

# ADVENTIST REVIEW

**FEBRUARY 2020: THE GREATEST BUILDER + DON'T STUDY THE 28 FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS + THE COLOR OF LIVES THAT MATTER (TO GOD) + HE KNOWS + MY KIND OF CHURCH + REVOLUTION OF THE HEART + *WOOF!***

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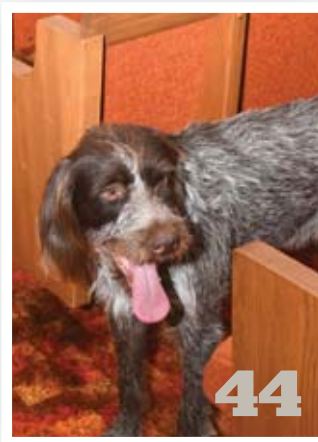
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# TRENDING

THE MOST SHARED STORIES ON ADVENTISTREVIEW.ORG LAST MONTH:



- 1 Bringing Help, Building Hope: An interview with ADRA president Michael Kruger
- 2 ADRA Helps Families Affected by Oil Spill in Brazil
- 3 Adventists Aid in Wake of Australian Brushfires
- 4 Magnitude 6.9 Earthquake Jolts Southern Philippines
- 5 Former Bar in Brazil Now Home to Adventist Congregation

## RECOGNIZING BLACK HISTORY

In 1926 Carter G. Woodson created Negro History Week to be observed during the second week of February. This week was so designated because two influential Americans in Black history, Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, were both born during this week. Fifty years later, U.S. President Gerald R. Ford declared February as Black History Month.



On March 14, 1968, the *Adventist Review* reported that U. S. Senator Edward M. Kennedy spoke to the student body at Atlantic Union College (AUC) on the first day of what was then Negro History Week. He gave a 30-minute presentation, followed by questions. This was a first for AUC. Andrews University held their first Negro History presentations in February 1967.

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BILL KNOTT



*In grace, we affirm that life—even here and now—can rise above its dailyness and drudgery.*

## A Gathering for Life

She hears the scraping of Fred's snow shovel while she is still in bed: he is meticulously clearing last night's nine inches so she can drive to church today. "Wouldn't want you to miss that church of yours," he says each winter Sabbath, though he has no church of his own and won't accept any payment for his work. "This town needs more people like you, Mrs. Schmidt. You just pray for me when you're at church."

Fifty-eight minutes later in the immaculate garage, she eases herself into "Jim's car," the 2006 Mercury Sable of which he had been so proud. She pauses to look at the empty passenger seat where she used to sit when Jim drove every week to church. As she does each Sabbath, she closes her eyes and prays that Jesus will come soon.

Arthur is shoveling the sidewalk and the wheelchair ramp when she arrives. "Happy Sabbath, Valerie," he says, momentarily leaning on the handle. "Were the roads OK for you this morning?"

"Oh, what's a little snow?" she laughs in a familiar exchange they have rehearsed for 30 winters.

Hector and the twins are already in the sanctuary, the eager 6-year-old girls hurrying from pew to pew to put the tithe envelopes carefully in place and restock the stubby pencils. "*Abuela Valerie*," Hector murmurs as he leans forward for his Sabbath morning hug. "*Feliz Sabado*."

Kaneesha, tall and elegant, arrives five minutes early, and set-

gles into the seat beside Valerie. Her hand reaches for her customary squeeze, and she leans toward her much older White sister. "How did your classes go this week?" Valerie whispers. A deep intake of breath follows: "Well, I survived," Kaneesha murmurs. "I need this Sabbath more than ever."

"Brenda's Brood" arrives at just the same moment—but never on time—each Sabbath, Valerie notes as four vocalizing children spill out of the aging minivan, followed by a 30-something mother who looks like she desperately needs a respite. The 8-year-old hurries down the aisle to Valerie's accustomed pew, shyly offering a folded construction paper card. "It says, 'I love you, Grandma Valerie,'" she blurts out before the card can even be opened. "I made it myself"

The sermon is unmemorable, but Valerie records each point so she can remake it in the Tuesday evening phone Bible study she leads with four other widows.

The Hammond organ still has that persistent low B-flat that hums through every hymn, but no one seems to mind too much.

What brings them here each Sabbath, pulled from well-lit, heated homes, each with cable connections to much grander Adventist sanctuaries? What calls the widow and the immigrant, the university student and the divorced mother of four out into the frozen sunshine and new snow of a Nebraska morning? They wouldn't dream of "sleeping

in" or even coming just for the sermon. Through thick and thin—dense Sabbath School lessons and thin preaching—they have persevered—will persevere—in being the church of Jesus in this place.

Somehow, mysteriously, they have found life in this place. Though the preacher sometimes loses them, the Word always finds them. Though the hymns are never grand and the choir long ago disbanded, they find life and light—and Jesus—in each other's faces every Sabbath.

"The physical presence of other Christians is a source of incomparable joy and strength to the believer," Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote as the darkness of the Second World War was closing in. And though our circumstances may not in any week be so grim, we find oxygen to inhale and the resurrection of our hope when we gather with those who are uniquely tied to us in Jesus.

In grace, we affirm that life—even here and now—can rise above its dailyness and drudgery; that meaning can endure; that faith can last through winter. We stand in the place of Jesus to each other week by week—reminders of the life abundant, and of the life to come.

Deliver me from sanctuaries and movements where no one finds rescue, shelter, and companions.

The church I want to belong to is . . . *life-affirming.*

*Bill Knott*

Even peaceful strikes may not be the best method to get the message across.

AMBER JOY, MONTANA

## WHY I'M STRIKING FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

Kayla's enthusiasm is noteworthy (AR Online, Sept. 20, 2019). She is articulate in stating her passion. There are many ways to spread the news about the changes people can undertake.

Starting with her church and the use of plastics is a good place to bring awareness. Since I am from the United States and all kinds of strikes disrupt the peace of businesses and people trying to accomplish their daily work, it strikes me (pun intended) that even peaceful strikes may not be the best method to get the message across. Here are some things to think about:

As a church we have a great message to give to the world. Kindness is an excellent attitude for doing that. It will take people like Kayla to help that effort. We have many avenues from which to choose: print, media, one-on-one encounters, organized meetings for the public, DVDs, social media, and others. Yes, prayers are the most helpful resource we have in caring for our planet and our churches. Many problems are not human-made, and cannot be solved by people. Let's do our best to be good stewards of the earth, but have a priority of spreading the good news about Jesus, the Creator!

**Amber Joy**  
Montana

## WONDERFUL ARTICLES

The October 2019 issue of Adventist Review had several wonderful articles. My husband related to the story, "The Happiest Day of My Life," by Arnold Cochran. His happiest day

was becoming a Seventh-day Adventist.

The two articles "Restoring Our Roots," by Somer Knight, and "Storing Up Treasures," by Cheryl Bolton, provide insightful and serious reading to "build on the



past and reconnect." Before my father passed away, he had made the decision to make his home with one of his daughters and son-in-law. There was much to sort, discard, give away, and keep. I am thankful that others are benefiting from those items given away.

"Convenient Amnesia," by Jason Craig, opens serious thought to "give our heart a chance" to witness for God. Thank you for printing all of these articles.

**Natalie Dodd**  
Ohio

## COMMENTS FROM ADVENTISTREVIEW.ORG

### IMAGINING A SOLA SCRIPTURA CHURCH

Hermeneutics. *Sola scriptura*. Hebrew and Greek texts. It's all pretty heady stuff. Can a whole church be *sola scriptura*? Is the Seventh-day Adventist Church a *sola scriptura* church?

In the beginning it was a William Miller movement, firmly rooted in agreements and alliances derived from personal Bible study, mainly just verses from the King James Version of the Bible, buttressed by comments from a few members who knew Hebrew and Greek.

I like this article because it



## Will the church undergo a revival and revolution and return to its fundamental *sola scriptura* curiosity?

MILTON HARE, VIA WEB

asks if the church is going to undergo a revival and revolution and return to its fundamental *sola scriptura* curiosity, or will it continue to wander into the gloom of the end-time connected only by Ellen White to the early pioneers and God's Word?

In the meantime, we are seeing how important it is, even if we don't know Greek and Hebrew, to read our Bibles for ourselves.

**Milton Hare**

*via web*

### THE TRUTH ABOUT INTERCHURCH/INTERFAITH RELATIONS

"Those who confuse future events with current reality dismiss relationships with other Christians as unnecessary and useless. They conflate other Christians with future enemies

and act as if their destiny is already sealed; and further that the mark of the beast is already affixed on those who do not keep the biblical Sabbath." Very true; wonderful insight.

**Veli Kotilainen**

*Finland*

### IN ENGLAND, PLAY ON THE GREAT CONTROVERSY THEME MOVES AUDIENCE TO TEARS

I would like to see the performance. I believe most forms of media can be used to God's glory when done in a respectful, biblical manner. Great caution is obviously needed.

**Warren Rushold**

*via web*

### A COVENANT FOR WANDERERS

If we are honest, we must admit that along with the good times, life can be challenging, difficult, painful, and confusing. I suspect Bill Knott writes GraceNotes as much for himself as for the rest

of us. But the simple quiet truths illustrated in them often hit the spot and encourage us to stay on track. I often share them with friends and family.

**Dan Burrington**

*via web*



**CORRECTION:** The photo credit for this photo in the December 2019 issue of *Adventist Review* was incorrect. Credit should have been given to Lynne Sesinye-Samwinga, United Kingdom. We apologize for our error.—Editors

### 2020 GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION

Official notice is hereby given that the sixty-first session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists will be held June 25–July 4, 2020, in the Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, Indiana, United States. The first meeting will begin at 8:00 a.m., June 25, 2020. All duly accredited delegates are urged to be present at that time.

*Ted N. C. Wilson,*  
*General Conference President*  
*G. T. Ng,*  
*General Conference Secretary*

### YOUR TURN

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

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**—Todd McFarland, General Conference Office of General Counsel, p. 12**

# NEWS



Members of the Tabernacle of Praise, an Adventist congregation in Spanish Lake, Missouri. The group recently hosted a public summit to stop gun violence in their city and beyond.

PHOTO: MID-AMERICA UNION OUTLOOK

## LOCAL TEENS HOST SUMMIT TO STOP GUN VIOLENCE

**SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD ORGANIZER SAYS SHE WANTS TO USE THE INITIATIVE TO REACH OTHERS FOR CHRIST.**

BY BRITTANY WINFIELD, MID-AMERICA UNION OUTLOOK

**S**kyler Robinson, a 17-year-old member of Tabernacle of Praise church in Spanish Lake, Missouri, wanted to make a difference after seeing peers lose their lives to gun violence.

“We’re losing too many young people. I became fed up when Jurnee Thompson, an 8-year-old girl, was shot along with four other victims in a parking lot near Soldan High School on August 23, 2019,” Robinson said. Jurnee died from her injuries.

“I ran into my mother’s room and told her about the shooting. With tears in my eyes, I told my mom, ‘This has to stop!’ Her response was ‘What can you do about it? It’s the world we live in.’ At that moment I felt motivated to make a difference,” Robinson said.

That incident inspired Robinson to organize a public event. On Sabbath, September 28, Tabernacle of Praise hosted an event called Stop Talking About It and Be About It—Putting a STOP to

Gun Violence Summit.

Approximately 120 people attended the summit, which included real-life dramatizations, singing, poetry, a question-and-answer panel, and a reflection from a mother who had lost her son due to gun violence. “Our goal was to have attendees leave with a sense of hope,” Robinson said.

The question-and-answer discussion about gun violence among youth involved three panelists: Cedric Redmon, youth ambassador of St. Louis; Eva Millar, a police officer of St. Louis City and a member of the Tabernacle of Praise church; and Karyle Barnes, pastor of Grand Avenue and Lighthouse Adventist churches.

Participants concluded the sum-

mit by praying over three families who recently lost their teen sons to gun violence, and gave the families a love offering. Attendees from 13 to 39 years old received a copy of the book *Stop the VIOLENCE*, by Christopher C. Thompson.

### TURNING TRAGEDY INTO MINISTRY

As of November 2019, 25 children in the St. Louis area had been killed by gunfire that year alone, according to official statistics. Robinson has been personally affected by gun violence, having lost two relatives to shootings, a cousin and an uncle.

“Their deaths made me very angry. But instead of being negative, I decided to do something positive,” Robinson explained. She was convicted to get other youth at her church involved, so she decided to create a movement.

Robinson told her pastor, Claval Hunter, about the movement, and laid out plans to organize a summit that would allow face-to-face interaction with people from the community, including troubled youth and families who had lost children to gun violence.

Robinson said that this is only the first of multiple summits and that the next summit will feature even more youth. “I know that God has [blessed], and will continue to bless. I have had youth outside the faith reach out to me on social media, telling me they would like to join the movement,” she said.

“I am a fifth-generation Adventist, and it seems as if we don’t like to step out of our comfort zones to address the issues of gun violence and drugs in our communities,” Robinson said. “We must break that cycle! We live in the last days, and it’s our job to reach out and lead souls to Christ. I believe God can use anybody from any situation. We must be that connection.”

## IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC, LEADERS REALIGN STRUCTURE TO IMPROVE DISCIPLE MAKING

CHANGES ARE EXPECTED TO AVOID DUPLICATION OF ROLES, STRENGTHEN MISSION INITIATIVES.

BY TRACEY BRIDCUTT, ADVENTIST RECORD

**A** restructuring at the South Pacific Division (SPD) headquarters is aimed at aligning it more effectively with the Adventist Church’s priorities of disciple-making and movement building.

Discussions between the SPD, union regions, and institutional leaders recently took place as part of the five-year review of the church’s strategy and operations. Out of those discussions a key issue was identified: a need for more alignment and collaboration, and greater clarity around roles within the various levels of the church.

“Unions are saying very, very clearly, ‘We don’t want the duplication of ministries and departments,’” SPD president Glenn

Townend said. “Instead, they are looking to the SPD for strategic direction and high-level insights from research and data that will help them to support discipleship activities at conference and local church levels.”

“UNIONS ARE SAYING VERY, VERY CLEARLY, ‘WE DON’T WANT THE DUPLICATION OF MINISTRIES AND DEPARTMENTS.’”

### A NEW STRUCTURE

In response, the SPD has mapped out a new structure, representing a significant shift in how the SPD office provides services and ministry support to the entire region. A new ministry and

strategy director will coordinate the five key regionwide strategic areas: discipleship, media, health, leadership, and mission to the cities—which will continue operating in the SPD.

Two new roles will focus on innovation, research, and data. The new women in ministry role, which encourages more women to work in every ministry within the church structure and supports them, will continue. The stewardship director—also based at the regional headquarters—is funded by the General Con-



South Pacific Division (SPD) president Glenn Townend (left), general secretary Lionel Smith, and special assistant Jane Gibson-Opetai at the regional annual meetings in Wahroonga, New South Wales, Australia. PHOTO: ADVENTIST RECORD

ference world church organization, which has indicated it will continue funding the role.

Some of the traditional ministries such as youth, children's, women's, personal ministries, and Sabbath School will no longer function at the SPD, to end duplication of roles at the world church, union conference, and local conference/mission levels. Overall, the changes will result in one less full-time role at the SPD.

In the area of finance, the associate CFO role will be discontinued, and a realignment and upgrading of some finance and service positions will occur to allow increased focus on key areas. Two new senior roles were created—a property manager and a commercial ministries director. Finance staff changes are a realignment and will not result in an increased cost to the church region's budget. Within the SPD secretariat a mission support director will be appointed to focus on governance in the Papua New Guinea Union Mission.

### FOCUS ON DISCIPLESHIP

Townend said the changes were considered prayerfully, with a focus on discipleship.

"Restructuring doesn't change our vision, mission, and purpose, which is making disciples and building a movement—it is something we want to make really clear," Townend said. "Unions have identified a need for strategic visioning and research-based innovation, and the changes will help us to meet these needs."

Townend affirmed the work of the ministries and

departments that will be impacted by the restructuring. "They have done an outstanding job, working collaboratively with our union personnel and having a significant impact in the places where they have provided training and resources," Townend said. "I acknowledge their hard work and dedication, and we will be supporting them as we transition to the new structure over the next year.

"I know that their ministry has been greatly appreciated by the unions, which are equipped to carry on the work of discipleship."

SPD general secretary Lionel Smith said the SPD secretariat has already undergone its own restructuring to increase efficiency. "The reduction and realignment of personnel are designed to improve governance and reporting regionwide," he said.

SPD CFO Rodney Brady said the changes will allow greater focus and attention on specific strategic and growing areas such as information technology and property. "The change is both healthy and timely, and reflects the positive growth and development of the SPD that it is now able to strengthen its treasury and service functions," he said.

The new structure was approved on November 14, 2019, at the SPD annual meetings in Wahroonga, New South Wales, Australia. It is expected that changes will be introduced from September 2020 onward. ▀

## KARI PAULSEN, WIFE OF FORMER WORLD CHURCH PRESIDENT JAN PAULSEN, DIES AT 85

HER LIFE WAS CHARACTERIZED BY RESILIENCE AND COMPASSION.

BY MARK A. KELLNER FOR ADVENTIST REVIEW



Jan and Kari Paulsen wave farewell at the 2010 General Conference Session. PHOTO BY JOSEF KISSINGER

**W**e all need somebody who listens to us at some time or another,” Kari Paulsen told *Ministry* magazine in 2006, describing how, as the wife of a Seventh-day Adventist Church administrator, she was able to find a personal ministry despite the limitations of chronic illness.

Paulsen, whose phone ministry of calling those who need encouragement was an integral part of her life, passed to her rest January 10, 2020, in Oslo, Norway, at the age of 85. Jan, her husband and the past president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, was at her side.

“Mrs. Paulsen was a very capable person and a strong support for Pastor Paulsen in his life and their ministry together over many decades in different parts of the world,” said Ted N. C. Wilson, current world church president, in a post on his Facebook account.

Rajmund Dabrowski, former communication director for the world church, noted a close bond with the Paulsens: “I felt that they were our second parents,” he told *Adventist Review*. Having first worked with Jan Paulsen in the Trans-European Division, and then while Jan was General Conference president, Dabrowski noted the family commitment Kari Paulsen had.

“When we were abroad, [they] eased our way of accepting a new area, a new culture, and so forth. These are the kind of memories we will have. It is a tremendous loss to not only the family, but to those who were accepted by them as a family,” Dabrowski said.

Gerry and Verna Karst worked with the Paulsens when the couples were in Silver Spring, Maryland. Gerry served as Paulsen’s assistant and Verna as the headquarters nurse.

Both remember Kari Paulsen’s adventurousness.

“She was not above having a little bit of fun,” Gerry Karst recalled, while Verna Karst noted Kari’s deep interest in others.

“Kari was a caring person and was very interested in people. But because of her health issues, she was restricted in what she could do,” Verna Karst said.

Kari Trykkerud was born in a small town near Notodden, about 70 miles (113 kilometers) from Oslo. She grew up during World War II, when Norway was under German occupation. Shortly after the war, Kari underwent surgery—the first performed in Norway—for a heart condition. During her recovery, she promised God she would become a Christian if He helped her get well.

That vow led to a search that ended when an Adventist relative’s pastor offered young Kari a copy of *Steps to Christ* by Ellen G. White. Following a Voice of Prophecy correspondence course and Bible studies, Kari decided to become a Seventh-day Adventist, even though this caused trouble at home when she refused a traditional Christmas dinner of pork. Infuriated, her father asked Kari to leave home, and the young woman went to live at an aunt’s home.

After secondary school in Norway, Kari went to the church-owned Vejlefjordskolen (Danish Junior

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE PAULSEN FAMILY UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED



Kari and Jan Paulsen pose with their two oldest children on the occasion of Pastor Paulsen's ordination to the gospel ministry.

College) in Daugård, Denmark, to study theology. Arriving two weeks into the semester, she admitted to being confused during a lecture on biblical dates, not least because of language differences. It so happened that another Norwegian student named Jan Paulsen was sitting next to her and offered to help. "Don't worry," he said, "I'll explain it to you later."

That remark began a continuing conversation that lasted more than six decades. Friends at first, love grew between them, and the couple married before Jan went to Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, to continue his education. Kari soon followed, and the couple learned a new culture along with adjusting to married life. They had three children, all of whom survive her: Laila, Jan Rune, and Rein Andre.

The couple went to Africa, first to Ghana and then Nigeria, where Jan Paulsen served as president of Adventist College of West Africa, now Babcock University. Mrs. Paulsen's health problems worsened while in Africa and were to remain with her throughout her life. Returning to Europe, Jan served as president of Newbold College in Binfield, England; secretary and

then president of the Trans-European Division, as a general vice president of the world church, and as General Conference president, a role he assumed in January 1999 and held for 11 years.

"I have experienced quite a lot of illness, and this close proximity to death does something to you and your relationship with the Lord," Kari told *Ministry* magazine in 2006. "Somehow you rely more on Him. It's important to stay close to Him, to pray, to read. It's kind of a constant reminder that this life might not last that long."

In 2015, Pacific Press released *Against All Odds*, Kari Paulsen's memoir of life as a Christian and her struggle with chronic illness and family tragedy. The book won wide praise from readers.

"Kari Paulsen defined 'resilience' for me, and for thousands of believers for whom her challenging life story has been a great encouragement," said Bill Knott, *Adventist Review* editor and executive editor. "Her honesty and wit have helped so many of us understand how grace has intersected our own moments of physical pain and disappointment. She reminded us by her words and her example that the Lord always has the last word—and that

His word is deep affection for us."

Tor Tjeransen, communication director for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Norway, who has known the Paulsens for more than 50 years, noted Kari Paulsen's lifelong optimism: "Kari has always kept a very positive attitude toward ev-



Kari and Jan Paulsen as they appeared early in their relationship.

everything, everything she met in life. The strain on those who are in traveling positions is just enormous. She has always been there, and always very supportive of Jan," he said.

Funeral services for Kari Paulsen were held in Mjøndalen, Norway, on Monday, January 20. In lieu of flowers, the family requested donations to the Life Hope orphanage and school in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; donations may be sent via PayPal to reinpaulsen@gmail.com.

In a message, Jan Paulsen remarked, "Kari gave often to keep the school alive and would love for it to continue after her departure." 🌿



*A Passion for Mission* book launch. Trans-European Division (TED) president Raafat Kamal (left), Adventist author and historian David Trim, Adventist Church president Ted Wilson, and TED executive secretary Audrey Andersson.

PHOTO: VICTOR HULBERT, TRANS-EUROPEAN DIVISION NEWS

## 90 YEARS OF PASSION FOR MISSION IN EUROPE AND BEYOND

### AT THE TRANS-EUROPEAN DIVISION, A NEW BOOK AND FILM HIGHLIGHT MISSIONARY HERITAGE.

BY VICTOR HULBERT, TRANS-EUROPEAN DIVISION NEWS

For 90 years the Trans-European Division (TED) has overseen the mission and ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in a vast, diverse, and ever-changing territory. Now a new book and a short documentary film highlight a passion for mission from the early origins of the Adventist Church in Europe to the continued challenges of outreach in largely secularized societies.

#### THE BOOK

*A Passion for Mission* is a detailed research work by author and Adventist historian David Trim. Trim shows that mission is in the DNA of European Adventism, and that

while Europe started as a “mission field,” it very soon began sending homegrown missionaries to Africa, Asia, and as far as South America. In a lecture that accompanied the book launch, Trim estimated that approximately 1,000 European missionaries served overseas.

“Sending some of its brightest and best talent to the mission field has had a significant impact on the world church, but also on the development of the church at home,” Trim said. This ninetieth-anniversary history tells stories that inspire, provides insights into effective leadership, and draws out conclusions and lessons applicable to the church in Europe today.

TED executive secretary Audrey Andersson, who said she loves history, strongly endorsed the book during the official presentation and a book signing on Thursday, November 21, 2019. “This book clearly demonstrates that mission has always been central to European Adventism,” Andersson said.

*A Passion for Mission* is published by Newbold Academic Press and is available from Amazon.

#### THE FILM

TED president Raafat Kamal chose a documentary video format for his 2019 president’s report. Standing on the beach opposite Southampton Docks in Southampton, England, he focused on four moving stories from TED history, then showed how the perseverance and determination of our pioneers are still active in mission today. Those stories included the first missionaries to the United Kingdom, William Ings and John Loughborough, and their determination in the midst of failure. Kamal then shared the story of the courage of a converted Adventist farmer in war-torn Finland who, in 1918, saved the lives of 10 men who were to be shot as revenge killings for the death of his son. His act of forgiveness broke the circle of violence and led to the start of a house church in his community.

In the final historical section, the film told of two faithful Adventist sisters who hid a Jewish boy during the Nazi occupation of Latvia, and the testimony of current



Polish Union president Ryszard Jankowski, who remembers how nine members of his family were incarcerated in Auschwitz and Ravensbrück because they faithfully kept the Sabbath.

These stories are from history, but history is still being made today, as the video also recounted modern mission in locations related to the historical stories: a

**HIS ACT OF FORGIVENESS  
BROKE THE CIRCLE OF  
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IN HIS COMMUNITY.**

church helping refugees; a café project; a center of influence in the north of Finland; a campsite that generates up to half the baptisms in Poland; and a camporee that changed children's lives.

Such accounts, both historical and current, clearly demonstrate that while mission can be difficult, with perseverance, dependence on God, and a willing spirit, missionaries can see miracles happen, regional church leaders said.

"We hope that the book and film will not just be interesting historical documents but will inspire and charge members across the TED and beyond with a real passion for mission," they said. ▀



*Modern Healthcare* has named AdventHealth president/CEO Terry Shaw one of 2019's 100 Most Influential People.

PHOTO: ADVENTHEALTH NEWS

## **ADVENTHEALTH PRESIDENT RECOGNIZED AS ONE OF 100 MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE IN U.S.**

TERRY SHAW JOINS A HOST OF OTHER HEALTH-CARE, TECHNOLOGY, AND GOVERNMENT INFLUENCERS.

BY ADVENTHEALTH NEWS

**M**odern Healthcare has named AdventHealth president/CEO Terry Shaw one of 2019's 100 Most Influential People. The prestigious recognition program acknowledges and honors individuals who are deemed by their peers and the senior editors of *Modern Healthcare* to be the most influential individuals in the industry in terms of leadership and impact.

In naming Shaw as eighty-fourth on the list, *Modern Healthcare* noted his more than three decades with AdventHealth; his co-creation approach to developing critical strategies for the organization; his incorporation of design-thinking methodology to improve the consumer experience; and his advocacy for diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

This marks Shaw's first appearance on the list, which features individuals from a range of sectors such as government, health care, and technology. The distinguished list of honorees also includes the likes of Seema Verma, administrator for the United States Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services; Jeff Bezos, president/CEO of Amazon; Tim Cook, CEO of Apple; and U.S. president Donald Trump.

"This year's selection process was contentious and difficult. Many health-care organizations made bold strides in the continued transformation of the industry. Many others were more cautious during a year that brought uncertainty over how the law of the land might change as a result of a federal court decision," commented Aurora Aguilar, *Modern Healthcare* editor. "The honorees chosen this year by *Modern Healthcare* and our readers are those who were fearless in their risky strategies and unapologetic in their rationale. Whether you agree with the compiled list or not, you can't argue with the influence of these 100 health-care leaders. Congratulations to those honorees."

The complete ranking is a main feature in the December 9, 2019, issue of *Modern Healthcare* magazine and can be viewed at <https://bit.ly/35lfOy4>. ▀

**“Now we look back as if the results were inevitable. But in the beginning, we didn’t know where God was leading us.”**



Maranatha president Don Noble (center) and his wife, Laura, and the president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cuba, Aldo Pérez (right), took part in the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the work of Maranatha Volunteers International in the country. PHOTO: MARANATHA VOLUNTEERS INTERNATIONAL

## MARANATHA CELEBRATES 25 YEARS IN CUBA

**THIS SUPPORTING MINISTRY OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH REACHES ANOTHER MILESTONE.**

BY MARANATHA VOLUNTEERS INTERNATIONAL AND ADVENTIST REVIEW

On November 20, 2019, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cuba celebrated 25 years of Maranatha Volunteers International’s work in that country. The anniversary was marked by a commemorative service on the campus of the Cuba Adventist Theological Seminary in Havana, in a building constructed by Maranatha volunteers between 1995 and 1997.

Maranatha president Don Noble and his wife, Laura, helped mark the milestone, which was attended by Adventist Church leaders from around Cuba, nearly all of whom graduated from the Havana seminary. The festivities included a tour of the campus, a presentation of plaques, speeches by church

leaders, and a viewing of Maranatha’s twenty-fifth anniversary video on the work in Cuba.

“When we started in Cuba, we had no idea where it was going,” Noble said. “We didn’t know if we could do anything. Now we look back as if the results were inevitable. But in the beginning, we didn’t know where God was leading us.”

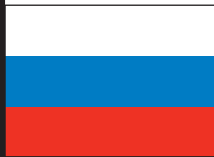
Maranatha’s work in Cuba began in 1994, with the simple hope of building one church. Over the years more than 200 churches have been constructed or renovated, and 600 students educated in the seminary. Church membership on the island increased from 12,000 to more than 35,000, marking big changes to the Seventh-day

Adventist Church in Cuba.

“It’s easy to look back and say, ‘Oh yeah, that’s an obvious decision to go into Cuba; you help out, and the church grows,’” Noble said. “But when you’re first starting, you don’t know any of that. However, after this long period of time and the impact on the church, it’s very clear that God was leading in what was happening there.”

Maranatha recently completed a 500-seat church in the city of Cárdenas, and a renovation project at San Antonio de los Baños, located on the western side of the island.

Maranatha Volunteers International, based in Roseville, California, United States, is a nonprofit Christian organization that organizes volunteers to build churches, schools, and waters wells around the world. Established in 1969, Maranatha has constructed more than 11,000 structures in nearly 90 countries, and mobilized more than 85,000 volunteers. ♣



**CONSTITUTIONAL COURT IN RUSSIA CONFIRMS RIGHT TO WORSHIP IN PRIVATE HOMES.** On November 14, 2019, the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation released a favorable ruling on a claim by Olga Glamozdinova, a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Glamozdinova had been fined for using her property for purposes deemed inappropriate. She had let her home be used as a house of worship. The Constitutional Court ruled that on land plots intended for individual housing construction, citizens have the right to satisfy their spiritual as well as physical needs.



**HIGH COURT RULING GIVES ADVENTIST SCHOOL IN FIJI BACK TO THE CHURCH.** The High Court of Fiji has returned management and control of Vatuvonu Adventist High School to the Adventist Church. The court handed down the judgment on November 22, 2019, in civil proceedings initiated by the Fiji government's Ministry of Education against the school and its trustees. The source of the conflict is the Fijian government's initial refusal to appoint Adventist faculty to the school, followed by the church's decision to privatize the school in order to appoint its own faculty.



**20,000 PEOPLE IN BRAZIL HAVE STUDIED THE BIBLE VIA WHATSAPP.** The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Brazil, in partnership with Novo Tempo Digital Bible School, recently launched the option of studying the Bible through the WhatsApp chat app. So far, approximately 20,000 have engaged in studying the Bible. WhatsApp is present on an estimated 98 percent of smartphones in Brazil, and according to communication experts, it has changed the way people communicate worldwide.



**ADVENTISTS MEET TO REFLECT AND RECOMMIT TO SPIRITUAL REFORM.** Seventh-day Adventist leaders and members in Kyrgyzstan recently gathered in the capital city of Bishkek for the Congress of Gospel Ministers. The event aimed to draw the attention of every believer to the need for transformation in all spheres of the Christian life. The program included moments of sharing testimonies and reflection about how members could experience a renewed Christian experience.



**VOLUNTEERS BUILD 202 SHEDS FOR FIRE SURVIVORS.** Maranatha Volunteers International and the Seventh-day Adventist church in Paradise, California, recently celebrated the completion of an ambitious community outreach project. In just three weeks, volunteers constructed 202 storage sheds (surpassing the initial goal of 200) for survivors of the Camp Fire, a devastating wildfire that destroyed the town of Paradise in 2018 and took the lives of 86 people. A total of 377 volunteers from all over the United States participated in the construction project.



**ADRA APPOINTS ANNETTA GIBSON AS VICE PRESIDENT FOR FINANCE.** The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) has announced the appointment of Annetta "Ann" Gibson as vice president for finance. Gibson steps into the role previously held by Michael Kruger, who now serves as president of the international organization. Before joining ADRA, Gibson was employed at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists as an assistant to the treasurer, and has served on ADRA's board since 2005. Previously held positions include dean of the School of Business at Andrews University.



**MARVIN MOORE EDITS 25 YEARS AND 300 ISSUES OF SIGNS.** Marvin Moore recently celebrated two major milestones at Pacific Press Publishing Association in North America. The December issue of *Signs of the Times* marks Moore's 300th issue and twenty-fifth year as editor of the 145-year-old Seventh-day Adventist publication. Of *Signs'* 10 editors, only Arthur Maxwell served longer (1937-1970). Moore is a prolific author, with more than 35 books to his credit.



## MELVIN WEST, ADVENTIST MUSICIAN, PROFESSOR, AND COMPOSER, DIES AT 89

CREDITED WITH ADVANCING ADVENTIST MUSICAL EDUCATION, HE WAS A MAJOR CONTRIBUTOR AND EDITOR OF THE CHURCH'S HYMNAL.

BY MARK A. KELLNER FOR ADVENTIST REVIEW

**T**eenager Kraig Scott took his seat at the organ at the Green Lake Seventh-day Adventist Church in Seattle, Washington. Scott, now a music professor at Walla Walla University, was scared.

Scott knew the work assigned him by Melvin K. West, head of the Music Department at what is now Walla Walla University and a fellow of the American Guild of Organists, was beyond his capabilities at that moment. Yet the young man pressed on, doing his best.

"I knew I had absolutely bombed and was terrified," Scott recalled. "I don't remember his exact words, but the first thing he said was not just encouraging, but pointing out something he liked that I had done. It was such a gracious moment. He won me over in that one sentence and taught me about how to teach a student."

Such graciousness was a hallmark of Melvin West's life, which reached its end on December 27, 2019, in Portland, Oregon. West was 89 years old.

West, who served Seventh-day Adventist institutions for more than

65 years, chaired the Tunes Committee and was an associate editor of *The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, published in 1985 and still in use by the 21-million-member movement today. He contributed more than 30 arrangements and hymn tunes.

James Bingham, a veteran Seventh-day Adventist musician, educator, and a Tunes Committee colleague, noted West's skill at managing the process. "He was a very capable committee chair, going the extra mile to find either compromises or appropriate tunes to lend to hymns," Bingham said.

Dan Shultz, who followed West as Music Department chair at Walla Walla, said the educator was "a pivot point in my life." Shultz had met West, who was teaching at Atlantic Union College, in 1958.

West taught at Atlantic Union College from 1953 to 1959, then began an 18-year career at what is now Walla Walla University in College Place, Washington, with 15 of those years as chair of the school's Music Department. The school named its Fine Arts Center—a building West

had helped design—after the educator in 1996.

West's tenure at Walla Walla included expanded recognition for a Seventh-day Adventist tertiary institution's music program. He achieved accreditation for the program in the National Association of Schools of Music and gained departmental membership in the national music honor society, Pi Kappa Lambda, both firsts for denominational institutions.

In 1977, West left College Place to become the church's first full-time minister of music, serving at the Seventh-day Adventist church in Kettering, Ohio. In 1981 he went to Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska, as a music teacher and director of development and alumni affairs. He also served the College View Seventh-day Adventist Church in Lincoln as its minister of music.

Melvin K. West was born in St. Paul, Minnesota. During his high school years at California's Lodi Academy, he studied the organ under Allen Bacon of the College of the Pacific. Although he began his undergraduate studies at Union College in 1948, he transferred to what is now Andrews University, from which he received a bachelor's degree in organ.

West earned a Master of Music degree at the University of Redlands and a Doctor of Music Arts degree from Boston University.

West is survived by his wife, Betty Ann; a son, Larry; a daughter, Lynelle; and three grandchildren. ▀

## STATEMENT ON THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF UNBORN LIFE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR ABORTION

*World Church Executive Committee members voted this statement during the 2019 Annual Council on October 14, 2019. –Editors.*

**H**uman beings are created in the image of God. Part of the gift that God has given us as humans is procreation, the ability to participate in creation along with the Author of life. This sacred gift should always be valued and treasured. In God's original plan every pregnancy should be the result of the expression of love between a man and a woman committed to each other in marriage. A pregnancy should be wanted, and each baby should be loved, valued, and nurtured even before birth. Unfortunately, since the entrance of sin, Satan has made intentional efforts to mar the image of God by defacing all of God's gifts—including the gift of procreation. Consequently, individuals are at times faced with difficult dilemmas and decisions regarding a pregnancy.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is committed to the teachings and principles of the Holy Scriptures that express God's values on life and provide guidance for prospective mothers and fathers, medical personnel, churches, and all believers in matters of faith, doctrine, ethical behavior, and lifestyle. The Church, while not being the conscience of individual believers, has the duty to convey the principles and teachings of the Word of God.

This statement affirms the sanctity of life and presents biblical principles bearing on abortion. As used in this statement, abortion is defined as any action aimed at the termination of a pregnancy and does not include the spontaneous termination of a pregnancy, known also as a miscarriage.

### BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES AND TEACHINGS RELATING TO ABORTION

As the practice of abortion must be weighed in the light of Scripture, the following biblical principles and teachings provide guidance for the community of faith and individuals affected by such difficult choices:

**1** God upholds the value and sacredness of human life. Human life is of the greatest value to God. Having created humanity in His image (Gen. 1:27; 2:7), God has a personal interest in people. God loves them and communicates with them, and they in turn can love and communicate with Him.

Life is a gift of God, and God is the Giver of life. In Jesus is life (John 1:4). He has life in Himself (John 5:26). He is the resurrection and the life (John 11:25; 14:6). He provides abundant life (John 10:10). Those who have the Son have life (1 John 5:12). He is also the Sustainer of life (Acts 17:25-28; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:1-3), and the Holy Spirit is described as the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2). God cares deeply for His creation and especially for humankind.

Furthermore, the importance of human life is made clear by the fact that, after the Fall (Gen. 3), God "gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). While God could have abandoned and terminated sinful humanity, He opted for life. Consequently, Christ's followers will be raised from the dead and will live in face-to-face communion with God (John 11:25, 26; 1 Thess. 4:15, 16; Rev. 21:3).

Thus, human life is of inestimable value. This is true for all stages of human life: the unborn, children of various ages, adolescents, adults, and seniors—independent of physical, mental, and emotional capacities. It is also true for all humans regardless of sex, ethnicity, social status, religion, and whatever else may distinguish them. Such an understanding of the sanctity of life gives inviolable and equal value to each and every human life and requires it to be treated with the utmost respect and care.

**2** God considers the unborn child as human life. Prenatal life is precious in God's sight, and the Bible describes God's knowledge of people before they were conceived. "Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them" (Ps. 139:16). In certain cases, God directly guided prenatal life. Samson was to "be a Nazirite to God from the womb" (Judges 13:5). The servant of God is "called from the womb" (Isa. 49:1, 5). Jeremiah was already chosen as a prophet before his birth (Jer. 1:5), as was Paul (Gal. 1:15), and John the Baptist was to "be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb" (Luke 1:15). Of Jesus the angel Gabriel explained to Mary: "therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). In His Incarnation Jesus Himself experienced the human prenatal period and was recognized as the Messiah and Son of God soon after His conception (Luke 1:40-45). The Bible already attributes to the unborn child joy (Luke 1:44) and even rivalry (Gen. 25:21-23). Those not-yet-born have a firm place with God (Job 10:8-12; 31:13-15). Biblical law shows a strong regard for protecting human life and considers harm to or the loss of a baby or mother as a result of a violent act a serious issue (Ex. 21:22, 23).

**3** The will of God regarding human life is expressed in the Ten Commandments and explained by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. The Decalogue was given to God's covenant people and the world to guide their lives and protect them. Its commandments are unchanging truths which should be cherished, respected, and obeyed. The Psalmist praises God's law (e.g., Ps. 119), and Paul calls it holy, righteous, and good (Rom. 7:12). The sixth commandment states: "You shall not kill" (Ex. 20:13), which calls for the preservation of human life. The principle to preserve life enshrined in the sixth commandment places abortion within its scope. Jesus reinforced the commandment not to kill in Matthew 5:21, 22. Life is protected by God. It is not measured by individuals' abilities or their usefulness, but by the value that God's creation and sacrificial love has placed on it. Personhood, human value, and salvation are not earned or merited but graciously granted by God.

**4** God is the Owner of life, and human beings are His stewards. Scripture teaches that God owns everything (Ps. 50:10-12). God has a dual claim on humans. They are His because He is their Creator and therefore He owns them (Ps. 139:13-16). They are also His because He is their Redeemer and has bought them with the highest possible price—His own life (1 Cor. 6:19, 20). This means that all human beings are stewards of whatever God has entrusted to them, including their own lives, the lives of their children, and the unborn.

The stewardship of life also includes carrying responsibilities which in some ways limit their choices (1 Cor. 9:19-22). Since God is the Giver and Owner of life, human beings do not have ultimate control over themselves and should seek

# God upholds the value and sacredness of human life.

to preserve life wherever possible. The principle of the stewardship of life obligates the community of believers to guide, support, care for, and love those facing decisions about pregnancies.

**5** The Bible teaches care for the weak and the vulnerable. God Himself cares for those who are disadvantaged and oppressed and protects them. He “shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing” (Deut. 10:17, 18, cf. Ps. 82:3-4; James 1:27). He does not hold children accountable for the sins of their fathers (Eze. 18:20). God expects the same of His children. They are called to help vulnerable people and ease their lot (Ps. 41:1; 82:3, 4; Acts 20:35). Jesus speaks of the least of His brothers (Matt. 25:40), for whom His followers are responsible, and of the little ones who should not be despised or lost (Matt. 18:10-14). The very youngest, namely the unborn, should be counted among them.

**6** God’s grace promotes life in a world marred by sin and death. It is God’s nature to protect, preserve, and sustain life. In addition to the providence of God over His creation (Ps. 103:19; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3), the Bible acknowledges the wide-ranging, devastating, and degrading effects of sin on the creation, including on human bodies. In Romans 8:20-24 Paul describes the impact of the Fall as subjecting the creation to futility. Consequently, in rare and extreme cases, human conception may produce pregnancies with fatal prospects and/or acute, life-threatening birth anomalies that present individuals and couples with exceptional dilemmas. Decisions in such cases may be left to the conscience of the individuals involved and their families. These decisions should be well-informed and guided by the Holy Spirit and the biblical

view of life outlined above. God’s grace promotes and protects life. Individuals in these challenging situations may come to Him in sincerity and find direction, comfort, and peace in the Lord.

## IMPLICATIONS

The Seventh-day Adventist Church considers abortion out of harmony with God’s plan for human life. It affects the unborn, the mother, the father, immediate and extended family members, the church family, and society with long-term consequences for all. Believers aim to trust God and follow His will for them, knowing He has their best interests in mind.

While not condoning abortion, the Church and its members are called to follow the example of Jesus, being “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14), to (1) create an atmosphere of true love and provide grace-filled, biblical pastoral care and loving support to those facing difficult decisions regarding abortion; (2) enlist the help of well-functioning and committed families and educate them to provide care for struggling individuals, couples, and families; (3) encourage church members to open their homes to those in need, including single parents, parentless children, and adoptive or foster care children; (4) care deeply for and support in various ways pregnant women who decide to keep their unborn children; and (5) provide emotional and spiritual support to those who have aborted a child for various reasons or were forced to have an abortion and may be hurting physically, emotionally, and/or spiritually.

The issue of abortion presents enormous challenges, but it gives individuals and the Church the opportunity to be what they aspire to be, the fellowship of brothers and sisters, the community of believers, the family of God, revealing His immeasurable and unending love.



## NEEDED: A WHOLE-CHURCH RESPONSE

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*Adventist Review editor Bill Knott asks Dr. Peter Landless, General Conference Adventist Health Ministries director, about the “Statement on the Biblical View of Unborn Life and Its Implications for Abortion,” recently adopted by the denomination’s Executive Committee.*

**Bill Knott:** The recent Statement voted by the Executive Committee emerged from a specific history. Any time the world Church decides to change or amend one of its published statements, we assume it does so for reasons it believes are compelling. What were the reasons that motivated church leadership to want a new Statement about unborn life and abortion beyond the Guidelines the Church voted in 1992?

**Landless:** The 1992 Guidelines actually served the church well, though we recognize there are some who don’t accept that. When we look at the data since 1992, the number of terminations of pregnancy overall decreased significantly. Some Adventist hospitals had a checkered history with abortion (practicing elective abortion), particularly in the ‘70s and ‘80s. There were issues, there were problems, with the numbers of abortions being performed at certain locations. Accountability in some entities was lacking. This is unacceptable.

Voting this Statement is an historic moment and one that we should welcome. Abortion is a sensitive and delicate topic that must be dis-



cussed—and is being discussed. The regrettable practices of the last century have left doubts and questions in the minds of many, and rightly so. When we look at the numbers and the practices from some entities before 1992, they are facts of which we can't be proud. We've also now moved from a time of selective disclosure to full disclosure, aided by trust and respect.

**Knott:** What would you describe as the significant differences between the 1992 Guidelines and the newly voted Statement?

**Landless:** The 1992 Guidelines were drafted by a large committee—The Christian View of Human Life Committee, made up of theologians, ethicists, and health professionals—and it addressed mainly the guidelines regarding termination of pregnancy. The current Statement is a biblical statement on the sanctity of life of the unborn, and was drawn up by the Biblical Research Institute Ethics Committee in consultation with dedicated Adventist health professionals from around the world. It's difficult to clearly and responsibly draw the distinctions between the two documents, since the 1992 Guidelines also referenced biblical principles. Guidelines useful to the church are of necessity informed by a biblically grounded Statement, which has now been voted.

I deeply appreciate the fact that the new Statement is fully biblical—well-rounded, thoughtful; establishing a deep respect both for the Word of God and for the women and men who have to make decisions based on their understanding of the Word.

**Knott:** But is there more that needs to be said beyond the voted Statement?

**Landless:** Even the most well-thought-out Statement will still need principles of care that help both families and Adventist medical practitioners understand how to faithfully implement the principles articulated in the Statement. These are particularly important in those rare and extremely difficult situations where very difficult decisions need to be made. The life of a mother might be at stake. Or, as has proven true in the very few terminations that now take place in Adventist hospitals, when life outside the womb would be impossible. In these tragic settings, where there seem to be no good options, it's important to have some understanding about how to proceed with these unfolding tragedies. In those extreme circumstances, we have to form plans that will help us make wise decisions,

## Live Births/Terminations of Pregnancy\*

Institution	Year	Live Births	Terminations of Pregnancy
AdventHealth	2016	38,951	23
	2017	39,160	23
Adventist Health West	August 2017 – July 2019	37,271	1
Adventist Health Care	2018	7,000	6
Kettering Health	2018	6,000	3
Waltfriede (Berlin)	---	1,000	Deliveries/annum No terminations of pregnancy since 2012

\*These statistics may be compared to information provided by the United States Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Out of every 1,000 live births in 2015, there were 188 terminations of pregnancies.

and practice humane, Christ-like medicine.

**Knott:** So these protocols and processes don't so much mandate outcomes as advise outcomes?

**Landless:** That's correct.

**Knott:** Let me push the question: Faithful medical staff, using these protocols, would then be able to present parents of an unborn child unable to experience life outside the womb with options drawn from the biblical principles of the Statement?

**Landless:** That's just how we want it to work. And it has to be done sensitively, carefully--a graceful and gracious approach to people who are in those rare and very difficult circumstances. This isn't at all the same as offering what has become known in the public mind as "choice." We should note that the 1992 Guidelines did help make a significant difference, for they drew a distinct line between these tragic, rare circumstances and all issues of elective abortion, abortion on demand, abortion for contraception, convenience, or gender selection. All of those were totally excluded by the 1992 Guidelines.

**Knott:** You said a moment ago that very few terminations of pregnancy now take place at Adventist hospitals. Is that widely understood by most members?

**Landless:** I think what has surprised many people is the fact that the numbers of pregnancies terminated at Adventist hospitals, especially in North America, is small—and the rationale for each one is carefully documented. [See chart above]. In the single largest Adventist health-care system in the world, AdventHealth, which handles nearly 40,000 live births each year among its 50 hospitals,

there was a total of 23 pregnancies terminated in the latest year on record—in every case, a situation where life outside the womb could not have been sustained. The numbers are thankfully dramatically smaller than almost anyone realized, and also represent a small fraction of the national abortion rate in the United States. Like each of our North American health-care systems, the leaders of this system have been very, very determined to continue best practice and careful interventions related to termination of pregnancy into the future. And I know not only from their words but from their practice, that it's their desire that termination of pregnancy be as close to zero as is absolutely possible.

**Knott:** During the recent Annual Council, one delegate pointed out that it's virtually impossible to compose a Statement that's entirely comprehensive for such a difficult and painful human moment. Two situations that continue to cause a lot of discussion, even though the Statement is voted, are the ques-



tions of what to do in cases of rape and incest. Were these addressed in this new document?

**Landless:** They weren't included among those rare and extreme conditions referenced. What was very interesting in the general floor discussion at Annual Council was that there were deep concerns expressed about the omission of these two situations by delegates, especially from outside of North America—some from regions in which rape is a tactic of war, and where incest may be thought to occur more frequently. It's going to require great

care and prayer to craft protocols that actually assist our medical institutions and our church members when dealing with these realities.

**Knott:** If I've understood you correctly, the Adventist Health Ministries Department, as advised by the General Conference Bioethics Committee, will be recommending protocols based on the new Statement to Adventist medical institutions and hospitals around the world.

**Landless:** Principles of care will emerge in these protocols and processes that will help caregivers, hospital systems, and ethics committees advise individuals of what they might appropriately consider in such moments. All of us—those who wanted a fuller and more biblical Statement, and those who were comfortable with the 1992 Guidelines—will be monitoring the implementation of these protocols. The intention is that no protocol or process opens the door to elective abortion or abortion on demand, to both of which this department and the wider Seventh-day Adventist Church are totally opposed.

As a physician who spent 11 years in family practice, attending many pregnancies and delivering hundreds of babies, I find it hard to imagine that anyone wouldn't strive to preserve and support life. It's crucial to make every effort to ensure that the life, the pregnancy, is maintained and respected for the miracle and inestimable value it is.

**Knott:** Talk to me for a moment about persons—the families—that are actually at the center of these heartbreaking situations. What do they have a right to expect as a result of the counsel your department will be providing?

**Landless:** As vital as it is for the church to approach these dilemmas from a thoroughly biblical perspective, we can't forget that it is people—mothers, fathers, families, and family systems—that must be our focus in such moments. There needs to be a well-informed, compassionate system that asks the right questions in these awful moments.

**Knott:** What are those questions?

**Landless:** "How is the mother—how are the parents—going to be supported and sustained through—and beyond—this crisis? How is the family going to be supported?" "How will we hold ourselves accountable to the principles emerging from God's Word?" We've got to ask—and answer—these questions with sensitivity. So chaplains need to be involved. Psychologists need to be involved.

Ethics committees need to be involved.

**Knott:** These issues aren't half a world away. Within the last two years, a General Conference family received the devastating news early in a pregnancy that the child forming in the womb was anencephalic, developing without a brain. The physicians brought this terribly difficult information to the mother and father, along with the grandparents. And the family wrestled with their pain; they sought pastoral support and counsel. They consulted hospital chaplains. They worked through every detail to try to find the right answer. No one was mandating anything or telling them what they must do. The physicians were painfully clear that there was no opportunity for life outside the womb. And the family ultimately reached a decision that, as terrible as it was for them, they believed was the best route to peace for them and for all the people who supported them.

**Landless:** Stories like that break my heart—and I know them well. I've walked with families who faced these awful moments. It's probably true that almost every family system in our worldwide church has been in one of these dilemmas in the last several generations.

**Knott:** Several participants in the process of drafting the new Statement noted that no more than 5 percent of Seventh-day Adventists around the world are likely to engage with an Adventist hospital or an Adventist practitioner in the course of a year. The vast majority of these stories will unfold in congregations and families. Will there also be protocols and processes to guide congregations and pastors and church boards about how to respond appropriately in these worst human moments?

**Landless:** This is an extremely important point you're raising, and one I've also made on committees as well. This isn't just a health-care issue: we are multidimensional beings. We are body, mind, and spirit, with social, emotional, and spiritual capacities. It's a chaplaincy issue as well. It's a pastoral issue. It's a young adult issue. It's a family issue—a massive family issue. Pastors, elders, and members have to recognize their role as caregivers as well as counsel-givers in these situations.

**Knott:** That sounds like a whole-church response.

**Landless:** This is a ministry that belongs to all of us: we can't leave it only to the physicians and

the bioethics committees. Families need support right where they live—from those who worship with them and serve with them and share the journey with them. The challenges don't end when an unsustainable pregnancy is terminated. Parents wrestle with the sense of loss, with feelings of inadequacy for not being able to fulfill what is



deemed a natural function, but one in which they may be judged to have failed.

And those who have made unwise choices to end an otherwise viable pregnancy especially need the church's love and care. We dare not extend our care only to those who make choices we approve of. I'm particularly proud of the Statement for calling on all members to "create an atmosphere of true love" for those who make these painful decisions. The body of Christ needs to act like a body does—as a unit for healing and restoration and recovery—so that every member is embraced by the love of God, immersed in His grace, and loved by their fellow pilgrims.

The ministries and departments of the Church we love and serve are a blended ministry, not ministries at war. The health work is the right arm of the message with all the complexities, challenges, and opportunities that come with this special ministry. As we prayerfully consider and implement the voted document, I'm praying that we'll be respectful and considerate at all times, showing by our love for one another that we are His disciples. That for me is an illustration of Church at its best. ♣

# NO MARKETING GIMMICK

Experiencing  
the abundant life

BY GERALD A. KLINGBEIL



# I wish

life would be as easy as the marketeers make it appear. *You feel worthless and unloved?* Get this . . . product and be transformed. *You are overweight and crave sweets all the time?* Do this diet using these special protein shakes and see the pounds drop like dead flies. *You are afraid of the unknown?* Don't worry about tomorrow—just be happy and seize the day.

We get, we do, we buy, we try. We love simple answers to complex questions, yet we wonder if we are on the right track.

That's why we pay attention when we hear Jesus speaking about abundant life.

## SETTING THE STAGE

John 10:10 is one of my favorite Bible texts. I especially love quoting its second half. "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (NKJV).<sup>1</sup> I automatically apply this to myself. We all do. Jesus wants to give us life—abundant life. Yet in order to grasp the

enormity of what He was saying, we need to look carefully at the larger context. Jesus' voice reverberates loud and clear throughout John 10:1-18. If you use a red-letter edition of the Bible, you will see most of this section is in red. Red means we need to pay special attention, for these are the words of Jesus.

Twice in the chapter Jesus uses the phrase "most assuredly" (or "truly, truly" [ESV] or "very truly" [NIV]). These translations represent the twofold repetition of the Greek term *amen*. We use "amen" to express strong affirmation during a sermon or at the end of a prayer. That's exactly what it meant in both Hebrew and Greek. The use of *amen* tells us that we should pay attention. Both in John 10:1 and in verse 7, Jesus describes access to a sheepfold. "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." And again, six verses later: "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep."

These are emphatic statements. So what does the larger context contribute to grasping the meaning of Jesus' words? Most ancient manuscripts did not include chapter divisions, or even verse divisions. Chapter 9 offers the real background to the many important statements (including the one about abundant life) Jesus makes in chapter 10.

## FROM BLINDNESS TO VISION

Jesus passes by a blind man sitting by the roadside. John offers us more background and tells us that he "was blind from birth" (John 9:1). Jesus sees him. He truly sees him. The disciples, noticing the Master's look, ask a pointed question: "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" (verse 2).

I imagine Jesus cringing. I do that when I hear an inappropriate question. "It was a common belief among Jews that physical infirmity was often a result of sinful behavior," writes New Testament scholar Urban von Wahle. "Blindness, as was the case with all physical imperfection, was often looked upon as a result of sin. Physical 'perfection' was a prerequisite in a number of Jewish religious rites."<sup>2</sup>

The disciples simply expressed what most people believed. Jesus' reaction is right to the point: "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him" (verse 3).

## God's abundance is expressed in His surprising grace.

He then declares Himself “the light of the world” (verse 5). The true Light of the world is about to give eyesight to the man who has been blind from birth.

It's a ground-shaking miracle. Jesus directs the focus of His audience away from speculating about the causes of sin and suffering to the power of the divine Light-giver. We can see an echo of creation at work. The Creator is right among His people—yet few recognize Him. The remainder of the chapter describes the reaction of the Jewish leaders. Readers are only now informed that Jesus performed this “eye-popping” miracle on a Sabbath (verse 14). By mixing a paste out of the clay of the ground and His saliva (verse 6), Jesus had, according to rabbinical rules,<sup>3</sup> worked on the Sabbath. Someone “working” on the Sabbath could *not* be from God (see verse 16). We get the Pharisees' logic, even though it's built on wrong presuppositions.

### THE RIGHT QUESTION

The formerly blind man finds himself facing Jerusalem's best scholars and lawyers. Their interrogation circles back to Jesus. They hate this upstart Galilean whose words and deeds they cannot understand—or control.

The man has but one line. “Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see” (verse 25). Translation: judge for yourself—and pay attention to the results of His work.

Finally, after insisting that Jesus cannot be from God and that the miracle is impossible, the rulers throw the man out of the synagogue. He has suddenly become *persona non grata*, an outcast, a nobody. As a blind man he already knew what it meant to be an outsider. Now he has been demoted even lower to being a nobody.

Jesus finds him right then and asks him *the*

crucial question: “Do you believe in the Son of God?” (verse 35). The question connects faith to the issue of authority and origin—and it's one of John's most important theological concepts. Believing in Jesus means accepting Him as the Son of God (cf. John 3:36; 6:69; 11:27; 20:31). It's the question that determines our eternal destiny.

“Lord, I believe!” (John 9:38) is a good answer.

True spiritual vision recognizes one's own blindness. And it's evidence of divine help, anointing our eyes with eyesalve (Rev. 3:18), so we can begin to “see” our need.

This important concept is not lost on some of the Pharisees, who ask Jesus directly: “Are we blind also?” (verse 40).

Jesus' answer is telling: “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, ‘We see.’ Therefore your sin remains” (verse 41). Spiritual blindness is evenly spread among the seeing and the orthodox and the faithful.

### THE REAL DEAL

At this point Jesus continues His discourse with two *amens*. He signals to His audience that what follows is important. Jesus uses two familiar figures (or illustrations) that help His audience distinguish the Good Shepherd from the thieves and robbers whose sole, self-centered purpose is to steal and kill and destroy (John 10:10). Twice Jesus uses the recognizable “I am” formula, echoing the well-known “I AM WHO I AM” of Exodus 3:14. Jesus is the door to the sheepfold (John 10:7, 9), and He is also the Good Shepherd (verse 11). Above all, He claims to be God.

Between the many sayings of Jesus in John 10, verse 6 functions as a disclaimer. Jesus uses “figures” (or “illustrations,” as translated by the NKJV) to communicate complex ideas—“but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them” (verse 6).

We need to understand the identity of “they” and “them” in this verse. The larger context suggests that Jesus was referring to Jewish leaders who were bent on destroying Him.<sup>4</sup> We find Pharisees, scribes, and other members of the Sanhedrin carefully listening to Jesus throughout the Gospel. They listen—but they don't believe. In fact, the entire interrogation of the formerly blind man found in John 9:13-34 seeks to find evidence that Jesus—a sinner in their eyes (cf. verse 24)—is guilty of breaking the Sabbath

and thus should be dealt with appropriately.

Jesus uses familiar imagery in John 10:1-18. Shepherds were associated with kings and leaders in the Old Testament (2 Chron. 18:16; Isa. 44:28; Eze. 34:1-10). God often challenged these leaders through His prophets: “‘Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture!’ says the Lord” (Jer. 23:1; cf. Zech. 10:3; 11:4; etc.). Good shepherds, or leaders, were a rare commodity in Israel. Like a thief or a robber, they would not put the safety and care of their flock first.

That’s why Jesus claims to be “the door of the sheep” (John 10:7). Entrance into His kingdom goes only through Him (verse 9). Jesus’ use of the verb “to save” (*sōzō*), a term used constantly to describe Jesus as the Saviour in the New Testament, makes it very clear that salvation safety is to be found only in the sheepfold of the Good Shepherd.

Jewish leaders in the time of Jesus highlighted the exclusivity of being “God’s people.” Abraham was their father and David their champion. Gentiles had no part in this and were excluded from God’s kingdom. Yet Jesus, the Good Shepherd, was gathering a flock with a distinct mind-set and values (John 10:16; cf. Matt. 5-7). Those who hear His voice and accept His grace follow Him wherever He leads—wherever they come from.

### THE ABUNDANT LIFE

So what does it mean practically that Jesus offers His followers more abundant life? Here are four suggestions.

First, God’s abundance is accessible to anyone who hears and follows the voice of the Good Shepherd. Exclusivity is not its trademark. Separation is not its battle cry. When we commit to follow the divine Shepherd wherever He goes, we commit to a global community of believers not segregated by ethnicity, race, economic status, or gender.

Second, God’s abundance is expressed in His surprising grace. John wants us to know that we are given life that goes beyond our wildest dreams. The Greek term *perissos* indicates profusion, abundance in quality and amount, “that which goes way beyond necessity.”<sup>5</sup> The coming of Jesus marks the beginning of abundant life—it’s not just an inspirational concept reserved for a future kingdom of God.<sup>6</sup>

Third, those who experience God’s abundant life will also extend this overflowing life to people around them. “By his death and resurrection Jesus

has become the door to an open community and the door of an open community,” writes New Testament scholar James Martin.<sup>7</sup> We walk through the “door-made-flesh” and excitedly share it with people surrounding us. Exclusivity has been replaced by profusion and inclusivity.

Fourth, Jesus as the life-giver is a major theme in John’s Gospel. The Greek word for “life” appears 36 times and it is mostly connected with Jesus, the life-giver. Life, real life, is possible only by accepting Jesus, the Christ, and His sacrifice for humanity. John 10:10 describes more closely the quality of this life. God-given life is not a limited quantity that needs to be carefully preserved. It’s profuse, overflowing, extraordinary, and remarkable. It’s *not* an experience of constant exhilaration or superficial happiness, for bad things also happen to good people; sheep following the Good Shepherd are still pursued and hunted by the wolves and thieves who seek to destroy them.

In the few moments of our lives when it becomes quiet all around us, when we can reflect rather than react, it’s a good exercise to remind ourselves of this abundant life and the Life-giver (and Shepherd) whose sacrifice alone made it possible. “In Jesus, as shown in types, as shadowed in symbols, as manifested in the revelation of the prophets, as unveiled in the lessons given to His disciples, and in the miracles wrought for the sons of men, [people] have beheld ‘the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world’ (John 1:29), and through Him they are brought within the fold of His grace.”<sup>8</sup>

We are called to be people who affirm life in Him! 🍀

<sup>1</sup> All Bible quotations have been taken from the New King James Version. Copyright© 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

<sup>2</sup> Urban C. von Wahlde, *The Gospel and Letters of John. Volume 2: Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Eerdmans Critical Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), p. 424.

<sup>3</sup> Scholars have suggested four possible Sabbath violations, including kneading, washing off an eye ointment, anointing an eye, and putting fasting spittle on eyes. For details, see *ibid.*, p. 427.

<sup>4</sup> James P. Martin, “John 10:1-10,” *Interpretation* 32 (April 1978): 171.

<sup>5</sup> Gerald L. Borchert, *John 1-11*, New American Commentary 25A (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1996), p. 333.

<sup>6</sup> Craig Keener, “The Thief May Not Be Who You Think He Is,” *Christianity Today*, April 2017, p. 51.

<sup>7</sup> Martin, “John: 10:1-10,” p. 173.

<sup>8</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940), p. 477.

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Gerald A. Klingbeil serves as associate editor of *Adventist Review*.



# IS BEAUTIFUL!

*Unique Adventists affirm Adventism*

*Adventism is a faith movement centered on the Life-giver, Jesus Christ. How do we take that message of more abundant life into all the world? Three Adventists from different areas of our big world share their thoughts. Their words may bring new inspiration as we share our stories of Christ's redeeming grace.—Editors.*

## MY AFFIRMATION

I'm a Seventh-day Adventist. My religion has been tested on life's sea, but through its trials I have tasted flavors and caught aromas of grace from God, who still commands the calm at the height of the storm.

### LIFE AND DISASTER

I was in the womb when my parents chose Jesus, Adventism, and baptism. Childhood Sabbath School classes taught me to memorize, share, and learn. Being an active youth leader taught me to stand up front and speak into a microphone, to plan great programs, and motivate people to action. Pathfinders taught me to be strong, innovative, sing in my heart, and cheer someone along. Adventist education chiseled and formed me from elementary through graduate school—wearing a uniform, learning about math and Adventist pioneers, writing, and winning spelling bees. Most important, I learned faith—faith that with God I could make it through anything.

As a student missionary, He took me from the tiny Caribbean island of Tobago (population less than 61,000) to India (and its nearly 1.4 billion) for six months of wonderful food and people who lived out the gospel at every turn.

He took me there and brought me home.

The Lord took me into adulthood, where neither church employment nor marriage lasted. Divorce stained me. Fellow church members did not know what to do with me or for me; what to say or not say. I struggled to breathe, to believe, to find support.

Where were my friends? Where was my church? Where was my God after I'd given Him everything? Something kept me going to church on Sabbath mornings, some hope that I would hear a helping word.

### GOD AFTER ALL

I did. Under the pressure of life's scorching heat, my tiny mustard seed of faith popped open. Miraculously, I tasted aromas of grace and mercy, and caught whiffs of heavenly care that drew my battered, fainting heart back to God. Now more than ever I'm an Adventist because of how my church has grown my faith to face life's battering storms.

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Carissa-Loy Andrews, a young adult from Scarborough, Tobago, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, served the Seventh-day Adventist Church as an educator for more than 10 years.



## IDENTITY AND AFFIRMATION

**W**e live in a world that values work (career) and education. We spend most of our youth gaining an education for that dream job that we think will ultimately bring about happiness, because that's how we measure our self-worth. If we're successful, we feel good about life; if we fail, we question life. Thus, according to the world, when we "do," then we "become." But according to God, we do because we've become (see Eph. 2:10).

I had a friend who played professional rugby. Because he made a living out of the sport, he saw himself as nothing but a rugby player—until a car accident ended his career. He became depressed and suicidal because the identity he had depended on, a sports career, was now over.

Longing for sympathetic understanding is not selfish. In Gethsemane Christ felt this longing for sympathy "to the very depths of His being."<sup>\*</sup>

The first time the word "love" appears in the New Testament is during Christ's baptism. Even

before Jesus begins His formal ministry, the Father utters this profound statement: "This is my Son, whom I love." That is identity. Then He says, "With Him I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17), the most powerful affirmation.

We work to achieve our identity, hoping for affirmation through it. But with God we stand still and receive our identity, thus finding our affirmation. God's church is a gathering of those affirmed, those who have received their identity from Christ at baptism. Our identity as children of the Most High gives us purpose and meaning. When this is established in our hearts, we no longer measure our worth based on what we do—whether in the church or the community. Rather, our worth is counted and affirmed by who we are in life, who we are in the eyes of God.

\* Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940), p. 687.

Rome Ulia, formerly of the North New South Wales Conference in Australia, recently accepted a call to the Washington Conference in the United States.

## LIFE-GIVING, LIFE-SUSTAINING, LIFE-ENRICHING FOOD

**P**otluck—eating together after the worship service—is a great Adventist tradition. Rice, salads, delicious desserts, hearty soups, homemade breads, pasta, and cakes—the spread is always mouthwatering. The more international the congregation, the more colorful and interesting the buffet. A real taste experience tells stories of foreign countries and cultures with exotic spices—cinnamon, coriander, nutmeg, saffron, and turmeric—and delight the eye and the palate.

In Stuttgart, Germany, visitors often join in, some of whom struggle with life and its many challenges. A friendly smile, a warm meal, and a tasty dessert mean a great blessing for them. In winter we send them off with large bags of the good food they desperately need.

Food connects. Eating together is an excellent way to preserve and celebrate life. Jesus knew that. The Bible says that He often ate with His friends (disciples), His critics and enemies

(Pharisees and lawyers), and society's despised (tax collectors). He is His church's example: potlucks and fellowship luncheons are great opportunities to share healthful and nutritious meals with members and visitors. For we share more than just food; caring fellowship is one way to share Jesus.

### POTLUCK COMING UP!

Jesus invites us to a future meal together: "Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb" (Rev. 19:9). I'm looking forward to the great feast with you in the New Jerusalem. Jesus our Saviour will be seated at the head of the table, leading the celebration with the redeemed of all the ages. Everything will taste heavenly!

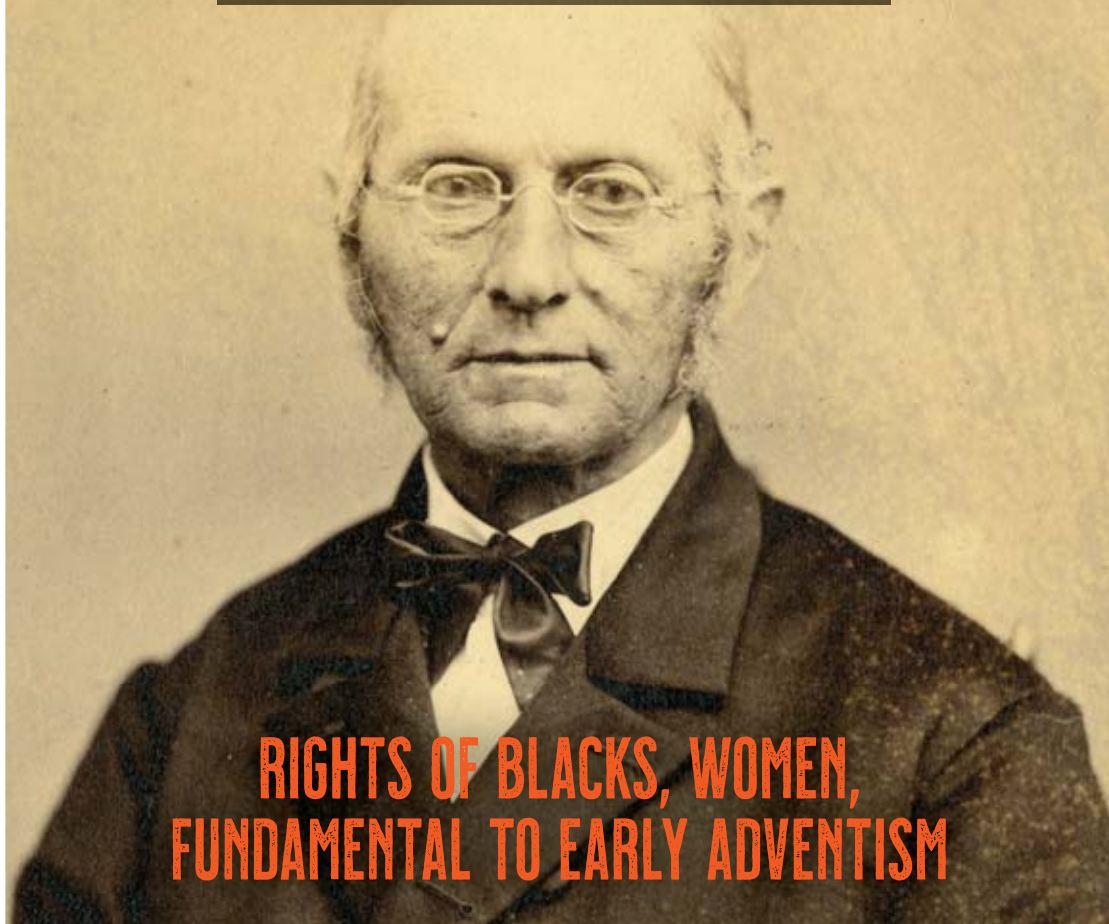
Claudia Mohr serves in the Public Relations Department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Germany. She lives with her husband, Jens-Oliver, and their daughter, Melody, in Ostfildern.

**JOSEPH BATES**  
*—and—*  
**ADVENTISM'S**  

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**RADICAL**  
**ROOTS**  

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**RIGHTS OF BLACKS, WOMEN,  
FUNDAMENTAL TO EARLY ADVENTISM**

**M**any Adventists are aware that Joseph Bates, one of the cofounders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, was an abolitionist. Nevertheless, historians and biographers have not previously sought to ascertain what kind of abolitionist Bates was, or document how he participated in the movement.<sup>1</sup> Bates was a radical Garrisonian abolitionist. Unlike some abolitionists who were committed solely to the immediate abolition of slavery and had little interest in the fate of Blacks after that, Bates was also an outspoken advocate for equal rights for the oppressed.

#### CONVERSION TO GARRISONIAN RADICALISM

Though there were many notable antecedents, historians often attribute the rise of the immediate abolition movement (“immediatism”) to William Lloyd Garrison (1805-1879), who began in 1831 to publish *The Liberator*, a weekly paper in Boston dedicated to immediatism. Garrison insisted that true Christians could not support the national government or established churches because they sanctioned slavery through law and fellowshipped with people who upheld the “peculiar institution.” Garrison’s broad-based peace platform also included promotion of pacifism and equal rights for Blacks and women.<sup>2</sup> Bates actively supported all of Garrison’s reforms and defended all of them publicly.<sup>3</sup>

Joshua V. Himes, a close friend and colleague of Garrison’s, convinced Bates—also Himes’ close friend—that Garrison had the right solution to the problem of slavery. But immediatism was a radical scheme in antebellum America, and most Northerners scorned Garrisonians and sometimes inflicted violence upon them. After working

closely with Garrison for three years, however, Himes was convinced that it was worth the risk to follow Garrison, because he “fearlessly and faithfully” exposed the sin of slavery and exhorted Americans “to an immediate repentance.”

In February 1835, as Bates became attracted to immediatism, Himes encouraged him “to support Mr. G. in all his efforts to disenfranchise [sic] and elevate the colored race.”<sup>4</sup>

#### ACTIVISM IN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETIES

On April 23, 1835, Bates and about 40 other abolitionists in Fairhaven, Massachusetts, organized the Fairhaven Anti-Slavery Society (FASS). Bates was also a cofounder and elected officer of the Bristol County Anti-Slavery Society (BCASS), and an active member of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, supporting it financially and serving as a delegate to annual meetings.<sup>5</sup> FASS was organized, according to its constitution, “for the avowed purpose of effecting the immediate and total abolition of slavery” and recognized “the people of color, both bond and free, as members of the same human family, entitled to the protection of the same just and equal laws.” Bates, therefore, ardently advocated equal rights for free Blacks in the North as well as the immediate abolition of slaves in the South.<sup>6</sup>

Anti-abolitionists in the Fairhaven-New Bedford area responded a few months later. The “very large and respectable” crowd of anti-abolitionists dwarfed the smaller FASS, and when they gathered in New Bedford’s Town Hall on August 22, 1835, they professed to detest the “evil of slavery” but objected to immediatism because it might sacrifice “the rights” of “the White population,” endanger their “domestic safety,” or “impoverish” them.<sup>7</sup>



## JOSEPH BATES' VIEWS WERE NOT EXCEPTIONAL AMONG HIS MILLERITE OR SABBATARIAN ADVENTIST PEERS. RATHER, HIS RADICALISM PROVIDES A WINDOW TO CATCH A GLIMPSE OF THE WORLDVIEW OF EARLY ADVENTISM.

As Bates later recalled, the FASS “drew down the wrath of a certain class of our neighbors” who “denounce[d] us in very severe terms. . . . Threats were often made that our meetings would be broken up, &c., but fortunately we were left to go onward.”<sup>8</sup>

Bates was an advocate for women’s rights and advocated for their right to participate politically, including his wife, Prudence, who was a cofounder of the Fairhaven Ladies Anti-Slavery Society (FLASS) and served as vice president and executive committee member.<sup>9</sup> When Northern White men began to oppose women acting politically by petitioning Congress, Bates and the BCASS responded directly: “That woman, when she pleads for the oppressed, and labors to meliorate and relieve their condition, acts worthy of herself, and of her high duties as an intellectual, moral, and accountable being.”<sup>10</sup>

### ABOLITION AND THE CHRISTIAN CONNEXION

Bates also worked with radical abolitionists within the Christian Connexion. In the fall of 1836 he united with Himes and 19 other Connexionist leaders at the Massachusetts Christian Conference on Slavery. This conference convened in New

Bedford to condemn churches and members for supporting slavery. These men resolved that it was their “sacred obligation” to “proclaim the holy displeasure of heaven against all unrighteousness” and firmly declared their “unqualified reprobation of every palliative, excuse, or apology, which may be urged in extenuation of this sin” of slavery. In doing so, they responded to Christians—North and South—who used the Bible to defend slavery.<sup>11</sup>

On June 5, 1841, Bates also led his own congregation on Washington Street to reestablish itself as a staunch abolitionist church. After chastising non-abolitionist Christians for their support of slavery, the church made a resolution that “we cannot receive to our fellowship, as a chairman or christian minister, a slaveholder, or an apologist for slavery.” Their resolutions were published in *The Liberator*.<sup>12</sup>

### ABOLITIONIST PETITIONS AND RADICAL REFORM

In the fall of 1839 Joseph Bates joined the Millerite movement.<sup>13</sup> That same year he was elected president of the FASS, and his responsibilities and activities in the abolition movement increased.<sup>14</sup> Though previous FASS presidents did

not undertake the task, Bates initiated annual petitioning campaigns among the male citizens of Fairhaven during his first presidential term. On January 1, 1840, he began to circulate petitions and send them to the Massachusetts State Legislature, the U.S. House of Representatives, and the U.S. Senate.

Many of Bates' petitions have been destroyed, but surviving documentation reveals that he petitioned for the eradication of the gag laws that forbade discussion of slavery in Congress, protestation that Texas and Florida be admitted as slave states, for the abolition of the interstate slave trade, and extinction of slavery in the District of Columbia. Though all of these issues were critical, Bates placed himself at the extreme end of the abolitionist spectrum when he petitioned that the United States recognize the independence of Haiti, that the New England "Jim Crow" segregation laws be eliminated, and that the interracial marriage law in Massachusetts be abolished.<sup>15</sup> These petitions demonstrate that Bates' believed in the equality of Blacks, their capacity to govern themselves (a fact that almost all White Americans denied), and his concern for international injustices.

### A WINDOW ON EARLY ADVENTISTS

Joseph Bates' views were not exceptional among his Millerite or Sabbatarian Adventist peers. Rather his radicalism provides a window to catch a glimpse of the worldview of early Adventism. Other Adventists expressed their political views by signing abolitionist petitions and voiced their radical political views in sermons and in print. Along with other leaders, Joseph Bates helped forge a biblical understanding of social justice that should be remembered and applied to our lives each day as we live and share the gospel of Jesus Christ in the spirit of our radical pioneers. ■

<sup>1</sup> Virgil Robinson, *Cabin Boy to Advent Crusader: The Life Story of Joseph Bates* (1960; repr., Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1992), pp. 102-109; Godfrey T. Anderson, *Outrider of the Apocalypse: Life and Times of Joseph Bates* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1972), p. 42; Ronald D. Graybill, "The Abolitionist-Millerite Connection," in *The Disappointed: Millerism and Millenarianism in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Ronald L. Numbers and Jonathan M. Butler, 2nd ed. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1993), p. 142; George R. Knight, *Joseph Bates: The Real Founder of Seventh-day Adventism*, Adventist Pioneer Series (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 2004), pp. 52-54; Gary Land, "Historical Introduction," in *Autobiography of Joseph Bates*, ed. George R. Knight, Adventist Classic Library (Berrien Springs, Mich.:

Andrews University Press, 2004), pp. x, xi.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Mayer, *All on Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998).

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Bates and Clother Gifford, "Fairhaven A. S. Society," *The Liberator*, Oct. 11, 1839, p. 163.

<sup>4</sup> J. V. Himes to Capt. J. Bates, Feb. 16, 1835, in *The Liberator*, Feb. 28, 1835, p. 2, cols. 4, 5.

<sup>5</sup> "A Call to the New-England Anti-Slavery Convention," *The Liberator Extra*, May 14, 1836, p. 1; "Quarterly Meeting of the Mass. A. S. Society," *The Liberator*, Mar. 29, 1839, p. 51; "Quarterly Meeting of the Mass. A. S. Society," *Massachusetts Abolitionist*, Apr. 4, 1839, p. 26; Henry G. Chapman, "Receipts Into the Treasury of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Soc. From the 2d, to the 13th of April," *The Liberator*, Apr. 19, 1839, p. 63; Henry G. Chapman, "Treasurer's Account," *The Liberator*, Sept. 4, 1840, p. 143; S. Philbrick, "Treasurer's Account," *The Liberator*, Oct. 15, 1841, p. 167.

<sup>6</sup> "[Fairhaven Anti-Slavery Constitution]," *New Bedford (Massachusetts) Mercury*, Aug. 21, 1835, p. 2, col. 6; E. Sawin and J. F. Terry, "Meeting at Fairhaven," *New Bedford (Massachusetts) Mercury*, Aug. 21, 1835, p. 2, col. 3; Joseph Bates, *The Autobiography of Elder Joseph Bates* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Steam Press, 1868), pp. 236, 237.

<sup>7</sup> Rowland R. Crocker, John Williams, Jr., and William H. Taylor, "Public Meeting," *New Bedford (Massachusetts) Mercury*, Aug. 28, 1835, p. 1, col. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Bates, *The Autobiography of Joseph Bates*, pp. 236, 237. For other challenges the FASS faced, see J. Clarke, "To Lemuel Tripp, President; Warren Delano, Chairman; Nath'l Hathaway, Recording Secretary; and the Members 'One and All,' of the Fairhaven Anti-Slavery Society," *New Bedford (Massachusetts) Gazette & Courier*, Nov. 16, 1835, p. 1, col. 7; Lemuel Tripp, Warren Delano, and Nath'l Hathaway, "[Meeting of the Fairhaven Anti-Slavery Society]," *New Bedford (Massachusetts) Gazette & Courier*, Nov. 16, 1835, p. 1, col. 6; Nath'l Hathaway, "To Mr. J. Clarke," *New Bedford (Massachusetts) Gazette & Courier*, Nov. 16, 1835, p. 2, col. 6; p. 3, cols. 1, 2; J. Clarke, "To the Board of Managers of the Fairhaven Anti-Slavery Society," *New-Bedford (MA) Gazette & Courier*, Nov. 23, 1835, p. 1, cols. 4, 5; J. Clarke, "To the Editor," *New-Bedford (MA) Gazette & Courier*, Nov. 30, 1835, p. 1, col. 6; Nath'l Hathaway, "Mr. Editor," *New Bedford (Massachusetts) Gazette & Courier*, Nov. 30, 1835, p. 1, col. 6; Nath'l Hathaway, "To Mr. Clark," *New Bedford (Massachusetts) Gazette & Courier*, Nov. 30, 1835, p. 2, col. 6; "[Editorial Note]," *New Bedford (Massachusetts) Gazette & Courier*, Nov. 30, 1835, p. 2, col. 6; "Mr. Clarke and the Fairhaven Anti-Slavery Society," *New Bedford (Massachusetts) Gazette & Courier*, Dec. 7, 1835, p. 1, col. 4; "Slavery in Massachusetts—No. 2," *Massachusetts Abolitionist*, Jan. 21, 1841, p. 2, cols. 3, 4.

<sup>9</sup> "New Societies in This State," *The Liberator*, Feb. 9, 1838, p. 23; "Fairhaven Female Anti-Slavery Society," *The Liberator*, Apr. 5, 1839, p. 55; Beth A. Salerno, *Sister Societies: Women's Antislavery Organizations in Antebellum America* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 2005), pp. 168, 177.

<sup>10</sup> "Bristol County A. S. Society," *The Liberator*, Oct. 27, 1837, p. 125.

<sup>11</sup> "Massachusetts Christian Conference on Slavery," *The Liberator*, Nov. 12, 1836, p. 182.

<sup>12</sup> Joseph Bates, "More Church Action," *The Liberator*, Aug. 20, 1841, p. 135.

<sup>13</sup> Knight, *Joseph Bates*, pp. 58, 59.

<sup>14</sup> Bates and Gifford.

<sup>15</sup> In 1840, for example, Bates was able to gather 80 signatures for abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia, but only 28 people were willing to petition for the recognition for Haitian independence, and only 21 for the eradication of Massachusetts' "Jim Crow" laws. "Massachusetts Legislature: List of Petitions Presented to the Late Session of the Legislature," *The Liberator*, Apr. 3, 1840, p. 54; Petition of Joseph Bates and 28 Others of Fairhaven, Massachusetts, for the Independence of the Haitian Government, January 1, 1840, HR 26A-H1.7, Record Group 311, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

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**THE  
COLOR**

**OF LIVES**

**THAT  
MATTER**

**(TO GOD)**

*What myths about race have we been telling ourselves?*

ALEX BRYAN

**P**astor, what does God think of Black Lives Matter (BLM)?"

The question was thrown at me publicly on Sabbath, October 1, 2016, in the midst of a fiery furnace—an American political campaign starring Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump.

Election Day was just 38 days away. Racial bullets were flying. Public protest was vigorous after the violent deaths of several Black American youth. Football quarterback Colin Kaepernick was refusing to stand for the national anthem. David Duke, avowed white supremacist, was running for the U.S. Senate in Louisiana. Traditional and social media were freighted with stories of racial hatred and responding outrage.

#### THE SERMON GAME

The rules of the game were straightforward (I had written them). Throughout this sermon series Walla Walla University students could ask me, their senior pastor, *anything* at the conclusion of the weekly worship service. Their questions would become the topic for the following week's sermon.

"Pastor, what does God think of BLM?"

At home after church that day I saw myself in the hallway mirror. A twice-terrified White man stared back at me: the politically and racially charged season and subject already frightened me.

But I now faced a deeper worry: I had been invited to speak to an experience not my own—a spectator asked to comment and speak truth about life in another man's skin. I did not sleep well that night. The terror of setting off political tripwires in a congregation filled with conservatives, liberals, partisans, nonpartisans, unknowns, was real. But failing to honor, in front of 3,000 people, the community of color from which the question came would be much worse.

So that week I cleared my calendar and listened. A lot. I replayed in my head and took notes on decades of conversations with Black classmates, Black colleagues, Black neighbors, Black friends. I reread relevant books by credible voices. I ordered new books to arrive overnight and consumed their wisdom. I rented *Twelve Years a Slave* and wept as

I watched the portrayal of Solomon Northup's captivity. I met in person and by telephone with people I trust, whose experiences I needed to hear afresh: stories about twenty-first-century mistreatment—in restaurants and grocery stores; in roadside pullovers with police; at church, where racial slurs were spoken. I shivered as I listened.

"Come on, tell me that didn't happen," I'd say.

"Yes, Alex, it did."

I kept listening. And maybe this is the first lesson for all of us who are White. I listened because I was afraid. I was afraid because I was not certain that I could enter this conversation without making a mess and causing even more pain. Fear drove me to humility. Humility inspired genuine curiosity. Curiosity provoked questions. Questions led to understanding. And understanding yielded a small measure of knowing.

#### THE SERMON: NO GAME NOW

Sanctuary pews creaked under the weight of attendees at church that day.

Hundreds of high school students from around the country added to the usual Walla Walla University crowd. Though floor and balcony were at capacity, with latecomers standing at exit doors, I still remember the decrescendo into collective silence as I read the question: "What does God think of BLM?"

First, I explained that I'd decided not to address the specific BLM movement in favor of a broader reflection on the Black experience in America. In my own interactions with students I had come to realize that conversations about the persistent tensions between the police and the Black community were sometimes dissatisfying because more foundational conversations had not yet happened.

I began with a text: "When [Jesus] saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Matt. 9:36). Some people, Jesus realized, were harassed and helpless, "distressed and dispirited" [NASB],<sup>1</sup> "thrown down," the Greek suggested. These were humans kicked to the curb; viewed as disposable; denied human rights and social dignity; lacking any solid protection from those in power.

The Gospels and early church leaders demonstrate specific concern for those who are poor, sick, women, children, slaves, and for persecuted racial and ethnic groups. Jesus' attentiveness to those who are vulnerable was certainly amplified by reading the Torah's outcry against slavery (Ex. 3:7); the Scriptures' care for those oppressed (Ps. 9:9), afflicted (Ps. 10:17, 18), fatherless (Isa. 1:17); by its stand against unjust laws (Isa. 10:1, 2), and the abuse of those weakened by societal norms (Amos 2:6, 7).

For Jesus, the Bible calls for extraordinary concern for those not properly valued as human beings. He heard the call. He saw the need.

The Christian starting point for humanitarian



**THE BIBLE CALLS FOR  
EXTRAORDINARY CONCERN  
FOR THOSE NOT PROPERLY  
VALUED AS HUMAN BEINGS.**

concern, including appreciation of the Black experience in America, is hearing and seeing as Jesus did. Jesus did not bury His head in the sandbox of fervent Bible studies, elaborate worship services, or amazing speculations about the timing of the end of this world and the glory of the age to come. As a man immersed in the Holy Scriptures, as the very embodiment of perfect biblical living, Jesus saw. He paid attention. Recognizing the plight of those who were not being well-treated was at the heart of His faith. For those who claim to follow His way, this must be the core of our faith: we must see.

See what? What would Jesus see if He came to America in 2020? What color of lives would matter to Him?

I reminded the congregation: whereas the first English settlement in North America was founded in Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607, we now have more than 400 years of European history in this New World. I showed them a timeline of these 400 years: slavery remained legal until 1863 with the Emancipation Proclamation, meaning that for 250 of these 400 years African slaves were treated not as people but as property. I showed hard-to-see

pictures: slave ships, Black slaves working on the great American railroad, public beatings, lynchings, and artwork showing that a White man could do whatever he liked to his slaves, male or female.

I told the congregation how much I loved the city of my birth,<sup>2</sup> Washington, D.C. But visiting was always a mixed blessing.

Why? Because I could never forget that the White House was built in part with African slave labor, as was also the United States Capitol building; that Thomas Jefferson, great author of the Declaration of Independence, a man magnificently memorialized on the banks of the Tidal Basin, was a slaveowner; that our first president, greatest general, father of our country, celebrated by the towering Washington Monument, owned more than 200 African slaves. Most of our nation's founders chose to sustain what Seventh-day Adventist abolitionist James White called "the darkest and most damning sin upon this nation."<sup>3</sup>

Slavery ran through the first 250 years of our 400-year time line. There followed 100 years of defacto slavery that rivaled the shame and victimization of slavery's days: exclusion from formal learning, restaurants, hotels, public transportation, restrooms, city parks, good employment (sometimes all employment); unchecked political intimidation, unjust legislative and judicial decisions, lynchings by the thousands; second-class citizenship, if citizenship at all; treatment as animals, or worse.

It is a story some prefer to silence, forget, or escape from with the earnest plea "I didn't own slaves. Can't we just forget about the past and let it go?"

### **THE PAST 50 YEARS**

What of the past 50 years?

In 1967 Blacks achieved about 55 percent of household income in contrast to Whites. Today that number is about 60 percent.<sup>4</sup>

Black adults are twice as likely as Whites to hold less than a high school diploma.<sup>5</sup>

Whites are more than twice as likely to hold a bachelor's degree in comparison to Blacks, a gap that is widening.<sup>6</sup>

Black babies die at a rate twice that of White babies.<sup>7</sup>

Black Americans are killed at 12 times the rate of citizens of other developed countries.<sup>8</sup>

Blacks are more than five times more likely to be incarcerated than Whites.<sup>9</sup>



For the same criminal conviction, prison sentences for Black men run nearly 20 percent longer than for White men.<sup>10</sup> Black and White Americans might as well be living in different countries.

My children love to compete with me in little races around the house. If the race is too close, or if Dad wins, they always say the same thing: “Daddy, give us a head start.” And if that result does not secure a victory, they wail, “Daddy, give us a bigger head start.” And sure enough, with a sufficiently generous early starting time, they win every race.

I challenged those listening that day: “I could beat any of you in this church in a race, in any race. Just give me enough of a head start, and I will win.”

I continued: “This is also true: as a White man, I enjoy a huge head start in American society. Don’t believe me?” I then treated them to numbers on White male privilege:

- » 44 of 45 American presidents (98 percent) have been White men.
- » 1,942 of 1,983 U.S. senators (98 percent) have been White. Senator Tim Scott, belonging to the 2 percent, has spoken openly of being accosted at the Capitol after five years as a U.S. senator, and despite wearing his senator’s pin. The officer who detained him said, “The pin I know. You, I don’t. Show me your ID.”
- » 100 of 106 U.S. Supreme Court justices (94 percent) have been White.
- » 472 of 500 Fortune 500 companies’ CEOs (94 percent) are White.
- » the owners of American basketball, baseball, and football teams, whose players are dominated by athletes of color, are 92 percent White men.

And Seventh-day Adventist General Conference presidents? 100 percent White men. It’s no secret that I can be half as good as someone not a White man, and still often get the job, the promotion, the opportunity.

Moreover, Senator Scott highlights the other side of this regrettable story: not only does he not get a head start, he doesn’t even get a fair shake.

## WHAT NEXT?

You’ve heard the lines in committees: “We should be following the Holy Spirit and not the dictates of diversity.” Translation: *things need to stay the way they are*. And you’ve heard the Adventist television

station where they’ve even elected not to broadcast worship services featuring certain music. Translation: *White European music is OK; Black music isn’t*.

Then there are the comments on the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday or Black History Month: “We don’t need to exclusively focus on Black people, because all this emphasis does is divide.” Translation: *it disturbs the noble White narrative of Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe. A sprinkling of color is fine so long as color does not get too big, too loud, too influential*.

Nothing I say here is to shame or diminish Whites, deny the progress we have made, discourage the church, or divide the community. *No, I lift these experiences to the fore because they remain a painful symptom of America’s original sin: slavery.*

My sermon ended as I end this article: *we can do better*. We are not doomed to repeat the mistakes of previous generations. We can engage in the hard yet beautiful work of racial understanding. We can learn about our shared history. We can confront the brutal facts of injustice. We can forge fresh relationships with people who do not look like us. We can listen—*listen well*. And we can *act*. Especially when it’s hard, for that’s what Jesus did: “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).

Racism is sin. Apathy about someone else’s racism is sin. Rationalizing self-justification is sin. Demanding that other sinners repent first is sin. When Jesus died for us, He “gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14, KJV).<sup>1</sup>

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

<sup>2</sup> I was actually born just outside the city limits, in Takoma Park, Maryland.

<sup>3</sup> *Review and Herald*, Aug. 12, 1861.

<sup>4</sup> [www.pewsocialtrends.org/2016/06/27/on-views-of-race-and-in-equality-blacks-and-whites-are-worlds-apart/st\\_2016-06-27\\_race-inequality-overview-05/](http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2016/06/27/on-views-of-race-and-in-equality-blacks-and-whites-are-worlds-apart/st_2016-06-27_race-inequality-overview-05/).

<sup>5</sup> [www.usnews.com/news/best-states/slideshows/top-10-states-for-education-equality-by-race](http://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/slideshows/top-10-states-for-education-equality-by-race).

<sup>6</sup> [www.highereducation.org/reports/pa\\_decline/decline-f2.shtml](http://www.highereducation.org/reports/pa_decline/decline-f2.shtml).

<sup>7</sup> [www.healthsystemtracker.org/chart-collection/infant-mortality-u-s-compare-countries/#item-](http://www.healthsystemtracker.org/chart-collection/infant-mortality-u-s-compare-countries/#item-)

<sup>8</sup> [fivethirtyeight.com/features/black-americans-are-killed-at-12-times-the-rate-of-people-in-other-developed-countries/](http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/black-americans-are-killed-at-12-times-the-rate-of-people-in-other-developed-countries/).

<sup>9</sup> [www.prisonpolicy.org/graphs/raceinc.html](http://www.prisonpolicy.org/graphs/raceinc.html).

<sup>10</sup> [www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887324432004578304463789858002](http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887324432004578304463789858002).

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# A WELLSPRING OF LIFE

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*Christ, the ultimate life-giver*

ELLEN G. WHITE

*But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. John 4:14, KJV.*

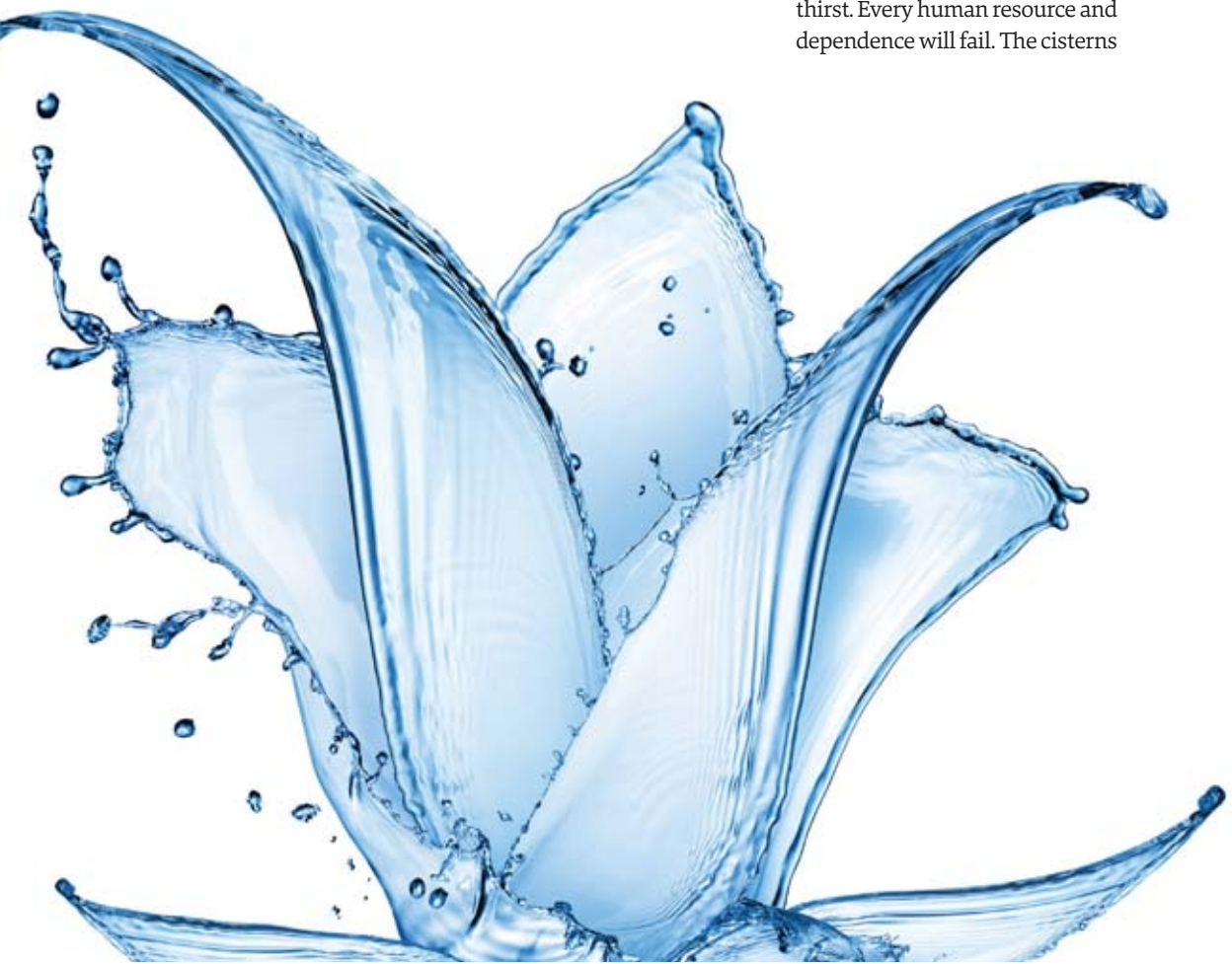
**M**any are suffering from maladies of the soul far more than from diseases of the body, and they will find no relief until they come to Christ, the wellspring of life. . . . Christ is the mighty Healer of the sin-sick soul (*Counsels on Health*, p. 502).

If we let go of Jesus we have nothing to hold on to. . . . Perpetual grace in ever-flowing streams is blessing those who will, if athirst, come unto Him and drink (letter 2, 1889).

He who seeks to quench his thirst at the fountains of this world will drink only to thirst again. Everywhere [men and

women] are unsatisfied. They long for something to supply the need of the soul. Only One can meet that want. The need of the world, "the desire of all nations," is Christ. The divine grace which He alone can impart is as living water, purifying, refreshing, and invigorating the soul. . . .

He who tastes of the love of Christ will continually long for more; but he seeks for nothing else. The riches, honors, and pleasures of the world do not attract him. The constant cry of his heart is, More of Thee. And He who reveals to the soul its necessity is waiting to satisfy its hunger and thirst. Every human resource and dependence will fail. The cisterns





will be emptied, the pools become dry; but our Redeemer is an inexhaustible fountain.

We may drink, and drink again, and ever find a fresh supply. He in whom Christ dwells has within himself the fountain of blessing—"a well of water springing up into everlasting life." From this source he may draw strength and grace sufficient for all his needs (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 187).

He who drinks of the living water becomes a fountain of life. The receiver becomes a giver. The grace of Christ in the soul is like a spring in the desert, welling up to refresh all, and making those who are ready to perish eager to drink of the water of life (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 195).

### SOURCE OF ALL LIFE

*For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light. Ps. 36:9, KJV.*

All created beings live by the will and power of God. They are dependent recipients of the life of God. From the highest seraph to the humblest animate being, all are replenished from the Source of life (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 785).

The youth need to understand the deep truth underlying the Bible statement that with God "is the fountain of life." Not only is He the originator of all, but He is the life of everything that lives. It is His life that we receive in the sunshine, in the pure, sweet air, in the food which builds up our bodies and sustains our strength. It is by His life that we exist, hour by hour, moment by moment. Except as perverted by sin, all His gifts tend to life, to health and joy (*Education*, pp. 197, 198). . . .

The same power that upholds nature, is working also in man. . . . The laws that govern the heart's action, regulating the flow of the current of life to the body, are the laws of the mighty Intelligence that has the jurisdiction of the soul. From Him all life proceeds.

Only in harmony with Him can be found its true sphere of action. For all the objects of His creation the condition is the same—a life sustained by receiving the life of God, a life exercised in harmony with the Creator's will. To transgress His law, physical, mental, or moral, is to place one's self out of harmony with the universe (*Education*, pp. 99, 100). . . .

### ONE LEASE OF LIFE

*Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years*

**Life is mysterious and sacred.  
It is the manifestation of God  
Himself, the source of all life.**

*draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them. Eccl. 12:1, KJV.*

Life is mysterious and sacred. It is the manifestation of God Himself, the source of all life. Precious are its opportunities, and earnestly should they be improved. Once lost, they are gone forever.

Before us God places eternity, with its solemn realities, and gives us a grasp on immortal, imperishable themes. He presents valuable, ennobling truth, that we may advance in a safe and sure path, in pursuit of an object worthy of the earnest engagement of all our capabilities. . . .

He desires that we shall constantly be growing in holiness, in happiness, in usefulness. All have capabilities which they must be taught to regard as sacred endowments, to appreciate as the Lord's gifts, and rightly to employ. He desires the youth to cultivate every power of their being, and to bring every faculty into active exercise. He desires them to enjoy all that is useful and precious in this life, to be good and to do good, laying up a heavenly treasure for the future life.

It should be their ambition to excel in all things that are unselfish, high, and noble. Let them look to Christ as the pattern after which they are to be fashioned. The holy ambition that He revealed in His life they are to cherish—an ambition to make the world better for their having lived in it. This is the work to which they are called (*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 397, 398).

Only one lease of life is granted us; and the inquiry with everyone should be, How can I invest my life so that it will yield the greatest profit? How can I do most for the glory of God and the benefit of [humanity]? (*Temperance*, p. 137). ♣

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Seventh-day Adventists believe that **Ellen G. White** (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry. These passages were excerpted from *The Faith I Live By* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958), pp. 99, 164, 167.

## Our Most Urgent Need? Your Help!

Utilities, maintenance and repair, human resources, meals for students, and providing for shortfalls in program funding like counseling, and the agricultural and horsemanship programs, are necessary to make a positive impact on Native American youth.

When you make a gift to operations, you keep this school going. Operational funding allows students to be here; gives them an education, a healing, safe environment, and introduces them to the love of Christ.

Eighty percent of our funding comes from you.

You are making a difference in the lives of our students when you contribute to our operating expenses.



You can also help our students by supporting these programs:

- Horsemanship
- Agriculture
- Counseling
- Mentorship
- Summer Leadership
- College Transition
- Athletics
- Mountain Biking
- Indigenous Arts
- Music

To learn more visit our website at  
[www.HolbrookIndianSchool.org](http://www.HolbrookIndianSchool.org)



# DON'T STUDY THE 28 FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS

Sometimes I read or hear comments about the Adventist Church's 28 Fundamental Beliefs along this line:

"Well, I didn't beat them over the head with the 28 Fundamental Beliefs or anything."

"The 28 Fundamental Beliefs aren't a salvation issue."

"Don't eat pork, don't swim on Sabbath, and all the other Adventist beliefs."

A few thoughts:

1. When commenting on a church's beliefs, it's important to know what they actually are. Our 28 Fundamental Beliefs begin like this: (1) The Holy Scriptures, (2) The Trinity, (3) God the Father, (4) God the Son, (5) God the Holy Spirit, (6) Creation. They end like this: (25) The Second Coming of Christ, (26) Death and Resurrection, (27) The Millennium and the End of Sin, (28) The New Earth. (You can easily find the full set of beliefs online.)

2. It's true that one of our beliefs (no. 22) does focus on Christian behavior—the abundant life in Christ. This belief calls us to lifestyle choices that "produce Christlike purity, health, and joy in our lives" (but it doesn't prohibit swimming on Sabbath). Most of our Fundamental Beliefs, however, aren't about our work but about God's redemptive work through "The Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ" (no. 9). This is the only "salvation issue."

3. I completely agree that our focus should not be on the 28 Fundamental Beliefs, but on the Bible itself. We don't believe by studying beliefs; we believe by studying Scripture. For a long time, Adventists refused to list our beliefs, saying instead, "Our only creed is Scripture." The reason we began spelling out our

beliefs was to clear up misperceptions of who Adventists really are. (Are they Christian? Why do they keep the Jewish Sabbath? Why do they avoid some foods?)

Though it was helpful to articulate what we believe, this unfortunately shifted the focus of our faith to our beliefs rather than to the basis of our beliefs: Scripture itself. In many cases we ended up teaching our own children and students Adventist beliefs (via memorized lists and multiple-choice questions) rather than teaching them how to study Scripture verse by verse.

This has resulted in a damaging environment in which many Adventist young people (and old people) think we "have" the truth without entering into the truth of God's Word for ourselves. Surveys show that more than half of Adventists never study the Bible on their own. This is deeply ironic and the reason we are half-dying.

But there is good news. Studying Scripture brings life to the lifeless (Heb. 4:12). Yes, it takes longer to study the Bible than it does to memorize a list of beliefs. But the rewards are great as we run "to and fro" in God's Word (Dan. 12:4, KJV), as the very first Adventists did.

4. In the meantime, enough sarcasm and cynicism about Adventist beliefs. The jokes are too easy. Sarcasm (especially among pastors and spiritual leaders) doesn't build a spirit of faith; it only builds a spirit of sarcasm. Our statement of beliefs isn't perfect (the prologue admits as much), but it's our sincere attempt to express what we have found the Bible to teach, even as "our only creed is Scripture." ♣

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**WE DON'T BELIEVE  
BY STUDYING  
BELIEFS;  
WE BELIEVE BY  
STUDYING  
SCRIPTURE.**

# WOOF!

Let the  
dogs  
come.



**SANDRA BLACKMER**

Visitors often do a double take when they first enter the doors of the 30-member Wood River Valley Adventist Church in Hailey, Idaho. Being greeted by a four-legged creature in a fur coat and a welcoming “Woof!” before receiving a hearty handshake and a church bulletin may have some wondering whether they’ve come to the right place. But smiles soon replace looks of confusion as members explain that theirs is a dog-friendly church, and their nonhuman best friends attend worship services with them each Sabbath. Visitors’ dogs are enthusiastically welcomed to join in as well.

No one seems to recall exactly when and how dogs first crossed the church threshold. One person insisted it was about a decade ago when a former pastor started bringing his own dog to



their dogs here. More dogs are coming all the time.”

Puccini, an 11-year-old bichon frise named after the couple’s favorite opera composer, has apparently adjusted well to worshipping in church each Sabbath.

“Occasionally a dog will bark and cause some distraction, but overall they’re quiet and behave,” Karen said. “We’re a small community, and bringing our dogs to church works well for us.”

“We have members and visitors who come here just because their dogs can tag along,” adds John Hall, head elder, whose 6-year-old Chihuahua, Stanley, is a regular attendee. “Just last Sabbath a young couple visited us and brought their dog. They said, ‘We looked online and saw this was a dog-friendly church.’ They were on vacation, and I don’t think they would have come if they hadn’t been able to bring their dog.”

**A TOURIST ATTRACTION**

Hailey, with a population of about 8,000, is part of the Sun Valley mountain resort community of Idaho. Located near the base of Bald Mountain, one of the higher summits of the Smoky Mountains of Idaho in the Sawtooth National Forest, the region attracts more than 200,000 skiers, hikers, and other lovers of the outdoors each year. Its lakes, rivers, snowcapped mountains, and high-end shops—all made accessible not only by road but also Friedman Memorial Airport—draw in more than the usual visitors. Such celebrities as Arnold Schwarzenegger, Tom Hanks, Oprah Winfrey, Demi Moore, Clint Eastwood, and Bill Gates have all owned property in the area.<sup>1</sup> Locals credit their most famous historical part-time resident, Ernest Hemingway—who, they say, spent many years in the Sun Valley area and completed *For Whom the Bell Tolls* during a stay there in 1939—for attracting the initial wave of Hollywood celebrities.<sup>2</sup>

For Adventist tourists who come to the district for a weekend with their dogs, the Wood River Valley church makes it possible for them to attend church services when Sabbath options for their dogs are limited. Even visitors who don’t own dogs



church. Another thought it was when a visitor was going to leave church early because he didn’t want his dog sitting in a hot car, so they invited him to bring his canine companion inside. Others don’t remember it being any other way.

“We’ve been bringing Puccini since we first joined the church about three years ago,” said Karen and Dennis Dunn. “People just seem to love bringing

ALL PHOTOS BY LARRY BLACKMER



# Dogs Can Help Us Live Longer!

More and more studies are confirming what many dog owners say they already knew—that having a canine companion is good for us!

A recent article in the *Washington Post*<sup>1</sup> reported on study findings in the *Journal of the American Heart Association (JAMA)* indicating that “dog ownership is associated with lower risk of death over the long term, which is possibly driven by a reduction in cardiovascular mortality.”<sup>2</sup>

Other studies have shown specific links between dog companionship and lower blood pressure, lower cholesterol, and increased ability to handle stress.<sup>3</sup>

In an editorial that accompanied the *JAMA*-reported study, Dhruv Kazi, a cardiologist at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, said that mental and physical benefits of dog ownership are well documented.

“Dogs offer companionship, reduce anxiety and loneliness, increase self-esteem, and improve overall mood,” and “even a single exposure to therapy dogs reduces stress response and pain,”<sup>4</sup> Kazi wrote. Physical benefits, he said, could be a result, in part, of walking and exercising our dogs, which gets owners outdoors and exercising as well.<sup>5</sup>

Although researchers acknowledge that socioeconomic and demographic factors could play a role in study results, evidence that dogs improve our health is mounting. So, along with other principles of healthful living, perhaps we should add “getting a dog”!

<sup>1</sup> [www.washingtonpost.com/business/2019/10/09/want-live-longer-try-getting-dog/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2019/10/09/want-live-longer-try-getting-dog/)

<sup>2</sup> [www.ahajournals.org/doi/10.1161/CIRCOUTCOMES.119.005554](http://www.ahajournals.org/doi/10.1161/CIRCOUTCOMES.119.005554)

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> [ahajournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1161/CIRCOUTCOMES.119.005887](http://ahajournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1161/CIRCOUTCOMES.119.005887)

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*



are intrigued by the canine-friendly environment.

"I really enjoy seeing all the different dogs," says Ellen Cole, a frequent visitor to the church. "I'm a cat owner; I don't have a dog. But all the dogs make it really fun to be here."

"Visitors who seem to love it the most are children," says Juli Miller, who, along with her husband, Barry, has been attending the church in Hailey since 1990. "When children walk in and see the dogs, they get a huge smile on their faces, open their arms, and run up to hug the dogs. The wagging tails and furry faces make the children feel welcome."

Juli understands the concerns some might have about maintaining a spirit of reverence in the worship service and not having the distractions that animals might bring. She suggested that setting guidelines for the management of the dogs in order to maintain a sense of sacred space and time for prayer and connection with God could resolve potential issues.

"Other churches could at least try it and see," she said. "You could invite certain kids to bring their dog to church one Sabbath and share a story about their dog with the others."

Juli and Barry own three cesky fouseks—Esta, Emma, and Eva—a wirehaired versatile breed from Czechoslovakia, and a Brittany spaniel named Absaroka. They say dogs "fit well" in their church. They are "weaved into the sermons" and "warm things up," Barry says. He concedes, however, that allowing dogs in church might not be for everyone.

"It works here because we're small," he says. "It might not work in a large church in New York City, but it works here. If anyone has ever complained about the dogs, I haven't heard about it."

"The dogs are of all sizes, all breeds, all temperaments, but they seem to get along," Juli adds. "More often than not, visitors are excited, relieved, and intrigued to be able to worship with animals here in the mountains. They seem to find it fitting that we can come here and worship with our best friends."

#### **A DOG-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY**

The Wood River Valley church is not alone in the community in opening its arms and its doors to "man's best friend." Local restaurants and other businesses also welcome canine companions.

"Almost every restaurant allows dogs to eat with you on their outdoor patios and provides water and treats," Karen says. "People bring pictures of their dogs and plaster them all over the restaurant bathroom walls. Banks welcome dogs and give them treats. When you go to the airport and you have your dog in the car, they are given a treat. And we have a huge animal center [Mountain Humane] that adopts out hundreds of dogs every year. It's a very dog-friendly community."

The nearby city of Ketchum also considered the needs of dogs about five years ago when it generously designated 80 acres of grass, trees, and trails as a local off-leash dog park.

"A high-end motel and golf course were slated to be built there," a hotel worker explained. "But it fell through, so they made it a dog park."

#### **NOT FOR EVERYONE**

Members realize that allowing dogs to attend church services could cause challenges for some visitors. Not everyone likes dogs and might find them distracting, and allergies to dogs could result in a visitor walking back out the door. So far, however—as far as they recall—the dogs have posed a problem for only one visitor.

"One woman didn't like it because she said, 'I'm allergic, so please keep the dogs away from me,'" Karen explained. "So we just kept our dogs at a distance, and she was fine."

Other members noted that not every dog's personality matches well with church-going, such as Carrie Williams' cesky fousek, Cheska.

"Cheska's nervous around other dogs and doesn't like to interact with them," Carrie says.

With the overwhelmingly positive response to their canine-friendly environment, however, the dogs, they say, are here to stay.

"The dogs break the ice with visitors and help them feel more welcome," Hall says. "We love having them here—and we believe visitors do too." ❖

*To learn more about the Wood River Valley Adventist Church or to book a stay at one of the church's guestrooms, go to [woodrivervalleyid.adventistchurch.org](http://woodrivervalleyid.adventistchurch.org).*

<sup>1</sup> [www.knobhillinn.com/2016/04/30/10-things-you-didnt-know-about-sun-valley-idaho/](http://www.knobhillinn.com/2016/04/30/10-things-you-didnt-know-about-sun-valley-idaho/)

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

**Sandra Blackmer** is an assistant editor of *Adventist Review*.



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- Run by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Southern Asia Division.
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- Support kindergarten through college education.

*Adventist Child India was conceived and built by Dorothy and Ron Watts. Today, it is led by Bill and Nancy Mattison-Mack.*



PETER N. LANDLESS

ZENO L. CHARLES-MARCEL

## THE MOUTH

*A window into our general health*

**Q:** My dentist is recommending expensive treatments for my bad breath, teeth, and gums. She said my gum disease is interfering with my blood pressure and blood sugar. Is she just scaring me to get business?

**A:** It's impossible to judge the integrity of your dentist based on your question. The substance of her argument, however, is sound, and we hope this was also emphasized by your medical doctor, if you have one. Here are the facts (and they may be scarier than what was already said!).

The mouth is a special window through which your bodywide (systemic) health or disease state can be observed. Oral disease is associated with and, indeed, may cause systemic diseases. Periodontal (gum) disease, like well-known chronic medical conditions, takes quite a while to develop. It may first be noticeable as bad breath and gingivitis (inflammation of the gums), in which the gums bleed easily with brushing and become swollen and red. As it worsens, it becomes periodontitis, in which the gums separate from the teeth, the underlying bone becomes thin, and the teeth may loosen or fall out.

This, however, is just the tip of the iceberg, since it seems that the inflammation that accompanies gum disease affects the susceptible tissues of the entire body.

Bad breath has a variety of causes that originate not just in the mouth; one pathway is through the production of sulfur-containing chemicals that make the delicate gum tissues porous to bacteria and their toxins, which, in turn, enter the body's circulatory system. Masking bad breath with mints and mouthwash does not deal with the causative bacteria, so definitive treatment should be sought.

Gum disease is associated with atherosclerotic vascular disease and heart attack, lung disease,

diabetes, pregnancy-related complications, osteoporosis, rheumatoid arthritis, kidney disease, high blood pressure, liver and pancreatic cancers, even Alzheimer's disease. Preventing and treating gum disease is part of the chronic disease risk-factor reduction strategy and adjunctive therapy for these conditions.

Just for the record, you are not alone—in one large, multinational analysis 73 percent of people with diabetes didn't know that their oral health affects and is affected by their diabetes. You might consider asking your doctor and dentist to collaborate with your care, since good evidence suggests that treating either the diabetes or the gum disease positively impacts the other.

### FACTS AT A GLANCE:

Gum disease affects:

- more than 538 million people globally.
- 50 percent of U.S. adults over 30 (as brushing-induced bleeding).
- 60 percent of dental students in one study.
- 80 percent of U.S. adults over 35.
- 95 percent of Americans with diabetes.
- males more often than females worldwide.
- pregnancy by increasing the risk of low-birth-weight babies sevenfold.
- blood vessels, blood pressure, and blood sugar; the heart, liver, immune system, and pancreas; and the risk of stroke, heart attack, rheumatoid arthritis, and cancer.

The good news is that gum diseases are preventable and manageable. But as with tooth decay, they are infectious. Effective, daily self-care, including meticulous oral hygiene, the judicious use of antibacterial rinses, and appropriate professional care, are essential components of a total health regimen. ♣

**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.

## BRITTANY HARWOOD

**H**ave you decided?" I looked at my boss, annoyed at a question I thought I'd already answered.

"Yes," I said. "I plan to stay until further notice."

"I think it would be better if we parted ways," she responded. "You can either quit, or not show up for a couple days so that I can fire you."

My body tensed, and my throat went dry. I felt queasy, sick. "Can I decide in a couple days?"

Her eyes narrowed. "No, you need to decide today."

"Can I work until the end

*What to do when life closes in*

of the month?"

"No, you can work until the end of next week. Take a few minutes to decide, but you'll have to let me know by the end of the day."

### CLASH OF PERSONALITIES

One of my bosses never liked me. She was cruel to everyone. Her threats to fire employees occurred regularly, to the point that one day a coworker broke down and yelled, "If you want to fire me, fire me! I'm tired of hearing how you're going to fire someone!"

For some reason my supervisor disliked me most. My coworkers had many theories. One thought it was because I was religious and she wasn't. Another said it was because I stood up for myself. Still others claimed she just needed someone to blame for the company's lack of business.

When one coworker asked our supervisor why she disliked me, she told her, "I don't know. I just never want to see her face again."

When I was given a choice to quit or be fired, I knew there was an ulterior motive. My mind flashed back. I remembered the stress and the times I went to the washroom and cried. I remembered her telling my coworkers and me that she shouldn't have hired us. I remembered the panic attacks. I remembered my coworkers coming to

my office in tears and having to comfort them. I remembered her disdain when I stood up for them. I remembered it all, and I walked to her office and quit with as much dignity as I could muster.

### WHAT NOW?

Four days following my last day of work, it hailed. I watched through the window of my building as golf ball-sized hail pummeled my car. I closed my eyes as tears threatened to fall from my eyes. My insurance company told me that my car was a total loss.

Two weeks following the loss of my car and my job, I gave notice to leave my apartment, knowing that the rent was too high for someone without a job. For the next two and a half months I applied to more than 200 jobs within a 300-mile radius. I seemed to be going nowhere; the devil seemed to be in control.

But he was never in control. I claimed the promise: "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28).


The devil can appear to take everything from us. He can take our jobs. He can take our feelings of worth and acceptance. He can take our families. He can even take our lives. But two things he cannot take: he cannot take our faith; he cannot take our joy. Those are things we have to give him.

When it seemed as though I had nowhere to go and nothing to do, God provided blessings I did not expect. He provided me with a better job. He provided me with a better car. He provided me with a better apartment. He even provided a group of close friends.

God is always there. When the moment is right, He shows Himself and His power. When we struggle, we have to remember just one thing: God knows what He's doing. ♣

**Brittany Harwood** wrote this when she lived in Wetaskiwin, Alberta, Canada.

# HE KNOWS



**When we  
struggle,  
we have to  
remember just  
one thing.**



*What we have to  
unlearn about  
people with  
disabilities*

**LARRY R. EVANS**

**W**e have a problem, and we aren't unique. Many, it seems, have bought into the myth that weakness always leads to failure and strength always leads to success. But at times we awaken to the reality that we've been squeezed into the mold of conventional wisdom (Rom. 12:2). Almost imperceptibly we've sought to develop heroic virtues in ourselves when simple trust in God is the greater need. As is often the case, God has a way of turning our assumptions upside down. Scripture teaches the fundamental principle that brokenness and wholeness need not be opposites. They are easily complementary (see 2 Cor. 12:10).

#### **NEW LIFE THROUGH BROKENNESS**

It began like an ordinary day. Regiane went to the bank to withdraw some cash. As she was driving back to her office, two men followed her on a motorcycle. Soon they drove to within a few feet of the driver's side of the car. The passenger on the motorcycle pulled out a gun, aimed at Regiane's head, and fired. The car crashed; a passerby pulled her out, and waited for the ambulance. The bullet destroyed her sight in both eyes, but her life was spared. In a moment her life, and the life of her family, had been turned upside down.

Someone has said, "Adversity introduces us to ourselves." This was the case for Regiane. Moments of loss, pain, and suffering can cause most of us to shout out, "Why!" Such times of brokenness can turn the focus of our lives inward. When we are fully broken, however, the focus shifts outward and upward. Such was the case with Regiane.

I was invited to her home in Brazil for supper and Sabbath vespers. The whole evening was a time of praise to God, not only for His saving her life, but for giving her a ministry for those who are blind. As we sang "How Great Thou Art," the song took on a deeper meaning for me. Regiane's blindness helped me see: I saw that immediate tragic circumstances don't need to be the final word. This is the power of her witness in the small Bible study

# MY KIND OF CHURCH

group of 45 blind individuals that she leads, from which three have already been baptized.

The very year that Regiane lost her sight, Juliana, a pastor's wife, was also losing hers. Some believed that if she had sufficient faith, her blindness would be healed. But God's wisdom produced major spiritual success for Juliana, who has become the regional leader for blind ministry (Isa. 55:8). In her search for understanding, God brought her and Regiane together. They are now partners in a growing ministry for blind individuals. Out of two tragedies has come a united ministry for those who are blind.

### WHAT IS A WEAKNESS?

God's process of developing a person's character often allows mystifying circumstances to come their way. The Bible is filled with examples of individuals who overcame weaknesses and tragedies thanks to God's leading. Joseph had his faults, and his own brothers dwelt on what they perceived were his weaknesses. As a result, Joseph endured trials of abandonment, deception, and imprisonment. Yet when events turned in his favor, when he had the opportunity for payback, he testified, "It was not you who sent me here, but God" (Gen. 45:8). Living faithfully despite horrific circumstances turned any weaknesses Joseph had into strengths that blessed not only Israel but Egypt as well.

Moses, another man whose case seemed hopeless, was dismissed as being vulnerable and impulsive. He may have had the best education afforded by Pharaoh's court, and he may have had good intentions when he killed the Egyptian, but his own people did not trust him. God, however, could see what others could not. It took some 40 years of preparation in the desert herding sheep, but God saw what others failed to understand. When an angel informed Moses of his calling to be God's spokesman to Pharaoh, Moses recoiled and essentially said, "I am disabled and have been so for a long time!" To which the Lord responded, "Who gave human beings their mouths? Who makes them deaf or mute? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say" (Ex. 4:11, 12).

And in answer to his continued resistance God explained that Moses' brother, Aaron, was "already on his way to meet" him (verse 14). Though we

know that God is our Maker (Ps. 100:3), that He knows how we are formed (Ps. 103:14), we are still slow to trust Him. As humans, we tend to write conclusions while God is still adding chapters. God's conclusion for "disabled" Moses was eventually written, "For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel" (Deut. 34:12). Disabilities notwithstanding, Moses' "church" absolutely needed him. And God still needs people like Moses today.

### RELATING TO WEAKNESS

*God has service assignments for everyone.* Stigmas regarding human weaknesses and disabilities can be demoralizing. Some people are depreciated in the very places where they go to find meaning and purpose, an issue well addressed by Paul: "God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked" (1 Cor. 12:24). In fact, "those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable" (verse 22).



The mission of God's church is nothing if not inclusive, and God desires all of us to feel equally welcome to His party and useful in His company. "To be effective, the mission movement needs every part of the body in Christ 'on mission.' If we do exclude people with disability from missions, then the mission movement is missing part of the body. The mission is itself disabled."<sup>1</sup> God's extravagant and dignifying love enables rather than disables His servants, granting everyone, whether good- or ordinary- or inadequate-looking, their

own honored role in His varied fields of service.

*God expects us to be mountain movers.* Unfortunately, many have found barriers keeping them from coming. No wonder John the Baptist, like Isaiah before him, announced that mountain moving, valley raising, and road straightening would all take place, providing total, direct entrance into the coming Messiah's presence (Isa. 40:3-5; Luke 3:4-6). Isaiah's and the Baptist's song of total access was wonderfully demonstrated in the healing of the paralytic (Mark 2:1-12).

A paralyzed man heard about Jesus being in a nearby city. He had no way of going, but he had friends who would do whatever was necessary for their companion to meet Jesus. They carried him all the way. When they arrived, large crowds obstructed their access. But no mountain or valley—roof tiles in this case—could stop them. They opened a road through the roof and lowered their friend directly into the presence of Jesus. Their disabled friend's only hope was meeting Jesus. They saw the need: they moved the mountain that needed to be moved; their friend met Jesus and received the healing and wholeness that he longed for.

*God's children shouldn't be defined by their disabilities.* I had never seen anything like it before—a wheelchair church: scores of wheelchairs crowded into the tight space of this Romanian meeting place. What a sight! Not all were in wheelchairs, but all had one thing in common. They had come to worship, to share, and to befriend one another.

I'll never forget meeting Gheorghe (yes, call him Gheorghe): he has cerebral palsy. I'd be challenged to understand him even if I understood Romanian. But the sparkle in his eyes outsparked everything else—garbled speech, odd smile, constant drooling, or stuttered gestures. I soon realized that I was encountering something far more amazing than any mere assembly of people with disabilities. It was a time for my own self-examination. Indeed, I had found my people—a people whose faith was not built on their being physically healed or having their rights defended. They were seeking something greater. That day they, and others like them, became my teachers. This was the church I needed—a place where brokenness is not about what we cannot do, nor about prejudices others had about us. Rather it is about finding the real purpose for each one's living. And

I found it that day in the wheelchair church.

*God has high ambitions for the disabled.* When Jeff was born his parents had great dreams for him. They denied it at first, but the truth became unmistakable: their son had been born deaf. Nobody can say what went “wrong,” but Jeff is deaf. But deafness is not Jeff's identity. He knows that “higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's ideal for His children.”<sup>2</sup> Jeff is secure in his identity as one of God's children. Today, as an ordained Seventh-day Adventist minister, he serves as my honorary associate in Adventist Possibility Ministries, while also engaged as a full-time pastor. His wife, Melissa, is an interpreter for the *It Is Written* telecast. They are a team ministry—one deaf, one hearing.

Jeff's role as a deaf pastor is not an employment accommodation of some sort, but a full-fledged and godly service that has impacted both deaf and hearing persons around the world. The changed moniker from Disability Ministries to Adventist Possibility Ministries is one reflection of the greater respect for God's children who belong to this constituency, as well as the higher regard for the importance of this area of the Lord's service. I give thanks to God that my church, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, is ever more clearly recognized globally as a movement of bringing hope and soon-coming glory to many who have long lived with despair, depreciation, and disdain. God's providence has placed widows, orphans, and others whom society often marginalizes “in close Christian relationship to His church; it is to prove His people and develop their true character. Angels of God are watching to see how we treat these persons who need our sympathy, love, and disinterested benevolence. This is God's test of our character.”<sup>3</sup>

We all need liberation from society's conventional thinking on weakness. Only as we surrender to the truth of our own inadequacy do we become available for ministries of service as God's “jars of clay” from which He may pour out the water of life to thirsty people everywhere (2 Cor. 4:7; John 4:13, 14; 7:37).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Nathan G. John, “Disability and Mission: For His Glory,” in David C. Deuel and Nathan G. John, eds., *Disability in Mission: The Church's Hidden Treasure* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Press, 2019), p. 158.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1903, 1952), p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 3, p. 511.

**Larry R. Evans** is assistant to the General Conference president for Adventist Possibility Ministries.



# A WORLD OF HURT, A WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES

*What the numbers say*

Here's more on the broken world we live in, broken relationships we live with, and about what we, as His good news ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20), can do to help.

World Health Organization (WHO), *et al.*, estimates:

- People living with some form of disability: more than 1 billion<sup>1</sup>
- People living with disabling hearing loss: 466 million<sup>2</sup>
- Children living with disabling hearing loss: 34 million<sup>3</sup>
- Percent of preventable childhood hearing loss: 60 percent<sup>4</sup>
- Prevented or unaddressed cases of blindness/vision impairment: 1 billion<sup>5</sup>
- Estimates of number fully blind by the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness: 36 million<sup>6</sup>
- Number of widows worldwide: 258.5 million<sup>7</sup>
- Number of children of widows worldwide: 584.6 million<sup>8</sup>
- Number of children infected each day with HIV: 4,387<sup>9</sup>

## COMMITTED TO HELP

The Adventist Church is working to help resolve the multifaceted problems referenced by the statistics above. Seven major elements of our global approach that are well established and long recognized are the departments of:

**Health Ministries**—in 2015 our hospitals, all not-for-profit, provided more than \$600 million of care and served more than 18 million outpatients.

**Education Ministries**—serving 2 million children per year and is the largest Protestant school system worldwide; educating for service and for eternity.

**Women's Ministries**—conducted more than 150,000 training seminars for women in 2018.

**Youth and Young Adult Ministries**—trains almost 8 million youth for service, from 4- to 9-year-old Adventurers through to 22- to 31-year-old young adults.

**Children's Ministries**—reaching children to reach and bless the world.

**Family Ministries**—now in their one hundred and first year of strengthening families.

**Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)**—a global humanitarian

effort working with governments around the world.

In 2015 the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists launched a globally coordinated initiative to address the needs of deaf persons, blind individuals, orphans/vulnerable children, widows, caregivers, and those challenged with physical/mobility or mental/emotional disabilities.<sup>10</sup>

As we work together with and for Jesus, we keep hearing His words: "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for Me (Matt. 25:40).

<sup>1</sup> 2018—[www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health](http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health)

<sup>2</sup> 2019—[www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/deafness-and-hearing-loss](http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/deafness-and-hearing-loss)

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> 2019 [www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/blindness-and-visual-impairment](http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/blindness-and-visual-impairment)

<sup>6</sup> 2015—[atlas.iapb.org/global-burden-vision-impairment/](http://atlas.iapb.org/global-burden-vision-impairment/)

<sup>7</sup> 2017—[www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=world+health+organization+widows&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8](http://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=world+health+organization+widows&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8). (Beyond the extreme poverty and contempt millions of widows suffer, their society's established superstitions sometimes forcibly subjects them to sex acts to "chase away the demons.")

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> 2016—[www.avert.org/professionals/hiv-social-issues/key-affected-populations/children](http://www.avert.org/professionals/hiv-social-issues/key-affected-populations/children)

<sup>10</sup> [specialneeds.adventist.org](http://specialneeds.adventist.org); [www.adventistdeaf.org](http://www.adventistdeaf.org)



# There's More To Faith

*Faith is the assurance of things hoped for,  
the conviction of things not seen.*

HEBREWS 11:1



Mike Tucker,  
Host Lifestyle Magazine

Roy Ice,  
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# THE SPIRIT OF JUDGMENT

I came from a place of judgment. I grew up with legalism, with no corresponding love for Jesus. It wasn't anybody's fault. Just the product of the culture of my church, of knowing "truth" without ever meeting Jesus. I looked at others through the lens of superiority, and myself through the lens of condemnation. Always trying. Yet never good enough for God.

When I first met Jesus, He revolutionized my life. I discovered grace, where before I experienced only shame. When I realized He could love me—*me!*—it changed me completely. I longed to be in His presence, to sense His acceptance, and to walk in His will. As I received His forgiveness and victory, it changed the way I viewed others. Instead of looking at their behavior, I began to see people as my wonderful, God-breathed brothers and sisters. We're all on a different journey, but God has called us to live in community, to encourage each other.

I grew to love ministering for Jesus. To hear other people's stories, to pray with them, to share God's Word, became my greatest passion. For five years I had the opportunity to minister to my sisters in the local county jail. God used that experience to peel back another layer of judgment as I discovered who they really were—God's daughters, beloved by Him.

I recently discovered that my old spirit of judgment still lives on. A group of us from Three Angels Broadcasting Network had partnered with Christmas Behind Bars, as we brought care packages and the message of salvation into prison. We first went to the women's prison. As I looked at the hundreds of inmates, I saw only my sisters, women just like me. Broken, yet seeking redemption.

The next day we entered the men's prison. Even though I was walking beside my husband, with our entire group, I felt small and vulnerable. I wasn't sure if I was going to speak, or even what I would say. Certainly nothing specific or personal. The guard at the door explained that most of the inmates were sex offenders. *Really? I was coming to talk with them?*

Just before the men walked in, a coworker, a woman I respect highly, approached me. "Jill, you should share the talk on forgiveness that you gave to the women."

I instantly froze, and tears filled my eyes. *That was intensely personal. How could I share the story of my pain? of my shame and journey to forgiveness? These men were abusers. Why did I have to minister to them? Surely someone else could minister.* That old spirit of judgment, the one I thought was gone, came and rested heavily upon me.

The men began to pour through the door. I stood next to Greg, shaking their hands as they entered.

The service began. Sitting in my chair, I hardly heard the music or what was said. A battle raged in my heart. God had clearly exposed my sin. These men came to hear the Word of God, and I sat in judgment. Yes, there are consequences to sin, but that wasn't my job. It was God's responsibility to convict and convert. My duty was to respond in love to anyone, anywhere.

Rising from my seat, I paused a moment, feeling incredibly defenseless, still uncertain if I should risk sharing my story. *But aren't all in need of forgiveness? Don't all need my Savior?* The words began to flow, and with that decision God broke a bit more of the spirit of judgment from my heart. 🍀

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

JOURNEYS  
WITH JESUS  
JILL  
MORIKONE



A WOMAN I  
RESPECT HIGHLY  
APPROACHED ME.  
"JILL, YOU SHOULD  
SHARE THE TALK ON  
FORGIVENESS."



## WHY? OR WHAT? THAT IS THE QUESTION.

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*A journey into discovering  
God's love*

**JUDE BOYER-PATRICK**

**W**here was God? Most of the time the question we want to ask is “Why?” I had to learn how to ask the question “What?” What do you want me to learn? What do you want me to get out of this?

### **UNBELIEVABLE PAIN**

Numbness, disbelief, shock. This can't be happening. You walk around in a daze, putting one foot in front of the other.

Then when the ice that fogs your brain starts to melt, you feel it. The anger. The unmitigating anger. How did I get here? Why did this happen? I prayed and prayed and asked God for healing, yet here I was, sitting in the funeral home looking at my 33-year-old husband, Mark, lying in the casket.

You know intuitively that bad things most certainly happen to good people, but you really can't

internalize that they will happen to you, because you've done everything you were supposed to do. Was I not raised by a good, loving Adventist family? Didn't I study my Sabbath School lessons, get baptized, participate in church, attend Adventist schools, and faithfully return my tithe? And for what? Where was my "loving God" in all this? Why was this happening to me?

It took me a long time to get through this challenge. I had to believe that God's shoulders were big enough to let me feel whatever emotions I was feeling. I had to question and reexamine my own expectations and beliefs. I decided to read the Bible again from Genesis—this time not as a 9-year-old girl, getting baptized by her father, but as a mature member of the church who had always believed that if you prayed, God would answer—because He loved you. I had to understand for myself what possible reason God would have to allow my husband to die under tragic circumstances; and what His point was in leaving me a widow. Answers did not come easily or quickly. The answers I sought didn't come in the way I thought they would, or should.

I did heal—gradually. I was able to move on—slowly. I took small steps toward rebuilding my fragile faith. I continued to attend church, but it took a long time for me to trust again and allow myself to get into another relationship. Three years after the death of my husband, I met a handsome man at church, and three years later we were married.

Finally, there was a return to what I would call the "normal Adventist life." My new husband, Geddes, and I shared a loving relationship; we worked, raised a daughter, attended church, and served there as well. God was in our home. Again I did the things I was raised to do. We had daily worship. We read the Bible. We had a great community of friends and family, and then . . .

### **NO LORD, NOT AGAIN**

Numbness, disbelief, shock. Surely God couldn't be challenging me again! I was faced with that question again: Why? I walked around in a daze. Why would something like this happen to me? Yet there I stood trying to comprehend the news. This time, it wasn't my husband I saw in the coffin, it was me: diagnosed with triple negative breast cancer, stage IIIA, a very aggressive form of breast

## **I had to believe that God's shoulders were big enough.**

cancer. I looked at myself and my record: I neither drank nor smoked; I grew up as a vegetarian; I exercised five times a week. I was healthy, wasn't I? What else was I supposed to do? I'd done everything I was supposed to! So, how, and—more important—why was this happening to me?

Because God had previously shown me His love and mercy after my first husband's death, I intentionally put my life and my treatment in His hands. Only then did I begin to understand the question "What?" I truly understood what His love was, what He had in store for me when He chose my husband for me. I say "He chose" because I asked God to send me someone who would not only be my husband but my friend; someone who would stand by me through thick and thin—in sickness and in health.

I saw the manifestation of God's love through my husband: through the year-long series of chemo and radiation treatments, he never left my side. I could take it to the bank: Geddes "loved me." My husband is a quiet man, not one for public displays of affection. He shows his love tangibly in small, ordinary things. And it was in life's small, ordinary things that, as I suffered, I saw and truly understood God's love.

From the moment I was diagnosed, my husband would simply not leave my side. He went to each medical appointment with me; he recorded the visits so he could play them back if he didn't understand something; he sat in the room each and every time I had chemo poured into my veins; he encouraged me; he prayed with me; he supported me. I became so discouraged that I just wanted to quit. He wouldn't let me.

I survived my year of treatment and tried to go on with life as usual. But nothing about this

# I am convinced that God never left me alone.

journey was usual. My trauma was multiplied—I had lost too many friends to this dreaded disease. I struggled to make sense of all this even with the support of my husband, my family, my friends, and my church. I still struggled to understand the “what.” What was God’s will for me with all this? As a psychiatrist, I tried to adhere to the adage of being healed in order to heal others, but I realized that I needed therapy to deal with all that was going on in my life. I trusted God, but I needed help, and I wasn’t afraid to get it.

Then, just eight months after I completed my initial treatment, my world came crashing down again. I began to experience chest pain—crushing chest pain. I couldn’t understand, and my doctor wasn’t sure why either. I had to go through another surgery before the pain went away. Six months later the pain was back, and worse than ever. What now? It took three more months of doctor’s visits to discover that the cancer had returned—*again*.

But this time it was Geddes’ turn to be challenged. Against the backdrop of the resurgence of my cancer, his elderly mother was involved in a tragic accident. He did his best to be there for me even though I couldn’t fully be there for him or his mother. It was everything I could do to manage my new treatments. I was completely devastated, angry, fearful, and numb. I could hardly pray without yelling to God, “Why?” What could possibly be His will through all this pain and agony? This time I didn’t want anyone knowing that the cancer had returned. I didn’t want my church praying for me, or my friends, or my family. This time I needed to work this out with God alone—just as I had done 30 years before.

While my husband helped me as best he could, I continued to work full-time while going to multiple medical appointments. Geddes struggled with making final decisions about his moth-

er’s life. We were both buried under the depth of grief, loss, and pain. While we struggled to lean on each other, God reminded me of the promise: “If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, *thou art there*” (Ps. 139:8, KJV).

Geddes’ mother died. My new treatment began while we mourned, cried, and fought to hold on to each other and to God in our despair. We prayed that God would heal his grief for the loss of both parents in the span of 18 months. We prayed for the healing of my body. God chose something peculiar to teach me about His love for me: though the cancer had returned, it had metastasized to a peanut-sized lymph node deep in my chest—that’s all there was to it. It could have spread to my entire body. It didn’t. I had to praise God for that pain months ago. If not for that pain in my chest, I would have never known about the recurrence of the cancer.

## PAIN: THE TAKEAWAY

Some who question, *Where was God?* crumble and walk away from Him. I asked too, many times. Many times I begged God to show me His will. I had to learn how to turn to Him even when the way seemed dark. I had to trust that no matter what, He loved us despite our circumstances. Love was not the superficial bestowing of gifts on a commercial celebration day. Love is more than chocolates or flowers: it has been the daily renewing of our affection for each other, the strength to lean on each other, the ability to cry out to God in our despair, grief, and weakness.

It is the knowledge that our way back—or forward—means relying on a God who has a plan for us, accepting that He watches over us no matter what happens—even when we don’t understand it.

My journey hasn’t been easy. But I’m convinced that God never left me alone. For me, my husband is God’s present, tangible love gift to me, as he says I am to him. We don’t waste one single day on regret, but cling to the present and live each day as it comes. Now our lives are about understanding the “what” rather than the “why.”

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**Jude Boyer-Patrick**, a board-certified psychiatrist, is medical director of BTST Services and Thrive Behavioral Health in Baltimore, Maryland.

# Jesus for Asia

...because people are dying without Jesus



## *The impossible made possible!*

**A**mong the Hindu caste system, the Brahmin, or highest caste, is the most difficult to reach with the gospel. Typically, Brahmins who become Christians are either killed or shunned by their community, and very few are willing to take that risk.

Mohan's\* family lives in Western India. Despite being Brahmins, they suffered great financial difficulty. The mother was lame, and Mohan's sons could not find work.

Their lives changed when Joseph\*, a Jesus for Asia Bible Worker, traveled to their village. He taught them about God, and they began to pray for His help. The other villagers, however, thought the family was foolish. They mocked them and attempted to change their minds.

"What will prayer do?" they asked.



Mohan and his family kept praying and learning about God. Finally their prayers were answered and both of Mohan's sons found good jobs.

They were so overjoyed, they threw a big party and invited their family and friends. There they publicly declared their faith in Jesus in front of over 60 guests! As a result of this, 12 people accepted Christ and were also baptized.

We have never heard of this taking place in that society. God performed a huge miracle in and for this family! This is a result of the partnership God has established through Jesus for Asia that enables donors to send people like Joseph into these unentered areas to find souls hungering for the Gospel of peace.

Since then, the family has continued to pray and share with their relatives. This has opened the door for Joseph to preach the Word to five other Brahmin families. The numbers continue to grow as the light of the Gospel spreads warmth, one heart at a time.

You can sponsor a Bible worker like Joseph at: [Jesus4asia.org/sponsor](http://Jesus4asia.org/sponsor)

We are receiving many calls from church leaders across India with requests for Bible workers like Joseph. There are lay members whose hearts are warm with the love of Christ who would like to work full time. All they need is a small stipend of just \$90/month. It's a beautiful partnership God has set up!

# IN SIX DAYS

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*Sharing the message of  
a literal creation week*





## RONNY NALIN

**S**eventh-day Adventists embrace the foundational belief in a Creator God. Fundamental Belief 6 is explicit: "In a recent six-day creation the Lord made 'the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them' and rested on the seventh day. Thus He established the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of the work He performed and completed during six literal days that together with the Sabbath constituted the same unit of time that we call a week today."\*

Beyond the belief that God created our world, this statement conveys that He did it recently, in six literal days, followed by the first Sabbath. Some disagree, contending that God created during long ages and through a process of biological evolution. It is legitimate, then, to ask why the church affirms this particular understanding of creation. What difference does it make if God created us and our world in six days, or over millions of years? Should we even care about this issue?

Here are a half dozen exciting reasons I believe we should.

### A POWERFUL GOD

The most striking aspect of creating over a literal week is that it seems impossible. Long time and gradual evolution smooths things out in little steps, making the big picture of creation more acceptable and less of a "miracle."

Should we really believe that God can create *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) and simply by *fiat* (by the power of His word)? For me, this is exactly why I worship only Him, and none of His creatures. The power expressed in the literal creation week epitomizes the boundary between God and all creation: on one side lies the whole universe, enclosed and subjected to given laws; on the other, the only One who transcends creation, who not only can set laws but use them in ways we can't.

The sheer power required by creation in a brief sequence of six days leaves us astonished. The same astonishment prompted those who witnessed God acting in human form on this earth to say: "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey Him!" (Mark 4:41). Spreading God's creative action in imperceptible and undetectable increments over billions of years leaves me wondering if this hidden Creator is there at all.

### AN INVOLVED GOD

God is the protagonist of the literal creation week, performing actions with direct effects. In Genesis 1 He expresses His initiative and volition by verbs such as "created," "said," "divided," "called," "made," "blessed." Yet He also cherishes proximity with His creation: witness the closeness of breathing life into Adam (Gen. 2:7). I find this combination of omnipotence and proximity to be the same thrilling and central theme of God's life-restoration program, the wonderful love He "has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!" (1 John 3:1).

### STRUCTURE AND PURPOSE

The days of creation proceed in a structured order, providing the prerequisites for a habitable planet (energy source, liquid water, atmosphere, rocky surface, orbital parameters) and filling habitats with teeming biodiversity. God affirms the value and function of the different components of the creation by introducing them separately. Individual elements, as well as the whole integrated system, are reviewed and approved ("it was good" [Gen. 1:4]; everything "was very good" [verse 31]). The daily progress through the creation week marks the implementation of a definite master plan, completed at the end of the week (Gen. 2:1).

Such intentionality of design signifies that the physical entities that make up the world all originated in the Creator's mind. Today's familiar categories—male and female genders, different animal or plant groups, etc.—trace back to a specific expression of God's will. From the beginning, a plurality of organisms, plants, and animals was brought to existence, each with their own distinctive characteristics (Gen. 1:11, 12, 21, 24, 25), all planned and executed according to God's will. Therefore, in spite of millennia of evil and degeneration, I still feel the touch of God when I look at the design of my hand, the flight of a hummingbird, or the veins of a leaf. God's meticulous investment in His creation is reflected in His concern for the seemingly unimportant sparrows, five of which may be sold "for two pennies" (Luke 12:6).

Special acts of creation during a literal week lay a magnificent foundation for valuing and caring for the earth and its inhabitants. For the Seventh-day Adventist Church, this foundation has

resulted in a beautiful and proactive sensitivity in the exploration and study of nature, exemplified by the millions of Adventurers and Pathfinders, kids 6 to 15 years old, who joyfully learn the integration of nature, service, and witnessing. It has also motivated many Adventist scientists to eagerly follow in the footsteps of Kepler and Newton to discover traces of design, divine wisdom, and biblical history in the study of the physical world.

### GOOD AND EVIL

The literal creation week also helps us correctly understand the present and future trajectory of our history. What God made in that week of creation was “very good” (Gen. 1:31), but it was followed by disruption and degeneration. Jesus affirms this discontinuity between present and past in stating that “it was not this way from the beginning” (Matt. 19:8). No hint of such important discontinuity is found in the account of biological evolution over billions of years. I reject any model of origins that sees the death scythe of natural selection as a necessary aspect of creation, joining the cohesive biblical denunciation of evil as an intruder, an enemy with whom we coexist but whom we are called to resist.

### SABBATH AND OUR PLACE IN THE WORLD

“All revolves around you” was the disturbingly self-centered tagline of an ad campaign for an Italian mobile phone company run in the early 2000s, and one that captures the human longing to understand our meaning and role in the big picture of existence. The literal creation week provides a balanced perspective on who we are: made in the image of God, given dominion over creation, and representing the climactic act of creation.

Yet we were also the last on stage, experiencing the creation drama as a fully formed gift whose origin we did not witness. We perceive with wonder how well integrated we are with our world, our special ability to understand and interact with it. But we also sense our finitude, the ways in which the world is bigger than any one of us.

The seventh day of creation week, the Sabbath, blends these two perspectives harmoniously. If we believe, as Jesus said, that “the Sabbath was made for man” (Mark 2:27), we can read even in the daily rhythm, paced by our planet’s rotation around its axis, a sign of God’s anticipation to masterfully

integrate us into His beautiful creation. At the same time, the Sabbath rest from the beginning acknowledges God’s sovereignty, protecting us from the delusion of thinking we need no God. Every Sabbath is part of a thread in time established by God that links the days of my life and my place in the world back to that original week.

### TRUTH AND HISTORY

Ultimately, accepting a literal creation week is an indicator of the trust we place in the Word of God and of the way we read it. Is the biblical account of creation week the first of a series of astonishing interactions in history between a real God and a tiny corner of the universe He made? Or is it an ancient myth, a venerable and inspiring religious tradition devoid of factuality?

Some suggest that placing historical value on the biblical narrative of creation week is a methodological mistake, because we shouldn’t ask the biblical text the questions of “how” and “when” that are typical of a modern scientific mind-set. Paradoxically, some reject a literal creation week for a similar methodological mistake, by attempting to bend and mold a cohesive biblical narrative around the “how” and “when” of naturalistic origins explanations. Undeniably, every human will confront some tension in trying to put together information from the Bible and the natural world. We may wonder at times what should give: evolution’s millions of years that crowd the pages of scientific papers, or creation’s literal days as numbered in the pages of Scripture?

When we are faced with doubt, Jesus’ challenge is worth our contemplation: “If I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe, how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things?” (John 3:12). God’s Word is trustworthy, and in the physical world we find elements that confirm the account of a literal creation week and a subsequent Fall, including evidence for power, purpose, structure, meaning, and a struggle between good and evil. Recognizing these factors inspires us to share passionately about the Creator to whose amazing character they testify. ▀

\* Fundamental Belief number 6, accessed on October 28, 2019, at [www.adventist.org/fileadmin/adventist.org/files/articles/official-statements/28Beliefs-Web.pdf](http://www.adventist.org/fileadmin/adventist.org/files/articles/official-statements/28Beliefs-Web.pdf)

**Ronny Nalin** is a scientist at the Geoscience Research Institute, and adjunct professor in the geology program at Loma Linda University, in California.

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# THE GREATEST BUILDER

Generally speaking, I'm a pretty confident guy. In high school I spent two summers doing door-to-door sales; and in my current professional life I never back down from defending my viewpoint—even if a superior is on the other end. I actually *enjoy* public speaking, while for most Americans it is their number-one fear, outpacing things like snakes, death by drowning, and needles.

Yet in one particular area of my life I fantastically lack confidence. It can be summed up in the category of handiness—building things, putting stuff together, the general act of being handy. Or in my case, whatever the opposite of that is. Having kids and moving three times in the past four years has put this area of my life on full display. (Thankfully, Yelp has a whole section on “handyman.” Those guys are lifesavers!).

That's why a recent conversation with my oldest son, Lincoln, yielded the greatest false compliment I've ever received. We had just finished building the “greatest tower of blocks the world has ever known.” That's when Lincoln, who turned 5 last August, looked at me, and with the sincerity only a child can possess said, “Dad, you're the greatest builder ever.”

I was horrified, but I tried not to show it. “Thanks, buddy,” I said. “That's really nice of you to say.”

*Wait until he finds out that Legos are pretty much the extent of my skills, I thought.*

A few hours later I shared the exchange with my wife, who is often on the receiving end of my lack of usefulness around the house. She said something powerful in response.

“Maybe you're not the best; but to him you are. He sees the best possible version of you.”

## SPEAKING LIFE

I learned two great lessons from my son that day.

First, we have the ability to speak life to others. We meet people every day—in and out of our homes—who have insecurities we know nothing about. Our words aren't magic, and they can't instantly remove every inward doubt. But something we say might be the spark that challenges the negative narrator who does everything possible to exemplify weakness and control the story we tell ourselves. What Lincoln told me that day didn't make me any better with a hammer, but it certainly made me want to keep trying.

“Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones” (Prov. 16:24).

Second, how we see ourselves is not how God sees us. We see a mountain of insurmountable faults, mistakes, and inadequacies. God sees what we can be once we've made it to the top. Our role is to simply keep climbing, believing that our heavenly Father knows our potential even if we don't. After all, He made us in His very own image and is the original “greatest builder” who can mold us into what we need to be.

*“For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Eph. 2:10).*

In 2020, I'm pledging to be a person who speaks life to others, and believes it when others speak life to me.

Even if—no, especially if—it comes from a 5-year-old. 🪵

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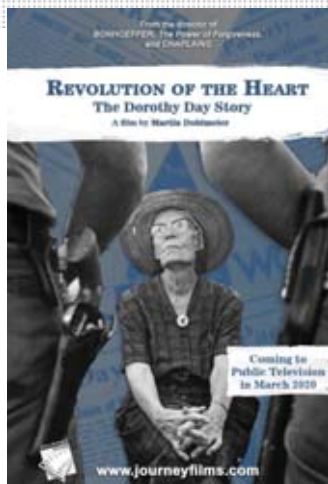
**Jimmy Phillips** is network marketing director for Kettering Health Network.

INTRODUCING  
THE WHY  
JIMMY  
PHILLIPS



“MAYBE YOU'RE NOT  
THE BEST; BUT TO  
HIM YOU ARE.”

# CLOSER LOOK



## Revolution of the Heart

*Revolution of the Heart: The Dorothy Day Story*, a film by Martin Doblmeier, Journey Films, 56 minutes, 2020. Reviewed by Stephen Chavez, *Adventist Review*.

In a joint session of the United States Congress in September 2015, four Americans were mentioned as those whose legacy benefited the country both socially and spiritually: Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Jr., Thomas Merton, and Dorothy Day. Someone who was in the chamber that day leaned over to a colleague and whispered, “Who’s Dorothy Day?”

Documentary filmmaker Martin Doblmeier has once again demonstrated his genius for profiling Christians who influenced American society for Christianity in the twentieth century. *Revolution of the Heart*, Doblmeier’s latest film, tells the story of a woman whose primary claim to fame was that she embraced the most basic—and radical—tenets of Christianity as enunciated in Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. In the process Dorothy Day earned the ire of both the Archdiocese of New York and J. Edgar Hoover’s Federal Bureau of Investigation.

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

## 20/20 Vision

*Following the Apostles’ Vision: Recapturing Their Vision for Today*, Peter Roennfeldt, Signs Publishing, 2019. Softcover, 247 pages, US\$9.99 (Kindle edition). Reviewed by Stephen Chavez, *Adventist Review*.

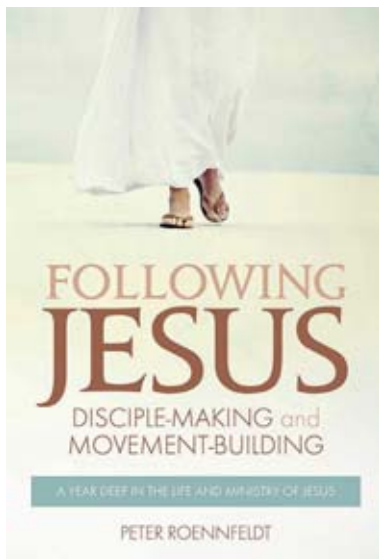
**H**indsight is always 20/20, or so it is said. Sometimes it’s only when we look back that we recognize patterns and pathways that contribute to our current situation. It may be the chief conceit of our age that we often feel obligated to reinvent what has happened before, with the idealistic assumption that we can improve on the past.

Church growth professional Peter Roennfeldt may have help for us. His latest book, *Following the Apostles’ Vision*, takes a hard look at the early Christian church, its challenges, and the ways the apostles met those challenges and turned Christianity into one of the most potent forces in world history.

To do that, Roennfeldt goes beyond dissecting the behaviors of the church as outlined in the book of Acts and unpacks the letters written to

Dorothy Day (1897-1980) was born in New York City, and lived a bohemian lifestyle as a young adult, calling herself a Communist and believing that Communism would improve people’s lives. As a journalist, she covered workers’ rights and child labor.

After she became a parent, Day became a Christian and found Christianity—particularly the Sermon on the Mount—more radical than Communism. She, with a few others, established “houses of hospitality” that welcomed those who were poor and destitute, providing food and lodging for those who otherwise would have gone without.



early congregations to see how they dealt with the issues that challenged them. His conclusion: the early church didn't live in a vacuum, spending most of its time merely preserving orthodoxy in belief and practice. Rather, each congregation saw itself as an outpost to take the gospel to its own community, as well as to the larger world.

We often make heroes of the big names of the New Testament: Peter, James, Philip, John, Paul, Silas, and Barnabas. But the author shows that behind these missionaries and apostles, the early

Christians who had the greatest influence in their communities were those who met regularly for meals, prayer, and fellowship. Indeed, this was the strength of the early church: not merely Paul's sermons, but the congregations he left behind.

Along the way Roennfeldt dares to ask (and answer) this essential question: What is the church? While some still mistakenly think of the church as a building or an institution, the definition that comes closest to what was meant by the word "church" in the New Testament is "those who are called." So the measure of a church's success is not simply the number of members who attend services each week, how much in offerings it receives, or how many members join each month (or year), but how members influence their communities when they're not attending services.

As with all of Roennfeldt's recent books (*Following Jesus*, *Following the Spirit*, and *You Can Make Disciples*), *Following the Apostles' Vision* contains excellent and practical thought questions in each chapter, making it easy for readers to imagine themselves touching others with the claims of the gospel, even when they're not in church. ▀

Day found in Jesus' words "blessed are the peacemakers" the motivation to be a fierce critic of military intervention from World War II to the war in Vietnam. She joined demonstrations to protest nuclear proliferation and was arrested several times.

Martin Doblmeier's award-winning films have profiled such individuals as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Reinhold Niebuhr, Jean Vanier, and Howard Thurman. His documentaries have also highlighted the power of forgiveness and the work of chaplains. Three of his documentaries have focused on the work and influence of Seventh-day Adventists. In 2019 Doblmeier received an honorary doctorate from Loma Linda University, Doctor of Humane Letters.

In addition to telling Dorothy Day's story, *Revolution of the Heart* contains portions of interviews with Day's granddaughters, Kate and Martha Hennessey; authors Joan Chittester and Jim Wallis; and actor/activist Martin Sheen. *Revolution of the Heart* will be broadcast on public television in March 2020 and is available for purchase from Journey Films ([JourneyFilms.com/store](http://JourneyFilms.com/store)) or Maryland Public Television ([MPT.org/shop](http://MPT.org/shop)).

Dorothy Day famously said, "Don't call me a saint; I don't want to be dismissed that easily." That statement is a reminder that sainthood is nothing more than putting one's faith into practice. ▀

## TO LIFE!

Even with the effects of thousands of years of sin, the earth is filled with much that delights the senses. And while nature's bounty and beauty seem boundless, humanity's carelessness for life is reflected not only in scenes of overuse and exploitation, but in the way some are marginalized and oppressed. As stewards of God's creation, we have a responsibility to serve as protectors and preservers of life in all its forms.—Editors.

"God saw all that He had made, and it was very good."

**GENESIS 1:31**

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"Hating people because of their color is wrong. And it doesn't matter which color does the hating. It's just plain wrong."

**MUHAMMAD ALI**

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"Nature is the art of God."

**DANTE ALIGHIERI**

---

"The ache for home lives in all of us."

**MAYA ANGELOU**

---

"Be the reason someone smiles. Be the reason someone feels loved and believes in the goodness of people."

**ROY T. BENNETT**

---

"I count myself lucky, having long ago won a lottery paid to me in seven sunrises every week for life."

**ROBERT BRAULT**

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"The love of one's own country is a splendid thing. But why should love stop at the border?"

**PABLO CASALS**

---

"If we don't stand up for children, then we don't stand for much."

**MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN**

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"As long as this exists, this sunshine and this cloudless sky, and as long as I can enjoy it, how can I be sad?"

**ANNE FRANK**

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**"The earth laughs  
in flowers."**

**RALPH WALDO EMERSON**







“When the well’s dry we know the worth of water.”  
**BENJAMIN FRANKLIN**

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“The golden way is to be friends with the world and to regard the whole human family as one.”  
**MAHATMA GANDHI**

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“Nothing in nature lives for itself. Rivers don’t drink their own water. Trees don’t eat their own fruit. Sun doesn’t give heat for itself. Flowers don’t spread fragrance for themselves. Living for others is the rule of nature.”  
**AMIT GUPTA**

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“Our society as a whole, because we have placed our love for money above our love for life, has devalued the sacred and devalued love.”  
**JULIA BUTTERFLY HILL**

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“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”  
**JESUS CHRIST (JOHN 10:10)**

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“We can complain because rose bushes have thorns or rejoice because thorn bushes have roses.”  
**ALPHONSE KARR**

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“Never, never be afraid to do what’s right, especially if the well-being of a person or animal is at stake.”  
**MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.**

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“When you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have to speak up. You have to say something; you have to do something.”  
**JOHN LEWIS**

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“I would rather be a little nobody, than to be an evil somebody.”  
**ABRAHAM LINCOLN**

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“No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, because love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.”  
**NELSON MANDELA**

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“Evil begins when you begin to treat people as things.”  
**TERRY PRATCHETT**

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“This country will not be a good place for any of us to live unless we make it a good place for all of us to live in.”  
**THEODORE ROOSEVELT**

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Our life . . . finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything.”  
**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

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“Seek out a tree and let it teach you stillness.”  
**ECKHART TOLLE**

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“I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.”  
**ELIE WIESEL**

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“God has not caused the flowers of the fields to grow in regular beds, with set borders, but He has scattered them like gems over the greensward, and they beautify the earth with their variety of form and color.”  
**ELLEN G. WHITE (THE ADVENTIST HOME, PP. 153, 154)**

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# INSPIRATION OR PERSPIRATION?

**T**here is nothing so powerful as an idea whose time has come.”—Victor Hugo.

I love ideas, especially disruptive ones. In a world more and more automated, streamlined, and similar, I find the common ingredient of success in many industries to be that of contrarianism.

Some shy away from standing out in this world. Society’s anthem shouts, “Blend in; do what everyone else is doing, saying, drinking, wearing, vaping, watching.”

No business today succeeds just by going with the flow and doing what others have done or are doing.

To give a better idea as to why contrarian thinking is so important, consider these facts: 87 percent of Fortune 500 companies in 1955 are no longer on the list today. What was once a 75-year life expectancy for a Fortune 500 company is now projected to be 15 years or less.

Look at some of the most prominent brands in the world today.

Uber is a huge player in the transportation sector, yet it is not built on owning any vehicles. Airbnb is the heavyweight in the lodging/hotel space, yet it owns no hotels or real estate. Netflix envisioned a world in which DVDs were no longer needed and now is the king of content-streaming platforms.

## SABBATH IN A WORLD OF STATUS QUO

The best idea around in these days of constant go, go, go, is a “new” holiday in our calendar every . . . single . . . week. We need one day each week in which we unplug from the digital matrix and plug

into the real world. Before I say more about this special holiday, allow me to explain two options for living life to the fullest.

## ORIGIN AND WORLDVIEW


The first option is to believe in evolution and the idea that the Cambrian explosion formed the foundation of all life. Motto: survival of the fittest. The answer: perspiration.

But if our worldview begins with nothing and ends with a planet flourishing with life and highly complex ecosystems six days later, all at the voice and hands of a personal God, then we have a different foundation on which to build. Inspiration is the answer.

We find the idea of Sabbath at the very beginning of the story of the earth and humanity per the account in the book of Genesis.

In the hustle and bustle of this world, Sabbath—the seventh day of the week—is a helpful reminder to disconnect from the noise and reconnect with God. It is a reminder to cease from our work and let God continue to work. It is a reminder to be still and know that God is God.

I don’t think that the longevity of Seventh-day Adventists is linked exclusively to a healthful diet. The Sabbath is a lot more interconnected than we give it credit. Think about it: in an average 70-year life span, Adventists have taken a holiday every seven days. That equates to 10 years less wear and tear of mind, body, and soul. Who wouldn’t like to live seven to 10 years longer?

It’s an idea whose time has come! 

**Jared Thurmon** is liaison for strategic partnerships at Adventist Review Ministries.

**I DON'T THINK THAT THE LONGEVITY OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS IS LINKED EXCLUSIVELY TO A HEALTHFUL DIET.**



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