

**JULY 2023: PROPHECY IN CRISIS + A CHRISTIAN  
POWER GRAB + OUR HOPE IS IN THE ROCK +  
ANONYMOUS WITNESSING + 3.5 YEARS LATER**

# ADVENTIST REVIEW

## Shattered Dreams

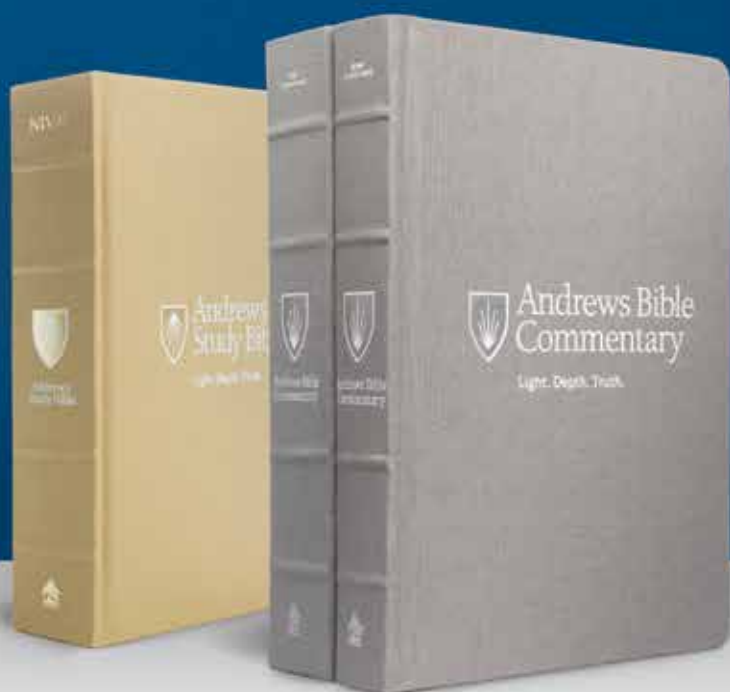
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# TRENDING

THE MOST SHARED  
STORIES ON  
ADVENTISTREVIEW.ORG  
LAST MONTH:

# 1



Benjamin D. Schoun Passes Away at 74

# 2



G. Ralph Thompson Passes Away at 94

# 3



AdventHealth Doctor Donates Own  
Bone Marrow to Save a Child's Life

# 4



The Holy Spirit Comes Again to Athens

# 5



It's a Heart Issue



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SIKHULEKILE DACO



*Our understanding of Bible prophecy as Seventh-day Adventists gives us our bearings.*

## A Prophetic People

Can we get so enraptured with the enigma of Bible prophecy that it becomes a ghastly obsession? As with all things, yes! It is possible that the numbers, the calculations, the historical facts, and even speculation can so engross our attention that we lose sight of the broader significance of the prophetic message. An excessive fixation on all the dates and names can also become a source of pride and a substitute for genuine Christianity.

On the flip side, ignorance of our prophetic identity engenders confusion. Why have we embraced certain standards and lifestyle practices? Why do we zealously emphasize certain doctrines? In what manner should we engage the world? It is with the realm of how we interface with the world that this magazine issue is concerned.

In the early 1800s our Advent movement was born of an ardent exploration of the sacred Scriptures and their prophetic utterances. Then in the wake of the Great Disappointment of 1844, the Advent believers discovered their unique mission within the prophecies of Revelation. In fact, early Adventists found that their experience of disappointment was prophesied in Revelation 10, affirming their very existence. Through the years prophecy has continued to guide and frame the identity and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist movement.

World events periodically compel us to reevaluate our comprehension of prophetic truths. Consider, for instance, how, for many, the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 simultaneously raised hopes for the unification of Europe and doubts about the veracity of Daniel 2. Then shockingly, on January 31, 2020, the United Kingdom became the first sovereign nation to withdraw their membership from the European Union, shattering previous hopes and affirming confidence in Bible prophecy. One wonders what investments and long-term strategies could have been (or were) impacted in 1992 based on a confidence in Daniel 2's interpretation?

Today the global landscape is riddled with fear. Fear of terrorism. Fear of pandemics. Fear of ethnic extinction. Fear of the effects of the decline of morality in society. Fear of the effects of the rise of dogmatism. Fear of the known and the unknown. These fears have led some to reinterpret our understanding of prophecy, particularly those found in the books of Daniel and Revelation. Political affiliations, long-standing prejudices, and new ideologies are superimposed or undermine our established understanding. What, instead, would be our Christian witness if we exhibited confidence in the outcomes predicted in the pages of Scripture? How

are we to relate to Christian political trends, and what is our role as a prophetic movement in these end-times?

Our understanding of Bible prophecy as Seventh-day Adventists gives us our bearings. It tells us where we are in earth's history and reassures us that our trials and challenges come as no surprise to an omniscient God. When fear grips the world around us, it finds no place in the heart of those whose confidence is grounded in the God of Scripture; the God who promised Adam and Eve that He would crush the serpent's head though it would bruise His heel; the God who told Abraham that his descendants would be strangers and slaves in a foreign land for 400 years; the God who through Jeremiah foretold that Israel would endure the yoke of Babylonian captivity for 70 years; the God who predicted that after Rome's rule Europe would never again adhere to one another.

When we accept the God of Bible prophecy as our God, we can engage the world with an inscrutable confidence, deeply affected and yet simultaneously unfazed by the exceeding wickedness of evil.

We know today the broad strokes of what tomorrow holds. Our Christianity, then, cannot mirror that of a world in doubt or darkness. We have a prophetic calling. We are a prophetic people. ▀



## STILL LEARNING NEW THINGS

In the June 2023 *KidsView*, which comes with the *Adventist Review*, there was a fun quiz page about rocks in the Bible. I was disappointed that I could not figure out the very first one, which read “This person was asked by God to hit a rock to supply the Israelites with water.” I only remembered that God told Moses to *speak* to the rock, and when Moses hit the rock, God was displeased (Num. 20). Then I looked up the Bible text you provided and remembered that God had told Moses earlier to hit the rock.

I truly love the *Adventist Review* and read it cover to cover every month. I learn so many new things and draw closer to God because of the inspiration and motivation you provide.

Thank you!

**Connie**

## NEW EDITOR IN TOWN

I have fond memories of *KidsView* from when I was younger.

**Samuel Girven**

It looks great and the content is wonderful! Just what kids need.

**Gina Wahlen**

I like reading *KidsView!* I save them for kids when they come over on Sabbath.

**Laura Jean-François**

*Beth Thomas, assistant editor, is the new KidsView editor. Check out the latest KidsView, our publication for children, ages 8-12. It arrives each month with an Adventist Review subscription, or read it online at kidsview.com. —Editors*

## AN INFINITE LENS

In “Vacancy at the Grand Hotel” (June 2023) Cliff Goldstein talks about an “infinite gift.” Even without the qualifier “infinite” the gift is a gift. A gift, by definition, is not earned. In our fallen humanity we simply have a difficult time receiving something free that is not attached to our deservedness. But I like the way Clifford got us to thinking about the gift through the lens of the concept of infinite.

**Kevin James**

## AT A REASONABLE PRICE

La Ronda Curtis Forsey and Janine Lim share the history of distance education in the Adventist Church in their article “A Journey of Innovation” (May 2023). Here in southern New England we have OCA (One Connection Academy), which is a satellite campus utilizing the Atlanta Adventist Academy (AAA) delivery system. The facilitator-led school is much like David’s as described in the article. It has been a great success, providing high-quality Adventist Christian education and a full high school curriculum to students who would otherwise travel great distances or attend public schools. And at a reasonable price. It is hoped many more students and parents will soon attend an OCA-type academy, since Adventist education is only serving a small, and evidently shrinking, fraction of our membership.

**George Odell**

## WOULD LOVE TO SEE THIS

Bill Knott’s article “The (School) Room Where It Happened” (May 2023) is very encouraging. Sadly, our school has been closed. It came down to money. The tuition became too high for anyone. But I would love to see this happen here.

**Chris**



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A gift, by definition, is not earned. In our fallen humanity we simply have a difficult time receiving something free that is not attached to our deservedness.

KEVIN JAMES

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### A HUGE MISSION FIELD

Julia DiBiase's tips in "Supporting Adventist Teachers" (May 2023) apply to Adventists teaching at non-Adventist schools. Please support your public school teachers who are Adventist as well! We have a huge mission field!

**Miranda Gresham**

### REACHING SUBCULTURES

I wish we went to the same lengths described in the online article "Amish Adventists Launch Bible Correspondence School" with many more numerous contemporary groups and subcultures, whether they're gamers, metalheads, science fiction fans, Swifties, or whatever else. These are modern "religions" that gather dozens of millions of incredibly devoted people. They need the gospel in relatable ways as well! For some reason the combination of terms "Amish Adventists" (two separate religions) does not worry us, while any biblically rooted attempt to conscientiously come closer to the much larger populations of contemporary subcultures is too often viewed with unnecessary suspicion.

**Matija Kovačević**

### LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX

I'm glad to see Friedensau Adventist University addressing the topic of sex as reported in the online article "Let's Talk About Sex." I do hope that someday someone will discuss sexuality and the single—as in the widow and widower. No one seems to address it. How does a sexually active married adult all of a sudden, with the death of their spouse, turn off their sexuality? How do they cope? No one seems to address this part of widowhood in a Christian, biblical manner. Please, would someone take this up? Thank you.

**Chrissie**

### SABBATH SINGALONG

I listen to the Sabbath Singalong every day ("Digital Disciple Receives Award for Sharing Sabbath With the World" online). I play it all night long—it's both my awake and sleep music. I am so blessed every time I listen. Thank you, Sandra Entermann, for hitting that live button. I want to go to Australia just to visit all

the "famous" singers and musicians in your crew! May God bless this wonderful ministry.

**Annie Raney**

### A BIG PROJECT

This is a big undertaking, one that readers appreciate! Thank you!

**Southern Tidings**

*We're super-excited to announce that most of the archives for Adventist Review and our sister publication, Adventist World, can be found on the General Conference Archives site ([adventistarchives.org](http://adventistarchives.org)). The most recent five years will be found on our websites ([adventistreview.org](http://adventistreview.org) and [adventistworld.org](http://adventistworld.org)), but the issues from 1850 to 2018 can be found for Adventist Review and 2005 to 2018 for Adventist World on the archives site. All issues are completely searchable. On the archives website, click online articles, then periodicals. Content will be found under Adventist World and Review and Herald.*  
—Editors

### YOUR TURN

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

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\*For more research, visit [southern.edu/100reasons](https://southern.edu/100reasons).

Collegedale, TN



**“We’re at a time in society when, unless we’re out meeting the needs of the community, our churches are in danger of becoming irrelevant.”**

**G. Alexander Bryant, p. 13**

# NEWS



Opening night of the evangelistic meetings in Prague, Czech Republic, on May 12. PHOTO: MARCOS PASEGGI, ADVENTIST REVIEW

## **“THIS JOURNEY DOES NOT END WITH THIS SERIES OF MEETINGS”**

**EVANGELISTIC SERIES IN PRAGUE CALLS ATTENDEES TO FIND HOPE IN GOD’S WORD.**

MARCOS PASEGGI, ADVENTIST REVIEW

**T**wo weeks of evangelistic meetings in Prague, Czech Republic, called attendees to embark on a journey with Jesus that will know no end. Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, was the guest speaker for the meetings that took place May 12-27 at the Společenské centrum Bethany (Bethany Social Center). The Prague series is part of Christ for Europe, an unprecedented evangelistic initiative taking place across the continent.

“In this world we live in today, hope is a precious commodity. During this series we are on a journey, a journey to understand hope in God, hope in His Word, hope in His prophecies, and hope in God’s ultimate victory over sin,” Wilson said with the assistance of Rene Metz, his interpreter into Czech. “This world is in God’s hands, and ultimately, He will put an end to sickness and suffering and war.”

Wilson invited church members and visitors alike to go back to the Bible to find answers about their

past, present, and future. He called them to venture into a journey with a beginning but no end. “This journey does not end with the end of the series of meetings,” Wilson said. “Even though I am a pastor, I am still on a journey with Jesus. So we’ll take this journey through history and discover God’s plan for us.”

### **A MEANINGFUL PLACE**

At the beginning of his message, Wilson reminded his audience of the significance of the city where the meetings are taking place. “We

are here in Prague, in Bohemia, the place where John Hus came from,” he said. “What a heritage you have in this location! What a legacy of being able to share God’s Word and stand faithful to what God has asked!”

Wilson emphasized that it is a privilege to follow in the footsteps of Reformers like John Hus. And that it is an opportunity for all those who are willing. “Every one of us can be a faithful witness for God. Even if you are a timid person, God can use you in a powerful way. And [if you are of] those who have great enthusiasm and are outgoing and optimistic to reach people, God can use you too.”

### IMPORTANCE OF THE SERIES

The series in Prague is supported by Adventist World Radio, which has also partnered with various church regions to assist in hundreds of venues across the continent. It has also enlisted the support of Radim Passer, a lay Adventist church member and well-known Czech businessman with experience in outreach and mission initiatives across the Czech Republic and beyond. With a life story that has resulted in several books and a documentary, Passer also shared tidbits about his life and the way God transformed him.

He has multiple contacts in the business world, where he openly shares that he is a Seventh-day Adventist Christian. Prague 4 city district mayor Ondřej Kubín was one of the special guests who attended the opening night of the series together with his wife.

Passer is also involved in Adventist-laymen’s Services and Industries Europe (ASI Europe) and funds outreach initiatives through Maranatha,\* an organization that in its 21 years of existence has been involved in hundreds of different projects and activities in more than 50 countries.

“I am a disciple of Jesus,” Passer proclaims to anyone who would like to hear him. “And our hope is in Him.”

The Prague meetings also enlisted the assistance of a carefully coordinated team of smiling church members. They included greeters, hosts, musicians, audio and visual volunteers, and many others. The meetings were livestreamed on YouTube, organizers said. Other venues across the Czech Republic held their own evangelistic series, including places in Jihlava, Mohelnice, Olomouc, Ostrava, Uherské Hradiště, and Zábřeh. 📌

\*Not to be confused with Maranatha Volunteers International.

## IN THE CITY AND IN THE LAST CORNER OF THE KINGDOM

**BICYCLING TEAM WITNESSES HOW GOD OPENS DOORS IN THE SHETLAND ISLANDS.**

MARCOS PASEGGI, ADVENTIST REVIEW

**W**hat is going on here?” a middle-aged man asks.

He’s tucked inside his van as a relentless drizzle prevents him and others from walking on the beach.

The man, who says he’s from a town outside Manchester in England, drives one of several vans that are currently parked by Norwich Beach on the Isle of Unst. Unst is the northernmost isle of the Shetland Islands and the northern border of the United Kingdom.

“Let me explain.”

As he has done many times during this bleak May 17, I Will Go Ride team coordinator Anthony Kent stops to answer the man’s question and ends up leaving a couple of Adventist books with him.

This man might be the last contacted that day, which started many hours and a couple of ferry rides before from the team’s base in Bixter on the Shetlands Mainland.

### A PLAN AND A SCHEDULE

Earlier that morning retired pastor Paul Tomkins reflected on the example of Paul when reaching others. “He went out and took his time to meet people where they were and worshipped,” Tomkins said. At the same time, Paul “was ready to change his modus operandi and present the gospel in public places when he had the opportunity to do it.”



Anthony Kent (center) and Fitzroy Morris chat with a resident of Brae in the Shetland Islands, United Kingdom. PHOTO: MARCOS PASEGGI, ADVENTIST REVIEW

Kent has prepared an optimistic schedule for a route north to outer isles on the northeast of the Shetlands. They know rain is forecast for the afternoon, and they want to make the most of every moment to cover as much of the islands as possible before it becomes too wet. Their mandate and priority, however, are clear. “At the end of the day we are not in the Shetlands just to ride,” Kent says. “We want to meet people and witness to them. That’s our first goal.”

Their desire becomes true as a few minutes into the morning ride they stop, time after time, to talk to people from all walks of life. A man waiting in his parked car; a worker fixing a sheep fence; a young woman walking by; and even a Nigerian gravedigger. This group of cyclists in light-blue matching gear seem to pique their curiosity. All of them end up with flyers or a book.

### GOING BEYOND

The first ferry crossing puts the team on the Isle of Yell (population 966), and not much later, the drizzle starts to fall. After riding Yell from southwest to northeast, another ferry takes them to Unst (population 632). Ferry crossings are also an opportunity for Kent, who connects with and talks to

some of the drivers waiting in their vehicles.

By then the drizzle is barely visible, but relentless. After Kent and General Conference associate health director Torben Bergland ride northeast through Unst, they reach Norwick Beach. Minutes before that, the cyclists and their supporting vehicles stop by Haroldswick Methodist Church, a small sanctuary advertised as Britain’s Most Northerly Church.

“Who knows,” a wet and cold cyclist comments as they all store their bicycles for the drive back, “if a future church member won’t be able to trace their first contact to this afternoon.”

That notion is perhaps what kept them riding despite the cold and the rain.

### GOING WITHIN

On May 18, another cold and cloudy day, it is time to leave their bikes aside for a while to walk downtown Lerwick. The capital city (population 7,500) is bustling with movement, as the first cruises of the season have begun to arrive at the port.

The cycling team members each go their own way in the streets around the Islesburgh Community Centre, the venue chosen for the

weekend meetings. Once again they talk to passersby, distributing flyers and an occasional book.

Then, when team members seem ready to take a break, Inverness pastor Wilfred Masih has an idea. “What if we call the radio?” he suggests. “What can we lose?”

Masih is surprised when the person on the other end of the line at BBC Shetland 92.7 FM tells them to pay a visit to the station to be interviewed. Masih, Kent, and Scottish Mission president Jimmy Botha visit the station. Once more they explain what they are doing on the Shetlands and why.

Then two newspapers pick up the story and write about it. One of them, the *Shetland Times*, highlights the cyclists as “a group of pastors from Norway and different parts of Scotland” who are “having conversations with locals, talking to them about hope.”

The radio interview and the feature in printed media had not been in the original plans of the I Will Go Ride team. But once again God opened doors that they had not considered.

“My heart is overflowing right now because of all that I am experiencing,” Botha writes in a message to the team. “This is heart-warming.”



The mission trip team in Mana Island, Fiji. PHOTO: PACIFIC UNION COLLEGE

## MISSION TRIP TO FIJI BUILDS LOVE RELATIONSHIPS

PACIFIC UNION COLLEGE INITIATIVE SUPPORTS ISOLATED COMMUNITIES.

LAURA GANG, PACIFIC UNION COLLEGE

In March, during spring vacation, a group of students and faculty from Pacific Union College (PUC), in Angwin, California, traveled to Mana Island, Fiji, for a 10-day mission trip.

It had been nearly a decade since the first PUC trip to this remote location. Mana is very small, with a population of about 500 people. Each mission trip has focused on meeting their needs in a variety of areas. A deep connection between PUC and the community has developed with each return trip to the island.

Under the leadership of former missions director Fabio Maia and two coleaders, Floyd Hayes and Sandra Ringer, this year's mission trip included 12 nursing and three non-nursing students. Nicolette Piaubert, a nursing professor at PUC, also went on the trip and helped lead health-care services.

"This year we focused mostly on providing medical and dental care for the residents of the island, working as a team with American and Brazilian health-care professionals," Hayes said. "We also provided

laptop computers, snorkeling gear, solar power systems, Vacation Bible School, and trash removal."

At a spring Week of Prayer program in April, Ringer told students about the recent trip to Fiji and said there is virtually no health care on Mana Island. There is only one nurse who works part-time at a nearby resort.

On this trip the PUC group learned that a local "healer" initially discouraged community members from seeking their health-care services. Ringer said not many people came on the first day. But when Piaubert treated some patients that evening, word began to spread. They had more than 100 patients the next day and 90 the day after.

PUC student Jan Jernigan has just finished the assistant nursing program and is now working on her Bachelor of Science in nursing. She was excited about the Fiji mission trip and the chance to gain medical experience and help minister to the people. When she learned that she could also earn academic credit for her clinical hours, she said it was a "win-win."

Jernigan said once the group arrived and set up the clinic, she went to work helping with triage. She took patients' vitals and gathered information about why they had come to the clinic. Then she directed them to the appropriate or specialized medical professional. Jernigan and other students visited homes and helped survey the village for potential health risks. They also handed out clothing and soap.

The most memorable part of the trip for Jernigan was playing with the children and seeing their care for one another. "The Fijian people, especially on Mana Island, have such a beautiful community that impacted my life," she said. "They laugh, worship, pray, play, work hard, and spend time truly enjoying each other's company."

Hayes said the residents of Mana Island were especially excited about two of the mission projects. "The residents were very pleased to have electricity at the school for the first time in several years, and they were very pleased to receive medical and dental care," he said.

On the last day of the trip, the group gathered with the people of the village. As the sun set with splendid colors in the sky, they joined hands together and sang, "We Shall Overcome."

Social work major Madison Alejandra Dietrich said, "I feel like we've lost the idea of community. This was like going home to heaven." 🍀



James Doggette addresses church members and visitors at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for Patmos Chapel's recently completed "worship hub." PHOTO: CURTIS WALTERS

## INAUGURATION HIGHLIGHTS ROLE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

PATMOS CHAPEL IN APOPKA, FLORIDA, SEEKS TO BECOME A "WORSHIP HUB."

CARLOS MEDLEY AND ADVENTIST REVIEW

**T**he Patmos Chapel Seventh-day Adventist Church celebrated the grand opening of their long-awaited "worship hub" in Apopka, Florida, United States, March 17-18. Festivities began March 17 with a ribbon-cutting and dedication ceremony. Attending were guests from the Southern Union Conference and city, county, and state leaders, including Bryan Nelson, Apopka mayor, who offered their greetings and well wishes.

On March 18 more than 800 people packed the "hub" and an adjacent overflow room. Among the special guests was Michael Owusu, president of the Southeastern Conference, who congratulated the members for the sacrificial giving that made the renovation possible.

During his sermon North American Division president G. Alexander Bryant commended the congregation for its vision. "Do you know what the emphasis is in the world church today?" he asked. "It's to have a place like this—to turn our worship centers into community places that will serve the needs of the people for whom Jesus Christ died. How do we take our places of worship and turn them from places that gather just two hours a week to places that serve the community seven days a week?"

The congregation was birthed in a tent in Winter Park in 1937. Throughout its 86-year history parishioners have experienced several construction projects and relocations. But the latest move was radically different. When the assembly acquired the Apopka property in 2019, it wasn't designed as a church building; instead, it housed a widely recognized athletics program, which offered unique opportunities for mission.

Church leaders named the building "The Well Activity Center," a reference to the biblical story of the woman at the well in John 4. The 107,000-square-foot activity center has basketball courts, a kids gymnasium, volleyball courts, batting cages, martial arts facilities, a restaurant, and an outdoor video screen used to stream services to the parking lot.

### A DIFFERENT MISSION FIELD

The Well serves hundreds of young people and adults who participate in such activities as gymnastics, martial arts, basketball, baseball training, tutoring, and workplace screening. As a result, there's a mission field right inside the church's doors; the "worship hub" provides a spiritual complement to the physical activities the Well offers.


In addition to the activities in-

side the Well, Patmos impacts surrounding neighborhoods. In 2019 the church launched a food drive that now serves more than 30,000 people each year. The biweekly food giveaway has greatly enhanced the health of Apopka residents and is one of the largest food distribution sites in the county. The church also collaborates with nonprofit groups to feed unhoused individuals in Orlando regularly.

"We're at a time in society when, unless we're out meeting the needs of the community, our churches are in danger of becoming irrelevant," Bryant said. "To see Patmos Chapel with a facility that meets the community's needs seven days a week is outstanding. They are ahead of the denomination at large."

### WHAT'S NEXT

In looking ahead for Patmos Chapel, senior pastor James R. Doggette, Sr., and executive pastor Marvin D. Mclean, Jr., are focusing on the growing mission field within the doors of the Well. "Each week hundreds enter the Well," Doggette said. "We need to touch those lives by being friendly, answering their questions, and meeting their needs."

"God has given us this building. He gave it to us for a purpose," he added. "With God's grace, we will fulfill that purpose." 



Ellen G. White's *Steps to Christ* in 14 of the languages Safeliz currently publishes.

PHOTO: MARCOS PASEGGI, ADVENTIST REVIEW

## FROM SPAIN TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

SAFELIZ PUBLISHING HOUSE IS MAKING A MISSION IMPACT AS NEVER BEFORE.

MARCOS PASEGGI, ADVENTIST REVIEW

An employee of Safeliz Publishing House in Spain and his family were vacationing in Greece a few years ago. As the days went by, they became good friends with the landlady of the place where they were staying. They enjoyed their experience so much that a year later they decided to go back and stay in the same place.

Wishing to witness to their kind landlady, he wrote to the leaders of the Greek Mission requesting a copy of Ellen G. White's *Steps to Christ* in Greek. When he got the copy in the mail, however, he felt disappointed. It was a bulky edition printed 50 years before. Its pages were yellowish and looked old-fashioned. There was no way he would feel comfortable giving away such an unappealing volume.

### AN IDEA IS BORN

Back at his desk at the Adventist-managed publishing house near Madrid, he had an idea. What if Safeliz contacted the Greek Mission and made them an offer to print multicolor illustrated copies of *Steps to Christ* in Greek?

The employee contacted his su-

periors, who got in touch with the Greek Mission field. Eventually a partnership was born that has now shipped thousands of copies of *Steps to Christ* to Greece.

The partnership with the Greek Mission, however, is not the only one Safeliz is involved in. During the past few years Safeliz has published that same edition of *Steps to Christ* in at least 14 languages, including Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, and Thai.

"By using the same basic design and similar illustrations, we can provide top-quality Adventist literature at a very affordable cost," Safeliz financial manager Sergio Mato says. "Also, we can decide where in the world to print, and send the books directly from the printing house to the church field that has requested them."

Workers at Safeliz warehouse in Spain regularly prepare pallets that are sent around the world. "Recipient not available on Saturdays. Please do not deliver," the label instructions say on a pallet ready to be loaded and sent to Chad. Other pallets wait nearby, ready to be shipped to other countries in Europe, Asia, and beyond.

### HEALTH BOOKS AND BIBLES

But it is not only Ellen G. White's volumes that are printed and shared with the world church. Safeliz also publishes books on healthy living. Multicolor volumes share healthy recipes and discuss ways to prevent diabetes, boost the immune system, and use the power of plants to enjoy better health.

Safeliz has also become known for the publication of Bibles that cater to specific age groups, professions, and interests. During the past few years it has published the *Pathfinders Bible*, the *Couple's Bible*, the *Colporteur's Bible*, and the *Archaeology and Cultural Background Study Bible*, among others. Most of these editions are offered in several major languages, including English, Spanish, French, and Portuguese.

### WALKING THE WALK

Safeliz, however, is not content with just promoting and selling books about healthy living. Its leaders have also implemented practices to live what they preach.

For years they have supported evangelistic initiatives across Spain and beyond. In its most recent multiyear effort, Safeliz leaders were the driving force behind the recently inaugurated Colmenar Viejo Church, the first Adventist congregation in the Madrid satellite town where the publishing house is located.

Safeliz is also using half of the land where the offices are located to grow fruit trees and other plants.





Benjamin D. Schoun

PHOTO: ADVENTIST REVIEW

## FORMER GC VICE PRESIDENT BENJAMIN D. SCHOUN DIES AT 74

**EXPERIENCED CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR  
SPECIALIZED IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT.**

ADVENTIST REVIEW STAFF

**B**enjamin D. Schoun, former vice president of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, passed to his rest on May 21, in Colorado Springs, Colorado, at 74. Schoun was an experienced leader known for his balanced approach and careful focus in conflict management and resolution.

Schoun completed a Master of Divinity in 1972 and a Doctor of Ministry in 1981 at Andrews University Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan. His dissertation eventually became the book *Helping Pastors Cope*, a resource on developing a support system for church pastors.

From 1972 until his retirement in 2015, Schoun served in various capacities, including church pastor in the U.S. and Canada, college professor, and educational and church administrator. He served 13 years at Andrews University as professor of church leadership, director of the Center of Continuing Education for Ministry, and associate dean of the Theological Seminary. His specialty was church leadership administration and conflict management.

In 1998 he was elected president of the Northern New England Conference and, two years later, president of the Atlantic Union Conference.

Adventist World Radio (AWR) elected him as president in 2002, a position he held until 2010. During his tenure as president of AWR, the number of broadcast languages increased from 45 to more than 75, and AWR began using many FM stations around the world in addition to continuing their original shortwave broadcasts.

In 2010 Schoun was elected as vice president of the General Conference, a position he held until his retirement five years later. In this capacity he worked closely with media entities of the General Conference, including AWR, Hope Channel, *Adventist Review*, and the GC Communication Department. He also served as chair of Andrews University Board and chair of the International Board of Ministerial and Theological Education.

Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the General Conference, sent his heartfelt condolences to Schoun's family. "Our sympathy, Christian love, and condolences go to Carol, his wife, and the family with this loss of our colleague," Wilson wrote. "Pastor Schoun had a wonderful gift for bringing balanced thinking into a situation, and provided fine assistance in the area of conflict management. He loved the Lord and this Advent message."

Schoun is survived by his wife, Carol (née Freuchtel), and adult daughter Kelly. The family held a private ceremony. ❧

Besides the ubiquitous olive trees, employees can harvest apricots, grapes, and figs. They can also grow their vegetable gardens.

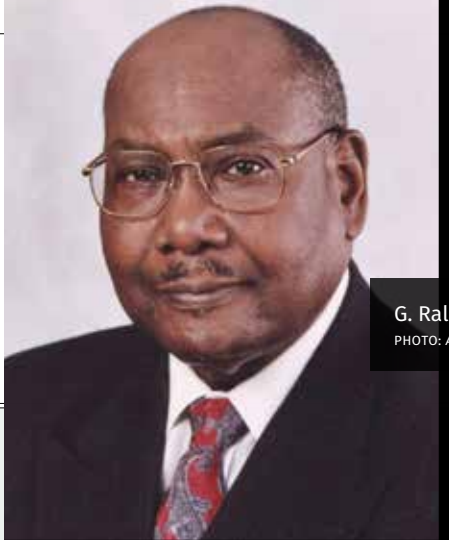
The publishing house has also opened a small but well-equipped gym for employees who want to give more attention to their physical fitness. The facilities include state-of-the-art machines, changing rooms, and shower stalls for both sexes.

"We try to keep our employees happy and cared for," Mato says. "If they are happy, we know we'll be able to count on them when we ask them to go a second mile. And they know it."

### AN UNFINISHED JOB

It's midday, and back in the warehouse, Safeliz employees are getting another shipment ready. They attach the shipping labels to the pallet, which, mercifully for the uninitiated, have transcribed the Greek characters into the Latin alphabet. "Christianikis Ekklesias Adventiston Evdomis Imeras," it reads. It is yet another shipment for the Greek Mission. More books. More contacts for the kingdom.

"In the past 12 months we have probably published and printed more books than in the previous five years," Mato says. "We keep adding languages and church territories. Still, there are many more who need to know this message. And our mission is to facilitate it." ❧



G. Ralph Thompson

PHOTO: ADVENTIST REVIEW

## G. RALPH THOMPSON PASSES TO HIS REST AT 94

HE WAS A FORMER VICE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY OF  
THE GENERAL CONFERENCE.

RACHEL ASHWORTH, ADVENTIST NEWS NETWORK, AND ADVENTIST REVIEW

**G**eorge Ralph Thompson, a pastor and former executive secretary of the General Conference, fell asleep in Jesus on May 20. Thompson was a remarkable individual whose contributions to mission and in leadership to the Seventh-day Adventist community will be remembered, church leaders said.

Reflecting on Thompson's life, Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the General Conference, shared his admiration for the late church administrator. "Pastor Thompson was a mentor and wonderful friend for many years. I had the privilege of working with him when I was a division secretary and as an associate secretary with him at the General Conference. He had a great, positive belief in the Seventh-day Adventist message," Wilson said.

Born in 1929 in Barbados, Thompson was the son of George Gilbert and Edna Thompson. He was ordained as a Seventh-day Adventist pastor in 1959. His commitment to his faith was unwavering, and his impact on the lives of those he served was profound, leaders said.

Thompson held various signifi-

cant roles in the Adventist Church throughout his career. He began his journey as an evangelist in the South Caribbean Conference in Trinidad and Tobago (1950-1953). Later he served as a teacher, church pastor, and chair of the Department of Theology at Caribbean Union College in the South Caribbean Conference from 1953 to 1954 and from 1959 to 1964. His passion for ministry and leadership skills led him to become the president of the East Caribbean Conference in Barbados from 1964 to 1970, followed by his tenure as the president of the Caribbean Union Conference in Trinidad and Tobago from 1970 to 1975.

During the 1975 General Conference Session in Vienna, Austria, Thompson's passion for ministry and leadership skills led to a nomination and election as vice president of the General Conference in Washington, D.C. He served in this role until 1980, when he transitioned to executive secretary. He remained in this position, serving the church for four five-year terms.

"Pastor Thompson was an example of faith and leadership. His ten-

ure as General Conference secretary, the longest in Adventist Church history, underscored his unyielding dedication to our mission," Erton Köhler, current General Conference executive secretary, said. "He was a deeply spiritual leader who shaped our church's trajectory. Pastor Thompson was a mentor to so many around the world that I am certain his example will continue to inspire future generations of Adventist leadership."

Even after his retirement, Thompson made valuable contributions as a field representative for the Ellen G. White Estate. His commitment to his faith was matched only by his devotion to his family. He married Imogene Clotilde Barker in 1959, and together they raised three children, Carol Jean, Gerald Randolph, and Linda Mae.

In his professional life Thompson exemplified love, kindness, and selflessness, leaders said. "His powerful sermons, leadership, and unwavering commitment to the Seventh-day Adventist message have left an indelible mark on the hearts and minds of those who had the privilege of knowing him and on the church to which he dedicated his professional life," they said.

"We extend to the entire Thompson family our heartfelt sympathy and Christian love," Wilson said. "Certainly the Holy Spirit will come close to them at this time, bringing encouragement and hope for Christ's soon return." 🍀



**MOTIVATION CAMP PREPARES STUDENTS TO THRIVE WHEN FACING CHALLENGES.** The Sabah Mission, which is now part of the newly formed Malaysia Union Mission, successfully hosted its twelfth Motivation Camp from April 13 to 16. A total of 132 individuals joined the camp. Aside from the exciting activities and challenges, the camp gives participants the opportunity to connect with pastors, elders, and youth leaders. Building these relationships allows them to seek aid and guidance throughout their tertiary education experience.



**IN JAMAICA, ADVENTIST FOOD BANK PARTNERS WITH COMPANY TO FEED THE NEEDY.** The Adventist Church in Jamaica, through its food bank, has embarked on a partnership with a corporate distribution company, Derrimon Trading, Ltd. (DTL), to assist them in feeding people in need across the nation. Food supplies valued at US\$35,000 were delivered through the five conferences in western, central, northern, northeastern, and eastern Jamaica, for distribution in several communities, April 25-28.



**MONGOLIA MISSION HOLDS SABBATH PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS.** “Sharing the Love” was the theme that mobilized the Mongolia Mission Adventist Possibilities Ministries and Volunteer Service to reach children with special needs. A total of 30 families participated in the program. Children ranged from 2 to 15 years old. The event was held at Emmanuel Church for Ulaanbaatar residents, since the building is wheelchair-accessible. Families and children appreciated the gifts they received, and each child took home a heart-shaped craft they made with their parents.



**ADVOCATES SUGGEST PRACTICAL IDEAS TO PROMOTE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.** The Adventist Church in Brazil held a national conference on religious freedom titled “Freedom 25.” The event took place in São Paulo May 13-15. The event suggested 100 practical ideas to strengthen religious freedom, all to be implemented by 2025. It trained and mobilized students, pastors, and volunteer leaders to promote, advocate, and protect religious freedom. It also sought to advance 25 specific topics in five areas: church, society, state, labor, and education.



**LEADERSHIP LAB EQUIPS ADMINISTRATORS TO FULFILL THEIR GOD-GIVEN MISSION.** The Life Hope Center in Silang, Cavite, Philippines, hosted the highly anticipated Leadership Laboratory Growth Series, known as LeadLab, May 14-17. This four-day event provided Adventist administrative leaders and their teams with essential tools, motivation, and support to help them achieve their God-given mission. The Global Leadership Institute’s LeadLab involved participants in an immersive journey through group activities, testimony, and training. The gathering hosted more than 30 leaders from the Southern Asia-Pacific Division territory.



**A DIFFERENT WAY OF CELEBRATING THE ADVENTIST CHURCH’S 160TH ANNIVERSARY.** The Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD) celebrated the denomination’s anniversary with a series of compassionate events. The celebration, which took place May 20-21, focused on benefiting various communities within the division territory. It included efforts aimed at delivering necessary supplies, health-care services, and compassionate care to those in need. These initiatives showed the church’s dedication to its mission. As part of the anniversary, the SSD handed out 160 sacks of rice to 160 residents.



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# THE NATURE OF PROPHECIES IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL

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*A brief synopsis*

**T**he book of Daniel is the shortest of the four major prophets. Yet for Seventh-day Adventists it is arguably the most important and most frequently studied book of the 16 major and minor prophets in the Old Testament. It records certain historical events in the life of Daniel and a number of dreams and visions given to the prophet and to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon.

We must distinguish between the classical prophecies as we find them in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the 12 minor prophets (Hosea to Malachi) and the apocalyptic prophecies

in the book of Daniel. The term *apocalyptic* comes from the Greek word *apokalypsis*, meaning “an unveiling” or “a revelation.” While classical prophecy deals primarily with events and issues in the life of the prophets, e.g., Isaiah’s messages to the nations of Judah, Babylon, Moab, Syria, Cush, Egypt, and Tyre (1-23), the book of Daniel describes by means of symbolic visions the course of human history and the final advent of the kingdom of God.

The book of Daniel divides into two parts: the first six chapters contain primarily history; the last six chapters, mostly visions. The historical chapters illustrate how God vindicates and delivers those who remain faithful to Him in a hostile pagan environment. Thus, the good news that trials and temptations are followed by blessings for those obedient to God is proclaimed throughout

these chapters. For example, in chapter 1 the four young Hebrews are tested concerning their commitment to the law of God. They are found faithful and are promoted to the palace of the king (verse 19).<sup>1</sup> The climax in each narrative chapter is the elevation of the worshippers of the true God, while the visions end in the establishment of the kingdom of God (Dan. 7:27; 8:26; 12:13).

### CHARACTERISTICS OF DANIEL'S PROPHECIES

*The Principle of Repetition*—The visions in Daniel 2, 7, and 8 deal with world history; chapter 9 announces the time of the Messiah's appearance; and chapters 10-12 contain the most detailed prophecy of future events in the Old Testament. We do well to remember, therefore, that the great prophecies in Daniel are given according to the principle of repetition and enlargement. These prophecies begin either in the days of Babylon (Daniel 2 and 7) or Medo-Persia (Daniel 8-12), but they each climax in the establishment of the kingdom of God—except Daniel 9, which ends with the destruction of Jerusalem. Daniel 2, 7, and 8 all deal with the same powers; chapter 7 enlarges the outline of chapter 2, chapter 8 enlarges the outline of chapter 7, and the vision of Daniel 10-12 enlarges the prophecy of Daniel 8.

*The Great Controversy*—In the introduction to the last vision, in Daniel 10:13 we see the cosmic dimension of the great controversy. Probably no other text in Scripture describes more clearly the struggle between the invisible powers that control and influence nations than verse 13. "But in the Word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, behind, above, and through all the play and counterplay of human interests and power and passions, the agencies of the all-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will. The Bible reveals the true philosophy of history."<sup>2</sup>

*The Year-Day Principle*—An important element of Daniel's prophecies is the fact that they are interpreted in accordance with the historicist method of interpretation, which includes the year-day principle, according to which a day in prophecy is a literal year. Thus the 1260 and 1290 days (Dan. 7:25; 12:11) are 1260 and 1290 years in literal time.

*Jesus Is the Center*—When studying Daniel's prophecies, we must not forget that Jesus is at the center of this book: He is the stone in chapter 2, He is the man in the fiery oven in chapter 3, He

**When studying Daniel's prophecies, we must not forget that Jesus is at the center of this Book.**

is the Son of man in chapter 7, He is the Prince of the host in chapter 8, He is Messiah the Prince in chapter 9, and He is Michael in the last vision in chapters 10-12. Daniel is primarily a book for the "time of the end." Matthew 24:15 refers to the time of the end prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70: "'Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place' (whoever reads, let him understand)"

*The Importance of Judgment*—Daniel means "God is my judge," and throughout the book we find explanations of that truth. The book begins and ends with references to judgment: at the beginning, apostate Judah is judged (Dan. 1:1, 2); at the end, the king of the north (Dan. 11:40-45). In the middle of the book (Dan. 7:9-13) God is portrayed as the Ancient of Days surrounded by the multitudes of angels with the books of judgment open. This pre-Advent or investigative judgment is important for the following reasons:

- Its historical importance lies in the fact that it provides an explanation for the disappointment in 1844. The recognition that Jesus in 1844 began the second phase of His ministry in heaven explains why He did not come to this earth on October 22, 1844.

- It is theologically important because in the pre-Advent judgment, the loving character of God, which has been in dispute through the controversy with Satan (Rev. 12:7-9), will be vindicated.

The main task of the book of Daniel is to prepare Christ's people for the last days, for the "time of trouble." Hence, we do well to heed Ellen White's counsel: "As we near the close of this world's history, the prophecies recorded by Daniel demand our special attention, as they relate to the very time in which we are living."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See also Dan. 2:48, 49; 3:30; 5:29; 6:28.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1903), p. 173.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1917), p. 547.

**Gerhard Pfandl** is a retired associate director of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference.



# PROPHECY IN

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*Returning to our roots or  
falling for every wind of  
doctrine*

**CHRIS HOLLAND**

I am deeply concerned.

There is a trend in Christianity in general, as well as in Adventism, to reinterpret and reapply a variety of prophecies from the Bible. This is particularly troubling, as the emphasis of much of this reinterpretation is human-centered rather than Christ-centered. It is with an almost eerily prophetic prediction that the Daniel and Revelation Committee warned the Adventist Church 32 years ago: "Today Seventh-day Adventists stand virtually alone as exponents of the historicist principles of prophetic interpretation. Recent events suggest that the Counter-Reformation—though delayed—is now knocking on the Adventist door. The historicist system of interpretation, as well as the positions derived thereby, is being challenged. Both futurist and preterist perspectives are being urged upon the church. It is crucial in these times for Seventh-day Adventist Christians to understand the principles—and the sound rationale for them—by which we as a people have interpreted the important prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation."<sup>1</sup>

**POSTMILLENNIAL UTOPIANISM**

Encompassed in the reinterpretation and reapplication of biblical prophecy in the Christian world are those interpretations that emphasize the restoration of America as the "New Israel." This perspective focuses its attention on the legislation of religion. While there is no doubt that the United States was founded on Judeo-Christian principles,

# CRISIS



Babylon

Medo-Persia

Greece

Imperial Rome

one of the most important principles is God's gift of free will. In order for His love to truly be love, it must give the right to say yes or no. There is danger in the reinterpretation of prophecy that emphasizes the necessity of legislation and power to bring about God's kingdom and its establishment on the earth. This idea is merely a reconstituted and baptized version of postmillennial utopianism. Christianity is letting go of the foundational historical-biblical interpretations of prophecy and replacing them with humancentric interpretations that focus on political and temporal power. Unfortunately, we are becoming no different than Israel of old: "We will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles" (1 Sam. 8:19, 20). What can we do?

We must return to our roots of an historical-biblical understanding of prophecy. This understanding is actually one of the foundations for who we are as Seventh-day Adventists. As indicated by the Daniel and Revelation Committee, a Seventh-day Adventist is not just "a Christian who observes the seventh-day Sabbath and who is preparing for the Saviour's second coming."<sup>2</sup> There is more to it than that.

It is in the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation that Adventists have found "their times, their

identity, and their task."<sup>3</sup> Conclusions that were reached "by employing the principles of the historical 'school' of prophetic interpretation." The historicist view is the same view that was used by the Millerites and the sixteenth-century Reformers.

It is time for a new reformation. A reformation that returns to the historicist principles that the Seventh-day Adventist Church was founded on. A reformation that reignites personal excitement for prophecy and sharing it with others. Unfortunately, for too many of us we have taken our prophetic roots for granted and lost a grasp on the biblical reality that it fosters. How can we appreciate and return to those roots?

#### READ IT AGAIN

I wasn't brought up with the privilege of a knowledge of the truth about prophecy. I was raised Catholic, and as I entered my teenage and then collegiate years, I had many questions. This led me to explore other religious options. I considered other Christian denominations as well as Eastern religions. Confused spiritually, I felt as if I were trying to put together a puzzle that was beyond impossible to figure out because it contained so many unmatched pieces. However, in 1995 I encountered the message of the Bible in a powerful way. Specifically, I encountered prophecy.

MATTHEW HERZEL



# Unfortunately, for too many of us we have taken our prophetic roots for granted and **lost a grasp on the biblical reality.**

Do you remember the first time you heard and studied Daniel 2? I remember how I was amazed and excited by God giving to Nebuchadnezzar a dream (and then that same dream to Daniel) that outlined world history in advance. It is so important to return to our prophetic roots. Let us take a moment to revisit the prophecy of Daniel 2, given some 2,600 years ago.

Nebuchadnezzar was the king of Babylon. Babylon had just conquered Judah and captured Jerusalem. As spoils of Babylon's victory, they took the best young men from Jerusalem back to Babylon to be trained in Babylonian ways and then placed over the conquered people to rule them. This was a normal practice, to give the conquered people the illusion that "one of their own" was ruling . . . yet their rule was in accordance with the conquering nation.

In 605 B.C. one of Jewish nobility that was taken to Babylon was the prophet Daniel. He, along with three of his friends, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael, stayed faithful to God and His ways throughout their time in Babylon. Not only were they faithful, but they excelled in all that they were asked to do by the king. This detail is important for what transpired in Daniel 2.

In Daniel 2 Nebuchadnezzar had a dream. The Bible says that he was disturbed by the dream; had forgotten some, if not all, of the dream; and didn't know what any of it meant, even what he could remember. He initially sought out an answer to his disturbing experience through his own advisors, wise men, magicians, and soothsayers. He was sorely disappointed, however, by their inability to help him know the dream and understand it. So frustrated was he at their incompetence that in a rage of fury he commanded that all wise men in the land should be killed. When the soldiers came to the home of Daniel and his three friends, who were considered part of the wise men, Daniel asked why the urgency and asked for time. We don't know why Daniel and his three friends weren't a part of the original

group that went to help the king, but now Daniel was given the opportunity to contribute.

Daniel knew God, and God knew Daniel. Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael sought the mercies of God through prayer, and God helped Daniel to know the dream and its interpretation. Daniel went before the mightiest king of his time and shared with the king what God had shared with him. The king had seen a multimetallic image in his dream—a dream that Daniel recounts, and then proceeds to interpret as representing a prophecy of the succession of powerful kingdoms throughout history and culminating in the establishment of a divine kingdom (Dan. 2:31-45).

The most important piece of this prophecy is the great promise of hope that all of those human kingdoms would be destroyed by a "stone . . . cut out . . . without hands" (verse 45). Luke 20:18 says, "Whoever falls on that stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." This promise is given in the context of Psalm 118:22: "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone." What a remarkable promise! It is Jesus Christ who will intervene in human history and bring all of those kingdoms and any current political powers to an end. That ending will occur when Jesus comes again and finally fulfills the establishment of His kingdom and a new heaven and a new earth. Are you looking forward to that day?

Only Jesus' intervention into human history will bring about an end of all things evil. I want to urge each of you to join me in embracing the historical-biblical interpretation of God's prophecies and placing our full faith and trust in Him. 🍀

<sup>1</sup> William H. Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation*, ed. Frank B. Holbrook, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series, rev. ed. (Silver Spring, Md.: Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1992).

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

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

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**Chris Holland** is senior evangelist at Hope Channel International and the president of Living Hope School of Evangelism.



CHRISTIAN LUE ON UNSPLASH

# HAVE WE RIGHTLY UNDERSTOOD EUROPE'S ROLE IN DANIEL 2?

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*Revisiting the statue*

**H**ave political events disproved our traditional Adventist interpretation of the prophetic message of Daniel 2? The feet and toes of the statue that Nebuchadnezzar saw in the dream represent the European nations that follow the dominant iron Roman Empire (Dan. 2:41, 42). The Bible tells us that “they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay” (verse 43). How does this picture square with the geopolitical reality in the twenty-first century?

## THE SPECTER OF UNITY

We are fascinated with the economic strength of the European Union and see it as a prime

example of political unity. In 2012 the European Union was awarded the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize for having contributed to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy, and human rights in Europe for more than six decades. The European Union appears as strong and cohesive as never before. Rather than falling apart, one could observe an impressive conglomeration of the European nations. Considering these indisputable political facts, how can we maintain that the biblical interpretation of Daniel 2 is still valid? Haven't political events invalidated the statements of Daniel 2? In addition, our inter-

pretation of the biblical prophetic message of Daniel appears rather Eurocentric. What about all the other great nations and highly developed civilizations of the world—from Asia to South America to Africa—that are not mentioned in Scripture? Does not the Bible display a rather limited ethnocentric perspective in which White European nations dominate the picture and feature prominently in our interpretation?

Knowing somewhat the European mentality and dynamic (because I grew up in central Europe and lived there for many years), I disagreed with the perception of Europe as being solidly unified. And history validated Scripture. In 2020 Brexit occurred and sent shock waves all over Europe and around the world. What was noticeable only for the perceptive observer of European political events became an undisputed fact with the decision of the majority of the British people who were Euro skeptics and who voted to withdraw from the European Union. Rapid political events had overturned what otherwise appeared to be a solid European union and gave the biblical message of Daniel 2 an unexpected confirmation. National pride and pervasive nationalistic feelings are very much alive today, and not just in Europe! They foster dangerous prejudices and often jeopardize political and ecclesiastical unity.

### **DIVINE INTERVENTION**

Since the British Brexit, some have promoted a “poetically licensed” version of the rock in Daniel 2 and have proposed that Britain is the “rock” that is bearing down upon Europe and ultimately will be the chief cause of its complete obliteration. Such a nationalistic interpretation of biblical symbolism does not do justice to the divine interpretation that the biblical text provides for us. In Daniel 2 the rock that is “cut without hands” does not end just the European Union. The Bible specifically tells us that “the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold” (verse 45) are affected. In other words, it is not just a divided Europe that is put to an end, but all the metals and materials that are mentioned in Daniel 2. They represent influential political and religious authorities throughout history that threaten God’s people. God tells us that He will put an end to these human powers and establish His kingdom that “shall never be destroyed” and that “shall not be left to other people.” God “shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and

## **Considering these indisputable political facts, how can we maintain that the biblical interpretation of Daniel 2 is still valid?**

[God’s kingdom] shall stand forever” (verse 44).

Is this biblical interpretation Eurocentric and biased because it discriminates against other cultures and nations? Not at all. First, not all nations mentioned in Daniel 2 are European nations. The dream in Daniel 2 starts out with Babylon and Medo-Persia, and only then do we see Greece and Rome emerge. These major nations are prophetically mentioned in Scripture, not because other advanced civilizations did not exist, but because these nations play a unique and significant role in connection with the history of God’s people. The religious-political powers that grow out of them will continue to play an important role in the end-time events of earth’s history. What began in Babylon and continued with Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome widens to a global dimension that encompasses all the earth and will culminate in the glorious return of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven.

In an age in which large segments of society are deeply worried about a climate crisis that threatens to toss the world into an ecological disaster beyond all expectations and in which many are afraid that the end of the world will be ushered in through a terminal nuclear catastrophe, Daniel 2 reminds us that the history of this earth is in God’s hands and that we don’t have to fear the future. While there will be tribulations, wars, famines, and natural disasters at the end of time (see Matt. 24 and Luke 21), the Bible tells us that the end of this globe will be initiated without human hands. There will be a supernatural end to earth’s history. Daniel 2 reminds us that the final kingdom is no earthly kingdom, but an eternal kingdom that is established by God Himself. This is good news that we can proclaim with confidence. While natural disasters, famines, earthquakes, floods, and wars will appear with increasing intensity, we can have hope, because Jesus will establish His eternal kingdom. He is the hope of the world. He is the way, the truth, and the life, which will never end. 📌

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**Frank M. Hasel** is an associate director of the Biblical Research Institute at the General Conference in Silver Spring, Maryland.



# HIS Impact On Me



## Finding Wholeness

**Nathaniel is a senior at Holbrook Indian School (HIS) and one of three siblings from the Greyeagle family to have attended HIS. On May 2021, the entire family was baptized together during one of the school's Sabbath services. Before their family baptism, Nathaniel says their family was not Christian. Nathaniel's dad was battling drug addiction, and Nathaniel says he struggled with depression.**

**It was through the recovery program hosted by the Chinle Seventh-day Adventist church located on the Navajo Nation that Nathaniel and his family were first introduced to Holbrook Indian School.**

What made me want to come to HIS was my poor mental health and my low grades. I was feeling trapped, I wanted to try a new school. I heard about HIS through my cousin Charles' mom.

After hearing the message of others who had come here before me and how it had changed them, I wanted that experience. I wanted to see how healthy it was to be here.

When I was here, I learned more about the Bible, Jesus, and God and thought it over and thought yeah, I do want to be baptized.

My experience at HIS has helped me by providing a place for me to talk about my experiences and opening me up to others who are experiencing similar issues. I did not have this at my previous school.

You can help other students like Nathaniel find wholeness, despite their circumstances.  
To to make a gift, visit [HolbrookIndianSchool.org/donate](https://HolbrookIndianSchool.org/donate).



**HOLBROOK  
INDIAN SCHOOL**

Development Department  
P.O. Box 910  
Holbrook, Arizona 86025-0910  
(928) 524-6845 (Ext. 109)  
[Development@hissda.org](mailto:Development@hissda.org)

# DOTS, LINES, AND SQUIGGLES

When the adults in the house didn't want us kids to know what they were talking about, they would yammer in Yiddish. However, outside a few choice insults (*farshunken, meshuggeneh, goyishe kop*), I never learned the language. In my mid-20s I worked for four months (illegally) in Zurich, where I greedily absorbed every syllable of Swiss Deutsch I could. About a year later, in the States, having entered a room in which an old Jewish man, talking on the phone, was speaking in Yiddish, I started to block him out, but then realized—I knew what he was saying. I instantly thought: *Wow! God gave me the true gift of tongues!*

But Yiddish?

Then it hit me: Swiss Deutsch and Yiddish both have Germanic origins, which is why I suddenly understood what was being said.

Language astounds me. How, after only four months, could my neural pathways have been so rewired that what for 20 years was to me meaningless utterances (sounded like German spoken through mouthfuls of pudding) now conveyed concrete and abstract ideas?

I also marvel that I can look at dots, lines, and squiggles that make up biblical Hebrew and Aramaic—languages thousands of years old and from a time and culture radically different from ours—and not only understand them but can see that certain dots, lines, and squiggles that make up modern English almost perfectly translate the dots, lines, and squiggles of Hebrew and Aramaic. How do the dots, lines, and squiggles of any language, or the sounds they represent, create worlds of thought and emotion and concepts in our brains?

Language is a gift from heaven, not earth; it came from above, not from within. In a brilliant book, *The Kingdom of Speech*, atheist Thomas Wolfe rips into the Darwinian charade as “a messy guess—baggy, boggy, soggy, and leaking all over the place,”<sup>1</sup> and unable to conjure up any explanation for human language. “Language in all its forms advanced man far beyond the boundaries of natural selection,” Wolfe continued, and this fact, he said, “was driving him [Darwin] crazy,”<sup>2</sup> unless one believes, as has been suggested, that language arose from millions of years of humans mimicking animal sounds. According to this theory, given enough time, random mutation and natural selection will transform *wuff wuff* into *Finnegan's Wake* or *The Brothers Karamazov*.

Words can be frighteningly powerful, surely one way that we reflect the image of God, who spoke—*spoke*—our world into existence. The right words, at the right time, in the right way, can cause us to thrive, or to descend into an abyss of hurt and despair. Who can't relate to these lines? “Norman nodded, dodging the hail of words. And yet many of them struck him.”<sup>3</sup> Anyone, which is all of us, who has been the victim of consonants and vowels whose sharp edges ripped into our guts and soul know the power of this astonishing gift, which, like all of God's gifts, has been—*ovey!*—so abused. 🦋

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Wolfe, *The Kingdom of Speech* (Little, Brown and Company), Kindle Edition.

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

<sup>3</sup> Edward Lewis Wallant, *The Tenants of Moonbloom* (New York Review Books), p. 105, Kindle Edition.

**Clifford Goldstein** is editor of the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*.

CLIFF'S  
EDGE  
CLIFFORD  
GOLDSTEIN

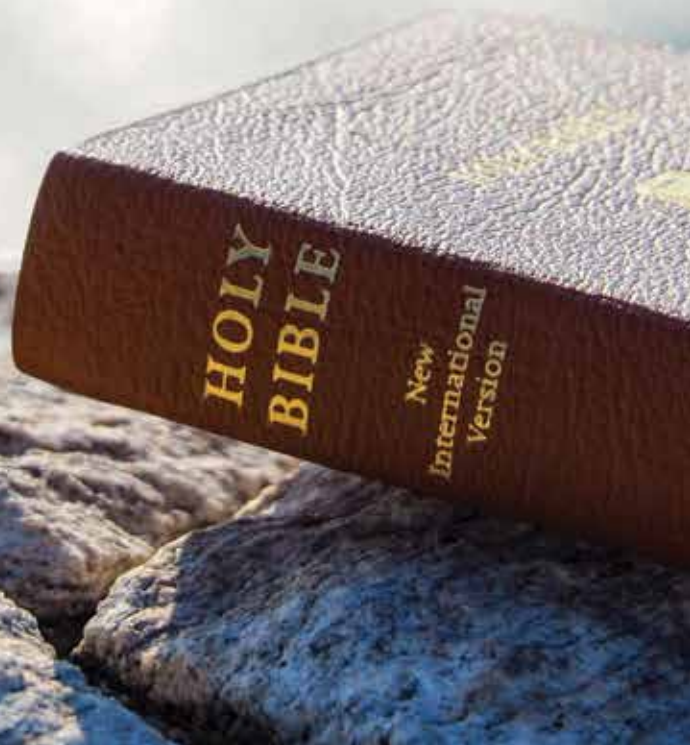


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# OUR HOPE IS IN THE ROCK

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*A warning against  
drinking the wine*





### ALAN J. REINACH

**T**he Advent hope is that the Lord is our Rock, a trustworthy and dependable sovereign who will establish His kingdom in His own time by His own hand without any human help. Yet there have always been Christians who imagined that God required their help to establish His kingdom in the here and now. So also today in the United States there is a powerful movement afoot steeped in the ethos that America is a Christian nation and must become even more overtly Christian through the exercise of political and spiritual power and authority. It borders on the blasphemous to think that religious and political leaders will establish something like the kingdom of God on earth. The movement was once referred to simply as “the Christian right.” More recently it has come to be known as Christian nationalism, as scholars have understood the goal to be a more overtly Christian America, in ways that marginalize those of other faiths.

### A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

Seventh-day Adventists know what it is like to be marginalized. We face systemic Sabbath discrimination both in the workplace and academia, with workers and students alike excluded because of Sabbath observance. Yet, because we share so many biblical values in common with other Christian believers, we are uniquely at risk of buying into the Christian nationalist agenda. After all, why shouldn't the state preserve “traditional” marriage as between a man and a woman, or seek to prevent the slaughter of innocent preborn human life? Many see these as perfectly reasonable social goals deserving of political support and allegiance. Let's take a step back and put our political and social values in a biblical perspective, shall we?

In Daniel's vision of a great statue of chapter 2 with a head of gold representing the kingdom of Babylon and other metals representing subsequent kingdoms, a stone cut out without

human hands destroyed all these human kingdoms, became a great mountain, and filled the earth. For Seventh-day Adventists the imagery of the rock takes on apocalyptic significance in the midst of political and social turmoil. This is the Advent hope itself—a different kind of kingdom, unlike the oppressive, violent institutions of human origin; a kingdom of God, where God’s people dwell securely with God.

This kingdom is elaborated in Jesus’ ministry, when the mother of “the sons of thunder,” the Jewish mother that she was, asked Jesus to favor her two sons to sit on either side of His throne. This mother wanted what many mothers want: an advantage for her sons. She expected Jesus as the Messiah to take His throne and rule all nations with a rod of iron. She wanted the kingdom of God. Jesus kindly rebuked her: “The rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant” (Matt. 20:25).

Lordship and authority—these are asserted by the Gentiles, and in all the human kingdoms to be destroyed by the stone cut out without human hands. These are not to be asserted by the church; they properly belong to God alone.

In Acts 1 a similar scene is played out, except this time the disciples ask for themselves, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” (verse 6). What were they really asking? Do we finally get to sit at Your right and left hand and rule with You in Your kingdom? They were so steeped in the messianic imagining of a son of David who would expel the Romans the way the Maccabees expelled the Greeks that even after the cross, they didn’t really understand.

### **THE WRONG WOMAN**

“It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority” (verse 7), Jesus answered. Determining the fate of empires and kingdoms and establishing the kingdom of God—these were matters for God’s authority. Jesus said, “But you shall receive” a different kind of power; not the authority to rule, but the power of the Holy Spirit. “And you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (verse 8). The only power God has ever delegated to the

church is the power of the Holy Spirit. The authority to rule in His name? Nope, not a chance.

In fact, the Bible has a very profound symbol for what the church becomes when it obtains political power to sit astride the beast and hold the reins of government: “Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth” (Rev. 17:5).

The symbol of a woman represents the church. In Revelation 12 the woman is portrayed as clothed in white, a symbol of purity and righteousness. But in Revelation 17 she is arrayed in royal colors, scarlet and purple, and she is “drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus” (verse 6). She has become an intolerant, persecuting power because she now wields the power of the sword, and she’s not afraid to use it against dissenters.

Seventh-day Adventists have always been at our best when we are dissenters, countercultural. In our infancy we opposed slavery and aided the Underground Railroad to help slaves escape bondage. As we grew up, we advocated for temperance and supported the prohibition of alcohol, because we saw how men treated their wives and children when they were drunk. Later we were at the forefront of teaching people how to quit smoking. At our best we can never conform to the culture. The church must always call the community to a much higher moral and spiritual standard than government or law can achieve.

Yet today American Christianity has lost its way. It has come to indulge what Ellen White calls “this accusing spirit,” “the cold, critical, unforgiving spirit that characterizes Pharisaism.” She observed that this spirit leads the church to “resort to compulsion. Just as far as lies in their power they will force men to comply with their ideas of what is right. This is what . . . the church has done . . . whenever she has lost the grace of Christ. Finding herself destitute of the power of love, she has reached out for the strong arm of the state to enforce her dogmas and execute her decrees. . . . When the church begins to seek for the support of secular power, it is evident that she is devoid of the power of Christ—the constraint of divine love.”\*

### **REJECT LEGALISM**

Seventh-day Adventists cannot afford to get bamboozled by the political aspirations of our





## The only power God has ever delegated to the church is the power of the Holy Spirit.

JIRKAEJC / ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES PLUS

Christian brothers and sisters. As a religious minority, we have never sought for power in this world. Instead, we “desire a better country, that is, an heavenly,” and we know that God has prepared for us a city (Heb. 11:16, KJV). We await the Advent of the stone cut out without human hands, which will smash to smithereens all of these human empires and create a kingdom that will never be destroyed, a place where the lion shall lie down with the lamb, and eat straw like the ox, and they will not hurt or destroy in all of God’s holy mountain. We will no longer be fighting over gun control, abortion, LGBTQ+ rights, prayer in school, cutting Social Security, or control over the Supreme Court.

Babylon is fallen because she made all nations . . . do something. She imposed her will upon the nations. The church becomes a harlot as she seeks and obtains political clout. She makes the nations drink the wine of the wrath of her fornication. Fornication describes an immoral, intimate relationship. Babylon becomes intimate with whom? With the nations; with the political establishment. Church and state have become intimate—symbolically, that is. And the fruit of this intimacy? All nations drink Babylon’s wine. Babylon’s intoxicating wine leads to the persecution of the saints until she becomes drunk with the blood of the saints. This is the warning of the second angel—

that the mixture of church and state is deadly.

Ellen White observed that the spirit that leads the church to persecute follows the log/speck formula, accusing others of one’s own sins. For many years Adventists have been accused of being legalists. In fairness, no church is exempt from experiencing legalism. Yes, we have our own struggles with it, but not for the reason we stand accused of. We are accused of legalism because of our commitment to the Sabbath. But in the end, our accusers will seek to enforce their version of the Sabbath, and prove themselves to be the true legalists. For us Sabbath remains “a rest for the people of God” (Heb. 4:9), a rest in the grace and righteousness of Christ.

Of all people, Adventists ought to know that law will neither save individuals or a nation. The gospel of Babylon is a gospel of law. It is an attempt to save the nation. Our task is to proclaim the grace of Christ, and to call all to return to the worship of the Creator in the hour of His judgment. Our hope is not in establishing the millennial kingdom of God as an earthly dominion, but in the Rock, a stone cut out without human hand that will grow into a mountain and fill the earth. Our hope is in the Rock. ♣

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**Alan Reinach** is public affairs and religious liberty director for the Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

# A CHRISTIAN POWER GRAB





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## *Is Christian nationalism the solution to a world in crisis?*

**STEPHEN ALLRED**

**A**dvocates of Christian nationalism are often dismissed as a fringe group, but their views may be gaining traction globally. A recent survey by the Public Religion Research Institute found that in the United States alone, 64 percent of White evangelical Protestants either adhered to the views of Christian nationalism (29 percent) or sympathized with those views (35 percent).<sup>1</sup> What views, exactly? For example, 97 percent of adherents and 78 percent of sympathizers either completely or mostly agreed that “being Christian is an important part of being truly American,” and a similarly large percentage agreed, or mostly agreed, with the following statement: “The U.S. government should declare America a Christian nation.” While this article focuses on the growth of Christian nationalism in the United States, the principles discussed here can be applied anywhere.

Some American politicians have made news by embracing the Christian nationalism label, and others by disparaging the separation of church and state. Recently one lawmaker expressed her belief that Christian nationalism will “solve the problem of crime, school shootings, and sexual immorality in America.”<sup>2</sup> At least one Supreme Court justice believes that the Constitution does not prohibit states from establishing a religion—and he may not be alone in his views.<sup>3</sup>

Seventh-day Adventists have historically supported the separation of church and state. Our support for this idea stems from the belief that God, whose character is one of love, allows freedom of choice in matters of faith, and so should we. After all, “if the Lord himself chose not to force obedience from those he created, then who are men to try?”<sup>4</sup> The Adventist understanding of end-time Bible prophecy and our experience with religious discrimination as seventh-day Sabbathkeepers has also motivated our defense of religious liberty and freedom of conscience.

### **AMERICA: A CHRISTIAN NATION?**

But *is* America a Christian nation? At its root, Christian nationalism assumes that it is. The answer, however, is more complicated.

Historically, the vast majority of Americans have claimed Christianity as their faith. In that limited sense, America could be called a Christian nation. Most of the original European immigrants who crossed the Atlantic to settle in the “New World” brought some version of Christianity with them, and many of the founders, although not necessarily evangelical by today’s standards, were at least nominally religious. The signers of the Declaration of Independence even acknowledged that human rights are necessarily derived from “Nature’s God,” the Creator—references to a deity that were, however, vague enough to be interpreted “however one liked.”<sup>5</sup>

But was the government of the United States founded as a Christian government? Many voices throughout American history have declared that it was. America’s founders, however, chose to follow in the footsteps

## We're not here to establish an earthly government, but to welcome God's heavenly kingdom at the second coming of Jesus.

of Roger Williams, whose Rhode Island colony was the “first government in the world which broke church and state apart.”<sup>6</sup> Ultimately the concept of church-state separation was enshrined in the Constitution of the United States. The First Amendment begins with these words: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” While the founders recognized God as the source of human rights, they wisely separated the business of government from matters of faith, also declaring in Article VI of the Constitution that “no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office.” In essence, America should be a land where believers can practice their faith, without government interference. Those who don’t believe are also protected as they are free from legislative imperatives to follow the church’s dictates.<sup>7</sup>

### DOES GOD NEED THE GOVERNMENT’S HELP?

But all of this leads to an obvious question: Does God want our government to be “Christian”?

Jesus Himself has given us some answers. When the religious leaders asked Him whether it was right to pay taxes to Caesar, Jesus answered: “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Mark 12:17, ESV). Not all that concerns Caesar concerns God, and Jesus declined to opine on how Caesar ran his kingdom—at least when the issue had no bearing on God’s kingdom. When asked by the Roman governor whether He was a king, Jesus declared that His kingdom was not of this world, and if it were, His servants would be fighting. Some of His disciples seemed ready to use coercion to advance God’s kingdom. But when they wanted to call down fire on the heathens for spurning Jesus, He reminded them that His mission was not “to destroy men’s lives but to save them” (Luke 9:56). Forced allegiance or mere outward conformity has never been God’s goal.

Ellen White noted that government’s duty is to

“protect liberty of conscience,” and “this is the limit of its authority in matters of religion.”<sup>8</sup> Echoing Roger Williams, White wrote that “the union of the church with the state, be the degree . . . [ever] so slight, while it may appear to bring the world nearer to the church, does in reality but bring the church nearer to the world.”<sup>9</sup> She observed that at the root of all “religious laws” was a spiritually dead church, bankrupt of the power of God’s love.

“Finding herself destitute of the power of love, [the church] has reached out for the strong arm of the state to enforce her dogmas and execute her decrees. Here is the secret of all religious laws that have ever been enacted, and the secret of all persecution from the days of Abel to our own time.”<sup>10</sup>

The history of the Puritans in Colonial America illustrates how even well-meaning Christians can justify persecution in the name of Christ. In fact, Jesus predicted that professed followers of God would persecute prior to His return, telling the disciples that “the time is coming when anyone who kills you will think they are offering a service to God” (John 16:2, NIV). White similarly saw the prophecies of Revelation 13 being fulfilled by “Protestant churches” controlling the government. She wrote:

“When Protestant churches shall unite with the secular power to sustain a false religion,” *“when the state shall use its power to enforce the decrees and sustain the institutions of the church—then will Protestant America have formed an image to the papacy [a church-state union].”*<sup>11</sup>

### THE POWER THAT WILL CHANGE LIVES

Most Christians share the concerns that Christian nationalism seeks to address, even if they don’t agree with the solutions offered. The destruction of innocent life, the rampant and ever-increasing mass shootings, and the normalization of sexual immorality are all indicators that our world needs Jesus. Other symptoms of a world in trouble include the self-centeredness, preoccupation with money, and forms of godliness that “deny the power” of God to change people’s lives—even among professed Christians (see 2 Tim. 3:1-5).

The Bible says that “righteousness exalts a nation, but sin condemns any people” (Prov. 14:34, NIV), and this is as true for America as for any nation. White wrote that “if the teachings of God’s Word were made the controlling influence in the life of every man and woman, if mind and heart

were brought under its restraining power, the evils that now exist in national and in social life would find no place. From every home would go forth an influence that would make men and women strong in spiritual insight and in moral power, and thus nations and individuals would be placed on vantage ground."<sup>12</sup>

Jesus, then, calls us to be salt and light in a world that is in trouble. Yes, Christians should have a voice in the public square. But more important, Jesus calls each of us to "do to others what you would have them do to you" (Matt. 7:12, NIV), and to be living witnesses of God's love and truth to our family, neighbors, and coworkers.

Joseph was an example of integrity and excellence in both public and private. As a result, he was used by God to save the world from starvation. Esther, a woman of faith, tact, and courage, was instrumental in preventing a genocide of God's people in her role as queen. Daniel, obedient to God and showing respect even to his enemies, played a part in a heathen king's conversion. More recently the early Adventists preached separation of church and state while simultaneously working to make the world a better place by helping the oppressed and advocating for social change on issues of public morality. They fought for the abolishment of American slavery and drew a line in the sand that excluded slaveowners and their sympathizers from church membership. They later argued against the enforcement of religion in the form of Sunday rest laws, while simultaneously advocating for public morality in the form of laws prohibiting the manufacture and sale of alcohol.<sup>13</sup> Ellen White even noted that voting was a moral duty when such issues were at stake.

But unlike the goal of Christian nationalism, God does not call His followers to create a secular version of the kingdom of God on earth. We aren't here "to build up the church by the aid of the state" or appeal "to the secular power in support of the gospel."<sup>14</sup> We do not believe in using coercion in matters of faith or private morality that should be left between an individual and God. We *do*, however, seek to manifest the kingdom of God in this world "by the implanting of Christ's nature in humanity through the work of the Holy Spirit."<sup>15</sup>

Seventh-day Adventists have a special work to do. We have been entrusted with a message to take to every "nation, tribe, language and people" (Rev. 14:6, NIV). "The last rays of merciful light,

the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love."<sup>16</sup> Our message is not an American gospel, but the everlasting gospel for all nations and peoples. We're not here to establish an earthly government, but to welcome God's heavenly kingdom at the second coming of Jesus. Our success won't be in using the power of the state to convince others that we have the truth; our success will be in living out God's other-centered love to all within our sphere of influence. What will be the result? "When those who profess the name of Christ shall practice the principles of the golden rule, the same power will attend the gospel as in apostolic times."<sup>17</sup> And that power can change not only America but the entire world. ♣

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.prii.org/research/a-christian-nation-understanding-the-threat-of-christian-nationalism-to-american-democracy-and-culture>

<sup>2</sup> <https://bjconline.org/bjc-condemns-congresswomans-embrace-of-christian-nationalism-060722/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/us-law-week/clarence-thomas-waited-30-years-for-court-that-thinks-like-him>

<sup>4</sup> Jon Meacham, *American Gospel: God, the Founding Fathers, and the Making of a Nation* (Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2007), p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>6</sup> John M. Barry, *Roger Williams and the Creation of the American Soul: Church, State, and the Birth of Liberty* (New York: Penguin Books, 2012), p. 389.

<sup>7</sup> Ted N. C. Wilson, "Keeping Church at Arm's Length From State," *HuffPost*, Nov. 6, 2013, [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/keeping-church-at-arms-le\\_b\\_4226809](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/keeping-church-at-arms-le_b_4226809).

<sup>8</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 201.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 297.

<sup>10</sup> Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1956), p. 127.

<sup>11</sup> Ellen G. White, *Last Day Events* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1992), p. 134. (Italics supplied.)

<sup>12</sup> Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1917), p. 192.

<sup>13</sup> Francis D. Nichol articulated a useful standard when advocating for public morality: "I cannot see how we, as champions of religious liberty, can safely enter into the discussion of laws at all unless we ever hold to the clear-cut principle that civil statutes must be built upon and defended by civil reasons. This, of course, does not say for a moment that various civil prohibitory laws, such as those against murder, robbery, and so forth, are not also found in the Good Book. It means that if we are going to avoid confusing the realm of the religious and the civil, we must find a sufficient justification on civil grounds for these various statutes, altogether apart from any Biblical arguments" (*Answers to Objections* [Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1952], p. 858).

<sup>14</sup> E. G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 297.

<sup>15</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940), p. 509.

<sup>16</sup> Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1900, 1941), p. 415.

<sup>17</sup> E. G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 137.

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**Stephen Allred**, an attorney and ordained minister, writes from Auburn, California.

# Duplicity

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*Looks like a lamb,  
sounds like a dragon*





**AMY SHEPPARD RATSARA**

**A**s recent as 10 years ago, Americans polled held largely positive views about America's role in history. "Nearly 8 in 10 (79 percent) say America has always been a force for good in the world, and almost two thirds believe God has granted America a special role in human history (64 percent) and that the world would be much better off if more countries adopted America's values and way of life (63 percent)."<sup>1</sup>

**THE HYPOCRISY OF A NATION**

Not everyone, of course, holds these views. This has been true from the beginning of the American enterprise. One insightful episode from history is a speech made by Frederick Douglass. A former slave turned abolitionist in the years leading up to the American Civil War, he was invited to give a speech on the Fourth of July to an abolitionist society in Rochester, New York. He declined speaking on July 4, but agreed to do so on July 5.<sup>2</sup> In what became a popular speech, reproduced and distributed across the country, Douglass made some insightful observations of the United States, asking, "What, to the American slave, is your Fourth of July?"

"Whether we turn to the declarations of the past," Douglass remarked, "or to the professions of the present, the conduct of the nation seems equally hideous and revolting. America is false to the past, false to the present, and solemnly binds herself to be false to the future." He expounds, "The hypocrisy of the nation must be exposed; and its crimes against God and man must be proclaimed and denounced."<sup>3</sup>

Douglass indicts America as a nation duplicitous in nature, by all appearances one thing, but in practice something very different. To a Seventh-day Adventist student of the Bible, this should sound familiar, calling back to the portion of Scripture that points to America as an international power foretold in prophecy.

Historically, Seventh-day Adventists have deduced that the beast that came "up out of the earth" and had "two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon" (Rev. 13:11) represents the United States of America and its Protestant ideals. This verse describes *characteristics* of the beast, providing identifying information. This is not to be confused with what the beast ultimately does, which is described in verses 12–17. In the broadest of terms, those latter verses describe the assault on religious liberty made by the beast with the authority of the first beast in the last days.

**TWO DIFFERENT KINDS OF SPEECH**

One identifying characteristic that helps us understand the nature of the beast is that it "spoke like a dragon" (verse 11). The beast speaks like a dragon *concurrent* with its lamblike state. Despite its Christlike appearance, the lamb talks like a dragon.

Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks (Matt. 12:34), so one's speech is a reflection of one's character. We know the dragon represents Satan, "that serpent of old" (Rev. 12:9), a reference to the devil's seductive and deceptive speech used to induce Eve into sin in Genesis 3:1-5. In short, to appear like a lamb yet speak like a dragon means that this beast is duplicitous—it lives a double life.

Ellen White states that "the 'speaking' of the nation is the action of its legislative and judicial authorities."<sup>4</sup> This suggests that from American law and case history, we can see the duplicitous nature of America.

The Declaration of Independence proclaimed the values on which this new nation would be based, stating "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal . . ." and that governments are instituted "from the consent of the governed" in order to secure their inalienable rights [see left QR code, center box].<sup>5</sup> Yet its author and a majority of its signers were slaveholders, and a condemnation of slavery was deleted from the declaration before it was signed.<sup>6</sup> Slavery's legal status was also enshrined in the United States Constitution, the ultimate law of the land, until the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment following the Civil War.<sup>7</sup>

## RECKONING WITH HISTORY

Slavery is not the only example of the law not living up to the ideals proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence. Unfortunately, history is replete with instances of American doublespeak. The U.S. Supreme Court withholding citizenship from Indian-born Bhagat Singh Thind in 1923<sup>8</sup> and their decision to uphold the internment of Japanese Americans against their will during World War II<sup>9</sup> are just two illustrative examples from the past century [see right QR code, center box]. Justice Frank Murphy, in his dissent in the internment case, recognized that it resembled "the abhorrent and despicable treatment of minority groups by the dictatorial tyrannies which this nation is now pledged to destroy," noting Italian and German Americans were not similarly treated.

Ellen White observes: "The greatest and most

favoured nation upon the earth is the United States. A gracious Providence has shielded this country, and poured upon her the choicest of Heaven's blessings" rings as true as her assessment "But these gifts have been repaid by ingratitude and forgetfulness of God."<sup>10</sup>

Eventually the United States will form an image to the beast and enforce the mark of the beast (Rev. 13:14-17), directly undermining the religious liberties the Constitution has protected from the founding of the nation. But that will come as no surprise to students of the Bible and history. Because America, through its laws and court decisions, has continuously struggled with executing the ideals for which the nation claims to stand.

As odd as it may seem, this reckoning with history should be encouraging for Seventh-day Adventists. First, it should bring us to personal reflection. Do how I speak and act reflect who the Lord has transformed me to be? Can Jesus be seen and heard in me? Or do I bear bad fruit? (Cf. Matt. 12:33-37.) And second, if I can already see the duplicitous nature of America in history and law, as predicted by Revelation 13, I can have confidence and prepare for what the rest of that chapter says will shortly come to pass.

Eventually all the broken systems of human governance will be broken to pieces, "the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people" (Dan. 2:44), for God Himself will rule. How amazing it will be to live in a society in which the values match the system that governs. May we experience it soon. 📌

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.prii.org/press-release/july-2013-prii-rns-release/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://time.com/5614930/frederick-douglass-fourth-of-july/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h2927t.html>

<sup>4</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 442.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>

<sup>6</sup> <https://lithub.com/>

<sup>7</sup> [how-slavery-was-written-out-of-the-declaration-of-independence/](https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript)

<sup>8</sup> Article I, Section 2, the "three-fifths" clause; Article I, Section 9, Clause 1, prohibiting the importation of slaves after 1808; Article IV, Section 2, Clause 3, the fugitive slave clause.

<sup>9</sup> *United States v Bhagat Singh Thind*, 261 US 204 (1923).

<sup>10</sup> *Korematsu v United States*, 323 US 214 (1944).

<sup>11</sup> Ellen G. White, in *Signs of the Times*, July 4, 1899.

**Amy Sheppard Ratsara** is an attorney in Kalamazoo, Michigan.





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# THE ACCIDENTAL CHRISTIAN NATIONALIST

*A paradigm driven by fear*

**BETTINA KRAUSE**

**T**roublesome times are here, filling men's hearts with fear. Freedom we all hold dear, now is at stake."

Recently I found myself humming those lines as I worked on the magazine I edit—*Liberty*. The mission of *Liberty* magazine is the same today as it was back in 1906, when the first issue rolled off the presses. It exists to promote a freedom that Seventh-day Adventists, in the words of the old gospel song, "hold dear"—the freedom to live and worship according to our deepest convictions, and the ability to share our faith without fear.

Moreover, this freedom is now "at stake," if we're to believe the urgent messages that surround us in headlines and social media feeds.

The result? For some of us there's a sense of looming threat that's "filling our hearts with fear." It's a fear that the cultural tide has turned against traditional

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Christianity. A fear that a secular majority that neither understands nor respects our beliefs has become hostile toward people of faith.

Christianity is declining as a social force in the United States, although for now it still holds a numerical and cultural majority. In 1999, 70 percent of Americans surveyed reported that they belonged to a church, synagogue, or mosque. Last year it was 47 percent.<sup>1</sup> In 1998, 62 percent said religion was “very important” to them; in 2023 that number had fallen to 39 percent.<sup>2</sup> It’s hardly surprising, then, that each year in the United States between 6,000 and 10,000 church buildings are shuttered, either to be demolished or repurposed.<sup>3</sup>

The narrative (or story) Christians talk about themselves is also changing. Where once American Christians casually presumed a cultural dominance, recent surveys show that they’re now more likely to see Christianity as a “cultural underdog”<sup>4</sup>

This new narrative has become a lucrative fundraising theme for many Christian ministries and advocacy organizations. In emails and social media posts, these cultural warriors highlight new outrages and new dangers facing Christians in America. They call the faithful onto the political battlefield, not just to defend religious freedoms, but to defend the identity of America itself as a “Christian nation.”

### THE ORIGINAL ANTI-CHRISTIAN NATIONALISTS

Christian nationalism is a term that’s thrown around a lot these days, and it has acquired an unhelpful political veneer. Yet it’s a relatively simple idea. When one’s sense of national identity and Christian identity become tangled up, it seems logical to believe that the levers of national power—political, judicial, and cultural—should be in Christian hands.

Christian nationalism, however, is theologically and historically “un-Adventist.” In fact, the archives of *Liberty* magazine show that Seventh-day Adventists developed an anti-Christian-nationalism message many decades before “Christian nationalism” was even a twinkle in the eye of political theorists.

Throughout our history as a church we’ve walked a unique path when it comes to relating to the political “powers that be”—one that clearly separates civil and religious authority. As Alan Reinach describes in his article in this issue of *Adventist Review* (p. 28), this approach has been shaped by prophetic insights and a clear-eyed

Throughout our history as a church we’ve walked a unique path when it comes to relating to the political “powers that be.”

understanding of end-time events. It has been shaped, also, by practical experience. From the mid-1800s through to the late 1920s, Adventists learned firsthand what can happen to religious minorities when America’s Protestant majority wields too great an influence on laws. Under state-level Sunday laws (or “blue laws”), many Adventist church members were arrested, prosecuted, fined, or jailed for doing secular work on Sunday.

Another wedge issue between Adventism and Christian nationalism is the question of America and its identity. On one side are Christians who believe America is divinely chosen, akin to a modern-day nation of Israel, with a special role to play in human history. In 1630 Puritan John Winthrop, soon to be leader of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, spoke to the men and women preparing to leave England to settle in the New World. Winthrop referenced Christ’s words in Matthew 5:14. He spoke of entering a covenant with God to establish a “city on a hill” that would be a beacon to the world. It was a powerful, poetic image, and one that centuries later was revived and repurposed in an entirely different context. In the 1950s, as the cold war took hold, this idea of a special covenant between God and America became part of a deliberate government effort to bolster national patriotism in the face of the Communist threat.<sup>5</sup>

In stark contrast, however, are those (including Adventists) who understand that one’s earthly nationality is something entirely separate from fealty to Christ and His kingdom. We don’t view America as a divinely favored nation, whose prosperity depends on Americans keeping a special “covenant with God.” We prayerfully exercise our citizenship rights and responsibilities—voting, advocating on public policy issues, defending religious freedoms. We understand that we’re called to reflect the values of God’s kingdom, not to establish a literal kingdom in the here and now.

## THE TEMPTATION

It's a mistake to imagine that Christian nationalism is always obvious, like patriots waving flags and calling for theonomy, a fusion of Christian and civil law. In fact, I'd suggest that the most seductive political temptation Seventh-day Adventists face today isn't blatant Christian nationalism. It would be a rare Adventist who surveyed the political and cultural landscape and said, "Now is the time for church and state to join forces to defeat the anti-religious hordes at the gates." That would be too much of a red flag for any church member even remotely familiar with Adventist eschatology.

No, the temptation for many of us is fear. We see society's norms changing. We hear other Christian leaders talking in grim tones about the rise of secularism. We understand the challenges—both existing and potential—of living in a society in which respect for traditional religion is waning. And so we drift into a Christian nationalist mindset of "us" versus "them," "Christian" versus "other." Almost unconsciously we find ourselves on the battlefield, supposing that we need to defend America as a "Christian nation."

I'm profoundly grateful for the prophetic message of our church in part because it provides *perspective*. It allows us to look beyond the urgency of the here and now. In Revelation 12:7-12, for instance, John pulls back the veil of the universe and shows us a stunning vision of a battle that has raged since before the beginning of earth's history and one that forms the



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backdrop to what is happening in the America of 2023. This passage begins with words we know well: "And there was war in heaven" (Rev. 12:7, KJV).

The Greek word used here for war is *polemos*, which provides the root for our English words "polemical" or "polemics." The implication seems to be that this is a battle not of swords but ideas; a question of whose truth will ultimately prevail.

We know what happens. Michael and His angels fight against the dragon. The dragon and his angels fight back, but they're not strong enough. They lose their place in heaven and are hurled to earth, where they continue even today to hold sway over human affairs.

In allowing us to glimpse this epic battle, Scripture places all human history against a backdrop of divine proportions. We gain an eternal perspective. It's a perspective that releases us from fear. It releases us from the need to defend truth with human power by planting a political flag for Christianity. We're playing the long game, and we know how it ends.

"Troublesome times are here, filling men's hearts with fear." That's how the song starts, but it ends on a different note. It's a note shaped by an eternal perspective.

"Rising up in the sky, telling this world goodbye. . . . Going where no one dies, heavenward bound." ♪

<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey M. Jones, "U.S. Church Membership Falls Below Majority for First Time," Mar. 29, 2021, news.Gallup.com.

<sup>2</sup> WSJ/NORC poll conducted March 2023 by NORC at the University of Chicago.

<sup>3</sup> Statistics from a newly released book, which also claims to provide empirical evidence that secularization theory is correct in predicting the decline of religion: Isabella Kasselstrand, Phil Zuckerman, and Ryan T. Cragun, *Beyond Doubt: The Secularization of Society* (New York: NYU Press, 2023).

<sup>4</sup> The 2016 PRRI/Brookings Immigration Survey, for instance, found that almost 50 percent of Americans surveyed believe discrimination against Christians is on par with discrimination against other groups, including Blacks and minorities.

<sup>5</sup> This is well documented by historians. See Daniel T. Rodgers, *As a City on a Hill: The Story of America's Most Famous Lay Sermon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

**Bettina Krause** is editor of *Liberty* magazine and associate director for public affairs and religious liberty at the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists.

# Jim and Donna

are in good health,

happily retired, and love their community. They want to pass on their legacy of giving to their grandchildren and want them to have a say in how they begin to make donations with their funds each year. They've called a family meeting to explore interests and gauge how to move forward with exciting contributions that all can see the fruit of.




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# GOD ALWAYS SAYS “YES” TO ME

**Y**ou may have heard that there are three kinds of answers to all our prayers: “Yes,” “No,” and “Wait.” During the past few years I have learned how to always receive a yes from God. There are two kinds of prayer He will never say “No” to.

The first is our praying for help related to our spiritual life, our growth, walk, and relationship with Him. When we humbly pray for wisdom and discernment in the study of His Word, for the gift of the Holy Spirit, for His will to be done, or to make us living testimonies, there is no way God will say “No.” These requests bring us closer to Him. But let me focus on the second kind of prayer God will not give a negative answer to: asking Him to use us for the salvation of others.

## HOW IT ALL STARTED

After my baptism in 2019, I earnestly prayed the second kind of prayer. I asked God to use me to share with others the wonderful experiences I was having with Him. And God did it! Before long I was sharing hundreds of books and thousands of GLOW tracts with people I met almost every day. I was a rideshare driver, so it was kind of easy. But I wanted to do more. My thoughts turned to people like me in my home country of Venezuela, people who have the same passion but do not have the resources to do the mission. Once again I asked God if He would help me.

Venezuela has suffered in recent years. According to United Nations data, “more than 7.1 million Venezuelans have left

*My journey into ministry with miraculous answers to prayer*

**JANETH PARTYKA**

their homeland since 2015 amid an ongoing economic and political crisis.”<sup>1</sup> If this statistic impacts you, consider these from the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research for the Adventist Church (ASTR) for 2020.<sup>2</sup>

REGION	CHURCHES	MEMBERSHIP	TITHES AND OFFERINGS
Dutch Caribbean Union	39	10,023	\$3.1 million
Colombia	1,805	289,902	\$25 million
Venezuela	1,243	353,834	\$1.6 million

My first idea was to collect or buy such books as the Bible, *The Great Controversy*, and *Steps to Christ*, as well as GLOW tracts, then send four or five big boxes to Venezuela. I planned to include some clothes, shoes, and other items I did not use anymore. I figured this would cost around \$500.

In May 2021 the Sabbath School superintendent of my local church invited me to give the mission feature. Instead of reading the regular mission story, she asked me to talk about the church in my home country. At the end of my presentation, I told the church about my plans to buy literature and send them in boxes, and I asked them to pray for our brothers and sisters in Venezuela. After Sabbath School a sister approached me and told me she wanted to help. As we spoke, she wrote a check for \$500. My husband, Alex, who was next to me, was surprised that someone just did that. I, on the other hand, started tearing up. How could this sister have known how much I anticipated spending? This was the first clear “Yes” from God in answer to my prayers.

People began bringing Spanish literature along with bags full of clothes to my church. Every Sabbath after service we filled our SUV to the brim with bags and boxes. My house got so messy we could barely walk around without tripping over something, and we had no space to sit in the living room. To be honest, this created a bit of anxiety for my husband, who frequently asked me how I was going to pay to ship all those boxes. I had no answers, but moment by moment I kept praying asking God to help me. I wanted to be sure He was with me. One night during our devotions, Alex read something I had never heard before: “In every difficulty He has His way prepared to bring relief. Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us, of which we know nothing.”<sup>3</sup> In that moment I felt relief. *He will take care of this! This is just another “Yes” from Him!* I thought.

**THE PLAN DEVELOPS**

By mid-June, as my vision expanded, I felt I had to ask for financial help, so I approached my church, and they started donating. I bought more GLOW tracts, a few boxes of *The Desire of Ages*, *The Ministry of Healing*, and some medical missionary supplies. How would I send so many boxes to

KAMONWAN WANKAEW / ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES PLUS



Venezuela? I needed a plan.

Ocean shipments are cheaper than air shipments, and most of the cargo companies that ship to Venezuela are in Florida. That meant the boxes would need to ship out of Florida. But costs of domestic shipping could be more expensive than overseas shipping! To save money, we needed to take the boxes from Maryland to Florida. I thought of driving our SUV, but with 20 or 30 boxes, we would surely need a truck. Three times I made the truck reservation, and three times it mysteriously got canceled. Finally, only a couple of days before my travel date, I found a rental company that rented the truck to me for much less than my previous reservations. The total cost for six days of rental was \$139 with unlimited miles—a deal that, to this day, I have not been able to find again. I have no doubt this was another positive response from God.

During those last two weeks we daily saw the hand of God in this small ministry venture. Miracle after miracle, small things I asked God for in my heart suddenly came to my hands. There is not enough room to write about it all.

We had planned to travel from Baltimore, Maryland, to Hialeah, Florida, on Saturday night, July 31, 2021. I had no idea what the total expenses would be. I wasn't sure if we would have enough

money to pay for fuel and the shipping expenses. Meanwhile, it seemed that the more boxes I packed, the more things there remained to pack. I wasn't even sure if everything was going to fit in the truck! Alex kept asking me if I had collected all the money needed to cover all the expenses. My answer was "God will provide." In my heart I had two more requests: one was that I wanted more books and Bibles, and the other was that none of the boxes would be returned to Baltimore, that I would get enough money to send all the boxes to Venezuela.

#### **GOD PROVIDES**

One day at the beginning of the last week before our trip, I received a call from an unknown number. I did not answer. But while driving back home from work, I felt impressed to call the number back. When I told the man that I had missed a call from him, he replied that he had not made the call and that his phone had probably dialed by accident. I replied, "Maybe God wanted us to greet each other," and prepared to say goodbye. Just before hanging up, he asked me my name, and when I answered, he asked me if I was from Venezuela. This surprised me, but I thought maybe he had noticed my accent, since we were speaking



in Spanish. What surprised me even more was that he asked me if I was the person collecting literature to send to Venezuela. “OK, wait a minute. Who are you?” I asked him.

“Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us of which we know nothing.”<sup>4</sup> This wonderful promise was being fulfilled in my life at that very moment. The gentleman I was speaking with was a member of a Hispanic Adventist church more than an hour from my house. Yet somehow God was using a person I had never met before to give another “Yes” to my prayers.

“Do you need more of *The Great Controversy* or *Steps to Christ* books?” he asked me.

“Oh, sure! And thank you!” I replied.

“How many?”

Without really thinking, I answered: “As many as you can give.”

He asked me if I had enough room in the truck and how I would pay for the shipping. I replied with the same thing I kept saying to my husband: “God will provide.” We agreed that on Thursday he would come to my house to bring me the books. This was another blessing. God knew I didn’t have time that week to go pick up the books. That Thursday afternoon this brother dropped off boxes with about 300 Bibles, 900 of *The Great Controversy*, and 1,200 *Steps to Christ*.

There was no room inside my house for even one more box, so we left these boxes outside on the balcony. I invited the kind man in for some water, and with difficulty we walked through the mess. As I served him the water, he asked me again if I had the money to pay for the whole shipment. I told him that I wasn’t sure how much money we would need, but that I was sure God would provide. He pulled out an envelope and handed it to me. I could not believe it! This stranger called me on my phone by “mistake,” and suddenly it turned out that he knew about me and what I was doing. He not only offered me books and Bibles, but brought them to my house himself, and gave me cash to help with the shipping expenses.

In Florida I spent two days at the shipping company sorting out shipping details as the boxes were to be distributed to 16 different states in Venezuela. I had not counted the total number of boxes until they were all invoiced. When it was done, a total of 82 boxes were to be shipped. Throughout the process I was a little afraid that

## This stranger called me on my phone by “mistake,” and suddenly it turned out that he knew about me and what I was doing.

the money was not going to be enough. As I was organizing the distribution of the boxes, I begged God that I would neither have money left over nor fall short of money. When I asked the owner of the shipping company for the total, he told me it was \$1,999.90. I will never forget this amount, because inside the envelope that the kind brother had given me at my house was \$2,000. I could not believe it!

### GOD WANTS TO SAY “YES”!

In my daily prayers I always ask God to help me help others. During the first year of this ministry, we sent 203 hymnals, 330 packs of GLOW tracts, more than 2,500 Bibles, more than 10,000 *Great Controversy* books, more than 20,000 other writings of Ellen White, about 70,000 *El Centinela* magazines, 164,000 postcards with the Ten Commandments, and other different pieces of literature. In just one year we shipped a total of 467 boxes. Today we have reached 21 of the 23 states in my home country and the city of Caracas, and more than 500 Adventists have received support for their missionary work.

I pray every day for the extraordinary privilege God has given me to work on behalf of those who also have a passion to bring the gospel to those in need. Now I understand better the meaning of James 4:3: “When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives” (NIV). This is how God always says “Yes” to me, and I know He wants to say “Yes” to you. 🙌

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-63279800>; see also <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/venezuela-emergency.html> (accessed Apr. 12, 2023).

<sup>2</sup> 2021 *Annual Statistical Report*, New Series, vol. 3, Report of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists’ 2020 Statistics, pp. 21, 22, 43, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Statistics/ASR/ASR2021.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940), p. 330.

<sup>4</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1905), p. 481.

**Janeth Partyka** is an office assistant in the General Conference Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department. Her ministry to Venezuela is called “Un Regalo de Dios.”

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# ANONYMOUS WITNESSING

Among my earliest memories is one of my parents handing out *Steps to Christ* to tollbooth agents during family road trips. Though my parents' method of tollbooth evangelism may be unique, the idea of sharing literature with strangers certainly isn't. After all, Ellen White advises that "leaflets containing the light of present truth should be scattered among the people like the leaves of autumn."<sup>1</sup>

Recently I ran across several local news broadcasts in various cities sensationally reporting on "mysterious" *The Great Controversy* books that had wound up in mailboxes all over town. At first I felt a twinge of embarrassment as citizens expressed how odd the mailing was, saying they would probably throw the book in the trash.

But then one of the recipients admitted he planned to read the book he'd received. My mind started to change. If one person read the book, if one person's life was changed, the efforts would be worth it. Right?

A couple months later I came across a story called "Witnessing," by Bruce Benway, on a literary magazine's website. In this story Bruce reminisced about his childhood with a father who was passionate about sharing the gospel. His dad would witness at the grocery store, the mall, the library, and the gas station men's room, and he would take his son on door-to-door outings. But by the time the boy was 12, he was discouraged at the repeated rejections he'd experienced.

When Bruce admitted his feelings, his father came up with a plan he called "drive-by witnessing." The family rolled up *Signs of the Times* and tossed them into yards.

As Bruce tossed magazines into the yards, he imagined lives being changed. Before the day was over, he had found joy in witnessing.

"My father, it seems to me," Bruce concludes, "was really trying to win over his son, who loved any game that involved throwing, but had not yet learned to love others."<sup>2</sup>

Reflecting on the stories I had come across, I tried to come to a simple conclusion. Is anonymous witnessing good or bad?

Then I read more about what Ellen White says about the leaves of autumn. "While the silent messengers of truth should be scattered like the leaves of autumn, our ministers should not make this work a form and leave devotion and true piety out of the question. Ten truly converted, willing-minded, unselfish workers can do more in the missionary field than one hundred who confine their efforts to set forms and preserve mechanical rules, working without deep love for souls."<sup>3</sup>

Yes, mail *The Great Controversy* to strangers. Yes, toss *Signs of the Times* into yards. But don't stop there. Make witnessing a part of your everyday life. As Bruce's dad did, be ready to share at the grocery store, the mall, the library, and the gas station restroom. ♣

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White letter 296, 1904.

<sup>2</sup> Bruce Benway, "Witnessing," *Hunger Mountain Review*, Mar. 23, 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 4, p. 602.

**Lori Futcher** is working on her M.F.A. in creative nonfiction and does freelance writing and voice-over work from her home in Nampa, Idaho.

WITNESSING  
FOR  
INTROVERTS  
LORI FUTCHER



IF ONE PERSON  
READ THE BOOK, IF  
ONE PERSON'S LIFE  
WAS CHANGED, THE  
EFFORTS WOULD BE  
WORTH IT. RIGHT?

A person stands on a rocky peak with a tree, overlooking a vast landscape. The scene is misty and atmospheric, with mountains in the background and a large rock formation in the foreground. The person is small against the vastness of the landscape, symbolizing a firm foundation.

# THE FOUNDATION OF OUR FAITH

*Rooted firmly in Scripture*

**ELLEN G. WHITE**

*This article appeared in Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 2, pages 51-59, published in 1904, as a repudiation of a newly published book that threatened to undermine the founding principles of our faith. Here are excerpts of her writing.*

**T**he enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, and that this reformation would consist in giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith, and engaging in a process of reorganization. Were this reformation to take place, what would result? The principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church would be discarded. Our religion would be changed. The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error. A new organization would be established. Books of a new order would be written. A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced. The founders of this system would go into the cities, and

do a wonderful work. The Sabbath of course would be lightly regarded, as also the God who created it. Nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement. The leaders would teach that virtue is better than vice, but God being removed, they would place their dependence on human power, which, without God, is worthless. Their foundation would be built on the sand, and storm and tempest would sweep away the structure.

Who has authority to begin such a movement? We have our Bibles. We have our experience, attested to by the miraculous working of the Holy Spirit. We have a truth that admits of no compromise. Shall we not repudiate everything that is not in harmony with this truth?

I hesitated and delayed about the sending out of that which

FRANCESCOH / ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES PLUS

the Spirit of the Lord impelled me to write. I did not want to be compelled to present the misleading influence of these sophistries. But in the providence of God, the errors that have been coming in *must be met*. . .

I have been hoping that there would be a thorough reformation, and that the principles for which we fought in the early days, and which were brought out in the power of the Holy Spirit, would be maintained.

### **EARNEST STUDY AND REVELATION**

Many of our people do not realize how firmly the foundation of our faith has been laid. My husband, Elder Joseph Bates, Father Pierce [Older brethren among the pioneers are here thus reminiscently referred to. "Father Pierce" was Stephen Pierce, who served in ministerial and administrative work in the early days. "Father Andrews" was Edward Andrews, the father of J. N. Andrews.—Compilers.], Elder [Hiram] Edson, and others who were keen, noble, and true were among those who, after the passing of the time in 1844, searched for the truth as for hidden treasure. I met with them, and we studied and prayed earnestly. Often we remained together until late at night, and sometimes through the entire night, praying for light and studying the Word. Again and again these brethren came together to study the Bible, in order that they might know its meaning, and be prepared to teach it with power. When they came to the point in their study where they said, "We can do nothing more," the Spirit of the Lord would come upon me, I would be taken off in vision, and a clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given me, with instruction as to how we were to labor and teach effectively. Thus light was given that helped us to understand the scriptures in regard to Christ, His mission, and His priesthood. A line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter the city of God was made plain to me, and I gave to others the instruction that the Lord had given me.

### **THE QUEST FOR UNDERSTANDING**

During this whole time I could not understand the reasoning of the brethren. My mind was locked, as it were, and I could not comprehend the meaning of the scriptures we were studying. This was one of the greatest sorrows of my life. I

was in this condition of mind until all the principal points of our faith were made clear to our minds, in harmony with the Word of God. The brethren knew that when not in vision, I could not understand these matters, and they accepted as light direct from heaven the revelations given.

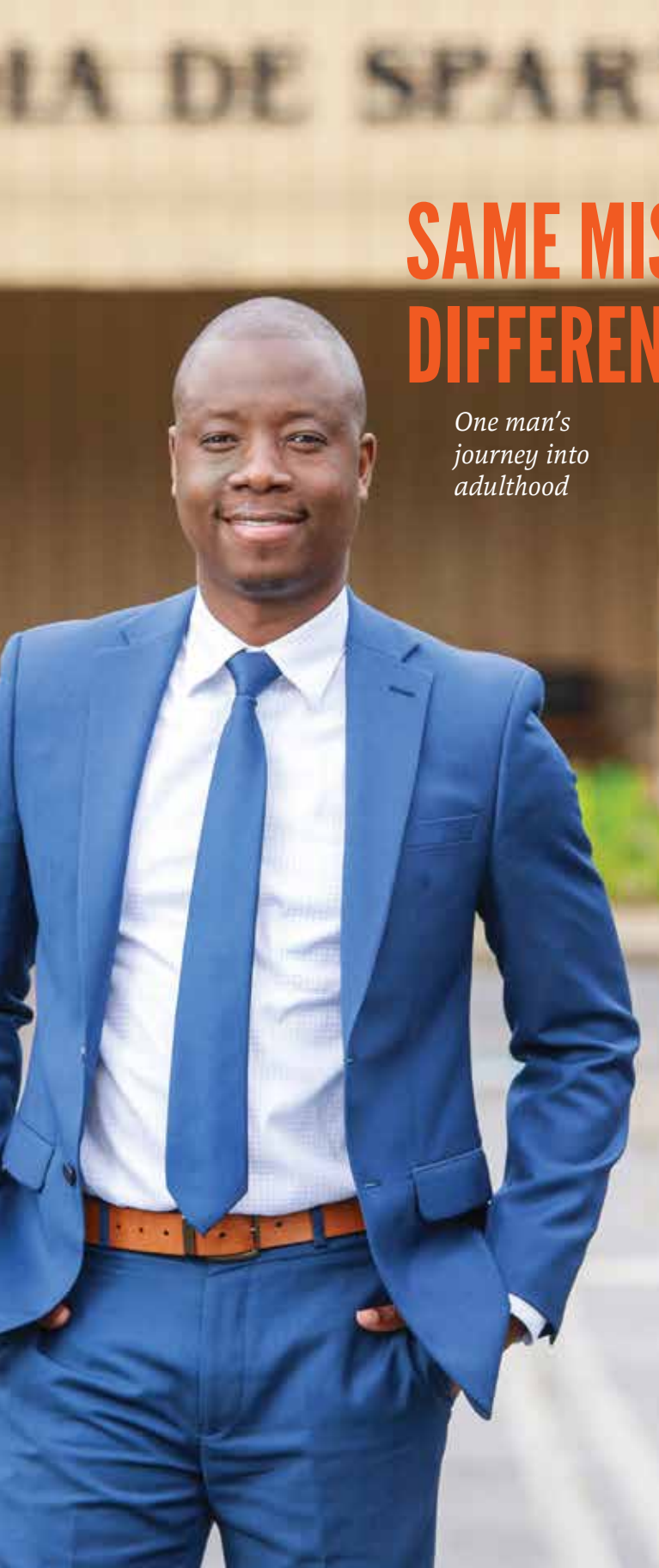
For two or three years my mind continued to be locked to an understanding of the Scriptures. In the course of our labors, my husband and I visited Father Andrews, who was suffering intensely with inflammatory rheumatism. We prayed for him. I laid my hands on his head, and said, "Father Andrews, the Lord Jesus maketh thee whole." He was healed instantly. He got up, and walked about the room, praising God, and saying, "I never saw it on this wise before. Angels of God are in this room." The glory of the Lord was revealed. Light seemed to shine all through the house, and an angel's hand was laid upon my head. From that time to this I have been able to understand the Word of God. . .

I must bear the messages of warning that God gives me to bear, and then leave with the Lord the results. I must now present the matter in all its bearings; for the people of God must not be despoiled.

We are God's commandment-keeping people. For the past fifty years every phase of heresy has been brought to bear upon us, to becloud our minds regarding the teaching of the Word—especially concerning the ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, and the message of Heaven for these last days, as given by the angels of the fourteenth chapter of Revelation. Messages of every order and kind have been urged upon Seventh-day Adventists, to take the place of the truth which, point by point, has been sought out by prayerful study, and testified to by the miracle-working power of the Lord. But the waymarks which have made us what we are are to be preserved, and they will be preserved, as God has signified through His Word and the testimony of His Spirit. He calls upon us to hold firmly, with the grip of faith, to the fundamental principles that are based upon unquestionable authority. ♣

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Seventh-day Adventists believe that **Ellen G. White** (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry. This excerpt was taken from *Selected Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958, 1980), book 1, pp. 204-208.



# SAME MISSION. DIFFERENT METHODS.

*One man's  
journey into  
adulthood*

**SIKHULULEKILE DACO  
WITH MARCUS PETERS**

**H**e was one of the most passionate and committed student leaders in his public campus ministry at Michigan State University in the early 2000s. He led out in Bible studies, organized evangelistic meetings on his campus, and participated in the life of his local church, all while completing a degree in engineering. But what happened after leaving college? How does one navigate that transition from a vibrant youth-infused religious experience to the concerns and sobriety of adulthood? Through a series of emails, Sikhululekile Daco, associate editor, *Adventist Review*, gleaned some insights from Marcus Peters, a native of Trinidad and Tobago, with a passion for studying God's Word and a burden for sharing it with others, on his journey into adulthood.

**Daco: You attended a non-Adventist college for your undergraduate studies. Was it important to you to find Adventist community as a student?**

Peters: Absolutely! I was an international student far away from my home and family in Trinidad and Tobago. The local

church was my home away from home, and it helped me acclimate to new foods, friends, and the frigid weather of Michigan!

**As a Seventh-day Adventist young man, why did you decide not to attend an Adventist school for college?**

My criteria for selecting a college was driven primarily by academics and finances (scholarships). I attended public schools for most of my childhood, so I didn't have a frame of reference or appreciation for the virtues of Christian education, let alone Adventist education.

**How did your Adventist community impact your spirituality while you were a student?**

This is difficult to quantify, but two areas in which I experienced the most growth come to mind. First, excellence. I felt challenged to excel spiritually and academically. These two aspirations always felt antithetical, if not unattainable, to me until I encountered fellow Adventist students who challenged that paradigm both in rhetoric and lifestyle. That shift in philosophy for me was life-changing in how I navigated a public university as an Adventist student.

Second, experience. After joining the Seventh-day Adventist Church in my late teens, I would describe my faith as one that was primarily intellectual. I knew the proof texts, and the *problem* ones, too. However, going to college in a secular environment challenged my faith to grow beyond the intellectual to one that was experiential. The local church I attended fostered a missionary mindset in reaching

the student population. That mindset was quite contagious! To participate in a first encounter all the way to witnessing a student make positive decisions for Christ (and His church) put my faith on steroids!

**How integrated was your student group with the local church?**

The student group was quite integrated with the local church. Students served in strategic positions on the church board and were active participants in the Sabbath services. In my junior year of college, I began serving as a campus ministries leader on the church board. The local church had created the position to integrate the student ministry on campus into the life of the church. As president of the campus ministry, I could better integrate our plans on campus with the church calendar by sitting on the board. Later I was appointed as an elder and became even more involved in the life of the

church. The experience helped broaden my understanding of how decisions are made at the local church level. I learned how to disagree without being disagreeable, and I also learned that cultivating relationships is important. I discovered that getting buy-in on a plan is as critical as the plan itself.

**Did you find peers in your new church when you left college?**

The next church I attended after college was warm and loving, but my new "peers" were older and grayer.

**What kept you attending church after college even though there weren't that many (or any?) young people in your age group?**

To be honest, the thought of not attending church never crossed my mind. I've always enjoyed the Sabbath fellowship that a church community offers. This appreciation grew as I entered a secular work environment that can, at times, be hos-



This rain catchment system installed on the Peteres property as a water access solution brought his neighbors together.

tile to people of faith. Perhaps the greatest blessing I received at the local church was mentorship in the areas of practical Christianity. Learning how to have a family life that incorporates both faith and fun, understanding the first steps to financial freedom, and being a better communicator in my marriage are some of the lessons I remember most from my early post-college experience.

**Incidentally, how did you find a wife even though you were not attending an Adventist college?**

I'd like to think that my wife found me! But in all seriousness, our paths crossed when I was church-hopping during my freshman year of college. She just happened to be home from her college that weekend and was attending her local church. Our connection was platonic at first; I caught feelings second; we became official during my sophomore year and got married during my first semester as a junior. I view my wife as my purpose partner. Having the clarity at graduation on whom I wanted to do life with made for an easier transition to the immediate adulting challenges of student loans, housing, and family planning.

**What did you find most challenging as a young professional transitioning from college to work life?**

On the upside, I was excited to finally earn a real paycheck and not be obligated to write another 10-page paper! Perhaps the greatest challenge was trying (and failing) to duplicate the spiritual highs I experienced while in college in my new

post-college environment.

The highs I experienced were often tied to an event: hearing a powerful sermon or a moving testimony, or participating in a lively service. There was a period after college in which I was chasing those experiences. But then I realized that the "high" was always tied to someone else. It came from a great preacher, a new convert, or a vibrant church. So as soon as those individuals were removed, the feeling of spiritual exuberance was gone too. This repeated disappointment helped reorient my focus from finding fulfillment solely from what I can get from the church experience to what I can give back. Now I can testify, as Acts 20:35 reminds us, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

**What practical steps did you implement to help you navigate the transition from student life to post-college life?**

Staying connected with old friends and being intentional at making new ones was a good first step. From our first year of marriage, my wife and I made it a point to have people over at least once a month, and have kept that tradition going ever since. As time passed, we also became more mindful of improving on the missionary opportunities within our sphere of influence. While this adventurous spirit has gotten us out of our comfort zone, it has opened multiple doors to study the Bible and nurture lasting relationships with our neighbors and coworkers. I'll share an example from a recent experience.

Two years ago we purchased some land to build a home in

the country. Coincidentally, two other couples (now our neighbors) had the same idea, and we were all building our homes about the same time. Sadly, that was not the only thing we had in common, as we all drilled wells but found no water. But what felt like the Great Disappointment turned out to be a divine appointment!

One day my neighbor was sharing his frustration about the entire ordeal. Just as I was about to join the pity party, I felt a deep conviction from the Spirit that I should offer to pray with him about our current predicament. I resisted at first, thinking, *Maybe he's not a Christian*, and wondering what I would do if he reacted negatively. My wife, who was within earshot of the conversation and never one to let a divine opportunity go to waste, gave me *the look*, and I ultimately yielded to the conviction. As I ended my prayer of petition, both my neighbor and I felt at peace that the Lord would make a way where there was none.

The seed of that prayer transformed a casual encounter into a deeper spiritual relationship with our neighbors. Today our two sets of neighbors have a rainwater harvesting system, and we have one as well. Miraculously, our 1,000-foot well that was once dry now has water!

After the home was built, we invited our neighbors over for a meal and some board games. One visit led to another, and as we won their confidence, the Lord opened the door for us to start a small group Bible study in our home. We jokingly refer to it as the rainwater support group, but instead of complain-





## Because I've said "Yes" to God's specific call on my life, it's a lot easier to say "No" to everything else, even to things that are not inherently evil.

ing about water (or lack thereof), we now study the Word!

We still have the same mission we did when we were students, but our methods have changed because our touchpoints have changed. We're not praying with classmates about grades, but with neighbors about property development. We now have a home in which we can entertain guests and solidify connections. We have the income to support our own initiatives. And we have a little more wisdom now than before.

### **How would you compare your spiritual life during your student years to where it is now as a professional with a family?**

There are some similarities and a few differences. I still enjoy daily quiet time with God, Sabbath fellowship, and leading people to Jesus. Compared to my student life, though, I now find more fulfillment in being rather than doing—in experiences

more than events. When it comes to messages, I find myself more inspired by a testimony than a sermon. And my life now has a greater emphasis on personal ministry than on church outreach activities.

### **With hindsight, what advice would you give your younger self on making the transition from student life to "adulthood"?**

Aside from going easy on the student loans, I would advise my younger self to be intentional about discovering my spiritual gifts. And to seek clarity on my life's calling rather than just the pursuit of a degree or course of study. Previously I was inclined to say yes to every ministry endeavor or spiritual request, for fear of feeling guilty if I said no. This would often have me assuming responsibilities for which I was not suited, leaving me exhausted and frustrated. In adulthood I've been more intentional in this area of

my life and have found my ministry calling in the areas of preaching, teaching, and administration. There is more inner peace and less internal disharmony. Because I've said "Yes" to God's specific call on my life, it's a lot easier to say "No" to everything else, even to things that are not inherently evil.

### **What can a student today do to best prepare for "the real world"?**

It's very easy to participate vicariously in other people's experiences; to substitute their testimonies for our own. We rob ourselves when we do so, and often find our faith wanting when exposed to the challenges of "the real world." Cultivate the habit of bringing the Word of God into your daily experience. This is one of the best guides for navigating life's challenges. Daniel 1 takes on a new meaning when I'm invited to happy hour after work. Song of Solomon 4 provides more insights on how to spice up my marriage than the latest chick flick. Genesis 39 illustrates the impact of working with integrity even when there is no external incentive. Isaiah 43 reminds me that I need not live my life based on the miracles of the past, as God is able to do a new thing in the here and now. Whether we're on a college campus or living out in the country, the same principle applies. We need to live a life that's guided by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God! 📖

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**Marcus Peters** works as a senior mechanical engineer and lives in South Carolina with his wife, Andrea, and two sons.

# DON'T MISS THIS SEASON'S FIRST EPISODES



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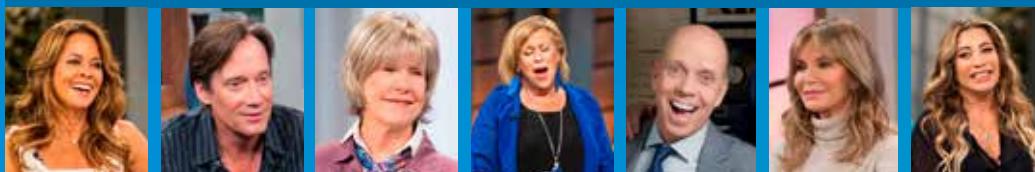
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# REDEFINING AGGRESSION

For much of recent history, the reputation of aggression has been rightly seen as dark and unwanted. For instance, the wars of the past 100 years have generally been started by what are correctly called “aggressor” nations. More recently, education districts from Australia to Austria to Africa have instituted policies to curb the aggression of schoolyard bullies. And who can count the at-times lethal cost of those who drive aggressively when sitting behind the wheel of a car?

In light of the destruction that has so often accompanied aggression, some may be tempted to conclude that the best course would be to eliminate aggression entirely. Surely the planet would be a better place if wars and bullies and road rage were gone, would it not? Obviously the answer is a resounding “Yes!”

But before we obliterate aggression entirely, I would call for caution. For as it turns out, not all aggression is evil. In fact, our planet desperately needs the right kind of aggression, when it’s understood and used correctly.

Jesus was the epitome of godly aggression. He was not merely loving toward humanity, He was *aggressively* loving (how else to describe Christ’s detouring through despised Samaria to save the woman at the well?). Jesus did not merely oppose hypocrisy, He *aggressively* opposed hypocrisy (as He did in Matthew 23, with tears of compassion<sup>1</sup> choking His voice). In fact, throughout His ministry, there was no hint of laziness or lethargy or haphazard planning. He was instead a lovingly aggressive Savior who was so staunchly devoted to His message and ministry that He—God in the flesh, King of kings, Creator of all—ultimately laid down His life to save undeserving

humanity. If that’s not aggressive, I don’t know what is.

Adventist pioneers were well aware of the continuing need for Christ’s brand of aggressive ministry. Ellen White put it this way: “The members of the church are not all called to labor in foreign lands, but all have a part to act in the great work of giving light to the world. *The gospel of Christ is aggressive* and diffusive. In the day of God not one will be excused for having been shut up to his own selfish interests. There is work for every mind and for every hand. There is a variety of work, adapted to different minds and varied capabilities.”<sup>2</sup>

“Everyone who has received the gospel has been given sacred truth to impart to the world. *God’s faithful people have always been aggressive missionaries*, consecrating their resources to the honor of His name and wisely using their talents in His service.”<sup>3</sup>

The lesson is clear: We cannot afford to let warlords and bullies be the sole definers of aggression. Christians instead are to also define aggression as Christ did: as passionate and indefatigable ministry to the world around us. With love and gentleness and compassion, we are to doggedly search for those open to Christ’s call, utilizing all the godly creativity we can muster, “so that by all possible means, [we] might save some” (see 1 Cor. 9:22). 🍌

<sup>1</sup> See Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940), pp. 619, 620.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Christian Service* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1925), p. 12. (Italics supplied.)

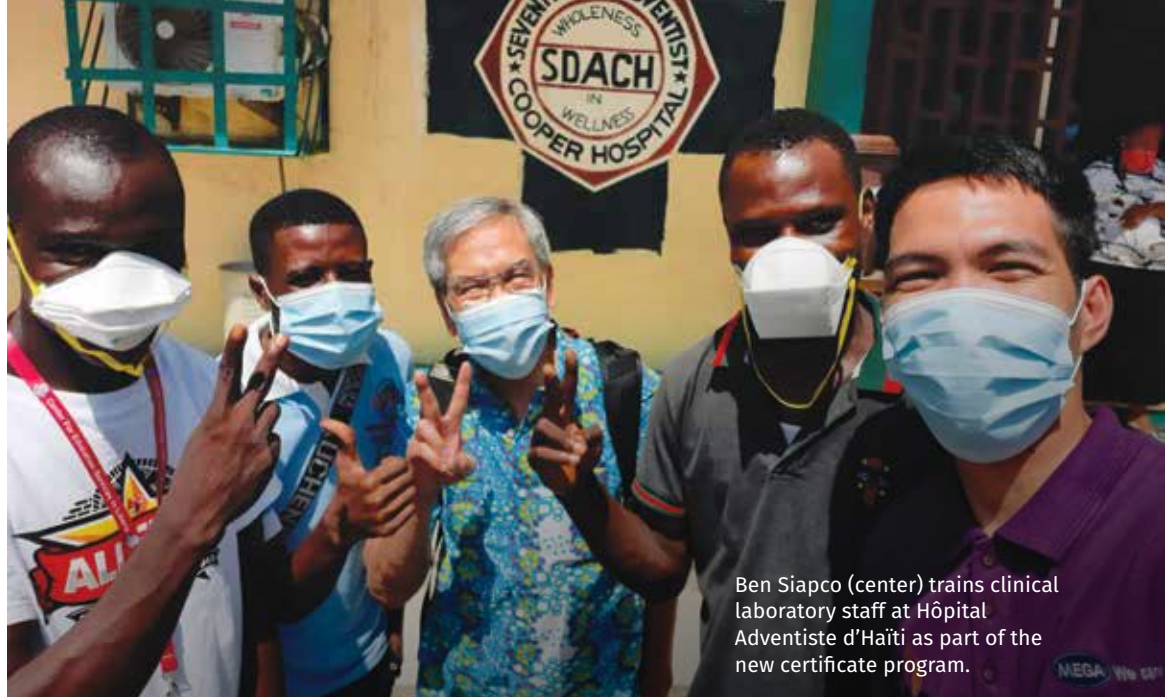
<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 109. (Italics supplied.)

**Shane Anderson** is the lead pastor of Pioneer Memorial church on the campus of Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

THE PIONEERING  
PASTOR  
SHANE  
ANDERSON



WE CANNOT AFFORD  
TO LET WARLORDS  
AND BULLIES BE THE  
SOLE DEFINERS OF  
AGGRESSION.



Ben Siapco (center) trains clinical laboratory staff at Hôpital Adventiste d'Haïti as part of the new certificate program.

# ADVENTIST HEALTH INTERNATIONAL

*Celebrating 25 years of service*

**DUSTIN R. JONES**

**A**n idea born 25 years ago from a few volunteers who wanted to try a different approach to managing international hospitals now operates in more than 30 countries throughout the world and partners with 45 hospitals and more than 100 clinics. Adventist Health International (AHI) reinvigorates health, wellness, and wholeness in the communities it serves.

This year AHI marks its twenty-fifth anniversary, and it all started with a request from Ethiopia.

## THE ROAD TO GIMBIE

When Claude Steen, Jr., arrived in western Ethiopia, he was exhausted. After three months of travel, including 80 miles in a U.S. Army Studebaker truck, he had finally reached the clinic. It was 1947, and, as it turned out, the treatment center was in an old cow barn. By 1948 Steen had established Gimbie Adventist Hospital (GAH) and

begun seeing patients. Everywhere Steen turned he saw opportunities, both for growth of the hospital and for spiritual growth among the villagers. The needs for both were great. The hospital grew significantly, both in services and in patients served. When the Steens left 12 years later, GAH was established as a solid health-care community with an active Adventist church.

In the 1990s, however, the hospital began to deteriorate rapidly. It was not surprising when, in 1997, the local government gave the Adventist Church in Ethiopia 12 months to upgrade GAH or the hospital would be shut down.

A request soon came to Loma Linda University (LLU) from both the national and international Seventh-day Adventist Church. As the flagship health-care system and medical school in the Adventist Church, it wasn't surprising the request came to LLU.

When Richard Hart, M.D., Dr.P.H., then serving as dean of the LLU School of Public Health, heard the request, he knew he had to respond. Having served overseas himself in Tanzania in the 1970s, Dr. Hart knew firsthand the hardships these hospitals and clinics faced. Already too many mission hospitals throughout the world had either closed or fallen into an irreversible state of disrepair.

A small group of volunteers started to meet regularly in the LLU School of Public Health to strategize and explore what could be done in

response to this request from Gimbie and the many other requests that were coming in from hospitals around the world. The group felt that LLU could serve as a solid foundation from which to help these hospitals.

Exactly what would it take to save these hospitals? What kind of financial resources would be needed? Could LLU provide medical personnel? The logistics were overwhelming. It wasn't just a lack of financial support or even lack of doctors and nurses—the real issues were developing leaders, solid accounting practices, and a steady stream of volunteers.

"None of us really knew in the beginning where this idea would end up," Dr. Hart recalls. "We just felt that we could no longer stand by while some of our most storied mission hospitals began to fade from existence." In 1997 AHI began operations in Loma Linda with Hart as its first president. The organization started with two hospitals, GAH and Davis Memorial Hospital in Guyana.

#### **A PRESSING NEED**

Ethiopia, however, was a pressing need. If AHI didn't respond quickly, the Ethiopian government would take control of the hospital. After a preliminary visit, AHI agreed to take on the challenge of building a new hospital facility at Gimbie. A team of volunteers from Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Netherlands began construction of the new hospital in March 1998, supplemented by a group of students and faculty from LLU.

The new hospital at Gimbie was completed in 2003. Work didn't stop there, however. The construction team now set their sights on repairing and upgrading the rural health centers throughout Ethiopia. This upgrade to the hospital and surrounding clinics satisfied the requirements of the Ethiopian government, and patients were moved into the new facility.

From Hart's perspective, building the new hospital became a symbol of AHI's commitment and belief that donors and volunteers could be found who were willing to move beyond the status quo and work for something better. After building the hospital, however, an even more difficult task was revitalizing the staff and morale at Gimbie and the outlying clinics in Ethiopia.

Local staff were gradually assembled, and relationships with patients and the government were

## **It all started with a request from Ethiopia.**

healed. Gimbie was now on the long road back to respect and service.

"The initial premise of AHI was that good governance and management could make a mission hospital both financially stable and able to provide Christian service in its community once again," per Hart.

Both Gimbie and Davis Memorial were able to pay off all their old debts, and began operating with a small profit. It became clear to the small group of AHI volunteers that even in the poorest countries, good management can make a hospital self-sufficient for operating expenses. Solid governing boards and strong management can lead these hospitals to operational solvency and the ability to control their own destiny.

According to Lowell Cooper, retired general vice president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists who served as AHI board chair for 15 years: "From its inception AHI sought to leverage the expertise of health-care professionals and administrators in a manner that could benefit health-care institutions, particularly those located in economically challenged environments. Services and skills provided largely by volunteers, along with resources from private and institutional



Ryan Hayton instructs students during surgery at Malamulo Adventist Hospital in Malawi.

donors, have been game changers for many health-care facilities.”

What started with two hospitals, Gimbie in Ethiopia and Davis Memorial in Guyana, soon expanded across Africa and into the Americas. Requests began pouring in from across the globe. AHI continued to grow, both in countries and hospitals served, but also in its donor base and skills.

### **WHAT IS AHI?**

The story of AHI captures the heart of international mission work, from the small band of LLU employees who volunteered their time to get it started, to the rough and tumble Australian handyman, Kelvin Sawyer, who drove hundreds of thousands of miles back and forth across Africa breathing life into old equipment. After arriving at a rural hospital, Sawyer would spend weeks to even months repairing and installing equipment or providing consultation.

There are also people like Ben Siapco, a retired microbiologist from LLU, who travels to various locations setting up and upgrading LLU, who provides facility inspections and helps review plans for new hospital constructions. The volunteers who have worked tirelessly for 25 years on behalf of hospitals and communities halfway around the world are too many to list. Their dedication, however, is legendary.

Developing a steady stream of financial support proved to be a critical piece in assisting these hospitals with their turnaround plans. In its first year of operations, donors gave a little more than \$7,000 to AHI; the next year, 1998, AHI brought in more than \$230,000.

In 2022 AHI raised more than \$3.6 million.

These funds support more than 40 hospitals and 70 clinics around world, building and renovating hospitals’ infrastructure, meeting emergency needs such as the cholera outbreak in Malawi, renovating operating rooms and water supply systems, strengthening accounting systems and relevant financial training of accounting staff, and strengthening governance systems that prompt integrated health-care operations.

As the footprint of AHI continued to grow, so did the involvement of other Adventist health-care systems in North America. From providing leadership on governing boards and committees to providing financial resources and consultation,

Adventist hospitals from across America have stepped up to ensure AHI’s success.

Another area that AHI has impacted is the return of the Deferred Mission Appointee (DMA) program at LLU. The DMA program is a partnership program with LLU and the Adventist Church that provides a pipeline of medical professionals with a desire for mission service to mission hospitals. Students throughout Loma Linda have become passionate about international mission service again.

In Hart’s view, “one of the most gratifying impacts of AHI has been its impact here at LLU. Young professionals hear about what is happening and want to be involved. This may include short-term mission trips, raising money for projects, finding equipment, and planning for long-term service. There is nothing like infectious enthusiasm for doing good.”

### **THE FUTURE OF AHI**

As with all other health-care systems in the world, AHI has faced challenges in recent years working through COVID, global recessions, inflation, and even natural disasters. The 7.0 earthquake in Haiti brought tremendous destruction and pain to the Adventist hospital in Port-au-Prince, but it also brought tremendous opportunity for health-care development in the country. Today Hôpital Adventiste d’Haïti has one of the top facilities in the nation, with an advanced orthopedic and orthotic team.

In 2010 Hurricane Tomas hit Antillean Adventist Hospital in Curaçao, in the southern Caribbean Sea. An earthen dam broke near the hospital and suddenly flooded the entire facility with three to four feet of water. Both patients and staff were evacuated safely, but the electrical equipment, which is so critical in a modern hospital, was essentially all destroyed. AHI raised more than \$1 million to replace what had been lost.

Though financial assistance is one way that AHI can help, often its real strength is the coordination, consultation, management, and technical assistance that is provided to these rural international hospitals. Dr. Albin Grohar, who has been part of AHI since its inception, notes, “We ensure that health-care professionals in the field have someone on this end to consult with and rely on and assure them that they are not alone as they face the day-to-day difficulties of operating health-care entities



During the Russia-Ukraine conflict, residents of Kyiv, Ukraine, line up outside Angelia Clinic for free bread and medical care. The clinic joined AHI in 2016.

in some of the world's most challenging places.”

AHI continues to pursue its objective of improving health services in Adventist hospitals around the world, working with 45 hospitals in approximately 30 different countries. Whether it is helping set up medical labs or nursing schools, upgrading electronic health records, or providing support during a global pandemic, AHI continues to answer the call from Adventist mission hospitals worldwide.

Many of the hospitals once facing very threatening circumstances have now been placed on sustainable footing. Some of these hospitals have reached financial sustainability and now make their way on their own. Others join AHI just to be part of something bigger than themselves.

In recent years AHI, in cooperation with the General Conference Health Ministries Department and the Loma Linda University Global Health Institute, has convened both regional and global health-care conferences attended by large numbers of mission hospital personnel.

LLU Health is now focusing on developing global campuses at AHI institutions in strategic locations throughout the world. The first campus was developed at Malamulo Hospital in Malawi, one of the oldest Adventist mission hospitals. New global

campuses are being developed at Béré Adventist Hospital in the country of Chad, to serve French-speaking African countries; Hôpital Adventiste d'Haïti as a teaching hospital serving the Americas; and Scheer Memorial Adventist Hospital in Nepal to serve Asia.

These campuses will serve as training sites for both locals and international students. It is the hope that these campuses will develop into major teaching hospitals, providing a variety of academic programs, research options, and modeling of improved clinical practices. AHI does not see itself as a donor agency, but as a development organization, seeking to create progress and sustainability in each of its affiliated hospitals, clinics, and training programs.

God has truly blessed the work that AHI started and has continued throughout the world for the past 25 years. What began as a single request from a struggling hospital in a far-off land is now changing communities across the globe.

To learn more about AHI and how donations can help those in need, visit [ahiglobal.org](http://ahiglobal.org).

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**Dustin Jones** led public relations for Adventist Health International from 1999 to 2013. He is now director of communications for Upper Columbia Conference in Spokane, Washington.



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# PRETENDERS

*Perfecting the role of a lifetime*

BETH THOMAS

In the late 1990s NBC aired *The Pretender*, a show with an unusual premise. Jarod, a brilliant young “pretender,” easily learns the intricate skill sets for any profession. Kidnapped as a little boy, Jarod is regularly guided through challenging simulations that exploit his intelligence for The Centre, a sinister think tank.

One night he escapes the secret facility he’s been raised in and sets out to find his family and the identity he was denied. So while a Centre team constantly attempts to capture him, he faithfully searches, blending in and pretending to be someone different wherever he goes.

While the show’s plotline is far-fetched, the concept is real. In fact, the Bible tells us of some other “pretenders.” Unlike Jarod, they think they have their identity all figured out. But do they really?

## DISGUISED

We begin in Revelation 3. “To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked” (verses 14-17).<sup>1</sup>

Laodicea was a city in Asia Minor, now Türkiye. Situated on a hill that offered protection from invaders and at the crossroads of major trade routes through Asia and Africa, it soon became one of the most prosperous cities in Asia Minor.

The apostle Paul spent considerable time discipling believers in Laodicea. Something went wrong, though. Jesus, the perfect observer, noticed some pretenders hiding under a guise of spirituality. “I know your deeds,” He admonished through His servant John, “that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other!”

When I was 14, our family participated in a mission trip, building a girls dormitory in the Dominican Republic. We spent hours in the drenching humidity, and all I really wanted was a cold, refreshing drink of water. Our water came from a storage tank high above campus. With constant sunlight beating down on the reservoir, the water soon became warm—not thirst-quenching at all. The cistern promised refreshment, but its contents were misleading and disappointing.

Jesus felt the same way. “Because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold,” He said, “I am about to spit you out of my mouth” (verse 16). The Laodiceans had the message of Christ’s saving grace to share with the world, but they didn’t. They “did not follow up the work begun by God’s messengers. They heard, but they failed to appropriate the truth to themselves, and to carry out the instruction given them.”<sup>2</sup>

They said, “I am rich; I have



acquired wealth and do not need a thing” (verse 17), but didn’t see their true spiritual condition. This self-satisfaction with their perceived spiritual superiority led to Jesus’ stern rebuke. Their “pretentious piety [was] nauseating to Him.”<sup>3</sup>

### A GRACE-FILLED PRESCRIPTION

This message must have been hard for Laodicean believers to swallow. The letter contained a grace-filled prescription for change written by Jesus, however. “I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent” (verses 18, 19).

The first item Jesus mentioned was “gold refined in the fire,” something genuine, not fake. Peter wrote: “That the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:7, NKJV). “Faith and love are the true ‘riches’ a Christian should demonstrate. It all comes together in a Christian character made of ‘pure gold.’”<sup>4</sup>

The second thing Jesus advised was new clothing to cover their spiritual nakedness. “This is what the transgressors of God’s law have done ever since the day of Adam and Eve’s disobedience. They have sewed together fig leaves to cover the nakedness caused by transgression. They have worn the garments of their own devising, by works of their own they have tried to cover their sins, and make themselves acceptable with God. . . . Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God’s presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul.”<sup>5</sup>

And finally: “Anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see” [verse 18, NKJV]. Laodicea was noted for a medical school that specialized in ear ointment and eye salve. For the church, spiritual ‘eye salve,’ understanding and applying Bible truth, clears up self-deception and restores spiritual vision.”<sup>6</sup>

### STILL RELEVANT

The Bible doesn’t expound on Laodicea’s reaction to this counsel. We do know that the message

## Are we playing the part but perpetuating superficiality?

is relevant to today’s church, however. In 1912 Ellen White wrote, “The Laodicean message has its application in conditions that exist in the church of God today. Many of God’s people have strengthened themselves in their own way, followed the impulses of their own minds, and have grown indifferent to the admonitions of the Lord. Many who were once firm believers in the truth have become careless in regard to their spiritual welfare, and are yielding without opposition to Satan’s well-laid plots.”<sup>7</sup>

Have circumstances improved in the past 111 years? We are daily bombarded with a host of distractions and worldly comforts that invite us to settle down into complacency. Are our ears willing to hear Jesus’ warning? Are we developing pure faith and sacrificial love, a character like Christ’s? Are we asking for His righteousness to cover us every day, to keep us from falling into temptation and sin? Are we reading, understanding, and applying biblical truth to restore our spiritual vision? If not, we’ll just be pretenders—playing the part, but perpetuating superficial spirituality.

If you have noticed some deficiencies in your religious experience lately, be encouraged! It means that self-deception’s spell is losing its power. Notice the first part of Jesus’ admonition: “I counsel you to buy from *me* . . .” He holds the remedy. He’s just waiting for us to ask. 📌

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, Bible texts are from the New International Version.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White manuscript 128, 1903, in Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases* (Silver Spring, Md.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1993), vol. 16, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, “Testimonies for the Church Containing Letters to Physicians and Ministers Instruction to Seventh-day Adventists,” *Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 1*, p. 20, retrieved from <https://egwwritings.org/book/b417>.

<sup>4</sup> Bibleinfo.com, “What Does the Bible Say About Laodicea?” retrieved from <https://www.bibleinfo.com/en/questions/laodicea>.

<sup>5</sup> Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1900, 1941), p. 311.

<sup>6</sup> Bibleinfo.com, “What Does the Bible Say About Laodicea?”

<sup>7</sup> Ellen G. White, in *Australasian Union Conference Record*, Apr. 15, 1912.

**Beth Thomas** is an assistant editor for Adventist Review Ministries.

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# 3.5 YEARS LATER

Not long ago a church member remarked to me that he had been doing the same job for the past 20 years as a traveling engineer, but as of late something had changed. People had become impatient, frustrated, even mean. My friend's work was the same, but the people themselves had changed.

A similar sentiment was shared with me this spring in Jerusalem by a hotel attendant I've made friends with through the years. My friend works in the hotel lobby, helping travelers with anything and everything. While my friend's job hasn't changed, he said that the people have. They seemingly expect so much more than before, as though their cup is empty and they're desperate to be filled up again, somehow.

Have you found the same to be true in your own circles?

Even as the pandemic is over, we're still healing, still recovering. Along with physical death, we've experienced emotional and relational death. And yet confusingly, our shared trauma really had no clear endpoint. We didn't have a set day of closure—a corporate funeral—to come together and grieve, process, and heal from what happened. So we've just sort of dealt with it individually, at different speeds.

Without closure, we've been left looking to other people to fill our cups, and when they don't, we act out, because other people will never completely fill our cups (any more than we will fill theirs).

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest," Jesus told another group of weary humans. "Take my yoke upon you and

learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30).\*

The ministry of Jesus lasted 3.5 years, about the same length as the pandemic. During those 3.5 years Jesus gently lifted people's sights from the horizontal to the vertical—from the things (and people) of the world to the light of the world. With His own tender hands He cupped our tired faces and told us that He had come to heal us, to love us, to save us. "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12). "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink" (John 7:37). "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10).

Jesus is still doing the same for us. Jesus is the fullness of our every longing, of our deepest heart desire. In Jesus alone we find wholeness, loving-kindness, and perfection. "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9, KJV).

So let's also lift our sights to the light of Christ; let's also receive the living water of Christ, washing us, cleansing us, healing us.

And let's be a little nicer to the people around us, loving others as Christ loved us. 🍀

\* Unless otherwise noted, Bible texts are from the New International Version.

**Andy Nash** (andynash5@gmail.com) is a pastor and professor who leads study tours to Israel.

THE LIFE  
OF FAITH  
ANDY  
NASH



EVEN AS THE  
PANDEMIC IS OVER,  
WE'RE STILL  
HEALING, STILL  
RECOVERING.



# JIM

---

*A chance encounter with a fellow child of God changed her life.*

**OLGA VALDIVIA**

66 ADVENTIST REVIEW | JULY 2023

**A**nd we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:18, NIV).

God reaches down to us when we need it the most, in the most unexpected of ways.

It was a cold, windy morning in late October. Outside the tall windows of our office, trees were shedding their leaves in shades of orange, magenta, and brown. It had been a stressful week, and

my mind wandered from the tasks in front of me like drops of rain on a windowpane.

"Do you ever feel inadequate?" I addressed the trees outside, seeking an answer to my state of mind. Feelings of inadequacy are something we all struggle with at some time or other in our Christian lives. Are we truly enough for God? Do we have what it takes to be a successful Christian? Are we even suited for the task we've been assigned as envoys of God's final message to the

PHOTO: YASINEMIR / ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES PLUS / GETTY IMAGES

world? These questions can be crippling.

Those were the thoughts and feelings occupying my mind and heart when Jim called.

Customer service representatives must have great patience to engage effectively with clients with differing listening skills. But after 15 minutes of trying to explain to Jim that the old seven-volume *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* set he wanted to purchase was not available, I got listless. He wasn't getting it.

### "THINGS" WON'T MATTER

I offered Jim other alternatives and was particularly keen in recommending the first volume of the *Seventh-day Adventist International Bible Commentary*, which was beautifully and insightfully written by leading Adventist scholars from around the world.

Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs—what an amazing collection! But Jim kept insisting on the old but temporarily unavailable set.

I came with an offer I thought he would jump at. Perhaps Jim could purchase some of the volumes of the old version as individual books; each at \$59.99. But when I proposed this, Jim suddenly became quiet. A moment later I heard him calculating out loud: \$59.99 x 2 x 3 . . . When he realized he would be paying almost double the cost of the set, Jim became very quiet again. Then, as if questioning himself, he asked a profound question: "Will I be taking any of this money with me when I'm gone?"

Taken by surprise, Job 1:21 came to mind, and I heard myself replying: "'Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return.'"

The conversation took a 180-degree turn. We were no longer buyer and seller. We were both children of God in desperate need of His grace.

When Jim asked me if I knew what was the only thing we can take to heaven, it was my turn to be quiet. I remembered a powerful statement in the writings of Ellen White: "The traits of character you cherish in life will not be changed by death or by the resurrection. You will come up from the grave with the same disposition you manifested in your home and in society."<sup>1</sup>

### A FELLOW SOJOURNER

"Our character," I answered almost in a whisper, and before I knew it, I was pouring my heart out

**"Let me tell you something. We must never believe that our eternity depends on having a perfect character."**

to this total stranger: I spoke of my daily spiritual struggles, feelings of inadequacy, of not being good enough to stand before the Lord, of lacking the quality and quantity required of me; of feeling insufficient for His purpose and unable to accomplish what I felt He was wanting me to accomplish.

When I was done, there were a few moments of silence from the other end of the line. But then Jim said, "Olga, you will never know what a tremendous help you've been to me today."

Jim was opening his heart to me too, and I listened as he explained how he often looked to others and admired their perfect Christian life. "When I look at myself, I can only see insufficiencies there."

"It is so comforting knowing that I'm not alone in this struggle," Jim shared. "Let me tell you something. We must never believe that our eternity depends on having a perfect character. The truth is our salvation depends entirely and absolutely on Christ's own perfect sacrifice."

The conversation soon ended. Jim will never know how much he helped me that day. I didn't sell him a single copy of the books I offered, but those brief moments of spiritual fellowship with a fellow sojourner basking for an instant in God's absolute acceptance and love for me permeated the rest of my day like a lovely perfume.

"If we are following Christ, His merits, imputed to us, come up before the Father as sweet odor. And the graces of our Savior's character, implanted in our hearts, will shed around us a precious fragrance."<sup>2</sup> ♣

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1952), p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 5, p. 174.

**Olga Valdivia** is a customer service representative at Pacific Press Publishing Association in Nampa, Idaho.

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## DOING ALL THROUGH CHRIST

*The great Motivator*

**Q:** I was recently diagnosed with pre-diabetes. I can't seem to keep myself motivated to go the distance. Can you help me?

**A:** We are sorry to hear about your diagnosis and have good news: prediabetes does not always have a bad ending! Tackling your lifestyle is undoubtedly the best path forward. We hope our words will be encouraging, but please keep your local health-care team engaged. You may benefit from spending time at a lifestyle center and following up with a health coach. Just as Jesus, driven by the joy set before Him, endured the cross and its indignities (Heb. 12:2), you can be strengthened by keeping your eyes on the prize of better health and vitality. Allow the vision of a joyful, healthier you to fuel your determination even in the face of challenges.

How have you met challenges before now? Reflect on your past successes, drawing strength from the knowledge that you have overcome challenges before. Remember, you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you (Phil. 4:13). God is on your side and wants you to be healthier. The Holy Spirit has guided you and given you the power to stay on track before and with other issues, He can do it again! Draw upon the strategies that led you to success in the past. Whether it was setting specific goals, seeking support from others, or finding solace in God through prayer, employ these proven strategies and adapt them to your current journey. In Christ you are more than an overcomer (Rom. 8:37).

Research shows that setting small “action goals” that you can achieve consistently is effective, since consistency is worth more than intensity when changing habits. Break your big goals down into manageable steps, establishing a routine that aligns with your projected outcome. Remember the promise “He who has begun a good work in you will complete it” (Phil. 1:6).

Celebrate each milestone along the way. On days when motivation wanes, let the Holy Spirit remind you of your and His commitment. Rely on Him to do what only He can do so that you have the power to do what you must do.

Having an accountability partner or diabetes “coach” can help support and facilitate your success. Their effectiveness lies in the accountability, encouragement, and shared responsibility they provide, helping you stay motivated and committed to your goals. Embrace the collaborative process, understanding that

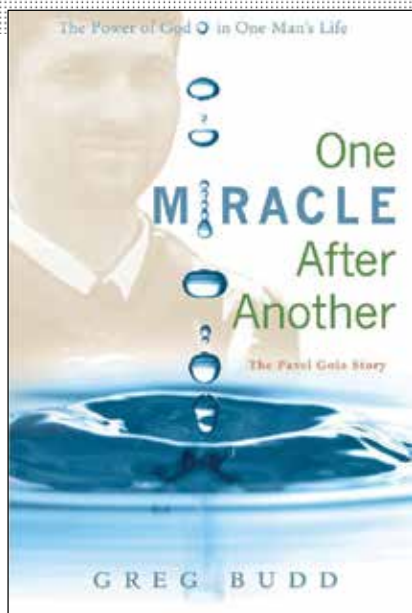
transformation takes time. Consider becoming a diabetes “coach” yourself; in helping others, you will also help yourself!

Pray and be thankful for every success. Trust God: the journey is worth it. Health rewards await you every day even if you don't see them. Every step in the right direction is better than no step at all. May God grant us strength, peace, and wholeness even in our brokenness—true shalom! 🙌

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

**Trust in God is a huge asset as new habits become your new normal.**

# CLOSER LOOK



## One Miracle After Another: The Pavel Goia Story

Greg Budd, *One Miracle After Another: The Pavel Goia Story* (Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2009), ISBN 978-0-8280-2496-9 (paperback), 160 pages, 16.99 USD. Reviewed by Justin Kim, editor, *Adventist Review*.

**F**rom his unassuming beginnings in Communist Romania to his extraordinary experiences as a pastor, Pavel Goia's storytelling grips your attention, starting with a shudder, from the first chapter. It reads quite straightforwardly, and you'll find yourself reading continuously because of the spiritual thrill.

It's hard to tell where the subject's voice starts and the author's ends, but the writing is cohesive. Those familiar with the flying dialogue Goia utilizes in his preaching can hear his honest, hurried, and vulnerable voice come through. Greg Budd's ability to convey this pastoral voice and to connect on a personal and relatable level is noteworthy.

There's something special about biographies that inspire and enthuse. What's different here is that this

## In the Spirit and Power: God's Presence and Answers to Prayer in Pavel Goia's Journey

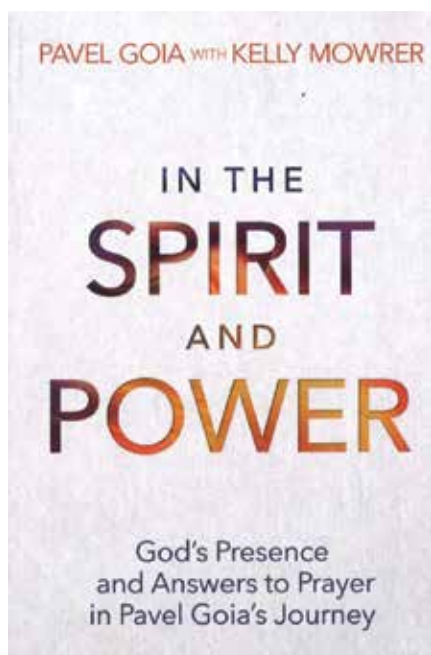
Pavel Goia with Kelly Mowrer, *In the Spirit and Power: God's Presence and Answers to Prayer in Pavel Goia's Journey* (Madrid, Spain: Editorial Safeliz, 2022), ISBN 978-84-7208-900-6 (paperback), 160 pages, 16.99 USD. Reviewed by Justin Kim, editor, *Adventist Review*

**F**ollowing up his biography is this "sequel" written more than 10 years later by Pavel Goia himself, with Kelly Mowrer. Though those involved have changed, it is assuring to see continuity. Anyone who's heard Goia preach can hear his speed, intonations, and humorous tone. Whereas the first book ended curtly at his seminary graduation, this second work includes more stories from his ministry in the United States.

While there are a couple of stories that have overlapped from the first book, *In the Spirit and Power* has a different objective. The account is so motivating that one doesn't mind their repetition,

book isn't from the historical archives (though it does contain black-and-white personal photos), but from a contemporary pastor that is still ministering. Summarizing the stories here would really spoil the read, but suffice it to say that from Goia's run-ins with the Communist government to his absolute confidence in knowing who he was going to marry at age 6, his individuality, humor, and holy boldness is showcased. As other characters refer to the titular protagonist as "that crazy pastor," you might find yourself thinking similarly.





like a nostalgic song that you enjoy hearing again. But in this work each chapter is couched in spiritual lessons with prayer prompts and devotional insights. Whereas the first was a narrative, the second is a collection of stories that revolve around the power of prayer.

There are many books on the mechanics of prayer; there are many books on the phenomenon

The book is filled with numerous accounts of divine intervention, each one inspiring more than the last like a narrative crescendo. The main theme that emerges is that God works today. From miraculous healings to supernatural protection, Goia's experiences are a reminder of God's presence and His ability to guide everyday people through everyday conundrums. Your faith will be strengthened, and challenged at times, knowing that God still acts in the present as He did in biblical times.

Moreover, the storytelling is accompanied by practical insights and lessons learned. Readers are encouraged to cultivate a life of prayer and trust in God's timing. You might be tempted either

of prayer. Refreshingly, this book emphasizes the simplicity of prayer, designed to be encouraging in nature to exemplify what a prayer life can look like. Not only in the life of Pavel Goia, but the inspiration is made evident in others, notably his wife, Daniela, and father, Pavel, Sr.

Drawing from Scripture and Goia's experiences, the book explores various aspects of the Holy Spirit's work, such as the baptism of the Holy Spirit, discerning and cultivating spiritual gifts, the empowering presence of God, the Spirit's guidance in decision-making, and living a Spirit-led life. The author emphasizes the importance of surrendering to the Spirit's leading and cultivating a deeper spiritual intimacy. These ideas aren't made more complex with theological analysis and criticism. Instead, Goia utilizes his ability to communicate these principles in an accessible and simple manner, without being simplistic.

This book's layout is perfect for prayer meetings, weekly small groups, and other serial get-togethers. Though it points to the individual spiritual experience, it intends to have results and effect on the corporate church experience as well. At the end it challenges readers to go beyond mere head knowledge and experience a vibrant, revived relationship with the Holy Spirit. ♣

to doubt the credulity of the accounts or to canonize his experiences. But Goia's humility acknowledges that the miracles are not exclusive to him. Rather, they are available to all who seek a genuine relationship with God.

Dedicated to those who are persecuted, imprisoned, and starving, and to those have died for their faith, this compilation of biographical episodes inspires readers to rededicate their lives toward more faithfulness. At the end, Goia's hardiness demonstrates the transformative power of faith, showing that even in the most difficult scenarios, hope can be found in God's promises in Scripture. ♣

## UNHOLDING GRUDGES

He was a gifted leader with a knack for out-of-the-box initiatives. *In Jesus' parable of the talents, I thought, he would be the servant who received five talents.* He was potential realized, the promise of a gift that would keep on giving. A person to look up to and look forward to.

A point in time came, however, when his attitude seemed to change. In the beginning the situation was relatively imperceptible. Eventually it festered like a sore. His posts on social media became harsher and his reactions sarcastic, with hints of deep-seated resentment.

One thing led to another. Soon the leader began to question some of the beliefs he had held dear. It was only a matter of time before his ability to role-model was marred to the point of seemingly no return. His worldview water fountain became tainted by the baleful concoction that poisoned everything he touched.

Eventually he crashed.

### GOING TO THE ROOT

A careful review of how this leader began to play with sparks until everything caught fire didn't prove unusually revealing. It was a story told countless times—the story of an injury to the spirit not dealt with properly, of a spiritual open fracture placed in a cast before disinfection. But in his case, it was ultimately enough to make him cut his anchor ropes and sail aimlessly adrift until his spiritual boat sank.

The question for the rest, who helplessly saw him sail away, would reverberate for years: Could we have done something to prevent his demise? Could he?

### A FRUSTRATING VISIT

Human interactions are, by definition, complex. Some biblical principles, however, can help to kill a germ before it becomes an epidemic.

I am reminded of Jethro's visit to Moses in the desert (Ex. 18). Moses' family enjoyed a memorable first day of remembrance and worship. On the second day, however, Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood before him from morning until evening.

It must have been highly frustrating to Jethro to arrive with Moses' wife and children for a visit, and then to see his son-in-law work himself to death before his eyes. Jethro could have criticized Moses behind his back. He could have kept his frustrations to himself and done nothing. He could have left, enraged.

Jethro, however, chose to appeal to Moses' heart. And Moses chose to listen.

### RELEASING GRUDGES

Here's one of the Bible remedies to the malady of misunderstandings that often leads to fractured connections at home, work, or church. One person chooses to be vulnerable and open. The other one decides to be open and listen. Both benefit from it.

It is extremely simple but immeasurably profound. "So Moses heeded the voice of his father-in-law" (Ex. 18:24). Resentment was averted. The seed of bitterness withered before sprouting; the scratch of the spirit was disinfected, allowing the body to heal naturally.

It's time to get closer to each other and talk it over. Time to listen more. To follow advice. To start anew. Release your grudges adrift into the night. 🦋

Marcos Paseggi is senior news correspondent for Adventist Review Ministries.

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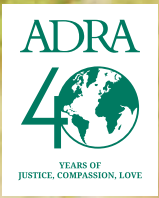
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