

Adventist World

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Bibles I Have Known

BY BILL KNOTT

"Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb. 4:12, NRSV).

The words that rise in the predawn darkness of my study resonate off glass and wood—emerging from my Bible-listening app as though spoken by a trusted friend beside me in the room. I savor them with eye and ear, discovering again that even Scripture on my smartphone can become a temple of the holy.

There was a time when I wouldn't have allowed for Scripture other than between the leather covers of a volume, pages doubled-columned, words of Jesus highlighted in red. That was the Bible of my childhood, the volume given me on my seventh Christmas that still endures upon my study shelf.

Student versions of the Bible soon replaced the leather-bound edition, the new ones heavily underlined in multiple pen colors as I read and reread the words that gave me life. College study editions—three of them, in fact, with bindings sagging at the corners—are heavily notated, underscoring parallels, allusions, and stirring passages I wouldn't let myself forget.

The Bibles from my many years of pastoring are both intensely personal and yet marked for Bible studies, sermons, and presentations. I read them and remember oh-so-many other early mornings when the Word before me on the desk became the Word deeply planted in my heart. Versions abound—*The New English Bible*; Revised Standard Version; New Revised Standard Version; New King James—each one sharper than a two-edged sword, convicting and

yet comforting, reminding me that grace is never a fully finished understanding in my heart.

The Bibles of my editorial years now fill most of a shelf—new versions, better bindings, gift editions, other languages. I pull my French edition to myself and wonder where another pastor, deep within the hills of Haiti or Provence, finds strength and Jesus in these words. Is he moved by the things that stir me on to love my Saviour? Does she repeat these words to greet

the dawning day? *"Car Dieu a tant aimé le monde qu'il a donné son Fils unique . . . (Jean 3:16).*

Each new year rightly starts with new commitment to the Word, to read it often—daily, yes—but even more important, to read it with the openheartedness by which truth finally lodges in our minds. A portion wisely read and deeply lived is more significant than 1189 chapters sped through, especially for those newly planted in the faith.

And so we offer you in this January edition a study plan to read the Gospels through this year—growing deep in the stories, parables, sermons, and sacrifice of our Saviour. If you follow another plan, be blessed with it. If you are looking for a new and richer walk with Jesus, try the study plan we've shared with you. In whatever language you read or listen, the grace of God will build in you a love for Jesus and His Word.



We believe in the power of prayer, and we welcome prayer requests that can be shared at our weekly staff worship every Wednesday morning. Send your requests to prayer@adventistworld.org, and pray for us as we work together to advance God's kingdom.

A group of pastors in the Central Brazil Conference lay hands on Rafael Hibner Hirle (left) and Carlos César Batista Alvino as part of their ordination ceremony at the Pedro Ludovico Central Seventh-day Adventist Church on October 30, 2021. Both pastors have been ministering to congregations in the state of Goiás, not far from Brasilia, Brazil's capital city.

Photo: Adventistas Goiás



“Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, our church pastors, workers, local churches, institutions, and church members never gave up. In the Northern Asia-Pacific Division, we took into consideration the direction of the following four aspects: Mission to the Cities, Youth and Children Evangelism, North Korea Mission, and Digital Evangelism.”

—Si Young Kim, president of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division, during the division’s year-end meetings. These meetings were held November 1-8 and had the theme “Reach the World: I Will Go, Make Disciples!” The annual meetings were conducted entirely on Zoom because of the ongoing pandemic.

27,000

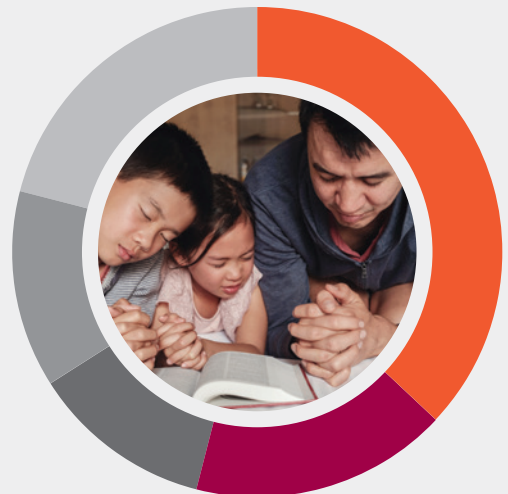
The number of young non-Christians who contacted Middle East and North Africa Union Mission (MENAUM) online instructors and completed at least one Bible study course. In 2018 church leaders in MENAUM conducted a survey of the region that helped them identify the audience, the languages they understood, and the best digital platform to connect with them. One year later MENAUM integrated radio, television, and digital evangelism. Additionally, they recruited online instructors from Middle East University to engage with people taking Bible study courses.

Family Worship

As part of the 2017-2018 Global Church Member Survey, researchers asked the question: How often do you have morning or evening worship with members of your family?

- 37%—Daily or More than Once a Day
- 17%—More than Once a Week
- 12%—About Once a Week
- 13%—Less than Once a Month
- 21%—Never

Source: ASTR Research and Evaluation Team, n=56,850
Image: ThitareeSarmkasat / iStock / Getty Images Plus / Getty Images



125 Years

On November 16, 2021, Oakwood University, Huntsville, Alabama, United States, celebrated its 125th birthday. For more than a century, Oakwood University has launched thousands of graduates into orbits of service around the corner and the world. A historically Black Seventh-day Adventist institution of higher learning, Oakwood offers high-quality Christian education. From the start, Adventist Church cofounder Ellen White championed Oakwood’s cause. In letter 313, 1904, White wrote, “It was in the providence of God that the Huntsville school farm was purchased.”

“Oxygen plants represent security and trust for a health institution, its staff, and its community. It means knowing we can count on a vital source and that we can effectively serve the community as well. We have social and community projects that we actively carry out with local governments, and this plant will help us continue the healing ministry of Jesus as we carry out those projects.”

—Cesar Valera, finance director of Clínica Adventista Ana Stahl, about the new oxygen plant, funded through contributions from AdventHealth, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) in Peru, the Rotary Foundation, and other donors.

“To get people to go to church, the first thing you must do is show them that you love them, then show that you have something different than other churches. This money will impact our evangelism program in the [outreach center] in Bryant Park.”

—Henry Beras, president of Greater New York Conference, United States, about the Bryant Park Life Hope Center in Manhattan, New York City. This center is poised to share hope, wholeness, and the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14 with the more than 12 million people who visit the area every year. The center received a grant from the Global Mission office of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

50 Years Ago

Church members in St. Croix, in the U.S. Virgin Islands, gathered in the fall of 2021 to commemorate the culmination of a historic evangelistic campaign held in a large tent 50 years ago, on October 30, 1971. “The Virgin Islands were considered difficult terrain for evangelism, but the leaders pressed on in faith,” Thomas Rose, who currently leads the Central Seventh-day Adventist Church in St. Croix, said. Fifty years later the island has six English-speaking churches and two Spanish-speaking churches.

Adventist Review Ministries Newsletter

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www.adventistreview.org/newsletter-signup

“The ADRA Solar-powered Water Kiosk pilot has taken more than three years of hard work by the dedicated team at ADRA Mozambique to perfect. The innovation and dedication combined have allowed ADRA to develop a solid concept that, if built upon, could revolutionize safe water supplies in peri-urban communities where access to reliable piped water systems is limited.”

—Jason Brooks, senior technical advisor for water, sanitation, and hygiene at Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) International, about a project that was awarded the Energy Globe Award for its solar-powered water kiosks. ➔



Photo: Arjay Arellano

Medicine Inaugural Class Dedicated in Rwanda

By Marcos Paseggi, *Adventist World*

Thirty-four medical students and scores of guests participated in the first white-coat ceremony at the Adventist School of Medicine of East-Central Africa (ASOME) in Kigali, Rwanda, on November 12. Guests included some of the students' parents, sponsors, Seventh-day Adventist Church health and education leaders, and Rwandan government officials.

ASOME, located on the campus of Adventist University of Central Africa (AUCA), was officially inaugurated in September 2019. More than two years later, because of the pandemic, the school is celebrating the first cohort of medical students, who are expected to graduate in 2027.

"Students, you are the future, and we are so delighted to have you here," ASOME founding dean Eustace Penniecook said as he welcomed the class and invites to the ceremony.

TRUTH AS IT IS IN JESUS

In a special address to the class, Adventist Health Ministries (AHM) associate director Zeno Charles-Marcel reminded students

that as physicians, they have at their disposal the best that science can offer. "But sometimes science can be very cold," he acknowledged. Christians, however, "have the best that heaven can offer. And God is a God of science. He created it. We are not in opposition to true scientific discovery. When you wear your white coat, you are saying that you are in the pursuit of truth wherever it may lead you."

Peter Landless, AHM director, said he felt privileged to be present at the ceremony "to witness history." He reminded students, leaders, and officers that Seventh-day Adventist medical education is not a franchise simply of medical education. On the contrary, he said, "it is an education focused on training medical missionaries in the pattern of the Great Physician, to extend the healing ministry of Jesus."

After being invested with their white coats, students read a pledge in which they promised to dedicate their lives "to the furtherance of Jesus Christ's healing and teaching ministry." They also promised to "go and serve the community," sharing

Leaders urge students to "continue the healing ministry of Jesus."

their knowledge with people around them.

After the pledge Patrick Ndimubanzi, director-general of human resources development of the government of Rwanda, addressed the class. Among other charges to help them excel in their mission, he called students to be patient and humble. "To be a good doctor, you have to be a good human being," he told them.

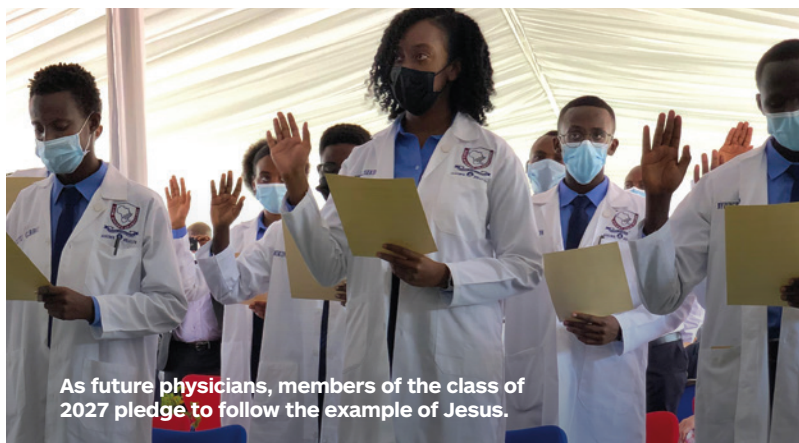
A LONG AND DIFFICULT JOURNEY

Lisa Beardsley-Hardy, director of the Education Department for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, reminded those attending the ceremony that ASOME is the seventh Adventist school of medicine around the world. It is also the second in the African continent, after the Benjamin Carson School of Medicine at Babcock University in Nigeria (established 2012).

On behalf of the East-Central Africa Division (ECD), the world church region comprising 11 African countries, including Rwanda, ECD president Blasious Ruguri thanked parents and sponsors who are allowing these students to become Adventist professionals.

He noted that the results they are now celebrating required years of hard work. "It has not been a simple journey . . . to get this school in place," Ruguri emphasized. "It was a very long journey, and to get at where we are today, it's a miracle itself."

He closed by addressing the students: "Class of 2027, I wish to challenge you to be our trailblazers! Do not let us down!" ©



As future physicians, members of the class of 2027 pledge to follow the example of Jesus.

Photo: Courtesy of Lisa Beardsley-Hardy

Best Religious Radio Station and Podcast in the U.S.

By Adventist World Staff

WGTS-FM in Washington, D.C., won two prestigious awards.



The staff at WGTS-FM, Washington, D.C., radio station celebrate receiving two national awards.

Photo: WGTS-FM

WGTS-FM in Washington, D.C., a radio station operated by Seventh-day Adventists, was recently named Religious Station of the Year at the 2021 National Association of Broadcasters' (NAB) Marconi Radio Awards. The awards, which recognize excellence in radio, were announced during the virtual NAB Marconi Radio Awards program on November 10.

The ceremony looked "to celebrate America's great broadcasters for their excellence in radio," according to organizers.

At the same time, *We Need to Talk*, from the same station, was named Best Radio Podcast of the Year during the ceremony. WGTS's *We Need to Talk* on-air hosts are Claude Jennings and Jerry Woods, who lead a weekly discussion about race that the station describes as "open, honest, and sometimes uncomfortable in an effort to foster growth and understanding between people of all races." Each week the hosts take questions, share stories, and discuss where they're seeing progress, inspiring people to be a part of change.

ABOUT WGTS-FM

WGTS began broadcasting in 1957 as the first noncommercial

radio station to operate in the Washington, D.C., area. According to the *Columbia Union Visitor*, it was launched in the basement of the men's dormitory on the campus of then Washington Missionary College, with a 10-watt transmitter that covered a scant square mile in Takoma Park, Maryland. The call letters—WGTS—echoed the college's motto "Gateway to Service."

In 1982 the station began broadcasting 18 hours a day, and in 1996 it changed to an inspirational Christian format. In 2004 the broadcast tower was moved to Arlington, Virginia, which helped grow its coverage area significantly. In 2018 the station was sold to the nonprofit Atlantic Gateway Communications, Inc.

According to the WGTS website, the stated mission of the station is "to encourage everyone . . . to take one step closer to Christ." The culture of the station is founded on a commitment to integrity, service, and excellence.

WGTS president and general manager Kevin Krueger has stated that "serving listeners through Christian music radio has been a career-long blessing. Serving listeners . . . in the nation's capital is an incredible honor, one I don't take

lightly; one that strikes me at the beginning of every day," he said.

Though some see his station as simply religious entertainment, Krueger sees more: "The reality is that it is life-changing, hundreds of thousand times over, as God works on the hearts of listeners . . . in D.C. and worldwide online," he said. It is that calling to share God with others that keeps it all fresh and alive, according to him. "I like to daydream about a day in heaven when we will have a huge WGTS 91.9 listener reunion and we will each share stories of how God worked in our lives through a song, a word shared—through this media ministry."

ABOUT THE NAB

The National Association of Broadcasters is the premier advocacy association for America's broadcasters. NAB enables broadcasters to best serve their communities, strengthen their businesses, and seize new opportunities in the digital age. According to NAB sources, Marconi finalists were selected by a taskforce of broadcasters, and the winners were voted on by the NAB Marconi Radio Awards Selection Academy. The votes were tabulated by an independent firm. ©

1,688,247

Membership of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD) as of December 31, 2020

“We are living at a time when digital evangelism has become mainstream, and we have to embrace this reality and take the initiative to maximize its potential.”

—Saw Samuel, president of SSD, about a health clinic that coincided with multiple sites streaming online evangelistic presentations. More than 800 people were baptized on the island of Mindoro, Philippines.

“Creatures Teach Us gives opportunities for kids to shine for Jesus as their talents are being maximized to their fullest potential. Each episode takes parents and children on an adventure with six different animals found in Singapore. [Viewers] can learn character traits such as loyalty, empathy, and teamwork, contextualized perspectives, prosocial choices, and other positive values in their Christian character-building process.”

—Producers of Hope Channel Singapore about the new children program. The series goes beyond video and offers family-friendly educational entertainment and activities. The episodes include a free downloadable family fun pack, parenting articles, and printable files.

12-Day Session

Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Laos is implementing phase II of the nutrition and livelihood project in Laos, one of Southeast Asia’s poorest countries. The project is situated in Xienkhouang province, where acute malnutrition is as high as 10 percent, chronic malnutrition is 33 percent, and more than 12 percent of children under 5 years of age are underweight. The project addresses undernutrition through a variety of interventions, one being the 12-day feeding session. Each household brings together what they have, and the ADRA staff turns the ingredients into a balanced nutritious meal for malnourished children. ⬇

“This construction braved three inches [7.5 centimeters] of ashfall, three strong earthquakes, two tropical cyclones, more than two years of pandemic lockdown, and two months of nonstop monsoon rains. In the end, this building endured them all and remained true to its purpose, to be a beacon of hope in the community.”

—Joseph Allan Deblois, treasurer of SSD, during the grand opening service of the Life Hope Impact Center. The center houses various ministries of the church and will also offer services to the community through its vegetarian restaurant, fitness center, sauna, health center, convention area, and guest facilities. The center is located in Silang, Cavite, Philippines.



Photo: courtesy of ADRA Laos



Photo: fizkes / iStock / Getty Images Plus / Getty Images

If You Had Just Answered the Phone!

What if God has been calling you all along?

It was to be a simple day-trip hike in the beautiful, autumn-colored Colorado mountains of the United States in October 2021. With deep-blue skies towering over rugged gray rock terrain amid conifer greens, it was a great day for a hike!

But at the end of the day, around 8:00 p.m., someone called the local search and rescue (SAR), reporting the hiker was long overdue. Could they please help locate the individual?

All night long, search and rescue teams combed surrounding areas to find the missing hiker. “Multiple attempts to contact the subject via their cell phone were unsuccessful,” a Lake County statement later reported.

But lo and behold, more than 24 hours later the hiker returned home. “Where have you been? The whole county has been searching for you!”

According to a SAR statement, the subject lost the trail around nightfall, spent the night searching for the missing trail, finally found

it, and reached their car the next morning. “They had no idea that SAR was out looking for them.”

But the closing to this news report is a classic. From the same statement: “One notable takeaway is that the subject ignored repeated phone calls from us because they didn’t recognize the number.” Can you believe it? The hiker’s phone kept ringing through the night from an unrecognized phone number, but since they didn’t know who was calling, they decided not to answer. Help was one phone call away—but they wouldn’t answer the phone!

When social media turned critical of this hapless hiker, SAR came to the hiker’s defense: “Please remember that what seems like common sense in hindsight is not obvious to a subject in the moment when they are lost and panicking.”¹

I’m amazed at how many of us have lived through the doubleheader crisis of this pandemic, watched from afar the meltdown of political movements and governments, tracked the global headlines of climate change, bemoaning the moral hemorrhaging of this culture and its collapsing values, and complaining about supply-chain disruptions that threaten a way of life based on incessant spending. All the while,

our phones are ringing off the hook from an unidentified caller. Has it occurred to anybody it might be God on the other end? And that we might be more lost than even we think?

How did our Lord put it? “But be on your guard. Don’t let the sharp edge of your expectation get dulled by parties and drinking and shopping. Otherwise, that Day is going to take you by complete surprise, spring on you suddenly like a trap, for it’s going to come on everyone, everywhere, at once. So, whatever you do, don’t fall asleep at the wheel. Pray constantly that you will have the strength and wits to make it through everything that’s coming and end up on your feet before the Son of Man” (Luke 21:34-36, Message).²

In other words, please answer the phone!

Or, in the words of the American author Ellen White: “God of heaven, wake us up!”³

Answer the phone. ☺

¹ Elisha Fieldstadt, “Hiker Lost for 24 Hours Ignored Rescuers’ Calls Because They Didn’t Recognize the Number,” www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/hiker-lost-24-hours-ignored-rescuers-calls-because-they-didn-t1282381

² Texts credited to Message are from The Message, copyright © 1993, 2002, 2018 by Eugene H. Peterson. Used by permission of NavPress, represented by Tyndale House Publishers, a division of Tyndale House Ministries. All rights reserved.

³ Ellen G. White, Last Day Events (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1992), p. 27.

Focus

365 Days With Jesus

COMPILED BY MERLE POIRIER,
OPERATIONS MANAGER,
ADVENTIST WORLD

The editorial team of *Adventist World* invites you to increase the time you spend with Jesus in 2022. This unique Bible study reading plan organizes the four Gospels in chronological order, and then groups them in 365 daily readings.¹ Corresponding selections from Ellen White's powerful volumes, *The Desire of Ages* and *Christ's Object Lessons*, are included to deepen your understanding of the Gospel content.² Some selections are accorded two, three, or even four days in order to keep each one clear and accessible. A more unhurried reading pace was deliberately chosen to allow time to contemplate the life of the One who came to give His life for ours. We pray that your life will be changed day by day as you spend time with Jesus.

¹ There are many versions available in order to read the Gospels chronologically. The one used as the base was produced by Rick Aschmann, with some modifications. You may be interested in his extensive work. Check it out at: <https://aschmann.net/BibleChronology/ChronologyOfTheFourGospels.pdf>.
² There are many printings of both these books. The page numbers listed are from the Ellen G. White writings website, which follows the standard pagination for *The Desire of Ages* and *Christ's Object Lessons*. You may find both books at: www.egwwritings.org.

INTRODUCTION

○ 1/1					DA 19-26
○ 1/2		Mark 1:1	Luke 1:1-4	John 1:1-18	DA 27-30
○ 1/3	Matt. 1:1-17		Luke 3:23-38		DA 31-38
1/4					

BIRTH NARRATIVE

○ 1/5			Luke 1:5-80		DA 97-100
1/6					
1/7					
○ 1/8	Matt. 1:18-25		Luke 2:1-20		DA 43-49
1/9					
○ 1/10			Luke 2:21-38		DA 50-58
○ 1/11	Matt. 2:1-23				DA 59-67
1/12					
1/13					
○ 1/14			Luke 2:39-40		DA 68-74

CHILDHOOD

○ 1/15			Luke 2:41-51		DA 75-83
○ 1/16			Luke 2:52		DA 84-92

THE FIRST YEAR AND A HALF OF MINISTRY

○ 1/17	Matt. 3:1-12	Mark 1:2-8	Luke 3:1-18		DA 101-108
1/18					
○ 1/19	Matt. 3:13-17	Mark 1:9-11	Luke 3:21-23		DA 109-113
○ 1/20	Matt. 4:1-11	Mark 1:12-13	Luke 4:1-13		DA 114-131
1/21					
1/22					
○ 1/23				John 1:19-51	DA 132-143
1/24					
○ 1/25				John 2:1-12	DA 144-153
1/26					
○ 1/27				John 2:13-25	DA 154-166
1/28					
○ 1/29				John 3:1-21	DA 167-177
1/30					
○ 1/31	Matt. 4:12	Mark 1:14	Luke 3:19-20	John 3:22-36	DA 178-182
○ 2/1				John 4:1-42	DA 183-195
2/2					
○ 2/3			Luke 4:14-15	John 4:43-54	DA 196-200
○ 2/4	Matt. 4:13-22	Mark 1:15-20	Luke 4:16-30		DA 236-243
2/5					
○ 2/6	Matt. 8:14-17	Mark 1:21-38	Luke 4:31-44		DA 231-235
2/7					
○ 2/8	Matt. 4:23-25	Mark 1:39	Luke 5:1-11		DA 244-251
○ 2/9	Matt. 8:1-4	Mark 1:40-45	Luke 5:12-16		DA 252-261
2/10					
○ 2/11	Matt. 9:1-8	Mark 2:1-12	Luke 5:17-26		DA 262-271
2/12					
○ 1/13	Matt. 9:9-13	Mark 2:13-17	Luke 5:27-32		DA 272-275
2/14					
○ 2/15	Matt. 9:14-17	Mark 2:18-22	Luke 5:33-39		DA 276-280
2/16					

THE SECOND YEAR OF MINISTRY

○ 2/17				John 5:1-47	DA 201-213
2/18					
2/19					
○ 2/20	Matt. 12:1-8	Mark 2:23-28	Luke 6:1-5		DA 281-285
2/21					
○ 2/22	Matt. 12:9-14	Mark 3:1-6	Luke 6:6-11		DA 286-289
○ 2/23	Matt. 12:15-21	Mark 3:7-12			
○ 2/24		Mark 3:13-19	Luke 6:12-16		DA 290-297
○ 2/25	Matt. 5:1-12		Luke 6:17-19		DA 298-306
2/26					
○ 2/27			Luke 6:20-26		
○ 2/28	Matt. 5:13-16				DA 306-307
○ 3/1	Matt. 5:17-37				DA 307-311
3/2					
○ 3/3	Matt. 5:38-42		Luke 6:27-31		
○ 3/4	Matt. 5:43-48		Luke 6:32-36		
○ 3/5	Matt. 6:1-21		Luke 11:1-13, 33-36		DA 311-312
3/6					
○ 3/7	Matt. 6:22-24				DA 312-313
○ 3/8	Matt. 6:25-34				DA 313-314
○ 3/9	Matt. 7:1-6		Luke 6:37-42		
○ 3/10	Matt. 7:7-29		Luke 6:43-49		
○ 3/11	Matt. 8:5-13		Luke 7:1-10		DA 315-317
○ 3/12			Luke 7:11-17		DA 318-320
○ 3/13	Matt. 11:2-19		Luke 7:18-35		DA 214-219
3/14					
○ 3/15			Luke 8:1-3		
○ 3/16	Matt. 12:22-37	Mark 3:20-30	Luke 11:14-23		DA 321-327
3/17					
○ 3/18	Matt. 12:38-42		Luke 11:29-32		
○ 3/19	Matt. 12:43-45		Luke 11:24-28		
○ 3/20	Matt. 12:46-50	Mark 3:31-35	Luke 8:19-21		
○ 3/21			Luke 11:37-54		
○ 3/22					COL 17-21
○ 3/23					COL 22-27
○ 3/24	Matt. 13:1-23	Mark 4:1-20	Luke 8:4-15		COL 33-38
○ 3/25					COL 39-44
○ 3/26					COL 45-50
○ 3/27					COL 51-56
○ 3/28					COL 57-61
○ 3/29	Matt. 13:24-30				COL 70-75
○ 3/30		Mark 4:21-25	Luke 8:16-18		
○ 3/31		Mark 4:26-29			COL 62-69
○ 4/1	Matt. 13:31-32	Mark 4:30-32	Luke 13:18-19		COL 76-79
○ 4/2	Matt. 13:33		Luke 13:20-21		COL 95-102
○ 4/3	Matt. 13:34-35	Mark 4:33-34			
○ 4/4	Matt. 13:36-43				COL 80-89
○ 4/5	Matt. 13:44				COL 103-107
○ 4/6					COL 108-114
○ 4/7	Matt. 13:45-46				COL 115-121
○ 4/8	Matt. 13:47-50				COL 122-123
○ 4/9	Matt. 13:51-52				COL 124-138

○ 4/10					COL 129-134
○ 4/11	Matt. 8:18-22		Luke 9:57-62		
○ 4/12	Matt. 8:23-27	Mark 4:35-41	Luke 8:22-25		DA 333-336
4/13					
○ 4/14	Matt. 8:28-34	Mark 5:1-20	Luke 8:26-39		DA 337-341
4/15					
4/16					
○ 4/17	Matt. 9:18-26	Mark 5:21-43	Luke 8:40-56		DA 342-348
4/18					
4/19					
○ 4/20	Matt. 9:27-34				
○ 4/21	Matt. 13:53-58	Mark 6:1-6			
○ 4/22	Matt. 9:35-38				
○ 4/23	Matt. 10:1-4	Mark 6:7	Luke 9:1-2		
○ 4/24	Matt. 10:5-15	Mark 6:8-13	Luke 9:3-5		DA 349-358
4/25					
○ 4/26	Matt. 10:16-11:1				
○ 4/27	Matt. 14:1-12	Mark 6:14-29	Luke 9:6-9		DA 214-225
4/28					

THE THIRD YEAR OF MINISTRY

○ 4/29	Matt. 14:13-14	Mark 6:30-34	Luke 9:10-11	John 6:1-4	DA 359-363
4/30					
○ 5/1	Matt. 14:15-21	Mark 6:35-44	Luke 9:12-17	John 6:5-13	DA 364-371
5/2					
○ 5/3	Matt. 14:22-33	Mark 6:45-52		John 6:14-21	DA 377-382
5/4					
○ 5/5	Matt. 14:34-36	Mark 6:53-56			
5/6				John 6:22-71	DA 383-394
5/7					
5/8					
○ 5/9	Matt. 15:1-20	Mark 7:1-23			DA 395-398
5/10					
○ 5/11	Matt. 15:21-28	Mark 7:24-30			DA 399-403
5/12					
○ 5/13	Matt. 15:29-39	Mark 7:31-38			DA 404-405
5/14					
○ 5/15		Mark 8:1-10			
○ 5/16	Matt. 16:1-12	Mark 8:11-26			DA 406-409
5/17					
○ 5/18	Matt. 16:13-28	Mark 8:27-38	Luke 9:18-27		DA 410-418
5/19					
5/20					
○ 5/21	Matt. 17:1-13	Mark 9:1-13	Luke 9:28-36		DA 419-425
5/22					
○ 5/23	Matt. 17:14-21	Mark 9:14-29	Luke 9:37-45		DA 426-431
5/24					
○ 5/25	Matt. 17:22-27				DA 432-434
5/26					
○ 5/27	Matt. 18:1-20	Mark 9:30-50	Luke 9:46-50		DA 435-442
5/28					
○ 5/29	Matt. 18:21-35				COL 243-251
5/30					

○	5/31			John 7:1-15	DA 447-454
	6/1				
○	6/2			John 7:16-36	DA 455-460
	6/3				
○	6/4			John 7:37-8:11	DA 461-462
	6/5				
○	6/6			John 8:12-59	DA 463-470
	6/7				
○	6/8			John 9:1-41	DA 471-475
	6/9				
	6/10				
○	6/11	Matt. 19:1	Mark 10:1	Luke 9:51-56	DA 485-490
	6/12				
○	6/13			Luke 10:1-24	DA 491-496
	6/14				
○	6/15			Luke 17:11-19	
○	6/16	Matt. 11:20-30			DA 328-332
○	6/17			Luke 10:25-42	DA 497-505
○	6/18				COL 376-380
○	6/19				COL 381-385
○	6/20				COL 386-389
○	6/21			Luke 11:1-13	COL 139-143
○	6/22				COL 144-149
○	6/23			John 10:1-30	DA 476-484
	6/24				
	6/25				
○	6/26			John 10:31-42	
○	6/27			Luke 12:1-12	
○	6/28			Luke 12:13-21	COL 252-259
	6/29				
○	6/30			Luke 12:22-59	
○	7/1			Luke 13:1-9	COL 212-218
○	7/2			Luke 13:10-17	
○	7/3			Luke 13:22-33	
○	7/4			Luke 14:1-11	
○	7/5			Luke 14:12-24	COL 219-223
○	7/6				COL 224-228
○	7/7				COL 229-233
○	7/8				COL 234-237
○	7/9			Luke 14:25-35	
○	7/10			Luke 15:1-10	COL 185-189
○	7/11				COL 190-193
○	7/12				COL 194-197
○	7/13			Luke 15:11-32	COL 198-202
○	7/14				COL 203-207
○	7/15				COL 208-211
○	7/16			Luke 16:1-18	COL 366-370
○	7/17				COL 371-375
○	7/18			Luke 16:19-31	COL 260-263
○	7/19				COL 264-268
○	7/20				COL 269-271
○	7/21			Luke 17:1-10	
○	7/22			Luke 17:20-37	DA 506-510
	7/23				

○	7/24			Luke 18:1-8	COL 164-168
○	7/25				COL 169-172
○	7/26				COL 173-176
○	7/27				COL 177-180
○	7/28			Luke 18:9-14	COL 150-155
○	7/29				COL 156-159
○	7/30				COL 160-163
○	7/31	Matt. 19:3-15	Mark 10:2-16	Luke 18:15-17	DA 511-517
	8/1				
○	8/2	Matt. 19:16-22	Mark 10:17-23		DA 518-523
	8/3				
○	8/4			Luke 18:18-30	COL 390-393
○	8/5				COL 395-399
○	8/6				COL 400-404
○	8/7	Matt. 19:23-30	Mark 10:24-31		COL 390-393
○	8/8				COL 394-396
○	8/9	Matt. 20:1-16			COL 396-399
○	8/10				COL 400-404
○	8/11			John 11:1-46	DA 524-536
	8/12				
○	8/13			John 11:47-54	DA 537-542
○	8/14	Matt. 20:17-28	Mark 10:32-45	Luke 18:31-34	DA 547-551
	8/15				
○	8/16	Matt. 20:29-34	10:46-52	Luke 18:35-43	
○	8/17			Luke 19:1-10	DA 552-556
○	8/18			Luke 19:11-28	
○	8/19			John 11:55-57	
○	8/20	Matt. 26:6-13	Mark 14:3-9	Luke 7:36-50	John 12:1-13
	8/21				DA 557-568
	8/22				
○	8/23	Matt. 21:1-11	Mark 11:1-11	Luke 19:29-44	John 12:14-19
	8/24				DA 569-579
	8/25				
	8/26				
○	8/27	Matt. 21:17-22	Mark 11:12-26		DA 580-588
	8/28				
	8/29				
○	8/30	Matt. 21:12-16	Mark 11:15-19	Luke 19:45-48	DA 589-595
	8/31				
○	9/1			Luke 21:37-38	
○	9/2	Matt. 21:23-27	Mark 11:27-33	Luke 20:1-8	COL 272-283
	9/3				
	9/4				
○	9/5	Matt. 21:28-32	Mark 12:1-12	Luke 20:9-19	DA 596-600
	9/6				
○	9/7	Matt. 21:33-44			COL 284-287
○	9/8				COL 288-291
○	9/9				COL 292-295
○	9/10				COL 296-300
○	9/11				COL 301-306
○	9/12	Matt. 22:1-14			COL 307-311
○	9/13				COL 312-315
○	9/14				COL 316-319
○	9/15	Matt. 22:15-22	Mark 12:13-17	Luke 20:20-26	DA 601-603
	9/16				

○	9/17 9/18	Matt. 22:23-33	Mark 12:18-27	Luke 20:27-38		DA 604-607
○	9/19 9/20	Matt. 22:34-46	Mark 12:28-37	Luke 20:39-44		DA 608-609
○	9/21 9/22 9/23	Matt. 23:1-39	Mark 12:38-44	Luke 20:45-47		DA 610-613
○	9/24			Luke 21:1-4		DA 614-615
○	9/25			Luke 13:34-35		DA 616-620
○	9/26 9/27	Matt. 24:1-22	Mark 13:1-20	Luke 21:5-24		DA 627-630
○	9/28 9/29	Matt. 24:23-51	Mark 13:21-37	Luke 21:25-36		DA 631-636
○	9/30	Matt. 25:1-13				COL 405-409
○	10/1					COL 410-413
○	10/2					COL 414-417
○	10/3					COL 418-421
○	10/4	Matt. 25:14-30				COL 325-328
○	10/5					COL 329-331
○	10/6					COL 332-335
○	10/7					COL 336-339
○	10/8					COL 340-343
○	10/9					COL 344-348
○	10/10					COL 349-353
○	10/11					COL 354-358
○	10/12					COL 359-362
○	10/13					COL 363-365
○	10/14 10/15	Matt 25:31-46				DA 637-641
○	10/16			John 12:20-36		DA 621-626
○	10/17	Matt. 26:1-5	Mark 14:1-2	Luke 22:1-2		
○	10/18	Matt. 26:14-16	Mark 14:10-11	Luke 22:3-6		
○	10/19			John 12:37-43		
○	10/20			John 12:44-50		
○	10/21 10/22 10/23	Matt. 26:17-19	Mark 14:12-16	Luke 22:7-13	John 13:1-17	DA 642-651
○	10/24 10/25 10/26	Matt.26:20-29	Mark 14:17-26	Luke 22:14-23	John 13:18-30	DA 652-661
○	10/27 10/28			Luke 22:24-34	John 13:31-38	DA 662-669
○	10/29 10/30 10/31			Luke 22:35-38	John 14:1-31	DA 670-672
○	11/1 11/2	Matt. 26:30-35	Mark 14:27-31	Luke 22:39-45		DA 673-674
○	11/3 11/4				John 15:1-27	DA 675-680
○	11/5				John 16:1-33	
○	11/6				John 17:1-26	
○	11/7 11/8 11/9	Matt. 26:36-46	Mark 14:32-42	Luke 22:46	John 18:1	DA 685-693

○	11/10 11/11	Matt. 26:47-56	Mark 14:43-52	Luke 22:47-53	John 18:2-11	DA 694-697
○	11/12 11/13	Matt. 26:57-68	Mark 14:53-65			DA 698-710
○	11/14 11/15 11/16	Matt. 26:69-75	Mark 14:66-72	Luke 22:54-65	John 18:12-27	DA 711-715
○	11/17 11/18 11/19	Matt. 27:1-10	Mark 15:1	Luke 22:66-71		DA 716-722
○	11/20 11/21 11/22	Matt. 27:11-23	Mark 15:2-14	Luke 23:1-23	John 18:28-38	DA 723-735
○	11/23 11/24	Matt. 27:24-30	Mark 15:15-19	Luke 23:24-25	John 18:39-40	DA 736-740
○	11/25 11/26				John 19:1-16	
○	11/27 11/28	Matt. 27:31-32	Mark 15:20-21	Luke 23:26-31	John 19:17	DA 741-743
○	11/29 11/30 12/1	Matt. 27:33-44	Mark 15:22-32	Luke 23:32-38	John 19:18-24	DA 744-749
○	12/2			Luke 23:39-43		DA 750-752
○	12/3 12/4	Matt. 27:45-49	Mark 15:33-36	Luke 23:44-45	John 19:25-29	DA 753-757
○	12/5 12/6				John 19:30	DA 758-764
○	12/7 12/8 12/9	Matt. 27:50-66	Mark 15:37-47	Luke 23:46-56	John 19:31-42	DA 769-778

THE 40 DAYS FROM THE RESURRECTION TO THE ASCENSION

○	12/10 12/11 12/12	Matt. 28:1-4	Mark 16:1-4	Luke 24:1-2	John 20:1	DA 779-787
○	12/13 12/14 12/15	Matt. 28:5-15	Mark 16:5-11	Luke 24:3-12	John 20:2-18	DA 788-794
○	12/16 12/17 12/18		Mark 16:12-13	Luke 24:13-35		DA 795-801
○	12/19 12/20 12/21		Mark 16:14	Luke 24:36-48	John 20:19-23	DA 802-806
○	12/22				John 20:24-29	DA 807-808
○	12/23 12/24 12/25				John 21:1-24	DA 809-817
○	12/26 12/27 12/28	Matt. 28:16-20	Mark 16:15-18			DA 818-828
○	12/29 12/30 12/31		Mark 16:19-20	Luke 24:49-53	John 20:30-31	DA 829-835
○					John 21:25	

Focus

Saying Yes to Jesus

Helping your children to make Jesus first starts with a simple family worship practice.



Raising children to have a strong personal faith in Jesus Christ, and equipping them to recognize and celebrate the presence of God in their lives, occur when Jesus is regularly invited into family worship in the home.

Many families, however, are so busy with work, school activities, medical appointments, and other extracurricular activities that parents are simply exhausted by the end of the day. Do they really have the time and energy to gather the family together for worship, let alone make it fun?

The Bible urges that parents are responsible to pass on their faith to their children, as reiterated from Moses' command about God's laws, "Impress them on your children" (Deut. 6:7, NIV) to Paul's admonition to "bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4, NIV).

V. Bailey Gillespie, a key contributor to the North American ValueGenesis study of grades 6 to 12 of Seventh-day Adventist youth, discovered the seriousness and importance of building quality family worship that is meaningful and relevant to their children.¹ The ValueGenesis study in the South Pacific Division concurred that the Christian commitment of young people increases directly as the frequency of family worship

increases. This relationship is very significant.²

The *Households of Faith* study by Barna Research suggests that households participating in spiritual practices (defined as praying every day or two and reading the Bible weekly all together) and spiritual conversations (defined as talking about God and faith as a family at least weekly) should be considered as "spiritually vibrant."³

Ellen White's parenting classic, *Child Guidance*, strongly urges parents to hold regular family worship: "In every family there should be a fixed time for morning and evening worship. How appropriate it is for parents to gather their children about them before the fast is broken,

to thank the heavenly Father for His protection during the night, and to ask Him for His help and guidance and watch care during the day! How fitting, also, when evening comes, for parents and children to gather once more before Him and thank Him for the blessings of the day that is past!⁴

CREATING A CONDUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Family worship should be a fun and relaxed time to get together as a family to share and talk about the day and how God has worked in their lives. Find a time that works best for everyone's schedule. If after breakfast in the morning or after supper in the evening works best for everyone, then pick that time. Remember, it should be short and sweet, about 10-15 minutes. A quiet place is preferable, or, if the weather permits, an undistracted outdoor setting would work well too. Parents can vary the venue, or they can let the children select their favorite spots to hold worship.

Family worships should be interesting and fun for children. Involve children in multisensory experiences using a variety of approaches. Give them opportunities to talk, share, and apply the lessons learned. Let them ask questions. They can also pray and lead the family in singing.

Ellen White offers this encouragement to parents: "Fathers and mothers, make the hour of worship intensely interesting. There is no reason why this hour should not be the most pleasant and enjoyable of the day. A little thought given to preparation for it will enable you to make it full of interest and profit. From time to time let the service be varied. Questions may be asked on the portion of Scripture read, and a few earnest, timely remarks may be made. A song of praise may be sung. The prayer offered should be short and pointed."⁵

EASY AND FUN IDEAS FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

Many fun and engaging family worship ideas don't require much preparation or much time. The ages of the children also determine what should be used. Here are some suggestions.

OBJECT LESSONS

Use common objects that children are familiar with, such as rocks, plants, seashells, ropes, or whatever unique props you may have available to teach Bible lessons. Try several of these:

Smashed Tomatoes—Put one or two ripe tomatoes into a strong plastic bag. Ask your child to step on it or smash it with their hands. Then ask: "Can we still use these smashed-up tomatoes? Should we throw them away? Let children suggest some answers—making a tomato sauce for spaghetti? salsa (or sauce) to go with tortilla chips?

What can you learn from this activity? Like the smashed tomatoes, we are smashed up, messed up, making mistakes time and again, but God still loves us and forgives us. Let's read Jeremiah 1:5, Isaiah 1:18, and John 3:16.

DRAMA, PANTOMIMES, AND CHARADES

Younger children can enact Bible stories.

Older children can do Bible charades for family members to guess. Then discuss the character traits that can apply to everyone in the family.

STORIES

A child or a parent can read an interesting Bible story and discuss it.

An older child can tell a Bible story and then ask questions. Everyone can share how they would apply the lesson from the Bible story. Example: How can you be brave like David today in your school?

USE SCRIPTURE

Read a psalm together and ask each family member to pray over the verse that is most meaningful to them.

Each one finds one Bible promise and tells why he or she likes it.

MAKING MUSIC

Each family member selects a favorite song to sing together and then explains why that particular song was chosen.

Introduce the story of a favorite hymn and pray about how we can live out that message.

Does it seem too complicated? Don't lose heart, busy parents. The gospel is powerful and saves. Just use a little creativity and time and apply them consistently as you set up your family altar daily before the Lord. You'll be helping your children say "Yes!" to Jesus! ☺

*True happiness: use a piece of paper to tell the gospel story—the story of a man who had everything on earth, a jet, a house, money, etc., but was not happy. He found out later that only Jesus can make him happy. Use the paper to tear it into a cross. Visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0axfBeDnsyg>.

¹V. Bailey Gillespie, *General Conference Studies Suggested Church Can Develop Faith in Its Young People*, ANN, May 3, 2010, online at <https://adventist.news/news/studies-suggest-ways-church-can-develop-faith-in-its-young-people>.

²South Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists, *Valuegenesis Study 1, Core Report* (1993), pp. 44, 45, <http://circle.adventist.org/files/download/VGCORERE.pdf>.

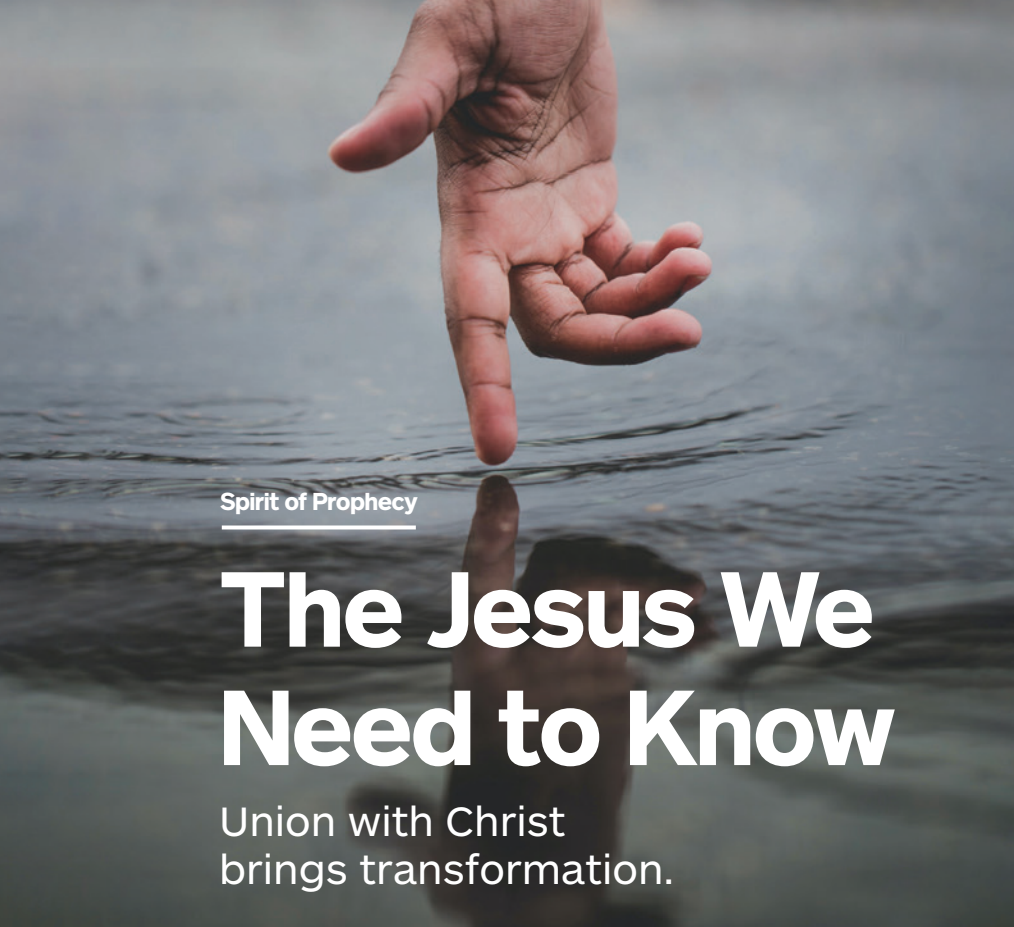
³Barna Group, "Opportunities for Faith Formation at Home," *Family and Kids*, Apr. 21, 2020, <https://www.barna.com/faith-formation-at-home/>.

⁴Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1954), p. 520.

⁵Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 7, p. 43.

Family worships should not be dull and boring for children.

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Spirit of Prophecy

The Jesus We Need to Know

Union with Christ brings transformation.

When Christ took human nature upon Him, He bound humanity to Himself by a tie of love that can never be broken by any power save the choice of man himself. Satan will constantly present allurements to induce us to break this tie—to choose to separate ourselves from Christ. Here is where we need to watch, to strive, to pray, that nothing may entice us to *choose* another master; for we are always free to do this. But let us keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, and He will preserve us. Looking unto Jesus, we are safe. Nothing can pluck us out of His hand. In constantly beholding Him, we “are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 3:18.

AN EXTREMELY CLOSE UNION

It was thus that the early disciples gained their likeness to the dear Saviour. When those disciples heard the words of Jesus, they felt their need of Him. They sought,

they found, they followed Him. They were with Him in the house, at the table, in the closet, in the field. They were with Him as pupils with a teacher, daily receiving from His lips lessons of holy truth. They looked to Him, as servants to their master, to learn their duty. Those disciples were men “subject to like passions as we are.” James 5:17. They had the same battle with sin to fight. They needed the same grace, in order to live a holy life.

Even John, the beloved disciple, the one who most fully reflected the likeness of the Saviour, did not naturally possess that loveliness of character. . . . But as the character of the Divine One was manifested to him, he saw his own deficiency and was humbled by the knowledge. The strength and patience, the power and tenderness, the majesty and meekness, that he beheld in the daily life of the Son of God filled his soul with admiration and love. Day by day his heart was drawn out toward Christ, until he lost sight of self in love for his Master. His resentful, ambitious

temper was yielded to the molding power of Christ. . . . The power of the love of Christ wrought a transformation of character. This is the sure result of union with Jesus. When Christ abides in the heart, the whole nature is transformed. Christ’s Spirit, His love, softens the heart, subdues the soul, and raises the thoughts and desires toward God and heaven.

HIS LINGERING PRESENCE

When Christ ascended to heaven, the sense of His presence was still with His followers. It was a personal presence, full of love and light. . . . The tones of His voice had come back to them, as the cloud of angels received Him—“Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Matthew 28:20. He had ascended to heaven in the form of humanity. They knew that He was before the throne of God, their Friend and Saviour still; that His sympathies were unchanged; that He was still identified with suffering humanity. . . .

Their union with Him was closer than when He was personally with them. The light, and love, and power of the indwelling Christ shone out through them, so that men, beholding, “marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.” Acts 4:13.

All that Christ was to the disciples, He desires to be to His children today; for in that last prayer, with the little band of disciples gathered about Him, He said, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.” John 17:20. ©

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 has been taken from her book *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1956), pp. 72-75.

Millennial Voices

No Bible for Our Bible Study



My trip didn't go as I had imagined. Because of a problem with my documentation, I was detained as I was entering a foreign country. Unbelievably, I was even sent to jail for a week, until the misunderstanding was resolved.

Before leaving home, I had trusted that God wanted me to make this trip. Even though things didn't seem to be going according to my original plan, I realized that He was still with me. I believed that He would make all things

work together for good once more, so I claimed that promise before getting into the police truck.

While I was being processed, I had to wait in a cold room. A young woman with nothing warmer than a T-shirt stood not far from me. Since I was wearing a sweater and a coat, I gave her my coat. We started a conversation, and I told her I was a Christian. She asked: "Do you think God still loves me?"

She had experienced many difficult situations, and when she asked me that question, I saw an opportunity to share my faith. I told her about Paul and Silas in prison, and she asked me to sing. I sang a couple of hymns and saw her eyes well up with tears.

Soon after that, all our belongings were taken from us, and we were given a uniform. Then someone guided us to a very small cell.

There were no windows, but the Son of righteousness shone even in that dreary cell.

When breakfast was served at 5:00 a.m., I asked my new friend if I could pray. It was the first of many prayers. As the week progressed, I was happy to see that she also wanted to join in praying.

The cell was cold. We wore short sleeves, and our blankets were

thin. We had nothing to do but wait for someone to call us. I was hoping to leave by Sabbath, but Sabbath passed, and no one came to pick me up. I thought about John the Baptist and how lonely and forgotten he must have felt.

As I was lying on my bunk, reflecting on John's story, I realized that the walls of our cell had many Bible verses and prayers written on them. I understood that, just as I was doing then, others before me had clung to the Bible to overcome despair.

In the darkest moments, when it seemed that everything had been taken from us, I realized there was something no one could take—my faith.

A week after being detained, I left. But before leaving, I hugged my new friend. I surely hadn't planned this encounter, but believed that God had used me to bless someone. The love of Jesus—especially His willingness to give His life for just one person—became increasingly real to me.

Many people around the world experience displacement for different reasons. They lose their homes, their clothes, and many times, their hope.

Being called a number and wearing a dirty prison uniform, I suddenly realized how much I could do for another person just by calling them by name and offering them a little comfort.

When John languished in prison, he was told that Jesus was performing miracles (Luke 7:22). Through my testimony I was able to share God's compassion and love with someone who had forgotten that she was loved too. A miracle began in that windowless cell.

As a new year begins, now that I can hold my Bible again, I am more determined than ever to engrave in my heart those well-loved verses that gave me strength, and allowed me to also share hope with another struggling person. ☺

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Acting Wisely at All Times

Inspired Counsel for Success



As we begin another year, it's natural to wonder about what lies ahead. What will this new year hold? Will we face similar challenges as we have during the past two years? Will the coronavirus finally subside, or will we continue to live in this "new reality"?

And what about in our personal lives—might there be important yet difficult decisions to make? Challenging situations at work or home to be addressed? Are you considering a new direction for your life.

For these situations and more, wouldn't it be wonderful if there were a way to know how to proceed—how to make the best decision; how to act wisely at all times and under all circumstances?

Fortunately, there is! The key is found in *Testimonies for the Church*, where we are promised: "Those who study the Bible, counsel with God, and rely upon Christ will be enabled to act wisely at all times and under all circumstances."¹

What a wonderful promise—to be "enabled to act wisely at *all* times and under *all* circumstances"! But there are conditions for the fulfillment of this promise. Let's take a brief look at each of the three conditions listed:

1. Study the Bible. Notice, it doesn't say we should simply *read* the Bible; but rather we are to *study* God's Word. Why is it so important to study the Bible? Because that is where we find "the knowledge of God." But we must *search* for it. God tells His children in Proverbs 2:1-6:

"If you receive my words,
And treasure my commands within you,
So that you incline your ear to wisdom,
And apply your heart to understanding;
Yes, if you cry out for discernment,
And lift up your voice for understanding,
If you seek her as silver,
And search for her as for hidden treasures;
Then you will understand the fear of the Lord,
And find the knowledge of God.
For the Lord gives wisdom;
From His mouth come knowledge and understanding."

So how do we study the Bible? Prayerfully, with an open mind and heart, accepting it as the Word of God, which transcends time and

culture. As stated in the Seventh-day Adventist Church's official "Methods of Bible Study" document: "The Bible is the Word of God and is the primary and authoritative means by which He reveals Himself to human beings."² The document further states, "Although it was given to those who lived in an ancient Near Eastern/Mediterranean context, the Bible transcends its cultural backgrounds to serve as God's Word for all cultural, racial, and situational contexts in all ages."³

God speaks to us today through His Word, but we must set aside time to listen. If you are not sure where or how to begin to study the Bible, why not begin with the book of Proverbs? It is a treasure chest filled with practical gems of wisdom. And there are 31 chapters in Proverbs—one for each day of the month!

2. Counsel With God. The second prerequisite, or condition, for being able to "act wisely at all times and under all circumstances" is to "counsel with God." But how do we, as human beings, counsel with the God of the universe? Through the privilege of prayer!

Just as we cannot rush through studying the Bible when looking for wisdom, neither can we rush through prayer. Notice, it says to *counsel* with God. This implies not only speaking but also listening.

In the beautiful book *Steps to Christ* we are warned *not* to "take counsel with our doubts and fears, or try to solve everything that we cannot see clearly. . . . But if we come to God, feeling helpless and dependent, as we really are, and in humble, trusting faith make known our wants to Him whose knowledge is infinite . . . He can and will attend to our cry, and will let light shine into our hearts. Through sincere

If we want to 'be enabled to act wisely at all times and under all circumstances' we must first study the Bible and take time to counsel with God through prayer.

prayer we are brought into connection with the mind of the Infinite."⁴

What an amazing thought this is—that through sincere prayer we are brought into connection with the mind of God! And Jesus is our example. In spite of His very busy schedule, we are told in Mark 1:35—"Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed."

If we want to "be enabled to act wisely at all times and under all circumstances" we must first study the Bible and take time to counsel with God through prayer.

3. Rely Upon Christ. The third condition specified in the promise for acting wisely is to "rely upon Christ." This involves acknowledging that of ourselves, we can do nothing. In Isaiah 53:6 we read, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way." But, praise God, through Christ we can be "more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded," wrote the apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans, "that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:37-39).

When we really grasp how much God loves us, it makes it easier to surrender our will to His all-knowing, all-wise, all-loving will for us. For to truly rely on Christ, we must stop relying on ourselves and surrender our will to Him, saying, "Lord, not my will, but Yours, be done" (see Luke 22:42).

When we rely completely on Christ, He will then work in marvelous ways. We are promised: "When in humble faith we rely on Christ as our sufficiency, our strength, our all and in all, then it is that the power of God rests upon our work."⁵

So as we begin this new year, let us claim this promise for ourselves and gain the wisdom and guidance that God is waiting to give so that we will be enabled, through His power, to wisely and winsomely reach the world for Him! ☺

¹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 5, p. 43.

² "Methods of Bible Study," Official Documents, Seventh-day Adventist Church, <https://www.adventist.org/documents/methods-of-bible-study/>.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1956), p. 97.

⁵ Ellen G. White, in *Gospel Herald*, Mar. 1, 1901.

Ted N. C. Wilson is president of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church. Additional articles and commentaries are available from the president's office on Twitter: @pastortedwilson and on Facebook: @Pastor Ted Wilson.

Why Are They Asking Me?

Surprising encounters

It had been a wonderful Sabbath. After church my wife and I had hosted friends for a lunch, and then we all decided to enjoy a nice afternoon walk in the cool shade of a nearby park. Because it was a hot and typically humid summer day in Maryland, we had all changed into more comfortable walking clothes, and finally started on the tree-shaded path.

Many others clearly had the same idea. We passed young families with little ones in their strollers, older couples in deep conversations, larger family groups, and teenagers holding hands.

After 10 minutes of walking, a woman in her 40s strode purposefully toward me and asked me for directions to a specific attraction of the park. I knew the place well and quickly pointed her to her destination. Five minutes later an older gentleman wondered how to get to the hothouse of the park. My wife, Chantal, was able to guide him to the right building. Fifteen minutes later, a family with a friendly dog walked hesitantly toward us and asked us for the way to the nearest dog park. I knew the best way to the dog park and walked with the family to the next turn, directing them to their destination.

By that time our friends looked at us in wonder: “Why do people keep coming to you asking you for directions? Do you know these people?”

BETWEEN DOING AND BEING

Why did people come to us and ask us for directions? Both my wife and I had noticed this phenomenon during earlier walks in our favorite park. Why did people think that we would know the way? we had asked ourselves. We didn't wear special clothes or badges suggesting that we were park employees. In fact, in our shorts, T-shirts, and walking shoes we looked like most people around us. It was a good question, and it somehow reminded us of evangelism.

Evangelism is an important word in Adventist vocabulary—and rightly so. We have been called to share the good news of the soon coming of Jesus with a hurting world hurtling toward destruction. Sometimes we have interpreted the meaning of this word merely in terms of *doing*, instead of reflecting as intensely on our *being*.

Let me illustrate this from the experience of the early Christian church. Following the miraculous work of the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2-4) and the conversions of thousands, the Jewish leadership began to take note of this new movement, called “the Way” (Acts 9:2). This focused attention led to increasingly violent persecution (Acts 8:1-3; 9:1, 2), forcing the church to rapidly spread out beyond Judea, Samaria, Syria, and the rest of the Roman Empire. Itinerant preachers such as Paul, Peter, and other apostles and leaders, would occasionally visit larger cities and engage in what



we would call “public” evangelism. But the Christian church grew most consistently because of the ministry and service of individual church members meeting in small house churches that were deeply embedded in their local communities. Their compassion, care, and love toward those in need of grace and support attracted people. Their focus on the Jesus who saves and transforms, changed these early Christians, as well as their families and neighbors.

WHY DO THEY ASK FOR DIRECTIONS?

Our park experience has challenged me to think more about the reasons people will reach out to others for guidance, direction, or even help. Here are three possible reasons that can undoubtedly also be applied to the way we engage with people about the gospel.

1. Know the territory. We have lived more than 12 years in our

neighborhood, and we really know this park. We walk confidently and purposefully on its paths. Confidence and purpose usually attract those who don’t know their way—on a path or in life. The spiritual application is straightforward: Unless we know our Savior personally, unless we enjoy a vibrant and intimate relationship with Him, we are in no position to guide anyone. Disciples know their Master personally and intimately. They don’t just communicate facts or a list of Bible verses. They have walked with their Lord through valleys and over mountains. They have confidence in their Redeemer, and they enjoy the assurance of salvation.

2. Be approachable. When we walk in our park, we usually don’t carry a cell phone or have earphones glued to our ears. We look at our surroundings; we notice the regulars we keep seeing week after week, and greet each other; we smile at people and are open to making new friends. We don’t just portray grave seriousness but rather joyous interest. Jesus seemed to have had the knack of engaging with all types of people—serious scholars, tired day laborers, wealthy landowners, fidgety children, self-conscious teenagers, worn-out mothers. Communicating openness to other people is not equal to being an extrovert. Jesus uses extroverts and introverts (and anything in between), but what we need to offer is availability and approachability.

3. Grasp opportunities. Chantal and I never took a class explaining all the intricacies and possibilities of our park. We never studied to be park guides, but because we love the park and have walked literally thousands of kilometers (or miles) in it, we can offer help to those who are trying to find their way. We may not have an answer to all questions,

Disciples know their Master personally and intimately. They don’t just communicate facts or a list of Bible verses.

but we help as best we can. I wonder what openings to witness to God’s goodness and His plan for our world we miss when we don’t give our testimony because we feel that it isn’t “special” enough? How often do we forgo great opportunities because we don’t grasp the moment of openness and opportunity when someone asks a question?

WALKING ALL THE WAY

Witnessing for Jesus doesn’t begin with words. It begins in a personal encounter with Jesus that transforms our lives. Once we know the Savior personally, we can live confident of His love and ready to share His goodness with those who seek. While we may not know all the answers, we can grasp every opportunity to be of service and communicate some of the blessings we have experienced. And then, sometimes, beyond the directions and answers, we can walk with those seeking answers some portion of the way. Like the disciples on their way to Emmaus, we may just find that walking in community with others *and* Jesus will prove to be a blessing that works both ways. As we help others, we ourselves find purpose in this seemingly purposeless, confused world. ©

Gerald A. Klingbeil serves as associate editor of *Adventist World*.

In October 2020 Adventist Review Ministries, in partnership with the East-Central Africa Division (ECD), made history: the first Kiswahili edition of the *Adventist World* magazine was delivered digitally via WhatsApp, free of charge.

Why in Kiswahili, and why on a mobile platform?

KISWAHILI

Kiswahili, also known as Swahili, is an indigenous East African Bantu language, with about 35 percent of its vocabulary stemming from Ara-

bic, owing to 12 centuries of history with Arabic peoples. It's becoming the *lingua franca* of East Africa and many parts of Central Africa.

Until 2020 Kiswahili represented the largest language group within the worldwide Adventist Church not yet served by the *Adventist World* magazine. Both Adventist Review Ministries and the ECD leadership have long wanted to publish a Kiswahili edition of *Adventist World*, not only to provide translated material in Kiswahili, but to offer 25 percent of the content in articles written by original

Kiswahili-speaking authors from within the ECD territory.

The ECD currently is the largest and fastest-growing division within the Adventist Church,¹ followed closely by the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division (SID). It serves the countries of Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, and the United Republic of Tanzania. Six of these countries (Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, DRC, Burundi, and Rwanda) use Kiswahili, as do people in northern Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, and the Comoro Islands in the SID territory. Many Kiswahili speakers live in the African diaspora.

Surprisingly, the challenges of a worldwide pandemic provided the opportunity to implement the long-desired plan for a Kiswahili *Adventist World*, and on a unique platform—a WhatsApp channel.

WHY WHATSAPP?

According to the GSMA's Mobile Economy Reports, by 2025, 1 billion people will have access to a SIM connection in Africa, a 3.7 percent increase from the 2017 statistics. A growth in mobile phone access presents economic growth opportunities. Kenya's mobile growth from 1 percent access in the late 1990s to 39 percent in 2014 is an example. It played a major role in the country's growing economy, alongside exciting technological innovations. Pew Research Center now puts Kenya at 80 percent and Tanzania at 75 percent mobile access, even though these percentages are still significantly lower regarding smartphones.²

WhatsApp is currently considered the world's most popular messaging app in both the personal and business sectors, and is especially used in the Global South.³ It provides an additional platform when sharing content with church

Faith in Action

Adventist World for Kiswahili Speakers

With the
help of
WhatsApp



members in sub-Saharan Africa.

In August 2020 the cross-continent committee of project developers began planning in earnest. While some managed logistics for translation via the *Ufunuo* (Revelation) Publishing House⁴ of the Southern Tanzania Union Mission, Digital Publications⁵ in Johannesburg, South Africa, designed and provided technical development of the app. More than 40,000 mobile numbers were collected from willing church members and workers, and SMS messages were sent, inviting them to subscribe via WhatsApp. On October 1, 2020, the first content was published to the *Adventist World* Kiswahili WhatsApp business channel, and notifications sent to all subscribers.

Since October 2020 the *Adventist World* Kiswahili edition has been delivered free to subscribers each month on WhatsApp, as well as weekly GraceNotes by Bill Knott, *Adventist World* executive editor, translated by Chacha Daniel Moseti in Tanzania.

Subscribers can conveniently read the magazine and GraceNotes online as well as all previous editions of the materials. They can send questions and requests to the *Adventist World* staff. These range from doctrinal questions to requests for Sabbath School lesson materials and prayer requests. Subscribers may also share the materials with friends via the WhatsApp channel's menu.

The church produces materials for the purpose of sharing the good news of God's love, His salvation, and His imminent return with others. The Kiswahili WhatsApp group is a new way to do that.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE ALREADY

Samuel Garama from Kenya recently contacted us to request permission to share this material with his students. Intrigued by his

request, our proofreader, Lilian Mweresa of Kenya, called him to find out more:

How did you find out about the *Adventist World* Kiswahili WhatsApp group?

While perusing a printed edition of *Adventist World*, I found instructions on how to join the Kiswahili WhatsApp group. I added the phone number provided to the contacts on my phone. Using the phone number, I was then able to send a message and join.

What area are you from, and what do you do?

I come from Kilifi town, Kilifi County, on the coast of Kenya. I teach Bible study at Majaoni Primary School, even though I'm not a professional teacher.

How does the *Adventist World* material help you do that?

It provides teachings and short stories that I share with my students as Bible lessons. I have 246 pupils between 8 and 15 years old.

How did you end up teaching Bible at the school?

The Majaoni school was looking for someone to lead the Program of Pastoral Instruction (PPI). Since my church, the Kilifi East Seventh-day Adventist Church, is near the school, and most of the pupils in that school are in my class at church, I offered to take on the role.

Would you recommend joining the WhatsApp group to your friends?

Yes, definitely. The WhatsApp group has been very beneficial to me, and I would want my friends to enjoy and benefit from the messages as well. Since I learned about the *Adventist World* WhatsApp group, I've been sharing it with the students and my friends. Last month I was able to share it with more than 400

people, including those at my church.

To subscribe, see the "How to Subscribe" sidebar. You can also follow and share our Kiswahili Facebook page and posts, and post your own comments and suggestions at <https://www.facebook.com/AdventistWorldSwahili>. ☺

¹ ECD has a membership of 4,452,526 out of 21,556,837 Adventists worldwide. It has a total regional population of 419,926,000, which gives a ratio of 1 in 94 people, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Statistics/ASR/ASR2020A.pdf>, accessed Oct. 3, 2021.

² <https://www.geopoll.com/blog/mobile-phone-penetration-africa/>, accessed Oct. 3, 2021.

³ <https://www.wilsonquarterly.com/quarterly/who-writes-the-rules/africa-whats-up-with-whatsapp/>

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/ufunuoph>

⁵ <https://www.digitalpublications.co.za>

Penny Brink, a pastor, is the regional editions coordinator for *Adventist World*.

How to Subscribe and Share

Method One:

1. Add the number 1-240-540-3000 to your phone's contacts list.
2. Go to your WhatsApp and send any message to that number's WhatsApp.
3. You'll receive a message in return. Choose your menu language. (Materials are all in Kiswahili.)
4. Follow the menu by typing the item number in the message bar and sending the message. In this way, you can choose to read the magazine or GraceNote, send in a message to *Adventist World*, or share the group with a friend.

Method Two:

Scan this QR code and follow the instructions.

Method Three:

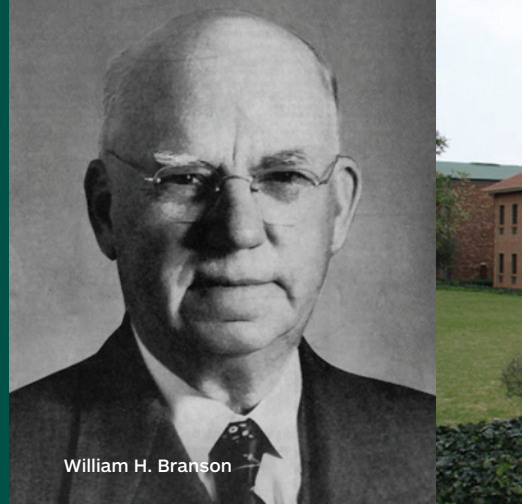
Click this link to watch an animation in Kiswahili about the WhatsApp



group and how to subscribe: <https://www.facebook.com/AdventistWorldSwahili/videos/231863492245749>.

100 Years of Africa's Pioneering Division

Lighting the Continent With Present Truth



William H. Branson

The Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division (SID) celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2020. This article reviews some aspects of the Adventist work in the division since its organization.—Editors.

The Seventh-day Adventist message reached South Africa in 1871 when mineral prospector William Hunt arrived in Kimberley on a diamond-hunting expedition. Just three years prior, Hunt, from Nevada, United States, had attended a series of evangelistic meetings led by J. N. Loughborough in Healdsburg, California. Hunt accepted the biblical truths presented and joined the Adventist believers, promising Loughborough that he would share the gospel message wherever he traveled.

True to his promise, Hunt placed a *Signs of the Times* magazine in the hands of J. H. G. Wilson, a local Methodist preacher, who, together with his wife, embraced the Seventh-day Adventist faith. A letter from Wilson, published in the June 6, 1878, issue of the *Review and Herald*, reported that several

people had become fully convinced of truth taught by the Adventists.

Hunt's witnessing efforts to George Van Druuten and Pieter Wesels, who had independently begun observing the Sabbath, resulted in missionaries C. L. Boyd and D. A. Robinson arriving in Kimberley in July 1887.

Their first congregation, located in Beaconsfield, consisted of 26 members.¹ Another congregation soon followed in Cape Town in 1889, and soon after, the South African Conference was organized by A. T. Robinson, who became its first president.

In Cape Town, the church established Claremont Union College, Plumstead Orphanage, Claremont Sanitarium, and a small printing press, before organizing the South African Union Conference in 1902.

The union conference expanded its outreach both in South Africa and the northern countries now known as Malawi and Zambia, using Solusi Mission in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, as a base. This growth of the church in Southern Africa paved the way for the establishment of the division organization.

DIVISION ORGANIZATION

When Elmer E. Andross, a vice president of the General Conference, visited South Africa in July 1919, the South African Union Conference voted a request to the General Conference to consider the possibility of organizing the African field into a division.² The General Conference approved the request and voted on October 16, 1919, to create the African Division.

William H. Branson was appointed vice president of the General Conference in charge of the African Division.³ Branson and his family arrived in South Africa in August 1920 to assume his duties. The division offices were located in Claremont, Cape Town,⁴ and church membership across three unions stood at 2,705.

Branson and other church leaders visited government and state departments to acquaint state leaders with denominational principles and ideals, and obtained legal recognition and standing for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the region.⁵

METHODS OF GROWTH

In 1901 William H. Anderson, one of the pioneering missionaries in Africa, stated, "All missionary societies laboring in Africa are agreed that the best way to reach the natives is through schools."⁶ The church established schools for Adventist young people, but children of all religious backgrounds were invited to join.



The current SID offices located in Pretoria, South Africa

Adolf Chitauro

By 1946, H. A. Morrison, an Adventist educator and administrator, reflected, "The Southern African Division has been a pioneer in establishing schools and through them making converts for God. As a result, these schools are widely attended, and the work has grown with great speed."⁷ Today there are seven church-operated universities, plus several colleges and schools throughout the territory.

Another pioneering method used was medical missionary work. Ellen White wrote: "The medical missionary work is to be regarded as the pioneer work. It is to be the means of breaking down prejudice. As the right arm, it is to open doors for the gospel message."⁸ In line with this counsel, six hospitals and several dispensaries were opened in different countries between 1920 and 1940. Although two hospitals later closed, the rest are still operating today.

The early Adventists also used literature distribution to augment their preaching. In 1875 Ellen White advised, "God has placed at the command of His people advantages in the press, which, combined with other agencies, will be successful in extending the knowledge of the truth. Tracts, papers, and books, as the case demands, should be circulated in all the cities and villages in the land."⁹

The division's earliest successful native colporteurs were Richard Moko in South Africa, David Kalaka of Basutoland (current Lesotho), and Jim Mayinza of Southern Rhodesia (current Zimbabwe). The



Isaac Chiyokoma

An aerial view of Rusanga University in Zambia

supply of literature was enhanced by the establishment of regional publishing houses.¹⁰

DIVISION CONTRIBUTIONS

The SID [see endnote #3] has made several contributions to the world church, including piloting the church's departmental system in 1892, which was adopted by the General Conference in 1901, and pioneering the Pastors' Kids Association (Pakia), now found in other divisions.

The driving motive of the pioneers and their successors was to finish the preaching of the gospel and see Jesus come (Matt. 24:14). Their sacrifice is attested to by graves found at such mission stations as Solusi in Zimbabwe.

Today, more than 100 years later, division leaders continue in their footsteps, emphasizing sacrifice for mission as a way of life, upholding freedom, wholistic health, and hope in Jesus, and restoring in people the image of God. ©

The church established schools for Adventist young people, but children of all religious backgrounds were invited to join.

¹ C. L. Boyd, "South Africa," *Review and Herald*, Nov. 8, 1887, p. 699.

² L. Francois Swanepoel, "The Origin and Early History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa, 1886-1920" (M.A. thesis, University of South Africa, 1972), p. 150.

³ In the decades that followed, the African Division underwent several territorial realignments and name changes from the African Division (1920-1930), Southern African Division (1931-1964), Trans-Africa Division (1964-1983), and Eastern Africa Division (1983-2003), to the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division, [SID] (2003-present).

⁴ In later years the offices relocated to Harare, Zimbabwe, and in 2007 returned to Pretoria, South Africa.

⁵ Charles L. Thompson, "A History of the Growth and Development of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Southern Africa, 1920-1960" (1977), pp. 2-3.

⁶ William H. Anderson, *On the Trail of Livingstone* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1919), p. 143; by 1913 C. P. Crager yearned, "I long for the day to come when we may have church schools dotted all over South Africa and our schools having in it, a band of students training for the field." See C. P. Crager, "The Convention Paper on Educational Work," *South African Missionary*, Feb. 24, 1913, p. 2.

⁷ H. A. Morrison, "The Department of Education," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, June 10, 1946, p. 96.

⁸ Ellen G. White, *Ellen G. White 1888 Materials* (Washington, D.C.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1987), vol. 4, p. 1738.

⁹ Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1915), p. 217.

¹⁰ Such as Sentinel Publishing Company in South Africa (1916), Malamulo Publishing House (1926), Madagascar Publishing House (1930), Casa Publicadora Angolana (1937), and Zambia Adventist Press (1989).

Passmore Hachalinga, D.Th., D.Min., serves as the director of the Ellen G. White Research and Heritage Centre at Helderberg College, near **Cape Town, South Africa.**

Samson: Strange Life and Death?

Q

Did Samson commit suicide?

A

You ask an important question about the last moments of Samson's life, a matter that is also relevant to us. The characterization of Samson in Judges 13-16 is complex. The assessment of his life by those who read his story is not encouraging. His behavior tends to be a sequence of failures, the results of self-indulgence. Yet the New Testament places him among the heroes of faith of the Old Testament (Heb. 11:32). He belongs among those who "out of weakness were made strong" (verse 34). Therein lays the paradox of Samson, whom we usually describe as traveling from strength to weakness.

1. FROM HIGH EXPECTATIONS TO DISILLUSIONMENT

The story began with a dialogue between a woman and an angel announcing the birth of a child who would be a lifelong Nazirite (Judges 13:2-7; cf. Num. 6:1-12). Through him the Lord would begin to defeat the Philistines. Instructions were given on how to rear the child—for example, not to drink wine, not to cut his hair. This had to be a special child through whom God would do wonders! Although Samson became physically strong, he was spiritually and morally weak. Controlled by the emotive side of his personality, he made decisions and acted in almost total independence from God. Yet not all was bad. One of Samson's redeeming qualities was that, despite the alliances he made with the Philistines, he never worshipped idols. In this respect he was always loyal to the Lord. Additionally, in spite of his spirit of independence, the Lord used his problems with the Philistines to constantly defeat them. One could only imagine what the Lord could have achieved through Samson had he been faithful to Him.

2. FROM STRENGTH TO WEAKNESS

The story of Samson reached its negative climax when he violated the last element of his Nazirite vow—the cutting of his hair. At that moment the Spirit of the Lord was unable to use him, and he became physically weak. He was the victim of his enemies, who blinded, jailed, and treated him like a slave. The Philistines considered Samson's experience to be both a defeat of Samson and of his God. The prison was a place to reflect about the quality of his life and his failure to Israel, his family, and his God. Samson was ready for another chance at life.

3. FROM WEAKNESS TO STRENGTH

Tragedies are transformed by the Lord into victories. The Philistines gathered to celebrate the victory of their god Dagon over Samson and his God (Judges 16:23, 24). The princes of the five Philistine kingdoms were present, with a crowd of more than 3,000 persons. They decided to invite Samson to entertain them—to gloat over their achievements. He was placed between the two pillars that supported the structure, leaning on them as if tired and weak. Then Samson prayed, asking the Lord to strengthen him to do what he should have already done: to inflict a major defeat on the Philistines (verse 30; cf. Judges 13:5). This is a prayer of total commitment to the Lord. He is handing over his life to God, expressing his willingness to die in His service. He wants to be vindicated—a request perhaps tainted by selfishness—but he also wants God to be vindicated by displaying His power over Dagon. He died as a soldier in the battlefield of a cosmic conflict. The end of life was for Samson a moment of absolute surrender to the Lord in an act of faith. ©

Angel Manuel Rodríguez is retired after a career serving as pastor, professor, and theologian.



Health & Wellness

Vocal Changes

Sign of a problem?

I've become aware of changes in my speaking voice and need to clear my throat frequently. I'm a teacher and speak a lot, and this voice change has become more obvious because of the lengthy teleteaching over the Internet. Is this voice change a dangerous sign? Can vocal changes be corrected and prevented?

Several conditions may be associated with voice changes. Allergies, excessive mucus production, and throat infections (viral or bacterial) may result in temporary hoarseness or voice loss. Certain blood pressure medications (ACE inhibitors and ARBs)¹ may be associated with a persistent cough and the feeling that one needs to clear the throat. Insufficient thyroid hormone production (hypothyroidism) may result in hoarseness and voice change. The use of tobacco in all forms may result in cancer of the throat and larynx (voice box), with hoarseness being an early symptom.

Overuse of the voice through excessive cheering, singing, or shouting may result in hoarseness. Singers and actors who project their voices over prolonged periods may experience swelling of the vocal cords with changes in voice quality that require prolonged periods of voice rest. Gastroesophageal reflux (acidity) may be associated with change in voice quality. Neurological conditions such as stroke and movement disorders, including Parkinson's disease, may affect the voice. Laryngeal nerve injury or damage through trauma, thyroid surgery, or diseases near the larynx affect phonation.

Voice changes may indicate the presence of a potentially dangerous health condition, even malignancy. Unexplained hoarseness or voice change should be evaluated—usually by an ear, nose, and throat specialist physician—and the vocal cords visualized.

Vocal changes may be prevented. Practice these “voice hygiene” tips—a health emphasis seldom discussed:

- Avoid tobacco in all forms, including secondhand smoke.
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine, which cause dehydration (among other negative health effects).
- Avoid spicy foods.
- Drink plenty of pure water.
- Learn and cultivate abdominal/diaphragmatic breathing, which allows more efficient speech production, resulting in less strain on the voice.
- Avoid shouting, speaking across the room, or speaking over loud noise.

These habits make sense and correlate with the benefits of the amazingly up-to-date health message encapsulated in the writings of Ellen White:

“The proper use of the vocal organs will bring benefit to the physical health. . . . [We should] expand the chest, and strengthen the muscles. Let the abdominal muscles have full play. . . . Taking in full breath, let the burden of your words come from this foundation, supported by abdominal breathing” [and by] “following health principles in regard to the expansion of the lungs and the culture of the voice.”²

We share with you this encouragement: “The power of speech is a talent that should be diligently cultivated. Of all the gifts we have received from God, none is capable of being a greater blessing than this. With the voice we convince and persuade, with it we offer prayer and praise to God, and with it we tell others of the Redeemer's love. How important, then, that it be so trained as to be most effective for good.”³ ©

¹ ACE inhibitors: angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors, such as captopril or enalapril. ARBs: angiotensin receptor blockers, such as valsartan or losartan.

² Ellen G. White, *Christian Education* (Battle Creek, Mich.: International Tract Society, 1893), p. 132.

³ Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1900, 1941), p. 335.

Peter N. Landless, a board-certified nuclear cardiologist, is director of Adventist Health Ministries at the General Conference.

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Jesus— Completely!



“May I Tell You a Story?”

BY DICK DUERKSEN

The huge old tree needed to be removed, chopped down, and taken away before it caused any more damage to the roof of the missionary’s house. The roof was flat, covered now with leaves and dead branches, especially during wind and rain. And it rained a lot in their African home in Burkina Faso.

No problem, thought Gilberto, the missionary. Every day our members come by to ask for food money, or to see if we might know of any work they could do. I’ll just let them know that we’ll pay for someone to cut down the old tree. The tree should be down in less than a week.

Pastor Gilberto spread the word. Everyone talked about the huge old tree, but no one offered to do the job.

One week passed, then two. Then three long rainy weeks slipped by without a single person showing interest in the job or the money. So Pastor Gilberto asked a couple of the church leaders what was wrong.

“Well, Pastor,” they whispered, “you see, well, some people believe that maybe, ummm, possibly that, well, it could be that the huge old tree is a Spirit Tree. If we were to cut it down, we’re not really sure what the spirits would do to the people who cut it down. We

wouldn’t be certain, but if someone in the family falls sick, we would know the spirits were at work harming us because we cut down their tree.”

“That’s the way it is with spirits,” one of the church elders said. “You never know what they will do, but they will hurt you. Probably, if we cut down their tree, it will be standing up right there again the next morning.”

Pastor Gilberto listened to his members, argued with them about how much power God has over demonic spirits, and even showed them Bible stories about how God is stronger than the enemy. No one seemed convinced, so Pastor Gilberto called in a nonbeliever to take down the tree. It was gone in two days. Permanently gone. Turned into firewood, with a loud witness to the greater power of God.

Pastor Gilberto, and his wife, Glauca, had come to Burkina Faso from Brazil, eager to guide people to Jesus, looking for every possible way to show how Jesus is far more powerful than the spirits the people had worshipped for so many years. With their young assistant, they visited members and made new friends.

“Please, Pastor, could you visit my neighbor?” one member asked. “She is paralyzed in her bed and would like a pastor to pray for her.”

She was a businesswoman, a very successful importer. Since Burkina Faso is a landlocked country, she had to travel through neighboring Togo to the port of Lomé to purchase goods for her business. She was comfortable with the travel but was very unhappy with the customs taxes she was having to pay when she returned to Burkina. One of her friends suggested that maybe a local sorcerer could help her reduce the taxes. Thinking this might be a good idea, she visited the sorcerer and described her problem. He listened closely, especially when she described how she wanted to become a very wealthy businesswoman, making much money from her imports.

"I have a solution for your problem, one that will help you become very rich," the sorcerer said. "I am going to give you this small leather amulet. You must always wear it on your left arm, and whenever you come to the border crossing, tap the amulet three times with your right hand. When you tap it, your purchases will become invisible. When you have passed through the customs station, you will then tap it three more times, and your purchases will be visible again. Do this, and you will never have to pay the customs tax."

The woman believed, accepted the leather amulet, and tied it to her left arm beneath her robes. The next time she went to the port she purchased a large quantity of goods. As she neared the customs station on her return to Burkina, she did as the sorcerer had told her. Three simple taps on the amulet and suddenly all her purchases disappeared, and she walked through without paying any taxes. When she was back on the bus, three quick taps brought her purchases back, and she was able to sell them at a large profit.

The process worked well for several months, and she was quickly becoming the wealthy woman of her dreams, but then she began to feel ill. The sorcerer, a witch doctor, and a spirit medium all gave her medications and treatments for

the illness and charged her high prices for the promised healing. Before long she was giving almost all of her money to them in exchange for treatments that weren't working very well. The illness grew worse, and she was finally confined to her bed, barely able to move. The closer she got to the spirits, the worse her life became.

"Please, Pastor, could you visit my neighbor?" the member had asked Gilberto's young assistant. "She is paralyzed in her bed and would like a pastor to pray for her."

The young pastor came, told the woman about Jesus, and prayed for her, returning every day to bring her the hope that comes from trusting God's power. She loved what she was hearing, and accepted Jesus as her personal Savior. But she was still lying in her bed, too ill to get up.

"Can Jesus cure me?" she asked.

"Yes, Jesus can heal you, but you must trust Him completely and abandon the spirits totally. You cannot serve Jesus and the spirits at the same time"

When she understood, she asked the pastor to bring her the box that was in the corner of her room. "It has the amulet and all of my other spirit things in it," she said. "We must take it to your church and burn it all up."

The church members agreed, and the next day they brought the woman and her box to the church for a burning. Together they prayed, lit the fire, and sang many songs of victory and worship.

"I want only one God," she declared as the box burned. "I want to serve Jesus completely."

A couple weeks later the woman was well enough to come to church and be baptized as a follower of Jesus. "I must follow Him completely," she always said. "Trusting only the mighty power of Jesus! The closer I get to Jesus, the happier I am." ©

Dick Duerksen, a pastor and storyteller, lives in **Portland, Oregon, United States.**

Publisher

The *Adventist World*, an international periodical of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The General Conference, Northern Asia-Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists, is the publisher.

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Art Direction and Design

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Adventist World is published monthly and printed simultaneously in Korea, Brazil, Indonesia, Australia, Germany, Austria, Argentina, Mexico, South Africa, and the United States.

Vol. 18, No. 1



Seventh-day
Adventist Church



Have Fun With Your Fruits and Veggies

A new year is a great time to start good new habits. And you are never too young to do things that will help your health and well-being.

So do you like fruits and vegetables? Do you like fruits better than vegetables, or the other way around? You have probably heard how important it is to eat these daily, but do you know why? Let's take a look!

Fruits and vegetables contain vitamins and minerals that protect against disease, keep you healthy, and helping to avoid the need of taking bad-tasting medicine (unless you absolutely have to). Eat more fruits and veggies—they taste much better than a spoonful of bitter cough syrup!

Would you like to grow more to you best height and weight? Fruits and vegetables contain important vitamins and minerals that help your body grow to its maximum potential. Give your bodies a fighting chance to be the best they can be.



You can also prevent grown-up illnesses. Strong scientific evidence says that regularly eating fruits and vegetables when you are young can help you avoid some major problems when you get older.

Fruits and vegetables contain a lot of natural fiber that is really good for your digestive system (your tummy and intestines), and they will work a lot better if you eat these foods.

Eat the colors of the rain-

bow. Did you know that all the different fruits and vegetables come in different colors? That's no accident! God created them that way, as each one contains different vitamins and minerals that are good for you. So to get the best effect, try to eat as many colors of them as you can!

Note: Some of you may be allergic to some fruits and vegetables. If you are, it's important to avoid those particular ones. But try to eat others for their great benefits!



Bible Treasure

“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all for the glory of God”

(1 Corinthians 10:31, NIV)



ACTIVITY

Fun With Your Food!

This is a great way to make fruits and vegetables fun to eat. Check with your parents about whether you can use certain ingredients (just in case they need them for something else). Have them help you with some of the chopping as well.

What can you create with fruits and veggies?





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