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# Adventist Journey

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## My Journey

My Adventist faith is worth fighting for because there's truth in it. There's beauty in it. There's peace. There's joy. We are not of this world. And the enemy will try everything in his power to discourage us. The Adventist journey is difficult. But I would not give it up for anything.

Visit [nadadventist.org/ajlentnertom](http://nadadventist.org/ajlentnertom) for more of Tom's story.

**LENTNER TOM,**  
pastor and missionary, from Colonia,  
Yap, Micronesia, living in California

Lentner L. Tom



Cover photo by Pieter Damsteegt

**Dear Reader:** The publication in your hands represents the collaborative efforts of the North American Division and *Adventist World* magazine, which follows *Adventist Journey* (after page 16). Please enjoy both magazines!

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## ADVENTIST JOURNEY

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# THE WHOLE-PERSON HEALTH APPROACH

An interview with editor Heather Quintana about *Vibrant Life*

The Pacific Press Publishing Association, the printing and publishing house of the North American Division, produces several sharing magazines. These magazines are geared toward members being able to share them with their family members, friends, neighbors, and colleagues. *Vibrant Life*, the first to be featured in our series, is available for subscription at [adventistbookcenter.com](http://adventistbookcenter.com). *Vibrant Life's* website is [www.vibrantlife.com](http://www.vibrantlife.com).

## What was the original mission of the publication?

*Vibrant Life* started 137 years ago, in 1885. It has had several names over the years (many people remember it as *Life and Health*), but the mission has always been the same: to provide practical, encouraging information that helps people achieve mental, physical, and spiritual health. The church pioneers believed health magazines were an essential ministry and a good way to meet people at a point of need and help them. Ellen White reminded the believers that heavy theology wasn't the only way to reach people: the immediate need for some people was their health.

"This matter must not be passed over as nonessential; for nearly every family needs to be stirred up on this question. . . . When you make the people intelligent on the question of health reform, you have prepared the way for them to give attention to the present truth for these last days."<sup>1</sup>

"Publications upon health reform will reach many who will not see or read anything upon important Bible subjects."<sup>2</sup>

## How has the mission changed and/or adapted since its inception?

We still celebrate and promote the timeless health principles that were at the heart of the magazine in the 1800s and 1900s—things such as the value of fresh air, sunshine, an active life, a sense of purpose, faith in God, and a plant-rich diet. But it's exciting to



develop those ideas and expand them now that we have more research to support them. For example, the magazine has always promoted a plant-centered diet because it is good for our health. But now more people are aware that it is also good for our planet. So we've included more information about the connection between our plates and our planet, along with other information about how to be a good steward of the earth.

Throughout the years we've also adapted our content to focus on the needs of the time. For example, we're currently sharing a lot of mental health information because so many people feel drained and are experiencing a lack of positive emotions or purpose in life. According to research, fewer than one in four adults is flourishing in life. That means most adults are "languishing" and go through the day with a "blah feeling." So we're sharing practical ways people can begin to feel more connected, purposeful, and excited about life. In recent years there's also been a greater demand for information about such things as caregiving, weight loss, diabetes, and disease prevention.

We know that the way people get their information has changed over the years, so we include more quick-read content now, along with colorful infographics, self-assessment tools, quizzes, lists, and activities, such as brain games.

#### What is the target audience? Whom is *Vibrant Life* written for?

Because *Vibrant Life* is designed to be shared, every article is written in a way that is inviting and welcoming—not intimidating. There's no jargon or lingo that would make people feel left out or confused. Whether the reader is fit and vigorous or has just received a frightening diagnosis, our goal is to help them move a step closer to the life they were designed to live. Our ministry is to present God's plan for a healthy mind, body, and spirit. You can give a subscription to neighbors, friends, or coworkers—or order a stack to place in a local business or doctor's office. You can also use it as a part of local church health initiatives, such as blood drives, cooking classes, or health fairs.

#### What makes *Vibrant Life* different from other health magazines?

While most health magazines focus on physical appearances and quick-result promises (like "Lose weight now!" or "Get a beach body before summer!"), we take a whole-person approach to health. Your mind, body, and spirit are all connected, so when one of those areas of your health is suffering or thriving, the other areas will too. For example, if you're struggling with discouragement or hopelessness, it affects your activity level, your food choices, and your overall well-being. Conversely, when you are thriving and feel supported and loved, you're more likely to make healthy choices regarding activity, rest, and nutrition.

Some people wonder what physical and mental health have to do with spiritual health. Consider, for example, what happens when you experience improvements in your relationships, energy level, or mental focus. Those improvements help clear the way for spiritual growth.

Some websites and magazines present health information in a way that leaves people feeling afraid or worried about their own health. We strive to present health information in a way that offers hope and encouragement. We want our readers to feel as if we're cheering for them.



A 1922 cover of one of the first iterations of the Adventist church's health magazine (left); *Vibrant Life* editor Heather Quintana

Every issue includes expert advice, recipes, interviews, research, inspiring true stories, practical suggestions, and self-assessment tools and quizzes.

We consider our magazine an extension of Jesus' healing ministry. He spent more time healing people than He did preaching to them. We share in His ministry by meeting people where they are and helping them live more abundantly.

#### Can you share a meaningful response from a reader?

I recently heard from a spa owner who strongly believes in the mind-body connection. Her entire business is built around a mystical approach to healing the body and spirit and finding inner light. Recently she was given a copy of *Vibrant Life*, and it was her first time reading about the mind-body-spirit connection from a Christian perspective. She loved it so much that she wrote me a note saying, "This is beautiful! This is fabulous!" She said she was going to subscribe to the magazine for herself—and place it in her spa for her clients.

We hear from readers all the time who have made healthy changes because of the magazine, whether it's starting a Meatless Monday in their homes, keeping a gratitude journal, or even joining the Adventist Church. And because we're designed to share, it's especially delightful to hear from non-Adventists who are buying and sharing the magazine with their friends and family.

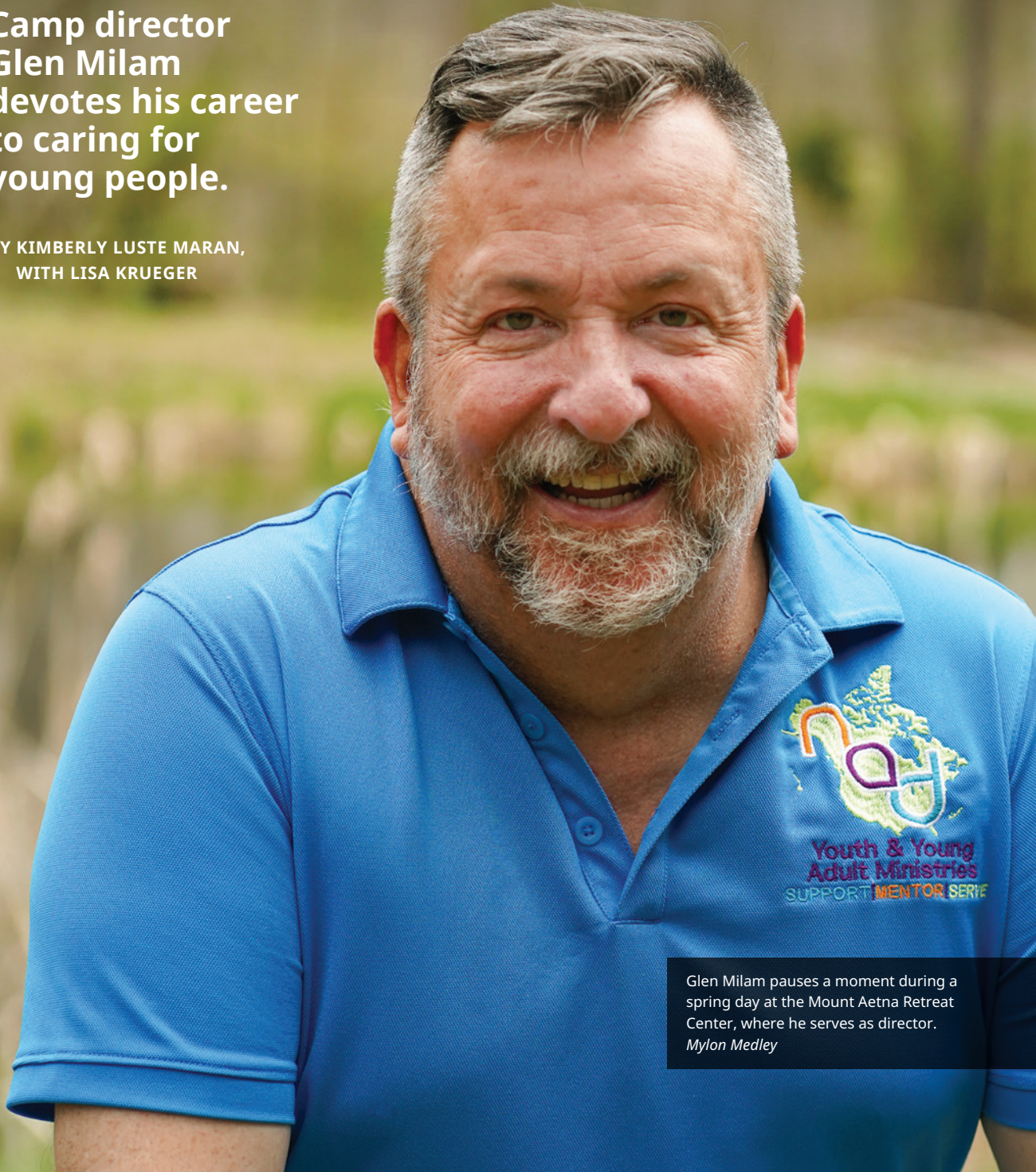
<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White manuscript 1, 1875, in Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Writers and Editors* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1946), pp. 124, 125.  
<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 123.



# “I’ll Go Where You Want Me to Go”

Camp director  
Glen Milam  
devotes his career  
to caring for  
young people.

BY KIMBERLY LUSTE MARAN,  
WITH LISA KRUEGER



Glen Milam pauses a moment during a spring day at the Mount Aetna Retreat Center, where he serves as director.  
*Mylon Medley*



Glen Wesley Milam has been the director of Mount Aetna Retreat Center, Hagerstown, Maryland, for the past 19 years and has been a leader for Pathfinders for the past 36 years, including being the North American Division Pathfinder coordinator and club leader, among numerous other roles. Milam was featured in the June 2021 Adventist Journey cover video, available to watch at [www.nadadventist.org/ajglenmilam](http://www.nadadventist.org/ajglenmilam).

“Ministering through Pathfinders has brought me great joy. Seeing young people open up—you get to see that spark in their eye, and you know they’ve got it.”

involved in these types of activities as a child himself.

Even though he is a third-generation Adventist on both sides of his family, Milam never attended summer camp as a kid, never lived in a dormitory as a student, and didn’t stay in Pathfinders for very long. “We had a very closely connected nuclear family, and we were always involved in learning and trying out new things through reading and traveling,” he says.

And while his family traveled often, Milam was raised in Takoma Park, Maryland. “I tell people that my entire life was on Carroll Avenue. I was born on Carroll Avenue. I went to Sligo school and Sligo church for 39 years, worked at the General Conference, all on Carroll Avenue,” he shares.

Milam recalls how his family was very social. “I have a genetic propensity to hospitality. My parents

were big into entertaining guests. Every Sabbath they were ready for guests to come to our home, even when we didn’t know them.”

In college, despite his various church affiliations, Milam never planned to work for the church. He trained as a graphic artist and intended to run his own business. However, right before graduation, he was invited to join the staff at Columbia Union College (now Washington Adventist University) to coordinate the graphics program. He ended up teaching for 10 years.

“During that time I was approached by the school when they were looking for an associate dean in the men’s dorm. I accepted the position and did it for six years. I loved the students. I had been the Student Association sponsor for many years, and also a sponsor for the student senate at the college,” Milam says.

“It was a bus ride that changed my life,” says Glen Wesley Milam, director of the Mount Aetna Retreat Center. “I was starting a job as a graphic artist at the Indonesia Publishing House in Bandung. On the road from Bandung down to the coast of the Indian Ocean, I watched as millions of people flashed by the side of the bus, and I had this appalling feeling that I was actually impacting none of them. And I had this realization of *You think you’re so important*, and yet to really see it, I had to admit, *I’m just a flash*.”

Milam remembers praying, “OK, Lord, I am a flash, but use that flash for whatever You want, whenever You want it.”

That moment began the trend in his journey, starting Milam, at age 22, on a lifetime of service—going wherever God wants him to go. “My line is ‘I’m going to keep walking, and if You want me to stop, close the door. Because I’m not going to sit still; I’m going to keep going. And I may do circles in the room until another door opens, but I’m going to keep moving.’”

### Doors Opening

And over the years, Milam has given his life to serving with Pathfinders and at the Mount Aetna Retreat Center in Hagerstown, Maryland, despite not really being



Glen Milam poses with two Pathfinders during a camporee. Photo provided by Glen Milam

Around the same time Milam graduated and started as a graphic design teacher, his good friend David Carlson told Milam that they needed to get involved in a ministry. Milam, single and teaching, and just getting his life in order, asked, “What ministry?”

“Pathfinders!” Carlson answered.

“Ugh, I thought. I had been in Pathfinders for three months as a kid. I hated it.”

### Pathfinder Leader

“I started as a counselor, which to me even now is the most important role there is, because it’s the front line. It’s where you’re dealing with six young people directly, and caring for them on a regular basis,” Milam shares. “That’s really my joy. With the skills the Lord has provided for me, I’ve done almost every role there is: I’ve been an instructor, honor instructor, deputy director, club director, area coordinator for the conference, a specialty coordinator.”

Milam continues, “I actually moved from being the specialty coordinator into doing leadership training, and that got me noticed with the division. I began to work with the division, developing leadership curriculum specifically aimed at Pathfinder leadership development.” And for the past 10 years, Milam has been the North American Division Pathfinder coordinator. It is a volunteer position primarily responsible for doing training. Until the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Milam would often travel to various conferences in North America up to eight weekends a year to provide leadership training at the local conference level.

He and his wife, Darlene, have been directors in Hagerstown for more than 14 years. Though they had attended a class in college together, it wasn’t until after both became employees at the college that their relationship set them on the course of lifelong partnership.

Milam proposed to Darlene while giving a worship talk to volunteers on a short-term building project in Honduras. One of the foundations of their commitment to each other was to make the Lord the center of their relationship and to minister together. Darlene quickly joined the staff of Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church Pathfinders, and they have co-led in their Pathfinder ministry ever since.

“Ministering through Pathfinders has brought me great joy. Seeing young people open up—you get to see that spark in their eye, and you know they’ve got it. When you create a new interest in a new field of study, or they understand a theological concept, or they see the value of service. Anytime you see those lights come on . . . that’s joy right there. And then to have them come back years later and tell you what

an impact you had on their life. That makes the work worthwhile.”

He continues, “I found out quickly that they *know* if you are there for them and love them. And they recognize genuine love pretty quickly. If you are more about being on time, and being in proper uniform, and discipline when it comes to a rigid sort of thing, they are very quickly going to deduce that you’re more concerned about status, or about points, or about earning a trophy at the end of the year. You really aren’t concerned about them.”

Milam and his wife have made it a point to show that love, and let the kids know they can count on them, “no matter what, no matter where.”

He recalls a young woman—still very close to the Milams—sharing this experience with him: “You were the drill instructor. I came up, and I pulled on your little finger to ask you a question. You turned around because you were talking to the director, and said, ‘Hold on, just a second.’ I thought you were going to ignore me. Instead you turned back to the director and said, ‘I need to take care of this person.’ You turned around and you knelt down, looking me straight on, and you took my hands in yours, and you said, ‘What can I do for you?’ There was just no question who was most important to you.”

“They know when you care about them,” reiterates Milam.

### Mount Aetna, Here We Come!

When the Milams’ daughter was ready to start elementary school, the couple decided to move north to Hagerstown to live near both sets of grandparents. “We built a home right next to my wife’s parents’ home,” explains Milam. “At the time, I was serving on the Mount Aetna board for the retreat center, and was regularly commenting that I wish we had such-and-such a service, that I’d rented the place to do leadership



In the Mount Aetna Retreat Center nature center, Glen Milam shares nature stories with a group of children. Photo provided by Glen Milam



“In all of the purposes for our retreat center, our main goal is making people feel welcome.”

training for Pathfinder ministry and there were certain kinds of resources that were not available that every meeting room needed. I guess that impressed them because when the current director announced he was retiring, they came to me and asked if I would like the job.”

Milam’s immediate response was no. When the call came, he was thoroughly enjoying managing his own graphics business and a self-supporting youth ministry. This seemed like a backward step. But, Milam shares, “when Darlene and I were first engaged, we made a commitment that we were going to minister together and be in agreement on accepting new jobs and opportunities. God did open some doors, including making it possible for us to stay in our new home.”

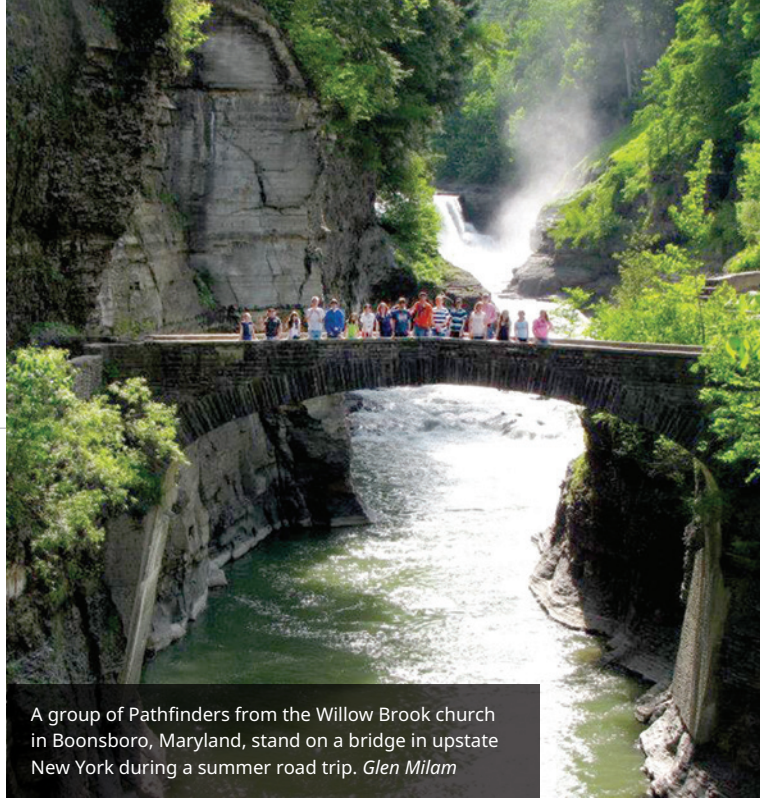
He continues, “I’ve been at Mount Aetna for 19 years. We have four primary ministries that we participate in. The most obvious is that we host summer camp. We are a church retreat center, and that’s what we spend most of our time doing—hosting church or church organizational or educational organizations on weekend or day retreats. We do outdoor school, which is a huge thing for us, fifth through eighth grade primarily, for overnight trips. And then we have the nature center here with many educational displays, as well as living animals, including snakes and horses. We see this as our outreach ministry to the community, rather than to the church.”

Milam is circumspect when thinking about all that the center provides. “I find that in all of these purposes for our retreat center, our main goal is making people feel welcome, checking on what their needs are, and providing for them. Looking back at how my parents practiced hospitality, and the various jobs I’ve had, I was prepared for this. Working here has been a blessing.”

### A Life of Learning

“In all of my work with young people, I find helping them learn gives me a purpose. I myself love to learn new things and travel,” he says. “I look back on my academic career and so wish I had focused more on science, nature, biology. Those just weren’t particularly areas of interest for me. I was much more into the arts and history, loved to do those kinds of things. But now I find that I’m just always interested in technology and the science that goes behind it, why things work the way they do. So I’m always reading.”

Milam shares that he loves to take kids on trips. “It must be close to 40 weeklong history study tours that we have



A group of Pathfinders from the Willow Brook church in Boonsboro, Maryland, stand on a bridge in upstate New York during a summer road trip. *Glen Milam*

done for middle-schoolers. We take them and help introduce them to the history of the country and show them how God has been involved in leading the development of the country,” says Milam, who believes that experiencing things is the most powerful way of learning.

“To stand on Gettysburg Battlefield. To walk across the mile of open wheat field where Generals [George Edward] Pickett and [James Johnston] Pettigrew led their troops—that’s a whole different thing than reading two sentences about it in a history textbook.”

Milam continues in his love for travel and learning. “Both my parents were mathematicians, but they also had artistic skills. Dad could play just about any brass or woodwind instrument you could hand him. He also loved to build models,” Milam explains. “Mom was a painter and crafter. I picked up a love for most of those things (except for musical talent). That contributed to my desire to focus on art, ultimately commercial art, in college. I love to paint, draw, and shoot landscapes.”

Milam says that with all the traveling he does, he often shoots more than 20,000 pictures a year. He’s taken up painting murals in a number of Adventist institutions, and in his own home.

He adds, “Right now I have 1,800 pins on my Google map of places I still want to visit, and I just keep adding more. Who knows when I’ll get there?”

*Kimberly Luste Maran is the editor of Adventist Journey; Lisa Krueger is a freelance writer and editor living in Silver Spring, Maryland.*



# No place *to call home*

War took everything Khan Mohammad owned. It also took his 12-year-old son. Now, he is trying to rebuild his life—but it's one set back after another. "The conflict's dark shadows darkened my life," he says.

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Getty Images/fotostorm

Hard times can become the greatest blessings.

In some ways it was a blessing that my dad got sick because it created a bond between us. I don't know where our relationship would be if he hadn't fallen ill. I cannot imagine another way that would have kept my dad at home for two years.

Now wherever we go, people always stop my father and admire him for the relationship he has with his sons. My brother and I always wrestle with him, whether in public or at home. The bond is so great between us that I see him not only as my father but also as a brother. Even though the illness was painful—and it did bring suffering—the blessing of having my dad at home for two years dramatically transformed our relationship. The illness brought us together as nothing else could. It was an illness that helped heal our family.

I believe that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose (see Rom. 8:28). Just because we don't immediately see the good doesn't mean it's not there. I've learned that the hard times can become the greatest blessings.

*Note from Cesar De Leon (Jonathan's father): This piece was written as a class assignment when Jonathan was a sophomore at Monterey Bay Academy. He went on to study nursing at Walla Walla College and is now practicing nursing for Salem Health Hospital in Salem, Oregon. My relationship with Jonathan remains as strong as ever.*

## A Healing Illness

BY JONATHAN DE LEON

**M**y dad's illness was the best thing to happen to my family. My dad is a pastor with a Ph.D. in marriage and family psychology. He loves ministering to people, and they are equally fanatic about him. As a kid I watched people flock around my father after a sermon, as if he were the last fish in the sea. Everyone wanted a fraction of his time to attend to their needs.

I remember wandering through the church for what seemed like centuries, waiting for my dad to finish talking with the people so we could eat potluck as a family. Every Sabbath we were the first ones there and the last ones to leave.

I had a good relationship with my father. He always made time for his family no matter how busy he was. But once I started school, I would see him for only an hour or two before I went to bed. I remember my father always being busy, either in church or in his home office. I remember playing with my toys at the foot of his desk just to be near him.

But that all changed when he got ill.

Even though my dad was sick and in pain for two years, they were the best years of *my* life. My dad spent more time with us—my mom, my brother, and me—than ever before. We had morning worships, lasting for hours, every day. We went on family walks through nature and discussed controversial topics. We even played games, such as ping-pong, in the middle of the day.

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BY WENDY EBERHARDT

# My Christmas List

**M**y mind fills with nostalgia when this time of year rolls around. I think of trudging through the freshly fallen snow, selecting the perfect Christmas tree from a nearby tree farm, unpacking all the decorations I have collected over the years, and spending time with my family. I wander through all my memories of the many Christmases I have celebrated. The ones that I savor the most are the ones from my childhood, when all of the family near and far would gather at my grandparents' home.

Weeks before the weather would turn cold and snowy, in the mail would arrive an extra-large catalog that my brother and I would spend hours combing through. We would dog-ear the pages of that Sears and Roebuck toy section, selecting toys we liked so that Mom and Dad would not need to guess at what we wanted that year for Christmas.

As Christmas Eve would arrive, my family would gather at my grandparents' home in Michigan with all my cousins, aunts, and uncles. We always enjoyed my grandmother's famous potato salad and her special peanut butter balls that she made only for the holidays. Christmas morning would always find our family—Dad, Mom, my brother, and I—back at our home. We could hardly sleep as we thought of the exciting morning that would soon arrive, when our parents would finally wake up and we all could go downstairs and see the gifts that were under the tree.

Later as an adult, I remember the tug of a toddler at my side of the bed, waiting patiently for my husband and me to wake up and go downstairs to the living room to see the tree surrounded by presents waiting to be opened, wrapped in bright, shiny paper of all colors. (Today my toddler is all grown up, and now I wait for him to wake up on Christmas morning.)

## God Wants All of You and All of Me

This year as I prepare for the holiday season, I go through my list. Not a list of gifts that I want, but gifts that I am going to

give. My mom, my husband, my son . . . beside each name on my list are items that I have carefully thought out, items that I know each person on my list will enjoy. And when I look at my list, I can't help thinking about my friend Ann who was one of the best gift givers I have ever known.

Ann would invest her time in hand-made gifts for everyone on her list, which she would wrap up beautifully. Somehow they always seemed to coordinate with her Christmas decorations in her home.

One Christmas I remember Ann sharing a song with me she had written about gift giving at Christmas. When I heard the song, I realized that Ann's focus on Christmas went far beyond what I had ever experienced in gift giving over the holiday season. I can't remember all of the words to the song, but the part that was most important I remember to this day. Every year when this season rolls around, my mind and my heart go straight to these words: "What kind of offering is fit for my Savior, my King? I think I know, I'm giving all of me to You."

This season I pray that we don't all get so wrapped up in our gift-giving that we forget the One that this season is all about, Jesus Christ. He needs to be at the top of our Christmas gift-giving list. God's gift to us is Jesus Christ; and the gift He wants is all of you and all of me.

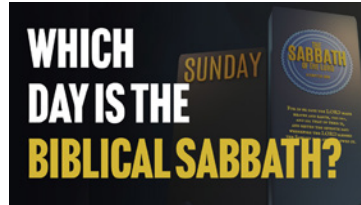
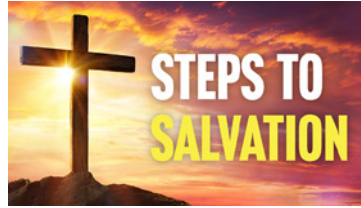
He wants every one of His children to give Him all of their hearts.

Ann's focus on Christmas went far beyond what I had ever experienced in gift giving.

*Wendy Eberhardt is vice president for ministries at the North American Division.*

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When Terry realized his Benton Harbor Church is in a food desert, he knew he could help.

Terry and his church began the Be Well Garden where they work alongside their neighbors to learn gardening and share the produce they grow.

Your donations funded a shed for the garden.

## THANK YOU



Seventh-day Adventist Church  
NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION



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“The soul that  
gives is always

**refreshed.”**

—Ray Hartwell

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



Planned Giving  
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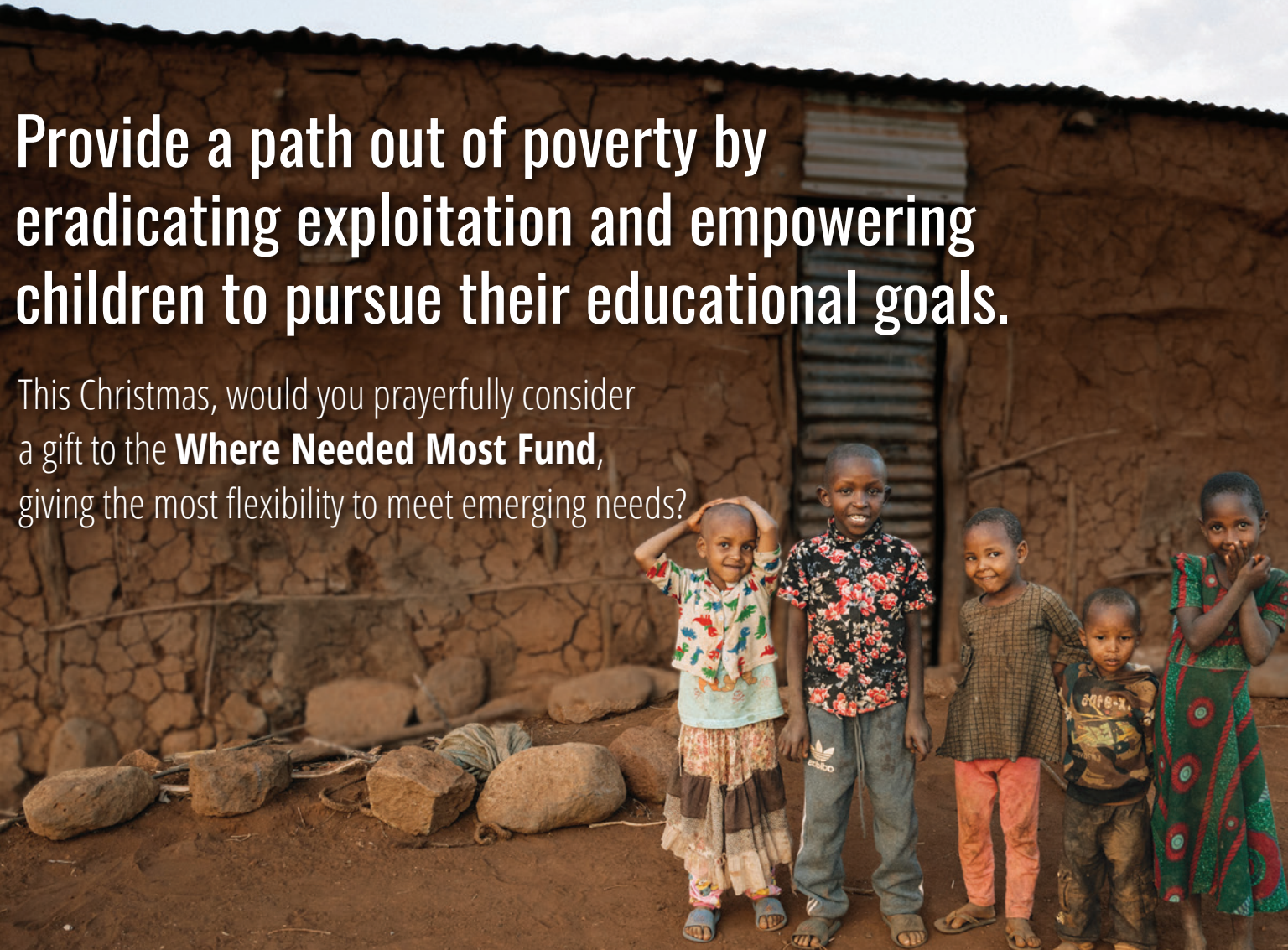


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