

Adventist World

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At Our Core

A refresher on who
we are because of
what we believe





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The Teacher of Teachings

By Justin Kim

When thinking about the word “doctrine,” we may imagine long, multivolume, dusty theological works and old parchment papers with European calligraphy. One may see medieval institutional councils, bearded and bald grandfathers, and feather quills with inked tips. But in short, doctrines are not holy guarded documents of the church, but simply the teachings of Jesus.

Who was Jesus? What is He doing now? What was He all about? What did He say, teach, and do? What did He promise? What did He teach about the beginning and the end of the world? What are the ramifications for us? These are some questions that arise about Jesus, and their answers are what biblical doctrines address.

However, there is a certain allergic response to doctrine and, in turn, another reaction the other way. Christian history records pendulum swings from minimal pietistic tendencies to maximal scholasticism; switching back and forth from revivalist praxis to academic dogmatics; from stressing “Jesus only” to the writing of official creeds. The church has bounced from one extreme to the other.

Today’s postmodernity veers away from the teachings of Jesus to the person of Jesus. But if one removes His teachings, what remains of Jesus’ person and ministry? Can Jesus retain His character and

love if we mute the Bible of all His teachings? Who is Jesus without the Sermon on the Mount? Who is Jesus without the Creation, the Incarnation, the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the Second Advent, just to name a few?

Following the Adventist tradition of going back to the Bible in times of difficulty and favoring the particular number, let’s look at seven brief and convenient insights on doctrine (though there are more):

1. People were astonished at Jesus’ doctrine (Matt. 7:28).
2. Doctrine has a heavenly origin: God the Father (John 7:16, 17).
3. Doctrine involves freedom from sin (Rom. 6:17, 18).
4. Doctrine was central for the early church (Acts 2:42).
5. Institutional religion was against doctrine (Acts 5:27-29).
6. The eschewing of sound doctrine is a sign of the last days (2 Tim. 4:2-4).
7. The church must endeavor for deeper doctrines (Heb. 6:1).

One can reread these same points and replace “doctrine” with “teachings” for more clarity. As we read this month’s issue, I hope these core teachings may reveal more about our wonderful Savior. May they continue to astonish us, reveal their heavenly origin, point to freedom from sin, revive us with primitive godliness, protect against institutionalization and eschatological deception, and deepen our faith in the Teacher of these teachings, the Lord Jesus Christ.



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.

Robert Lungu (left) visits with Ortensia Profir and her husband, Pastor Eugen Profir, who volunteer at the ADRA booth at the Siret border crossing between Ukraine and Romania, where ADRA provides assistance to refugees.

Photo: Robert Lungu / AME (CC BY 4.0)



“The establishment of the Adventist College of Nursing Sciences in Jengre is a pointer that the Adventist Church is keen to help the teeming youth in northern Nigeria toward developing career paths that will blend with their spiritual growth and satisfaction, especially in the field of nursing sciences.”

—Istifanus Ishaya, Northern Nigeria Union Conference executive secretary, about the opening of the Adventist College of Nursing Sciences in Jengre, Plateau State. Church members gathered on October 10 to pray for the opening of the school. In attendance were Ladu Zhu, director of Nursing Services for Plateau State, as well as clergy representatives from other denominations.

4,445

The number of kilograms of fresh produce that were given away on November 20 at the North American Division headquarters in Columbia, Maryland, for people struggling to put food on their table. Visitors received high-quality produce as well as *Message* and *Vibrant Life* magazines. The fresh produce and health-focused literature, including recipes, supported the Adventist Church’s emphasis on healthy living.

Belief in Doctrines

As part of the 2017-2018 Global Church Member Survey, researchers asked the question: Do the Seventh-day Adventist fundamental beliefs as a whole reflect a loving and gracious character of God?

- 1% Strongly Disagree
- 1% Disagree
- 5% I am not sure
- 28% Agree
- 65% Strongly Agree



Source: ASTR Research and Evaluation Team, n=56,546



“It is so exciting to see all of our Australian conferences wanting to be a part of this Life Group ministry proposal as it rolls out over 2023/2024. All the conference administration teams see the need to move forward in this space and want to act fast to connect with both our own Adventist young adults and other university students that can be reached for Christ.

—Jeffrey Parker, Australian Union Conference (AUC) youth director, about a new initiative in Australia called Disciple Focused Life Group Leadership. This project aims to reach university students outside of the church and provide support for Adventist students within secular universities.

“Organizing a meeting in Vietnam was challenging, but with the help of the government and several meetings, we were able to plan appropriately for this gathering, and this mental health seminar was put together.”

—Pham Nguyen To Phuong, health director of the Southeastern Asia Union Mission, about the health programs that took place at the Forward Venture Community Center in Hanoi, Vietnam. More than 40 attendees joined the mental health seminar.

“I accept that you considered me for this position in recognition to Pastor Verduzco. I have been working under the supervision of Pastor Verduzco for 17 years and four months. He has had a very positive influence in my life. We will work hard to continue that legacy here in the Inter-American Division, so that it can continue to be known for its solid, stable financial system.”

—Ivelisse Herrera, Inter-American Division treasurer, after being invited to fill the treasurer’s position. Herrera is the first woman to currently hold the treasurer’s position among the 13 world divisions.

Adventist Review Newsletter

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www.adventistreview.org/newsletter-signup

23,154

The number of new believers from Bangladesh, Pakistan, the Philippines, Myanmar, Malaysia, and the Southeastern Asia Union Mission that joined the Adventist Church through the Voice of Youth (VOY) Expand initiative. Adventist Youth leaders in the Southern Asia-Pacific Division have helped equip 1,215 VOY teams with 32,326 young people to reach out to communities for Jesus.

“Our students come from diverse backgrounds and remote communities with constant challenges, and for some, even just getting to the college is an ordeal. So it’s really encouraging to see those students completing the course.”

—David Garrard, principal of Mamarapha College in Western Australia, about the recent graduation held at the Livingston Adventist Church. The afternoon service saw 13 students receive a certificate, diploma, or advanced diploma, and 15 students received progression awards.



Photo: Adventist Record

Health Ambassadors Ready to Roll Out Anti-Diabetes Campaign

Tico Banasi, *Adventist Record*

More than 130 people graduated as 10,000 Toes ambassadors after attending a three-day summit held at Pacific Adventist University (PAU) in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea (PNG), from October 21 to 23, 2022.

Learning how to run health expos and community health checks, the new ambassadors are now ready to assist the campaign in fighting against the rise of diabetes in PNG.

Following the three-day summit, further training was given to lead ambassadors from local missions in PNG—which includes mission presidents, health directors, and health professionals.

The five-day training focused on two intervention programs—ELIA Wellness and Live More Abundantly—and equipped leaders with tools, resources, and skills to help roll out the 10,000 Toes Campaign across the country.

“It is exciting to have the debut 10,000 Toes Wellness Summit take place and the training of the health directors in the Live More Abundantly program to help turn the tide of diabetes and other chronic diseases,” 10,000 Toes Campaign coordinator Pamela Townend said. “10,000 Toes have been planning this event in Papua New Guinea for a long time and are thrilled to take the important

health message to its communities.”

The team is from Fiji, Australia, and Papua New Guinea and led by PNG Union Mission health director Zachary Lipen, South Pacific Division (SPD) health ministries director Geraldine Przybylko, Trans-Pacific Union Mission (TPUM) regional health director George Kwong, and associate regional ambassador in Fiji Mary-Clare, with the support from PAU under the leadership of vice-chancellor Lohi Matainaho. They said the program turned out to be a success.

Przybylko was excited to see so many getting involved. “The vision and strategy of the 10,000 Toes Campaign was shared at the 10,000 Toes Wellness Summit, and it was exciting to see administration, health professionals, pastors, and members embrace it and be trained as 10,000 Toes ambassadors committed to champion the blended ministry of health, healing, and hope,” she said.

The SPD health leader spent two days working with Matainaho and his team to develop the business plan for an on-campus lifestyle medicine center. The proposal was presented to the government and was well received.

“It was so encouraging to get the government’s support for creating

In Papua New Guinea, initiative seeks to save lives by fighting diabetes.

a Lifestyle Medicine Centre of Excellence that uses a whole-person approach [and] model that positively impacts PNG and can be rolled out across the country. The government was also supportive of the 10,000 Toes strategy and transforming churches into wellness hubs to educate and empower the community to whole-person health,” Przybylko said.

PNG is one of 10 countries in the South Pacific region where the campaign is helping in the fight against diabetes.

ABOUT THE 10,000 TOES PROJECT

South Pacific nations have the highest prevalence of diabetes in the world. As a result of this the United Nations reports that diabetes and other noncommunicable diseases are one of the greatest threats to the region’s development.

The 10,000 Toes Campaign is committed to saving the lives and limbs of those affected. The project seeks to equip every South Pacific village with the skills and tools to conduct community health assessments for the early detection of diabetes. It also seeks to train and resource lifestyle coaches to implement programs to prevent, arrest, and reverse type 2 diabetes in every village and improve the capacity of health professionals working in health systems across the South Pacific to manage diabetes. ©



10,000 Toes ambassadors ready to join the fight against diabetes.

Photo: *Adventist Record*

Free Dental Health Clinic Fills Need in U.S. Area

Debi Everhart, for *Lake Union Herald*, and *Adventist World*

In southwest Michigan, volunteer event assists underserved residents.



More than 50 church members served as volunteers during the free dentistry event in Michigan.

Photo: *Lake Union Herald*

The Niles Westside Seventh-day Adventist Church hosted a free dental health clinic on November 6 to meet the needs in the local community in southwest Michigan, United States.

The event was open on a first-come, first-served basis. Attendees needed only to register and pass a basic vital signs test, and then they were offered a cleaning, filling, or extraction as recommended by the dental health team. With the assistance of the Michigan Conference of the Adventist Church, the event was made available to anyone who came onto the premises.

More than 50 church members and regular attendees served in such roles as hygienists and dental assistants, nurses, registration assistants, support people in the sterilization area, greeters, spiritual leaders offering pastoral care, attendants in the waiting area and parking lot, and teams for setup and teardown.

Further offerings at the event included massage sessions, a waiting area featuring health films and banners for NEWSTART (nutrition, exercise, water, sunshine, temperance, air, rest, trust), consultation with Hinman Counseling Services of Berrien Springs, spiritual and

health-related literature, and brightly colored gift bags with fruit, water, granola bars, and health literature.

One of the first local community members to be served said, "I'm so happy with this!" It had been a challenge for her to schedule a dentist appointment in the near future, so she said the event was "a blessing."

Someone from outside the community had been driving through Niles that morning and decided to check out the event. Pulling in, he questioned "what the hitch was" with free dental service, since "nothing in this life is free." He was surprised with the fine service he received—for free.

When volunteer dentist Richard Beckermeyer was asked about what inspired his selfless service, he referred to a statement from Ellen White's book *Steps to Christ*: "Angels are ever engaged in working for the happiness of others. This is their joy. That which selfish hearts would regard as humiliating service, ministering to those who are wretched and in every way inferior in character and rank, is the work of sinless angels. The spirit of Christ's self-sacrificing love is the spirit that pervades heaven and is the very

essence of its bliss. This is the spirit that Christ's followers will possess, the work that they will do."^{*}

Of the people treated, 36 completed a short survey rating their experience in several areas (e.g., reception, instruction, performance, comfort) and gave high ratings. Among those who expressed personal appreciation were a mother and daughter who are new to the United States and haven't yet been able to establish medical insurance or find new doctors. They declared the event to be "a blessing just at the right time."

While this health clinic required a lot of coordination and the help of many volunteers, Niles Westside pastor Alex Rybacheck said that it was well worth the effort. "The event we held today is something we want to continue doing to help our local community," he said. "We pray it will be a ministry we can offer at least once a year. I greatly appreciate everyone's contribution and hope the event brought great blessings to the people who received these free services. Our church was happy to provide it and looks forward to doing so again." ©

^{*} Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1956), p. 77.

59,631

Membership of
the Euro-Asia
Division (ESD) as of
September 30, 2022

“While working on the project, we made sure that this isn’t just another program of the church, not a short-term project. The Bible school is the lifework of Jesus. It’s the work of His church on earth; it’s the work of every disciple! We not only strengthen our faith through the Word, but we also receive salvation through Jesus, of whom the Word bears witness!”

—Mikhail Kaminskiy, ESD president, introducing a new Bible school project to ESD executive committee members meeting from October 31 to November 1 in Antalya, Turkey.

“I was glad to be a part of this wonderful concert! Praise God for such talents! It’s obvious that Jesus blesses our children. Such an event gave me, as a mother, once again a reason to think about what a responsibility I have, to raise my child that the Lord gave me. Thank you for an evening filled with light, warmth, and talent of the participants.”

—Svetlana Skorikova, mother of a participant in a concert titled, “I Love You, I Sing to You!” The program included 26 performances from 45 young participants from many cities in the Stavropol, Dagestan, and North Ossetia territory, Russia.

More Than 40

The number of people who attended the second music and creative festival of the Crimea Mission. Participants included children, youth, and adults. The event brought together people from different parts of Crimea, Russia. Young participants sang about gratitude to God for life and about hope. The event ended with a special meal for all attendees.

6

The number of people who were baptized December 10 at the conclusion of an evangelistic series in Kansk, Russia. Prayer ministry leader Moses Iosifovich Ostrovsky and his wife, Nina Petrovna, were invited by the local Adventist church and conducted an evangelistic series from December 3 to 10. ⬇

“This evening was very important for me. Lately I have felt depressed and insecure; I felt [a] spiritual decline. I was looking for Christian fellowship, and this youth [event] was what I needed so much.”

—Impressions shared by a guest about a special youth day held in the city of Krasnodar, Russia. Each part of the worship service was led by youth, and the sermon was presented by Roman Kisakov, youth director of ESD. The program resumed in the evening with singing, a devotional, and testimonies by young people.



Photo: ESD News

Perspective



Photo: Wei Fukuyama

Groundhog Day

To whom do you trust your future?

The ceremony is as nonsensical as enticing.

Every February 2, in the small town of Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, United States, thousands of people, including national and international media outlets, gather for Groundhog Day. It's a civil festival of music and food that starts before sunrise. It's also one of the most famous annual weather predictions around the world. On that day a groundhog named Punxsutawney Phil "predicts" the end of winter and the arrival of spring.

It supposedly works this way. During the ceremony Phil emerges temporarily from his burrow. The tradition states that if Phil "sees" his shadow and returns to his hole, there are still six weeks of winter ahead. If, on the contrary, the furry animal does *not* "see" his shadow, he has predicted an early spring. The ceremony is broadcast live and followed by millions.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Behind the folklore and long-held traditions, however, things

are more mundane. The solemn group of groundhog handlers, the "Inner Circle" who "interpret" the groundhog message, usually decide on the forecast ahead of time. In fact, the Stormfax Almanac has recorded 12 incidents in a 20-year span in which the Inner Circle said the groundhog "saw" his shadow on a cloudy, rainy, or snowy day. In one case Phil didn't "see" his shadow despite sunshine.*

Most studies have shown no connection between Phil's prediction and the actual weather. Statistics show that the groundhog has been right only 28 to 47 percent of the time—a very poor record for a prediction with a 50-50 chance of success.

SUSPENSION OF BELIEF?

Experts agree that the ceremony is based on a suspension of belief, or the avoidance of critical thinking or logic, to believe for the sake of enjoyment. Besides folkloric traditions and lighthearted amusement, however, this ceremony and its countless iterations across time zones and continents hide a desire as old as humanity itself—the possibility of controlling, to some extent, some of the uncertainties of our tomorrows.

Knowing and understanding the future has been an ever-present goal for fallen humans. It prompted

Nebuchadnezzar to leave no stone unturned to gain that knowledge (see Dan. 2). In his case the whole experience took him closer to the true God. At the same time, anxiety about an uncertain outcome drove King Saul to Endor to inquire from a medium and ultimately precipitate his demise (see 1 Sam. 28).

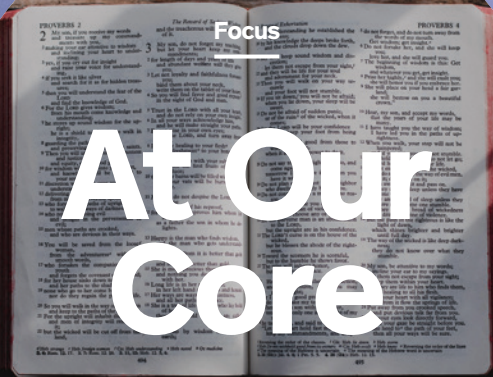
GOING TO THE SOURCE

Those who believe in God's Word, however, have long accepted that there is only One who holds the future and, in His infinite wisdom, chooses what, how, and when to reveal it. In the Garden of Eden He calmed the abject countenance of fallen Adam and Eve to proclaim the eventual triumph of the woman's Seed.

Through the years and centuries God kept providing an accurate vision of future events to His faithful followers. But He also revealed it to disloyal prophets and kings (see, for instance, Num. 24 and 1 Kings 22). God's Word encapsulates all that we need to know about our personal future, the future of God's followers, and even the future of our enemy.

At the end of the day, what counts is only our decision to allow God to take care of our uncertainties. No adorable furry friend can come even close to such a blessing. ☺

*<http://www.stormfax.com/ghogday.htm>



Focus

At Our Core

A refresher on who we are because of what we believe.

BY WILONA KARIMABADI

When my kids expressed interest in baptism, one of the things my husband and I stressed was that taking “studies” with a pastor wasn’t just about knowing Jesus better. Especially as time marches on toward the inevitable, and our beliefs become increasingly more questioned, all Adventists need to know the “whats” and “whys.” This “primer” on the 28 Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is designed to help old and new believers alike have a more concise and even conversational way to remember our core doctrines. We hope you find it helpful.

—Wilona Karimabadi



Refer to this link for the official wording of each fundamental belief:

www.adventist.org/beliefs/

1 The Holy Scriptures

Scriptural Basis: Psalm 119:105; Proverbs 30:5, 6; Isaiah 8:20; John 17:17; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20, 21.

We believe the Bible is the real deal—words from God through His influence on the minds and hearts of those who were devoted to Him. Through the Bible, God guides, inspires, teaches, and regulates us. It’s the most solid guidebook for life, and we can trust it implicitly.

2 The Trinity

Scriptural Basis: Genesis 1:26; Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 6:8; Matthew 28:19; John 3:16; 2 Corinthians 1:21, 22; 13:14; Ephesians 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2.

There is one God, and yet He is Father, Son (Jesus), and Holy Spirit. He’s always with us, never going anywhere; He knows everything; and our human minds will never be able to wrap themselves around how awesome He is. Most of all, He’s the personification of love.

3 The Father

Scriptural Basis: Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 4:35; Psalm 110:1, 4; John 3:16; 14:9; 1 Corinthians 15:28; 1 Timothy 1:17; 1 John 4:8; Revelation 4:11.

God is more wonderful than most can fathom. Caricatures of God as a mean, stern, and unforgiving being aren’t true. God is pure love, comfort, wisdom, compassion, joy, and so much more.

4 The Son

Scriptural Basis: Isaiah 53:4-6; Daniel 9:25-27; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-3, 14; 5:22; 10:30; 14:1-3, 9, 13; Romans 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 5:17-19; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:15-19; Hebrews 2:9-18; 8:1, 2.

Jesus is miraculous in every sense of the word. We believe God came to earth through Jesus Christ, who lived as a human being; therefore, there isn’t anything humanity has experienced that He doesn’t understand. Because of Him, this life isn’t all there is. And because of Him—the Lord who has saved us, redeemed us, and is rooting for us—we can be in heaven, because He’s wiped all our messes clean.

5 The Holy Spirit

Scriptural Basis: Genesis 1:1, 2; 2 Samuel 23:2; Psalm 51:11; Isaiah 61:1; Luke 1:35; 4:18; John 14:16-18, 26; 15-26; 16:7-13; Acts 1:8; 5:3; 10:38; Romans 5:5; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 2 Peter 1:21.

The Holy Spirit is the “communicator” and “convictor,” meaning that we can’t as humans understand how He does what He does, but He does it. That conviction to do something you never imagined you could—it’s Him. That unexplainable comfort and peace in the worst situation? It’s Him. The voice that tells you which way to go when you don’t know the way? That’s Him. He’s mysterious and yet not, because for the believer the unexplained often has the Holy Spirit written all over it.

6 Creation

Scriptural Basis: Genesis 1-2; 5; 11; Exodus 20:8-11; Psalm 19:1-6; 33:6, 9; 104; Isaiah 45:12, 18; Acts 17-24; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2; 11:3; Revelation 10:6; 14:7.

We believe that in six literal days God created this vast universe we live in. On the seventh day He rested. Not that He's got the same energy limitations as humans, but in doing so, He set aside the seventh day as our day of rest and remembrance, and it's a wonderful thing. In His creation of human beings, He made something special and—intrinsically and forever—linked to Him. Every living thing in this world tells the story of how amazing our God is.

7 The Nature of Humanity

Scriptural Basis: Genesis 1:26-28; 2:7, 15; 3; Psalm 8:4-8; 51:5, 10; 58:3; Jeremiah 17:9; Acts 17:24-28; Romans 5:12-17; 2 Corinthians 5:19, 20; Ephesians 2:3; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 1 John 3:4; 4:7, 8, 11, 20.

When God made human beings, they were perfection. Everything about us was connected to Him as unique people with the power to choose. Sadly, Adam and Eve's fall rendered us as we know ourselves today—flawed, wounded people who will all die one day. But through Christ and what He did for us, we have a second chance at what God always intended for us. All that is asked of us is to love Him and one another and to take care of this great big world He made.

8 The Great Controversy

Scriptural Basis: Genesis 3; 6-8; Job 1:6-12; Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:12-18; Romans 1:19-32; 3:4; 5:12-21; 8:19-22; 1 Corinthians 4:9; Hebrews 1:14; 1 Peter 5:8; 2 Peter 3:6; Revelation 12:4-9.

A tale as old as time: that of good versus evil. Satan, once part of heaven, became the enemy of God, thus leading a good chunk of the angels into rebellion. Since then evil has existed. That's why there is so much sickness

God's love has already won, and while humanity endures the assaults of evil, Jesus does not leave us defenseless.

of mind, body, character, and heart in this world. But all is not lost. God's love has already won, and while humanity endures the assaults of evil, Jesus does not leave us defenseless. He comes through every time we call on Him, and it will remain that way until we are with Him in the very end.

9 The Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ

Scriptural Basis: Genesis 3:15; Psalm 22:1; Isaiah 53; John 3:16; 14:30; Romans 1:4; 3:25; 4:25; 8:3, 4; 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4, 20-22; 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15, 19-21; Philippians 2:6-11; Colossians 2:15; 1 Peter 2:21, 22; 1 John 2:2; 4:10.

We believe that Christ came to earth to die for our sins, and His resurrection put the cap on all the evil this world could squash us with. That's not to say we don't go through pain, violence, and illness in our earthly lives. But through Christ and what He did for us, we have been given total victory over anything Satan has to throw at us. This is the ultimate power, and it's ours to claim, all because of the love of Jesus Christ. We just have to accept it.

10 The Experience of Salvation

Scriptural Basis: Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 45:22; 53; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 33:11; 36:25-27; Habakkuk 2:4; Mark 9:23, 24; John 3:3-8, 16; 16:8; Romans 3:21-26; 5:6-10; 8:1-4, 14-17; 10:17; 12:2; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Galatians 1:4; 3:13, 14, 26; 4:4-7; Ephesians 2:4-10; Colossians 1:13, 14; Titus 3:7; Hebrews 8:7-12; 1 Peter 1:23; 2:21, 22; 2 Peter 1:3, 4; Revelation 13:8.

Salvation is as real as the nose on your face. You fall because of sin, but through Christ's salvation, you are lifted. That is the whole mission of Christ for us. This faith in God's grace and mercy is what will get us through, and it's so much more than just a nice thought. Salvation because of Jesus is powerful.

11 Growing in Christ

Scriptural Basis: 1 Chronicles 29:11; Psalm 1:1, 2; 23:4; 77:11, 12; Matthew 20:25-28; 25:31-46; Luke 10:17-20; John 20:21; Romans 8:38, 39; 2 Corinthians 3:17, 18; Galatians 5:22-25; Ephesians 5:19, 20; 6:12-18; Philippians 3:7-14; Colossians 1:13, 14; 2:6, 14, 15; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, 23; Hebrews 10:25; James 1:27; 2 Peter 2:9; 3:18; 1 John 4:4.

Life is not meant to be stagnant. Though we live in a sinful world and are likely to commit our share of "infractions," Jesus walks with us to keep us growing and moving forward. He is our example to follow in making the best life decisions that not only honor God, but benefit our lives on this earth. We don't have to be stuck—Jesus always offers us a path of growth that in the end prepares us for eternal life with Him.

12 The Church

Scriptural Basis: Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:3-7; Matthew 16:13-20; 18:18; 28:19, 20; Acts 2:38-42; 7:38; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 1:22, 23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11; 5:23-27; Colossians 1:17, 18; 1 Peter 2:9.

The church is not a building, and it's not a weekly spot to find people on a Saturday morning. The church is the collective group of all those who believe that Jesus is the Savior. The church looks to no one but Jesus, as He is the ultimate authority on everything and thankfully, only a prayer away. The love Jesus has for the church is unfathomable—yes, it's that deep.

13 The Remnant and Its Mission

Scriptural Basis: Daniel 7:9-14; Isaiah 1:9; 11:11; Jeremiah 23:3; Micah 2:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Peter 1:16-19; 4:17; 2 Peter 3:10-14; Jude 3, 14; Revelation 12:17; 14:6-12; 18:1-4.

A lot of people today are asking if our world is about to explode—if this life as we know it is about to change forever. Our special mission is to help the world understand that this life isn't all there is—something the book of Revelation delves deep into. Thus, as the world gets increasingly out of control, the way forward is to take the commandments seriously and hang on to Jesus with all that we have. Aligning ourselves with Jesus is the answer.

Aligning ourselves with Jesus is the answer.

14 Unity in the Body of Christ

Scriptural Basis: Psalm 133:1; Matthew 28:19, 20; John 17:20-23; Acts 17:26, 27; Romans 12:4, 5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; 2 Corinthians 5:16, 17; Galatians 3:27-29; Ephesians 2:13-16; 4:3-6, 11-16; Colossians 3:10-15.

In Christ we all belong together regardless of how we look, what languages we speak, how we think, and what makes us tick. And it is all right to have differences, remembering that we are part of one family headed by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and we are chosen. Most important, we are loved and valued for who we are, just as we are. Thus we should impart this love to all those around us.

15 Baptism

Scriptural Basis: Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 2:38; 16:30-33; 22:16; Romans 6:1-6; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:12, 13.

While one can certainly become a follower of Christ in their heart, baptism is a public symbol that denotes a deep commitment to a new life with Jesus. The symbolism of washing away and burying all that held you down before and arising from that water fresh and renewed in Christ is so very powerful.

16 The Lord's Supper

Scriptural Basis: Matthew 26:17-30; John 6:48-63; 13:1-17; 1 Corinthians 10:16, 17; 11:23-30; Revelation 3:20.

In this particular element of spiritual practice, the power of remembrance is especially dear. Through this act, we think about Christ lowering Himself to clean the feet of people who had many faults (just as we have), loving and caring for them regardless. Through consuming the bread and juice, we think about that precious last meal He shared before He went forward to do the bravest thing that could ever be done. Taking stock of these blessings by participating in these ordinances is good for the soul.

17 Spiritual Gifts and Ministries

Scriptural Basis: Acts 6:1-7; Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 27, 28; Ephesians 4:8, 11-16; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; 1 Peter 4:10, 11.

It's easy to think we, as human beings, are here on this planet in possession of a few basic talents with which we are to live our lives. But God values us so much more than that and has given each person unique gifts with which to lovingly serve all of humanity. Gifts such as the ability to teach, be empathetic and compassionate, preach, heal, etc., are all from a loving Creator who equips everyone He calls.

18 The Gift of Prophecy

Scriptural Basis: Numbers 12:6; 2 Chronicles 20:20; Amos 3:7; Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:14-21; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; Hebrews 1:1-3; Revelation 12:17; 19:10; 22:8, 9.

Not to be confused with fortunetelling, prophecy has been inherently featured through Scripture and, in more modern times, through the ministry of a woman called Ellen White. Through visions given to her from her youth, she has been instrumental in the shaping and guiding of Seventh-day Adventist beliefs and study. Her work provides another resource by which to understand what is to come as we look forward to Christ's return. That said, the Bible, as the definitive Word of God, will always be the number-one standard by which everything is evaluated.

19 The Law of God

Scriptural Basis: Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 28:1-14; Psalm 19:7-14; 40:7, 8; Matthew 5:17-20; 22:36-40; John 14:15; 15:7-10; Romans 8:3, 4; Ephesians 2:8-10; Hebrews 8:8-10; 1 John 2:3; 5:3; Revelation 12:17; 14:12.

We believe every last one of the Ten Commandments is meant to be taken seriously, and when we do, our lives naturally become better. Through obeying these important precepts, we grow through Christ's example and become living witnesses to the world. But we must never forget that our salvation comes through the grace of Christ, because we certainly fall short of perfect adherence to the law.

20 The Sabbath

Scriptural Basis: Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11; 31:13-17; Leviticus 23:32; Deuteronomy 5:12-15; Isaiah 56:5, 6; 58:13, 14; Ezekiel 20:12, 20; Matthew 12:1-12; Mark 1:32; Luke 4:16; Hebrews 4:1-11.

We look at the Sabbath as a gift. Not only is it a much-needed rest day from our busy lives; it renews our spirits and faith through worship and time spent with those we love. It is a special 24-hour period that shows the world our commitment to following the commandments and remaining devoted to Jesus, who is the Lord of the Sabbath. It renews us, fortifies us, and strengthens our bond to the Creator.

21 Stewardship

Scriptural Basis: Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15; 1 Chronicles 29:14; Haggai 1:3-11; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 23:23; Romans 15:26, 27; 1 Corinthians 9:9-14; 2 Corinthians 8:1-15; 9:7.

We've been given many blessings from the Lord in the form of abilities, material possessions, our physical beings and relationships, and this beautiful earth we live in. Because of the Lord's great love and generosity, we believe it's important to take care of all He has given us and to give back through tithing and blessing others in whatever ways we can.

22 Christian Behavior

Scriptural Basis: Genesis 7:2; Exodus 20:15; Leviticus 11:1-47; Psalm 106:3; Romans 12:1, 2; 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20; 10:31; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 10:5; Ephesians 5:1-21; Philippians 2:4; 4:8; 1 Timothy 2:9, 10; Titus 2:11, 12; 1 Peter 3:1-4; 1 John 2:6; 3 John 2.

One of the highest ideals we can aim for in this life is to be like Jesus. He is our example in everything. So in our wanting to follow His example, healthy habits and behavior are key. Thus, since Jesus was never a drinking, smoking, drug-abusing person eating unclean

foods and harming His body and spirit, neither should we. We have nothing to lose from avoiding those things, yet, as we know, a lot to lose when we indulge in them.

One of the highest ideals we can aim for in this life is to be like Jesus.

23 Marriage and the Family

Scriptural Basis: Genesis 2:18-25; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:5-9; Proverbs 22:6; Malachi 4:5, 6; Matthew 5:31, 32; 19:3-9, 12; Mark 10:11, 12; John 2:1-11; 1 Corinthians 7:7, 10, 11; 2 Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4.

We believe in marriage between a man and a woman united in the same faith for a lifetime. Marriage can be hard, and divorce rates are high; thus this union is something to take very seriously. The Lord knows the effects of sin on our relationships, but He is always there to help us. The family is a very important unit—a gift that figures into the furtherance of the gospel, and so we seek to raise our children in the faith through example and exposure to the loving nature of Jesus. All members of God’s family, regardless of whether they are married or single, are highly treasured, valued individuals.

24 Christ’s Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary

Scriptural Basis: Leviticus 16; Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6; Daniel 7:9-27; 8:13, 14; 9:24-27; Hebrews 1:3; 2:16, 17; 4:14-16; 8:1-5; 9:11-28; 10:19-22; Revelation 8:3-5; 11:19; 14:6, 7, 12; 20:12; 22:11, 12.

Christ works in the heavenly sanctuary much like the high priest would have in the sanctuary of the Old Testament. Through this work He is making certain that those who love Him and keep the commandments will be with Him in heaven. While the word “judgment” sounds negative, in this case it’s all about the pulling together of Christ’s beloved—a labor of love, if you will.

25 The Second Coming of Christ

Scriptural Basis: Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 5:1-6; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; 2:8; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:28; Revelation 1:7; 14:14-20; 19:11-21.

Life on earth is temporary, and all the pain, suffering, and sorrow will finally end with the second coming of Jesus. It won’t be a quiet incident, for every living being will see it, hear it, and feel it. All those who have loved and lived for Christ and died in the knowledge of His return will be resurrected. Broken families will be reunited, and those we have lost will be with us again. Everything prophecy has pointed to regarding this moment will be fulfilled. But because only the Father knows the time, we are told to live in readiness.

26 Death and Resurrection

Scriptural Basis: Job 19:25-27; Psalm 146:3, 4; Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, 10; Daniel 12:2, 13; Isaiah 25:8; John 5:28, 29; 11:11-14; Romans 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54; Colossians 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; 1 Timothy 6:15, 16; Revelation 20:1-10.

This is a belief that is filled with so much hope. Death isn’t the end of the story for those who claim Jesus as their Savior. It’s a pressing of the pause button on a

Death isn’t the end of the story for those who claim Jesus as their Savior.

life. Then, when Christ comes back for us, the play button is pressed, and a new life in Christ goes forward—better than ever to live in joy in heaven with Him.

27 The Millennium and the End of Sin

Scriptural Basis: Jeremiah 4:23-26; Ezekiel 28:18, 19; Malachi 4:1; 1 Corinthians 6:2, 3; Revelation 20; 21:1-5.

While this might sound like the plot of a major Hollywood sci-fi blockbuster, no actors or special-effects gurus are involved. Here, the saved in Jesus will be safe in heaven with Him while Satan and his angels—no longer able to touch us—will be running amok on a horrible earth. But at the close of 1,000 years we will descend with Christ, where fire from God will consume evil and cleanse the earth forever. Sin and sinners? A thing of the past.

28 The New Earth

Scriptural Basis: Isaiah 35; 65:17-25; Matthew 5:5; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 11:15; 21:1-7; 22:1-5.

This is it. The best of the best, the peace and joy we’ve longed for, with this perfect world to enjoy, is all we will know for eternity. The earth made shiny and new will be the perfect place for God’s people to live completely free of suffering, death, and pain. There is no more battle between good and evil, for the Lord has prevailed, never to be challenged again. And everything—every last thing—will tell the story that God is, and has always been, love. ☺

Wilona Karimabadi is an assistant editor for Adventist Review Ministries.

A Sure Foundation

Biblical beliefs are fundamental.

The Bible and its teachings have always served as the foundation for what we as Seventh-day Adventists believe. The Advent movement began through the providential unfolding of Bible prophecy to prepare a people for Christ's second advent. In the mid nineteenth century God raised up a former skeptic-turned-reluctant preacher by the name of William Miller to proclaim the message of the first angel of Revelation 14: "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come" (verse 7). Thousands accepted this message, believing Christ's coming was imminent. However, not all accepted the message, and its rejection by the professed Christian churches is described in the message of the second angel, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen" (verse 8).

When Jesus didn't come as expected on October 22, 1844,

many left the Advent movement. However, a small remnant remained, determined to search the Scriptures for a better understanding. As they prayerfully studied, they saw the endpoint of the 2,300-day prophecy of Daniel 8:14 did not culminate in the coming of Christ to this earth, but instead ushered in a new phase of His ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. As they continued their prayerful Bible study with open hearts and minds, further truths were revealed, such as the full meaning of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14, including the importance of keeping holy God's seventh-day Sabbath. Other Bible teachings also became clear, such as the nonimmortality of the soul and the state of the dead, the second coming of Christ, and more.

Speaking of this period of intense study, Ellen White wrote: "Many of our people do not realize

how firmly the foundation of our faith has been laid. My husband, Elder Joseph Bates, [Stephen] Pierce, Elder [Hiram] Edson, and others who were keen, noble, and true, were among those who, after the passing of the time in 1844, searched for the truth as for hidden treasure. I met with them, and we studied and prayed earnestly. Often we remained together until late at night, and sometimes through the entire night, praying for the light and studying the Word. Again and again these brethren came together to study the Bible, in order that they might know its meaning, and be prepared to teach it with power."¹

"LEADING DOCTRINES"

Nearly 10 years after the Great Disappointment, the small remnant had grown into about 1,000 believers. And although they did not yet have an official name, they

did have an official paper called *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*.

On the front page of the August 15, 1854, issue of that publication was printed a brief statement listing five “leading doctrines taught by the *Review*.” The list included:

“The Bible, and the Bible alone, the rule of faith and duty.”

“The Law of God, as taught in the Old and New Testaments, unchangeable.”

“The Personal Advent of Christ and the Resurrection of the Just, before the Millennium.”

“The Earth restored to its Eden perfection and glory, the final Inheritance of the Saints.”

“Immortality alone through Christ, to be given to the Saints at the Resurrection.”²

In 1863 the group officially organized and chose the name, “Seventh-day Adventist,” reflecting two prominent beliefs—the importance of the seventh-day Sabbath, and a looking forward to the second advent of Jesus Christ.

FORMAL STATEMENTS OF BELIEFS

The church’s first formal statement of beliefs was published in 1872, titled “A Declaration of the Fundamental Principles Taught and Practiced by the Seventh-day Adventists.” The document listed 25 points drawn from Bible study and begins with the statement: “In presenting to the public this synopsis of our faith, we wish to have it distinctly understood that we have no articles of faith, creed, or discipline, aside from the Bible,” explaining that it was “a brief statement of what is, and has been, with great unanimity, held by [Seventh-day Adventists]”³

The declaration of the fundamental principles was published again, this time in the first issue of the magazine *Signs of the Times*, on

June 4, 1874. It was republished in 1875, and again in 1889, with some added footnotes.

The next statement of our beliefs came 42 years later. Some of the previous points were combined, making a total of 22, and were renamed “Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists.” These were published in the 1931 *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* and in the 1932 *Church Manual*.

Over the years some stylistic changes and minor revisions were made, along with further revisions. By 1980 the Fundamental Beliefs included 27 points and were adopted at the 1980 General Conference (GC) Session, held in Dallas, Texas.

FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS ARE DYNAMIC

These Fundamental Beliefs are dynamic, and as the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth, it may add to its list of beliefs. Sensing that a new Fundamental Belief was needed, delegates to the 2005 GC Session held in St. Louis, Missouri, voted the statement “Growing in Christ,” which was added to the Fundamental Beliefs, bringing the total to 28. While we still have 28 Fundamental Beliefs, the present form is the result of wording revisions made at the 2015 GC Session held in San Antonio, Texas.

I praise God for how the Lord has led this movement, step by step, into a more complete understanding of who He is, who we are, and what His wonderful plans for us are, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. The Seventh-day Adventist Church does not have, nor has it ever had, a set creed. Instead, we have a collection of 28 Fundamental Beliefs that express what we believe the Bible teaches. Each of these beliefs has Christ at

“The Bible and its teachings have always served as the foundation for what we as Seventh-day Adventists believe.”

its center, for He is the Living Word, and He speaks to us today through His Word, the Holy Bible.

If you would like to learn more about our Bible-based Fundamental Beliefs, I encourage you to carefully peruse this issue of *Adventist World*. In addition, you may be interested in watching a short video series I filmed in 2022 on the Fundamental Beliefs. In each video we briefly explore one of our Fundamental Beliefs and point to resources to learn more. This video series is available on the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s official YouTube Channel at <https://bit.ly/28FundamentalswithPastorWilson>.

May God bless as you continue to study His Word and hold on to His precious, time-tested biblical truths as we proclaim Christ’s soon second coming. ☺

¹ Ellen G. White, *Early Writings* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1882, 1945), pp. xxii, xxiii.

² *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Aug. 15, 1854, p. 1., <https://bit.ly/AdventReviewSabbathHerald>

³ “A Declaration of the Fundamental Principles Taught and Practiced by the Seventh-day Adventists” (Battle Creek, Mich.: Seventh-day Adventist Pub. Assn., 1872), p. 3, ellenwhite.org/media/document/7963.

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 Facebook: @Pastor Ted Wilson.



Scan this code to watch a short video series on the fundamental beliefs.

The Fear of the Lord Is the Beginning of All Wisdom



A volume for the times

The first multi-commentary volume of the new Seventh-day Adventist International Bible Commentary (SDAIBC) was published in 2022 in North America. It focused on biblical wisdom literature and included commentaries on Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs. Doctoral students Flavio Prestes II (FP) and Sergio R. Festa (SF), both serving as professors at the Adventist University of São Paulo, Brazil, recently interviewed Jacques Doukhan, general editor of the new commentary series and senior research professor of Hebrew and Old Testament exegesis at Andrews University, about the project and the importance of wisdom literature in general.—Editors.

FP: Dr. Doukhan, *The Seventh-day Adventist International Bible Commentary*, volume 6, on wisdom literature, was just released. How would you describe wisdom from a biblical perspective?

JD: One of the most important moments in the Bible, when wisdom is identified, is Solomon's going to God with the complete awareness that he is not wise. And, therefore, he asks for wisdom (1 Kings 3:7-12). That is the paradox of biblical wisdom. Humility—that is, the need for

wisdom from God—is the starting point of wisdom: “The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom” (Ps. 111:10; see also Prov. 1:7; 9:10; Eccl. 12:13).

SF: How does the wisdom displayed in the Bible intersect with and differ from other ancient wisdom literature?

JD: The Bible did not come to us in vitro, outside of its cultural environment. The Bible uses the literary forms, the language, and even some of the concepts and stories of the ancient Near East (ANE). The book of Proverbs, for instance, refers to the wisdom of Agur, the son of Jakeh, who comes from outside of God’s people and did not know God (Prov. 30:1-3). And yet his wise words have been retained in the biblical canon. When you take the book of Ecclesiastes, on which I have written the commentary, I am struck by the connections between Ecclesiastes and the wisdom of ancient Egypt. Wisdom is not exclusive to God’s people. We learn the same lesson from Jesus, who shows us that the Roman soldier and the Samaritan woman may sometimes be wiser than the man in God’s people, the biblical scholar, the Pharisee, and the doctor of the Law. What is missing in the ANE literature, however, is the presence of the true God, who gives wisdom—the personal God, who guides us in our present life and acts in history. He is also the God of the prophets who reveals Himself and sheds light on the future salvation of humankind.

FP: What is the connection between wisdom and the hope in the second coming of Jesus?

JD: Wisdom is related to the future. The book of Proverbs gives us the example of the ant, which is wise in thinking about the future (Prov.

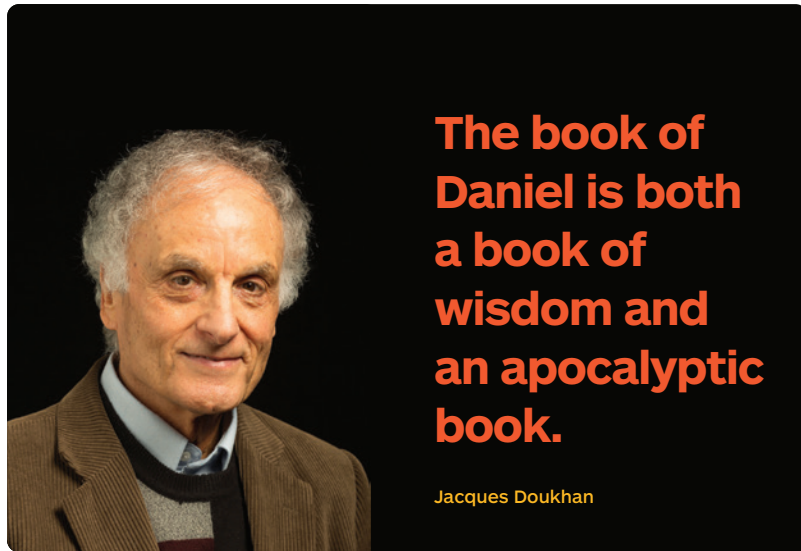


Photo: Andrews University

6:6-11). A person who is concerned just with the present is a fool and is not wise. And really, the future par excellence is the second coming of Christ. Very often Christians, unfortunately, have neglected and even eliminated the reference to the future. But if you live only with the present, you are no longer in touch with God—who is the God of the future, the God who will come. The Song of Songs speaks about the God who knocks at the door and promises to save us. If you take away the God who will come, there is no more wisdom. As the apostle Paul said, if you take away the belief, the faith in the resurrection, the faith in His coming, your life is nonsense (cf. 1 Cor. 15:19). So the future is a very important component of wisdom.

But there is also a serious psychological and theological problem with people who focus *only* on apocalyptic prophecies, and are concerned only with future events. This mistake is found in all religions. In our little circle, people with this kind of mentality read only the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation, and the book of Daniel. They neglect the wisdom

The book of Daniel is both a book of wisdom and an apocalyptic book.

Jacques Doukhan

books. As a result, these people fail to embrace the reality of daily life: they often don’t enjoy God’s gift of creation; they sometimes don’t pay attention to their neighbor.

Both perspectives, the apocalyptic revelation of the future and the principles of wisdom in the present life, are needed. Actually, the Bible brings the two perspectives together. The book of Daniel is both a book of wisdom and an apocalyptic book. Daniel is a wise man (Dan. 1:4, 20) who entertains good relationships with other people (verse 9); but he is also an apocalyptic prophet who appeals to the future, “what will be” (Dan. 2:29).

FP: How do these concepts you are talking about—wisdom and apocalypticism—relate to our identity as Seventh-day Adventists?

JD: I think that this connection between the two perspectives is very present in our theology; it’s in fact what makes our identity, as testified in our name, “Seventh-day Adventist.” The “Seventh-day” part refers to the beginning of human history and connects us with wisdom that concerns the present reality of life, the concrete creation,

Unfortunately, our beautiful and powerful message has often been communicated with little wisdom, and has thus been misunderstood, despised, and rejected by many intelligent people.

and our relationship to each other as human beings. And the “Adventist” part refers to the end of human history, and connects us to the future apocalyptic salvation of the world, and makes us dream and hope for the kingdom of heaven. The biblical truth is about both perspectives. This is our challenge, our destiny, and our mission to the world.

SF: How can wisdom impact our outreach to and dialogue with the people living in our world today?

JD: We need a lot of wisdom to communicate our special message. Unfortunately, our beautiful and powerful message has often been communicated with little wisdom, and has thus been misunderstood, despised, and rejected by many intelligent people. Also, sadly, we have often testified to the profound and complex truth of biblical wisdom with a shallow reading of the biblical text. Or we shared this particular wisdom without trying to understand the others, without being relevant to them. We need to learn to identify with other people, just as the apostle Paul did (see Acts 17:23; cf. 1 Cor. 9:19-23). Wisdom is the capacity to be in touch with the world, knowing how the world thinks, being a part of the

world (John 17:15), although not belonging to it (John 18:36). Daniel, John, Jesus, and the Adventist pioneers exemplified this wisdom.

SF: How could pastors and church members use wisdom literature from the Bible in their sermons and evangelistic series?

JD: I believe wisdom literature, which is found in the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, and the Psalms (our volume 6 of the SDAIBC), is the part of the Bible that is the closest to the minds, the concern, and the situations of the people of the world today. So when we bring the message of biblical wisdom to the world, we will reach them where they are. Unfortunately, we very rarely preach or teach from these books. This is perhaps why we have not been successful with secular people of the world, who, by the way, constitute the majority of people today.

FP: You are also the author of Ecclesiastes in the new SDAIBC, volume 6. What are your expectations and thoughts about your new commentary?

JD: I hope that my commentary will be an incentive to read and discover the book of Ecclesiastes. Many of our Adventist people don't

know this book. And yet this is one of the most Adventist books of the Bible. This is the only place in the Old Testament where the hope of the eschatological judgment and the faith of creation are brought together (Eccl. 11:9–12:1, 6, 13), just as it is in Revelation 14, in the three angels' messages. This is the book of the Bible that is the most explicit about the state of the dead (Eccl. 3:18-22; 8:2–9:10). This is also the book that is the most in tune with the postmodern minds of the people of the time of the end.

FP: Volume 6 is the first published multi-commentary volume of the SDAIBC series. It happens to contain these books, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs—the first ones to be finalized and put together in a single volume. Do you see any significance on having these books becoming available first and not other books/volumes of the series?

JD: The fact that the first volume of the commentary series is on the Psalms, which contains the prayers of ancient Israel, and on the biblical books of wisdom, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs, is providential. In these times of troubles and confusion in the world and also in our Adventist communities we are in great need of prayer.* We are also in great need for wisdom—wisdom to confront and endure the trials of the last times, but also wisdom to fulfill our mission and testimony to the world. We need to be wise and we need to pray. Volume 6, the first volume of the SDAIBC, which anticipates all the following volumes, fits very well the spiritual and existential needs of people today, the needs of the remnant people, and the needs of the people of the world. ©

* Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), pp. 621, 622.

Millennial Voices

We Will Rise Again



Nothing could have prepared me for this.

“I’m sorry, *Daktari*; we just lost him.”¹

I froze.

My heart began pounding furiously in my chest, my mind in a flurry of unanswerable questions. Inexplicable grief engulfed me. A whirlwind of emotions flooded through my being as I asked myself the question many of us have done so many times. “Why did they have to die?”

So this is how it feels.

Having been labeled as the “COVID doctor” in my local hospital in Nairobi, Kenya, I had treated hundreds of patients during the COVID pandemic. Now, right at the heart of the worst wave of the delta COVID variant, I finally knew what it meant to lose someone close to me, my own family member—the one I thought would survive but did not.

Why, Lord?

We had given him all the latest treatments available in our part of the African continent—without any success. We had prayed fervently for him. We had pleaded to God day and night to spare his life. But God hadn’t intervened.

Perhaps that’s what Mary and Martha felt as they pleaded with Jesus to heal their brother, Lazarus; as they sought to evoke His sympathy by reminding Him of His attachment to Lazarus: “Lord, the one you love is sick” (John 11:3).² Surely a reminder of Jesus’ bond to Lazarus would spark an immediate response to heal him. After all, Jesus had healed so many others. Why not save the one person He loved dearly, even as His own brother?

Jesus did not intervene. Yet we are told that “Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days” (verses 5, 6). Could it be that Jesus’ apparent “delay” was connected to His very love for Lazarus, Mary, and Martha? Could it be that His seemingly aloof behavior of procrastinating what His loved ones desperately desired—that very act of “arriving too late”—was the ultimate demonstration of His love for them? Could it be that the times we feel that Jesus is not there for us—the instances during which God seems to be so far removed from our painful experience—are

the very moments His love wraps itself around us the tightest?

It has been more than a year now since we buried my beloved family member. Yet Jesus’ words to Mary and Martha came alive to me, thousands of years after He spoke them: “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it” (verse 4). The death that Mary and Martha knew humanly was not really death in Jesus’ terms. Jesus knew that there would be a greater blessing in Lazarus’ physical death than in the healing of his sickness. He foresaw that God would receive greater glory in His apparent delay than if He had directly intervened. The Lord in His wisdom allows us to go through painful times because He sees the big picture. Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again” (verse 23). And He says the same to us today: we can rise again from our pain, our heartaches, our insurmountable problems, our trials, our hopeless situations, our suffering. We can, and will, rise again!

As we reflect on the pillars of our faith, we are reminded that our deceased loved ones will rise again, for they have just “fallen asleep” (verse 11). Our temporary pain on earth will give rise to permanent joy in heaven. This gives us hope that “our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us” (Rom. 8:18). This gives us confidence that whatever we are going through now in our personal lives—including the bad and the ugly—all of it is evidence of His love for us. He is closest to us in our pain, just like the final words of the beloved poem “Footprints in the Sand.”

He whispered, “My precious child, I love you and will never leave you. Never, ever, during your trials and testings. When you saw only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you.” ©

¹ Swahili for “doctor.”

² Bible texts are from the New International Version.

Frederick Kimani is a consultant physician in **Nairobi, Kenya**.

The only Seventh-day Adventist church on Germany's largest island would have to close. Only six church members worshipped there on Sabbath: four elderly members of a single family, and two other older people. Conference leadership recommended selling the early-nineteenth-century building in the town of Bergen on Rügen island.

"No, we want to keep the church," the church's head elder, Gunthardt Saupe, told them. "We don't want to sell it."

With those words, the six church members began to pray earnestly. As they prayed, membership grew—and they also constructed a brand-new church building that serves as a center of influence to the community and is a witness of God's incredible power in northern Germany. Today 25 church members plus their children and guests gather to praise God every Sabbath in the miraculous 730,000-euro (US\$758,000) church building.

"In the end, we have a new church building and no debt," Gunthardt said in an interview in the new church building. "God confirmed that our church should stay open."

Faith in Action

The Little Church That Could

Prayer revitalizes a German church

Church members and others gathering outside the new Bergen Seventh-day Adventist Church building after a Sabbath worship service



The Bergen Seventh-day Adventist Church was founded by seven members in 1940 during World War II. The church—located on a resort island with sandy beaches, historic towns, and a national park with stunning white chalk cliffs towering over the blue Baltic Sea—hit a peak of 33 members in the late 1950s. But it saw a sharp decline after Germany's reunification in 1990. Elderly members died, and younger ones left the former East German island to seek better lives. By 1999, when conference leaders recommended closing the church, the island's population had become largely secular.

Gunthardt and his wife, Petra, joined her parents and the other two church members in praying for God to intervene.

"Please bring someone new to the church," Gunthardt prayed.

Then an Adventist physician and his wife and daughter moved to the island and joined the church. The church's membership grew to nine.

Church members kept praying.

Then a former church member recommitted his life to Jesus and rejoined the church.

Church members kept praying.

CHANGE OF HEART

By 2010 church membership had reached 16, and conference leaders changed their minds about closing the church. While membership remained low, they saw the church overflowing with vacationers, who flocked to the island in the summer. Some vacationers were Adventist, and their presence boosted Sabbath attendance to 30 to 50 people. With insufficient space in the church, people sat on the grass outside and listened to the sermon through open windows.

The church members' battle to save their church seemed to have been won. But another challenge emerged. A new building was desperately needed. The church's

small yellow building was more than 200 years old and in serious disrepair. The upstairs floor creaked and shifted when people gathered for Sabbath School, and a foul odor permeated the premises.

Church members kept praying.

In 2018 each of the seven families who comprised the church's membership decided to pledge funds for a new building. Their pledged total of 136,000 euros (US\$141,000) was far from enough for the project, but it encouraged them to keep praying.

"God, would You please help us raise the rest of the money that we need?" Gunthardt prayed.

Gunthardt, who had built several houses, designed a new church building that also would serve as a center of influence offering seminars during the week on such topics as forgiveness and coping with grief.

Other money flowed in. Church members from across Germany contributed generously after hearing about the project at camp meeting. Companies and other organizations also donated.

UNEXPECTED DONATION

A significant contribution came when Gunthardt unexpectedly met a state finance minister. Germany has 16 state finance ministers, one for each of its 16 federal states, and Gunthardt met one of them at a local business meeting. Gunthardt told him about the church after the meeting, and the minister promised to help.

Gunthardt, however, didn't wait for the minister to call back. During the next six months he called the minister's office many times.

"Please ask him to read the document and get in touch with me," he asked the minister's assistant.

Finally the minister called back. He apologized for the delay and gave Gunthardt the phone number of a senior local politician who could help.

Gunthardt called the politician and invited him to visit the church. During the visit the politician expressed delight with the proposal.

"If your application is for less than 300,000 euros, I can give you the money right now," he said.

In Germany, politicians have the broad authority to distribute state funds to private social and religious causes. But the politician placed a condition on the donation.

"As a Christian," he said, "I want the new church building to be used not only for social purposes but also to spread the Word of God."

Church members were only too happy to agree. They had already planned to use the church as a center of influence.

Politicians and community leaders joined church members at the grand opening of the new church building in 2021. Bergen mayor Anja Ratzke praised the church as "a great asset" to the community, according to



Gunthardt Saupe, left, head elder of Bergen Seventh-day Adventist Church, standing with Hugo Tornow, right, pastor of Bergen Seventh-day Adventist Church during the struggling stage when it grew from six to 16 members, near a welcome sign at the church entrance

an online video of her speech at the opening ceremony. In addition to seminars, church members pledged to open its premises to other religious organizations and to host funeral services at no cost.

A NEW BEGINNING

God's incredible answer to the faithful prayers of church members should encourage any church with declining membership, said Hugo Tornow, the church's pastor during its struggling stage when it grew from six to 16 members.

"We want to give hope to people who are disappointed that their church membership is declining," he said. "We want to say that God can work."

Although the new church is open, church members are still praying. The church is located in a region of Germany that is recognized as one of the most secular and atheistic in the world.

"Now we want to fill the church with life for the community," said the church's pastor, René Cornelius.

But Gunthardt has no doubt that God hears and answers prayers.

"We are waiting for more miracles," he said. "The people here are not very religious. We are trying to connect with the community. Our message to all people is 'You are loved by God.'"

Watch a 10-minute video about Bergen church (in German): bit.ly/Bergen-Church. ©



Scan this code to watch a 10-minute video about Bergen church.

Andrew McChesney is editor of the *Mission* quarterly at *Adventist Mission*, headquartered at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in **Silver Spring, Maryland, United States**.



Discovering the Spirit of Prophecy

How to Read Ellen White's Writings Today

A few years ago I was discussing with a group of students the theme of God's love in the writings of Ellen White (1827–1915). One student replied, "I was introduced to Ellen White through a group that was very law-oriented, and that makes it difficult for me to find the love of God there."

In my experience most teenagers and young adults have experienced a rough introduction to Ellen White's writings, where she has been used as an arbiter of pure doctrine, a judge of right interpretation, and a rule for lifestyle questions. It was not until they "tasted" her writings for themselves that their perception improved. This raises the question on how we should introduce people to the writings of this significant historical figure who was instrumental in the founding of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and still has bearing on the lives of many people today.

WHERE TO BEGIN?

One might ask: "Ellen White wrote so much. Where should I begin?" Many of her contemporary readers knew her personally, had met her, or had read her frequent articles in Adventist periodicals. They were generally aware of the central motifs and recurrent topics in her talks and writings, allowing them to read her books against the backdrop of that knowledge.

No one today can claim the advantage of having known, met, or heard Ellen White personally. Without that experience, we are at a disadvantage to comprehend things she wrote specifically for people with this background. Thus the writings are often misunderstood and misused.

While we cannot have the firsthand experience with Ellen White that her contemporaries had, I believe we may approach her writings in a way that permits us to develop a similar perspective. This "method" is based on the reality that some of her writings were written specifically with an Adventist audience in mind, whereas other writings were written for a broad audience, both Adventist and non-Adventist.

While the latter set of writings did not require any knowledge about Ellen White as a person or her claim to divine inspiration, publications for an Adventist readership could expect at least a basic understanding of those points. I suggest starting with writings that do not require any background knowledge of Ellen White.

WRITINGS FOR A BROAD AUDIENCE

In this category there are writings on a number of topics, such as salvation, Jesus, the cosmic conflict, education, and health. Her central ideas become especially visible as

we progress, allowing us to see how they permeate all her writings.

A nice starting point to her most important ideas is *Steps to Christ*, published originally in 1892 by the Evangelical publisher Fleming H. Revell. Written from a Wesleyan-Arminian perspective, this small, revivalist book presents a beautiful description of God's character and provides practical steps on how to become and remain a Christian. The book explains many of the key themes and emphases of her ministry as a whole—love, authenticity, spirituality, commitment, growth, joy.

A passion for Jesus and Scripture drove her ministry and interaction with other people. A strong focus in her cosmic conflict narrative is Jesus as the ultimate manifestation of God's unselfish, others-centered love. *The Desire of Ages* (1898), *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing* (1896), and *Christ's Object Lessons* (1900) deal with the person, life, teachings, and death of Jesus. The two latter books, covering the Sermon on the Mount and the parables, were originally intended to be part of *The Desire of Ages*, but as that book had grown too large, they were published separately.

Her other books on the cosmic conflict narrative—*Patriarchs and Prophets* (1890), *Prophets and Kings* (1917), *The Acts of the Apostles* (1911), and *The Great Controversy* (1888, 1911)—revolve around the character of God's love. Using the words "God is love" as the first words in *Patriarchs and Prophets* and as the last words in *The Great Controversy*, she employed those words from 1 John 4:16 as the framework for the entire narrative.

In *Education* (1903), she stressed that "love, the basis of creation and of redemption, is the basis of true education."¹ Unselfish love to God and to other people underlies unselfish service and all true development.

This is facilitated best through the harmonious development of body, mind, and soul. Since true unselfish love necessitates freedom of will, "true education" aims at training "the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought."²

Finally, the same motifs reappear in *The Ministry of Healing* (1905), a manual for unselfish ministry to those in physical, emotional, and spiritual need. This type of help illustrates the love of Jesus, becoming a "vitalizing power" that "touches with healing" "every vital part—the brain, the heart, the nerves."³ The practical illustration of God's love therefore becomes an important tool in reaching people in the context of the cosmic narrative.

WRITINGS FOR A LIMITED AUDIENCE

Seeing her focus on God's love as manifested in Christ and how that plays out in our individual lives prepares us as we turn to Ellen White's writings for an Adventist audience. Since those writings often spoke to particular situations and circumstances, it is helpful to know the context in which they were written. The book *Life Sketches* (1915) provides a good overview of her life, family, experiences, visions, travels and more.

The *Ellen G. White Letters and Manuscripts With Annotations*, volume 1, 1845–1859, attempts to make her personal interaction and inspired counsel available against the backdrop of the historical context. That may also explain why her son W. C. White (1854–1937) expressed the need for the *Testimonies for the Church* (1855) to be published with historical background information.⁴

Ellen White published some writings for specific groups in the church, who presumably were aware of the main focus and

emphases of her ministry. *The Southern Work* (1898, 1901), *Gospel Workers* (1892, 1915), and *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students* (1913) fit into this category. Reading those writings from the perspective gained through the reading of her general audience works will prove beneficial.

After discovering Ellen White's main emphases, learning about her as a person, and understanding the general nature of the testimonies, we are better prepared to turn to the posthumous compilations of her writings, such as *Counsels on Diet and Foods* (1938), *Evangelism* (1946), *Temperance* (1949), *The Adventist Home* (1952), and many others.

Many of Ellen White's statements quoted in the compilations were originally made to address specific circumstances. This should always be kept in mind. Sometimes she gave what appeared to be conflicting counsel to different people, but, she may have been applying different biblical principles depending on the circumstances and issues.

Most students who applied this way of approaching Ellen White have testified that it revolutionized their perception of her as a person, her ministry, and her writings. Not only does it create a more balanced perspective, but it allows them to appreciate the content of those writings in harmony with their original intent and purpose. ©

¹ Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1903), p. 16.

² *Ibid.*, p. 17.

³ Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1905), p. 115.

⁴ W. C. White to Guy Dail, Aug. 28, 1929.

Denis Kaiser is an associate professor of church history at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, **Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States**. This article was adapted from the October 2022 issue of the *Lake Union Herald*.

666 as Blessing— 666 as God’s People?

Q

Is the mention of the number 666 in 1 Kings important for the interpretation of the number 666 in Revelation 13:18?

A

Yes, it’s possible. The number 666 is usually taken as representing in the Bible something evil and menacing. But I would suggest that 666 is associated in the Bible with something good that, in the hands of Babylon, has become a tool of deception by claiming to be something that it is not. There are two places in the Bible where the numeral 666 is mentioned in a positive context.

WEALTH, BLESSING, AND 666

In 1 Kings 3:13 God promised to bless Solomon with wisdom and great wealth. The narrative goes on to show how God blessed Solomon with wealth, specifically stating that “the weight of gold that came to Solomon yearly was six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold” (1 Kings 10:14). This amount of gold was an expression of God’s blessing. One could suggest that this understanding of divine blessing, associated with 666, is utilized by the beast of Revelation to suggest that he is a fulfillment of God’s blessing; that he is a blessing for all. However, in the context of Revelation 13, with its emphasis on the law of God, the number serves to unmask the beast as a deceptive power. The blessing of the Lord, explicitly associated with the seventh-day Sabbath (Gen. 2:3), is here related to the numeral six. It marks the absolute absence of the blessing.

GOD’S PEOPLE AND 666

The second passage is Ezra 2:13, where 666 is related to Babylon (verse 1). Among those who returned to Jerusalem from Babylon, the clan of Adonikam lists a total of 666 persons (Ezra 2:13). The number clearly

stands for a number of God’s people that listened to God’s call to leave Babylon and in obedience to Him left Babylon. It could be that in Revelation the numeral 666 is employed by the beast to deceptively suggest that he is an expression of God’s obedient people. Revelation unmasks this deception by placing the number in the context of the mark of the beast as a counterfeit to the seal of God—the beast does not belong to the people of God because it does not submit to God’s commandments.

BLESSING, GOD’S PEOPLE, AND BABYLON

Which one of these two texts provides the background for the symbolism of 666 in Revelation? The case in favor of Ezra 2:13 is weakened by the fact that in that text 666 could be a scribal mistake and that the original number may have been 667 (see the parallel text in Neh. 7:18). Or perhaps the original was 666 and the scribal mistake is found in Nehemiah, in which case Ezra 2:13 would be useful in understanding 666 in Revelation. What perhaps inclines the balance in favor of 1 Kings 10:14 is the fact that here, as well as in Revelation 13:18, the number is contextually associated with divine wisdom. In that case our understanding of 666 as stated above would apply to the beast. If we conclude that both 1 Kings 10:14 and Ezra 2:13 are correct references to 666, then a combination of the two suggestions made above could be valid. End-time Babylon would claim to be an expression of divine blessing and a manifestation of God’s obedient people, when in fact it is a distorted imperfection of both by not subjecting itself to God’s law, as demonstrated by the emphasis on the mark of the beast and the number 666 as a counterfeit to the seal of God. ©

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

Pig Valve Implants

Are they appropriate
for Adventists?



We live in a remote, rural area. My grandmother has just had her aortic heart valve replaced in a city hospital. A pig valve was implanted. I'm worried because pork is listed as an unclean meat. And why does valve disease occur? Will healthful living prevent my needing valve surgery as I age?

Excellent and pertinent questions! Heart valves of porcine (pig) and bovine (cow) tissue have been used for many years in the surgical treatment of human valvular heart disease. The animal valves are harvested, specially treated, and sterilized, and may function efficiently for many years in the human heart.

These valves are used especially where blood thinning may be difficult to monitor or would complicate already-existing diseases. Blood thinners are required to prevent blood clots forming on material foreign to the body, when mechanical or artificial—usually metallic valves—are used. Porcine and bovine valves are less likely to generate clots. This may be the reason a porcine valve was selected for your grandmother's surgery.

We don't have an official statement on the use of porcine heart valves for Seventh-day Adventists, nor did we have one on the use of porcine insulin at the time when synthetic or genetically engineered insulin was not available. Animal-sourced insulin was all that was available and was lifesaving and sustaining. As such, it was used by Seventh-day Adventists who needed it.

Just as porcine insulin was used as a lifesaving measure, porcine heart valves may play a similar role in specific circumstances. In the setting where a porcine valve implant will prolong and sustain life, it may be used without reservation. Once the patient has been appropriately diagnosed and guided by their treating physicians, we as a church neither criticize nor disagree with this course of recommended treatment.

It's important to note, however, that this is a general recommendation, as we are not aware of all the nuances of a particular patient's medical situation and possible anticipated complications. Each individual should exercise informed choices.

Heart valve disease has many causes: congenital malformations (bicuspid aortic valve), coronary heart disease and heart attacks (mitral valve leaks), inherited and very high blood cholesterol (hereditary/familial hypercholesterolemia), infections (rheumatic fever, infective

endocarditis), and degenerative (progressive mitral valve dysfunction/prolapse and leaking) and extensive damage to the heart muscle (as in what are termed cardiomyopathies).


Many of these conditions are not preventable by healthful living. Rheumatic fever is more common in circumstances in which there is consistent household overcrowding, inadequate access to health care, and delayed recognition of the disease. On the other hand, healthful living, careful diet, rest, and regular exercise are all important factors in preventing coronary artery disease, and also in modifying the progression of established coronary disease. Congenital and hereditary conditions are generally unavoidable.

We are designed to enjoy vigor, quality of life, and even longevity despite our inevitable brokenness as we live on this fallen planet. We encourage you to adopt and live the Adventist healthy lifestyle, living life to the fullest (see John 10:10, NIV).

As you do this, we wish you complete shalom, by His grace. ☺

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

Zeno L. Charles-Marcel, a board-certified internist, is an associate director of Adventist Health Ministries at the General Conference.



When the Lions Came

Everything was going wrong. First, the porters had taken far too long to load the goods in Bulawayo. Then the oxen were uncomfortable with the heavy wooden yoke and refused to work together. Then the water ran out, and now one of the wheels had hit a large rock and nearly fallen off the axle. Traveling hundreds of miles through rough and hilly Africa was always difficult, but on this trip the devil seemed to be pushing them backwards.

Pastor Anderson wiped the sweat-stained cloth across his forehead once more, breathed deeply, and aimed the wooden mallet at the peg he'd cut to fix the wheel.

I didn't need to hit it that hard, he thought as the peg split into three useless pieces.

Pastor Harry Anderson, along with a young African helper, was taking a heavy wagonload of

supplies from the end of the railroad, up through the desert, across the Zambezi River, and then through roadless dust to the new school at Rusangu. Anderson was a missionary from America, one of the founders of the school at Solusi, one of the kindest men to walk the dust of Africa, and a Christian leader the local people had learned they could trust.

The Rusangu school would be the fulfillment of a dream, a call God had given him several years earlier. The classes would bring the truth of God's love to thousands of Batonga people who had never heard the gospel, and it seemed God was leading every step of the way. Already, students had come, begging to be taught by the missionary from America. The books, salt, sugar, dried fruit, and other supplies in the wagon would give the school new life.

His knife carved a new peg from the dead branch he had found near a tall anthill. This time he whacked it more softly. *Hit it square, and without anger, he thought to himself.*

The peg stuck, and with the wheel rolling smoothly again, Pastor Anderson and his young helper drove on toward the Zambezi River crossing. There were no roads near the Zambezi River at that time, only a winding, twisty native footpath through tall grass and woods. They followed this, dodging trees if they could, cutting down those that fully blocked their path.

"This is certainly not a vacation," Pastor Anderson wrote in a letter home. "The halo of travel disappears about the fourth day one is stalled in the sand or stuck in a mudhole."

"We need to get to the river crossing before sundown," Anderson said to the young man, just as he had already said to him a dozen other times that day. "The old British sea captain who runs the ferry will take us across if we're there before the sun goes down. If we don't get there in time, he'll be gone, and we'll have to camp on this side of the river. I do not like the campsites on this



"May I Tell
You a Story?"

BY DICK DUERKSEN

side. I want to go across and camp where there's a large acacia grove on a low hill just across the Zambezi. There's good grass there, and strong trees we can use to tie down the tent."

The helper listened to the pastor's voice, understanding enough of the words to know that he must keep the oxen moving forward, yet wondering what it would be like to see a real sea captain.

When the road dipped through an ancient streambed and the oxen struggled in the deep sand, they both got off and walked beside the lead team, encouraging the oxen onward.

It was slow, hard, and frustrating going.

The old sea captain was just lowering his flag as they drove down the road to the ferry.

"Too late, Anderson," he shouted. "I'm done for the day and am going home right now. See you tomorrow."

Pastor Anderson begged, cajoled, argued, and even offered to pay extra. Nothing changed the captain's mind.

When he began to walk down the path to his home, the pastor lost it and shouted many salty words in the captain's direction. The old man stopped, started to say something, then took a puff on his pipe and walked on home.

Pastor Anderson and the young man made a silent camp in the nettles above the river.

In the morning they were first in line at the ferry. The old sea captain smiled, welcomed them, and carried them safely across the river. Anderson was silent, paying the bill with a frown.

* * *

"I want to show you where we should have spent the night," he muttered to his young helper as he drove the oxen up the green hill toward the grove of tall acacia trees.

There was a tent, a large wooden wagon, and a still-smoldering fire in a clearing at the top of the hill. Pastor Anderson called a greeting, but there was just silence in the acacias.

The young man found them first. The well-worn soles of a pair of leather boots.

Pastor Anderson begged, cajoled, argued, and even offered to pay extra. Nothing changed the captain's mind.

That was all they found. Except for the obvious prints left by a pride of lions who had visited the camp during the night. The trader who had camped here last night was gone. Taken by the lions.

Pastor Anderson knelt beside the tent, put his hands in the paw prints, and wept. While the young helper watched, Pastor Anderson confessed his pride, his anger, his frustration, and his cruelty to the old sea captain.

Later, much later, Pastor Anderson and the young African helper drove the oxen back down the hill toward the ferry landing, where they waited patiently for the old sea captain to bring the ferry to their side of the Zambezi.

"I was wrong, sir," Pastor Anderson said when the old sea captain looked down at him from the ferry's deck. "I was wrong in the way I treated you. I was wrong in the way I spoke to you. I was late, and I was angry because I wasn't getting my way. This morning God reminded me that He knows best and is always walking ahead of me to protect me. Please forgive me."

The old sea captain took a long pull on his pipe and then nodded acceptance of the apology.

"Anderson, today you are once again like the Man you follow. I'm glad you're still with us." ©

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

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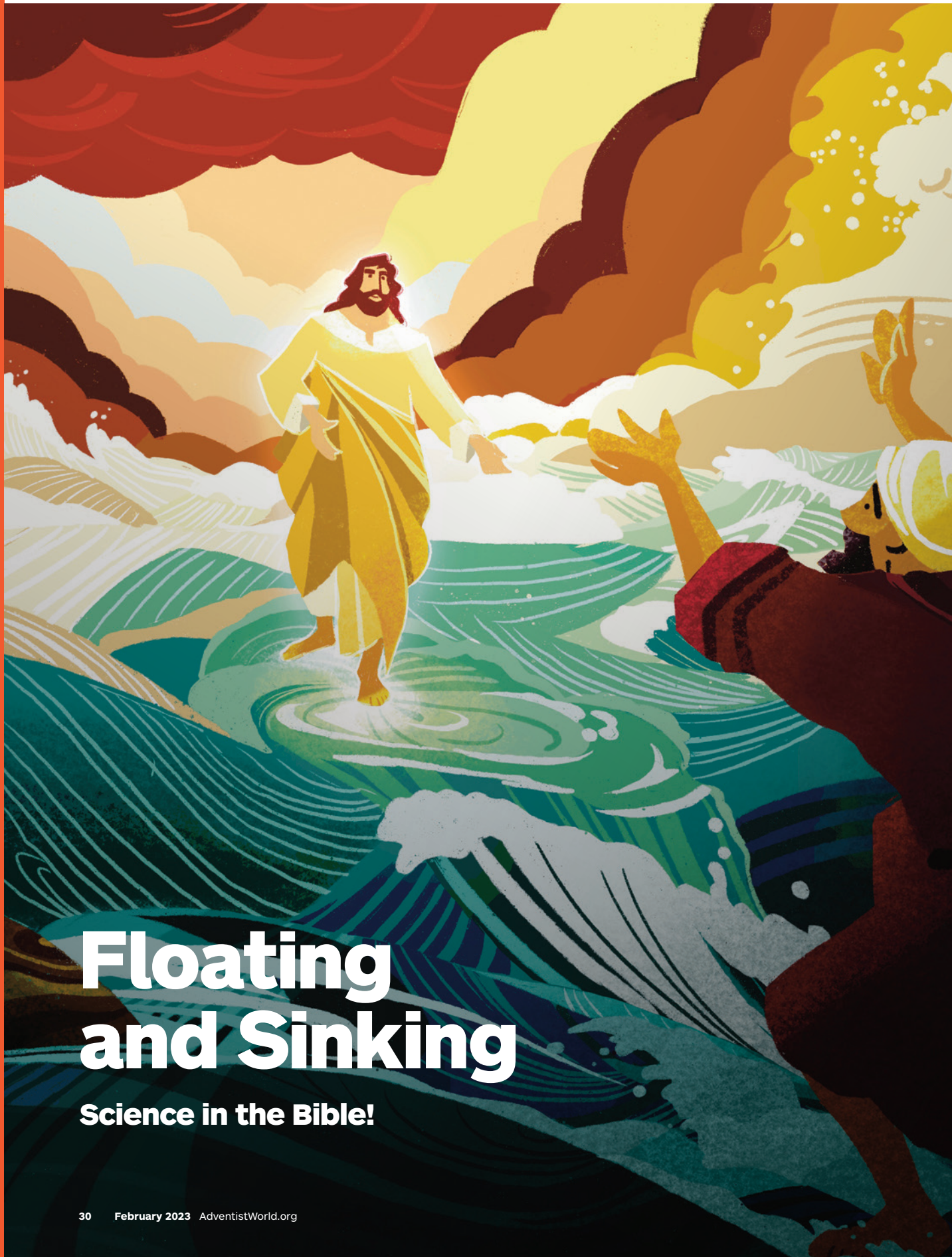
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Seventh-day
Adventist Church



Floating and Sinking

Science in the Bible!



Bible Treasure

“‘Lord, if it’s you,’ Peter replied, ‘tell me to come to you on the water.’ ‘Come,’ he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, ‘Lord, save me!’ Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. ‘You of little faith,’ he said, ‘why did you doubt?’”

Matthew 14:28-31, NIV



Let’s Do an Experiment

Does an orange float or sink when placed in water?

You will need:

- a large bowl
- water
- an orange

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Fill the bowl with water.
- Put the orange in the water.
- Does it float?
- Peel the rind from the orange and try it again. Is there any difference?

WHAT’S HAPPENING?

When you first placed the orange in the bowl of water, it probably floated on the surface, but after you removed the rind, it probably sunk to the bottom. Why?

The rind of an orange is full of tiny air pockets, which help give it a lower density than water, making it float to the surface. Removing the rind (and all the air pockets) from the orange increases its density to higher than that of water, making it sink.

Density is the mass of an object relative to its volume. Objects with a lot of matter and a certain volume have a high density, while objects with a small amount of matter in the same volume have a low density.

Next time you go swimming, notice that you’ll float better in the water if you fill your lungs with as much air as possible. When you place a block of wood in a pail of water, the block displaces some of the water, and the water level goes up. If you could weigh the water that the wood displaces, you would find that its weight equals the weight of the wood.

This doesn’t mean that if you had a few blocks of wood that were exactly the same size and shape, they would each displace the same amount of water. A block of wood made of oak, for example, sits deeper in the water (and therefore displaces more of the water) than does a block of pine. The reason is that it is heavier for its size, or denser. In this case the molecules that make it up are more closely packed together than the molecules that make up the pine.

SPIRITUAL APPLICATION

On the sea of life, there are floaters and sinkers. Which one are you? As long as Peter kept his eyes on Jesus, he walked on water. But when he took his eyes off Jesus, he began to sink. As we go through life, there will be some storms. We will encounter some pretty rough water. As long as we keep our eyes upon Jesus and put our trust in Him, we will be OK. But when we take our eyes off Jesus and put our confidence in our own ability, we will surely sink. ©

*From *KidsView*, April 2019.

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