relocated to Oklahoma, where Kenneth grew up. In his 2010 memoir “Called to Serve,” Cox recalled a childhood marked by his mother’s illness, a nonmalignant brain tumor, and his father’s sometimes-abusive behavior.

In the midst of their struggles, Laura Cox found a copy of *Signs of the Times* magazine tucked into a neighbor’s mail-order catalog. Reading an article on the Bible Sabbath, Laura began Bible studies with an Adventist pastor; eventually she and Kenneth were baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Kenneth attended Adventist boarding school and what is today Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Texas, graduating in 1955. He also studied at



Evangelist Kenneth Cox.
PHOTO: COURTESY OF PALIMOR DESIGN STUDIOS

the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, at the time located in Takoma Park, Maryland.

Cox initially served in churches in Texas and New Mexico, briefly interning under H.M.S. Richards, Jr., who would later serve as speaker-director of the Voice of Prophecy media ministry. Cox was then called to the Chesapeake Conference as an evangelist, which was followed by evangelistic work in Oklahoma, Arizona, Kentucky, and Tennessee. His first wife, Marilyn, passed away in 1974 following a brief illness.

Cox threw himself into evangelistic work and began touring the globe, with notable campaigns in Costa Rica and Melbourne, Australia. Following the 1992 Melbourne campaign, which netted what a church official said was the largest number of baptisms in any evangelism event ever held there, Cox told the South Pacific Division’s *Record* magazine his presentation of the Adventist message was still relevant.

“I took the position that Jesus Christ pulls people,”

Cox told *Record* editor Bruce Manners. “I don’t care if they’re atheists or what. . . . I think that you can go out and take Bible prophecy and interest people. I think we’ve shown that it can. We were booked out for three sessions.”

In an editorial Manners praised Cox’s “almost flawless” presentation of the Adventist message and “professional” approach that involved local church members. “Nothing happened by accident,” Manners wrote. “It was all carefully planned and executed.”

In 1997 Cox joined the Voice of Prophecy ministry, at the time led by Lonnie Melashenko, as a field evangelist, and remained with that ministry for four years, Draper said. Cox then began his own ministry, which continued until the time of his death.

Cox’s sermon videos air on 3ABN and other cable systems, as well as a handful of broadcast stations around the country. His books and Bible studies have also been quite popular, Draper said.

Draper’s fondest memory was “traveling with Kenneth and hearing his explanation of the Bible.” Along with preaching, Cox was “a natural” when visiting potential converts at their homes. “He could win people over to Christ so easily, so logically,” Draper said.

Cox is survived by a daughter, Laura Becker, of Loma Linda, California, and a son, James R. Cox, of Las Vegas, as well as stepsons Bart and Bob Vaughan, and several grandchildren. ♣



Ted Hamilton, AdventHealth’s chief integration officer and senior vice president for Mission and Ministry, said being healthy is “more than tofu and triathlons.” “It implies finding balance and loving one another,” he emphasized.

PHOTO: MARCOS PASEGGI, ADVENTIST REVIEW

“HEALTH IS MORE THAN TOFU AND TRIATHLONS”

ADVENTIST HEALTH-CARE EXECUTIVE UNPACKS WHAT HEALTHFUL LIVING ADVOCATES OFTEN MISS.

BY SANDRA BLACKMER, ADVENTIST REVIEW

Priorities may have more to do with health and longevity than many might think, said Ted Hamilton, AdventHealth’s chief integration officer and senior vice president for mission and ministry. Hamilton’s remarks were made during his plenary presentation at the third Global Conference on Health and Lifestyle hosted by Loma Linda University on July 9-13, 2019.

“Perhaps it’s not all about diet and exercise, or tofu and triathlons,” he said. “Maybe it’s about living well and whole as long as we live” and finding the proper balance.

He conceded, however, that finding balance isn’t easy to do.

SEARCHING FOR BALANCE

In 1863 Adventist Church cofounder Ellen White received a 45-minute vision emphasizing the need for health reform that eventually “spawned a health-care system of 300 to 400 health-care centers worldwide,” Hamilton said. Following that vision, Ellen White wrote in *Selected Messages*: “I saw that it was a sacred duty to attend to our health, and arouse others to their duty. . . . I saw that we should not be silent upon the subject of health but should wake up minds to the subject.”¹

White also wrote in *The Ministry of Healing* that “pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use

of water, trust in divine power—these are the true remedies.”² But even Ellen White and her husband, James, struggled with life balance, Hamilton noted. After James suffered a severe stroke in 1865, both his and Ellen’s ministries “were compromised as Ellen cared for him and helped him recover.” So healthful living comprises various components, he said.

OUR MISSION, TO OFFER HOPE

We need to look to Jesus as our example, Hamilton advised, then cited John 13:35, where Jesus said, “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” Jesus didn’t say that people know we’re His followers “because we’re vegetarians or keep the Sabbath or pay tithe, but because we love one another,” Hamilton explained. Then he asked, “Are we a church that loves one another and can teach others to love one another?”

Noting that chaplains are frequently called to counsel individuals suffering from loneliness and despair, Hamilton suggested that our mission is to offer hope, “a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ—a transcendent, living hope.”

Nineteenth-century school-teacher Annie Flint is an example of living in hope, Hamilton said. Developing crippling arthritis while in her 20s and reaching a point where she couldn’t walk, Flint chose to be hopeful. She became a poet who shared her hope and faith in God through her writing and inspired others, Hamilton said.

“We too must be hopeful,” he added. “We need to go out and share both hope and love with the world.”

¹ Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1980), book 3, p. 280.

² Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1905), p. 127.



Members of the Mound City Films production team.

PHOTO: LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY HEALTH NEWS

TV SHOW FEATURING LOMA LINDA HEALTH STORIES WINS EMMY AWARD

LIFE ON THE LINE TELLS COMPELLING
STORIES OF HOPE AND COURAGE.

BY HEATHER JACKSON, LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY HEALTH NEWS

Mound City Films, a documentary production entity that produces films for Loma Linda University Health, took home an Emmy at the forty-fifth annual Pacific Southwest chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Emmy awards ceremony, for its *Life on the Line* series episode about a teenager in southern California who received a heart transplant.

Mound City Films was one of two film teams that won the best program or special for the health/science category. The production house’s episode “Love for Lexi” followed a 16-year-old whose heart stopped just weeks after being diagnosed with a rare form of heart disease, which got her placed on the heart transplant list. Following this tragedy she received her care at Loma Linda University Children’s Hospital. The episode shared her journey through the eyes of her doctors and family while they all fought for her life. Lexi eventually received a lifesaving heart transplant and is now thriving.

Life on the Line showrunner Patricia Kelikani says it is a privilege to tell stories such as “Love for Lexi.”

“It’s an honor to share stories on television of those who inspire and create meaning out of life’s darkest moments,” Kelikani said. “The amazing individuals featured on the show remind us never to give up and to live life to the fullest.”

Life on the Line won its first Emmy in 2016 in the category of health and science for a NICU episode called “Rough Beginnings.” The following year, its third season, the show took home seven Emmy awards. This year’s award was Mound City Films’s fourteenth Emmy.

Life on the Line is a television show narrated by TV personality Lisa Ling, which features compelling, real-life stories of hope and courage from Loma Linda University Health. The series gives a unique, up-close look into the lives of those faced with immense tragedy, revealing the resilience of humankind.



In this file photo from 2018, Blythe Seventh-day Adventist Church volunteers serve food to those in need. The local church in California keeps assisting newcomers with their basic needs. PHOTO: PACIFIC UNION CONFERENCE NEWS

STEPPING FORWARD TO HELP DURING THE U.S. BORDER CRISIS

ADVENTIST COMMUNITY SERVICES AND LOCAL CHURCHES ARE ADDRESSING MIGRANTS' NEEDS.

BY NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION ADVENTIST COMMUNITY SERVICES

As was reported by the San Diego *Union-Tribune*, a Seventh-day Adventist church in Blythe, California, United States, has addressed community needs by setting up a shelter in their church building. The church, which started helping the homeless in 2018, has been operating the shelter for several months in 2019, and local Adventist Community Services Disaster Response (ACS DR) leaders have requested assistance.

"The city of Blythe has been taking in refugees during the past three months," reported W. Derrick Lea, North American Division (NAD) ACS DR director. "Intricately involved in this activity has been the Blythe Central Seventh-day Adventist Church. First, the local church was assisting Riverside County with temporary housing for families that were being housed in California after crossing into the U.S. The county asked if organizations would provide lodging while it was determined where the people would be sent on a more permanent basis. The Blythe church volunteered to be one such place of refuge."

The church reported that at the height of this arrangement they were inundated with upward of 200 people at any given time. This

brought challenges to the church building, which was not equipped to handle crowds of this capacity adequately. "The church tried to meet the needs with local church resources," Lea said.

After the church's work was publicized, the conference learned of the congregation's role. The Southwestern California Conference ACS, which includes Blythe, became aware of some of these needs and reached out to the NAD. "Since that contact, we have offered support and communicated with them about what assistance we might give," Lea added.

In a discussion with Lea and ACS DR personnel, the county liaison revealed that the flow of refugees had been stopped as the federal government placed a hold on people coming from the shelters and was now holding them in Mexico. "As of July 7, 2019, no one knows for certain what will happen after the hold is lifted, but the expectation is that the flow will soon once again take place." The county is hoping the Blythe church will continue to help.

The situation in Blythe is fluid, Lea said. ACS DR planned to meet with conference officials to determine the next steps. "Additionally, the church group has requested we

meet with them to ascertain how they can better meet the needs of the community," he said. "The state liaison asked to be involved in the conversation to better ensure things are in place to provide consistent, effective support. The state has even offered some funding should we be able to provide a usable facility."

HELPING IN TEXAS

Texas is another place where local church members and ACS personnel have been making a difference for those in need. Southwestern Union ACS DR directors have reported that ACS already has made two trips down to McArthur, delivering items such as clothing and comfort kits. Since these deliveries took place, the state Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) has asked if ACS could deliver additional goods to this area.

"The Southwestern Union [Conference] reached out to the NAD, as their resources were exhausted. Within the week, we were able to approve some financial support for the union, and items were ordered for another delivery to the border," Lea said. "In addition to this support, we sent out a request for certain needed items throughout the division. Because many conferences have inquired as to how they could be of support, this has created a ready-made opportunity for them to be involved in the work in the weeks ahead.

"The NAD will continue to look for how we might support these efforts," he added. ▀



Torben Bergland, psychiatrist and Adventist Health Ministries associate director. PHOTO: ADVENTIST NEWS NETWORK

ADVENTIST PSYCHIATRIST DISCUSSES HOW TO UNDERSTAND, PREVENT FANATICISM

QUOTING A CHURCH COFOUNDER, HE SAID HEALTH REFORM SHOULD NOT BECOME 'HEALTH DEFORM.'

BY MARCOS PASEGGI, ADVENTIST REVIEW

What I am going to share with you today may challenge you; it may trigger some soul-searching," said Seventh-day Adventist psychiatrist Torben Bergland at the third Global Conference on Health and Lifestyle, organized by the General Conference Health Ministries Department and hosted by Loma Linda University on July 12, 2019.

His assertion was the opening statement of a presentation entitled "What's Unhealthy About Fanaticism," in which Bergland, an associate director of the church's Health Ministries Department, unpacked how the fanatical mind thinks and works and how to prevent it.

According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, Bergland said, fanaticism is an "outlook or behavior especially as exhibited by excessive enthusiasm, unreasoning zeal, or wild and extravagant notions

on some subject." At the same time, he cautioned, it's not just an issue of placing labels on others but something we all have the potential to fall into. At least part of the problem, he said, is the fact that we forget being human is being fallible.

THE ISSUE OF FALLIBILITY

Citing scholar H. J. Perkinson, Bergland said that "fanaticism is a flight from fallibility, and to be a human being is to be fallible." He explained that our fallibility is really difficult to accept because all would like to be perfect. But even though everything that God makes is made perfect, all that humankind makes is imperfect, inadequate.

At the same time, Bergland said, as Perkinson reminds us, humans can ignore their condition of fallibility and declare that their knowledge is true, that their actions are good. In other words, they can claim

to be like God. "At this point they become fanatics," he said.

Bergland explained that according to Perkinson, fanatics are dogmatic, in that they insist that their theories, their ideologies, their solutions are the correct ones. Fanatics are also obscurantists, since they ignore (or cannot perceive) arguments, facts, or consequences that refute their solutions. "And finally, a fanatic is authoritarian," he quoted Perkinson as saying. "When they have power, they try to impose their answers on others." "The fundamental objection to fanaticism is that it prevents improvement," Bergland said, quoting Perkinson again. "Instead of improving what they possess and process, fanatics dogmatically celebrate it, obscure its inadequacies, and strive to impose it on others."

IGNORANCE AND BELIEF

Fanaticism is often related to the problem of ignorance, in which "the ignorant are too ignorant to know they are ignorant," Bergland said. He quoted it as the Dunning-Kruger effect, in which "poor performers in many social and intellectual domains seem largely unaware of just how deficient their expertise is." It is something that presents a double problem, as their "incomplete and misguided knowledge leads them to make mistakes, but those same deficits also prevent them from recognizing when they are making mistakes and other people [are] choosing more wisely," he explained.

Quoting E. Hoffer, Bergland said that fanatics “cannot be weaned away from their cause by an appeal to reason and moral sense,” but they find “no difficulty in swinging suddenly and wildly from one holy cause to another.” They cannot be convinced but only converted.”

A fanatic, explained Bergland,

“WHEN
PEOPLE
ARE VERY
JUDGMENTAL,
VERY HARSH
WITH OTHERS,
I WONDER
WHAT THEY
ARE HIDING
OR RUNNING
AWAY FROM.”

often performs acts of self-denial, which seems to confer upon the person the right to be harsh and merciless toward others. Quoting Hoffer once more, he read, “The awareness of . . . blemishes and shortcomings inclines the frustrated to detect ill will and meanness in their fellows. . . . We usually strive to reveal in others the blemishes we hide in ourselves.”

“When people are very judgmental, very harsh with others, I wonder what they are hiding or running

away from,” Bergland said. “When someone seemingly is overly focused on some specific sin, I wonder if the person himself actually may be struggling with that exact thing or something similar.”

ADVENTISTS, HEALTH, AND FANATICISM

Adventist Church cofounder and author Ellen White had a profound understanding of fanaticism, Bergland noted. Even though White advocated for dietary and other changes for better health, she explained that going to extremes was, in her words, “the desire and plan of Satan.”

Our enemy wants, she wrote in her book *Evangelism*, “to bring in among us those who will go to great extremes—people of narrow minds, who are critical and sharp, and very tenacious in holding their own conceptions of what the truth means.” She added, “They will be exacting, and will seek to enforce rigorous duties, and go to great lengths in matters of minor importance, while they neglect the weightier matters of the law—judgment and mercy and the love of God.”¹

She warned that “if Satan cannot keep souls bound in the ice of indifference, he will try to push them into the fire of fanaticism,”² and thus bring the faith into disrepute.

In her book *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, White added, “Extremists do more harm in a few months than they can undo in a lifetime. They are engaged in a work which Satan

loves to see go on. Two classes have been presented before me: first, those who are not living up to the light which God has given them; secondly, those who are too rigid in carrying out their one-sided ideas of reform, and enforcing them on others. When they take a position, they stand to it stubbornly, and carry nearly everything over the mark.”³

In 1901 White wrote, “I have something to say in reference to extreme views of health reform. Health reform becomes health deform, a health destroyer, when it is carried to extremes.”³

On the other hand, truly following the example of Jesus will prevent us from going to extremes, Bergland said. Quoting White once more, this time from her book *Gospel Workers*, he emphasized, “Those who are close students of the Word, following Christ in humility of soul, will not go to extremes. The Savior never went to extremes, never lost self-control, never violated the laws of good taste.”⁵ In closing, Bergland said, “It is my prayer that the church, that Adventist health care and health ministries, and each one of us also, will be like Jesus.”

¹ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946), p. 212.

² Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 5, p. 644.

³ Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Diet and Foods* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1938), p. 196.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

⁵ Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1915), p. 317.

NEW COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE WILL HELP MINISTRIES INCREASE ONLINE VISIBILITY

NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION INITIATIVE IS A PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CENTER FOR ONLINE EVANGELISM.

BY NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION SOCIAL MEDIA AND BIG DATA

The North American Division (NAD) recently released its first comprehensive guide to search engine optimization for ministries. The *Search Engine Optimization* guidebook is designed to help Seventh-day Adventist entities evangelize online through effective content creation, website ranking best practices, and reputation management.

“The Seventh-day Adventist Church has historically been at the forefront of using tools and technologies to advance present truth—from print to radio to television. Now is the time to leverage the untapped potential of such digital communications as search engine optimization for the customization of our ministry services as part of a broader digital strategy that relies on making data-driven decisions,” states Alvin Kibble, vice president for Big Data + Social Media, Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, Literature Ministries, and Executive Coaching, Training, and Development for the NAD.

The 142-page document is a culmination of nine months’ work, as well as a collaborative partnership between the NAD’s Social Media + Big Data Department and the Cen-

ter for Online Evangelism. It’s a step-by-step guide designed to be easy to follow and implement, leaders reported. It will be a “living document,” which will undergo regular updates as technologies change, while the underlying philosophy will remain largely the same.

Search engine optimization (SEO) is an ever-evolving set of strategies used in online marketing to help organizations reach more of their target audience. It is the process of utilizing a variety of techniques to improve a website’s visibility in unpaid search engine results. The higher a website ranks when a person enters search terms related to it, the more web traffic it receives. Most people do not scroll past the first page of search engine results.

“Our challenge as a church is to embrace these techniques in order to cut through the clutter online and reach more seekers in an increasingly digital world,” said Jamie Domm, digital strategist for the NAD. “This guide is designed to equip ministries of all sizes to truly meet people where they are.” Today, that’s online.

“By being intentional and strate-



gic, we can improve our digital curb appeal and encourage more people to encounter and possibly embrace our message,” Domm added.

A good example of the effects of SEO is that 74,000 people google “Bible study” each month. The name “Jesus” is googled 1.5 million times per month, and “Adventist” 18,000 times per month. This data comes from keyword research tools Keyword Planner (Google Ads), Ubersuggest, and Keywords Everywhere.

“People are literally googling for God but not finding our messages of hope and wholeness. We can no longer ignore the potential of this vast online mission field of people who already want what we have to offer—an audience we may never otherwise meet!” said Amy Prindle, lead content strategist at the Center for Online Evangelism. It is a significant ministry opportunity if Adventist websites can rank higher in the search results Google displays for these search terms, she said.

“I believe the next Great Awakening will be a digital one. This is our generation’s Great Commission,” Domm said.

With some education, Domm added, every ministry can invest the time to implement these valuable techniques. “It is your chance to learn insider information for free and use it for the gospel,” she said. ▀

Poverty is frequently a precursor to religious persecution as majority populations turn on minorities as scapegoats during times of extreme social and economic stress.



ADRA president Jonathan Duffy at the second annual Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom Summit at the U.S. Department of State in Washington, D.C. on July 17, 2019. PHOTO: ADRA INTERNATIONAL

“POVERTY PLANTS THE SEEDS OF RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE”

ADRA PRESIDENT ADDRESSES U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT SUMMIT ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.

BY ADVENTIST DEVELOPMENT AND RELIEF AGENCY

Jonathan Duffy, president of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), spoke in front of a packed room during the second annual Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom Summit at the U.S. Department of State in Washington, D.C., on July 17, 2019. He was there to address the preservation of religious liberty for all.

Focusing on the theme “Religious Freedom in Conflict and Crisis Zones: Protecting Vulnerable Minorities,” Duffy spoke about the connection between poverty and religious violence on a panel with senior humanitarian leaders.

“If our goal is to address religious freedom violations, the place to start is addressing poverty,”

Duffy stated. He pointed out that poverty is frequently a precursor to religious persecution as majority populations turn on minorities as scapegoats during times of extreme social and economic stress.

“For example,” Duffy said, “the World Bank reports that the Rakhine State, home to the Rohingya, is the poorest state in Myanmar. Its poverty rate is twice the national average, with almost 80 percent of the state living in poverty.”

One solution to this, according to Duffy, involves the need to develop places like the Rakhine State before “religious violence flares up.” Only through addressing the economic conditions can we

prevent extreme religious violence, he added.

Panelists also discussed the importance of data-driven solutions; the challenges of ensuring disadvantaged minorities receive needed assistance without exacerbating preexisting resentment against them; and the need to tackle grant compliance requirements that inhibit effective delivery of aid to endangered religious minorities.

Speakers at the event also included U.S. secretary of state Mike Pompeo; speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi; U.S. secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar; former United Kingdom member of Parliament and human rights activist Lord David Alton; and representatives of other leading faith-based humanitarian organizations.

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency is the humanitarian arm of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Its work empowers communities and changes lives around the globe by providing sustainable community development and disaster relief. ▀



ADVENTISTS PLANT COCONUT TREES TO BEAUTIFY BEACHES AFFECTED BY HURRICANE. Members of the Maranatha Seventh-day Adventist Church on the Caribbean island of Tortola recently planted dozens of coconut trees along the shores in an effort to beautify their island after Hurricane Irma hit hard in 2017. Pathfinders, church leaders, and the church's community services organization planted 69 trees on Trellis Bay, Beef Island, and Josiah's Bay in the British Virgin Islands in late May 2019.



BRAZILIAN COLLEGE STUDENTS SPEND VACATION SERVING ON FOUR CONTINENTS. Two hundred fifty students and faculty of the Adventist University Center of São Paulo (UNASP) in Brazil are spending their vacation in volunteer projects across four continents. According to organizers, 14 locations in eight countries will benefit from their acts of service. Destinations for projects selected this year by the school include various locations across Brazil and also in Angola, Chile, Cyprus, Egypt, Ireland, Paraguay, and New York, United States.



ANDREWS UNIVERSITY RECEIVES GRANT TO HELP PEOPLE WITH PARKINSON'S. Parkinson Voice Project (PVP), a nonprofit organization, has named the Andrews University School of Communication Sciences and Disorders as a recipient of its 2019 SPEAK OUT! AND LOUD Crowd Grant Program. Up to 90 percent of people with Parkinson's are at high risk of losing their ability to speak, say PVP representatives. Recipients will receive free training for their speech-language pathologists and graduate students, as well as speech therapy supplies; and some will receive funding.



SERIES HAS A BIG IMPACT IN AUSTRALIA'S VICTORIA REGION. Evangelistic meetings conducted by It Is Written speakers John Bradshaw and Eric Flickinger in Australia attracted more than 1,000 attendees. The series also had a significant impact on church members. According to a survey conducted at the end of the series, 78 percent of members said it had increased their biblical understanding, 88 percent said it reaffirmed their belief in the Adventist message, and 87 percent said they were now more likely to share the good news of Jesus with others.



JUSTICE PREVAILS IN ANGOLA FOR FIVE ADVENTISTS. An acquittal by the Supreme Court of Angola has ended a two-year legal ordeal for four Adventist Church pastors and one layperson falsely accused in an abduction conspiracy. The accusations of kidnapping against the men stemmed from an incident that took place in 2015, involving a staged abduction of a former Adventist conference president and a demand for money from the church. Those responsible for the fake kidnapping sought to cast blame elsewhere, which eventually resulted in charges being brought against six Adventist men.



WOMEN'S MINISTRIES INITIATIVE PROVIDES BEDDING FOR PUBLIC HOSPITALS. A group of Seventh-day Adventist women from eastern Guatemala delivered 561 bedsheets to four hospitals in the cities of Chiquimula, Zacapa, Jalapa, and Jutiapa. Many local hospitals lack supplies, and the life cycle of the bedding supplies in a hospital is approximately three months. Funds for the bedsheets, totaling more than US\$5,000, were collected among local Adventist churches. Members were encouraged to each purchase one bedsheet (which cost about US\$10).



ADVENTIST CHURCH RELAUNCHES BACKGROUND CHECK VERIFICATION.

The web-based verification program for volunteers in North America is now called Adventist Screening Verification. The name change comes as the company processing the verifications is also undergoing a name change. North American Division leaders determined that now was a good time to establish a permanent name for the division's volunteer screening program, irrespective of the professional company retained to process the screenings.

What do they experience when they visit your church?

Awoman walks into church wearing her blond hair very short, dressed in black denim pants, white T-shirt, and black leather jacket. A man approaches and asks, “Are you a man or a woman?”

Caught slightly off guard, she replies, “Uh, a woman.”

“Well, why don’t you dress like one?” the man harrumphs as he walks away, leaving her wondering why she bothered to come to church that morning.

A well-dressed African American walks into a Seventh-day Adventist church one Sabbath. One of the first people to greet him offers, “You should probably go to the church down the road; you’d feel more comfortable worshipping with your own people.”

A young woman raised in church returns after years of attending university and establishing her career. The preacher, speaking about something entirely different, notices her in the congregation, sets aside his notes, and directs a tirade against her spiritual and moral deficiencies (as he thinks he understands them).

SALVATION, NOT CONDEMNATION

For a movement raised up to proclaim “the hour of [God’s] judgment” (Rev. 14:7), these vignettes, for some, illustrate how we’re supposed to deal with those who deserve some sort of correction, even rebuke.

The challenge, however, is to compare the words

and actions of these “defenders of the faith” with Jesus, the one who said, “Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him” (John 3:14, 15).

Following these are words known and loved by every Christian: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (verse 16).

And immediately following this, one of the Bible’s greatest promises, are these words: “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him” (verse 17).

Did you notice? Jesus came to offer salvation, not condemnation. Sometimes His followers seem better at condemning than at reflecting His character of love, grace, and inclusion.

We sometimes imagine that we’re responsible for turning sinners into saints; that people attend church so they can be “straightened out.” There are those in power in the world who sometimes use their influence to abuse others—physically, sexually, emotionally. There are stories about the church of those who have been abused spiritually, too often by those who thought they were doing God’s will.

BRUISED REEDS AND SMOLDERING WICKS

It’s unnecessary to recount all the people who experienced grace and acceptance as they came into Jesus’ orbit during His earthly ministry. But it’s useful to remember that those who benefited most from His attention included those most likely

SEE ALL THE

STEPHEN CHAVEZ



to be overlooked today: laborers, immigrants, single parents, children, sinners, the diseased, those with physical or emotional disabilities. Jesus was there to support and encourage anyone to whom life had dealt a bad hand. Matthew, quoting Isaiah, said about Jesus: "A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he has brought justice through to victory" (Matt. 12:20).

And why is that important?

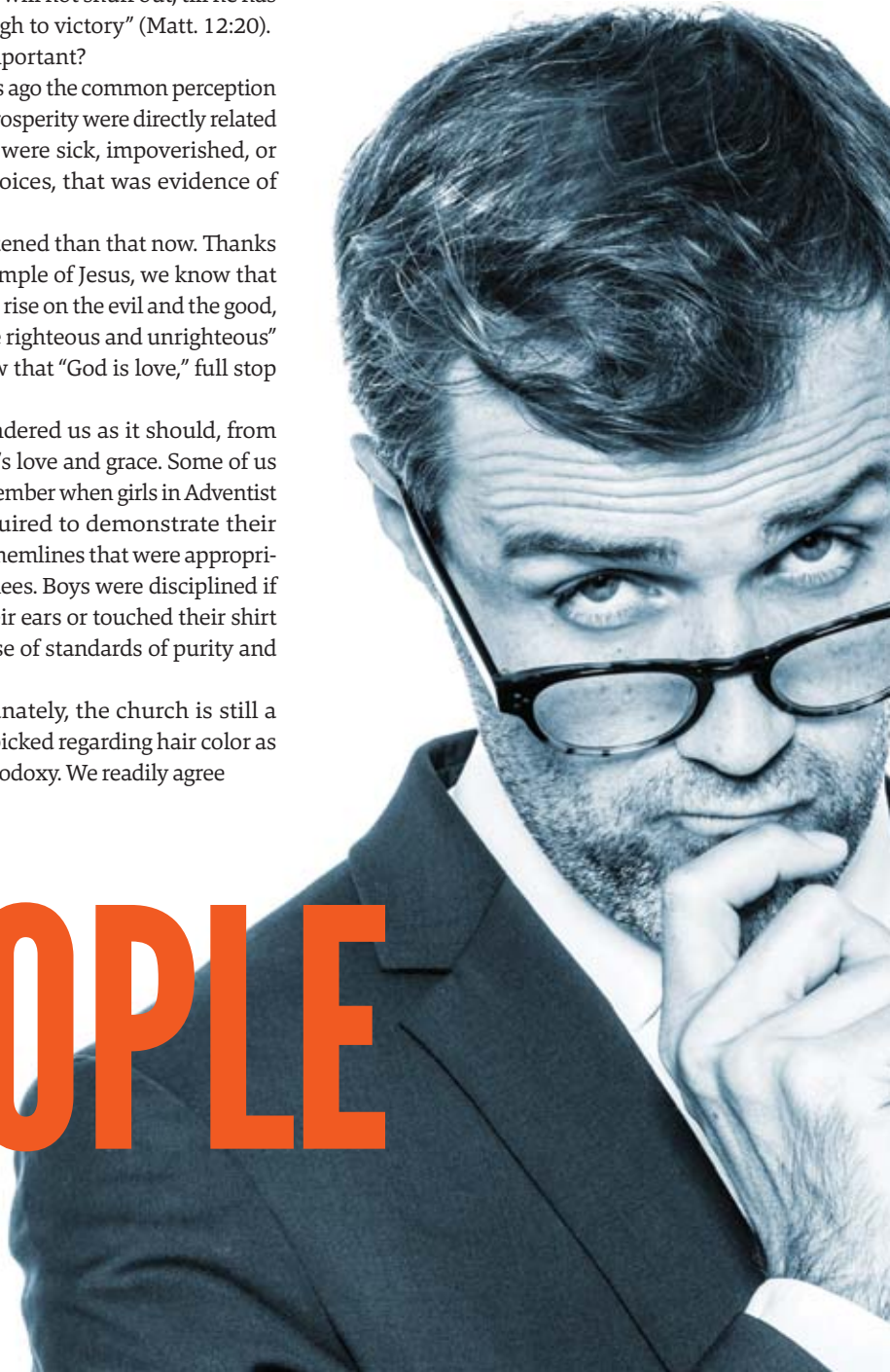
Because 2,000 years ago the common perception was that health and prosperity were directly related to God's favor. If you were sick, impoverished, or the victim of bad choices, that was evidence of God's judgment.

We're more enlightened than that now. Thanks to the words and example of Jesus, we know that God "causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and unrighteous" (Matt. 5:45). We know that "God is love," full stop (1 John 4:8).

But that hasn't hindered us as it should, from reflecting poorly God's love and grace. Some of us are old enough to remember when girls in Adventist academies were required to demonstrate their modesty by showing hemlines that were appropriately close to their knees. Boys were disciplined if their hair covered their ears or touched their shirt collars. This in defense of standards of purity and godliness.

For some, unfortunately, the church is still a place where nits are picked regarding hair color as if it is a matter of orthodoxy. We readily agree

PEOPLE



The church is a sanctuary in every sense of the word.

People go to church to be safe, protected, encouraged, and supported.

that bullying and emotional abuse should not be tolerated in society and online. But have we done enough to make our congregations spiritually and emotionally safe places? If people can't experience grace in church, where will they experience it?

SINNERS IN THE HANDS OF A LOVING GOD

In his book *The Jesus I Never Knew*, Philip Yancey tells of a woman who used prostitution to support her drug habit. As she cataloged her shameful behaviors someone asked if she had ever thought of going to church for help. "Church!" she cried. "Why would I ever go there? They'd just make me feel worse than I already do!"¹

Can we imagine anyone saying about Jesus, "He'd only make me feel worse than I already feel"?

The church is a sanctuary in every sense of the word. People go to church to be safe, protected, encouraged, and supported. Gone are the days of eighteenth century preacher Jonathan Edwards and his sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," along with "mourner's benches" near the front of a chapel where penitents went to weep for their sins and beg for heaven's mercy.

Most of us feel broken at some point. It may be the result of some personal or professional trauma; disease may show up as an unwelcome visitor; circumstances may conspire to destroy relationships; it may be our conscience. When those things happen, when we're tempted to doubt that God is really on our side, when the accuser torments us about our failure, we need a place we can go to experience the power of God's love and forgiveness; where we can be surrounded by people who know our frailties, love us just the same, and will strengthen and help us grow by the power of God's Spirit.

WELCOME HOME

Rebecca Manley Pippert, in the book *Out of the Saltshaker*, tells the story of "Bill," a young man who lived in a university town and was characterized by his ragged clothes, unruly hair, and the fact that he

always went around barefoot (even in winter).

One Sunday Bill entered a middle-class church across the street from campus. This was 40 years ago, when most people would have looked down at someone attending church dressed in blue jeans, a T-shirt, and . . . no shoes.

Bill began walking down the center aisle looking for a place to sit. With attendance at church that day unusually high, Bill walked closer and closer to the podium, unable to find a place to sit. Finding no available seating, he squatted on the floor and sat cross-legged in front of the pulpit.

Immediately another drama began to play out. An elderly man, dressed properly in suit, shirt, tie, and shiny dress shoes, began walking down the aisle. Suddenly the church became utterly silent as people began to imagine what they thought was going to happen next.

They never imagined that when the old man reached Bill, he slowly, with difficulty, lowered himself onto the floor and worshipped with Bill while sitting on the carpet.

Pippert writes: "The irony is that probably the only one who failed to see how great the giving had been that Sunday was Bill. But grace is always that way. It gives without the receiver realizing how great the gift really is."²

The church in which I worship has the largest Adventist congregation on the East Coast of the United States. A friend of mine often remarks: "There are people here I've never seen before. When I ask if they're visitors, they say, 'We've been members here for 10, 12, 15 years.'"

This is how I've solved that embarrassment. My standard greeting to everyone I see—old or young; male or female; Black, White, Asian, or Hispanic; gay or straight—is: "Welcome to Sligo church. I'm glad you're here." 🍌

¹ Philip Yancey, *The Jesus I Never Knew* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), p. 148.

² Rebecca Manley Pippert, *Out of the Saltshaker* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1979), p. 178.

Stephen Chavez is an assistant editor of *Adventist Review*. He chairs the administrative board of Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church in Takoma Park, Maryland.



Introducing It Is Written's new full-time channel!

Enjoy our great lineup for FREE on your favorite device: the award-winning *It Is Written* series; *It Is Written Classics* with founder George Vandeman; our exclusive new shows *Conversations*, *Line Upon Line*, and *In the Word*; several Spanish series including *Escrito Está*; and other high quality programs. New programs are added daily, so watch now!

You can watch It Is Written TV online 24/7 at itiswritten.tv

Look for It Is Written TV on these platforms:



The Android robot is modified from work created by Google and used under the Creative Commons 3.0 Attribution License. Apple TV is a registered trademark of Apple Inc. Amazon, Fire, and all related logos are trademarks of Amazon, com, Inc. or its affiliates. Roku and the Roku Logo are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Roku, Inc.



Copyright © 2019, It Is Written, Inc. All rights reserved.

Winner of 18 Telly Awards (2019)

1 Gold	4 Silver	13 Bronze
--------	----------	-----------



HIS MERCY MADE ME WHOLE

*An abortion threatened my sanity,
until God stepped in.*

GRACE BONDURANT

I grew up in a Christian home and decided when I was 13 that I wanted to save myself for sex within marriage. My dad was a pastor, and he was gone a lot when I was young. I guess because of this I began to seek out affirmation and attention from other father figures. In high school I latched onto a male teacher as a mentor. I became his teacher's assistant, and he was my coach for after-school sports. We began spending a lot of time together.

The relationship changed over time, and I noticed he was expressing interest in me. This attention fed a deep unmet need I had known all my life. I soaked it up and fell head over heels in love with him. He knew that I wanted to wait for marriage.

We had discussed it before. But he was very experienced. I was not. I didn't know how to say no. I was so in love with him. I didn't want to lose him. He was my teacher. I was accustomed to doing what he said: it wasn't a relationship of equals.

One night I lost my virginity to him. Lost is such an appropriate word to me! I spiraled into a dark and deep depression. My purity was gone. Just a few weeks later I found out I was pregnant.

At first I was scared. But then I started to get excited at the thought that we would get married and raise our baby together. He wasn't: he told me I needed to have an abortion. If people found out he was the father of my baby, he would be fired and go to jail and we would never be together. He prom-



ised that we would get married after I graduated, and that he would give me all the babies I wanted to make up for this one. I didn't know what to do.

KNOCKED OUT OF ORBIT

All my life I have believed abortion is wrong. But I felt trapped: nowhere to go; no one to turn to. I couldn't talk to anyone because he would get in trouble. So I let him take me to the abortion clinic. I had to go through the procedure while awake. I heard all the noises and felt everything. It hurt. I received no counseling before or after. As soon as it was over they sent me home. I felt like a planet knocked out of orbit. I was convinced God couldn't love me anymore after what I had done.

Not only had I thrown away my purity, but I believed I was now a murderer. I felt I had committed the unpardonable sin. To make it worse, this man ended things with me after the abortion (despite his promises). Shortly after, he got married to someone else and had a baby girl. He even introduced his baby to me. I felt devastated; that little girl could have been our baby.

I graduated high school and went off to Southern Adventist University for college. But I was utterly and completely broken. I battled with dark presences haunting me at night. My roommate told me I cried in my sleep. I wanted God to take my life because I no longer found any joy in living. I felt I couldn't turn to anyone because I was afraid

I felt trapped with nowhere to go and no one to turn to.

of judgment and condemnation. I felt I was living a lie, and I was exhausted by trying to cover up my secret. At times it felt as if there were no redemption for me.

But then God rolled up His sleeves and started the process of saving me. Just as the Israelites long ago, I was in Egypt, enslaved to my guilt and in bondage to my shame. They were cruel taskmasters that never relented. Only God's grace delivered me.

A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

I remember one Valentine's Day at Southern. I was feeling really low because I was surrounded by couples and happy people in love. I hadn't been able to date and have a functional relationship because I believed deep in my core that I was unlovable and that something was broken in me. Valentine's Day only reminded me that I had no worth and that no Christian man could ever love me.

But that day I found a surprise package waiting for me at my dorm. It was a teddy bear and some flowers with a note that said, "Grace, you are my precious princess, and I love you unconditionally. I have been by your side all your life and watched you grow up with pride. No one is more important to Me than you. I am with you always. Prince Jesus." I cried my eyes out, hardly able to believe what I was reading.

I didn't believe this was really a message from God. Why would He do a miracle for me? I thought about how the Israelites must have felt when God did the impossible and split the Red Sea for them to escape. God did many other things for me but one miracle finally set me free.

A friend of mine found out about this abortion recovery conference called Rachel's Vineyard. It was for any woman who had gone through abortion and needed healing. I was in college, low on funds, and I didn't have money to go. But the group

contacted me and told me an anonymous person was sponsoring me. So I went.

I met several other women with the same heartache as mine. Many things happened at this retreat that showed me that God was looking out for me. I finally found the healing, closure, and forgiveness I needed. I finally felt that I could breathe, as if a heavy weight had been lifted from me. I had been delivered from the guilt and shame that had engulfed me for so long, and I was washed in the waters of God's mercy and forgiveness.

But like the Israelites who didn't go directly to the Promised Land, I still had some wilderness wandering to do. Some may view that wandering as negative, but God knew I needed a period of transition first. I had been delivered out of Egypt, but Egypt was not out of me. I found myself moving in and out of toxic relationships because that was all I knew. I finally realized that I was still trying to find worth from the love of a man instead of in my identity as God's daughter. But slowly things changed for the better.

CHASING AFTER HIM

After a particularly difficult breakup, while working a job I was miserable in, I heard God beckoning my heart to leave it all behind and chase after Him. I cut all contact with the ex-boyfriend, quit my job, and spent a few weeks out in nature listening to God's voice. He was preparing me to be truly ready to move on to claim the promises He had in store for me. Instead of making New Year's resolutions that year, I chose the word "sanctified" to be my personal motto. I decided to use this word to filter all my decisions going forward. Before, I was unable even to say the word "abortion" or to confess to anyone what I had done. But God has restored me and healed me. I have shared my story at vespers on campus and on a program on the Three Angels Broadcasting Network called *Life After Choice*.

I hope that other women who hear my story might think about abortion differently than the world would have them think about it. I also encourage anyone who may be going through the guilt I did to know that God still heals. He is ready to redeem us and move us to bigger and brighter days, as I know He is doing with me. 🍀

Grace Bondurant is a registered nurse who writes from Collegedale, Tennessee.

INVISIBLE SPIDERS FROM MARS

Nothing differentiates our era from others more than does science, specifically the technology it spawns. If, for example, someone had told me 25 years ago about a phone, the size of a half slice of toast, that enabled you to deposit checks, edit photos, watch movies—indeed, make movies—and so much more, I wouldn't have believed it. Today we give these smartphone processes no more thought than we do a flush toilet.

Thus awed by technology, many people now regard science as the hegemon of truth. Science says that if something is true, then it's true; and to challenge that claim, especially in the name of "faith" or "Scripture," is deemed, even by some Christians, intellectual infantilism.

This thinking is flawed, however.

Suppose a scientist proposes theory X. According to theory X, every time you do Y, Z happens, and it always does. Other scientists do Y, and Z happens exactly as predicted by theory X. An entrepreneur creates, then sells, millions of devices based on Y causing Z according to theory X.

What's the logical conclusion, other than that theory X is true?

No. The odds are greater (perhaps infinitely greater) that theory X is probably not true.

What do I mean?

I have my own theory X, which is that invisible spiders from Mars push everything to the ground. To test my theory X, I do Y (let go of a pencil), and Z happens (it falls to the ground). Other scientists conduct thousands of experiments in which they do Y (let go of a pencil), and Z happens (it falls to the ground)—all according to theory X. Thus we have confirming evidence for theory X, that

spiders from Mars push things to the ground.

However silly, this example reveals what is known as "the underdetermination of theory by evidence." That is, no matter how much experimental evidence exists, including accurate predictions, for a scientific theory, the theory might later be rejected. The history of science is littered with discarded theories once deemed sacrosanct. And who knows what sacrosanct theories of today will be discarded tomorrow?

One of the twentieth century's most influential philosophers of science, Karl Popper (1902-1994), argued that we "can never give positive reasons which justify the belief that a theory is true." There's a zero probability, Popper asserted, of ever proving a theory true. Not that there's a zero probability that the theory is true, but only a zero probability of *proving* it true.

This is why some philosophers of science argue that science has nothing to do with seeking truth. Rather, science is about describing the natural world well enough to make predictions about what it will do, and then manipulating those predictions to our advantage (technology). Thus, however much we are awed by technology, it no more guarantees that the theory behind the technology is true than the theory that invisible spiders from Mars push things to the ground is true, even though the theory works and makes accurate predictions.

Try it yourself and see. ♣

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

CLIFF'S
EDGE
CLIFFORD
GOLDSTEIN



SOME
PHILOSOPHERS
OF SCIENCE
ARGUE THAT
SCIENCE HAS
NOTHING TO DO
WITH SEEKING
TRUTH.



DANGEROUS KISSING COUSINS

*The link between
pornography and
intimate partner
violence*

**CLAUDIO CONSUEGRA
AND PAMELA CONSUEGRA**

Consumption of pornography in the United States has climbed sharply with the proliferation of the Internet and the use of smartphones in particular. Some statistics report that more than 77 percent of Americans view pornography at least once a month.¹ At least 30 percent of all Internet traffic is directed to pornographic websites.²

People of all ages—men, women, even children—are featured on pornographic websites. In adult porn women are often shown being disrespected, coerced, and physically and verbally abused. In a study that looked at 50 pornographic videos that were purchased or rented most often, 88 percent of the 304 scenes contained physical violence; 49 percent contained some form of verbal aggression. Even more disturbing is that 95 percent of the recipients of such treatment, almost all women, were either neutral in their feelings toward the abuse or appeared to respond with pleasure.³

While not all porn portrays physical or verbal violence, even nonviolent porn has been shown to affect consumers. Those who consume even nonviolent porn are more likely to support statements that agree with or even promote abuse and sexual aggression toward women and girls.⁴ Most porn depicts men as powerful and in charge, and women as submissive and obedient. This attitude sets the stage for unequal power dynamics in couple relationships and the resulting acceptance of verbal and physical aggression against women.

Porn consumption affects not only men's attitudes toward women, but also their actions. In a study conducted in 2016, researchers concluded that "on the average, individuals who consume pornography more frequently are more likely to hold attitudes conducive



[favorable] to sexual aggression and engage in actual acts of sexual aggression.”⁵ Those who consume porn are more likely to use verbal pressure, drugs, and alcohol to coerce women into sex, and exposure to porn increases violent fantasies and violent assaults.⁶

A study in Australia looked at all studies from the 1980s that found a strong correlation between exposure to porn and aggressive attitudes. One study, conducted in 2006, concluded: “Exposure to sexually violent material increases male viewers’ acceptance of rape myths, desensitizes them to sexual violence, erodes their empathy for victims of violence, and informs more callous attitudes toward female victims.”⁷

THE MIRROR IN OUR BRAINS

What causes men to develop such demeaning attitudes? Sex and violence share a number of common brain pathways. Both behaviors evoke intense states of arousal. Fighting and mating share not only some of the same neural circuits, but also some of the same neurotransmitters and hormones that stimulate the brain’s reward and pleasure systems.

Scientists refer to “mirror cells,” brain cells that fire not only when we actually do things ourselves, or when we experience certain emotions, but also when we watch other people do those things.⁸ For example, we may cry at the funeral for someone we love; or we may also cry when we see somebody else crying for the loss of a loved one, even if we don’t know them. That’s why we may even cry at a sad, or happy, scene in a movie; our mirror cells place us in the scene.

Translating that into watching porn, consumers’ brains naturally start to respond to the emotions of the actors they’re watching on the screen. As they become aroused, their brains connect their feelings of arousal, almost as if they were present, as if they were actually having the experience.

When consumers repeatedly watch scenes of victims of physical and verbal violence who seem to consent or even find pleasure in being hurt, they come to believe that women like to be treated that way. Di McLeod, director of the Gold Coast Centre for Sexual Violence, stated: “In the past few years we have had a huge increase in intimate partner rape of women from 14 to 80+. The biggest common denominator is consumption of porn by the offender.”⁹

IT’S A PRIVATE MATTER

Most, if not all, of those who use porn say that watching porn is simply a private matter; that it doesn’t hurt anyone.

But a large body of research¹⁰ shows that watching porn makes consumers more likely to support violence against women, and to believe that women secretly enjoy being raped, which may lead to sexual aggression in real life.

The problem is complicated with the fact that porn use often escalates over time: the longer people watch porn, the more likely they’ll find themselves seeking out increasingly shocking, hardcore scenes, including violent content. The more violent porn a person watches, the more they are inclined to support violence and to act violently. One study found that “those with higher exposure to violent porn were six times more likely to have raped someone than those who had low past exposure.”¹¹

While some people may think that porn is only that which they can purchase at some magazine stands, or watch on their computers, tablets, or cellular phones, porn, particularly violent porn, went public with the release of the books *Fifty Shades of Grey* and movies by the same title.

Writing on Foxnews.com, Dawn Hawkins said, “The popularity of *Fifty Shades of Grey* among women also sends a message to men that unrestrained domination is what women want. And, educated by porn, they know how to do it. A majority of men have been getting a regular diet of this kind of violent sex and degradation through porn for years. In it women are tied up and treated like animals and objects. Much of it is rape-themed.”¹²

Then she astutely concludes, “Hold up a mirror to Christian Grey and you’ll see the reflection of a culture saturated in exposure to violent pornography. This is the porn that has and continues to groom the next generation of men to believe that they are entitled to violent sexual behavior, and that women should enjoy it.”¹³

Mary Anne Layden, director of the Sexual Trauma and Psychopathology Program Center at the University of Pennsylvania, and who has written extensively about the way pornography teaches values, stated that “40 percent of abused women indicated that their partner used violent pornography.”¹⁴

She also cited research that found that men who view pornography tend to view their partners as less attractive. It affects negatively the way they see their

own spouse because she will never be able to compare or compete with the countless and apparently nearly perfect women they see on the screen. She will probably never “act” the way those women do.

DANGEROUS INTERSECTION

Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October gives us an opportunity to recognize that issues such as domestic violence do not occur in a vacuum. Instead, they have their origin and are reinforced by issues such as prior sexual abuse, sexual assault, and exposure to and abuse of pornography. The National Center on Sexual Exploitation highlights three ways domestic violence intersects with pornography:¹⁵

1 *Pornography sets expectations of violence and abuse.* It acts as a form of sexual education, teaching children, young men, and adult males that female sexual partners should enjoy physical acts such as hitting, gagging, slapping, or nonconsensual sex. We are often asked questions by women at couples’ retreats about certain forms of sex which they were unaccustomed to before, questions their husbands are not asking, while at times requiring those forms of sex from their wives.

One woman told us how her husband demands sex every day. When she rejects his advances, he forces her. In other words, he rapes her.

In a study of 40 survivors of marital rape, pornography was used by one third of the abusive partners. In many cases women were forced to watch pornography, and to reenact what they had seen on screen.¹⁶

2 *Abusers sometimes use their own couple-made pornography or nude images to manipulate their victims.* Abusers often use pornographic videos or nude pictures they have taken of their victims in

order either to coerce or to punish victims in abusive relationships by threatening to share or actually sharing them online. The expression “revenge pornography” is not often connected to domestic violence or abusive relationships, but these phenomena often overlap.

Mary Anne Franks, professor at the University of Miami School of Law, stated, “Domestic violence sounds like a serious thing, and sharing pictures doesn’t always sound serious to people. But these things can’t be separated—nonconsensual [sharing of] pornography is becoming one of the most common ways to try to control and intimidate a partner.”¹⁷ Fortunately, at least 40 states and the District of Columbia have passed laws against nonconsensual sharing of videos or nude pictures.¹⁸

3 *Pornography use by domestic abusers can increase the odds of sexual assault.* In a study of 271 battered women, in which 30 percent stated their abusers reportedly used pornography,¹⁹ “the majority of women (58 percent) whose abusers used pornography acknowledged that the pornography had affected their abuse.”

Research conducted by the journal *Violence Against Women* found a link between pornography use and marital rape, a form of domestic abuse.²⁰

BREAKING UP IS HARD TO DO

In a world of Internet clouds, tablets, computers, and handheld devices, the war against pornography and how it falsely portrays relationships and love will probably never be completely won. Politicians may continue to pass laws to try to control it. Some celebrities may speak against it, while others surrender to the temptation of money, fame, and the idea that they are producing art. Some athletes live exemplary lives, while others teach through their example that the powerful can take advantage of the weak. Singers and songwriters may write about love, while the lyrics of some styles of music continue to demean women and incite violence against them.

The church plays a unique role, by word and example, in teaching how women and the weak should be treated, and the proper role of sex within the context of marriage. Some Christians, just like those who don’t know Christ, may think that occasionally or regularly viewing pornography is a private matter and does not affect them.

Porn consumption affects not only men’s attitudes toward women, but also their actions.

But even occasional use of pornography affects how they view women, and, more important, how it affects their relationship with Christ. “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?” (Jer. 17:9, ESV).²¹

So what are we to do if we’re caught in this tangled web?


1 *Start the journey to freedom immediately.* We recommend breaking the addiction (yes, addiction) to pornography; the sooner the better. We’ve created a resource to help you get started. Visit www.newfreedomtolove.org for testimonials, sermons, seminars, and other links and resources that can help you get started on the journey toward freedom from porn addiction. Additional help and resources are available from gatewaytowholeness.com. In some cases, professional counseling may be necessary.

2 *It is a heart matter.* Jesus made that clear when He said, “Good people do good things because of the good in their hearts. Bad people do bad things because of the evil in their hearts. Your words [and actions] show what is in your heart” (Luke 6:45, CEV).²² Solomon knew that as well when he wrote, “Carefully guard your thoughts because they are the source of true life” (Prov. 4:23, CEV).

Take these encouraging words and claim them for yourself: “The only defense against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith in His righteousness. Unless we become vitally connected with God, we can never resist the unhalloved effects of self-love, self-indulgence, and temptation to sin. We may leave off many bad habits, for the time we may part company with Satan; but without a vital connection with God, through the surrender of ourselves to Him moment by moment, we shall be overcome.”²³

3 *Recruit others.* Freedom from pornography is not a battle we have to fight alone. Solomon explained: “Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed” (Eccl. 4:9, NLT).²⁴ Begin with your spouse or those closest to you; ask them to help you by being accountability partners. Loneliness often drives individuals to fill that void with porn.

While porn and intimate partner violence are dangerous kissing cousins, we don’t have to be their

instruments, and our spouses and others their hapless victims. It is in our power to make the decision and take the steps necessary, beginning today, to end both of these toxic, poisonous devices of the devil before they destroy others and us. 

¹ www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/does-pornography-lead-to-sexual-assault_us_57c0876ae4b0b01630de8c93, accessed May 5, 2019.

² www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-new-brain/201601/the-explosive-mix-sex-and-violence.

³ A. J. Bridges, R. Wosnitzer, E. Scharrer, C. Sun, R. Liberman, “Aggression and Sexual Behavior In Best-Selling Pornography Videos: A Content Analysis Update,” *Violence Against Women* 16, no. 10 (2010): 1065–1085, accessed May 5, 2019, in fightthenewdrug.org/how-consuming-porn-can-lead-to-violence, accessed May 5, 2019.

⁴ Cited in fightthenewdrug.org/how-consuming-porn-can-lead-to-violence.

⁵ P. J. Wright, R. S. Tokunaga, A. Kraus, “A Meta-Analysis of Pornography Consumption and Actual Acts of Sexual Aggression in General Population Studies,” *Journal of Communication* 66, no. 1 (2016): 183–205.

⁶ Cited in fightthenewdrug.org/how-consuming-porn-can-lead-to-violence/

⁷ Cited in sundayeveryday.me/2015/12/29/the-link-between-domestic-violence-and-porn/, accessed May 5, 2019.

⁸ G. Rizzolatti and L. Craighero, “The Mirror-Neuron System,” *Annual Review of Neuroscience* 27, (2004) 169–192.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Cited in fightthenewdrug.org/how-consuming-porn-can-lead-to-violence/, accessed May 5, 2019.

¹¹ Cited in *Ibid.*

¹² www.foxnews.com/opinion/truth-about-fifty-shades-of-grey-movie-glamorizes-sexual-violence-domestic-abuse, accessed May 5, 2019.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Cited in www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/feb/12/op-ed-to-confront-domestic-violence-we-must-confront-pornography/, accessed May 5, 2019.

¹⁵ endsexualexploitation.org/articles/three-ways-domestic-violence-is-connected-to-pornography/, accessed May 5, 2019.

¹⁶ R. K. Bergen, “The Reality of Wife Rape: Women’s Experiences of Sexual Violence in Marriage. In R. K. Bergen, ed., *Issues in Intimate Violence* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1998), pp 237–250.

¹⁷ Haley Goldberg, “Revenge Porn: When Domestic Violence Goes Viral,” www.self.com/story/revenge-porn-domestic-violence (2017), accessed May 5, 2019.

¹⁸ www.cybercivilrights.org/revenge-porn-laws/, accessed May 5, 2019.

¹⁹ Janet Hinson Shope, “When Words Are Not Enough: The Search for the Effect of Pornography on Abused Women,” *Violence Against Women* 10, no. 1 (2004): 56–72.

²⁰ C. Simmons, P. Lehmann, and S. Collier-Tension, “Linking Male Use of the Sex Industry to Controlling Behaviors in Violent Relationships: An Exploratory Analysis,” *Violence Against Women* 14, no. 34 (2008): 406–417.

²¹ 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.

²² Scripture quotations identified CEV are from the Contemporary English Version. Copyright © American Bible Society 1991, 1995. Used by permission.

²³ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940), p. 324.

²⁴ Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Claudio and Pamela Consuegra are director and associate director (respectively) for the North American Division Department of Family Ministries.



MEN? VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Another side to a serious problem

WILLIE OLIVER

Domestic Violence (DV) refers to a comprehensive mixture of violent deeds perpetrated by one member of a family against another. It frequently describes the maltreatment of a child, spouse, intimate partner, or other family member, and may include physical injury, intimidation, as well as verbal, psychological, and sexual abuse. The primary difference between DV and other assaults is the relationship between the victim and the person responsible for the abuse.

FOCUS OF THE PROBLEM

While victims of DV are mostly women, a remarkable

number of men also sustain physical, mental, and sexual abuse in domestic heterosexual and same-sex relationships.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggest male victimization is a significant public health problem. Data from their comprehensive annual national research on intimate partner violence¹ shows that during their lifetimes:

- approximately one in 10 men (9.6 percent of male population—an estimated 10.6 million men) experienced sexual coercion (e.g., being worn down by someone who repeatedly asked for sex; sexual pressure because of someone using their influence or authority)

- approximately 20 million men reported unwanted sexual contact (e.g., groping)

- an estimated 2 million male victims of completed or attempted rape reported that their first experience occurred prior to age 25

- many males live in fear today: one in 17 men in the United States (6.4 million) were victims of stalking (harassment, intimidated following, etc.), nearly 41 percent of those before age 25, and almost 13 percent prior to age 18

- in the U.S. one in three men (33.6 percent, or 37.3 million) experienced contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner; for 14.9 percent, the experience constituted severe physical violence;

- more than one third of men (34.2 percent or 28.1 million) experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner.

SURPRISING, PERHAPS

Data on sexual activity when



consent is not acquired or given without reservation may engender its own surprise when it is recognized that 82 percent of male victims of sexual coercion reported only female perpetrators, and 53 percent of male victims of unwanted sexual contact reported only female perpetrators. Female aggression is also documented in data on stalking (repetitive harassment, triggering fear or concerns about safety), in which 46 percent of male victims reported being stalked by female perpetrators only.

PURPOSE OF THIS FOCUS

Drawing attention to numbers on female aggression cannot, with any enlightenment, be seen as toning down the reality of outrageous rates of DV against women each year, much higher than they are for men. Rather, it is meant to shine a light on an expanding discussion: it is important to acknowledge that anyone can become a victim of DV, that everyone deserves access to protection, and that we should all do our part to mitigate these realities.

Male victims of DV, much like their female counterparts, experience severe anxiety and insecurity before getting assistance. They are afraid to end such relationships because they've been isolated from friends and family, intimidated, controlled, or physically and emotionally battered. Moreover, their religious beliefs often dictate that they stay with their spouse. They are frightened that their abusers will hurt them if they report the situation. Also, many are in denial about what is happening and believe their partners are good people who will eventually change if they pray hard enough.

WHAT TO DO

The more understanding there is on the issue of DV, the easier it will be for communities to stop the violence before it begins. Also, men in abusive relationships need to know that they are not alone, and that this experience happens without regard to culture, race, occupation, or socioeconomic status.

Because DV can have serious physical and emotional consequences on any victim, the first thing victims can do to protect themselves and stop the abuse is to reach out for help. They should be willing to talk to a friend, family member, pastor, counselor, or someone else they trust, or call a DV helpline. Acknowledging the problem and looking for assistance doesn't mean a victim has failed as a man or as a husband. In fact, sharing the reality of their

Adventist congregations must work toward the goal of making our churches safe spaces.

abuse with the right person will begin to offer much-needed assistance and a sense of release.

Reading this content in a faith-based publication many may respond that such abuse and violence might be taking place far from their spiritual community, certainly not anywhere close to them, or, perish the thought, in their congregation. It may be easier to question the reliability and validity of the research, and push these revolting thoughts to the back of their consciousness, than to think about what can be done to deliberately make their congregations safe spaces for victims and help perpetrators find transformation through acceptance, healing, and change.

As disciples of Jesus, our assignment is to be the hands, feet, and heart of Jesus to a world wounded by victimization of all kinds. After all, Jesus Himself, quoting Isaiah 61:1 from the Hebrew Scriptures, declared: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me . . . to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed" (Luke 4:18, NKJV).²

Adventist congregations must work toward the goal of making our churches safe spaces where victims can share their pain and be heard, and abusers can talk about their disease and find support and healing. Like the early church, we, too, may astonish onlookers by being a community so dedicated to mutual caring that it can truly be said, "They had all things in common" (Acts 4:32, NKJV).¹

¹ National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2015 Data Brief.

² Bible texts credited to NKJV are from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.

Willie Oliver, director of the General Conference Family Ministries Department, coauthored the church's 2019 world missionary book of the year, *Hope for Today's Families*.



KIDSAFE CHURCH

Practical steps to show kids the care of Jesus.

BY DAVID FOURNIER

Does it not seem as though our churches should be places where children can grow closer to God and to their church family without threat of injury or violence?

NEED TO TAKE CARE

The expectation that the world has, and that we have of ourselves, is that our churches will be well organized, that reasonable steps will be

taken to prevent injury or abuse. Society seems more and more prone to take legal action as a means of settling grievances. This is, unfortunately, no less true in the church. The church I'd like to belong to is safe for our children.

Happily, many of our churches are engaging places with safe activities for our children. This includes weekly worship services, Adventurers, Pathfinders, Vacation Bible School, camping



trips, visiting nursing homes, and many more. To facilitate these activities our children must be protected from injury at our facilities, while being transported, or while learning about God in nature.

If we were to conduct a simple survey of our church facility, what risks might we find? Are the carpets free of rips and holes? Are the utility and maintenance rooms secured, or could children access them along with the chemicals, electrical boxes, or tools contained therein? Are hallways and exits free of storage? Do they provide quick and easy egress in case of a fire? Does your church have a kitchen or dining hall with appliances with hot elements, burners, gas, and pots containing hot food items? Is the baptismal tank secured before and after the service until it's drained? Can children gain access to areas of the church that are unsupervised while the adults are engaged in ministry or fellowship? These and more questions should be considered on a regular basis.

Nor should we neglect the evaluation of transportation methods and activity planning. Careful selection of vehicles and drivers should be done to ensure that no shortcuts are taken in regard to safety. Have vehicles been inspected, and have they been maintained on a regular schedule? Are drivers trustworthy, with safe driving records and showing good judgment? Is there thought given to communication when conducting an activity off-site, or to emergency planning, first aid, or a plan B in the event of an accident?

REASONABLE, EXPECTED RISKS

Organizations are expected to address risks as part of their duty. Evaluate your facilities and procedures on a systematic basis. It's a good practice to be sure that those entrusted with the care of our children are oriented to the expected procedures and safety requirements on a regular basis.

Once you have identified these safety risks, the next step is taking action to address and correct them. Safety should be a top priority of the church because it illustrates how we care for people, including our precious children, members, and those we wish to reach with the gospel. Some items that need correction may be simple, and can be remedied quickly at no cost. Others may require planning and financial commitment.

In my experience of examining insurance claims that the church experiences, I've seen that often we

end up paying for these risks one way or another, either up front, by repairing or correcting something proactively, or afterward, when someone is injured. The former tends to be less expensive in the long run, and no amount of money resolves hurt feelings or damage to the church's reputation.

Some other risks our children face aren't so easy to recognize or address. Where there are children, there will be those looking to take advantage of them. I'm sometimes asked why churches seem to be places where abuse takes place. Unfortunately, the answer is that churches are where children are. Also, many churches have much yet to do to improve safety awareness and put safety measures in place for their children.

PROTECTION STEPS

Here are five practical steps to protect children against abuse:

- » Leaders should set a clear tone on this issue. Make it clear that abuse will not be tolerated; and a clear process will be followed if it should happen. All must understand that abuse happens, how it happens, what the signs of abuse are, and what is the process of reporting suspected abuse.
- » Regular members must get to know new people before giving them responsibilities with young churchgoers; we must ensure that they understand and support our rules and expectations, and that their judgment and behavior leave no question of their propriety.
- » Organizers must ensure that no adult is alone with a child. Having at least two adults on the scene improves the likelihood that nothing untoward happens and that expectations of behavior are met. Classrooms should be viewable, with windows in classroom doors to prevent unobserved activities inside.
- » Those representing the church as volunteers should be screened effectively for criminal offenses relevant to their responsibilities and with thorough reference checking.

For those who find these steps a burden they do not feel responsible to bear, be assured that legal expectations and the wider culture are not the same today. Instead of groaning under these tasks, let's be the first to find ways to ensure our children's safety and make our churches the most proactive and effective in caring for these precious lives.

Safety should be a top priority of the church because it illustrates how we care for people.

Imagine the damage done by injury or abuse to a young person that is the result of inattention by the church! What is the impression that abused children and their families will carry with them throughout their lives? What message should that send to those of us entrusted with the responsibility of representing God's kingdom?

SENIOR ROLES—PARENT, TEACHER, COUNSELOR, SUPERVISOR

We have not forgotten the important role of parents and guardians in caring for the church's children. While the church certainly has its responsibilities for the programs it runs, parents' responsibility is not diminished. Many consider the church another home; and there is a comfort there that children can have free rein. But in keeping our churches safe for families, responsibility has to be

clearly defined. The relaxed attitude that others are watching the children leaves too much to assumptions. Then, when a child is subsequently injured, the "blame game" is the natural and painful response. Church leaders should gently but clearly remind parents of their responsibilities to supervise their children, and processes should be in place that clearly mark the transfer of responsibility from parent to Sabbath School teacher and back.

The church succeeds in ministry because of volunteers. Those with supervisory roles—Sabbath School teachers, Pathfinder leaders, etc., should be uplifted and supported. Equally, they should appreciate the seriousness of their responsibility in supervision, planning, and care. Their conduct isn't limited to their role in Sabbath School or Pathfinders. A lawsuit against them may affect the church's entire organization (local conference) in their area. We have to work together, following the policies and expectations of our conferences and congregations.

In many ways we represent something much larger than ourselves. Our actions effect others.

Keeping our children safe is a challenge because of the different legal environments, risks, and cultures. The principle we can all adopt is to follow the guidelines given us in our areas of responsibility. It's difficult to defend the church from

responsibility if we haven't followed our own policies or guidelines. The spirit of service in our church community will also include the humility of Christ to submit to what our church has decided and faithfully carry out our task to the very best of our abilities.

The care of our children is a serious responsibility and an honor. Let's each fulfill this aspect of ministry as one who cares for the "least of these" (Matt. 25:40), because according to Christ we are doing this as to Him. ▀


David Fournier is chief client care officer for Adventist Risk Management, Inc., General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland.



Kidsafe Church

Adventist Risk Management, Inc., the church's risk management institution, has a number of easy-to-use tools to aid in evaluation and prevention of common risks:

- » *Church self-inspection form*: evaluate your facility for common hazards and safety measures.
- » *Activity planning form*: plan activities while consider important safety concerns such as effective supervision and transportation requirements.
- » *Vehicle inspection form*: a short checklist to document simple safety checks on a vehicle before and after a trip.
- » Visit AdventistRisk.org to download these free resources.



Exchange Your Land or Mineral Interest for Income

And Support the Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church!

Do you own **land** you are not using? Do you own any **mineral rights** such as **oil** or **gas**?

If you want to help support the Mission, consider making a gift of your land or mineral interest to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. You may be able to transfer your land or mineral rights to a charitable remainder trust (CRT) or fund a charitable gift annuity (CGA) that will provide you and your spouse with payments for the rest of your lives. You will receive a charitable deduction in the year you make your gift and benefit the Church from the future proceeds.



Planned Giving
& Trust Services

To learn more about the
**benefits of gifting land or
mineral rights for payments,
Call or visit the website today.**

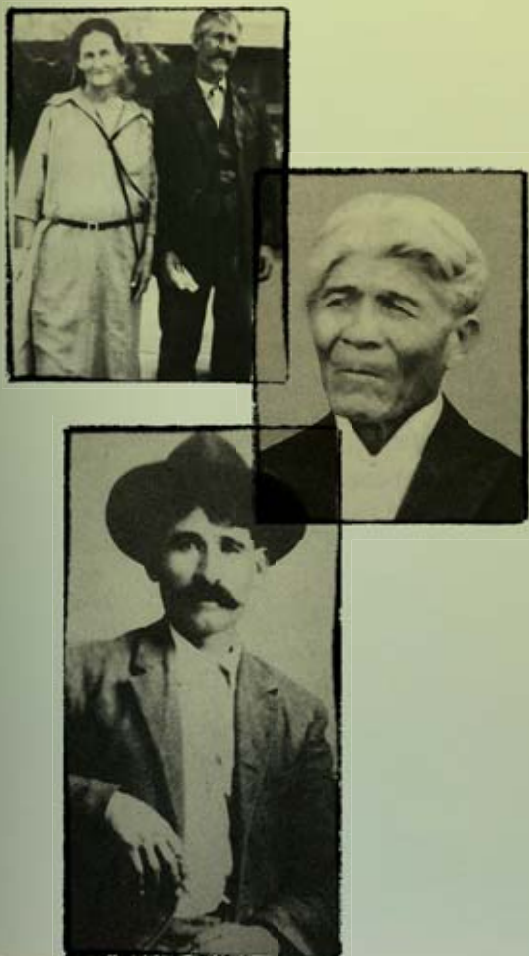
301-680-5002

willplan@gc.adventist.org

www.willplan.org

THE FIRST HISPANIC ADVENTISTS IN NORTH AMERICA

The story begins in Sánchez, Arizona.



▲ Reyes and Adiel Sánchez (top) were charter members of the first Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America. Marcial Serna (right) was a Methodist pastor before he became an Adventist, becoming the first Hispanic Adventist pastor in North America. Abel Sánchez (bottom) was baptized with his brother, Adiel.

MANUEL VASQUEZ

*"Who dares despise the day of small things?"
(Zech. 4:10).*

In the summer of 1899 two Seventh-day Adventists knocked on the door of Marcial Serna, pastor of the Tucson Mexican Methodist-Episcopal Church. Walter Lawrence Black, a literature evangelist, was selling books by Ellen White in the Tucson, Arizona, area. Charles D. M. Williams, who had been sent to help develop the interests in Adventism that Black found, accompanied him. When Serna answered the door, both Black and Williams were delighted to discover that he was bilingual. Black enthusiastically proceeded to give Serna his canvass.

After listening politely, Serna told them, "I'm sorry, but I already have lots of books. I'm not interested in buying any more."

The two men left somewhat disappointed. Sensing, however, that the pastor was sincere and, if given the opportunity, might accept the Sabbath truth, they decided to try another approach.

Returning the next day, Black and Williams knocked again on Serna's door. "Pastor Serna," Black began, "We're at a real disadvantage since so many Mexican families living here do not speak English. Would you be willing to teach us some Spanish so that we can communicate with the people when we visit their homes?"

BECOMING BILINGUAL

Serna was a sincere man, and he truly wanted to help them. "*Con gusto* [with pleasure]," Serna told them. "Come back tomorrow, and we will start your lessons." Early the next morning Black and Williams were at Serna's house learning to roll their Rs and twist their tongues in imitation of their Spanish teacher.

COURAGE AND BETRAYAL

When a spouse's double life destroyed everything but her will.

WILONA KARIMABADI

It was a weekend in early March 2012. March, when the weather can't make up its mind between winter or spring. Caryn's* birthday was coming up that week, and the family was in the middle of a downstairs remodeling project. Tom,* her husband, was away touring with his longtime gospel singing group.

Both husband and wife worked for the same company. So it wasn't totally out of the ordinary for Caryn to receive a phone call from human resources asking for Tom. Besides, this call was urgent in nature. "I got a call from HR here. They asked to speak with him, and I told them he wouldn't be back until Monday," she remembers. They asked her to have him report to their office before he began his day.

By midmorning that Monday, Tom called Caryn and informed her he'd been fired. He told her it was because there was pornography on his work computer.

NORMAL BEGINNINGS

Caryn was born and raised on the West Coast of the United States. Her father worked for the boarding academy she attended. When she was ready for college, her father got a new job at a campus on the East Coast, so the entire family moved.

"I met my husband through my sister, actually. She was friends with him, and he rented a room from my parents," Caryn says. Caryn had graduated, and Tom, with a few more classes he needed to finish up, stayed at her parents' house. They were just friends at first, but the friendship blossomed into something more. The two

were married in 2000. Their son was born in 2002, and a daughter rounded out the little family in 2004.

In 2005 Tom was offered a job in a different state several hours from the campus where they had met and married. Once their daughter started school full-time, Caryn was able to find a job of her own at the same company.

Life seemed just fine for a long time. The two could commute to work together and see each other during the day—a luxury seldom afforded to most married couples. They were involved in their local church and the kids' school, and they had a circle of close friends.

Caryn had no idea there was another side to Tom. A side he skillfully concealed from her, and one that changed their lives forever.

THE BALL DROPS

On Caryn's birthday, just two days after Tom was dismissed from his job, she got a call from a county detective. "They asked me to come home and said they had a search warrant," she says. "They were looking for specific things—cameras, flash drives, a computer. And there were some articles of clothing and a blanket."

It took about a month after that for an arrest warrant to go out for Tom. And the story began to grow exponentially bigger than Caryn ever thought it could. Another county brought another search warrant, and the federal government became involved.





"One day I got a call from the school saying that I needed to come. I was told my husband was not allowed to come and pick up the kids. When I got to school, social workers were there, and they had already talked to both my kids." Child sexual abuse was the new addition.

"It wasn't just pornography found on his computer," Caryn recalls. There was child pornography involving him and three young children. Both counties involved built their cases. Tom didn't have the money needed to get a lawyer, so he accepted the public defender provided to him. He was arrested, and no bail was put up.

TRYING TO COPE

In the aftermath of her husband's arrest, Caryn tried to make sense of everything. There had been no clues about Tom's secrets, and nothing had raised suspicion. As she tried to comprehend it all, county advocates assigned to her stressed the fact that none of this was her fault. To cope, she sought counseling for herself and her children and tried to keep some sense of normalcy as she continued working and helping the kids keep up with school and other activities. "The kids knew he went to jail, but they didn't know why," says Caryn.

Things continued to unravel. In counseling, Tom admitted that his first exposure to pornography had been at a very young age, and that he had struggled with it all his life. But aside from that, he didn't provide more information that would have helped his wife to understand the horrific mess he'd plunged his family into.

When Caryn visited him in jail while he awaited trial, Tom asked her not to listen to what people said or believe everything she read. She spent many Sabbath afternoons with him in which he was very careful not to divulge anything about what he'd done, in case he was recorded. Instead, Tom talked about dreams or visions he believed God was giving him. He wrote letters—pages and pages of letters that to this day, Caryn can't bring herself to read in totality.

When the trial finally came up, Caryn was first called to testify. But just before she was to take the stand, she was informed that Tom had pleaded guilty. It was a huge blow to her. "In my mind, after

he pleaded guilty to all of it, it made me question everything that he said to me. Because all this time he was telling me not to believe everything I heard, read, or whatever. Then he goes to court and pleads guilty. To me, it didn't make sense." Tom was sentenced to 150 years in jail, and was eligible for parole only after 75 years.

That was when Caryn stopped visiting him or taking his calls. She had always believed marriage was forever. So she struggled with remaining in her marriage after Tom was sentenced. It took her years to adjust to the fuller implications of his actions. She finally opted to leave the marriage, and the divorce was finalized in 2016.

There have been many struggles for Caryn and her children since Tom's sentencing and the dissolution of the marriage. But Caryn is a remarkably strong woman who is working through her pain with God beside her. "I know this made me realize how much my relationship with God was not where it should have been," she says. "I feel like I have grown closer to Him because I've called out to and relied on Him."

For many people, forgiveness can be complicated. In light of Caryn's situation, it is, without doubt, very difficult. "I still struggle with the concept of forgiveness. I mean, as far as actually forgiving versus knowing exactly what forgiveness is. It's supposed to be freeing for you, to let things go. But I still struggle with actually saying, 'I forgive you.' Because even though I know it's not condoning what they did, those words make me feel like I am."

THERE IS STILL A FUTURE

By court order, Tom's children will decide for themselves, in adulthood, if he may be part of their future. His son is close to reaching that age now. While Caryn has tried to keep the lines of communication open for the children to talk to her about their father, they themselves haven't asked or said much.

For now, Caryn is mothering them, working, being with friends, living her life; and looking toward the bright future she knows that her God has for her and her loved ones.

*Caryn and Tom are pseudonyms.

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



LOOK OUT FOR THE CHILDREN

Two attorneys offer counsel about protecting Jesus' "little ones."

The Seventh-day Adventist Church cares for children because Jesus does. We seek to be on the forefront when it comes to protecting His “little ones” (Matt. 18:10). Child abuse damages lives. This article cannot cover the entire matter, but we will highlight key issues and provide basic information about things the church can do to improve children’s safety.

STATING THE PROBLEM

The broad term “child abuse” can be broken down into various types, including physical or sexual abuse. Perpetrators of child sexual abuse can be adults or other minors. This article will address issues of child sexual abuse by adult perpetrators.

Most children cannot protect themselves from child molesters, who are often master manipulators. It's the job of parents and church leaders to protect the children in their care. They must always be aware that access to

children, especially with adult permission, is a primary goal of child molesters, who, for this reason, often seek out church and school settings. Most perpetrators of child sexual abuse are known to the victim or their family, not strangers.

CAUTION AND ACTION

Perpetrators can spot potential victims in a group of children within minutes of being exposed to them. Perhaps it's a child who is not well liked by the child's peers, a child who may have some physical or emotional issues, or a child from a broken home who seeks a father or mother figure.

Perpetrators often seek to gain the trust of not only the child but also adults and parents by demonstrating an interest in the child's well-being. They may offer to help with the child's athletic, academic, or social skills. Be aware of the potential charitable interest another adult may have in the children under your care. Just because someone is nice to your children does not mean they are a potential perpetrator. Their goals and interest may be genuine, but be aware.

Child molesters seek to seduce children into sexual activity by a process commonly known as grooming. Grooming methods may include befriending a child, buying them gifts, and treating them as a peer or special friend. This may progress to sexual conversations and jokes and seeking physical contact, such as tickling, hugging, and massage, to assess the child's receptivity to physical intimacy. Molesters then seek opportunities to be alone with the child to facilitate sexual conduct.



Older children are susceptible to grooming, but children of any age are at risk. Many adults are surprised that some children don't talk about physical contact. They may not recognize an abuse of trust and authority; or they may recognize the wrong and still not report it because they feel guilty about "allowing" it or because they doubt that anyone will believe them.

REPORTING AND INVESTIGATING

Many states or provinces have mandated reporter laws that, at a minimum, require individuals in certain professions, such as medical professionals, pastors, and teachers, to report any reasonable suspicion of child abuse to proper authorities. Some jurisdictions require *anyone* with reasonable suspicion to report.

Most such laws require reporting, not investigation. When a church organization first learns of suspected child sexual abuse, a question is often asked: "Is the report credible?" Questioning a child about sexual abuse should be left to persons qualified to investigate. Unqualified questioners may do harm to both child and investigation. Investigation is best left to proper authorities.

OTHER MEASURES

Churches and schools can do other things to ensure they are furthering the goal of child safety.

First, ensure that the organization follows applicable requirements for checking or screening employees and volunteers. The North American Division *Working Policy* FB 20 requires screening and background checking of all volunteers.

Second, the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* includes child abuse as proper grounds for discipline,¹ and sets forth certain expectations when dealing with perpetrators of sexual abuse. For example, where church attendance is allowed, perpetrators shouldn't be placed in positions that put them in contact with children, or in positions that imply that children can trust them.² Churches must also provide supervision to ensure that perpetrators do not have opportunities to come into contact with minors at church or through church activities. Furthermore, where a perpetrator seeks to transfer membership, "the pastor or elder should provide a confidential statement alerting the pastor or elder of the congregation to which the member is transferring."³

Child abuse identification and prevention training are critical, and many excellent resources are available for church leaders and parents. Additional resources are available from Adventist Risk Management at www.AdventistRisk.org. Training can help parents and leaders understand what to look for to improve child safety. Watch out for inappropriate engagement with children, such as persons providing special treatment to a child, acting "flirty," or seeking opportunities to be alone with them. Follow the guidelines found in the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*:

- Two-Adult Policy—Have two adults present in children's classrooms or activities.
- Open Door—Discourage private or one-on-one contact and encourage an open-door policy in all situations. Where an open door is not possible, station a second adult at the door.
- Volunteer Screening—Have all volunteers complete a volunteer information form, check their references, and, if required by law, do a police background check.
- Six-Month Policy—Require a waiting period of six months for newly baptized or transferring members who have indicated a willingness to work with children.
- Training—Provide regular training for teachers and volunteers to help them understand and protect children and how to nurture their faith.
- Local church leaders should consult with the conference to ascertain conference procedures and requirements, including local legal requirements for individuals working with children." Take children's reports seriously and present them to authorities right away. False reports are extremely rare. Situations are often much worse than a child's initial report. Be careful to love and support everyone involved in a report, but take proper steps to limit the accused's access to children while the law enforcement investigation takes its course.

By becoming informed and staying diligently aware, we can cooperate with Jesus to make our church a harder target for child molesters and a safer place for His "little ones."⁴

¹ *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (Silver Spring, Md.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2016), p. 62.

² *Ibid.*, p. 67.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

Jon Daggett and **Phil Hiroshima** are attorneys who have had years of experience assisting Seventh-day Adventist organizations in addressing these issues.

Spiritual abuse

**USING "GOD"
TO COMPEL
CONFORMITY**

LAEL CAESAR

The Word of God is “sharper than any double-edged sword” (Heb. 4:12). Is it designed, then, as an instrument of painful, even violent, aggression? After all, it describes itself as sharper than your own weapons of bloody violence, and powerfully so. Powerful, sharp—very sharp, piercing through to your core, the Spirit’s sword, according to Paul (Eph. 6:17).

DEFINING WELL

Maybe this can help us understand why some think of spiritual abuse as hitting you over the head with the Bible (assault and battery, it sounds like); as a constant readiness to throw scripture texts at a problem rather than listen and talk things over together. Problems remain unresolved because instead of interaction between those on both sides of an issue there is spiritual aggression on the part of one side against the rest.

Good church folk believe mostly that issues are allowed to have just two sides: right or wrong. Spiritually, this means choosing beautiful truth and rejecting ugly error; religiously speaking, it means standing in the right camp, against the wrong. Some scholars say that the expression “spiritual abuse” is new.¹ Whether or not, its implications are at least as old as the devil, as old as the choice between heaven and “the hot place,” with many true believers consigning all who disagree with them to the latter, finding support in Jesus’ position that whoever is not with Him is against Him (Matt. 12:30; Luke 11:23). Germs of abuse sometimes lurk unseen in precisely such intolerant spiritual locations.



One particularly personal definition of spiritual abuse sees it as imputing to God the results of my selfishness, blaming Him for ghettos of poverty outside my fence—erected and armed to preserve me from the stain of that poverty.

Over against those who blame God for the world's misery are others who expect God's representatives to be the ones constantly delivering the world from misery. Their definition of spiritual abuse involves (1) leaders using misconceived spirituality to misdirect their followers; or (2) pastors interpreting otherwise correct doctrine in a way that fits their personal agenda; or (3) pastors and spiritual leaders inflicting emotional pain on their congregation instead of emotional uplift; or (4) leaders—even parents specifically—requiring, in the name of God, behaviors that are not in the best interests of the youth or others who look to them for guidance. In this understanding, humans who should but fail to represent God well are practitioners of spiritual abuse.

These definitions see the problem of spiritual abuse as the problem of abusers who occupy spiritual roles in which their leadership misrepresents the God that their conduct is expected to model. Their victims look to them to learn of God. But their self-serving, even their exploitation and cruelty, directly contradicts expectations.

IN THE NAME OF GOD, TRADITION, AND CONFORMITY

Abuse inspired by church leaders for the sake of maintaining spiritual standards claims anchorage in the supernatural: their rule(s) may cover any area from style of church garment or music to choice of food or entertainment; from noise level in the sanctuary to posture for, and language of, prayer; from length of worship service to (non) justification of Sabbath funerals in the sanctuary.

Whether recently written into church policy or long assumed, a rule based on God or the antiquity over which He is assumed to reign, is often held to be untouchable; easily seen to be both correct and nonnegotiable. Those upon whom it is foisted may feel conscience-bound to do whatever is thus presented. Either that, or they can tell from the stated rationale that they have no recourse, that any appeal of theirs is already answered with the explanation that only God, the author of the rule, can change it. At this point Scripture may be

invoked to establish the futility of such appeal, since God doesn't change (Mal. 3:6).

This particular and oft-quoted message about God from Malachi (meaning: "the Lord's messenger"), used in context of compelling conformity, is itself a classic illustration of spiritual abuse: the text being wielded is not about tradition or forced conformity, but about God's enduring loving-kindness that bears with and forgives the culpable.

This lovingkindness first revealed itself in glory unmeasured eons ago, when a spiritual being sometimes called Lucifer decided that God's rulership was a function of spiritual abuse. He could see, and tried to show his celestial colleagues, that contrary to standard claim, they were all being victimized, and that love, however loudly and often claimed, was not "the foundation of the government of God."²

As God "in yearning pity for Lucifer and his followers" worked to restore his joy by correcting his thinking, "Lucifer pointed to the long-suffering of God as an evidence of his own superiority,"³ and continued to press his point: any law being imposed upon the angels was an inappropriate restraint; they "needed no such restraint, for their own wisdom was a sufficient guide."⁴ Freedom was what they deserved.⁵

Lucifer's rebellious strategy does not appear to wield a sword initially. For spiritual abuse embraces a range of attitudes and behaviors that encompasses ostensible meekness as surely as it includes all-out violence.

Safety from domestic abuse consistently involves protection from physical violence meted out by a parent or intimate partner. Not so with spiritual abuse. For cruelty is not the defining mark of its presence: it is not how tortured a person may be that identifies them as a subject of spiritual abuse. Rather, it is often enough how externally controlled they are mentally, emotionally, spiritually.

Jim Jones was spiritually abusing followers who attended his healing services at the Peoples Temple in California, and when they worked in his gardens in the Guyanese jungle, just as surely as when nearly a thousand of them, including 304 children, died from doses of his cyanide-laced punch on November 18, 1978. Facts and legends about the rants and promiscuity of the 47-year-old Jones do not modify the truth about control: it was his control over them that led them to hand over their

Escaping calculated spiritual abuse can be as complicated as escaping domestic abuse.

possessions and future to him; that brought them from North America to near-uninhabited forests in Guyana; that led them to join him in founding the communal unit that came to bear his name, Jonestown. Whether they were better or worse than anyone else counted for less than whether they believed or were subject to their spiritual master.

While Lucifer won his first followers with the argument for their superiority to law, his commitment to manipulation may go in any direction and come from any angle.

FOR THE SAKE OF ME


In her control of the birthright ritual (Gen. 27), Isaac's spouse and Jacob's mother, Rebekah, offers a classic biblical illustration of spiritual abuse for the sake of "me." The birthright blessing does involve reasons for acting "in the name of God"; but Rebekah's uninspired, commonsense attitude conveys the thinking that left to God, she and her pet son, Jacob, would be shut out from their family's material and spiritual equations within a matter of hours.

The account overflows with markers of her dominance in the story. Even in the report of Isaac's word to Esau the narrative deliberately turns to her as the crucial eavesdropper.⁶ And when the story becomes hers, she initiates all the actions Jacob her "little son"⁷ participates in, including multiple details of deception in which he is only a passive recipient: it is Rebekah who selects the best of Esau's clothes, dresses Jacob, and puts hairy skin on Jacob's hands and neck. Isaac's recruitment of Esau involves four imperatives;⁸ Rebekah speaks seven, the first of which is "obey"⁹

Her focused spiritual manipulation stands out most boldly when she swallows up Jacob's single comment against the unscrupulous scheme: if caught in the fraud he "would bring down a curse on [him]self rather than a blessing" (Gen. 27:12). To which Rebekah promptly responds, "My son, let the curse fall on me. Just obey me" (verse 13, author's rendering). Her attitude in the drama appears as matter of fact and exploitative as that of Alaskan Thomas Skeek, who repeatedly abused his wife, Linda, while forbidding her to report his cruelty because "we have these two children, and if I go to jail . . . they're not going to grow up with a dad."¹⁰

SUMMARIZING

Mention of Rebekah and Skeek in no way validates the pathetic responses of Rebekah's son or Skeek's wife. Citing them only helps illustrate the victim's plight. Escaping calculated spiritual abuse can be as complicated as escaping domestic abuse. Abusing parents, leaders, and others are in as much need of help as are those they manipulate and inappropriately control. Once awakened to their situation and desirous of deliverance, abuser and abused may need to seek help from the same sources as other abused persons: all may benefit from personal, Christian counseling; victims may need relocation (a different church home, perhaps) and even the protection of the law.

United States congressman Leo Ryan's death in the American-Guyanese disaster of Jonestown shows how far and imperiling the reach of spiritual abuse can be. Rebekah's single-mindedness highlights how deceived a follower of God may become in their drive to realize God's will. Her tragedy and Jacob's may be an object lesson for spiritual leaders and followers so determined to achieve for God that they must supply their own unconverted means—crude or elegant—to accomplish His ends. Church leaders contemplating their next grand project, dreaming of ways to establish Christian order or inspire their congregation's youth; parents and well-wishers determined to help their children achieve all that God means for them to be, may all pause right now, rethink their next move, and ask the crucial question: *Could this be taking God's name in vain?* 

¹ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_abuse#Spiritual_abuse.

² Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1890, 1908), p. 34.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁶ The account breaks the flow of standard wayyiqtol forms to introduce Rebekah with the waw + noun, *verivkah shema'at*: "but Rebekah was listening. . . ." (Gen. 27:5, author's rendering).

⁷ The adjective *qatan* does mean "younger," but is most often used to signify "little."

⁸ "Take," "go out," "hunt," "make"—verses 3, 4.

⁹ "Obey" (twice), "go" (twice), "take" (twice), "bring"—verses 8-13.

¹⁰ Lindsay Schnell, "Violence, Anguish in Alaska," *USA Today*, July 2, 2019, p. 1A.

Lael Caesar, *Adventist Review* associate editor, has a seven-word motto for all his life's projects: "Do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).



ADVENTIST WORLD RADIO

has committed to the immense task of translating and recording the *Revelation of Hope* series into **1000 LANGUAGES** so that we can reach the world with Biblical truth.

Partner with us through prayer and help sponsor a language and give the world the hope of Christ today!

FIND OUT MORE AT:

AWR.ORG/1KL

FOLLOW US AT:

AWR360

AWRweb

AWR360

CELL PHONES SHARING

THE GOOD NEWS?

Around the world, our cell phone evangelists are sending the *Revelation of Hope* series to friends and family. However, many are still waiting to hear the Good News because it has not been recorded in their native language.



WEIMAR INSTITUTE

ACCREDITED

A CENTER OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH,
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
& HEALING

H.E.A.L.T.H.
Nursing
Education

Religion/Theology
Natural Science
Business

FREE \$50
APPLICATION FEE WAIVER

(530) 422-7923

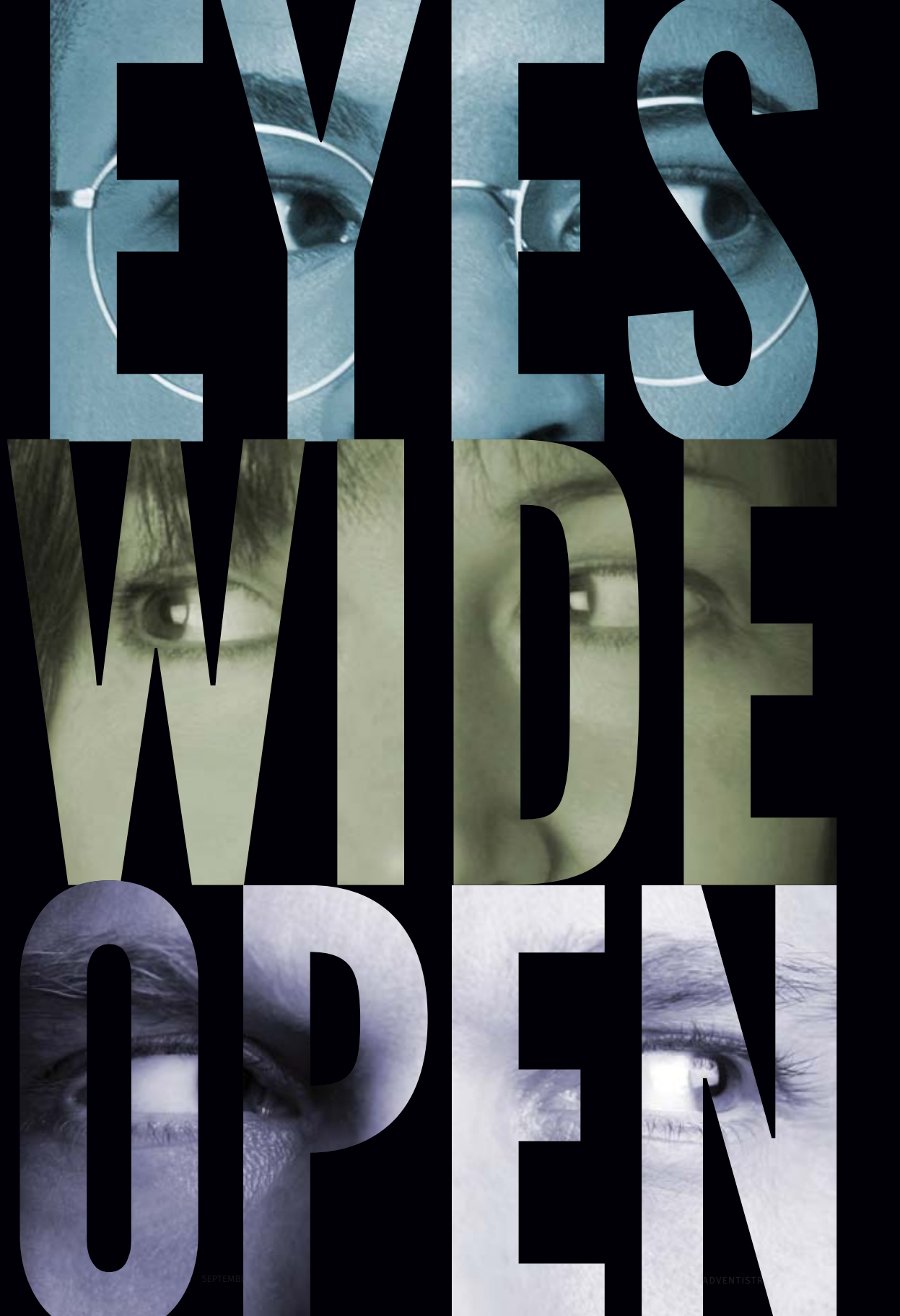
ADMISSIONS@WEIMAR.EDU

WWW.WEIMAR.EDU

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY AS TO STUDENTS

Weimar Institute admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. Weimar Institute does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and/or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

Accredited by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC), 985 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 100, Alameda, CA 94501, 510.748.9001.



EYES

WIDE

OPEN



Living in a world in which violence is a fact of life

Scott Rackley has served in the U.S. Army for more than 30 years, 15 as a special agent for the Criminal Investigation Division. He resides in Reston, Virginia, with his family. He provides resources for churches and schools designed to reduce the risk of random, senseless violent attacks. He agreed to answer some of our questions about personal safety.—Editors.

We're living in a moment nobody thought we'd ever see. People with guns shoot innocent, defenseless victims in schools, churches, synagogues, mosques, and concerts. What biblical promises come to mind when you think about these challenging times?

Proverbs 1:33: "Whoever listens to me will live in safety, and be at ease, without fear of harm."

Through my years of experience, speaking in our houses of worship and academies, I find that we focus on the moment of prayer; but that at times we seem to forget what to do after we finish praying.

A person prays for protection or safety; they connect deeply with God. But once the act of prayer is complete, they often take no further action. At times we may fail to listen to the message God wants us to hear. God wants us to listen, and He wants to protect us.

For example, common sense tells us not to walk into a busy street without looking both ways and using a crosswalk. We know. Yet we don't necessarily follow this same common sense when we discuss basic, practical, secure, and safe measures in our schools and churches.

Short of arming ourselves, what should we be aware of when we visit places thought by some to be "soft targets"?

A lot of people ask about this during my visits to churches and schools. Arming yourself does not make you safer. Many people believe that a weapon (gun, knife, etc.) makes us safer. That's not necessarily true.

Carrying a gun does not make you a trained law-enforcement professional. Many questions are involved here: when was the last time you went to a [gun] range? What was your qualification table? Did you pass the basic qualifications for carrying a weapon? Liability issues are involved, such as armed law-enforcement professionals versus armed private citizens. Do you have a legitimate concealed-carry permit? Remember, paper targets don't shoot back. Under stressful situations a person carrying a side-arm may cause more issues than solutions.

What's the best strategy when gunfire erupts? Run, or hide?

That depends on the location, the situation, and so many other factors.

If you can escape, do so; if you have any doubt about whether you can escape safely, then barricade in place. Something as simple as turning out the lights and hiding after barricading the door of a classroom could save your life and others with you. The most important thing: action is key; you must do something; you must prepare yourself to do something.

People have been attacked while shopping, eating out, taking a walk. What three things should we be aware of when we're out in public?

Be aware of your surroundings and your environment. Look for the unusual; notice things that tend to be out of place or don't seem right.

Listen to yourself and to your God. I have conducted numerous interviews of personnel following traumatic events. A common theme/denominator among them was that they did not listen to their intuition. Sometimes God uses the "toolbox" of intuition to alert us to safe action.

Act. Action is sometimes the hardest thing to do. When you see something that seems unsafe or not "right," then act. The adage "deer in the highlights" or "fight versus flight" happens more often than most people think. Train yourself to a life of both trust and awareness. Change your routine, start simple, and retrain your brain. It's one of the most difficult things to grasp.

Some Christians might be conscientiously opposed to carrying weapons, even for self-defense. What are some nonviolent options for self-defense?

This specific question is very difficult to answer. I respect everyone's right to choose to carry or not carry, to defend themselves or not. Here's a helpful animal comparison: sheep, wolves, and sheepdogs. Sheep carry on life in their pasture, eating grass, blissfully unaware about the world around them.

Sometimes we think that ultimate safety comes with bodyguards and security drones flying overhead. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Wolves watch from the shadows of the wood line near the pasture, waiting for one sheep to separate from the herd, unaware that the wolf can spring and attack. But the wolf is wary and cautious. What causes the wolf a moment of pause? Answer: the sheepdog. The sheepdog watches over the herd and its flock. It will lay down its life to protect the sheep. I think we all have filled sheep or sheepdog roles in our life. I have seen even the most passive man act to defend his friends or family. No one knows exactly what they will do until the situation presents itself.

Are there different ways of training people to be safe depending on their ages (children, youth, adults, seniors)?

Training is based on people's experience and responsibilities. I have trained children in escape tactics to be self-aware of various situations, including possible abduction. Precollege students are instructed in self-defense. Church leaders, elders, and deacons are trained in escort procedures and self-defense measures to ensure the safety of themselves and members of their church.

Anyone can learn self-defense, but much depends on their receptiveness, and whether they will continue to practice once the training is done. All skills are perishable and have to be maintained.

What are the differences between protecting ourselves in a public place (such as a mall, church, or school) and in our homes?

I find it interesting that even the most introverted person seems to feel a sense of safety among crowds. We maintain the safety of a pack mentally. By contrast, when we are home, or walking down a path alone, we may feel more calm and peaceful. But then something we see or hear causes our

senses to become heightened. We should use that heightened awareness we feel when we are alone and apply it to when we are in crowded areas.

Recent attacks in Washington, D.C., and other cities have shown that groups of individuals will attack crowds regardless. So awareness is the key: without it you cannot protect yourself or others.

What essential pieces of technology should we invest in for our personal safety? How much should we expect to spend?

An excellent question. Sometimes we think that ultimate safety comes with bodyguards and security drones flying overhead. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Sometimes the simplest tool creates the best solution. I tell my wife and kids that if you're worried that someone is following you, get on the phone and call someone, or pretend to speak to someone. The fact that a suspect believes or sees you talking to someone could make you a "hard target." Simple and effective are the best kinds of solutions.

Now that unexpected, violent attacks are part of our culture, how can Christians push back in a way that is hopeful, not fearful?

Unfortunately, our culture has become a violent and aggressive one. Refuse to be a victim. Make that your mind-set, developed with time and practice.

Also, maintain eye contact; don't be a "ground grazer," someone who just walks along looking at the ground and never looks up. People looking for easy targets are looking for sheep, blissfully unaware of their surroundings or anything outside the fence line of their pasture. Recognize the cues of violent acts before they occur and become significant, emotional, and life-altering events.

With everything you see on a daily basis, with my work in our churches and schools, we are all rightly concerned about the prevalence of violence. But let us take courage from the growing attention that church leaders are paying to being good stewards of our kids' and members' lives and property. Together we are learning more about just what we can bring out of our Christian toolbox.

Be blessed. Be aware. Keep listening. Because God still promises, "Whoever listens to me will live in safety, and be at ease, without fear of harm" (Prov. 1:33). 🗡️

THE TASTE OF GRATITUDE

It's a beautiful day for a cup of tea; won't you join me?" Sitting on a chair in the memory care facility that I work in is Frank. Military veteran, always observing, spending his mornings between breakfast and lunch sitting on one of the chairs facing the garden, a white porcelain cup nestled between his shaking hands. His words are more than an invitation.

The walker next to him narrates the silent story of inability to prepare tea and return to the chair on his own. *He is inviting you to help him make the tea and sit with him.* For Frank there is no family, no visitors. Just a daily cup of memories.

Before I visit any patients, I walk through the facility, committing this new task to God and asking for wisdom. This will be home for four months. I will work as a hospice and palliative chaplain. *God, is this the right choice for me?* My job is to visit the patients every day, talk to them, prepare families for a moment of loss and bereavement.

While chaplaincy work is familiar, memory care is challenging. Not everyone in this space is at the same "place" in their physical decline. When I visit, I see family pictures on the wall, wedding pictures, mementos. I realize this is a sacred responsibility. Patients ask end-of-life questions, and they expect me to have the right answer—a difficult process to navigate between legalities of potential proselytizing and the reality that I may have but one opportunity to share God with someone near death. Most are

scared, seeking comfort in the warmth of a faith they once knew.

Frank prefaces his stories, looking out the window: *"This is a good cup of tea. Have I ever told you about Rosie, my wife for 47 years?"*

"This is a good cup of tea. Have I told you about my time in the war?"

"This is a good cup of tea. My son lived to be 13. Accidents happen, but no one tells you that God is the only insurance you have to mend a broken heart."

Every morning, 9:00, tea with Frank. We make our own space placing two chairs and a small table in front of the window. I see him every day. Soon the walker becomes a wheelchair, then he is bed-bound. One day while having tea and reading a morning devotional, Frank reaches for my hand: "I have buried children, my wife, friends, but God is merciful. I may forget who I am, but He will still know me. I have accepted Him as my Savior. Thank you for the company, for reading and praying. I am at peace. Your time with me makes the tea taste of gratitude."

Two weeks later I arrive at the center to see an empty chair with a teacup next to it. Just one chair. I sit and a familiar friend, a nurse, takes the cup and gives me a hug. "The military chaplain is on the way. What tea can I get you?" *I smile. None. We never drank tea, just water. Water that tasted like gratitude.* ♣

Dixil Rodríguez lives in Texas.

SEARCHING
THE OBVIOUS
DIXIL
RODRIGUEZ



I MAY FORGET WHO I
AM, BUT HE WILL
STILL KNOW ME. I
HAVE ACCEPTED HIM
AS MY SAVIOR.



GOD'S LONG-SUFFERING NATURE

*We need not fear if we
are on God's side.*

ELLEN G. WHITE

The apostle Paul tells us, "After that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21).

This was the carrying out of God's plan for the conviction and conversion of [men and women], who are constantly tempted to magnify their own powers. The Lord would make it manifest whether [men and

women] by their own finite wisdom could acquire a knowledge of the truth, whether they could know God, their Creator. . . .

With His eye upon the church, the Lord has again and again allowed matters to come to a crisis, that in their extremity His people should look alone for His help. Their prayers, their faith, together with their steadfast purpose to be true, have called for the interference of God, and then He has fulfilled His promise, "Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am" (Isa. 58:9).

His mighty arm has been stretched out for the deliverance of His people. God reserves His gracious interposition in their behalf till the time of their extremity; thus He makes their deliverance more marked, and their victories more glorious. . . .

PRAYER, FAITH, RELIANCE ON GOD

What is needed in this, our time of danger, is fervent prayer, mingled with earnest faith, a reliance upon God when Satan casts his shadow over God's people. Let everyone bear in mind that God delights to listen to the supplications of His people; for the prevailing iniquity calls for more earnest prayer, and God has promised that He will avenge His own elect, who cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them.

[Men and women] are prone to abuse the long-suffering of God, and to presume on His forbearance. But there is a point in human iniquity when it is time for God to interfere; and terrible are the issues. "The Lord is slow

to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked" (Nahum 1:3).

The long-suffering of God is wonderful, because He puts constraint on His own attributes; but punishment is nonetheless certain. Every century of profligacy has treasured up wrath against the day of wrath; and when the time comes, and the iniquity is full, then God will do His strange work. It will be found a terrible thing to have worn out the divine patience; for the wrath of God will fall so signally and strongly that it is presented as being unmixed with mercy; and the very earth will be desolated.

It is at the time of the national apostasy, when, acting on the policy of Satan, the rulers of the land will rank themselves on the side of the man of sin—it is then the measure of guilt is full; the national apostasy is the signal for national ruin.

GOD'S EXTENDED MERCY

God has thrust His people into the gap, to make up the hedge, to raise up the foundation of many generations. The heavenly intelligences, angels that excel in strength, are waiting, obedient to His command, to unite with human agencies; and the Lord will interpose when matters have come to such a pass that none but a divine power can counteract the satanic agencies at work. When His people shall be in the greatest danger, seemingly unable to stand against the power of Satan, God will work in their behalf. [Humanity's] extremity is God's opportunity.

Now is the time when the loyal and true are to arise and shine; for the glory of the Lord is risen upon them. It is no time now to hide our colors, no time to turn traitors when the battle presses sore, no time to lay aside our weapons of warfare. Watchmen on the walls of Zion must be wide awake.

I am so thankful at this time that we can have our minds taken off from the difficulties that surround us, and the oppression that is to come upon the people of God, and can look up to the heaven of light and power. If we place ourselves on the side of God, of Christ and the heavenly intelligences, the broad shield of Omnipotence is over us, the mighty God of Israel is our helper, and we need not fear. Those who touch the people of God touch the apple of His eye. . . .

We are coming to a time when, more than ever before, we shall need to press together, to labor unitedly.

We are coming to a time when, more than ever before, we shall need to press together, to labor unitedly. In union there is strength. In discord and disunion there is only weakness. God never designed that one [person], or four, or twenty, should take an important work into their own hands, and carry it forward independently of other workers in the cause.

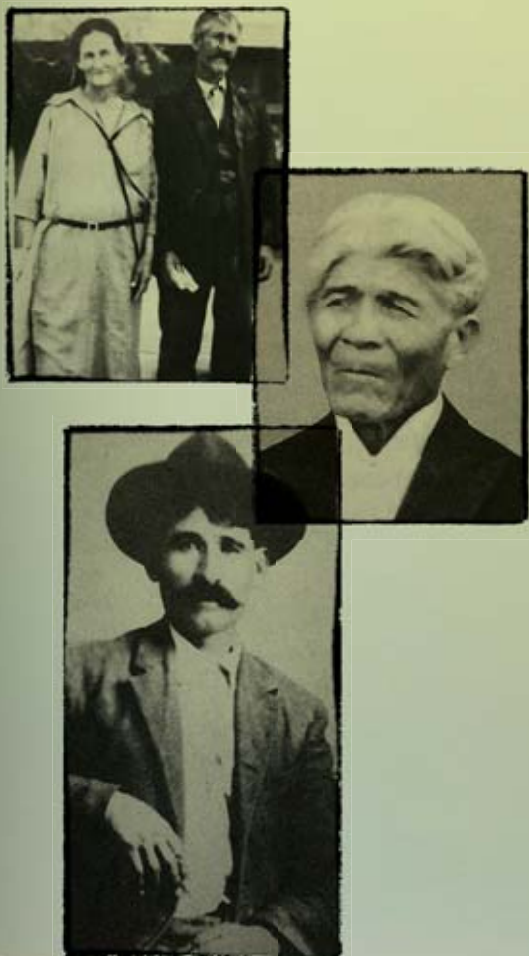
God wants His people to counsel together, to be a united church, in Christ a perfect whole. The only safety for us is to enter into the counsels of heaven, ever seeking to do the will of God, to become laborers together with Him. No one company is to form a confederacy, and say, "We are going to take this work, and carry it on in our own way; and if it does not go as we want it to, we will not give our influence to have it go at all." This is Satan's voice, not God's. Do not obey such suggestions.

What we want is the spirit of Jesus. When we have this, we shall love one another. Here are the credentials that we are to bear: "By this shall all . . . know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). 🍀

This excerpt was taken from *Selected Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958), book 2, pp. 371-374. Seventh-day Adventists believe that **Ellen G. White** (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.

THE FIRST HISPANIC ADVENTISTS IN NORTH AMERICA

The story begins in Sánchez, Arizona.



▲ Reyes and Adiel Sánchez (top) were charter members of the first Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America. Marcial Serna (right) was a Methodist pastor before he became an Adventist, becoming the first Hispanic Adventist pastor in North America. Abel Sánchez (bottom) was baptized with his brother, Adiel.

MANUEL VASQUEZ

“Who dares despise the day of small things?”
(Zech. 4:10).

In the summer of 1899 two Seventh-day Adventists knocked on the door of Marcial Serna, pastor of the Tucson Mexican Methodist-Episcopal Church. Walter Lawrence Black, a literature evangelist, was selling books by Ellen White in the Tucson, Arizona, area. Charles D. M. Williams, who had been sent to help develop the interests in Adventism that Black found, accompanied him. When Serna answered the door, both Black and Williams were delighted to discover that he was bilingual. Black enthusiastically proceeded to give Serna his canvass.

After listening politely, Serna told them, “I’m sorry, but I already have lots of books. I’m not interested in buying any more.”

The two men left somewhat disappointed. Sensing, however, that the pastor was sincere and, if given the opportunity, might accept the Sabbath truth, they decided to try another approach.

Returning the next day, Black and Williams knocked again on Serna’s door. “Pastor Serna,” Black began, “We’re at a real disadvantage since so many Mexican families living here do not speak English. Would you be willing to teach us some Spanish so that we can communicate with the people when we visit their homes?”

BECOMING BILINGUAL

Serna was a sincere man, and he truly wanted to help them. “*Con gusto* [with pleasure],” Serna told them. “Come back tomorrow, and we will start your lessons.” Early the next morning Black and Williams were at Serna’s house learning to roll their Rs and twist their tongues in imitation of their Spanish teacher.

“I think it would be good if we had something to look at, to see the words we’re trying to say,” Williams suggested. “Why don’t you show us some of these words in the Bible?”

“Good idea,” Serna agreed. Placing the Spanish and English Bibles side by side, they opened them to the first chapter of Genesis and continued their study. Everything seemed to go well. They learned words such as *Dios* (God), *hombre* (man), *día* (day), *noche* (night), and how to count up to *seis* (six).

But the next day when they started studying Genesis 2, things changed. They had read only verses 2 and 3 when the lesson ended in a disagreement over the phrase *séptimo día* (seventh day) and which day was the right day to observe as the day of worship.

“By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done” (Gen. 2:2, 3).

Serna was so confident that Sunday was the right day to observe that he challenged the two young men to a public debate on the Sunday-Saturday question.¹ “I know Sunday is the Sabbath; I can prove it from the New Testament. If we can’t agree here, perhaps we should have a public debate and let the people decide who is right.”

THE DEBATE

On the day of the debate many interested Christians and curious onlookers were present. In those days, debates were a type of entertainment. Both young Adventists had prepared diligently, but Walter Black led out. Walter had a list of more than 40 Bible verses to use in his presentation, but just before he got up to speak, the Lord impressed him to make a very simple presentation. He cut his list of verses down to 12.

As Black made his presentation, Marcial Serna began to take notes for his rebuttal. At first his notes were detailed. But the more he listened, the fewer notes he took. He finally stopped taking notes and only listened. The Holy Spirit was planting the truth in Serna’s heart.

By the time it was Serna’s turn to speak, he was convinced. Standing before the people, he confessed, “I now see that my opponents have brought out the truth from God’s Book. I was going to show them where they were wrong, but I see the truth of the Bible. It is clear from God’s Word that the seventh day is the Sabbath. I promise you and God that next Saturday I will rest on that day. With God’s help, I will keep His Sabbath.”²

After this surprising testimony, Serna invited Black and Williams to his home to discuss the matter further. He told them about the letter he had received from Abel and Adiel Sánchez (two brothers who had learned about the seventh-day Sabbath as a result of their own Bible study). “The hand of the Lord has been working,” he said. “At the right time He sent you to me. My eyes have been opened to understand His Word on this particular subject. I plan to go see the young Sánchez boys in answer to their letter about the Sabbath. Will you go with me?”³

THE SABBATH BRINGS DIVISION

Meanwhile, it was harvesttime on the Sánchez rancheria. Abel and Adiel went quite often to the mining camps with their peaches, apples, and dried vegetables. One day, when they returned from one of their trips, they found a letter from Pastor Serna waiting for them. “Hey, Abel, here’s a response from Pastor Serna,” Adiel said as he opened the letter. “He says he’ll be here in the middle of the week. The two men he was debating will be here too. I wonder if he proved to them that Sunday is the Lord’s day of rest? Whatever the

**When he saw that he could not convince them,
he threatened, “If you do not obey me, I will kill
every one of you!”**

truth is, if it is proved by the Bible, I'll accept it"
Abel agreed.

"For the past few weeks," said Adiel, "my search has been to see if the seventh-day Sabbath was replaced by Sunday. If it is somewhere in the Bible, I won't have any more questions. I've made up my mind to follow His Word—even if I'm the only Sabbathkeeper."⁴

That Wednesday evening Marcial Serna came as he had promised; and he brought with him the two literature evangelists. Serna called for a meeting, and the little church filled to capacity. As Black and Williams stood to address the crowd, they were struck by how God was using them.

Here we are, they thought, two Anglos who cannot speak Spanish, addressing an audience, most of whom cannot speak English. "God, You have to help us!"

But God had already promised in His Word: "Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear" (Isa. 65:24). Pastor Serna and Adiel Sánchez were His chosen translators, and they helped deliver the message of the Sabbath that evening.

LORENZO VOWS TO KILL

The message, however, divided the church—and the Sánchez family. The Adventist young men decided to stay in the area and continue studying with those interested, which included Adiel and Abel. This division in the Sánchez family over which day to keep continued for several months, with the tension growing to the point that the patriarch, Lorenzo, could stand it no longer. Intending to settle the matter once and for all, he called his entire family together.

In those days, in accordance with Hispanic culture and tradition, the patriarch of the family did all the talking. The sons were not allowed to answer back, since that would have been considered disrespectful. So the Saturdaykeeping Sánchezes asked Black, Williams, and Serna to be present to defend them.

After a stern lecture, Don Lorenzo had his Saturdaykeeping sons and daughters stand before him. Sitting in his chair, his rifle in his lap, he looked each one in the eye and warned them: "This division in the family, with some worshipping on Saturday and the others worshipping on Sunday, is not good. You must give up these crazy Adventist ideas about Saturday being the Lord's Sabbath and worship the Methodist way, the way I brought you up!"



Marcial Serna uses an irrigation ditch in Tucson, Arizona, to baptize a new member into the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1901.

When he saw that he could not convince them, he was outraged and threatened, "If you do not obey me, I will kill every one of you!"

Abel and Adiel respected their father, but they could not turn their backs on the truth. Their loyalty to their heavenly Father and His commandments took precedence. Even the threat of death could not persuade them to renounce their faith.

At the time they were all living in their father's house. One evening when the sons came home, Don Lorenzo was waiting for them at the door. "Abel, Adiel, have you decided to give up this foolishness about the *sábado* yet?"

"Papa, we cannot do other than what the Bible tells us," they answered respectfully.

"Well, since you will not renounce your faith, I have no choice but to disown you. You are no longer my sons. Take your belongings, your families, *your Sabbath* and get out of my house immediately!"

Sadly, with heavy hearts the two young men, along with their wives and little ones, packed their few belongings and moved outside—into the yard—for there was nowhere else to go). For a time they were forced to live under the *Alamo* (cottonwood) trees near the house, sleeping outdoors, and cooking on an open stove. But their

faith never wavered. They had promised to follow God's Word, even if they were the only ones. Eventually a relative took them in.

FIRST HISPANIC BAPTISM

In December 1899 Black and Williams had a group of 15 people ready for baptism. Among them were Marcial Serna and Abel and Adiel Sánchez, along with other members of the Sánchez family. Black and Williams contacted the Arizona Mission in Phoenix, requesting that someone be sent to baptize the group. R. M. Kilgore, in charge of district 5 of the General Conference, responded to the call.

When Kilgore arrived, he met with the baptismal candidates and found them firmly grounded in the truth. Arrangements were made for a baptismal service, and on a cold but sunny afternoon, December 9, 1899, he immersed them in the chilly waters of the Gila River, Marcial Serna being the first to be baptized.⁵

DYING WORDS

Meanwhile, Don Lorenzo was determined to make good on his threat and had acquired a revolver and plenty of bullets. He planned to kill all the newly baptized Adventists when they came back to the church from the baptismal service.

What happened next is a mystery. After the baptisms the members returned to the church for the 3:00 p.m. service. Toward the end of the meeting someone came running from the Sánchez house, about 1,000 yards from the church. Excited and out of breath, he called to the Sánchez boys, "Your father is dying."

All the sons and daughters hurried to their father's bedside. He had apparently suffered a stroke. Eleven days later, on December 20, he passed away.

Before Don Lorenzo breathed his last, he gathered his family close to his bedside and pronounced a blessing on each one. When he came to Adiel, he said, "You have been a kind and obedient son. I was always pleased with you. But lately you have chosen to obey your heavenly Father according to your conscience. May God give you the courage and strength to do what you have determined."

THE FIRST SPANISH CHURCH

On December 23 the Seventh-day Adventist church in Sánchez, Arizona, was officially organized,

becoming the first Spanish Seventh-day Adventist church in North America. R. M. Kilgore and C.D.M. Williams officiated. When the church elected officers, Adiel Sánchez became the elder of the church.⁶

The little adobe church now became even more central in the lives of the Sánchez family, not only for their spiritual well-being but also for their children's Christian education. They wanted their children to have an education that included God.

"Send us an Adventist teacher," the families asked leaders at the Arizona Mission. In response to their request, Augusta de Angeles, who also served as a Bible worker, was sent, becoming the first Adventist teacher to serve in Sánchez. Subsequent Adventist teachers were F. M. Owen, H. F. Courter, Lorenzo Stump, and Harold Ward.

THE UNFINISHED CHURCH

Methodist members of the Sánchez family decided to give their little adobe church to the Adventist believers. "We will give you this church," the Methodists said, "with the condition that you help us build a new church for our members."

The Adventists agreed, and both groups promptly laid the foundation, put up the walls, and installed the doors. But it began to rain before the roof could be installed. It continued to rain day after day, causing the project to come to a complete halt.

When it finally stopped raining several days later, the Sánchez family inspected what was supposed to have been the new church. They found the building flooded. The unprotected adobe walls had become waterlogged and two of them had collapsed. With no way to salvage it, the building was never completed.

As the years passed, children of those charter members moved away. Some went to Adventist colleges and became nurses and teachers. Many served in other church institutions. But it all began in Sánchez, Arizona. 🍌

¹ Myrtle A. Pohle, *The Truth Seekers: Saga of the Southwest* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1983), pp. 19, 20.

² Ann Sánchez, unpublished and unnamed article on the Sánchez family.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Ann Sánchez, "The Beginning of the Spanish Work in the United States," pp. 1, 2.

⁶ Sánchez, unpublished document about the Sánchez family.

This article is adapted from the chapter "Sánchez, Arizona: Cradle of Hispanic Adventism" in the book *The Untold Story: 100 Years of Hispanic Adventism*, by Manuel Vasquez (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 2000).

worship (verse 20). Job is lucid and disturbed by what is happening to him. Tearing his clothes and shaving his head (verse 20) are expressions of his utter desolation. Nevertheless, he's able to worship God in the midst of turmoil.

FAMOUS FRIENDS

Job's friends arrive. But their behavior only increases his moral torture. The best support that they provide is when, during the first seven days, they sit together with him in silent astonishment at his plight (Job 2:11-13).

When they eventually speak, it is devastating to Job: they accuse him of hidden sin, arguing that the innocent do not perish (Job 4:7); that it must be the sins of his sons that earned their sudden destruction (Job 8:3, 4); that if he turned from iniquity his lot would improve (Job 11:14, 15).

Job retorts that God's hand against him is harsh, overwhelming, humiliating, and unfair (Job 9:17, 18, 20, 22-24). Still, Job longs for the chance to speak to God directly (Job 23:3-7).

The book is structured as a chiasm, presenting a sequence of ideas, then repeating them in reverse order, with its climax occurring at the middle of the book, the center of the chiasm. It is a climax that transcends the height of natural human reason as Job declares, "I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth" (Job 19:25).

Job's faith sees further than human eyesight and speaks with authority about things beyond all earthly human capacity. Job becomes a prophet of the Resurrection, and author of one of the Bible's most wonderful statements. Job suffers; there is much that he doesn't understand; his treatment is unfair. But whatever he may not grasp of the full explanation of his circumstance, he can still say, "I know that my redeemer lives," and "I myself will see him with my own eyes" (verses 25, 27).

ASKING AGAIN: WHY?

Why does God allow Job's undeserved misfortune? He does offer answers in Job 38-41. But at first they seem to dodge Job's questions. God speaks to Job, who chafes at his suffering, about lightning and thunder, rain and clouds, goats and lions; carrying on about creative power when the issue is Job's pain and abuse.

Nevertheless, God gets through to Job. Job sees

God's astonishing answer to suffering is oblique, subjective, and incarnational.

his inability to explain simple questions about nature. And though science today knows a lot more than Job did about ice and rain, humanity still struggles to understand innocent suffering. Explaining innocent suffering is a lot harder than explaining ice and rain. Understanding suffering takes special revelation.

But if we listen as Job did, we can understand too. Job hears his answer in God's rhetorical questions. God says that one encounter with the mythic, fire-breathing leviathan (Job 41:18-21) will teach you never to dare engage him again (verse 8). And if you can't handle Leviathan, "who then is able to stand against me?" (verse 10).

God's astonishing answer to suffering is oblique, subjective, and incarnational: resolving the evil of suffering is too much for us; God and God alone can master it. And He does in Immanuel, God with us (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23), Jesus living among us, becoming the curse to conquer blight forever, sharing our humanity "so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death" (Heb. 2:14).

All of this is not explicit for Job, and things don't end perfectly for him. God restores his health, wealth, and family, but he ends up dead. Any story that ends in death is a sad story. But what Job hears from God is enough for him, as his answer implies: "My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you" (Job 42:5). Job is satisfied because his faith is satisfied. For faith, the victory that overcomes the world (1 John 5:4) is not a resolution of all questions, but trusting, in spite of questions, that enables us to share the climax of Job and the book: "I know that my redeemer lives. . . . I myself will see him with my own eyes" (Job 19:25-27). ♣

Mario Oliveira directs emergency management for ADRA International, the Seventh-day Adventist Church's global development and disaster relief organization.



Tony Anobile, vice president of Multilingual Ministries for the North American Division (center), stands with Ernest Castillo, his predecessor at the NAD (left), and Arnold Trujillo, a former vice president of the Pacific Union Conference.

¡ANDALE!

The role of Hispanics in today's North American church

Tony Anobile is vice president for the Office of Multilingual Ministries for the North American Division. As we observe the 120-year anniversary of the beginning of the Adventist work among Hispanics, we asked him to tell us about his role, as well as to reflect on the work among Hispanics today.
—Editors.

You're vice president for Multilingual Ministries for the North American Division. What does that mean?

It means that I oversee 15 language groups that are officially recognized by the North American Division.

Before you came to the North American Division . . .

I was at the Pacific Union Conference as a vice president and coordinated volunteer and refugee ministries. Before that I was president of the Arizona Conference.

You were a conference president and a union conference vice president. What made you say, "I think I can do something positive at the North American Division"?

I was associated with the Hispanic Advisory. And working with refugee ministries in Arizona opened my eyes to the reality: what can we do to help everybody in this country understand the beauty of Jesus Christ?

I want to make sure that every language group feels validated and part of the family. I attend their camp meetings. Just this summer I've been to Myanmar camp meeting, the Zimbabwean camp meeting, the Karen, Yugoslavian, Romanian. It's a foretaste of heaven.

Give us a bird's-eye view of the Hispanic work in North America.

Our membership as of 2017 is 222,400, which is more than double that of the next group, which is the Asian/Pacific Ministries. Their membership is 100,800.

Our baptisms are high. We're averaging 13,000 to 15,000 per year.

[Hispanic] growth is phenomenal. We bring a lot of our evangelistic mentality to North America.

When I took over, a NET event had been planned for September 2018. NET events were great in the 1990s and 2000s. The coordinators told me, "You can do that if you want, but participation is going to be minimal, with minimal results."

I said, "OK, what do you want? What do you need?"

They said, "Resources and training; that's what the division can do to help."

So we took the funding for the NET and prepared a 21-course kit that has material for the pastor, leaders of small groups, the church as a whole, and for doing evangelism in pairs. We put all

that into a box and called it “Life GPS.” In Spanish, GPS stands for healthy small groups. *VIDA* (life) stands for vision, identity, development, and acceptance, which we feel are key elements to accepting people and feeling accepted.

Alejandro Bullón was scheduled to speak for the NET event, and got on board. He spent 37 days with us.

We were in a union [conference] for four or five days. We’d meet with the pastors in the morning—it got better as we went along. Pastors in the morning, then pastors and laity in the evening. We met with 7,000 to 8,000 small groups.

I ordered 13,000 of these kits in faith. One guy said, “You should order 15.”

I said, “There’s no way.” I’ll never forget: I was driving back from a meeting when Ruben Merino, my associate and director of Esperanza TV for North America, said, “I have the order number.”

I was praying, “Let it be 8,000.” It was 12,930. We got more. AdventSource is going to start carrying it. So that was Plan A, the caravan. We planned, we trained, we equipped.

The evangelistic series we had was only through small groups; no coliseums, no stadiums—churches, homes, in groups of eight to 12 (the healthiest is six to 10).

Everything led to an evangelistic series in April, only through a web page, all free, all through social media (that’s the other revolutionary part).

Compared to a NET event, for which you have to pick which coast you’re going to be on, and everybody has to tune in at a specific time, on social media we could record (we recorded in February), and we posted the program each morning. So if your small group wanted to do it at 3:00 p.m., great. If you want to do it at 4:15, great. If you want to do it at night, it doesn’t matter. Any time you want, anywhere in the country, all you have to do is hit “click.”

We built the studio [set] to look like a home. We actually had a small group, no actors. So when Bullón made the call, they were actually responding on camera.

Bullón is a visionary. He said, “I want stories of people.” So each day Bullón would be facing the audience and he’d say, “You know, Steve had a hard life; Steve this, Steve that, but the Lord . . . and Steve’s here today.” That was exciting.

Then we asked, “Are people going to tune in?”

Refugee immigrant growth is going to lead the church in North America.

Out of the 750 Spanish pastors, 553 registered, which is phenomenal.

Another issue we had is that for those 40 years old and over, technology is a beast. They said, “Can we get it on DVDs?” I fought it, but I gave in at the end. So we had more than 6,500 DVD sets, and they all got used. So we have numbers to show that we had more than 16,000 small groups.

It’s all in Spanish, but the number-one question I got was “Can we get this in English?” The other question: “Can we do it for kids?” And we’re working on both of those.

Identify two or three main challenges you see.

The first one is generational. We’re always going to have first-generation Hispanics coming to North America. Their mentality about mission is just different. The second, third, fourth generations are just in a different place.

Another challenge is understanding that it’s OK to be bicultural. That’s where we’re at. It’s OK if it’s a little different.

Do you have counterparts in other church divisions around the world?

Honestly, I don’t know. I don’t think the General Conference has a multilingual director. But in North America more conferences and union conferences are moving from specific ethnic group nomenclature to a multilingual director, and I think that’s a good thing.

I’m close to setting up an advisory for directors of multilingual ministries. There are enough in North America so that we can actually meet. Refugee immigrant growth is going to lead the church in North America.

People say they’re frustrated with having a Hispanic church, an African American church, a Filipino church all within walking distance. Will that change? It may change a little, but is it ever going to go away? I don’t think so. In heaven we’re all going to speak, according to one group, Yugoslavian. 🗡

¡COCINEMOS!

*Celebrate
Hispanic
Heritage Month
by getting
in the kitchen.*

WILONA KARIMABADI

National Hispanic Heritage Month is September 15 through October 15. So this is a good time to learn more about Hispanic culture, and a great place to start is by sampling some delicious delights you may not be familiar with. We are happy to present three recipes that are sure to get you on your way. If you try them, take a picture and post it to our Facebook page. Happy cooking!

BRAZIL

Pão de Queijo (Brazilian Cheese Bread)

By Raquel Arrais

This bread is part of my childhood. Even today it's one of the most delicious treats I want to eat when I go to Brazil. It is easy to make and tasty to eat!

INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups tapioca flour
- 1 ¼ cups milk
- ½ cup water
- 6 tablespoons oil
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 large eggs
- 1 ½ cups grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 cup shredded Mozzarella cheese

INSTRUCTIONS

- Preheat oven to 400° F.
- Place the tapioca flour in the bowl of a stand mixer.
- Combine milk, water, oil, and salt in a saucepan and bring to a boil over medium-high heat.
- When the milk mixture boils, pour it over the flour. Mix well. The texture will be fondant-like, white and sticky.
- With the mixer still on, add the eggs, one at a time. You may think the eggs won't mix in since the tapioca flour mixture is so sticky, but keep mixing.
- When the eggs are incorporated, add the cheese, a little at a time, until fully combined.
- The dough is supposed to be soft and sticky. But if you're worried that it's too moist, add more tapioca flour. Just don't overdo it or your cheese bread will be tough, and the cheese will not be gooey enough.
- Shape the dough into balls. Wet your hands with cold water and use a scoop or spoon to help form balls slightly smaller than the size of golf balls.
- Place the balls of dough on a baking sheet.
- Bake the cheese bread for 15-20 minutes, or until golden and puffed.

Serve them warm!

PUERTO RICO

Arroz con Gandules Puertorriqueño (Puerto Rican Rice With Pigeon Peas)

By Laura Sanchez

INGREDIENTS

- Homemade Seasoning*
- 1 9-ounce jar Spanish olives
- 5 cups water
- 4 tablespoons cooking oil
- 2 15-ounce cans pigeon peas/gandules (drained)
- 4 cups rice

*Homemade Seasoning

- 1 15-ounce can tomato sauce
- 2 packets Sazon with achiote and cilantro
- 2 tablespoons sofrito (Goya makes a good version)
- 2 tablespoons cilantro
- 1 medium onion
- 4 garlic cloves
- ½ cup water

INSTRUCTIONS

- Blend the homemade seasoning ingredients in a blender until well mixed.
- Chop the Spanish olives into fine slices and lay them aside momentarily.
- Heat the water in a “caldero” or Dutch oven to medium heat, and add the cooking oil.
- Add the homemade seasoning, stirring it constantly until tender, but not browned.
- Add the sliced Spanish olives and salt to taste. Stir to combine.
- Add the drained pigeon peas and bring the mixture to a boil.
- Add the rice and distribute the mixture evenly. Cook on medium heat.
- Allow the rice to absorb all the liquid, uncovered. Then stir the rice once and cover it to steam for 20 minutes on low heat.
- Stir it again one last time. The rice will be fluffy and ready to eat!

Buen provecho!

ARGENTINA

Gluten-free Alfajores With Dulce de Leche (Argentine Sandwich Cookies)

By Silvia Sicalo

INGREDIENTS

- 2½ cups cornstarch
- 1 cup gluten-free all-purpose baking flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup unsalted butter, softened
- ¾ cup white sugar
- 1 11.5-ounce can of condensed milk
- 3 egg yolks
- 2 teaspoons lemon zest
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ cup shredded coconut

INSTRUCTIONS

- Preheat oven to 350° F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
- Whisk cornstarch, flour, baking powder, and baking soda in a bowl.
- Beat butter, sugar, and condensed milk with an electric mixer in a large bowl until light and fluffy. Whisk in egg yolks, one at a time, until well-blended. Add lemon zest and vanilla extract with the last egg.
- Fold into flour mixture with a spoon, mixing until dough holds together and turns into a ball. Wrap in plastic wrap; refrigerate for 30 minutes to 1 hour.
- Roll out dough to about ¼-inch thickness. Cut cookies with a small round cookie cutter and place on the prepared baking sheets.
- Bake in preheated oven until set but not browned, seven to 10 minutes. Remove immediately to cool on a wire rack.
- Spread underside of a cookie with 1 teaspoon dulce de leche. Sandwich together with another cookie until filling comes out on the sides. Roll sides in the shredded coconut.



INNOCENT SUFFERERS: WHY?

Related to ice and rain?

Through many years of work with ADRA, I have often witnessed situations of extreme human suffering.

FOR EXAMPLE

About 20 years ago in Angola I met an 8-year-old girl who had stepped on an anti-personnel mine. We evacuated her by plane to Luanda to amputate her leg. She was one more innocent, painful civilian casualty in the devastation of civil war.

Countless stories from refugees in their paths of exile tell the horrors of their struggles on the road, stories of fear, shipwrecks, robberies, rapes, hunger, torture, slavery. In France I met a young man from Mali. When I asked about the origin of scars on his arms and face he answered simply: “Libya.” If he had known what he would have had to suffer to reach France, he would never have left home.

A FAMOUS TRAGEDY

There aren’t enough pages in the world to describe all the injustices and suffering you and I have seen. We invariably wonder: Why? The biblical drama of Job, apocalyptic in its dimensions and implications, casts light on a struggle involving our world that unfolds on the supernatural level. Through

it God shares with us more insight than the naked eye can provide. The struggle illustrated by the story of Job may be hidden from common view, but the war it depicts between God and Satan is completely real.

In Job 1 God questions Satan, whose name means “adversary,” about God’s servant Job, an upright, God-fearing man who “shuns evil” (Job 1:8).

Satan answers with a challenge: “Does Job fear God for nothing? . . . Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands” (verses 9, 10). Here Satan himself acknowledges that God is our

protector. But this does not dull his daring. In fact, he makes it the inspiration for his challenge: “Stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face” (verse 11).

What should God do now? The adversary demands that He stop protecting Job, to prove that Job will stop pretending to respect and obey Him if he is not pampered. God allows Satan to test Job’s sincerity, and the troubles begin. Job loses wealth, health, social position, reputation, children, everything. But what is his reaction? He falls to the ground in



© SEBASTIÃO SALGADO / UNHCR

worship (verse 20). Job is lucid and disturbed by what is happening to him. Tearing his clothes and shaving his head (verse 20) are expressions of his utter desolation. Nevertheless, he's able to worship God in the midst of turmoil.

FAMOUS FRIENDS

Job's friends arrive. But their behavior only increases his moral torture. The best support that they provide is when, during the first seven days, they sit together with him in silent astonishment at his plight (Job 2:11-13).

When they eventually speak, it is devastating to Job: they accuse him of hidden sin, arguing that the innocent do not perish (Job 4:7); that it must be the sins of his sons that earned their sudden destruction (Job 8:3, 4); that if he turned from iniquity his lot would improve (Job 11:14, 15).

Job retorts that God's hand against him is harsh, overwhelming, humiliating, and unfair (Job 9:17, 18, 20, 22-24). Still, Job longs for the chance to speak to God directly (Job 23:3-7).

The book is structured as a chiasm, presenting a sequence of ideas, then repeating them in reverse order, with its climax occurring at the middle of the book, the center of the chiasm. It is a climax that transcends the height of natural human reason as Job declares, "I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth" (Job 19:25).

Job's faith sees further than human eyesight and speaks with authority about things beyond all earthly human capacity. Job becomes a prophet of the Resurrection, and author of one of the Bible's most wonderful statements. Job suffers; there is much that he doesn't understand; his treatment is unfair. But whatever he may not grasp of the full explanation of his circumstance, he can still say, "I know that my redeemer lives," and "I myself will see him with my own eyes" (verses 25, 27).

ASKING AGAIN: WHY?

Why does God allow Job's undeserved misfortune? He does offer answers in Job 38-41. But at first they seem to dodge Job's questions. God speaks to Job, who chafes at his suffering, about lightning and thunder, rain and clouds, goats and lions; carrying on about creative power when the issue is Job's pain and abuse.

Nevertheless, God gets through to Job. Job sees

God's astonishing answer to suffering is oblique, subjective, and incarnational.

his inability to explain simple questions about nature. And though science today knows a lot more than Job did about ice and rain, humanity still struggles to understand innocent suffering. Explaining innocent suffering is a lot harder than explaining ice and rain. Understanding suffering takes special revelation.

But if we listen as Job did, we can understand too. Job hears his answer in God's rhetorical questions. God says that one encounter with the mythic, fire-breathing leviathan (Job 41:18-21) will teach you never to dare engage him again (verse 8). And if you can't handle Leviathan, "who then is able to stand against me?" (verse 10).

God's astonishing answer to suffering is oblique, subjective, and incarnational: resolving the evil of suffering is too much for us; God and God alone can master it. And He does in Immanuel, God with us (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23), Jesus living among us, becoming the curse to conquer blight forever, sharing our humanity "so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death" (Heb. 2:14).

All of this is not explicit for Job, and things don't end perfectly for him. God restores his health, wealth, and family, but he ends up dead. Any story that ends in death is a sad story. But what Job hears from God is enough for him, as his answer implies: "My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you" (Job 42:5). Job is satisfied because his faith is satisfied. For faith, the victory that overcomes the world (1 John 5:4) is not a resolution of all questions, but trusting, in spite of questions, that enables us to share the climax of Job and the book: "I know that my redeemer lives. . . . I myself will see him with my own eyes" (Job 19:25-27). ♣

Mario Oliveira directs emergency management for ADRA International, the Seventh-day Adventist Church's global development and disaster relief organization.

#MindBodySoul

Lifestyle Magazine | mind
body
soul

Mike Tucker
Host

Lifestyle Magazine
www.Lifestyle.org

mind
body
soul



Scan for Life Tips

THE AUDIENCE OF ONE

I stared at the letter in disbelief. It wasn't addressed to me, but because of its contents it had landed on my desk. "There are many people on 3ABN with good hair, decent hair. And then there is yours . . . looking like the mice might make a nest in it."

I knew the woman this letter was about. She was beautiful with gorgeous hair, smooth skin, and high cheekbones. Even better, she had a sweet spirit and a love for others. *Who would write something like this? Who could even think it?*

Hundreds of letters and thousands of e-mails make their way across my desk every month. Most are good. Sometimes 3ABN has blessed a viewer's life in incredible ways. Sometimes it's a message here or a sermon there that made the difference between life and death. Someone has accepted Jesus or discovered the truths in God's Word for the first time; someone is walking into a Seventh-day Adventist church because of something they heard on 3ABN. That is why we exist—to spread this gospel message to the world.

But what of the other letters? Not the ones with questions, for we love to help and assist wherever possible. I'm referring to the ones with no apparent purpose except to wound and destroy. There's the viewer who said I laughed at inappropriate times, and it showed my lack of intelligence. The one who said that God knew that I wouldn't make a good mom, and that was why He had withheld

children from me. The one who said my sins must be keeping God from blessing this ministry. *Ouch!*

For some people a comment like that wouldn't bother them in the least. "Oh, well," they'd say. "That's just one person's opinion." They'd let it go in one ear and out the other. *God, why didn't You make me like that?*

Me? I spent two weeks in earnest prayer over that last comment, searching my heart. *God, is there unconfessed sin in my life? Anything that might hinder Your work in my life or in this ministry?* I want to live a life pleasing to God. My Father knows and understands this, for He knows all about me. What is the purpose, then, of random comments?

Perhaps it's not about the person writing in; rather, maybe it's about me. Where does my identity come from? Is it from Jesus, or from others? What about my value, my purpose in life? How much does someone else's praise or criticism affect me?

Life is a journey. And what I'm learning is this: my Father's opinion is the one that really matters. *God, teach me to live for the audience of One, letting nothing and no one else get in the way.* ♣

Jill Morikone is vice president and chief operations officer for Three Angels Broadcasting Network, 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



HUNDREDS OF
LETTERS AND
THOUSANDS OF
E-MAILS MAKE THEIR
WAY ACROSS MY
DESK EVERY MONTH.
MOST ARE GOOD.

NEW!



CHILDIMPACT
INTERNATIONAL
Previously Asian Aid USA



SPONSORSHIP ZAMBIA



Impact the life of a needy child in Zambia

only **\$25**/month
Sponsorship

or donate to our Unsponsored Child fund

Joint partnership with Riverside Farms Institute

Sponsor or Donate Online
childimpact.org

by Mail: Child Impact, PO Box 763,
Ooltewah, TN 37363

or Phone: (423) 910-0667



PETER N. LANDLESS

ZENO L. CHARLES-MARCEL

Surgical Outcomes

Improving the odds

Q: I will be scheduled for in-hospital surgery under general anaesthesia within the next three to four months, and I'm scared. I've heard that there are ways to reduce my risk. What can I do?

A: People undergoing medical-surgical procedures often feel anxious, stressed, or scared. Doctors are paying increasing attention to interventions to reduce presurgery jitters, anxiety, and stress to improve recovery and avoid delayed discharge from the hospital. Using the time you have before surgery to optimize your total health is a must-do for all who can. Some hospitals have “prehabilitation” programs, so see if such a program is available where you are.

We are privileged to respond to your question, but remember that these general health tips should not supersede or replace the recommendations from your physician.

- » **Make maximum deposits into your “well-being bank account.”** Use the opportunity to examine and improve all aspects of your health: physical, mental, social, and spiritual. Get up-to-date with appropriate screening and those “to-do” things you’ve been putting off. Quitting the use of alcohol, tobacco, and nicotine all improve your chances of a better surgical outcome.
- » **Be clear, honest, and upfront with your doctor(s)** about your habits, history, concerns, and anxiety—and your use of supplements. Some herbal products, supplements, and both non-prescription and prescription medications can be dangerous if used before and after surgery. So please disclose everything.
- » **Become knowledgeable** about your surgery and recovery process. Research shows that the clearer your expectations, the lower your stress, and the better you are likely to do before, during, and after surgery. Always feel free to get a second opinion.

» **Eat well.** It’s crucial for a quality lifestyle, but it’s a must before and after surgery. Your presurgery diet should be rich in protein (1.2 to 2 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight per day), especially the amino acid arginine, fiber to prevent constipation, and omega-3 fats (but not in excess). Presurgery arginine and omega-3s can reduce the risk of postsurgical infections, and along with vitamin C-rich foods regulate the immune system to promote healing. Nuts, seeds, seaweed, and legumes provide many of the components for an enhanced pre-op diet. Additionally, good evidence suggests that carbohydrate-loading two to three hours prior to surgery, and chewing gum containing xylitol after surgery, improve perceived recovery.

- » **Get physically fit.** This improves recovery. In the weeks before your surgery, walk *at least* 30 minutes every day, and moderately but safely step up your favorite form of exercise.
- » **Lose some fat.** If you are overweight, healthfully losing even 10 pounds before surgery will improve your surgeon’s visibility during the operation and allow him or her to operate more quickly and efficiently.

» **Take time to laugh, sing, and pray.** These curb levels of stress hormones in your body and strengthen your immune system. A merry heart *is* good medicine!

Preparing for surgery takes planning. Have a plan, and prayerfully work that plan. By God’s grace, trust Him to do for you what you can’t do for yourself. ♣

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



THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR

Don't be afraid; open it!

One Sunday morning about 7:30 I was in bed, somewhere between comatose and dreamland. Fortunately, my wife doesn't sleep as soundly as I do, and she woke me from my slumber. Sure enough, someone was banging on our front door.

We lived on the ground floor in an apartment complex. People had to pass a locked outside gate, and a locked entrance to the stairwell, to get to our front door. The question was not only *why* but also *how* someone happened to be banging on our door.

I wasn't awake enough to process those questions just yet. I stumbled out of bed, slipped a jacket over my pajamas, and made my way to the door.

Outside in the stairwell stood

a man who didn't look particularly happy. He was wearing jeans, socks, but no shoes, and was naked from the waist up. I noticed his red eyes and sensed quickly the stale smell of alcohol. In his right hand he brandished a metal bed frame.

FOCUS

Mark, as he was called, admitted to getting drunk the night before. But he had no recollection as to how he ended up spending the night on the carpet at the top of the apartment stairwell amid some random furniture. He made the assumption, clearly so in his mind, that someone within the complex had played a prank on him. Not only had they left him there the previous evening—they had taken his shoes, his wallet, and his phone.

If those indignities weren't enough, they had also apparently urinated on his jeans!

So there he was, out to find who had done it and make them pay.

I daresay I do not make a very intimidating figure in my pajamas. Other than being quite tall, I am not very aggressive. Nor was I sure what this visitor was capable of. So, whether by instinct or preference, I spoke to him calmly. I asked him questions. I answered his questions honestly. I even offered some suggestions.

It must have worked. Right before my eyes he began to soften, and even shook my hand when I introduced myself.

I quickly got dressed after closing the door. But Mark was still out there, somewhere, and I couldn't settle. He was not my

responsibility; let's be clear about that. I don't know how he got upstairs, but it certainly wasn't my doing. My door was closed now; couldn't I leave it that way?

He'd done a fair bit to get himself into this mess, couldn't he get himself out of it? Maybe he would learn a lesson in the process.

But I couldn't settle. He was still out there, on the other side of the door.

So back out I went. He was now locked out of the stairwell. He seemed almost more disoriented than 10 minutes earlier. I started talking to him again. He borrowed my phone to call his own number. Lo and behold, his girlfriend answered. It seemed that she was less keen to see him this morning than I had been. That became clear as he handed the phone back for me to talk to her.

He sat down with his back against the wall to rest his broken toe, so I sat beside him. I asked him where he worked. Did he want a drink of water? No. Did I have a cigarette? No.

The sun was warm; maybe that softened him further. When I suggested for the third time that I take him home, he painfully rose to his feet and accepted the offer. Pulling into his driveway about five minutes later, he was almost apologetic that he couldn't give me anything in return. Not that I needed anything. I could go home now and know that he wasn't on the other side of the door.

LESSONS LEARNED

So what neat, tidy moral can I pull from this experience? Well, a few actually.

First, if you hadn't picked it up already, stay away from alcohol. Keep your brain cells and your dignity.

Second, a wise man once said, "A gentle answer turns away wrath" (Prov. 15:1). How else could a hungover, half-naked man come to the point of being a "friend" in the space of a half hour?

But what most echoed through my mind was the vivid recognition of two intertwined realities. First, how much God wants to connect with a world of messed-up people. How can He possibly do that when they make it so hard for Him? And at what point was Mark going to realize that a night of drinking and its aftereffects isn't all that it's cracked up to be? When was he going to figure out that there might be something better?

Those questions bring us to the second reality:

I like the idea of being God's agent to transform messy lives.

God wants to connect with a world of messed-up people for sure, but He wants to do it through us. Yes, the Holy Spirit is active and engaged, working on people's hearts. And yes, I believe salvation is a transaction that ultimately takes place between individuals and God. But when it comes to demonstrating the better way of life that we so eloquently talk about among ourselves, that is a task given to us.

Maybe someday Mark will have an epiphany. He will wake up somewhere else on a Sunday morning with another headache, another broken toe, and suddenly realize that he has been sold a dud. That maybe he ought to look to God, go to church, read a Bible.

It could happen; but that scenario is usually God's Plan B. Plan A is to put Mark in proximity with someone who can demonstrate that better way of life and introduce him to it.

I'm not sure if that scares me or excites me. I think it's supposed to be the latter. Could I have said more to Mark? Did I do enough? Still, I'm glad I didn't leave Mark on the other side of the door. I'm glad I was able to help him a little.

Maybe in a small way I was able to be a channel for God to connect with Mark. I do like the idea of being God's agent to transform messy lives.

Who in your life lies on the other side of the door? Are you more comfortable if they stay out there while you keep your place of security? Are you content to leave God with Plan B and settle for that? Or do you want to be an agent for God in changing messy lives also?

That person—(he or she)—will be there some time—on the other side of the door. 🗡️

Derek O'Hare lives in Kwinana, near Perth, Australia. He works as a hearing specialist and attends the Seventh-day Adventist church in Rockingham.

**THE CARTER REPORT
ANNOUNCES**

THE "MEGA MANILA" CAMPAIGN FOR CHRIST AND TRUTH



Photo: Shutterstock

MARCH 9-15, 2020
SPREAD THE WORD!

You are invited to join us for a supernatural encounter

SPEAKER - International pastor and evangelist John Carter.

VENUE -The famous and prestigious Philippine International Convention Center, MANILA.

WHO WILL BE ATTENDING? - Thousands of invitees, community leaders, church pastors and administrators, government officials, international singers, and The Carter Report team from America, Australia, China, and Cuba.

1984



John Carter and Graeme Bradford with a local pastor baptize prisoners on death row in a high security Philippine prison.

WHAT WILL I GAIN BY JOINING THE TEAM IN MANILA? -

You will experience the power of God in the preaching and teaching of great spiritual and scientific truths. Your life will be enriched by the multifaceted culture of a dynamic Asian city bigger than New York.

CONTACT US NOW - The Carter Report • PO Box 1900 •

Thousand Oaks • CA 91358. Write or call us for details concerning air fares, accommodation, sightseeing, etc. **YOUR LIFE WILL NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN.** Be part of a great international Gospel reaping program that will powerfully touch the lives of thousands. **Join the team.** Young people are especially invited. **YOU HAVE ALL TO GAIN.** This definitely is the opportunity of a lifetime.

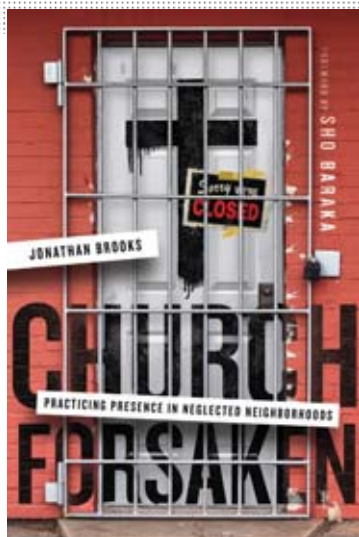
Proudly sponsored by The Carter Report and the Central Luzon Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Call today 805-532-0038, availability limited.
Website: www.carterreport.org



PO Box 1900 | Thousand Oaks CA 91358 | 805.532.0038
www.carterreport.org | email: info@carterreport.org

CLOSER LOOK



Left Behind

Church Forsaken: Practicing Presence in Neglected Neighborhoods, Jonathan Brooks, InterVarsity Press, 2018, 224 pages. Softcover, US\$16 (\$10.99, Kindle edition). Reviewed by Stephen Chavez, *Adventist Review*.

Most large cities in North America have neighborhoods in which poverty rests like pollen on streets, cars, and buildings, and occupies multiple blocks. These are neighborhoods where shops, cafés, schools, and churches once thrived. But then the closing of a factory or other businesses left behind people too elderly or too trapped by poverty to relocate elsewhere.

In Chicago's South Side, one of those neighborhoods is Englewood, the type of neighborhood from which people try to escape. Some succeed, but many do not. It was to this neighborhood, Englewood, that Jonathan Brooks ("Pastah J") came to serve the Canaan Community Church as pastor.

Church Forsaken is part memoir, part playbook, part prophetic pronouncement for anyone who has wondered whether communities such as Englewood can be touched

Connecting With Christ

Connection: How to Have a Relationship With God, Steve Case, Pacific Press, 2009, revised 2019, 238 pages. Softcover, US\$15.99 (Kindle version US\$9.99). Reviewed by Stephen Chavez, *Adventist Review*.

It's been 10 years since *Connection* was first published. So when you're looking to buy this book, look for a small banner on the lower right corner of the cover that says "*Connection*, Tenth Anniversary Edition." It represents the author's latest effort to help youth and young adults connect with Jesus, using the outline of Ellen White's classic book about discipleship, *Steps to Christ*.

This is not a paraphrase. As the author points out in the preface: "I took its structure and then rewrote it as if I were sharing it in a one-on-one conversation. . . . My own background, experiences, and training got mixed in as well." So the chapters resemble *Steps to Christ* only in terms of the broad subjects. While the concepts were first articulated by Ellen White, the words belong to the author. Even the chapter titles are different (although it isn't difficult to see that "You Need Help" is the same as "The Sinner's Need of Christ" and "Proof"

with practical Christianity.

The book opens with the author sitting on his porch one evening in July when his reading is interrupted by the sound of gunfire. He learns later that a young man was killed in the alley behind his house.

Thinking of his wife and their two small children in the house, he reflects on questions others have asked: Why don't you move? Why don't you go somewhere else? Why are you here?

Brooks uses Jeremiah's prophecy about the Babylonian Exile (Jer. 29:4-11) as the reason he chooses to stay and try to make



is related to “Faith and Acceptance”).

Steve Case is president of Involve Youth, a supportive ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church; he is also an adjunct professor at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. *Connection* is a fine stand

alone, presented by a youth ministry professional whose doctoral degree in religious education has been augmented by decades of practical youth ministry.

One of the book’s great strengths is its practicality. Each chapter is divided into several self-contained two-page subsections in which the author takes a simple concept, identifies a spiritual principle, and applies it to contemporary spiritual life. Thought questions, and a blank space to write down reflections, make them extremely practical. This is a book one might keep for years to review written comments and track spiritual growth. It is also an excellent resource for small group Bible study, and not just for youth. Mature Christians will also find thoughtful, challenging concepts about living the life of faith.

Steps to Christ first appeared in 1892, published by the Fleming H. Revell Company. Its broad appeal during nearly 130 years, in more than 150 languages, testifies to its usefulness in helping people choose Christ and become His disciples. In this volume Steve Case is doing something laudable: helping to introduce youth and young adults to a Savior who will encourage and nurture them as they navigate the path of salvation. ♣

a difference. He expertly translates these verses into seven practices for making a difference where we live.

Brooks has a Master of Divinity and Christian Community Development degree from Northern Seminary, and could live in any number of communities. But rather than writing off this community and the people who live there, Brooks and his congregation take up the challenge of translating Christian principles into practice and making Englewood a better place for its citizens.

The tagline of Canaan Community Church is: “The church where love makes a difference.” Brooks quickly points out that “love is not a word to be tossed around trivially.” His book is much

more than a collection of feel-good success stories. The situations he describes are as gritty, real, and uncompromising as one might expect from living in a community infected with poverty, crime, and addiction.

But also marvelously obvious throughout the book is the power of the gospel to transform lives and confront stubborn social problems. The book chronicles Canaan’s attempts to support arts, athletics, commerce, and education in an area all but written off by many of society’s other institutions. The author invites readers to see the neighborhoods where we live as God does: with unlimited potential, not intractable problems. ♣

THE OBJECT OF GOD'S SUPREME REGARD

Until Jesus returns, the church will always be that odd assortment of male and female, old and young, wise and foolish, saints and sinners, honesty and hypocrisy. It is God's shelter, safe yet dynamic, a place of sweet redemption, deep fellowship and growth in wholeness unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. We offer here timeless pictures of the God who loves and saves, as of the people privileged to be objects of His love.

—Editors.

“Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?”

AMOS 3:3.

“And the Lord said, ‘I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion’”

EX. 33:19.

“So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob’s hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. Then the man said, ‘Let me go, for it is daybreak.’

“But Jacob replied, ‘I will not let you go unless you bless me’”

GEN. 32:24-26.

“[Joseph’s] brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. ‘We are your slaves,’ they said.

“But Joseph said to them, ‘Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don’t be afraid. I will provide for you and your children.’ And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them”

GEN. 50:18-21.

“But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him,

and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all”

ISA. 53:5, 6.

“Neither do I condemn you,’
Jesus declared.
‘Go now and
leave your life of sin’”

JOHN 8:11.

“When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee’s house and reclined at the table. A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee’s house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet



with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

“When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, ‘If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner.’

“Jesus answered him, ‘Simon, I have something to tell you.’

“Tell me, teacher,’ he said.

“Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?”

“Simon replied, ‘I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven.’

“You have judged correctly,’ Jesus said.

“Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, ‘Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.’

“Then Jesus said to her, ‘Your sins are forgiven’”

LUKE 7:36-48.

“The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

“But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and

celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate”

LUKE 15:21-24.

“The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter.

Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: ‘Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times.’ And he went outside and wept bitterly”

LUKE 22:61, 62.

“Then [the thief] said, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’

“Jesus answered him, ‘Truly I tell you today, you will be with me in paradise’”

LUKE 23:42, 43.

“Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me. . . .

You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.
My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart
you, God, will not despise”

PS. 51:10-17.

“We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy. Lord, listen! Lord, forgive! Lord, hear and act!”

DAN. 9:18, 19.

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails”

1 COR. 13:4-8.

SCARED SAFE

I awoke one morning in June to a desperate cry, as audible as written text can be.

It was all part of someone's Sabbath greeting to "Papa C.," and to her sisterhood of like souls, children who claim to love Papa C.: 3,000 + appropriately sunny, smiling emojis and hearts! Children who once sat in my college classes, whose wedding ceremonies and baby dedications I have since performed, children not yet one week of years into motherhood. She wrote on the morning after Virginia Beach had become headline news for the killing of

12 people and their slaughterer.

Besides "Happy Sabbath" wishes for all, her fingers blurted out her vulnerability: "Also asking for prayer! I find myself feeling paralyzed in fear when I hear of these senseless acts of violence!

**NO. IT ISN'T
MADNESS THAT
KEEPS US HERE.**

It keeps me from wanting to take my kid-dos out anywhere, church included! So I am asking for all your loving prayers!"

I responded: "True, true, true—3k true: This ain't no world to bring your babies to. Truth is, this ain't no world for me, either! You want to stay here? I don't. But my Lena-I-Love-You Lily is here. My children are here—the ones that blood and genes gave me; the other ones—all of you—that love gave me. 3K love. And I love you back all three thousand.

"So are we confused? No. It isn't madness that keeps us here, whether it be the madness of the massacre or the X-gamed madness of approximate self-destruction—like what's been going on at the top of the world in the Himalayas. Fact is that those two—Virginia Beach and Mount Everest—are both, in one crucial sense, manifestations of the same thing: they are

exhibitions of the choice some people feel obliged to make. For some, you think in sync with the NRA; for some, you're recognizing a public health disaster for what it is; for some, you're emptying your bucket, not leaving anything unchecked on your list; for others it's inventing excitement to satisfy unsatisfiable cravings for something that can last beyond the spectacle, the gold medal, the applause, the endorsements, and the money.

Then, over against all these, there is the incredible tagline from the holy terrorist that goes off with the first bullet: "In the name of God. . . !" In the end, to the extent that any part of us is part of it, what we have and what we have become is humans making fools of ourselves to make ourselves famous.

Meanwhile, I and my loving-me-3k children are still here; Morgz and her (four!) babies, small and big, are still here. So what are we going to do in fear's next moment when its ugly hand throttles our throat again and we almost cannot breathe, and we don't know where to hide our hearts and the children in them?

What are we going to do? What are you going to do next time? Next time? What are you going to do now? Because the "next times" and their numbers—54 dead in Vegas; nine in Ohio; 22 in El Paso, etc., etc.—those are nothing but punctuation. The reality of the text is constant! So what are we going to do every day?

I was hoping you would ask, so I could say: "see Psalm 56:3; Isaiah 12:2; 26:3"

Peace. 🕊

Lael Caesar, *Adventist Review* associate editor, earnestly believes Psalm 56:3; he may feel scared, but his trust is in God.

AR AUDIO

Let those
who have
ears, **listen!**



ARAUDIO.org

Audio on Demand



Live life to the fullest.

You were born to enjoy a life that is active, vibrant and filled with joy. Which is why we are excited to announce that **CREATION Health is now CREATION Life.**

This new name better expresses our promise to feel whole—made possible by experiencing the biblical principles of health—Choice, Rest, Environment, Activity, Trust in God, Interpersonal Relationships, Outlook and Nutrition.

For more information, visit [CREATIONLife.com](https://www.CREATIONLife.com)

CREATION Life


Advent Health