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HEALTH UPDATE + OUR BOYS IN THE ARMY**

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LAST MONTH:

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The Hopeful, a Film About Adventist Origins, Debuts in Theaters, by Kathryn Post, Religion News Service

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Camporee in Venezuela Results in 170 Baptisms and Inspires Young and Old, by Steven's Rosado and Inter-American Division

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In Papua New Guinea, Port Moresby Program Fills Stadium, by Jarrod Stackelroth, Adventist Record

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Adventist Secondary School in PNG Dedicates a Room for Prayer, by Jarrod Stackelroth, Adventist Record

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Adventists in St. Croix Celebrate Historic Results After Evangelistic Series, by Libna Stevens, Inter-American Division

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Only those who receive the early rain will benefit from the latter rain.

A Break From Frontier (or Modern) Life

In the 1800s those on the North American frontier did not have easy access to pastors. There weren't enough church buildings, either, both in capacity and quantity. Rather than bringing people to the preacher, itinerant preachers went to the people. Camp meetings became a vacation to explore spiritual interests as well as to get a break from the toil of frontier life. Typically there was nonstop preaching from early morning to late at night. With a de-emphasis on formal theology and an emphasis on revival, spirituality, and Bible preaching, many enjoyed this religious phenomenon.

The first Adventist camp meeting was held in Wright, Michigan, on September 1-7, 1868 (read more in Michael Campbell's article on page 22). Four months earlier the General Conference Session convened in Battle Creek, Michigan. But the proceedings were so formal and so church business-oriented that attendees left disappointed. In response, James White proposed the idea for a general convocation of "spiritual feasting" for the people—camp meeting.¹

As Rich Constantinescu will highlight in this issue (see page 26), Ellen White interestingly wrote this about camp meeting in 1897:

"The convocations of the church, as in camp meetings, the assemblies of the home church, and all occasions where there is

personal labor for souls, are God's appointed opportunities for giving the early and the latter rain."²

Ancient Israel's agricultural year consisted of an early (or former) rain and a latter rain. They bookended an intense drought during the summer. The early rain would ensure the crops would survive the drought. But for a bountiful yield, the latter rain was necessary just before the harvesttime. Both were necessary for a productive return.

The Bible likens our spiritual experience, as well as the church body's experience, to these rains. The early rain was typified at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came down upon the early church. For those of us not present then, we experience the early rain when we encounter Jesus at our conversion, whether it be a punctiliar or progressive experience.

The next prophetic event in earth's time line is not necessarily the second coming of Jesus, but the falling of the latter rain upon His people to prepare for His coming. This means a supernatural occurrence during which the Holy Spirit is copiously poured forth, resulting in power over pride, self, and worldliness. Those waiting for the Advent will be endowed with a spiritual influence to forgive, connect, and unite with other believers. Evangelism, outreach, and witnessing will grow in intensity and in fervency, resulting in more conversions and revival.

Like Israel's rains, only those who receive the waters of the early rain will benefit from the latter rain right before the harvest, or the second coming of Christ. What is sobering is that those receiving the rain and those not receiving the rain may be in the same room: one praising God and another going about their day as if nothing were happening. One would experience the moving of the Spirit, and another would experience nothing, while sitting in the same pew. One would be convicted by a text of Scripture, while another would yawn in familiarity.

Ellen White connects the evangelistic and revivalist experiences of convocations, home church, personal labor, and even our Adventist camp meetings with God's opportunities to give both the early rain and latter rain. We don't all have frontier lifestyles anymore, but why not take time this summer to explore your spiritual interests at camp meeting as well as to get a break from the toil of modern life?

If not, let's pray to hear God's voice in convocations, churches, your devotional life, and/or online. But whatever you do, let's pray for rain, the early and the latter, to prepare for His harvest, His return. ▀

¹ <https://adventistreview.org/magazine-article/camp-meeting/>

² Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1923), p. 508.

GRATITUDE FOR THE *REVIEW*

The new *Review* is excellent. Learning and relearning about our rich history, with a new back page; focusing on difficult topic themes, such as mental health and church discipline, in a balanced and helpful manner—each *Review* surprises with new insights and ideas. I'm thankful for a magazine that continues to strengthen my faith and increase my gratitude for my church.

Selma Chaij Mastrapa



STUDY TIME FOR PARENTS

I enjoyed Merle Poirier's article "Mary or Martha?" in the May issue. A tip I learned many years ago in children's Sabbath School at La Sierra church to address parental concerns was to have a program for the cradle roll children for part of the time, then create a safe place with supervision from some students. We let the children play while the parents had their own study time. This became a real blessing for me and other parents.

Kelly Bock

AN ENCOURAGING READ

Clifford Goldstein's article "A Lament" (May 2024) was right on and much needed. His lament of imperfection is my main lament in life and the lament of many other Christians. I was encouraged to read I was not alone in despairing that in my Christian walk I fail more than I care to admit, even after decades of fellowship with Jesus. And when I fail, I realize that it harms the cause of God, as some may think that God has not changed me or, worse, that I am a hypocrite.

While we too wonder if we are sometimes worse than we were in the past, that is the devil's lie. Though I still sometimes stumble, I know that Jesus loves me and died for my sins. He has forgiven me, and I need to forgive myself and trust God will give me the victory over sin.

Douglas Abbott

ON TARGET

John Peckham's May editorial "Christ's Kingdom Is Not of This World" was both on target and a source of encouragement: our leaders (as at the *Review*) know very well that evangelical drift into authoritarian nationalism is indefensible.

Charles Scriven

POWER IN CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

The articles about the history and the impact of our literature by Almir Marroni brought a lot of memories and joy to me ("Seven Phases" and "17 Years Later," April 2024). There is power in Christian literature.

Leo Ranzolin, Sr.

ABOUT THE CAREGIVERS

"Not Alone" (April 2024), by Becky St. Clair, was such an excellent article! Though

“I fail more than I care to admit.”

DOUGLAS ABBOTT

caregivers are not mentioned in the article, the concepts could be very helpful in caregivers' situations. Many times the period leading up to the death of a spouse or loved one is an emotionally difficult period for the caregiver—be it a spouse or another family member. Though it seems strange to suggest grief recovery while still ministering to the person struggling to stay alive, it would help. I know there are groups for caregivers of dementia patients, but I confess my ignorance of caregiver groups for those dealing with terminal illness.

Leona Murray

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 email messages). Letters will be edited for space and clarity only. Send correspondence to Letters to the Editor, *Adventist Review*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600; Internet: letters@adventistreview.org.

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“Being able to worship God in your own language is such a blessing. It brings us hope, and it heals wounds.”

Claude Hakizimanh, p. 13

NEWS



Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division and Inter-American Division leaders stand with Atlantic Caribbean Union officers at the church's headquarters in Nassau, the Bahamas, April 12. PHOTO: JOHN GARCIA

AFRICAN CHURCH LEADERS VISIT LOCAL MEMBERSHIP IN THE BAHAMAS

SOUTHERN AFRICA-INDIAN OCEAN DIVISION ADMINISTRATORS TOUR CHURCH FACILITIES.

HENRY R. MONCUR III, ATLANTIC CARIBBEAN UNION, AND INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION NEWS

Leaders from the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division (SID) and the Inter-American Division (IAD) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church visited leaders and members in the Atlantic Caribbean Union (ATCU) region during a two-day tour April 12-13. Leaders learned about the union territory's history and

church growth initiatives, and met local pastors and members across Nassau, the Bahamas.

According to Elie Henry, president of the IAD, the visit accommodated a request from SID leaders to see how the church's mission is accomplished in the Inter-American Division territory. "We wanted

to go to a place where we can spend the Sabbath and see the church in action," Henry said.

Harrington Akombwa, president of SID, said that to see what was done in the territory was history in the making for the SID leaders. "The linkage of these two divisions is historic," he said. "The biggest division

in the world church is in Africa. The second largest is our division, well above 4 million [members], and your division is the third in membership," he said. "So when we come together, we are not competing with one another, but networking. This brings glory to God in heaven." The visit was an opportunity to learn from each other and then collaborate to finish the mission, he added.

Leaders arrived in New Providence, the Bahamas, home to ATCU's headquarters, as well as home to the South Bahamas Conference, on April 12. They first visited Grand Bahama Academy, where they were welcomed by music from the school's band, taken on a tour of the campus facilities, given produce grown in the school's garden, and updated on the school's plans for development.

"We can see it in the experience we had in visiting the school that you are teaching the students how to care for nature and that the school can make a difference for the community," Henry said.

Before the visit to ATCU, SID leaders spent a day at the IAD headquarters in Miami, Florida, to learn about evangelism initiatives and mission strategies throughout the territory, Henry said.

In his remarks at a welcoming ceremony at the union's headquarters, Akombwa highlighted the importance of the visit as he spoke to church administrators, workers, and pastors. "We heard how organized you are as a division, and we said we want to learn. Your reports

are among the best in the entire world. You are doing very well," Akombwa said.

Leonard Johnson, secretary of the IAD, tied the visit to a historic moment. Johnson noted how the first prime minister of the Bahamas, the late Sir Lynden O. Pindling, who was a Seventh-day Adventist, played an instrumental role in the release of Nelson Mandela from prison. "It is historic that at this moment we have leaders from South Africa now here in the Bahamas to meet with and learn from others in advancing mission," Johnson said.

Leaders saw the church in action on April 13 when they attended an evangelistic outreach campaign under way on the island.

Henry expressed excitement about the passion and fervor demonstrated by the membership during the evangelistic meeting and the way the gospel was being preached in the territory. "Coming here to one of the newest and youngest unions in IAD, we are delighted to see that you are doing marvelous things for God. The way you are taking the work forward and growing is inspiring," he said. He called on the members to accept the challenge to go and seek those who have not yet accepted Christ.

Leaders also attended a joint service of several Adventist Haitian Creole churches on the island at the Grants Town Seventh-day Adventist Church, where Bishop Delton Fernander, president of

the Bahamas Christian Council, welcomed the IAD and SID leaders on behalf of the Christian diaspora in the Bahamas.

"I am grateful that we have found you at your best, doing evangelism. This is the reason we exist as a church," Akombwa said. He challenged the members to persist in evangelism. "We have a message that we need to get out to the people. . . . Keep on doing the work of evangelism," he said.

The visit provided opportunities for the division leaders to see how organizational restructuring has benefited the work in the region, said Peter Kerr, president of ATCU. "We feel blessed beyond measure to have been considered by the leadership of the Inter-American Division as the union out of the 24 unions of the division that would be honored with the visit of our leaders from the Inter-American Division and the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division," he said.

In reflecting on the visit, Henry said they saw the church in motion for mission. "This visit shows ATCU at its finest, doing mission, and I want to encourage the members to continue with that fire for the Lord."

Gideon Reyneke, secretary of SID, in summing up the two-day experience, said, "Mission is the heartthrob of our division, and everything needs to be focused on mission. Ours is to have every member an active disciple doing something for God. We are blessed to have been here." ▀



Despite the challenging times in Ukraine, God's work keeps moving forward, regional church leaders said. PHOTO: ADVENTISTS UKRAINE

BAPTISMS IN UKRAINE DURING THE WAR

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS EXPANDING REGARDLESS OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

NATALIA LUCHAK, UKRAINIAN UNION CONFERENCE

In the challenging times facing the Seventh-day Adventist Church community in Ukraine, the work of God continues. Here are testimonies about individuals who have recently received Jesus and committed their lives to Him.

God's special blessings were experienced by the youth community "upstream" in Kyiv, when two girls and a young man dedicated their lives to Jesus and were baptized on March 16. Each of them at one time had heard about Jesus and got to know Him through the study of biblical truths.

On Sabbath, March 16, a baptism service was held in Mykolaiv. Four people made a covenant with God and joined the church. Two people became members of the Adventist Church in Berezanka and two more in the Mykolaiv community. The oldest of the newly baptized, Andriy Prokofievich, is 92 years old.

On the same day, five people made a covenant with God in the Adventist community of Bila Tserkva, Kyiv region. The people baptized were from Bezugliak, Bila Tserkva, and Volodarka. Some made their decision after an evangelistic

program held in the Bila Tserkva-2 community, and others after personal study with their pastor.

Also on March 16, three boys were baptized in the first Rivne community. They had been attending youth Bible study meetings held every Tuesday by Serhii Soya, a pastor in that region.

From March 22 to 24 a youth mission congress titled "In the Footsteps of Jesus" was held in the city of Vyshhorod, where the young people of Chernihiv, Sumy, and Kyiv regions gathered. This special event led to the baptism of three young people.

On March 23 two men and two women entered into a covenant with the Lord and joined the church family of the First Community church of the city of Berdychev, Zhytomyr region.

In Kyiv on March 23 a solemn service of water baptism took place, during which representatives from various communities of the city gathered, and 15 people who had undergone Bible studies made a covenant with the Lord.

During evangelistic meetings in the Rivne region, two people were baptized in the city of Dubno. For

almost a year Alla attended church services and took Bible studies. For Yuri the evangelistic meetings were the first contact with the Adventist Church.

Evangelistic meetings held in Lutsk also brought results. Four people joined the Adventist Church, and now they will help seekers of God's truth to grow in faith.

Two young people, brother and sister, Maxim and Albina Shaposhnik, attended the Adventist church in the city of Lutsk. They were born into an Adventist family, and after studying the Bible courses at the Bible school, they decided to be baptized.

Two more people who were baptized in Lutsk, Yevhenii and Olga, were also familiar with Adventists because Yevhenii's cousin is a member of the Adventist Church. When missionary Serhiy Meles visited them, the couple showed interest in Adventist teachings. As a result of regular meetings and the study of the Word of God, they were baptized on March 23. Five people who studied biblical truths and were prepared for baptism made a covenant with God. ▀



General Conference president Ted N. C. Wilson turns on the new Brazil Publishing House press in Tatuí, São Paulo, April 18. PHOTO: WILLIAM DE MORAES

GC PRESIDENT PARTICIPATES IN BOOK DISTRIBUTION AT HISTORIC SITE

TED N. C. WILSON VISITED THE PLACE WHERE THE FIRST ADVENTIST IN BRAZIL WAS BAPTIZED.

MÁRCIO TONETTI, SOUTH AMERICAN DIVISION, AND ADVENTIST REVIEW

An event held at the Brazil Publishing House (CPB) on April 18 recalled a milestone for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Brazil. Impacto CPB was a moment of celebration for the distribution, during the past century, of 27 million copies of Ellen G. White's book *The Great Controversy*.

"In just two years we have distributed four times as many copies of *The Great Controversy* in Brazil as in the past century," CPB general manager Edson Medeiros said. "It is an unprecedented milestone in the dissemination of inspired writings."

Impacto CPB welcomed Adventist leaders from across Brazil and the South American Division, as well as General Conference president Ted N. C. Wilson. The program highlighted the story of Guilherme Stein, Jr., whose journey is intertwined with the beginnings of the CPB and the book *The Great Controversy*. After reading the book, Stein accepted the Adventist message, becoming the first member baptized in Brazil. A few years later he would also be responsible for the publication of the first national Adventist periodical, *The*

Herald of Truth, in addition to writing several books and translating some of Ellen White's works, including *The Great Controversy*.

An event held in the auditorium of the publishing house headquarters in Tatuí, São Paulo, preceded the book distribution. Then, almost 600 employees of the publishing house, together with church leaders and a group of 300 motorcyclists, traveled to Piracicaba, São Paulo, where almost 130 years ago Stein was baptized, to distribute copies of *The Great Controversy*.

The little seed planted by Stein so long ago has born much fruit. Today the city of Piracicaba has 2,500 church members, distributed in 22 congregations in five pastoral districts.

GLOBAL IMPACT

Wilson pointed out that the Adventist Church around the world has looked with admiration at the strength of the publishing work in Brazil and in South America in general. "God is doing extraordinary things through CPB and ACES [the Adventist publishing house in Argentina], and

we want to express our recognition and gratitude," Wilson said. "The sacred work of producing millions of books will reverberate for eternity."

The Adventist Church in South America is celebrating the milestone of 329 million books distributed during the past 18 years. Out of those, 246 million have been distributed across Brazil. "But the challenge is not over," SAD president Stanley Arco said. According to Wilson, "we need to go from city to city, from house to house, and from person to person, until everyone is reached."

During his visit to the publishing house, Wilson participated in another historic moment for the CPB: the inauguration of a new press with the capacity to produce 18,000 pages per hour, print double-sided in color, and apply varnish, ensuring higher quality and agility to the process. According to Wilson, the CPB is the only one among more than 60 Adventist publishing houses that owns such a press. "It will further add to your capacity of spreading the gospel message," he said. ▀

A group of Rwandan families now meets for worship at the Bowling Green Adventist Church in Kentucky. PHOTO BY PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA



KINYARWANDA IS THE LATEST EVOLUTION IN LOCAL CHURCH'S MULTILINGUAL COMMUNITY

SEVERAL LANGUAGE GROUPS NOW WORSHIP AT BOWLING GREEN CHURCH IN KENTUCKY.

PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA, SOUTHERN TIDINGS

In 2019 Claude Hakizimanh moved to Bowling Green, Kentucky, as a Rwandan refugee and found a spiritual community in the Bowling Green Seventh-day Adventist Church.

As he connected with other African families in the congregation, a language barrier became apparent to him during the English services. Hakizimanh, fluent in English, took it upon himself to translate the services for his friends who were not so fluent. Yet he sensed a deeper need—a longing for spiritual connection in their own language.

So the group, composed of three families, met with the Bowling Green church board and presented their idea to start a Kinyarwanda group. The group would still be a part of the Bowling Green church, but they would hold separate services in their native language. The Bowling Green church board was happy to accommodate their needs, and by July 2023 the Kinyarwanda group had begun meeting on Sabbath afternoons.

According to the Immigration Research Initiative, Kentucky ranks fourth among the U.S. states for the number of refugees it receives per capita. Within Bowling Green's population of more than 70,000 residents, a remarkable 15 percent were born in another country. As a result, the Bowling Green Adventist Church, whose membership is represented by more than 17 different nations, has found unity in its diversity.

THREE GROUPS IN ONE SANCTUARY

"We have three different congregations meeting on a Sabbath, all under the umbrella of one church," Trey Sharp, Bowling Green pastor, said. "There is the English congregation, the Spanish congregation, and the Kinyarwanda group. While I was born and raised in Kentucky, I've been back in Bowling Green for only about two and a half years. Seeing how Bowling Green has evolved [and] how churches have changed is really neat, because you get to see how God is working."

Once a month the three groups come together for a church potluck. Every three months they share a joint worship session, dividing the program time equally among their three main languages: English, Spanish, and Kinyarwanda.

"[This experience] has brought so many blessings to our group," Jehu Diaz, head elder for the Bowling Green Hispanic group, said. "It doesn't matter what language you speak; we are all worshipping the same God. We all get to embrace and wish each other a happy Sabbath."

The Hispanic group at Bowling Green church started meeting in the early 2000s. While attendance has varied over the years, they've recently been experiencing steady growth, with about 35 members. Their goal is to eventually become an independent church, a goal fully supported by the English group.

PAST TRIUMPHS, FUTURE PLANS

A similar journey took place for Bowling Green Zomi Church 10 years ago. Like the Hispanic group, they started gathering within the Bowling Green church, and in 2019 gained their own church status. The Zomi group now boasts 80 baptized members and has an average attendance of more than 150 people.

"If God is using the English church to help support these ministries, then it is an honor to do so," Sharp said. "If we can help all these groups graduate to church status, that would be amazing, because now all of a sudden we're going to have a handful of different Adventist churches in the Bowling Green area."

When the Kinyarwanda group began meeting last year, they had only about 10 people attending their worship service. Within eight months their attendance doubled and now includes guests who, while Christians, are not members of the Adventist Church.

"We are refugees and displaced people," Hakizimanh said. "Being able to worship God in your own language is such a blessing. It brings us hope, and it heals wounds. We feel loved and supported in many ways, and when we gather [with the other groups] and share a meal and a smile, we get a picture of what heaven will be like." ❧



Lake Union Conference headquarters in Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States. PHOTO: KATIE FELLOWS, LAKE UNION HERALD

LAKE UNION PLEDGES \$1 MILLION TO ATTRACT NEW TEACHERS AND PASTORS

MANY REGIONS OF THE CHURCH EXPECT A SHORTAGE IN THE COMING YEARS.

DEBBIE MICHEL, LAKE UNION CONFERENCE

In a move to attract qualified new teachers and pastors, the Lake Union Conference is pledging US\$1 million for incoming Andrews University students to pursue careers in teaching and pastoral ministry. Beginning in the fall 2024 semester, scholarships will cover four years of study in either of these two fields.

Driving this initiative is the decreasing number of students pursuing careers of critical importance to the church. “We are seeing a real need to recruit more teachers and pastors,” Ken Denslow, president of the Lake Union Conference, said. “As educators move or retire, we notice it is increasingly difficult to fill these roles. There are young people who would be open to the call of being educators and pastors, but cost gets in the way.”

Ruth Horton, education director for the Lake Union, has witnessed the declining number of available educators. “Next school year we

are projecting dozens of openings for teachers in our Early Childhood through Grade 12 schools,” she said. “At this time there simply aren’t enough students graduating from Andrews University to fill current openings and what we anticipate in the immediate future.”

While the number of pastoral openings in the Lake Union is not very large currently, the North American Division is projecting that, as pastors retire, there will be up to 2,000 openings across the division in the next five years. The division leadership is engaged in tackling the looming crisis.

In addition to retirements, the explosive growth in immigrant and refugee populations throughout the Lake Union and beyond creates an opportunity to train those who are called to minister to these groups, said Carmelo Mercado, Lake Union vice president for multicultural ministries. “Many of our youth are interested in serving

the church, but as first-generation students they don’t have the resources to attend our universities,” Mercado said. “This will be a blessing to them.”

A steering committee comprising union, conference, and university leaders is establishing parameters for awarding the scholarship. More details are expected in the near future. The Lake Union joins several other unions in providing scholarships to emerging pastors and teachers.

Lake Union administrators said they hope this initiative spurs church members to further invest in future leaders. “This is a faith initiative,” Lake Union treasurer Glynn Scott said. “Other territories were able to use special trust fund gifts, but we’re spending down our reserves. Nevertheless, we believe God will bless as we seek to invest in the mission and future of His church.”



A recent graduation ceremony for Zaoksky Christian Secondary School students. PHOTO: EURO-ASIA DIVISION

ZAOKSKY CHRISTIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL IN RUSSIA CELEBRATES THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY

THE SCHOOL'S CHAPLAIN REVEALS GOD-LED PATH AND EXPANSION OF THE SCHOOL.

MARK RAKOVICH FOR THE EURO-ASIA DIVISION, AND ADVENTIST REVIEW

In March, Zaoksky Christian Secondary School, a Seventh-day Adventist school in Zaoksky, in the Tula region of Russia, celebrated its thirtieth anniversary. The school's chaplain, Reuben Dmitrievich Kroytor, shares some insight about the history and the current state of the school.

Can you please describe in general terms what the path of the school was?

The school began in September 1993, and a year later, in 1994, it was registered as the Zaoksky Christian Secondary School. The school began with 23 students and during 30 years has grown to 223 students. And the school continues to grow. Therefore, the school's trustees decided to build a separate building for the elementary school.

What differences do you see in comparison with an ordinary secular school regarding its curriculum, teachers, and the students?

It must be said that I did not work in a secular school, so I can only compare them as a student. Of course, no one had any explanatory conversations with us, no

one particularly taught moral standards, no one dedicated a lesson to studying the Bible. The most valuable thing in this school is that each teacher is focused on the child, and not on the program; everyone's task is not only to give knowledge, although this is very important, but to form the consciousness of the children in such a way that they can succeed in life.

What is your personal ministry? What are your goals as a chaplain? What are the goals of the school itself, besides educational ones?

My ministry is to ensure that a correct idea of God is formed in the minds of every child at school. Every week I teach Bible studies in preparation for baptism. For the second year we are trying to prepare children for baptism, which is held twice during a school year.

I am conducting, so to speak, a mass study of the commandments. We reward everyone who can recite the commandments by heart with a certificate and a chocolate at the school assembly.

I visit schoolchildren in their homes and communicate with parents.

I have also organized a parents' club called "OPORA," in which we organize meetings with fathers and mothers.

What is the percentage of children who are not from religious families, and what feedback do these students and their parents have?

Today the percentage of schoolchildren from nonreligious families is approaching 50.

Parents who bring their children from other schools are very surprised to learn that there is such a "wonderful" school here.

Of course, we must work individually with children who come from other schools, explaining that there is no need to "defend" or "attack" here as in another school. Often they come to us closed, withdrawn. And when we walk this path together, we rejoice with them, remembering their past.

We see how a decision made 30 years ago still affects the lives of hundreds of children. We believe that every student at this school is here for a reason and receives a special blessing from studying at an Adventist school. 🍀

COLUMBIA UNION CONFERENCE HAS NEW PRESIDENT

MARCELLUS T. ROBINSON BRINGS A LIFETIME OF DEDICATED MINISTRY TO A NEW ROLE.

BECKY ST. CLAIR, COLUMBIA UNION CONFERENCE, AND ADVENTIST REVIEW

Marcellus T. Robinson, president of the Allegheny East Conference (AEC) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church since October 2022, was elected as the new president of the Columbia Union Conference on March 24. Robinson started his new role immediately after the vote, while still serving as president of AEC for a period of time.

Robinson hails from the rural town of Cumberland, Virginia. Despite its remote location, Cumberland was still affected by the civil rights movement, which deeply impacted Robinson's early years.

"In the second week of fourth grade at an all-Black school, 23 of my classmates and I were called out of class," Robinson recalls. "We were loaded onto a bus with no idea where we were being taken, until the bus pulled up in front of 'Cumberland School.' Teachers came onto the bus, called us by name, and led us to their classrooms. And we followed, terrified. Up until that moment, Cumberland School had been an all-White school."

Those 24 students, including Robinson, were the first to implement desegregation in their little Virginia town. "I will never forget

my teacher's kindness," Robinson recalls. "Mrs. Womack's Christian values got me through that first day, which was the most horrifying experience of my life."

The summer he was 15, Robinson's mother went to Brooklyn, New York, to visit her sisters, and when she came back, she was a shockingly different person—a Seventh-day Adventist. She quit smoking, had a calmer demeanor, and smiled more.

After a few months Robinson also committed to the Adventist faith through baptism. The following week Robinson's new pastor approached him with some materials and said, "We've been praying for you, Marcellus. We want to make you a youth elder, and we'd like you to preach on Youth Day next month."

It's been 50 years since that first sermon at age 15. Robinson has since preached countless sermons, led the AEC as Ministerial Association director, then vice president for administration, director of Stewardship, Philanthropy, and Planned Giving, and most recently as AEC president. He has served on executive committees for the North American

Division, Columbia Union, AEC, and Lake Region Conference, as well as the board of trustees for Washington Adventist University and Adventist HealthCare White Oak Medical Center in Silver Spring, Maryland.

"When I look back over my life, I see very clearly the Lord knows where to send a person," Robinson admits. "He doesn't just call you; He knows how to lead you where you need to be."

During Robinson's second year at Andrews University he met Maryann Lewis, and three years later they got married. Maryann holds a bachelor's in nursing, a master's in counseling and education, and a doctorate in organizational management. Together they have two adult daughters, two sons (by marriage), and four grandchildren.

Robinson says his new position is "mind-blowing"; he never dreamed of becoming president of a union, but, he says, even just a few weeks into his new role he can see why God brought him here. "I know He'll use my gifts to do what needs doing in this role. Serving the Lord is a joy, and serving His people is an honor I will never take for granted." ❖



Marcellus T. Robinson, new president of the Columbia Union Conference. PHOTO: RODNEY CHOICE



ADVENTIST WORLD RADIO LAUNCHES NEW FM STATION IN MANILA, PHILIPPINES. AWR Manila held an inauguration ceremony on April 24 to officially launch its broadcast on DWAV 89.1 FM. Since 2018, AWR Manila has been in search of a suitable radio station to serve as its broadcasting platform. They eventually entered into a management agreement with Blockbuster Broadcasting System, Inc., on March 10. This new station has the potential to reach more than 14 million residents in the Mega Manila region.



IN BENIN, EVANGELISTIC SERIES RESULTS IN 238 BAPTISMS. In the heart of Hèvié Akossavié in Cotonou, Benin, Hensley Mooroooven, undersecretary of the General Conference, led the Pentecost 2024 evangelistic series April 14-27. The campaign included other sites and speakers some joining from the West-Central Africa Division and Eastern Sahel Union Mission. With more than 7,000 church members spread across 38 churches and 57 groups, the Benin Conference sees these events as a powerful method for spiritual and community growth.



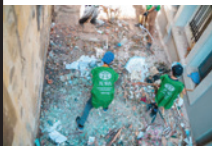
CAMPOREE IN VENEZUELA RESULTS IN 170 BAPTISMS AND INSPIRES YOUNG AND OLD. More than 5,000 Pathfinders from the East Venezuela Union Mission attended a second camporee, held March 24-30. Some of the participants traveled up to three days, walking through jungles and over mountains, canoeing rivers, or traveling by car to reach the event in Las Aguas de Moisés. During the camporee approximately 170 of young attendees were baptized, and another 600 were invested in various Pathfinder honors.



THOUSANDS ATTEND MEGA HEALTH CLINIC IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA. Thousands of people lined up for checkups at a mega health clinic held in Papua New Guinea's Western Highlands Province, April 16-19. Located at Mount Hagen, the clinic opened with a large welcoming ceremony attended by more than 2,500 people. The clinic was a joint effort of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's 10,000 Toes Campaign and Adventist World Radio and was run by 426 volunteers. Services included diabetes screenings and other medical and dental checks.



AFRICAN AMERICAN CONGREGATION LAUNCHES WORSHIP SERVICE IN SPANISH. In the past, Shiloh Adventist Church has served an African American community in Chicago's South Side in Illinois. However, the demographics have shifted in the recent years, as a new wave of immigrants from Central and South America found refuge in this urban landscape. The Shiloh church recognized an opportunity to extend its outreach, and launched Shiloh en Español, a church service in Spanish to meet the needs of this burgeoning community.



ADRA MARKS EARTH DAY BY INSPIRING GLOBAL ACTION. The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is spearheading a global movement to inspire communities to #GoGreenWithADRA in honor of Earth Day on April 22. This effort aims to promote environmental stewardship, raise awareness of global environmental concerns, and instill a sense of responsibility in students and individuals from all backgrounds to contribute to a more sustainable planet. Communities in the U.S. and worldwide were invited to participate in the #GoGreenWithADRA movement by engaging in activities such as environmental cleanups, gardening, and tree planting.



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BY GOD'S GRACE

*Recovery,
relationships, and
a camp meeting response*

SHANNON M. OLIVER

I began watching movies and playing video games at an early age. I learned that not only was media entertaining, it was also a great escape and coping mechanism. Fast-forward to my seventh-grade year, and someone introduced me to pornography. This new addiction fit nicely into my growing collection. Another fast-forward to my twenty-first birthday, and I started socially drinking. Yet another addiction added to my collection. It was all fun and games in my remaining years at an Adventist college and even into early adulthood.

GOD'S SEARCH FOR ME

There were moments I grew close to God. One of those times was in college, when I was consistently journaling to God and could sense His presence in my life—all the while I held on to my addictions. The moment did not last. I put my notebook down and stopped trying to connect with God.

Three years after graduating college, as I sought to break free from a life steeped in sin, I reached out to a church elder who was a family friend. We started weekly Bible studies, and my life changed tremendously. Some addictions stopped, and others were diminished. I wanted to serve God, but I was not ready put both feet in. But each time I left a spiritual period, my life was in a worse state than before.

I cannot explain all the factors that led to it, but in the months prior to my thirtieth birthday I started examining my life, and it did not match

where I wanted to be. Though the salary was quite good, the job I had left me feeling unfulfilled. There was always a screen in my face or noise in my ears. I was grouchy and passive aggressive to everyone. My relationship with my parents was dysfunctional. I could not string a pure thought together, and I had no self-control. My life was a complete and terrible disaster. The addictions in my life had a real hold and lasting consequences. Satan started me in the shallow end, but when he was done, he had dragged me to the depths and was holding me under, almost until the bubbles stopped.

DETOX

Similar to the prodigal son, I had a “coming to myself” moment. One Sabbath in April 2022 I made up my mind that I would seek help at church. After a 45-minute conversation with two friends, I finally mustered the courage to share about my addictions and my hopeless state. My friend counseled me to find a godly person in the city in which I lived who could help. I was still attending the church where I grew up, even though I lived an hour away now.

Taking my friend's advice, I began counseling with a pastor that summer. This was one of the darkest periods in my life, digging up dirt from a past that I wished could have stayed buried forever. In the process I made a critical mistake. Learning that there could be contributing factors to my addictions from my upbringing, I started to blame my parents. I kept this to myself at first, until the pain got bad enough that I felt the need to give my mother “a piece of my mind.”

I have since learned that this was not right. Early in recovery I had a bad case of blaming others, a condition we have all inherited from our first parents, who blamed others when they sinned in the Garden of Eden. Regardless of *contributing factors*, we are all slaves to sin, born with a sinful nature. But God's grace restores free will to each of His

When I gave up something for God, He replaced it with something much better.

children, and He grants us the ability to choose to follow Him or continue in our sinful ways. On the path to recovery in Christ, we must allow Him to conquer our innate desire to blame others.

In time I began attending Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). The first meeting I went to was for “research” purposes for an addiction recovery group I wanted to start. I was convinced I was bound by lust, but not yet convinced that I might be an alcoholic. By the time that first meeting ended, I felt convicted and convinced, and I kept going back. By God’s grace I have remained sober since October 31, 2022. Considered Reformation Day for the church because of Martin Luther, October 31 became Reformation Day for me also.

If going sober in the fall and winter (depression season) was not hard enough, I decided to kill my smartphone and buy a “dumb” phone to curb my media and pornography addictions. My LightPhone II arrived around the same time that my sobriety began.

The following months were hard. Through AA I was getting a similar type of therapy as I had received in my counseling sessions, but in a group setting. I had to “face the music” with no help from my addictions, my “medicine,” and the music was disgraceful, jarring, cacophonous. I became more temperamental and endured severe anxiety attacks, some of which led to sleepless nights. But by God’s grace, I kept stringing days of sobriety together at whatever cost, and life started to get better. It seemed as though there was no room in the inn of my heart for Jesus to reside until these addictions were met and began to be removed.

HEALING

Four months into sobriety Jesus came into my life *for real*. It was a gradual experience with some shining moments. Conviction during the appeal after a sermon, wanting to serve my Lord better, experiencing healing in my familial relationships—all were a result of the healing power of God in my life. He was healing me as I was growing spiritually with Him. Most important, God began giving me a love for Him and His Word that I did not know was possible. I was falling in love with my loving Father.

Life looks much different now. By God’s grace I find myself having lengthy devotions and seldom

miss a day. God makes communion so good that some days I wish I had no other obligations or responsibilities. God is building a beautiful relationship between my parents and me. He is mending my relationships and healing my wounds. I can attest that our God is wonderful.

All these changes led to attending camp meeting in the summer of 2023. My parents invited me to stay with them for the opening and closing weekends of the convocation that spanned a week. While I had grown up attending camp meeting and would not miss it for anything in the adolescent years of my life, my attendance began to wane in adulthood. This year was different. I wanted to be where God’s people were congregated and to experience again the wonderful sermons given during Sabbath divine service and the evening plenary meeting.

On the final night of camp meeting the main speaker made an altar call. As he was building up to the appeal, I prayed that He would ask for someone to come up for rebaptism. When he made the appeal for the Adventist that had backslidden and needed to be rebaptized to go to the front, I was literally jumping over seats to answer the call! After further Bible studies, on October 28, 2023, I was rebaptized into the family of Christ (having been first baptized at the age of 9).

As our relationship grows, God will put His finger on something in my life and ask me to give it up for Him. Luke 14:33 has been my experience: “So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.” What I discovered was that when I gave up something for God, He replaced it with something much better. Usually He fills me with a deep sense of peace and joy that lacks explanation. God gives me joy in the simplest things: a sunset, going on a walk, singing praises to Him, worship time in the morning, listening to a captivating classical piece, an inspiring sermon on Sabbath morning. God lives in the subtleties of life. His ways are simple, and He speaks in a still small voice. We must silence the noise; then we will hear our Father in heaven calling us. 🍀

Shannon M. Oliver is a missionary currently serving public university students while receiving training through the Center for Adventist Ministry to Public University Students’ (CAMPUS) missionary training program in Michigan.

WHEN I CONSIDER THE STARS

Yahweh, our Lord! How majestic is Your name in all the earth, You who have put Your glory upon the heavens. . . . When I see Your heavens, the works of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have established—[I ask,] *‘What is man that You remember him, and the son of man that You visit him?’* (Ps. 8:1-4).*

City dwellers can only long to imagine what David, the shepherd boy, saw in the 1000 B.C. heavens above Bethlehem. Surely a full moon at times would loom over him like a piece of red raw fruit. But the stars? On a cloudless moonless dusk, the vanishing sun would drag out of twilight the cold white fire of stars burning incandescent to the horizon. Whatever David’s cosmology, or however far away he deemed those stars to be, and however many he saw (a few thousand at most in ideal conditions), the psalm reveals his wonder that the God who created these heavens above remembered, and even interacted with, humanity on the earth below.

But, please! If back then David could marvel that the God who put those stars in the heavens would care for us humans on earth—how much more should we be awed that God cares about us here, the God who created a cosmos that David surely couldn’t have comprehended. Gawking at photos from Hubble and from the James Webb Space Telescope, we can’t fully absorb what our eyes funnel into our minds. We barely grasp the concept of *c*, the speed of light, 186,000 miles per second—*second*? And so how do our brains (chemicals, electrical currents, water) translate a light-year, 5,878,625,370,000 miles, much less a

million light-years, or a billion, or 20 billion, into a concept cemented inside our skulls?

Or how do we comprehend a galaxy with 100 billion stars, much less 2 trillion galaxies of 100 billion stars each? These are numbers that we use to console ourselves with the illusion that we, somehow, know how many stars there are out there and our distances from them. God has created a reality too big for us to clasp onto (and too small, too: try comprehending the numbers and sizes of the atomic and subatomic realm).

And so, if David, awed by what he saw looking up at the stars raw, at just splashes and splatters of light, could ask Yahweh, *What is man that You remember him, and the son of man that You visit him?* what chutzpah—with our space telescopes gazing at billions of stars light-years away—on our part to think that Yahweh would not only remember us but, indeed, would visit us?

And not just visit us, but to go to the cross for us when He did come? When we look at Jesus at Calvary, bearing the punishment of our sins (Isa. 53:4-10; 1 Peter 2:24; Rom. 4:25; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 John 2:2)—we are looking at the One who not only created (John 1:3) the cosmos but who sustains it as well (Heb. 1:3). How do we, really, wrap our minds around this, and what it says about God’s love for us?♣

*Author’s translation.

Clifford Goldstein is the editor of the *Adult Bible Study Guide*. His latest book is *Risen: Finding Hope in the Empty Tomb*.

**CLIFF'S
EDGE**
CLIFFORD
GOLDSTEIN



**THE GOD WHO
CREATED THESE
HEAVENS ABOVE
REMEMBERS, AND
EVEN INTERACTS
WITH, HUMANITY.**



THE WRIGHT CONNECTION

*The beginning of
Seventh-day Adventist
camp meetings*

MICHAEL W. CAMPBELL

The year 1868 was a decisive one for the fledgling Seventh-day Adventist Church.¹ To put things in perspective, the General Conference had been organized only five years earlier, and it had been only a decade since Ellen White's pivotal great controversy vision. Now, September 1-7, 1868, an estimated 200 to 300 individuals gathered to hold the first official, denomination-wide "camp meeting." Held on the farm of Ephraim H. Root (1828-1906), who lived in Wright, Michigan, the idea of holding such gatherings was certainly not new or unique to these early church pioneers, but they did worry about whether it would really work to meet their needs and desire to share their faith.

BEGINNINGS

Many who were alive in the 1860s would have been familiar with the rise of camp meetings, especially in the context of the Millerite revival from the 1840s. William Miller (1782-



Such gatherings awakened “a general interest on the subject of the Lord’s speedy coming, and its kindred doctrines.”

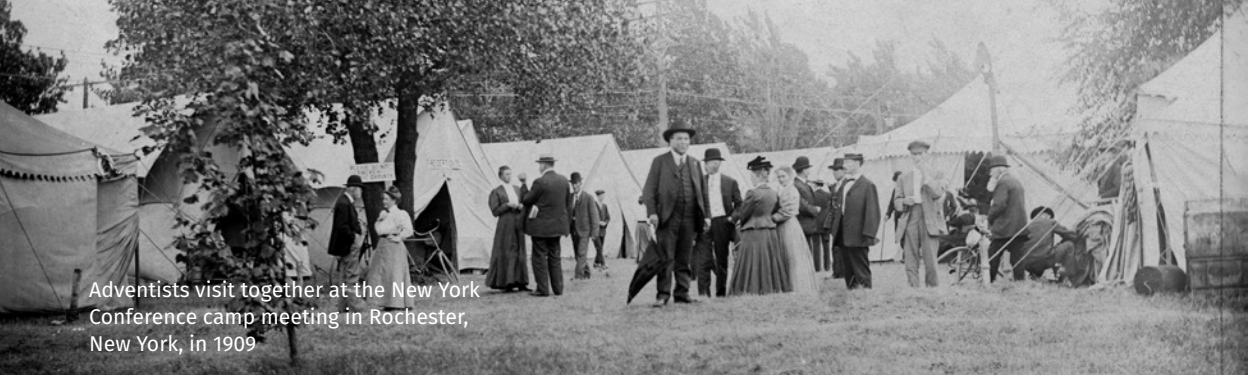
hear sermons calling for repentance and to celebrate the Lord’s Supper. These revivals in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries continued as the Second Great Awakening, particularly along the frontier. As revivalism became increasingly populist and democratic, this contributed to a greater emphasis upon personal emotional experience over intellect, and camp meetings became a key component to these ongoing revivals.

The specific innovation of camp meetings in America is generally attributed to a series of meetings in rural Kentucky in 1800. One attendee, Barton W. Stone (1772-1844), the following year organized one of the largest early camp meetings, held in Cane Ridge, Kentucky, in 1801. It was said that some came for religious reasons, but others came to gamble and cause trouble. Several Baptist and Methodist clergy joined in the preaching. As clergy made emotional appeals for repentance and spiritual renewal, some in the congregation laughed while others cried. The meeting lasted a week, and soon many others held similar gatherings that became ubiquitous across America. Charles Finney became legendary for popularizing the appeal for people to come forward to the anxious bench during such revivals.

The widespread popularity of camp meetings, including their use by Millerites during the 1840s, meant that early Sabbatarian Adventists began to consider whether this might be something they could utilize to share their religious convictions. Some expressed concern about religious excesses that at times characterized such gatherings. Some even opined that if Adventists held such meetings, it would be “a terrible mistake, a step backward.” Yet church leaders ultimately felt it would be worth the risk. Church leaders had begun to use large tents for evangelistic meetings. By 1867 a series of

1849) noted how beginning in June 1842 at East Kingston, New Hampshire, such gatherings contributed to significant revivals.² Adventists in 1849 reflected how such gatherings awakened “a general interest on the subject of the Lord’s speedy coming, and its kindred doctrines, our camp-meetings have been of incalculable importance, and in many instances, have accomplished much good.”³

Yet camp meetings can be traced even earlier. The open-air revivals held during the transatlantic Great Awakening were certainly a precursor. These revivals occurred because of immigration to colonial America, where such traditions and practices were adapted and appropriated in new and creative ways. The most important precursor for camp meetings was the Scottish Presbyterian practice of gathering semiannually with other believers to



Adventists visit together at the New York Conference camp meeting in Rochester, New York, in 1909

small, regional camp meetings in Iowa, Quebec, and Wisconsin effectively showcased how localized gatherings could unite church members and help to harness outreach efforts. James and Ellen White even attended the Wisconsin gathering with an estimated attendance of 1,200 people.

TRYING IT WRIGHT

The initial success encouraged them to move forward with the first official and denomination-wide camp meeting. This was widely seen by church leaders, especially James and Ellen White, as a significant and historic event. The 1868 General Conference Session discussed how they could hold “a camp meeting for the whole field.”⁴ As they deliberated, Ephraim Root volunteered his farm as a location for the proposed camp meeting, modeled after the earlier Millerite camp meetings. The ensuing denomination-wide gathering served two purposes: a source of “spiritual good” and “the promulgation of our views among the people.”⁵ Such a “general gathering” would be near the town of Wright, a relatively “new field,” providing new opportunities to share the Adventist faith.⁶ Ultimately this gathering would be dubbed the first *official* and *denomination-wide* camp meeting. *Review* editor Uriah Smith specifically dubbed it as “the largest, most important, and by far the best meeting ever held by Seventh-day Adventists” up to that point.⁷

The maple grove or “sugar bush” Root farm was deemed an ideal location with both sufficient land and resources. The layout was described by J. O. Corliss as “very primitive.”⁸ Lodging consisted of bolts of factory cloth sewn together and spread over poles. The ends were fastened with nails to either upright posts or tree limbs cut just for the event. Eventually 22 makeshift tents were set up in a circle. Each tent represented a small church or group of families that could hold 12 to 20 people. As one participant remembered, James White woke up early, made a bonfire, and “prepared a kettle of

hot porridge for all in the camp.” In “stentorian tones” he invited “all to come and be served.”⁹ Unfortunately, only one tent, the tent from Olcott, New York, the home church of J. N. Andrews, had a waterproofed covering canvas (or “duck canvas”), which after it rained, convinced other participants that for future camp meetings, waterproofed canvas was an essential requirement. James White had initially urged participants to obtain plain “cotton drilling” so that just in case the venture did not go well, participants could still use the material to make overalls or sack covers. The success of the camp meeting meant that the church needed to invest in proper waterproof sleeping tents.

Some of the tents were 60 feet in diameter. These large tents would become characteristic of both earlier and later camp meetings. The tents were erected as “a precautionary measure against the possibility of stormy weather.” The first tent was pitched to keep straw that was used for either bedding or feeding the horses dry.¹⁰ A second tent was reserved for use of campers and reserved as a meeting place in case it rained. Fortunately, the weather was pleasant overall, so the preaching was held in the open air instead. The pulpit was a simple, crude-covered structure made up of boards. The audience was seated on rough planks with risers taken from the nearby beech and maple trees. “The camp was lighted by wood fires,” wrote A. W. Spalding, “built on earth-filled boxes elevated on posts; and there were also log fires on the outskirts to warm the chilly.”¹¹

The 1868 Wright camp meeting included a primitive Adventist bookstore—a bookstand that was placed at the camp entrance. Three 12-foot boards were placed in a triangle between the trees. The 12-inch boards gave just enough room to place an assortment of tracts, periodicals, and books from the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association. Behind stood an aspiring young minister, E. R. Palmer (1869-1931), who would become a

lifelong worker in the Adventist publishing work, and John O. Corliss (1845-1923), who would serve as a preacher and missionary. Together they would sell more than \$600 worth of books and tracts.¹²

CAMP MEETINGS PROLIFERATE

According to M. E. Olsen (1873-1952), the success of the Wright camp meeting led to the proliferation of camp meetings in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.¹³ Camp meetings were held later that year in Clyde, Illinois (September 23-30), and Pilot Grove, Iowa (October 2-7). The following year the General Conference recommended that state conferences organize all future camp meetings. Six such camp meetings would be held in 1869. As camp meetings became increasingly popular, it became common to pass along suggestions for how to have the best possible experience at such events. Such details included even pragmatic details such as directions about how to make your own camp meeting tent.¹⁴ James and Ellen White traveled to so many camp meetings that James found it expedient to publish the family's bedding needs in the denominational periodical.¹⁵

During the 1870s there were five to 15 camp meetings held annually across North America. Camp meetings became a mechanism to bring together geographically separated believers to work, worship together, and hold evangelistic meetings. Often conferences and related church entities, such as the tract and missionary societies, in conjunction with these camp meetings, would hold their annual meetings and organize. Thus, camp meetings became an important feature facilitating organization and administration and providing a convenient venue to facilitate community outreach, raise funds, and garner support for denominational projects.

Often the topics of camp meeting sermons were geared toward attracting those who might be curious or who might have questions about spiritual matters. Ellen White's preaching at camp meetings was frequently on temperance. She was also an effectual revivalist who could make altar calls. At one such camp meeting, held in 1874, Ellen White exhibited her "eloquence and persuasive powers" as "she implored sinners to flee from their sins." According to Uriah Smith, during her appeal "probably 300 came forward for prayers, and it seemed as if the early days of Methodism had returned."¹⁶ On another occasion, at a camp meeting in 1876

held in Groveland, Massachusetts, an estimated 4,000 people heard her speak about temperance.¹⁷ Throughout her lifetime it would be at camp meetings that Ellen White and other Adventist preachers drew some of their largest crowds. As Adventism spread across the continent and beyond, they continued to hold camp meetings. The first Adventist camp meeting on the West Coast occurred in Windsor, California, in October 1872. The first Seventh-day Adventist camp meeting held in Canada occurred in Magog, Quebec, August 21-26, 1879, and was organized by A. C. Bourdeau (1834-1916) and G. I. Butler (1834-1918). Altogether camp meetings remained a consistent way to solidify an Adventist identity as Adventism spread. ■

¹ For an expanded and detailed treatment of "camp meetings" in Adventist history, see my article on this topic in the *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*.

² Sylvester Bliss and Apollon Hale, *Memoirs of William Miller, Generally Known as a Lecturer on the Prophecies, and the Second Coming of Christ* (Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1853), pp. 164, 165.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 306.

⁴ Arthur W. Spalding, *Captains of the Host* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1949), p. 354.

⁵ See editor's note, *Review and Herald*, Aug. 11, 1868, p. 128.

⁶ "General Campmeeting," *Review and Herald*, Aug. 11, 1868, p. 128.

⁷ As quoted by William C. White, "Sketches and Memories of James and Ellen G. White: XLVIII—The First General Camp Meeting," *Review and Herald*, Mar. 11, 1937, p. 4.

⁸ J. O. Corliss, as quoted in E. R. Palmer, "First Camp-Meeting Sales of Our Literature," *Review and Herald*, Aug. 10, 1922, p. 24.

⁹ J. F. Piper, "West Michigan Camp-Meeting and Pioneers' Day," *Review and Herald*, Jan. 15, 1925, p. 18.

¹⁰ Virgil E. Robinson, *John Nevins Andrews: Flame for the Lord* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1975), p. 71.

¹¹ Spalding, p. 355.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Mahlon E. Olsen, "Adventists Become Health Champions," *Signs of the Times*, Aug. 21, 1923, p. 10.

¹⁴ D. H. Lamson, "How to Make Tents," *Review and Herald*, July 20, 1876, pp. 26, 27.

¹⁵ James White wrote: "We design to take a family tent with us to all our camp-meetings, and wish our brethren to provide for our company, board and bed-clothing for six. There should be at least one spring bed, and hair mattress, or their equivalent, for the worn and weary" ("Camp-Meetings," *Review and Herald*, May 17, 1870, p. 176).

¹⁶ Uriah Smith, "Camp-Meeting Notings," *Review and Herald*, Aug. 18, 1874, p. 68.

¹⁷ Ellen White stated that "it is estimated that twenty thousand people are assembled in this grove" ("Incidents at Groveland, Mass.," *Signs of the Times*, Sept. 14, 1876; see also Ellen G. White manuscript 29, 1897). The "big day" of the Groveland camp meeting was August 27, 1876, at which she spoke about temperance (see *Boston Evening Transcript*, Aug. 24, 1876, p. 8). The Groveland camp meeting was held August 24-29, 1876 (see *Boston Evening Transcript*, Aug. 19, 1876, p. 8). The local newspaper estimated that the actual attendance was 4,000 at its peak (see *Fall River Daily Evening News*, Aug. 29, 1876, p. 2).

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SPIRITUAL CONVOCATIONS

*Divine
opportunities*

RICH CONSTANTINESCU

He seemed “too cool for school.” The first time I saw Brother Andrew he was wearing dark sunglasses and standing at the back of an outdoor convocation. Whenever I saw him, he was standing at the back and wearing dark glasses. I wasn’t sure if he wanted to be alone or was simply disinterested.

One night a couple friends and I gathered at my home for our daily meeting to ask for the Holy Spirit, when Andrew entered, wearing his usual dark glasses. As we were recounting the promises of God Andrew wistfully interjected, “I wish I could read the Bible.”

Though he exercised, drank water, and ate a plant-based diet, Andrew said that piercing

migraine headaches limited his reading, hearing, and sleeping. He thought this was his thorn in his flesh (see 2 Cor. 12:7, 8), but I was not convinced. I advised him not to assume God’s answer, but to go to a camp meeting and determine to seek God until He answered “yes” or “no.”

Andrew moved from the area, and I didn’t see him until the next summer. One sunny Sabbath day, as I was walking in the mountains, a group of chattering, joyous hikers exited the forest, led by Brother Andrew. His dark glasses were absent, while a bright smile lit his face. He told me, “I followed your advice and went to a camp meeting this summer. I decided to pray until God answered. He did, and took my headache away” Praise God!

HISTORICAL PRECEDENT

Large spiritual gatherings have facilitated God's teaching and blessing throughout sacred history. After God delivered Israel from Egypt, He gathered them at Mount Sinai to receive His instruction and blessing (Ex. 19:17, 18). Prior to entering Canaan, Moses gathered Israel on the plains of Moab to repeat to them God's law (Deut. 1:5). Before Joshua died, he gathered Israel to Shechem to renew their covenant with God (Joshua 24:1).

The law God gave at Sinai, confirmed by Moses and Joshua, required every male Israelite to convene at the sanctuary three times yearly for instruction and blessing. Their commitment to these meetings comprised a month of each year. "To these holy convocations the children of Israel came, bringing to the house of God their tithes, their sin offerings, and their offerings of gratitude. They met to recount God's mercies, to make known His wonderful works, and to offer praise and thanksgiving to His name."¹

God desired to bless His people at these meetings. "The Lord saw that these gatherings were necessary for the spiritual life of His people. They needed to turn away from their worldly cares, to commune with God, and to contemplate unseen realities."² In the following centuries spiritual leaders called additional convocations to instruct and reform Israel. In the united kingdom of Israel, these gatherings were led by Samuel, David, and Solomon. In Judah, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah, Nehemiah, and Ezra led in organizing gatherings for national revival and reformation. Elijah called a most successful convocation in northern Israel.

While the significance of the specific ceremonies connected to the sanctuary have passed with Christ's death, our attendance at spiritual gatherings remains important today. The Lord Jesus Himself often gathered people to heal and teach them. Great numbers followed Him who "tabernacled among us" (John 1:14, TLV)³ in Galilee. The apostle Paul warned the early church against neglecting sacred assembly, "as is the manner of some." He counseled them to meet more frequently, "as you see the Day approaching" (Heb. 10:25).

Christ promised His church that "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20, KJV). He is

present in our gatherings through the Holy Spirit, His Ambassador (John. 14:16-18). Where Christ is, through His Spirit, every blessing awaits. Christ will bless His gathered people now, as in former years (Mal. 3:4).

IN RECENT HISTORY

Camp meetings greatly advanced the development of the Advent movement as they united its adherents and extended its influence. Francis D. Nichol noted that the first Millerite camp meeting in 1842 "may be regarded as the commencement of a new era in the second advent cause."⁴

In 1868 James White reasoned that as the "Second-Advent camp meetings in 1843 and 1844 were one of the grandest means of disseminating light

relative to the Advent hope and faith, and imparted life and strength to the great Advent movement," Seventh-day Adventists should also have "a general Convocation, free from business sessions, where ministers and people could devote their entire time and energies to the spiritual interests of the assembly"⁵

As the camp meeting rapidly became "one of the most important agencies in our work,"⁶ Ellen White noted that "the convocations of the church, as in camp meetings, the assemblies of the home church, and all occasions where there is personal labor for souls, are God's appointed opportunities for giving the early and the latter rain."⁷

God still meets with His people today. It is our privilege to place ourselves in the path of His ready blessing. Convocations, such as camp meetings, are divine opportunities for us to receive His Spirit. Will you make every effort to appear before the Lord in sacred assembly with His people? With God's help, I will also! 🌿

¹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 6, p. 39.

² *Ibid.*, p. 40.

³ Bible texts credited to TLV are from the Tree of Life Translation of the Bible. Copyright © 2015 by The Messianic Jewish Family Bible Society.

⁴ Francis D. Nichol, *The Midnight Cry* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1944), p. 109.

⁵ James White, in *Review and Herald*, July 14, 1868.

⁶ E. G. White, p. 31.

⁷ Ellen G. White, in *Review and Herald*, Mar. 2, 1897.

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THE POWER OF FELLOWSHIP

Combating the epidemic of loneliness

BETH THOMAS

In a May 2023 press release, U.S. surgeon general Vivek Murthy called attention to what he termed the “epidemic of loneliness.” This, he said, “has been an underappreciated public health crisis that has harmed individual and societal health. Our relationships are a source of healing and well-being hiding in plain sight—one that can help us live healthier, more fulfilled, and more productive lives.”

The release, published on the Department of Health and Human Services website, went on to highlight some statistics. “The physical health consequences of poor or insufficient connection include a 29 percent increased risk of heart disease, a 32 percent increased risk of stroke, and a 50 percent increased risk of developing dementia for older adults. Additionally, lacking social connection increases risk of premature death by more than 60 percent.”¹

Despite the explosion of social networks and digital platforms making connection instant, many individuals feel more isolated and disconnected. The rise of remote work and modern conveniences has further aggravated the situation. You don’t even have to leave the house to go shopping or get groceries. A delivery service will drop things off on your doorstep—contactless.

Against this backdrop, fellowship and community have never been more crucial. The benefits extend far beyond mere companionship. Numerous studies have highlighted the positive impact of social support on mental, emotional, and physical well-being. From reducing stress and anxiety to boosting resilience and self-esteem, the bonds forged through fellowship have the power to heal, inspire, and empower individuals to lead more fulfilling lives.

To a believer, fellowship is not merely a casual gathering but a sacred communion that echoes the divine imperative of unity and mutual support. The Bible emphasizes the significance of fellowship, painting a vivid portrait of its spiritual and mental ramifications. At its core lies the concept of *koinonía* (*koinonía*), a Greek term meaning “intimate spiritual communion and participative sharing in a common religious commitment and spiritual community.”²

BIBLICAL CONTEXT

This is perhaps most clearly displayed in the book of Acts and the fledgling Christian church. Acts 2:42-47 gives a vivid depiction of *koinonía* in action, describing how the believers “were together and had everything

in common” (verse 44, NIV), sharing meals, possessions, and spiritual experiences as they lived out their faith in community. This spiritual fellowship exceeded mere social interaction once a week. And as a result, “the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (verse 47, NIV).

The biblical concept of *koinonía* involves joint participation in the mission and purpose of Christ’s kingdom, as believers collaborate in advancing the gospel, serving others, and extending God’s love to the world. It fosters authentic community by transparency, vulnerability, and mutual accountability, where believers can experience genuine fellowship and spiritual growth. Believers bear witness to the transformative power of Christ’s love and the Holy Spirit’s work in the life and that draws others to Jesus.

Koinonía, when actively practiced, also serves as a fertile soil for discipleship, providing a supportive environment in which believers can grow in their faith, knowledge of God’s Word, and obedience to Christ’s commands.

Why is fellowship and meeting together even more important as we prepare for Christ’s second coming? In a letter written to church leaders in Australia, Ellen White admonished, “There is a great work before us. Those who believe the truth, present truth for this time, are few. Let these be bound together in bonds of closest Christian fellowship, to strengthen one another.”³ Hebrews 3:12-14 details why strengthening each other is necessary. “See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called ‘Today,’ so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end” (NIV).

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

How can we, in today’s fast-paced, overstimulated, and highly technical world, embody the same quality of fellowship as the disciples in Acts 2?

Consistent church attendance. Through Sabbath worship, weekly Bible study and prayer meetings, participating in the Communion service, and uniting together in a dedicated space, believers can deepen their understanding of faith and grow in their relationship with God. This requires consistent engagement with each other, not just nodding

Loneliness can be effectively addressed only through genuine human connection and fellowship.

briefly as you make your way to a pew. As mutual trust is built, members can offer each other comfort, guidance, and practical assistance, fostering strong friendships based on shared values and beliefs.

Small groups. Fellowship groups often engage in acts of service and outreach to help those in need within their community. This can include volunteering at shelters, organizing food drives, visiting seniors or those who are sick, or aiding families facing hardship. By working together, believers can make a tangible difference in the lives of others and demonstrate Christ’s love in action. Small groups often provide resources and support for families, helping navigate the challenges of marriage, parenting, and relationships. Through marriage enrichment classes, parenting seminars, and couples’ retreats, believers can strengthen their relationships and build strong, healthy families grounded in faith.

Outreach efforts. Fellowship extends beyond the walls of the church, reaching out to the wider community. By engaging in outreach events, evangelistic campaigns, and mission trips, believers can share the message of Christ’s love and salvation with those who have not yet heard.

The epidemic of loneliness can be effectively addressed only through a concerted effort to prioritize genuine human connection and fellowship. As we heed the exhortation of Hebrews 10:24, 25 to “spur one another on toward love and good deeds” (NIV), let us embrace the imperative of fellowship and community, knowing that together we are stronger, more resilient, and infinitely more capable of overcoming the challenges that lie ahead. 🍀

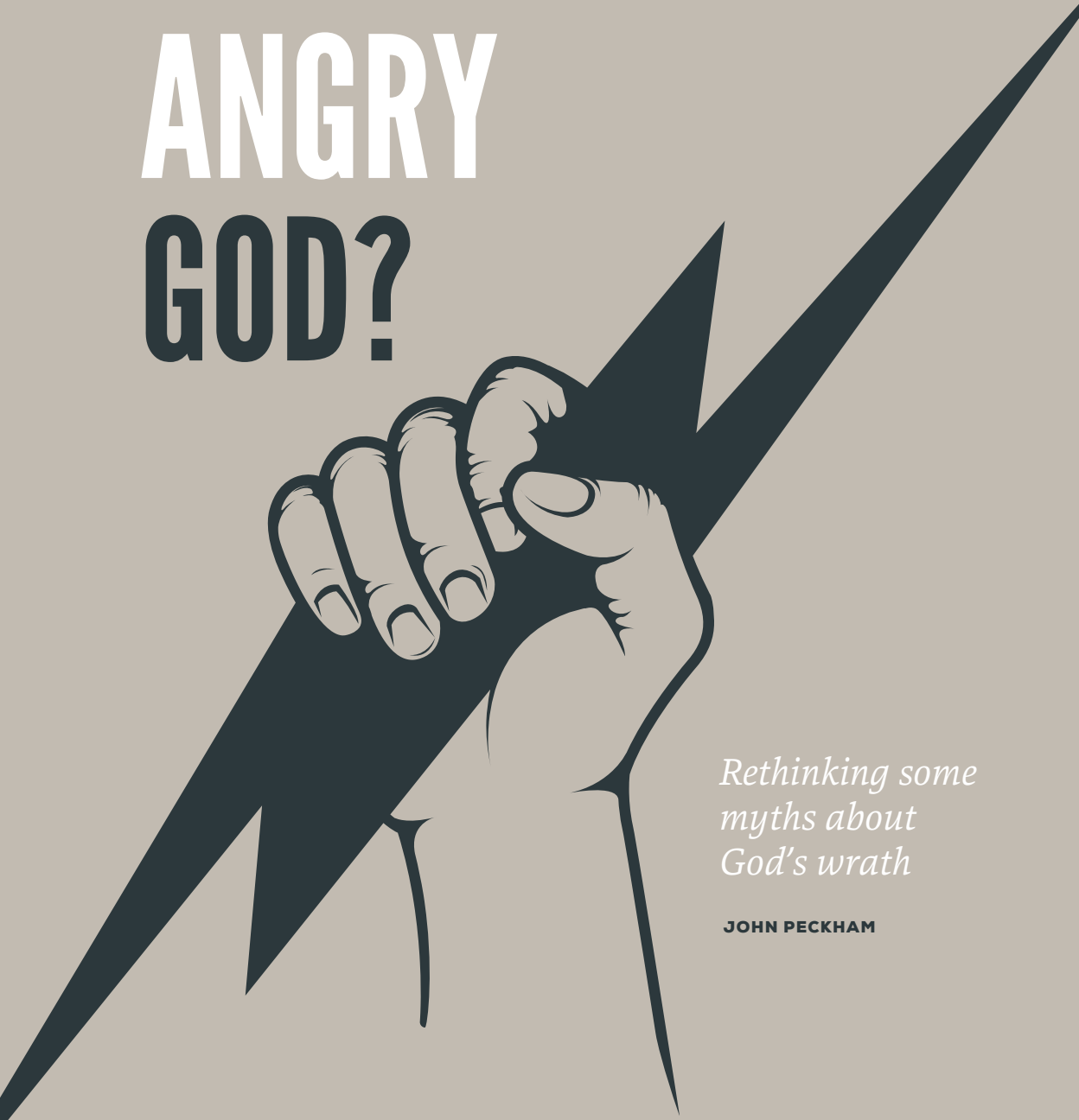
¹ <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2023/05/03/new-surgeon-general-advisory-raises-alarm-about-devastating-impact-epidemic-loneliness-isolation-united-states.html>

² <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/koinonia>

³ Ellen G. White letter 10, 1897, in Ellen G. White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 12, p. 12.

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ANGRY GOD?



*Rethinking some
myths about
God's wrath*

JOHN PECKHAM

My toy cabin made of Lincoln Logs was a masterpiece. Or so it seemed to me as I sat in my grandmother's living room as a young child. As I stood up to show it off, I accidentally stepped on my sister's little cabin, knocking it to pieces.

She ran to Grandma, complaining that I'd destroyed her cabin. Not realizing it was an accident, Grandma gave her permission to knock my cabin over, and my sister did so.

I was angry. Not just because my little cabin was destroyed, but because I'd been blamed and punished for an accident. In my mind this was profoundly unjust.

So I took matters into my own hands. I went outside and knocked over every piece of Grandma's outdoor furniture. Boy, did I regret that later.

I overreacted. My anger got the best of me. Human anger is typically like this—unrighteous, self-serving, and over the top.

God's anger, however, is very different.

Yet some believe that since God is love (1 John 4:8, 16), He should *never* be angry. Is that so? What, then, of the biblical depictions of divine anger?

OLD TESTAMENT GOD OF WRATH VERSUS NEW TESTAMENT GOD OF LOVE?

Perhaps you've heard the common myth that the "Old Testament God" is a God of wrath, while the New Testament God is a God of love. This is false. The New Testament God is the *same* as the Old Testament God. *Both* testaments consistently teach that God is love—"a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth" (Ps. 86:15).

What about depictions of God's anger in the Bible, then?

Suppose a mother sees a man viciously attacking her 3-year-old daughter. Should she be angry? Indeed. Such anger is called *righteous* indignation—the good and just response of love against evil.

The injustice in this story is dwarfed by the great evil humans have committed against one another over the ages, including such atrocities as child sacrifice (2 Chron. 33:6) and many others.

Because God loves deeply, these and other evils evoke God's intense, but always appropriate, anger. Evil angers God because evil always harms at least one person God loves, even when such harm is self-inflicted.

This is not unique to the Old Testament. The New Testament also repeatedly displays divine anger in response to evil.

For example, Jesus "drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves," declaring they were making God's house a "den of thieves" (Matt. 21:12, 13). Here and elsewhere, Jesus exhibited profound righteous indignation against those who used God's house to take advantage of the poor, widows, and orphans.

Christ's response on this occasion and others (see Mark 3:5; 10:14) mirrors the way God responds to evil in the Old Testament. And Jesus Himself repeatedly taught about God's wrath and judgment against evil (e.g., John 3:36), even attributing this judgment to Himself (e.g., Matt. 13:41, 42; cf. 8:12; 10:28; 22:5, 6, 13; 23:16-33; 24:50, 51; 25:41-43; Luke 13:28).

Elsewhere, Paul teaches: "Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.) Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world?" (Rom. 3:5, 6; cf. Rom. 12:19; Heb. 10:30).

The anger of the so-called God of the Old Testament is mirrored by Jesus and affirmed elsewhere in the New Testament. Yet in both testaments God's anger is the anger of love—the appropriate response of love against evil and the harm it inevitably inflicts on God's children.

DOES GOD CONTINUALLY BRING JUDGMENT ON HIS PEOPLE?

This brings us to a second myth: the common view that God is always angry and continually bringing judgment. In contrast, Scripture teaches that God is exceedingly longsuffering and compassionate.

Scripture includes numerous instances of God's wrath and judgment. But attention to the biblical time line shows that long ages often pass between those instances. Indeed, God often overlooks the people's evils for centuries!

God's covenant people repeatedly perpetrated horrible evils, which "provoked" God to wrath (Deut. 9:7; cf. 32:16, 21). As Psalm 78:40 puts it: "How often they provoked Him in the wilderness, and grieved Him in the desert" (cf. verse 58; Isa. 63:10; 1 Cor. 10:5).

Indeed, the following cycle of rebellion repeatedly appears, wherein:

God's people rebel and commit horrible evils, breaking the covenant and effectively rejecting God.

God withdraws in accordance with the people's rejection of Him.

Surrounding nations oppress God's people.

The people cry to God for help.

God hears and graciously rescues them.

The people rebel again, often in worse ways than before (see Ps. 78; Neh. 9).

Throughout these cycles God remains faithful—like a loving and patient parent whose children constantly rebel (see Deut. 32:5, 18) or a devoted husband whose wife goes after other lovers (see Hosea 1-3; Isa. 62:4).¹

Again and again God met His people's unfaithfulness with longsuffering mercy far beyond any reasonable expectations. For example, after the people rebelled with the golden calf, "God would have been 'just' in putting an end to these rebellious people. Yet he kept on loving, guiding, and delivering them (Ex. 32:10; 33:5)."²

Later, despite centuries of repeated cycles of rebellion, God continued to pour out compassion (Neh. 9:7-33). God, "being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and did not destroy them.

Yes, many a time He turned His anger away, and did not stir up all His wrath" (Ps. 78:38).

Long periods passed between judgment events, and God repeatedly sent prophets to call His people back to Him, but the people would not listen (see Jer. 35:14-17). This deeply pained God, who cried out: "My people would not heed My voice, and Israel would have none of Me. So I gave them over to their own stubborn heart, to walk in their own counsels. Oh, that My people would listen to Me" (Ps. 81:11-13; cf. Hosea 11:8, 9). Much later Jesus likewise cried, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!" (Matt. 23:37).

IS WRATH THE OPPOSITE OF LOVE?

Human anger is often incompatible with love (see Matt. 5:22; 1 Cor. 13:4-7; Gal. 5:20; James 1:19, 20). God's righteous indignation, however, is different.

Human anger often overreacts, but God's anger is always love's perfect response against evil, toward the best achievable good for all.

Throughout Scripture God's prophets long for judgment to come because it brings deliverance to victims of evil. In contrast to the way judgment is often viewed today, biblical authors frequently question why God does not bring judgment more quickly to right wrongs sooner, crying, "How long, Lord?"

When God did bring judgment, God disciplined people to do good for them "in the end" (Deut. 8:16), as a good father lovingly disciplines his son (Deut. 8:5; cf. Heb. 12:10). "For whom the Lord loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights" (Prov. 3:12; cf. Rev. 3:19).

When God brings judgment, "He does not afflict willingly" (Lam. 3:33) and does so only when there is "no remedy" (2 Chron. 36:16). God takes "no pleasure in the death of one who dies" (Eze. 18:32). And through the many cycles of rebellion "often He restrained his anger" (Ps. 78:38, NASB) for long periods, providing a way for deliverance for anyone willing (see Ps. 81:11-14; Matt. 23:37).

Thus, God Himself asks, "What more could have been done to My vineyard that I have not done in it?" (Isa. 5:4).

Some think God's ways of dealing with His people in the wilderness (and beyond) were harsh, but God's loving discipline of His people must be understood in the context of the situations the people faced.

Evil angers God because evil always harms at least one person God loves, even when such harm is self-inflicted.



After being brought out of Egypt, God's chosen people were surrounded by dangers. They were in the wilderness with a shortage of food and water, amid poisonous snakes and other dangers, and the surrounding nations wanted to destroy them. Without God's special protection and sustenance, they had *no hope to survive*.

And, left unchecked, their evil actions would eventually cut them off from God's special protection. Their evil actions were literally an existential threat to the nation.

Consider this. Why is it such a serious matter to disobey a flight attendant's instructions on a plane, but those same instructions might be disregarded without consequence on the street? Because of the increased danger to everyone on the plane, the safety of which hinges on the flight crew.

Israel was in a somewhat similar situation. Accordingly, God's laws and the way He governed the people were aimed at preventing Israel's destruction by surrounding nations or other dangers—destruction that was sure to take place if the enemy succeeded to separate God's people from Him. So, very often, God disciplined them to deter them from going over a cliff, as it were.

Eventually, however, the people pushed God so far away that His special protection had to be removed. The people of Judah persistently "provoked the God of heaven to wrath," so that God eventually withdrew and "gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar" (Ezra 5:12; see also Judges 2:13, 14; Ps. 106:41, 42; Jer. 38:18; Neh. 9:30). God withdrew only after the people over many years continually "despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets" that were sent to warn them and provide a way of escape, "till there was no remedy" (2 Chron. 36:16). In the meantime God did everything He could for His people (see Isa. 5:3, 4).

On this and other occasions God brings judgment only when there are no preferable alternatives available to Him (given all factors) and only after providing warnings and a way of escape (e.g., Jer. 38:2).

God's wrath, however, does not continue forever. It is the temporary response of love to evil. But where there is no evil, there is no wrath. Moreover, God's compassion far exceeds His wrath—His "anger is but for a moment," but "His favor is for life" (Ps. 30:5; cf. Ex. 34:6; Judges 10:16; Luke 13:34).

Love demands justice, and God loves justice (Ps. 33:5; Isa. 61:8; Jer. 9:24; cf. Luke 11:42). Again, God despises evil because evil always harms God's children, even when self-inflicted. The next time you think of God's wrath, envision a compassionate father or mother mourning the harm done to their children. That is the ground and origin of God's wrath—evil and the harm it brings to His beloved children.

Everything God does is always loving. God's wrath is not the opposite of love. It is the final resort of love—always and only in response to evil and to do good for all in the end. 🗡️

¹ As William L. Lane notes, "God's anger (cf. Num 14:11, 23, 43b) was not aroused by a single incident but by a persistent tendency to refuse his direction" (*Hebrews 1-8* [Dallas: Word, 2002], p. 86).

² Mervin Breneman, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther* (Nashville: B&H, 1993), p. 241.

FATHERS AND THEIR CHILDREN

*Recognizing that
parenting is a sacred
trust from God*

ELLEN G. WHITE

The history of Samuel, the pure, noble-hearted prophet, and of Moses, the holiest of men, the most illustrious of leaders, shows how great is the mother's power to mold the character of her child, even in its earliest years. . . .

But great as is the work of the mother, it should never be forgotten that the father also has a part to act in the education and training of his children, and that he is under the most solemn obligation to perform that work with fidelity. Especially as the children advance in years is the father's influence needed, in union with that of the mother, to restrain, control, and guide. Parents little realize the harm done by withholding from their children needed and wholesome restraint, and allowing them to grow up with uncontrolled passions, and selfish, debasing habits.

ELI'S FAILURE AS A FATHER

The course of Eli—his sinful indulgence as a father, and his criminal neglect as a priest of God—presents a striking and painful contrast to the firmness and self-denial of the faithful Hannah. Eli was acquainted with the divine will. He knew what characters God could accept, and what He would condemn. Yet he suffered his children to grow up with unbridled passions, perverted appetites, and corrupt morals.

Eli had instructed his children in the law of God, and had given them a good example in his own life; but this was not his whole duty. God required him, both as a father and as a priest, to restrain them from following their own perverse will. This he had failed to do. His sons were impatient of control, and he weakly resigned the reins to them, and suffered them to pursue their evil ways at pleasure. The fond father overlooked the faults and sins of their childhood, flattering himself that after a time they would outgrow these evil tendencies. He

did not regard his children as a sacred trust which God had committed to his care, to be returned with interest; but he looked upon them as his own. Hence, instead of seeking guidance and help from God, and following the instructions given in His Word, Eli chose his own way of management, that most agreeable to his ease-loving disposition.



Had he taught his sons to obey their father, they would have learned to obey God; but by permitting them to disregard his commands, he taught them to disregard the commands of their heavenly Father. Thus their evil habits strengthened with their years, and when they reached manhood, they were ready to defy all authority, both human and divine.

God requires every parent not only to give his children right instruction and a good example, but with promptness and decision to restrain their inclination to do evil. . . . All parents should strive to make their families patterns of good works, perfect Christian households. . . . He who fails to direct wisely his own household is not qualified to guide the church of God.

Christian parents, if you desire to work for the Lord, begin with your little ones at home. If you manifest tact and wisdom and the fear of God in the management of your children, you may be entrusted with greater responsibilities. True Christian effort will begin at home, and go out from the center to embrace wider fields. A soul saved in your own family circle or in your own neighborhood, by your patient, painstaking labor, will bring as much honor to the name of Christ. . . .

THE FATHER'S DUTY

The Lord will not pass unpunished the neglect of parents to train their children for His service. By kind and judicious management, fathers as well as mothers should bind their children to them by the strong ties of reverence, gratitude, and love, and should kindle in their young hearts an earnest longing for righteousness and truth. While the mother seeks to implant good principles, the father should see that the precious seed is not choked by the growth of evil. His sterner discipline is needed that his children may learn firmness and self-control amid the allurements to sin which must be on every hand. . . .

The influence of faithful Christian parents can never lose its power. A young man when about to be ordained as a Christian minister stated that at one time he had been well-nigh led to adopt the principles of infidelity. "But," he added, "there was one argument in favor of Christianity which I could never forget, and that was the consistent conduct of my own father. Through that I was at length won to the Saviour."

By neglect of duty, parents exert a far-reaching influence for evil. One ungodly, disobedient son may lead many souls in the path of iniquity. Each of these will corrupt others; the evil traits cherished will be transmitted to posterity; and thus iniquity is constantly increasing and multiplying, and all because parents choose the way which is easiest at the moment, the way of gratification and indulgence, and look not to the misery in store for themselves, their children, and their children's children.

The solemn warnings contained in the Word of God, the judgments visited upon the indulgent father, and his rebellious sons, should arouse parents from their stupor, and lead them to see and feel their duty to give to their children, by right education and discipline, correct habits and sound principles. Christian father, labor kindly, patiently, for the welfare of your children. Seek to turn their hearts to the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. Teach them by precept and example that the spirit of Christ is the spirit of doing good.

To every father and mother is committed a little plot of ground before their own door. It is their work to clear it from noxious weeds, and to mellow the soil that the precious seed may take root and flourish there. To do their work faithfully will be far more pleasing to God than to go on a mission to some foreign land, leaving the home field neglected. The work of Christian ministers and parents should begin with their own children. Present to the church and to the world a well-disciplined family, and you present one of the strongest arguments in favor of Christianity. . . .

The Lord holds parents and guardians responsible for the children under their care. He has not left us in uncertainty concerning the characters that He will accept. Nothing less than purity in thought, word, and deed will meet the divine standard. The Word of God sets forth in unmistakable language the duties of parents. If they will faithfully perform these duties, His Spirit will crown their efforts with success. Those words of holy writ are as true now as when first uttered by the wise man, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." ♣

Seventh-day Adventists believe that **Ellen G. White** (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry. This excerpt was taken from *Signs of the Times*, Nov. 10, 1881.



MY FATHER AND YOUR FATHER

A faithful Father forever

Note: Many fathers will be honored on Father's Day, and this article is not meant to detract from these faithful fathers. But for those who have not had the privilege of having such a father in their lives, this is meant to provide hope and encouragement from one who has been there.

It was never an easy choice, standing in the Hallmark store staring at the selection of Father's Day cards, trying to find just the right one. As I shuffled through the cards, my eyes caught glimpses of such words and phrases as kind, wise, protector, on my side, strong, generous—words I so much wished applied to him. But they didn't. How could one find a card to honor one so dishonorable as my father?

A sly man, he lurked in the shadows for decades before

finally being convicted as a felon—a child sexual predator with multiple counts against him.

He was always scary—having one face at church and an entirely different one at home. Because he was charming yet unpredictable, we never knew what his next move might be.

When I was 4 years old, my parents divorced, and for the next few years I lived with my mother. But when I was 8, darkness returned when my father snatched me from my mother's porch and carried me across the country, forcing me to stay with him while cutting off all communication with my mother. Following custody battles, the court determined, despite my pleadings, that I would spend the three months of summer with my father and the rest of the year with my mother. This went on for years.

Fortunately, my mother had a very strong faith, and she instilled that faith in me at an early age. "I may not always be able to be with you," she told me, "but God will always be there for you."

And He was.

Nevertheless, even while understanding that God "will always be there for you," facing turmoil, trauma, and abuse can make it difficult to trust others—even God Himself.

While there are no easy answers, the Bible itself provides a picture of a Father who is worthy of our trust.

A THOROUGHLY BIBLICAL CONCEPT

The concept of God as our Father permeates the Bible. In his final words to the children of Israel, Moses stated: "Do you thus

deal with the Lord, O foolish and unwise people? Is He not your Father, who bought you? Has He not made you and established you?" (Deut. 32:6).

Later God spoke to David through His prophet Nathan, saying, "I will be his Father, and he shall be My son" (2 Sam. 7:14).

David embraced this promise, acknowledging God as "a father of the fatherless, a defender of widows" (Ps. 68:5).

This refrain is echoed by Isaiah: "But now, O Lord, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You our potter; and all we are the work of Your hand" (Isa. 64:8; cf. Isa. 63:16).

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

During His earthly ministry Jesus taught His followers to embrace God as their heavenly Father.

"When you pray," He instructed, "say: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name" (Luke 11:2).

In His sermon on the mount Christ repeatedly emphasized the love and care of the Father, and our calling to follow Him:

"Your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him" (Matt. 6:8). "Your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly" (verse 18). "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!" (Matt. 7:11).

Scripture records Jesus referring to God as "Father" more than 175 times, and it is always in a very personal sense—"my Father," "your Father," "our Father"

In Gethsemane we hear His multiple pleas: "O My Father" (Matt. 26:39, 42). And on the cross, following the agonizing cry of "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34), Christ still trusted the Father as He "cried out with a loud voice, . . . Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit" (Luke 23:46).

Following the resurrection, Christ assured His followers, "I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God" (John 20:17).

A STRONG CONNECTION

This understanding of God as our Father continues throughout the New Testament. Paul begins almost all his letters with the familiar salutation: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 1:7).

Encouraging a strong connection with the

I have a heavenly Father who will one day make all things right.

Father, he writes, "For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father'" (Rom. 8:15, cf. Gal. 4:6).

James, Peter, John, and Jude all highlight the Father's care for us (see James 1:17; 1 Peter 1:3; 1 John 1:3; 3:1; Jude 1). In fact, in the little book of First John, God is referred to as Father 13 times.

And in the book of Revelation Jesus assures us, "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne" (Rev. 3:21).

OUR FATHER'S NAME

The Bible provides a powerful antidote to the sin and suffering that are inevitable in this fallen world. How thankful I am that despite very difficult circumstances, my mother instilled in me a strong faith in God and His Word. It was her example, her prayers, and her faithfulness in taking me to Sabbath school and church that enabled me to realize that, despite my earthly father, I have a heavenly Father who will one day make all things right. Rather than clinging to anger and bitterness, she taught me to believe God's promise when He says, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay" (Rom. 12:19).

In practicing the concepts learned at an early age, I have found that God is indeed a faithful and true Father—one who loves and cares for me, promising, "For I know the plans I have for you, . . . plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jer. 29:11, NIV).

Today I am honored to call Him my Father and look forward to the time God's children will stand on Mount Zion, with *His* name written on the foreheads of those who believe (Rev. 14:1). ♣

Gina Wahlen is an editor and project manager in the Office of the President at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

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THE LAZARUS SYNDROME

Revival against all odds

Many of us face impediments that at times appear insurmountable. What if you discovered a way to view any challenge as manageable and resolvable? Inspired by the Lazarus syndrome, a rare phenomenon of spontaneous restoration, let's explore this biblical-medical concept that can help resolve the most daunting problems.

UNDERSTANDING

The Lazarus syndrome, also known as autoresuscitation after failed cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), is a phenomenon during which a person returns to life after CPR has been unsuccessful. Named after the biblical figure raised from the dead by Jesus (John 11), it embodies the idea of unexpected revival and renewal against all odds. Just as Lazarus emerged from the tomb through Jesus' words, we, too, can experience His transformational power.

At the heart of the Lazarus syndrome lie the powerful principles of resilience and cooperation. These, combined with faith and bold action, can make the impossible possible, notwithstanding discouraging surroundings. Lazarus, through the power of God, experienced resurrection over death itself. Interestingly, this miraculous breakthrough happened in concert with the cooperation of those around him. Similarly, we must persevere through trials and tribulations, trusting in God's providence to bring about unexpected breakthroughs.

APPLICATION

Central to the Lazarus syndrome is the acknowledgment of divine intervention in impossible human situations. Just as Jesus spoke the words "Lazarus, come

forth," we, too, can call upon God to intervene in our most challenging situations. Through prayer, faith, obedience, a reliance on God's timing, often partnering with others, we open ourselves to miraculous transformation, even when all seems lost.

In the face of despair, the Lazarus syndrome teaches us to cultivate resilience, hope, and action. Despite the finality of death, Lazarus' resurrection serves as a beacon of hope, reminding us that no situation, spiritual or secular, is beyond redemption.

In practical terms, the Lazarus syndrome can be applied as a five-step approach:

Intentional Perseverance: Never give up hope. Search for answers, even in the darkest of times.

Divine-Human Cooperation: Seek and depend on God's guidance. Intervene via prayer and action, often working in concert with others.

Expectant Faith: Trust in God's timing and providence to bring about transformation.

Determined Resilience: Bounce back from every challenge with renewed determination, stronger as a result of the experience.

Stubborn Hope: By the power of God, maintain a hopeful outlook, always believing, searching for possibilities and transformation.

The Lazarus syndrome provides a powerful framework for unraveling and resolving difficult situations. Just as Lazarus emerged from the tomb to new life, we, too, can experience transformation and renewal, trusting in God to bring about miracles. ▀

**PRACTICALLY
SPEAKING**
DELBERT W.
BAKER



**THIS BIBLICAL-
MEDICAL CONCEPT
CAN HELP RESOLVE
THE MOST
DAUNTING
PROBLEMS.**

Delbert W. Baker, Ph.D., is director of Research and Development for the Regional Conference Retirement Plan/Office of Regional Conference Ministries in Huntsville, Alabama.

The Anatomy of Prayer

KENNETH CRAWFORD

Early in the morning I stop at the kitchen, drink my two large glasses of water, put several pieces of wood on the embers of last night's fire, and then settle down in my chair for a time of devotions.

It is a strange ritual. The world is still at slumber; even the birds are yet silent. In the distance I hear a faint crow of the rooster. "Must be on daylight saving time," I muse.

But I am here to meet with God. I have concluded, over the years, that it really doesn't matter most what rituals or forms I use, what books I start with—it is all a part of waiting at the gates of the divine temple for an audience with my Creator.

This is the deep mystery of prayer, for there is a delicate divine mechanism at work here that I cannot interpret. A process from heaven that I cannot explain.

The busy day lies waiting, things to be done, people to meet, a thousand different wheels all turning to move life along the path of productivity to some unsearchable accomplishment. Yet I sit in quietness, waiting, listening, attentive to the echo from the throne, a whisper from the heart of God, a sense of the presence of the Spirit of God within me.

It is in the quietness of those moments that conversation begins to flow from within my soul, and slowly, attentively, I pour out my heart to God. The burdens of my spirit, the sorrow that crushes me, the perplexity of relationships—all flow out together.

Then there are my own inadequacies, my sense of sorrow for things done in haste or left undone. Regret comes in as a groan rather than a song; confession is always difficult yet cleansing and ends in gratitude. The song restored with overwhelming gratitude. "Why me, God? How is it that You could call one like me?"

Finally, the natural flow of the heart moves toward listening. “I am finished, Lord. If there is anything You would like to tell me, I am now open.”

Waiting for a response from God should receive at least equal time to all other conversation with God. Now, while there is silence in the soul, He speaks to your heart and mine.

Sometimes it is only the sense of peace that we recognize—the realization that He hears, He receives, He understands, and He loves. At other times it is the sense that the High Priest of our souls has received our feeble attempts at worship, and our prayer is heard, accepted, and answered in His name.

So, in the end, the river of my audience with God rushes over narrow chasms, tumbles over rocks and ebbs and flows, swirls and eddies, until finally it comes to rest in the deep waters of peace.

Here is the great mystery of prayer. Our prayers are so feeble, the outreachings of our hearts are so inarticulate, even often so selfish. Yet one of the miracles of conversation with God is that the Holy Spirit understands not our feeble attempts to express what we ought, but the intent of our heart. The Holy Spirit intercedes for us, and God accepts the intent of the deep longings of our soul.

As Paul writes in Romans 8:26, 27: “The Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

Oh, the amazing miracle of that hour with God. An hour of waiting transforms the day into one of anticipation, waiting upon God to carry us through the storms of life, safe in the palm of His hand.

As Lettie B. Cowman puts it in her work *Streams in the Desert*:

“Submission to the divine will is the softest pillow on which to recline.

It fills the room, it fills my life, with the glory of source unseen,

It made me calm in the midst of strife, and in the winter my heart was green.

And the birds of promise sang on the tree when the storm was breaking on land.”

* L. B. Cowman, “Streams in the Desert,” <https://www.crosswalk.com/devotionals/desert/streams-in-the-desert-november-4th.html>.

Kenneth Crawford is the former president of the Alaska Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and now enjoys retirement in College Place, Washington, with his wife, Colleen.

ADVENTIST HEALTH UPDATE

*Recent findings
from the Adventist
Health Study-2*



**GARY FRASER,
ROY MATHEW,
FAYTH MILES-BUTLER,
JISOO OH,
DAVID SHAVLIK**

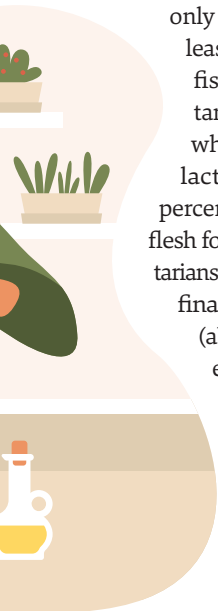
Ninety-six thousand Seventh-day Adventists, ages 30 to 112, from all 50 U.S. states and Canada were enrolled in the second Adventist Health Study (AHS-2) from 2002 to 2007, including 25 percent African American participants and smaller proportions of other racial and ethnic minorities. Although the study has now resulted in more than 200 reports in the medical literature from AHS-2, you may reasonably say, “What does that mean for me?”

We already know that Adventists are particularly long-lived on

average—part of a so-called Blue Zone. We also know that red meat consumption increases risk of several disorders, and that nut consumption protects against heart disease and possibly some other problems. More recently we found that meat *protein* is associated with higher risk and nut *protein* with lower risk of heart disease. Thus, it may not only be fats that are relevant to disease risk.

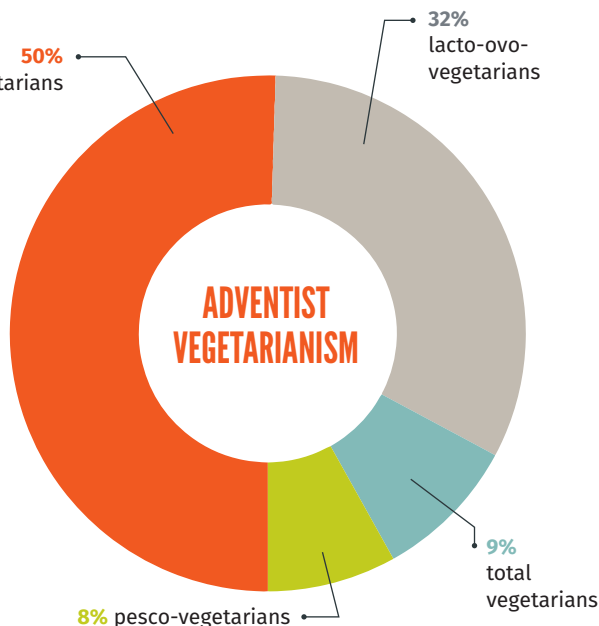
VEGETARIANISM

In AHS-2 we have focused mainly on Adventists who eat differently from each other. These



include nonvegetarians (about 50 percent of our study Adventists) who nevertheless are generally more health-conscious than the average American. They eat meats only about three times per week, at least half of these being chicken or fish. Then there are pesco-vegetarians (about 8 percent of AHS-2) who eat only fish as a flesh food; lacto-ovo-vegetarians (about 32 percent of AHS-2), who consume no flesh foods, but as with the pesco-vegetarians may eat dairy foods and eggs; and finally total vegetarian Adventists (about 8-9 percent of AHS-2), who eat no animal products at all.

Many common afflictions of middle and later life are caused by inflammation at the cellular level. These include heart disease, diabetes, many cancers, autoimmune disorders (such as rheumatoid arthritis and systemic lupus erythematosus [SLE]). All categories of vegetarians have lower levels of C-reactive protein (CRP), a marker of inflammation, especially the total vegetarians as compared to nonvegetarian Adventists. Further, all vegetarians have markedly lower body weights (adjusting for height) as compared to nonvegetarians. This is important, as excess fatty tissue produces chemicals that enhance inflammation. Vegetarians have markedly lower rates of diabetes, an inflammation-mediated disorder in which, in adult-onset diabetes, insulin does not work as well as it should. Our data show that eating mainly plant foods is associated with better sensitivity to insulin, and that an omega-3 fatty acid from plant foods, alpha-linolenic acid (ALA, found especially in soy, flaxseed,



chia, and walnuts), appears to be responsible for this. We have seen that many of these seem to be at highest levels in the blood and adipose tissues of our total vegetarians.

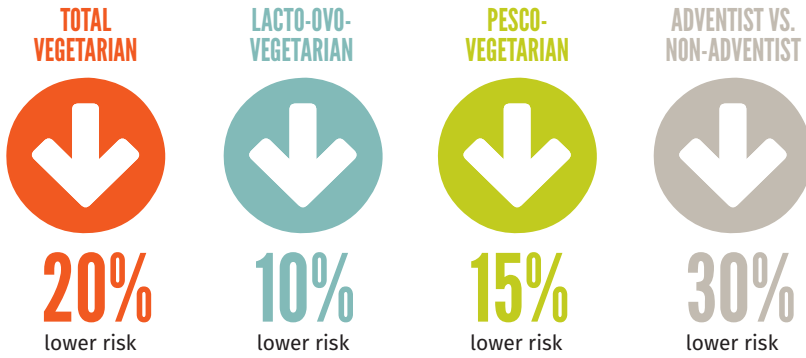
We also analyzed the apparent effects of meats and dairy. We have not documented any adverse effects of fish or poultry, except to say, for poultry at least, that it can matter greatly what one may choose to *replace it with* after it is eliminated. We have evidence that vegetable sources of protein that may replace poultry, such as whole grains, legumes, or nuts, will often have protective properties not possessed by the poultry. Fish *may* have some protective properties. Red meats, their dense calories, their lack of dietary fiber, their saturated fats, and probably some of their proteins increase the risk of overweight, diabetes mellitus, heart disease, and colorectal (and perhaps some other) cancers. They have little to recommend them.

We would note that Black church members should understand that our findings show that they have approximately the same trends with diet and health reported here. There is strong evidence that healthy dietary patterns are important in reducing or addressing health disparities among Black Americans as well.

CANCERS

Three cancers are particularly common in Western societies: colorectal cancer, breast cancer in women, and prostate cancers in men. While the lifestyle recommended by Adventists may not protect from all chronic diseases, it protects from many of these, sufficient to make it clearly beneficial.

CANCER RISK



There is good evidence from many sources that red meat, particularly processed red meat, increases risk of colorectal cancer. Results from AHS-2 are consistent with this. It is also worth noting that the pesco-vegetarians had a particularly lower risk of colorectal cancer, and that was unlikely to be a result of chance. Further study is needed to determine if it was the fish or some other characteristic of the pesco-vegetarians that led to a lower risk.

Many studies, including AHS-2, find that dairy consumers have lower risk of colorectal cancers, so total vegetarians who consume no dairy, get a little less protection here than other vegetarians. But our data, drilling a little deeper, suggest that this dairy effect on colorectal cancer is likely due to dairy's calcium content, and calcium is also easily found in a wide variety of vegetable products.

In AHS-2 we noted that two hormone-responsive cancers, breast cancer in women and prostate cancer in men, were 25-35 percent less common in total vegetarians, but not at all less frequent in lacto-ovo- or pesco-vegetarians, when compared to nonvegetarians. We have now analyzed and reported apparently clear trends of *increased risk* of these two cancers with some dairy products, in particular, dairy milk. We found little or no discernible effect for cheese and yogurt. The dairy milk association seemed almost pharmacologic, starting to accumulate at quite small amounts of regular, long-term consumption. The maximum effects (at least a 50 percent increase in risk) were achieved at only $\frac{3}{4}$ cup per day. We speculate that this may be related either to sex hormones from the cows, which are found in small quantities in milk particularly, or to effects of milk protein on a hormone called IGF-1, which is thought to increase risk of both of these cancers. Low-fat and regular fat milks had almost identical effects, suggesting that it is not the milk fat that may be causing the problem.

Overall vegetarian Adventists have about 10 percent lower risk of all cancers combined, when compared to nonvegetarian Adventists. Turning to the specific types of vegetarians, total vegetarians have about a 20 percent lower risk of all cancers combined, lacto-ovo-vegetarians about 10 percent lower risk, pesco-vegetarians about 15 percent lower risk, each when compared to nonvegetarian Adventists. But when we compare all Adventists to *non-Adventists*, there is at least a 30 percent lower risk. This tells us that even the relatively health-conscious nonvegetarian Adventists are gaining some benefit and have less cancer risk than *non-Adventist* Americans.

OTHER DISORDERS

Although our focus was mostly on cancer, we have taken the opportunity to explore possible effects of lifestyle on a small number of other disorders. There is little doubt that Adventist vegetarians do much better than Adventist nonvegetarians with respect to risk of diabetes, high blood pressures, and blood cholesterol levels. In all of these, the total vegetarians do best of all, followed by lacto-ovo-vegetarians and pesco-vegetarians. We have found, however, that total vegetarians tend to have a higher risk of bone fractures (and thus presumably osteoporosis), but for them, this can be largely mitigated by adequate calcium and vitamin D supplements. For everyone, regular vigorous physical activity and adequate (but not excessive) *animal or vegetable* dietary protein is usually adequate to promote good bone health.

Recent AHS-2 publications also indicate that the autoimmune disorder SLE is less prevalent in vegetarians, perhaps partially related to higher intake of the ALA omega-3 fatty acid. This is preliminary work that needs more study to further support causal connections.



One of our reports that got much attention in the press was that we found Adventists who spaced their meals such that there was a long (perhaps 16-hour) “fast” overnight had less weight gain over several decades of adult life. We also found that those preferring to make breakfast their main meal did well in this regard. It is noteworthy that the recently promoted “16/8” diet *to lose weight* has become popular and for many works well without great feelings of hunger. To have perhaps a little later breakfast and a little earlier supper about eight hours later is one option, although other plans with similar spacings are possible.

TOTAL MORTALITY

The final focus of AHS-2 results is how diet relates to total mortality—the risk of dying during a particular age. Often as doctors we encounter elderly keenly health-conscious Adventists who are discouraged, and sometimes angry, that they now suffer from a chronic disease. While we can and do sympathize with their distress, it is worth pointing out that protection afforded by a healthy lifestyle is that of a lower risk, not the absence of risk. Second, Adventists do finally suffer from essentially the same disorders as others. The benefit is that they usually come at later ages. That is how we live longer on average, and with better quality of life.

At younger years (about 65 years of age), lower risk of dying *from any cause* is found in male vegetarians (about 16 percent lower, especially in total vegetarian males), and in women about 8 percent lower, compared to Adventist nonvegetarians. In later years, however (say, 75 years of age and above) we do not find clear evidence of a total mortality benefit for the vegetarians as a group. Comparing the various dietary patterns, pesco- and lacto-ovo-vegetarians seem to do the best for overall total mortality. So it seems that vegetarian diets, as we currently practice them, are especially tending to prevent premature deaths at younger ages, allowing more of us to achieve older

We live longer on average, and with better quality of life.

ages. In those who have survived that long, however, the advantage in total vegetarians and lacto-ovo-vegetarians for total mortality then becomes harder to detect. Some advantage seems to persist at older ages for pesco-vegetarians.

One area of potential concern is a signal of increased deaths in vegetarians related to neurological diseases (such as stroke, dementia, and Parkinson's disease), *but only in old age*. More research is under way to give more clarity, especially in regard to potential nutrients that could explain this difference and may be targets for supplementation if there is evidence of deficiency. Nonetheless, when compared to a U.S. Census population, *total deaths* in vegetarian and nonvegetarian Adventists combined are estimated at 33 percent and 22 percent lower at younger and older ages, respectively.

Our bodies, their physiology and chemistry, are marvelously complex, but as we age, many bodily functions tend to become less efficient. Vitamin B₁₂ is absorbed less well by the stomach, for instance, and the skin does less well when using sunlight to form vitamin D. Total vegetarians, and many lacto-ovo-vegetarians, should supplement B₁₂ as they grow older.

SUMMARY

In summary, it is clearly true that Adventists as a group are doing better than others, and this includes the nonvegetarians! The vegetarian Adventists are doing better yet. This is especially so for the pesco- and lacto-ovo-vegetarians, and male total vegetarians, when looking at total mortality. More of us are living to older ages. In our latest, more comprehen-

sive data, however, we do not find any clear overall mortality (longevity) advantage for total vegetarian women, though male total vegetarians are especially protected from deaths at earlier ages, as compared to nonvegetarians.

As compared to nonvegetarians, total vegetarians especially and also other vegetarians are doing particularly well as far as less heart disease, kidney disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure, thus “delivering” more of us to those older years. Despite this, it appears that for some in their later years the vegetarian advantage may then be offset by not doing quite so well from neurological diseases, when compared to low meat-and-fish-consuming elderly nonvegetarian Adventists.

Clearly, diet is very complex. Medical and dietary research results in a constantly changing picture. What we will write in 10 years is likely to have some differences from what we write today, but hopefully these differences will be relatively minor, mainly filling gaps in our present understanding. What we can say with confidence is that the Adventist “health message” has resulted in many hundreds of thousands of extra good quality years of life among church members, this over five to six generations. 🦋

Gary E. Fraser is distinguished professor of medicine and epidemiology at Loma Linda University. **Roy Mathew**, a nephrologist, is associate professor at Loma Linda University School of Medicine. **Fayth Miles-Butler** is associate professor and research investigator at Loma Linda University with joint appointments in the School of Public Health and the School of Medicine. **Jisoo Oh** is associate professor at Loma Linda University School of Public Health. **David Shavlik** is associate professor at Loma Linda University School of Public Health. An expanded version of this article is available at adventistreview.org, and for a complete list of Adventist Health Study publications, visit adventisthealthstudy.org.

If you are an Adventist Health Study-2 participant, we are most grateful for that.

Our study has so far focused on cancer, heart disease, risk of dying (longevity), but there are many other common medical conditions that may be influenced by diet. Some of these cannot be found by questionnaire with any accuracy (e.g., rheumatoid arthritis, congestive heart failure, dementia, kidney disease). In order to investigate them, it is essential that we identify study members who have developed these disorders. There is often an inexpensive way of doing this by matching study members to national databases of, say, kidney failure or heart bypass surgery. It is also extremely informative to match AHS-2 data with Medicare records (for those 44,000+ AHS-2 participants who are Medicare members).

So we are planning to do this, using your name, date of birth, and Social Security number (if you provided it) as personal identifiers. Please note that these databases always have very strict security protocols, and if you are not already on their rolls, your personal information will not be retained by them.

To decline the use of your data for these purposes, you can email us at ahs2@llu.edu or send a note by mail to Adventist Health Study, Room 330, Nichol Hall, Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, CA 92350, if possible before July 31, 2024.

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A TWIST OF FAITH

PHYLIS COCHRAN



Horns beeped. People yelled. “Get out of the road, Lloyd!” Lloyd Harred’s family had serviced generations of townspeople’s automobiles. Seniors enjoyed reminiscing with him, but some of us younger women, working locally, found Lloyd distasteful. We went out of our way to avoid him. He embarrassed us with his loud declarations of adoration. His kindness might have been better received in a more suitable location than in the middle of the sidewalk on the main street where everyone knows everyone in our small town.

I quickened my pace when I spotted the grungy-looking man darting across the street toward me. Newly wed, I certainly did not care to hear Lloyd’s frivolous remarks. Hurrying up the walkway to the office did not deter him. I smelled oil even before I felt his arm around my shoulder. His well-lubricated clothing always left a lingering odor.

“How’s my favorite girl today?” Lloyd inquired.

“Fine,” I said rather abrasively as I squirmed from beneath his embrace and raced into the office building.

Lloyd, close behind, grabbed the door and followed me inside. He looked around the lunchroom for other women to annoy; finally he was asked to leave.

IN HIS DEFENSE

Later I recounted several of these incidents to my mother-in-law.

“Lloyd means no harm,” she said. “He’s a good boy.”

“Boy?” Lloyd was in his 30s, but my mother-in-law viewed him like one of her sons.

“Lloyd has had a hard life,” she added. “His father died when he was young. Lloyd was forced to quit school in order to take over the family business and support his mother and younger siblings. Did you know that Lloyd sent his younger brother, Tony, to college?”

“No, but I know Tony is a well-respected businessman.”

“If it wasn’t for Lloyd,” my mother-in-law asserted, “Tony wouldn’t be where he is today.”

No matter what my mother-in-law said in his defense, it did not change my opinion of the auto mechanic. I was young, impressionable, and overly concerned about what others might think of me. Lloyd was bothersome. To befriend him would cause gossip; so I ducked out of sight and outran him whenever possible.

A SOFTENED HEART

Years passed. My husband and I were raising children. Lloyd married a lovely woman and became a father. Occasionally our paths crossed. Lloyd’s style never varied. Even in the middle of the grocery store with my young children, Lloyd came plodding down the aisle to greet me with a hug.

A few years later our middle child, Susan, at 9 years of age fell ill and died of a brain tumor. Wading through grief, I experienced deep sorrow. I turned to Bible scriptures, where I encountered Jesus and received Him into my life. Crying out to God for help brought comfort. I began to feel compassion for hurting people.

One of these people was Lloyd Harred. He met with mishaps and found himself struggling. “Lloyd may lose his business,” the townspeople explained.

“Lloyd offended me, but he doesn’t deserve this, Lord.” I began praying for the man with the scuffed-up boots and soiled clothing.

PRAYING FOR LLOYD

One spring I caught a glimpse of Lloyd in the parking lot. This time I did not outrun Lloyd, but allowed him to catch up to me. He threw his grubby hand around my shoulder. I did not move away. Before Lloyd could speak, I said, “Lloyd, I know what it’s like to face tough times.”

“No one has ever prayed for me,” he said, walking quickly away.

“I know you do,” he responded sympathetically.

Looking at this man’s grease-smearing face, I said, “Lloyd, God has taken me through some difficult places these past months. Now I’m praying for you.”

Speechless, Lloyd seemed transfixed by my words. His eyes filled up. “No one has ever prayed for me,” he said, walking quickly away.

Whenever I saw Lloyd on the main street in town, he tooted and waved. I would ask God to watch over him and his family.

Years later my other daughter, Kristen, now grown, dropped by my home after working in the local bank. “Do you know Lloyd Harred?” she asked.

“Yes,” I said. “I’ve known him for years.”

I was surprised she didn’t remember Lloyd. I wondered what kind of a scene he might have created at the bank. *Was she disturbed by this man’s behavior, as I had been at her age?*

Kris told me her story. “Lloyd Harred came into the bank this morning,” she said. “I was waiting on him when he asked me my maiden name. Then he asked me the names of my mother and father. When I mentioned your name, he started to cry. Tears ran down his face. I didn’t understand. Then Lloyd said, ‘Your mother prays for me.’”

Phyllis Cochran is a published author and freelance writer living in Winchendon, Massachusetts.

I wasn't paying attention, and my shopping cart almost hit the man in front of me. Uttering a hasty apology, I sincerely hoped he wasn't mad. "Don't be sorry," he said with a smile.

At the fast-food restaurant near my house I ordered a drink. I had underestimated the cost, so I opened my wallet to pull out more money. The cashier promptly raised her hand, smiled, said, "Don't worry about it," and handed me my drink despite the 20 cents I owed.

To some, these small gestures mean little. But to me, they mean more. So much more. Because I had been abused, almost daily, and didn't realize the healing my soul needed.

I had found myself in a relationship that was verbally abusive. My thoughts, wishes, and preferences were almost always pushed to the side, and only his wants mattered. I would leave the relationship only to go back, not realizing the harm each unkind word, each harsh gesture, was causing my soul. I thought I was strong. I thought I knew my value and my worth. Because no matter how cruel he was, I told myself I saw the truth. I thought that I was OK, that I wasn't a doormat, because I confronted him on his behavior.

But I wasn't OK. And I didn't know it until the kindness of others made it glaringly obvious. More and more I found myself in situations in which random people would perform small, precious gestures that would heal my soul. It was as if they were showing me I did matter, when he said I didn't. He was telling me that I should hide, that I was hideous, while they made me feel seen and cared for. While he would barely lift a finger to bring me a cup of water, they would go out of their way to make sure I was comfortable.

And it was that kindness that allowed me to heal. To step back and set a boundary where I didn't know I needed one before. To step back and realize that all those words and actions that I was allowing myself to take in had really caused more pain than I knew. And I realized, too, God's love for me in such a unique and beautiful way. As I saw the effect those words had on me, I realized how much I needed to believe His Word, His truth, over the lies that had been thrown at me.

People can hurt us. They can wound us badly with their words and actions, and a part of us may even feel we deserve it. But I believe there are times we need to step back and reexamine what God's Word says about us, in contrast to the lies that are spoken over us. When we begin to embrace His truth, we can have the healing we desperately need. And then we too can reflect His love to others in the little things, and give them a glimpse of the healing they can have in Jesus' love.

Amber Tracy is a pseudonym.

I realized how much I needed to believe His Word, His truth, over the lies that had been thrown at me.



HEALING LOVE

AMBER TRACY

WHAT IS “THE GOSPEL”?

I recently listened to an interview with a former Seventh-day Adventist in which he criticized the denomination in no uncertain terms. Though he covered a lot of ground, what struck me the most was his claim that Adventists don’t understand or proclaim the true gospel—and that as a result, there will be many people who will burn in hell forever because they believed the false gospel we promote.

Admittedly, we could do a much better job of articulating and embodying the gospel—and sounding this alarm has been a longtime part of my ministry.

Yet his claim got me to thinking: *What even is the gospel?*

Christians throw the word around a lot. And we all just assume everyone knows what we’re talking about when we use the term.

It seems that for this young man, as for many Christians, the “gospel” has a very narrow meaning, focusing almost exclusively on how a person gets “saved.” It’s essentially the news that sinful humans deserve God’s wrath, and yet Jesus took that wrath upon Himself—and we can therefore be saved if we accept His work on our behalf.

I have no doubt that some version of this explanation is a *part* of the gospel. But after refamiliarizing myself with every use of the word “gospel” in the New Testament, I’ve been convicted afresh that the gospel encompasses so much more.

Of course, we no doubt recognize that the term “gospel” literally means “good news.” But that good news covers a lot of ground. According to Paul, that good news starts—and flows out of—what Christ did via His death, burial, and resurrection (see

1 Cor. 15:1-5). Truly, this work on our behalf is the foundation to all else.

Included in that work, however, are many more insights that fall under the “good news” umbrella. It definitely includes Christ, because of His work, delivering us “from the wrath to come” (1 Thess. 1:10), but it also includes a “day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ” (Rom. 2:16), which John also refers to as the “everlasting gospel” (Rev. 14:6).

Similarly, the handful of times Jesus uses the word “gospel,” it’s always a part of the phrase “the gospel of the kingdom” (see Matt. 4:23; 9:35; 24:14; Mark 1:14). Thus, it seems that whenever Jesus spoke about the “kingdom of God,” which was His favorite subject, He was expounding upon the gospel, announcing the good news of how His kingdom—and the King at the head—operates in opposition to the kingdoms of the world.

There’s so much more that could be said about this topic. But in short I’d summarize the New Testament’s definition of the gospel this way: flowing out of and predicated upon Christ’s work on our behalf, the gospel is the good news about what God has done, is doing, and will do to accomplish the full restoration of His kingdom of love in the universe.

And the degree to which we place emphasis on what *we’ve* done, are doing, and will do—rather than God’s work—is the degree to which we’re not proclaiming the gospel.

Let’s keep glorying in and proclaiming that good news! 🗡️

Shawn Brace is a pastor and author in Maine. He’s also a D.Phil. candidate at the University of Oxford, researching nineteenth-century American Christianity.

REIMAGINING
FAITH
SHAWN
BRACE



THE DEGREE TO WHICH WE PLACE EMPHASIS ON WHAT WE’VE DONE, ARE DOING, AND WILL DO IS THE DEGREE TO WHICH WE’RE NOT PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL.



The Great Pastor of the Church

*Calling members to a higher
level of spirituality*

◀ People line up to attend the cinema at Loew's Palace Theater, in Washington, D.C., in the early 1930s. At that time more than 70 percent of the U.S. population attended a movie at least once a week.

MERLE POIRIER

Someone mentioned they thought this *Review* series might focus too much on the editors and not enough on the *Review* itself. I've pondered this observation and concluded that to write about the *Adventist Review* without some focus on its editors would be an incomplete picture. More important, I have discovered that "as the editor goes, so goes the *Review*." In other words, the paper strongly reflected its editor—their interests, passions, and commitment to "the cause." But what, I believe, confirms this most is the editorship of F. M. Wilcox.

To sum up Wilcox's impact, we begin at his retirement. F. D. Nichol, longtime associate, summed up Wilcox's leadership in these terms:

"Never in robust health, often beset by afflictions, he [Wilcox] made up in spiritual resources what he lacked in physical. For one third of a century he was the editor of the *Review*. His time of editorship added to that of James White and Uriah Smith, spanned almost one hundred years from the founding of the journal in 1849. . . . Elder Wilcox was a man of great convictions. He stood for something. He kept the faith. To guard and to promote Adventist beliefs and standards was to him more than an editorial duty, it was a passion. No subtle speculations tintured his writings. No question marks punctuated his declarations on doctrine."¹

Lest one think he was high-handed and righteous in tone, the pages of the *Review*, particularly toward the last half of his tenure, were warm, inviting, and pastoral. In a three-page letter to W. P. Elliott, *Review* and Herald Publishing House manager, Wilcox wrote:

"Will you bear with me while I ask you to kindly consider several serious questions which concern my mind? There is one leading question, and then other questions naturally growing out of this leading one. Why is it that this work in which we are engaged is not finished and the people of God already in His kingdom?" He then wrote a list of 18 questions, ending with this:

"I feel burdened over this question of the condition of the church in my relationship as editor of our general church paper. That paper [the *Review*] should be a great pastor of the church. It should minister to the needs of the church. It should point out constantly the dangers threatening the church from within and from without. It should call the church to a higher plane of spiritual life."²

And point out dangers he did. Authors were solicited to write on a variety of topics seen on the front pages of the newspapers of his day. But Wilcox's concern never lost his pastoral approach—direct words written with kindness and encouragement toward a relationship with Jesus and righteous living.



CENTER FOR ADVENTIST RESEARCH

ISSUES OF THE DAY

Prohibition, the prevention by law of the manufacture and sale of alcohol within the United States, began in 1920. Adventists, who espoused a temperate lifestyle, rejoiced. But in 1932 Franklin D. Roosevelt, candidate for president of the United States, ran on a platform that included legalizing alcohol again. Up through and continuing after Roosevelt's inauguration in March 1933 there was increased urgency in the *Review* to encourage the continuation of prohibition either through articles or ads.

The inauguration of Roosevelt in 1933 brought the banking crisis to the forefront, although people had been suffering for years because of the Great Depression. Wilcox wrote "The Haunting Specter of Fear," an editorial expressing deep feelings for those who had lost everything either through poor investment or loss of a job including those in church employment. "I think often of the severe blow which the present situation in the country has dealt to our various church organizations. Many of our institutions and conferences have been compelled to lay off tried and faithful

workers. My heart aches for some of our ministers who, after years of faithful effort, find themselves out of regular employment."³

The 1930s also saw an increase in editorials and articles on the theater. The first movies with sound as well as color were introduced into theaters in the early thirties. People looking for an escape from life's burdens could watch a movie allowing them to escape reality, if only for an hour or two. According to the *New York Times*, about 88 million people went to the movies each week.⁴ Considering the population of the United States was 124 million,⁵ this was a little more than 70 percent. Adventists were also found in that number as the temptation to attend loomed large.

Wilcox wrote two articles for the *Review* entitled "Theatricals in Our Churches," which he first sent to C. H. Watson, General Conference (GC) president. Watson replied: "I have no criticism of the articles. The facts which they give have shocked me. I had no idea of such doings in any of our schools and churches. . . . I believe that decisive steps should be taken to protest the sort of thing you describe. It cannot possibly do any good. Its harmful effects on young and old are beyond our calculations. It should not be. It is just wicked worldliness, and has nothing at all to do with getting a people ready for their Lord."⁶

Watson went on to counsel that the articles might be "too disturbing" for readers of the *Review* and that perhaps the contents should be shared with GC leaders as well as leaders of our colleges, academies, unions, and conferences. At this point I should add that if the *Review* reflected its editor, the paper also was often influenced by which GC president was in office. Wilcox served under four, all with whom he seemed to have a good working relationship.⁷

While those articles weren't published, others were. A column for young girls called *Girls' Problems Discussed* by Mother Naomi started in May 1933. Mother Naomi, a pen name, discussed any number of questions submitted by young women, including whether it was permissible to attend the theater.

PROHIBITION BROADSIDES

TWENTY little one-side, one-purpose tracts, printed on colored stock, each striking a heavy blow for Prohibition. Hand them to people everywhere; tack them on trees, fences, any place where they can be seen; put them in automobiles, and everywhere people will find them.

The Saloon Must Not Come Back!

**DO YOUR BIT
To Keep Your State Dry**

Here are the titles:

- Prohibition and Personal Liberty
- The Greatest Outlaw in the World Has Prohibition Ruined Farmers!
- Is Government Control a Success?
- Blind Pigs and Speakeasies
- Prohibition and Our Schools
- What Has Prohibition Accomplished?
- American Youth in Saloon Days
- Prohibition Has Improved Conditions
- Evil Effects of Alcohol
- Does Prohibition Prohibit?
- A Home and Nation Wrecker
- Liquor and Labor
- Liquor and Athletics
- Thirty-two Million Reasons for Prohibition
- Will the Return of Beer Bring Prosperity?
- Alcohol Has No Medicinal Value
- The Greatest Crime-Producing Agency
- American Youth and Prohibition
- A Revenue Consumer, Not Producer

Over two million have been sold. Sold in packages of 1,000 only. Only 50 cents a thousand.

Order of your Book and Bible House, or of the
REVIEW AND HERALD PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION
TANAGER PARK, WASHINGTON, D. C.

This ad ran in the February 16, 1933 *Review*. It encouraged members to purchase tracts to share across their state. Sold only in packages of 1,000, the idea was to spread the tracts far and wide so that people would vote for Prohibition to continue.

QUESTIONS WELCOME

The idea of engaging readers through the submission of questions was encouraged by F. M. Wilcox. It was another way to personalize the *Review*. The questions came directly to Wilcox or



The Great Depression first began with the crash of the stock market in 1929 and extended into the early thirties with the banking crisis. Many were out of work and life was difficult for many.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

columnists on topics related to young people, health, children, theology, and more. Wilcox changed his editorial in 1931, calling it Heart-to-Heart With Our Readers. Loosely started in 1921, he formalized it 10 years later.

“We have thought for some time that we would like to open a column in our church paper where we could talk over some questions in a heart-to-heart way with our readers—questions relating to their own personal experiences, to family problems, to church relations, etc. We hoped that this would bring us into closer personal touch with some who needed help.”⁸ In this, Wilcox used this editorial approach to reach readers, but also to deliver Bible truths he felt so important. Reading Heart-to-Heart editorials was like taking a walk with a friend. Wilcox would often start by writing an observation from his daily life, such as a trip to the grocery store or a walk in his neighborhood. He’d then move to something in the headlines or answering a question from a reader.

“We receive from the field letters of all kinds,” Wilcox wrote in one editorial. “They bring to us various requests. Some are filled with hope and courage for the future, with praise and thanksgiving to God for His abundant goodness to the children of men; others express the great heart sorrow which the writers feel. It is particularly these last letters that touch a responsive chord in my heart.”⁹

By the late 1930s, articles dealing with Adventist education began to appear more frequently. In a

letter to GC president J. L. McElhany Wilcox wrote: “I feel that there is thrown upon me, as editor of the church paper, a solemn responsibility to hold back as far as possible the flood tide of worldliness that is sweeping in upon the church. I feel deeply concerned over our education situation.”¹⁰

By August 1938 Wilcox wrote again to McElhany: “I feel, Brother McElhany, a great burden over our educational situation. Perhaps this is a misplaced burden and one which I need not carry. And yet it is continually thrust upon me. I know that many of our dear people through the field feel that we are traveling a wrong road and they feel that the end of the road will mean destruction to many of our boys and girls, even to some of our teachers.” He ended the letter by advising McElhany of two articles already in production for the *Review*: “Safeguarding Our Youth” and “Safeguarding Our Schools and Teachers.”¹¹ “I feel quite sure that this will arouse some criticism among some of our educational leaders,” he wrote. “But I feel under God that these things should be said in our church paper.”¹²

SUBSCRIPTIONS, PLEASE

While the *Review* was serving as a “pastor” for some, not all Adventists were subscribers. Subscriptions were the bane of an editor’s life. An analysis of circulation between 1921 and 1939 reveals subscriptions peaking at approximately 28,000 in 1928 but averaging closer to 22,000. In

“The *Review* ministers to our worldwide field. More than any other one of our publications it is the voice of the denomination.”

1939 this equaled one *Review* per just under 8 members.¹³ While not a poor ratio by any means compared to more recent years, the desire was always: “a *Review* in every Adventist home.”

Several strategies were engaged to entice more readers. Only 24 pages, content was maximized to provide interesting but concise articles on theology, mission, the home, and the worldwide field. Few illustrations or photographs were used, but a redesign of margins, columns, and a larger font offered easy readability. Testimonies by either lay members or church leaders were published explaining why the *Review* should be everyone’s top reading choice. I. H. Evans, GC vice president, wrote an article listing 10 reasons one should subscribe to the *Review*.¹⁴

There were annual subscription campaigns. One creative idea was a subscription offer of \$1 for one year for a new subscriber. This meant operating at a loss, but it was suggested the GC, *Review* and Herald Publishing House, unions, and conferences would pitch in to make up the difference. Whether this idea was accepted and whether it was successful I was unable to discover.¹⁵

Another marketing tool was to “forecast” what was planned for the following year. The idea, not original to Wilcox, was to alert subscribers that if they let their subscription lapse, the reader would miss out. What was unique to Wilcox was the detail in titles, authors, and more listed several months before the new year began, demonstrating not only his planning skills but office organization.

Something else introduced was the idea of author payments. C. H. Watson, GC president, was asked to write six articles for the coming year. But Wilcox added: “We have not been in the habit of paying for articles for the *Review* in the past, but this year we are departing somewhat from this plan. We shall be glad to give you \$3.00 an article

for these six articles, not as pay, because I know that they will require earnest thought and labor, but as an expression of our appreciation.”¹⁶ By 1943, writers were offered \$10 per article.¹⁷

As Wilcox aged, his health declined. Several letters mention suffering from the flu, physical disabilities, or depleted strength. He would decline an invitation to speak, but always include that if duty required it, he would do whatever was asked. This announcement appeared in 1944: “All will regret to learn that because of advancing years and the imperative need for both him and Mrs. Wilcox to seek a warmer winter climate, Elder Wilcox has felt it wise to resign his editorship.” The announcement by McElhany went on to say: “The *Review* ministers to our worldwide field. More than any other one of our publications it is the voice of the denomination.”¹⁸ Because of this they arranged for W. A. Spicer to once again step in temporarily until an editor could be selected.

Elder Wilcox shaped and guided the *Review* for 33 years. His loss would be felt by the members he cared deeply for. While I’m persuaded the editor influences the *Review*, I can also agree with J. L. McElhany, who wrote at the time of Wilcox’s retirement, “The *Review* must always speak to our people. Editors have come and gone through the years, but this journal still stands as a faithful minister working in behalf of this cause.”¹⁹ 🍀

¹ *Review and Herald*, Sept. 13, 1951, p. 24.

² F. M. Wilcox to W. P. Elliott, Sept. 20, 1942.

³ *Review and Herald*, Mar. 23, 1933, p. 2.

⁴ “Celebrating the 30’s, When Nearly Everyone Went to the Movies,” *New York Times*, Oct. 28, 1979.

⁵ <http://demographia.com/db-uspop1900.htm>

⁶ C. H. Watson to J. L. McElhany, May 5, 1933.

⁷ Wilcox was the editor under A. G. Daniells, W. A. Spicer, C. H. Watson, and J. L. McElhany.

⁸ *Review and Herald*, July 2, 1931, p. 2.

⁹ *Review and Herald*, Jan. 19, 1933, p. 2.

¹⁰ F. M. Wilcox to J. L. McElhany, May 5, 1938.

¹¹ These articles were published in the August 25, 1938, and September 1, 1938, issues in the *Review and Herald*.

¹² F. M. Wilcox to J. L. McElhany, May 5, 1938.

¹³ Exhibit 2, *Review* Circulation in North America in Relation to Church Membership, General Conference Archives, General Files, 1939, Francis M. Wilcox.

¹⁴ *Review and Herald*, Jan. 26, 1933, pp. 19, 20.

¹⁵ F. M. Wilcox to J. L. McElhany, Sept. 26, 1939.

¹⁶ F. M. Wilcox to C. H. Watson, Dec. 6, 1932.

¹⁷ F. M. Wilcox to J. L. McElhany, Sept. 13, 1943.

¹⁸ *Review and Herald*, Dec. 28, 1944, p. 16.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Merle Poirier is the operations manager for the *Adventist Review*.

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...ENCOURAGING
YOUNG PEOPLE
TO LEARN,
EXPERIENCE,
LIVE AND
SHARE CHRIST

God's Message for Today

F. M. WILCOX

This month features excerpts from an article in the July 28, 1932, Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, in which F. M. Wilcox provides a general outline of the Seventh-day Adventist message and its presentation.

God has a message for this day and generation. He has had messages for the world in the various periods of the past. As God's messenger, Noah warned the antediluvian world of the coming flood. Through Jonah Heaven gave the message of the overthrow of Nineveh. John the Baptist was made the forerunner of the Messiah. To Luther and his associates in the sixteenth century was given the message of Christ's righteousness and warnings against the abuses of the Roman Catholic Church. Through John Wesley God sent a message to the world of His free grace.

Similarly, He has given to Seventh-day Adventists a message for this day and generation.

This message is comprehensively stated in Revelation 14. It is based upon definite time prophecies which find their fulfillment in that period of the church immediately preceding the second coming of Christ. And what does it involve? It is the message of the everlasting gospel in its prophetic setting of the last days. It is the message of Christ, the center and embodiment of that gospel, as represented in His various offices and attributes. This message proclaims Christ as Creator and Redeemer, as Lawmaker and Judge, as Prophet, Priest, and King, as the God-man, forming the one connecting link between heaven and earth. It presents the message of love as revealed in His incarnate life, His sacrificial death, His resurrection power, the ministry of His priestly grace, the regenerating, life-giving power of the Holy Spirit, and to lost

mankind extends the gracious invitation, "Come unto Me, and be saved. Find in Me hope and peace, light and life."

The message for this hour is the message of Christ's righteousness in contrast with the righteousness of human achievement, His law as the standard of righteousness, His life as the expression of that law, the judgment already in session as the determining test of character, His coming in glory as the consummation of the Christian's hope. Christ is set forth as the one and only true God, to whom worship and glory should be rendered, His Sabbath as the test of allegiance in contrast with the blasphemous claims of antichrist, the worship of the beast and his image and the reception of his mark. This message announces the sad fall of Babylon, the apostate church, and calls God's children to separate from her communion. It develops a people who keep the commandments of God and have manifested in their midst the Spirit of prophecy. . . .

THE MESSAGE AND ITS PRESENTATION

This is the message in its general outline which Seventh-day Adventists have been commissioned of High Heaven to give to the world. They should give it faithfully and unflinching; they should give it pointedly and uncompromisingly; they should give it lovingly and winningly.

Next to the great principles of the message itself is the manner in which the message is given. It should be presented in a well-balanced and symmetrical manner. Presented in a cold, logical manner, this message will appeal to the head, but have little effect upon the heart. Those who receive the message under this style of preaching become cold, logical formalists, intellectual debaters, but lack that Christian fervor and tender love which should characterize those who receive the greatest message ever given to man. Presented in a harsh, critical manner, it will have the effect of repelling rather than winning. Preached in an indifferent manner, it will be counted of little importance by men. Given in a one-sided way, with emphasis upon one or two features and neglect of other features equally important, it will make its recipients one-sided in their experience, extreme in their positions.

THE MESSAGE ONE WHOLE

Every feature of this great message of God for today should be presented in its proper setting as a part of the one message. This will give to each particular truth an added appeal. There are many phases of God's great message for today being presented as independent truths, entirely divorced from the framework and spirit of the message; but we cannot believe that this is in God's order. There are those who preach that the seventh day is the Sabbath, and they preach it earnestly and conscientiously; but they make little headway, for the reason that their preaching of the Sabbath truth is divorced from the setting in which God designed it to be placed at the present time. There are some in the world who stand for the principles of religious liberty which constitute a part of this message, but these principles, divorced from the particular message of which they are a part, make but little appeal.

The same is true of the preaching of the coming of the Lord. Many in the various church communions of the world believe that the coming of the Lord is near; some advocate it, basing their argument upon the conditions now found in the world which constitute true signs of that great day; but their preaching has little point for the reason that it is not given in association with the other truths which constitute

the great message for this time. There are many in the world standing for the principles of health and temperance. Much excellent literature has been printed by various orders and organizations relating to this subject, and undoubtedly much good has been accomplished. The appeal is made justly upon the scientific basis, and this is proper, but how much added emphasis would be given to the proclamation of these principles if, united with the scientific reasons, the principles of health could be presented as a part of God's saving, gospel message.

We have been exhorted by the Spirit of prophecy to pull in even lines. We must be careful to do this in the days to come. There are many noble causes in the world seeking our support, and as far as consistent we should give them our support; but in doing this let us bear in mind that God has called Seventh-day Adventists into existence for a specific purpose, and that is to give to the world the message which we have outlined above. Upon no other church has He laid this responsibility. We cannot afford to be recreant to our sacred trust. We cannot afford to permit our time or means to be employed in any line of endeavor or in the promotion of any cause, however good, which will lead us to forget this responsibility or to slacken our efforts. . . .

Christ constitutes the great center of the redemptive scheme. Every truth of the Word of God centers in Him. The sole objective of God's message for today is to bring men and women to a saving knowledge of the gospel as it is in Christ the Lord. The Word of God is the revelation of Christ and His character, of His great love and supreme sacrifice for the children of men. The prophecies of that Word reach their grand and final climax in His second advent, as He comes to consummate the great plan of salvation. The law of God is Christ's law, the expression of His divine will for His children. He is the great central figure of the sanctuary service, as represented in type in the old dispensation, and in His heavenly ministry in the Christian dispensation. Immortality is the gift which Christ bestows upon mortal, dying men as a result of their saving faith in His sacrifice in their behalf. The Sabbath of the fourth commandment is the day of rest which He gave upon the completion of the material creation. It constitutes, as well, a sign of re-creation, of the sanctification which His grace works in the heart of the believer.

Thus it is that every principle of the gospel message for this hour has Christ as its great center, and the conversion of men to Christ as its grand objective. There is danger, however, that some will lose sight of the Christ of the message in this concrete form; they present Him as merely a lofty ideal, quite dissociated from this concrete expression of His character and of His gospel. . . .

Thank God that He has given us a knowledge of His truth for this time. May that truth sanctify our own hearts; and then in His fear, guided and directed by His Holy Spirit, may we give to others the message whose saving power and sanctification we have experienced in our own lives. ♣

* Francis M. Wilcox, "God's Message for Today," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, July 28, 1932, pp. 2, 5.

Francis McLellan (F. M.) Wilcox served as editor of the *Review* from 1911 to 1944.

**Christ constitutes
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scheme. Every truth
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centers in Him.**

Sophia

just lost her husband

One of her most important questions is how to take care of her daughter and still make a significant impact on her local church. Her friend Susan has given her some ideas, but she's still navigating the details.



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OUR BOYS IN THE ARMY

*Testimonies from
the front lines*

World War II began September 1, 1939, and lasted until 1945, yet another issue addressed in the Review. One method was to print testimonies of Adventist soldiers and sailors drafted into the conflict. This began in 1942. No names were published. We share a few examples here.—Editors.

MY EXPERIENCE IN THE ARMY

I am glad that I am a Seventh-day Adventist. The hope of a home in heaven when the Lord comes leads me to pray that I may be more faithful.

It was just last June that I became a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It was rather difficult for me, a new believer, to adapt myself to new conditions, but I have learned to pray in faith since my call came to serve my country in the Army.

Because I had had some training in the Medical Cadet Corps and because I wanted to be in harmony with the principles of the church, I requested, after having been inducted, that I be placed in the Medical Corps. The draft board had first classified me as I-A, but after I had prayed about it, my classification was changed to I-A-O. The officers wanted to place me in the Quartermaster Corps, because I had been in the grocery business for 20 years. Feeling that I could hold to my religious principles better in the Medical Corps, I continued to request placement there.

The captain asked me whether I would be willing to serve in the Quartermaster Corps if he would arrange for my Sabbath observance. I could only answer, "Yes." He replied, "Leave it to me. If you find yourself in the Medical Department, you may know that I couldn't arrange for your Sabbaths." Of course, I prayed that the Lord would place me where He wanted me.

I felt that I had been called into the Army because God had a work for me to do there. I have carried that in mind. Now I know that He must have something for me to do.

Before I learned the results of my request to serve in the Medical Corps, I was shipped to another camp. I had no idea where I was going. To my joy I found that I had been placed in the M. R. T. C. (Medical Replacement Training Center).

Unfortunately, I became a patient at the station hospital the first night. My stay there stretched out to three weeks. Upon my release from the hospital, I was placed in a tent with five other

boys. Only one of the five reads his Bible every day and kneels by his bed to pray at night. He and I are the only ones in the tent who seem to be at all religiously inclined.

The day following my release from the hospital, the battalion captain called me for an interview. He told me that he would have to transfer me to another group of men, because I had missed three weeks' training. I replied, "Sir, I would like to stay with the boys with whom I came from Michigan." Then I showed him my Medical Cadet training card, and told him what experience I had had.

He said that I had already received as much training as the other men in the battalion, or more, and that he would try me out. I also showed him a home-nursing certificate I had received from the General Conference. He asked me whether I was a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. When I replied, "Yes, sir," he told me that his folks were Adventists, and he assured me that I could have my Sabbaths free. He told me to report to the company commander right away. When I reached the office, the captain had already telephoned about me. Not only was I told that I could have my Sabbaths free, but I was even permitted to take at another time examinations that were scheduled for Sabbath.

I am about to be transferred from this camp, for my battalion has completed its training. We are awaiting orders and do not know where we will be sent. I am sure, from my previous experiences, that the Lord will be with me. I look into the future with that confidence.¹

I FELT THAT I HAD BEEN CALLED INTO THE ARMY BECAUSE GOD HAD A WORK FOR ME TO DO THERE.

SEEKING TO BE FAITHFUL

August 8, 1941, I was inducted into the Army. This was three years after I had become a Seventh-day Adventist. My first experience was in the induction center, near my home, where I was examined and classified. When I went before the classification officer, I told him all about my religious beliefs. He asked me several questions about my religion, which I answered readily. He was very kind to me, and asked me if I had taken the Medical Cadet training that our church was giving. I told him that I had not taken it, as I had to work on Sundays, which was the day they were giving it. He said it would have been better if I had taken it. He put me in the Medical Corps, and asked me to sign a statement to the effect that I would do necessary work on the Sabbath. However, so far I have not had to work at all on the Sabbath.

After I was classified, I was sent to a medical training replacement center, where I received valuable information on the duties of a medical soldier in hospital and field.

I ASK YOUR PRAYERS, THAT I MAY STAND FAITHFUL UNTIL THE END.

As soon as I arrived at this camp, I went to my commanding officer and asked to be excused from Sabbath work. He told me to go and see the chaplain of our battalion. I did this, but did not get a satisfactory answer.

Since the next day was the Sabbath, I did not know what to do. That night I prayed that I might be able to keep the Sabbath as it should be kept, and that I might prove faithful, even if I were punished. On Friday I had shined my shoes, straightened out my foot locker, and made everything look as neat as possible. Sabbath morning I made my bed; then while everyone else was eating breakfast, I took my Bible and went out to the edge of the camp. I sat down underneath a patch of trees, where I spent most of the Sabbath studying my Bible.

Coming back to the barracks, I found out that I had been reported A. W. O. L. However, when the

commanding officer found out why I was absent, he did not punish me, but gave me the privilege of having time off from sundown Friday until sundown Saturday. I could also leave camp and attend church between these hours.

There were several other Adventist boys in the camp who were granted the same privilege. We used to get together on Friday evening and go into town, where one of our churches was located. We would attend young people's meeting Friday evening and then stay overnight in the home of some church member. The next morning we would attend church. I seem to enjoy attending church now more than I ever did before. I guess we do not know how to enjoy our church privileges until we get into a place where we must have permission to attend religious services.

After a very enjoyable day in association with our own church members, we would return to camp to spend another week among the soldiers.

I have had several chances to witness for the Lord. The boys in camp often ask me questions about why I live as I do. I try to give them a Bible study on every subject they ask me about, and I have given out a large amount of literature. One boy requested a series of Bible studies, which I was glad to give to him.

I have been transferred twice recently. The camp where I am now located is not quite finished, so we have not done any hospital work yet. I have had to go before my commanding officer twice, once because I would not work on the Sabbath, and again because I would not receive my pay on the Sabbath. It irritated the officers to have to hold my pay over until Sunday. I told them from then on, when payday came on Sabbath, to redline me, and pay me the following month.

I am now getting the Sabbath off without any trouble, and have also received a rating. I am expecting another promotion soon.

I ask your prayers, that I may stand faithful until the end.²

STANDING ALONE

As time presses on toward the end, I find myself in unforeseen circumstances. My Selective Service number was among the first to be drawn, and as I desired very much to get into the hospital division of the Army, I enlisted in that branch of the service. To get into that division through the draft was practically impossible at that time.

Arriving at my post of duty, I was somewhat bewildered and not a little frightened as to what the future might bring. The routine was so vastly different from what I had been used to that it was very difficult for me to adjust myself to it.

Upon first being inducted into the Army, every man is supposed to go through a certain amount of basic drill and common labor, called “fatigue duty.” Such work is assigned on Sabbath as well as on weekdays. I knew that when the Sabbath came I would be confronted with a serious problem. That thought kept going through my mind day and night. I prayed about it. When Sabbath came, I was informed that I was to go to work in the hospital that night. Surely it was an answer to prayer, because, out of some thirty men, I was the only one asked to go on duty at that time. The Lord surely made it easy for me to do the right thing on the Sabbath. Even though I could not get the Sabbath off, I still was able to keep it by doing good.

During my three months of night duty in the hospital there, it was my good fortune to have the opportunity to tell several people of the truth, some of whom became very much interested.

Soon after I arrived at the camp, one of our ministers began holding Friday night and Sabbath meetings at the post chapel. All the Adventist boys who were able to attend counted this a blessing, and we thanked God for the privilege. Those meetings were a great help to us spiritually. After about five months of enjoyable Sabbaths I was transferred to a new post. Again I wondered just what the future might bring. I prayed that God would be with me and help me. He surely did, for again I was immediately put on duty in the hospital.

By this time I was beginning to realize that my hardest battle was going to be to keep up my own personal spirituality. I have offered many prayers



IT IS MY DAILY PRAYER THAT GOD WILL BE AS MERCIFUL AND GOOD TO THE OTHER BOYS IN THE ARMY AS HE HAS BEEN TO ME.

to God for His help, and He has surely kept me strong in this time of need.

I can count my experience in the Army as one that has made me realize more and more every day my need of God’s help to sustain my spiritual life. The Army puts a man out on his own, because there is no one who is going to look out for him. He has no one to lean on but his God. As I look at it now, I see that back home I was keeping warm by the fires of others, as many others are still doing. But here in the Army, where we do not have those fires to keep us warm, we must kindle some of our own. With God’s gracious help that is what I have tried

to do, and I believe I have succeeded. It is my daily prayer that God will be as merciful and good to the other boys in the Army as He has been to me.

Please remember in your prayers all our boys in uniform. Pray that they may remain faithful and true to the end. We have a daily fight to remain on top, and prayer is the only support that is strong enough to enable us to retain that position.³

¹ *Review and Herald*, Jan. 7, 1943.

² *Review and Herald*, Jan. 14, 1943.

³ *Review and Herald*, Jan. 28, 1943.



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WHO AM I?

Who am I?

They say I'm the woman who teaches Sabbath school, the "list lady." *I want to learn how you study, how you spend time with God.*

Yet who am I?

They say I'm Mollie's "successor," stepping into her shoes, while never being able to truly fill them. Organizing people, overseeing departments, operating a ministry. *I want to learn how you operate, how you lead.*

But who am I?

They say I'm a wife, not a mom; a daughter, sister, friend, author, woman of faith. *I want to learn how you balance life, how you share God's Word with others.*

Yet at the end of the day the question remains. *Who am I?*

Am I a Bible teacher or a student, some days with more questions than answers?

Am I a leader or a follower, especially on the foggy, misty days?

Do I always follow Christ, or sometimes walk in the way of my own choosing?

Do I represent Him? Do I surrender when He calls for my heart? Do I truly long for His presence?

Who am I?

Others' perceptions are one thing, but only I know what lies inside. I know the broken days, the lonely days, the questions. I know the doubts the enemy hurls my way and the taste of fear. I know the struggles and victories, the battles fought and won, and especially the way my God walks this path with me.

Who am I? I suppose that question doesn't even really matter. You see, it's not so important who I am as whose I am. Whom do I belong to? I am God's daughter, loved simply because He created me and bestowed His love upon me, not for what I can do. Cherished by Him, no matter what. Forgiven and cleansed, and in the process of being made new.

You see, an outside perspective of you and me matters little. And the inside perspective of ourselves matters even less. The only thing that counts is what God says of me. And not just what He says, but that I internalize it, know it, own it.

I don't have to live in fear. I don't have to walk in failure. I can be set free from the expectations of others and the criticism of myself. I don't have to focus on others' thoughts or opinions. I don't have to wallow in my own. I can turn my attention to Jesus, and discover what He thinks of me.

What about you? Who are you? And even more important, whose are you? 🍀

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



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AND EVEN MORE
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WHOSE ARE YOU?



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“HEALTHY” MEETINGS

Are they safe?

Q: I was recently invited to camp meeting and remember the fun times my family had when I was growing up. I now have a young family and wonder: Are these gatherings safe or worth the effort?

A: We believe that camp meetings are generally worth the effort, but realize that your decision depends on your individual/family circumstances and risk tolerance. If you’re all in good health and willing to take appropriate precautions, the potential benefits for physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being, along with intellectual and multidimensional personal growth, may outweigh the risks.

For family members with compromised immune systems or other health vulnerabilities, however, the risks of attending any large gathering may be an issue needing attention, since these events can facilitate the spread of infectious diseases, particularly respiratory illnesses. Many camp meetings have outdoor programs and campsites that can reduce the risk of disease transmission compared to strictly indoor events. Additionally, employing good common sense and public health practices (such as handwashing and, if necessary, mask wearing and some degree of physical distancing) can help minimize the risk.

PHYSICAL HEALTH BENEFITS

Integral to camp meetings is spending time in nature, especially in green spaces, a proven, positive influencer of physical health by decreasing levels of cortisol (a stress-related hormone), lowering blood pressure, and improving immune function.¹ Camp meeting events, such as hiking, swimming, and horseback riding, promote movement and overall physical fitness. Health lectures and family life workshops that encourage healthy lifestyle practices may be of great value to the whole family.

MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS

The sense of community and connection provided by these meetings positively affect mental well-being. Strong social relationships and a sense of belonging are associated with lower rates of depression, anxiety, and cognitive decline.² The friendships forged and fellowship experienced at camp meetings can serve as a buffer against loneliness and social isolation, which have been linked to poor mental health outcomes.

Interestingly, atheist “churches” or secular communities, such as Sunday assemblies and humanist congregations, have emerged as organizations that aim to provide a sense of community, ethical guidance, and social support for those who do not subscribe to traditional religious beliefs. While they do not involve the worship of the Creator, these organizations seek to fulfill some of the same functions as traditional religious institutions, primarily because they perceive the benefits of “getting together.”

SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING BENEFITS

The opportunity for spiritual renewal and growth should not be underestimated. The focused time for worship, prayer, and biblical teaching can help you and your family deepen your relationship with God and refresh or revive your spiritual lives. Studies have found that religious and spiritual engagement is associated with improved psychological well-being, increased life satisfaction, and a greater sense of meaning and purpose.³ May God guide you in this important decision. ✎

¹R. Hansmann, S. M. Hug, and K. Seeland, “Restoration and Stress Relief Through Physical Activities in Forests and Parks,” *Urban Forestry and Urban Greening* 6, no. 4 (2007): 213-225.

²J. T. Cacioppo and S. Cacioppo, “Social Relationships and Health: The Toxic Effects of Perceived Social Isolation,” *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 8, no.2 (2014): 58-72.

³H. G. Koenig, “Religion, Spirituality, and Health: The Research and Clinical Implications,” *ISRN Psychiatry*, Dec. 16, 2012.

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LOOKING BACK

CONTINUED FROM P. 72

with great success. Matteson's fiery temperance speeches allowed for the organization of a temperance society in 1877, the first in Denmark. The Danish Conference was established May 30, 1880, the first conference outside the United States.

In 1878 Matteson proceeded to Norway. In Kristiania (Oslo) he started a series of lectures that caused a stir in the city. Matteson held regular meetings every Sunday evening for a couple of months, during which 1,000-1,200 listeners came. Matteson showed the Adventist faith as a successor of the Protestant Reformation.

On January 11, 1879, a small band of 34 signed a charter for a Christian church, the "First Seventh Day Adventist Church in Kristiania."

In 1880 he issued a new publication, *Sundheds-bladet*, a health journal, the first of its kind in the country. The state church required Matteson to acquire a property. In May 1885 a spacious church was built at Akersgatan 74, with treatment rooms on the basement level; the printing press was also housed there.

Matteson officiated at the organization of the first Seventh-day Adventist church in Sweden on August 28, 1880, in Grythytted. The Swedish Conference was established in 1882 in Örebro.¹¹

In 1884 Matteson and Olaf Johnson held an evangelistic campaign in Stockholm. The lack of religious material in Swedish was great. Matteson tried to issue tracts and a periodical on health. Eventually his book *The Prophecies of Jesus* was printed in Swedish, first in the United States for Swedish-speaking Americans, and then shipped to relatives in Sweden.

One of Matteson's goals was to increase the number of workers, which he succeeded in doing through mission schools, held a couple of months each year. Matteson realized that the prospect of spreading literature was greater in Sweden than in Denmark and Norway, so he arranged a branch of the Scandinavian publishing house in Kristiania to be set up in Stockholm.¹²

When Ellen White visited Scandinavia in 1886 to 1888, she had reason to be impressed by the rapidity of the process Matteson had launched in all three countries. Despite few workers with knowledge, a conference in each country had been organized, the colporteur work flourished, magazines were issued, and people were won for the Adventist message. In

Stockholm alone the membership rose from six to 60 in one winter of Matteson's campaigns.¹³

The first camp meeting in Europe, in Moss, Norway, in 1887 was at the initiative of Matteson. The presence of Ellen and W. C. White, S. N. Haskell, and others made this the first important Adventist meeting in Scandinavia.¹⁴

Matteson's health was not the best, and in the spring of 1888 he and his family returned to the United States, where he held Bible schools in Chicago, was a traveling secretary, did extensive editorial work, and ended up the last three years of his life as a Bible teacher at Union College in Nebraska, where the Scandinavian American Adventists attended school. Some of Matteson's students became future leaders in the church on both sides of the Atlantic, while some left for foreign mission fields.¹⁵

Matteson died on March 30, 1896, in Santa Monica, California, while visiting one of his sons to recover from feeble health.¹⁶ Ellen White commented upon his death, "Elder Matteson, who now sleeps in Jesus, united with his Savior as his helping hand, and organized a school of young men and women. And under his direction the students worked nobly. What a work has been done! What a multitude of books were sold. And how many there were who united with the church."¹⁷ ♣

¹ *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (1996), s.v. "Matteson, John Gottlieb (1835-1896)."

² J. G. Matteson, *Mattesons Liv* (International Publishing Association, 1908), pp. 53-59. Photographic print, Dansk Bogforlag, 1972.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 73-81.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 82-86.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 98-104.

⁶ *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (1996), s.v. "Matteson, John Gottlieb (1835-1896)."

⁷ Matteson, p. 135.

⁸ *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (1996), s.v. "Matteson, John Gottlieb (1835-1896)."

⁹ *Review and Herald*, Apr. 12, 1877, p. 119.

¹⁰ *Review and Herald*, Apr. 19, 1877, p. 124.

¹¹ W. A. Spicer, *The Story of Our Missions* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1921), p. 110.

¹² Matteson, pp. 264, 265; *Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists* (Basle: Imprimerie Polyglotte, 1886), p. 189.

¹³ Matteson, pp. 256, 257.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 267-269.

¹⁵ O. A. Olsen, "Another Faithful Leader Fallen," *Review and Herald* 73, no. 15 (1896): 234.

¹⁶ *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (1996), s.v. "Matteson, John Gottlieb (1835-1896)."

¹⁷ Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases* (Silver Spring, Md.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1990), vol. 7, p. 315, in www.adventistarchives.org.

Yvonne Johansson Öster is a retired college teacher and pastor. She has written numerous articles on Adventist history.

ADVENTISM'S UNLIKELY APOSTLE

John Matteson worked tirelessly as a missionary to Scandinavians.

This article was taken from the Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists. The full article may be read at encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=5CPX.

—Editors.

John Gottlieb Matteson was a minister, editor, and pioneer missionary in Scandinavia. Born into a nominally Lutheran family in Langeland, Denmark, he had the advantage of a good literary and musical education, where he also learned English and German. At his initiative he, his parents, and two sisters emigrated to the United States in 1854 with a group of 20 others.

In New Denmark, Wisconsin, the family built a log cabin on a 20-acre timber lot.¹ Matteson was invited to a prayer meeting by a neighbor. From this connection he read a book that impressed him deeply; and asked himself: “Why can’t you too become a Christian?” Gradually this led to his personal conversion in 1859.²

Matteson worked with great enthusiasm as a lay preacher. He entered Douglas Baptist Theological College in Chicago in 1860. Following two years of study, he was ordained as a Baptist minister.³ He married Anna Sivertsen from Norway, and they left for Wisconsin, to preach the Baptist faith.⁴

In the spring of 1863 he met P. H. Cady, a neighbor. From him Matteson learned of the seventh-day Sabbath, which he accepted after meticulous Bible study. He gave a six-month series explaining his newfound faith in Seventh-day Adventism to his Baptist congregation. The entire congregation, apart from one family, followed him.⁵

Matteson became a powerful preacher



of the Advent message with a special emphasis on the love of God. He conducted revivals and established churches among the Scandinavians in Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, Illinois, Iowa, and Kansas.⁶ A Danish Adventist church was founded by Matteson in Poy Sippi, Wisconsin. The first Adventist church building for a Norwegian-speaking congregation was built in Chicago because of Matteson’s revival meetings.⁷

Matteson prepared tracts, pamphlets, and edited a songbook in Danish-Norwegian. In 1872 *Advent Tidende* (*Advent Herald*), a Danish-Norwegian periodical, was launched, the first Adventist publication in a language other than English.⁸ When urgent appeals asked for a worker in Scandinavia, Matteson was reluctant.⁹ “It is a great sacrifice on my part to go,” he said. “There is no undertaking that I have been so slow to decide on as this.” Fearing the cause would suffer if he didn’t go, he trusted God would direct and bless the work.¹⁰

The first Adventist church was organized in Ålstrup, Denmark, in May 1878. Not only did his preaching establish small Adventist churches, but he also preached temperance

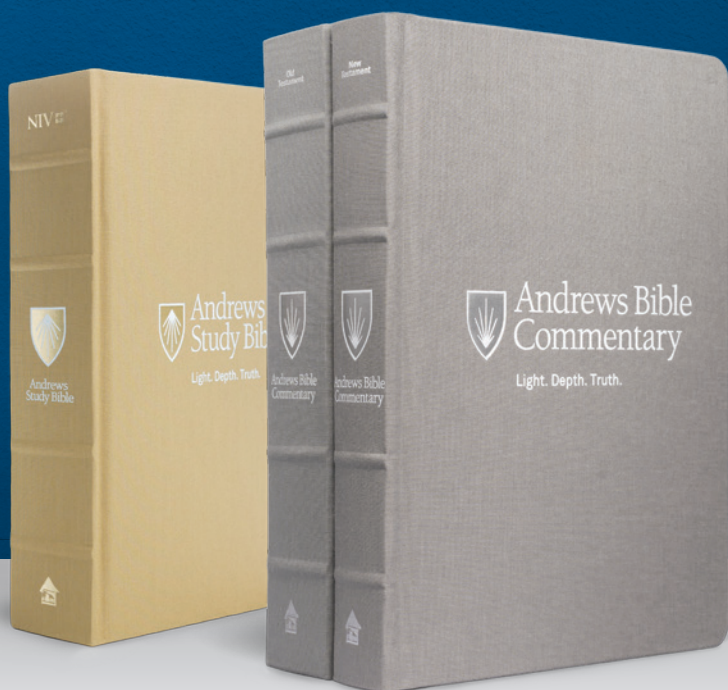
CONTINUED ON PAGE 71

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