

ADVENTIST REVIEW

MARCH 2020: HAPPY CEREAL DAY! + ETHICAL INVESTING AND HELICOPTER MONEY + MY ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT + REFLECTIONS FROM THE SERVANT QUEEN + "PRAY FOR ME" + LIVING THE DREAM



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The Church
I Want to
Belong to Is...

ETHICAL

MISSION-MINDED

INCLUSIVE

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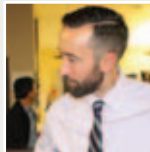
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TRENDING

THE MOST SHARED STORIES ON ADVENTISTREVIEW.ORG LAST MONTH:



- 1 Reducing the Risk of the Coronavirus
- 2 Adventist Ministers and Mental Health
- 3 After the Earthquakes: Adventists Respond in Puerto Rico
- 4 Adventist School in Jordan Expands
- 5 Remembering the Liberation of Auschwitz

THIRTY-NINE YEARS AGO IN ADVENTIST REVIEW

In 1981 the Seventh-day Adventist Church was rocked by revelations that Donald J. Davenport, an Adventist physician-turned-real-estate-developer, had solicited millions of dollars from Adventist individuals and institutions, promising investors returns at higher than market interest rates. When Davenport declared bankruptcy, many investors received little or nothing from their investments.

In an editorial in the *Adventist Review* (Oct. 22, 1981), Kenneth H. Wood referred to articles that had appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Washington Post* to make this observation: "We have no doubt that the [Securities and Exchange Commission] will inquire carefully into all aspects of the Davenport case. If it discovers irregularities, it will report them."

Then he asked: "Should the church be less serious about bringing the truth to light?"

"Whatever may be the ultimate outcome of the Davenport affair," wrote Wood, "we think we should remind ourselves that the strength of the Adventist Church is not its money, but its message. . . . No amount of money can take the place of the Holy Spirit."



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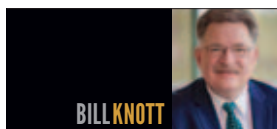
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BILL KNOTT

Self-applied labels rarely have a strong adhesive.

A Church Both Wise and True

An old—and favorite—editorial cartoon from another era portrays two duck hunters pushing through chest-high cattails in their quest for game.

Unseen by them, but in the flattened foreground of our view, is their bloodhound, engaged in a game of poker with a brace of shady-looking mallards.

“Ethics?” one hunter calls out. “Ethics? Where is that dog, Ethics?”

The “ouch” the political cartoonist intended isn’t easily forgotten, for he cleverly reminded us that even those charged with ensuring ethics in our government and society have frequently compromised themselves. At a time when every smartphone owner may be a journalist and every video clip may go viral, the ethical lapses of those who lack internal, moral consistency are visible to everyone. Trust isn’t trending. Expectations are forever lowering.

So it’s imperative that thoughtful, sober-minded believers—in the pulpit, in the pew, and in the committee room—begin to unapologetically assert that they require the ethics of Scripture and the ethics of Jesus from those they ask to lead them in their end-time mission.

This isn’t a diatribe—or even a “dig”—at the tens of thousands of men and women who lead in local Adventist congregations, conferences, unions, departmental services, or executive offices. I’ve been blessed through 40 years of ministry to meet and appreciate hundreds—thousands—who use their Spirit-given gifts at great personal

expense; when perhaps they should be sleeping; when others have left jobs and responsibilities undone. I’ve seen the deacons who arrive an hour before Sabbath School to shovel 18 inches of snow; the grandmothers who still volunteer to teach in Cradle Roll; the elders who lead by visiting faithfully; the pastors who log 5,000 miles a month connecting isolated, lonely members and congregations. For them, I have—and always will have—enormous admiration.

But no one can deny that the presence of all those smartphones and the rapidity of global communication have also made us painfully aware that some we’ve asked to serve have missed the first and foundational lessons about their accountability for how they lead. The footprints made by leaders with “clay feet” are distressingly familiar. In some places, money goes missing; employees are summarily dismissed because they disagree with leaders; the divinely-inspired system of church governance is abridged or even ignored by leaders intent on securing a personal agenda.

If these were only occasional incidents, we might plausibly identify them as the failures of men and women who are of “like passions” to us (Acts 14:15, KJV). We know we are sinners, and even when they disappoint us, we recognize that our leaders are sinners as well.

But it’s the increasing tide—some say, the brazenness—of ethical misdeeds that requires us to go beyond otherwise charitable assessments.

At a time when the failure of ecclesiastical and faith-based organizations to hold leaders accountable for ethical behavior is literally blaring from every laptop and television set, an unwillingness to set our own house in order is effectively a denial of our mission and a surrender to the spirit of the age.

I may think myself—and even call myself—an ethical person, believing I know my heart and my behaviors to be uncorrupted. But I’m actually the least qualified to judge myself as truly ethical, for self-applied labels rarely have a strong adhesive. I’m ethical as a leader if those I lead consider me to be ethical: it’s a judgment of my church community, not a personal report. Ethical leadership certainly begins with an intense personal commitment to “let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (Amos 5:24, NRSV).^{*} But only the gathered church can accurately discern whether these norms have actually been met in how I lead.

The key corollary of true leadership in any age is accountability to those led. When transparency is required—when we truly listen to “what the Spirit is saying to the churches” (Rev. 3:6, NRSV)—ethical leadership, godly witness, and effective mission will all flourish.

That’s why the church I want to belong to is . . . *ethical*.

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

TRIBUTE TO KARI PAULSEN

“Gracious” is the adjective that always comes to mind whenever I think of my dear friend Kari Paulsen. Although she fought constant discomfort most of her 85 years, Kari was unfailingly appreciative of any small kindness or favor shown her. She was gracious in every sense of the word. May I allow the love of Jesus to fill my life as Kari did hers.

Carole Colburn

Royal Palm Beach, Florida



WOOF!

Thanks to Sandra Blackmer for the dogs in church article “Woof” (February 2020). Blackmer and I go back 10 years or more. She wrote an article for the *Review* in 2010 called, “The Dog With the Big Heart,” about Fawn, our first pet therapy greyhound. We are now on our third greyhound, Ollie. He’ll be certified soon and on the job at our local hospital, as well as being in church here in Maine every week.

Russell Johnson

via e-mail

THE PULSE CAFÉ

I was so glad to read the article about the Pulse Café (adventist-review.org/church-members-

[open-a-restaurant-because-they-want-to-help-people](http://adventist-review.org/church-members-)). It’s great that we as a church are venturing out into this relatively unexplored area of evangelism and showing God’s love to others.

In today’s increasingly secular society, in which people show very little interest in God, we need to see more of this kind of outreach. This is how Christ ministered to others. It’s important not just to evangelize with preaching and door-to-door outreach, but also in ways that reach a person’s needs. Restaurant outreach perfectly fits this kind of evangelism. If customers like the food and atmosphere, they’ll keep coming, which will present them with even more

opportunities to learn.

When will we as a church fully embrace these methods? When we begin reaching out to people like this, we will truly bring many to Christ!

Torin Martell

via e-mail

I am particularly moved by this article. I often think: *Surely there are other ways of acquainting people with our faith other than public evangelism.* This is a refreshing article about how a few members have thought about helping their community. Six hundred to 800 for Sunday brunch? Pulse Café is surely meeting community needs. May their efforts be crowned with success. This model needs to be replicated all over the world.

Norman W. M. Thompson

via web

COMMENTS FROM ADVENTISTREVIEW.ORG

A MESSAGE OF GRATITUDE FROM FORMER GENERAL CONFERENCE PRESIDENT JAN PAULSEN

Jan Paulsen’s words convey the heart of who he is: a loving, kind, thoughtful Christian gentleman. He and Kari are true role models for all of us.

Dick Stenbakken

via web

In today's increasingly secular society, in which people show very little interest in God, we need to see more of this kind of outreach.

TORIN MARTELL

**WE ARE NOT SAVED TO
BE HERMITS IN A CAVE**

Nice work! I wish more Adventist churches could share a similar vision and actually do something for the community.

Nikesha Creft

via web

**THE SECOND AMERICAN CIVIL
WAR**

In the Middle East, religious leaders on both sides call everyone to choose a side. Historically, Seventh-day Adventists have chosen to be neutral, because our beliefs tell us that bloodlines no longer matter (Gal. 3:26-29). Our denomination is also one of the most diverse Protestant denominations, based upon our strong beliefs that all people are loved by God regardless of skin

color. In the current political climate we must choose to be "above" the political bickering on both sides, regardless of our personal preferences and leanings. We must move beyond our personal biases, political leanings, national patriotisms, etc., because we have a higher loyalty to God and His kingdom. His principles tell us we must love our enemies. We are citizens of heaven, not earth. There are good people on both sides and in other denominations. We must be able to reach out lovingly to all of them.

Greg Bratcher

via web

**IMAGINING A SOLA SCRIPTURA
CHURCH**

As a Bible worker and teacher, I very much appreciate the fundamental premise of the author of this article (January 2020). We must each return to reading and studying the Bible

for ourselves. Praise Jesus! May it be so among His true remnant people.

Craig Kavanaugh

via web

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MASSIVE EVANGELISTIC EFFORT**

Praise God! Our publishing ministry should keep marching forward in supporting the ministry of the church. It can work together with all other electronic media too. Members and leaders should not put print media over electronic, nor should it be the other way around.

Sone Mariner

via web

CLIFF'S EDGE—IF GOD EXISTED . . .

I do not agree with Clifford Goldstein's columns 100 percent of the time, but I never miss reading an article of his when I come across one. Thank you.

Ben A. Trujillo

via web

**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.

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“Tomorrow will be 10 years since the terrible earthquake hit us. That date brings sad memories, made us cry, and touched the whole world.”

Pierre Caporal, president of the Adventist Church in Haiti, page 14

NEWS



Torben Bergland, associate director of health ministries for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, speaks to dozens of church administrators and health leaders during the 2020 Inter-American Division Health Summit.

PHOTO: LIBNA STEVENS, INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION NEWS

MENTAL HEALTH EXPERT DISCUSSES DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, ABUSE, AND DEPRESSION

“DON'T PASS SPIRITUAL JUDGMENT ON THOSE WHO COMMIT SUICIDE.”

NIGEL COKE, INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION, AND ADVENTIST REVIEW

Torben Bergland, a psychiatrist and associate director of health ministries for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, challenged Adventist administrators and health leaders to enforce zero tolerance toward domestic violence and sexual abuse in the church, as this is a major threat to mental health and well-being.

“What is detrimental to mental health is exposure to violence, neglect, and abuse, which is everywhere,” Bergland said. “Inside the homes, places that should be safe,

there is violence, neglect, and abuse. These are things as a church that we need to pay attention to. It's not acceptable.”

He went on. “As a church, we must have zero tolerance for domestic violence and sexual abuse. This is one of the biggest health challenges and health threats that we have, and this is [present] all around the world; no place is exempt from it.”

Bergland's charge was made during a presentation on depression on the

third day of a health summit hosted by the Inter-American Division (IAD) church region in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, January 22-25, 2020. Attendees included church administrators and health ministry directors from across the IAD.

DISCUSSING DEPRESSION

Bergland devoted considerable time to discussing the reality of depression. Depression can affect anyone—even those who appear to live in relatively ideal circumstances, he

explained. It's twice as common in women as it is in men.

He explained that several factors can play a role in depression, including biochemistry (differences in certain chemicals in the brain) and genetics. "Depression can run in families," he said. "For example, if one identical twin has depression, the other has a 70 percent chance of having the illness sometime in life."

**WITHIN RELIGIOUS
COMMUNITIES
THERE HAS BEEN
SKEPTICISM TOWARD
PSYCHOLOGY.**

Other factors, according to Bergland, include personality (people with low self-esteem, who are easily overwhelmed by stress, or who are generally pessimistic appear to be more likely to experience depression) or a person's environment. "Continuous exposure to violence, neglect, abuse, or poverty may make some people more vulnerable to depression," he said.

With more than 264 million people of all ages being affected by depression, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), Bergland explained that "depression is part of being human. It's a common response to the brokenness of this world. It is an illness that affects the quality of life and the ability to function. People sometimes think of depression only as extreme sadness;

but depression is a complex state of mind often characterized by hopelessness, self-loathing, isolation, anxiety, sadness, guilt, shame, and emptiness."

According to WHO, Bergland said, between 76 and 85 percent of people in low- and middle-income countries receive no treatment for their disorder. Barriers to effective care include a lack of resources, lack of trained health-care providers, the social stigma associated with mental disorders, and inaccurate assessment. In countries of all income levels, people who are depressed are often not correctly diagnosed, and others who do not have the disorder are too often misdiagnosed and prescribed antidepressants, he said.

Bergland believes that one of the challenges that has affected the effective treatment of depression is that within religious communities there has been skepticism toward psychology.

"Traditionally, in the history of psychology, there has been some antagonism between religion and psychology. Because of this, many Christians have become resistant and skeptical of seeking help for mental issues," he said.

SPIRITUAL JUDGMENT

On the spiritual side of things, Bergland reminded the audience that some Christians believe persons cannot be saved if they commit suicide.

"Whenever someone commits suicide, God knows how much pain

there is to it. God knows the history," Bergland said. "God knows and understands mental health and the dysfunction of the mind better than any psychiatrist. Whenever someone gives up on life, it pains God more than anyone else. He is not angry with the individual, but He is angry with sin. So I am not to judge who will be saved and who will be lost. I don't believe suicide is an unforgivable sin. We must always remember that God is a compassionate God who loves humanity. His heart goes out in a special way to those who suffer."

Feedback to Bergland's presentation was overwhelmingly positive.

"I learned so much about depression from this presentation," said Carla Sanchez, from Belize. "I know now that it can affect any one of us, so we don't need to be ashamed of it," she added.

Sanchez said she understands that it's sometimes more the actions and not the words that help us understand when someone is going through a depression. "We must be less judgmental of persons with depression," she said.

Bergland made clear that depression can be treated, but treatment doesn't guarantee full recovery. It's something that calls for greater kindness to those suffering, he said.

"We need to be more compassionate to persons suffering from depression in our church and community," he said. ▀



Straford Seventh-day Adventist church members get ready to walk the streets of Chicago in the rally called "Girls Night Out: A Stroll Through the City." Cook County juvenile inmates created some of the signs used during the rally. PHOTOS: LAKE UNION HERALD

CHICAGO CHURCH MEMBERS TAKE TO THE STREETS AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

VOLUNTEERS OF DIFFERENT AGES JOIN IN CALLING PEOPLE'S ATTENTION AND OFFERING GUIDANCE.

ELIJAH HORTON, FOR LAKE UNION HERALD

Thirty members of Straford Memorial Seventh-day Adventist Church in Chicago, Illinois, United States, stood on a city block on the evening of Saturday, January 18, 2020, to take a physical stand against human sex trafficking in the area.

Church member Victoria Davis Hollins, who also serves as the statewide human trafficking program manager for the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), was one of the volunteers in attendance. She said the church sees firsthand the need for such an event.

Right outside its doors is a sex trafficking hotspot. These spots are called "tracks," where men, women, and children are commercialized. Hollins said the aim is to provide outreach to victims, and let them know where they can go for help.

"I announced [the event] one week in church, and by the next week I had supplies coming in," Hollins said. "The members just jumped right in."

An earlier community-wide event, called "Girls Night Out: A Stroll Through the City," was held on January 11, 2020, on National Human Trafficking Awareness Day. The event is the brainchild of Kisha Roberts-Tabb, a Cook County juvenile probation officer and founder of Roberts-Tabb and Associates, a

nonprofit organization aimed at helping girls ages 13 to 18.

Roberts-Tabb has been organizing this event for the past two years. She felt compelled to start the initiative because she wanted to bring awareness to sex trafficking in communities of color.

"The way we've seen sex trafficking portrayed across the city, across the state, and even nationally, we don't tie it to poverty, we don't tie it to adolescent minority women and boys," she said. "It's usually portrayed as something that goes on elsewhere, that goes on in another country."

But the statistics are hard to dismiss. Chicago is one of the top five cities in the United States for sex trafficking crimes, according to Seelah Freedom, a national organization that helps to fight child trafficking. In the U.S., roughly 300,000 are at risk of this crime every year. Boys and girls are, on average, bought and sold at between 12 and 14 years old. Once a child is in this situation, they may be sold 15 to 40 times every 24 hours.

In 2019, Illinois DCFS investigated 255 allegations of human trafficking of children, 119 of those in Cook County. Some experts believe that figure is lower than the actual number of incidents that occurred during that time.



Victims of human trafficking often do not seek help because they are afraid, ashamed of their situation, distrust law enforcement, or have become dependent on perpetrators.

The rally, which kicked off at Delta Alumni House near downtown Chicago, featured representatives from several government and nonprofit agencies, including the Chicago Police Department, Cook County Sheriff's Office, Illinois state legislature, and DCFS administration, as well as other churches such as New Covenant Baptist Church. "It was truly a community event," Hollins said.

At the end of the rally, volunteers fanned out into the community with "love bags" containing toiletries, snacks, pamphlets, and other materials, to walk in the rally against domestic human trafficking. Church members offered to pray with those with whom they came into contact.

"It was cool to see an intergenerational approach," said Khrist Jones, an elder at the Straford Adventist Church, who remarked on the support from young and old. "There's definitely a willingness to go back out there." ▀



Derek Sloan, newly elected Member of Parliament in Canada, celebrates with his family on October 21, 2019.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF CANADIAN ADVENTIST MESSENGER

FIRST SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST ELECTED TO CANADA'S PARLIAMENT

SAYS HE WILL STRIVE TO BE "THE BEST MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT HE CAN BE."

BARRY W. BUSSEY, CANADIAN ADVENTIST MESSENGER

In late 2019 Derek Nathaniel Sloan was elected as the member of Parliament (MP) for the Ontario riding of Hastings–Lennox and Addington, for the Conservative Party of Canada. Friends and family, including his wife, Jennifer, and his children, surrounded Derek as he finally saw victory after a tense hour and a half of waiting after the polls closed. After members of the press and most family and friends had left, Barry W. Bussey, director of Legal Affairs at the Canadian Council of Christian Charities and a Seventh-day Adventist attorney, had a chance to interview Sloan.

What does this experience mean to you?

I obviously did this because I thought that God was leading me, and that God had placed me in the riding at an opportune time, and

a lot of doors opened for me. But at the same time, it has been a long journey: about a year and a half of campaigning, whether for the nomination itself or while being the candidate to be the MP. It's been a big investment of emotion and time and so forth. I'm really glad that it has worked out so far; I'm thankful for all of the support I have received.

In the distant past, did you envision yourself as a member of Parliament?

No, I didn't actually think about it at all until a couple years ago. In fact, when I was in law school, I started to become aware of certain trends that were going on, and initially I thought I would get into religious liberty work as a lawyer. I interned at the Seventh-day Ad-

ventist Church in Canada for a summer, and through that experience I began to be more drawn to politics and began to be more concerned about the trend of intolerance toward people who hold non-mainstream views. That includes people, obviously, of a religious persuasion, but it also includes others as well.

I saw a solidifying of a politically correct acceptance of mainstream views on so many different things, and I felt that people who didn't fit in were being systematically excluded and discriminated against in certain ways. I felt that this was problematic, and I also felt that the people who were perpetuating that politically-correct mindset were very politically active. I felt that people like me—I consider myself an average sort of guy—needed to get involved for the good of our country. We need people in leadership who are a little more accepting of the fact that Canada is a diverse country with a variety of different viewpoints, and that this is OK.

Mayor Mitch Panciuk of Belleville, Ontario, Canada, congratulates Derek Sloan on his election to Canada's Parliament on October 21, 2019.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF CANADIAN ADVENTIST MESSENGER



Have you had a chance to talk to other members of Parliament to know what life is like as an MP?

I have spoken to a few, but it's one of those things you really don't know until you get there. So I guess we'll see what happens. It will be an interesting journey!

How has this experience been on your family? Have there been a lot of incursions on the time with your family, and what have you done as a Christian father to be able to alleviate that?

Since the campaign itself started in early September, I've obviously been busy from sunup until I went to bed. It did draw me away from the family during that time. We have always kept the [Saturday] Sabbath the entire time through the campaign and prior to, and that has been a great time for us to recharge and get together.

You're a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

That's correct.

As far as I know, you are the first Seventh-day Adventist ever elected to Parliament in Canada. What's your reaction to that reality?

Parliament could use a couple Seventh-day Adventists. Seventh-day Adventists, obviously, have a long history of work on religious liberty. As I learned in law school, they have great credentials when it comes to appearing at the Supreme Court of Canada with prac-

tically any issue relating to religious liberty. They have a lot of "street cred" for appearances at the Supreme Court. We could use a couple of politicians to provide that perspective.

What would you say to young Christians who look up to you? Would you recommend politics as a viable career?

Yeah, absolutely. It's more than just a "career." Christians should be more political and get involved. It doesn't necessarily matter which party. Christians should look at the founding documents of the different parties to see which philosophies appeal to them.

You can get involved at the grass-roots level in any party in Canada and have a major impact, and a major difference on the policies that get brought forward. If you attend conventions or other sorts of gatherings that these parties have, you can be one of, say, 1,300 people voting on a policy that will eventually be brought before the entire country. So being involved at the grass-roots level as a party member is a phenomenal way to be involved, make a difference, and have a say. Your vote matters in that context because you are actually participating in a party that may form government; you are literally having a

say in what their policy will be.

If you are just voting in a general election, the policies are already cast, the local person has already been decided. As a local party member, you can decide (1) who is going to run for that party and (2) what policies the party will stand for. That is super-important.

You're going in as a member of Parliament with a party that is not forming a government. You will be in the opposition. What do you see yourself being able to do?

That's a really good question. I'm going to be fighting for my riding, obviously. It will provide a good opportunity to learn the ropes. Being in the opposition is less pressure, so to speak; it gives you more latitude to learn. A former MP I was speaking with said it was a good place to be a rookie in terms of learning the ropes. So that's a blessing.

What are your hopes for the future?

I have been keeping my eyes open for God's leading in my life, and [I] will see how that materializes in Ottawa, and how that manifests itself over the next couple years. My options are open, and I want to get involved as much as I can and work in my riding as best I can, and be the best MP I can be. 🍀



The Galaad Seventh-day Adventist Church in Haiti grew out of a small group that gathered in the neighborhood the night an earthquake struck. The church grew from a group of 50 after the earthquake to more than 300 members today.

ADVENTIST CHURCH IN HAITI GROWING STRONG 10 YEARS AFTER DEVASTATING EARTHQUAKE

MEMBERS REBUILT CHURCH BUILDINGS AND PLANTED NEW CONGREGATIONS AFTER THE DISASTER.

LIBNA STEVENS, INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION, AND ADVENTIST REVIEW

In the midst of a hiatus from political protests that filled the streets of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, in 2019, Seventh-day Adventists had reason to celebrate on January 11, 2020, 10 years after the nation saw its worst earthquake devastate thousands of lives.

Hundreds gathered at the nearly completed Galaad Seventh-day Adventist Church in Diquini, Carrefour, to praise and worship as they welcomed guests during the second week of a three-week evangelistic campaign. The event took place on the eve of the tenth anniversary of the earthquake, which hit the island nation on January 12, 2010, and claimed the lives of many thousands of people, including more than 500 Adventists.

To the more than 300 members

of the Galaad church, the memory of the tragic earthquake also brings to mind the birth of a church group of 50 Seventh-day Adventists and other neighbors. This group slept on the streets the night after the earthquake and began to meet every week thereafter. The informal group soon grew to what is now the current congregation. They have nearly completed a church building that seats more than 500.

Pierre Caporal, president of the Adventist Church in Haiti, was among the group of 50 that slept under the stars and worshipped every week with the new, smaller congregation in 2010. He congratulated the congregation for its resilience and dedication in spreading God's love in the community.

"Tomorrow will be 10 years since

the terrible earthquake hit us," Caporal said. "That date brings sad memories, made us cry, and touched the whole world."

Caporal said that it has been 10 years of demonstrating God's love. "Ten years of struggles in favor of God's work. Ten years of generosity that led to building this temple and waiting to see its completion and dedication soon," he said. "These 10 years were not easy, but everything came about as a result of God's grace and God's power for His people."

Since the earthquake, the church in Haiti has seen the baptism of more than 91,000 new believers and the birth of more than 110 new congregations.

Caporal's spiritual message encouraged the more than 500 crowding the church and reminded them of the importance of resisting sin and clinging to Jesus, "for nothing can separate His people from the love of God."

"Keep moving forward, resist temptation, and finish the goal of spreading God's love to others," Caporal said. "The finish line is the Second Coming. We are all running in this race and do not know when

Church elder Figaro Greger points to the spot on the street where neighbors met every week for more than five years, starting on the evening a major earthquake struck on January 12, 2010.

PHOTOS: LIBNA STEVENS/IAD



we will be called to rest, so we must work hard, stay strong, and not be tempted to abandon the race.”

As Caporal broke into a praise song during the service, he was joined by hundreds of voices. He then invited anyone who wanted to give their heart to Jesus to take a stand at the front of the church. More than 20 accepted the call and were prayed for by Waitland Francois.

Francois, who is pursuing a doctoral degree at the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS) in the Philippines, traveled to Haiti for the anniversary celebration. He moved quickly to the platform to pray for those at the front.

He recalled the pain and grief he and his wife endured after celebrating their wedding on December 27, 2009. Seven of his bride-to-be’s family flew in from the United States to witness the ceremony and were scheduled to leave on January 13, 2010. “They all died when the earthquake struck, and both of us were left to grieve,” Francois said. “I do not even have photos or videos from our wedding because our photographer died in the quake.”

Francois’ wife died less than two years ago in the Philippines from a pulmonary embolism.

“Life is short, and it’s important to know that the best resource in your life is family and friends; it’s what matters most,” Francois said. “You have to be ready in Jesus, because you do not know when you may not be here anymore.”

Francois said he is determined

to finish his doctoral thesis on developing a theology of service. His desire, he said, is to return to Haiti and serve his church and ensure that churches are acclimated to providing accessible spaces for members and persons with special needs. He had been blind in one eye for more than 19 years before surgery corrected it. Francois said he sees the growth of Galaad Adventist Church and spoke proudly of one of his best friends, Figaro Greger, who is the head elder at the church and who was instrumental in raising funds to build it.

Greger pointed to the spot where a small group of people from his neighborhood gathered on the night of the earthquake. For more than five years after the quake, the group worshipped under a tent with wooden pews at that spot in front of his house. His house sits across the street from the new church. “We came to the porch of my house when we held communion services, and we saw the church grow,” Greger said.

Greger said he had a burden to find property and build a church. Ten years later, Galaad church has more than 350 church members. Greger said he was overjoyed to see the church bursting with more than 500 people. “There is so much to praise God for because from the moment the earthquake struck, a new congregation was born among so many unbelievers in the neighborhood,” he said.

The ceiling needs to be finished and the air conditioning system needs to be installed, as well as a

few details in the basement, which houses the children’s church, according to Greger. “God will see to the completion of the temple,” he said.

Many churches in Haiti still have some additional renovation to be done after the earthquake, but every church is bursting with believers every Sabbath, Caporal said. During his spiritual message he reminded church members of the love and support that the world church demonstrated right after the quake and years later. “You are not alone. God and our brothers and sisters still care and pray for us,” he said.

Primary and secondary schools resumed classes in December after two months of being closed, and Haiti Adventist University began its first semester last week, Caporal said. The university is expected to make up class time lost because of political unrest and complete its school year in July, like the government-run schools. The university has nearly 200 more students enrolled in the 2020 school year than the previous year, and university and church leaders are hopeful that the women’s dorm will be remodeled by the end of the year. The men’s dorm is to be completed next year, Caporal explained.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Haiti has more than 481,000 members worshipping in 1,126 churches and congregations. The church oversees a hospital, university, radio station, and dozens of primary and secondary schools. ▀

WALNUTS MAY SLOW COGNITIVE DECLINE IN AT-RISK ELDERLY

**DISADVANTAGED
POPULATIONS MAY HAVE
THE MOST TO GAIN, SAYS
PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER
JOAN SABATÉ.**

ANSEL OLIVER,
LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY HEALTH NEWS

Eating walnuts may help slow cognitive decline in at-risk groups of the elderly population, according to a study conducted by researchers in California, United States, and Barcelona, Spain.

The Walnuts and Healthy Aging Study, published this month in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, found that walnut consumption by healthy, elderly adults had little effect on cognitive function over two years, but it had greater effect on elderly adults who had smoked more and had a lower baseline neuropsychological test score.

The study examined nearly 640 seniors living unassisted in Loma Linda, California, United States, and in Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain. For two years the test group included walnuts in their daily diet, and the control group abstained from eating walnuts.

Walnuts contain omega-3 fatty acids and polyphenols, which have previously been

found to counteract oxidative stress and inflammation, both of which are drivers of cognitive decline.

Joan Sabaté, professor of nutrition and epidemiology at Loma Linda University School of Public Health and the study's principal investigator, said this was the largest and most well-controlled trial ever conducted on the effects of nuts on cognition.

"While this was a minor result, it could lead to better outcomes when conducted over longer periods of time," Sabaté said. "Further investigation is definitely warranted based on our findings, especially for disadvantaged populations, who may have the most to gain from incorporating walnuts and other nuts into their diet."

Sabaté and his research team at Loma Linda University were the first to discover the cholesterol-lowering effect of nut consumption—specifically walnuts. Findings were first published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 1993. Subsequently, findings from Loma Linda University researchers have linked nut consumption to lower risk of cardiovascular diseases.

The Walnuts and Healthy Aging Study was funded by a grant from the California Walnut Commission, which had no input in the study design, data collection, analyses, or writing and submission of the manuscript. ▀





YOUNG ADVENTISTS AGREE TO BE BOLD FOR GOD. Approximately 4,000 people gathered in Louisville, Kentucky, United States, in early January for the 2020 convention of Generation. Youth. Christ (GYC). The annual event, geared to church members 35 years old or younger, was themed “By Many or by Few.” GYC leaders encouraged participants to consider a life of service, and invited them to explore a diverse set of service and ministry options on display in the exhibit hall.



ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY HOSTS WORLD FOOD DAY EVENT. Babcock University, an institution of higher learning in Nigeria, organized the third World Food Day event held on the university’s campus. Leaders noted that the provision of food is critical to human survival. Speakers also emphasized that despite official statistics pointing to a decrease in hunger, a condition called “hidden hunger” has reached an “alarming proportion.” Babcock University operates a Department of Agriculture that seeks, in part, to address global hunger.



AIIAS RECOVERS FROM VOLCANO ERUPTION IN PHILIPPINES. Three days after the Taal volcano, located in the Philippines, blanketed the campus and surrounding areas with ash on January 12, 2020, residents of the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIIAS) came together for a cleanup drive. The Adventist university is situated approximately 24 miles from the volcano. AIIAS distributed 800 of the requisite N95 face masks to volunteers and staff at the start of the first day of cleanup to avoid any respiratory damage from inhaling ash.



SIGNS OF THE TIMES TO SUPPORT EVANGELISM IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA. Two hundred thousand copies of the Pacific edition of *Signs of the Times* are intended for use during this year’s “Papua New Guinea for Christ” evangelistic effort. The special edition of the magazine, believed to be the first full-length *Signs* developed especially for the Pacific Islands, deals with current issues in the region and includes a focus on distinctive Adventist Bible teachings. Coordinated evangelistic meetings will take place at approximately 2,000 locations across the nation.



ADVENTISTS REMEMBER THE LIBERATION OF AUSCHWITZ. Seventy-five years ago, on January 27, 1945, troops of the 60th Army of the First Ukrainian Front (part of the Soviet Red Army) liberated Auschwitz, one of the most infamous concentration and camps established by Nazi Germany in what is now Poland. Adventist leaders emphasized the necessity of never allowing a similar travesty to occur again. Others focused on the work of Adventists in saving Jews from concentration camps.



NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION HOSTS RELIGIOUS FREEDOM PRAYER BREAKFAST. More than 100 people from diverse faith traditions attended the second annual Religious Freedom Prayer Breakfast, hosted by the North American Division (NAD) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The event, held in January, recognized Religious Freedom Day in the United States and included prayer for elected officials, the community, and the nation; for peace and places of worship; and for unity of spirit. Adventist, Jewish, Muslim, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and nondenominational Christian representatives offered the various petitions.



PLAY ON THE GREAT CONTROVERSY THEME DRAWS DIVERSE AUDIENCE. A recent dramatic production in England drew both Christian and secular crowds. Performed at the Broadway Theatre in Catford, London, in December 2019, the production *And There Was War* traced the beginnings of the fall of Lucifer, which ushered in the effects of sin. The play was directed by Jermaine Wong and chronicled two crucial testing times for humanity as described in the Bible, namely the tension of Cain toward Abel and the test of faith for Noah and his family as they built the ark before the Flood.

THE LIVE OPTION

An indispensable value

LOWELL C. COOPER

Trust is the church's most important human resource. We live in an age that exhibits a crisis of confidence in leaders. Strategy, technique, innovation, technology, structure, performance, and social media are important words for organizational success. It's easy to become preoccupied with them. But they are ineffectual without trust. Where trust exists, other resources become available. Where trust is lacking, other resources will diminish.

THE FIRST KIND OF TRUST

Two kinds of trust operate in organizational life. The first is trust in individuals—the confidence that people in leadership roles are persons of moral character and competence. Trusted leaders are obviously committed to the lordship of Jesus, keep their promises (including promises of confidentiality), strive for justice and fairness, practice objectivity in decision-making, and possess a team consciousness rather than a celebrity mentality.

Paul's description of his leadership style underlines the trust issue: "We have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Cor. 4:2).

Leaders must have integrity. They must accept the fact that the impact of their moral behavior will rarely, if ever, be neutral. Their words and deeds are heard and watched more closely than the words and deeds of others. Their personal choices are noticed and evaluated—often against

higher standards than those applied to others. Furthermore, the microphone is always on. Virtually everything a leader says is analyzed, amplified, communicated, and often misinterpreted. The leader's behavior needs to be consistent with the beliefs, policies, and values of the organization.

Character counts in church leadership. The tone of leadership resonates throughout an organization. Leaders' voices and conduct must reveal unquestioned integrity.

Task-oriented leaders may find it somewhat strange that before His crucifixion Jesus used prime-time moments with His disciples to focus on relationships rather than tasks (see John 12-17). Some would have expected His concern after His departure to be about strategy, tasks, and structure. But His agenda was focused on the inner life.

A similar situation occurred in the Exodus. Moses was summoned to meet with God on a mountain. You might recognize that Moses' great need was an organizational chart, a strategic plan, a portable supermarket with fresh food, and a blueprint of how to get this unruly mob moving across the wilderness and into the Promised Land. After his 40-day meeting, Moses returned with only two small and interrelated items: a code of conduct and architectural specifications for a portable place of worship.

Evidently, proper behavior—ethical conduct—and enlightened worship are among God's highest priorities. Ethical conduct among His church's leaders is essential to the effective advance of God's mission. Unethical behavior mars our witness for Him and erodes the confidence of church



**Loyalty to mission is
more important to
church members than
loyalty to leaders.**

members in church structure. An old proverb states: “A crooked stick casts a crooked shadow.”

In addition to moral character, leaders build trust when they demonstrate such ethical characteristics as enthusiasm, empowerment, and empathy or emotional intelligence.

A leader’s enthusiasm about mission is contagious. Every Adventist church member deserves to know with assurance that their church pastor is a believer—in the Bible, in the Fundamental Beliefs of the church, and in church organization. Leaders in all entities of denominational organization enhance their own credibility and that of the organization they serve when it’s clear that the foundation of all they do is to “glorify God” (see John 17:4) and advance His mission on the earth. Loyalty to mission is more important to church members than loyalty to leaders.

The ethical attitude of empowerment means that leaders believe in the competence and commitment of others, seek to enable others to make decisions, recognize the giftedness of others, and provide opportunities for the development of their skills and talents. An ethical leader will not use power selfishly. Jesus modeled the use of power through service: “Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant” (Matt. 20:26); “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve” (verse 28). Serving is giving, is sharing; and power shared becomes power multiplied.

Ethical leadership in the church also calls for leaders to have empathy or emotional intelligence—the awareness that people have differing personalities, reflect differing cultural backgrounds,

Every entity of church organization needs to foster a sense of security in the work environment.

and may approach problem-solving through other methodologies. A leader who is sensitive to individual uniqueness and cultural backgrounds will find ways to engage people's strengths so that everyone is valued, and everyone needed. The apostle Paul spoke of the church as being the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-21), amazingly diverse in function and characteristics, yet wonderfully unified in collaboration and mutual respect.

Respect involves treating people with dignity, equality, honesty, fairness, and good will. It means that leaders will be committed to creating an environment that attracts, develops, and retains a highly qualified, diverse, and dedicated workforce. Harassment or any conduct creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment must not be ignored, overlooked, or tolerated.

A SECOND KIND OF TRUST

Trust in leaders must be complemented with organizational trust, the firm conviction that an organization's purposes are valid and its operations consistent with its policies and public statements. Besides living in a way that builds personal trust, leaders in the church must collectively function in a manner that inspires faith in the church as an organization.

This is one of the most important global leadership tasks in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. For the reality is that mistakes and failures occurring in one location can be, and usually are, communicated instantly to many other locations around the globe. An attitude of distrust that germinates in a particular unit of church organization can quickly metabolize into a generalized distrust of the whole organization.

Trust in a church organization can be enhanced or eroded in many ways. At a minimum, organizational trust will rest on these five features: transparency in decision-making, fair and just policy administration, timely and accurate com-

munication, a safe environment for reporting misconduct, and systems of accountability.

Transparent decision-making in the Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes that the highest authority at any level of organization is a group (board or executive committee) rather than an individual. Group decision-making will involve open, candid, and free discussion; presentation of all relevant information; addressing conflict of interest situations; and adopting the will of the majority while respecting the view and rights of the minority.

Fair and just policy administration means there will be no favoritism or discrimination. In many locations around the world ethical employment practices are already defined in law. Church organizations cannot circumvent legal obligations on the excuse that "this is the Lord's work." Principles of equality, fairness, and justice found in employment laws must also be applied to other areas of administration as well. Church organizational structure calls for respect of organizational boundaries and authority. No part of the church can exist on its own, nor can any part act as if it exists only for itself.

Timely and accurate communication builds trust in an organization. Timeliness and truthfulness have become increasingly important in today's instant-news environment. The potential for accidental or intentional misinformation, misinterpretation, and misrepresentation is pervasive because every individual can become an instant publisher. It is incumbent on church organizations to establish reliable and responsive sources for official communication.

Every entity of church organization needs to foster a sense of security in the work environment and to establish a safe process for reporting misconduct. Fraud, discrimination, abuse, and hostility in the workplace must not continue undetected, unreported, or spun manipulatively.

Organizations and their leaders must be accountable. In large organizations many individuals contribute to the decisions and policies, often making it difficult, even in principle, to identify those who should be accountable for the results.

Accountability means being realistic in making promises—and keeping them. It means respecting and protecting assets of the organization, including physical and intellectual property. It involves appropriate use of resources with due consideration for effectiveness, efficiency, the most urgent needs in

furthering mission, and for reduction of waste. Good performance needs to be recognized and performance shortfalls addressed quickly and fairly.

This does not mean that there is no room for creativity, initiative, the questioning of long-held assumptions or policies, and experimentation with new ideas. Trail-blazers and pioneers perform valued service to any organization provided they embrace their own accountability, seek counsel, and demonstrate loyalty.

Change is constant, however. Neither the church nor its environment remains static. Wise and discerning leaders will ever be alerted to anticipating change and/or recognizing the need for it. Their response will be designed in a manner that contributes to the strength and health of the whole church and its engagement in mission. The processes for handling change—Bible study, prayer, negotiation, give-and-take, teaching and learning, experiment and revision—all have their rightful place; and they yield their best fruits in a collaborative rather than confrontational environment.

Christian organizations and their leaders strive for excellence, not from rivalry with colleagues

or competitors but from the realization that this is how God works. They demonstrate excellence by their unwavering commitment to continued growth (1) professionally, with respect to their responsibilities; (2) relationally, with respect to understanding and interacting with the diversity of persons, groups, and viewpoints; (3) intellectually, with respect to embracing an ever-enlarging grasp of the vast sum of knowledge; and (4) spiritually, with respect to deepening their understanding of and walk with God.

For church leaders and church organizations, ethical conduct is obligatory, not optional, if the church is to reflect God's character and proclaim God's good news to the world. Paul's example will be our goal: "We live in such a way that no one will stumble because of us, and no one will find fault with our ministry. In everything we do, we show that we are true ministers of God" (2 Cor. 6:3, 4, NLT).*

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Lowell C. Cooper, now retired, served as a General Conference vice president for 16 years.

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ETHICS AND THE SONS OF DAVID



Who is the greatest of them all?

LAEL CAESAR

Perhaps David, son of Jesse, deserves more than the plaudits he already gets—giant slayer, sweet singer in Israel, Messiah's royal ancestor, celebrated in Messiah's own word and that of throngs who hail Him as David's Son (Matt. 1:1; 21:9; Mark 10:46-52; 12:35-37). So here's to one more cheer

for David: through five centuries of unbroken reign in Israel-Judah, only he and Josiah father three sons who attain to kingship.¹

KING ABSALOM

Solomon was David's third son to become king of Israel. His older siblings who preceded him

as king gave him good opportunity to learn crucial lessons in ethical decency. The first to reign was Absalom, remembered for his GQ status: “In all Israel there was not a man so highly praised for his handsome appearance as Absalom. From the top of his head to the sole of his foot there was no blemish in him” (2 Sam. 14:25). He cut his hair but once a year and made a show of it—both the hair and the annual haircut (verse 26). If charities like Locks of Love or Wigs for Kids had existed in his time, he may have donated his hair to the benefit of children who lose theirs to cancer treatment—all pronounced with blazing bulbs and flashing photography.

Much of Absalom’s life, including his ascent to the throne of Israel, seems to have been a performance. Becoming king was a painstaking production, a careful contrivance, a pompous patience of pretended interest in people’s lives: “He would get up early and stand by the side of the road leading to the city gate” (2 Sam. 15:2). The city gate was the place where people came to make their case and hear the judgments and rulings that guided the nation. People came by to lodge their complaints to the king himself. Whenever they came, Absalom would capture their attention and communicate concern: “What town are you from?” And: “Look, your claims are valid and proper,” though nobody’s listening to you. Then his punch line: “If only I were appointed judge in the land! Then everyone who has a complaint or case could come to me and I would see that they receive justice” (verses 2-4).

Absalom’s well-controlled deceit gave deep-tissue massages to economically and emotionally vulnerable people. His way of winning hearts undermined the norms of moral conduct. But it charmed multitudes of mindless stooges into supporting his protracted program of national seduction. In process of time they came to believe in the pied piper of Jerusalem promising them justice. Their need and his ambition, their gullibility and his grand deceit, his kindling vanity and their fire stick responses, sparked a raging national blaze whose fury drove his reigning father from his throne, his home, and his city. It was a forest fire that came close to consuming both royalty and nation.

Absalom’s high-quality showtime eventually yielded its craved result: his special chariot, ele-

Solomon received a double coronation without having to fight his father.

gant horses, and glittering retinue of guards, including 50 outriders ahead of him (verse 1), with others likely around and after him as well, powerfully persuaded the public. They thought, *This must be something*. His obvious importance and solicitude for their causes, his posture of disinterested meekness, his public pretense of enlightened care for his father’s citizens, his longing for them to get the justice they deserved, all this stole their hearts (verse 6). When they elevated him to the status of an object of worship—all part of his plan—his focus on the ultimate goal taught him to downplay the very adoration he consciously cultivated. So that “whenever anyone approached him to bow down before him, Absalom would reach out his hand, take hold of him and kiss him” (verse 5).

For years his dedicated hypocrisy nurtured public faith in his grand potential. Absalom could be patient. After Amnon raped his sister, Tamar, Absalom simply told her, “Don’t take this thing to heart” (2 Sam. 13:20). To rapist Amnon he never said a word (verse 22). Two years later² he scheduled a party his father could not attend, then begged him to come (verses 23-25). When King David said he couldn’t attend, the master schemer had another suggestion: “If not, please let my brother Amnon come with us” (verse 26). Thus, by apparent afterthought, and with the king’s support, Amnon the rapist of two years before, arrived, invited, at Absalom’s party so Absalom’s servants could hack him to death (verses 23-29). Absalom was handsome, ambitious, cold, calculating, and disconcertingly patient in executing evil. To murder a prince, he needed two years.

Gaining the throne in a palace coup took more.

Solomon's proverbs state principles that instructed his sane and youthful years.

Four years of skillful political charade went by (2 Sam. 15:7) before he determined that the nation was ready for the climax. Two hundred carefully selected lackeys, chosen for the strength of their loyalty, followed him out of the capital city. They were people he could always count on. At his cue they would run or stop, applaud or demonstrate, be silent or shout as trumpets blared, "Absalom is king in Hebron" (verse 10).

They "had been invited as guests and went quite innocently, knowing nothing of the matter" (verse 11). The word translated "invited" is the standard Hebrew verb for "call." The value of the call, whether the Lord to Adam (Gen. 3:9), Moses to his elders (Ex. 19:7), or seraphim to each other (Isa. 6:3), depends on the hearer's ear. Absalom's followers heard his call to lead a revolution and give their all in support and loyalty, even at the expense of their intelligence or integrity.

Interestingly, the adverbial phrase "quite innocently" translates the Hebrew word "integrity." There is integrity in innocence. But all innocence is not created equal: there is ethical innocence in childlike spiritual purity and innocence God longs for in all of us (Matt. 18:3). And to be fair, Absalom's 200 may have been simply naive. Some innocence, though, is an elected posture, a corruption of free will, a choice not to know, a contrivance sometimes labeled plausible deniability. God loves both integrity and innocence. But His curse is upon whoever exploits the latter because they lack the former. Those who cause any of His little innocents to stumble await a horrible fate:

"better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea" (verse 6).

The abuse of children's trust is not the only abuse of innocence that God despises. The righteous God who will avenge the exploitation of innocents also promises stern damnation upon those who claim innocence because they have chosen willing ignorance. We pay the price of rebellion when our ignorance is because we will not see what God is showing us (Rom. 1:20).

ABSALOM AND ADONIYAH, KINGS UNDONE

Absalom would not come to a beautiful end. His public posturing, undergirded with personal conceit, his contempt for the very ones whose loyalty helped him up to the throne, were varied expressions of one thing: pride. Solomon saw how pride preceded his brother's accession and, equally so, prepared his destruction and shameful death at the hands of Joab and friends (2 Sam. 18:9-15).

Sadly enough, Israel would relive Absalom's pathetic show before Solomon ascended to his father's throne. This time it was Adonijah, also famously handsome, applying Absalom's rules, but substituting transparency and abruptness for his older brother's hypocrisy and calculating patience. Where Absalom pretended to care about others, Adonijah was explicitly self-centered. He announced, "I will be king" (1 Kings 1:5). Like Absalom, he attracted some of the very best to his team. Absalom had Ahithophel, whose counsel "was like that of one who inquires of God" (2 Sam. 16:23). Adonijah snared Joab, David's greatest general, and Abiathar, David's priest.

Adonijah's reign ended the day it started. Prophet Nathan, Solomon's mother Bathsheba, and drunken shouts of "Long live King Adonijah!" helped advise David of the coup and bring a swift end to it.

SOLOMON, KING

By contrast with his brothers' selfish scheming, Solomon received double coronation without having to fight his father (1 Kings 1:32-40; 1 Chron. 29:22). Once he was enthroned his only desire was wisdom to judge God's people right (2 Chron. 1:10). God honored his focused humility, promis-

ing him what he asked as well as wealth and fame unprecedented and never to be repeated (verses 11, 12). In prophetic fulfillment we are still celebrating Solomon's wisdom, and respecting it as divine—scholarship preserved for us in God's holy Word.

But Solomon's writings and the work of contemporary royal archivists remind of disconcertingly more than Solomon's early humility. They remind of the vastness of his harem; the splendor of his court; the paganism of his political alliances; his abuse of certain elements of the populace, cementing them in second-class status; his exploitation of human beings to accomplish his grand architectural schemes; his self-indulgence; his disobedience to instructions divinely established a half millennium before his day.

SOLOMON, KING UNDONE

Solomon's atrocities defy God's directives for royal behavior. When Israel's rebellion against divine rule brought them to announce their desire for a king "such as all the other nations have" (1 Sam. 8:5), their gracious God had instructions prepared to help them with their inferior option for government. Solomon contradicted those instructions to the finest of degrees: according to Deuteronomy, when Israel decided on kingship their monarch was not to acquire lots of horses (Deut. 17:16); but Solomon's stable numbers—1,400 horses—are part of his fame (1 Kings 10:26). God warned that the people were not to go back to Egypt to get horses (Deut. 17:16); but Egypt was Solomon's equine supply source (1 Kings 10:28). The king was not to multiply wives (Deut. 17:17). Solomon had 700 (1 Kings 11:3). The king was not to accumulate large amounts of silver and gold (Deut. 17:17). Solomon "made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones" (1 Kings 10:27).

His famed architectural projects were consistently dependent on royal abuse. The harshness that advanced their construction eventually helped undo the national unity that he inherited from his father. He failed to pass on to his son King Rehoboam the United States of Israel that he received from his father. Perpetually simmering social tensions (2 Sam. 19:40-43; 20:1, 2, 4-22) erupted after Solomon's death. Ten of

Israel's 12 tribes broke away from the original kingdom, never to return. A gifted servant of his whom Solomon appointed to enforce his abusive labor policies became the rebels' chief spokesperson and first king (1 Kings 11:28): Jeroboam was both a great soldier and a disciplined team leader, or driver, perhaps. King Solomon utilized him as a virtual slave-master who helped to drive his royal ambitions as grandeur replaced humility in Solomon's vision. A prophetic word announced that God would enthrone Solomon's enforcer over 10 of the 12 tribes Solomon ruled. For the king, it meant that Jeroboam should be eliminated (verse 40). He fled and found refuge with Egypt's King Shishak. Court life taught him statecraft that enhanced and refined his brilliance. After Solomon's death, Jeroboam, the runaway Israelite, and Shishak, his mentor, inflicted powerful military and political blows on his son and successor Rehoboam (1 Kings 14:25, 26). The nation never recovered.

Solomon's precepts and three princes' examples have left us history lessons on what not to do. Solomon's proverbs state principles that instructed his sane and youthful years. Ecclesiastes is his retrospective, full of explicit and intimate reflections. Neither its sermon nor Proverbs' precepts ever mention Solomon's brothers, a fact that may help us find Solomon's true target: us; we who need to know that as with Lucifer and Absalom, so with us: "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18); we who must ever remember, for the sake of our own ascent, to "trust in the Lord with all [our] heart and lean not on [our] own understanding" (Prov. 3:5). Still, he must surely have been comparing coronations when he stated, "Let someone else praise you, and not your own mouth" (Prov. 27:2). It is wisdom that befits the commoner as much as it does the king. ♣

¹ Josiah's three were Jehoahaz—enthroned by the people of the land (2 Kings 23:28-30); Eliakim—renamed Jehoiakim by Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, who appointed him to replace Jehoahaz (Necho then took Jehoahaz to Egypt, where he died (verses 31-34); and Judah's last, set up by Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, who had him called Zedekiah instead of Mattaniah (2 Kings 24:17).

² The Hebrew narrative reaches for emphasis: "a full two years later."

Lael Caesar, associate editor at Adventist Review Ministries, ever welcomes Solomon's reminder: "Remember your Creator."

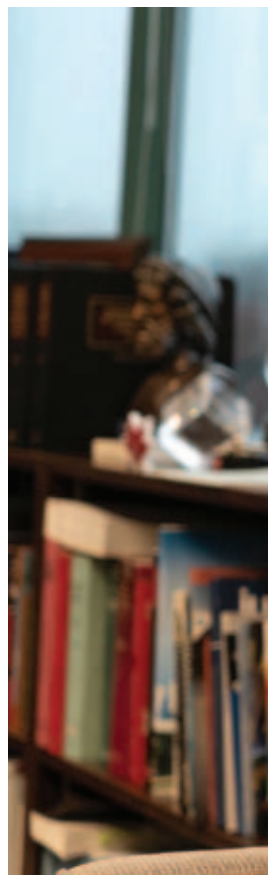
“WE HOLD THEM ACCOUNTABLE”

Adventist Review editor Bill Knott recently sat down with Karnik Doukmetzian, chief legal counsel for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, to discuss the ethical behaviors church members may expect of leaders.

Many conversations about ethics in faith-based organizations get stranded in the clouds at a theoretical level of nuance that seems far removed from the realities of where believers live and move. I’m going to ask you to respond to a plausible scenario that might land on your desk in the Office of General Counsel (OGC) for the General Conference. It’s not a real situation: it’s a composite story formed from fragments of many such stories. Here it is:

An ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) country director in country X happens to be the brother of a union treasurer in the same territory. Concerns are expressed by several ADRA employees who have questions about what’s happening to the finances of aid money donated by national governments or aid organizations to ADRA for certain projects. In the process of looking into the matter, ADRA concludes that there is need for an audit to track their funds and accurately report to donors and their organizations. The audit reveals that ADRA funds had been comingled with those of the union, and there’s now a sum equivalent to US\$70,000 that is unaccounted for.

If those were the facts that arrived on your desk as the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s chief legal counsel, what processes





would you think about initiating to bring clarity and resolution?

I know it's not good form to argue with the interviewer's question, but if this was an actual situation, those involved would have encountered a robust ADRA system to protect against such abuses, as well as a full investigative process if something inappropriate still occurred.

But your scenario is really about appropriate process. First, we would need to recognize that there are several different entities involved that must all be considered. We have ADRA in that local territory: it could be a separate legal organization, or it could be part of the church organization. We could have ADRA International involved. We could have the foreign government that provided the funding involved, because they hold every organization that receives their funds accountable. And if you don't provide accurate documentation, that government has the right

to reclaim what it has given. And then, of course, there are the established church structures in the region—in this case a union conference.

Assessing all the parties involved in the situation is a key to developing an ethical process?

If such a situation were presented, our office follows a two-step process—one with ADRA, and one within the church. That would include using ADRA's internal auditors initially, and, if necessary, external auditors to go in, investigate, and then provide a report. It could also involve the General Conference Auditing Service.

It's heartening to hear that there are robust investigative options.

Depending on the findings, appropriate actions would be taken. But we have to remember that as separate organizations, we may have very little input or control over what the local organizations

If somebody is doing wrong, we need to stop that behavior. If somebody is abusing a child or abusing a church member, there's no room for that.

do. We may provide guidance, counseling, and advice, but the General Conference isn't unilaterally able to remove someone from office, even when there's evidence of wrongdoing. We can provide guidance, but ultimately that decision has to be made by the local governing body responsible for those individuals.

Are there sometimes competing claims or structural matters that restrict the world headquarters from dealing with a situation in the way it would wish to?

Yes, there are. Ultimately, the governing body is responsible, but if they fail to take action, it does have an impact on the church as a whole. There may be an impact on additional funding for an organization like ADRA, or for other projects that may be happening. There's, of course, the impact on the reputation of the church, both in the specific country and internationally. That reputation impacts the trust level of church members and their giving patterns.

Many church members may not differentiate between one entity of the church, like ADRA, and the rest of the mission that is operated through local structures. They may see these as somehow all under one governance.



For most Seventh-day Adventists the church is the church. Members don't differentiate between one level and another, between one organization and another. As long as it has Adventist branding on it, we're all assumed to be operating together—and in a time of crisis or misappropriation of money, we can all be tarred with the same brush.

With this scenario you've responded to, what steps could have been taken before it occurred to make it less likely to happen?

Two things come to mind. One, both leaders and members need to understand what a "conflict of interest" is, and how it can be protected against. Putting my relative in a position over which I may have some authority places me in a potential conflict of interest.

Second, leaders at every level have to understand they have fiduciary responsibilities. They are there to protect the interests of the individuals who put them in authority, or in position. That could well be the constituency of the organization. It could be the board that oversees that entity. Ultimately, each leader is accountable to that group or organization that has put us in positions of decision-making and authority, because we're charged with protecting their interests. Overlooking the wrongs of a family member puts us in a severe conflict of interest, and doesn't allow us to carry out our fiduciary responsibilities.

Some might say, in response to this scenario, that we're just applying Western and legal contexts to a cultural setting in which family is the basic unit.

Family is important—vital—and we need to take care of our family members. But at the same time we have to remember that we can't give them preference or allow them to continue with their wrongdoing. We don't give them the right to do what is wrong. We must hold them accountable. If our family member is stealing, that shouldn't stop us from reporting it or taking care of the problem.

So there's a biblical imperative that is transcultural?

Yes, absolutely. Ethics, morality, legality—they're all interwoven, and they apply across the board, regardless of what country you're in.

Are there other steps that could have been taken procedurally to prevent the embarrassing situation that emerged in this scenario?

Church organizations always have the ability to investigate, and not just after a problem is discovered. Because of the family situation, it would be crucial to have independent investigation. Whether that's someone from a higher organization or completely external, there must be a competent investigation. Those perceived to be involved, or related to those involved, must be isolated from the process, to prevent the potential conflict of interest, and allow the investigation to take place.

What steps is the church taking to bring this ethical awareness to the persons we elect to lead church structures or auxiliary church structures?

First and foremost—education. Many people don't understand the concept of conflict of interest and exactly what that means. They need to be educated. How do I handle a conflict of interest? When I have an issue, whom do I need to disclose it to? Do I withdraw from any decision-making involving that situation or those individuals? Ethics education is vitally important as persons take on leadership roles. As individuals who act in fiduciary responsibilities, they have an obligation to others.

A newly elected officer in a given region wouldn't necessarily have been exposed to that ethical training at their previous level of employment. How does the church go about providing that? Do we automatically train new officers, or do we sort of trust that there is field training in their region?

Different organizations handle things differently. In North America all newly elected conference or union officers come in for extensive training within a few months of being elected. That training covers the whole gamut of responsibilities that they have assumed, including organizational ethics, administration, governance, conducting constituency meetings, and helping with issues at local church boards. An entire range of issues is addressed.

Are there church organizations that have a

We had an individual who filed a complaint that the receptionist in their office wore such strong perfume that the smell caused them problems.

well-developed training sequence to orient new officers to things they might not have known through their previous church experience?

Yes, there are—and good ones too. It's very important that officers be trained in how to carry out their functions. If they've been elected to leadership from a local pastorate, they may not have had to make final decisions on these kinds of things, including employment matters, personnel issues, contracts. These aren't things you normally deal with in a local church setting, and you need that legal and ethical training to be able to function effectively.

If you were speaking to a group of elected church leaders about a mind-set they ought to take to these kinds of ethical issues, what are the points you'd want to highlight? How do you take an organization that wasn't intended to do investigations of money or conduct—but was supposed to focus on mission and ministry—and also make sure that it's scrupulous about these ethical concerns?

Leaders have to understand that they have an obligation not only to the constituency and to the general public, but to God. They've undertaken responsibilities to abide by certain processes and procedures that they need to follow. If they don't, their leadership is going to be called into question. If the law says you ought to be doing A, and you're doing B, do you want to get challenged in court? So we expose ourselves to litigation, liability, and public embarrassment when we don't adhere to standards that we are expected to follow.

We're all painfully aware of a developing trend of frustrated persons who believe themselves to be aggrieved by some church process going to a media outlet—or going to social media—to broadcast their concerns. What options are there

for a person who has a grievance with the ethical conduct of a leader or an organization? Are there responsible steps they can take to make sure their concerns are heard and investigated?

A number of years ago the global Adventist Church began participating in a whistleblower reporting system that allows for individuals to report matters of fraud, sexual misconduct, financial improprieties, and other such concerns anonymously. Their reporting allows a genuine investigation to take place, and for the matter to be dealt with. It's called SilentWhistle®, and it can be accessed through a website called www.Adventist.silentwhistle.com.

Individuals—members and employees—can anonymously report the issue, which is then processed, sent to the organization ultimately responsible, and dealt with at that point. After the initial anonymous intake, the processing is done by this office—the Office of General Counsel—and directed to the individual ultimately responsible.

For example, if the issue is of a local conference nature and involves personnel or policies, then it would likely be directed to the president of that organization. If the matter involves the president, it would be directed to the next-higher organization, and so on. If it's learned that an organization isn't dealing with the issue or the complaint, working policy does allow for the next-higher organization to begin their own investigation, and to deal with the matter, taking it to the executive committee for ultimate handling.

What assurances does a caller to SilentWhistle® have that the ethical concern they are reporting won't just disappear?

Well, first of all, the information that comes in is completely anonymous.

At both ends?

Both ends. Now, once that is received, then the investigation commences, and when additional information is required, it is anonymously communicated to the individual.

So there's a loop back to the initial reporter.

Once the matter is investigated, and action taken, that's also reported back to the individual who filed the complaint so that they are aware that their complaint was taken seriously.

How many of these reports emerge in a typical year?

It's hard to say in any given year, but probably 20 to 30. They are all looked at and processed. At one end we had an individual who filed a complaint that the receptionist in their office wore such strong perfume that the smell caused them problems. That one was forwarded to the HR director of the organization. The other extreme is financial mismanagement or outright theft being reported. In those cases, auditors were dispatched to investigate, and appropriate actions were taken. We need to have the lowest and most immediate level of church organization deal with the problem wherever possible.

So there's an attempt to avoid having the General Conference, or the Office of General Counsel, ever override existing processes. There are times, though, when local organizations ask the OGC or the General Conference Auditing Service to assist them, but the request does come from that lower organization to help them. We won't step in on our own initiative, but we will assist where requested.

Many church members may assume that the foremost organization can take action from its position over any other component organization. You're saying that the church deliberately focuses on trying to solve it at the lowest level possible.

Remember that most organizations are separate legal organizations. Whether it's a conference, a union, or the General Conference—they're all separate. Our institutions are all separately governed. So their governing bodies, their constituencies, are the ones that oversee and control those. For the General Conference to step over all those other organizations and instruct a local conference, "You must do this or you must not do this," is not only improper, it's something we as a church cannot do. We have constituencies in place that oversee these organizations, and ultimate responsibility rests with them.

There's an assumption that the highest named organization can take executive action to adjust policy, personnel, and situations at every other level.

(Laughs) Which is why all the complaint letters come to the president's office at the General Con-

ference, believing that he can act directly. It would actually be timelier and more effective if they would actually work through the relevant local organization, or the one above it.

You've watched many difficult situations come and go. What key ideas do you want to lodge in the minds of leaders and members about how we deal with the inevitable clay feet of human beings?

Every action we take must be held to the highest standards, whether those are legal standards, moral standards, or ethical standards. If somebody is doing wrong, we need to stop that behavior. If somebody is abusing a child or abusing a church member, there's absolutely no room for that. It's not enough to say, "Sorry, I won't do it again," and move them on to another position. They must be terminated, and terminated immediately, and not be passed on or hired by another denominational organization.

In some cases the law of the land dictates outcomes we can't avoid.

Absolutely. We have an obligation to protect the assets of the church, and if that means removing that individual, so be it. We have an obligation to follow the law: if the law says we have to pay our employees A, B, and C, we have to do that. We can't say, "Well, no, we think better than the law." We're not above the law, and the law will find us, and we will pay a price as a church. Our reputation and the reputation of the denomination are at stake.

We have an obligation to God to do right. We have an obligation to our constituency and to the community as a whole. And as a religious body, we're really held to a higher standard. People expect us to be better, and when we make mistakes that could have been avoided with proper regard for ethics, it doesn't reflect well on the church.

Church members and the wider public have the right to expect that faith leaders at all levels will act in harmony with the principles of Scripture. It's part of the job of every leader to increase confidence in the trustworthiness and ethical decision-making of the organization they lead. When that happens, our witness within—and our witness without—bring glory to the God of truth. 🍀

WHEN CULTURES CLASH

GERALD R. WINSLOW



Anyone who has lived in more than one culture has probably learned that ethical expectations differ. A defining feature of any culture is the way it makes some actions seem praiseworthy and others seem blameworthy. A perennial opportunity for Christians, who take the moral implications of the gospel seriously, is to seek clarity about the ethical norms that are crucial for faithfulness and the optional values of a specific culture. Do the resources of our faith help us to distinguish between the principles essential for ethical integrity and the dispensable norms of culture?

Here's a small example. While living in Europe many years ago, we noticed that no offering was collected during the Sabbath worship service. Instead, little envelopes were distributed, and members were encouraged to mail their offering to the church the following week. We asked the grandmotherly woman we were living with about this. A staunchly faithful leader in the church, she assured us that the congregation and their pastor wanted to be true to the instructions of the apostle Paul when he told the church, "On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made" (1 Cor. 16:2).

Our friend went on to tell us that she had once visited the United States, and she was dismayed to see that church members opened their wallets

or purses during the divine service and took out filthy money to put in the offering plates. Had they not learned what Jesus thought about money changers in the temple (Matt. 21:12)? Had they not considered what Paul told the Corinthians? Given the firmness of her convictions, it seemed clear that little or nothing would be accomplished by suggesting an alternative point of view.

This story illustrates one of our first experiences with the variable influences of cultural norms, but it was certainly not our last. Some years later we were about to enter a church in another part of Europe, when someone greeting guests at the door noticed that my wife had no head covering. She was quietly but hurriedly offered a head scarf so she could enter the church properly attired. This time, another teaching of Paul was probably governing: "Every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is the same as having her head shaved" (1 Cor. 11:5). Why would any faithful Christian woman fail to follow this plainly written instruction? The answer from believers who don't follow this practice usually involves making a distinction between norms that are culturally relative and those that are always obligatory regardless of culture.

But what is the legitimate process for making this distinction?

The answer involves the discovery of Scripture's fundamental principles.



PRINCIPLES

Offering counsel to those who work for God in sometimes difficult circumstances, Ellen White wrote: “If they make the broad principles of the Word of God the foundation of the character, they may stand wherever the Lord in His providence may call them, surrounded by any deleterious influence, and yet not be swayed from the path of right.”¹ This process of uncovering the “broad principles” typically entails careful study, spiritual reflection, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In the cases of our two earlier examples, the focus would shift from the specific modes of giving offerings or head coverings to underlying principles of generosity and modesty.

Jesus illustrated the importance of broad principles when He directed attention to the ethically essential elements of God’s revelation: “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness” (Matt. 23:23). Progress toward moral maturity in the Christian life requires discerning what in Scripture’s guidance is “weightier,” then evaluating specific cultural norms in light of the biblical principles that matter most.

As is often the case in the teachings of Jesus, His illustration of the weightier matters draws on the message of the Hebrew prophets. His threefold

listing of “justice, mercy, and faith” echoes the call to repentance and to faithfulness from the prophet Micah. In the great mountain range of biblical principles found in the Hebrew prophets, one of the highest peaks is surely this passage from Micah: “He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8).

Each of these three principles provides essential guidance when assessing cultural differences. For example, the prophetic call to justice gives priority to caring for those who are weak, poor, and helpless. Micah’s contemporary, Isaiah, expressed this when he wrote:

“Stop doing wrong. Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow” (Isa. 1:16, 17).

A major moral test of any culture is how its people treat their most vulnerable members. Whatever practices harm the most helpless are morally wrong, no matter how firmly those practices are entrenched in cultural tradition. And whatever practices aid the orphan, the widow, and the stranger are in the service of prophetic justice, no matter how challenging they may be to conventional norms.

The prophetic mandate to “love mercy” provides another resource for assessing cultural expecta-

tions. Mercy encompasses the grace of forgiveness and generosity of spirit. While we can never be less than fair, or just, we can be more than fair. This spirit of mercy is depicted as a defining attribute of God in the final verses of Micah:

“Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance?

“You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy. You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot” (Micah 7:18, 19).

We follow the way of the Lord when we delight in mercy. Cultural practices that are devoid of compassion fail the test of prophetic mercy.

Finally, we’re invited to walk humbly with our God. In-depth understanding of God’s gracious compassion can help to form in us the virtue of humility. Through the prophet Isaiah, the Lord says,

“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:9).

Every Christian still has much to learn about the ways of the Lord. Humble recognition of this fact may also help to prepare Christians to learn from cultural differences. Sometimes, when people visit other cultures, they tend mostly to notice customs they judge to be inferior, even immoral. More appropriate humility, a greater willingness to learn from the values of others, could open the way for finding new ethical insights—treasures that would otherwise be left undiscovered.

According to Samuel Johnson: “As the Spanish proverb says, ‘He who would bring home the wealth of the Indies must carry the wealth of the Indies with him.’ So it is with travelling: a man must carry knowledge with him, if he would bring home knowledge.” When visitors to another culture carry along the gift of humble appreciation, they may experience new discoveries of great ethical wealth.

LOVE’S PRIMACY

Of course, the challenges of cultural differences for Christian ethics are often greater than the simple examples of head coverings or methods of giving church offerings. Cultural traditions affect the various ways families are established, how power is distributed, the ways respect for persons is accorded, and what personal traits are stigmatized or valorized. Add to all this the fact

that new practices constantly emerge as varied as human organ transplantation, assisted human procreation, genetic manipulation, and a host of other interventions unheard of in ages past. Some might yearn for an ethical answer book that would give specific instructions for each of these new possibilities. But a better book has already been given, one that providentially reveals broad ethical principles to guide God’s people.

The pinnacle of Scripture’s principles is summed up in the word “love,” our way of translating the New Testament Greek word *agapē*. When Jesus was asked, “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” He answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments” (Matt. 22:37-40).

Love, as expressed in the ministry of Jesus, is the ultimate principle that applies in all cultures at all times. Jesus said, “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you” (John 15:12). The love commandment is not just one rule among many others. It’s the master principle because it’s the Master’s principle, made vivid in the life and ongoing ministry of Jesus.

Of this kind of love, Paul says, “Let no debt remain outstanding except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. . . . Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law” (Rom. 13:8-10).

A deep, experiential knowledge of Christ’s love is the fundamental resource that enables believers to encounter vastly different cultures and offer the blessing of God’s grace with ethical integrity. It’s God’s love that provides the evaluative filter for cultural traditions. It’s this love that unifies the essential elements of Christian ethics. In the memorable words of Ellen White: “It is love alone which in the sight of Heaven makes any act of value.”²

¹ Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Health* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1951), p. 405.

² Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 487.

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LESSONS FROM BOBO

In this 2020 calendar year, one is reminded of the value of 20/20 eyesight. Visually we get it. But spiritually, how can Christians have the right vision for the days ahead? One of the most effective ways is to seek out and model best practices.

To illustrate, let's revert to the 1961 Bobo doll experiment by psychologist Albert Bandura. A pioneer in the field of social psychology and self-efficacy, Bandura conducted a famous controlled experiment in which he demonstrated the power of modeling. He used the Bobo doll, a toy clown with a rounded bottom and low center of mass that rocks back and forth but always bounces back to an upright position.

Bandura demonstrated that children who saw adults beating up the Bobo doll were more likely to beat on Bobo when given opportunity. Their behavior contrasted with children who didn't witness the violence against the clown and seemed disinclined to act aggressively toward it.

Bandura's findings demonstrated that people are influenced by observing and modeling the behavior of others, either for good or ill. It illustrated that effective modeling can affect behavior change and accelerate the learning process.

When believers select worthy models and imitate their behavior in a spiritual context, we can observe this same principle working for good. Here are five biblical scenarios in which the modeling principle can work.

Leadership. Those who identify as Christian should be leaders of integrity, morality, and spirituality. By modeling best behavior in either personal or professional settings, believers can and do initiate pos-

itive behavior in others. And by avoiding negative behaviors, we can avoid being examples of what not to do (1 Cor. 8:9).

Role Modeling. Whether we like it or not, our lives as Christians are both examples of what to embrace and what to avoid. From its beginning the Bible displays the characters, beliefs, and practices of those who demonstrated both good and evil traits. Discerning readers choose characteristics based on the most positive outcome (1 Cor. 11:1).

Trials. Trials and temptations are a fact of life—we will be affected by them. Believers can demonstrate strength and perseverance when struggling with life issues. They demonstrate how to successfully endure tribulation, trials, temptations, and tests as Christ and other heroes of faith did. While others may be tempted to give up, Spirit-led role models demonstrate exemplary growth.

Nature. The wise man wrote, "Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise!" (Prov. 6:6). By observing nature and the creatures of creation, sensitive Christians can gather lessons about ethics, wisdom, learning strategies, industry, and stewardship. Transformative truths and exemplary habits can be learned from the natural world around us.

Purpose. What is our calling and purpose? What is our place and role in life? The Holy Spirit uses God's Word, prayer, and chosen illustrious models to teach us best practices, so that we can grow in grace and purpose.

With 20/20 vision we can learn from Bobo and choose well in 2020. 🦋

TRANSFORMATION TIPS
DELBERT W. BAKER



PEOPLE ARE INFLUENCED BY OBSERVING AND MODELING THE BEHAVIOR OF OTHERS, EITHER FOR GOOD OR ILL.

Delbert W. Baker is vice chancellor of Adventist University of Africa, near Nairobi, Kenya.



WHY JOURNALISM MATTERS TO ADVENTISTS

What we cover, and how we cover it, matters significantly.

The editors of *Adventist World and Adventist Review* have featured this article in the March 2020 issues of both magazines.

COSTIN JORDACHE

Aysha Taryam once wrote: “In politics, the pen is at its heaviest because it is weighed down by the collective responsibility it holds toward its people and their future in the eyes of the world.”¹

The statement applies as much to the church as it does to politics. The weight that rests on those responsible for reporting the movement and development of the church is significant. And the weight borne by the church itself to empower responsible journalism within its gates is even greater.

The church, in our case the Seventh-day Adventist Church, has a responsibility—an ethical imperative—to inform its members and communities accurately and consistently, even when the news is less than positive. At the root of this calling is biblical integrity—the courage to acknowledge our shortcomings regardless of political consequences.

Yet within our faith community we sometimes shy away from, even discourage, the dissemination of news that would compromise our shiny organizational facade or challenge leaders’ interests.

There are, however, several compelling reasons we should reconsider such tendencies.

TRANSPARENCY IS THE NEW NORM

Around the world transparency is among society’s core values. The shift is driven largely by the Millennial generation, now 24-39 years old. Most Millennials require—even demand—transparency from the organizations with which they engage. They grew up with the Web and social media, both of which offer copious amounts of information for analyzing and assessing just about anything. Organizations that don’t offer this level of disclosure are trusted less, or not at all.

Kira Karapetian writes, “It is clear that trust is the new currency of brand loyalty.”² Applying this to news, we can generally assume that if an organization is honest with bad news, “it is more likely to be trusted with good news.”³

BIAS IS THE GREAT TEMPTATION

Surveying the landscape of news outlets, it’s apparent that secular news operations are increas-

ingly comfortable with either an implied or overt ideological bias. While objectivity in journalism has always been far from perfect, in the past it was at least deemed worth the effort. Objectivity was the road to credibility. Today’s trend, however, of highly polarized news outlets unambiguously interweaving reporting with commentary is difficult to reconcile.

News outlets in the wider world of Adventism face the same temptation—to report from an angle. Report mainly controversial and negative news if you’re critical of the church; report mostly triumphalist news if you’re not. Bias engenders neither trust nor credibility. The church and its journalists ought to be above it.

THE BIBLE IS AN EXCELLENT MODEL

While the Bible isn’t typically viewed as a journalistic work, its authors nevertheless chronicled and reported on the journey of God’s people, beginning with Creation. A single reading confirms that these authors never shied away from giving a full and honest assessment of events.

The biblical record contains the sullied past of many patriarchs—for our benefit. Because of fair and honest accounts, we have both an accurate history of the church and many lessons from which to learn.

THE DEFAULT POSITION

In 2011 the Adventist Church released the document “Transparency and Accountability in Financial Reporting.” At its rollout, church administrators explained that the document’s principles transcended finances, and that transparency must be the default position of the Adventist Church in all arenas.

That was a step in the right direction, one that should certainly apply to the church’s commitment to keep its members informed through truly fair and balanced news. ▀

¹ Aysha Taryam is the editor of *The Gulf Today*, an English-language newspaper in the Middle East.

² Kira Karapetian, in *Forbes*, Aug. 8, 2017.

³ Glen Broom and Bey-Ling Sha, *Effective Public Relations*, 11th ed. (2013), p. 253.

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

A background illustration of numerous green dollar bills falling from the top of the page, scattered across the entire layout. The bills are shown in various orientations, some fully visible and others partially cut off by the edges of the page.

HELICOPTER MONEY AND INVESTING

Honesty below the surface

Tobacco, alcohol, gambling, adult entertainment . . . When we hear the term ethical investing, many Christians typically think about industries they must exclude from their investment portfolios. More recently, climate change, identity politics, and corruption have come to dominate this discussion. Still, a new issue, brewing for a while, may prove a bigger topic of conversation this year, namely, income equality.

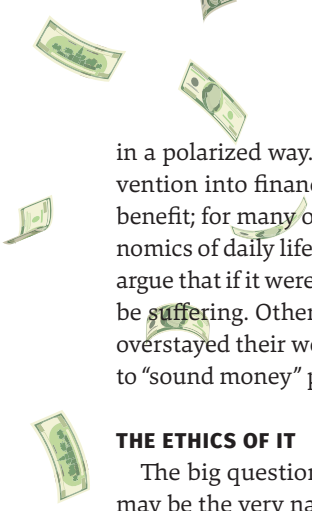
THE BIG[GER] DEAL

While we may not think about this as your typical ethical investment issue, or even as an investment issue at all, it threatens to become the economic world's biggest societal issue. And heading into the United States presidential elections in

November 2020, it may become even more heated. To the extent that investment performance has been driven by economic and monetary policy, the income inequality debate will have a large impact on investments. In the investment industry, discussions around monetary stimulus, social spending, and "helicopter money" are certainly more pronounced.

What in the world is "helicopter money"? Economics fans may know that it's the idea that a country or its central bank can provide direct financial stimulus to its citizens, even if it has to proverbially rain down from a helicopter. The idea, made famous by Ben Bernanke, former chair of the United States Federal Reserve, is to bail out a country's economy by "bailing out the people." While some may think that's a ridiculous notion, it's precisely the discussion that's on the table today. And it may not sound so ridiculous if you think about the trillions of dollars spent to bail out banks, corporations, and Wall Street in the past decades, while Main Street has suffered from job losses, stagnant wages, and soaring costs for tuition, health care, and other basic living needs. Some may agree that perhaps it's a good idea or a good time to "bail out" the consumer.

This isn't just an issue for those living in a "flyover state," those rural "unimportant" parts of the country forgotten by the nation's economic development; it's not just a blue-state-versus-red-state issue (Democrats versus Republicans); or Boomers versus Millennials. It is an issue that affects us all, but certainly

A decorative illustration in the top left corner shows several green banknotes falling from the top of the page. The bills are shown in various orientations, some partially cut off by the edge of the page, creating a sense of motion and abundance.

in a polarized way. For some, government intervention into financial markets has been a great benefit; for many others it has distorted the economics of daily life and caused much pain. Some argue that if it were not for bailouts, we would all be suffering. Others say that bailouts have long overstayed their welcome and we need to return to “sound money” principles.

THE ETHICS OF IT

The big question in investment ethics today may be the very nature of our economic system. Is capitalism right? moral? ethical? Or should we embrace something that looks more like socialism? Would a centrally planned system be a more egalitarian society, in which wealth redistribution is managed by a central authority? But then is it right to take something that “belongs” to someone and forcibly give it to another? On the other hand, is it right to maintain a society in which a few people flourish while many struggle to get basic necessities?

The argument needs to be expanded. Is it moral for one country to have great wealth and modern luxuries while other countries remain entrenched in a “third world” existence? Do we feel comfortable in the West to be able to buy “cheap” goods made in far-off countries in which people, paid very little, work in unsafe conditions? Should we rather buy things that are “made in the USA,” “made in Canada,” or “made in [your home country]”? Should we buy things that are made in a country that oppresses its own people? People everywhere wrestle with these deep questions about the economic systems that govern their societies.

So who’s wrong and who’s right? Is it socialism’s left or pure capitalism’s right? Some ask whether we even have real capitalism today—a fair and open system of business and finance. Some insist that it’s just “crony capitalism,” in which those aligned with people in power get the capital. Some suggest that we need a “new deal” right now—a fairer distribution of money. But how far are people willing to go in tearing down our current economic foundations to get to a fairer system? What does a free and fair society look like? Protesters in Paris, Beirut, Hong Kong, and elsewhere want to find and experience it: economic fairness will be the question of this decade.

Is capitalism right? moral? ethical?

THE ROOTS OF THE PROBLEM

The problem originated in the West, where a free market system has been transformed into a warped system that prioritizes money over people. Central banks have exacerbated it, distorting monetary principles to inflate asset prices to keep wealth secure. But central banks now seem to be trapped in a corner with no ability to get back to what was once normal monetary policy. When the U.S. Federal Reserve tried “normalization” in 2018, the stock market plunged 20 percent. The Federal Reserve quickly reversed course to “save” the markets.

Stock markets today are back at all-time highs, but the idea of continuing to “bail out Wall Street” is becoming much less palatable in our social-political climate. Average consumers, responsible for much of the economic activity, have reached their limits of spending. Since we’ve bailed out corporations and the wealthy in the past, shouldn’t we now bail out ordinary citizens? And is “helicopter money” the placating answer? Given the central banks’ inflated asset bubble, we may have no way to keep the system in balance but by “reflating” consumers so they can keep buying. It is a solution of our financial problems that relieves individuals of personal fiscal responsibility.

Our world stands on a dubious platform, an economic construct that requires perpetual growth. Rein in the growth, and chaotic rebalancing occurs. Much of today’s continuous economic expansion is likely unsustainable. Uneven wealth distribution depends too much on continued cooperation by the have-nots. On the other hand, experiments in centralized control—communism, socialism—have been mostly disastrous. Even where capitalism and socialism seem best in balance—Canada, perhaps—societies still rely on the global capitalist system. Canada’s oil, minerals, and real estate all benefit from the global financial

I'm the traitor if I fail to faithfully do whatever the Spirit bids me to do.

system. Communist China and Vietnam are committed to building capitalist-like financial systems in order to access funding to fuel their growth. In the end, capitalism and socialism both ultimately fail for the same reason, selfish human nature, the corruption that power inspires.

SOLVING THE PROBLEM?

Whether we choose to bail out Wall Street or Main Street, the problem is that eventually it's our grandchildren and great-grandchildren who will pay. Moreover, our children, having already spotted the non sequiturs in our economic faith, are looking for a better system of financial governance that will bring fairness and equality. Is there such a system? And can we get to it without causing chaos?

Heading into this new and potentially tumultuous decade of the 2020s, where do we stand as Seventh-day Adventist Christians? Do the different economic systems of Bible times offer helpful suggestions or solutions for us? Shall I leave a corner of my field to be gleaned by the poor, and forgive all debts after seven or 50 years? Beyond this, should believers in Christ become economic justice warriors? Finally, what did God Incarnate teach us about relating to poverty or wealth, high or low social status? Thankfully, even in our current Christian living we may enjoy a life of economic godliness consistent with principles of economic peace and balance that will rule the new heavens and new earth we shall soon inhabit. Here's a list of a few of those principles:

1. *Heirship.* We are already heirs of Christ's superior kingdom. This world is no match: "What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?" (Mark 8:36).

2. *Stewardship.* While we accept whom God made us to be, and where He placed us, we strive

to be ever better stewards of the talents He has loaned us so we may live and flourish: "each person should live as a believer in whatever situation the Lord has assigned to them, just as God has called them" (1 Cor. 7:17). "And my God will meet all your need according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).

3. *Sacrifice.* Besides being fiscally responsible for ourselves, we need to create capacity to help others. We do this by living simply and keeping our living expenses low. Then, as greater needs arise, we are ready to make the greater sacrifices required. "All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. . . . Those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need" (Acts 4:32-35).

4. *Fellowship.* We serve God and community regardless of our personal socio-economic situation. Perhaps being a "social justice warrior" begins with my neighborhood rather than my political leaders: "Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed" (Ps. 82:3).

5. *Faithfulness.* In a world with imperfect or even broken economic systems, clamoring for change in public policy may be an exercise in futility. I'm not a traitor to economic godliness because I accept society's prevailing rules that may (seem to) benefit me. I'm the traitor if I fail to faithfully do whatever the Spirit bids me do: "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?" (Isa. 58:6, 7).

Our financial world is broken, and neither capitalism nor socialism offers the ultimate solution. Our most vital role as Adventist Christians may well be to help somebody else survive the coming economic onslaught. Our sacrifice and acts of love will share with them the true gospel of Christ. 🍌

Tim Aka is an associate treasurer of the General Conference and director of investments in Silver Spring, Maryland.

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WHEN I THINK OF

HOW I WORK FOR GOD

I'm one person, not two or three.

JUAN M. GUERRERO

As a kid in the Dominican Republic, the church was all I knew: church school, Pathfinder club, summer camp, everything. All my friends were from church. Between my native land and in my adopted one, the United States, I've been a member of many Adventist churches along the way, churches of all kinds—small, large, friendly, not so friendly, young, mostly adult, caring about their community, caring not so much, caring about saving souls, catering more to their members. Their urgency and methods may vary, but they all want Jesus to come. Soon.

I strive to be the same at work as I am at church because my work relations just mean more opportunities to share who Jesus is through me. I don't have multiple personalities or characters, just one—me. That's what I believe ethical living is. I'm outgoing and intentional, crazy about people and letting Jesus shine through me. My work allows me to have direct contact with people and help them any way I can. I'm thankful to God for

what I've achieved through the years, but my greatest achievement is my family. "Daddy" is the best title of all.

I want to be consistent. I don't share with people what I'm not practicing myself. I believe we should be that way in all our dealings. We should be transparent and avoid conflicts of interest. An ethical church approaches the community with care, understanding that our focus is people's well-being. Carpet color and church Facebook pages don't deserve the power we give them to divide us or distract us from our message.

One day a friend took me fishing. I went because he insisted so much. I didn't catch any fish. But I can still share some truths about fishing: to catch fish, we need to be where they are—in the water; we need the right bait and the right hook. If you want to catch one fish, you'll use the fishing rod. If you want to catch many fish, you need to have a net.

In our spiritual life of fishing we need to find the best tools, be where the people are, and love them sincerely, as Jesus loves us.

Juan M. Guerrero, daddy and husband, is a claims representative for the Social Security Administration, and lives in Maryland.



I COMPROMISED

Big or small, wrong steps are wrong steps.

BY MORGAN RUDLEY-BUCKLEY

I will never forget my first real paying job. After graduating from graduate school, I had applied for an assignment close to where my fiancé lived. First, I was invited to have a phone interview; then a sit-down interview; then a Skype call for the team to question me, or me to question them. I shared that I would not work on Saturdays. The team offered its collective support. I was soon offered the position. I stuffed everything I could into my little car and drove to New England.

Then red flags started waving. On the schedule my supervisor handed me, I was down to work on Saturday. I pulled her aside after the meeting to gain some clarification. She said she just needed me to shadow one of the clinicians. Everything in me said no; but I didn't want to seem disagreeable—especially being the only woman of color.

On Sabbath I showed up for work. The salary was exciting; I had never made this much money on my own. After two weeks they put me on the Saturday schedule. That surprised me. A coworker said I shouldn't worry about it: it was just temporary. I took a deep swallow and pushed on with my good job and against my sensitive conscience.

A training meeting I attended presented various employee scenarios with which human resources had to deal. One was about an employee who shared that as an Adventist he was unable to work before 1:00 p.m.

I thought, *Are you kidding me? Of all the scenarios!* I couldn't take it any longer. I raised my hand and



asked to address everyone. I had practiced a speech for my soul: *Morgan, you are the daughter of Kathleen Rudley and the late Pastor Orlando Rudley. Be done with compromising: being thought safe and agreeable cannot replace honesty, obedience to God, integrity.*

I spoke proudly: "I'm an Adventist, and as I have shared before, we do not work on Saturdays unless it relates to the spreading of God's Word and reaching His people. My present services go beyond that."

My supervisor spoke up: "Well, you have worked now for two Saturdays."

I had no credibility. I had compromised my beliefs and ethics around working on Sabbath. But I would not allow it to happen again. I was fired a month later; "not a good fit," they said. I knew the facts, however, and I was going to stand for principle from that day forward.

I remember crying to my husband about it. He held me and firmly said, "You must own your part. You compromised yourself the day you agreed to work on Sabbath."

I didn't want to hear that, but he was right. I have carried with me the lesson of compromise. I was embarrassed to be fired from my first job, but I have learned my lesson: I will not compromise. ♣

Morgan Rudley-Buckley is a mental health counselor at Colorado College in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

MR. UNETHICAL GOES TO CHURCH

Was it a good visit?

RICARDO BACCHUS

Mr. Unethical visited my church today. The greeter failed to welcome him.

Mr. Unethical walked through the lobby. The head elder avoided eye contact.

Mr. Unethical made a comment during Sabbath School. The teacher cut him off.

Mr. Unethical looked for a seat at divine service. The deacon was too busy to help.

Mr. Unethical attempted to understand the sermon. The pastor went Adventist-heavy on the terminology.

Mr. Unethical stayed back for potluck. The organizer served him last.

Mr. Unethical never returned.

In today's society, being a virtuous human does not make headlines. Are Seventh-day Adventists sufficiently alive to the risks of learning our human relations, public relations, and communications from "all the nations around" (Deut. 17:14)? Is it our goal to see as they do and highlight what they highlight? Has it dawned on us that "Unrecognizable" may be our middle name?

We cannot afford to let the world teach us right

from wrong. We already have God's Word as our standard and Jesus as our example. We can find principles that help us figure out how we tip our waiter, commend our coworker, or babysit our neighbor's kid.

"The ethics inculcated by the gospel acknowledge no standard but the perfection of God's mind, God's will. All righteous attributes of character dwell in God as a perfect, harmonious whole. Everyone who receives Christ as his personal Saviour is privileged to possess these attributes. This is the science of holiness."

Catching and practicing that science better prepares us for the next visit. The next time Madam Samaria, Rich Young the ruler, or Nico the seeker visits our church, home, or heart, let's open our arms and undo our ties. Otherwise, there's no telling whom our flawed judgment may be turning away.

* Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1902), vol. 7, p. 276.

Ricardo Bacchus is an assistant director for Communication Services at the Columbia Union Conference in Columbia, Maryland, and an editor of the *Visitor* magazine.



There's no telling
whom our flawed
judgment may have
turned away.

“PRAY FOR ME”

There are people in our lives who share similar spiritual values. Among these values, for me, is the importance of prayer for one another. I have *many* friends who are truly fine individuals and scholars. They share very little about their lives. This is common in an academic environment in which the personal and religious are not engaged in daily discussion by any requirement. Hence, I have *few* friends who share their spiritual journeys and ask for prayer. Somehow the Holy Spirit introduces us.

It's a precious request: *pray for me*. Imagine all that affects, shapes your space: family, friends, work, colleagues, emergencies, daily activities, thoughts, concerns, praise. So many cares and joys to place forward in prayer. What are we asking of others when we request their prayer? What are others asking for when they pray for us?

It was my last-minute e-mail check before leaving for work. There it was: “May God continue to bless your ministry and the ministry of your colleagues at *Adventist Review*. I pray for you . . .” The sender included this citation: “We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Holy Spirit gives” (Col. 1:9). I don't recognize the name of the sender, but humility overcomes me as I realize someone has placed my name in the presence of God, praying for my service to Him.

The e-mail note remains a companion during lectures at the university. A colleague stops by my office to “check in” before a meeting, and we talk for a few minutes. As she prepares to leave, she

whispers, “Pray for me. Life is getting complicated.”

A few hours later my friend returns from her meeting, stops by my office, quietly sits, and shares: “I was thinking. God knows what I need, but if you could pray for strength, wisdom, patience, and . . .” her voice trails off.

Experience has taught me that these are important requests, pleadings for extended guidance and grace. This request is more specific in its intent. I invite her to join me in prayer that very moment. We spend time talking, and eventually the focus falls on prayers we offer for others. I mention prayers that appear to be the topic of the day, briefly sharing the morning e-mail experience. She smiles.

“I have neglected to reflect on prayers sent for me, given by me,” she says. “Only recently have I realized how much I need them. It's comforting to know that someone prays to ensure that your daily journey includes traveling close to still waters.”

Still waters. Peace. Care. No needs. Comfort for the soul.

On my drive home I think on this: I do not have great wars to fight; no country calls for me. I lose sleep to personal battles, the struggles of being a child of God running through challenging terrain with trees so high the light of heaven can barely be seen. When darkness encroaches on my life, when the body remembers to push forward in faith, I am not alone.

The Holy Spirit never stops moving among us. Part of searching the guidance provided is to continually be willing to lift one another in prayer.

Still waters.

Pray for me.

Dixil Rodríguez writes from Ohio.

SEARCHING
THE OBVIOUS
DIXIL
RODRIGUEZ



WHAT ARE WE
ASKING OF OTHERS
WHEN WE REQUEST
THEIR PRAYERS?
WHAT ARE OTHERS
ASKING FOR WHEN
THEY PRAY FOR US?

A man in a striped shirt and tie is shown in profile, looking down at a smartphone he is holding. The phone is engulfed in bright orange and yellow flames, with sparks flying out. The background is a dark, textured wall with shades of blue and purple. The overall mood is one of concern or warning.

A WORD ON THESE **STRANGE** POLITICAL TIMES

*How do we keep our Christian integrity
while preparing for the voting booth?*

A wise saying asserts that one should never talk about politics, religion, and money in polite company. But in this election cycle (and perhaps during the past few years) it seems that restraint has been thrown out the window.

It used to be that polite people held their political opinions closely while Walter Cronkite spent a few minutes recounting the day's news events. But today, an increasingly opinionated political press stretches five-minute stories into a 24/7 news cycle while our friends and acquaintances openly share their political opinions with wild abandon on social media.

This constant drumbeat of partisanship has deeply affected the nation. A study released last September by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln found that of Americans surveyed, 40 percent find politics to be a major source of stress, and one in five individuals are losing sleep over it. The study also found that 31.8 percent reported that exposure to media outlets promoting views contrary to their political beliefs "drive[s] them crazy"; 29.3 percent say they've lost their temper as a result of politics, and one in five say political differences have damaged friendships.¹

These pressures are building during this election cycle, and Adventist congregations, with their many family and friend units, are not immune.

So how do we rise above the fracas and participate in decisions for our nation's future that come from a place of spiritual wisdom and God-given intellect? Being "in the world but not of the world" is not easy when your political values are at stake; and while it may be impossible for many to disengage from politics, here are a few potentially helpful points that might help.

Our ability to influence others doesn't matter as much as we think it does.

"Do not contend with a man for no reason, when he has done you no harm" (Prov. 3:30, ESV).²

Before some dismiss this point as political heresy, here's some math. In 2016, 55 percent of the estimated 250,056,000 eligible voters in the United States voted. That's about 137,530,800 votes. Assuming the average height of a U.S. dollar is 0.0043 inches, if you stacked a dollar for every person who voted, it would be 49,282 feet, or 9.3 miles, tall. So while our vote counts in the aggregate, if we lose a friendship because we're trying to convince somebody to vote our way, it's not worth it statistically, and certainly not worth it

emotionally.

Those who disagree with us are not bad people. "It is to one's honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel!" (Prov. 20:3).

It is easy to divide the political world between those who are "right" and those who are "wrong." When it comes to the church, this gets translated into the "sheep" versus "goats" discussion. Instead of thinking of others as fellow travelers on this journey through life, some categorize others as either political allies or opponents. After they are labeled, everything one's opponents do is suspect, even if it's good. And rather than hope for the best outcome for all involved, the main motivation becomes to watch the "other" lose (and maybe gloat a little).

In reality, each person has different reasons for holding certain opinions. Some individuals may be truly interested in saving the wetlands, while others may be concerned that they will lose a job as a result of regulations. Some may want to see increased national health care, while others may be worrying about the impact of higher taxes on their ability to pay the rent.

So, before arguing about it, let's listen and genuinely attempt to find out what the person's concerns and motives are and try to address the conflict from a perspective of understanding, instead of bulldozing one over with our view of "the truth."

Shield kids from the partisanship of politics, but encourage them to think.

"Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people" (Titus 3:1, 2, ESV).

In 1984 my dad bought my brother a Walter Mondale pin, and I received a Ronald Reagan pin. At the time I didn't understand the positions of the candidates, but I did start to understand that reasonable people can hold different opinions on political issues.

My wife and I joke that we often cancel each other out with our votes. She and I may not agree on candidates, but we respect each other and keep political debates outside the home.

Children may have a very hard time differentiating between candidates and the issues, so if you say that you disagree with a particular politician, they need to understand why you take that position. Small children who might hear you say "Politician

With news and social media within easy reach, it's easy to get constantly caught up in political debates.

A is an idiot" will view your statement in concrete terms. Instead, you might say, "Politician A is wrong about ABC for XYZ reasons," and help them understand why you feel that way.

An understanding of history in the context of culture and law is good. It's important not to require children to blindly adopt our positions without context, as they may not understand all that is involved. Teach them to respect the office of those in authority, but if certain issues arise that demand attention, don't be afraid to address those issues with a reasoned, contextual explanation. Don't make blanket judgments about politicians, but encourage kids to consider what would happen if factors were added to or subtracted from a given situation. We can steer them through the analysis by asking open-ended questions that focus on the "why" of a position, and whether it's workable or not.

It takes time, but teaching children to analyze the issues while cultivating a sense of kindness and a "we're in this together" ethic will serve them well.

Learn how to productively discuss politics on social media.

"Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil" (2 Tim. 2:23, 24, ESV).

If you're discussing a political issue with someone in person, it's likely that if you disagree, one of you will nervously smile and try to change the subject. But the online world doesn't allow face-to-face communication. Instead, we hide behind screens, and while making a point we can also be digging around the web for rhetorical ammo to use.

If we're going to debate politics, let our words be our own. Let's not rely on memes or bumper sticker slogans. The other person may never agree with us no matter how convincing we are.

Most online arguments about politics start with someone making a statement of political "fact." Then another person responds with a "fact." And the first person responds with more "facts," and the flame-

throwers of "truth" get lit up. Finally, one person will give up and say, "I bid you farewell; discussing this with you is truly remedial." And the other repeats another point, and it keeps going until the flag of truce is waved: "Let's agree to disagree."

Nobody likes to seal a disagreement in stone by "agreeing to disagree." Once you've made your point, silently disengage and leave the conversation without making a huge show. There's nothing to be gained from "capping off" the discussion with the "last word." Being the last to post doesn't mean you won the argument; it simply means you exhausted your opponent and all the other tired people who stopped reading the thread hours before.

Take a weekly Sabbath rest from politics.

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

With news and social media within easy reach on phones or iPads, it's easy to get constantly caught up in political debates. And it can also be very tempting to find ways to connect political news with religion as a conversation topic with friends at church. But what may seem to be of such intense importance to us may not seem so relevant to others within our faith community.

Set aside your phone or television news between sundown Friday and sundown Saturday. You may be surprised at how little you missed during those hours. You'll realize that most hyped-up "breaking news" can wait.

If you really want to discuss the latest political events with your friends from church, invite them to Sunday morning brunch, and if all are game, discuss it to your hearts' content. But regardless of how the conversation goes, or whatever box is checked in the voting booth, it's wise to remember during this election cycle (and those to come) that God sometimes uses what seems like the insanity of the age to serve His purpose.

Nothing can change that. 🗡️

¹ K. B. Smith, M. V. Hibbing, J. R. Hibbing, "Friends, Relatives, Sanity, and Health: The Costs of Politics," *PLoS ONE* 14, no. 9 (2019): e0221870, doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0221870.

² Scripture quotations marked ESV are from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

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PETER N. LANDLESS ZENO L. CHARLES-MARCEL

Elderly Drivers—Safety First!

Q: We're worried about our widowed 86-year-old mother who lives alone and still drives. Can you advise us on how and when to limit or stop her from driving?

A: You describe an increasingly frequent situation that families and practicing physicians face daily. Unfortunately, no guaranteed trouble-free approach to this often-sensitive subject exists. We all age differently, and circumstances can vary dramatically, so no age-setting for everyone to stop driving is possible.

The main issue is whether your mom, regardless of her age, is a safe driver and poses no increased danger to herself or others. The authorities take the position of helping drivers stay behind the wheel as long as it is safely possible, regardless of age, and we do too. Here are some suggestions:

Concern should be based on risk, so assessing risk is paramount. If you cannot assess by direct observation your mom herself, her closest friends and neighbors and her driving record are reasonable starting points. Talk with your mom about her driving. Use news and magazine articles to start the conversation.

Do those who drive with her express concern or apprehension? Has she had near misses; accidents; fender benders; or scrapes, scratches, or dents on her car lately? Has she had two or more traffic violations or warnings in the past two years? Does she worry about her driving, or complain about the traffic speed and the increasing unpredictability of other drivers or pedestrians? Is she anxious about driving at night or has she gotten "lost" recently? Has she noticed people honk at her more than usual

or use obscene language or gestures at her? A yes to any of these warrants a conversation.

Since it's sometimes hard for people to realize that they're no longer safe driving, a good place to start is to suggest that she take a self-assessment (e.g., AAA's "Drivers 65 Plus" self-evaluation*), either online or on paper, and go from there.

Involve her primary-care physician. Communication with her doctor is important since physicians may be legally obligated to report concerns to the appropriate agency. Her doctor may shed additional light on her health/functional status or refer her for appropriate assessments to determine her driving risk.

Develop an alternative transportation plan that's realistic, dependable, and sustainable. Independence and mobility are often anxiety-producing issues for high-functioning elderly people. There must be considerable thought about how she's going to get around if she's not driving. Even if your mom isn't currently at risk, this is good contingency planning.

Get additional information. Some valuable resources include AARP, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,

the National Institute on Aging, and University of Michigan's "SAFER Driving" workbook.

Thank God for loving parents and caring children. May His blessings attend your family as you navigate through the challenges of the cycle of life. ▀

Medical/Functional Conditions That Adversely Affect Driving

Joint and musculoskeletal

Vision

Hearing

Seizures

Memory, judgment, or decision-making capability

Reaction time

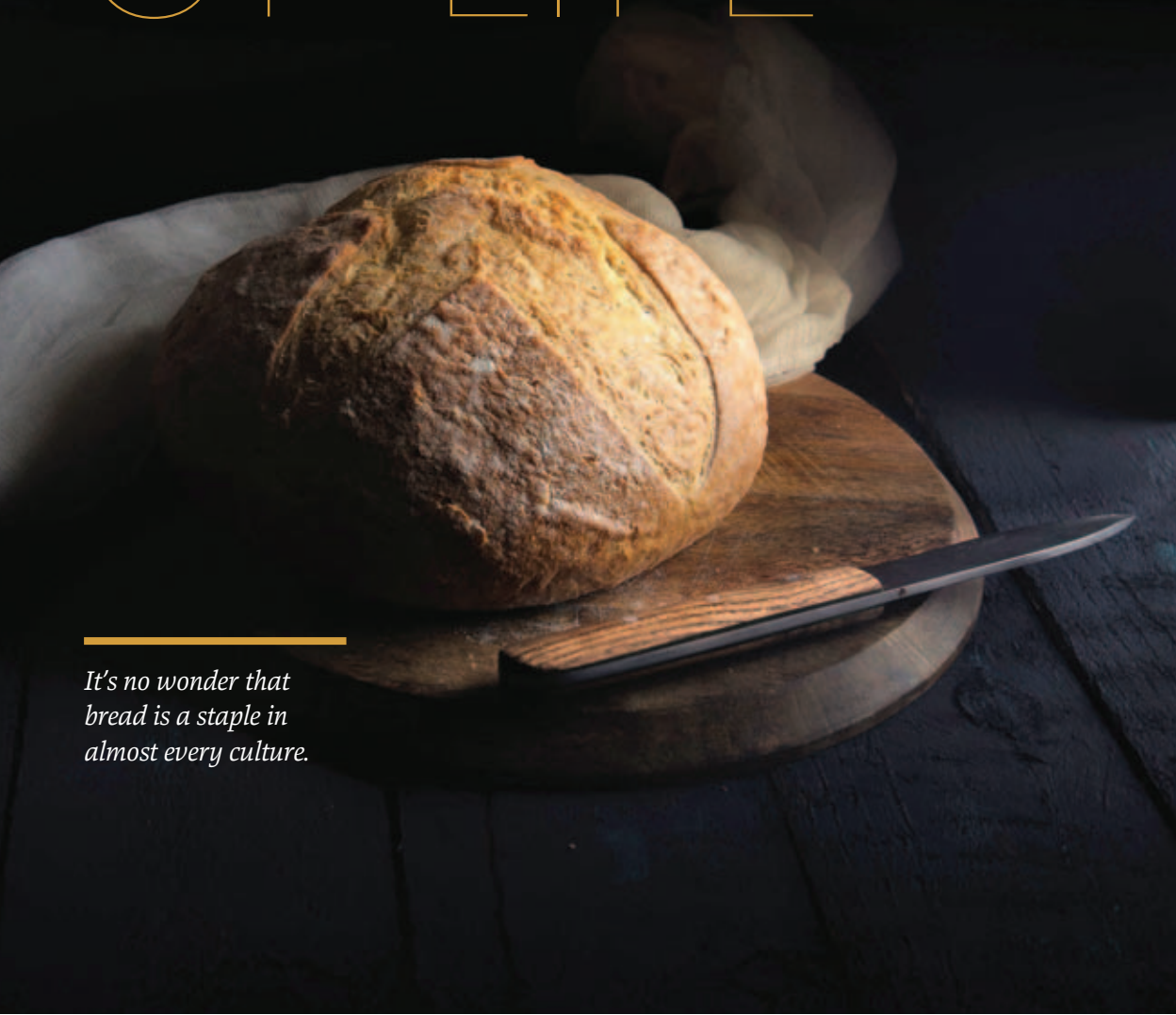
Medications

Recreational drugs and alcohol

*seniordriving.aaa.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Driver652.pdf

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

THE BREAD OF LIFE



*It's no wonder that
bread is a staple in
almost every culture.*

Do you enjoy bread? Since I was a child I have enjoyed eating bread—artisanal, sourdough, French baguettes, and croissants.

I recently took a DNA test. The results surprised me. I'm 25 percent French. I immediately shared the results with my family. The first thing they said was "No wonder you like bread so much!"

ALL (OR MUCH) ABOUT BREAD

The King James Version of the Bible mentions bread 361 times in 330 verses. Of those 361 times, 297 are in the Old Testament.

The Hebrew word usually translated "bread" actually stands for much more than just bread: it's the standard term for food—meat, shewbread, loaves, provision, feast. Bread served interesting purposes in the Bible, such as welcoming or inviting someone for fellowship. When Abraham persuaded three men to come into his tent for a visit, he offered them bread as the proper way to welcome them into his home (Gen. 18:1-5).

I experienced my own welcome with bread one day as I returned home from running errands. As I opened my door I noticed a sweet aroma: my wife was baking banana bread. The smell welcomed me.

As an important extension of welcoming, in the Bible bread is directly associated with making peace. David and his soldiers voluntarily protected the servants and flocks of a man named Nabal (whose name means "foolish") while they were in the wilderness. David later sent a delegation to Nabal as he was enjoying a party at sheepshearing time.

David and his men looked forward to sharing the celebration with Nabal, who everyone knew was very rich (1 Sam. 25:2). His herders had become personal acquaintances of David's companions, perhaps even friends. They knew that David had done them the favor of protecting them and their flocks from wild men and animals. They saw nothing wrong in sharing food with their new acquaintances, who, they said, "were a wall around us the whole time we were herding [verse 15]," and never charged a penny for it. But Nabal had absolutely no interest in sharing anything with David or his friends. He rejected the messengers with insults, and continued his partying, drinking himself completely drunk (verse 36).

Nabal's response disturbed his servants deeply.

They express their distress to Nabal's wife, Abigail. Abigail had a fix for it: "two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five dressed sheep, five seahs of roasted grain, a hundred cakes of raisins and two hundred cakes of pressed figs" (verse 18) loaded onto donkeys, driven down the mountain, and she herself backing up the whole peace party (verses 19, 20).

Her fix worked. David said if it had not been for her, "not one male belonging to Nabal would have been left alive by daybreak" (verse 34). Bread saved the day, as it did so many other times: with Elijah at the brook Cherith (1 Kings 17:6); again in Zarephath (verses 8-16). And who can forget Jesus' momentous miracle with five barley loaves and two small fish (John 6:9).

PALESTINIAN BREAD

The bread of the ancient Near East was made of barley or wheat. Barley was more common with poor families, and wheat for those who were wealthy. Preparing and making bread took most of the day. Toward the end of the day a father would come from the field, children from their chores, and mother would have bread ready for supper. It was a time of coming together around God's provision for them all.

In Palestine, bread was the plate as well as the main serving: on the bread people put vegetables and lentils. There was also a little pot for dipping the bread in vinegar with salt or olive oil; a piece of the bread's crust served as a spoon; at the meal's end the soft dough of the bread might wipe the remnants of lentils off your mouth. Bread was your plate, your meal, and your napkin.

JESUS IS BREAD

We can see now what Jesus meant when He said, "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35). We can understand what it really meant for those who heard Him. Bread was everything. Jesus was telling them, and us today, that He is our everything: our daily sustenance and our everlasting salvation.

Has your work or career been your main dish? Has it been your family or other relationships? your finances? I recommend Jesus: let's have Him as our everything: our plate, our meal, our napkin. Let's eat and never die (verse 50). 🍞

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LIVING THE DREAM

What happens to a dream deferred?" asked Langston Hughes, African American poet. "Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun? Or fester like a sore—and then run? Does it stink like rotten meat? Or crust and sugar over—like a syrupy sweet? Does it just sag like a heavy load? Or does it explode?"

These questions are relevant, as they affect not only our personal experience, but biblical, social, and religious history that are likewise filled with deferred dreams.

Abraham and Sarah, for example. Their dream of bearing the seed of promise was deferred for 25 years before it was fulfilled. Moses' dream of leading his people out of Egyptian bondage was deferred for 40 years; besides, he never led them into the Promised Land.

Jesus had a dream that His followers would live in unity and love one another the same way He loves them. But that dream has also been deferred. The apostles' dream that in their lifetime their Lord would return in triumphant glory to receive them to Himself also still waits realization.

February was long ago dedicated to the observance of Black History Month and the dream of Martin Luther King, Jr., for an America in which all people would live in harmony and equally enjoy the privileges and resources of the nation. But in 2020 his dream is still trashed by some, and still in deferment.

Many dreamers and visionaries throughout history have been victims of deferment. God's people always seem to be "in waiting." It's one of life's inexplicable tensions with which Christians must cope until Jesus comes; that while

God calls us to dream dreams and see visions, we must expect along the way we will encounter the disappointing, frustrating reality of deferred dreams.

But before we give up our dreams, let's remember: the word "deferred" means delayed, not denied. Deferred dreams are not defunct desires; they are not impossible or improbable because their fulfillment may be difficult to imagine. If we wait on the Lord, He will renew our strength to keep dreaming, and deliver our dreams bigger and better than we can imagine or hope. The fulfillment of a common but eagerly awaited dream is the miraculous effusion of the Holy Spirit promised in Joel 2:28 and repeated in Acts 2:17, 18.

The pouring forth of the Holy Spirit marks a major change in God's dealing with His people. The promise includes extensive showering of grace on every believer, instead of trickles previously sprinkled on Old Testament priests or prophets or kings. In these last days the Spirit will be in God's people, filled up, running over, regardless of race or gender or rank.

Yet it seems too often today that Christianity features divisions, defeats, and splits in God's kingdom. Rather than specialize in separation and segregation of God's people into factions and fragments, we should be summoning disgruntled sinners and disinherited saints to return to our God who is One (Deut. 6:4), and revel together in the heritage of the truth that all humanity is created equal and destined to be one in Him.

Let's begin again, as if for the first time, to love as Christ loves us. 🍀

Hyveth Williams is a professor at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary.

CURE FOR THE
COMMON LIFE
HYVETH
WILLIAMS



WE SHOULD NO
LONGER BE WILLING
TO SETTLE FOR THE
STATUS QUO.

SMALL CHURCH

BIG OUTREACH!



Gil Bohannon of the Caldwell church



Mary Carroll of the Meridian church



Meridian church members Katie and Lloyd McClusky play Mary and Joseph with Baby Jesus (a lifelike baby doll) in the stable.

God can bless not only by many but also by few.

As far as size goes, an average weekly church attendance of 57 wouldn't place the Meridian Seventh-day Adventist Church in Idaho in the top tier. This, however, doesn't stop them from thinking big when it comes to community outreach.

Meridian members are actively involved in various outreach activities, such as organizing God's Closets, in which they supply children's clothing to low-income families; running depression-recovery and Diabetes Undone clinics; organizing prison ministries and out-of-country mission trips; and repairing used appliances and cars and donating them to people in need. A herculean task that they've tackled each December for 10 years, though, is their living Nativity event called Journey to Bethlehem (J2B).

WHAT'S J2B?

Churches hosting live Nativity programs at Christmastime is nothing new. Countless churches do it. But what sets J2B apart from the crowd is the extensive preparation, the elaborate costumes church members designed, attention to detail, and the large



Judah Warren, age 20 months, of the Middleton church won hearts as the youngest beggar.



Clyde the camel and his owner, Gary Drake, are among the most popular of the J2B characters each year.

and lavish production they pull together annually. This past December J2B drew record crowds that totaled slightly fewer than 2,000 visitors in three nights, many of them repeats from previous years. Even though many people from neighboring Adventist churches as well as from other denominations (including Baptist and Latter-day Saints) take on several of the character roles and help with the live music and logistics such as parking, this still seems quite a feat for a small church in a city of 107,000 residents.

Visitors experience J2B in groups led by a “guide” during the three hours that J2B is open each evening, leaving little time for volunteers to catch their breath. Organizers, however, say it’s worth it.



Children of all ages helped to play the roles of beggars, lepers, and shepherds.

“As you see the people coming through the doors each night and listen to the comments, it’s such a blessing,” says Beverly Logan, who has served as J2B director for three years. “I’m always amazed at the comments about the overall spirit of the event. That’s our goal—to share the love of Jesus with the community—and this is possible only through the working of the Holy Spirit.”

PREPARATION

An occasional groan echoes among Meridian church members when each October rolls around and it’s announced that it’s time to begin setting up for J2B—and with good reason. On the church’s five-acre lot more than 20 “booths” are assembled to hold biblical period shops, homes, a tax collector’s office, a temple room, and other small buildings that depict the city of Bethlehem some 2,000 years

ago. Additional props include a gate to the city, areas for beggars and lepers, a raised structure from which an angel announces the Messiah’s birth to the shepherds, and the stable where Jesus was born, among others. Meridian members labor for weeks setting up for the production—often in inclement weather.

“About a dozen or so people came out and helped with assembling the village this year—and I’m so grateful to each one of them,” says Jerry Rowan, who headed the J2B setup. “Many cold days are spent assembling and decorating. But the comments we receive as the groups come into the social hall at the end of the journey are heart touching and make us feel that the time was well spent.”

THE EXPERIENCE

As guests and families turn up for J2B, they’re given a group number and listen to live Christmas music in the church sanctuary—performed by such



Caesar’s tax collector, who demanded that the travelers pay their taxes, was played by Bruce Fenner of the Caldwell church. PHOTO BY CHERI GATTON

musicians as the Gem State Adventist Academy Bell Ringers and Chorale, the Koinonia Children’s Choir, and a musical group comprising refugees from Rwanda and Uganda called the Oasis Victory Youth Choir—until their group number is called. About 25 visitors at a time are led to a Sabbath School room where introducers set the scene for their journey back in time to biblical Bethlehem, and present them with a few shekels (shiny pennies) to pay the tax collector in the city. A guide, introduced as their cousin Rebekah or Josiah from the family of David who will guide them along the road from Nazareth to Bethlehem, then takes over. After ensuring everyone has their tax money so no one gets thrown into “jail,” he or

she leads the group outside—past beggars pleading for money and lepers crying “Unclean! Unclean!”—to the city gate, protected by Roman guards.

After bribing their way past the gate, the rest of the 30-minute journey takes them by shopkeepers enthusiastically selling their wares, rabbis reading from the Torah and playing a shofar, tax collectors greedily grasping for their money, a blacksmith, a carpenter, goats and their keepers, Clyde the camel, and Roman centurions wandering throughout the village. They then tarry in a “field” of shepherds, where a glowing angel unexpectedly appears and announces the Messiah’s birth. From there they follow a star to the innkeeper’s stable, where they find Baby Jesus with Mary and Joseph.



Meridian church member Merwin Stewart shared readings from sacred scrolls and prophecies about the soon-coming Messiah with the travelers.

The volunteers who play each role stay in character throughout the journey.

“We’ve always received lots of positive comments about the acting of the guides and the guards, which is to be expected as they are the most involved with the family groups,” Logan says. “But this year we received really positive comments about every area of J2B. Even the 105 loaves of bread and the 100 gallons of hot chocolate we provided for the ‘travelers’ at the end of their journey got several thumbs up. People really did notice every detail.”

“About 200 people from all age groups—even the very young who played beggars and lepers and shepherds—worked together to make this happen,” Logan adds.

A FAMILY TRADITION

Several of the J2B guests described it as an annual family tradition.

“Our kids have to come every year or it’s not Christmas,” one person said.

The animated portrayal of the characters appears to be an especially appreciated aspect of the program, helping to create an atmosphere not only of fun but also of reverence.

“I loved the shepherds’ great excitement and joy as they ran to the stable!” a visitor said. “Also the angel’s worship and praise to God. It was all very moving.”

Others were grateful for the journey’s being based on the Bible, as well as for the “spirit” they “could feel during the tour.” One person conceded she cried when she saw Jesus.

“The goal of J2B is to help people focus on Jesus,” Logan says, “so when they said that what



Meridian church member Dean Jones, who manned the village pottery shop, stands at the door of the inn.

they loved most about the program was ‘just being able to stand at the stable and take in that Emmanuel, Jesus, has come’ and that ‘I come every year to see Jesus, I just thank the Lord.’”

Logan describes partnering with the Lord as a humbling experience, because you witness the power of the Holy Spirit at work, even when the task seems daunting.

“Just when you’re ready to think there’s no way this is going to work, God comes through every time—even for a small church like ours.”

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

The Vision That Could Not Be Told



*Providence knew when
the time was right.*

During a series of meetings in Salamanca, New York, in November 1890, Ellen White was addressing large groups. But she became weak, having caught a severe cold on the trip to the city.

After one of the meetings she left for her room discouraged and sick. She intended to pour out her soul before God and plead for His mercy, and for health and strength. She knelt by her chair and, in her own words:

“I had not uttered a word when the whole room seemed filled with a soft, silvery light, and my pain of disappointment and discouragement was removed. I was filled with comfort and hope—the peace of Christ.”

Then she was given a vision. Afterward she didn’t feel like sleeping. She was healed, rested.

In the morning she had to decide: should she go on to where the next meetings were to be held, or should she go back to her home in Battle Creek?

A. T. Robinson, who had charge of the work, and William White, Ellen White’s son, called on her in her room to get her answer. They found her dressed and well. She was ready to go. She told of the healing. She told of receiving a vision. She said, “There are some things presented to me last night concerning the work in Battle Creek.” Then she began to talk about other matters and she did not relate the vision.

Ellen White continued on her journey in the eastern states, but would later describe what had been shown her that evening about plans being made for the church’s religious liberty journal, then called *The American Sentinel*.

A PREVIEW OF THE FUTURE

“In the night season I was present in several councils, and there I heard words repeated by influential men to the effect that if *The American Sentinel* would drop the words ‘Seventh-day Adventist’ from its column, and would say

Ellen White wrote that God “has often permitted matters to come to a crisis, that His interference might become marked.”

nothing about the sabbath, the great men of the world would patronize it; it would become popular, and do a larger work. This looked very pleasing.

“I saw their countenances brighten, and they began to work on a policy to make the *Sentinel* a popular success. The whole matter was introduced by men who needed the truth in the chambers of the mind and soul.”

When the General Conference session opened the following year, March 1891, Ellen White was asked to speak to the workers at 5:30 each morning and address the whole conference of 4,000 attendees on Sabbath afternoon.

Her text on Sabbath afternoon was “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16, KJV). The entire discourse was an appeal to Seventh-day Adventists to hold forth the distinctive features of their faith.

Two or three times during the meeting she started to tell of the Salamanca vision, but each time she held back. The events of the vision would simply leave her mind, so she said, “Of this, I shall have more to say later.” All those assembled had noticed that she was unable to call the vision to mind. The president of the General Conference came and asked if she would take the morning meeting.

“No,” she replied, “I’m weary; I’ve borne my testimony. You must make other plans for the morning meeting.”

As Ellen White returned to her home, she told members of her family that she would not be attending the morning meeting. She was tired; she was going to have a good rest. She planned to sleep in on Sunday morning.

A CLOSED-DOOR MEETING

That night, after the close of the General Conference session, a small group of men met in one of the offices in the Review and Herald building. At the meeting were representatives of the publishing house that issued *The American Sentinel*. Also present were representatives of the Religious Liberty Association. They met to discuss and settle a vexing question: the editorial policy of *The American Sentinel*. The door was locked, and all agreed that the door would stay locked until the question was settled.

A little before 3:00 on Sunday morning the meeting ended in a deadlock, with those representing religious liberty insisting that unless Pacific Press agrees to their demands and drops the terms “Seventh-day Adventist” and “the Sabbath” from the columns of that paper, they would no longer use it as the mouthpiece of the Religious Liberty Association. That meant the paper would cease to exist. Their meeting at a stalemate, they unlocked the door, and the men went to their rooms.

MEANWHILE, AT 3:00 A.M.

God sent His angel messenger to Ellen White's room at 3:00 a.m. She was aroused from sleep and instructed that she must go to the workers' meeting at 5:30 and present what was shown to her at Salamanca.

She arose quickly and wrote for about two hours what had been shown to her at Salamanca. The ministers were just getting up from prayer in the tabernacle as Ellen White came in the door with a bundle of manuscripts under her arm. The General Conference president was the speaker, and he addressed her:

"Sister White," he said, "we are happy to see you. Do you have a message for us?"

"Indeed I do," she said, and stepped to the front. Then she began right where she had left off the day before. She told them that at 3:00 that morning she had been aroused from her sleep and instructed to go to the workers' meeting and present what had been shown to her at Salamanca.

"In the vision," she said, "I seemed to be in Battle Creek. I was taken to the Review and Herald office, and the angel messenger bade me, 'Follow me.' I was taken to a room where a group of men were earnestly discussing a matter. There was a zeal manifest, but not according to knowledge."

She told how they were discussing the editorial policy of *The American Sentinel*. She said, "I saw one of the men take a copy of the *Sentinel*, hold it high over his head, and say, 'Unless these articles on the Sabbath and the Second Advent come out of this paper, we can no longer use it as the organ of the Religious Liberty Association.'"

Ellen White spoke for an hour, describing the meeting that had been shown to her in vision months before, and giving counsel based on that revelation. Then she sat down.

REFLECTION AND REALIZATION

The General Conference president didn't know what to think of her comments. He had never heard of any such meeting. But they didn't have to wait long for an explanation. A man stood in the back of the room and began to speak:

"I was in that meeting last night."

"Last night!" Ellen White exclaimed, "Last night? I thought that meeting took place months ago, when it was shown to me in vision."

"I was in that meeting last night," he said, "and

I am the man who made the remarks about the articles in the paper, while holding it over my head. I'm sorry to say that I was on the wrong side, but I take this opportunity to place myself on the right side." Then he sat down.

Another man stood to speak, the president of the Religious Liberty Association. Note his words: "I was in that meeting. Last night after the close of the conference some of us met in my office, where we locked ourselves in and there discussed the questions and the matter presented to us this morning. We remained in that room until 3:00 this morning. If I should begin to give a description of what took place and the personal attitude of those in the room, I could not give it as exactly and as correctly as it has been given by Sister White. I now see that I was in error and that the position that I took was not correct. From the light given this morning, I acknowledge that I was wrong."

Others spoke that day. Everyone in the meeting the night before stood and bore his testimony, saying that Ellen White had accurately described the meeting and the attitude of those in the room.

Before that meeting closed that Sunday morning, the Religious Liberty group gathered together and rescinded the action they had taken only a few hours before.

Had Ellen White not been restrained, and had she related the vision on Sabbath afternoon, her message would not have served the purpose that God had intended, for the meeting had not yet taken place.

Somehow the men did not apply the general counsel given Sabbath afternoon. They thought they knew better. Maybe they reasoned, as some do today, "Perhaps Ellen White did not understand," or "We live in a different day now."

The thoughts that Satan whispers to us in these days are the same with which he tempted our ministers in 1891. God, in His own time and in His own way, made it clear that it was His work; He was guiding; He was guarding; He had His hand upon the wheel.

Ellen White wrote that God "has often permitted matters to come to a crisis, that His interference might become marked. Then He has made it manifest that there is a God in Israel." ❖

This story is adapted from an account written by trustees of the Ellen G. White Estate. It is found in the book *Counsels for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1991), pp. 25-29.



Agness Bakuluma Chirwa



Ai Araki



Anna Knight



Carole Ferch-Johnson



Elizabeth Sterndale



Elsa Luukkanen



Hong, Xiao Mei



Lottie Blake



Maud Sisley Boyd



Miriam de Azevedo Berg



Kate Lindsey



Margarete Prange



Olga Murga



Ana Alvarado



Anna Hindson



Consolacion Tauro



Nancy Basham



Nellie Rankin Druillard

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE: 18 WOMEN

They could be listed in Hebrews 11.

HEATHER-DAWN SMALL

If you were to visit the Women's Ministries Department at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Silver Spring, Maryland, you would find a wall dedicated to Adventist women who lived from 1844 to today. The wall is filled with pictures of and information about these women who gave their lives in service to God and His church—God's superwomen of their time.

Much as the book of Hebrews lists heroes of faith along with significant features of their lives, we offer our own list of women who were champions for God.

1844- TO 1894

Maud Sisley Boyd (1851–1937) was a Bible instructor, colporteur, educator, and the first unmarried missionary to Europe. She also

served in Africa and Australia.

Nellie H. Rankin Druillard (1844–1937) served as a financier and treasurer in the founding of the Riverside Sanitarium, Madison College, and Emmanuel Missionary College. She was also a missionary to South Africa.

Katherine (Kate) Lindsey (1842–1923), a physician, founded Adventism's first nurses training school at Battle Creek Sanitarium; she also rendered missionary service in South Africa.

1895 TO 1945

Ai Araki (1890–1982) was a Bible worker, a church leader who never let her blindness stop her work for the church throughout World War II. Her faithfulness helped preserve the only Adventist congregation that

remained intact in Japan throughout the war.

Lottie Blake (1876–1976) was the Adventist Church's first African American woman physician. Her distinctions include establishing a School of Nursing at Oakwood College, treating Ellen White, and missionary service with her physician husband in Central America and the Caribbean.

Anna L. Ingels Hindson (1862–1933) was an editor, union conference secretary-treasurer, union conference departmental director for youth and Sabbath School, and a missionary in Australia.

Anna Knight (1874–1972) was the first Adventist African American woman missionary to India, the first Black missionary of any Christian denomination to India. In the United States she worked as an educator, nurse, and conference and union conference departmental secretary.

We may mention several more from this period: Ana Rosa Alvarado, Cuban pastor, evangelist, educator, and musician for 45 years; Nancy Bassham, of Thailand, an educator and the first family life and women's ministries director in the Asia-Pacific Division; Elsa Luukkanen, Finnish evangelist and pastor; and Margarete Prange of Germany, pastor, evangelist, and a member of Adventism's 1989 Women's Commission.

1997 TO 2010

Miriam de Azevedo Berg was an educator and frontier missionary in Mozambique, as well as a mentor, and children's ministries pioneer in her native South American Division.

Russian evangelist and church planter Olga Murga, pioneer in women's ministries, is responsible for 3,038 people being baptized.

In China, pastor and evangelist Hong, Xiao Mei raised up an 800-member congregation with a training facility for Adventist leaders.

Elizabeth Sterndale, registered nurse and president of the Association of Seventh-day Adventist Nurses, was the first women's ministries director in the North American Division and a division field secretary.

2011 TO PRESENT

Agness Bakuluma Chirwa, known in Zambia as "mother general" because of her leadership qualities in evangelism, education, and business, was her division's first volunteer women's ministries director.

Carole Ferch-Johnson, Bible worker, preacher, and writer, pioneered women's ministries in the South Pacific Division.

Consolacion Tauro, leads the church in the Philippines in multiple areas as elder, preacher, educator, and women's ministries pioneer; she gave 47 years of her life to service in the Southern Asia-Pacific Division.

REFLECTIONS

When I first saw the women's wall of fame, I felt inadequate to carry out the work God had called me to do. These women seemed bigger than life. But as I thought more about them, I realized that they weren't much different from women of today. I don't think they knew beforehand what God would do in and through their lives. I'm sure they had insecurities and doubts, struggled spiritually, and faced many challenges in life. Yet they pushed beyond what they thought possible because of whom they served. God had called each of them, just as He calls His daughters and sons today.

He called us to salvation and to service, not in our strength, but in His.

Paul writes that we are called to "lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. 2:12). And Peter emphasizes: we are "a chosen people," God's own possession, called "out of darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Peter 2:9): this call is to the privileges of salvation.

But the call to salvation is equally the call to serve, a call "to be free," not to satisfy our sinful nature, but to "serve one another humbly in love" (Gal. 5:13).

Each person in God's end-time church has been called to salvation and called to serve. The way we serve may differ by gender, means, or location. What matters is our willingness to surrender to God to be used by Him, however and wherever He knows will be best. He calls. What is our answer? The hall of fame in the book of Hebrews celebrates young and old, male and female. We can all be saints of distinguished service because we have answered God's call and surrendered to His will for our lives. God in me and God through me should be our cry. 🖊️

Heather-Dawn Small directs the Women's Ministries Department at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland.

HAPPY CEREAL DAY!

Yes, it's an actual day in March, and here's why the Adventist Review knows about it.

WILONA KARIMABADI

Besides its crucial role in some of their potluck delicacies, breakfast cereals enjoy a special connection to Adventists.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, John Harvey Kellogg, a contemporary of early Adventist pioneers James and Ellen White, was an advocate for clean living—fresh air, exercise, hydrotherapy, and a vegetarian diet comprising plain, simple foods that wouldn't “excite” the senses. This way of living brought better health and solutions for indigestion by improving the diet of the average American, who might have previously consumed a lot of animal protein.

After Sylvester Graham invented the product that now bears his name, graham crackers, James Caleb Jackson, in 1863, created a cereal from mixing graham flour with water and baking it. This concoction proved inedible unless first soaked overnight in milk. Jackson called this breakfast food “Gran-ula.” It would not be the only new breakfast food of America's nineteenth century. In the 1890s, John Harvey Kellogg and his brother Will went commercial with their creation called Granose Flakes. The Seventh-day Adventist Church eventually cut ties with John Harvey Kellogg over theological issues, but not before brother Will cut ties with him and started the Battle Creek Toasted Corn Flake Company, which by 1925 became the Kellogg Company you are probably familiar with today.

Rice Krispies, Corn Flakes, and yes, that beloved Special K cereal of potluck casserole legend are among many products the company offers, though it now has no affiliation with the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

So the next time you see a commercial for Kellogg's cereal, sit back and ponder what might have been. Once you're done musing, why not try one of these recipes made with (you guessed it) breakfast cereal!

CHEERIOS APPLESAUCE MUFFINS¹

Ingredients

2 cups Cheerios cereal
1¼ cups all-purpose flour
½ cup packed brown sugar
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 tsp. baking powder
¾ tsp. baking soda
3 pouches (3.2 ounces each) GoGo Squeeze
Applesauce on the Go.
Optional: raisins

METHOD

Heat oven to 400°F. Spray bottom only of 12 regular-size muffin cups with cooking spray.

Crush cereal. In large bowl, stir together cereal, flour, brown sugar, cinnamon, baking powder, and baking soda. Stir in remaining ingredients until moistened. Stir in raisins, if desired.

Divide batter evenly among muffin cups.

Bake 18 to 22 minutes, or until golden brown.

¹ www.cheerios.com/recipes/cheerios-apple-sauce-muffins/



OATMEAL PATTIES²

Patty Ingredients

¼ cup vegetable oil
3 cups rolled oats, instant or old-fashioned
1 can cream of mushroom soup
¼ large onion, chopped
½ cup pecan meal or slivered almonds (optional)
1 tsp. soy sauce
1 package Lipton Onion Soup mix
2 eggs

Gravy Ingredients

Leftover oil from the fried patties
¼ chopped onion
Handful of sliced mushrooms
4 tbsp. flour
½ package Lipton Onion Soup mix
1 cup water

METHOD

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Pour the oil into a skillet and preheat it while you make the patty mix.

Mix all the patty ingredients in a mixing bowl.

Once the patty mix is prepared, form the mixture into balls, place in the skillet, and flatten with a spatula. Allow them to cook until brown, then flip over to brown the other side.

Set the patties aside. At this stage, they make pretty good veggieburgers, and you can complete them with buns and fixings. To make this a casserole, add the gravy.

Turn down the heat on the oil. Toss in onions and caramelize them slowly over low heat. This takes about 15 minutes. When the onions are about half-way done, add mushrooms.

Sprinkle flour over the mixture.

Gently turn up the heat and blend the flour into the oil until it starts to brown. Add the onion soup mix and water and stir consistently until a gravy forms. Continue stirring until all flour lumps are gone.

Place patties and gravy in a casserole dish and bake until the gravy bubbles (you'll have to eyeball this to know for sure).

² potluckvegetarian.blogspot.com/2015/05/oatmeal-patties.html

STRAWBERRY COCONUT PIE³

Ingredients

1 cup cereal flakes with strawberries (such as Kellogg's Special K Red Berries)
1 cup quick oats
½ cup all-purpose flour
1 cup sweetened shredded coconut
¾ cup honey (you can also use maple syrup)
¼ cup water
1 tbsp. corn starch
½ cup strawberries, mashed or pureed
3 cups sliced strawberries, divided

METHOD

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Grease a 9-inch pie plate with baking spray and set aside.

Place cereal in a Ziploc bag, close the bag, and crush it with a rolling pin.

In a mixing bowl combine crushed cereal, oats, flour, coconut, and honey; stir until completely blended.

Press mixture into previously prepared pie plate. You can use a buttered spatula to do this, or you can also spray cooking spray on your hands so the mixture doesn't stick.

Bake for 8 to 10 minutes or until golden brown.

Let cool completely.

Prepare the strawberry sauce by combining water and corn starch in a microwave-safe bowl.

Stir until well blended.

Mix in mashed strawberries and microwave for 30 to 40 seconds, or until sauce is thickened.

Spread sauce on top of cooled pie.

Arrange sliced strawberries and refrigerate for 20 to 30 minutes or until chilled.

Garnish with crushed strawberry cereal flakes and serve.

³ diethood.com/strawberry-coconut-oatmeal-crunch-pie/



MY ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT

Our dreams don't belong only to us.

From a young age I imagined what my future would hold. I decided that God needed my help in figuring out the details, and I quickly claimed my life as mine, not His. Since it was now my plan, any change or problem left me feeling anxious, nervous, and frustrated.

Then guess who I blamed for my frustration? “God, why are You allowing this to happen? What have I done that You’re not letting things work out for me? Why? Why? Why?”

God has been teaching me the painful lesson of learning how

to let go of what is “mine” and accepting what He offers in its place.

DETAILS, DETAILS, DETAILS

My husband and I moved from Hawaii to the mainland after I gave my 90-day notice to my employer. I was informed that they couldn’t afford to keep me for three more months, and I had 30 days instead. This meant that instead of having three months to plan a move across the ocean, we had 30 days.

Our car had to be shipped back to the mainland, and it was scheduled to arrive in California on a Monday. We bought plane tickets and got on the flight; it was only at our layover in Texas that we learned our car would not be available for another day or so. We had no sleeping arrangements ready, and our very tight budget did not allow for extra nights in a hotel.

Before we left Hawaii, I had been offered, and accepted a position in Kentucky. It was *mine!* I had already toured the facility, seen my office, met most of my coworkers, completed all the new hire paperwork; we’d even met the pastor’s wife of the local Adventist church. We had begun house hunting.

Suddenly a snag transferring my license to Kentucky made me ineligible to work in that state. After six weeks on the mainland waiting to get licensed so I could start my job, I no longer had a job to start.

So now we sat at my in-law’s house with no job prospects, no housing options (other than their spare bedroom), and quickly running out of money

to cover the school loans and car payments that didn't stop coming just because we didn't have an income.

I felt confused, frustrated, and angry with God. I had numerous conversations with Him about these feelings, and these are the verses that repeatedly ran through my mind:

"My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' says the Lord. 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts'" (Isa. 55:8, 9).

"Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn. . . . Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him. . . . Do not fret—it leads only to evil" (Ps. 37:5-8).

"Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord" (Ps. 27:14).

WHO'S IN CONTROL?

But I quickly realized that I didn't want to wait! I wanted it right now; and I wanted it *my* way; according to *my* timing, and *my* plan. God seemed to be gently leading me to the mirror and opening my eyes to realize that I needed a serious attitude adjustment.

God also convicted me that I had to let it all go. I had been clinging so tightly to what I thought was *mine*, and He kept gently telling me, "Just let go of it and trust that I have something better for you. Just let it go. Not just the job thing or the house thing, all of it."

But all those plans I'd held tightly all my life, thinking that if I could just make them happen my life would somehow be better.

As I prayed and thought some more, this image came to mind: me holding as tightly as I could to my dreams, a heavy, dirty bundle that was making me dirty from holding onto it. It weighed me down with stress, anxiety, and discouragement. All the while my heavenly Father was standing nearby, reaching out with both hands, constantly offering—begging—to carry it for me.

God's desire was to replace that filthy bundle with a bright, beautiful dream that was so light I couldn't even call it a burden, only a delight. I'd been so busy trying to protect what I thought was mine that I was losing out on what was so much better.

I'd been so busy trying to protect what I thought was mine that I was losing out on that which was so much better.

What a novel idea! The One who designed me would know better than I do. I realized it's a matter of trust: did I trust Him enough to allow Him to do something that I couldn't yet feel? Is He trustworthy enough to guide my feet down paths that I couldn't yet see?

He has proven again and again that the answer to those questions is "yes."

THE BETTER WAY

Two weeks after we arrived on the mainland, I heard that eight of my coworkers at my former job had been laid off and my boss had been demoted. If the company had not refused to honor my 90-day notice, I would have been let go with no warning. As it was, God allowed us to have 30 days.

We had planned a specific route driving back from California. If the car had arrived when it was supposed to, the route we would have taken would have put us in the middle of almost blizzard-like conditions. Because it was delayed, we had time to realize the weather was going to be bad and took a safer route. Two days after the job in Kentucky fell through, my husband was handed a well-paying position with an Adventist company.

"For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future'" (Jer. 29:11).

Yes, He is trustworthy and faithful. 🍀

Erin White lives in Tennessee and is a licensed clinical social worker.

Jesus for Asia

...because people are dying without Jesus



A Hunger for Souls!

Why are there no souls?" Mary cried out to God.

Mary is a Jesus for Asia Bible Worker and her husband is a pastor in India. They had been working in a new village for over a year but hadn't seen any results. So Mary and her husband prayed desperately for the Lord to give them a plan, and He did.

They began praying for their village every morning from 5 a.m. to 6 a.m. At the end of this Mary met a lady who shared a family problem and Mary offered to pray with them for forty days! At first, only the mother joined them, but gradually the father and children came as well.

During those prayer times, Mary and her husband taught the Bible and by the end of the 40 days, the mother had given her life to Jesus, and eventually, her whole family was baptized.

The mother introduced Mary and her husband to another family, and that family introduced them to yet another, until they were holding 40 days of prayer in eight different homes!

At the end, 12 people were baptized.

The pastor of the local Sunday church was angry with Mary because his church members kept leaving his church to join hers. He searched for Mary and her husband every day, hoping to harm them, but God hid them from him. They prayed, "Lord, blindfold him like you blindfolded the people in Sodom and Gomorrah, so that we can keep doing our ministry."

The pastor did not find them until two months later. He brought five men into their home to threaten them, but to their surprise, Mary and her husband sat the men down and gave them a Bible study and tracts to read! They told the pastor that if he would teach Biblical truths, they wouldn't have any problems, but the pastor remained angry.

"If you go to my church members' houses again, I will do something very dangerous to you. There is no guarantee for your lives," the pastor said.

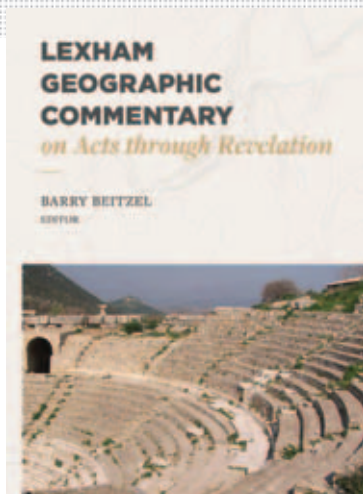
In spite of these threats Mary and her husband remain courageous in their calling and praise God that He has answered their sincere prayer for souls!



Sponsor a Bible worker at
Jesus4asia.org/sponsor

We are receiving many calls from church leaders across India with requests for Bible workers like Mary. 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!

CLOSER LOOK



Lexham Geographic Commentary on Acts through Revelation

Barry J. Beitzel, ed., *Lexham Geographic Commentary on Acts through Revelation* (Bellingham, Wash.: Lexham Press, 2019), 762 pages, \$39.99 (hardcover). Reviewed by Gerald A. Klingbeil, *Adventist Review*.

Real estate agents tell their clients that location is key to selling well. The *Lexham Geographic Commentary* offers a unique take on the commentary genre, focusing on geography and location as a crucial element for understanding the texts of the New Testament. Following the publication of the first volume on the Gospels in 2016, Beitzel and his team of 18 well-known and highly qualified biblical scholars discuss the biblical text thematically, not verse by verse.

The volume is divided into 53 chapters, ranging from “The Topography of Jerusalem in the Book of Acts,” via “Paul’s Early Ministry in Syria and Cilicia: The Silent Years,” to “The Social and Geographical World of Ephesus,” and “Peter’s Christian Communities in

Asia Minor.” A large portion of relevant texts from the New Testament commented upon comes from the book of Acts and its narrative detailing the geographical and numerical growth of the nascent fellowship of the followers of Jesus and its transformation into the early Christian church. While there are individual chapters on the different churches addressed in Revelation 1-3, there is no discussion of the last 19 chapters of this apocalyptic book—something to be expected in a commentary focusing on geography.

Each chapter with a box containing the key points of the chapter, followed by the discussion of significant issues and theories associated with the section under consideration. Explicit geographical descriptions and clear sequences were not always the most important information the biblical authors wanted to communicate, thus requiring careful consideration and, at times, informed guestimates based on known geographical realities. All chapters include at least one map, indicating locations and possible routes discussed in the chapter, together with a number of relevant color images of specific locations or pertinent objects.

The commentary represents a great resource for getting “closer” to the biblical places discussed in it. Each chapter concludes with an extensive bibliography of articles and monographs that offers help to readers who want to dig deeper. The volume also includes a helpful subject index, as well as Scripture and nonbiblical textual sources indexes.

The emphasis on geography and location offers unique angles to well-known biblical texts. Readers are reminded that God’s Word was revealed in *real* time about *real* people in *real* places. Those eager to see God’s handiwork in history will find the vantage point of this volume refreshing, faith-affirming, and relevant for their study of Scripture.

In the introduction Beitzel summarizes: “If the Christian gospel were simply a matter of otherworldliness, or if it were concerned only with applying spiritual or moral values, gaining an appreciation of the spatial dimension of the Bible would hardly matter, and seminal events in the Bible would hardly have been geographically encoded in the text by inspired biblical writers. But it is neither of these! Central to the *kerygma* [message] of the New Testament is the foundational claim that God became a man at a definite moment in time and at a precise point in space.”

For people anxiously awaiting the physical coming of their Lord this reference tool will engage both their minds and their hearts as they follow in the footsteps of the apostles and marvel at the breadth of mission of the early church. ♣

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

WHEN DOING THE RIGHT THING IS COMPLICATED

To live life is to make a series of choices. Some are simpler, such as what cereal to eat for breakfast or what color of shoes to wear. Other choices are more complex because they challenge you ethically.

The scenarios offered here are for personal reflection, or maybe for discussion in small groups you belong to. They remind us that being like Jesus is being ethical always, whether in seemingly small matters or grand and dramatic contexts.—Editors.

You, or someone you know, needs an organ donation. To what lengths would you go to improve your chances of getting a donated organ?

You have \$30,000 to spend on a car. Should you buy a car with all the “bells and whistles” and spend the entire \$30,000, or should you buy a car with fewer features and use the \$5,000 saved to support some mission or community service initiative?

A friend is posting on social media material that is demonstrably false. What course of Christlike action will most help your friend to be more careful in what they post?

In a public place you see a friend being intimate with someone who is not their spouse. What do you do? Whom do you tell? Do you have to tell anyone?

Someone you’ve known for many years moves to your community and begins attending your church. You’re aware that they’ve experienced a number of failed relationships and business disappointments. Should you share with others what you know? Why or why not?



A ballot initiative seeks to raise the salaries of public school teachers, funding the raise by increasing property taxes. Which side should you be on? Why?

You're invited to attend a rally against gun violence scheduled for a Sabbath afternoon. Should you go?

Some of your neighbors have been commenting about the new family that has joined your community. They're uncomfortable with the new neighbors' ethnicity, and have been mumbling about whether the new family is even "legal." What do you say in such conversations?

One of the public schools in your community has been exposed as having a culture of bullying. What will be your level of involvement in putting an end to bullying and raising the standard of tolerance for vulnerable kids?

One of the Sabbath School teachers in your church is slowly losing the ability to teach. How do you tactfully—and honestly—ease them out of such a public role into a more behind-the-scenes role?

Your community has an intersection at which several pedestrians have been killed or injured in the past 12 months. What, if anything, would you do to help civic authorities create a solution to this problem?

REFLECTIONS FROM THE SERVANT QUEEN

I polled a friend in St. Albans, United Kingdom: “What do you think about England having a royal family and a queen?”

Her reply was similar to others I’d heard. “The queen adds a special dignity to being British,” she said.

I recently read *The Servant Queen and the King She Serves*, the King she serves being our heavenly Father!

Every Christmas afternoon at 3:00, after kids have opened their presents, Christmas meals have been eaten, and

families are relaxing together, citizens of the United Kingdom can listen on the radio or watch on the British Broadcasting Corporation the queen’s annual Christmas broadcast. Two of the most recurring themes are forgiveness and loving our neighbors. In 2014, Queen Elizabeth said: “For me, the life of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, whose birth we celebrate today,

is an inspiration and an anchor in my life.”

I picture in my mind’s eye a solid, heavy anchor. Jesus, the Prince of Peace, is our solid anchor, providing us with all that is good. The queen continued: “Christ’s example has taught me to seek to respect and value all people of whatever faith, or none.”

To hold people in high regard, those of different faiths, even those with no faith, treating them with respect and consideration is so like Christ, humble and non-confrontational. How can we learn about each other, become friends, if we don’t treat others with respect?

In her 1975 broadcast, Queen Elizabeth said: “[Jesus’] simple message of love has been turning the world upside down ever since [His birth]. He showed that what people are and what they do does matter and does make all the difference.”

I think we all know that everything we do matters and makes a difference, even though the things that get news coverage or “likes” on social media don’t tend to encourage little, thoughtful acts.

The queen correctly compares the little things we do in our daily lives to stones thrown into water. “Even the smallest pebble changes the whole pattern of the water. . . . Kindness, sympathy, resolution, and courteous behavior are infectious.”

Most of us—the “smallest pebbles”—doubt that anything we do matters in the big picture. But we have an impact. The queen speaks of it, she has experienced it in her life. On some level we know it too: it gives us a reason to continue doing what is good and right.

“I know that the only way to live my life is to try to do what is right,” Queen Elizabeth wrote. “To take the long view, to give of my best in all that the day brings, and to put my trust in God. . . . I draw strength from the message of hope in the Christian gospel.”

I find such inspiration in these sweet, simple words. Like us, the queen draws strength from her faith in God. He provides her with stability and is her anchor. She reminds us that there is a purpose in doing right, taking the long view instead of simply satisfying our immediate impulses, and putting our trust in God. ♣

Sharon Tennyson is distribution and logistics coordinator for Adventist Review Ministries.

THERE IS A PURPOSE
IN DOING RIGHT,
TAKING THE LONG
VIEW INSTEAD OF
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IMPULSES.

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