

AUGUST 2020

Ministry[®]

INTERNATIONAL
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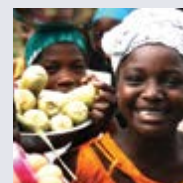
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AND MORE...



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“My hope is that these messages will be taken seriously by church leaders and members in every corner of the globe where evil exists.”

Thank-you for an excellent article by Christopher Kabwe Mukuka, titled, “Dual Allegiance” (April 2020). It was really practical and thorough—also explaining realistically how these challenges are faced on membership level. The enlightenment was appreciated.

—David Spencer, South Africa

Thank you for the April 2020 issue of *Ministry* magazine titled “And Deliver Us From Evil.” This issue was simply superb! As soon as I received it I began reading and could not put it down as I read article after enlightening and powerfully spiritually impactful article. Despite my limited experience with Deliverance Ministry (DM), as a pastor’s kid who grew up in the mission field where my dad often was involved in this kind of ministry, I’ve always believed, and still do, that the power of God is greater than the power of Satan.

Bravo for your courage in taking on this topic and finding a stellar line-up of authors with an outstanding grasp of DM. I was riveted by each presentation—but

especially by the one written by Jonathan Walter because it took place in Europe and by a young European Christian who had obviously read his Bible and believed what it says.

Again, thank you for this timely and outstanding issue. My hope is that these messages will be taken seriously by church leaders and members in every corner of the globe where evil exists. God’s omnipotence must be employed to deliver those who are oppressed.

—Willie Oliver, Silver Spring, Maryland

I found the April (2020) issue on the problem of demon possession pretty well balanced and Biblically thoughtful for the most part but wanted to address the repeated use of the term *Deliverance Ministry* mentioned throughout the magazine. In Kwabena Donkor’s Practical Pointers section (“Demons and Demonic Activity”), I think it needs to be stressed that “. . . exorcism is not listed among the spiritual gifts.” Simply because we make a ministry of something does

not mean we have a Biblical imperative to do so or that it somehow legitimizes it.

Casting out demons was a sign of sharing the gospel, just like tongues or healing, and not the main ministry. When we make a ministry of something and focus all or most of our energies there, we can forget the main reason we are called out of Babylon. We do not have any more problems with demon possession than the first century of the New Testament’s writing did, and there it was not a “ministry.”

Our calling is to share the three angels’ messages. If we cast out some demons, heal some people, and provide for needs along the way as we share the gospel in this context, then praise the Lord. Otherwise, in setting up deliverance ministries we will find ourselves treading on ground Ellen White warned us away from: “The work of declaring persons possessed of the devil, and then praying with them and pretending to cast out the evil spirits, is fanaticism which will bring into disrepute any church which sanctions such work. I was shown that we must give no encouragement to these demonstrations, but must guard the people with a decided testimony against that which would bring a stain upon the name of Seventh-day Adventists, and destroy the confidence of the people in the message of truth which they must bear to the world” (*Selected Messages*, book 2, 46).

—Bob Stewart, email



“Leave her alone!”

The story came out of the *New York Times*. “On March 1, while Lele was holding her 11-month-old daughter, her husband began to beat her with a high chair. She is not sure how many times he hit her. Eventually, she says, one of her legs lost feeling and she fell to the ground, still holding the baby in her arms. . . .

“Lele—her full name is not being used for her safety—said that her husband had abused her throughout their six-year relationship, but that the Covid-19 outbreak made things far worse.

“‘During the epidemic, we were unable to go outside, and our conflicts just grew bigger and bigger and more and more frequent,’ she said. ‘Everything was exposed.’”¹

Common tools of abuse may also include “isolation from friends, family and employment; constant surveillance; strict, detailed rules for behavior; and restrictions on access to such basic necessities as food, clothing and sanitary facilities.”² Mental health expert Karen Holford valiantly conducted response training for pastoral leaders because “most of them had never experienced domestic abuse situations before.”³

What would Jesus say?

What would Jesus say to the girls and the women who have been wounded and shamed by domestic, workplace, or campus sexual abuse or harassment?⁴ Remember Mary (the sister of Martha and Lazarus) at the feast of Simon, the healed leper? There she was, kneeling beside Jesus, sobbing as she splashed expensive perfume over both His head and feet. *The Desire of Ages* draws the veil aside with a disclosure not unlike the headlines of late. As it turns out, “Simon had led into sin the woman he now despised. [Mary] had been deeply wronged by him.”⁵ He, who was her uncle no less,⁶ had led her into the shame of his own sexual sin.

So, when Jesus responds to the hisses of disapproval for Mary, He speaks cryptic but forceful words still addressed to every male abuser: “‘Leave her alone’” (John 12:7, NIV).

Woundedness

The church stands beside all victims of unwanted sexual abuse—for there is no place in either kingdom or church for this predatory

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immorality. If you are a victim of such abuse, report this illegal activity to the authorities, if possible. When it is safe to do so, seize the new freedom that many victims are now sensing and speak up regarding your woundedness. Find a counselor or pastor whom you can trust and share your story of pain.

Does Christ forgive sexual sin? Of course, He does. “You may say, I am sinful, very sinful. You may be; but the worse you are, the more you need Jesus. He turns no weeping, contrite one away. He does not tell to any all that He might reveal, but He bids every trembling soul take courage. Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration.”⁷

Can Jesus heal the victims of sexual sin? The story of Mary offers a resounding Yes. *The Desire of Ages* promises: “The plan of redemption has invested humanity with great possibilities, and in Mary these possibilities were to be realized. Through His grace she became a partaker of the divine nature. . . .

“The souls that turn to Him for refuge, Jesus lifts above the accusing and the strife of tongues. No man or evil angel can impeach these souls. Christ unites them to His own divine-human nature. They stand beside the great Sin Bearer, in the light proceeding from the throne of God.”⁸

Where better to stand than beside the One who can both forgive our guilt and heal our wounds? No matter the headlines—victim, or even abuser—the light shining from Calvary offers hope to us all.



- 1 Amanda Taub, “A New Covid-19 Crisis: Domestic Abuse Rises Worldwide,” *New York Times*, updated April 14, 2020, <http://nytimes.com/2020/04/06/world/coronavirus-domestic-violence.html>.
- 2 Taub, “A New Covid-19 Crisis.”
- 3 Karen Holford, “Abuse in Lockdown—and How to Help,” *Trans-European Division News*, May 6, 2020, ted.adventist.org/news/1692-abuse-in-lockdown-and-how-to-help.
- 4 A version of this was first published as a blog on “The Fourth Watch” at pmchurch.org/blog/2017/11/29/leave-her-alone.
- 5 Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898), 566.
- 6 Ellen G. White, *Daughters of God* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1998), 239.
- 7 White, *Desire of Ages*, 568.
- 8 White, 568.

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Economics, pandemics, and prophecy

Economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic has raised many fears but also renewed interest in end-time events. As the number of economists suggesting a global depression increases, one wonders how a pandemic or an economic depression fits into our understanding of eschatology. Scripture states that while the end will come as a thief in the night for some people, “ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that this day should overtake you as a thief” (1 Thess. 5:4, KJV). In light of Scripture, history, and economics, how are we to understand events now taking place?

Preexisting conditions

While the coronavirus has been the catalyst for economic upheaval, many preexisting conditions have made its financial impact potentially catastrophic for individuals, businesses, and even countries. Our current debt-driven,

consumption-based economy, in which individuals and corporations alike operate without savings, seems to have no ability to withstand financial turmoil. Everyone—from single parent to small business to multibillion-dollar corporation—is looking for a bailout. Some were already dealing with the realities of income inequality and a system stacked against them¹ while, at the same time, CEOs were paying themselves large bonuses with their financially engineered “profits” at the expense of saving for a rainy day. The world is in the state of a medically induced economic coma, out of which many businesses will not recover.

The Silent Depression

One economist reported that the economic growth per capita of the past decade in the United States was actually worse than the Great Depression era of 1929 or the Long Depression

of 1873. In fact, he calls the current era the Silent Depression²—a depression that no one in the financial media wants to admit or discuss but in which people are clearly suffering. Only the use of enormous amounts of debt has been able to obscure the real impact of this financial condition. Indeed, we say, “I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing”—and do not know that [we] are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked” (Rev. 3:17, NKJV).

The world is coming to the end of a long economic cycle that started after World War II, one that created great prosperity but is now catching many in a downward spiral. Today, many, having lost sight of the financial prudence of their parents or grandparents, now find themselves in the kind of dire situations that always strike at the end of economic cycles. Such long economic cycles have played out before in history, with each ending in a global depression and societal upheaval. Interestingly, those years and eras correspond with several key events in our understanding of church and prophetic history.

The Kondratieff Wave and 1844

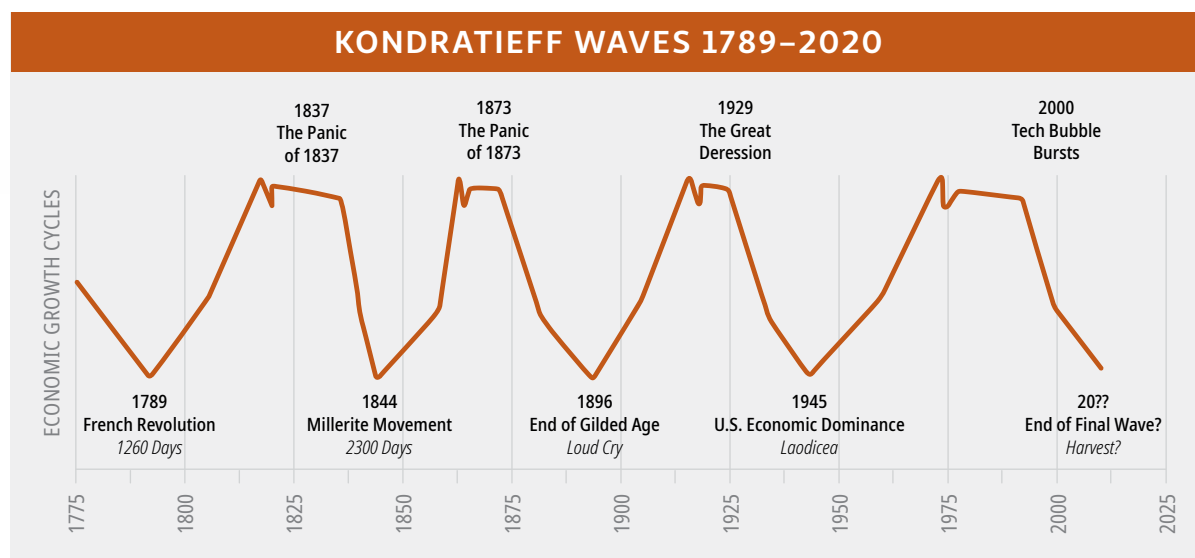
Nikolai Kondratieff first studied such long economic cycles during the 1920s. He observed that they persisted over 50- to 70-year periods and were characterized like the seasons. As with spring and summer, the world’s economies would grow well, followed by an economic plateau that one could describe as an autumn. Then came an economic winter that typically saw debt crises, stock market crashes, depressions, world wars, and regime changes.

Others have applied Kondratieff’s work to long economic cycles, now called the Kondratieff wave³ or long waves. The Kondratieff wave during the past 200 years is illustrated in the following graph.⁴ It shows the four long waves, or economic cycles, that have occurred since the late 1700s.

As Seventh-day Adventists, we find our attention immediately drawn to the date of 1844 because it is such a significant event in the beginnings of the Advent movement. The year 1844 was the end of the first cycle of the 1800s. Economists would deem the period from about 1837 to 1844 as an economic winter characterized by a deep depression, wars, and political turmoil. Uriah Smith, in his book *Daniel and the Revelation*, pointed out that in 1840 the Ottoman regime ended in accordance with prophecy.⁵ It was the same period during which the Baptist preacher William Miller expounded on the 2,300-day prophecy of Daniel 8:14, declaring that the cleansing of the sanctuary would take place in 1844.

French Revolution

The previous wave had ended in 1789 with the beginning of the French Revolution. After a famine and grueling depression, French peasants rose up in revolt. As a result of the French Revolution, Napoleon’s general Berthier arrested and exiled Pope Pious VI, in fulfillment of another major time prophecy, the 1,260-day prophecy of Daniel. It was an era in which years of repression now fostered new ideas and theories that opposed the ruling classes of both the aristocracy and the church. Many embraced the ideologies of secular humanism, evolutionism, and Marxism to replace



a theology steeped in hypocrisy and cruelty. The 1,260-day prophecy warned of these new threats to Christianity. During this era, the United States arose as a nation, another feature of the end of such cycles—changing governmental regimes.

The Panic of 1873

The next Kondratieff wave ended around 1896, after a very prolonged long economic downturn that lasted more than 20 years. Amid this economic malaise, the Adventist Church had its 1888 experience, when the preaching of righteousness by faith was to be accompanied by the outpouring of the latter rain in special power to equip the church for the final proclamation of the “everlasting gospel” (Rev. 14:6). Ellen White stated, “The loud cry of the third angel has already begun.”⁶ History reveals that the church was unprepared to receive this special blessing.

Looking at the events that began the Kondratieff winter from 1870 into the 1890s can be very instructive for Christians today.⁷ This cycle began with the Panic of 1873, a meltdown of the financial markets that grew into the “Long Depression.”⁸ This “Long Depression,” as historians have called it, lasted more than five years and is the longest ever officially recorded in the US, outlasting the Great Depression of the 1930s. Even after the depression technically ended, the economy languished until the end of the cycle in 1896.

Also, in 1888, Henry W. Blair introduced a bill in the US Senate that sought to establish a Sunday law. In the midst of economic upheaval, Ellen White stated that “rulers and legislators, in order to secure public favor, will yield to the popular demand for a law enforcing Sunday observance.”⁹ While this failed, it seems that our window of opportunity to finish the work in that cycle also faded. Yet the connection between economic turmoil and religious legislation can clearly be seen.

Wars and rumors of wars

In the next Kondratieff wave, starting in 1896 and ending in 1945, the earth saw terrible bloodshed unlike anything experienced before. World War I, the Russian Revolution, the Holocaust under the Nazis, World War II, the atomic bomb, the beginning of the Chinese Revolution, and many other conflicts filled the era. Much of the world’s population became trapped behind closed borders. The loss of life was unbearable, and the wars and international tensions also made an environment hostile to the spread of the gospel.



The key takeaway for Christians is not so much that this is a Kondratieff winter. Rather, history shows us that these economic winters are really harvest seasons for God.

This cycle ended in 1945. Though it may seem there was no culmination of a prophetic event at the time, it may be that it still was the beginning of a key end-time prophecy.

Laodicea and the age of prosperity

The post–World War II era ushered in an era of unprecedented world prosperity. The US Marshall Plan helped to rebuild the war-torn economies, and America benefited by becoming a global economic engine. The American dollar became the international trade and reserve currency, effectively making the US the world’s banker. Kondratieff spring and summer bloomed for 30 years and with it the burgeoning American middle class. While the Christian church thrived financially, the growing affluence led many into a trap of materialism and wealth.

In the 1980s, corporations began to seek greater profits by offshoring their production to Asia and other regions, which started the financialization of the US economy. Financialization and debt replaced manufacturing and savings, but few recognized the economic and societal impacts of such a shift. The strong manufacturing economy shifted to one driven by debt and consumption. As debt levels grew, it created a massive financial bubble. In the year 2000, the bursting of the tech-stock bubble ushered in the Kondratieff winter, the effects of which are being experienced today in this bubble economy era.

Past is prolog

The global financial crisis in 2008 was another warning signal. Still, again most have forgotten it, thanks to the extraordinary amounts of debt incurred by governments and central banks to



keep up the appearances of economic growth. For 12 years, the US economy set new records for the length of economic expansion and stock market gains. But this past decade of economic progress has left behind many of the lower-income families. Income inequality has exploded, festering social unrest. Nationalism has become preferred over international cooperation. And in the midst of a global trade war between the US and China, a new threat has swept the world—COVID-19.

This pandemic has exposed all of the weaknesses and excesses of our economy and society. Our on-demand, consumption-based economy has not saved for a rainy day. We have assumed that economic growth will always be the norm, ignoring the “laws” of economics. The sudden stop of cash flow has revealed all of the levered economic schemes that only a few months ago looked like sound investments.

In 2020, many have borrowed to create rental homes, making *Airbnb* just the new word for the subprime mortgages of 2008. Some have borrowed to buy more expensive cars, expecting to Uber or Lyft their way to affordability. Large corporations have spent their cash and then borrowed money to buy back stocks to prop up stock prices so that executives can get their bonuses. The entire US shale oil industry is built on the availability of cheap debt and the assumption of never-ending demand. Oil prices crashing into negative prices was as unthinkable as the failure of a major financial institution such as Lehman Brothers. The government is bailing out not only the financial sector but also every business and worker. Governments around the world have pledged tens of trillions of dollars to keep the system from imploding.

The great opportunity

So, what of this economic winter? The key takeaway for Christians is not so much that this is a Kondratieff winter. Rather, history shows us that these economic winters are really harvest seasons for God. These are the times when worried people are ready to listen to a message of hope. In such times, struggling, oppressed human beings are responsive to compassion and grace. This is not only a time when the harvest is plentiful in a world looking for answers but also an opportunity to finish the Great Commission given us by Christ. Jesus, Himself, lamented that the harvest is great, but the laborers are few.

Where will this go from here? Will all the printed money transport the economy back

to January 2020, to a world before we knew of coronaviruses and lockdowns? Or will the economic gravity, that had already been pulling, fully take over and bring the economic winter to its inevitable conclusion as it always does? Has God, in His foresight, planned for a paradigm shift for His church, a massive redirection and mobilization of peoples previously paralyzed in a Laodicean state?

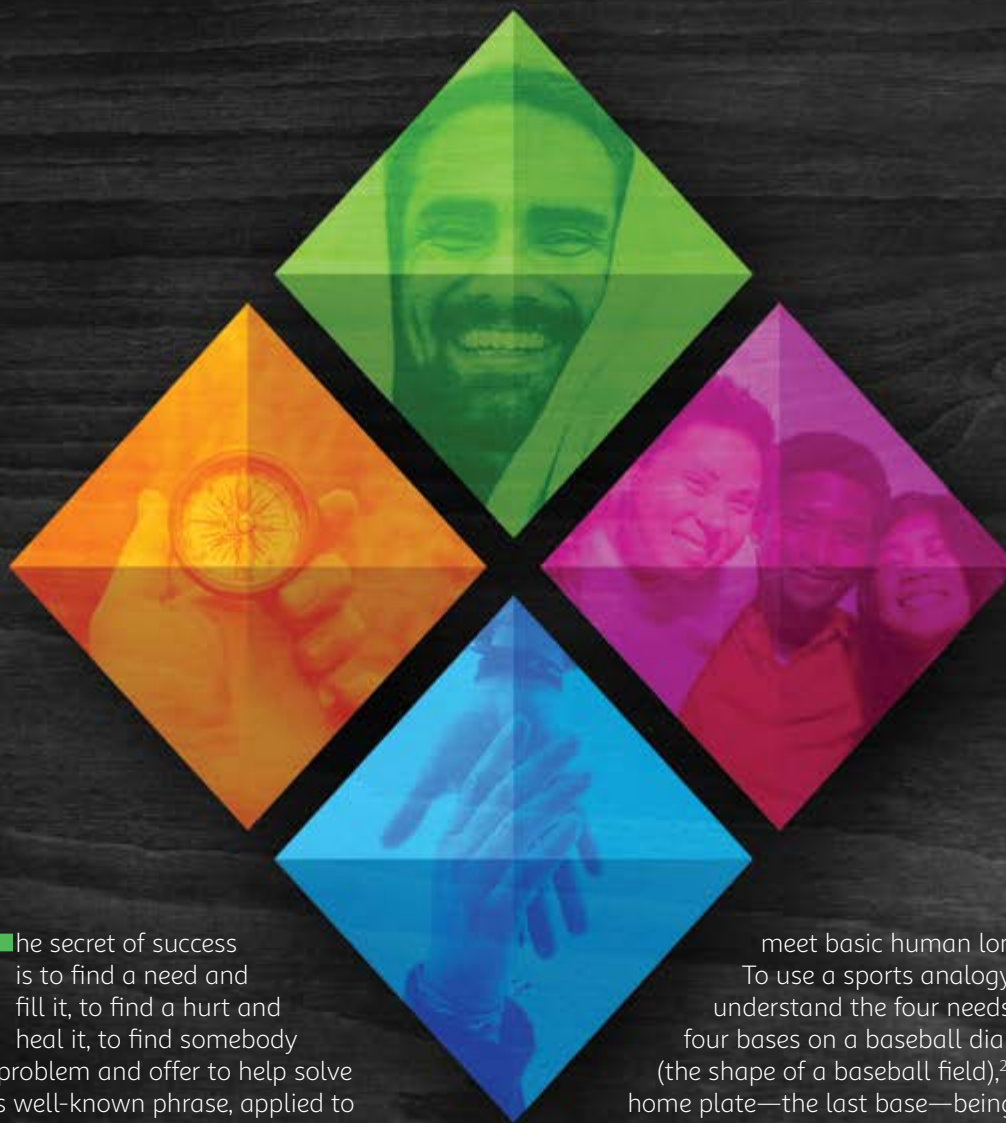
“God’s mercy, His sustaining providence, His never-to-be-forgotten deliverances, are to be recounted, step by step. *As God’s people thus review the past, they should see that the Lord is ever repeating His dealings.* They should understand the warnings given, and should beware not to repeat their mistakes. Renouncing all self-dependence, they are to trust in Him to save them from again dishonoring His name.”¹⁰

Perhaps God has guided the world through economic cycles, history, and prophecy to prepare His people to recognize the events of the COVID-19 financial crisis as the moment of greatest opportunity in the history of His workings with humans.



- 1 “Measuring Deprivation: The Grim Racial Inequalities Behind America’s Protests.” *The Economist*, June 3, 2020, <https://www.economist.com/united-states/2020/06/03/the-grim-racial-inequalities-behind-americas-protests>.
- 2 Emil Kalinowski, “The Silent Depression: Trundling Is the New Booming,” CFA Institute, February 11, 2020, <http://blogs.cfainstitute.org/investor/2020/02/11/the-silent-depression-trundling-is-the-new-booming/>.
- 3 Christopher Quigley, “Kondratieff Waves and the Greater Depression of 2013–2020,” *Financial Sense*, February 24, 2012, <https://www.financialsense.com/contributors/christopher-quigley/kondratieff-waves-and-the-greater-depression-of-2013-2020>.
- 4 Long Wave Analyst Group, Vancouver, Canada, longwavegroup.com/. Another resource is Nicolai Kondratieff, *The Long Waves in Economic Life* (Mansfield Center, CT: Martino, 2014); originally published as “Die langen Wellen der Konjunktur,” *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* 56, no. 3 (1926): 573–609.
- 5 Uriah Smith, *Daniel and the Revelation* (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1897), 518.
- 6 Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958), 363.
- 7 T. H. Aka, *End Game Economics, Understanding the Coming Financial Crisis Through Scripture* (Seattle, WA: Kindle Direct Publishing, 2020). Another resource can be found at the YouTube channel “End Game Economics : Kondratieff Wave” at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCe10Lh3zNzcw>.
- 8 The National Bureau of Economic Research, *US Business Cycle Expansions and Contractions*, nber.org/cycles/cyclesmain.html.
- 9 Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), 592.
- 10 Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1902), 210; emphasis added.

The evangelism diamond: A model for successful evangelism



The secret of success is to find a need and fill it, to find a hurt and heal it, to find somebody with a problem and offer to help solve it.¹ This well-known phrase, applied to many aspects of life, including business, may also be applied to evangelism. Jesus lived that principle, saying, “The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10, NKJV). He did for us what we could not do for ourselves.

What do people desire? What are their basic needs, regardless of culture, geography, age, and education? I believe there are four: guidance, practical help, friendship, and God. And that is what we as a church should offer people. They will respond to such an approach because it will

meet basic human longings. To use a sports analogy, we can understand the four needs as the four bases on a baseball diamond (the shape of a baseball field),² with home plate—the last base—being the ultimate absence in their lives: God Himself. Let us unpack the evangelism diamond.

1. People crave guidance

Working in northern Asia, I have come to realize that scores of people wonder why an all-loving, omnipotent God is even necessary. To be sure, a relatively small percentage of the world is strictly atheist. Still, many more have married a belief in naturalism (such as evolution) with trust in spirits and powers who are godlike but are completely different from our heavenly Father. In

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fact, according to the Joshua Project, a whopping 42.5 percent of the world population has no clue about the God of the Bible.³

So, before anything else can take place in their journey to a God they do not know, *guidance* is what they require—direction. They must have the leading of the Holy Spirit. But that need is not limited to populations devoid of Christian values. It includes many secular and even religious people in so-called Christian nations.⁴ The big question is, What can we as Seventh-day Adventists do about this?

We can pray. Faithful, focused, and strategic prayer is the first base of the evangelism diamond. We cannot get to the next step until we reach this one. Many may be tempted now to stop reading, considering it a religious cliché. But I am not speaking about casual praying. Many Adventists I know are sincere and yet still do not know how to pray, trusting fully in God's promises and pressing with daily conviction before God's throne for people to be saved.

Consider, for example, that God “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:3, 4, NKJV). Jesus knows that many more people are ready to respond than we expect since the fields “are already white for harvest!” (John 4:35, NKJV). John assures us that if we pray on behalf of those who have not yet committed the unpardonable sin, the requests we have asked of Him will be fulfilled (1 John 5:14–16). Christ urges us to ask, seek, and knock because God will surely answer, especially our need for the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:9, 13). He also said: “Whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (John 14:13, NKJV), and, “If two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven” (Matt. 18:19, NKJV). While they are marvelous promises, Christ had one concern about them: “When the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?” (see Luke 18:1–8, NKJV).

Intercessory prayer for unbelievers is a largely unexplored area of ministry in the church, but it

is absolutely essential! The church desperately needs focused, serious, faith-filled, and systematic prayer intercessors, even for large, broad-based initiatives. Every congregation should have teams for strategic mission prayer. No longer an add-on to mission, prayer must take center stage. Otherwise, relatively few people will continue to advance along the evangelism diamond toward home base.⁵

2. People desire practical help

Unbelievers must come to realize that Christianity is different, that it works in real life. Practical and disinterested acts of kindness will go a long way toward softening the hearts of those searching for a God they do not yet know. Here is where our various community and health ministries enter into the equation. Cooking schools, stop-smoking clinics, parenting classes, financial seminars, stress-management seminars, and programs for the poor and disadvantaged will help. But just as necessary is a *personal* willingness to help friend and neighbor. “The strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian.”⁶

Yet, how does a local church express *consistent* love for others? The truth is that human beings, Christians included, are inherently selfish. Most will give of their time and efforts for the sake of others but within boundaries. And yet, when you read the Sermon on the Mount, you find Jesus rejecting such limits (Matt. 5:13–16, 38–48). How can we reflect the lavish and unconditional love of God day in and day out? Ellen White helps us: “Whatever the profession, no man has pure love to God unless he has unselfish love for his brother. But we can never come into possession of this spirit by *trying* to love others. What is needed is the love of Christ in the heart. When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously.”⁷

The only way I can consistently love and give time and again to others is if I go to the Source of love day after day and fill my heart with Him. It is the love of Christ *through me* that works, not

my inherent capacity to love. Helping others in practical ways leads unbelievers to second base on their way home.

3. People want friends

Making friends with unbelievers, of course, is closely related to our previous point. Being consistently kind and generous to others will inevitably create friendships. And everyone needs friends. Studies on loneliness show people deteriorate and die sooner without meaningful relationships.⁸ However, at this point, many Adventists make a mistake. They value their human friendships above the one their friends may develop with Jesus Christ.

I have known well-meaning Adventists who have made solid friendships with nonbelievers because of work associations, family ties, or hobbies that both like. They find some affinity that binds them together, and they treasure doing things with them. However, they will become selfishly protective of those friendships to the point that they “guard” their friends from a closer association with the church.

For example, they may not invite people to attend church services with them because they fear the members’ flaws will turn their friends away. Or they do not ask them to attend evangelistic meetings because they “know” their friends are not ready to hear sermons on Bible prophecy. But that may indicate more of a lack of trust in God working with their friends than actual concern for them. All of our congregations have faults, and our methods, though well-intentioned, may involve risks. But we must watch what *God* is accomplishing with our friends, not what *we* are doing with them.

So, inviting others to our small groups, our Sabbath School classes, and our evangelistic meetings and spending valuable time with them while connecting them with others in the church is key to the spiritual development of nonbelievers. We involve them in the social as well as the spiritual aspects of what it is like to follow Jesus. This is the third base.⁹ Now, we are ready to point them to home plate.

4. People need the Lord

The most important objective when working with the lost is to get them home, to guide them to Jesus. Leaving people on third base without bringing them home ends in cruel disappointment. What people need the most is not our friendship, kindness, or prayers, as critical as

those are in soul winning. What people require most of all is Jesus Himself. Without Him, we are only helping generate a thirst that will never be quenched.

How do we bring them home? The simple answer is by exposure to God’s Word. Having worked for many years in evangelism, I have seen countless people come to Christ. I am convinced that nothing is as critical when doing evangelism as exposing people to the Word of God. That is when the Holy Spirit can work most freely in people’s lives. Time and again, I have observed people brought to deep conviction of what they should or should not do as they came to understand the plan of God found in His Word. “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12, NKJV).

How does this happen? Primarily through two venues: personal Bible studies and evangelistic reaping meetings. Professional evangelists have learned that people must encounter a certain amount of biblical teaching if we are to expect them to make decisions for Christ, His teachings, and His last-day church. Not too many of our members have the experience and ability to lead people to decisions just through personal Bible studies. Offering a series of evangelistic biblical sermons on distinctive Adventist teachings meets a critical need today. While a person is listening to a Bible exposition, the Holy Spirit has the best opportunity to bring about conviction. Around the world, with very few exceptions, most new converts to Adventism come through public evangelistic meetings.¹⁰ Churches that hold one or more of them each year will see people “come home.” But it is much better to offer a full series of Bible teachings—20 to 30 sermons—than a shortened version of 6 to 10 sermons. Seeing the big picture is important for the Holy Spirit to drive home each aspect of God’s will.

Home at last

In baseball, a home run is scored when the ball is hit in such a way that the batter is able to make a complete circuit of the four bases and reach home safely in one play. Every person in the world needs the four bases: guidance, help, friends, and God. These happen more or less sequentially. The more a church keeps this in mind and works accordingly, the greater a fruitful harvest and the more people will reach home.



- 1 Robert H. Schuller, *Life Changers* (Old Tappan, NJ, MI: F. H. Revell, 1981), 33.
- 2 Baseball, basically, involves one team using a bat to try to hit a ball thrown by the pitcher of the opposing team and that team catching the ball hit by the batter. If the hitter reaches first base before the fielding team gets the ball to it, a hit is scored. The team scores a run when a player manages to reach the fourth base—home plate—without getting tagged by the opposite team with a ball they have fielded. The team with the most runs after nine innings—sequences—wins the game.
- 3 "Global Summary," Joshua Project, accessed May 12, 2020, <https://joshuaproject.net/>. The Joshua Project is a research organization that quantifies the challenge of Christian missions in the world.
- 4 Historically, the quintessential Christian nation has been the United States (US). However, closely resembling what happened in Western Europe, Christianity is declining as fast in the US as atheism, agnosticism, and secularism are rising. See "In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace," Pew Research Center, October 17, 2019, <https://www.pewforum.org/2019/10/17/in-u-s-decline-of-christianity-continues-at-rapid-pace/>. Some evidence, however, indicates that *conservative* Christianity continues to flourish. See Glenn T. Stanton, *The Myth of the Dying Church: How Christianity Is Actually Thriving in America and the World* (New York, NY: Worthy Publishing, 2019).
- 5 I have just completed a 17-chapter book on this subject. While much more can be said, the key thing is to get busy and systematically pray for others believing that God will hear and answer!
- 6 Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1905), 470.
- 7 Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1900), 384; emphasis in the original.
- 8 See, for example, the Harvard University study on happiness called Harvard Study on Adult Development mentioned in Liz Mineo, "Good Genes Are Nice, but Joy Is Better: Harvard Study, Almost 80 Years Old, Has Proved That Embracing Community Helps Us Live Longer, and Be Happier," *Harvard Gazette*, April 11, 2017, <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2017/04/over-nearly-80-years-harvard-study-has-been-showing-how-to-live-a-healthy-and-happy-life/>.
- 9 Some readers may be wondering where the famous statement by Ellen White about "Christ's method alone" may fit in this scheme. She wrote that Jesus mingled with people desiring their good, had compassion for them, ministered to their needs, gained their confidence, and then asked them to follow Him (see White, *Ministry of Healing*, 143). Such steps are, basically, part of the second and third bases in our structure. Mingling with them and gaining their confidence fits well with the friendship factor, and having compassion and ministering to their needs fits well with the practical help factor.
- 10 Although I am not aware of empirical research on this point, personal experience and conversations with scores of evangelists and pastors of evangelistically oriented churches validate this belief. I have held some 30 public evangelism events, with dozens of churches, on four continents. I have often asked on Sabbath mornings, before starting evangelistic meetings, how many who were not raised in Adventist homes have joined the church thanks to public meetings. Unfailingly, the number is between 60 and 80 percent. Many attend Adventist churches due to friendships made with members, however, a significant percentage of those do not join the church. Joining the church seems to be a response to a series of Spirit-led Bible meetings for most people.

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Understanding childhood spiritual abuse

In 1968, singer and songwriter John Lennon released a song called *"Imagine"* in which he muses about a world without religion. If you have experienced any form of spiritual abuse, you wonder the same thing. I know, because I did. Let me start with a disclaimer.

This article may seem negative toward the church—but I am a committed Seventh-day Adventist. My husband works at the local conference level and we raised our children in the church and its school system. My intent is to bring awareness to the issue of childhood spiritual abuse and to encourage those who have lived through such abuse to find hope and rebirth in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.¹

My church, while I was growing up, was split between liberals and conservatives. I know, not much has changed today. Friction between opposing groups is not new. In heaven, Satan thought his brand of religion was better than God's. It continued with Isaac and Ishmael's lineage, leading to war between the Jews and Arabs. In the Crusades, Christians determined to destroy the non-Christians. The attack from Islamic extremist terrorists on September 11,

2001, had religious motivations. Religious divides result in deep anguish.

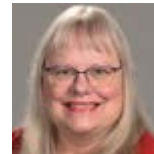
What is childhood spiritual abuse?

Childhood spiritual abuse differs greatly from adult spiritual abuse. As a child, you are religiously indoctrinated with no real choice on your part, and those early experiences shape your developmental patterns and worldview. Those of us who experienced the split between the strict/uncompromising faction of our church on the one hand and the lenient/tolerant faction on the other, suffered great pain during our childhood years. This tremendously affected our relationship with God. Understanding this may help identify whether or not spiritual abuse may be a factor your church.

The religious environment I knew as a child was very fundamentalist and rigid. The



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Word of God was black and white. With no room for open discussion, my opinions and feelings seemed not to matter. To denounce such foundational beliefs is to have overwhelming guilt. As a teenager, I became unsure of my identity. I found myself constantly searching for “the right way.” I applied to a self-supporting church school, thinking that would make me holier. My application was denied. Now I felt rejected at home and abroad. That rejection sent me down a dark hole of despondency.

We were given biblical ratification for every prohibitive injunction:

- One must be perfect by obeying all the rules to gain salvation (Matthew 5:48).
- Anything less than that perfect obedience to all God’s commands means one does not love Him (John 14:15).
- No pictures or portraits of people are allowed because they might be an idol to be worshiped (Exodus 20:4).
- If found violating the Sabbath (as defined by the group or local church), one would lose church membership and, therefore, salvation (Exodus 20:8).
- No fun games, secular music, or any television programs were allowed on Sabbath (Isaiah 58:13).
- On Sabbath, one could reheat food, but never cook it (Exodus 16:23).
- Holidays were suspect—usually pagan—especially Christmas (Jeremiah 10:3).
- Makeup, “fancy clothes,” and jewelry were associated with Jezebel (2 Kings 9:30).
- Voting was not allowed because such actions might expedite the “end of time” (Titus 3:1, 2). (My parents had a large, framed wall-size chart of the last day events portrayed prominently in our house. I didn’t vote on anything until I was 25 years old. My husband had to instruct me.)

Anything look familiar? The subject matter was not so much of a problem as much as the rigid manner in which it was delivered. Those who have grown up under strict circumstances realize that such beliefs have become so embedded in the mind that rational thinking does not change the emotional response when triggered. Failing to obey the rules was considered to be evil. “Rule breakers” were typically shunned. Anyone who attempted to deviate would find themselves verbally abused.

My parents were both vegan. (My father is now deceased and, sadly, my mother has dementia and is blind.) When I suggested getting a pizza, I was reprimanded with phrases such as, “Get thee behind me, Satan.” It felt like they were calling me the devil! To this day, I cannot read Mark 8:33 without some mental or emotional relapse. I attended nursing school in Loma Linda, California, an hour and a half away from our home. My parents would never come to visit me on Sabbath because it was more than an hour’s travel.

To be fair, there are degrees of childhood spiritual abuse. Some have endured added physical abuse. One family padlocked their refrigerator during Sabbath hours so that their children could not eat during that time. Other forms of spiritual abuse are less extreme but no less impactful. Passionate, enthusiastic preaching is difficult for me to listen to. I believe this arises from the rigid demanding nature of the verbal abuse in our home. There seemed to be a desire to “scare religion into them.” My ears start ringing, my heart starts pounding, and I usually find myself leaving the room.

I think it is important to know that such experiences are not restricted to any one religious group. Susan was raised in a religious non-SDA Christian home affiliated with another denomination. I met her in home care where I worked as a registered nurse. Susan was diagnosed with rectal

cancer. She was upset that her parents arranged for her to be excused from health classes in high school on the grounds that there was no value in learning about her body.

They told her that God would always determine the course of her life. Now, as an adult, she would study pictures on the door of the doctor's office to learn what a colon is. She felt stupid and scared because of the ignorance that her parents forced upon her in the name of God. Her mind understands differently now but her emotions can't seem to match.

This type of control as a child can leave you struggling as an adult. Yet some who have lived through this type of dominance, perpetuate the same ideas on their children, controlling them in order to keep their family "pure in the eyes of God." Such behavior is akin to "Stockholm syndrome," so named after the 1973 incident that involved four hostages seized during a bank robbery in Sweden. At the end of their captivity, the hostages resisted rescue and refused to testify against their captors. Such a psychological shift to sympathize with and follow your tormenter can take hold within just three to four days.²

A 2003 Prime Time special on the 10th anniversary of the tragic conflagration in Waco, Texas, portrayed children of the victims. When the host played film footage of the burning buildings, he had a hard time controlling his emotions because these children had lost their parents in that fire. Most of the children, however, had no reaction at all. Their parents died and they had been programmed to believe this is what would happen in the "last days."

It should be understood that not all strict/uncompromising people are bad, evil and legalistic. Also, not all lenient/ tolerant people are bad, evil and subscribe to cheap grace. As a survivor of childhood spiritual abuse, it was difficult to differentiate between truth and lies. Religious interpretations of spiritual things were seen as another twist on the same old lie I have heard all my life.

This type of control in childhood leaves you struggling as an adult. It rips your spirit from you. Many adults abused as children prefer not to talk about their experience. I myself did not know how to give voice to it. I was afraid that if I tried, I would be subjected to more judgment and embarrassment. Friendships were often frustrating and unfulfilling. Relationships were difficult at times because I was not always clear on how to have any kind of relationship. Interestingly some survivors

Failing to obey the rules was considered to be evil. "Rule breakers" were typically shunned. Anyone who attempted to deviate would find themselves verbally abused.

believe that their parents did the right thing because of the indoctrination they received. Some see suicide or homicide as the only way of escape.

The following steps to recovery are what really helped me. The triggers have not completely disappeared, but they are certainly less intense.

Steps to recovery³

1. *Commit to recovering and investing the necessary energy.* It took commitment on my part to invest energy. Recovery was not easy.
2. *Find a counselor with knowledge of spiritual abuse.* You will probably need psychological therapy and possibly medication. I found a good Christian counselor with knowledge of spiritual abuse from the Meier Clinics.
3. *Discover your own interests rather than simply carrying on in the old patterns.* It takes direction and practice as you learn to evaluate things and discard what is wrong. I felt like an emotional damaged or lost child inside. But even damaged children can come to Jesus (Luke 18:16).
4. *Wean yourself from the compulsive need to understand your parent's behavior.* I re-read the Bible starting with the gospels. I discovered Jesus anew. The Spirit now told me what was true. I learned to press forward (John 14:6; 16:13; Phil. 3:13, 14).
5. *Learn to evaluate your reactions to other people* to see whether the injuries you suffered as a child magnify them in some way. Beware of

triggers that spark negative memories. If I hear the hymn "Trust and Obey", I still can't handle the phrase "Obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus."⁴ It sets off a trigger for me and I become very anxious. I usually get up and go to the lobby to do some deep breathing exercises until the song is over.

6. *Mourn the childhood that you will never have.* I had to tell myself, "Therefore, if anyone in Christ the new creation has come. The old has gone, the new is here" (2 Cor. 5:17, NIV).
7. *Share love to help heal yourself.* Healing often comes by facilitating love to others (1 John 4:16, 18; John 15:9, 12; 1 Corinthians 13).
8. *When you are ready, attempt to look ahead and ask God for assistance,* even if all you can say is, "Help." Somedays, that's all I could do.
9. *Grow stronger as you learn to cope with the difficulties of your past.* While we are still on this earth, we must always live with hope (Rev. 21:4-5).

Childhood spiritual abuse is alive and active in our churches today. When I finally "woke up," my first response was, "I've been lied to!" I questioned

God and His existence. I became so sensitive to the subject that when I would visit a church, not only could I sense which child is currently living it, but I could detect which adult has experienced it. As a survivor, it's not hard to recognize these people. Generally, these adults are loners, withdrawn, self-loathing, or inappropriately angry. They may even be the hurting troublemakers in your church.

I no longer imagine a world without God. Mahalia Jackson sang, "There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole."⁵ May you extend that Balm to all those who hurt—His name is Jesus.



- 1 A version of this article appeared as Anne Fergusson, "Recovery From Childhood Spiritual Abuse," *The Journal* 25, no. 3 (Third Quarter 2008): 6.
- 2 Elan Golomb, *Trapped in the Mirror* (New York: William Morrow 1992); "Stockholm Syndrome," <https://sniggle.net/stock.php>.
- 3 Adapted from John and Linda Friel, *An Adult Child's Guide to What's "Normal"* (Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications, Inc., 1990).
- 4 J. H. Sammis, "Trust and Obey."
- 5 American Negro Spiritual, "Balm in Gilead."

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Sacrificing for God's cause

ALBERTO R. TIMM

Unconditional commitment and self-sacrifice for the cause they embraced constantly drove our early Adventist missionaries. For example, W. H. Anderson (1870–1950), while still a student at Battle Creek College in Michigan, yearned to be in the mission field. In 1895 he married Nora Haysmer, and shortly after that, the young couple said goodbye to their loved ones and started their long journey to Cape Town, South Africa. From there, they traveled with a small group of missionaries 800 miles by train to Mafeking and 600 miles by ox wagon to Matabeleland, Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). There they established the Matabele (Solusi) Mission.

But their mission endeavor ended up being more costly than they imagined. First, clouds of locusts attacked their early crops. In March 1896, the Second Matabele War erupted with all its horrors and famine. Then in early 1898, a severe outbreak of malaria hit the region. Within three months, five of the small missionary team had already died, three had gone to the African coast, and Anderson and his wife remained alone at the station.

The next year, on a long trip, Anderson became very sick. One evening, he told the locals who had

accompanied him that most probably he would not live through the night. So, they should dig his grave under a nearby tree, sew him up in his blankets, and bury him there. Then they should tell his wife, baby, and the others at the mission station not to abandon the work in the country because he had died. His grave at the side of the road should mark the way for other missionaries into that new territory.¹

Anderson recovered from his illness. But some years later, his wife contracted malaria. He took her to Kimberley, a long trip of 1,600 miles by train. Nora told her husband, “Harry, I want you to take that train tonight, and go back to the mission. There are those boys and girls we have gathered at the mission station. Who will take care of them? Harry, you must do it.” With a heavy heart, Anderson packed up his things and rode the train back to the mission, not knowing that he would never see her again. A month later, she went to the Cape Town Sanitarium. Realizing that she had no chance to live, she wrote to her husband, “Take care of Naomi [their little girl]; stay by the mission, and make it all we have planned, under God, it should be.”²

Reflecting on the challenges of carrying the Adventist message to the most remote places

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of the world, Anderson stated in 1919, “Every mission station has its cemetery, where laborers are resting. Every new field that is open to the gospel, plants a grave by the way, to direct future laborers to the field.”³

Why have so many people sacrificed their own resources and even their own lives for this cause? What lessons can we learn from their experiences?

Christ’s cheering example

Brave missionaries such as W. H. Anderson have transformed the history of the world as they carried the gospel into the most remote places of the globe. The book of Hebrews speaks of those who suffered for God’s cause as people “of whom the world was not worthy” (Heb. 11:38). But the moving force that leads people to dedicate their lives and possessions to God’s cause is the supreme sacrifice that Christ made for the human race (Phil. 2:5–11). Bought by His blood, Christ’s followers no longer belong to themselves but rather to Him and His saving mission (1 Cor. 6:19, 20; Gal. 2:20).

The apostle Paul expressed this as being the driving force of all his missionary endeavors. Recalling his dramatic experience on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1–9), he stated that he “was not disobedient to the heavenly vision” (Acts 26:19).⁴ Writing to the church in Corinth, he confessed that “the love of Christ compels us” first to reconcile ourselves with God and then to be “ambassadors for Christ,” pleading with others to have the same vital experience (2 Cor. 5:14–21).

In his exhortations to the Ephesian elders (see Acts 20:17–38), Paul presented one of the most insightful portrayals of what the gospel ministry is all about. Among several other aspects, he revealed his unselfish attitude: “I have coveted no one’s silver or gold or apparel” (v. 33). He also revealed his altruistic motivation: “And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying

that chains and tribulations await me. But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God” (vv. 22–24).

One could mention many other names, but that of David Livingstone (1813–1873) especially stands out. On Friday, December 4, 1857, he delivered a lecture at the University of Cambridge, England. Toward the end of it, he stated with conviction, “People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. Can that be called a sacrifice which is simply paid back as a small part of a great debt owing to our God, which we can never repay? . . . Away with the word [sacrifice] in such a view, and with such a thought! It is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege. . . . I never made a sacrifice. Of this we ought not to talk, when we remember the great sacrifice which He made who left His Father’s throne on high to give Himself for us.”⁵

A renewed motivation

With such inspiring examples challenging us even today, why do we tend to live and minister as if our mission were fulfilled? Oswald J. Smith (1889–1986) touched the core of the problem when he wrote, “If soul-winning is the most important work of the church, it naturally follows that Satan will do all he can to get us side-tracked or satisfied with something else. And such is the case.”⁶ But Ellen G. White says that the same commitment and motivation that compelled the apostolic church and the Adventist pioneers will take over the church at the end of time.

In her classic book *The Great Controversy*, White declares, “The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. . . .

“Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth,

the warning will be given.”⁷ Here is a picture of the final outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28–32), when people will devote themselves, as well as their means and possessions, fully to the Lord and His cause.

Unfortunately, a strong tendency places this eschatological scenario in a quite distant future. But regardless of when it will be wholly fulfilled, our personal commitment should not reflect any procrastination. In reality, “there is a great and important work to be accomplished in a very short time. God never designed that the law of the tithing system should be of no account among His people; but, instead of this, He designed that the spirit of sacrifice should widen and deepen for the closing work.”⁸

In 1854 Ellen G. White sent a letter to the church in Bedford, Michigan. She stated, “There is too much of a feeling like this: My time is my own; but it is not so. It is not your own. You are bought with a price, and are soldiers, and you must be ever at your post, wherever it is, at home or abroad. Idleness and slothfulness God abhors. Ease and love of self-gratification must be overcome and all must have a spirit of sacrifice. . . .

“ . . . O, it behooved Christ to suffer all this to make a way of escape for lost man! He was the innocent Sufferer, and shall we dare to complain of any sacrifice we have made or can make? Shall we murmur who shall suffer something for our own sins? O, no! Let us crave the suffering part.

“Brethren and sisters in Bedford, learn to suffer more. Learn to deny yourselves more. There is need of it. Die to self. Do not love your ease too much. Have energy in your daily labors and energy in the cause of God. Your reward is not here. Jesus has purchased for us an immortal inheritance and for that we can endure anything. O what love, what wondrous love has been manifested us by the Beloved of the Father! O, do not, any of you, neglect the preparation necessary, and finally be weighed in the balances and found wanting!”⁹ Such timeless counsel is pertinent to our own generation and perhaps even to us individually!

Unquestionably, God expects from us a full and unreserved commitment to Him and His cause. But remember that He does not require from us anything beyond our potential and abilities. In 1875 Ellen White warned, “Men and women who love the cause of God as they do their lives will pledge upon these occasions [at the camp meetings], when their families must suffer for the very means that they have promised

to give to advance the cause. Our God is not a taskmaster and does not require the poor man to give means to the cause that belongs to his family and that should be used to keep them in comfort and above pinching want.”¹⁰

Conclusion

We began with the story of W. H. Anderson, and we will conclude with him also. In the last paragraph of his autobiography, titled *On the Trail of Livingstone*, Anderson says, “I have given my money, my strength, my wife, and I intend to give the rest of my poor self to finish the work God has given me to do. I want you who read these lines to ask yourself that question, ‘Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?’ ”¹¹

May the Lord help us also to overcome our natural selfishness and materialist tendencies, and to fully dedicate ourselves—including all our talents and possessions—to Him and His cause. Let’s live in this world a decent life, demonstrating by all that we do, that our most important investments are “ ‘in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal’ ” (Matt. 6:19–21).



- 1 W. H. Anderson, *On the Trail of Livingstone* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1919), 136, 175, 176.
- 2 Anderson, 348–351.
- 3 Anderson, 329.
- 4 Scripture is from the New King James Version.
- 5 *Dr. Livingstone’s Cambridge Lectures*, ed. William Monk (Cambridge, UK: Deighton, Bell, 1858), 23.
- 6 Oswald J. Smith, *The Man God Uses* (New York, NY: Christian Alliance, 1925), 95.
- 7 Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), 611, 612.
- 8 Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1872), 396.
- 9 *The Ellen G. White Letters and Manuscripts With Annotations, 1845–1859*, vol. 1 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 2014), 440, 441.
- 10 White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, 410, 411.
- 11 Anderson, *Trail of Livingstone*, 351. It should be noted that the spirit of sacrifice in the Seventh-day Adventist Church has, from its inception, been a multiracial enterprise. See James R. Nix and Fylvia Fowler (eds.), *The Spirit of Sacrifice and Commitment: Experiences of Seventh-day Adventist Pioneers* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2000); Samuel G. London, Jr. *Seventh-day Adventists and the Civil Rights Movement* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2010); Carol Howard Hammond, *Precious Memories of Missionaries of Color*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Fort Oglethorpe, GA: TEACH Services, Inc., 2019); DeWitt S. Williams, *Precious Memories of Missionaries of Color*, vol. 2 (Fort Oglethorpe, GA: TEACH Services, Inc., 2016) and “Chronological Listing of African American Missionaries,” [blacksdahistory.org](http://www.blacksdahistory.org), accessed July 21, 2020, <http://www.blacksdahistory.org/files/103825106.pdf>. — The Editors.



Clinton A. Valley,

EdD, is the CEO of Valley Consulting, LLC, and adjunct professor of leadership at the University of the Virgin Islands.



Racial Reconciliation and Privilege

by Winsley B. Hector, Claremont, CA: Claremont Press, 2019.

This new book on church race relations emanates from Winsley Hector's thought-provoking Claremont School of Theology dissertation of distinction. While documenting the story of the establishment of an African-American administrative structure, the book shows the relevance of Seventh-day Adventist race relations to both historical and contemporary discussions on racial reconciliation, within and beyond ecclesiastical circles.

Hector's work, anchored in the discipline of spiritual care and pastoral counseling, draws on the work of Eric Yamamoto's interracial justice model.¹ To derive the desired racial reconciliation, the four-stage model calls for recognition and confession, responsibility and repentance, reconstruction and accountability, and reparation that is transformative. Hector believes that, with some adaptation, this can serve as a model for the complex but necessary work of racial healing in the church. He challenges church leadership to engage in the ministry of reconciliation that Jesus prayed for in John 17, describing it as "restoring fractured relationships and ending estrangement."

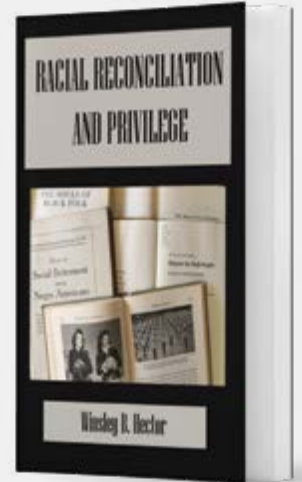
Hector expertly outlines arguments for both the continuance and the closure of regional conferences, advocated by pragmatists and idealists, respectively. The pragmatists argue for the structural accommodation of regional conferences based on cultural solidarity, "mission particularity," and the development of black leadership. The idealists proffer the "unity defense" for dissolving regional conferences, arguing that they represent a visible sign of the church's racial legacy and current divisions. Hector posits that idealists say little about the process for reconciliation, the form of the assimilated, unified structure, or the resultant effects on black and white members in abolishing regional conferences and establishing a new structure. Nevertheless, maintains Hector, the conversation is worthwhile.

Of course, he argues, it is quite difficult to talk about race relations without addressing the specter of white privilege. Hector asserts that failure to confront this historical legacy, defined by

Peggy McIntosh as "an invisible package of unearned assets,"² will frustrate any efforts at racial reconciliation, no matter how magnanimous the intent. This issue has become a potent national discussion, and the church is well advised to seize the moment and examine the effects of this ongoing legacy on the church. This calls for courage to confront what I refer to as "the brutal facts of the organization's current reality."³

Hector expresses his honest convictions with academic vigor and professionalism—a quality to be welcomed, not derided, as may often be the case. His call is also timely, given the international interest in issues of race relations arising from the death of George Floyd and the resultant global impetus for systemic change leading to racial equality. Aneeta Rattan admonishes, "And if you are currently thinking that this moment—the protests, the pandemic, the economic outlook—is not the right time to act, ask yourself what more you require, beyond a global movement, to make you see diversity as a priority?"⁴

Hector's work is a must-read, especially for church leaders. Current global trends demonstrate the wisdom of the church immediately engaging in a process addressing biased systems and policies, thereby moving the church, and its diversity, forward. Too much is at stake to do otherwise.



- 1 Eric Yamamoto, *Interracial Justice: Conflict and Reconciliation in Post-Civil Rights America* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1999).
- 2 Peggy McIntosh, "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women's Studies" in Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, eds., *Critical White Studies: Looking Behind the Mirror* (Temple University Press, 1997), 291.
- 3 Clinton A. Valley, *Straight from the Valley: A Christian Leader's Journey* (Atlanta, GA: Xulon Press, 2020).
- 4 Aneeta Rattan, "An Open Letter of Advice to CEOs," *Financial Times*, June 9, 2020, <https://www.ft.com/content/7216ad9e-aa30-11ea-abfc-5d8dc4dd86f9>.

To believe again— a plea for Adventist Christian education

I was raised in a socially and economically austere environment. The law of averages suggests that youth from such backgrounds are unlikely to succeed. This prediction has proven true for many of my friends: some descended into violence; some were destroyed by poverty and deprivation; some adapted to street life and never left it.

I got out. I found Christ in an Adventist evangelistic series conducted by the late Pastor E. C. Walton. Becoming an Adventist opened up for me an opportunity to enroll in a Seventh-day Adventist educational institution, which changed (actually, saved) my life. It changed the lives of my brothers and sisters and, much later, my parents as well.

Thus, I am burdened by the increasing number of children in Adventist homes not benefiting from Adventist education. Although new people are joining our church, many come from economically depressed areas and may lack the resources to afford Adventist Christian education for their children. This is a problem that needs addressing.

A stark contrast

For starters, the postmodern push to be inclusive supports the minimization of differences and would discourage the need for the uniqueness of Adventist Christian education (ACE). In an effort to be politically correct,

some may be tempted to forget that the earliest advocates for a refined educational framework constructed the craft on three theoretical foundations: epistemology, metaphysics, and axiology (EMA).¹

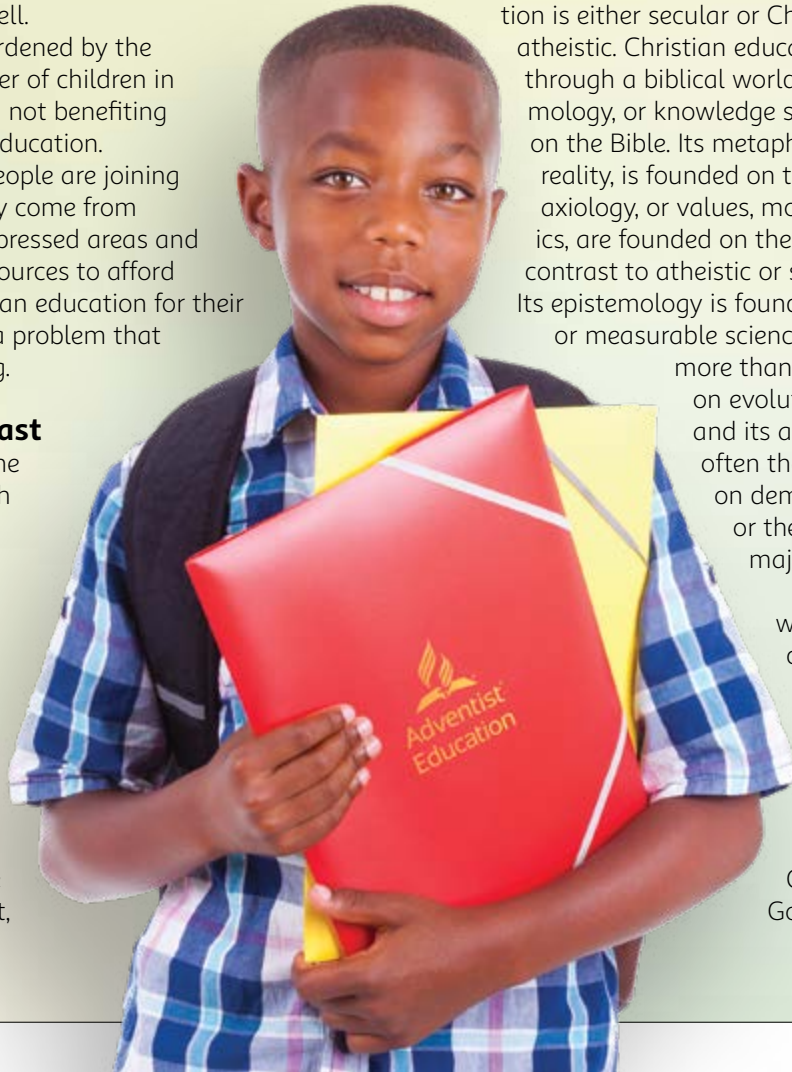
These three terms (EMA) are not used in everyday conversations. It is, therefore, easy to overlook their value regarding education. Epistemology answers the question, What is knowledge, and where does it come from? Metaphysics speaks to the construction and location of the individual's sphere of reality. Axiology addresses the question of the ethics, morals, values, and aesthetics underpinning the source and construction of a knowledge base.

After all, at every level of schooling, education is either secular or Christian, theistic or atheistic. Christian education is delivered through a biblical worldview. Its epistemology, or knowledge source, is founded on the Bible. Its metaphysics, or source of reality, is founded on the Bible. And its axiology, or values, morals, and aesthetics, are founded on the Bible. This is in contrast to atheistic or secular education. Its epistemology is founded on empiricism, or measurable science. Its metaphysics, more than likely, is founded on evolutionary theories, and its axiology is more often than not founded on democratic pluralism or the opinion of the majority.

Which one do we want for our children?

Intentional immersion

Parents and leaders must not forget God's purpose. God wants prepared



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SCAN FOR AUDIO

people to partner with Him for the evangelization of humanity. This has always been a principle with God; wherever He places the gospel, He establishes institutions and qualifies workers to carry forward His mission.

In the Old Testament, God used Samuel to establish the school of the prophets, from which the ecclesiological skills needed for administration, discipleship, and preaching were forged (1 Sam. 19:18–24; 2 Kings 4:38–44). As the church moved through the centuries, the concept of religious education and missional training always remained in vogue. Universities were founded primarily to train workers for the mission of God and the evangelization of the world.²

The Seventh-day Adventist pioneers believed that wherever the gospel was planted in the world, a school should also be instituted. In these schools, workers could be trained to spread the three angels' messages. Adventist Christian education is why the Seventh-day Adventist Church today, with its qualified and committed global workforce, still exists. If there were to be an erosion of belief in ACE, the Adventist way of life and mission would disappear. The church and its mission need ACE and vice versa. It is in the interest of the church to expend all efforts to keep these two in harmony and to keep ACE distinctively Adventist. Adventist Christian education has been the driver and motivator for mission, which has brought light to a darkened world.

The guile of separation

Despite the importance of ACE, many of

our young people today will never experience an immersion in Adventist education because of ideology and financial issues:

- Too many Adventist parents are comfortable believing that the *church* or the *family altar* is the place for learning about the eschatological prophetic mission of the remnant. For them, the spheres of influence are separate, the issues are separate. To their minds, education is defined as simply earning credentialed certification from the best accredited secular institutions available. As for eschatological prophetic teachings, that is what the church is for.
- Some parents simply cannot afford ACE.

Financially challenged parents have no choice but to separate the issues. For them, missional training must rest with the church and home while skill development becomes the responsibility of public, secular, educational institutes. In some congregations in various regions of the world, a significant number of families come from circumstances that are both socially and economically challenged. Would not the continual advocacy for ACE in congregations of economically depressed persons inadvertently nurture elements of



elitism in the church? Would not the advocacy of the superiority of ACE diminish the value of the educational experience of those persons not privileged to afford ACE?

Parents with the resources to finance ACE must be reminded of the EMA of Bible-based education. Educational leaders need to remain committed to delivering a top-quality education that gains the confidence of education consumers in the environment. Education in an ACE environment that is below accredited industry standards does not glorify God. The Holy Spirit guides us, but employees must do exceptional work.

Economic challenges must be expected. The demographics of evangelism tell us that resources are needed to ensure that our economically challenged families have collaborative ACE learning experiences of comparable value available to them through the church.

With the rapid expansion of evangelism today, large-scale evangelistic efforts in depressed communities must be accompanied by a strategic plan. They must immerse the massive influx of new minds into relevant, ACE learning experiences that will be transformative and expedite their assimilation into an Adventist culture reflective of the mind of Christ. How can we do this? There are five steps church and educational leaders can take to ensure that no child is left behind.

Leave no child behind

1. Assessment. Discreetly determine which families have their children attending non-Adventist schools because of circumstances and not choice.

2. Access. Make a special effort to have these children join and actively participate in

the church-supported groups for children and adolescents. Many times the children who have access to ACE attend the same schools. Their peer-bonds are stronger. When they come to church on Sabbath, they tend to associate with the same group of friends. Special efforts should be made to minimize cliques. Sometimes the same children from the stronger, legacy families are chosen for activities over and over again. Giving special attention to children who are not as socially competent will minimize alienation and draw these children closer to the group. It is important for them to develop strong peer relationships with the better-assimilated youth.

3. Transformative activities. Regularly review the activities of ministries in our church that target children and adolescents. Confirm through collaboration that the content of those activities complies with the distinctive teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. According to the Youth Ministries department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church,³ Adventurers is a club for children ages 6 to 9, with 1 million members worldwide. Pathfinders, with 2 million members, is for young people ages 10 to 15. The Ambassador group strives to meet the spiritual, social, and lifestyle needs of those from 16 into their 20s. Then there is Sabbath School. These groups can be the lifeline for children without access to ACE. Such groups should be microcosms of mainstream ACE, filling the gaps that come with not being part of a bona fide ACE institution.

4. Monitor and evaluate. Track the attendance and participation of these students with periodic quizzes, prizes, projects, homework assistance, and service activities. These activities should involve them and their families and should function as indicators of integration and learning. One on one “leadership appointments” will keep the children apprised



of their progress and keep the leaders informed of their needs and the subsequent adjustments that might be required.

5. *Strengthen adult and peer mentorship capacities.* Empowered, immersed adults produce empowered, immersed children. Target parents and other active Adventists for special mentorship workshops. The objective is to set up intentional partnerships to allow for a grounded integration and interchange of faith, friendship, and learning. Parents will help parents. Peers will help peers. Just because someone has been in the church for a long time does not mean that they can automatically assist in mentoring others into full immersion in Christ. Training and coaching are needed. Children cannot learn and understand the distinctive faith-life elements of the Seventh-day Adventist Church if the parents and persons of influence are not strong repositories of accurate knowledge, reflections of positive attitude, and sources of motivational energy.

The challenge

Unique challenges are associated with survival in socioeconomically deficient conditions.

Advocacy for ACE will be difficult if the children are hungry; if borderline homelessness exists; if they face an uncertain immigration status, toxic family relationships, and overwhelming health stresses. Mentoring partnerships in the church provide the mentoring partnerships that the children would have experienced in the ACE environment.

Adventist Christian education saved my life. Let us find creative ways to ensure that every member—new, emerging, and generational—receives the opportunity to benefit from transformative Adventist Christian education experiences.



- 1 George R. Knight, *Philosophy and Education: An Introduction in Christian Perspective*, 4th ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2006), 15–32.
- 2 Will Durant, *The Reformation: A History of European Civilization From Wyclif to Calvin: 1300–1564* (New York, NY: Simon and Shuster, 1957), 786, 787; Will Durant, *The Age of Faith: A History of Medieval Civilization from Constantine to Dante: A.D. 325–1300* (New York, NY: Simon and Shuster, 1957), 988; Richard Middleton and Anne Lombard, *Colonial America: A History to 1763* (Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2011).
- 3 General Conference Youth Ministries Department, <https://youth.adventist.org>.

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New leadership for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America

COLUMBIA, MARYLAND, UNITED STATES

On July 9, 2020, the Seventh-day Adventist Church's General Conference (GC) Executive Committee met virtually to receive the name of **G. Alexander Bryant**, the recommendation for division president, from both the North American Division's (NAD) nominating committee and executive committee. Bryant was confirmed in a vote of 153 to 5.

Bryant is the second African American elected to serve as NAD president. **Charles E. Bradford**, the division's first president, was the first, serving

from 1979 to 1990. Previous division presidents include **Alfred C. McClure** (1990–2000), **Don C. Schneider** (2000–2010), and **Daniel R. Jackson** (2010–2020).

"I am first indebted to God for His call to ministry and secondly to those who have poured into my life over the years," said Bryant in response to the vote. "I am deeply humbled by the confidence Elder Wilson, our chair, and the NAD and GC executive committees have placed in me with this assignment. This task is too big for one individual or office. It is abundantly clear to me that it takes all of us working together to advance God's kingdom, and I just deeply covet your prayers."

A graduate of Oakwood University (BA) and Andrews University (MDiv, DMin), Glenward Alexander "Alex" Bryant most recently served

as executive secretary of the NAD and associate secretary of the GC, positions he has held since October 2008. Before coming to the division, Bryant served as executive secretary of the Mid-American Union and, more recently, president of the Central States Conference in Kansas City, Kansas.

While serving as the division's secretary, Bryant's passion for evangelism has led him to conduct annual evangelistic series throughout the United States and in Kenya, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Jamaica, South Korea, the Philippines, China, and Japan. He had lived in Japan, where he served the church as a student missionary.

In an earlier interview, Bryant was asked what a racially reconciled church would look like. "I'm not sure what it'll look like, but I do have a good picture in my head of what it will feel like," he stated. "It will feel like everyone's accepted for who they are and what they are. I would like to feel that I'm accepted, not because of my color of my skin but in spite of what that color may be. I would like to feel that [whether] walking into a church, a conference office, a union office, a division office, or a General Conference office. If I



could feel that I'm accepted, that I'm loved, and that I'm a part of God's family because I belong to Him, I think we will achieve a lot."

Bryant is married to the former **Desiree** Wimbish, who served as associate superintendent of Education for the Potomac Conference and superintendent of Education for the Central States Conference, as well as former principal of the V. Lindsay Seventh-day Adventist School in Kansas City, Kansas. Desiree currently serves as the assistant director and projects coordinator for Adventist Education in the NAD. The Bryants have three adult children and three grandchildren.

Bryant replaces Daniel R. Jackson, who served at the NAD headquarters since his election in June 2010 at the GC Session in Atlanta, Georgia, and reelection in 2015 in San Antonio, Texas, until his retirement on

July 1, 2020. Jackson was passionate for the mission of the church to reach all people, using all people. His vision, combined with his encouraging support to employees, was always sweetened with laughter and song. He grew the mission and ministry of the division through building up the NAD Ministerial Association (Jackson's wife **Donna** was an associate ministerial director with responsibility for clergy families), Multilingual Ministries, and Stewardship department; the creation of a missional strategic plan; the addition to the NAD territory of the Guam-Micronesia Mission, Oakwood University, Pacific Press Publishing Association, AdventSource, Christian Record Services for the Blind; and the relocation of the NAD into their own headquarters facility.

The search process for a new executive secretary has begun. [*Adventist Review/Ministry*]

A prince of preachers—remembering Walter L. Pearson Jr.

HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA, UNITED STATES

"Then the king said to his servants, 'Do you not know that a prince and a great man has fallen this day in Israel?'" (2 Sam. 3:38, NKJV).

Walter L. Pearson Jr. passed to his rest on June 7, 2020, at the age of 74. He was a graduate of Pine Forge Academy and Oakwood University. His ministry encompassed Allegheny West, Allegheny East, and the South Atlantic Conferences. While serving as the senior pastor of the Berean Church, he was an executive board member for Mayor **Maynard H. Jackson's** "Atlanta Religious Mobilization Against Crime."

From there, he was called to the Ellen G. White Estate at the world headquarters of the

Seventh-day Adventist Church, where he was the first African American to serve as an associate director. He was then invited to serve as director of evangelism and church growth in the General Conference Ministerial Association. Upon the recommendation of retiring Breath of Life Television Ministries speaker/director, **C. D. Brooks**, Pearson assumed this position, serving concurrently as the general field secretary for the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventists.

Pearson led successful evangelistic meetings nationally as well as internationally in cities including Kingston, Jamaica; Tema, Ghana; Warsaw, Poland; Nairobi, Kenya; and London, England. He was invited to serve as the featured speaker for the North American Division's Net 2004 evangelistic initiative, "Experience the Power." This initiative was uplinked to approximately 1,100 sites in North America, with another 1,000 sites in the Caribbean and tens of thousands around the globe. As a result, over 4,000 individuals were baptized.



Pearson will be remembered as one of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's most gifted preachers. His preaching gift was honed under the tutelage of Dr. **H. L. Cleveland** and the influence of certain extraordinary preachers in the local ministerial alliance. He possessed the ability to make the Word of God come alive in the minds of his audiences. In 1991, he became the first Seventh-day Adventist inducted into the Martin Luther King Jr. Board of Preachers and Collegium of Scholars at Morehouse College in Atlanta. For 12 years, he served as the speaker/director of Breath of Life Television Ministries before passing the baton to the current speaker/director **Carlton P. Byrd**. **Byrd** said Pearson was "one of our greatest communicators, particularly in his narrative preaching and ability to tell a story."

Jerry Page, ministerial director for the General Conference, stated, "He was a true preacher of the Word with integrity, clarity, and the convicting and converting power of His indwelling Friend, the Holy Spirit!" Retired North American Division (NAD) president **Daniel R. Jackson** said, "While his powerful messages had been carefully thought through, they were delivered with

'Spirit power.' Thousands will be in God's eternal kingdom who will trace their experience back to Walter Pearson." NAD vice president **Alvin M. Kibble** said, "Pearson preached with the fervor of the old-time evangelists and the eloquence of a master wordsmith. His timing, style, and humor were artfully and effectively crafted to deliver the message God had ordained. A careful student of the Word and of human nature, his sermons were biblically sound and socially relevant."

G. Alexander Bryant, the new NAD president, called him "one of the most gifted homiletics of our day." **Doug Batchelor**, president of Amazing Facts International, said, "He was a gifted communicator and evangelist who will have many stars in his crown." Pearson leaves to mourn him his wife **Patricia** and other family members including his children **Ericca**, **Walter III**, and **Mia-Liani**, and four grandchildren. Page stated, "Those of us in the General Conference Ministerial Association share in the mourning and sorrow of loss, yet the amazing joy of that certain future resurrection morning when all the faithful of Walter's family and loved ones will be reunited with him again!" [Breath of Life/NAD/Ministry]

PHOTO: BREATH OF LIFE TELEVISION MINISTRIES



While we will endeavor to keep the “unity of the Spirit” in the bonds of peace, we will not with pen or voice cease to protest against bigotry. —Ellen G. White, *Last Day Events*, 48.

The Seventh-day Adventist Regional Presidents Council

We the members of the Seventh-day Adventist Regional Presidents Council share the shock, sorrow and anger that our colleague, Elder Roger Bernard, President, Central States Conference so articulately described. . . .

“Dr. Martin Luther King said that ‘Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.’ No one—in particular, people of faith—can be indifferent or silent when injustices are done and the precious gift of life is needlessly snatched away.

“We call on government leaders on all levels to act and put an end to this continuing sad story of unequal justice under the law and we support the peaceful protests and demonstrations that call for it.

“Our prayers go out to the family of George Floyd, to our country and for the world that we are called to serve and prepare for the soon coming of the One whose coming will ultimately make all wrongs right.

“ ‘Even so, come Lord Jesus.’ ”¹

The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

In this time of pain and unrest across the United States, our hearts continue to go out in sympathy to all who have suffered, and especially to the families of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd, whose lives ended tragically.

“As Seventh-day Adventists, we stand together worldwide in condemning racism, bigotry, hatred, prejudice, and violence in all of its myriad forms. We know that God is a God of justice, who sees and knows all, and we look to Him to fulfill His Word when He says, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay’ (Romans 12:19).

“WE KNOW THAT GOD IS A GOD OF JUSTICE, WHO SEES AND KNOWS ALL, AND WE LOOK TO HIM TO FULFILL HIS WORD WHEN HE SAYS, ‘VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY’ (ROMANS 12:19).”

“On behalf of the Seventh-day Adventist worldwide family, I have sent letters of condolence to the families of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd, expressing our sorrow for the tragic loss of their loved ones and stating unequivocally that as Seventh-day Adventists we stand strongly on the biblical principles that go against hatred, rage, racism, bigotry, evil surmising, prejudice, and more, and offered the families support, hope, and encouragement through God’s Church. . . .

“I encourage you, too, as a Seventh-day Adventist, to reach out to these and other individuals within your local community, bringing, in a practical way, the peace, comfort, hope and courage that only Christ can provide as we follow His example in ministry outlined in Luke 4:18.”²



1 “Statement from The Seventh-day Adventist Regional Presidents Council Regarding the Death of George Floyd,” Seventh-day Adventist Office for Regional Conference Ministry, May 29, 2020, <https://adventistregionalministries.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Statement-from-the-Seven-day-Adventist-Regional-Presidents-Council-Regarding-the-Death-of-George-Floyd.pdf>.

2 “A Time for Compassion and Healing: Our Christ-Centered Mission,” ANN News, Ted N. C. Wilson, president, General Conference, June 1, 2020, <https://adventist.news/en/news/a-time-for-compassion-and-healing-our-christ-centered-mission/>.



Marcos Torres is pastor of the Victoria Park and Joondalup Seventh-day Adventist churches in Western Australia.



Five leadership lessons for pastors

Over 12 years ago, I was a soldier in the United States Army.¹ As I think about my time in the army, there is one massive thing I am grateful for—the opportunity to learn how to lead. I would like to share five leadership lessons I learned from the army that are must-haves for pastors and church leaders.

1. Live by the leadership singularity

A singularity is basically the simplest state of a thing. Leadership can have many variables, scenarios, hacks, and tricks, but if you boil effective leadership down to its most simple, “singular” state, you will arrive at this word: *care*.

So, pastors, care about your church members. I mean, really, truly care. If you do not care about people and they know it (and trust me, they will), there is seldom any bouncing back from that.

2. Embody your people

In the military, good leaders are those who do not look at their soldiers as employees, volunteers, stepping-stones, or tools to accomplish the mission. Rather, they look at them as family. These kinds of leaders will take any flack, endure any heat, and remove any obstacle to see their people succeed. Everything to this kind of leader is “us.” If you insult their team, this kind of leader will stand up for them even if you compliment his or her leadership.

Pastors should learn this lesson well. Some pastors I have met complain endlessly about their church members. Many times, they view their churches as a stepping-stone to future and better opportunities. They do not embody their people, and it shows.

3. Be a bearer, not a wearer

In the military, everyone wears rank insignia. When you become a sergeant, you receive the three stripes. These three stripes symbolize your role as a leader. However, there are two types of sergeants in the military: the wearer and the bearer.

The wearer is the sergeant who wears the stripes and enjoys the respect that comes with them. He or she can give commands and demand

respect. The stripes also come with a burden to care, nurture, and sacrifice. However, wearers do none of that. They wear the rank and welcome all of its accolades while refusing to bear the burdens that come with it.

The bearer is the sergeant who welcomes both the kudos and the burdens. They lead selflessly and see themselves as servants, not taskmasters. These kinds of leaders are loved because they inspire followership, they do not require it.

4. Utilize the leadership triad

A good leader is one who lives to provide his or her people with purpose, direction, and motivation. You cannot skip one without the overall mission suffering. If you provide purpose and direction but no motivation, your people will not act. If you provide direction and motivation but no purpose, your people will not care. If you provide motivation and purpose but no direction, your people will not follow. All three need to be at play at the same time for your leadership to positively influence the mission.

5. Lead from the front

Leading from the front shows the difference between a leader and a boss. A boss sits in the background and yells to his people, “Go!” A leader steps into the foreground and yells, “Let’s go!” as she sets the example of what they are to do.

How does this work practically? When I ask my elders to visit church members, I visit the members first. When I ask my preachers to preach good, life-changing, and biblical sermons, I preach them first. When I ask my people to look out for one another, to put family first and to spend time with God—I do it first.

Jesus exhibited all these leadership lessons. He cared deeply for His people and bore the burden of leadership all the way to the cross. He provides us with purpose, direction, and motivation. He lived out all that He asks us to do and more. So, look to Jesus. Let’s lead like Him.



¹ This is an expanded version of a previously published entry in the author’s blog.

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by power, but by
My Spirit, says the
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—ZECHARIAH 4:6, ESV

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