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Prophecy: Connecting  
people to Jesus

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Step out in faith



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## CONTENTS



### PROPHECY: CONNECTING PEOPLE TO JESUS

God has given visions “in the ‘last days’; not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of his people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth.”—Ellen G. White.

by Merlin D. Burt



### SCIENCE OR SCIENTISM?

In the study of unobservable events from the distant past, the person who considers a broader range of explanations may have a better chance, even a scientifically more realistic chance, of finding the right answer.

by Leonard Brand



### STEP OUT IN FAITH

Despite the unknown future, Despite incredible suffering, the person of faith is able to affirm: “I know that my Redeemer lives!” (Job 19: 25, NKJV).

by John Wesley Taylor V

## DEPARTMENTS

- 3 **EDITORIAL**  
Be not pretenders  
*Lisa M. Beardsley-Hardy*
- 14 **LOGOS**  
How to know when  
to cut your ties  
*by Jason Miller*
- 16 **PROFILE**  
Daniel Gallardo  
*Interview by  
Gabriela de Sousa Matias*
- 22 **FIRST PERSON**  
I Will Go  
*by Leylén Marcó*
- 24 **REFLECTIONS**  
Living beyond grief  
*by Denny Rengifo*
- 26 **FOOTPRINTS OF FAITH**  
My mother's legacy:  
The passion for education  
*by Danièle Starenkyj*
- 29 **ACTION REPORT**  
Adventist University Zurcher  
launches joint witnessing venture  
*by Cédric Lachenal and Stephanie  
M. Jonathan*
- 31 **BOOKS**  
Positive mind: A practical  
guide for any situation  
*Reviewed by Conrad S. Zygmunt*
- Biblical Foundation of  
Law and Diplomacy  
*Reviewed by Abiodun A. Adesegun*
- 34 **FYI**  
Public Campus Ministry  
becomes part of Youth Ministry  
*by Pako Mokgwane*

# BE NOT PRETENDERS

A 20-something caught the world's attention in a well-heeled ruse. Anna Delvey pretended to be a German heiress with an \$80 million trust fund.\* A Russian immigrant to Germany, her real last name was Sorokin. She had no trust fund and came from a very modest background. But as Anna Delvey, she lived a life of luxury in expensive hotels in New York and Paris, even vacationed in a \$7,000-a-night boutique riad in Morocco, dropped \$100 tips, and sported exclusive fashion labels and accessories such as dark designer sunglasses or chunky glasses that framed her blue eyes. Anna's guise was carefully calculated, invented picture by picture on social media. But hotels, restaurants, banks, and newfound friends were stuck with the reality of bills amounting to hundreds of thousands of dollars for her glittering lifestyle and ambitions.

Even after her arrest, it seemed Anna could not disabuse herself of the charade in which she was living. To the irritation of the judge, she appeared late in court when the outfit she was sent one day did not meet her standards. Anna paraded a new fashion ensemble for each trial appearance, curated by her professional stylist, who sent them to her in prison.

But which is worse? To act rich when you are poor, or to act poor when you are rich? Christians can be pretenders, too. They may not be doing anything that would put them behind bars, as happened with Anna. But why should a person who belongs to Christ act as if he or she doesn't? Why would any such person not live spiritually as an heir to royalty, whose Father is the King of the Universe?

The problem might start with faulty self-perception. Christ's Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) describes how to live as a child of God. With forgiveness full and free, live thankfully rather than wallow in a keen sense of your shortcomings. If maligned or insulted for faith in God, recall that a reward is in store for all who suffer in this way. If your fight is for justice to press back racism and casteism, or to speak up for the vulnerable, do it as a peacemaker, with the manners of a child of God. Don't fight like the devil. Our battle ultimately is against spiritual wickedness, so the weapons and methods we use must show who we really are (Ephesians 6:12).

Fraud lives in many ways. It is a challenge to live consistently with one's true identity, particularly on a public campus. Since you need a good grade in class, how much should you say and risk when professors promote

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##### *Dialogue*

📍 12501 Old Columbia Pike  
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600 U.S.A.

📞 301-680-5073/5065

📠 301-622-9627

✉️ mooroooven@gc.adventist.org  
(English and French)  
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anti-biblical ideas? And on weekends, socializing with classmates can lead one to play-act in order to fit in with the scene. How easy it is to perpetuate a hoax, to express doubt, to compromise, or to complain rather than to exude quiet confidence in the providence of God.

And in the intimate area of romance, how can a believer be unequally yoked with an unbeliever? In doing so, you risk becoming the unhappy victim of your own double-dealing in matters of the heart. God's directions are only and always for our ultimate happiness. A romance scam is not limited to anonymity on the Internet. It is something you can do to yourself by simply not living the truth of who you are as a Christian.

So, don't cheat yourself. Live patiently in a way that is in harmony with the truth about who you are—wealthy beyond measure, a child of a loving Father who is working out all things for your good (Romans 8:28). He is your Defender and has promised that, if there are scores to settle, He will take care of them. You can trust Him

to do for you what is right. But until then, celebrate your inheritance! Be confident! Persevere despite setbacks. Pray for the Holy Spirit to enable you to discern and embrace who you really are as a child of God.

Above all, be generous and share with others the truth of what God has in store for them, and the lavish trust fund that can also be theirs in Christ. With all that is yours already, you can afford to share from the inheritance God has given you. 

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\* "Anna Sorokin," Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anna\\_Sorokin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anna_Sorokin).

**Lisa M. Beardsley-Hardy**

*(MPH, Loma Linda University, California, U.S.A.; MBA, Claremont Graduate University, California; and PhD, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, U.S.A.) is the Director of Education at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, and Editor-in-Chief of Dialogue.*



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# PROPHECY: CONNECTING PEOPLE TO JESUS

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MERLIN D. BURT

“**G**od, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets . . .” (Hebrews 1:1, NKJV).<sup>1</sup>

Prophecy, or prophetic communication, is a primary means through which God reveals Himself and His purposes to His people and foretells His plans for the future. Through the prophetic word, God connects with us on a deep and personal level. Even though God is high above us and is beyond our comprehension, He still comes close to us through the working of the Holy Spirit, who can catch our attention and touch our hearts in many ways, but the clearest and most trustworthy way is through the special revelation that comes through the Bible and prophetic revelation. “The prophecies which the great I AM has given in His word, uniting link after link in the chain of events, from eternity in the past to eternity in the future, tell us where we are today in the procession of the ages and what may be expected in the time to come. All that prophecy has foretold as coming to pass, until the present time, has been traced on the pages of history, and we may be assured that all which is yet to come will be fulfilled in its order.”<sup>2</sup>

Two steps are involved in prophetic revelation. First, God provides the message through the prophetic gift; and, second, the Holy Spirit takes this message and illuminates our hearts and connects us to Jesus. Peter explains this two-step process: “And so, we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of someone’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will,

God has given visions “in the ‘last days’; not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of his people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth.”—*Ellen G. White.*

but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God” (2 Peter 1:19–21, NASB).

Just before this bold assertion on the role of the prophetic word, Peter refers to his personal experience of actually hearing God’s voice: “[W]e ourselves heard this declaration made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain” (2 Peter 1:18, NASB). God Himself on the Mount of Transfiguration pointed the disciples to Jesus: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (vs. 17). For Peter, Jesus was the focus of divine special revelation.

Peter experienced the prophetic word through which he understood Jesus as God’s beloved Son. The apostle wrote that the prophetic word comes into our hearts as a “lamp shining in a dark place.” In other words, we cannot see or understand God’s workings without divine illumination. A miracle happens as the Holy Spirit gives power to the prophetic word. The prophetic word keeps shining “until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts” (2 Peter 1:19, NASB). To what does the term “morning star” refer? To Jesus our Savior who calls Himself “the Bright and Morning Star” (Revelation 22:16). Jesus touches our

minds and feelings through the Holy Spirit as we read the Spirit-inspired prophetic words of the Scripture. Only when we experience the working of the Holy Spirit in our inmost selves and accept the forgiveness of sin that comes through Jesus can we understand and experience the miracle of transformation that Jesus offers.

### PROPHECY CONNECTS TO JESUS

Peter further explained that the core purpose of prophetic revelation is to connect us to Jesus in a living and transformational way at a personal level. Throughout its pages the Bible speaks often about this experience of illumination and transformation. When the earth was fresh from the Creator's hands and Adam and Eve fell victim to sin, God's prophetic word assured them of a Savior to come who would redeem them from sin (recorded in Genesis 3:15). It is the prophetic word through Isaiah that gave hope to all sinners that a Redeemer would come to save them (Isaiah 9:6). Ezekiel the prophet noted God's deep desire for His failing children of Israel: "Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourself a new heart and a new spirit" (Ezekiel 18:31). John the Baptist in the might and power of the Spirit came "preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4). Jesus prayed that His disciples might have an experience of sanctification that comes from knowing and living the truth (John 17:17), and promised that He would come again to take His children home that where He is they may be also (John 14:1-3). Paul prophesied: "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17).

John the Revelator wrote in several places in the Book of Revelation (1:2, 9; 12:17; 19:10; 20:4 [NASB]) that he was sharing the "testimony of Jesus," which is the "spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10). Jesus Himself communicated to the world, through John, what was to take place in the future, culminating in the establishment of the new heavens and new earth (Revelation 21:1ff.). The communication of this great truth is the purpose of the prophetic Book of Revelation. Thus, prophecy runs through the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation as one unfailing method of communication from God to His people, assuring them of the basis of their hope. Insight and understanding combine with a personal connection to God through the Holy Spirit and Jesus, the Morning Star, arises in our hearts.

But it is not only through the canon of Scripture that God has given prophetic revelation. At various times throughout history, God gave special prophetic revelation that did not become part of the biblical canon. The Bible itself mentions some authors who were clearly inspired but who wrote books or documents that never became part of the canon: "Jasher, Samuel, Nathan, Gad, Shemaiah, Oded,

Ahijah, Jehu, and Iddo (for details, see Joshua 10:13; 2 Sam. 1:18; 1 Chron. 29:29; 2 Chron. 9:29; 12:15; 15:8; 20:34)."<sup>3</sup> Such calling and ministry of inspired non-canonical prophets is predicted to continue until the end of time (Joel 2:28, 29ff). God decides at various times, often during periods of great crisis, to provide additional prophetic guidance.

### THE MINISTRY OF ELLEN WHITE

One such non-canonical prophetic ministry, Seventh-day Adventists believe, came through the ministry of Ellen G. White. She received many prophetic visions and dreams over a period of more than 70 years, until her death in 1915. What she received she wrote in numerous letters, manuscripts, articles, tracts, and books. She produced these under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Yet, she saw herself as a non-canonical prophet. Of this she wrote in her introduction to one of her most significant books, *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan*:

"During the ages while the Scriptures of both the Old and the New Testament were being given, the Holy Spirit did not cease to communicate light to individual minds, apart from the revelations to be embodied in the Sacred Canon. The Bible itself relates how, through the Holy Spirit, men received warning, reproof, counsel, and instruction, in matters in no way relating to the giving of the Scriptures. And mention is made of prophets in different ages, of whose utterances nothing is recorded. In like manner, after the close of the canon of the Scripture, the Holy Spirit was still to continue its work, to enlighten, warn, and comfort the children of God."<sup>4</sup>

Ellen White was very clear that the purpose of her prophetic work was first and foremost to lead to the Bible. In the conclusion of her first tract published in 1851 she wrote: "I recommend to you, dear reader, the word of God as the rule of your faith and practice. By that Word we are to be judged. God has, in that Word, promised to give visions in the 'last days;' not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of his people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth."<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps the clearest statement in which she spoke of her prophetic role in relation to the Bible is the following:

"I have a work of great responsibility to do—to impart by pen and voice the instruction given me, not alone to Seventh-day Adventists, but to the world. I have published many books, large and small, and some of these have been translated into several languages. This is my work—to open the Scriptures to others as God has opened them to me."<sup>6</sup> This work of Ellen White in bringing us to the Bible focuses on connecting people to Jesus, as Peter said would happen through the prophetic gift. The most beloved book in the numerous ones she wrote is *Steps to Christ*, which has been translated into more than 160 languages. It has drawn millions of people to salvation and accomplished Peter's prophetic goal that the Morning Star should rise in hurting and wounded hearts. In *Steps to Christ*, you will find that she presents the way of salvation through compelling and persuasive words filled with the Spirit and Scripture.

Another greatly loved book by Ellen White is *The Desire of Ages*\*, an inspiring work on the life of Jesus. I quote here a longer passage from that book to illustrate how Christ-centered and beautiful were her messages and her writings:

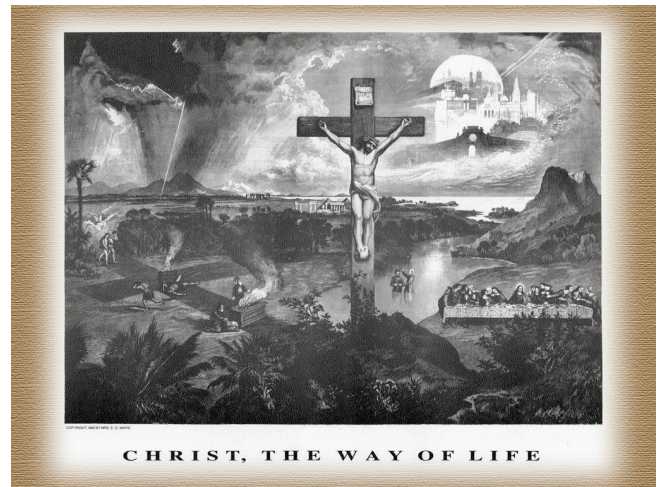
“The spotless Son of God hung upon the cross, His flesh lacerated with stripes; those hands so often reached out in blessing, nailed to the wooden bars; those feet so tireless on ministries of love, spiked to the tree; that royal head pierced by the crown of thorns; those quivering lips shaped to the cry of woe. And all that He endured—the blood drops that flowed from His head, His hands, His feet, the agony that racked His frame, and the unutterable anguish that filled His soul at the hiding of His Father’s face—speaks to each child of humanity, declaring, It is for thee that the Son of God consents to bear this burden of guilt; for thee He spoils the domain of death, and opens the gates of Paradise. He who stilled the angry waves and walked the foam-capped billows, who made devils tremble and disease flee, who opened blind eyes and called forth the dead to life,—offers Himself upon the cross as a sacrifice, and this from love to thee. He, the Sin Bearer, endures the wrath of divine justice, and for thy sake becomes sin itself.”<sup>7</sup>

She sealed this powerful presentation showing how Jesus overcame sin for us on the Cross: “Amid the awful darkness, apparently forsaken of God, Christ had drained the last dregs in the cup of human woe. In those dreadful hours He had relied upon the evidence of His Father’s acceptance heretofore given Him. He was acquainted with the character of His Father; He understood His justice, His mercy, and His great love. By faith He rested in Him whom it had ever been His joy to obey. And as in submission He committed Himself to God, the sense of the loss of His Father’s favor was withdrawn. By faith, Christ was victor.”<sup>8</sup>

### GOD’S LOVE REVEALED ON THE CROSS

The central theme of God’s love revealed in the death of Jesus on the Cross is represented through an 1883 lithograph that Ellen White published. Titled “Christ, the Way of Life,” it portrays her view of the great conflict between good and evil beginning in the Garden of Eden and continuing until the second coming of Jesus and the New Jerusalem. As you see represented here, it placed Jesus on the Cross at the center of the entire plan of salvation.

I would like to conclude with a connection that Ellen White made between the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross and the love of God: As the Holy Spirit takes these words and gives them life, this is an opportunity to connect to our amazing and wonderful God: “All the paternal love which has come down from generation to generation through the channel of human hearts, all the springs of tenderness which have opened in the souls of men, are but as a tiny rill to the boundless ocean when compared with the infinite, exhaustless love of God. Tongue cannot utter it; pen cannot portray it. You may meditate upon it every day of your life; you may search the Scriptures diligently in order to under-



stand it; you may summon every power and capability that God has given you, in the endeavor to comprehend the love and compassion of the heavenly Father; and yet there is an infinity beyond. You may study that love for ages; yet you can never fully comprehend the length and the breadth, the depth and the height, of the love of God in giving His Son to die for the world. Eternity itself can never fully reveal it. Yet as we study the Bible and meditate upon the life of Christ and the plan of redemption, these great themes will open to our understanding more and more.”

May this prophetic special revelation be effective and transformational for us as God reveals His inspired message. May the Holy Spirit illuminate and transform this word into a living experience as Jesus the Morning Star arises in our hearts. ☪

\* Ellen G. White’s writings are available at [egwwritings.org](http://egwwritings.org).

**Merlin D. Burt**

(PhD, Andrews University, Michigan, U.S.A.) is Director of the Ellen G. White Estate, Inc. and Research Professor of Church History, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, U.S.A.  
E-mails: [burt@whiteestate.org](mailto:burt@whiteestate.org); [burt@andrews.edu](mailto:burt@andrews.edu).

### NOTES AND REFERENCES

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# SCIENCE OR SCIENTISM?



Cettyimage

LEONARD BRAND

**H**ow does one evaluate truth claims? The Bible makes truth claims, science makes truth claims, philosophy makes truth claims, and often each goes in different and at times conflicting directions. Some of us are confident that the biblical claim to truth is trustworthy, even on turf that science claims as its own.

What is the Christian's response to scholarly thinking that holds that only science can provide truthful information to problems that arise in everyday life? Such absolute reliance known as scientism maintains that if an idea can be tested and demonstrated by the scientific method, especially in the natural sciences like physics, chemistry, and biology, we have arrived at reliable knowledge. Other ideas are merely uncertain beliefs, not worthy of confidence; for example, disciplines like philosophy and theology offer opinions but not knowledge. If such a view is accepted, then just about anything we get from the Bible falls in the category of

In the study of unobservable events from the distant past, the person who considers a broader range of explanations may have a better chance, even a scientifically more realistic chance, of finding the right answer.



subjective opinions, leading to secularism. Therefore, if we want to seek reliable knowledge, our search must be focused on science, and religion has nothing to contribute. A recent book, *Scientism and Secularism*, explores these ideas and offers useful insights.<sup>1</sup>

Two examples can help in the evaluation of these ideas, and reveal what they can tell us about the claims of science and scientism. Suppose I claim that my pet goldfish can live without oxygen. We can use a scientific procedure to test that claim. Seal the top of the goldfish bowl to keep out all oxygen, and that experiment will provide a reliable test of my hypothesis. This valid scientific procedure offers reliable knowledge, as science has in so many cases, consequently establishing confidence in the power of science.

Now for our second example. We have already noted that if an idea can be tested and demonstrated by the scientific method, only then is it reliable knowledge; and fields like philosophy and theology offer opinions but not knowledge. How can the claims of those two constructs be taken into a laboratory and tested by a scientific procedure? Can theological statements be tested using the scientific process? If they cannot, does that mean they are false? How about the broader proposal: that reliable knowledge comes only from science and not from philosophy or theology? Can scientific procedures test that proposal?

Science deals with many topics that are like the goldfish hypothesis: processes in nature that we can observe and test with experiments or careful observation. Scientism implies that those observable processes are the only things in the universe that can be reliable knowledge. But how would finite humans test that claim? The very claims of scientism are self-refuting—since all those claims cannot be tested by science, they fail the test that scientism uses to define itself. Scientism actually is philosophy, not science. It is a claim about itself that cannot be tested by science, and thus is a *philosophical* claim with no demonstrable validity.

Science and scientism are worlds apart in terms of validity. Science has given us many valuable advances in understanding, with hypotheses and theories that can be tested. But a given hypothesis, even if it originated through science, may be true or false. It is the experimental test that can demonstrate whether the hypothesis is true or false, and some hypotheses could never be tested, including scientism.

#### **DANGEROUS ASPECT IN SCIENTISM**

The outcome of scientism that is perhaps most dangerous is secularism. Secularism has been very influential, but it has a fatal flaw. For example, according to

*It could be there is a God, and if so, paying attention to what He told us may give us an advantage in study of ancient events that He observed, and we did not observe.*

secularism, the idea of God cannot be tested by science, and thus needs to be rejected. Since we cannot design an experiment to test the God hypothesis, scientism concludes that there is no God, or at least no god worthy of our attention. But go back to the goldfish experiment. The experiment has two possible outcomes. Goldfish either need oxygen, or they do not. Science shows its strength here because it can demonstrate which of these conclusions is correct.

The God hypothesis also has two possible conclusions. It could be that He exists, or it could be that He does not exist. In this case, the goldfish test cannot be replicated. Science can't demonstrate that God exists and is equally incapable of demonstrating that God does *not* exist. Any attempt to do otherwise is a misuse and does not have the capability of giving a decision, one way or the other. Scientism (and its offspring, secularism) simply fails to deliver what it claims and has nothing further to say.

Scientism and secularism are merely assumptions, a chosen philosophy. An assumption is something that is taken as truth but without proof. If we choose to accept it as true, we have to do so without convincing evidence, and that puts assumptions in the cluster of things scientism claims to reject. Consequently, something in scientism is not fitting together here.

#### **METHODOLOGICAL NATURALISM**

A major offspring of scientism is a scientific perspective called materialism, or methodological naturalism. This is the belief that nothing exists except matter and things human beings can observe by manipulating matter. Anything we would call a divine miracle is rejected by definition. Miracles must never be used as an explanation for anything. If we are doing an experiment in a chemistry or physics lab, that seems quite reasonable. The lab instructor is not likely to accept a miracle as our explanation for why our results were not what was expected.

The situation changes if we are asking about an event from the remote past. For example, let's say theories have been developed to explain how an extensive sedi-

mentary rock formation, covering a hundred thousand square miles, was deposited. Its fossils and other characteristics indicate it is a terrestrial deposit, formed on land. There are a few possibilities for what process could have deposited it there, primarily rivers. What scientific test can be used to demonstrate whether it formed that way? We can't go back in time to observe the process, so the assertion will always remain only a hypothesis.

Perhaps four theories are proposed for what the process could have been, but none of them seems convincing. Another possibility that seems more likely is deposition by an enormous catastrophic flood. The Bible speaks of such a flood, but materialism cannot accept such a religious story. It insists that geological events must have happened by processes we can study today in the known universe.

But what if there actually was a global flood? Would we want to know that? Or should we insist it didn't happen, to be consistent with materialism? Of course some evidence favors a slow process over millions of years, but other evidence is not compatible with that explanation.<sup>2</sup> Materialism will automatically accept the conventional theory of slow, gradual processes. In fact, those who accept materialism will normally accept that process without ever giving a thought to the alternative of a huge catastrophe. Why? Because the assumption of scientism has a controlling influence in many scientific circles.

What is often not realized is that in study of unobservable events from the distant past, the person who considers a broader range of explanations may have a better chance, even a scientifically more realistic chance, of finding the right answer. That doesn't mean it is better to consider any wild idea that is suggested. I am just reminding us that scientism and its philosophical relatives may be false. It could be there is a God, and if so, paying attention to what He told us may give us an advantage in study of ancient events that He observed, and we did not observe. Some of us have had decades of experience in geological research that demonstrates the reality of this claim.<sup>3</sup>

We shall consider one more example of why it may be wiser to question scientism, secularism, and materialism. How did life begin? This is a critical aspect in any discussion of scientism, because if life needed a designer, then scientism, secularism, and materialism are all *dead*. Our understanding of life is far in advance of our understanding of ancient geological events. Life, in all its complexity and wonder, is all around us and can be studied in detail in the laboratory. What has it taught us? Every living cell can be compared to a city of chemical laboratories, full of constant chemical reactions of immense complexity, many of which we still don't understand.

The theory that life arose from non-living matter by itself (abiogenesis, or chemical evolution), as required by scientism, is confidently described in all standard science textbooks. The possibility that life was created or designed is never considered in popular or scientific sources. But how much evidence is there to support these claims for abiogenesis? There is no such evidence, absolutely *none*. All the evidence is against them.<sup>4</sup>

Did the gradual occurrence of fortuitous chemical reactions over millions of years finally put a living cell together? With enough millions of years, anything can happen—right? Wrong. Biochemists who spend their careers in the laboratory designing and synthesizing proteins find that in this synthesis process, time is an enemy, not an asset. To accomplish any specific chemical reaction, it is necessary to have the needed chemical reagents there *exactly on time*, and with the right pH and the right temperature. Accomplishing this by chance, over long time periods, is unrealistic in the extreme.<sup>5</sup>

And yet, scientism and materialism can accept no other option—not because of evidence, but by preference. The origin of life is perhaps the strongest indication of the hopeless state of these philosophical assumptions of scientism, secularism, and materialism. ☪

#### Leonard Brand

(PhD, Cornell University, Ithaca, New-York, U.S.A.)  
is a Professor of Biology and Paleontology, Loma  
Linda University, Loma Linda, California, U.S.A.  
E-mail: lbrand@llu.edu.

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# STEP OUT IN FAITH



Despite the unknown future, despite incredible suffering, the person of faith is able to affirm: “I know that my Redeemer lives!” (Job 19: 25, NKJV).<sup>1</sup>

JOHN WESLEY TAYLOR V

Life is not always a straight line; it has its ups, downs, and curves. Sometimes our friends share with us the uncertainty and anxiety that they experience. Sometimes our own horizons become blurred, and our path grows dark. When these occur, one Scripture passage can be reassuring and instructive: “For we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7). A succinct statement. Note its three key elements.

## 1. WE MUST WALK

Scripture affirms that it is not enough to stand. We must walk in the truth (2 John 4; 3 John 4). Walking involves two core concepts: choice and change.

*To walk involves choice.* Sometimes the road divides. The more difficult decision is often not what to include, but what to exclude. The problem is that we want it all! But we cannot walk two roads at once. Further, such choices are important. “There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death” (Proverbs 16:25, NLT). The first temptation that humans faced was a matter of choice, whether to trust God or perhaps miss out on something (Genesis 3:1–6). In our journey, we should ask: What are the forks in the road that I am facing? Am I afraid that by following Jesus, I may miss something? Jesus provided the roadmap. He declared, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). He also said, “Follow Me” (Matthew 4:19).

*To walk involves change.* Each moment is an invitation to grow. Each day, an opportunity to experience new horizons. For this to happen, however, we must be willing to leave our cozy spot. We must be willing to let God take our world, shake it up, turn it upside down, and render a new creation (Acts 17:6; 2 Corinthians 5:17). We must be willing to let God out of the tidy box where we have placed Him and let Him work as He sees fit.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps the change in your life will be a calling to do something you have never envisioned before: to help the homeless, to give a Bible study, to become a missionary, to trade in worldly comforts for heavenly treasure (Luke 18:22). I don’t know what your shake-up will look like. But I do know that if you trust God, He will take you on a journey that will transform your life.

## 2. WALK BY FAITH

To walk by faith is a simple concept, but a challenging assignment. Faith makes things possible, not easy. Trusting Jesus can be difficult. It requires following the unseen into the unknown.

Faith is daring the soul to go beyond what the eyes can see. It is taking the first step when you cannot glimpse the whole journey. It is not hoping that God can. It is knowing that He will!

Paul wrote, “Faith is *confidence* in what we hope for and *assurance* about what we do not see” (Hebrews 11:1, NIV, italics supplied). To walk by faith is to believe in the reality of that which we cannot comprehend. It is to live in confident expectation of that which is yet to come. It is to conduct our lives with a view of eternity.

Further, to walk by faith is to *live by faith*.<sup>3</sup> It is to tune our hearts to the voice of the Spirit, to live in harmony with the Word (John 10:27; 16:13). It is to choose God’s plan, rather than to trust our own understanding (Jeremiah 29:11; Proverbs 3:5, 6). It is to make God’s kingdom our highest priority (Matthew 6:33).

Walking by faith requires courage and strength. You must be willing to be misunderstood. Your course of action may, in fact, seem foolhardy to some, because “[t]he person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness” (1 Corinthians 2:14, NIV). The Bible highlights the lives of those who were fools for God: Noah, building an ark for a flood, when it had never rained (Genesis 2:5, 6; Hebrews 11:7); Abraham clinging to the promise that he would be “the father of many nations” (Genesis 17:4, 5), even though he was almost 100 years old and childless; Moses, standing at the edge of the Red Sea, trapped by the military might of Egypt (Exodus 14; Hebrews 11:29); Joshua, marching around a fortified city for seven days (Joshua 6; Hebrews 11:30).

In sum, walking by faith is a journey that is breathtaking, life-altering, and mind-boggling. A journey that allows us to experience God in His fullness and grace.<sup>4</sup> A journey that prepares us to be used powerfully for His glory.

## 3. NOT BY SIGHT

The term *sight* means, more broadly, “through the senses,” and includes what we hear, feel, smell, and even taste. Sight, however, is the dominant sense. Of all that we know, 75 to 80 percent was learned through sight.<sup>5</sup> More of the brain, in fact, is devoted to processing visual information than all other senses combined.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, “sight” is the part representing the whole.

There are three fundamental problems with the senses. First, *physical senses cannot discern spiritual things*. Jesus told Nicodemus, “That which is born of the flesh is

flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6). They are simply different realms of reality. We already noted in 1 Corinthians 2:14 that spiritual matters seem foolish to the natural person. The passage, however, goes on to explain, “Nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

The second problem is that *our physical senses are closely linked to our feelings*. And our feelings are not the test. Richard Sibbes wrote: “Measure not God’s love and favor by your own feeling. The sun shines as clearly in the darkest day as it does in the brightest. The difference is not in the sun, but in some clouds which hinder the manifestation of the light thereof.”<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Ellen White advised, “We are not to make our feelings a test to discern whether we are in or out of favor with God. . . . It is not wisdom to look at the emotions and try to test your spirituality by your feelings. Do not study yourself; look away from self to Jesus.”<sup>8</sup> In essence, we are not to live confined in a cell of feelings and emotions. We are to live in God’s reality of faith.

The third problem is that not all sense experiences are of divine origin. Satanic deceptions delude those who “have not believed the truth,” who have “refused to love the truth” (2 Thessalonians 2:9–12, NIV). Perception can be deception.<sup>9</sup> Consequently, simply because it seems that we perceive something does not mean that this perception is a revelation of God’s truth or of His plan for our lives.

There are two areas of difficulty in walking by sight—the matters of possessions and suffering.<sup>10</sup>

First, those who walk by sight *manage possessions with anxiety*. The underlying difficulty is that “human eyes are never satisfied” (Proverbs 27:20, NRSV) and the pursuit of wealth becomes an obsession (Matthew 6:24; Colossians 3:5). Further, fluctuations of the material world cannot guarantee that a fortune today will even exist tomorrow. Consequently, Scripture warns us not to “fix [your] hope on the uncertainty of riches,” which “plunge people into ruin and destruction” (1 Timothy 6:17, 9, NASB).

In contrast, those who walk by faith *manage material goods with contentment*. Paul stated, “I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances” (Philippians 4:11, NIV). As believers, we recognize God’s promise to supply our material needs when we place His kingdom first (Matthew 6:25–33). We respond to the invitation, “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7, NIV).

Second, those who walk by sight *relate to suffering with despair*. Life doesn’t seem fair! The wicked prosper, the righteous suffer. Asaph, in fact, confessed, “I nearly lost my foothold . . . when I saw the prosperity of the wicked” (Psalm 73:2, 3, NIV). Consider Job,

one whom God described as “blameless and upright” (Job 1:8). In a brief span, he lost his wealth, his children, and his health. Then he received the advice of his friends, “Get rid of your sins” (Job 11:14, NLT) and of his wife, “Curse God and die!” (Job 2:9, NIV). Ample reason for despair.

Those who walk by faith, however, *face suffering with hope*. Paul experienced suffering. To Corinthian believers, he provided a partial inventory: “Five different times the Jewish leaders gave me thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea” (2 Corinthians 11:24, 25, NLT). Why didn’t Paul despair? His answer: “Therefore we do not lose heart. . . . For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen” (2 Corinthians 4:16–18, NIV).

Despite incredible suffering, Job was able to exclaim: “I know that my redeemer lives. . . . And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God. . . . How my heart yearns within me!” (Job 19:25–27, NIV).

### LIFE APPLICATIONS

The disciples had procrastinated. When they finally pushed back from the shore and began to cross the lake, a storm descended. Even for experienced fishermen, this was no ordinary storm, and they began to fear. Suddenly they spotted a form crossing the water. The disciples cried out in terror, sure that their lives were about to end. Jesus spoke, “It is I; do not be afraid.” Without hesitation Peter replied, “Lord, if it is You, tell me to come to you on the water.” Jesus said, “Come” (Matthew 14:22–29).

Peter stepped out of the boat and began walking toward Jesus. *This is amazing!* he thought. *I wonder if others are watching.* As he looked back, Peter “saw that the wind was boisterous.” He focused on the waves and panicked. “Beginning to sink he cried out, saying, ‘Lord, save me!’ And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, saying, ‘O you of little faith, why did you doubt?’” (Matthew 14:30, 31).


Peter started out right. He courageously stepped out of the boat. As soon as he started to walk by sight, however, fear gripped him, and he began to sink. Notice that Jesus didn’t stand back and let Peter gulp some Galilee water. He immediately reached out and rescued Peter, and He said to him to “walk by faith.”

Consider another example. Following God’s directive, Moses sent 12 men to assess the Promised Land. For 40 days they traversed Canaan. Then they returned and rendered a report: “We entered the land you sent

us to explore, and it is indeed a bountiful country, a land flowing with milk and honey. . . . But the people living there are powerful, and their towns are large and fortified. We even saw giants there . . . . Next to them we felt like grasshoppers” (Numbers 13:27–33, NLT).

Notice that all 12 men walked. Ten, however, walked by sight. They focused on what their senses perceived, and they despaired. Caleb and Joshua, however, walked by faith: “The land we traveled through and explored is a wonderful land! And if the Lord is pleased with us, he will bring us safely into that land. . . . Don’t be afraid . . . !” (Numbers 14:7–9, NLT).

So, choose faith! Let your faith be bigger than your fears. Like Daniel, determine to follow God’s plan regardless of what others may think or do (Daniel 1 to 6). Like Esther, stand up for the threatened and the oppressed, even in the face of death (Esther 4 to 8). Like Joseph, cling to the dream that God has planted in your heart, even when it seems that you have lost everything (Genesis 37 to 50). Like Abraham, step out in faith, even though the journey may be unknown (Hebrews 11:8–10).

May we pray, “I have put my trust in you [O God]. Show me the way I should go” (Psalm 143:8, NIV). Then, accepting God’s invitation, step out in faith! 

### John Wesley Taylor V

(PhD, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, U.S.A.; EdD, University of Virginia, U.S.A.) serves as Associate Director of Education at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A.

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# HOW TO KNOW WHEN TO CUT YOUR TIES

JASON MILLER

**H**ezekiah was the 13th king of Judah. He was a good ruler, unlike his father Ahaz, whom he succeeded. Ahaz was an idolater, known for his evil behavior, for rejecting God's ways, for worshipping strange gods in high places, for seeking a dangerous and compromising alliance with Assyria, and for leading Judah away from God (2 Kings 16:1-9). Ahaz had compromised not only Judah's political position but also its spiritual strength, and had led Judah into a vacuum of leadership, godless and powerless. Into the leadership of that kingdom stepped Hezekiah. Unlike his father, Hezekiah was a godly leader who could not stand the God-denying alliance with Assyria. As soon as Assyria had a transition in leadership, Hezekiah saw his opportunity and immediately ended the alliance of servitude with that nation (2 Kings 18:7).

Was Hezekiah too hasty? Maybe he should have waited rather than cutting his ties so soon. How do we know when is the right time to cut ties—whether the ties are to an abusive relationship, a substance that leads to addiction, or even ties to some religious items that seem good but don't help our walk with God? Cutting ties can be a difficult process, especially because we may face negative consequences. Hezekiah certainly did, but he came through.

A few years ago, I faced such a challenge myself. During the summer of 2018, I made what I thought was a career breakthrough. I had always wanted to find a way to get involved in actual litigation as a lawyer but had to settle for contract work in different government agencies. As time wore on, however, I became convicted that this law position wasn't for me. I was struggling to understand the work. I was having issues communicating with my supervisor. My spiritual life and even my relationship with my girlfriend were beginning to weaken. Like Hezekiah, I had to make a choice. Should I cut ties, or hold out for a better opportunity?

Ultimately, the question was a personal one that can be decided only by me and the Holy Spirit. We do have some godly counsel on this issue. The Bible tells us "Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?" (Amos 3:3. NKJV),\* reminding us that the path we take needs to be consistent with God's plan for us.

The apostle Paul adds: "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful" (1 Corinthians 6:12, RSV). How can we know which of these "things" we should keep, and from which "things" we should cut ties? Paul provides a clue: "I will not be enslaved by anything" (vs. 12, RSV).

## MY DILEMMA

Here was the dilemma I was facing. Would I let my prestigious litigation position enslave me, or would I cut ties and proceed on faith?

During this time, my supervisor gave me one last chance to keep my job. He invited me personally to work with the leadership of our company, hoping this might help demonstrate my loyalty and enable me to learn the skills I would need to succeed. I was in turmoil that week as I struggled whether to cut my ties or not. One night I fell asleep in the



middle of prayer. At about three in the morning, I woke up and began playing a song in my head about the “American Dream.” I felt intense conviction from God and began praying earnestly for the next couple of hours, crying and wrestling with God about my dilemma. At last, I made my decision to begin the process of cutting ties with my job. Immediately, a sense of internal peace came over me—peace I had not experienced since I began the job. Within a few weeks, the job was over. I had officially cut my ties.

Because Hezekiah cut ties, he faced his own challenges. Sennacherib, king of Assyria, invaded Judah (2 Kings 18:13). To make matters worse, God allowed Assyria to conquer all of Judah, except Jerusalem, the capital city (vss. 17-35). The king of Assyria sent several leaders, including his chief political propagandist, the Rabshakeh, to scare the people of Jerusalem into surrendering (vss. 19-23). The Rabshakeh used conniving diplomacy to destroy the morale of Hezekiah and his people. The danger of propaganda is that it can hit us when we are most vulnerable and desperate for a way out, even if it’s a shaky shortcut. Another danger in propaganda is its instinct to mix truth and error. The Rabshakeh did speak truth in that God had allowed Assyria to invade Judah (vs. 25). To all human eyes, it appeared that hope was lost (vss. 33-35). But what humans could not perceive was the simple truth: The Rabshakeh was wrong in claiming that God was on the side of Assyria (vs. 25).

Do we have any rabshakehs in our world today? Turn on the news, look at the Twitter feed, or scroll through Facebook to see modern-day rabshakehs all around us. Both in the church and in the world, conspiracy theories abound. And just as in Hezekiah’s day, prominent leaders use political propaganda to spread a dangerous mix of truth and error. How should we as Christians respond to such mixed-up messages? Should we fight back and troll through the comment sections of social-media posts? Should we shout down religious leaders who get involved with these ideas?

### A LESSON TO LEARN

Perhaps we can learn a lesson from how Hezekiah responded to political propaganda from the enemy king. The Bible tells us that he and his people, “held their peace and answered him not a word” (2 Kings 18:36).

When bombarded with that which is not truth or that which is opposed to God’s Word, our first response should be to turn it off. Maybe we need to just keep scrolling through our newsfeed, or click “X” to close that YouTube video. Maybe we should even shut off our phones. As Christian young adults, do we really have time to be engaged in trying to fight the enemy’s propaganda? The devil is the originator of political, even spiritual propaganda and that which carries the pretension of truth. At times like that, when deception puts on the cloak of reality, and when


falsehood takes on the image of truth, the best thing we can do is just shut it down and not give the evil one an opening.

And yet, that’s only the first lesson. If all we do is turn off the source of such false and misleading propaganda, we’ve failed to replace it with something better—and we’ve failed to go to the actual source of truth.

Consider Hezekiah again. He not only had his men stay silent, but he also approached God directly soon after he received repeated waves of propaganda from the Rabshakeh. Hezekiah sent a message to the prophet Isaiah (2 Kings 19:1-4) to hear what God had to say. Then he went into God’s temple and spread out Rabshakeh’s letter of threat before the Lord (2 Kings 19:1-4, 14, 15).

How many of us have thought about laying out our social media (modern-day distraction from God) before the Lord as Hezekiah did? While maybe we don’t physically unplug ourselves from all of it, perhaps we can learn to cut ties by ensuring that we strengthen our relationship with God.

Fast forward to the end of the story. Because Hezekiah trusted God and placed his predicament before Him, God came to his rescue in a very powerful way (2 Kings 19:35). God did the same for me. Even though I had some of my own rabshakehs who criticized my choice to be unemployed instead of serving a job that was harming me, God came through. Thanks to cutting the ties that bound me to my past job, I now had more time to focus on what really mattered to me: my spiritual walk. A few months after leaving that job, I officially got engaged to my girlfriend, and a few months later I was hired to work at Hope Channel, where I still am today. Just like Hezekiah, I faced a few close calls during this time, yet God took care of me every step of the way. By faith, Hezekiah cut his ties to an ungodly and harmful alliance, and by faith I cut my ties to a stressful and counterproductive job.

I don’t know what issues you face, but I do know this. At some point, you will have to decide whether or not to cut ties. As you contemplate that decision, let the lessons from the story of Hezekiah guide you as they did me. Don’t try to fight the enemy’s stance and enticements on your own. Go to God and let Him guide you regarding the decisions you must make in your life. 

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\* Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture passages in this article are quoted from the *New King James Version* of the Bible.

**Jason Miller**

(JD, The Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.) serves as the Director of Planned Giving for Hope Channel at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A.  
E-mail: [jason.miller@hopetv.org](mailto:jason.miller@hopetv.org)

# DANIEL GALLARDO

A dialogue with an Adventist artist from Mexico

INTERVIEW BY GABRIELA DE SOUSA MATÍAS





**“AND EVERY EYE WILL SEE HIM”**  
(REVELATION 1:7, NKJV).

*Created to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Montemorelos University, this painting is a reminder that we are closer than ever to the return of our Redeemer, who has promised, “Behold, I am coming quickly!” ( NKJV)*

Montemorelos University, where this painting was done, provides a blueprint of wholistic education founded in Christ-centered principles and strengthened by family units. It is the reason we decided to carry out this project from a university standpoint. Emblematic characters from school life are included—faculty, retired members, students, staff, the school family, and even pioneers—all of them showing how to live actively and witness positively as we wait for Christ’s second coming.



## PROFILE

Although barely 35, Daniel Gallardo is a talented artist and photographer, well noted not only in denominational circles but also in the Mexican art world as well. With a degree in visual arts and photography from Montemorelos University, Mexico, he has entered the world of art, featuring biblical themes and challenging viewers to understand and appreciate how art can be turned into a faith-witnessing tool.

Luis Daniel Gutiérrez Gallardo was born in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Mexico, on December 14, 1985, the youngest in a family of six children. The family was modest in means, but lived in one of the most beautiful, nature-endowed parts of the country: Tuxtla Gutiérrez, the capital city of Chiapas State in southeast Mexico, where every turn was blessed with nature's living colors, joyful music, and cultural richness that fostered creativity.

As a child, Gallardo was influenced by his Seventh-day Adventist mother, who prioritized Christian education for her children. Her commitment to the Adventist faith and values helped shape her son's worldview.

Being part of a large family with limited resources meant that it was an ongoing struggle for Gallardo and his siblings to attend an Adventist school, but to his mother, Christian education was non-negotiable. She, along with her husband, worked hard and took up any job they came across to support their family and educate the children. When Gallardo finished his studies at the local Adventist high school, he transferred to Montemorelos University in Nuevo Leon, Mexico, where he completed his degree.

In 2006, as he was working at the Montemorelos University Press, Gallardo had the opportunity of experimenting in the world of the arts. Working his way through college, he graduated in 2014 with a degree in visual arts, with a concentration in photography. Since 2011, Gallardo has worked as department director for Pulso en la UM, the official publication of the university. Two years later, he joined the Inter-American Division (IAD) as their official photographer.

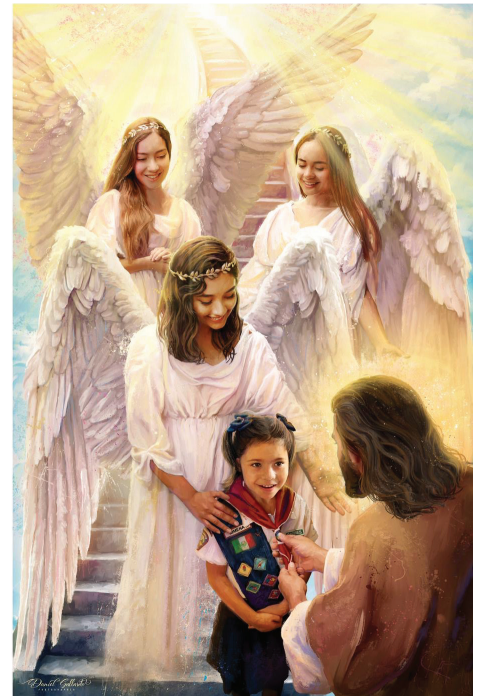
As artist and photographer, Gallardo keeps as a constant goal to support Seventh-day Adventist institutions. He also strives to help other people experience firsthand relationship with Jesus.



Daniel Gallardo  
ARTIST



BECAUSE JESUS LOVES ME, I WILL  
ALWAYS DO MY BEST.



ALL REDEEMED CHILDREN  
WILL BE HIS GEM.

■ *Tell us how you became a visual artist. How old were you when you discovered your artistic potential?*

It's often said that the teens are the time to dream. I had my own dreams, many of them. My foremost dream was to become a musician. Then I began to look for a school where I could follow that dream. At the suggestion of some friends, I arrived at Montemorelos when I was 17, very committed to reaching my goal. A while after that, influenced by my brother, I decided to take visual communication (graphic design). After following that degree for almost two years, I took a photography course, which was part of the program syllabi. Photography was really exciting. After my first course, I discovered the enormous possibilities photography could provide me, and I transferred to work on a degree in visual arts. This led me to experiencing various techniques both in art and photography.

■ *Was it easy to study the arts, especially when facing some misconceptions that seemingly prevail within Adventism?*

Since I studied visual arts in a Seventh-day Adventist college, I did not face many hurdles. The biggest challenge, however, was after graduation. When I, having a clear vision about Christian life principles, went out in search of a career as an artist in a culture that is not necessarily supportive of my cherished spiritual values, I faced some real challenges. Worldly interests are very different from our interests as Christian young people, and it is in those moments that controversies and problems arise. In a hostile world where anger and disrespect abound, being able to create and enjoy a type of art that stresses kindness, courtesy, respect, etc., can be a real challenge.

However, I was fortunate to have a head start on my career in a friendly and supportive atmosphere. It happened when I was director of the Montemorelos University yearbook. My work was to illustrate Bible scenes. First, I worked only with photographs, but as I searched how to improve the image quality, I discovered new editing techniques that made the images become more and more striking. I began by working on projects for several schools or degree programs at the university.

Soon, other church organizations showed their interest in my art and design, especially as I chose to relate Christian themes to current topics of life interest, and to depict topics that are core to Adventist faith and work. The life and mission of Jesus visualized for the current culture and times was of particular interest in topics such as Jesus' second coming and the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, among others. It is then that I was drawn into using digital art images that became more and more common.

■ *Did you face prejudice within Adventist circles as you proceeded down the road of your professional choice?*

Prejudices come one's way when an individual's particular choice—especially in the world of art—is somewhat different from what may be considered as normal. Every time you try to innovate or introduce something new, some people will oppose. But if you keep working, and if your life is true to your faith-claims and to God, He will allow those barriers and prejudices to be torn down. Eventually, God will open a way so that even your critics will appreciate your artistic expression. The Bible itself urges us to use every talent given to us to serve the Lord. No matter how unimportant our talents may seem, they can be used to fulfill God's purpose in our lives.

■ *Imagine you have your brush, paint, and canvass. Slowly, you begin working on what you have conceived in your mind, and gradually you see emerging before your eyes the face of Jesus. You work on a canvass. At that point, how do you feel, and what kind of emotional experience do you encounter as you work with His image every day?*

To communicate through art who Jesus is and what He has to say to the artist's audience is very humbling and beyond the artist's ability. Art, by the best of artists, can barely begin to portray who Jesus is and what He can do for humans such as we are. All I can say from my limited experience is a confession that through art, I must faithfully communicate the glory and majesty, the love and grace of the Savior.

■ *Do you see art as a means of evangelism? If so, what are your strategies?*

Certainly! If our work cannot be a means of witness to our faith, then what we do is both meaningless and irrelevant. Whatever we do should exalt Jesus, the Lord of our life; and to the extent that our work is committed to that goal, we are involved in evangelism. Evangelism may not necessarily result in baptism, but it must always witness to who the Lord is and what He can do through us. I want to make sure that my work as an artist draws others to glorify Jesus.

■ *What are some of the things you find frustrating as an artist?*

Two things especially frustrate me—one, art is not valued enough in our church; and two, the limited investment made in Christian art. It is not something that just affects me as an artist but something that affects new generations of students and educational institutions of Christian art, which are becoming fewer in number and smaller.

■ *Which is the type of work that gives you the greatest satisfaction, and why?*

As a visual artist and Adventist photographer, I develop various projects for the church. One of the projects I feel more passionate about, in producing Christ-centered works, is when I am in direct touch with people who open their hearts to tell me their stories. It is something that allows me to create works that offer hope and faith, not only for those who are included in the pictures but also to all those who can envision an active Jesus involved in the everyday life of people.

This aim, for example, was in me and before me as I painted the glorious scene of the second coming of Jesus, with the words of the Revelator as my inspiration: “Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him” (Revelation 1:7, NKJV). This promise is what makes us who we are, as Seventh-day Adventists.

When working on this project, my main objective was to lead every viewer to reflect on the primary question: “When Jesus returns, will I be there to hear His welcoming words, ‘come home?’”

■ *It is a wonderful work. Now, tell us, are you involved in any church activity? In what kinds of service do you like to participate?*

I am actively involved in communication, taking part in church-organized events to provide graphic coverage. I also enjoy taking part in any project that may require visual support to communicate Christ’s message to the world more efficiently. Some are qualified to preach. Some can be effective teachers. Some excel in personal witnessing and sharing their faith. Some are called to be Dorcases. I feel that my calling is to use the visual arts to direct people to behold God’s love gifted to us in varied ways.

■ *What advice would you give to young people who feel they have artistic talent but can’t find a place in the church to express their art?*

Every artist must clearly know why he or she is creating a specific type of art. If your goal has been clearly demarcated, if you are looking to praise God and acknowledging Him as your Creator and Redeemer, creating content will be unbelievably easy. Often our art may not be adequate to be exhibited in a church or school, but I can assure that, as part of our mission as Seventh-day Adventists, there is a space where you can use that art to develop clearly defined strategies, with a clear goal of fulfilling the Great Commission. The closer you are to your Creator and Redeemer, the more effective will be your work and witness.

■ *What Bible promise has comforted, or still comforts you, when discouraged?*

Many. But the one in Isaiah is my favorite: “Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint” (Isaiah 40:31, NKJV). ☞

**Gabriela de Sousa Matías**

*(Master of Education, Montemorelos, Nuevo Leon, Montemorelos University, Mexico) is an Editorial Assistant for Dialogue and the Managing Editor of the Spanish and Portuguese editions of the journal.*



*Daniel Gallardo*  
ARTIST



“... HE SHALL GIVE HIS ANGELS CHARGE OVER YOU”  
Psalm 91:11



IT'S YOUR CHOICE



TEACHINGS OF THE MASTER



PHYSICAL THERAPY



“FOR THE LORD GIVES WISDOM; FROM HIS MOUTH COME KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING.” PROVERBS 2:6

*Daniel Gallardo*  
PHOTOGRAPHER



LEYLÉN MARCÓ

At a conference on missions, I was immersing myself in story after story of God’s miraculous interventions in distant lands. Even as I listened, I wondered: Could it be that God had a place for me in Global Mission? He did.

I woke up early that Friday morning, finished packing, and headed to River Plate Adventist University, Entre Rios, Argentina, to participate in “I Will Go,” an international conference of young missionaries. At that time, little did I know the impact this conference would have on my life.

I had been telling God for quite some time about my insecurities. I was frustrated with the idea of limiting myself to studying and looking for a job in my city. I wanted to serve God elsewhere. Although there is a lot of missionary work to be done where I lived, I was eager to experience a cross-cultural challenge. I have always been passionate about languages and cultures, and my family is quite multicultural; in fact, my childhood was spent in another country where my parents worked.

Before leaving my room, I knelt in prayer, asking God to show me during that weekend, if He wanted to use me in His service. I rose from my knees with a certain assurance that God wanted to use “I Will Go 2017” to speak to me.

The conference venue had attracted young people from all over South America. Youth with the desire to be involved

in God’s mission seemed to have felt God’s call. Some of them came with stories of miracles that God had done in their lives and the lives of those they had touched. As for me, I was not just attending another conference, immersing myself in story after story of God’s miraculous interventions in distant lands. Even as I listened, I wondered: could it be that God had a place for me in Global Mission?

### A PASSION FOR GOD’S MISSION

As I listened to these stories, something intensely burned within me. I was moved to hear that missionaries, far away from their homes, felt the passion of God’s mission, His empowering, and watchcare, whether the service was for a short time or an extended period. The ones involved in mission were all convinced that it was God who guided their work, and that they were not alone. Those who went to the most adverse areas, with no knowledge of the local language or customs or any appreciation for Christianity, found their moorings and gave moving testimonies of how the Holy Spirit used them in spreading the good news of salvation in those distant lands. How impressive and heart-stirring to witness simple messengers who had experienced Christ’s commission in all its fullness!

At that time, I was working toward a degree in English. I remember that before many intense days of study, and before many exams, my prayer was, “Lord, may this be to serve You wherever You want.” That prayer reminded me that I was not preparing academically for the world, but to be used as God’s tool for eternal purposes. Without a doubt, God answered those prayers and the one before the conference. Not only was I moved by the presentations, but my heart sank when I heard God speak to me through a different person on each of the three days of the conference. These speakers shared their testimony on how they left comfort and security of life to discover what God wanted them to do. Despite not knowing how and where He would use me, I knew for sure that God was calling me to leave my comfort zone and follow His leading.

This idea of doing God’s will burned within me even as I returned home. I went on normally with my studies and

persisted praying about my future. I still didn't know the what, the when, the where, or the how of my future, but I knew God would prepare me and show me somehow in His own time. So I kept on with my normal life, studying and participating in church activities.

Two years later, I completed my degree and started working as a substitute English teacher. Everything was beginning to follow the natural expected course of life. Completing a degree, starting a career, planning a family . . . I was following a safe path. Inevitably, the idea of serving God seemed more and more distant; perhaps less convenient, from a human point of view. But . . .

One day, I received an invitation on my social networks for the "I Will Go 2019" conference that was to be held in Peru. I had kept in my heart and my prayers the call I had felt a few years ago, so I thought it would be a good idea to attend in hopes of getting a clearer sign. It was no longer being held in Argentina. It would be a more expensive trip and would require a lot of effort, but I had no doubt that I was going to try. I placed this trip in the hands of God. After all, if it was His will, He would provide what was needed. As humans, we can make plans and set goals. We can also put our resources and best efforts to continue to plan and achieve our ultimate goal, but what really makes a plan successful is that it originates with and fulfills the will of God. I decided to go along with the person who would become my fiancé and a group of students from Argentina.

### GOD SHOWED ME THE WAY

The conference was a great blessing. Young people from many parts of South America attended and shared their missionary dream. It was wonderful to see the parade of flags and hear powerful testimonies from different parts of the continent. But my human weakness betrayed me at times, and I couldn't help but think: What would I miss if I left what I was doing? I knew God had a plan for me, but I wondered if volunteering was it. I looked around and saw that many of the participants were younger than I was, still in college, perhaps temporarily interrupting their studies to serve; a more realistic and logical goal. Maybe I should have done this earlier, I thought to myself. Perhaps my call had expired, and God no longer needed me for such a task. My doubts made me feel discouraged. What if that trip and the resources invested in it were in vain? Even being soaked in mission, I fell into the trap of doubt.

It was Friday morning, the third day of the conference. On that day, like in 2017, I placed my concerns before God. I asked Him to show me if this was still His will. And, unsurprisingly, He did just that.

My friends and I were at the mission fair, the last activity before sunset. The first place that caught my attention was the small Middle East and North Africa Union (MENA)

booth. No one was there at the time, but there were some flyers and triptychs on the table that I examined for a moment. I remembered having seen them two years earlier and that the mission in those places had captured my attention powerfully. We continued touring the fair until we had visited each of the missions. We were about to leave the fair when we saw that in the small MENA stand there was someone welcoming visitors and answering their questions. I raced over to ask: "If one wants to serve, what are the opportunities?" Back came the question, "What do you do for a living?" When I said I had a degree in English, the response was an invitation: "When would you be willing to leave?" My heart started beating rapidly. I replied: whenever they needed me, and whenever the financial conditions to travel were completed.

Two months later, I was leaving Buenos Aires for Cairo, Egypt. My God is a living God. And my living God was aware of all my prayers and did not leave one unanswered. In a few weeks, I completed the course required for the mission. I had resigned my jobs and said farewell to my family and my boyfriend. I couldn't help but shed tears thinking of being away from them, who had supported me so much and who trusted that it was God who had drawn up this plan. From then on, I was faced with the typical sway of emotions of those who leave home to travel to a faraway place: farewells, long hours of travel, adaptation to a place very different from home. But in the midst of it all, I found the peace of knowing that I was in the place where God wanted me to be, knowing that with His help I could overcome adversity and be an instrument for others to know Him.

I don't think there is a more comforting feeling than knowing that you are where God wants you to be. It is perhaps the most accurate definition of earthly success for a Christian. In a world where wellbeing is almost undeniably linked to comfort, stepping out of your comfort zone without having visible benefits seems absurd. It is no wonder that young people who decide to follow Christ are moved to modify the parameters of their success equation. Earnest prayer, evangelistic mission, and the living Word are the undeniable constants. Being in the hands of God, an inevitable moment will come when you will hear: "Look at all the work that needs to be done in this place. Who will be My messenger? Whom will I send in My name?" Only one correct answer must stand out: Here I am, Lord, send me (Isaiah 6:8).

There is nothing better than saying "I will go." ﷻ

**Leylén Marcó**

*is a graduate of Universidad Nacional de Estudios a Distancia (National Distance Education University) in Madrid, Spain, and currently teaches English in Argentina.*

# LIVING BEYOND GRIEF

DENNY RENGIFO

Christians may believe that faith in Christ and the prospect of eternal life can take away the need to grieve, the need to cry, and the need to be fully human. But rather than denying the pain of the human predicament, it is faith and God's enduring presence that enable us to grieve, but with hope.

**H**er grief stung, and I was speechless. I felt it as it radiated out from her, spreading like clouds of darkness in a storm. She sat outside an ICU room, looking at her dying son through the glass of a closed door. That door was as close as she could get to him now, so she reached out to hug and kiss and caress the glass in her futile attempt to reach out to him. I stood next to her in silence, touching her shoulders, bearing witness to her pain.

For the past four years I have served as a hospital chaplain. I have had the sacred privilege of being with people during some of the most difficult and darkest moments of their lives. I'm called to be with grieving people as they receive bad news, experience trauma, or even face the very end of life. Grief has become familiar and common as I hear it, see it, and feel it in the rooms and halls I walk around as well as in my personal life. I have learned to respect grief, to appreciate it, even to be grateful for it. I have come to know that grief can be commonplace, helpful, and positive. I have seen that there can be hope in grief. I have perceived that there are many phases and faces to grief and that one of them may even be a smile.

Grief is a journey on which we embark from the moment we are born and cry, and continue to experience as we mourn the loss of the comfort of the womb. As we mature we experience pain and loss in big and small ways. And we must learn to cope, to feel, to share our emotions, to find comfort, to make meaning of it and to hope.

If grief is such an inescapable part of human experience, why is it so hard for human beings to talk about it? Why is the concept of grief so foreign? Could that uneasy, kind of sad bit of angry feeling be called grief?

Grief is the natural and normal reaction that we experience at different levels of intensity, for different reasons and with different reactions. Grief is more common than we think. We grieve when we experience a big loss. . . . someone we love dies, a relationship ends, a job is gone, etc. Then there are more common reasons for grief: someone we love moves away, we experience a health issue, or a transition affects our workplace. What about those little things? Our favorite store closes, we lose some money we had saved, or our vacation gets cancelled.

Have you experienced grief this year? Are you experiencing it now? I'm feeling grief now on a mild level. On



New Year's Day, I made the resolution of getting in the best shape of my life. I was going to do that by embracing an active lifestyle and exercising five times a week. I was committed to it. On January 1 this year, I woke up early and excited to complete the first workout of the year. But I injured my foot during that workout and afterward was forced to sit around unable to walk. And even when my foot began to heal, I needed to take it easy in order to allow ample time for healing. My resolution became just one more item in my box of unfulfilled dreams and failed goals. I'm grieving my ability to be active and to exercise—and in a deeper sense, my ability to accomplish a goal in which I was emotionally invested.

### FAITH AND GRIEF

I was once asked: "Is it okay for a Christian to grieve?" Well, if grief is human and Christians are humans, then the answer is obvious. Everyone grieves, Christians included. But Christians may believe that faith in Christ or the prospect of eternal life can take away the need to feel, the need to cry, and to be fully human. Some time ago, I visited a woman in the labor and delivery unit who had delivered a full-term baby boy. She had brought with her a new diaper bag filled with everything her baby would need and a new car seat in which to take him home. The nursery at home was prepared and filled with gifts that church members had given during the baby shower. Her other children were excited. But the baby was born dead. I entered the room expecting to see, hear, or feel the usual devastation that I had often seen in similar cases. But this time it was different. There were no tears, no "what if's," no expressions of sadness. She said that there was no reason for her to be sad. God had allowed her baby to die, and she had to be OK with that. For her, that meant no grief, no tears, no anger, no questions, no feeling.

More than once I asked her how she felt. She responded, "I can't feel." She would not allow herself to feel the grief of the loss of her son. The way she understood it, her faith demanded acceptance without sadness, tears, or anger. She didn't allow herself to feel her deep anguish. So, as a result, she felt nothing.

Two months later, I encountered her again. I was surprised to see her, not in a medical room but in the behavioral health wing. She had become psychotic. Her refusal to grieve and the denial of her pain had become too much for her to bear. Scripture says that because of the hope of Christ's second coming, we do not grieve like those who have no hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13). This means that as Christians we have hope, yes—but we also still grieve.

So what is a healthy way to respond to loss? A good first step is to acknowledge what has happened or is happening to you, what you have lost, and what has changed in your

life. Then explore how you feel about it. Allow yourself to feel all your emotions without judging them as negative or bad. Emotions are human. God created you with the ability to feel them. Find healthy ways of expressing how you feel, such as journaling, joining a support group, talking to a friend, seeking counseling, or taking any positive activity that feels therapeutic. I like to go on long walks with my dog as I pray and meditate. My coworker plays gospel music loud during her commute. A friend who now lives alone because she recently lost her mother and her dog a few days apart uses Facebook as a journal where she writes and shares how she feels. This helps her get her feelings out and allows her to receive comments from people who reply with words of comfort and hope.

I will never forget what I witnessed standing by that mother outside her dying son's ICU room. She was unable to touch him, as he was in isolation due to COVID-19. We both smiled as she showed me a video on her phone that he had taken the day before. He was happy, apparently in good health, and having fun with his friends. So full of life! Then that morning, he was found collapsed. Nothing more could be done. Life is fragile, unfair, and filled with sorrows. But life is also good because out of pain and brokenness comes healing. If you have lived, then you have cried and laughed, you have experienced loss and gain, you have grieved and healed, and you will do it all again. All these human experiences are part of the richness of life.

Remember: Through all the ups and downs, through all the pangs and pains, we are never alone. God has repeatedly said He will never leave us nor forsake us—whatever grief or pain may come our way (see Genesis 28:15; Joshua 1:5; Deuteronomy 31:6; and Hebrews 13:5). And soon "He will wipe every tear from [our] eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away" (Revelation 21:4, NIV).\*

It is against such a backdrop that we dare to grieve, with hope. ☪

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\* The Scripture quotation credited to NIV is quoted from the *New International Version of the Bible*.

#### Denny Rengifo

(MDiv, Andrews University, Michigan, U.S.A.) is a certified chaplain at Adventist HealthCare, Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A. She also works with bereaved families in the community and leads grief-support groups.

# MY MOTHER'S LEGACY: THE PASSION FOR EDUCATION

One day, my grandkids noticed the abundance of books and research documents in my office. They asked me, “Grandma, did you like going to school when you were a child?” I smiled before I answered. “Yes, I liked going to school. I first went when I was only three days old.” Surprised, they asked me: “But how come? How come you went to school so young?” And so, I told them my story.



**M**y mother was a teacher. Pregnant with me, she continued to teach in the small Adventist church school in Strasbourg, Alsace, France, until Friday, the day before I was born.

Mother taught a multilevel class of about 20 students between 6 and 14 years of age—basically, she taught all the elementary levels. She taught with passion, and her students loved her. I got to see just how much they loved her when I went back to my hometown about 30 years later. I then met a few of her students, now grown men,

who told me they still had very fond memories of her. They shared with much emotion that they considered that it was thanks to her they had discovered their calling in life: They had gone on to serve in a variety of professions: a missionary, a pastor, a teacher, and a doctor.

So yes, that Friday, the eve of my birthday, she prepared for the Sabbath: cleaning, laundry, cooking. Her husband, an evangelist, had invited church members to their home for Sabbath dinner, as was his custom. With haste, she cooked various Mediterranean dishes with flavors and scents that brought to mind the bright Sun

and the blue sky of Morocco, where she grew up. On Sabbath morning, she welcomed the members, played the piano, and taught the Sabbath school lesson to the children. At noon, she served the guests as she pushed through the contractions that were announcing my soon arrival. Come time for dessert, she could no longer hold back, as she shouted: “Erwin, take me to the clinic; the baby is coming!”

After apologizing to their guests and having left the home in their care, she sat on the luggage carrier of her husband’s Solex bike. Without further ado, she arrived at the clinic just in time for me to let out my first cry at 3:33 and 10 seconds P.M.—as my father specifically jotted in his family notebook that I still own—that Sabbath in March 1949.

Because the delivery took place without incident, my mother insisted that she be sent home immediately and, on Monday morning, I was in class with her.

Mom placed a bassinet under the large teacher’s desk in her classroom. Whenever she told me this story, she would make sure to mention that I had been a good baby. If she heard me wiggle ever so slightly, she would take me in her arms, breastfeed me as she continued to teach and, once I was done, would place me back into my bassinet under her desk.

And so, until June 14th, the date that marked the beginning of the summer holidays in France, I went to school diligently with my mother, the teacher.

My grandkids, completely amazed by my story, said: “Is that why you have never stopped studying, Grandma?”

I smiled at their conclusion. Indeed, I have never stopped reading, researching, writing . . . but that story leads me to other thoughts.

While work-life balance has been the subject of many social policies as well as the subject of numerous failures in modern society, my mother did not hesitate; profoundly attached to her calling as a teacher, and just as attached to me, her newborn child, she joined the two in a gesture of unique love. It was extraordinary, quite literally. But the most extraordinary aspect of it all in my opinion—and I say this with utmost respect—is that no one criticized her, and no one seemed opposed to her choice.

Still today, I am nostalgic about such a privileged environment: a church with a church school that allowed a passionate mother to experience her motherhood without any reproach or boundaries!

*Still today, I am nostalgic about such a privileged environment: a church with a church school that allowed a passionate mother to experience her motherhood without any reproach or boundaries!*

And why would it be otherwise when our Lord commanded us to “Feed my lambs” (John 21:15, KJV)? Our children and those of our neighbors are the Lord’s flock. Why should we cater to the children of others at the expense of catering to the ones to whom we gave life? In my mind always resonates the affirmation of another mother, Ellen White, who had to juggle with work-life balance in her time: “as you treat your children, so will you treat Christ.”<sup>1</sup>

I believe there are thousands of women like this in our worldwide church. Their love is strong enough to unite their mission in their families and their mission toward their neighbors. Work-life balance? Let our church be known as its advocate and as a leader in the matter.

My mother was new in the faith when she accepted the call to be a teacher in the church school operated by the Strasbourg church. She had grown up in an atheist household. The first time she stood in a church was when, as a widow with two children, she decided to visit the tomb of her late husband, who had died in World War II. At her in-laws’ home in Angers, France, it was hard for her; as they were not very kind to her. One Saturday morning, feeling discouraged and overwhelmed by her situation, she decided to explore her new town. While biking, without a destination, she passed a building with the windows wide open. People inside were singing. She stopped and listened, carried away by the lyrics, which touched her heart and gave it new life: “Jesus is coming to earth again, What if it were today?”<sup>2</sup> That hymn remained her favorite until she passed away. As the stanzas followed one after another, suddenly, the urgency to know more overwhelmed her. She quickly left her bike next to the building and entered. Taking a seat, she listened to what was being said. At the end of the service, the pastor asked her if she would be interested in Bible studies. She quickly

accepted; feeling that only in that choice resided any hope for a brighter tomorrow.

She soon requested baptism. This resulted in severe persecution by her in-laws, who were fiercely opposed to religion. After opening a wool and knitting shop, her faith was severely tested. Although she had to close her shop on Fridays at noon—to *prepare for her Sabbath*—and on Saturdays—to *respect the Sabbath*—on top of closing on Sundays and Mondays, which were public holidays in France for businesses, God blessed her, and she was able to make a decent living. “The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it” (Proverbs 10:22, KJV). How many times did I hear her quote this verse, a testimony to her unshakeable faith!

And when the day came that she was called to teach at the church school in Strasbourg, Mother left with her two children, heading to this unknown city. Finally, she was in a stable situation; and finally, she had support from the parents of her students, who were delighted with her influence on their children. Soon after, she met my father, the new church evangelist, got married, and became my mother.

In 1961, my father was called to serve in Quebec City, Canada, and we followed along. My mother distinguished herself by becoming the principal of the first public school in Quebec for children with learning disabilities. Then, after she retired, she and my dad founded “Le Semeur,” a school based on the education model of the Spirit of Prophecy, located in the countryside (Berthier-sur-Mer, Quebec).

And now, it is my turn to honor again the Spirit of Prophecy model of education in the oldest Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada, South-Stukely (1877) in Stukely-Sud, Quebec, where the first Adventist school in Canada (1884).<sup>3</sup>

I firmly believe that the educational mandate of the Seventh-day Adventist Church must be reborn where

it has faded. There are major obstacles on the way, the main one being the lack of conviction that schools according to the principles of the Spirit of Prophecy are still relevant and, consequently, a lack of the missionary zeal that our pioneers had.

My mother, Gisèle Talbot Guimbretière, whose name became Morosoli, born in 1917 and deceased in 1994, is now resting in peace. Her last wish was that her declaration of faith be on her tombstone: GOD IS LOVE. That’s the message she had successfully proclaimed in her little church school in Strasbourg. “With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world! How soon might the end come—the end of suffering and sorrow and sin!”<sup>24</sup>

My mother was convinced of the truth of that statement. So am I. What about you? ☸

#### Danièle Starenkyj

*is the author of 20 books on the topics of health, nutrition, and women's issues, as well as the translator of 10 books from English to French. She resides in the Quebec countryside with her husband, a retired architect and artist. They have two adult children and three grandchildren. You can visit her books and blogs at <http://www.publicationsorion.com>.*

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# ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY ZURCHER LAUNCHES JOINT WITNESSING VENTURE



CÉDRIC LACHENAL and STEPHANIE M. JONATHAN

**A**dventist University Zurcher (UAZ) in Antsirabe, Madagascar, has been known through its history not only for its excellence in Adventist higher education, but also for a rare sociological phenomenon: Its department of theology has an annual average of 150 students, with 99 percent of them being male. When they graduate and leave for ministry, most theology students don't leave alone: They find their marital partners, usually from the nursing school. Despite these strong links between the two departments, student missionary outreach during the years of study has mostly been conducted separately by young men and young women, with no attempt at combined witness by the two genders. But no more. Recently, the university's nursing and theology students decided to pool their expertise and resources and jointly launch a Health-Spiritual Expo. The concept of combining health and spirituality in a witnessing and healing crusade came to the university as essentially a new idea, but it immediately became clear that it could offer great challenges and blessings for the students and faculty of UAZ. Those who participated in the health and evangelism reach-out experienced rich bless-

ings and divine providence, and their efforts generated remarkable church growth.

In Madagascar, private visitations and consultations are easy to organize; however, public gatherings require authorization from local authorities at the mayoral level. The authorities at first rejected the student proposal, not agreeing on the association of health and spirituality in the same project. Students worked and prayed to keep the proposal as originally designed, for they believed that promoting both the health of the body and the enrichment of the soul is essential for the growth and development of a person as a wholistic being. Students continued to approach the authorities. Finally, the health and the internal-affair directors, still unconvinced of the usefulness of the student proposal, sent the file to the Deputy Prefect of the region.


Student representatives and the faculty deans met with the official, but the meeting quickly turned into a harsh interrogation that lasted for about 30 minutes. While the university group sitting in the office was losing hope, the Deputy Prefect called her secretary to ask for a clearance form, and stamped it with the official seal of her approval. This may appear to be a small matter, but for the students who came up with the proposal

and went through the lengthy stages of negotiations, it was unquestionably God's answer to their prayers.

Soon, small posters were posted all over the town to ensure that none of its 5,000 inhabitants would fail to notice that good news of great import was coming to town. When the morning of the expo dawned, what a disappointment for students to arrive and find the venue totally empty. They gathered to pray and seek God's guidance. The prayer time strongly reinvigorated the students. They decided to announce and promote the meeting throughout the town, and some conducted door-to-door visitation, directly inviting people to the expo.

From then on, good attendance and public interest marked the meetings. Activities included health screenings (such as glucose tests, and blood pressure and vision exams), health talks on water purification, the benefits of water, proper diet, hygiene, a healthy lifestyle, rest, etc. Special meetings were organized for children 3 to 12 years of age, during which participants told stories with a health emphasis and taught vital health principles. In addition, students went two by two throughout the town to visit houses, to give out literature, and to pray for

people who needed help. Each day, hundreds of people attended the public meetings or received health visits at home. When the student group left the town, many people asked for regular visitations and for frequent expos.

The experience produced twin blessings: reaching out to the public and making them aware of the Adventist message; and an inward challenge to students themselves to recognize that Adventist education is not simply book-based study but also reaching out to touch the lives of people in the community with a message of God's love and care. 

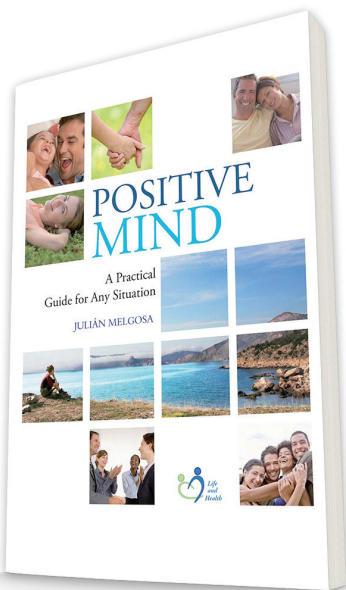
**Cédric Lachenal,**

*(PhD, AIIAS, Cavite, Philippines), is the Dean of Theology, at Adventist University Zurcher, Antsirabe, Madagascar.*

**Stephanie M. Jonathan,**

*(MD, MPH, University of Perpetual Help, Philippines), is the Campus Physician at Adventist University Zurcher, Antsirabe, Madagascar.*





**POSITIVE MIND: A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR ANY SITUATION**

*Julián Melgosa (Madrid, Spain: Safeliz, S.L., 2021), hardback, 327 pages.*

**Reviewed by Conrad Stanisław Zygmunt**

**T**he COVID-19 pandemic has had devastating results around the world. By 2021, an additional 20.7 million people were pushed into poverty, resulting in a total of 162.8 million people living below the poverty line.<sup>1</sup> In China, close to 50 percent of the adult population<sup>2</sup> showed signs of depression in the first month of the epidemic. A survey including 63 countries found that 77 percent of respondents reported high levels of stress, with adults between 18-34 years old being the group most susceptible to COVID-19 related stress, anxiety, and depression.<sup>3</sup> In addition to COVID's global threat, we have health pandemics, climate changes, political upheavals, economic inequality and instability, and religious intolerance creating frightening conditions around the world. Faced with such situations, who would not benefit from a more optimistic, resilient, and health-affirming way of thinking and living? Julián Melgosa's book, *Positive Mind: A Practical Guide for Any Situation* (published in English and Spanish) provides just such a way. Dr. Melgosa, a long-time Christian educator, also a psychologist, and currently the associate director of education at the world headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, provides in this his latest book a way to develop

a positive and health-affirming approach to thinking and engaging with the world. His simple, research-supported, and practical advice will benefit people of different backgrounds, age groups, and mental-health dispositions.

The book consists of six chapters of well-researched, highly motivating, and readable material. Chapter 1 provides a foundation for understanding the power of our choices, beliefs and perceptions of the world in shaping our experience of reality and overall well-being. Melgosa emphasizes that all of us have the power to make positive and affirming choices that directly impact our self-esteem, emotional intelligence, enjoyment of our surroundings, relationships with others, and hope for the future. He provides a framework for understanding the interdependent functioning of our thoughts, attitudes, feelings, relationships, and overall physical and mental health. He also provides practical advice on engaging positively when faced with varied life situations and threats.

In Chapters 2 and 3, Melgosa provides an overview of simple but effective alternative or adjunctive approaches for the alleviation of a number of mental-health conditions. Chapter 2 focuses on clinical disorders such as stress, depression, anxiety, addictions, and insomnia, as well as less prevalent ones like dyslexia, hypochondriasis, panic attacks, anorexia, and bulimia. Chapter 3 focuses on apparently benign problems such as boredom, apathy, fear of flying, and superstition. In addition, he also deals with conditions compounded by the erosion of moral values in contemporary society, such as irresponsibility, narcissism, guilt, insecurity, superstition, chronic fatigue, covetousness, identity and confusion in sexual orientation, consumerism, and various psychosomatic conditions.

Chapter 4 addresses thinking and behavior in the context of social interactions that could negatively impact one's well-being, and provides practical advice on how to develop positive interpersonal relationships in various contexts. Some of the topics covered include anger, shyness, jealousy, envy, abuse, problems in intimate relations, competitiveness, kleptomania, loneliness and emotional isolation, and intercultural competence.

Chapter 5 covers developing resilience, the ability to withstand the negative effects and also the ability to bounce back and gain strength from difficult experiences such as illness, epidemics, death, adversity, pain, accidents, terrorism, financial crises, divorce and its aftermath, violence, natural disasters, and wars.

The final chapter outlines eight different psychotherapeutic approaches, introduces some of their main principles, guides the reader in choosing the most appropriate technique for specific problems, and highlights some of their limitations.

The book attempts to cover an incredibly broad scope. Although there is something of value for everyone, that does limit the depth with which each topic can be

## BOOKS

addressed. Also, research on which the advice is based is generally from the late 1990s and early 2000s, which means the latest advances have not been included (e.g., Bredensen's treatment protocol<sup>4</sup> for Alzheimer's disease, which looks so similar to the CELEBRATIONS® model developed by Seventh-day Adventist health ministries).<sup>5</sup>

While Melgosa omits sociopolitical, economic, and environmental determinants of mental health, his focus on the individual's thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, and feelings stresses a wholistic perspective, acknowledging the importance of a balanced development in physical, social, emotional, and spiritual development. I particularly valued the biblical references and narratives used throughout to illustrate important principles. For example, Melgosa's emphasis that sin is the foundational cause of all mental illness, and that it can be vanquished only through the supernatural intervention of God in our lives. In addition to psychological techniques, the reader is gently encouraged to explore spirituality as a source of mental health, not merely as a set of cultural beliefs and practices, but also as a relationship with an all-powerful, faithful, loving heavenly Father who desires our good.

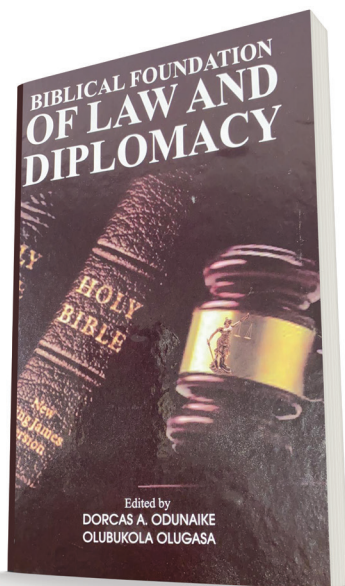
One limitation with self-help books is that people struggling with mental health are often impaired in their ability to think rationally about their problems, may lack insight into the nature and extent of their problems, or lack skills necessary to initiate and sustain a systematic plan of intervention. This book includes self-assessment instruments that help one to gain insight into his or her thinking and behavior, offer clear and simple steps for intervention that often include others in the process, provide warnings when professional intervention is necessary, and guide readers to depend on God. ☮

### Conrad Stanisław Zygmont

(PhD, Stellenbosch University, Cape Town, South Africa) has been working as a Lecturer in the Psychology Department at Helderberg College of Higher Education in South Africa for over 15 years. He currently serves as Head of the Department, and is acting Director of Student Services. He also holds a position as a Research Associate with the Psychology Department at the Stellenbosch University, Cape Town, South Africa. E-mail: zygmontc@hche.ac.za.

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### BIBLICAL FOUNDATION OF LAW AND DIPLOMACY

Dorcas A. Odunaike and Olubukola Olugasa, Editors (Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria: Princeton & Associates, 2020), hardback, 262 pages.

### Reviewed by Abiodun A. Adesegun

**B**iblical *Foundation of Law and Diplomacy* is a compelling read for all lovers of wholistic education. In 12 chapters, 25 contributors from Babcock University School of Law and Security Studies in Nigeria provide multiple intersections of faith with law, jurisprudence, and diplomacy. The book carefully argues against the common notion that faith on the one hand and law and diplomacy on the other hand are irreconcilable opposites. The book



further views the Bible as the evidentiary foundation of natural law, which is seen as the fundamental basis for knowing what is morally right or wrong.

The book deals with topics such as the biblical concepts of law and justice, and places these concepts as foundational to the understanding of law and life, both in biblical as well as in modern times, with particular references to Nigerian law. In so doing, the book provides an abundance of Bible-based approaches and counsel on matters of truth, inheritance, ethics, property ownership, diplomacy, accountability, justice, and loans. All these studies are grounded on a biblical understanding and approach, so that readers are made aware that human pursuit of any study can find grounding and guidance in the Scriptures. For example, the book shows how often the Old Testament deals with concepts of ethical conduct, social justice, and fair play. The Old Testament argument for ethics and social justice reaches its height in how the authors show that Scripture epitomizes the moral law—specifically the Ten Commandments—as the grounding for human morality. The book explores Jesus’ affirmation that He did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17), and discusses how the New Testament summarized the Ten Commandments as two parts of life—the first four commandments enjoining human relationship with God, and the second six defining fair, just, and considerate behavior among humans.

The book also deals with moral claims on the conduct of legal practitioners. It refers to how Jesus called out lawyers of His day in not-too-complimentary terms (e.g., Luke 11:46, 52, Matthew 22:29, 34-35, 46). One may argue that these statements were directed at teachers of religious law as opposed to general practitioners, but the principles are all-encompassing in delineating the ways lawyers have fallen short of their calling and are susceptible to various foibles. Only a right relationship with Jesus can set the right tone for ethical conduct in either the profession of law or other social realms.

Take diplomacy, for example, which is the business of communication between governments. The book contains several biblical examples; two will suffice for our consideration here. The first example is in Genesis 21:22 to 34. Abraham and Abimelech, king of Gerar, signed a peace treaty over a disputed well of water. This was a diplomatic success for both sides, as it brought peace to their relationship. A second example appears in 2 Kings 5, dealing with the account of Naaman’s bringing a diplomatic letter from his king requesting the king of Israel to cure him (Naaman) of leprosy.

Both the accounts in Genesis and 2 Kings demonstrate the correlation of the Bible with various aspects of law, jurisprudence, and diplomacy. The authors of *Biblical Foundation of Law and Diplomacy* will likely succeed in “teasing” the book’s casual readers to do more Bible study with regard to the Ten Commandments, Mosaic laws, and diplomacy during biblical times.

One can conclude from the book that although humankind was created in the image of God to give Him worship and obedience that image was distorted because of the entrance of sin, which affected all human dealings including contracts and agreements. Biblically based agreements (contracts and other legal documents) first and foremost seek to lead humanity back to God and to restore His image in them if both parties keep their side of the agreement. God always keeps His promises, but humankind often fails.

The book, although written in the context of Nigerian law, offers useful reading and helpful guidelines for approaching legal education and practice from an ethical and biblical standpoint. However, there are still many unresolved matters as to what the Bible says regarding other relational and social issues, one of which is charging interest (usury) in lending and borrowing money. The Bible prohibits this practice (Leviticus 25:35-37), while Jesus seems to speak in favor of investing to earn interest (Matthew 25:27). Readers may find other issues crying out for an explanation. Yet the book offers good guidelines for approaching law, ethics, and regulating social interactions from a biblical standpoint. ❏

**Abiodun A. Adesegun**

(PhD, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria) is Professor of African History and History of Religious Education; and Dean, School of Education and Humanities, Babcock University, Ilisan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria. E-mail: adesegun@babcock.edu.ng.

# PUBLIC CAMPUS MINISTRY BECOMES PART OF YOUTH MINISTRY



## PAKO MOKGWANE

In a recent adjustment of its departmental structure, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists moved Public Campus Ministry (PCM) from Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries Department back to the Youth Department. Administratively, from now on, PCM falls under Senior Youth Ministry, which houses three ministries: Ambassadors, Young Adults, and Public Campus Ministry (PCM). The reason for the shift is to optimize resources, personnel, and services to public campus ministry.

### A VISION FOR PUBLIC CAMPUS MINISTRY

The General Conference's Public Campus Ministry is charged with the task of ensuring that young people are grounded in the mission of Jesus Christ and the Adventist Church, with the focus of reaching and engaging their fellow students in a lifelong relationship with Jesus. In addition to this spiritual concern for students, Public Campus Ministry also supports Adventist professors and others who work on public campuses. The work is done in collaboration with divisions, unions, conferences, and attached fields to assist the church as a whole to be united in its endeavors to keep youth and young adults fully committed to the faith and the mission of the church even as they pursue their studies in a public institution, and to train and involve them in ministry wherever they are. Young people are valuable participants in the ministry and mission of the local church. They are irreplaceable resources for public campus ministry.

### THE LOCAL CHURCH

Around the world, every day, at hundreds of public university/college campuses, PCM members are involved in gospel ministry and in leading their fellow students to Jesus. Working together with the local church, PCM reaches young people on public campuses with the gospel and develops lifelong followers of Jesus who grow in Christian discipleship and authentic Christian lifestyle. These new disciples are devoted to the Word of God, prayer, ministry, and redemptive social involvement. Thus, public campuses provide enormous opportunities for Adventist young people and professors to become effective co-laborers with Jesus in the work of redemption.

General Conference Youth Ministries (GCYM) views the responsibilities of the local church as being pivotal to the spiritual growth of both the individual and the corporate church, and considers the local church to be the primary base for youth ministry. For this reason, one core function of GCYM is to produce resources that will build this special ministry to students on public campuses linked to local churches. Youth ministry is most effective when it is responsive to local needs, guided by local convictions, and placed in the hands of local people. This level of caring, nurturing, and collaboration will provide spiritual growth and a sense of community and unity, while helping participants develop leadership skills.

With the return of the Public Campus Ministry to the Youth Department, the care and ministry of Adventist young people on both public campuses and on Adventist campuses are closely linked and cared for by the department of the church whose primary function is to foster the spiritual growth, nurture, and witness of all the youth of the church. The General Conference Youth Department offers help and assistance to ensure that the leaders of the local church—pastors and elders—support youth ministry to its optimum level, as they reach out to students in both Adventist and public institutions in as many ways as possible to help them attain spiritual nurture and growth and to encourage them to engage in evangelism and witnessing.

It can be lonely on a public campus. Each local church should connect with PCM chapters, associations, or fellowships in their area to provide mentoring and promote a sense of belonging so that students see themselves as being part of a global community of believers. In other words, public campus ministry should become an extension of the local church, allowing the youth of the church to work along with those on the public campus in outreach, while at the same time being mentored by the older, more mature members in the local church. This close relationship will not happen overnight. With PCM ambassadors and supporters and the local church working together, bound by the same goal of reaching and retaining, this ministry can grow into a creative and dynamic outreach of the local church, although individual students may come and go as they complete their studies.

## RESOLUTIONS


In order to facilitate and reach these objectives, the 2020 World Youth Advisory voted the following recommendations:

PCM Day celebration at the local church be held each year on the third Sabbath of October. What was known as PCM Weekend, which happened on a global scale, will now be celebrated in the local church to promote local church connection with Adventist students on public campuses. Materials for this special day program will be available on the youth ministries website (<http://gcyouthministries.org>).

PCM students will be included in the local church planning and implementation of the annual Youth Week of Prayer to students, youth, and young adults.

## WHAT WE CAN DO

Ministry and outreach to public colleges and universities will always benefit more when the PCM fellowship has strong roots in the local church. The General Conference will continue to provide leadership and resources for such global initiatives. In implementing such proposals, it is hoped that all levels of church organization—from the local church to the divisions—will adapt the programs provided by GCYM for meaningful and efficient implementation in their regions. With this in mind, the General Conference Youth Department will reduce its online PCM (webinars) programs to give division, unions, and particularly conferences, more flexibility to mobilize, train, and equip young people in their territory. With this in view, every local church needs to ensure that it elects and supports a PCM leader/coordinator.

Young people on public campuses study and socialize all week in a non-Adventist environment, often for a number of years. Think of what will happen when they find the members of their local church a resource that meets their needs and helps them deal with the challenges they experience during the week in their public institution. Imagine what will happen when they find in the local church a meaningful and lasting relationship with God and their fellow believers. When Adventists on these public campuses are supported, the likelihood is much greater that they will faithfully follow Jesus, warmly embrace His mission, and ultimately be instruments that change the world for the better. 



**Pako Mokgwane**

*(MA in theology, PhD candidate in organizational leadership, Adventist University of Africa, Kenya) is Associate Youth Director, responsible for Public Campus Ministry, at the Seventh-day Adventist Church World Headquarters, Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A. E-mail: [mokgwanep@gc.adventist.org](mailto:mokgwanep@gc.adventist.org).*

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