

# Adventist World

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## The Global Congregation of the Entire Sanctuary

Justin Kim

Of all our doctrines, the sanctuary theme is one in which we have merely begun to unearth spiritual truths. Ellen White remarked, “[The sanctuary] opened to view a complete system of truth, connected and harmonious, showing that God’s hand had directed the great advent movement and revealing present duty as it brought to light the position and work of His people. . . . Light from the sanctuary illumined the past, the present, and the future.”<sup>1</sup>

A key lesson derived from the sanctuary is balance. We often think of two poles and measuring the midpoint as the center. But the sanctuary posits, not two reference points, but three: the courtyard, the holy place, and the most holy place. Here are some relationships in which their triangulation is seen:



As an eschatological timeline, the courtyard represents Christ’s ministry while He was on this earth, providing the redemptive blood to commence the heavenly sanctuary system of salvation. The holy place was where Christ ministered from His ascension to 1844, when the sanctuary was to be cleansed. The most holy place corresponds to this cleansing investigative judgment leading up to the end. Seeing there is no fourth room, the High Priest exits the same way He entered, returning to earth.

In salvation the courtyard parallels justification, with the blood and water corresponding to imputed righteousness. The holy place parallels sanctification, with the bread and light corresponding to imparted righteousness. And the most holy place points to glorification, when we, through the merits of our High Priest, will be able to directly see God someday.

Last, different ecclesiological communities tend to revolve around aspects of sections of the sanctuary. Evangelicals rightfully extol the cross of Christ as seen in the Lamb of God in the courtyard, but tend to prematurely end their passion there. Roman Catholics emphasize the vessel of their church to provide sanctification through the sacraments (e.g., the bread of the Eucharist) and sacramentals such as candles (lights) and incense. Pentecostals and charismatics proclaim the era of power, looking forward to glorification through the intimate face-to-face contact with the divine.

Where are Adventists? Not one, not two, but all three are to be rightfully balanced with each other. We celebrate the sacrifice of Jesus, the intercession of Jesus, and the judgment of Jesus. We balance justification, sanctification, and glorification. We are prophetically told that the congregations of the blood, of the holy, and of power will unite based on an earthly sanctuary.<sup>2</sup> Let us unite followers of Jesus from all over the world and point souls to Christ’s ministry in the heavenly sanctuary.

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 423.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Maranatha* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1976), p. 190.



**More than 1,200 Adventists from Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, and New Caledonia came together in Port Vila for the Vanuatu National Welfare Congress from December 6 to 15. During the congress participants also took part in community outreach, as seen here.**

*Photo: Adventist Record*



**“The generosity of our people is inspiring. They truly live our purpose to change lives every day through whole person health and rallied together to support those in need in the community in which we work.”**

—Todd Saunders, executive general manager for Sanitarium in Australia and New Zealand, about staff of the food company that personally contributing more than US\$3,400 toward the Coast Shelter’s annual fund drive. Additionally, Sanitarium surprised the organization with a US\$12,400 donation to ensure its valuable programs continue in 2025 and beyond. Coast Shelter operates on the Central Coast of New South Wales, Australia, providing services and support for people experiencing homelessness or domestic and family violence.

### Adventist Review Newsletter

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### 2025 General Conference Session

Official notice is hereby given that the sixty-second session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists will be held July 3-12, 2025, in the America’s Center Convention Complex in St. Louis, Missouri, United States. The first meeting will begin at 2:00 pm, July 3, 2025. All duly accredited delegates are urged to be present at that time.

**Ted N C Wilson, General Conference President**

**Erton C Köhler, General Conference Secretary**

## Prayer and Social Media

Church members across the globe were asked if they prayed or engaged with prayer on social media platforms.

- **19%** Daily
- **18%** More than once a week
- **12%** Once a week
- **13%** More than once a month
- **12%** Less than once a month
- **26%** Never



**Scan the QR code to view the complete survey.**



N = 145,815

Source: 2022-2023 Global Church Member Survey

Data provided by the General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research

**“This space was created with the intention of bringing people closer to God and providing an environment of peace, reflection, praise, and communion. It is a place with open arms, as the cross exemplifies, where everyone is welcome.”**

—António Amorim, pastor of the Central Seventh-day Adventist Church in Lisbon, Portugal, about the centenary celebration of the congregation. Sabbath, November 23, was filled with celebrating the existence of the church as well as its architecture. The church was built in 1924 and was designed by renowned architect Porfírio Pardal Monteiro. It is a historical and architectural landmark in the Portuguese capital. Additionally, the National Postal Service launched a commemorative postcard to mark this milestone, which celebrates the history and impact of the Adventist church building in Lisbon.



“This is a giant step forward to provide services to the blind in Canada, and it is a great resource for churches to share with those with visual challenges in their communities. Our three-year partnership will help change the landscape of the services our churches may offer to their communities.”

—Paul Llewellyn, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada, about a new three-year contract with Christian Record Services. This partnership, effective from 2025 to 2027, will enhance the quality of life for many individuals across Canada. This agreement ensures that members continue to receive essential resources without added costs. This includes access to an online library app, the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, and subscriptions to Christian Record Services magazines.

# More Than 450

The number of people that met in person for the third film festival held in Caracas, Venezuela, on November 30. The 2024 UVOFILMS gala featured a Christian-faith-based theme, “Family.” In total, 17 productions were screened in four categories: fiction, video clip, documentary, and podcast. In the three months leading up to the event, more than 20 producers participated in workshops and received guidance from jury members and other guests, including those who did not make the final selection.

# 40

The number of young musicians from the Asia-Pacific International University church in Thailand decided to use their short Christmas break to travel to Hong Kong and Macao, one of the world’s most expensive regions. Through prayer, faith, and planning, the ensemble was able to share their love for Jesus and exchanged cultural values through music at various Adventist churches and schools from December 13 to 17. The group performed concerts that resonated with themes of joy, hope, and gratitude. ➔



Photo: Hong Kong Adventist International Academy

## ADRA Distributes Food Aid Kits in Haiti Amid Rising Food Crisis

ADRA Haiti and Inter-American Division News

**Initiative is bringing relief to vulnerable communities.**

In a response to the growing food crisis in the commune of Caracol, in the northeastern part of Haiti, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) in the country recently distributed hundreds of essential food kits at the Caracol National School. The project aims to alleviate the severe hardship faced by some of the most vulnerable families in the region.

### A DEEPENING CRISIS

Located in the Trou-du-Nord arrondissement of Haiti's Northeast Department, Caracol is experiencing an acute food crisis compounded by the escalating insecurity plaguing the country. The situation has left many in desperate need of immediate assistance, ADRA Haiti leaders said. ADRA Haiti's emergency team quickly mobilized to launch the Emergency Food and Cash Assistance in Haiti (EFACH), in partnership with Canadian Foodgrains Bank and ADRA Canada, last month.

"Following the latest reports indicating this severe food crisis, we un-

derstood the urgency of intervening in Caracol," said Myrlaine Jean Pierre, ADRA Haiti director. "We did not hesitate to implement this project in collaboration with our partners to alleviate the suffering of this severely affected population."

From December 2024 to February 2025 the project will distribute food assistance to approximately 8,560 people across 1,070 households in three phases, she said. Each food kit, which was distributed at the Caracol National School on December 16, included a 25 kilogram (55 pounds) bag of rice, a 12.5 kilogram (27.5 pounds) bag of beans, a 12.5 kilogram bag of corn, a 24 pack of spaghetti, 2.5 kilograms (5.5 pounds) of sugar, and 5.7 liters (about 1.5 gallons) of cooking oil. Additionally, each recipient received a cash transfer of US\$30 to further support their immediate needs.

### A LIFELINE FOR VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

For many residents of Caracol, the aid came as a lifeline amid a

challenging holiday season. Anita, an 80-year-old resident of the commune, expressed her relief: "It is God Himself who is visiting us in this difficult time. Thanks to this aid, I no longer fear this end of the year."

The food distribution also highlights the broader food insecurity affecting nearly half of Haiti's population. According to the latest report from the Consumer Price Index (CPI) by the National Food Security Coordination (CNSA), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the World Food Program (WFP), 48 percent of Haitians face acute food insecurity. Vulnerable groups, including children, pregnant and breastfeeding women, the elderly, and people with limited mobility, are among the hardest hit by the ongoing crisis.

### ADRA COMMITMENT TO HUMANITARIAN ACTION

As Haiti continues to grapple with political instability and economic hardship, the emergency assistance underscores ADRA's ongoing commitment to providing critical support in times of need, Jean Pierre said. By acting swiftly to meet the immediate needs of those suffering the most, ADRA Haiti is playing a key role in easing the burden of food insecurity and working toward a more hopeful future for the people of Caracol, she explained.

"This timely assistance provided by ADRA reflects our humanitarian commitment to easing the suffering of these disadvantaged populations and working for a better future," she said. ©



Beneficiaries receive their food kits during the distribution organized by ADRA Haiti in December 2024.

Photo: ADRA Haiti

# Papua New Guinea Island Celebrates 100 Years of the Adventist Message

Reeves Papaol, *Adventist Record*, and *Adventist World*

First missionaries to the country arrived in Bougainville in 1924.

From December 18 to 31, 2024, more than 4,000 attendees, including church leaders, government officials, and church members from across Papua New Guinea (PNG) and the Solomon Islands, gathered to commemorate the Bougainville Seventh-day Adventist Mission centennial celebrations. The regional church celebrated 100 years of faith, service, and community impact by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the region. Bougainville belongs to PNG, but its landmass is part of the Solomon Islands archipelago.

Attendees to the celebration ranged from a 4-month-old infant to a 94-year-old great-great-grandmother under the theme “Celebrating 100 Years of God’s Story on Bougainville.”

The centennial celebrations unfolded across three historic sites, including Lavelai, where the first missionaries arrived in 1924. It also included Kastorita, where missionaries traveled to by boat and on foot in 1927, and Rumba, Arawa, where the mission office was established in 1929. Each site hosted dedications, unveiling of monuments, three days of revival, historical accounts from pioneering family representatives, and cultural performances, including reenactments of the missionaries’ arrival. Across the sites more than 200 people were baptized.

## LEADERSHIP AND VISION

Government and church leaders attended the celebrations and shared messages of inspiration and vision for the future. Among them was Papua New Guinea prime minister James Marape. He shared his



The gospel torch arrives at Inivus, Inus District, from Sirovai, Buin District, in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea.

Photo: *Adventist Record*

personal connection to the legacy of Adventist Mission.

He stated, “If it were not for Bougainville pioneer missionaries who brought the mission to Tari in 1955, I wouldn’t be who or where I am today.” Reflecting on the life-changing impact of the mission, he explained that his pastor father, John Marape, was a direct beneficiary of Adventist Mission’s work.

The prime minister emphasized, “All mainline churches in PNG should continue to make inroads into communities, villages, and societies to promote peace, education, health, and wholistic living. This is the real mission work of churches.”

Peter Tsiamalili, Jr., minister for police and regional member for Bougainville, underscored the unity and spiritual growth fostered by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, recognizing its significant contribution to the community.

Francisca Semoso, member for North Bougainville, highlighted the crucial role of women and children in missionary work, stating, “Discipline starts at home, and our kids become the society we want it to become.”

Timothy Masiu, minister for communication and member for South Bougainville, called for accountability

in church leadership, urging pastors to take the lead in promoting peace and goodwill at the community level.

From the church, Malachi Yani, president of Papua New Guinea Union Mission, encouraged Bougainvilleans to amplify their voices and take ownership of their spiritual journey. Likewise, Danny Philip, South Pacific Division discipleship strategy director, challenged the Adventist Church in the Pacific region to lead in driving transformative change wherever they serve, particularly in Bougainville.

The event also unveiled ambitious goals, including the construction of the Green Valley Adventist Pioneer High School in Buin for grades 7-10 and the renovation and ownership transfer of health centers in Kastorita, Wisai, and Darupute, among several others.

## SPIRITUAL AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

The centennial celebrated the church’s spiritual significance and its enduring impact on the community, regional church leaders explained. “The church reaffirmed its commitment to serving Bougainville and beyond, ensuring that the legacy of faith and service continues for generations,” they said. ☺



## New Center in Colombia Provides Spiritual and Emotional Support

Cristin Serrano, North Colombian Union, and Inter-American Division News

A newly launched center is providing emotional and spiritual support to patients and their families at a private hospital in Bucaramanga, Colombia, thanks to the efforts of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the region.

Inaugurated at the Hospital Internacional de Colombia, the center was unveiled during a ceremony attended by hospital staff and church leaders. The space features a curated bookshop with titles published by the Inter-American Division Publishing Association (IADPA), a healthy food corner encouraging positive habits, and a section offering other resources and art products for both adults and children.

The center, named Letras de Vida (Letters for Life), serves as a center of influence with support from the East Colombian Conference. Its mission is to promote health through the knowledge of God, marking a significant milestone in hospital care by integrating not only medical treatment but also emotional and spiritual support, according to local church leaders.

Jonathan Cáceres Prada, a Seventh-day Adventist and the medical director of Hospital Internacional de Colombia, is the visionary behind the initiative. He believes the space will provide comfort to those facing difficult times at the hospital.

### A BEACON OF HOPE FOR ALL

The center also offers a unique book-lending service in the form of a bookmobile, delivering books directly to patients' rooms. With more than 100 titles available, the selection covers such topics as personal growth, spirituality, family strengthening, and health. Patients can request books through the center's official website, where they will receive personalized service via an online chat feature.

"With God's guidance we begin a new chapter. Letras de Vida is a beacon that will undoubtedly guide many people," said Cáceres during the center's inauguration on December 6, 2024. "Thank you all for being part of this dream turned into reality."

The center has received strong support from the East Colombian

**The initiative combines medical care with spiritual wellness at a private hospital.**

Conference, which coordinates volunteer missionary service both locally and internationally through its School of Missions initiative. As part of this collaboration, the center also provides suicide prevention support and organizes volunteer-driven social initiatives, welcoming participation from the entire hospital community.

Elie Henry, president of the Inter-American Division, commended both hospital and church leaders for their efforts in addressing the needs of patients, families, visitors, and hospital staff. "We praise God for this special space, which will create opportunities to connect with those who are ailing and in need of healing and hope," he said.

### IMPACT BEYOND THE HOSPITAL

The opening of Letras de Vida garnered widespread attention in the local media, highlighting the positive impact of the initiative. "Projects like this reinforce the Adventist mission of serving society, bringing hope and well-being beyond church congregations," church leaders said.

Cáceres added, "Having the opportunity for books filled with hope to reach those who need them most, providing guidance and direction toward restoration, is a great blessing, and all of this has been made possible by God."

Letras de Vida is expected not only to enhance the quality of life for patients and their families but also to humanize the hospital experience by providing a space for comfort and reflection. The center is open from Mondays to Fridays. ©



Hospital and regional church leaders get ready to cut the ribbon during the launch of the new center in Bucaramanga, Colombia.

Photo: East Colombian Conference



Every year Ellen Lopes and her husband participate in short-term mission trips to various regions of Brazil and the world.

Photo: courtesy of Ellen Lopes

## “Serving Is Our Way of Living God’s Purpose for Our Lives”

Through volunteering, Ellen Lopes is finding ways to serve people beyond borders.

After finishing high school, Ellen Lopes found herself facing a decision that would define her life. She had dreamed of being a missionary, but she wasn’t sure how to go about it.

During a devotional initiative titled “40 Dawns With God,” Ellen began praying earnestly for direction. “Each prayer seemed like a conversation with God, as I asked Him to show me what next step to take,” she recalled.

The answer came with an opportunity to study at Wildwood Health Institute, a missionary college in the United States. There Ellen discovered the world of medical missionary work and immersed herself in topics that would transform her way of looking at life, such as living a healthful lifestyle and eating healthfully. “It was as if God opened a door and said, ‘This is the

way.’ I knew that it would change my life forever,” she said.

### A HIGHER PURPOSE

After this remarkable experience Ellen returned to Brazil and decided to study advertising at Brazilian Adventist University (UNASP), combining her passion for communication with the desire to serve. “I saw how communication could be a powerful instrument for the mission. I wanted to use what I learned to help bring hope to people,” she explained.

With a diploma in hand, she left for her first major missionary project, in Peru. For six months Ellen worked in isolated communities, using various methods of communication to support local action. “Every day was a learning experience. I saw the joy of people when they were reached, and that fed my soul. It was there that I confirmed that serving was what made my life meaningful,” she said.

She returned to Brazil because of family issues, yet Ellen did not forget about mission service. She began working as a marketing manager at Central Brazil Adventist Academy (formerly IABC) in Goiás, where she found opportunities for service. Although she thought her stay would be temporary, her pas-

sion for mission in her community kept her there.

Since then, Ellen and her husband, who is a dental surgeon, have dedicated their vacations to short-term projects. “Every year we are involved in at least two projects, whether local, national, or even international. Serving is our way of living God’s purpose for our lives,” she said.

### A DREAM-DRIVEN MISSION

Among the many experiences that volunteer service has provided her, Ellen fondly remembers her work in Guinea-Bissau, West Africa, where in approximately one month her husband performed more than 200 dental procedures, while she dedicated herself to communication and support for the project. “It was exciting to see how small gestures can transform lives. The gratitude in people’s eyes was something I will never forget,” she said.

Today Ellen looks back with gratitude and forward with hope. Each project, each experience, and each challenge reinforce her certainty that mission is not just a job but a lifestyle. “Life makes sense only when we make ourselves available to God to serve where He calls us,” she said. “That’s what warms my heart and gives me the strength to continue.” ©






Focus

# Forgiveness and the Justice of God

Faith and practice,  
message and mission

BY JEROME SKINNER





**D**uring the question-and-answer session of a panel discussion on forgiveness, a gentleman with tears in his voice asked, “How can you have reconciliation with someone who murdered your whole family in front of you?” This daunting question raised an important matter of the heart. How can one forgive and be reconciled in the face of such radical evil?

There is a longing in the human experience to receive the mercy and forgiveness of God, while, at the same time, there can be a reticence to offer that same grace when offended, especially if the offense is deemed too severe. The inscrutable tension between forgiveness and the justice of God is at the heart of the gospel. For it is God, who on the one hand is rich in mercy, showing the immeasurable riches of His grace to us who were dead in our trespasses (Eph. 2:4-8), and, at the same time, is the one who will hold everyone accountable for the things they have done in life, including unconfessed offenses toward others (Eccl. 12:14; 2 Cor. 5:10). Thankfully, in His dealings with His children, God always operates from a place of justice and righteousness (Ps. 33:5; 89:14). As His children, the people of God must learn from God how to receive and show mercy in ways consistent with their experience with the Lord (Ps. 18:25; 97:10).

For Christians the cross is where the ultimate source of forgiveness and the eternal principle of God’s justice merge. From the heart of God, the seemingly unanswerable question surveyed above receives a theological answer and a heart-transforming offer to allow both forgiveness and the justice of God to have their proper place in reconciliation (Ps. 85).

### **GOD’S CHARACTER, FORGIVENESS, AND JUSTICE**

The Bible acknowledges the gravity of forgiveness by developing a wholistic picture that captures the offense’s physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects (Ps. 38:1-14) that necessitate (1) forgiveness, (2) the remedy that addresses the offense, and (3) outcomes whose goal is reconciliation (Ps. 51). It does this through various terms and images that show sins (Gen. 18:20; 1 John 3:4), debts (Matt. 6:12; Col. 2:14), or transgressions (Gen. 50:17; Lev. 16:16; Rom. 5:14) being forgiven (Matt. 6:12), lifted away (Ex. 32:32), wiped clean (Ps. 51:1), covered (Ps. 32:1), ransomed (Ps. 69:18; Rev. 5:9), atoned for (Lev. 4:20), appeased (Gen. 32:20), passed over (Ex. 12:13), and restored (Lev. 5:15; 2 Cor. 13:9, 11). Scripture stresses divine and human forgiveness, which have different yet interconnected processes and goals (2 Cor. 2:5-11).

God’s forgiveness is not based on the merit or worthiness of the offender or offended. God’s forgiveness is based solely on His character of love, justice, grace, and mercy (Ex. 34:6, 7; Dan. 9:18; Mal. 3:6). As God’s character is central to the act of forgiveness, it is experienced within His abiding presence and not in isolation. So humans cannot conjure up a forgiving heart or offer forgiveness in a way that can lead to true redemption without the impetus of divine grace (Col. 3:13). It is from God that forgiveness is expressed and experienced (Ps. 130:4).

Moreover, not only is God’s forgiveness unmerited, but God’s wrath is justified against sin and sinners (Rom. 1:18; 5:9-11). This raises the concern of justice. If fallen humanity does not warrant mercy but wrath, forgiveness’s central quality deals with God’s justice. How does God maintain His faithfulness to His justice and righteousness in the face of human depravity and rebellion while showing mercy to the offender and comfort to the afflicted?

(Cf. Ps. 9:12, 13; 10:12; 22:24.)

At the cross the wrath of God against sin and the mercy of God for sinners meet, and divine justice is both satisfied and saving in its intent (Eph. 2:16). Divine retribution is demanded by the offense. For the believer the offense receives its just due in the sacrifice of Christ (Rom. 8:1-4). In this way God can be just in holding to His standard of perfect righteousness and the justifier of sinners who do not deserve but eternally benefit from His grace and mercy (Rom. 3:21-31; Eph. 2:1-10). In this way the prayerful and humble offer of forgiveness to others recognizes that wrath has been addressed in what Christ has done on the cross and ultimately through His mediatorial work as our high priest (Rom. 5:9-11; Rev. 15:1). This does not dissipate the hurt one experiences, but it does provide freedom from Satan's spirit of resentment and acrimony. In human terms we cannot mitigate justice in a way that will provide the internal or eternal recompense that leads to peace (cf. Col. 1:20). Forgiveness then includes both the interpersonal effects as well as God's dealings in restorative justice before He visits retributive justice.

### **FORGIVENESS, JUSTICE, AND RECOMPENSE**

Through Jesus' death on our behalf and God's grace, human forgiveness offers release on the part of the offended party, understanding that the payment for the debt the offense brings from the offender primarily rests in God's hands. Sometimes the hurt, the long-term effects, or the eternal ramifications are so overwhelming that no human reparation could bring a complete sense of justice to the matter. While the hope may be that the offender recognizes the

offense, confesses, and repents of the sin, forgiveness cannot depend on the offender's action (Matt. 5:38-42; Rom. 12:17). Having said that, I realize it is crucial to acknowledge that God is not indifferent to the hurt and pain experienced by any of His children. He wants His children to live knowing that they do not need to have a vengeful heart, because God's ultimate goal is to redeem and restore what has been broken (Rom. 12:19; 1 Tim. 2:4). Yet the cry of the heart may even be amplified, as the offender may seem to flourish in spite of committing offenses with no seeming accountability, which can be extremely distressing (Ps. 94:3). The psalmist admonishes the faithful not to fret because of evildoers, as they will eventually face their sins if unconfessed and unrepented (Ps. 37:4, 5; Rom. 12:19).

Offering forgiveness can also be difficult, because the nature of the offense can range from relatively minor to extremely damaging effects, and even though the gravity and scope may be different, the same call to forgive without reserve is given in all of these situations (Matt. 18:21, 22).

This also raises questions concerning justice. In Scripture, when dealing with the approach to reconciliation, God set up an atonement system that addressed offenses in a way that accounted for motivations, including inadvertence, omission, and intentionality (Lev. 4:20). This included giving time for the recognition of the fault (Lev. 4:13; Acts 17:30). The wise man, Solomon, acknowledges, "Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, the heart of the children of man is fully set to do evil" (Eccl. 8:11).<sup>1</sup> Indeed, when the ungodly commit wrongs against the righteous, it is typically in defiance, with no con-

cern for consequences or the pain caused (Ps. 10:6, 11, 13; Isa. 26:10; Rom. 2:4). That the wicked do wickedly is expected (Dan. 12:10). But the hurt and pain can feel even worse when the offense is done by a fellow believer or a loved one (Ps. 41:9; 55:12-14). Even though it may seem and feel different, in both cases the offense creates the same problem and need for reconciliation, which may include some act of making amends to another for damage inflicted or crime perpetrated (Ex. 22:1; Luke 19:1-10).

The problem created by the offense and its need to be resolved should be seen as necessitating justice. When justice is in view, forgiveness is not a matter of worthiness. When wrongs are committed by or against the righteous, they often appeal to God's just intervention (Ps. 7:3-11; 35:24; 43:1; Rev. 15:3; 19:1, 2). Justice encompasses not only culpability and accountability but also the opportunity for restitution and redemption even in the face of radical evil (2 Kings 21:1-18; 2 Chron. 33:10-13).

Moreover, the apostle Paul states clearly that forgiveness was offered to believers while they were the offenders against God (Rom. 5:8). So justice renders forgiveness necessary and possible because what the offended are asked of God is to show the same grace that was shown to them in God's just acts, and God gives this counsel to those who would be like Him (Ex. 34:9; Matt. 6:14, 15; Luke 7:44-48; cf. Matt. 5:44-48). When God offers forgiveness, He does not record them in a kind of register of crimes or in our memory and hold on to them and use them against the forgiven (Ps. 130:3; Micah 7:18-20; 1 Cor. 13:5). Rather, the blood of Jesus expunges the record, taking the offense upon Himself, offering a healing salve, and working to

restore what has been broken. The goal then of the justice of God in the process of forgiveness is reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:17-6:1). This goal is so central to walking with God that He commands us to seek reconciliation before offering our worship to Him (Matt. 5:23-25).

When describing the removal of an inappropriate offense in this way, the removal does not condone the behavior or suggest approval for the offense.<sup>2</sup> In fact, the wise man continues: "Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life, yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God, because they fear before him. But it will not be well with the wicked" (Eccl. 8:12). Divine justice may not be swift, but it is certain. How it is experienced depends on how the offender relates to God's work of justice. God's omniscience knows how to, when to, and to what extent to render justice in the process of

forgiveness. The delay of punishment is not evidence of divine indifference, but rather is designed to elicit confession and repentance that He is working toward, which is an expression of justice (Luke 18:1-8; Acts 5:30-32).

#### PRAYING FOR JUSTICE

The persistent posture of a prayerful heart helps the petitioner "turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it" (Ps. 34:14). By praying for justice, we leave the process for redemption, restitution, and resolution in God's hands. Prayer gives God full access to our hearts in ways that enable reconciliation in the face of radical evil. This is what the justice of God through the gospel of Jesus Christ does. Its transforming work can turn murderers into missionaries (Gal. 1:11-24) and skeptics into believers (John 3; 19:38-42). And at the cross the love of God, seen in the forgive-

ness and justice that only God could mingle, turned a rebel into a man redeemed (Luke 23:32-43).<sup>3</sup>

Likewise, when we prayerfully surrender to Jesus, His justice exhibited on Calvary extends to purifying our consciences from the dead works of sin, which includes our desire for vengeance or our reticence to forgive. Ultimately, Jesus gave Himself for us to empower us to zealously seek to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with Him (Titus 2:14; Micah 6:8). ©

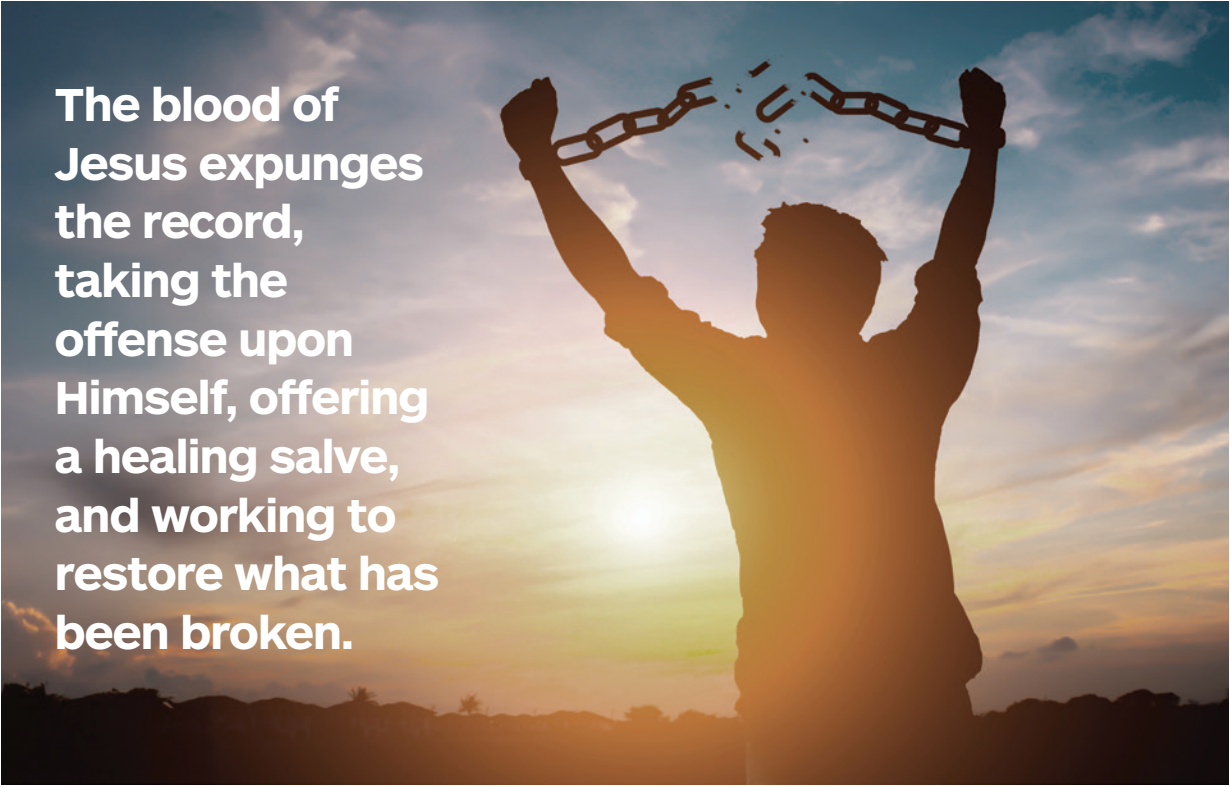
<sup>1</sup> Biblical quotations are from *The Holy Bible*, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

<sup>2</sup> J. David Stark, "Forgiveness," *Lexham Theological Wordbook* (Bellingham, Wash.: Lexham Press, 2014).

<sup>3</sup> See Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940), pp. 750, 751.

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**Jerome Skinner** is associate professor of Old Testament exegesis and theology at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.



The blood of  
Jesus expunges  
the record,  
taking the  
offense upon  
Himself, offering  
a healing salve,  
and working to  
restore what has  
been broken.





## Feature

# Paying It Forward

BY HOWARD WILLIAMS

**M**y paternal grandmother, Fern (Hurd) Williams, grew up in a family in which she was one of 12 siblings. As was quite typical at that time, families were large, and incomes were small. Her father, Ray Hurd, worked at whatever jobs he could find to keep food on the table. At the time of this story they lived in Saint Helena, California. And just about a quarter of a mile (400 meters) down the street lived a wonderful elderly woman by the name of Ellen White.

Now, Sister White was in the custom of taking buggy rides to get out in the fresh air and sunshine each afternoon. This also gave her the chance to stop in and check on people she knew and worried

about. She had a particular concern for the Hurd family because of their family's size and income level. On a number of occasions she employed Great-grandpa Ray to prune her orchard and do other odd jobs around her place. Quite often she would simply pop in to see how they were doing. My grandma was a small child then, but later in life she spoke of her fond memories of Sister White's visits.

### THE BENEFICIARY

Fast-forward a number of decades. World War II ended, and a huge building boom began occurring in the United States. Sawmills sprang up all over the Pacific Northwest, bringing with them many jobs. At least two of my





← Ellen White out for a buggy ride with her nurse companion, Sara McEntefer, when she lived in California.

and let the owner know that if he couldn't make all the payments, he would repay the owner as soon as he possibly could after work picked back up again.

After he shared his situation with the owner, the man seemed to take it quite calmly and simply said, "Mr. Hurd, don't worry about a thing! I will take care of it."

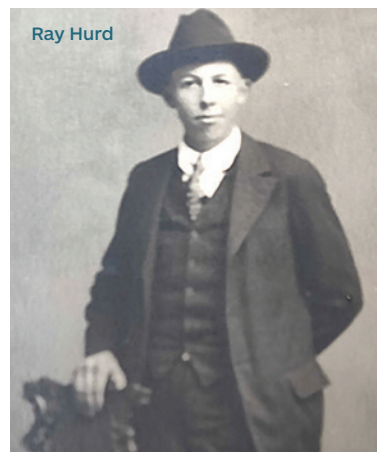
Within a couple weeks a letter arrived in the mail from the truck dealership. He opened it and scanned the document in front of him in disbelief! There, on the front of the original title document for his truck, it read "PAID IN FULL." As soon as he could, he made his way back to the dealership to clear up an obvious error.

After informing the owner of the reason for his visit, the man leaned back in his chair and said; "Mr. Hurd, I need to tell you a story."

### THE DEPOSIT

"When I was a small boy, I lived not too far from where your family lived. In fact, I knew who your family was. A time came," he continued, "when, one by one, each member of my family fell ill, until I was the only one who could still do anything, and even I was starting to feel bad. I was doing everything I could to care for the rest of my family, but as a small child, I didn't know what to really do to nurse them back to health. At that critical moment, when the lives of our entire family hung in the balance, there was a knock at the door, and when I opened it, an elderly woman by the name of Mrs. White was standing there and wanted to know how our family was doing."

"After entering and evaluating our plight," he said, "she excused herself with the promise that she



would go get supplies and return. She was soon back and never left our sides until every one of us had regained our health. What an angel of a woman she was."

The store owner continued, "I have done very well financially, and for quite some time now I have been convicted that I should do something, for someone, to pay forward the great gift that woman gave to us. Our whole family, no doubt, owed our lives to her. I don't think any of us would be alive today if she hadn't arrived at just the right time to save us. I knew that she was a Seventh-day Adventist, and I know that you are a Seventh-day Adventist, so the thought occurred to me, *Who better to give a helping hand to than someone from her same faith?* So, no, there has been no mistake on your truck's title. Your loan is paid in full, and I can sleep well, knowing that I was finally able to pay forward that gift we received so long ago!"

My great-uncle went home that day praising God and so thankful that not only did Mrs. White demonstrate that God's healing principles work, but she showed, by her actions, that she practiced what she preached, in love for others and in following God's health principles. ©

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**Howard Williams**, a retired missionary and pastor who served in Bolivia, the Philippines, and Alaska and Idaho, lives in **central Oregon, USA**.

grandma's brothers became truckers, hauling lumber from sawmills in northern California to wherever it was needed.

One of her brothers, the youngest, entered a truck dealership in Santa Rosa, California, looking to buy a lumber truck. The demand at the time was huge. The owner of the establishment agreed to sell him a truck with financing through their establishment. Everything went well for some time, and then there was a downturn in the demand for lumber. Finances started getting tight, and he started worrying as to whether he would be able to keep up with his truck payments. Being conscientious and trying to do the right thing, he decided to go to the dealership

# A Wall of Fire

God answers prayer.

BY TED N. C. WILSON

It was a daring plan, but someone needed to reach the town of more than 8,000 people. The town was almost exclusively non-Christian, with 99 percent of its inhabitants adherents to a dominant non-Christian faith.

Over the years several attempts had been made to reach them with the three angels' messages, but this town, located along the Indian Ocean coast of Tanzania, seemed almost impervious to the gospel message.

Nevertheless, this did not stop a small group of young people from Seventh-day Adventist churches in a city some distance away from making a daring plan to conduct an evangelistic event in this town.

## A RISKY UNDERTAKING

Normally, preparing for an evangelistic series involves a lot of preplanning, involving many details and logistics, but these young people mainly prepared for the series by praying. Knowing the work was delicate and risky, they decided to spend two weeks in earnest prayer, pleading for God's intervention.

Miraculously, a few days later they obtained permission from the town government to hold religious meetings. Word spread quickly, and some in the town were furious that such meetings would take place.

Knowing that they were young and inexperienced and that this was a very risky undertaking, the young Adventists faithfully met at the seashore at 5:00 a.m. every morning to pray for the townspeople, the meetings, and God's protection.



## A WALL OF FIRE

One morning, unbeknownst to them, some youth from the town were sent by local leaders to kill the Adventists by the sea as they were praying. But God heard the young people's prayers. As the attackers approached, they saw a wall of fire surrounding the Adventist youth! Shocked, they dared not attack, and instead ran away!

The Adventist young people continued praying and started the meetings. But the elders of the city were determined to stop them. They sent their youth to steal equipment and furniture used for the meeting. But when they went to steal, they saw a very tall man wearing a white gown and holding a shining sword walking around the equipment. They again failed to execute their wicked plan.

The Adventist young people kept praying earnestly and went on with the meetings. One evening, as a meeting was taking place, two elderly people dressed in full traditional regalia walked through the crowd, heading toward the front where one of the young Adventists was preaching. But before they reached the front, the men started running and jumping, crying out, "We're burning! We're burning!" and rushed away. Later these men explained how they saw a wall of fire surrounding the young preacher, making it impossible to attack him.

When none of their deadly plans worked, those who had opposed the meetings wanted to know what sort of "magic" the Adventists were using to protect themselves. The young people happily explained there was no "magic"; they served the living God of heaven, to whom they prayed every day, and had the divine protection of angels sent by God.

When the news of these miracles spread into the neighboring towns, a journalist came and reported

the story in the *Msema Kweli*, a nationwide newspaper.

In the end, 50 people were baptized, and even though working in this environment continues to be challenging, there are now three organized churches in that town, with a total membership of nearly 200 people. Several of the Adventist youth became powerful lay evangelists, and two are now pastors.

## PRAYER IS KEY

Friends, we are assured that "prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence."<sup>1</sup>

This is where true power lies. We can make all the Global Total Member Involvement (TMI) plans that we want, but unless we are earnestly asking the Lord to bless those plans and to give us greater plans, we will accomplish almost nothing.

Prayer is vital and increasingly so as the world continues to unravel. Without prayer, how will we touch the lives of busy, distracted, annoyed people in the world and share with them the magnificent three angels' messages? The Holy Spirit will need to arrest their attention as we pray earnestly for the Lord to work through our humble plans. And every personal connection, which is what TMI is all about, must be bathed in prayer.

## OUR EXAMPLE

Jesus is our example. In the wonderful little book *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing* we read how the disciples "marked how often He spent long hours in solitude in communion with His Father. His days were passed in ministry to the crowds that pressed upon Him, and in unveiling the treacherous sophistry of the rabbis, and this incessant labor often left Him so utterly wearied that His mother

**Prayer is vital and increasingly so as the world continues to unravel. Without prayer, how will we touch the lives of busy, distracted, annoyed people?**

and brothers, and even His disciples, had feared that His life would be sacrificed. But as He returned from the hours of prayer that closed the toilsome day, they marked the look of peace upon His face, the sense of refreshment that seemed to pervade His presence."<sup>2</sup>

Then notice this: "It was from hours spent with God that He came forth, morning by morning, to bring the light of heaven to men. The disciples had come to connect His hours of prayer with the power of His words and works."<sup>3</sup>

Would you like the power of God in your life to reach souls for Him? It is there for the asking. I encourage you, and myself, to spend more time in prayer, asking the Lord to give wisdom, guidance, and effectiveness as we move forward in Global TMI—reaching the world for Him! ©


<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1956), pp. 94, 95.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1956), p. 102.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 102, 103.

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Spirit of Prophecy

# Forgiveness

What true forgiveness entails

BY ELLEN G. WHITE

*The letter below was written by Ellen G. White to Brother and Sister Mills.—Editors.*

I hope that you will not suppose that I have not a real interest in you, because I have. The Lord has an interest in you. If you walk and work in the counsel of God, you will make every effort possible to be in harmony with your brethren. All who are members of the church are not walking in the light of God's Word and are running a great risk of having their names blotted out of the book of life. But thank God that you are not their sin-bearer. There is but one sin-bearer for the human family. Christ

has borne our sins. He has carried our sorrows. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" [Isaiah 53:5].

Your work is now to clear your own soul before God and leave others to do the same. Whatever course others have pursued, you have your own case to care for. You have the Word of God, clear and distinct. Follow this Word. Human nature is often hard to manage, and those who do not strictly follow the Word of God are in peril. The enemy obtains an advantage over them. The stubbornness of human

nature is often a great hindrance to advancement in the divine life. You have a very stubborn disposition to overcome, but God will help you.

## REMOVING ALL STUMBLING BLOCKS

There is never a time or a place when it is right for you or me to say, I will not forgive my brother, and I will not walk and work in fellowship with him. In doing this the human agent places himself in opposition to the express teachings of Christ.

Please clear your own soul, in strict accordance with the Word, whatever may be the course pursued by any other man. We have self to deal with, and we must



be faithful with our own souls, else our natural and hereditary tendencies to wrong will gain the ascendancy. When one errs, we are not to harass our own souls, but wait on the Lord. If your brother does you an injustice ignorantly, and then holds out his hand of fellowship, saying, "If I have erred and done you an injury or misjudged you, forgive me," and you draw away from him and refuse to forgive, you have walked away from the great Counselor, and need yourself to repent and be forgiven.

You have passed through scenes of severe trial, and the Lord understands the mischief done. Mischievous tongues are without

number. They know not the things they assert. They are passing over ground that they will have to pass over again when every case shall be brought in review before God, when the judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened, and every one shall be judged according to the things written in the books whether they be good or whether they be evil. Then those whose words now wound and bruise must answer for every statement they have made, and bear the results of the words they have spoken to wound and bruise the souls of the Lord's heritage. There are many things which do not now appear in a correct light, which will in that day be made plain.

#### **FORGIVENESS IS A CHOICE**

But the question of forgiveness needs not to be interpreted for it is plain. If a brother err, forgive him if he asks you. If he is not humble enough to ask, forgive him in your heart and express your forgiveness in word and action.

Then the weight of his sin will not in any degree be upon you. "Consider thyself, lest thou also be tempted" [see Gal. 6:1]. When he reaches out his hand and says, "Forgive me," it is not for you to turn away and refuse to forgive, because you may think he does not feel humble enough and does not mean what he says. You have no right to judge him because you cannot read the heart. The Word of God says, If he repent, forgive him. "If he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him" [Luke 17:4]. And we are not only to forgive seven times, but seventy times seven. Just as often as God forgives us, we are to forgive one another. Thus we encourage repentance and confession.

#### **TRUE FORGIVENESS IS UNCONDITIONAL**

You are never to say, "When I see that you have reformed, then I will forgive you." This is not God's plan. This is in accordance with the prompting of human nature rather than with divine promptings. A Pharisaical indifference and hardness of heart is not to be allowed, for it is not Christlike. In showing that you do not care for the soul of your brother and do not want fellowship with him, you hurt your brother and set him a wrong example.

My brother, you have made mistakes, and you need to come with softened heart to your brethren. To be a member of the church is not to be regarded by you as the greatest thing. The greatest thing is to cleanse from the heart everything that will lessen your influence for good in the church and in the world. You have a work to do to strive to enter in at the strait gate. If others professing the truth use their talent of speech to report matters which hurt your soul, they do a work which pleases the enemy.

There is need of the tongue being touched with hot coals of juniper. God is greatly displeased with this kind of talking in the church. If each would save his words to comfort and encourage and bless, there would be much more charity, which is love, and much more true elevation. If men and women would cease to be mischief-makers, stirring up strife, there would be a much more favorable showing in their own Christian experience. When scandal is circulated there is no want of sin. ©

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Seventh-day Adventist 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 Ellen G. White letter 23, 1901, in *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 16, p. 25.





Feature

# Worship Moments

When God comes into focus

BY HEATHER KRICK

**M**y husband and I had just changed drivers, and I was sitting comfortably behind the wheel as we headed down the highway, eager to be home after a cross-country trip. Suddenly, seemingly out of nowhere, a full-size semitruck barreled into my peripheral vision, its orange blinker flashing ominously as it moved straight into my lane as if I were invisible. It was too late to brake.

Instinctively I swerved, panicked, and jerked the steering wheel a little too hard. Now the center guardrail was looming menacingly ahead of me. Desperate to recover, I overcorrected, and we careened back toward the encroaching truck. The passenger side of our Toyota Camry sedan where my husband was sitting crashed into the steel side of the truck's metal trailer. Out of control, we spun helplessly across the road yet again, finally coming to a dead stop as we collided with that same middle guardrail.

All this happened in about the time it takes to read it. Shards of glass littered the car, and the passenger side and the right rear edge of the car were smashed and dented, but we were alive! As we sat there in shock, my husband turned to look into the back seat for our two teens. Amazingly, we were all uninjured, and the police officer who helped us agreed that we were "lucky" to be unscathed. We knew without a doubt that God's angels had shielded us. Despite the shock, we spontaneously thanked God. For us it was a moment of worship.

Quite a few Bible characters, being human like us, had similar experiences to ours, which evoked an attitude of worship in various circumstances. Let's peer in on a few of these.





## BIBLICAL WORSHIP MOMENTS

Abraham had commissioned his trusted servant Eliezer to fulfill an important mission: to find a wife for Isaac. Eliezer could not help wondering if the Lord would make his journey to Nahor successful. As he waited near the well, he plotted and prayed. The sign that she was Miss Right? She would draw water for him and would offer to get water for his camels as well.

Soon he saw a young woman who impressed him, and he asked her for a drink. Rebekah immediately fulfilled the sign and also invited him to her father's house. Eliezer's reaction? "And the man bowed down his head, and *worshipped* the Lord" (Gen. 24:26, KJV). Before he agreed, before he went to the house, before he ate, before did anything else, he took a minute to focus on God, who had undeniably answered his prayer.

Pious Job was having an incredibly rough day. An unexpected messenger burst in, saying that the Sabeans had taken Job's oxen and donkeys and killed his servants. Before that servant was done speaking, another panting servant came and said that fire from heaven had burned up the sheep and servants. Another servant arrived right then and announced that his camels had been raided by Chaldeans. Job was in shock, but the biggest blow came last.

All Job's children were at the oldest brother's home having a party when wind (possibly a tornado) demolished the house, leaving no survivors. This was devastating news, but interestingly, the Bible records Job's incredible reaction as this: "Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and *worshipped*" (Job 1:20, KJV). Reeling from more disasters than one can imagine in one day, including

## When I drive by the site of our car accident, I remember that crucial moment that God protected us.

losing all his children, Job tore his clothes, shaved his head, and, even though grieving, naturally turned to His God and worshipped Him.

When fearful Gideon overheard a man relating a dream about Gideon winning the battle, he realized God had a solution and would win the battle he dreaded. He saw how faithful God is, and his cowardice turned to awe and *worship* (Judges 7:15).

While visiting Egypt, Moses showed the Israelite slaves how his rod would become a snake, and they were amazed and thankful. Realizing now that their God had remembered them and actually seen their afflicted lives, they bowed their heads in *worship* (Ex. 4:31).

Then there was Eli. Hannah had come to drop off little Samuel at the tabernacle. High Priest Eli stood amazed at this devoted mother's considerable sacrifice in parting with her son. Comparing her attitude to his own selfish parenting gave him a feeling of humiliation and reverence, and he bowed before the Lord and *worshipped*.\*

While they were out on a boat on the stormy Sea of Galilee, surrounded by the morning blackness, the disciples saw a ghostlike form on the water and started to be scared. But then they heard the familiar voice of Jesus and saw His form, and they knew help was on the way. Peter got excited about stepping out of the heaving boat and getting to Jesus.

As long as Peter looked at Jesus, the miracle happened—he walked on water! But as soon as he took his eyes off Jesus and looked at the waves, he began to sink. Desperate,

he cried out, "Save me!" Jesus unhesitatingly reached out and lifted him up. Soon they were in the boat together.

Watching the miracle erased the gripping fear that had harassed even the seasoned fishermen-turned-disciples. After Peter had walked on water to meet Jesus, and the wind had died down, those who had watched could only exclaim, "Truly You are the Son of God" (Matt. 14:33). God had their attention, and now they worshipped Him.

## CRUCIAL MOMENTS

These were all crucial moments that led to worship. The Israelites saw God, through Moses, turn a rod into a snake. The disciples saw Jesus walk on water. Eli saw Hannah's faithfulness to God. Eliezer saw a miraculous answer to his prayers. And Job walked in faith because He knew and trusted God even though he was laid in the dust with sickness, mourning, and stress.

When I drive by the site of our car accident, I remember that crucial moment that God protected us. And, when unexpected elating or trying circumstances arise, and they will, as no one is exempt from these, the stories of these Bible figures inspire me to also embrace these crucial moments that bring God into sharp focus for me. ©

\*See Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1890, 1908), p. 571.

**Heather Krick**, a native of **South Africa**, resides in California and is the happy wife of her pastor husband, Bill.



Lifestyle

# Equipped for Purpose

Building a foundation  
for eternity

BY BETH THOMAS



In today's ever-changing world the importance of a strong foundation for young hearts and minds cannot be overstated. The Adventist Church has set aside March 22, 2025, as a day of Christian education emphasis. A Christian education offers a unique and deeply meaningful approach to learning, setting itself apart from public schooling. Rooted in faith, values, and a biblical worldview, it equips students for academic success and a life of purpose and integrity.

One of the benefits of Christian education is its emphasis on integrating faith into every aspect of learning. In public schools the curriculum is typically secular, designed to remain neutral on matters of religion. While this serves a diverse population, it leaves little room for students to explore how faith and academics intersect. Christian schools, however, weave biblical principles into every subject—from science to history to literature. This integration allows students to see the world through the lens of biblical truth, helping them develop a deeper understanding of their purpose and identity in Christ.

A key distinction of Christian education is its focus on character formation. Public schools may emphasize academic achievement and social skills, but Christian schools go further by nurturing students' moral and spiritual growth. Teachers in Christian schools often serve as mentors, modeling Christlike behavior and guiding students in their walk with God. Through daily prayer, Bible classes, and discussions in class about moral decision-making, students are given opportunities to choose what's best.

Christian education provides a safe and supportive environment in which students can thrive. Sometimes the pressures of secular culture, peer influence, and, at times, overcrowded classrooms can make it challenging for students to stay grounded in their faith in a public school environment. Christian schools, on the other hand, foster a sense of community and shared values. Students are surrounded by peers and educators who share their beliefs, creating a nurturing atmosphere that reinforces their spiritual growth.

Additionally, Christian education prepares students to be salt and light in the world. It's not only about shielding young people from secular influences but also about equipping them to engage with the world in a meaningful way. Students are taught to think critically, defend their faith, and approach life's challenges with a Christ-centered perspective. This preparation is vital for Christians who are called to be ambassadors for Christ in their communities and workplaces.

Christian schools can also serve as an avenue for evangelism, extending beyond the Adventist community. Many non-Adventist families choose Christian educa-

## Christian education is about more than academic success; it's about shaping hearts and minds for eternity.

tion for its values-driven approach and supportive environment. This creates a unique opportunity to share the gospel in a natural and impactful way. Through daily exposure to biblical teachings and participation in spiritual activities, non-Adventist students often encounter the love of Jesus in transformative ways. These experiences can plant seeds of faith that grow long after their time in school.

In an age in which absolute truth is often dismissed and biblical values are increasingly marginalized, Christian schools provide a haven where God's Word remains the ultimate authority. They empower students to stand firm in their beliefs and navigate the complexities of modern life with confidence and grace.

Ultimately, Christian education is about more than academic success; it's about shaping hearts and minds for eternity. Prioritizing faith, character, and a biblical worldview equips young people to live out their calling as followers of Christ. For Christian families seeking an education that aligns with their values and reinforces their faith, the investment in Christian schooling is worthwhile and truly essential. ☺

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**Beth Thomas** is assistant editor of *Adventist World*.

# Faithful Until the End

The life and legacy of Malcolm Abbott

BY LESTER DEVINE

*The original version of this historical sketch was published on the Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists website, [encyclopedia.adventist.org](http://encyclopedia.adventist.org). It has been adapted for content and space.*

**M**alcolm Abbott was the superintendent of the Seventh-day Adventist Mission in New Guinea when he was taken as a civilian internee during World War II in Rabaul, New Guinea, and subsequently lost his life at the age of 33.

## EARLY LIFE

Malcolm was born into an Adventist home in Waverly, a suburb of Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, on January 12, 1909.

A biographical sketch in the Adventist Archives gives us more detail on his education. "After attending school at Gordon, he became a student of the North Sydney High School, where he was highly esteemed for his good character and his athletic prowess. When it was suggested, at the age of sixteen, that he be transferred to the Australasian Missionary College, it was with reluctance on the part of the headmaster (who had instructed Mac's mother also) that he was released."<sup>1</sup>

Malcolm graduated from the three-year business course at the Australasian Missionary College and accepted an appointment as clerk in the Sanitarium Health Food Company. He also spent time in the Australasian Union Conference office and was later hired as accountant and preceptor of the New Zealand Missionary College.

While in New Zealand, Malcolm married Una Frances ("Fran") Spengel. Fran was a nurse who had graduated from the Sydney Sanitarium. She was born in Boonah, Queensland, in 1906. Her family had moved to Avondale so the children could attend the Australasian Missionary College and had purchased the property and home previously owned by W. C. White opposite

Sunnyside, the home of Ellen G. White.

Malcolm spent three years in educational work at the New Zealand Missionary College, followed by some years of clerical work for various church entities, before his ordination in September 1939. That same month he was chosen as the superintendent of the New Guinea Mission.

## WARTIME TRAGEDY

"Having faithfully served in this capacity for three years, [the Abbotts'] furlough fell due late in 1941. Knowing that Pastor and Mrs. Tutty were also due a furlough at the same time, Pastor Abbott said he and Sister Abbott would postpone their leave for a few months, in order not to deplete the field of workers. Had he taken his leave when due, he would have been in Australia at the time of the fatal invasion of New Guinea."<sup>2</sup>

In December 1941 the Seventh-day Adventist missionary family dependents in Papua New Guinea were evacuated to Australia. Within seven months the Japanese navy had pushed back the Australian army and taken over the town of Rabaul on the island of New Britain and established a base from which the invasion of the Solomon Islands and mainland Papua New Guinea could be launched.

Malcolm remained in Papua New Guinea at a location where he was in easy reach of the invading Japanese forces, and he was soon captured by the occupying Japanese forces.

He and 1,052 other men were packed onto the *Montevideo Maru* for transportation to Hainan Island, leaving Rabaul on June 22, 1942. Aboard this prison ship were some 845 servicemen and 208 civilians. The webpage of the National Archives of Australia includes the account of the fate of Australian personnel in East New Britain before the Japanese attack:

"Of the 1396 Australian military personnel at Rabaul before the attack, 160 were killed south of the town



at Tol, about 400 eventually escaped to Australia, and the remainder became prisoners of war (POWs). After the invasion, most civilians gathered around Rabaul, where the Japanese forces set up a camp for civilian and military prisoners.

"In June and July 1942 the Japanese naval authorities made two attempts to transfer these prisoners to Japan. The first group of about 60 Australian officers and 18 women, including Army nurses, arrived safely. The second, historically thought to include 845 POWs and 208 civilian internees, left on 22 June for Hainan on the *Montevideo Maru*, a freighter requisitioned by the Japanese navy. It was not marked as a POW carrier. On 1 July it was torpedoed and sunk by the submarine USS *Sturgeon* off the Philippine island of Luzon, resulting in the deaths of all prisoners and internees on board. The loss of life on the *Montevideo Maru* is described as the worst maritime disaster, in peace or war, in Australian history."<sup>3</sup>

For many months the families of these men knew nothing of their fate. After the end of the war, when Japanese records, including the names of the prisoners who had been on board the *Montevideo Maru*, were translated, the Commonwealth of Australia's minister for external affairs was able to let the families know the men who had been on board the *Montevideo Maru* when it was torpedoed. Abbott is listed as internee 145.

During a memorial service held in the Wairoonga church on November 10, 1946, to honor those Adventists who lost their lives while prisoners of war, a fitting tribute was paid to Malcolm and his faithfulness:

"His fidelity to duty, his love for his fellow workers,

his concern for the indigenous people of New Guinea, placed him within easy reach of the invasion forces, at whose hands he fell a victim with eleven hundred fellow Australians, whose loss we so deeply deplore."<sup>4</sup>

On July 1, 2012, a memorial was erected in Canberra to those who had lost their lives in this tragedy. It was dedicated by the governor-general of Australia with more than 800 in attendance, representing the families who had experienced this tragic loss.

#### FRAN'S CAREER AND LATER LIFE

After Fran's evacuation from Papua New Guinea, leaving behind the husband she never saw again, she worked at the Sydney Adventist Hospital until her retirement in 1971. In her later years she was the dean of the women's dormitory. Because she had no children of her own, the nursing students were her family. She enjoyed visits with the students, often sharing with them her experiences. Fran died in 1993. ©

<sup>1</sup> Retrieved from <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/AAR/AAR19460107-V50-01.pdf#search=Malcolm%20Edwin%20Abbott>.

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

<sup>3</sup> Retrieved from <https://montevideomaru.naa.gov.au/timeline/>.

<sup>4</sup> Retrieved from <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/AAR/AAR19460107-V50-01.pdf#search=Malcolm%20Edwin%20Abbott>.

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# One Victorious Remnant

Q

**We see ourselves as God's end-time remnant, but is there a remnant within the remnant formed by those who are truly faithful to God?**

A

This question has been raised by some who believe that, in general, the church is not as spiritual as it should be and, therefore, that God has within it a group of faithful believers who constitute the true remnant. In response to this view, I will argue that it is based on a misunderstanding of the nature and role of the end-time remnant.

## THE END-TIME REMNANT AS FINAL

In the Bible, God has always preserved a remnant through whom He fulfills His plans for the human race. But we also find what could be called a pattern of growth and rebellion. The small number, the remnant, multiplies and becomes a large group that, because of their persistent disobedience to God, is rejected by Him. Out of grace, God preserves a small remnant, and the whole process starts all over again. Apocalyptic prophecies break this vicious cycle, announcing the final triumph of God's end-time remnant. In Revelation God's remnant people are under attack from the outside and threatened with extinction, but God and the Lamb preserve them (Rev. 13:16-14:1). The whole world is deceived and led into rebellion and apostasy, but not the remnant (Rev. 13:8). Yes, the remnant will grow by calling God's people who are still in Babylon to come out of it, but the large number will remain faithful to Christ and will be victorious (Rev. 17:14).

## THE REMNANT IS HISTORICAL AND VISIBLE

The suggestion that there is a remnant within the remnant implies that the true remnant is invisible. This

goes against the apocalyptic picture of God's end-time remnant as a visible entity, that is to say, it can be seen and identified by others. It is historical in the sense that it appeared after the fulfillment of the prophecy of the 1260 prophetic days in 1798 (Rev. 12:14, 17). Its visibility is guaranteed by the fact that the Bible provides a number of marks that characterizes the remnant and makes it recognizable. For instance, the remnant keep the commandments of God (verse 17); they have placed their faith in Jesus as Savior (Rev. 14:12); the Spirit of prophecy has been manifested among them (Rev. 12:17; cf. Rev. 19:10); they have the seal of God and of the Lamb on them (Rev. 14:1); and they persevere in their commitment to Jesus to the very end (verse 12). The visibility of the remnant is indispensable, as they intend to fulfill their mission. In order for those who come out of Babylon to join them, the end-time remnant people of God have to be a specific group of believers.

## THE REMNANT AND TRUTH

One of the most important characteristics of the remnant is that they have a message from God to the human race that is to be clearly proclaimed (Rev. 14:6-10). Revelation does not suggest that the remnant will depart from that message in an act of rebellion and apostasy. On the contrary, they will proclaim it to the whole world in preparation for the coming of Christ (verses 6-20). The challenge that the remnant will face comes from the outside, but there is also the possibility that some of them will not live up to the truth entrusted to them. They do not reject the truth they have received, but some of them could grow cold, and the Lord would remove them from among His end-time remnant (Rev. 3:15, 16). This indicates that the remnant itself will never be overcome by an apostasy that will require the Lord to raise a remnant from within the remnant. ©

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**Ángel Manuel Rodríguez**, Th.D., is retired after a career serving as pastor, professor, and theologian.

# Gratitude

## A pathway to health and wholeness

*Our church's health resources emphasize gratitude. Does it really impact my health?*

**G**ratITUDE, actively recognizing and appreciating the positive aspects of life, is more than just a feeling. Research has shown it to be a powerful tool for improving mental and physical well-being.

One of the most profound impacts of gratitude is improved mental health. Expressing gratitude shifts the focus away from negative thoughts and fosters a more optimistic outlook on life. Studies show that individuals who regularly practice gratitude experience lower levels of depression and anxiety, helping individuals manage stress and adversity more effectively.

Gratitude is linked to improved emotional resilience. People who practice gratitude are better equipped to find meaning and maintain a sense of hope. Gratitude contributes to the strengthening of relationships and reduces feelings of isolation; positive relationships are crucial for emotional well-being. Furthermore, gratitude enhances self-worth. Focusing on what we have rather than what we lack helps combat the negative effects of inadequacy often induced by comparison, an unfortunate impact of social media.

Gratitude offers tangible physical health benefits. One of the key mechanisms is through stress reduction. Chronic stress has been linked to physical ailments, including cardiovascular disease and weakened immune function. Gratitude helps lower stress hormone levels, such as cortisol, thereby supporting better overall health.

Improved sleep is another significant benefit. People who practice gratitude tend to have better sleep quality and duration. Recounting our blessings and expressing thanks before going to bed can create a more restful mental state, promoting restful sleep. Gratitude has been shown to encourage healthier lifestyle behaviors. Individuals who cultivate gratitude are more likely to engage in regular exercise, eat nutritious foods, and practice preventive health measures, promoting better long-term health outcomes.

Gratitude is also associated with reduced symptoms of chronic conditions. For example, individuals with hypertension have experienced improved blood pressure control after consistently practicing gratitude. Similarly, those with chronic pain conditions report less discomfort and greater mobility when they focus on aspects of life for which they are thankful.

### CULTIVATING GRATITUDE

The benefits of gratitude can be accessed through simple, intentional practices. Prayerful Bible study and meditation can help us recognize and savor our blessings, whatever the circumstances.

Keeping a gratitude journal and listing the blessings we are thankful for each day is a powerful way to develop the habit. Writing thank-you notes or verbally expressing appreciation to others also deepens the sense of gratitude.

Gratitude is a cornerstone of mental and physical well-being and provides a pathway to a more fulfilling and balanced life. We are grateful that God affirmed this blessing through the health message entrusted to this church 150 years ago:

“Nothing tends more to promote health of body and of soul than does a spirit of gratitude and praise. It is a positive duty to resist melancholy, discontented thoughts and feelings—as much a duty as it is to pray. If we are heaven-bound, how can we go as a band of mourners, groaning and complaining all along the way to our Father’s house?”\* ©

\* Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1905). p. 251.

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# Marta

A curandeira



“May I Tell  
You a Story?”

BY DICK DUERKSEN

**M**arta, what’s the first thing you want to do when you get to heaven?”

Marta had obviously thought about my question long before I asked it! Rather than look at me and answer, Marta looked up, far beyond the top of a tall cashew tree, as if watching the clouds scudding by in the Mozambican sky. Then she smiled, leaned forward, and began speaking intensely in her language, Changana.

Marta was sitting on a brightly colored *capulana* cloth, working with other village women to shell the current crop of peanuts. It was quite the party, each woman telling wild family tales, everyone laughing happily at the well-known punch lines. I had been invited to join the women because my wife, Brenda, had called me over to hear Marta retell one of her favorite stories.

## THE DREAM

Many years ago, so the story goes, Marta, the village *curandeira*, had fallen in love with Jesus and become the village *evangelista*.

It had begun with a dream, one of the many dreams Marta would experience as she worked with *the spirits* as a witch doctor to find the right potions and cures for her neighbors’ troubles. Her cures worked, and the people paid her well. *The spirits* had provided her with

a good life, so good that she had even started saving money to purchase a truck. Owning a pickup truck would make her the most important person in the village! It was foolish, she knew, especially since there wasn’t even a road to her village. Just a wide cow path.

Then came *the dream*.

“Marta, Marta.” A loud voice called her name and commanded her to step outside her hut. She slipped out from under the covers, opened the door a thin crack, and peeked out. There, right in front of her hut, standing beside her personal firepit, was a brand-new white, four-door, four-wheel-drive Toyota pickup truck!

Marta ran to the truck, touched it to be sure it was real, then walked all around it, petting the bright-white paint, looking at the lights, bumpers, windscreen, and logos. Tentatively, as if afraid this might not be true, she reached for the driver’s door handle. It opened, and there were keys dangling from the ignition switch!

In a moment she was seated and feeling the powerful engine of her new truck. She drove around the village, trying not to awaken her neighbors. Then she pulled back on the wheel and began driving up, up, up, above the cashew trees, above the mangoes, through the clouds, through the stars, right to the stone walls of a giant heavenly city. Far above her tiny village of Mucapane, Mozambique.

She looked out the window, maybe to

see if anyone was watching her. When she looked through the windscreen again, she was speeding toward the gate of a terrible stone city that was hanging among the stars in the sky!

Marta turned the wheel and drove to the city's main gate, but it was closed. She got out of her pickup and pounded on the door for entry, but everything stayed silent. She screamed loud enough so that everyone inside would be able to hear her voice, but the gate stayed closed to the *curandeira* from Mucapane.

## THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CITY

Then she woke up, shouting and sweating in her own hut.

Marta lay still for a long time. She was accustomed to *the spirits* giving her odd and crazy dreams, but this had been different. This time the dream seemed filled with hope! She knew she had to find a way to get back up to the heavenly city, but she had no idea how to get there and open the door. So Marta, the *curandeira* who was used to helping others find answers, started asking everyone for help. No one knew anything about a giant stone city in the sky!

Then one afternoon someone mentioned that a farmer in Machumbutane might know the truth about the city in the sky. That was enough for Marta, and the "spirit healer," the village *curandeira*, put some food in a basket and began walking the dirt path toward the distant huts of Machumbutane. "If only I can find the key to the city," she muttered to herself as she walked.

What she found was a group of searchers studying the Christian Bible, praying to a man named Jesus, worshipping on Saturday, and planning to join the Savior in His giant heavenly city.

She listened, studied with her new friends, and fell in love with Jesus.

## BACK HOME

Back home the dream returned. This time she was ready when the voice called her name.

"Marta! Marta!"

She ran outside, jumped into the white Toyota pickup, and sped straight up above the cashews and mangoes back to the Great Stone City in the sky!

Tonight the gate was open, but blocked by a powerful giant with "huge shoulders, crossed arms, and a very bad frown." His words were clear.

"You must leave the old life as a *curandeira*, destroy all your *curandeira* tools, and teach your neighbors about Jesus and His heavenly city.

Marta turned the truck around, pressed the accelerator down, and drove straight home to Mucapane. She rushed into her hut, gathered all of her "curandeira stuff," and hauled it out to the firepit. She stirred up her fire and threw the amulets, charms, bones, and her favorite idols into the flames. She even burned the money she had been saving for a truck.

*It's bad money, Marta thought, and I don't need a truck to get to heaven anyway.*

Everyone in the village heard the commotion and stood amazed around the fire. That morning Marta started a Jesus congregation in Mucapane, Mozambique. They met beside her firepit, beneath the village's tallest cashew tree, studying a few Bible pages together and planning for heaven.

"Marta, what's the first thing you want to do when you get to heaven?"

"Let me tell you what I want to do when I get home to heaven," Marta's face crinkled with a joyous smile as she looked up from shelling the village peanuts. "I want to take a long walk with Jesus. I want to hold His hand. I want to listen to His voice. I want to look into His eyes. I want to say thank You for loving this *curandeira* into an *evangelista*!"

When Marta finished her story, the peanut-shellers filled Mucapane with boisterous Hosannas! ☺

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# Trail Ride

Thrills, lessons, and God's protection

**T**rail ride. The sound of those words sent chills down my spine and injected excitement into my bones! Since most of my friends from church had horses, we planned horse-related activities as often as possible. This time I was especially thrilled to have my horse, Lightning, to take on the trail ride. He was a rich-brown color with a luxuriously long, blond mane and tail, and a spunky personality. He was fun to ride, but also possessed a stubborn streak. He often refused to stop no matter how many times I yanked those reins with all my might; he seemed to forget that I was supposed to be in control. *Hopefully this time he will listen*, I thought.

Our excitement filled the air, mingled with the scent of horses and leather gear. My sister Naomi, friend John, his sister Kaylee,<sup>1</sup> and the others had their four-legged mounts

too. Anticipation rose higher as we eagerly prepared for our horseback adventure. After saddling the horses and packing food into our saddlebags for lunch, we gathered to pray for God's protection and presence. It wasn't until later that day that we realized the importance of our prayer.

We rode for several miles down a paved road, following trails into the woods. I enjoyed the natural scenery as we rode through places new to me. Fresh green grass combined with golden fields to contrast the bright-blue sky. The warm sun shone down on my skin, glistening on the horses' sweaty bodies. Whenever we encountered a good stretch of dirt road, we would gallop fast and freely, savoring the wind mingled with our excited breath. It was so much fun!

A little later, as our horses plodded along a winding trail,

Kaylee, riding her brother's horse named Justin, and I pondered out loud: "Which horse is faster: Lightning or Justin?" Justin was tall and slender, seemingly built for speed and jumping. Lightning, almost a hand<sup>2</sup> shorter than Justin, made up for the height difference with spunk and pride. "Well, there's only one way to find out." We turned to each other with twinkles in our eyes and said, "Let's race!"

Since we were on a trail wide enough for two horses, deep in the woods, we assumed it was long enough for a race. "On your mark, get set, go!" We took off, leaving the others behind in a cloud of dust. Horse hooves were pounding, adrenaline was pumping, tree branches seemed to cheer as we flew past them. The horses could feel the exhilaration. It was a close race: Lightning takes the lead; no, Justin ahead by a nose; but wait, Lightning is picking up



## Bible Treasure

“The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them”

(Ps. 34:7, NIV).

speed; and now . . . Oh, no!

STOP! Kaylee and I were so focused on the race that we overlooked the paved road swiftly approaching. Speeding horseshoes and blacktop pavement do not mix! Quickly glancing at Kaylee, I could see her legs straighten in the saddle as she used all her arm strength to yank the leather reins back, hoping to stop the determined runner, but it was useless. Justin thought it was only a suggestion.

Lightning must have thought the same thing because he refused to stop and let Justin beat him. We had seconds to stop our charging steeds before reaching the treacherous pavement. Seeing a small grass clearing on our side of the road, I made a split-second decision to turn sharply to the left, pulling as hard as I could on the reins, anxiously hoping that Lightning would go there instead of the road. He slipped a

little on the road, his horseshoes briefly scraping the blacktop, but he quickly caught himself and stopped on the grass. I was grateful he surrendered his usual stubbornness during our emergency.

He proved to be easier to stop than Justin. I sighed in relief, but then held my breath, watching Kaylee do her best to stay in the saddle as Justin, slipping and sliding on the road, nearly fell, scraping one of his hind legs on the pavement. Finally he managed to steady himself and move to the opposite side of the road. Whew! We were safe. While we took a few seconds to catch our breath and wait for the others in our group to catch up, we noticed blood on one of Justin’s hind legs from his moment as a road-skating horse.

Kaylee dreaded her brother’s reaction to his horse’s injury and our not-so-smart adventure. But what happened next made us momentarily forget all about

that. Seconds after we were off the road, a massive utility truck thundered past. Kaylee and I exchanged shocked glances, suddenly aware that if we had reached the road just seconds later, everything could have turned out very differently. On the ride home I thought about how close we had come to an unhappy ending, gratefully aware of God’s amazing timing and protection. I also decided to be more careful if I ever raced down an unfamiliar road again.

“The angel of the Lord” truly “encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them” (Ps. 34:7, NIV). ©

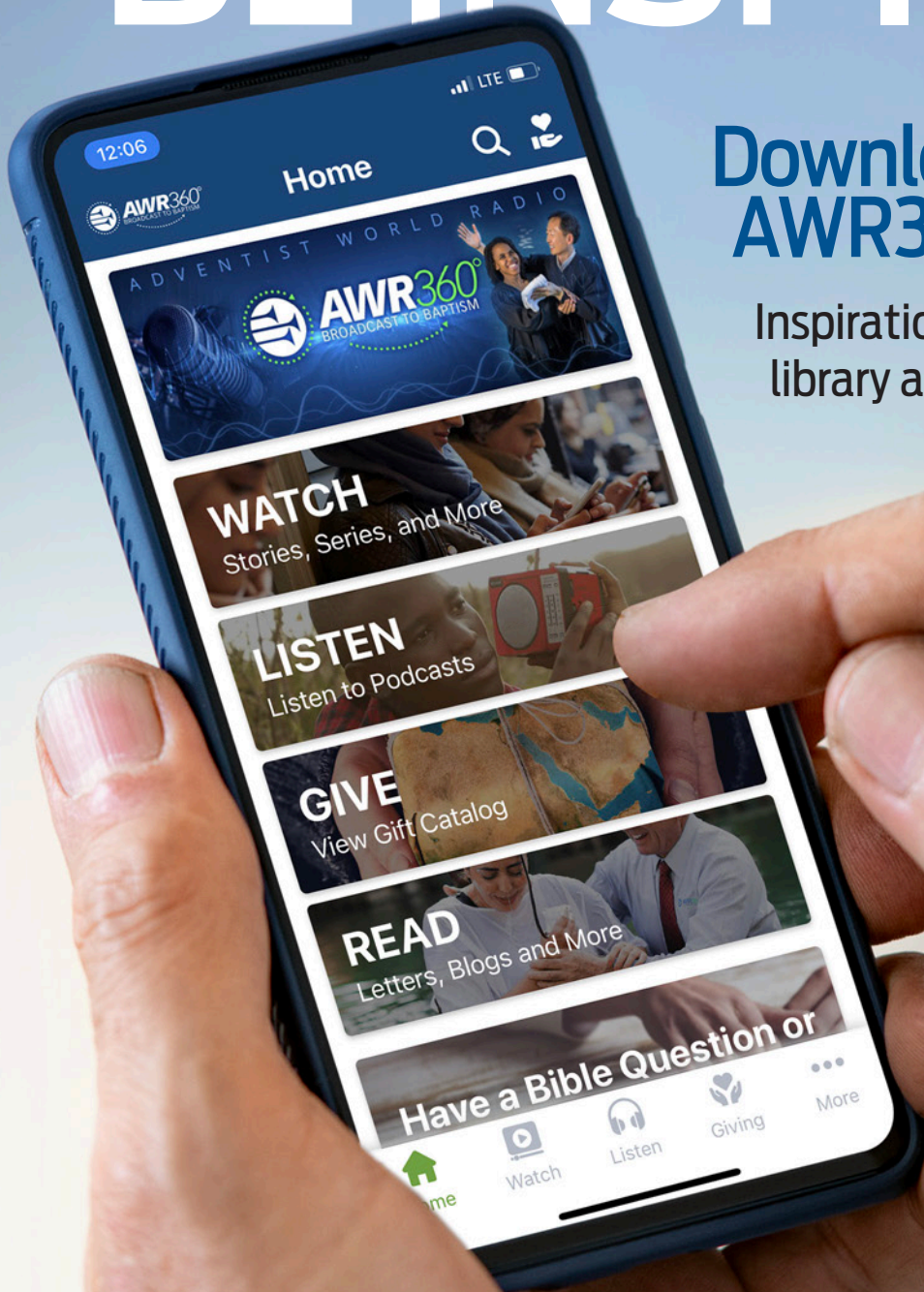
<sup>1</sup> Names have been changed.

<sup>2</sup> “Hand” is a term measuring a horse’s height from the ground to its shoulders. One “hand” equals 4 inches (10 centimeters).

**Mayri Clarke** writes from **Chattanooga, Tennessee, United States.**

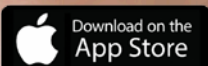


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