

MINISTRY[®]

INTERNATIONAL
JOURNAL FOR PASTORS

MAY 2012

*"...the Son of Man did
not come to be
served, but
to serve..."*

Matt. 20:28 NASB



EXTREME
SERVOLUTION



IS ADDING A NEW DIMENSION



MINISTRYinMOTION will launch this summer as a weekly podcast and television program where we explore best the practices for your ministry in the twenty-first century. Wherever you serve on planet Earth, God wants you to be a great

Christian leader. Whether you're a full-time pastor or a lay leader in your Christian fellowship, God wants to use you to impact your world.



The hosts for the program, Anthony Kent and Derek Morris, bring broad experiences in ministry, both as local pastors and pastoral leaders.

As we design future programs for *MINISTRYinMOTION*, we want to hear from you. What are some of the best practices you are discovering and contextualizing in your pastoral ministry? What are the areas of your greatest need for training and equipping?

Share your thoughts with us at **feedback@MINISTRYinMOTION.TV**

06

Extreme servolution

Because we are part of a global community in crisis, the time has come for a worldwide wake-up call.

David Jamieson

10

Free will and choice: A study of Jeremiah 1:5

This article aims to illuminate a Scripture passage that has long been painted with the broad brush of predestination.

Daniel Xisto

14

Have a heart: Praying from your heart and not just your head

Could a person who had always lived in her head learn how to intercede for others from her heart?

Cynthia Hyle Bezek

18

Supporting multiple methods of outreach in the local congregation

Traditional evangelism and outreach — how can a church membership embrace both?

Mark Carr, Jon Ciccarelli, Ken Curtis, and Jon Paulien

22

Laying a foundation for missional living: A call to primitive godliness

The author examines the kind of foundation we need in order to reach the Western culture with the gospel message.

Michael R. Cauley

04 LETTERS

05 EDITORIAL

09 & 11 REVIVAL AND REFORMATION

26 RESOURCES

28 DATELINE

30 THE PASTOR AND HEALTH

MINISTRY®

MINISTRY®

International Journal for Pastors
12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600 U.S.A.
www.ministrymagazine.org
ministrymagazine@gc.adventist.org

EDITOR

Derek J. Morris

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Willie E. Hucks II

CONSULTANTS TO EDITOR

John Fowler, Clifford Goldstein, Myrna Tetz

EDITORIAL SPECIALIST

Sheryl Beck

FINANCE AND TECHNOLOGY MANAGER

John Feezer IV

ADVERTISING

Cheri Gattton
advertising@ministrymagazine.org
+1 208-965-0157

SUBSCRIPTIONS/RENEWALS/ ADDRESS CHANGES

subscriptions@ministrymagazine.org
+1 301-680-6515
+1 301-680-6502 (fax)

COVER ILLUSTRATION

316 Creative

LAYOUT

316 Creative

INTERNATIONAL EDITORS

Chinese-Robert Wong
Indonesian-Edwin T. Pandjaitan
Japanese-Yukio Ebihara
Korean-Sung Sun Hong
Portuguese (South America)-Zinaldo Santos
Russian-Ilie Leahu
Spanish (South America)-Marcos Blanco
Spanish (Inter-America)-Pablo Perla

INTERNATIONAL ADVISORS

Mario Brito, Mikhael Kaminsky, Janos Kovacs-Biro, L. Chansanga Colney, Armando Miranda, Rudatinya M. Mwangachuchu, Daniel Opoku-Boateng, Jongimpi Papu, Bruno Raso, Ángel M. Rodríguez, Hector Sanchez, Houtman Sinaga, David Tasker, Ivan L. Williams, Ted N. C. Wilson

SUBSCRIPTIONS

12 issues: United States US\$32.99; Canada and overseas US\$47.00. To order: send name, address, and payment to *Ministry*® Subscriptions, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600 U.S.A. ministrymagazine.org/subscribe

TO WRITERS

We welcome unsolicited manuscripts. Before submitting, review the writers' guidelines at www.ministrymagazine.org. Please send manuscripts via email to ministrymagazine@gc.adventist.org.

MINISTRY® PROFESSIONAL GROWTH SEMINARS

Director Anthony Kent | kenta@gc.adventist.org | +1 301-680-6516

MINISTRY® has been published monthly since 1928 by the Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. *Ministry* is a peer-reviewed journal.

SECRETARY Jerry N. Page

ASSOCIATE SECRETARIES

Jonas Arrais, Robert Costa, Willie E. Hucks II, Anthony Kent, Derek Morris, Janet Page

MINISTERIAL RESOURCE CENTER

Coordinator Cathy Payne
888-771-0738, +1 301-680-6508
www.ministerialassociation.com

PRINTER Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1350 N. Kings Rd., Nampa, ID 83687
Standard mail postage paid at Nampa, Idaho. (ISSN 0026-5314)

Member of Associated Church Press.

Adventist®, Seventh-day Adventist®, and Ministry® are the registered trademarks of the General Conference Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists®.

Vol. 84 Number 5 © 2012

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

BIBLE CREDITS Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved. Scriptures quoted from NKJV are from The New King James Version, copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982, Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers. Scripture taken from The New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.



“THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN INSPIRING, AUTHENTICATING, AND CANONIZING THE OT AND THE NT CANNOT BE OVERSTATED.”

The authority of the Bible

Thank you for including Kwabena Donkor’s article on “Who Decided Which Books Should Be Included in the Bible?” in your March 2012 special issue. His closing paragraphs point to the self-authenticating nature of the canonical writings, even while acknowledging the discussions that continued for several centuries around the Old Testament (OT) canon, and the fact that it took over 200 years before the New Testament (NT) canon reached its final shape.

Your printing of Dr. Donkor’s article highlighted his claim that “Historical-critical scholars believe the Bible gained its authority progressively,” while in spite of himself, his last paragraphs illustrate to me that the “conservative perspective” also acknowledges a gradual process of recognition (cf. “several centuries” and “by the fourth century A.D.”). He also addresses the role of “the church.” While acknowledging that “church councils played a certain role,” he denies that “the church” decided “which books should be included in the canon.” “The church” only “recognized and acknowledged the inspiration and . . . authority” of the 27 NT books.

The role of the Holy Spirit in inspiring, authenticating, and canonizing the OT and the NT cannot

be overstated. That the Spirit was able to bring about a consensus among congregations and leaders (both Jewish and Christian) with whom we have so many theological disagreements, is nothing short of miraculous.

—*Ole C. Olesen, outgoing pastor of the Milton and Blue Mountain Valley—Mission Native American churches, Milton-Freewater, Athena, and Mission, Oregon, United States*

Seven trumpets

Thank you, *Ministry*, for sharing with the readers of this prestigious journal the diversity of interpretations [that] exist among Adventist scholars concerning the visionary cycle of the seven trumpets of Revelation (see “Issues in the Interpretation of the Seven Trumpets of Revelation,” January 2012). I want to congratulate Dr. Ángel Manuel Rodríguez for openly informing the readers of *Ministry* about this interpretational situation on the seven trumpets of Revelation and his attempt to offer a solution to this hermeneutical issue. The public recognition of the uncertainty [that] prevails among Adventist interpreters concerning the seven trumpets of Revelation is a sign of the intellectual maturity and religious honesty of Adventist leaders and scholars.

I would submit it is imperative to explore the real cause of this

unfortunate situation, rather than simply avoiding a “theological struggle” within our denomination. Considering that all the interpretations presented within this article were offered by historicist scholars, I wonder whether the interpretational problems presented have their real cause in the actual principles that were presented as “nonnegotiable.”

—*Samuel L. Nunez, pastor, Fallbrook, California, United States*

Reflections on Matthew 13:47–50

Laurence A. Turner’s article (“All Kinds of Stuff,” January 2012) was excellent. It helped me put into perspective all the issues that a pastor faces in a typical congregation in a way that was so refreshing and enlightening.

—*Daniel M. Forbes, email*

Regarding the article “All Kinds of Stuff,” I found it very thought provoking and to the point. I have been teaching the Bible and counseling all kinds of people for 50 years in my capacities as a Catholic theologian, ordained lay deacon, and later as an ordained chaplain in the Assemblies of God. I have shared many of the same life experiences and inner thoughts as you have in my journey thus far.

Continued on page 24 ►



The joy of joining God in His work

Every time I interact with colleagues in ministry, I'm convinced that I receive more than I give. At a recent pastors' conference, I met the distinguished Bible scholar and writer Frank M. Hasel. Dr. Hasel serves as dean of the theology department at Bogenhofen Seminary in Austria. While we chatted, I was delighted to learn that his first article, written in English more than 20 years ago, was published in *Ministry*.¹ That experience as a young aspiring writer encouraged Dr. Hasel to join God in His work as a theology professor and writer.

This issue of *Ministry* features the work of another young writer, Daniel Xisto. His article, "Free Will and Choice: A Study of Jeremiah 1:5," received the grand prize in our most recent Ministerial Student Writing Contest.² Daniel is a seminary student at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States.

When I called Daniel to congratulate him, he shared what the renowned radio broadcaster, the late Paul Harvey, would refer to as "the rest of the story." Here is a brief excerpt from Daniel's testimony: "My wife, Andrea, and I have been on quite the journey here at the seminary. We moved to Michigan as we saw the pillar of cloud lead, leaving our professional careers and family in New York. Since moving here, we have been challenged in many ways. Though the classroom experience has always been one of sheer joy, finances and other trials have tested our faith. Additionally, I was sometimes plagued with thoughts of inadequacy. I feared that I had mistakenly uprooted our family, leaving our secure lives behind. But I am happy to testify that we have had

a personal experience with Yahweh Yireh: the Lord will provide! We have experienced miracle after miracle—more than space allows—that have driven us closer to God and to each other. This recognition from *Ministry* is just one more evidence that the

Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart" (Jer. 29:11–13). He also appeals to us to live and minister in total dependence on Him: " "Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you


WHEN WE MOVE BY FAITH BEYOND OUR INTERNAL INSECURITIES AND EXTERNAL ADVERSITIES, WE WILL SEE GOD WORK IN LIFE-CHANGING, WORLD-TRANSFORMING WAYS.

Lord has His fingers on the pulse of my life. He sees me."

We are truly blessed when we come to the realization that God sees us and is at work for and in us. But our responsibilities do not end with the awareness of His presence and a complete surrender to God and His expressed will for our lives. God has given each one of us a voice to "proclaim the praises of Him who called [us] out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9).³ While God is Sovereign, He also offers us the free choice to join Him in His work.

In the midst of the challenges of life and ministry, He assures us: "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to

great and mighty things, which you do not know" (Jer. 33:3).

When we move by faith beyond our internal insecurities and external adversities, we will see God work in life-changing, world-transforming ways. We will repeat the testimony of Jesus that " "My Father has been working" (John 5:17), and we will declare with the prophet Jeremiah, " "Ah, Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You" (Jer. 32:17). 

1 Frank M. Hasel, "The Wrath of God," *Ministry* 64, no. 11 (November 1991): 10–12.

2 A complete list of our most recent Ministerial Student Writing Contest winners can be found in the March 2012 issue of *Ministry*.

3 All Bible quotations are taken from the New King James Version.

Tell us what you think about this article. Email MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org or visit facebook.com/MinistryMagazine



Extreme servolution

Editor's note: The following is an adaptation of Pastor David Jamieson's sermon at the Canadian University College alumni weekend, College Heights, Alberta, Canada, June 4, 2011.

The world's population is witnessing a global revolution. On January 14, 2011, an uprising in Tunisia led to President Ben Ali fleeing the country after his 23-year-long reign. This Tunisian spark lit a flame all across the Arab world that many are calling the Islamic awakening.

Popular uprisings have overthrown long-reigning regimes in Egypt and Libya. Protests have erupted in other parts of the Middle East against perceived injustice, authoritarian rulership, and rising food and fuel prices. Similar protests have also taken place in other parts of the world such as Bolivia and Chile. The Occupy movement has called for people to camp out in the major cities of Canada and the United States to protest for political and economic change. People everywhere are asking, What in the world is wrong? For the first time in human history, an unprecedented desire exists for political change. Why? Well, according to www.worldrevolution.org

- Half the world's population lives on less than two dollars a day.

- Eight hundred million people are malnourished.
- Nearly 200 million of these malnourished are children.
- Twenty-four thousand people die every day from hunger; that's 8.7 million people per year.
- More than a billion people lack access to clean drinking water.
- Thirty-three percent of the world's people live in authoritarian, nondemocratic countries.
- One billion, or one-third, of the world's labor force is currently unemployed or underemployed.
- One-half of the forests that originally covered 46 percent of earth's land surface are gone.
- Twenty-seven million people worldwide are enslaved.
- Between 10–20 percent of all species will be driven to extinction in the next 20 to 50 years.
- Sixty percent of the world's coral reefs, which contain up to one-fourth of the world's marine species, could be lost in the next 20 to 40 years.
- The assets of the 200 richest people in the world in 1998 were more than the total annual income of 42 percent of the world's people. Three families—the Bill Gates family, the family of the Sultan of Brunei, and the Walton family have a combined wealth of \$135 billion. Their value equals the annual income of

600 million people living in the world's poorest countries.¹

Are these statistics as staggering to you as they are to me? We are a part of a global community that is in crisis. People are suffering in unthinkable and unspeakable ways. It is time for a worldwide wake-up call.

What the world needs today, what the church needs today, is not to experience a revolution aimed at overthrowing a government with anger, violence, and revolt but to experience a revolution of compassion, love, and service.

What the world needs to see today is a *servolution*.

What is a servolution?

Servolution is a combination of the words *revolution* and *service* that, when put into practice, has a compounding result for the church, world, and kingdom of God. According to Dino Rizzo, servolution is "a significant change in the course of history sparked by simple acts of kindness. . . . [A servolution is] 1. A complete and radical change of a person's life caused by simple acts of kindness for the glory of God. 2. God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. 3. A church revolution through serving."² Servolution cannot be described as a program or event, but the divine culture of God's kingdom birthed

in the church of God. A culture of sacrifice and service that can change the world! Servolution is not just a call to action. It is a call to being. It is a picture of the church of God finally rising up to fulfill the command of Jesus to " "love your neighbor as yourself" " " (Mark 12:31). Servolution asks the question, What Would Dorcas Do?

Servolution fulfills the words of Jesus in Matthew 25:40: " " "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of

Why do we serve?

We serve others for several simple reasons:

- Because Jesus did. He is the greatest Example of serving.
- Because Jesus calls us to follow His example.
- Because service is a tangible expression of the love of God for lost humanity.
- Because service breaks down

Extreme servolution is about serving with no strings attached

Extreme servolution can be defined as one of the greatest principles of Christianity. The foundation of the Christian faith is the undeserved, unmerited, and unconditional grace of God toward every human being who has ever lived. Jesus said, " 'A new command I give you: Love one another. As I



THE CHURCH NEEDS
TO SERVE THE WORLD
AROUND IT WITH
THE SAME KIND OF
UNCONDITIONAL LOVE
AND GRACE THAT GOD
HAS GIVEN US.

the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." ' "3 Servolution fulfills the mandate of the Spirit of Prophecy: "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me.' "4 "If we would humble ourselves before God, and be kind and courteous and tender-hearted and pitiful, there would be one hundred conversions to the truth where now there is only one."5

barriers and opens hearts.

- Because service changes our world, our church, and our lives.

The goal of extreme servolution calls for the demonstration of the love of Jesus. You see this demonstration of the gospel fast replacing the proclamation of the gospel. Telling people the truth without loving them hardly encourages them to embrace it. The fact is, words are important, but our actions carry more weight than our words.

Note the five steps in developing an extreme servolution strategy.

have loved you, so you must love one another' " (John 13:34).

How did Jesus love others? The most well-known verse in the Bible tells us how much He loves us. " 'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life' " (John 3:16).

But notice that when Jesus first shared these words during a late-night conversation with Nicodemus, He shocked him beyond belief. Nicodemus was expecting to hear a much different kind of strategy, but he was jarred by the answer he

received from Jesus. First, Jesus asserted that God has a Son. This was a challenge to the radical monotheism central to the core belief of Judaism. Second, Jesus declared that the redemptive mission of God was not based on “For God so loved the synagogue,” but rather on “For God so loved the world.” For Pharisees like Nicodemus, the kingdom of God was seen as a reward intended for the benefit of God’s people, for the benefit of those in the church, not as a gift to the world. This churchcentric thinking often still mirrors the same myopic and distorted view of God’s love today. Finally, Jesus said, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son.” God gave His Son freely to the entire world with no strings attached.

In fact, Jesus never left a city in the same condition as it was when He arrived. But He never wanted those He served to feel like they owed Him *anything* either. Ephesians 5:1, 2 says, “Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

So, if we are determined to be like Jesus, who went about blessing and healing people freely, then we need to treat people the same way. In fact, sometimes we need to serve others without them ever knowing who has been doing the serving.

We should not serve people in our communities expecting them to become Seventh-day Adventists. But as Seventh-day Adventists, we serve the people in our communities with no strings attached because that is what Jesus would do.

Extreme servolution is about serving with extravagant generosity

Jesus was a Revolutionary. Or should I say a Servolutionary? Matthew 20:28 says, “[T]he Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” When you pay a ransom for someone or something,

you usually pay a very high price. Just look at the incredible exchange God offered us: we get Christ, forgiveness, and an amazing life now and in the hereafter, and in return He gets us! Obviously, we got the best part of that deal, but amazingly God does not see it that way. In His unbelievable love, He wanted us so badly the He gave His only begotten Son to die on a cross for you and me. That is some pretty ridiculous generosity, wouldn’t you say?

Ridiculous generosity describes exactly what we have received from God. He is the perfect Example of extreme giving. Every account of the life of Jesus describes Him living in an overwhelmingly generous way with His time, talents, resources, compassion, and, of course, service. Therefore, everything about our Christianity should also be about serving and giving as well. We do not want to be known for our *average* generosity. We want to be a church that gives with *extreme* generosity.

The church needs to serve the world around it with the same kind of unconditional love and grace that God has given us. We need to risk doing outrageously loving things because, when we go above and beyond what others may expect of us to express the love of God, the results of those loving actions are multiplied in the lives of others in incredible ways for God’s kingdom.

Extreme servolution is about expanding the kingdom, not just the church

This leads us to another huge concept that many Christians have not fully grasped. It is not about growing the church; rather, it is about advancing the kingdom of God. We serve others in our communities to advance God’s kingdom on this earth.

As Christians, we are called to do our part in bringing the kingdom of God to this earth every single day. How? Well, whether you realize it or not, God has given you a kingdom assignment.

Every day when you pray, you can bring the kingdom of God down to this earth. Notice the powerful words that Jesus taught us to pray in the beginning of the Lord’s Prayer, “ ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven’ ” (Matt. 6:9, 10).

We can pray and ask God to live out His kingdom values in our everyday lives. Then, as we go through our day, we can watch for opportunities to do what Jesus would do if He were still here on this earth. So, let me ask, Are we praying the Lord’s Prayer every day? For if we will focus our attention on building God’s kingdom, then He will see to it that His church grows.

Extreme servolution reminds us that people matter to God

The Gospel of Luke records the greatest reason why Jesus came to serve. “ ‘For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost’ ” (Luke 19:10). Jesus lived His life seeking opportunities to find lost people and lead them to their heavenly Father. Every day He turned His love for people into action. He had the ability to be in a crowd of people and yet serve the needs of a single person who was desperate for healing.

The heart of God sees people in our cities, our homes, the cubicles next to us, and down the street, and He values them as precious people whom He cannot possibly live without. People matter to God more than anything! And if people matter to God, then they must matter to us as well.

Extreme servolution is the path to continuous blessing

Probably the clearest picture of servolution we see in the Bible is that of Jesus in John 13. In Jesus’ day, people wore sandals as they traveled the dusty roads. The custom of the day was to wash the feet of guests when they arrived at their destination, but servants typically

performed that duty, not the master of the house.

John describes how Jesus got up from the table, took off His garment, put on a servant's towel, and preached a sermon in action by serving His disciples and washing their dirty feet. Then He said, " 'Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them' " (John 13:17). Jesus said there are many blessings that come from serving others.

But that was not the first time that Scripture declared such a powerful truth. In the first book of the Bible we read about how God blessed Abraham: " 'I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you' " (Gen. 12:2, 3). God does not bless us for the sake of just blessing us.

Extreme Servolution Commitment

I lift up compassion, love, and service, and surrender all of my excuses.

I take up the cause of Christ and commit to live out simple acts of kindness every day.

I refuse to do nothing. This is my resolve.

I am a soldier in an extreme servolution!

Rather, He blesses us so that we can be a blessing.

The role of the church is simply this: to bless the world. And every time we do, amazing things will happen. Can you imagine how different the world would be if each one of us who claims to know Christ would do one act of kindness for someone every day? The results would be astonishing and the world would be a better place. We could overcome all the evil in the world with good if

we all made a commitment to serve others the way Jesus did. In fact, the opposite is also true. The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil in our world is for good men to do nothing.

So, let me ask you, Will you perpetuate the problems in the world today? Will you be indifferent or make excuses? Or will you gladly join in an extreme servolution? God is counting on us! The world needs the church today to rise up and be the church of God on this earth.

So, let the servolution begin! 

- 1 "Overview of Global Issues," World Revolution, accessed March 19, 2012, www.worldrevolution.org/WRNFiles/GlobalIssues1.pdf; "The State of the World: Human Rights," World Revolution, accessed March 19, 2012, www.worldrevolution.org/projects/globalissuesoverview/overview2/briefhumanrights.htm.
- 2 Dino Rizzo, *Servolution: Starting a Church Revolution Through Serving* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 18.
- 3 All Scripture passages, unless otherwise noted, are from the New International Version.
- 4 Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1942), 143.
- 5 Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), 9:189.

Tell us what you think about this article. Email MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org or visit facebook.com/MinistryMagazine

Ask for the rain

God gives for the sake of joy! "Ask ye of the LORD rain," advises the prophet Zechariah, ask and the Lord will give (Zech. 10:1).

We need Zechariah's words because we seem unaware of the laws by which God works. His message is pressingly relevant: the harvest could already have been reaped.

Living without asking the Lord for rain is inappropriate. We, and the weather, are not accidents in time, for God runs the world and the clouds. And He cares. Ask God and He will answer and act, Zechariah contends. Societal chaos without is sometimes seen as but a reflection of spiritual

weakness within the church. But sighing, crying saints have more to do than scratch heads, wring hands, and bang heads in futile frustration at an apparently unavoidable moral meltdown. Spiritual dearth is not inevitable. God can and wants to do something about it.

Zechariah speaks with authority to our needy condition. Our spiritual meteorology is as it is because we have not given permission to God to make the clouds, break the clouds, and flood the fields with life-giving rain. God, who sees our need, possesses the power to supply all our needs according to His glorious riches. He

can dictate the weather and give us rain.

Then, why not simply send the rain? Because we would be happier if we asked. If you have not asked thus far, He says, "[A]sk, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:24). Ask for rain. Ask and He will give. God gives for the sake of joy!

—LAEL CAESAR SERVES AS AN ASSOCIATE EDITOR OF ADVENTIST REVIEW.



Daniel Xisto, grand-prize winner of *Ministry's* 2011 Ministerial Student Writing Contest, is a student at the Andrews University Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States.



Free will and choice: A study of Jeremiah 1:5

The book of Jeremiah begins with the prophet's distinctive call to ministry. Jeremiah 1:5¹ states that before Jeremiah was born, even before he was conceived in his mother's womb, the Lord had specific plans for his life. Scholars widely interpret this passage to mean that God had predestined the course of Jeremiah's life.

However, sound biblical exegesis reveals that the clearest reading of Jeremiah 1:5 testifies not to an inviolable predestination as to what the prophet's life and ministry would be but to God's sovereignty mingled with humanity's free will. This article will show that even during the collapse of the kingdom of Judah, the Lord, wanting to save His children, never forced or predestined the will of Jeremiah.

I will also aim to illuminate a passage of Scripture that has long been painted with the broad brush of predestination. In so doing, we shall arrive at a clearer understanding of God's all-loving and ever-respecting stance toward humanity's total and complete freedom of will and choice.

History of interpretation

Predestination can be broadly defined as a doctrine that maintains that God has sovereignly determined the history, life, and destination of all

humans, arbitrarily electing some to eternal life and some to eternal condemnation.² In other words, an individual's life calling—that is, one's earthly and eternal destinies—are predetermined by God without the possibility of any change. The individual has no choice as to his or her destiny. Countless theologians and Bible commentators have interpreted Jeremiah 1:5 from the context of this worldview.

J. A. Thompson, in his commentary on the book of Jeremiah, endorses the predestination view, asserting that predestination was vital to the psyche of the prophet when coping with the trials that attended his prophetic office. Thompson further maintains that Jeremiah's "awareness that he had been predestined to occupy the prophetic office since his birth" would serve as a substantial encouragement for the prophet, should despair creep into his mind.³ Similarly, William L. Holladay presupposes the same nuance of determinism when describing the prophet's call from God: "[It] remains true that the experience of the providence of God attracts men and women throughout history to such language of predestination."⁴

Other commentators, such as John Bright, voice their agreement:

the striking feature of Jeremiah's call is the prophet's "awareness that he had been predestined for the prophetic office since before his birth."⁵ Ostensibly, there is no doubt in Bright's mind that Jeremiah was destined to be a prophet, regardless of Jeremiah's will. Likewise, Ernest W. Nicholson argues, "Jeremiah believed himself to have been predestined."⁶ Nicholson further observes that Isaiah (Isa. 49:1, 5) and the apostle Paul (Gal. 1:15) had similar unalterable callings.⁷ John L. Mackay voices his agreement, stating that God has "determined what destiny should be for each."⁸ Thompson, Holladay, Bright, Nicholson, and Mackay represent the majority of scholarship on Jeremiah, which presupposes predestination without entertaining the slightest possibility of free will.

A final argument worth noting is that of John Skinner, author of *Prophecy and Religion: Studies in the Life of Jeremiah*. Skinner, though believing in the personal predestination of Jeremiah to be a prophet, adds a caveat. He submits that Jeremiah's understanding of his individual predestination was not "a truth suddenly injected into the mind from without . . . but a conviction formed within, an intuitive perception."⁹ However, Mackay

disagrees with Skinner, urging that this concept of “conviction formed within” be “totally rejected.”¹⁰ Mackay contends that the prophet’s call was a call precisely because it came unexpectedly from an external source and challenged the prophet’s expectations.¹¹

Notwithstanding Skinner’s and Mackay’s disagreement about when and how the prophet became aware of his call, they, like the other aforementioned commentators, unswervingly hold to predestination as the appropriate schema for understanding Jeremiah 1:5.

Textual analysis

Jeremiah was from the priestly line of Hilkiah, whose family dwelt in Anathoth, a small village approximately three miles northeast of Jerusalem, the capital of Judah.¹² The time period in which Jeremiah received his call to prophetic ministry was exceptionally tumultuous in the history of the kingdom of Judah. Within a span of 23 years (609 B.C.–586 B.C.), four kings in succession would lay claim to its throne. This turbulent time concluded with Judah’s defeat and total destruction in 586 B.C. at the hands of Babylon.¹³ Jeremiah received his call

in 627 B.C., the thirteenth year of King Josiah’s reign (1:2).¹⁴ He lived and ministered through this politically, socially, and economically unstable period, witnessing both the ruin of the beloved city of Jerusalem under the reign of Zedekiah, as well as the shameful captivity of his fellow citizens.¹⁵ This scene of collapse amid monumental world change was the context of Jeremiah’s appeal to his erring nation, pleading for their return to spiritual fidelity.

The account of Jeremiah’s call to prophetic ministry is captured in the book’s first chapter (1:1–19). The call can be divided into four sections: “the editorial superscription (vv. 1-3), the call proper (vv. 4-10), two visions (vv. 11-14), and expansions . . . (vv. 15-19).”¹⁶ This article considers the three lines found in Jeremiah 1:5.

Before I formed you in the belly
I knew you
And before you came out of the
womb I sanctified you
I appointed you a prophet to the
nations.¹⁷

Note that immediately preceding this verse, Jeremiah 1:4 opens a dialogue between the Lord and Jeremiah: “Now the word of the LORD

came to me saying.” Dialogue with the Lord at the commencement of prophetic ministry is not uncommon to the Israelite (see Isa. 6; Ezek. 1). This text is set in poetic frame,¹⁸ containing four pairings of phrases.

A critical reading and exegesis of this parallel structure shows abundant biblical evidence pointing to an alternative to predestination. The first pairing is that of *before*, prepositions denoting time. This term is often used in the context of birth or creation and death (cf. Isa. 42:9; 66:7; Pss. 39:13; 90:2).¹⁹ With the repetition of *before*, a reader may accurately conclude that the time when the Lord both knew and sanctified Jeremiah came long before Jeremiah’s time on this earth. This sounds as though the Lord is saying *there is no merit outside of His grace and that Jeremiah was chosen as a result of this grace*. God repeats Himself twice to make sure the point is well understood.

Some view the above mentioned verses as providing compelling evidence of Jeremiah’s predestination from birth. However, there are indications that speak otherwise. Staying within the prophet’s own writing, the reader finds a very similar coupling of *before* in Jeremiah 13:16: “Give

Turn us back to You, O Lord

John Mecredy, pastor of a church in Saintfield, Ireland, longed for revival in his community. After preaching a sermon on Lamentations 5:20, 21, a greater earnest seeking of God’s reviving work ensued. Mecredy also publicly confessed that 11 years had gone by without a single conversion taking place under his ministry and begged his members to pray and seek the Holy Spirit.

Suddenly, members came under conviction and were converted. They shared what God was doing in their lives, and others began responding as well. “And so one and another was

stricken—some in their own houses, others at our meetings, until at length above two hundred . . . found peace in the Lord Jesus Christ. The prayer-meeting then became crowded; so that I have seen twelve hundred people in attendance night after night. . . .

“There are now crowded congregations upon the Sabbath; many come out to hear who for years did not. . . . [I]nstead of shunning religious conversation with their minister [they] are anxious for it.”*

The great need of our time is revival, and God wants to grant it more than we are willing to receive

it. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if Pastor Mecredy’s experience in 1859 could be repeated many times over in our day?

—DAN AUGSBURGER, MA, WRITES FROM BERRIEN SPRINGS, MICHIGAN, UNITED STATES.

* John Mecredy to Henry Grattan Guinness, letter, September 1859, in *The Revival in Ireland: Letters From Ministers and Medical Men in Ulster on the Revival of Religion in the North of Ireland* (Philadelphia: William S. & Alfred Martien, 1860), 9–13. For a complete copy of the letter, visit www.path2prayer.com/article.php?id=1124.



WHILE JEREMIAH 1:5 HAS BEEN READ EXTENSIVELY
THROUGH THE LENSES OF PREDESTINATION,
THERE IS SOUND TEXTUAL AND EXEGETICAL
EVIDENCE FOR THE PRESENCE OF FREE WILL.

glory to the LORD your God, before He brings darkness and before your feet stumble." Here the prophet is clearly delivering a conditional prophecy via a parallel structure that includes the word *before*. Judah chose not to heed the warning of the Lord spoken through Jeremiah.

The next two sets of pairings in the sequence are *I formed you* with *you came out*, and *in the belly* with *of (from) the womb*. Observe here a simple structure of two *qal* active verbs followed by their corresponding prepositional phrases containing like nouns. This parallel structure peaks in the final pairing.

Before discussing the significance of this climaxing pair, it is worth noting that evidence has been given for an alternative reading of the phrase translated as "I formed you." Holladay points to the *ketib* as "I summoned you" and suggests that this is the proper meaning.²⁰ Another example of this is found in Isaiah 49:1, 5, which offers both meanings. With this rendering, Jeremiah 1:5 would read as "I summoned you" and "you came out." This wording denotes a clearer connection between God's call and Jeremiah's response, leading the reader to appreciate more fully the climaxing pair.

The parallel structure culminates with a pair of two verbs: the *qal* perfect translated in the past tense ("I knew you"), and the *hiphil* perfect, which is translated with a causative function ("I sanctified you"). The reader should now consider these verbs and their connection, if any, with predestination. Beginning with

"I knew you," this precise phrase occurs for the first time in Exodus 33:12, in which the Lord states that He has known Moses by name. And earlier, the passage indicates that God spoke with Moses face-to-face (v. 11). This knowing is much more than a mere intellectual knowledge; it is a deep and intimate understanding of another—a relationship.

The question remains whether or not this knowing is in any way a commitment to predestination. Look at the second time outside of Jeremiah 1:5 where the phrase *I knew you* is used. Hosea 13:5 is widely translated as "I cared for you" but could also be read as "I knew you." This verse refers to the backslidden tribe of Ephraim. The Lord presents His case, as it were, in an attempt to woo the sin-filled tribe back from Baal into a life of purity and fidelity to Him. However, Ephraim chose Baal instead of the Lord. In this case, the Lord's intimate knowledge of Ephraim did not determine or predestine Ephraim to turn back to Him. The backslidden tribe chose to pursue its course of unfaithfulness notwithstanding the Lord having intimately known it.

In the parallel mentioned above, the corresponding phrase to *I knew you* is *I sanctified you*. In this repetition, the second verb is an intensification of the first. In its Hebrew construction, the language has shifted to a causative state. Not only does the Lord simply know Jeremiah, albeit intimately, He is causing Jeremiah to be holy. The second verb portrays the additional effort that the Lord had invested in Jeremiah.

As with the verbal clause "I knew you," "I sanctified you" does not denote or connote predestination. Without the pronoun *you*, it is found in six other places (Num. 3:13; 8:17; Judg. 17:3; 1 Kings 9:3; 9:7; 2 Chron. 7:20). It will suffice to consider the two passages in 1 Kings. After completing the construction of the temple, Solomon's prayer to the Lord was heard. In 1 Kings 9:3, the Lord states, "I have consecrated this house which you have built by putting My name there forever." Then the Lord sets a condition to His prophecy in verses 6 and 7: "But if you or your sons indeed turn away from following Me . . . , then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them, and the house which I have consecrated for My name, I will cast out of My sight." Here, if the condition was *not* met, the consecration of the Lord would become void. Therefore, the Lord's consecration of a thing is nevertheless not the same as predestination.

Finally, consider the concluding phrase *I appointed you*. There is corroborating evidence as early as Jeremiah 1:17, 18 that the Lord afforded Jeremiah a choice. The verbal clause employed here appears in verse 18, where the Lord tells Jeremiah, "I have made you today as a fortified city." At first, it sounds like the Lord predestined Jeremiah to be a fortified city because this is in the *qal* perfect form, indicating a completed action. However, the key here is to look at verse 17, which sheds light on the use of "I appointed you" in verse 18: "[A]rise, and speak


to them all which I command you. Do not be dismayed before them, or I will dismay you before them.' ” If Jeremiah had been predestined to be a fortified city, then the Lord’s promise to dismay him seems out of place. Implied in the Lord’s statement that He will dismay Jeremiah is the assumption that Jeremiah truly has a choice to make.

In light of the analysis above, all three main verbs utilized clearly identify the presence of choice and free will.

Conclusion

While Jeremiah 1:5 has been read extensively through the lenses of predestination, there is sound textual and exegetical evidence for the presence of free will. Deconstructing the parallel structure of this verse and analyzing its four pairings and

climaxing verbs, both within the book of Jeremiah and elsewhere in the Old Testament, provides strong support for a reading of choice in Jeremiah 1:5. The presumption of predestination has gone unchallenged for an extensive period. However, biblical exegesis reveals an alternate reading that eradicates the predestination stance.

Despite the ominous collapse of the kingdom of Judah and the Lord’s certain desire to save His children, in His consecration of Jeremiah as a prophet to warn them He did not cast off the prophet’s privilege of choice. 

- 1 All Scripture passages, unless otherwise stated, are from the New American Standard Bible.
- 2 Leanne VanDyke, “Predestination,” in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 1079, 1080.
- 3 J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand

Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), 145.

- 4 William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 1–25* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 33.
- 5 John Bright, *Jeremiah*, The Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965), 6, 7.
- 6 Ernest W. Nicholson, *The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah 1–25*, The Cambridge Bible Commentary (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 24.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 John L. Mackay, *Jeremiah*, Mentor Commentary (Scotland: Mentor, 2004), 1:96.
- 9 John Skinner, *Prophecy and Religion: Studies in the Life of Jeremiah* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1936), 27.
- 10 Mackay, *Jeremiah*, 94, 95.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Peter C. Craigie, Joel F. Drinkard Jr., and Page H. Kelley, *Jeremiah 1–25*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas, TX: Word Books Publisher, 1991), 26:2.
- 13 Ibid., 3. There are groupings of scholars who have the date of Judah’s destruction as 586 B.C., of which this author agrees. The Word Biblical Commentary date is 587 B.C.
- 14 Ibid. Scholarship has also shown a possibility for this date to be 626 B.C.
- 15 Bright, *Jeremiah*, xxviii.
- 16 William L. Holladay, *The Architecture of Jeremiah 1-20* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1976), 27.
- 17 Author’s translation.
- 18 J. Andrew Dearman, *Jeremiah and Lamentations*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 49.
- 19 Holladay, 33.
- 20 Ibid.

Tell us what you think about this article. Email MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org or visit [facebook.com/MinistryMagazine](https://www.facebook.com/MinistryMagazine)



 Seventh-day Adventist
Theological Seminary
Andrews University

Master of Divinity

Masters degrees in:

- Pastoral Ministry
- Youth and Young Adult Ministry
- Religion
- Religious Education

Doctoral degrees in:

- Ministry
- Religion
- Religious Education
- Biblical Archaeology

All programs are accredited by the Association of Theological Schools

Contact Information

Phone : 269-471-3537

Website: www.andrews.edu/sem

Cynthia Hyle Bezek, MA, serves as editorial director for Community Bible Study, along with being a blogger and speaker on prayer, and lives in Colorado Springs, Colorado, United States.



Have a heart: Praying from your heart and not just your head

A few years ago, I met a pastor who prayed from his heart. His prayers exuded the deep understanding and compassion of Jesus. To be prayed for by him was to enter the presence of Jesus Himself and experience His love.

But, this pastor told me, he had not always prayed or ministered that way. For years, his ministry focus was on preaching and teaching. He spent hours studying the Bible, reading books on leadership, and strategizing church growth. He kept his mental faculties strong—but almost completely neglected his heart. That is, until one memorable worship service when he stood before his congregation and had a nervous breakdown.

In retrospect, the pastor told me that the breakdown was one of the best things that had ever happened to him. God used that painful experience to help him attend to his heart and allow Him to heal the hidden brokenness and pain. And, when he returned to his congregation months later, he was a new man. No longer just a preacher and teacher, he was

truly a pastor, a shepherd—one who could reach the hearts of his people and not just their heads.

Since that time I have met quite a few ministers who struggle with a similar heart-head disconnect.¹ They come to the prayer retreats I lead because they know they have neglected their hearts. They know that the neglect hinders their ability to relate to God intimately. And they start realizing that this private neglect is hampering their public ministry.

“I struggle to relate to God intimately myself,” one of these pastors recently confided to me. “So how can I lead my people into an intimate prayer conversation with God?”

I empathize with these ministers. I can understand why some of them hold their hearts at arm’s length. Until God did some major work on my heart, I did not appreciate or take care of my emotions very much either.

Just the facts, ma’am

By personality, I am an analytical, thinker type. My first professional job was as a reporter for a daily newspaper. “Just the facts, ma’am,” was my

motto, while anything touchy-feely perturbed me.

My background is German English—a heritage notorious for reserve and infrequent displays of tender emotions. As I was growing up, I remember seeing my mother cry only one time and my dad only twice. By the time I was a teen, I never cried either.

In my view, that was a good thing. To be honest, I was pretty proud of the fact that I lived in my head. Living life mentally felt safe, while allowing for emotions, on the other hand, seemed downright risky.

God’s first challenge

But God challenged me on that in two specific ways. The first challenge was Frank. Frank was an exuberant worshiper and lay elder in my church. One time he preached from Mark 12:30: “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ ”² He talked about how loving God with just one part of our being was incomplete love; God desires to be loved by every part of us.

I cornered Frank afterward. "I'm not an emotional person," I protested.

"Doesn't matter," Frank said. "It still applies to you."

The Bible is an emotion-filled book

Frank's provocative words began a shift in my perspective on emotions. In particular, I started noticing all the emotions expressed in the Bible. To my consternation, I discovered it was *full* of them! One day I stumbled over Hosea 6:4, and there I found God sounding exactly like a frustrated, wounded dad: " 'What can I do with you, Ephraim? What can I do with you, Judah? Your love is like the morning mist, like the early dew that disappears.' " I studied further and discovered that when we turn away from God, His heart is "filled with pain" (Gen. 6:6) and He gets jealous and angry (Deut. 32:16); but when we turn back to Him, He feels delight and rejoices over us with singing (Zeph. 3:17). Among the many examples the Holy Spirit led me to, several stand out.

In Joel, I read, " 'Even now,' declares the LORD, 'return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.' Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity" (2:12, 13).

I noticed God saying almost plaintively to Jonah: " 'But Nineveh has more than 120,000 people living in spiritual darkness, not to mention all the animals. Shouldn't I feel sorry for such a great city?' " (Jon. 4:11, NLT).

I even saw Jesus being emotional: " 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!' " (Luke 13:34).

Frank's challenge and my new way of looking at Scripture set me on a journey that I am still walking on. I

could no longer be content to live in my head alone. I had to learn how to engage my heart as well.

Changes in how I pray

As you can probably imagine, this journey has had ramifications in nearly every aspect of my life—how I work, relate, and minister and, soon, I was to realize, it would also change my way of praying.

For years, I had prayed primarily from my head. Prayer usually went something like this: I would learn about a situation and analyze the needs, concerns, and problems associated with this situation. Then I would size it up from my perspective: What did I think needed to happen in order to fix this problem? What was the logical, biblical solution to this situation? And then I would ask God to do that.

For example, when I volunteered at a crisis pregnancy center, I prayed for funding to help unwed mothers and for laws that would support life.

In the various churches and Christian ministries I worked in, I would pray for clear communication of God's Word and ways, for more laborers, for budgets to be met, and decisions to be made wisely. For our government, I would pray that corruption and abuses of power would be exposed and dealt with. If a friend's marriage was in crisis, I would pray that each partner would recognize where he or she had been selfish or inconsiderate (or unfaithful or whatever) and that he or she would repent and treat his or her spouse the way God intended.

My approach to pain, difficulty, and sin was to find a corresponding truth and pray for that. This included the way I prayed for myself. I would sum up my personal situation—what I needed to do, believe, or be—then ask God to help me discipline myself to live in that truth so I would, in fact, do, believe, and be what was right.

Occasionally, I wonder about those prayers I prayed. Were they effective? Well, sometimes sin actually was exposed and dealt with; sometimes good laws were passed

and funding did come in; often God's Word was preached and occasionally people responded, and sometimes I did experience spiritual growth. So in that sense, yes, my prayers were effective. But as I started pondering the heart-mind connection, I wondered if there could be more to it than that.

God's second challenge

A few years after Frank's message, I received another challenge to my head-only way of living and praying. My husband received a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis that resulted in 11 years of debilitating illness and his death at the age of 46.

During that season of relentless pain, struggle, and loss, my heart became overwhelmed. I hated feeling—but I could not help it. Feelings showed up uninvited.

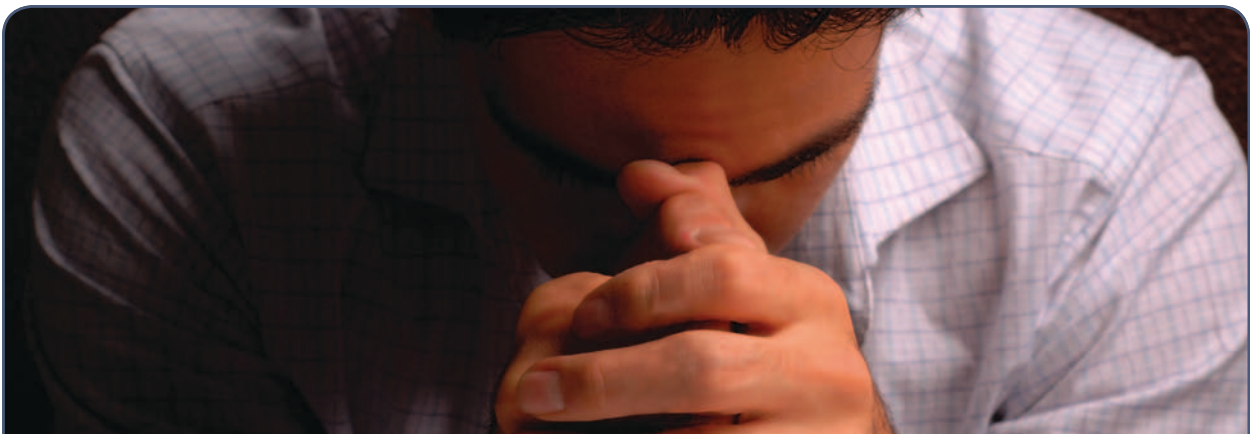
Well-meaning people offered all kinds of answers—spiritual prescriptions, advice, explanations, and fixes. But mental understandings alone did not cut it for me anymore. Answers, even logical, biblical ones, were not enough. Just believing the right things and making the right choices would not get me through this crisis. Perhaps for the first time in my life, my feelings were more than I could manage in any kind of sustained way. Though I desperately tried to deny, stuff, or ignore the feelings, I could not do it. I finally had to admit to both God and friends that I *felt*—and I felt *bad*. I was scared, discouraged, frustrated, and lonely. And I did not like it!

However, when I did allow myself to feel and even admit those feelings to God and others, something surprising happened. Whereas before I had persevered through each day in a mechanical way, now I was *feeling*. Sure, a lot of it was painful, frightening, and hard but, to my amazement, I also began to feel warm and tender feelings. When I had tried to shut myself off from pain and other negative emotions, I also had cut myself off from positive emotions, such as compassion, understanding, and mercy. Gradually, as I opened up

my heart to God and people, I was actually able to feel His love and care. This was a new thing—and it was very, very good.

Some people, who knew how to pray from their hearts, would pray to God for His mercy for me. They asked God to care for my heart and give me hope; they asked Him to help me feel His love and compassion for me and His understanding of what I was experiencing. This abundance

- “But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you look for him *with all your heart and with all your soul*” (Deut. 4:29).
- “ ‘Now *devote your heart and soul* to seeking the LORD your God’ ” (1 Chron. 22:19).
- “They entered into a covenant to seek the LORD, the God of their fathers, *with all their heart and soul*” (2 Chron. 15:12).
- “ ‘You will seek me and find me when you seek me *with all your heart*’ ” (Jer. 29:13).
- Solomon’s prayer: “ ‘And if they turn back to you *with all their heart and soul* in the land of their enemies who took them captive, and pray to you . . . then from heaven, your dwelling place, hear their prayer and their plea, and uphold their cause’ ” (1 Kings 8:48, 49).



I COULD NO LONGER BE CONTENT TO LIVE IN MY HEAD ALONE. I HAD TO LEARN HOW TO ENGAGE MY HEART AS WELL.

of prayers actually did give me hope and helped me press into God with my heart and not just my head. And for me, this was an entirely new kind of prayer. Experiencing prayer like that made me want to offer it to others. But how? Could a person who had always lived in her head learn how to intercede for others from her heart?

Praying with your heart

This new season sent me back to the Scriptures to see what God had to say about praying with the heart. Here are a few scriptures that stood out to me:³

- “They said to me [Nehemiah], ‘Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire.’ When I heard these things, I sat down *and wept*. For some days *I mourned and fasted and prayed* before the God of heaven” (Neh. 1:3, 4).
- “*My heart says* of you, ‘Seek his face!’ Your face, LORD, I will seek” (Ps. 27:8).
- “Blessed are they who keep his statutes and seek him *with all their heart*” (Ps. 119:2).
- Paul: “I have *great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart*. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, the people of Israel” (Rom. 9:2–4; see 10:1).

Differences between heart- and head-praying

So how does praying with our hearts differ from praying simply with our heads? Because we use our minds and hearts differently, the prayers we pray from each will be focused differently.

On the one hand, we use our minds to (1) discern right from wrong, (2) solve problems, (3) make judgments, (4) make decisions, (5) form convictions, (6) make policies, and (7) understand issues. So, when we pray from our minds, we are likely to pray about (1) issues; (2) behaviors; (3) justice; (4) judgment; and (5) principles, morals, and values.

On the other hand, we use our hearts to (1) love, (2) empathize and sympathize, (3) mourn and grieve, (4) relate, (5) show compassion and pity, (6) desire, and (7) dream. So when we pray with our hearts we are likely to pray for (1) people (as opposed to issues, events, and things); (2) heart healing (as opposed to behavior correction); (3) God's love, grace, and presence to be experienced; (4) hope, peace, comfort, and mercy (as opposed to judgment, trying harder, and "shaping up"); and (5) God to be known as He truly is.

What difference does it make?

With these things in mind, how might I have prayed about crisis pregnancy centers, churches and ministries, government, and marriages? I still might have prayed for exposure of sin and conviction, but I also would have prayed for God to pour His love into the hearts of wounded people; for is not every sinner a wounded person? I might have asked God to heal hearts; to restore broken relationships; to reveal Himself in mercy, grace, and kindness. I might have prayed that the Lord would meet people's innermost needs for security, significance, and acceptance, and that His kindness would lead to repentance—if, in fact, repentance was what was needed.

Does learning to pray from my heart mean that I no longer pray about wrongs being righted, problems being solved, sins being turned from, and all the other mind-oriented prayers I used to pray? Of course not.

God gave us hearts and minds, and I believe He intends us to use them both. But it seems as if many of us rely more heavily on the head side of praying and miss out on the heart side. I know I did!

Integrating heart and head

Learning to pray with both heart and head might not come naturally to you at first, but the good news is you can learn. And you do not have to go through a nervous breakdown or the death of a spouse to do it. But you will need to give yourself permission to feel. If that is tough for you, ask God, and maybe a safe friend, to help you. God made you in His image, emotions and all, so let Him help you accept this uncomfortable but beautiful gift.


Then, when you grow more comfortable with your feelings, invite God to help you pray with your heart. Here are some simple steps you could try. Think of something you would like to pray about. Now think about how you ordinarily would pray concerning this request. If you are like many head-oriented people, you will probably think of head-type prayers: wisdom for decision making, creativity for a project, success in a medical procedure, or healthy interaction among peers. Now think about how this prayer need affects you (or the people you are concerned about) *emotionally*. Feelings, such as worry, longing, helplessness, frustration, inadequacy, resentment, and so on, may rise to the surface. For a moment, allow yourself to really feel those emotions. Then consider how God might want to meet you or the people you care about at this heart level.

As you do this, you will begin to see God in a more personal way than you would have otherwise. He is not just a divine Problem Solver but a compassionate Person who wants to comfort your heart, lift your burden, and reveal more of Himself

to you. You may recognize the ways He wants to use these situations to deepen His intimacy with you, nurture your trust, and bring peace to your restless heart. You will start to see that He does not merely want to fix problems. He wants to care for your heart and shepherd your soul. God wants to reveal Himself as the Father, Counselor, and Friend that He truly is. If you try these simple steps, I believe that you will see a marked difference in how you pray—and in time, in how you pray with and minister to others.

Unexpected benefits

Although my heart journey started with wanting to love and engage with God more completely, there have been unexpected side benefits. By permitting myself to acknowledge my pain and allow for a full range of emotions, including hard ones, I have become a safer, more compassionate, more approachable person. In my earlier days, people sometimes described me as "intimidating." While it was not uncommon for people to seek me for advice, it was unusual for them to share their heartaches with me. But, like the pastor I wrote about in the introduction to this article, getting in touch with my own feelings opened up whole new ways of ministry for me. Before, I could engage intellectually with others; but now I am able to engage at a heart level too.

I am still not what most people would call touchy-feely, and I am certainly not given to emotionalism—but I am a person who has come to deeply appreciate the fact that God has made me in His image—and that includes a heart as well as a head. 

- 1 For a Bible study that explores the importance of the heart in prayer, see Cynthia Hyle Bezek, *Prayer Begins With Relationship* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2011), especially lesson 2.
- 2 All Scripture references, unless otherwise noted, are from the New International Version.
- 3 Emphasis added throughout.

Tell us what you think about this article. Email MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org or visit facebook.com/MinistryMagazine

MARK CARR, JON CICCARELLI, KEN CURTIS, AND JON PAULIEN

Mark Carr, PhD, is professor of ethics, School of Religion, Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, California, United States.

Jon Ciccarelli is senior pastor at Calimesa Seventh-day Adventist Church, Calimesa, California, United States.

Ken Curtis, DMin, is associate pastor at Calimesa Seventh-day Adventist Church, Calimesa, California, United States.

Jon Paulien, PhD, is dean of the School of Religion, Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, California, United States.



Supporting **multiple methods** of outreach in the local congregation

Standing in the church lobby, we watched hundreds of people streaming out the door of the sanctuary, though we recognized few faces. The Easter musical sponsored by the Calimesa, California, Seventh-day Adventist Church had worked again: our third year of the musical (three performances over two days) drew more than 1,300 attendees.

But can you really call offering musicals to your community evangelism? Or have we defined evangelism too narrowly? Is it a lowering of our evangelistic heritage to offer the community a theatrical representation of our full message? Arguably the musical was just that—a staged presentation of our message: the great controversy story on stage in word (narrators), song (a choir), and choreography (scripted movement). The musical told the Adventist metanarrative—the great controversy between God and Satan—through the words, songs, and movements performed

by more than 65 characters and a live band. By all accounts, it was a magnificent performance, in part because of the visually creative and stunning costuming work.

How do we wrap our minds around types of evangelism that do not fall into the traditional public evangelistic patterns? Perhaps the concept of outreach is more accurate. Outreach can be a lot like traditional evangelism, but it is not necessarily the same thing. What are the goals of traditional evangelism and outreach, and how can a church embrace both?

Evangelism and outreach

The goals of traditional evangelism can be expressed in a two-part perspective, both designed to fulfill the Great Commission: first, the aim is to spread the good news of Christ's salvation so that others can hear and accept His call; second, most often there is a tangible blessing for members who are involved in traditional evangelism. This positive

experience for church members can be a good argument for holding traditional evangelistic meetings, even when the new converts are few.

The goals of outreach are similarly twofold: First, we seek to offer a glimpse of our Savior to the community around us. While this glimpse may be through words, such as the life skills course we used here at Calimesa, it may also be through music (a concert series), or through stage performance (the Easter musical). Second, such outreach is also a blessing to our own members. Great power flows through those gifted by God with musical skills. Music moves people in ways that the spoken word simply cannot. Additionally, the methods of sharing God's truth on stage through the entire range of human senses moves the listener as a whole person—emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually engaging the participant with truth.

With this background in mind, what follows are several elements of the Calimesa church ministry.

Traditional (but not so traditional) evangelistic series

Traditional evangelistic meetings have not had a track record of success in our community, nor have the members met them with enthusiasm. So in our strategic planning for evangelism, we wondered how we could get members involved in a Revelation Seminar to the degree that they would bring their friends and relatives.

We came up with five principles to enhance our more traditional

college class. We would meet the second and fourth Tuesdays of the months, when local colleges are in sessions (September through May). We would take Christmas, spring break, and summer off, and run the 26 meetings over a year and a half (which was also more conducive to our own busy schedules). We also decided to charge 30 dollars (the current rate for community college classes in California) and provide assignments for those attending. Instead of spending money on advertising, the church created a Web

the prophetic message of Seventh-day Adventism. On the other hand, if we were to do this again, a shorter period (such as three to nine months) would work better than 18 months, and we would want to do a better job of tracking attendees than we have done.

On another level, more in line with the second goal of evangelism and outreach noted above, this approach also seeks to address the way people form lasting life commitments and sustained relationships with others. We know that the people we are

OUR OUTREACH STRATEGY IS PRESENTLY
FOCUSED ON BUILDING TEAMS OF
CHURCH MEMBERS AND INTERESTED
VISITORS TO WORK WITH SPECIFIC
SECTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY.

evangelistic meetings and make them more appealing to members and visitors. These principles were based on the *Revelation: Hope, Meaning, and Purpose* series from the Hope Channel: (1) a verse by verse, chapter by chapter approach, (2) more gospel oriented, (3) more Christ centered, (4) a practical everyday life element, and (5) being more positive toward other faiths. When the members learned about these five principles, particularly the first and the last, their attitudes toward the evangelistic series changed and they became more open both to coming and also bringing family and friends.

We then designed the program to look and feel like a community

site, ran off inexpensive posters and flyers, and relied on the members to develop the interest.

We are now in the second year of the program. Would we do it again? We have learned a number of things. On the positive side, more than 200 people registered for the class on the Web. A number of relatives and friends of members are attending. Opening night registrations included about 15 walk-ins from the community (drawn by personal invitations and a banner created inexpensively by one of the pastors). So far two people impacted by the meetings have joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church. But perhaps the biggest result is a renewed enthusiasm within the church for

most likely to retain after traditional evangelistic events are those who have developed relationships with other people in our community of faith. Furthermore, one questions how wise it is to encourage life-altering commitments to anything after only a couple of weeks of content-intense gatherings. This approach allows people to be present at the church for more than two years, thus getting to know others there. The fact that the "evangelist," or teacher of the course, is a member of our church helps develop these positive relationships. The members of the course can attend church and see the evangelist and his or her family as a regular part of our congregation. Seeing the message

of the course lived in the life of the church is an added value. The challenging and yet low pressure style of the presentations allows people time to process what they are hearing in an unrushed manner, and to get to know people; thus, by the time the series is over, if they have not done so already, they can make decisions about becoming part of a community they know, based on a message that has had time to sink in.

Lifestyle evangelism

One of the hazards of evangelistic strategizing is the trap of thinking that evangelism is primarily results, rather than a way of life that reflects the priorities of Jesus, regardless of the results. Jesus extended healing to ten lepers; only one returned to say Thank You. Jesus likely would have done the same, even if that one had not returned, because evangelism is not defined wholly by results but by the life of faith extended to others.

One of the ways this takes place at Calimesa is in the support we provide to the House of Decision, a non-Seventh-day Adventist residential ministry that takes in people who need a new start. Many are women and their children who escaped violence and abuse. Others have lost jobs and have nowhere to go. Others have been through crises, some even self-induced. But for those willing to connect with God, this provides a transitional place to put their lives back together. The House of Decision is a faith-based ministry operating solely on donations. The Calimesa church is honored to share with them through financial support, counseling services, and routine invites for them to join us during special programs. Some of our church members have directly benefited from their ministry, not to mention that a resident of the House of Decision has shown an interest in baptism.

Another time we adopted a local mobile home community and, in conjunction with our church school, helped many of the residents. Some had health problems that limited

their mobility, and so we would clean up and care for their yards, make repairs on their homes, and so on. Some residents have developed close relationships with church members who served, and the contact continues long after we completed the projects there.

We are currently involved in helping to provide a community garden. We provide a half acre of space from some property owned by the church and, in conjunction with the local Chamber of Commerce, offer the space for many families to grow vegetables that will help supply their nutritional needs. This has given us the opportunity to develop relationships all through the community, which sees us as people who are willing to serve.

Music ministry

The Calimesa Community Concert Series is a tradition in and of itself. Because of the dedication of one family, our church has, through the tenure of many pastors, offered the ministry of Christian music. For 26 years, the Calimesa Community Concert Series has averaged six concerts per year, offered primarily in our church sanctuary, but occasionally held in our church school auditorium or in other churches. The premier event each and every year is the Christmas concert, which is offered twice on Friday evening and once on Sabbath afternoon. While the musicians (and musical style) have varied throughout the years, the aim of the ministry has been to bring non-Seventh-day Adventists into our church in a nonthreatening way. The musicians are primarily and purposefully non-Seventh-day Adventists. The gift of music can be celebrated across denominational cultures and the crossover blessing is substantial. Not only have scores of community members written letters of appreciation, but the relationships that we have developed with these musicians has been encouraging as well.

The musical guests are well-known local, national, and international stars. In most cases,

they did not know much about us, but, after responding to our invitation and getting to know us in person, they have been exceedingly positive. Certainly, these relationships help break down barriers. We must show our wider community that Christianity, Seventh-day Adventist Christianity in particular, is neither a cult nor a sectarian oddity. People have come to know us in a way that is focused on a broader message of celebrating those aspects of Christ that all people can appreciate. In addition to those who come explicitly to hear our professional guests, others now come because the concerts have become a family tradition. Whether or not they have any connection to Adventism, they come because the concert series is a community tradition.

Drama ministry: The Easter musical

As noted above, attendance at the third annual Easter musical was stellar. In the second year, we added a third performance; this year, we purposefully put the third performance on Sunday morning. The hope was that we would draw even more people from the community to attend on the actual day of Easter. We targeted those who might routinely look for a place to attend a religious service on this special occasion. (We put a general advertisement into the local newspaper toward that end.) Some in your church may not be inclined to engage in outreach on Easter weekend, but our strategy is to reach our community with the least threatening and combative form of outreach possible. We solicited audience responses to the musical through specially printed cards included in the program bulletin.

The musical was about the story of salvation, emphasizing that our own personal stories are a part of God's story—the story of our entire universe. We asked on these response cards if persons would like to share their own stories with us, as a community of faith interested

in how we live out our part of God's story. While we have not received as many response cards as we had hoped, those who did respond were positive and many requested future performances. Part of our overall outreach is a consistent effort to simply minister to our community—again, regardless of the positive number of those who respond.


In keeping with the second goal of evangelism and outreach, as noted above, one of the most important elements of our Easter musical is the ministry it provides our own church members. For at least six months prior to the Easter weekend performances, the director and her team worked with cast members, ages 4 to 80. The simple fact that more than 65 cast members and

their families were memorizing lines, traveling to and from rehearsals, sewing costumes, practicing their parts on stage, and thinking about how it would all come together is a huge blessing. This is a ministry in and of itself as the entire team worked together, praying at every step. On a personal and practical level, it is very natural and non-threatening to invite your friends and neighbors to see your daughter, husband, or cousin perform in a play at your church on Easter morning.

Conclusion

Our outreach strategy is presently focused on building teams of church members and interested visitors to work with specific sections of the community. Teams of about ten

people will work together with the purpose of building connections and relationships with residents and businesses in their particular sections of town. As they have routine contact with our community members, the attendance rates for all of these outreach modalities will surely increase. As these team members get to know those in their districts, we can better focus our strategy to the needs of our community as well.

At Calimesa, there is a complex blending of the twofold purpose of responding to the Great Commission. The purposeful approach of the church as it responds to God's calling to share His message is paying rich dividends in the lives of those already in the church and those in the community we serve. 

Tell us what you think about this article. Email MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org or visit [facebook.com/MinistryMagazine](https://www.facebook.com/MinistryMagazine)

SPRING COUNCIL
APRIL 17, 2012

GENERAL CONFERENCE
SESSION, JULY 2015

REVIVED BY HIS WORD

READING THROUGH THE BIBLE TOGETHER

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

www.revivalandreformation.org



Laying a foundation for missional living: A call to primitive godliness

An Adventist Frontier Missions candidate was a year away from entering her mission territory. As her fear and excitement about her family's upcoming journey mingled, she said something interesting: "We need to learn the culture in order to be accepted into the culture so that we can work in the culture."

I posted that quote on Facebook. The comments I received indicated that while many carry this insight into overseas mission, few apply it to the mission field of Western culture. We forget that our Western world has become a needy mission field as well. What kind of foundation do we need in order to reach the Western culture with the gospel message?

Experience through relationship

The *Shema* (God's proclamation and command to Israel in Deuteronomy 6:4, 5) is God's invitation to move His followers from belief into experience *through* relationship. David G. Benner writes, "Any authentic spiritual journey must grow from direct, personal experience of God. There is no substitute for a genuine encounter with Perfect Love."¹ God's command to Israel within the *Shema*

moves the nation from belief into experience through a relationship. "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength" (Deut. 6:4, 5).² This movement begins with identity that is shaped by love.³

According to P. J. J. S. Els, "The fact that love could be commanded indicates that *'hb* in Deut 6:5 . . . expresses not primarily feeling, but rather a certain behavioral pattern, i.e., obedience (in gratitude) to Yahweh's covenantal commandments and faithful and total commitment to him."⁴ The love that God commands engages the whole person, which anchors the follower to a foundation upon which experience through relationship needs to be cultivated. Rather than relating godliness to rule keeping, the Old Testament relates genuine godliness to love for God, a love unified through trust and faithfulness that stem from gratitude.⁵

In Isaiah 41:8, Abraham is called the friend of God because of his relationship with God. This relationship is the model of godliness (2 Chron. 20:7).⁶ The events that took place in the Exodus and conquest laid the foundation for gratitude within Israel.⁷

Likewise, Christ's death on the cross lays the foundation for gratitude within the followers of Jesus Christ.

In the *Shema*, the combination of "heart," "soul [life]," and "strength [power]" reveals characteristics of mental and emotional faculties that display themselves in the life of the follower through self-discipline.⁸ David G. Benner observes, "Leaving the self out of Christian spirituality results in a spirituality that is not well grounded in experience. It is, therefore, not well grounded in reality. Focusing on God while failing to know ourselves deeply may produce an external form of piety [godliness], but it will always leave a gap between appearance and reality. This is dangerous to the soul of anyone—and in spiritual leaders it can also be disastrous for those they lead."⁹

Benner emphasizes that the follower must have self-knowledge in order to bridge the gap between the inner life with God and the outer life with others. Bridging this gap becomes the challenge of mission-oriented living.

Church plant in the Western mission field

On August 21, 2006, my family and I moved into a hotel in Keller,

Texas, with the task of planting a church, but without a core group or money for ministry. I began visiting Seventh-day Adventist churches in the area, asking for members who lived in Keller and if they would be interested in starting a church there. I also began visiting area businessmen, casting a vision for reaching millennials (those born around 1980).

The first three months of visitation led us nowhere. In spite of the disappointment, my wife, Ashley, and I began praying together on

persistence in prayer and consistency in showing up in people's lives, we became the first church to join the Merchants Association. It was not long before we had a chance to put our love into action.

The Krawl

The Merchants Association began planning their first annual Keller Crawfish Krawl, in which they would serve large amounts of crawfish and alcohol on a Saturday morning, all in order to promote the businesses in

did not come from playing it safe. Outreach is anything but safe; for this reason, we found it important to lay a foundation for witnessing through primitive godliness.

Primitive godliness

Primitive godliness is an experience through relationship that places all facets of human life into faith.¹⁰ Living a life of primitive godliness is a journey into oneness with God. " 'I will bring him near and he will come close to me, for who is he

MISSION THAT CARRIES OUT A FOCUSED GOD-GIVEN VISION, FLOWS FROM A CHURCH IN WHICH THE MAJORITY OF THE FOLLOWERS LIVE LIVES OF PRIMITIVE GODLINESS.

Wednesday nights after we had put our seven-month-old daughter to sleep. At the end of three months, we had a core group of 11 members, several hundred dollars for ministry, and a weekly outreach to 25 teenage skateboarders. We kept praying and taught our small core group to pray as well. Through weekly prayer, our core group began developing love for one another, a love that began to ripple outside of our core group.

A year later, I began driving through Keller in order to find a place to teach our community to pray, believing that prayer with the community would change the community, just as it had been changing us. We leased the front office of an auto body shop in an older part of town and began 12-hour prayer meetings on Friday nights every other week. Taking one-hour shifts we confessed sins, prayed to be changed, and asked God to break down strongholds in Keller. Through

the Old Town district. They had a need to provide transportation for those too inebriated to drive home. I immediately said that our church would rent a van and take care of that. I also offered to supply volunteers to pick up trash and the use of our church's portable sound system. Immediately, one of the most antagonistic people towards our involvement snapped, "Why would you do that?"

"Because," I said, "I believe that Jesus would."

She replied, "Well, hallelujah!"

On the day of the Keller Crawfish Krawl, we set up our sound system and began serving as security, transportation, and clean up. We did this to show the community that our prayers for them were leading us to love them. At the end of the day, a community leader who strongly disliked our involvement told me, with tears in his eyes, "Thank you!"

We had earned the right to share Jesus with our community, but it

who will devote himself to be close to me?" declares the LORD. "So you will be my people and I will be your God" ' " (Jer. 30:21). This describes the foundation for primitive godliness. Hebrews 8:10 connects this covenant promise to Israel with the Christian church:¹¹ " 'I will be their God, and they will be my people.' "

This move towards oneness with God should not be presumed through human effort.¹² According to Jon Stock, Tim Otto, and Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, "Any understanding of what it might mean for the people of God to be righteous must begin with the nature of God's righteousness."¹³ Only God can bring the follower into oneness with Himself through the Person of Jesus Christ.

Regarding Scripture's role in conjunction with primitive godliness, Ellen White states,

Whenever the people of God are growing in grace, they will be

constantly obtaining a clearer understanding of His word. They will discern new light and beauty in its sacred truths. This has been true in the history of the church in all ages, and thus it will continue to the end. *But as real spiritual life declines, it has ever been the tendency to cease to advance in the knowledge of the truth.* Men rest satisfied with the light already received from God's word and discourage any further investigation of the Scriptures. They become conservative and seek to avoid discussion.¹⁴


The follower who lives a life of primitive godliness in the twenty-first century must, through the leading of the Holy Spirit, shape a living theology that roots itself in the great commandments (Matt. 22:37–40). Primitive godliness can be understood as justice through the parable of the sheep and the goats, in which the actions of the follower have demonstrated love to God and others, and the actions of the perceived follower have not.

Scot McKnight posits, "Justice is also structural at some level: it refers to the establishment of conditions that promote loving God and loving others or living in the Spirit."¹⁵ Consequently, the church community gives an indication of spiritual life as it discerns truth and

lives that truth to those in need of Jesus through the Holy Spirit. Thus, the church is led into mission. For it is not so much that the church has a *mission* as the *mission* has a church; mission is something God does and the church joins in it.¹⁶

This strategy engages "the moving parts of the church" (i.e., weekly programs, Sabbath worship, service to the community, children's ministry, mission trips, for example).¹⁷ Commitment to, and consistency in, the strategy of primitive godliness within the members of the church is important. Thus, the life of primitive godliness in the twenty-first century composes an ideal example in that the spiritual depth the follower gains from such a life equips the follower to help reach the soul of the not-yet-Christian.¹⁸ Furthermore, the authenticity of the follower brings credibility.¹⁹

Through sitting with God during devotional practices, the follower discovers his or her role as he or she lives out a life of primitive godliness through the means of God's church. Mission that carries out a focused God-given vision, flows from a church in which the majority of the followers live lives of primitive godliness.

Nothing else will work. We, in Keller, are still learning that deep spiritual truth, which we believe is key in leading people to a life-changing relationship with God.²⁰ 

- 1 David G. Benner, *Surrender to Love* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 27.
- 2 Unless otherwise indicated, all Bible references are from the New International Version.
- 3 Patrick D. Miller, *Deuteronomy*, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1990), 5:98–103.
- 4 P. J. J. S. Els, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 1:287.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 286.
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1–21:9*, 2nd ed., Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 6a:98–143.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 143.
- 9 David G. Benner, *The Gift of Being Yourself: The Sacred Call to Self-Discovery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 20, 21.
- 10 Simon Chan, *Spiritual Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 141.
- 11 F. D. Nichol, ed., *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1980), 4:463.
- 12 Gerald L. Keown, Pamela J. Scalise, and Thomas G. Smothers, *Jeremiah 26–52*, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 27:104.
- 13 Jon Stock, Tim Otto, and Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, *Inhabiting the Church: Biblical Wisdom for a New Monasticism* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2007), 17.
- 14 Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), 5:706, 707; emphasis added.
- 15 Scot McKnight, *A Community Called Atonement* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007), 125.
- 16 Alan Hirsch, "Lord Jesus . . . It All Begins Here" (lecture, Exponential 2008 Conference, Orlando, FL, April 22, 2008).
- 17 Will Mancini, *Church Unique* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2008), 203.
- 18 Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shape of Things to Come* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003), 95–107.
- 19 Frost, 99.
- 20 After four years of mission, the church in Keller grew from three people without any resources to 74 people who are playing a vital role in loving people into the kingdom of God. Of the 74 people involved, previous church attendance is as follows, 28 attended the Seventh-day Adventist Church regularly, 22 are reclaimed Seventh-day Adventists, 19 are formerly unchurched, 5 came from another denomination. Of this group, 51 percent are millennials, 19 percent are in their thirties, 16 percent are in their forties, 7 percent are in their fifties, 4 percent are in their sixties, 3 percent are in their seventies.

Tell us what you think about this article. Email MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org or visit [facebook.com/MinistryMagazine](https://www.facebook.com/MinistryMagazine)

LETTERS



Continued from page 4 ▶

Second, your comment that the translation of "all kinds of fish" that was taken from the New International Version and was not a good translation is quite accurate. The NIV is not a word-for-word translation of the Bible into the English language; rather, it is more of a thought-for-thought interpretation meant to


meet present cultural demands for relevancy.

—Ron Delaney, chaplain, *Assemblies of God*, email

Goals for 2012

What a perfectly lovely and most appropriate set of goals Willie E. Hucks II outlined in his editorial

("Seven Goals for the New Year," January 2012), both for himself and for us all. He didn't say it, but I do not doubt he intended his first goal to be that of consistently starting *and ending* each day with prayer.

Thank you, Pastor Hucks!
—Cliff Drieberg, *Osoyoos, British Columbia, Canada* 



The ARMOR of GOD

FROM EPHESIANS 6

- 2 DVD set
- 8 thirty minute panel discussions
- 60 + pages of photos, background information and discussion starters



To order the *Armor of God two-DVD set*, see sample videos, or for *other products (and information)*, visit: www.biblefaces.com

Dr. Dick Stenbakken • 2493 Frances Drive • Loveland, Colorado 80537 • Phone: 970-667-0866

How do Paul's first century words and descriptions of the Roman armor of his era apply to modern living and the challenging situations we face daily today?

Join a group of scholars, educators, clergy, and administrators as they examine and explain the various pieces of armor Paul lists in Ephesians 6:10-18. Explore with them historically accurate armor and weapons like those used by soldiers common in New Testament times. Roman armor was timely; the principles derived from Paul's illustrations are timeless.

Six of the thirty-minute discussions focus on armor Paul mentions, and the seventh session looks at other parts of Roman military gear mentioned or alluded to by Christ and other Bible personalities. In a bonus eighth segment the five panelists share some of their personal "Aha!" experiences as a result of making the DVD set.

These DVDs are ideal for a wide range of settings from individual and small group use to classroom and home school applications. Each segment has an introduction as well as a series of questions to prompt deeper thought and study. They can be printed directly from the discs as needed.

Belt of Truth



Breastplate of Righteousness



Sandals of Peace



Shield of Faith



Helmet of Salvation



Sword of the Spirit

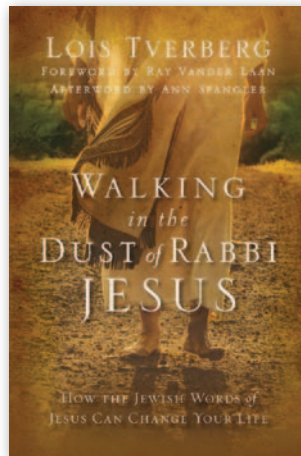


Other Military Equipment



Walking in the Dust of Rabbi Jesus: How the Jewish Words of Jesus Can Change Your Life

by Lois Tverberg,
Grand Rapids, MI:
Zondervan, 2012.



TVERBERG TAKES JESUS' SAYINGS AND CAREFULLY PEELS AWAY THE LAYERS OF TRADITION THAT SOMETIMES PREVENT US FROM SEEING THE REAL

MEANING OF THE TEXT.

A number of books have been published on the theme of reconstructing the context of Jesus' world. Some of them are very technical and sometimes too difficult to follow, while others are simply devotional and without a necessary depth. The newest book by Lois Tverberg, *Walking in the Dust of Rabbi Jesus*, I suggest, maintains a middle ground. The author, a devout Christian and thorough biblical scholar, succeeded in writing a book that will captivate the attention of both clergy and laity. With the help of Jewish thought, the author brings to the surface fascinating details concerning the familiar sayings of Jesus.

The overall theme of the book is stated as "hearing Jesus' words in their Eastern context yields insight for applying them to our lives today. The book is specifically oriented toward discipleship, asking what difference does it make that Jesus was Jewish for how we 'walk' as his disciples nowadays?"* Tverberg's previous book *Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus* received many positive reviews. But, in this new book, the author goes even deeper in exploring the Jewish background of Jesus' sayings.

In the very first line of the book, the author raises an important question:

"What would it be like to listen to Jesus' earth-shattering words through the ears of first-century disciples?" (13). But her survey of Jesus' words is not limited to first-century disciples. The subtitle for her book is *How the Jewish Words of Jesus Can Change Your Life*. Even though it may sound a bit too promising, her masterful transitions from the first century to the twenty-first century deserve particular attention. The author examines some Jewish ideas that can certainly deepen the understanding of Jesus' words and present fresh and practical insights for followers of Jesus today.

Tverberg takes Jesus' sayings and carefully peels away the layers of tradition that sometimes prevent us from seeing the real meaning of the text. For instance, when she talks about "loving your neighbor as yourself," she suggests that "instead of comparing the two kinds of love, it can compare *yourself* with your *neighbor*: 'Love your neighbor who is *similar to yourself*' " (60). The author also analyzes such sayings of Jesus as "hallowed be your name" (86) and

presents fascinating details regarding the meaning of the expression. When exploring Jewish thought, Tverberg finds the keys for interpreting Jesus' words on judging others, *chutzpah* (boldness) in prayer, obeying the Sabbath, and the importance of the Scriptures. In addition to contemplating the words of Jesus, the author points out the importance of studying and understanding the Bible in its entirety and demonstrates its beauty. Finally, the usage of contemporary and relevant illustrations makes the book truly practical and appealing to all.

Overall, I highly recommend *Walking in the Dust of Rabbi Jesus* for all who want to be inspired by the study of Jesus in His cultural context. This book is highly readable and filled with tremendous insights on Jesus and His sayings in His Jewish context.

—Reviewed by Oleg Kostyuk, MA, host of Cross Connection, Hope Channel.

* Lois Tverberg, "Next Book Close to Done," *Our Rabbi Jesus* (blog) April 11, 2011, ourrabbijesus.com/2011/04/11/next-book-close-to-done.



The Death of the Soul in Romans 7

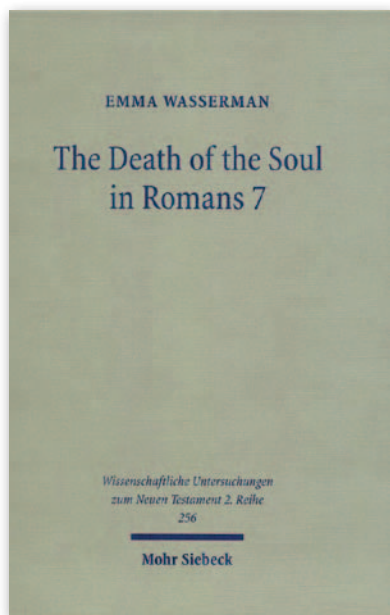
by Emma Wasserman,
Tübingen, Germany:
Mohr Siebeck, 2008.

The title of this book, a revised doctoral dissertation, is intriguing for Seventh-day Adventists because Adventists believe in the nonimmortality of the soul and can refer to biblical texts that state that the soul dies. However, this book is not about the state of the dead.

As the title indicates, it deals with Romans 7, a text that is notoriously difficult to interpret. Some perceive this chapter as pointing to the state of the unconverted person. Others challenge this position and would opt for the struggle of the redeemed Christian, illustrated by Paul's own experience. Luther spoke about *simul justus et peccator* ("at the same time just and a sinner"). But this is not Wasserman's approach. She seeks to present a new approach that differs widely from traditional interpretations. With regard to Romans 7, she distances herself from approaches that, for instance, opt for justification by faith. Wasserman goes back to Greek philosophers and feels that Paul is especially informed by, if not dependent on, a Platonic discourse.

She summarizes, "The death of the soul describes a moral-psychological drama in which the worst part of the soul defeats the best part. Platonic moral psychology divides the soul into three faculties that struggle against one another for dominance and control. In this struggle, the good part of the soul, reason or mind, always fights against the bad parts, the passions

and appetites. . . . [I]n extreme cases the bad faculties gain control and perversely enslave, imprison, and even metaphorically 'kill' reason" (8). According to her understanding, the issue in Romans 7 does not consist of moral weakness, but rather the text deals with cases of extreme immorality when reason is imprisoned by the passions that would be described as the death of the soul.




The speaker in Romans 7 is not Paul; rather, it is reason. Sin has to do with the irrational parts of the soul and is "a personified representation of the passions" (8). She acknowledges that the term *soul* is not used in Romans 7 but nevertheless argues that Paul operates with a concept of the soul that includes those aspects of the person that are not "reducible to the body" (8). Apparently, she claims that Paul does not understand *soul* holistically but as the nonbodily functions of a person, subdivided

into three additional categories among which reason is the highest category. If the passions dominate and enslave reason, the situation of Romans 7 is reached—extreme immorality.

Wasserman does not limit her study to Paul and Plato but also looks at other Greek philosophers, especially those who take an approach similar to Plato, for instance, Philo, claiming that Romans 7 is "consistent with a middle-Platonic discourse alive in Paul's day" (115). Her chapters deal with "Moral Psychology and Platonic Discourse," "The Death of the Soul in Romans 7," and "The Life and Death of the Soul in Romans 1–8."

Although much more could be said about her work, the basic questions are the following: Should we hear Paul on his own terms? Or should we interpret his letter to the Romans by the use of Greek moral philosophy and psychology? Does Paul follow a Greek or Old Testament understanding of the soul? Although Paul undoubtedly was familiar with Greek philosophy, was he dependent on it, or did he rather follow a biblical approach, distinguishing inspired literature from noninspired literature? Since the term *soul* is not used in Romans 7, is it helpful to introduce it into the debate? Did Paul really endorse reason as the good faculty as opposed to desires and passions that are bad? Do not Greek philosophers typically consider vices as contrary to human nature, while Paul seems to understand them as part of fallen human nature? This reviewer is not convinced that all of these questions have been answered satisfactorily.

—Reviewed by Ekkehardt Mueller, ThD, is deputy director, Biblical Research Institute, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States. 

Four church plants are being organized into local Adventist churches in the Netherlands

Huis ter Heide, the Netherlands—This spring four church plants in the Netherlands Union Conference (NUC) are being organized into a recognized Seventh-day Adventist church.

Beginning in 2000, the NUC has invested in 23 church plants. These projects are carried out by teams of church members, who are monitored by a minister, usually the pastor of

their “mother” church. Unfortunately, three out of these 23 church plants have stopped working. However, three others were organized into a church a few years ago. These churches have become big congregations.

While these three churches are mainly geared to the Dutch Caribbean (Antillean) culture, four new ones are predominantly linked to postmoderns, the post-Christian culture of the Netherlands. Pastor **Wim Altink**, NUC president, and Pastor **Rudy Dingjan**, NUC staff member for church growth, will lead out in the inauguration feasts for these churches.

The Netherlands Union Conference has 5,375 members worshipping now in 58 churches and 13 church plants. *[ted/NEWS]*

In Hungary, amended religion law recognizes Seventh-day Adventist Church

Silver Spring, Maryland, United States—A difficult time for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Hungary took a new turn when the nation’s lawmakers voted to restore the denomination’s official church status. Hungary’s parliament amended the country’s controversial “Law on Churches,” on February 27, 2012, to expand the list of officially recognized churches from 14 to

a total of 32. Among other faith groups added to the law were the Methodist Church, the Pentecostal Church, the Coptic Orthodox Church, and the Hungarian Islamic Council.

Tamás Ócsai, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Hungary, said the vote concludes months of uncertainty for both church leaders and members. Under the Law on Churches, first passed in July of last year, 14 denominations retained their traditional legal status while some 300 minority religious groups, including the Seventh-day Adventist Church, were “de-registered”



X-preszo team in a prayer session [photo courtesy NUC]



and invited to reapply for church status. The Hungarian government said the law is part of its broader efforts to shore up the country's struggling economy, and is aimed at preventing sham religious groups from claiming rights and privileges extended to churches.

"The past six months have been challenging," said Ócsai, speaking just minutes after the parliament

heritage, and that our church's many fine ministries for the public good can continue."

Wiklander also commended church leaders in Hungary for their "balanced, persistent approach in dealing with a complex political and legal situation."

He said, "Today, we join our brothers and sisters in Hungary in giving thanks to God for lead-

ing them through what has been a tremendously difficult time."

Raafat Kamal,

Public Affairs and Religious Liberty director for the Trans-European Division, called the passage of the amendment "an immense relief for all those who've been working tirelessly for this outcome." But he

also noted that the Law on Churches has stirred considerable international concern since it was passed last year, with some analysts saying it overtly politicizes the religious landscape in Hungary.

In response to criticisms, the Hungarian government has emphasized that even religious groups without church status can continue to meet, worship, and evangelize—rights that are protected under Hungary's constitution.

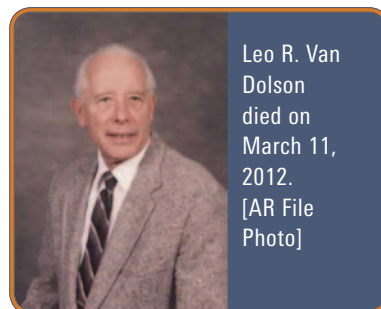
The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Hungary was first officially recognized by the government in 1957. Today it has more than 100 congregations and 5,000 members and also operates the Adventist Theological Seminary in Pécel, near Budapest. [tedNEWS]

Former editor dies

Leo Ray Van Dolson, who served the Seventh-day Adventist Church for many years in various capacities, including *Ministry*, died March 11, 2012, in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He was 86 years old.

Van Dolson, a native of San Francisco, California, was a noted pastor, missionary, educator, and journalist, serving the Adventist Church in Asia and North America. He preached on six continents and published dozens of books and scores of articles.

After being pastor, chaplain, evangelist, and teacher, Van Dolson joined the staff of the General Conference Ministerial Association in 1973 as an assistant secretary and executive editor of *Ministry* magazine. Later he became editor of *Life and Health* magazine (now called *Vibrant Life*) before joining the *Adventist Review* staff as associate editor in 1979.



In 1982, Van Dolson joined the General Conference Sabbath School Department as associate director. He retired from denominational service in 1987. [Adapted from *Adventist Review*, Carlos Medley] M



voted on the amendment. "But throughout it all, we haven't felt alone. We've experienced a tremendous sense of support from our worldwide church family who've been praying, along with us, that God's purpose will prevail."

Bertil Wiklander, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's Trans-European Division, welcomed the news, saying the vote allows the church in Hungary to look to the future with renewed purpose and energy. "The Hungarian Seventh-day Adventist Church has a long tradition of community service through its houses of worship, education programs, and welfare and public health initiatives," he said. "We're very pleased the government of Hungary has recognized this rich

Vicki Griffin, MS, Human Nutrition; MPA; MACN; Health Ministries director, Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Lansing, Michigan, United States.



Troubled by worry and anxiety?

Pastors are not immune from worry and anxiety: an upcoming board meeting, disgruntled members, family issues, church finances—the list goes on and on.

Science confirms the link between mind-set and disease: “A person’s psychological state is a prominent factor in health.”¹ “Attitude, social networks, and a healthy diet are woven together in their importance for physical and mental health.”²

Attitudes such as forgiveness, faith, optimism, happiness, and perseverance lower stress and, along with trust in God, are linked with a reduced risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, infection, ill health, and countless stress-related conditions. They also lessen the severity of illness and speed recovery when illness occurs.³

A steady state of worry, hostility, unforgiveness, hopelessness, grief, and depression increases the risk of infection, inflammatory conditions, and disease, and slows recovery from sickness.⁴ Many factors contribute to disease, and even those with a positive outlook on life get sick. Nevertheless, a positive mind-set is as important to good health as exercise and diet.

Do you worry about various issues? Practicing the following seven suggestions may help tip your mental scales toward the positive side of life:

1. *Smile.* Smiling is free—but its benefits are priceless. Doing so lowers stress hormones in the brain, and may power up the body’s immune system.

2. *Express gratitude.* People who express gratitude tend to live longer, healthier lives. Mentally rehearsing or writing a list of daily blessings is a powerful buffer against mental depression and physical illness.

3. *Focus on the positives.* Continually ruminating over sad events or worrisome thoughts is linked to many kinds of depression. Do you control your attitude, or does it control you? Concentrating on positive solutions and opportunities will help reduce negative thinking.


4. *Forgive.* Harboring anger and grudges hurts you by increasing stress hormones, blood pressure, and triggering other physical ailments. An act may not be excusable, but it is forgivable. Forgiving allows you to let the injury go. The healing spirit of forgiveness is a gift that God bestows to all who ask.

5. *Don’t give up.* Successful people are not mistake free—they just refuse to give up. Each one of us can change, learn, and improve. Persevere in spite of challenges and failures. Be inspired by the success of others and learn from criticism. Building a more resilient, wholesome attitude will put the oil of enthusiasm back into the mechanics of everyday life.

6. *Nurture your brain and body.* Nutrition and lifestyle powerfully affect brain function, mood, memory, and learning. Eating whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, nuts, and beans has long-term mood- and brain-boosting effects that no snack cake can rival! Drinking

water instead of caffeinated and sugary beverages improves alertness naturally. Adequate rest is essential for resisting fatigue, irritability, and temptations. And daily exercise, especially in the sunshine and fresh air, has a calming, stress-lowering effect often more powerful than antidepressants.

7. *Help others.* Offer to help someone in some way. It takes less than a minute to open a door for someone, but these little courtesies help others while boosting your own health and relieve depression. Many studies demonstrate that those who spend regular time helping others in service not only cut their overall risk of death, but also improve their quality of life.

Chronic worry, anxiety, and fear are the opposite of trust. Trust in God is the most potent weapon against mental and physical problems. As a pastor, you frequently invite others to place their trust in God; He extends that same compelling, personal invitation to you for each day’s challenges: “Trust in Him at all times, you people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us” (Ps. 62:8, NKJV). 

1 David Beaton, “Effects of Stress and Psychological Disorders on the Immune System” (Rochester Institute of Technology, November 2003), www.personalityresearch.org/papers/beaton.html.

2 Kathryn O. Tacy, “The Role of Prior Protective Factors,” peer review of David Beaton, “Effects of Stress and Psychological Disorders on the Immune System” (Rochester Institute of Technology, November 2003), www.personalityresearch.org/papers/beaton.html.

3 Ibid.

4 Robert Ader, *Psychoneuroimmunology* (Burlington, MA: Elsevier Press, 2007), 766.

Tell us what you think about this article. Email MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org or visit [facebook.com/MinistryMagazine](https://www.facebook.com/MinistryMagazine)

Join us in Cincinnati!



IT'S TIME...

To Be About Our Father's Business

ASI INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

Cincinnati, Ohio, Aug. 8-11, 2012

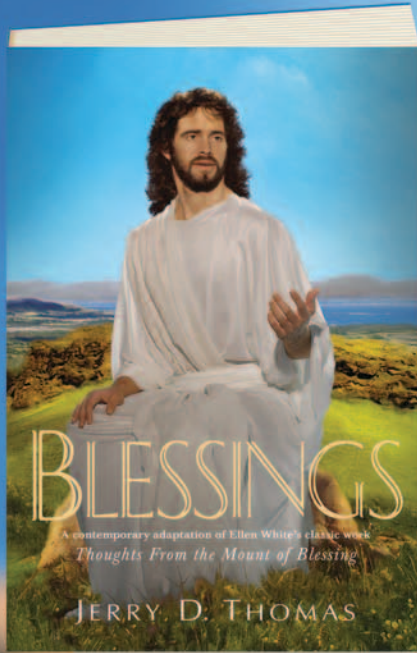
The annual ASI International Convention has something for everyone. Dynamic speakers, challenging seminars, programs and activities for youth and children, exhibitors from around the world, and exciting stories from ASI members in action.

Discover a new sense of calling!



ASI[®]

Find out more! www.asiministries.org 301-680-6450



BLESSINGS

Jerry D. Thomas

This modern-day paraphrase of Ellen White's classic work *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing* will give you a fresh new perspective into the words of Christ delivered on the mount that day. Jerry D. Thomas uses updated language and shorter sentences. This is a great book for giving and an inspiring read for anyone who values time with Jesus.

US\$15.99 • Hardcover/Dust Jacket • 0-8163-2284-8
US\$29.95 • Leather • 0-8163-2297-X

MESSIAH

Jerry D. Thomas

Working with the E. G. White Estate, author Jerry D. Thomas has prepared this contemporary adaptation of Mrs. White's great work, *The Desire of Ages*. The author's friendly style amplifies the beautiful message of this devotional classic, making the sublime themes of the original easier to grasp for readers of all ages.

US\$19.99 • Hardcover/Dust Jacket • 0-8163-1845-X
US\$8.99 • Paperback • 0-8163-1978-2
US\$8.99 • Paperback African American • 0-8163-2002-0
US\$5.99 • Pocket Edition • 0-8163-2132-9
US\$0.69 • Sharing booklet • 0-8163-2334-8



Call 1-800-545-2449 or Shop ABCASAP.com  Pacific Press®