

ADVENTIST REVIEW

**AUGUST 2022: ADVOCATING FOR THE VULNERABLE
+ CHARACTERS OR COMPUTERS + THE SCANDAL
OF BIOCHEMICAL EVOLUTION + THE CHRISTIAN'S
CALL TO DISOBEDIENCE**

ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD

Does my job really matter?

“The soul that
gives is always

refreshed.”

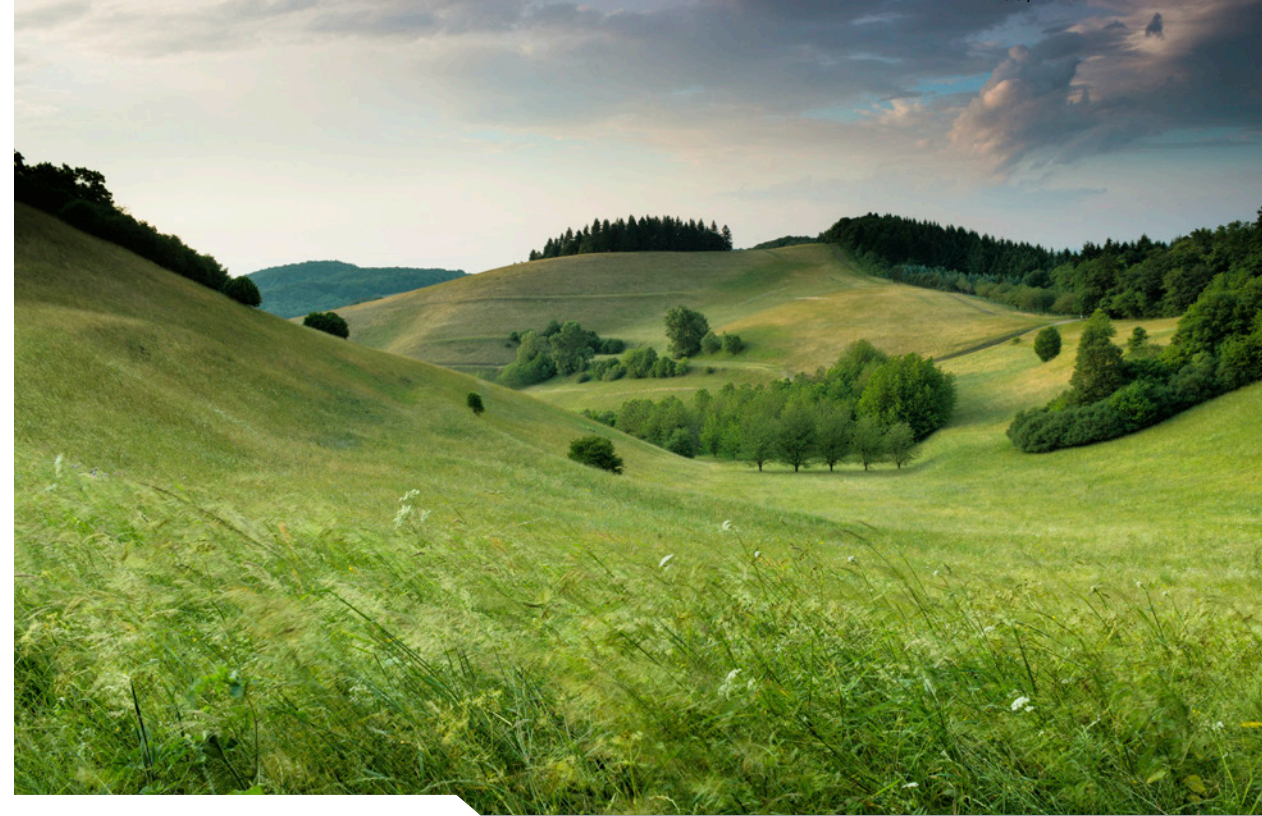
—Ray Hartwell

Director at Grateful Living
(Trust Services, Stewardship)
Georgia Cumberland Conference



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TRENDING

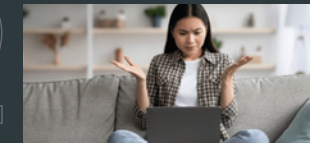
THE MOST SHARED STORIES ON ADVENTISTREVIEW.ORG LAST MONTH:

1



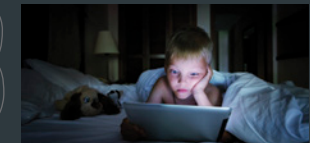
“Ish-Chamudot,” by Clifford Goldstein

2



“Logged In and Checked Out,” by Seth Pierce

3



“A Guide to Your Kids and Screen Time,” by Sheann Brandon

4



“Confessions of a Church-State Separationist,” by Nicolas P. Miller

5



“Buildings That Will Last Until Jesus Comes,” by Marcos Paseggi

(life)†

LIFE *more* ABUNDANT

JOHN 10:10

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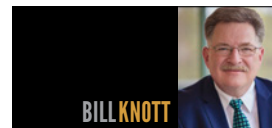
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October 26 - October 29, 2023 - Indian Wells, CA
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†AMEN will return to Indian Wells, California in 2024 to celebrate our 20th anniversary.



BILL KNOTT

What we have memorized from Scripture will be our sustenance and stay. I testify.

In All Generations

Nothing is so characteristic of older generations as lamenting the choices of those that come after them. As memory wraps the world of our own youth in gauzy nostalgia, we can't imagine that those behind us could find meaning in their lives without what made our lives seem valuable. So we predict the imminent decline of civilization because adult children prefer avocado toast for breakfast instead of eggs and potatoes, or our grandkids find no solace in *The Song of Hiawatha*.

We deplore "the fashions of today," forgetting that there are photos somewhere that show us in even more awkward attire. Every time alumni pictures from the schools I attended appear in Facebook posts, my heart rate elevates a bit. Will they see the plaid sport coat I so shamelessly wore to academy banquets, or the mutton-chop sideburns I sported as a college freshman? We are well advised, dear reader, to draw a veil of kindness over all these scenes . . .

And dare we speak of music? Even as we note the jarring crassness of some contemporary musical genres, shall we laud ourselves for preferring lyrics that only hinted at what now is explicit? We wince—much as our parents winced—at rhythms we don't understand; at soundtracks that to us seem calculated for sensory overload instead of meaning. Where, or where, are the gentle

folk ballads of Peter, Paul, and Mary; the endless upward modulations of anything by Barry Manilow; or even, gasp!—the soaring vocals of Sandi Patty? I have my preferences, for sure, but is there anything more righteous about the warm harmonies of the Gaither Vocal Band, to which grey heads nod in approval, than the warm devotion of a Hillsong anthem that sings faith to yearning young adults?

All of this might yield in a conclusion that there are few objective values that continue from generation to generation—that everything is about taste and preference; that each new cohort must "find its own truth." But the story of Christianity, now 20 centuries old, reminds us that there are some enduring behaviors that have proven themselves valuable in all times and places—in temperate, thoughtful cultures like the ones from which we think we sprang, and painful, broken environments like the one we now share simultaneously with six living generations.

So here is one—by no means the most important—yet still one trans-generational habit worth noting: *memorization*. This isn't a tribute to the worn-out pedagogy that bade us memorize vocabulary lists, or dates for dynasties and battles. But memorization—the conscious intake of rich content by repeated habit into the marrow of our bones and the recesses of our brains—has

proven its enduring value irrespective of the times and seasons. Saints from all ages, including this time, testify to the power, the comfort, the companionship of lines we choose to memorize, particularly those from God's Word.

A friend recently let slip that he had just finished memorizing the letter to the Galatians. I congratulated him warmly, for there are certainly easier texts than Paul's admonishing critique of those he called "foolish" for slipping back into the clutches of legalism. But I was even more delighted when my friend told me he had recited the entire letter—all 149 verses and 3,096 English words—to his family at evening worship. His older children were fascinated—and intrigued to try this long-valued spiritual practice. Even if their enthusiasm falters and they never reach their father's mark, they will bless the Lord for every line they anchor in their hearts. On difficult days and never-ending nights, when minds are so burdened that clarity eludes us, what we have memorized from Scripture will be our sustenance and stay. I testify.

And should you seek a modest option, try Psalm 90, "a prayer of Moses, the man of God." Here's how it begins: "Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations . . ."†

Bill Knott

HE NEEDS ALL OF US

It has often been mentioned that God doesn't need us to get things done. But I see it differently, and Ellen White often indicated He does need us. When we are willing, we witness for Him, and after reading through the 2022 GC Session Supplement issue, the edition points that out. I recently viewed a YouTube presentation about which Christian denomination today does or does not believe in evolution. The presenter went through several denominations. Regarding Adventists, he said that we do not accept evolution and added this comment: "Seventh-day Adventists are the most racially diversified church in the world. White, 37 percent; Black, 32 percent; Asian, 8 percent; Latino, 15 percent; mix and others, 8 percent, consisting of 21.3 million members." Praise God He uses all of us. My compliments to all the hands involved in preparing the "Jesus Is Coming: Get Involved" special issue.

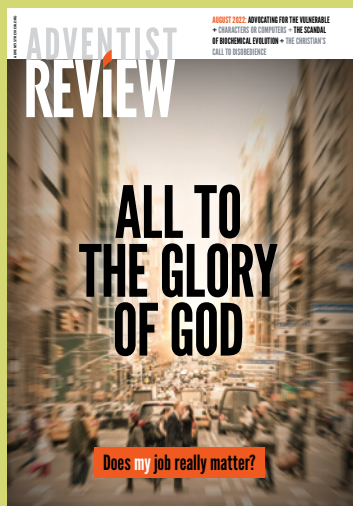
Robert Rouillard

Lakewood, Washington

VALUING THE GIFT

I was getting acquainted with new students at the Walla Walla University School of Nursing. As Allison and I chatted, I discovered that she was not an

Adventist and had no Seventh-day Adventist ties, that her father was a theology professor at another church's university, and that her brother was attending Loma Linda



University's School of Medicine. I said, "That's strange that you and your brother, with no Adventist ties, would end up in Adventist schools at the same time." I will never forget Allison's reply: "That's not strange at all, Mr. McClay. You folks happen to have the best Protestant private school system in the world." Sometimes we, who are inside the system, do not value the gift we have been given.

Bruce McClay, M.A., M.L.S.
Battle Ground, Washington

A BLESSED MOVEMENT

"I was thrilled to receive *Adventist Review* and the 2022 GC Session Supplement for St. Louis when thousands of Adventists and leaders congregated for reports and elections for the quinquennium. I was touched by the story Bill Knott told about the comments his mother made as she contemplated the 50,000 believers in Toronto in 2000. "I wish my mother could have seen this," she said. "She never knew how big her church was." This made me think of a young man I met in Ireland who told me how inspiring it was when he went to the first and only World Youth Congress in Zurich in 1969,

"That our founders were unafraid to take a moral stance against a social ill—slavery—makes me proud to belong to such a sturdy spiritual lineage."

—**LOURDES E. MORALES-GUDMUNDSSON**, RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA.

when 12,000 young people were there. Coming from a small country, he felt blessed to see so many young people who loved the Lord. I've been to many sessions and left inspired by the growth of our church. We have more than 22 million members and still a lot of work to be done until Jesus comes. I also wish that my mother could have seen how the Lord has blessed this movement!"

Leo Ranzolin, Sr.
Estero, Florida

MOTHERS ARE VERY SPECIAL

Thank you, thank you, for the article by Jared Thurmon. For some time I have been frustrated that the *Review* seemed to promote women in roles other than the one God has established for them. In this article you get it right. The highest goal for any person is helping others connect with Jesus. God has, in a very special way, given that privilege to mothers. Thank you for affirming that in this article.

Pastor J. Fred Calkins

OUR ROOTS AS PEACEMAKERS

Thank you for printing Douglas Morgan's carefully researched article that traces the Adventist roots of noncombatancy and

peacemaking to the very founders of the Advent movement. That our founders were unafraid to take a moral stance against a social ill—slavery—makes me proud to belong to such a sturdy spiritual lineage. Morgan's article has reminded us that the sixth commandment still calls us to find avenues that affirm life, rather than take it away—for any reason. Not to do so is a violation of our claim to be the remnant who keep all the commandments and follow Jesus' mandate to love, not kill, our enemies.

Lourdes E. Morales-Gudmundsson, Ph.D.
Riverside, California

ADVENTISTS AND SPORTS

I really appreciate the *Review* tackling relevant topics as it did with Adventists and sports in the May issue. As a mother of boys and one who lives in an

Adventist academy setting, healthy mindsets about sports and balanced handling of participation are issues that I ponder on a regular basis. I appreciate the insights offered in the May issue. If I could have asked for deeper probing in this line of discussion, it would be how to help kids/teens understand, navigate, and accept the lower achievement level that sports will be able to be played at for most Adventist young people. And in light of that, how to set up school sports programs to reflect Adventist values while placing our kids in positions where they can still feel proud of their participation. There are many spiritual, practical, and administrative ramifications for these topics for Adventist parents and teachers.

Jaclyn Knight
New Market, Virginia

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.

"Set free those who are crushed. Break every evil chain." - Isaiah 58:6



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"All the texts in this Sabbath School quarterly came from God as He opened Scripture to me while I was walking through difficult experiences." p. 15

NEWS



NAD Professional Services director, Rohann Wellington, gives advice to tech-minded missionaries at his talk on digital evangelism.

PHOTO: PIETER DAMSTEEGT

CALLED CONVENTION PROVIDES HUNDREDS OF TRAINING OPTIONS

PASTORS AND THEIR FAMILIES ARE ENCOURAGED TO LEARN AND GROW.

RACHEL SCRIBNER, NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION NEWS

It's afternoon at the CALLED Pastors' Family Convention, and the bustling lunch crowd is starting to disperse. A few of the remaining wanderers pause under the bright-blue CALLED banner to check today's schedule of events. Guests who didn't plan ahead are faced with a choice. Which of the many educational seminars will they attend this time?

Near the sleek, modern tech lab with its tasteful equipment displays, a talk on podcasting is about to begin.

Downstairs, in a spacious film-

screening room, Mark Tamaleaa is showing ministry videos and sharing tips from more than two decades in youth and young adult ministry.

And just around the corner in a stately room lined with upholstered chairs, G. Alexander Bryant, president of the North American Division (NAD), is sharing lessons from the story of Paul and Barnabas.

Over the course of several days (June 19-22) the 2022 CALLED Pastors' Family Convention offered 135 educational seminars, with more

than 25 simultaneous classes in a single afternoon. Presenters included NAD officers and department directors, health-care professionals, technical innovators, pastors, and experts in a wide variety of fields. The topics were varied, but all were chosen to provide training and tools for pastors and chaplains.

The convention also hosted a series of seminars for pastors' spouses and created the CALLED-Kids Go Fish for Kids meetings for younger children, as well as the PK



Matthew Lucio, pastor and creator of The Adventist History Podcast, outlines a simple strategy for podcasters to follow.

PHOTO: PEITER DAMSTEEGT

Journey program for older pastors' kids.

The NAD Ministerial Association selected a wide range of pastoral learning opportunities based on seven "core qualities of an effective pastor." These include character, evangelism, leadership, management, relationship, scholarship, and worship.

MIXING AND MATCHING

There were four "boot camps"—or dedicated seminar tracks—that pastors and ministry teams could attend, either as a complete set or mixed and matched with other topics. The four boot camps were geared toward (1) church planters, (2) church revitalization, (3) pastor evangelists, and (4) volunteer lay pastors.

"Every church has a culture, whether you like it or not. Yours does. Mine does," Joanne Cortes, pastor and church planter in the Washington, D.C., area, said during the pastor evangelists' boot camp. "Ask yourself: Why do we do what we do? Why does the church exist?" she said. "Does it draw people to Jesus? Does it make people feel welcome? Or is it done because it's always been done?"

A sampling of the many outreach-based seminars included a

class on ministering to the dying, led by Claudio and Pamela Consegua, director and associate director of NAD Family Ministries; a talk on community care by W. Derrick Lea, director of Adventist Community Services; and advice for welcoming the blind community to church from Christian Record Services director Diane Thurber.

Leslie Pollard, president of Oakwood University, hosted a panel discussion on ministering to people who identify as LGBTQ+, with a focus on theology, science, ethics, and relationship. TechTalk seminars covered topics including online mission work, with digital missionary Justin Khoe, podcasting with Matthew Lucio, and social media strategy with Adventist Learning Community director Adam Fenner.

"Our presenters are experts in the field of digital discipleship, worship, and evangelism practices, and we believe that their success strategies can act as a catalyst for other ministers to engage in digital evangelism," Rohann Wellington, tech lab supervisor and director of the NAD Professional Services Department, said.

A few of the varied finance-based sessions included personal finance tips from NAD treasurer Randy

Robinson, a financial refresh from Michael Anthony Harpe, director of NAD Stewardship Ministries, and advice on raising funds for church projects from Michael Brown, associate director of NAD Philanthropic Services for Institutions.

The panel "How to Use Media for Local Evangelism" featured a discussion with Adventist media ministry leaders Shawn Boonstra (Voice of Prophecy), Elizabeth Talbot (Jesus 101), Debleaire Snell (Breath of Life), Roy Ice (Faith for Today), John Bradshaw (It Is Written), and John Geli (Life Talk Radio).

Angeline David Brauer, director of NAD Health Ministries, led a class on mental health and resilience strategies. At the seminar Brauer introduced Ricardo J. Whyte and gave out copies of a workbook co-written by Whyte, *Killing Burn-out*. Whyte used the book to guide a group discussion on resilience. "If you master your mind, you can and will master your life," Whyte wrote in the book.

Back in the convention center, as the seminars end and the meeting doors swing open, the hallway fills up with the noise of a thousand lively conversations. The pastors, en route to their next destination, pass once again under the bright-blue banner in the hall. CALLED, it reads, in large white letters. And indeed, the men and women walking beneath it carry new books, technology, resources, and fresh ideas to take back to the places where they are called to serve. ▀



BATTLE CREEK ACADEMY CELEBRATES 150-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

CHARLOTTE ERICKSON, LAKE UNION HERALD AND ADVENTIST REVIEW

Several hundred alumni and guests gathered in Battle Creek, Michigan, United States, June 2-5, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Battle Creek Academy (BCA).

The first school established by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, BCA officially opened on June 3, 1872, with Goodloe Harper Bell as the first teacher. Some of Bell's original students included John Harvey and Will Keith Kellogg, John Loughborough, and Ellen White's sons, James Edson and William. The school had several locations in the early years and is now located on Parkway Drive off Limit Street.

The original 12-student school in Battle Creek grew into the second-largest parochial school system in the world, with more than 1 million students in primary and secondary schools, colleges, and universities in 212 countries. As the flagship school of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, BCA now enrolls a diverse student body, hailing from five countries and where English is a second language for many of the students.

The anniversary celebrations began on June 2 with the annual

alumni golf outing. That evening more than 200 alumni and guests attended a banquet and awards ceremony. An alumni choir and band provided music throughout the weekend. Friday's activities included a fancy drill exhibition by the Orion Pathfinder Club from Toronto, Ontario, Canada; a K-9 demonstration by Sergeant Chad Fickle and his dog, Ace, of the Battle Creek Police Department, and a Burmese cultural presentation.

Battle Creek mayor Mark Behnke spoke briefly to the alumni assembled at the Battle Creek Tabernacle on Friday evening about the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and school and their ongoing involvement with the city of Battle Creek. He then presented the BCA board chair, Dan Greutz, a proclamation from the city that read in part, "Therefore, on behalf of all the citizens, we do hereby proclaim that Battle Creek Academy be recognized for the 150th anniversary and the contributions that they continue to make to the Battle Creek community."

Former vice president of education for the North American Division Larry Blackmer spoke for the

Saturday (Sabbath) morning church service. Blackmer also served for seven years as associate superintendent in the Michigan Conference. In his sermon he emphasized the importance of not only Christian education but Seventh-day Adventist Christian education in preparing young people to be future leaders of the church. For Sabbath evening vespers David Yeagley presented a one-man play on BCA's first teacher, Goodloe Harper Bell. Currently serving as the director of young adult and camp ministries for the Washington Conference, Yeagley wrote the play, titled "God's Goodness Through 150 Years of Battle Creek Academy."

On Sunday morning BCA alumni and current students partnered with Leila Arboretum for a seed-planting activity and a family fun walk from the arboretum to BCA across the street. Former BCA kindergarten teacher Nicole Mattson closed the weekend with a devotional in the Chapel of the Pines.

Alumni and guests who attended said they were thrilled with the weekend activities and the opportunity to celebrate such a grand occasion. Alumna Mary Jane High, BCA class of 1969, said, "Reuniting with people we haven't seen in a very long time was just a little taste of what heaven will be like!" ▀



Sarah Lindsey, the first woman licensed as a Seventh-day Adventist minister

PHOTOGRAPH OF PIONEER ADVENTIST WOMAN MINISTER DISCOVERED

SARAH LINDSEY WAS A SOUGHT-AFTER PREACHER AND LEADER IN EARLY ADVENTISM.

MICHAEL W. CAMPBELL, NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION NEWS

A photograph recently discovered in the George I. Butler Collection at Loma Linda University read “Sister Lindsey.”¹ George I. Butler (1834-1918) was president of the General Conference from 1871 to 1874 and again from 1880 to 1888. Loma Linda University has a family photograph album that contains mostly albumen prints of early Adventist church leaders and family members. These cabinet photos were cursorily identified, and to this day many remain unidentified.

By a careful process, other possible options for this photo were considered and eliminated in consultation with a group of leading Adventist historians. For example, there was a “Sarah Lindsay” (with the surname spelled with an “a”) for whom we do have a picture, and so we know it was not her. There were also two younger Lindseys who

would have been about half her age or younger, but the picture appears to be of a woman about the age of 60, and the photograph, along with others, can be largely dated to the late 1880s or early 1890s. Additional genealogical research reveals that there are no other family members by that name either.²

Thus, the clear provenance makes for an increasingly strong case that indeed it must be a picture of this elusive person! Also, thanks to technology, this historic photograph has been colorized using digital algorithms to provide actual “color” to this historic treasure.

So who was this pioneer Adventist woman?

Sarah was born on April 14, 1832, to Noah (1812-1894) and Hannah Hallock (1813-1895) in Ulysses, Pennsylvania. She came from a staunch Seventh Day Baptist family

and attended Alfred University (1851-1852).³

In later years she traced the beginnings of Adventism in their area to a tour by J. N. Andrews and Hiram Edson around 1851.⁴ By the summer of 1857 R. F. Cottrell would conduct evangelistic meetings in Ulysses, where he baptized four people, possibly including Sarah, for their “deep conviction of the truth.” By December 11, 1857, Sarah sent her first note to the editor of the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*: “I feel grateful . . . that the light of His glorious gospel now illumines this once-benighted heart of mine.”⁵

By late 1859 Sarah had responded to a challenge to women who were “lacking in that heart consecration” and therefore reticent to preach. In early 1860 she responded by asking the editor to resolve the biblical admonition whether it was right for women to keep silent in churches yet in other places the Bible encourages them to teach the gospel.⁶ Even before marriage it seems clear that Sarah was eager to serve in ministry.

On July 16, 1861, Sarah married John Lindsey (1821-1881), a widower who had been a Millerite believer and in 1846 had been baptized by Joseph Bates. He had previously been married to Esther (1818-1860), who had tragically died from tuberculosis. They had an 11-year-old child, Mary Ellen (1849-1880).⁷ After his wife’s death, John had moved to Ulysses, Pennsylvania. He no doubt also met Sarah while there; she was about a decade his junior. It is known

that she was active in their local church and beyond. They had a daughter of their own, Katherine, born in 1862.

In 1867 Sarah contracted both diphtheria and typhoid and was “almost ready to drop into the grave.” By 1868 there is some indication that she had begun a more active public ministry, where she would spend the next 30 years establishing churches across New York and Pennsylvania. The stunning apostasy of Nathan Fuller in the summer of 1869 contributed to the need for individuals, such as John and Sarah, to work closely together in ministry. Sarah and her husband went as Seventh-day Adventist representatives to the 1870 Seventh Day Baptist General Conference session, showing the confidence the Adventist denomination had in their leadership and diplomacy.

The years 1871 and 1872 were especially noteworthy for Sarah, with a wide range of evangelistic meetings. The couple frequently traveled together as a team, although Sarah appears to have been the more visible preacher of the two. On August 9, 1871, she received a ministerial license from the New York and Pennsylvania Conference.⁸ She is recognized as the first woman to receive a ministerial license in Adventist history.

On October 5, 1871, during a series of evangelistic meetings at Beaver Dams, New York, Sarah competed for the attention of residents against the Barnum and Bailey Circus that showed up at the county fair some

This intrepid pioneer couple worked as a team, and both before and after her husband’s death Sarah showed a strong interest in evangelism.

10 miles away in Corning. She was reported to have drawn larger crowds than the circus!⁹ In another instance, John and Sarah held evangelistic meetings at Woodhull, New York. It is notable that in their travels, at times Sarah gave funeral discourses, a role that one might expect for her husband.¹⁰

After 1872, the couple made Beaver Dams, New York, their primary base, from which they ventured out on shorter preaching tours. They alternately received both colporteur and ministerial licenses at various conference sessions. By 1880 Sarah reported from the Wellsville church as part of the Pennsylvania Sabbath School Association.¹¹ Tragically, on October 11, 1881, John died from “cancer of the liver.” Despite his death, Sarah remained active in ministry. One newspaper reports that in 1883 she shared a “Temperance lecture from charts” in North Bingham, New York, which was reported to be “very interesting and instructive.”

On December 29, 1914, Sarah passed to her rest and is buried in the Hallock family plot, in an unmarked grave, in Ulysses, Pennsylvania.

This intrepid pioneer couple worked as a team, and both before and after her husband’s death Sarah showed a strong interest in evangelism. She was a persuasive and successful advocate in sharing her Adventist faith with others, leading new believers to Christ, raising up churches, and even competing with the circus and conduct-

ing temperance lectures as the first licensed female minister in Seventh-day Adventist history.

“I am excited to see this photo of Sarah Lindsey finally emerge,” Andrews University professor Strayer said, “from the dusty pages of the Butler album! May her thrilling career as our first licensed female minister inspire other women to follow her example.”

¹The photograph is part of the Loma Linda University library’s digital collection, available only to those with academic access, at <https://cdm.llu.edu/digital/collection/sdahpfa/id/325/rec/19>.

²According to Denis Fortin, who has done extensive research on the Butler family in preparation for a forthcoming biography about G. I. Butler, no relative exists by that name, eliminating another possibility. Personal email from Denis Fortin to the author.

³These biographical details are accessible on [ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com), which requires registration to log in: <http://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/tools/tree/181911285/invitees/accept?inviteid=dc66c9ad-3830-4a10-9f4f-9381dc621c26>.

⁴John Lindsey and S.A.H. Lindsey, “Pennsylvania,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, May 9, 1871, p. 166.

⁵“From Sister Hallock,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Dec. 31, 1857, p. 63.

⁶Sarah A. Hallock, “A Query.—Bro. Smith,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Jan. 12, 1860, p. 64.

⁷Milton Hook, in his *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists* article, incorrectly assumes that John and Esther had two children. This is based on incorrect genealogical information. For a comparison of sources, see “Lindsey, Sarah A. Hallock (1832-1914).”

⁸“Tenth Annual Report of the N. Y. and Pa. Conference,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Sept. 12, 1871, p. 102.

⁹Circus Historical Society, “P. T. Barnum’s Circus Routes 1871-1880,” <http://www.classic.circushistory.org/Routes/PTB1871.htm>; John Lindsey and S.A.H. Lindsey, “New York and Pennsylvania,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Nov. 7, 1871, p. 166.

¹⁰Obituary Notices. *Review and Herald*, October 27, 1874, 143.

¹¹See *Youth’s Instructor*, Dec. 8, 1880, p. 215.

ADVENTIST RADIO IS CHANGING LIVES IN THE PERUVIAN AMAZONIA

SEVERAL FAMILIES FROM ISOLATED COMMUNITIES HAVE FOUND BIBLE TRUTH THROUGH THE AIRWAVES.

ANGELA ARIAS, SOUTH AMERICAN DIVISION AND ADVENTIST REVIEW

Traveling up the Itaya River for more than two hours from the beautiful island of Iquitos is enough time to realize that neither rain nor distances can prevent God's Word from reaching people. This is what happened in the Canta Gallo community, a rural hamlet in the Loreto region of the Peruvian Amazon jungle.

district pastor in the Maynas province, said. "These people listen to Radio Nuevo Tiempo. They have studied the Faith of Jesus Bible lessons. Now they are following up with a Revelation course, and I am very happy, very grateful, for the support received."

South American Division (SAD) radio director Tomas Parras



Nuevo Tiempo radio team visited the Canta Gallo community in Peruvian Amazon jungle.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF TOMÁS PARRA

"Canta Gallo is a village, a rural hamlet where four, five families have been baptized, and we hope by the end of the month to have about twelve [Adventist] families in this town," Cristian Carrera, a

Contreras said that when he arrived in Canta Gallo, he had a wonderful surprise. "We found that there are several families who are Adventists and who got to know the gospel of Jesus through Radio

Nuevo Tiempo," he said. "This is the reason it's important to keep focusing on this great ministry, because we don't know where radio waves can reach and their impact in people's hearts. It's an important job, because it prepares citizens for the kingdom of heaven."

A FAMILY TOUCHED BY THE GOSPEL

The goal is to continue preaching with more emphasis a message of salvation through media, radio leaders said. This applied to the case of Liz Amparo and her family. She was about to take her life when the voice of hope on the radio touched her heart.

"I got to the point of wanting to kill myself, but then I began to listen to Radio Nuevo Tiempo," she shared. "Then I felt a great peace, and now I feel happy. The radio prepared me to meet Jesus."

Amparo said that now, when she meets other people, she tells them about Jesus, and adds, "If you want to know more, please listen to Radio Nuevo Tiempo."

Her husband, Alberto Habram, has also been touched by the messages and is a new person in Christ, she said.

"Thanks to the radio I have been able to learn more about Jesus," Alberto said. "I had lost my self-esteem as a father because I had a problem with alcohol, but God changed my heart. Now I am a member of Christ's family thanks to Radio Nuevo Tiempo and the Seventh-day Adventist Church." ❖



Sabbath School Commentary podcast host Morgan Vincent recording the new season.

CREDIT: ADVENTIST RECORD

REVAMPED SABBATH SCHOOL PODCAST SEEKS TO ENHANCE STUDY TIME

LEADERS SAY EXPRESSING VARIOUS PERSPECTIVES ADDS VALUE TO THE WEEKLY BIBLE DISCUSSION.

JULIANA MUNIZ, ADVENTIST RECORD

The *Sabbath School Quarterly Commentary* podcast, a North New South Wales (NNSW) Conference initiative in Australia, is launching its new season with a brand-new format aimed at empowering Sabbath School discussions.

Produced by NNSW digital evangelism strategies coordinator Henrique Felix, the podcast's twelfth season is hosted by Avondale University church associate pastor Morgan Vincent. It features an array of special guests, including the author of the July-September 2022 lesson, Gavin Anthony, and Australian Union Conference Sabbath School director Lyndelle Peterson.

"Up until last season, the format consisted of just one person explaining their point of view, but there was not much space for discussion, which is the opposite of what should happen in

a regular Sabbath School class," Felix explained.

"This season, we brought the format that we use for the All Things Evangelism podcast—another podcast produced by the NNSW evangelism department—with a host and a guest, bringing more dynamic to the discussion," he added.

Joining the podcast for two episodes this season, Anthony—who is currently president of the Iceland Conference in the Trans-European Division—talks about his journey to write this quarter's lesson, "In the Crucible With Christ," and the accompanying book, *The Refiner's Fire*. Both publications explore the theme of suffering and pain, which Anthony has experienced intensely, mostly during his first decade of ministry.

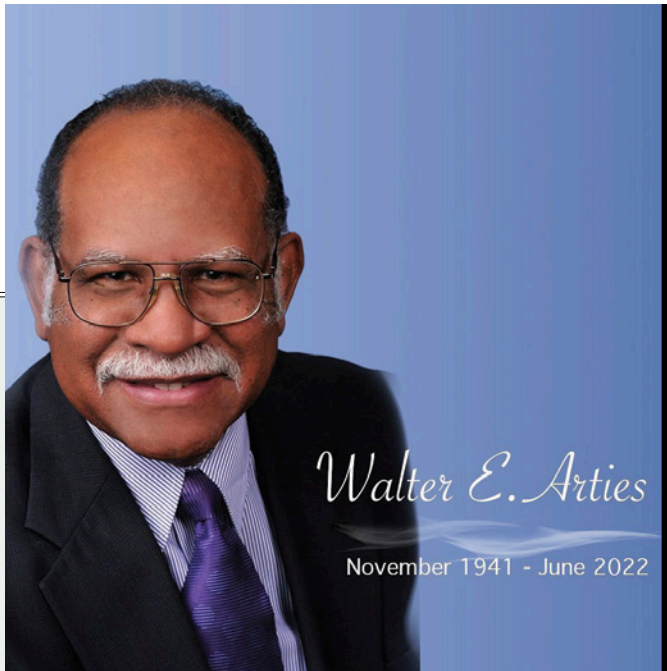
"I wrote these Sabbath School lessons some years ago, as God began to unfold certain realities

and truths to me. And it became a very personal journey," he said. "All the texts in this Sabbath School quarterly came from God as He opened Scripture to me while I was walking through difficult experiences. So we could consider in one sense that these Sabbath School lessons are my theological autobiography."

According to Felix, the goal of producing this podcast is to inspire Sabbath School leaders and attendees with an in-depth perspective on the quarter's lessons.

"We're very excited about this season's guests, who will bring additional insights to be shared in Sabbath School classes, and it's particularly inspiring to hear the ideas from the lesson's author," he said.

Peterson, who will also be featured in two episodes, said the podcast is an excellent resource to enhance study time. "It's always great to be able to hear from a variety of different sources and perspectives about the lesson topic for the week, and I believe this podcast will really add value to a Sabbath School teacher's lesson preparation," she said. ❖



BREATH OF LIFE FOUNDER WALTER E. ARTIES DIES AT 80

RENOWNED SOLOIST, RECORDING ARTIST,
AND MEDIA PRODUCER

ADVENTIST REVIEW STAFF

Walter Eugene Arties III, a Seventh-day Adventist singer and pastor known as the founder of Breath of Life Television Ministries, died, after an illness, on June 26 in Phoenix, Arizona, United States. He was born on November 12, 1941, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and at his death was 80.

Arties showed a talent for music from when he was very young, singing at various Adventist evangelistic meetings and college campuses across the United States. In 1974 Arties was instrumental in the founding of Breath of Life Television Ministries in Newbury Park, California. The ministry was aimed at an African American audience. According to Arties, the move was the direct result of “prayer, fasting, counseling with church leaders, and divine intervention.”

Maurice Valentine, recently elected

General Conference vice president, reflected on the Breath of Life ministry’s contribution. “Through the decades, [Breath of Life] has been a great blessing to people of all backgrounds. For people of color, it was revolutionary in many ways. . . . It came into existence at a time when there were few TV shows depicting persons of color.”

Arties was ordained to the gospel ministry in 1982, during the annual Black convocation of the Southern California Conference. C. D. Brooks, then field secretary of the General Conference and speaker/director for Breath of Life, preached at the ceremony.

By then Arties had been involved in public evangelism and outreach ministry. He was widely known as vocal soloist, choir director, and music arranger. He had also released several albums through

Chapel Records, including *Gentle Exhortations*, which won the 1982-1983 Religion in Media Award.

Arties retired in 2005. At his retirement party he received a plaque “in grateful appreciation” for his “outstanding leadership at the Adventist Media Center and the Voice of Prophecy,” and his “untiring commitment to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.” At that time Arties was commended for his “outstanding musical contribution,” described as enriching and a blessing.

Connie Vandeman Jeffery, an old friend of the family who worked with Arties at the Adventist Media Center for 10 years, recalled his impact on her personal and professional life and lamented his death. “He was with us too brief a time, but he is not gone. He lives on through his music, his witness, and his love for Jesus,” Jeffery said.

Valentine also reflected on Arties’ contribution as a singer and church minister. “Globally enjoyed, his stratospheric tenor voice was revolutionary because he had a range that we came to accept was not falsetto, but conversely, he could, in fact, easily and comfortably reach high notes and sustain them with unbelievable control that religious musical artists have adopted to this very day,” Valentine wrote. “But his best attribute was not what he did for his church, but how he reflected the humble character of Christ to the world.”

Arties is survived by his wife, Beverly, and his nieces, Ethelda and Arlene Dyer. ♠



A LOCAL U.S. CONGREGATION IN MIAMI OPENS VISION CARE CENTER.

Building on the principle that effective churches take care of a community’s physical and spiritual needs was at the heart when the Tabernacle Seventh-day Adventist Church in Miami, Florida, officially opened the Albert C. Pierre/Rhonda Eyes Alliance Vision Care Center in March. The purpose is to provide affordable vision care to those who need it most.



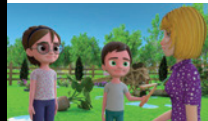
NEW PORTUGUESE ADVENTIST HYMNAL HAS A REPERTOIRE OF 600

HYMNS. After almost four years of work, the committee responsible for the new Portuguese Adventist Hymnal in South America announced a July launch. The work of the hymnal committee, created in March 2018, was divided into three parts: theological analysis, literary and linguistic analysis, and musical analysis. The format of the hymnal was reformulated to give greater prominence to the doctrinal identity of the Adventist Church.



OAKWOOD UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT ELECTED FOR A THIRD TERM.

Leslie N. Pollard was reelected president of Oakwood University at a meeting of the Corporate Members of the Oakwood University Corporation on June 16. Pollard and his administrative team have prayerfully and skillfully led the institution through the COVID-19 pandemic, a cybersecurity attack on the institution, and many more obstacles. Despite these challenges, Oakwood University has experienced growth in enrollment, new graduate programs, financial stability, and community outreach and service partnerships.



IN COLOMBIA, ADVENTIST CHURCH RELEASES ANIMATED SERIES.

The North Colombian Union Conference (NCUC) released weekly episodes of an animated 12-episode series for children to be used throughout its local churches. The series is the first initiative of its kind launched by NCUC’s Children’s and Adolescent Ministry, produced by the church’s Hope Media Colombia center. Each episode in the series, titled *True Stewards of Jesus*, is five to six minutes long and focuses on Christian stewardship. It also includes an accompanying activity book.



ADRA BULGARIA INAUGURATES NEW MEDICAL-SOCIAL CENTER.

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) has served in Bulgaria for the past 30 years. Following the long tradition of providing care to people, it recently established a new medical-social center in the town of Pazardzhik. It was launched with several goals: to ensure the prevention of diseases; to provide free medical and dental treatments; to organize and conduct psychotherapeutic trainings; and, finally, to be a place for development of social entrepreneurship, as well as other social activities.



ADVENTIST CHURCH CELEBRATES HUNDREDS OF BAPTISMS IN NORTHERN MEXICO.

Thousands of Seventh-day Adventists in the state of Baja California, Mexico, gathered to celebrate the culmination of evangelism efforts that began earlier this year and resulted in 700 new believers joining the church. More than 4,800 leaders and church members traveled to the Baja California Center in Rosarito to take part in a Sabbath worship program on May 28, where government and church leaders spoke and witnessed the work of the church and the baptism of 230 persons.



ADVENTIST REVIEW MINISTRIES NEWSLETTER

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WORKING FOR JESUS

Ministry is possible wherever you are called.



CELEBRATING GIFTS

Ah! The *Adventist Review* has taken to celebrating math! Oh well . . . But lawyers and filmmakers? Who and what else? And most important, why?

Glad you asked. And why should we not rejoice at the presence of such heavenly gifts among us (see James 1:17)? Do the saints and the community of saints need no further maturing? Isn't Jesus' story of talents (Matt. 25:14-30) precisely about this? It sure is. His narrative "includes all gifts and endowments,

whether original or acquired, natural or spiritual. All are to be employed in Christ's service. . . . These gifts . . . [are] to be used for His glory in blessing our fellow men."*

So join our celebration. Be thrilled by the stories and inspired by your sisters and brothers who are living them. Pledge your own gifts to Jesus in service. Why? "For His glory in blessing" the world.

*Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1900, 1941), p. 328.

FOR THE PEOPLE

Lawyers Work For Jesus Too?

Advocacy for Jesus, and for others on His behalf

JOSUÉ PIERRE

Why would you want to be a lawyer? Lawyers are liars." This is what I heard several times when I declared at a young age that I wanted to become an attorney one day.

WHY BE A LAWYER?

In the Adventist community I came from, honorable professions included teachers, pastors, doctors, nurses, engineers, accountants, and others, perhaps. But lawyers were viewed with high suspicion. Because of this, perhaps, I had no firsthand exposure to lawyers growing up. The first time I met an attorney, I was already a junior in high school. And the first impressions or insights I ever had of what lawyers do was via television programs: *L.A. Law*, *Law and Order*.

Despite misgivings about the profession in my church community, my boyhood commitment to being a lawyer did not die. I committed myself to its study. In the process, as I read lawyers' arguments, I could appreciate the moral value that a career in law can have. I saw the life-changing power of making the right argument and using the right words to make that argument. I saw that it could determine some person's course of life, and even change the direction of society in the most fundamental of ways. An example I still readily think of is the widely celebrated case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, in which the United States Supreme Court ruled that it was contrary to the nation's founding principles to practice racial segregation in its public schools.



By personal experience I now enthusiastically declare to my Adventist church community that God can use lawyers.

BEING A LAWYER: PRACTICING PRINCIPLE

Once I graduated law school I set out on a somewhat singular path. Instead of apprenticeship as a law clerk to some judge or senior attorney, I decided to open my own practice from the beginning. I learned on the job, helping both myself and my clients to recognize the scope of issues involved in a given matter, and integrating all aspects of the issue so as to arrive at a coherent and comprehensive resolution of each subject's case.

By personal experience I now enthusiastically declare to my Adventist church community that God can use lawyers. He is seeking to incorporate our skill sets and abilities to advance His plan of salvation. At pivotal moments in the lives of everyday individuals lawyers play a crucial role, representing their interests in the courtroom, before government agencies, in significant business transactions and litigation matters. Advocating for the interests of another, standing in the gap to defend their interest, is one of the most valued services that attorneys provide, a role that's strongly biblical. Consider Abraham, negotiating with God for the lowest number of righteous people needed in Sodom to spare the cities of the plain. Abraham persuades God to move from a starting threshold of 50 righteous people all the way down to 10 (Gen. 18:16-33). And there's Moses, standing in the gap for Israel, sparing them destruction despite their egregious idolatry insulting the God who delivered them from Egypt; advocacy that softens the heart of God Himself (Ex. 32:7-14).

The New Testament describes both Christ and the Holy Spirit as arguing our case, pleading on our behalf: "We have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One" (1 John

2:1, NIV). And "the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans" (Rom. 8:26, NIV). Indeed, there is an abundance of Bible examples of the blessings that come from God advocating on behalf of His children. Advocacy is a God thing. He can utilize professionally trained advocates to advance His kingdom.

BEING A LAWYER: ARGUING FOR MORE ADVOCATES

Today we observe an increasing frequency of natural disasters, wars and conflict, and political unrest, events pointing to Christ's soon return. There is an increasing urgency that this gospel must be preached to all the world. People everywhere are desperately searching for truth, thirsting after peace, and yearning to fill that emptiness inside. Now more than ever before, God needs all available "hands on deck" for that final push to share Christ's plan of redemption.

How can Adventist lawyers answer this call of action? We can be the hands and feet of Jesus when we demonstrate integrity in our duties, when we pursue justice for those who have no voice, and when we take a stand for truth, no matter the cost. I believe that at the end, when pastors are silenced, there will be Adventist attorneys standing before courtrooms around the world to advocate on behalf of fellow believers who will choose to follow God's command, come what may, over the decrees of men. To be that effective witness when that time comes, we must singly and collectively establish a reputation that will give credibility to our final witness. God is looking for willing vessels. The Holy Spirit will utilize those persuasive communications skill sets to achieve results that will advance the cause of Christ beyond our capabilities or imagination. God will call on those who are willing and are not afraid to stand for Him.

Preparation for those consequential moments begins now. Our road map is laid out: "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, NIV). ♣

Josué Pierre was recently elected as an associate treasurer of the General Conference.

FOR THE PEOPLE

Justice, Dignity, and Behavior

Working for God through the levers of government

JOHN WILCOX

In 2007 I started working for the United States Department of State in its Bureau for European and Eurasian Affairs. The State Department is the lead diplomatic agency within the United States government charged with advancing the president's foreign policy goals.

On a typical day my colleagues and I might negotiate agreements to sell American goods abroad, help a U.S. citizen who has fallen ill while traveling internationally, or work with other governments to protect Americans from threats beyond our borders. More specifically, in my office I advise senior leaders

on how to best spend approximately \$1 billion in foreign aid annually that the U.S. Congress gives to advance democracy, the rule of law, and economic growth in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. In this role, I believe God uses me in two ways. First, to advance the principles of justice and human dignity through the substance of my work; and second, through my daily speech, manner, and acts toward the people with whom I work.

A BIBLICAL EXAMPLE

Daniel, the Old Testament prophet and exile, is the quintessential "minister" working for God through the levers of government. Like Daniel, I serve a government with global influence. And like the ancient Babylonian empire, it is also a government that did not rise merely by chance; instead, like all governments, it exists as an instrument of God's sovereign will, providing law and order to a greater or lesser degree.

At present, much of my day is spent advising senior leaders on how best to direct American



It is because a Supreme Being exists who is good that the universe is governed by principles of justice and love.

We know [Daniel] also exercised extraordinary influence personally by the kind of man he was, pointing others directly to the one true God.

foreign aid to respond to the crisis in Ukraine and other affected countries. This work does not directly advance the gospel, but in the example of Ukraine it does help to protect the lives of innocent people, and to hold accountable others who may have committed war crimes. It also assists in providing ordinary people with their basic needs.

It is because a Supreme Being exists who is good that the universe is governed by principles of justice and love. So when I work to advance democracy and the rule of law in a country such as Ukraine, I am serving God, because it is His will that a woman driven from her home by conflict has shelter, food, and education for her children; it is His will that any who have taken the lives of the innocent are brought to justice; and it is His will that families have the means to provide for their children and make a life for themselves that is meaningful and good.

PERSONAL INFLUENCE

But Daniel did not witness for God only in carrying out the policies of the Babylonian government and advising the king. We know he also exercised extraordinary influence personally by the kind of man he was, pointing others directly to the one true God.

A simple thing such as diet was one of the early ways in which Daniel was able to show his faith in God. Like Daniel, I speak and act in ways that

are a direct result of my knowing Christ and my desire to please him.

The ways this happens are very simple and natural. I'm careful about how I speak, including avoiding profanities. This is a characteristic that is most often noticed. Colleagues often remark on it, and quickly apologize if they use an expletive while talking to me or in a meeting in which I am present. Another example, which also surprises me, as I know my temper and tendency to get irritated, is that my colleagues perceive me as being very calm and not easily angered or ruffled. Knowing myself, the extent to which this perception is true is surely an act of God, and in remarking on it, my colleagues are seeing the work of the Spirit in my life.

THE WITNESS OF LOVE

Finally, just as our speech and manner can evince the sweet savor of Christ, my love for my colleagues is another way I may reveal Him. Just today I learned that a colleague with whom I have worked for 15 years has been ill. It is easy for me to offer to pick up groceries for her or help in other simple, practical ways.

One of my staff just bought his first house. I believe I can show my interest and love for him in genuinely sharing his excitement about this step that he and his wife have taken.

As a supervisor, I also have an opportunity to show Christ by putting my staff's development and advancement above my own, showing a genuine concern for them as they deal with issues at work or home. The State Department, like any workplace, is bursting with opportunities such as these, and they represent perhaps the greatest field of endeavor for all of us—whether in the employment of the church or not. ♣

John Wilcox is director for policy, planning, and performance in the Office of the Coordinator for Assistance to Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia.

Advising Congress

Policy can be fun, really!

MICHELLE L. CHIN

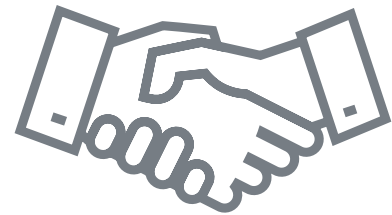
To be one of Jesus' disciples was to have power and authority to heal, to fight evil, and to proclaim hope. Jesus chose 12 ordinary individuals "and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness" (Matt. 10:1, NIV). He appointed "seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go" (Luke 10:1, ESV). They had a simple task: "Heal the sick . . . and tell them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you'" (verse 9). But what does it mean to be one of His disciples today? In 2022 we reckon with a world that is overwhelmed by disease and sickness, by destructive forces, by hopelessness.

As a political scientist I read the preamble to the U.S. Constitution and see some important parallels to the disciples' commission: "We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America." The Constitution gives the nation's people the power and authority to create (and re-create) the country they want. Like Jesus' disciples, policy wonks are empowered to seek healing and peace and to proclaim hope.

In college I read *The Power Game: How Washington Works*, by Hedrick Smith. It was 700 fascinating pages telling the story of how the president and members of Congress use power and politics to achieve policy change. I wanted to come to Washington, D.C., to work in Congress.

A summer internship led to a full-time job after graduation, with U.S. representative Joe Barton (retired, Tex.-6). I remember a family friend expressing some dismay at my desire to work in Congress. "That is such an evil, corrupt place," they sighed. I disagreed. I had seen mostly hardworking, civic-minded elected representatives. I wanted to be part of the machine that created good policy. One of the highlights was working on passage of the Chinese Student Protection Act (PL 102-404). On June 4, 1989, the government of the People's Republic of China launched an assault on pro-democracy protesters gathered in Tiananmen Square in Beijing. Many Chinese nationals in the United States who sympathized with the protesters were fearful of reprisals if they returned to China. As a result, President George H. W. Bush issued Executive Order 12711, which deferred deportation of Chinese nationals in the U.S. between June 5, 1989, and April 11, 1990. After meeting with some Chinese graduate students from Texas A&M University, my boss introduced legislation making it possible for individuals

I wanted to be part of the machine that created good policy.



covered by the executive order to apply for legal permanent residency. It became my job to sort out the details with colleagues in the House and Senate. Later I was pleased to discover that an elderly couple from my church were able to become American citizens because of the law.

After a 12-year break to complete graduate degrees in political science and to teach at Arizona State University, I landed a job working as policy advisor for U.S. senator John Cornyn (Tex.). One of my first tasks as a policy wonk was to analyze a draft of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act, which the senator later sponsored and which was signed into law on June 22, 2009. It reminded me of my academy days when my classmates and I had to set up the smoking dummy with the black, tar-stained lungs as part of a Breathe Free seminar. Over the next eight years I would have opportunities to work on finding solutions to policy problems that came to my attention through conversations with constituents, or other policy stakeholders. I would get to travel through my home state and come to appreciate the variety of cultures, issues, and people represented.

In 2011 I joined my academy classmates to reminisce and laugh. On the counter was a copy of the 1986 senior class issue of our school newspaper, *The Gazette*. It was a special issue that featured each

senior's prediction for the life they would be living at our 15-year class reunion. Ten years earlier, in 2001, we had first unearthed the paper and been amused to see what poor forecasters we were. This time, however, I was stunned to read my prediction that I would be "a political scientist and a Senate advisor." It seemed incredible that a 17-year-old young woman would write a prediction, forget about it, and then proceed to live life as a series of somewhat random decisions, only to discover 25 years later that her dream had become reality. Psalm 37:4 came to mind: "Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart" (NIV). I'd always thought of the text as an "if-then" statement: If you delight in the Lord, then He gives you the desires of your heart. But as I read my prediction, it occurred to me that just as the Lord had empowered His disciples to go forth, He planted the desire in my heart all those years before. Jesus needed this policy wonk! 🍀

* As I reflected on the prediction, two thoughts came to mind: (1) God granted me the desire of my heart because He put it there first, and (2) I really thought this would be more exciting. I stayed in the Senate office a few more years before moving on to new challenges and opportunities for ministry, growth, and impact. The mission to seek healing and peace and to proclaim hope remains.

Michelle L. Chin, academic director for the Archer Center at the University of Texas System, Washington, D.C., Office, worked as a congressional staffer and policy advisor for more than 12 years.

Advocating for the Vulnerable

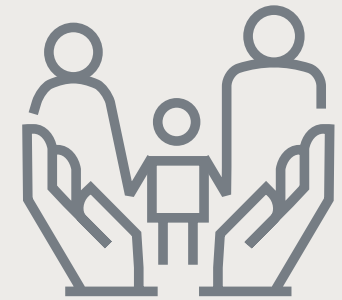
Can you see Jesus as a social worker?

CAROLINA RAMÍREZ

Have you earnestly searched for an answer but found none? Have you prayed for a clear path to move forward but noticed no clarity ahead? At that moment I would have been thankful for such uncertainty. Regrettably, God had rather soundly and conspicuously shared His decision, and the answer was a resounding "no." As much as I wanted to deny it, even I had to acknowledge that the door of academic opportunity had miraculously closed.

Matthew 7:3-5 has been vital in my understanding of the experience: "And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

I was thrust into a profession focused on meeting the basic human needs of the most vulnerable and oppressed.



When God redirected my academic life, He did so by providing the financial and practical means to study social work. I fought God every semester until I graduated with a Master of Social Work degree. I got my clinical social work license, but I could not see why. During the early years of my career I persisted in my hope that God would miraculously steer me in a different direction. To my surprise, there was no change in plans. God had indeed given His final answer. I have come to read Matthew 7:3-5 as God's loving invitation to remove the plank from my eye. My plank was pride. I had wanted to spend my life doing something a little more—prestigious. Instead I was thrust into a profession focused on meeting the basic human needs of the most vulnerable and oppressed.

FOR THE LEAST OF THESE

As a clinical social worker I have worked in an inpatient psychiatric hospital with those experiencing a psychiatric emergency. I have had the privilege of serving in a hospice and palliative-care setting, spending time with the dying and those who must endure the pain of losing a loved one. I have spent years as a psychotherapist, supporting those struggling with interpersonal problems, addiction, and other issues that impact their lives. Most recently I have focused on oncology social work, where I work with those diagnosed with cancer to support their emotional well-being and that of their family. Daily I can practice social work's core values of (1) service; (2) working toward social change, particularly with and on behalf of the vulnerable and oppressed; (3) respect for the dignity and worth of the person; (4) the importance of human relationships; (5) integrity; and (6) competence.

As I look back on my social work career, I find a second application of Matthew 7:3-5. More than once I have been tempted to think that my "experience" and education allow me to guide an individual seeking help. Jesus' words, however, caution me against that temptation. He asks me to pause so that I may see my shortcomings, faults, and struggles. He asks me to see that despite those shortcomings, He can use my feeble efforts so others may experience grace, forgiveness, and peace.

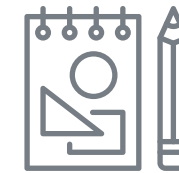
BEYOND REGRETS

It's not unusual for my clients to speak about regret. I worked with a man who was very ill and very lonely. His guilt and shame were more

overwhelming than the physical pain and daily deterioration he experienced. Since I was working for an organization that welcomed spiritual conversations, I asked if he believed in a forgiving God. The answer was slow and painful: "I have nothing else. I have to believe." With those short sentences he put away his pride and opened the door to God's direction. We talked about human failing and divine power; humans being adrift but God firmly in control. That was one of several moments in my career when God quietly whispered in my ear: *Remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.* At the end of that session, I spent some time alone with God and submissively acknowledged that His plans are infinitely better than mine. I am still thankful for God's final answer.

What plans do you have? What plans does God have for you? As you consider the road ahead, I pray that you may spend time seeking an answer from above. He will help you clearly see how you can find meaning and purpose in your life. You will not be disappointed. 🍀

Carolina Ramírez leads an oncology social work department at a hospital in Baltimore. She lives with her husband, Sam, in Columbia, Maryland.



FOR THE ARTS

Helping Others See Jesus

Yes, art really is a career!

HEIDI MENDOZA

When I was a little girl, I wanted to be so many things. I dreamed about being a veterinarian. I felt very confident that the only criterion was to really love animals. I thought I was overqualified. I dreamed of being in law enforcement—so I could give my dad tickets for driving way too fast.

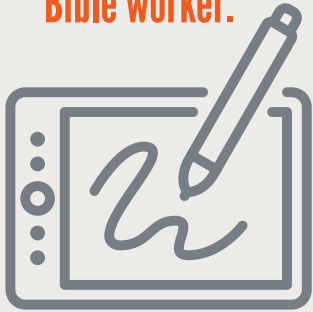
DECISION TIME FOR ME

But when the moment came, I was at a loss. I didn't feel called to any of the traditional occupations: teacher, preacher, doctor, lawyer. I wanted something within the creative field: that was what fueled my heart and soul! All I heard, though, was that artists starve. I needed to find something that would support me. But it appeared that there was nothing out there that would allow me to be creative and still pay my bills. What would I do?

As it turned out, God had a plan. He always does.

It was my junior year of academy when one brief conversation changed my life. My English teacher got a visit from his sister and told me about her work: she designs things and that's her job. I thought "What?" Could he repeat that again? What kind of things? He showed me a teacher's résumé that she

Being a graphic designer involves dimensions as powerful as being a pastor, evangelist, or Bible worker.



had designed; a unique résumé in which she had wrapped a number 2 pencil as the spine of the little booklet made from lined paper. I was stunned at what I saw. She gets paid to come up with genius ideas like that? My heart was racing and excited. Could it be that I had found a place where I could be creative, that would be fun, and possibly pay my bills too? He gave her a label: graphic designer.

It wasn't easy, then, to chase down that dream. First of all, I had to convince my parents that it was a legitimate career. I told them that when I heard what a graphic designer does, my soul lit up, my smile grew, and the ideas and possibilities came pouring in. My parents love me and support me, but they still aren't confident in describing what I do. I remember my father looking at the school bill and calling me, needing some answers. In his wonderful, sarcastic, loving way, he asked why there were no books on the bill. Why only color pencils, sketchbooks, canvas, paint, and more art materials? I had to explain to him, one more time, that I'm an art major; these were my tools.

DECISION TIME FOR YOU?

I believe that everyone is called. I believe God aligns our lives and, if we allow Him, will lead us to His purpose, to His calling for us. God called me to be a graphic designer. My junior year at Andrews University He blended my skills and His purpose and revealed it to me. A deep desire to design for our churches and conferences grew in my heart. I wanted the visual presentation of the events and printed work that the church released to match the rich, beautiful content that we taught. I wanted to design for God.

Jesus needs graphic designers. He needs individuals who are creative and see visual communication as a powerful tool. He needs them to mingle among other creatives. He needs them to direct others to the one true Creator! Being called to be a graphic designer may mean representing Jesus in a very secular atmosphere, or representing Him by helping Adventist visual designs to rise to the quality of their biblical content.

Jesus as Creator is the ultimate visual communication designer. Look at the coloring on some tropical birds. Look at the intricate design of the veins in your body, how they weave in and out carrying life. All these things speak loudly and point to an amazing divine Designer. Jesus' purpose is for us to spread His message of love and hope. Being a graphic designer involves dimensions as powerful as being a pastor, evangelist, or Bible worker. It is a specific calling to represent Him, not just in your work ethic or interaction with your coworkers, but specifically in the designs you create. When that art director or layperson says your designs are amazing, that's your opportunity to say how God helped you design them even though you stayed up way too late finishing them. "Amen"—we serve a patient, all-knowing, creative

God. First Corinthians 10:31 says it clearly: "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." "Whatever you do," the Spirit insists, it is always to be for His glory. What a great honor!

The Master Designer is calling for graphic designers to sign up

to help share the gospel in your style of living, the words you speak, sharing how God helps you with each project that you are assigned. We are visual communicators: people need to visualize, to see Jesus in us. Isn't that the ultimate calling? In a sense, everyone, by godly living, should

be a visual communicator for Jesus. But He also needs some who will pursue the specialized profession of graphic designer for Him: *Be ready.*

Heidi Mendoza Murphy is a senior art director at JohnsonRauhoff Agency, and a single mom dedicated to God and to her children.

Seeing the World Differently

Discovering God's symmetry in mathematics

TED ASHTON

I hold degrees in electrical engineering and mathematics and have spent decades as a professional computer programmer. I am not a teacher. I am not a pastor. My friends and I joke that I am a doctor, but not the kind that helps anyone. What have I to offer to God?

Mathematicians love a universe with which few others are familiar. We explore the mathematical world as a physicist or a biologist explores the natural world, seeking to understand it, fascinated to see the beauty and order we find there. For those of us who know the Creator, we see His hand in the delightful spangling of the primes across the integers, the exquisite beauty of a fractal, the elegance of a well-crafted proof.

Mathematicians love to find patterns. We notice, for example, that in the parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15:3-7), 1 percent of the sheep needed to be rescued; in the parable of the lost coin (verses 8-10), 10 percent of the coins needed to be found, and, following the pattern into the parable of the lost son, we see Christ's message that 100 percent of the sons needed to experience the Father's love. We see Moses, Job, and Jesus asking God to forgive people who have not yet come to repentance, and we see that we can do the same. We notice that Jesus said that John the Baptist was Elijah (Matt. 17:11-13) and start wondering if, perhaps, there are parallels between Elisha and Jesus Himself.

As mathematicians we deal in mathematical proof. We certainly take some things "on faith," but we state those things up front, explicitly. After that, proofs need to follow in logical progression, simple



Mathematicians love a universe with which few others are familiar.

steps, verifiable by other mathematicians. Any proof that includes “Well, I think” as one of the steps fails as a proof, and that viewpoint carries over into our understanding of the God who created mathematics. In the teen Sabbath School that I teach, one of our fundamental requirements is “Show me from the Bible.”

That view of the world puts us in alliance with other believing scientists in countering a dangerous and damaging idea. An idea has grown in our world that science and faith are fundamentally incompatible. In some cases, that idea seems to be the only common ground that scientists and people of faith have—they agree that science and faith cannot live together, and the scientists reject faith, and people of faith look with skepticism on the truths of science.

As mathematicians who believe that God created not only reasonable people but reason

itself, we believe that, as Francis Collins said: “The God of the Bible is also the God of the genome. He can be worshipped in the cathedral or in the laboratory.”¹ We see the love of a God who created us and our ability to think, a God who “desires man to exercise his reasoning powers,” and we thrill to learn from Him and to discover ever new beauties in His world and His word “through the illumination of that Spirit by which the word was given.”²

¹ Francis S. Collins, *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief* (New York: Free Press, 2006), p. 211.

² Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1956), p. 109.

Ted Ashton, Ph.D., is a Sabbath School teacher and Pathfinder Bible Experience coach at the Triadelphia Seventh-day Adventist Church in Clarksville, Maryland. He loves to tutor mathematics students, play his cello, and count his blessings.

Telling Stories For Today

Using technology to reach others for Him

RAJEEV SIGAMONEY

Jesus was a storyteller.

At any time during His ministry, this is who He was. More a storyteller than a rabbi or a counselor or even a pastor of any kind. When I read the Gospels and immerse myself in the life of Jesus, I see a man who told stories.

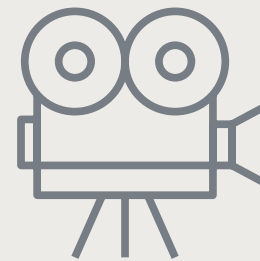
Stories that connected audiences to the divine.

Stories that connected audiences to one another.

Stories that connected audiences to themselves.

And even now, 2,000 years later, stories are, to me, the most impactful way to change someone else’s mind or even my own. We exist in a time when many young people feel jaded from the conventional church experience. Yet films, television shows, and web content continue to explode across all platforms. And explode not just in directions of mindless sensationalism but also in directions that push the viewers into the deeper questions of life and how we are meant to exist as individuals and in community with one another.

And yet, because of our church’s historically complicated relationship with Hollywood, many Seventh-day Adventists struggle with the calling to pursue storytelling and filmmaking as a profession.



The truth is that God in every generation has asked a group of His believers to step out in faith.

Within Adventism:

There are many safe and conventional paths to the medical field.

There are many safe and conventional paths to working in tech.

There are even many safe and conventional paths to becoming a pastor.

But to pursue film is a risk.

The truth is that God in every generation has asked a group of His believers to step out in faith. And He doesn’t promise that it will be comfortable or easy. He doesn’t even promise success on this earth. He just promises that He will be with them.

When I set out for Hollywood more than 20 years ago, I was filled with the hope of what I believed God was calling me to do. I drove out to join an industry in which I didn’t have a degree in the field, I barely knew anybody, and to be honest, I didn’t even fully know what I was signing up to do. But God was with me. And through His guidance, I had the privilege to tell stories with such amazing collaborators as Octavia Spencer, Tony Hale, and Melissa McCarthy. I got to be a part of a team that created *The Record Keeper*, which opened new visions for what Adventist Church media could become. And I eventually got to join as a professor at Pacific Union College,

where I now get to work with students who feel similarly inspired and called to tell stories that have the potential to change the world.

And I can say that the industry is much more prepared for them, and that they, when they leave our educational institution, are much more prepared for the industry. But it is still unconventional to some. As unconventional as a 30-year-old storyteller who moved from town to town telling stories that were so powerful that we still look to them today to understand how to love God, ourselves, and others better.

The truth is that many conventional careers in this life support institutions we don’t even believe in. But often, to be truly called is, in many ways, to create the world and the life that has yet to come. And that is what I believe the true calling of all filmmakers is and why God needs filmmakers.

To create worlds that don’t yet exist.

To cast visions that can be seen by multitudes.

To paint stories of God’s kingdom here on this earth as it is in heaven.

Rajeev Sigamoney, MFA, is chair and professor of film for the Department of Visual Arts at Pacific Union College in Angwin, California.



An Invitation For Everyone

We represent more than one kingdom.

FRANK A. CAMPBELL

Assigned the task of commenting on why Jesus needs diplomats, I promptly exercised the liberty of writing on ambassadors instead. My excuse is biblical: unlike the term “diplomat,” the word “ambassador,” for whatever reason, is used in Scripture (e.g., Eph. 6:19, 20).

BEGINNING WITH JESUS

The very first verse of Matthew refers to Jesus as Jesus Christ. That makes Him the Messiah, the Anointed One. It also calls Him David’s son: Jesus is God’s anointed king. The Wise Men from the east, coming to bring royal gifts to the Baby Jesus, explicitly acclaimed Him “King of the Jews” (Luke 2:2).

One of the things that kings do is appoint ambassadors.

RULES OF THE GAME

Jesus was, literally, out of this world. Yes, He is King, but not of earth, as He plainly stated to Roman governor Pilate (John 18:36). Still, that He was otherworldly makes Him no less a king, no less qualified for the duties, privileges, and responsibilities of monarchy.

Kings and other rulers of state are particular in their selection of ambassadors, often choosing individuals who have some combination of closeness to them, high competence and willingness to serve; persons possessing political savvy, sufficient experience, and a good range of contacts. Those contacts speak to the need for good relationships between the monarch’s kingdom and the nations with which there will be interaction. Consider, for example, how such countries as my current homeland, Canada, along with other Western powers, are obliged to build their links with Ukraine and find ways of communication with both Ukraine and Russia even as war persists between those two countries.

RULES OF JESUS’ GAME

How does any of this apply to us in Jesus’ kingdom? We know that we have been selected, “a chosen generation, a royal



Jesus was, literally, out of this world. Yes, He is King, but not of earth.

priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people” (1 Peter 2:9). We are Christ’s ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:21). But why?

When I was chosen as the first resident ambassador to Cuba, and the youngest till today from the land of my birth, the main qualities I brought to the appointment were my surprising level of political understanding and experience, given my youth. But the kingdom of God is not designed to thrive on the basis of intriguing maneuvers for achieving power and control. According to the Lord of the kingdom, we have no access to His realm except we accept the divinely bestowed gift of repentance (Acts 5:31); except we “are converted and become as little children” (Matt. 18:3). Answering a question on rank in His kingdom, He called to Himself one of the many little children near enough to be His show-and-tell. Then He said, “whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom” (verse 4). Status in Jesus’ kingdom would be a matter of topsy-turvy for most clear-thinking and successful politicians around Him then or hearing Him now. Jesus needs unpretentious ambassadors of disarmingly trusting spirit to represent His cause. He needs people of undying gratitude to Him because He “called [us] out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9). It is not theological brilliance that qualifies us as Christ’s ambassadors. It is our closeness to the King

of kings. It is knowing Him well enough to speak for Him without distorting His picture or His truth: “We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God” (2 Cor. 5:20).

When the foreign minister of Guyana summoned me to his office and informed me that the president of Guyana was inviting me to be his ambassador to Cuba, I was excited. How would you respond if King Jesus invited you to become one of His ambassadors? During my years as Guyana’s ambassador to Cuba, I could not witness on behalf of the otherworldly citizenship I now enjoy. Sadly, those were years when I had abandoned my faith and life as a Seventh-day Adventist Christian. In the years after I returned to faith, one of my greatest regrets has been the years I lost, when I could have represented simultaneously a kingdom infinitely more wonderful than any earthly domain. Not surprisingly, one of my favorite Bible promises is that the Lord will restore to me “the years that the locusts have eaten” (Joel 2:25, NIV).

Here’s good news: if you have a relationship with Jesus today, you are His ambassador right now, right where you are. Jesus needs ambassadors today. Please stand up and say, “Lord, send me.”

Frank A. Campbell is a freelance writer and editor, and is a local elder at the Agape Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ontario, Canada.



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A HILARIOUS PARADOX

A hilarious paradox, one that troubled Darwin (he thought it “horrid” not hilarious), haunts evolution still: the paradox of self-refutation. If our brains arose from chance alone, with no front-loaded design, with no goals or end purposes (except, accidentally, survival), then why believe anything those same brains tell us? Unless mindlessness can create minds, and non-rationality create rationality (about as likely as radio static creating not just Dvořák’s Ninth but the symphony that plays it), we have little justification to trust what our mindlessly-made minds proclaim is true.

Bemoaning this dilemma, Darwin himself worried about “whether the convictions of man’s mind, which have been developed from the minds of the lower animals, are of any value or at all trustworthy.” And among the “convictions of men’s minds” was his own theory of evolution by natural selection. If our minds were created by nothing but non-rational accidents, then why should the products of those minds, i.e., thoughts, ideas, or scientific theories (such as evolution) have any epistemic value?

They shouldn’t. If our brains evolved for survival only, and not for truth, then they are not reliable. Suppose some ancient hominids—believing that rattlesnakes were shifty gods coming from the sun and moon to punish them for eating dog meat—fled whenever they heard or saw rattlesnakes? That belief, no matter how erroneous, would have helped them survive, which according to evolution is what natural selection is all about: surviving. What matters is behavior, not

belief, and if error after error, lie after lie, lead to our continued existence, so be it. We have been wired to keep on trucking, not to discover truth.

“Under such conditions,” wrote Bruce Gordon, “any complex of beliefs and desires that conduces to survival would suffice. What we believe to be true under such conditions is therefore an accidental historical byproduct of purely natural events that bear no intrinsic relation to the actual truth of the beliefs we hold; it is an expression of how our brains just happen to work.”

In short, if Darwinism, or any contemporary incantation of it, were true, then anything we believe is more likely to be wrong than right because there are more wrong answers to any question than right ones, and we have no innate tools to help us to know the difference.

What a contrast to biblical origins, in which we, made in the image of God, can not only know truth (“And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” [John 8:32]), but follow it as well (“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth” [3 John 4]).

Being able to know truth isn’t, however, synonymous with knowing it, as the widespread belief in evolution shows. And the falsity of evolution is one truth (out of many) that we, because of our origins, can be certain of.

* Gordon, Bruce; Demoski, William. *The Nature of Nature: Examining the Role of Naturalism in Science*. Intercollegiate Studies Institute (ORD). Kindle Edition.

Clifford Goldstein is the editor the Adult Bible Study Guides at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

CLIFF'S
EDGE
CLIFFORD
GOLDSTEIN



IN SHORT, IF DARWINISM, OR ANY CONTEMPORARY INCANTATION OF IT, WERE TRUE, THEN ANYTHING WE BELIEVE IS MORE LIKELY TO BE WRONG THAN RIGHT.

THE SON HAS SET YOU **FREE** *(even from your phone)*



ABIGAIL FOLLOWS

I wanted to talk to you about your presentation,” a young woman said, fidgeting with the edges of her phone. I smiled and nodded, expecting a question about missions. Instead she said, “I really identified with what you said about your phone. How did you get rid of it?”

It was 2018, and I had recently traded my smartphone for a “dumb” one. Although I mentioned the trade in passing, people often wanted to talk about it. Adventists, non-Adventist Christians, and people just beginning their walk with Jesus were wrestling with the same question: Data from 2012 reveal that more than 400 million people were addicted to the Internet.¹ I wondered how we as followers of Christ should relate to technology.

Dr. Neil Nedley, who has done extensive research on the causes of depression, lists entertainment Internet and chat addiction as two ways we can damage the frontal lobe of our brains.² Frontal-lobe damage not only is a major contributing factor to depression, but also affects our spiritual sensitivity because we use this area of the brain to communicate with God.³

That’s a problem for any human, but especially for someone whose entire vocation is to share Jesus with others. How can you share Jesus if you can’t hear Him?

SEEING THE PROBLEM

As a young missionary 12 years ago, I felt disturbed by how frequently I ran to technology for the comfort, guidance, and connection I should seek from the Lord. The time I spent vegging on my phone cost me opportunities to connect with unreached people in the mission field. And it drained me of the emotional energy I needed to choose unselfish service.

I’d been in India six months when I deleted my Facebook account. Some years later, as a new mother, I made another drastic change.

I was taking a video of something cute my kids were doing—the obvious choice when one is far from grandmas and grandpas. As I looked at my precious little ones through my smartphone screen, I noticed them trying to get around the phone to interact with me. They wanted to look into my eyes! My view through my phone screen was of their adorable antics. Their view was not the smiling face of their mother, but the cold, black eye of my phone camera. I put the phone down.

That night I did some research. What I found was a psychological study conducted by Edward Tronick called the still-face experiment. In it mothers were instructed to keep their faces completely neutral, regardless of their child’s behavior. After just three minutes an infant “rapidly sobers and grows wary. . . . [He] withdraws [and] orients his face and body away from his



What seemed like a huge sacrifice turned into a powerful blessing.

mother with a withdrawn, hopeless facial expression.”⁴

Watching videos of similar experiments left me uncomfortable. Why? Because I saw myself in them. How often did I stare at my phone, expressionless, while my children played? And if they saw me use my phone to check out, why wouldn't they do the same as adults? I had to do something.

A DRAMATIC CHANGE

For a year I lived without a smartphone. I used our computer to connect with family back in the United States and a flip phone for local calls. Instead of feeling deprived, I enjoyed the freedom and headspace this experiment gave me.

After a year, however, an upcoming trip entailed my traveling alone in South Asia. I wanted maps and a GPS for my safety, so I bought a smartphone again. After I returned “home” to North Africa, I continued using the phone for language-learning support, but I prayed about what to do. I knew my children would probably have smartphones someday. How could I model responsible technology use?

Since my children are 8 and 10, I have less than a precious decade left with them. It's my job to teach them everything I can, from brushing teeth to having personal devotions. And the most important thing when teaching is to model the desired behavior. That means I must continue learning and growing in my own Christian maturity. As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 6:12: “All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be enslaved by anything” (RSV).⁵

EIGHT BASIC STEPS

Do you feel the need to place boundaries around your technology use? My husband, Joshua, and I recently took the following eight steps to protect our time, our ministry, and our children, not from technology itself, but from technology addiction.

1 Prayerfully analyze the needs technology meets. Find possible alternatives.

People use technology for anxiety relief, relaxation, to get a dopamine hit, to connect socially, and for practical or business purposes. Try meeting some needs in other ways. Wear a watch to see the time; call instead of text; write your to-do list on a piece of paper.

2 Schedule a regular technology fast.

Fasting from technology gives us time to breathe and helps us reevaluate our relationship with technology and with God. If doing a technology fast is very stressful, it could mean that technology is being used to regulate mood—one sign of addiction. Besides doing longer technology fasts, we often set aside the Sabbath as a low-tech day.

3 Have places that are off-limits to phones.

The areas we've placed off-limits include the bathrooms, kitchen table, and bedrooms.

4 Get inspired.

How would being free from addictive or compulsive technology use benefit you? Why do you want to be free? Try writing out your “why” and taping it up in a prominent place. You could also post your technology rules, favorite Bible promises, and/or a piece of artwork that expresses how God is calling you to live your life.

5 Put your phone away at night.

We try to leave our phones unused until after having personal devotions in the morning. This helps us prioritize connecting with God and each other.

6 Have a daily technology hour limit.

Even though Adventists tend to be careful about consuming only uplifting media, we still need limits. We limit our kids' listening to stories, and our own listening to audiobooks and sermons. Our goal is to create some quiet headspace where we can think our own thoughts or hear from God.

7 Turn off notifications.

Catherine Price in *How to Break Up With Your Phone* writes, “[Smartphones] nag us. . . . [They] demand our attention and reward us when we give it to them. [They] engage in disruptive behaviors that have traditionally been performed only by extremely annoying people.”⁶ To limit my phone's access to me, I've turned off all notifications, so the only sound it makes is a ringtone.

8 Be accountable.

Lifestyle changes take time to implement. Failure is not a sign that you're doomed; it's a sign you're

trying! Schedule a family meeting or phone call with a friend to reevaluate how your plan is working. Keep praying and adjusting your approach.

DOING GREAT THINGS FOR GOD

What if God asks you to do something impossible?

Most of us would say we're willing to do great things for God if He empowers us. But what about when God asks us to give up or regulate small things we're extremely attached to? Could it be that we, like Naaman, are willing to do great things, but struggle to do the small things God calls us to?

When I was in my 20s, God made it very clear that I shouldn't watch movies.

Maybe you've been there: something resounds in your heart, louder than your own thoughts and desires. You know God is impressing you to do something. Or to stop doing something.

If you're like me, your initial reaction is to whine, while trying not to panic.

Lord, why me? Why not them? You're going to make me seem strange! As I prayed this, I had the disturbing thought that God might not care what other people think of me as much as I do.

I finally obeyed and gave up watching movies. But what seemed like a huge sacrifice turned into a powerful blessing. Giving up movies gave me more peace of mind, better sleep, more stamina to examine doubts, and a more vivid devotional life.

As it turns out, that small thing was about as small as washing in the Jordan seven times.

As you examine your relationship with technology, don't forget to ask God for His eternal perspective. And don't be afraid to give up anything He asks you to. If Jesus wants to set you free from something, don't let anything keep you from that freedom.

Not even your phone. 🦋

¹<https://www.businessinsider.com/420-million-people-are-addicted-to-the-internet-study-2014-12>

²<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5103329/>

³<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/322539#Different-religions-have-different-effects>

⁴<https://www.gottman.com/blog/research-still-face-experiment/>

⁵Bible texts credited to RSV are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright © 1946, 1952, 1971, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Used by permission.

⁶Catherine Price, *How to Break Up With Your Phone* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2018).

Abigail Follows is the author of *Hidden Song of the Himalayas* and writes under a pen name for security in the mission field.

PAIN AND PLEASURE

What's in a game?

THERON ITHIEL

The story that follows draws on my father's faith in a particular biblical proverb. My father's love for me was neither weaker nor stronger than his faith in that portion of the Holy Scriptures. He was a wonderful man, beloved by all in his world; or by most, then, for the sake of your incredulity. I hope you share faith in God's Word as deeply as he taught me to, and love for him as much as we who knew him did.

AN INTRO OF SORTS

I was the first boy and second child of a loving family that enjoyed playing with our father when he was available. Our father was good at several things, and I probably inherited some of his abilities, athletics included. Approaching my twelfth birthday, I won my first race against my older sister. We hardly competed after I started to win, but I venture that given a chance, she would have been a national sprint champion.

In cricket—the game, not the insect—I found myself a permanent member of my school's team quite early in elementary school, even before I won that race against my sister. I may not have been good at anything, but results need explanations: "Time and chance happen" (Eccl. 9:11), but someone gets the credit for giftedness. Often enough I did.

Six decades later there is much that I've forgotten. But there is enough that I have never forgotten. Even at that early age, I was an all-rounder, filling in wherever needed. Repeatedly, my contribution was crucial, even if only to prevent defeat. Excellent reflexes enabled me as a wicketkeeper, or as a fielder at any position—quick over the ground, accurate in my throws, producing many dismissals of batsmen otherwise difficult to dislodge. My name would be called repeatedly when weekend games were reported at school assembly on Monday.

Cricket games—there were no T20s

then—can last much longer than America's better known basketball, soccer, baseball, and football. But my cricket matches had to end Friday afternoon, in fading light sometimes. Teams would use delaying tactics to have a game declared a draw in situations where only poor visibility could save them from defeat.

The Friday afternoon sun-setting situation was my big problem. My father was a Bible-believing Seventh-day Adventist who, like Abraham, commanded his household after him. In his house everyone had to be ready for welcoming the Sabbath at sundown Friday. He usually took his seat and started singing before sunset. Extended delay in joining him had its consequences, namely, sincere paternal efforts to convince any recalcitrant child that delinquency in Sabbath eve worship attendance would not be tolerated. His regard for Scripture embraced faithfulness to duties he found there defined, including that proverb I alluded to: "Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them" (Prov. 13:24, NIV). My house was not close enough to the cricket ground. I could never see the game through to a finish and still arrive on time for welcoming the Sabbath. It was an awful delinquency, too grave to be ignored, explained away, or quietly forgiven. It may well have been forgiven, but not quietly. And the attention it received was more than an admonitory finger or earnest plea to do better next time.

I have good reason to believe that my confident recollections of his discipline are out of balance, for my father's job caused him to be away from home for extended periods. Though I was occasionally punished for instances reported to him after he came home, I'm willing to believe that overall I may have been punished a lot fewer times than I recall. No, I'm not confused. And no, I do not distrust my memory.

BRIAN JACKSON / ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES PLUS

As a child, I had many joyful opportunities for memorizing Bible texts.

I'm simply open to clarification from my recording angel, should he see fit.

THE (PROTRACTED) MIDDLE

Needless to say, I vowed, often enough, never to be late again for Friday evening Sabbath welcome worship. However, my vows were like "ropes of sand." Being a regular member of the school team sometimes entailed my presence at the game until its conclusion. There were occasions I could have left, as my participation was no longer actively required. But I was a child acting without considering consequences, or rather, one for whom those consequences were not especially determinative. The outcome of the game was determinative: it would definitively affect the way my contribution would be viewed, and influence my future participation.

Despite my success on the field of sport, and despite the acclaim it brought me, I was always burdened going home from the game on Friday, and home from church at the end of the Sabbath. As children we walked everywhere we needed to go—school, church, shop, etc.; we could not afford car fares, and in those days a two-mile walk was not regarded as prohibitive. I usually took the final steps of the walk in quiet reflection on my yesterday and what it would mean for me soon: I knew I'd earned myself the Proverbs 13 "application."

For whatever reason, my father never punished me during the Sabbath for disobedience to him and God in breaking the Sabbath. Also, his discipline consistently involved a combination of spanking and Bible texts, my repetition of Bible texts he thought were important to my situation and attitude. And though I've admitted my openness to clarification about being spanked, I need no clarification on my Scripture memorization: I can still repeat many of those verses. To be fair to the texts now in my head, and to my patient, loving, and reasonable father as the person who got them there, I should clarify the question written in the furrows of your brow: is that how your father wants you to think of the Bible—as an aid to, or an instrument of, punishment? My answer is a vigorous apology for any misleading that got you to such a question.

Bible texts were not exclusively connected to punishment. They were simply everywhere in the home in which I was raised. As a child, I had many joyful opportunities for memorizing Bible texts.

THE (BLESSED) END

I feel constrained to offer a confession about my obedience or lack of it, and my punishment in relation to it: I remember myself as a tween, consciously deciding that Dad's spanking qualified as a "necessary evil" to be endured in order to experience the pleasure and glorification my weekly exploits engendered. I quite understand that this pathetic confession must lead you, my reader, to lament the fact that I'm so different from you and Moses. After all, he preferred to experience affliction with God's people rather than "enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11:25, KJV). I, on the other hand, anticipated glorifications at school on Monday that made me more than ready to downplay Bible proverbs and their "application" that someone thought necessary. My earnest father's efforts always faded into insignificance compared to the adulation and satisfaction I experienced at school.

Thankfully, Sabbath breaking for the pleasure of it is not the last word in my story. Instead, I have two simple reflections. First, on my father: I was his first, not his only, gifted cricketing son. After a while, it seems he rethought the "application" of his Bible verse. He did live to see one of his offspring sacrifice a promising international cricket career to become a mentor and a source of inspiration as a successful educational and institutional administrator.

Second, a reflection on long-range outcomes of our Father's grace: He forgives my sincerely "disgraceful comparison" in noting that in some situations, anticipated pleasure does have a nullifying effect on the pain of the moment. The Godhead, seeing of their soul travail, including me—and you—through eternity, will be completely satisfied: Their pain was worth it. ♣

*Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1956), p. 47.

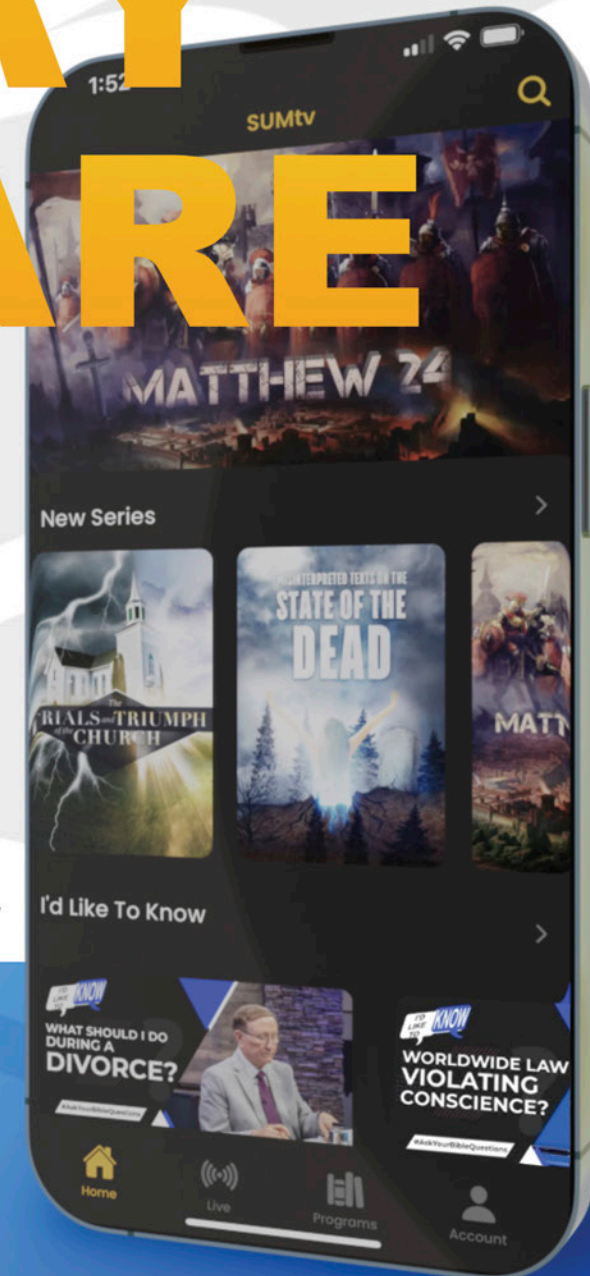
Theron Ithiel is a retiree and active member of the Amazing Grace Seventh-day Adventist Church in Brooklyn, New York.

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HIS Impact On Me

75 Year of Stories Like These



photo by Josef Kissinger
Sam Hubbard with two HIS students during Outdoor School.

If you have been keeping up with Holbrook Indian School (HIS) then you know a good bit about the culture at this unique Adventist school. We go a little deeper into learning about the background of the Native students that are served, specifically those of the Navajo Nation, by speaking with Navajo Language and Navajo Government teacher, Sam Hubbard.

Mr. Hubbard was first introduced to HIS in the same way many Navajo are introduced to the school—through word of mouth on the reservation. Back in the 1970s, Mr. Hubbard and his family were exposed to HIS through a former Navajo Code Talker with the US military who had good things to say about the school.

Only his sister attended HIS, but Mr. Hubbard would come to know the little school in the desert for himself later as a Bible worker. It was several decades later, after becoming an Adventist, when he felt inspired to become a full-time missionary.

Mr. Hubbard first came to HIS as a Bible worker for one year in 2001, and then later as a bible teacher in 2006 before moving into the Math, Navajo Language, Navajo Government, and maker space teaching roles. Before his time at HIS, he tells us about what led him to become an Adventist.

“I was in my late teens and I was a party animal. I was sick of it and I wanted to stop drinking. I started going to AA meetings and seeing a counselor. One of the things suggested to me by my counselor was prayer. I prayed and I’ve been sober ever since. From that time, I felt like I needed to find a church. I started looking and I found a prophecy seminar in Albuquerque and a few months later I became a Seventh-day Adventist.”

After becoming an Adventist, Mr. Hubbard says he felt inspired to tell people about it and quit his job to become a full-time missionary. As a teacher at Holbrook Indian School today, Mr. Hubbard continues his missionary spirit. To find out more about the mission field he serves in now, and how to support, visit HolbrookIndianSchool.org



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A CHANGING NATIONAL LANDSCAPE

Before the second greatest war in human history, almost every major issue in the culture and governance of America had either Christian connotations or was developed to demonstrate the dominance of Christianity. But after World War II the national landscape changed. The culture-shaping force that Christianity exerted altered, and with it went the political, financial, and intellectual power once exerted by mainline Protestants.

Today the Christian religion, especially the church established by Jesus Christ, is one of the most criticized institutions in America. The church has become the scapegoat for many of the social, political, and spiritual problems of the twenty-first century. The big question now is: “Church—why bother?”

Considering this hostility, it’s easy to forget that since the beginning of sin, human nature has demanded a “fall guy,” someone or something to blame for its errors and failures. This started in the Garden of Eden, where Adam blamed Eve for tempting him with the forbidden fruit. Eve passed on the blame to the serpent, and today the serpent is using men and women, inside and outside Christian communities of faith, to blame God and His church. As a result, criticisms are coming from every quarter and corner with extreme, increasing intensity.

This siege has created a critical moment in time for Christianity, especially for Adventists in America and our influence throughout the nation and world. Individual clergy and congregations have become sources of misinformation and disinformation. Some adherents promote messages and others produce malice based on conspiracy the-

ories that engender fear, animosity toward others, and unnecessary risk-taking in the never-ending COVID pandemic. Misinterpreted or misrepresented personal faith and spirituality, mingled with partisan politics, have become sources or hosts of public resistance and deterrents to positive public responses to God’s plan of salvation and the purpose of His church to seek and save the lost.

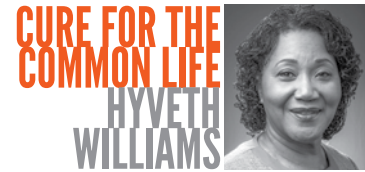
Consequently, there’s probably no institution on the planet more scrutinized, criticized, and undermined than the Christian church, established by Jesus Christ for the healing of nations from the hurts perpetrated by sin. Some criticisms are valid, and others are not.

In his list of characteristics of the last days, the apostle Paul speaks of church members who are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power (see 2 Tim. 3:1-7). The question is: when Jesus comes, will He find faith in the church He founded?

When humans are criticized, especially publicly and harshly, it’s our natural tendency to fight back and “outcriticize” those who throw stones—but let’s not bother to go there. Instead, let’s each consider our own attitude toward church, admitting the realities expressed by critics so as to avoid repeating past mistakes. And let’s move forward. In 1886 Ellen White answered accusations with powerful words: “The church may appear as about to fall, but it does not fall. It remains, while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out—the chaff separated from the precious wheat. This is a terrible ordeal, but nevertheless it must take place.”*

* Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958, 1980), book 2, p. 380.

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



TODAY THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION
IS ONE OF THE MOST
CRITICIZED
INSTITUTIONS IN
AMERICA.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR

When I was 8 years old, my dad signed us up for a church league that played on Saturday nights. That was my first exposure to organized sports. The team consisted of several of my friends from church. Most of us had never been on a team before, but we all had fun playing together.

When I was in middle school, my parents found a homeschool organization that played soccer, basketball, and flag football against other smaller private schools in the area. I played soccer for two years, basketball for three years, and flag football for six years with that organization. My love for sports grew significantly while there, especially for football. During my sophomore year in high school I attended Richmond Academy through a virtually connected program at Vienna Adventist Academy. While there, I played basketball for two years.

SOMETHING NEW

In 2020 I began attending Southwestern Adventist University (SWAU) and joined the Knights cross country team. I wasn't planning on playing sports when I entered university, but my brother convinced me to try out. I thought that my background in soccer would have prepared me for the five-mile runs at the meets, but I soon found out that running at the collegiate level is very different. There were several times I questioned whether it was all worth it, but I kept persisting. I may not have been breaking any world records, but I was always improving from the previous race. Although it's hard work, I

enjoy being a part of a team and cherish the memories that are made together. Cross country, or at least the league we raced in, is different from any other competitive sport I have experienced. Everyone is very encouraging and supportive of each other. You'll often hear a more seasoned runner encourage a less-experienced runner to keep on pushing as they pass them. This has allowed me to feel less self-conscious and more motivated to give it my all.

REALITY CHECK

Despite my overall positive experience in cross country, that has not always been the case playing competitive sports. It's very common for emotions to run high in competitive settings, and I have seen a lot of that while playing sports. There have been many situations in which fights break out between players, coaches, and fans. Sometimes one can even see arguments start between players from different teams in settings off the court, such as church, school events, or gatherings that involve multiple church or school groups. No harm is usually done, but these behaviors do not reflect the Christlike character that we are seeking to reflect. This can often cause people to wonder what separates Christians from nonbelievers—especially if there is little or no difference in behavior.

However, there's also been an abundance of instances in which I have seen the character of Christ on and off the court. There have been several individuals and teams that have managed to maintain a respectful and positive attitude no matter the score or outcome of the game. This in and of itself can be a powerful witness to the love of God.

Medical doctors tell us that regular exercise or playing sports results in a healthier body and mind. Although exercise is good, the amount of preparation to stay competitive at the college level takes a toll on one's body. I remember that being sleep-deprived became a common occurrence. I was able to balance athletics, classes, and work because we had only four races, but that doesn't mean it didn't have its challenges. I saw the Knights basketball and soccer teams miss several days of school because of traveling for games and tournaments. This makes it difficult for players to keep up with their classes and find jobs to be able

Everything we do is for the honor and glory of God.

to pay for school. Many schools offer sports scholarships for their student athletes. Because SWAU doesn't offer athletic scholarships, the sacrifice to play is much bigger. School is the priority, so sports can come only after work, classes, and paying for school are worked out.

LESSONS LEARNED

The lessons that I learned while playing sports extend far beyond the court or field. Participating on an athletics team has taught me a good work ethic, the importance of teamwork, critical thinking skills, and determination. These skills not only are useful for sports but are critical in the real world.

Working in the Marketing Department at SWAU, I have seen firsthand how these skills have translated into the work environment. Staying physically active also has tremendous benefits for mental and physical health. I found that I was more energetic and alert in my studies during the day after waking up at 6:00 a.m. for practice.

I experienced many highs and lows while playing sports in school. I wouldn't trade any of them. I have made many friendships and connections that have lasted long after the final whistle was blown. Being a Knight at SWAU has allowed me to proudly represent my university and has pushed me to reach my full potential. The Athletics Department has emphasized the importance of incorporating Christ-centered and Christ-forward education in all aspects of campus life, including athletics. Whether we win or lose, everything we do is for the honor and glory of God. That's what it means to me to be a Knight at SWAU.

Keith Barrow is a sophomore communication major with a minor in mathematics at Southwestern Adventist University.

A KNIGHT IN HIS SERVICE

Reflections of a university student on the role of sports in his life

KEITH BARROW

Sports have always been a big part of my family. My father would take us outside on weekends to teach us how to dribble a basketball or how to catch a football properly. Sometimes my grandmother would simply play catch or shoot the basketball into a mini hoop with me in the downstairs playroom of our home. My brother was always more dedicated to sports than I was, but we both enjoyed learning and having fun.



Characters of Computers

DAVID HAMSTRA

That's not a biblical norm, that's just a cultural norm." You may have heard someone say this when they're arguing about how a verse in the Bible applies to us today.

Or they might say, "Let's let go of our preconceived ideas so that we can hear what the Bible is actually saying." Or "You need to study the Bible with the right method, or you will read your own biases into it." And the argument winner: "When they say the Bible allows them to do that, they are wrong, because they have found a way to make the Bible mean whatever they want it to mean."

It may surprise you to find out that these ways of understanding Bible interpretation are wrong in an important sense. That sense has to do with something vital that is at stake when we try to understand how we interpret the Bible. I hope to leave you with a better grasp of what that is and explain why you may be interpreting the Bible better than those understandings would suggest.¹

ARE WE THE PROBLEM?

If your experience is like mine, you likely agree that notions like those expressed in the above statements are commonly taught and assumed in the Adventist community. I'm not going to argue that such views are always wrong. I have held such views myself, and I think my motives for doing so were good insofar as I believed them out of a desire to keep myself in line with the truth of God's Word. And I still tremble at the real possibility that I may somehow substitute my own voice for God's when reading the Bible.

The common thread that runs through the above statements, however, is an assumption that human personhood is primarily an obstacle to understanding and applying God's Word. One best interprets the Bible, the thinking goes, when one minimizes or even obviates one's own history, experiences, will, desires, intentions, and the like, because those aspects of personhood form preconceptions about the meaning of things, including the things of God. After all, if

The unity in diversity God gives to His people appears as confusion to the ungodly (Acts 2:6-13).

our own minds are more responsible for misleading us than anything else (according to Jeremiah 17:9), isn't the solution to get them out of the way entirely?

This perspective on Bible interpretation culminates in various proposals for interpretive methods that promise to reduce or eliminate interpretive bias in various ways so that we can all arrive at the same conclusions.

THE IDEAL INTERPRETER

Let's try to imagine what the ideal Bible interpreter would be like, according to the assumption that our backgrounds, preconceptions, and biases mostly get in the way of our understanding Scripture. This ideal interpreter would have no experiences prior to encountering the Bible or any sense of having a story, for these could lead to wrong expectations about what the Bible means or is about; no desires, for even the desire to understand the Bible could lead to reading meanings into the text that God did not intend; no will, for that would afford the ability to choose something besides interpreting the Bible and obeying it; and no intentions, for these might lead the ideal interpreter to distort the Bible's presentation of God's purposes. In short, the ideal interpreter of the Bible—under the assumption that human personhood is primarily an obstacle to understanding and applying God's Word—is like, or is in the process of becoming, a machine: "not a free moral

agent, but a mere automaton," a creature that "would have sustained Satan's charge of God's arbitrary rule."²

The Bible was not written for machines, however. It was written for people like you and me—sinful, fallen human beings—because God wanted to instruct us in wisdom for our salvation through faith in Jesus the Messiah and to equip our moral characters to do good in a fallen world (2 Tim. 3:15-17). Nor was the Bible written to turn us into robots running on the software of Scripture. Rather, according to the Bible, its ideal interpreters become wise and acquire good judgment. They need their life's story to matter in some way and can join their story with God's story to attain that experience. They desire goodness and can choose to trust God. Therefore, sound interpretation of Scripture cannot be conditioned on us acting as though we are machines. We rightly interpret the Bible as earthly, embodied characters caught up in a celestial drama, not as computer programs crunching abstract code in a realm untroubled by considerations of consciousness, time, and location.

BETWEEN BEREA AND ATHENS

The apostle Paul's message of the gospel had its best reception in the synagogue of Berea: "These [Jews] were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11). This verse exemplifies a sola scriptura approach to theology: receive God's Word, compare it with previous divine revelation, make a fair-minded judgment, and walk accordingly. "Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men" (verse 12).

What should we do when we go through that process and still disagree? And how do we explain it when our disagreements break along cultural lines? Let's read further.

Berea was too close to the hostile Jews who were present in Thessalonica, so Paul had to leave for Athens (verses 13-15). His reception there was rather different than in Berea: for the first time, Paul's proclamation of Christ garnered a response not just among the Jews and God-fearing Gentiles but also among the pagans (verses 16-18). And in

recording what Paul did next, Luke provided us with the Bible's only explicit explanation of how God works in history and in the cultures that history produces to draw people to Himself.

Paul was distressed by the idolatry of the Athenians (verse 16), but in connection with their sin he found a seed of truth: an altar to the Unknown God (verse 23). Having been invited to give a presentation to the philosophers (verses 19-22), he explained that this altar was in their city because God is at work in the history of every group of humans in the world. God shifts the times and boundaries of groups of people, planting seeds of truth in their cultures that open avenues for them to seek for God and find Him (verses 26, 27). That is how Paul was able to recognize the altar to the Unknown God for what it really was.

Yes, groups of people with whom we identify, and the languages and cultures that go along with them, change the meanings of Scripture for us. Some of those changes can lead us further from God in ways other groups don't struggle with, but others of them lead us closer to God in ways that other groups struggle to understand. To name this state of affairs "confusion" and wish that it were otherwise is to dream the dream of Babel unity (Gen. 11:4), which results in the spiritual confusion of end-time Babylon's global dominance (Rev. 18:23, 24); for the unity in diversity God gives to His people appears as confusion to the ungodly (Acts 2:6-13).

What then is required for sound Bible interpretation? Biases, preconceptions, and cultural backgrounds are required, because without these there would be no reason to interpret the Bible in the first place.

To get started, we need a bias that comes from love and is in favor of knowing God better and of aligning our wills with His (Matt. 22:37).

We also need preconceptions based on our experiences that form in us a general sense of reality, without which Scripture wouldn't mean anything to us. But we also need the experience of having God renew our minds so that we are willing to revise both our concepts and our previous interpretations based on new meanings we find in Scripture. Methods that reduce bias in interpretation—such as those set forth in the Adventist Church's 1988 Rio de Janeiro statement—are helpful on this point because they alternately challenge

us to consider alternatives and rule out interpretive options, as long as we don't imagine that these methods will replace faith and judgment calls. These make knowledge active, and action is necessary for character transformation.

And we need love for ourselves and others so that we can appreciate the seeds of truth in our own lives while not excluding the ways seeds of truth God has placed in others can expose our own tendencies toward sin (verse 39). We change our biases by changing our experiences; we change our experiences by changing our practices; and we change our practices by the aspirations and community of faith that the Holy Spirit unites in and among us (Gal. 5:22-6:5). This requires relationships in which people of different backgrounds can productively disagree over their interpretations not only of Scripture but of life in general, by drawing attention to inconsistencies and demonstrating for each other how to hear the call of God in Scripture and live with integrity.

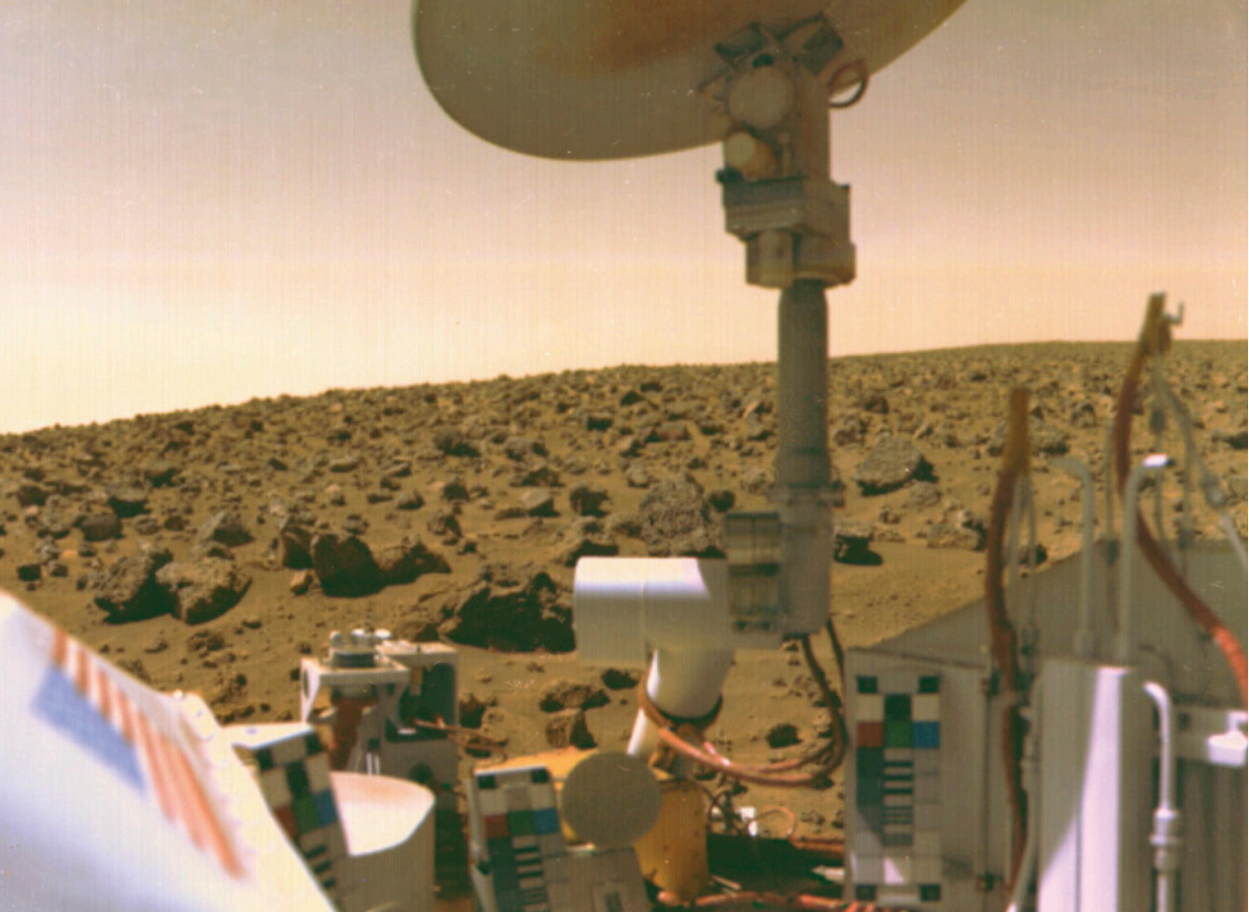
Finally, we need to grow as people by moving back and forth over these various sites of interpretation over and over and over and on into an eternity of ever-unfolding and reflecting the manifold dimensions of God's character of love. If you want to start growing in this way, start or join together with a prayer partner or small group under this goal.

In place of an impersonal ideal of unbiased Bible interpretation, I propose that we embrace, instead of rebelling against, our limited, irreducibly biased creatureliness in a way that amounts to a unique kind of relativism—not an idolatrous relativism that holds all things relative to human judgment, but a reverent relativism that holds all things, including human judgment, relative to God. ✎

¹ My explanation broadly draws on insights from the hermeneutic tradition in continental philosophy associated with Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002), and Jürgen Habermas. Fernando L. Canale, emeritus professor of theology and philosophy at Andrews University, was influenced by this tradition, especially in his early work. It has also stimulated contemporary reflection on biblical and theological interpretation in the broader Christian community that holds a high view of Scripture, including works by Kevin J. Vanhoozer and James K. A. Smith.

² Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1890, 1940), p. 49.

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THE SCANDAL OF BIOCHEMICAL EVOLUTION

A fight with Louis Pasteur

When it comes to the origin of life on earth, there are only two possibilities. Either life was created by the Creator or life developed spontaneously from inanimate matter. Until recently there was a third possibility: that life came to earth fortuitously from another source in the cosmos. However, extensive search for life in the solar system shows that only our globe is covered with living organisms. The rest of our cosmic neighborhood is sterile. As the closest star system beyond the solar system is three and a half light-years (more than 20 trillion miles) away, this third possibility has been abandoned.

As for spontaneous generation of life on earth, the French Academy of Sciences awarded the Alhumbert Prize (2,500 francs) to Louis Pasteur in 1862, for conclusively showing that it could not happen.¹

GEORGE T. JAVOR

CREATIONISM AS STANDARD

There are no meaningful alternatives to the biblical story of Creation. Two powerful witnesses from antiquity point to a period in human history when the biblical account of our origins would have been standard. The first is the almost universal observation of the seven-day cycle of the week through most of history.

Some modern historians propose that the weekly cycle originated with the Sumerians and Babylonians, with Moses copying the Babylonian calendar when he wrote his books c. 500 B.C.² Alongside the dubiousness of such a chronology for Moses there are more than 100 major ancient and modern languages, spoken by 1 million people or more, that use the word “Sabbath” or a derivative of it to name the seventh day of the week!³

The most reasonable explanation of this remarkable phenomenon is a common acceptance, in early human history, of the seven-day cycle. That cycle is firmly founded on the Bible’s Creation story. Loss of linguistic harmony and the dispersal of ethnic and other groupings at the Tower of Babel must have contributed to loss of identity markers like the Sabbath (see Gen. 11:1-9).

The singular designation of the seventh day as variations of the Hebrew “Sabbath” in so many languages both lends validity to the biblical narrative of humanity’s origin, and implicitly repudiates evolutionary counternarratives.

The seven-day weekly cycle legacy from antiquity may not have received as much attention as deserved from thought leaders of the past 150 years, because it does not fit another narrative of our past proclaimed “scientific.” Reluctance to concede the invalidity of their postulates has led some to suggest that religious considerations be isolated from scientific facts and placed into a separate “magisterium.”

SCIENCE AS REGNANT

“Scientific narrative” has served as code phrase for multiple postulates and guesses scientists propose while in pursuit of an exception to Pasteur’s dictum that spontaneous generation of life cannot happen.

In the 1870s Charles Darwin suggested that life on earth probably began in a “warm little pond.”⁴ In the 1920s J. B. Haldane and A. I. Oparin both proposed that primitive living cells came into existence when organic substances, formed

in an airless atmosphere, collected in puddles and interacted with each other.⁵

In 1953, 91 years after Pasteur’s discovery, Stanley Miller, a graduate student in Harold Urey’s laboratory at the University of Chicago, published the results of his experiments, where he exposed a mixture of gases (ammonia, hydrogen, methane, and water vapors) to electric discharges and showed the formation of amino acids.⁶ Because proteins, the all-important substances of living matter, are composed of amino acids, this was credited by some as a laboratory demonstration of how life may have originated on earth. Thus the discipline of biochemical evolution was born.

Over subsequent decades numerous laboratories in this field have produced numerous biologically relevant substances, using numerous imagined “primordial” conditions. The one common denominator among these numerous efforts was the exclusion of the gas oxygen, because it destroys the desired products.

Practitioners of these biochemical evolutionary efforts gave undeserving inattention to a surprising discovery by astronauts of Apollo 16’s 1972 mission to the moon. They seemed more to ignore than deal with the fact that vast amounts of oxygen are constantly generated high in the atmosphere by the ultraviolet radiation of the sun acting upon water vapors.⁷ The news release of this discovery suggested that this “photolysis” of water may be the main source of oxygen in the atmosphere, instead of photosynthesis. That this phenomenon has been present all through earth’s history nullifies any concept of an oxygen-free atmosphere at some point in earth history.

In 1975 Stanley Miller wrote: “We are confident that the basic process [of chemical evolution] is correct, so confident that it seems inevitable that a similar process has taken place on many other planets in the solar system. . . . We are sufficiently confident of our ideas about the origin of life that in 1976 a spacecraft will be sent to Mars to land on the surface with the primary purpose of the experiments being a search for living organisms.”⁸

Indeed, in the summer of 1976, two sophisticated spacecrafts, the Viking landers, settled on Martian soil, 4,600 miles apart from each other, and began their search for living organisms. The results stunned the scientific community. Not only were there no living organisms on Mars, there

We do not now possess the technology to construct cells with continuous ongoing chemical processes within them.

were no organic substances at all in the soil! The results thoroughly repudiated biochemical evolutionary predictions.⁹

SYNTHETIC BIOLOGY: A NEW DISCIPLINE INTRODUCED

Near the end of the twentieth century a new field of inquiry emerged: synthetic biology. Here laboratories are attempting to create living organisms. Widespread optimism is expressed that with this development we are on the cusp of a new and exciting era of biology.¹⁰

However, scientists have bumped into a hitherto largely overlooked aspect of living organisms. The phenomenon of life is based on continuous chemical reactions within each cell, and we do not now possess the technology to construct cells with continuous ongoing chemical processes within them. Such a feat requires the ability to control, simultaneously, myriads of molecules, a function anyone must wield who would operate as life's Creator.¹¹

The study of ecology, the relationship between different types of organisms in the biosphere, reveals that no single kind of organism can survive by itself on earth. Plants depend on mammals for CO₂ to make sugar and oxygen through photosynthesis. Bacteria living in root nodules of plants convert nitrogen of the air to nitrate salts, so that plants utilize it for growth. It is clear to the scientific community that the various organisms of our biosphere do not compete with each other as much as they share an obligatory network of mutual support. If, through putative evolutionary means, a single organism were to emerge miraculously, it would not survive in the absence of a supportive biosphere!

Since 1862 there has been no new scientific

discovery that would invalidate Pasteur's annihilation of the theory of spontaneous generation. The enterprise of biochemical evolution, from 1953 to the present, constitutes one more futile effort to find an exception to Pasteur's dictum.

The scandal of biochemical evolution is that despite its long history of scientific failures and a lack of prospect of ever succeeding, the official scientific establishment still teaches it to students of all ages as the gospel, combined with active crusading against teaching creationism in science classes.¹² This deprives generations of students of knowing their true origins, while squandering untold billions of dollars on projects that cannot ever bring us life. 📌

¹ J. R. Porter, "Louis Pasteur: Achievements and Disappointments, 1861," *Bacteriological Reviews* 25, no. 4: 389-403.

² Robert Coolman, "Keeping Time: Origins of the Days of the Week," <https://www.livescience.com/45432-days-of-the-week.html>, accessed June 28, 2022.

³ <http://oneinmessiah.net/4thSab.htm>, accessed June 28, 2022.

⁴ Charles Darwin, in a letter to Joseph Hooker, 1871.

⁵ S. Tirardi, "J.B.S. Haldane and the Origin of Life," *Journal of Genetics* 96, no. 5 (2017): 735-739; see also https://physicsoftheuniverse.com/scientists_oparin.html/, accessed June 28, 2022.

⁶ S. L. Miller, "Production of Amino Acids Under Possible Primitive Earth Conditions," *Science* 117 (1953): 528, 529.

⁷ Naval Research Laboratory News Release: 30-72-7; *Review and Herald*, Mar. 14, 1974.

⁸ S. L. Miller, *The Heritage of Copernicus*, ed. Jerzy Neyman (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1974), p. 328.

⁹ C. Ponamperuma, A. Shimoyama, M. Yamada, T. Hobo, and R. Pal, "Possible Surface Reactions on Mars: Implications for Viking Biology Results," *Science* 197 (1977): 455-457.

¹⁰ G. A. Soffen, "Scientific Results of the Viking Missions," *Science* 194 (1976): 1274-1276; J. W. Szostak, D. P. Bartel, P. L. Luisi, "Synthesizing Life," *Nature* 409 (2001): 387-390.

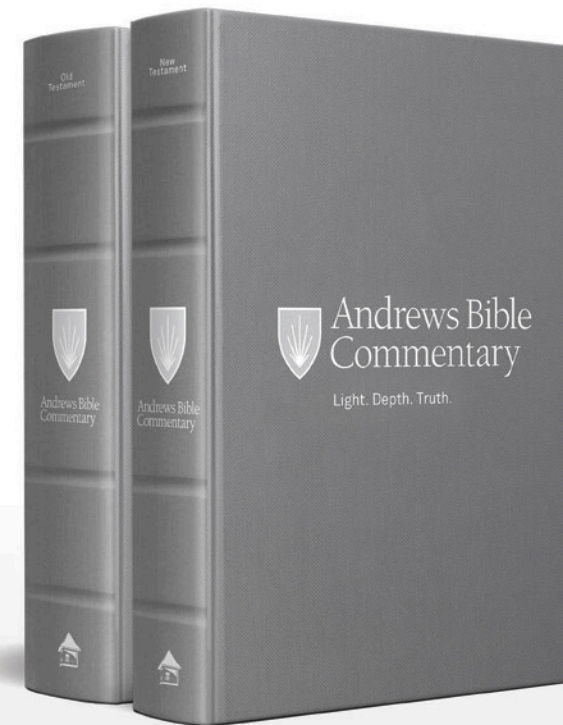
¹¹ G. T. Javor, "Synthesizing Life in the Laboratory: Why Is It Not Happening?" Geoscience Research Institute Website, July 26, 2021.

¹² G. T. Javor, "Letters," *Microbe Magazine*, Nov. 5, 2008. Archives of *Microbe Magazine* are inaccessible to nonmembers of the American Society of Microbiology. The letter is reproduced here: "Evolution in the Classroom. Risking the ire of the National Academy of Sciences, attention needs to be called to the irony of their current crusade against creationism in science classrooms. Sir Francis Bacon, who is credited with formulating and establishing the scientific method, was a creationist. So were Sir Isaac Newton, Robert Boyle, Louis Pasteur, Carl Linnaeus, Michael Faraday, Blaise Pascal, Lord Kelvin, James Clerk Maxwell, Jean Louis Agassiz, Rudolph Carl Virchow, Johannes Kepler, and numerous other intellectual giants on whose shoulders stand the modern scientific enterprise. Clearly, creationism did not hinder the scientific work of these greats; rather it encouraged them to seek keener insights into the secrets of the physical realm. Permitting students to peek outside the box of evolution is hardly a dilution of science. Rather it is granting them freedom of imagination and thought similar to what students of previous generations were allowed to have."

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THE ONE THING THE CHURCH NEEDS?

I recently asked my congregation what they thought the one thing was that the Seventh-day Adventist Church needed in order to fulfill its mission. One young man, who isn't a member, raised his hand and, to my utter surprise, gave a one-word answer: humility.

I asked the question because it had been informally posed to some of the General Conference leaders during the General Conference Session in St. Louis, which I'd been watching the week before. In between sessions, various leaders were interviewed and given opportunity to share their thoughts on the state and direction of the denomination. And as they responded to this specific question—with answers ranging from revival to unity to a renewed commitment to the Bible—I pondered how I would answer it. The answer I came up with was the same one the young man gave a few days later.

Revival, unity, and a deeper commitment to Scripture are all important. But it seems to me that what the church needs more than anything else is humility.

Historically, Adventism has closely identified with the "remnant" of Revelation 12, which can lend itself to a heightened sense of self-importance. But we've also—and perhaps just as important—identified ourselves as the church of Laodicea in Revelation 3, which is a humbling identity.

According to Christ, the Laodicean church claims to be "rich," "wealthy," and in "need of nothing," totally unaware that it is, instead, "wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked" (Rev. 3:17). In other words, the Laodicean church's assessment of itself is delusional and out of touch with reality. Some serious self-deception

is going on. A condition that should elicit humility has instead elicited pride.

Thus, Christ invites the Laodiceans to buy of Him gold tried in the fire, white clothing, and eye salve so they can properly see their true condition.

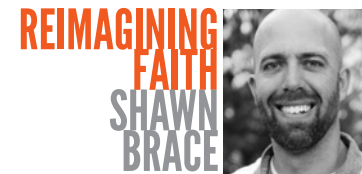
Embracing humility and Christ's Laodicean message would be an acknowledgment that we don't have everything figured out. It would communicate that we know we have more to learn, that we are no better than anyone else, that even the best things we do are as "filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6). It would indicate that we recognize our existence is justified not by any good thing we do or how big we grow or how many baptisms we get or how much truth we possess, but solely on the basis of Christ's righteousness.

In short, it would be an implicit commitment to the gospel, which says that we have nothing of ourselves of which to boast—but that our worth comes from Christ.

This assessment applies to me first, of course, as much as anyone else. I have plenty of self-righteousness that needs to be subdued and obliterated.

But it just seems to me that, among other things, having an honest awareness of ourselves—in short, having humility—is an exceptionally attractive force in the world, especially in this current cultural moment. The outside world will likely be more impressed by our identifying ourselves as Laodicea than identifying ourselves as the remnant. My young friend at church suggested as much. 🖊️

Shawn Brace is a pastor and author in Bangor, Maine, whose most recent book, *The Table I Long For* (Signs Publishing), details the journey he and his church have taken into a mission-centered life. He is also a DPhil student at the University of Oxford, researching nineteenth-century American Christianity.



EMBRACING HUMILITY AND CHRIST'S LAODICEAN MESSAGE WOULD BE AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT THAT WE DON'T HAVE EVERYTHING FIGURED OUT.

Reading all the Bible's teaching is crucial.

JENNIFER GRAY WOODS

Over the years Christians have faced the question of what to do when following religious convictions comes in direct conflict with obedience to governmental authority. There are two ways that this conflict occurs, and there are biblical examples for both. The first happens when a government mandates something that stands in conflict to religious convictions. The book of Daniel offers a helpful example of this form of conflict when King Nebuchadnezzar issued the decree that everyone was to bow down to the golden image, in direct violation of the second commandment (Dan. 3; cf. Ex. 20:4-6). Another example of this can be found in the book of Exodus, where Pharaoh commanded the Hebrew midwives to kill all Hebrew boys when they were born (Ex. 1:15-20).

This conflict also occurs when a government forbids something that God commands. Again, we can look to the book of Daniel for the example of this type of conflict, where we see King Darius forbidding everyone to pray to anyone other than him for 30 days (Dan. 6). In both instances God's people were placed in a position of whether to submit to government authority or to God. And in all three examples, God's people chose to follow Him and defy the laws of the leaders of the time.

However, when we get to the New Testament, we find guidance that we, as followers of Christ, should submit to government authority because leaders are appointed by God. For example, in Romans Paul says, "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves" (Rom. 13:1, 2, NIV; cf. Titus 3:1). Peter offers similar counsel when he states, "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right" (1 Peter 2:13, 14, NIV).

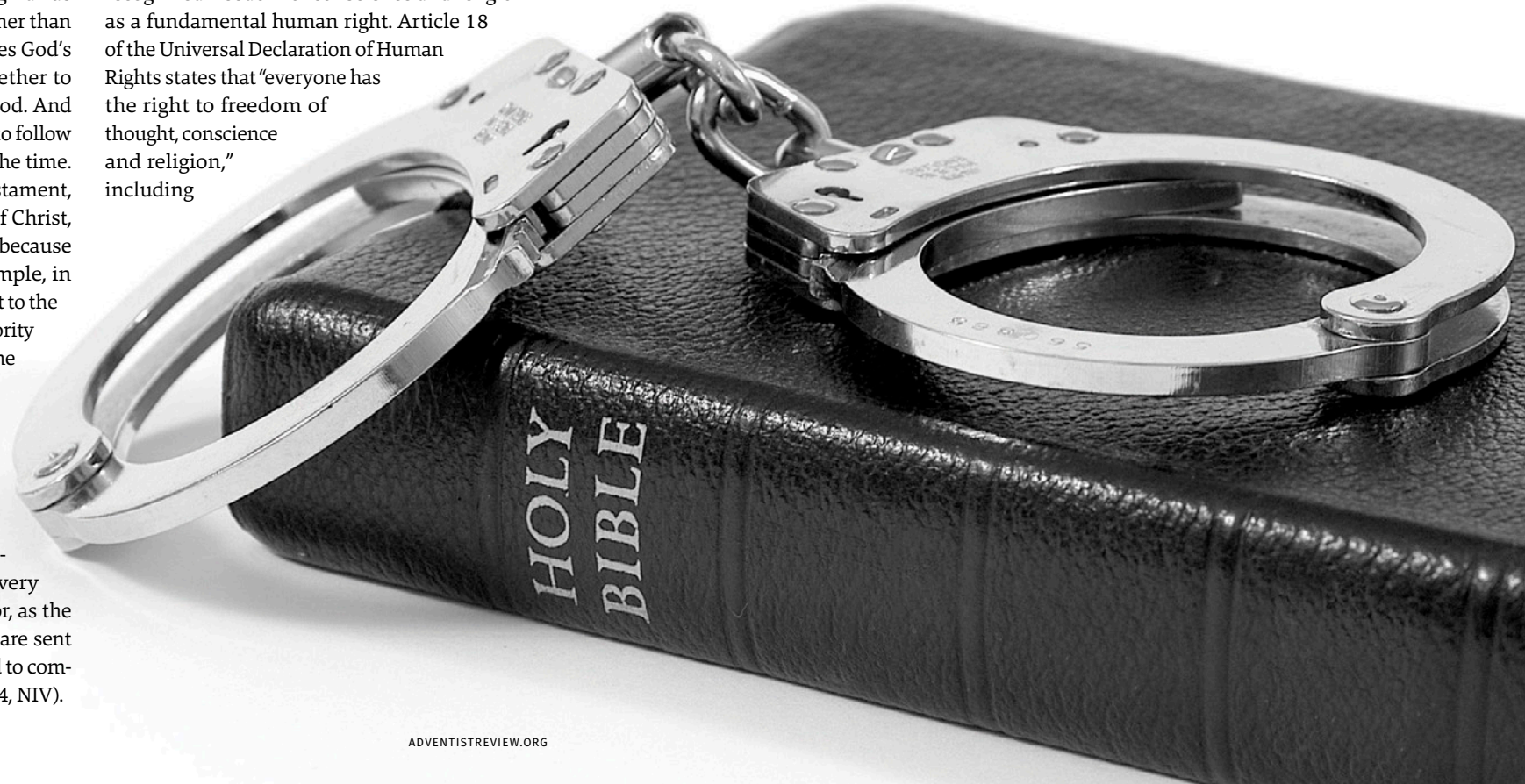
Jesus also taught that believers have a duty to government when He responded to the question posed by the Pharisees to trick Him regarding whether they should pay taxes to Caesar. In response, Jesus gave the guidance to "render . . . to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22:21; cf. Luke 20:19-26 and Mark 12:13-17).

Considering the biblical examples and the guidance given in both the Old and New Testaments, two questions come to mind. First, what is our duty to submit to governmental authority, especially when that authority prohibits believers to freely worship as they see fit? Second, what safeguards have governments put in place to protect an individual's rights to worship freely without constraints from the government?

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY PROTECTIONS BASICS

Since 1948 the international community has recognized freedom of conscience and religion as a fundamental human right. Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion," including

THE CHRISTIAN'S CALL TO CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE?





“freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.”¹ Even before this Universal Declaration, though, the United States has recognized the importance of this fundamental right from when it became a nation. Part of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution known as the “free exercise clause” states that an individual should be able to practice his or her religion, or no religion at all, without constraints from the government.²

This right, however, is not an absolute one, and over the years courts have been defining what it means to freely exercise one’s religion and what the limitations of this right are. Courts have recognized that there is a difference between an individual’s right to hold a religious belief and the right to freely practice that belief.³ While the right to hold a religious belief is absolute, the right to practice that belief is not. For example, the right to freely exercise one’s religion does not include the right to harm others or interfere with others’ rights.

Currently the law in the United States is that as long as the federal government has a compelling government interest and the law is the least-restrictive means of furthering its interest, it can place limits on an individual’s ability to freely

practice his or her religious beliefs.⁴ For state governments the standard is even lower: as long as the law is neutral and generally applicable, it will be legal even if it limits religious practice in some way.⁵ Many countries also have laws regarding religious liberty and the freedom of people to practice their faith, although each country balances the importance of individual freedom versus government interest differently.

While the concept of freedom of religion is a well-recognized principle, there have been times, and will continue to be times, that governments will limit freedom of conscience and religion in the name of fulfilling other government interests. We’ve seen this take place when religious speech is labeled as hate speech, when students and employees are forced to decide between taking school exams and working on Sabbath or honoring God’s day, when governments make laws forbidding proselytizing, or demanding the bearing of arms against an individual’s conscience.

SUBORDINATION AND CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE?

What should we, as believers, do when faced with a law that appears to conflict with biblical principles that impact our ability to freely practice our religious beliefs?

I believe that the Bible gives guidance on this

issue. Following the counsel of Jesus, we should “render . . . unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s,” recognizing and supporting the government’s right to legislate on secular matters and comply with those laws when possible. But we must also remember our duty to render unto God as our first priority. This means that when laws are in conflict with biblical mandates, our allegiance to God should always come first.⁶

This brings me to a term that is often used but has many different definitions: civil disobedience. Using the following definition, I believe that we as Christians at times are called to civil disobedience. Civil disobedience for purposes of this article can be defined as “purposeful, nonviolent action, or refusal to act, by a Christian who believes such action or inaction is required of him or her in order to be faithful to God, and which he or she knows will be treated by the governing authorities as a violation of law.”⁷ Civil disobedience is warranted anytime the government commands what God has forbidden or forbids what God commands.

Looking at the two biblical accounts given at the beginning of this article in Daniel 3 and 6, we see both examples of when civil disobedience is warranted. In both instances the decision to act or refusal to act were purposeful—the decisions not to comply with the law were not based merely on individual preferences, but because compliance would be in direct contradiction to the teachings and commands of God. Furthermore, and this is a crucial point, in both instances the decisions were made knowing it would be seen as a violation of the law, and there was a willingness to face the penalty—death. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego didn’t try to argue that the law didn’t, or shouldn’t, apply to them. Instead, they were willing to be subject to the penalty that breaking the law entailed, even though the laws were unjust.

So does engaging in civil disobedience mean not following the New Testament counsel to be subject to authority? No, it’s important to note that the apostles’ guidance in the New Testament doesn’t say that we, as believers, are to always obey government authority, but that we are to be subject to it. As John Yoder, a Mennonite theologian and ethicist, explained: “The conscientious objector who refuses to do what his government asks him to do, but still remains under the sover-

eignty of that government and accepts the penalties which it imposes, . . . is being subordinate even though he is not obeying.”⁸

Even though Peter and Paul preached subordination to government authority, they disobeyed their local leaders by continuing to preach the gospel when they were told to stop, leading to their arrest and imprisonment (cf. Acts 5; 12; 16). Also, Jesus anticipated that spreading the gospel could and would at times result in being handed over to authorities to be beaten and punished, and prepared His followers for this (Mark 13:9-11).

Early Adventist pioneers also understood that at times civil disobedience may be called for, while recognizing that this also meant being subject to the law and its penalties. Ellen White counseled that at times civil disobedience was necessary. “When the laws of men conflict with the word and law of God, we are to obey the latter, whatever the consequences may be. The law of our land requiring us to deliver a slave to his master, we are not to obey; and we must abide the consequences of violating this law.”⁹

As believers our default position should be submission to authority and, when possible, obedience to the laws of the land if they are not in direct conflict with our ability to follow the commands of God. But when we are faced with a conflict that requires obedience to government or submission to God, our first duty should always be to Him, regardless of the cost.✚

¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/human-rights/universal-declaration/translations/english>

² “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof”; <https://constitution.congress.gov/constitution/amendment-1/>.

³ *Reynolds v. United States* 98 US 145 (1879) and *Cantwell v. Connecticut* 310 U.S. 296 (1940).

⁴ Religious Freedom Restoration Act; 42 U.S.C., sec. 2000bb through 2000bb-4.

⁵ Unless a state has adopted its own version of the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

⁶ Seventh-day Adventist Statement on Church-State Relations, available online at: <https://www.adventist.org/documents/church-state-relations/>.

⁷ I’ve taken this definition from Duane Heffelbower, “The Christian and Civil Disobedience,” *Direction: A Mennonite Newsletter* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 23-30.

⁸ John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), p. 212.

⁹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 1, pp. 201, 202.

Jennifer Gray Woods is a lawyer and serves as associate director of the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.



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PETER N. LANDLESS ZENO L. CHARLES-MARCEL

HOUSECALL

HELPFUL, HEALING HOPE

Q: Everybody is encouraging me: “Have hope; don’t give up.” With two strokes, complicated diabetes, and recently diagnosed cancer, how can I have hope? What good is hope, anyway?

A: “Hope” has various meanings, but from your question, it seems that Merriam-Webster describes best what you mean: “a desire with the expectation and anticipation that that desire will be fulfilled.” You appear to doubt that your “tomorrow” can be better than “today,” and that there’s no realistic path to a good outcome.

Your feelings of despondency and helplessness are real and understandable; it takes emotional strength to be hopeful and optimistic in situations like yours. But as elusive as hope may seem, cultivating hope is possible. Circumstances can force us to our knees, but sometimes that is the best posture in which to grow and sustain hope. Scientific studies have shown that hope reduces pain; decreases helplessness, anxiety, and depression; and increases well-being.¹ Hope affects every aspect of life.

Circumstances can force us to our knees, but sometimes that’s the best posture in which to grow and sustain hope.

We’ve worked with patients who, in situations like yours, chose to proactively help neighbors, relatives, and friends who were facing significant challenges. Their own moods improved, their optimism and hope grew, and they described feeling “unstuck” from the track of despair and hopelessness. Also, many of our patients do what the research suggests in order to foster hope: they

practice gratitude. Every evening they write down five things they’re thankful for. Studies show that by expressing gratitude, we become more compassionate, happy, and hopeful.²

- Here are some ideas that may help:
- **Reject** the notion that there’s no hope or future for you. While you have breath, you are still able to be used by God for good!
 - **Reexamine** your situation prayerfully and count your blessings.
 - **Regard gratefully** what you can be thankful for; make a list every day.
 - **Reflect** on what’s truly important in your life. Heal broken relationships, make new friends, and come to know God more intimately.
 - **Reframe** your situation realistically, focusing on what you still have, what is still possible, and what you still can do rather than on what you’ve lost and the possible obstacles ahead.
 - **Refine** your expectations; set new goals.
 - **Redefine** how you see success, based on the above.
 - **Repeat** God’s promises and meditate on His Word.
 - **Remain** anchored spiritually.
 - **Respond** to God’s invitation to let Him be the author of the rest-of-your-life script.
 - **Rejoice** in the Lord always—HE is our HOPE!
 - **Rejoice**—God is faithful!

We believe that being hopeful is an intentional, cultivated act, not an instinctive response. We pray that the God of hope will fill you with all joy and peace, so you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (see Rom. 15:13).

¹ R. K. Rajandram et al., in *BMC Research Notes* 4 (Nov. 28, 2011): 519.
² Charlotte vanOyen et al., *The Journal of Positive Psychology* 14, no. 3 (2019): 271-282.

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

THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

*Finding
arguments
or finding
answers?*

LORON WADE



SURACHAT YAEPAE / LIGHTSTOCK

Yes, I know; the Bible condemns the way I am living,” said the young man on the opposite side of my desk. “But those verses you just read—don’t they reflect the popular culture of the time? And aren’t you applying them according to your own set of values?”

“The problem with Mario,” said one of my colleagues when I told him about this conversation, “is that he accepts the Bible only as long as it approves of his behavior. He wants a cafeteria-style religion where he can choose what he likes and ignore the rest.”

THE BIBLE SAYS: MEANING WHAT?

Mario and my colleague were, obviously, on the opposite sides of a very old debate about Bible authority. And yet, without realizing it, both were saying the same thing: each was accusing the other side of interpreting the Bible according to their own opinions and ideas.

Bible authority is not as simple as it may appear, because after we say “Yes,” we believe in it; we need to ask how to interpret and apply what the Bible says.

The first part is clear: Number one in the list of Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs is a ringing affirmation: “The Holy Scriptures are the . . . infallible revelation of [God’s] will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revealer of doctrines.”

Nineteenth-century Adventist hymn writer Frank Belden, more poetic but equally emphatic, wrote:

“What says the Bible, the blessed Bible?
This should my only question be;
Teachings of men so often mislead us,
What says the book of God to me?”

One day Jesus was talking with a “lawyer,” a man whose whole life was dedicated to studying the law of God and teaching it to the people, and He asked this man, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” (Luke 10:26, NIV). It is clear that Jesus was upholding the authority of the written Word.

The apostle Paul wrote: “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16, NIV).

Like the old saying: “God said it; I believe it; and that settles it.”

THE MESSAGE IS: MEANING WHAT?

But we really can’t stop there. We have to consider, first of all, the nature of the Bible. As Paul says, it is “God-breathed.” Any sincere approach to Scripture brings one into contact with divinity. “The word of God is alive” (Heb. 4:12, NIV). It vibrates with the presence of its divine Author. But God, out of compassion, takes a humble approach. He stoops low to whisper in our ear. He speaks to us in human words.

There is an Incarnation principle at work here. The mysterious combination of humanity and divinity that was present in Jesus is seen also in His written Word. He entrusts eternal, infinite truth to human authors, translators, scholars, and preachers: we have a “treasure”; we’re “jars of clay” that disclose God’s “all-surpassing

power” (2 Cor. 4:7, NIV). The “treasure” is God’s message, a story for which the angels never cease to praise Him, and of which the redeemed will study and sing for eternal ages; a message of “all-surpassing power” because, through it, God is reconciling the universe to Himself. This is far, far beyond amazing. No words can ever begin to describe it. And it is Paul’s incredible anomaly: this treasure, placed in rough clay pots! With his familiar transparency and sincerity, Paul reveals the various strands that were interwoven in making the book First Corinthians. The first strand is perhaps the most surprising:

Hearsay: “Some from Chloe’s household have informed me that there are quarrels among you” (1 Cor. 1:11, NIV; see also 1 Cor. 5:1, NIV). “I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent, I believe it” (1 Cor. 11:18, NIV).

Personal recollection: “I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius. . . . (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don’t remember if I baptized anyone else)” (1 Cor. 1:14-16, NIV). “And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God” (1 Cor. 2:1, 2, NIV).

Readers’ personal recollection: “Brothers and sis-

ters, think of what you were when you were called” (1 Cor. 1:26, NIV; see also 1 Cor. 9:13, NIV).

Spirit-revealed truths: “These are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit” (1 Cor. 2:10, NIV). “This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit” (verse 13, NIV).

“To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord)” (1 Cor. 7:10, NIV).

“For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you” (1 Cor. 11:23, NIV).

“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance” (1 Cor. 15:3, NIV).

Personal opinion: “Now about virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment” (1 Cor. 7:25, NIV). Paul’s “judgment” is “because of the present crisis” (verse 26). Elsewhere he says, “It seems to me . . .” (1 Cor. 4:9, NIV).

Tradition and customary practice “I praise you . . . for holding to the traditions just as I passed them on to you” (1 Cor. 11:2, NIV). The “tradition” here concerns covering the head, or not, during praying or prophesying. Anticipating some disagreement, Paul adds: “If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice—nor do the churches of God” (verse 16, NIV).

The Bible: “It is written” (eight times). Like Timothy, Paul had known the Scripture from his earliest years. He breathed and lived it. Its message shaped his values and his world view. He quotes it directly and indirectly. Eight times in First Corinthians he says, “It is written,” and then cites the words of the Bible. He quotes from Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Job, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Hosea. In addition, there are at least 20 other points where he quotes, paraphrases, or alludes to Scripture, e.g.: “God is faithful, by whom you were called” (1 Cor. 1:9). This is similar to Isaiah 49:7: “The Lord who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel . . . has chosen you.” Paul may be intentionally quoting Isaiah, or simply using language that is the most familiar to him.

In addition to citing Bible instruction as authoritative, Paul refers extensively to Bible history. He reminds his readers about the water that flowed from the rock, the manna in the wilderness, the cloud that covered and protected the people, and the apostasy at Baal-peor. “These things,” he says, “occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. . . . [They] were

written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come” (1 Cor. 10:6-11).

INSPIRATION: MEANING WHAT?

So how much of First Corinthians is inspired and, therefore, authoritative? Is it only the snippets where Paul says, I received this from the Lord? Is it that, plus the words he quotes from the Old Testament? This brings us to the question What is inspiration, and how does it work?

God gives the prophets a message. They may receive it in a specific vision or not, but, through the work of His Spirit, He communicates to them a focus, an understanding of the message He wants them to transmit. He guides them to comprehend, absorb, and correctly interpret the other inspired writings.

Although He does not usually dictate the message verbally, neither does He stand back passively as they speak on His behalf. If He sees they are in danger of saying something that is seriously misleading, He is able to intervene. The prophet Nathan approved of David’s idea—building a temple. But that night God instructed Nathan: “Go and tell my servant David, ‘This is what the Lord says: You are not the one to build me a house to dwell in’” (1 Chron. 17:4).

God looks out for the integrity of the message, but He does not always intervene to correct insignificant details. The story of Jesus casting out demons near Gadara is told by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Matthew tells us that Jesus healed two demon-possessed men, whereas Mark and Luke say there was one. Similarly, Matthew says Jesus restored the eyesight of two blind men in Jericho, whereas Mark and Luke tell about only one. This should not be our point of contention, because we do not believe in verbal inspiration. We need to ask: What is the Spirit’s message? It is that Jesus is there for us, that He has power over demons and can open our eyes. He has the same power today and is eager to use it on our behalf. People were rebuking the blind man (or men). The disciples were terrified and ran away from the demon-possessed man (or men). But Jesus responded to them with love. He met their needs and drew them into the circle of His care. That is the message, and that is how inspiration works.

So how much of 1 Corinthians is inspired? All of it. Not just the parts where Paul says he received

something from the Lord. Light from heaven filled his heart and mind and soul. Guided by the Holy Spirit, he had absorbed the message, and it influenced everything—his teaching, writing, living, and suggesting about what He thinks God wants us to understand. What we, his readers, need to do, is to pray, look for the message under the Holy Spirit’s guidance, and, with reverence and respect, apply it to our lives.

PROPHETS WERE HUMAN: MEANING WHAT?

The Bible writers need not have had 100 percent accurate information about everything. Their humanity does not shake our confidence in their divinely inspired message or lead us to question its authority: that is not how inspiration works.

Some people see this approach as a slippery slope. They are afraid that if we do not believe in unerring word-for-word inspiration, there is no stopping place, and we shall plunge over the cliff into skepticism. We believe, however, that guided by the Spirit, we can avoid hermeneutical extremes: We do not require women to use a head scarf when they pray. We do not try to keep our children from marrying “because of the present crisis.” We are neither disrespecting Paul nor disobeying the Bible in this. Our aim is to understand the principles of the message, asking God for wisdom to apply them in practice.

An overly literalistic approach is literary legalism. We parse beyond reasoning, fighting about definitions more than the authors who wrote the words. We fail to see God smiling; we miss the love He has written on every page.

That is the problem with a strict, legalistic approach to Bible authority, and it is also the problem with Mario and his friends. They have not seen the smile of God behind the commandments. They see them as forbidding, restricting, limiting. They are not understanding them as an immense blessing, designed by God to help us avoid a flood of troubles. If they could see Bible authority in its true light, their hearts would be filled with intense love for God, and they would render joyful obedience to its sacred principles. This approach leads to far greater faithfulness and obedience than legalism.

And this is the approach that truly does uphold the authority of the Bible. ♣

Loron Wade is a retired Adventist theologian.

The mysterious combination of humanity and divinity that was present in Jesus is seen also in His written Word.



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MY LAST WISH

I stepped into the Green Room and stopped short. She didn't look as sick as I'd expected. She sat on the chair next to Grandma Joyce, snuggled against her side. She was a beautiful child, smooth cheeks, large, dark eyes. She didn't look like she was dying. *How did her family cope?*

My eyes burned with unshed tears. Swallowing hard, I met the family, then knelt in front of little Grace's* chair. "It's nice to meet you, sweetie. So glad you came to 3ABN." She looked at me, eyes intelligent, even though she was unable to speak.

My mind traveled back to the email we'd first received from Make-A-Wish Foundation, an organization focused on making the last wish come true for a critically ill child. We were thrilled that Grace had chosen 3ABN. She loved *Grandma's House*, a program that aired on 3ABN Kids Network, and Make-A-Wish had sponsored her trip to southern Illinois to meet Aunt Francine and Grandma Joyce. We'd been told this wish was urgent, as Grace didn't have much time left. Sometimes life is measured in decades or years, sometimes in days or weeks. Life is uncertain at best, but even more so when looking at a little girl who should have her whole life still ahead of her.

Grace was fed, then carried out on set, ready to record. I slipped into the control room, looking at her face on the screen, haunted by the pain in the family's eyes. Pain, strangely combined with joy, even amid such a diagnosis. My mind pondered the unfairness of this world of sin.

Some couples long for a child they can-

not have, while others have a child they don't want.

Some children die much too young, while others struggle on, lost in addiction and pain.

Others lose their parents somehow, through misunderstandings or a clash of wills.

What thoughts have gone through little Grace's mind? Did she understand that, without a miracle from Jesus, she was close to the end? How does a child understand death? How does a parent cope with such a loss?

The thoughts swirled through my mind: the uncertainty of life, the unfairness of this world of sin, yet the preciousness of her last wish. She didn't wish for Disney World or Mickey Mouse, for a Hollywood actor or sports figure. She wanted to hear more about Jesus, from the lips of someone who had encouraged her toward Him.

What truly matters in life? Is it our jobs or our ability to provide for our families? Is it our status in church or the number of friends we possess? Somehow, when all the mist clears and the dust settles, when I pause to actually take a breath, I'm reminded of my heart's desire, my only wish.

My wish, my last and only wish, is to see Jesus—really, truly for who He is—and then to reveal that Jesus to others.

Nothing else really matters. ♣

* Not her real name.

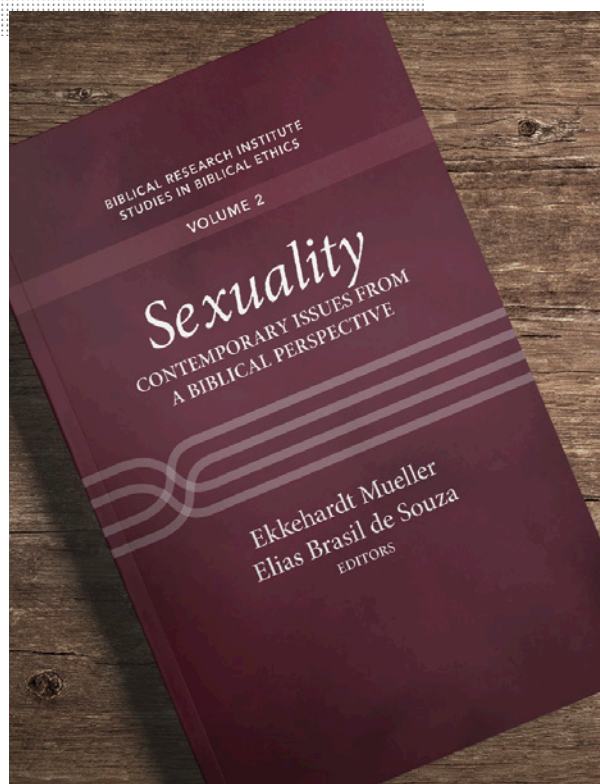
Jill Morikone is vice president and chief operations officer for Three Angels Broadcasting Network (3ABN), a supporting Adventist television network. She and her husband, Greg, live in southern Illinois and enjoy ministering together for Jesus.

JOURNEYS WITH JESUS
JILL MORIKONE



LIFE IS UNCERTAIN AT BEST, BUT EVEN MORE SO WHEN LOOKING AT A LITTLE GIRL WHO SHOULD HAVE HER WHOLE LIFE STILL AHEAD OF HER.

Readers will learn much from a perusal of the volume, perhaps feeling at times they are learning a little too much.



A BIBLICAL VIEW OF SEXUALITY

Ekkehardt Mueller and Elias Brasil de Souza, eds., *Sexuality: Contemporary Issues From a Biblical Perspective*, Biblical Research Institute Studies in Biblical Ethics 2 (Silver Spring, Md.: Biblical Research Institute/Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 2022), 625 pages. US\$25.00. Reviewed by Clinton Wahlen, associate director, Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions have brought back to the forefront many issues involving sexuality, including abortion, same-sex marriages, gender identity, and contraception, to name a few. All of these topics and many more are dealt with in an engaging way from a biblical perspective in a recent and timely publication, *Sexuality: Contemporary Issues From a Biblical Perspective*, published in 2022 by the Biblical Research Institute. Volume 2 of a three-volume series on *Marriage, Sexuality, and the Family*, this book's international flavor is reflected by its 22 authors who, similar to those who had contributed to the first volume, represent a wide variety of specialties and come from diverse backgrounds.

The early chapters deal with such foundational questions as What is human sexuality? What constitutes sexual immorality? What about premarital sex, living together outside of marriage, having a mistress, and polygamy? Many other practical issues are dealt with quite explicitly, including: sexual addiction, prostitution, rape, female genital mutilation, abortion, child sexual abuse, queer theology, homosexuality, even cybersex and robotic sex. Readers will learn much from a perusal of the volume, perhaps feeling at times they are learning a little too much, such as that some theologians imagine an erotic trinity (pp. 392-394) and even sexualize their relationship with Jesus (pp. 395, 396). Readers may also discover interesting facts, such as the use of spermicides by the ancient Egyptians (p. 282), and details of fetal

development from conception to delivery (pp. 304-306). Vital information is also given, such as how to recognize child sexual abuse and what to do about it (pp. 367-373).

Two chapters wrestle with the issue of transgenderism. The first, by Elias Brasil de Souza and Larry Lichtenwalter, surveys modern theological approaches to the topic and cites apparent ancient expressions of transgenderism in Egypt, Canaan, and Mesopotamia, before tackling the topic from a biblical perspective. The second chapter, by Kwabena Donkor, examines gender and sexuality from an Adventist perspective, providing helpful definitions of various LGBTQ+ terms (pp. 490, 491) and evaluating three different Christian "frameworks" or lenses through which transgenderism has been viewed (integrity, disability, diversity), before suggesting a "great controversy framework" as the best way to understand and help transgender individuals relate to their sexuality in terms of God's grace and the biblical hope of ultimate restoration to God's ideal in eternity. Unfortunately, of the two chapters, sex-reassignment surgery is mentioned only briefly by Donkor (p. 509) and could have been helpfully explored in far greater detail. As the first chapter points out, Genesis 1 defines human beings (and animals) in physical and sexual terms, "male and female" (p. 8).

Fittingly, perhaps, the book concludes with one of the most engaging topics of all, "The Seduction of Forbidden Intimacy," by Alberto Timm. He points out that fully 90 percent of men and 61 percent of women fantasize about having sexual encounters with people they meet (p. 545). Lessons are drawn from three cases of forbidden intimacy described in Scripture, and eight helpful principles presented to help people "build strong affair-resistant relationships" (pp. 555-560). Rounding out the book's 20 chapters is an appendix that helpfully draws together 16 documents

produced by the church from 1987 to 2019 related to the issues addressed in the volume.

In this brief review it is impossible to really capture how important this book is for Christians living in our highly sexualized age, in which even children are confronted with the possibility of choosing a gender other than the one they were given at birth. Some readers will wish that a wider range of perspectives would be represented on such diverse issues, while others will welcome the clear, biblical, and ethical reasoning the various authors display as they tackle these difficult topics that reflect different cultural mores and practices in various parts of the globe. Already the first decades of the twenty-first century have shown that not only are these issues not going away; because of the interconnectivity of our post-postmodern world, they are rapidly spreading geographically, culturally, and even intergenerationally to very young readers. Consequently, this book will be helpful for many—parents, pastors, teachers, and everyone who has been directly affected by the sexual revolutions of the past half century. In fact, one may legitimately ask whether any of us remain untouched by these pressures. Even if the answers may not fully satisfy everyone, readers will be challenged to think through the whys of their beliefs and perhaps even rethink them. Ekkehardt Mueller and Elias Brasil de Souza are to be commended for bringing us a resource that will help readers understand better how to relate to societal pressures in the light of God's Word. ♣

You Are Enough

She was the youngest and most inexperienced intern in an established, older, and primarily male clergy team not far from a major health-care institution in New York City. That chilly autumn evening, when everyone else had already left and she was about to do the same, the phone rang.

“A terminal patient has asked for one of you to come to see him,” a nurse who said she was calling from the hospital told the young intern.

“I am the only one left here tonight,” she answered. “But it’s OK. I’ll go.”

When she arrived minutes later, a reception nurse told the young intern how to find the room and then hurried away.

The young intern knocked and came in.

“You asked for a religious person to see you?” she asked the man hesitantly.

“I was expecting someone older,” he told her bluntly, visibly disappointed.

“Would you rather I leave?” she asked, thinking her decision to answer the call had been a bad idea.

“Oh, no,” he said, mellowing a little. “Stay. You are enough.”

The young intern acquiesced. She dragged a chair by his bed and sat. She held his hands. They talked and talked. She prayed for him. An hour later the young intern said goodbye, promising to return in the morning.

When the young intern arrived at the hospital the following day, a nurse gave her the sad news. “The man died not long after you left,” she told her.

Years have passed. The young intern is now an established figure in her field. People now look up to her and seek her counsel. Her contributions are usually

appreciated, and her words are treasured as wise and worthy of notice.

“I still face significant, sometimes daunting challenges,” she shares. “But every time in my service that I feel overwhelmed by the circumstances; every time that it seems I might not be able to cope; every time that I feel my qualifications, abilities, or acumen fall short of other people’s or my expectations, I picture the dying old man telling me, ‘You are enough.’”

By biblical definition, being human after the Garden of Eden is somewhat paradoxical. We were created “a little lower than the angels” and “crowned . . . with glory and honor” (Ps. 8:5). And “we finish our years like a sigh,” as we are “cut off, and we fly away” (Ps. 90:9, 10). Being human is a work in progress, never to be completed this side of Paradise.

Against that background, sooner or later, we are pushed to face our shortcomings. Maybe it’s our inherited traits, bad habits, or lack of proficiency or experience. Perhaps it is that we are attempting too much or not enough. It may be the fallout of missed opportunities. Our best falls too short; our expected masterpieces turn out to be ordinary and stale. And deep down, we know it. Our family knows it. Our coworkers know it. God knows it.

Then we might need that still, calm voice that reminds us, “You are enough.”

That voice might originate in a friend, a colleague, or even in a dying man in a dull hospital ward. It can also come after we dig in the Word to read, “You are precious and honored . . . and because I love you, I will give . . . nations in exchange for your life” (Isa. 43:4, NIV).

No need to dwell on your shortcomings after such confirmation: you are enough!

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