

Adventist World

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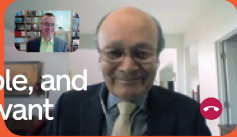
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A Call to Deeper Worship

BY BILL KNOTT

In the sanctuary of God's presence, hidden in the cleft of the rock, Moses pleaded for a revelation of God's glory (Ex. 33:18-21).

In the violence of a tempest, trembling on a mountaintop, the psalmist saw into the sanctuary above, and marveled, "In His temple everyone says, 'Glory!'" (Ps. 29:9).

In the sanctuary built by Solomon, the young prophet heard the seraphim calling to each other, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!" (Isa. 6:3).

And when the people of God, prefigured by three angels flying in midheaven—carrying good news about the sanctuary and judgment—begin their proclamation, they announce, "Fear God and give glory to Him" (Rev. 14:7).

The inescapable conclusion of these and many other passages of Scripture is that giving God glory, especially in our worship, is the essential mission of God's faithful remnant—"those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" (verse 12).

This is a resonating call—loud and insistent—to deepen and to strengthen our perceptions of "Him to whom we must give account" (Heb. 4:13), to renew Adventist worship with clear teaching and rich experience of God's magnificence, holiness, and kindness. In a global culture obsessed with cheap familiarity, tweeting its way to careless oblivion, we have the shared tasks of proclaiming God's amazing "otherness" as well as Jesus' amazing closeness.



We announce how great the gulf is between the sinner and the Father, but also show the abundance of the Father's plan in sending Jesus to be one of us. He lived in our sweat and pain; He died for our eternal gain; He rose that we might enjoy great fellowship with Him now and forever.

The call to "give Him glory" must begin with the household of faith, whether we gather in the shadowed heat beneath a palm frond roof or in a gleaming sanctuary, fully lit and air-conditioned. When we have replicated the story young Isaiah tells—when we have glimpsed both the Father's deep holiness and the Saviour's deep, forgiving tenderness—then we are ready to wholeheartedly respond as did the prophet long ago: "Here am I! Send me" (Isa. 6:8).

The mission—and the message—is all about worship.

As you read this special collection of articles about the central mission of this movement, begin by bowing both your heart and your knees—and give Him glory.

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



Rob Folkenberg, a pastor and church planter living in British Columbia, Canada, uses his passion for rock climbing as a way to engage with people in the town where he lives. “For me as a church planter, one aspect of my job is to get to know people in my community, make friends, and look for ways to introduce Jesus.” Climbing with others has become a creative way to do just that.

Photo: Rob Folkenberg, Canadian Adventist Messenger

100
+
100



Number of families on the Caribbean island of Sint Maarten that received a monthly bag of organically grown fresh produce, including lettuce, bok choy, Swiss chard, collard greens, breadfruit, plantain, radish, and many others. A hundred more families received a 100 Grow Bag, containing seeds, seedlings, a plant, and starter soil to encourage them to grow their own fruits and vegetables, eat more healthfully, and become more financially independent.

“We’re going to the communities that have not received any help thus far. Many don’t have power, and I’ve heard reports that some of these communities aren’t going to have power for the next two months. That’s their reality.”

—W. Derrick Lea, Adventist Community Services Disaster Response (ACS DR) director of the North American Division. He spoke about efforts of ACS DR to deliver much-needed donations by mobile distribution units to those displaced in the hardest hit areas of Louisiana, United States, following the landfall of category 4 Hurricane Laura on August 27, 2020.

30,000

Number of dinosaur bones uncovered by the Adventist-led Dinosaur Excavation research project over the past 20 years in the Lance Formation bone bed, located in eastern Wyoming, United States. Significant research, based on a biblical creation paradigm, offering alternative ideas regarding the extinction of dinosaurs, has been published in peer-reviewed academic journals, challenging traditional evolutionary theory.

“The Adventist community in Bozeman is heartbroken by this tragic loss. Tom has a long history of dedicated service as an Adventist leader here in Montana and the Northwest and will be deeply missed.”

—Elden Ramirez, Montana Conference president, commenting on the death of 40-year-old Adventist helicopter pilot Tom Duffy, whose helicopter crashed while helping to fight a wild-fire in the Mount Hood National Forest in Oregon, United States.

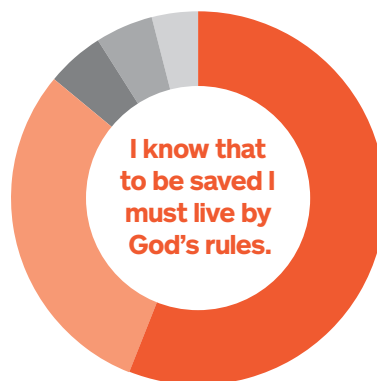
Are We Getting It Right?

During the 2019 Chosen International Pathfinder Camporee in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, United States, researchers asked 993 Pathfinders about their views on salvation. The results of the following two questions challenge us to better present the biblical concept of salvation by grace.

Source: ASTR Research and Evaluation Team in collaboration with Institute of Church Ministry, n = 993



- Strongly agree (77.5%)
- Agree (19.0%)
- I'm not sure (2.5%)
- Disagree (0.4%)
- Strongly disagree (0.6%)



- Strongly agree (55.5%)
- Agree (29.5%)
- I'm not sure (5.5%)
- Disagree (5.5%)
- Strongly disagree (4.0%)

“This new alignment brings evidence-based acute clinical and lifestyle medicine together, building on both Adventist HealthCare’s rich heritage and ELIA Wellness’s innovation in the area of health and wellness to create a stronger platform to bring health, hope, and healing to the community.”

— Geraldine Przybylko, executive director of Australia-based ELIA Wellness, commenting on the newly established partnership with Adventist HealthCare and Sydney Adventist Hospital. ELIA Wellness was founded in 2016 and has focused on lifestyle medicine, offering proactive health and wellness resources. The partnership will potentially serve 175,000 patients a year.

6,000

Value in Australian dollars of furniture sold in one week following the opening of a new secondhand church-owned furniture store in the town of Bourke, northwestern New South Wales, Australia. It took the small congregation 12 months to renovate the store and an adjacent café that serve as an Adventist ministry center located prominently on Main Street.

211

Number of municipal and provincial social work directors in Colombia who completed the I Want to Live Healthy certificate program over a nine-week period of e-learning video classes focusing on promoting a healthier lifestyle.

“ADRA conducted training classes on how to make soap. We now have all the soap we need to keep ourselves and our homes safe. Also, now that we know how to make soap ourselves, it has given us a new income opportunity. I can see myself making a lot of soap that I can sell for profit.”

—Maria, a refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo, now living in Uganda, about a soap-making workshop offered by ADRA Uganda for people living in the Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement. ➔



Photo: ADRA Canada

Gift Giving, Singing, and Plenty of Baptisms

By *Adventist Record* and *Adventist World*

Schools in the Trans-Pacific Union Mission (TPUM) in the South Pacific Division (SPD) celebrated Adventist Education Week with gift giving, singing, and dozens of baptisms.

“Looking Beyond” was the week’s theme, with hundreds of students, teachers, and members of the wider community participating in the programs.

An evangelism series at Navesau Adventist High School in Fiji culminated in the baptism of 40 students on August 15, 2020.

At Funafuti Adventist Primary School in Tuvalu, activities were held over two weeks. The first week was designed for the teachers’ enrichment, while the second week saw teachers lead out in evening presentations and students involved in singing for the community. Principal Kima Pedro said the church was packed every night, and a good number of parents from other faiths attended. Students also visited retired teachers and presented them with gifts.

Betikama Adventist College in the Solomon Islands concluded their Adventist Education Week with the baptism of 19 young people on August 22. Principal Par- tinson Bekala said the week’s scrip- tural readings helped to strengthen the students’ stand for baptism. There have been 69 baptisms at the college this year.

Samoa Adventist College held a combined Adventist Education Sabbath on August 22. More than 200 parents joined in the celebra- tion, with most being from other faiths. Principal Tepora Fuimaono said that there were a lot of positive comments from parents.

In Fiji a teacher from Suva Ad- ventist College, who organized the Education Week of Prayer in her local church, said, “I have never felt so blessed, inspired, and impressed in my whole Christian life. Please pass on our sincere appreciation to the principal, Encie Donie, and her team at BekaBeka Adventist High School for the readings. They were truly an inspiration.”

South Pacific islands Adventist schools celebrate Education Week.

Beulah College conducted its Adventist Education Sabbath throughout all the local churches in Tonga on August 29. With teachers and students sharing the Word of God, they collected a special offering toward the school’s oper- ation. Mission education director Fatongia Hopoate said, “The school . . . received more. God works in a mysterious way during this pan- demic—to God be the glory!”

Two weeks earlier 24 students and two teachers were baptized. More than 60 percent of students at Beulah College are from homes of other faiths.

In the Solomon Islands on August 18, Naha Adventist Primary School staff and students visited Sunrise Adventist Primary School. Sunrise school is surrounded by churches from other Christian denominations. Nearly all the chil- dren attending Sunrise school are from families of other faiths.

Students were encouraged to wit- ness in their local community. One of the residents they met was an elderly man named Iro. While the students were singing songs about God’s love, tears streamed down his cheeks. Iro mentioned that the students were the first group to visit him and give him gifts. He said he wants to join the little group worshipping every Sabbath at the school.

“Adventist education aims to pre- pare students for the joy of service in this work, and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come,” said TPUM associate education director Mele Vaihola. “Thus, its role is to plant the seed of service in our students’ hearts, and the wider com- munity and God give the harvest.” ©



Photo: *Adventist Record*

Adventist Publishing House in Germany Turns 125

By Adventistischer Pressedienst, and *Adventist World*

Advent-Verlag, the Seventh-day Adventist publishing house founded by Ludwig Richard Conradi in Hamburg, Germany, is turning 125 in 2020. Advent-Verlag opened in 1895 to spread Adventist literature to German-speaking people across the world from the port of Hamburg. Today, Advent-Verlag GmbH is a modern publishing house with 16 employees and a subsidiary, Wartberg-Verlag GmbH. Advent-Verlag GmbH is a registered company that has an eye on the future.

“In the recent past we deliberately initiated a generational change in the publishing house,” said Advent-Verlag shareholder representative Johannes Naether. “We handed over the management to a new generation in trust. It was important to us for the new team to be supported by the expertise of long-standing publishing employees, so that the publishing house is optimally positioned and its tradition-steeped history can be continued,” he added.

WORDS THAT LAST

“Words That Last,” the publishing house’s motto, is not just a slogan, according to publishing director Jessica Schultka. “It has been the DNA of the Adventist publishing house for 125 years,” she emphasized. “Although the range of tasks has changed in recent years, the core competence of the publishing house has always been the publication of Adventist books, magazines, and study materials that, then as now, aim to encourage people to think about God,” she added.

As they work to guarantee this for the future, the editorial team

The September 2020 issue of *Adventisten Heute*, the magazine for Adventist members in Germany. The magazine is one of many resources Advent-Verlag has produced during its 125-year history.



Photo: Advent-Verlag

works to publish books on topics related to theology, pastoral care, and lived faith. They also publish devotional books, study books, journals, and magazines that promote, deepen, and accompany faith, leaders said.

On the occasion of the anniversary, the Lüneburg-Wolfsburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce was a guest at the publishing house. Sönke Feldhusen, deputy general manager of the organization, presented a certificate of honor on the special occasion.

“We are proud and grateful for our tradition-rich past, because the Advent-Verlag publishing house is a defining part of Adventist history in Germany,” managing director Dieter Neef explained during the ceremony. The publishing house employs workers in the Lüneburg region, securing jobs there since 1994. It is the reason leaders said

Advent-Verlag continues to serve German-speaking populations around the world.

they felt honored by the Chamber of Industry and Commerce acknowledgment.

CEREMONY POSTPONED

As leaders explained, Advent-Verlag Lüneburg has offered readers direction and meaning in life, interacting wholistically across generations. According to their description, they want to inspire readers to reflect on God and live authentic biblical faith in everyday life by promoting, deepening, and accompanying it in a sustainable way.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the planned anniversary celebration had to be postponed until 2021, leaders said.

Those interested in knowing more about the work and everyday life of Advent-Verlag Lüneburg can visit advent-verlag.de/wir-feiern, and watch a video at youtu.be/VGdTzIPaJGQ. ©

105,317

Membership of the
Euro-Asia Division (ESD)
as of June 30, 2020

1,600,000

Number of liters of fresh water given to people living in the Donetsk region thanks to efforts of ADRA Ukraine and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). This project supplies water to the most vulnerable population groups living in 25 settlements in the Avdeevsky, Mariinsky, Volnovakhsky, and Nikolskyi districts because of damage to its water supply pipeline.

“The good news, allowing nobody to stay indifferent, is the way the church has responded to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic by keeping an eye on new opportunities to minister to people. This inspires a sense of great optimism that our church, in spite of everything, is alive, active, and has huge potential for serving this world.”

— Mikhail F. Kaminskiy, Euro-Asia Division (ESD) president, in a leadership meeting focusing on the church's strategic planning for the future.

We Are Together

—Irina V. Protasevich, assistant vice president for spiritual and educational work at Zaoksky Adventist University, was recognized by a certificate of honor and a commemorative medal. She was honored for her selfless contribution to organizing assistance to senior citizens and those struggling in the lockdown in the Zaoksky district, Tula region, as part of the We Are Together all-Russian mutual assistance effort.

423

Number of tons of food aid distributed by the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) in ESD territory among 31,406 most vulnerable people living in Uzbekistan, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, and Kyrgyzstan. 📍

85,255

Number of face masks, along with disinfectants and other personal protective equipment, donated to 55 health-care institutions in Russia and 29 entities in Ukraine. The program involved the employment of local seamstresses, enabling them to earn a living during the lockdown.



Photo: Euro-Asia Division

Perspective



Photo: Tyler Nix

I Choose the Joy of Service

What kind of advice would Joseph, Moses, and Esther have for me?

One of the most important decisions we make in our lives is related to happiness and joy.

Happiness is traditionally linked to the external environment and circumstances we do not always control. Like the bearing of sunshine or rain on our mood or weekends versus working days, happiness is often something we have very little or zero influence over.

When pursuing happiness, we focus on weekends and live for vacations. We might even feel empty and sad when a specific person is not around, or even that our self-worth depends on the good evaluation made by superiors. This kind of happiness leads to insecurity, fear, and emptiness.

On the other side is joy. And surprisingly, we can choose joy. As experts remind us: "Happiness is a destination; joy is a state of mind." We choose to be joyful regardless of the external environment, people, or circumstances. It is something we can do when we acknowledge that

God is in control of all the details of our lives, and are determined to praise Him no matter what happens.

CHOOSING TO SERVE

For some people, true happiness, joy, and life satisfaction come from living life based on clear values and purpose. These people experience joy regardless of circumstances. One of them recently shared this experience with me.

"During the past 10 years my professional life has changed a lot. God's purpose for my life became clearer; events that followed changed me. I decided not to allow any external circumstances or people to shape me into something I do not choose to be. I decided to bring joy into my life.

"I dreamed of living a fuller life with God. What helped me along the way were traffic signs in the form of my core values: love, wisdom, inspiration, courage, and kindness. They are keeping me on the right road and are directing my path in the right direction. I chose the courageous life of serving humanity over the comfort of seeking false pleasures. I'm pushed way out of my comfort zone, but I experience true meaning, purpose, and joy."

Making the bold decision to live filled with joy is only the beginning of the road less traveled. Once we

go down that path, we won't want to go back to our old, safe existence.

BIGGER THAN YOURSELF

In our world, comfort is so overrated that the decision for a life greater than ourselves is considered a naive act of hopeless dreamers. But there, and only there, true joy can be found and maintained.

When God moves, it is rarely safe, but it is always right. It might even not be seen as joy at first. Joseph was enslaved. Moses confronted Pharaoh. Esther was threatened by genocide. As difficult as it may seem, when we step out in faith to experience joy we can trust that God's way is better than ours.

Biblical heroes were often called to live an unusual life of serving humanity at crucial moments of human history. The divine call was not safe, even less comfortable. I wonder what kind of advice Joseph, Moses, and Esther would have for me? Would they encourage me to stay in my comfort zone and stay silent about injustice, poverty, and systematic exclusions? Or would they advise me to speak up and act in a kind and loving manner?

A long time ago I made my decision. I chose joy.

Maja Ahac is head of advocacy at ADRA Europe. ©

Focus



Eternal, Unchangeable, and Always Relevant

A conversation
about the
three angels'
messages

**Adventist World
associate editor Gerald
Klingbeil spoke with
Ángel Manuel Rodríguez,
former director of
the Biblical Research
Institute, via Zoom
about the content,
significance, relevance,
and timeliness of the
three angels' messages
within the larger context
of Adventist theology.**

Adventists are very familiar with the phrase “three angels’ messages,” while other Christians may wonder what this phrase means. What does this phrase refer to, and why is it important?

For Adventists this phrase is very significant, because our roots are found in apocalyptic prophecy. Other Christians, who perhaps are not that well informed about apocalyptic prophecies, may be disoriented when they hear the three angels’ messages terminology.

But for us the three angels’ messages, located in Revelation 14:6-12, are an important and significant passage containing God’s last message for the human race.

There is a renewed emphasis on the three angels’ messages. Are we doing something that we’ve never done before? Why is this focus so important right now?

It’s good to reread the Bible. By going back, we possibly encounter new insights and find new ways of expressing the same truth.

We go back to our passage to keep it fresh in our collective mind as a church. The significance of the three angels' messages is such that we need to be almost constantly speaking about this. Otherwise it will lose its significance.

You see, we are pilgrims sharing what we have with others. We cannot allow ourselves to leave by the side of the road this important part of our message and life. Let's talk about it as often as possible.

If we look at Adventist theology as a whole, where would you locate the three angels' messages in terms of importance?

The three angels' messages are part of the teachings of the church, and these teachings are wholistic. It's one entity, making it difficult to assign some to the periphery. We do believe that at the center of Adventist doctrine and theological thinking is Jesus. There's no other way.

Through the study of biblical doctrines, we gain new insights in terms of who Jesus is, and what His plan is for us. When you look at Revelation 14:6-12, you notice that many of our doctrines are directly or indirectly present in it.

You take the beginning, verse 6, and the first thing the text says is that the angel is proclaiming the gospel. We're talking about the heart of the matter here. This is the center of the three angels' messages, placed at the very beginning of the passage. This is going to orient the rest of the passage.

Is that a different gospel than Jesus preached, or the apostles, or anybody since?

The fact that it's called the eternal gospel is telling you really that this gospel was, if I may say so, conceptualized in the mind of God in eternity. It's what God also calls the "great mystery" that was hidden for ages and ages and has now been

revealed to us through Jesus.

This gospel was in God's mind, and He wants to implant it in our minds and lives. It's eternal because it has always been His plan for us. This one gospel is eternal, unchangeable, and always relevant.

Could you give us a one-sentence summary of each of the messages of the three angels? What would be the key concept for each message?

The Lord invites every person, when confronted by the gospel of salvation, to fear God, to make God their covenant Lord, to give Him glory, to repent and recognize Him as a righteous judge, and to worship Him as Creator in a world of apostasy, secularism, and atheism.

The second message is also good news, because it's about the fall of the enemy. The Babylon that is fallen is the unification of political and religious powers that are in opposition to God.

The last message is a wonderful message as well. It's God's heart opening up to us, saying, "Choose Me, choose Me, because if you become loyal to the forces of evil, what you will experience is eternal death, so don't do that." The language is strong, because we are standing, so to say, at the edge of the abyss, and God is shouting, "Don't take another step! Come back!"

Ángel, I think you must've also been an evangelist.

Pastors are [smiles].

Starting with the Millerites, our spiritual forebears, and early Adventists, we have preached the three angels' messages for more than 175 years. Has our preaching changed?

The three angels' messages were read by Christians before we did it. Some applied them to the work of Luther or Calvin. The Millerites applied them to their own experience. Through the study of the

Scriptures the pioneers found in this message their own identity, their own mission. These have remained an integral part of our message and mission to the world.

So you would say that we are standing in the same tradition? that we're preaching the same message that these early Adventists were preaching?

No question about that.

Adventists, similar to other Christian denominations, struggle to engage young adults who often leave the church when they transition after finishing high school or college. How can we best communicate this important element of Adventist theology to this generation?

This is a complex question, but I will go back to the concept that we began with. We need to talk about the three angels' messages. We have to bring it to the attention of young people, not once, but constantly, as often as possible. Make them aware of the content and significance of this message. I would also suggest that we present the topic as part of a cosmic conflict.

If there is something that I believe that humans, and particularly young people, can understand, it's stories. We all love stories. Now we have the most wonderful story to tell. Perhaps one of the problems is that we have taken that story and have broken it apart into what we call doctrines.

In some cases we have not been able to put them together as a narrative, as a story. It seems to me that if we would develop a way to tell the whole story to young people, they would be taken by it. Show them that the three angels' messages are part of the cosmic conflict. Challenge them and tell them, "This is a magnificent story, a true story. You have a part to play in it. You are an actor in this story."

If there is something that I believe that humans, and particularly young people, can understand, it's stories. We all love stories.

I believe that if the story is told with energy, enthusiasm, and consistency, young people will say, "Wow, this is amazing!" The story of the cosmic conflict answers for them the question of existential significance: what are we doing here?

Narratives and stories work in many different cultures. "Relevance" is another key word. For this generation, and for most of us, if something is irrelevant, we tend to ignore it. Can you help us frame the relevance of the three angels' messages for the twenty-first century?

I can mention only a few things. I suppose "relevant" means meaningful. So it means that I somehow have to talk with young people to identify their real needs. They have their own perceived needs, but there are needs that go deep inside every human being. It would then be our task to show how the three angels' messages best meet their real personal needs.

The question *Why am I here?* is a question that many young people don't ask. They know only that they are here now. *Why are we here?* is a

big question that the three angels' messages help to answer.

We have to also place it in the context in which they live, which is, particularly in the Western Hemisphere, a secular world. Where is God within this intellectual map?

The three angels' messages tell you where He is. *I'm here. I'm the Creator.* You are breathing every second of your life because of Him. It means if God withholds the breath, we die.

This message is powerful when connected, as it is, with the concept and the experience of hope. When people are disoriented, they need something to hold on to that will give meaning to their lives. It has to begin with talking to them, opening our hearts to them as we lovingly tell them the most glorious story of cosmic love flowing from the heart of God to ours.

I like your notion that hope is such an important element, and that there is a yearning in our souls. It's not just young people. I think it's you and me.

Everybody.

If you look at our world right now, we need more hope. Are the three angels' messages really a message of hope?

Definitely. If you look for the source of hope, where was hope born? Look, it's almost the first word in the message, the "everlasting gospel." If we go back to the Fall, there was no future for humans, but then the gospel came and filled their hearts with hope. This hope is at the center of the message.

They [the three angels' messages] introduce the hope of salvation already realized in the work of Christ proclaimed in the gospel. The message points to the consummation of hope in the second coming of Christ. For now, this hope is ours in the form of a promise, but it will soon become a palpable reality.

How do the three angels' messages fit into the overall picture of Adventist theology?

How do we do theology? You need a starting point. Of course, you start from the Bible, but you go to the Bible and you pull from it God's message for us. Adventists went to the Bible. They gathered together these wonderful jewels. And they understood that these jewels were to be proclaimed at the close of the cosmic conflict.


It provided for them, and for us, a point of reference. There are two integrating key elements in Adventist theology.

The first one is the doctrine of the [heavenly] sanctuary. There's no question that the doctrine of the sanctuary is extremely important in the Bible, because it's about Jesus, His nature, His role, His death on the cross, and His ministry as mediator. If that is not going to integrate our system of beliefs, what else can do it?

The second element that I would suggest is the three angels' messages. These messages, together with the sanctuary, bind the elements into a message for the last days that is framed, so to speak, by the cosmic conflict. Now, if I'm going to do theology as an Adventist theologian, this is the Adventist perspective. I have to take these elements with me in my theological journey.

Ángel, thank you for this conversation. Thank you for your passion. Thank you for your evangelistic drive.

My pleasure. Thank you for the invitation. ©

 **A video of the longer version of the interview can be seen at vimeo.com/454016252**

Keeping the Home Fires Burning



Heaven: List three things you'd like to do when you get there." A simple activity to conclude our family worship focused on the events after the Second Coming and the millennium. Seven of us wrote down our top three wishes and placed them on the table. Then each of us had to guess whose wish list we were reading. The room was filled with surprises and laughter. We enjoyed this activity. We had something to look forward to.

The lists contained a wide variety of wishes ranging from flying with angels, visiting other worlds, riding a lion or a wolf, to asking Jesus how we even made it, and thanking Him for His boundless love. The wishes spoke of our desire to be part of God's glorious kingdom. In the midst of a pandemic, the hope of meeting Jesus and being part of His kingdom keeps burning within.

COVID-19 has slowed down life and has brought us back to basics. We are in survival mode. As a new normal is taking shape, we are led to ponder the times we are living in. While some look for temporary accommodations and others try to make ends meet, many are just grateful for food on their tables and jobs they still have.

My husband recently said, "God has brought us where He wants us to be, at home." Home is where worship, values, and relationships are cultivated. Home is where courage is built and love is grown. For far too long Satan has managed to fill our lives with busy schedules and many distractions. This has limited quality family time. Now we have the chance to start over, to reset, to rebuild our families on a Christ-centered foundation.

God has His ways of getting our attention. When we worship, at first there is a spark, then a flame that burns within us but never consumes us. Family worship is a means of speaking to God as a group—then listening

for His voice. Worshipping God as a family during the lockdown helps us to reconnect and draw closer to our Savior.

This time of uncertainty has helped me understand my human need of a divine Savior. When I read John's descriptions of the heavenly throne room (Rev. 5:11), with myriads of angels and heavenly beings honoring the Lamb of God, I realize that God is worthy of our worship. Our Creator is worthy of all praise. When we worship Him, we experience a longing quenched, and an emptiness made whole. We find our worth in Him, in the One we worship.

We often spend our lives warming ourselves by the fires of other people's stories and spiritual experiences. It's time to experience God for ourselves—personally and wholeheartedly. No matter how cold and broken the hallelujah might be, we are promised that "our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18, NIV).

Ellen White writes, "If ever there was a time when every house should be a house of prayer, it is now." We are rediscovering the spiritual importance of the family unit, the building block of society, church, and nation. We can also see this on the campus of Lowry Memorial College. We hear our neighbors singing and worshipping each evening. Their songs and prayers are encouraging and remind us that God is at work. When a family worships together, the forces of darkness tremble at the name of Jesus, family bonds are strengthened, and God is able to use them to bless the world. ©

* Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 7, p. 42.

Beersheba Jacob serves as the human resources coordinator and assistant to the vice president at Lowry Memorial College, **Bangalore, India**. She is married to Andrew.



Focus

Three Messages, Three Groups

Building on a platform of hope

Seventh-day Adventists and the three angels' messages of Revelation 14 are often thought of synonymously. For years the very logo of the movement depicted three angels flying in midheaven with a message for all the world.

Historically, we have believed that the first angel's message went out to the early Advent believers of the 1800s. Following that first message, the second message is a call to come out of Babylon, or the confused religions of the world. We even believe that the third angel's message began to be heard in different parts of the earth, but that its widest impact was somehow limited until the future.

But what if we could look at these messages in an entirely new way, in a future context in which each message takes on new meaning?

We don't have to look far to see a future moment for these messages. In *Early Writings* we read these words: "When the messages of the three angels come prominently before the world again just before the second advent of Christ, the angel of Revelation 18:1 joins in the proclamation of the second angel in the message that 'Babylon is fallen.' 'Come out of her, my people.'"

Adventists find their roots and meaning in history. I'm not here to debate that. But I suggest that sometimes we lose our prophetic relevance by keeping in the past things that should have fresh application in our current reality.

These three messages should be heard collectively and sequentially. They point out that God is asking us all to decide about whom we worship before judgment is pronounced on the whole world.

THE FIRST ANGEL

"Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the

everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water’” (Rev. 14:6, 7).

This message is a call to fear God. Solomon wrote: “The fear of the Lord is to hate evil” (Prov. 8:13). This message is also a call to give glory to God. How do we do that? Jesus said, “By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit” (John 15:8). The fruit of the Spirit comes from our complete surrender to the Holy Spirit, the result of embracing this message.

Then it makes it clear who would understand this message—those who believe in judgment and in the Creator of the heavens and the earth.

I don’t know any group in the world that makes more sense of this message than Seventh-day Adventists. It also makes sense that if a message goes out, it gets people to join a movement that then swells and moves to step two.

No other religious group believes in the judgment hour message, calls people to give God glory, and celebrates God as Creator of heaven and earth every seventh day.

This first message has been taken up earnestly by the Seventh-day Adventist Church as we seek to eschew evil and honor the Creator by giving Him glory, doing all this in the context that time won’t last forever, and believing in the current, ongoing judgment of the living.

Who gives this message around the world? Individuals who have received it, who identify with the movement, and who, in love and mercy, give it by example, by pen, and by voice.

THE SECOND ANGEL

“And another angel followed, saying, ‘Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication’” (Rev. 14:8).

This message is serious. It’s a clear announcement that religion has become corrupted, and that God will not tolerate false religion much longer. This is His call to those now awakened by the first angel, those who accepted that first message. They go out and declare it to their friends in Babylon—historically identified as the fallen churches of Christendom—those who rejected the everlasting gospel message. In His mercy God gives them another warning; this message goes to them.

Many will listen to this message that their belief system is corrupt. Deep down they may have felt that something is not right. Now more surely than ever, they know it is not.

THE THIRD ANGEL

This last message to all the world begins with “If anyone . . .” It’s almost as if anyone who didn’t understand the first message or didn’t answer the call of the second are told: This last one is for you. God in His mercy is addressing you.

The third angel begins with a warning that has an urgency like no other. It’s a call either to allow God to save you, or to try to save yourself. God is clear: salvation is a matter of worship. Because of the faithful call of friends and family, many who now hear the call will exit the fallen churches and their mistaken worship and join with the Advent movement, going out together to give the last message to the world. This third message is intensified by the call of a fourth angel, who repeats mightily the cry of the second and adds the warning of the imminent seven last plagues: “After these things I saw another

Adventists find their roots and meaning in history.

angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, ‘Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen.’ . . . ‘Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities’” (Rev. 18:1-5). The message goes to all who have ever professed to be followers of Christ; to all who have ever heard and resisted the Holy Spirit’s whisper; to people everywhere who are still part of the religious, ideological, spiritual confusion that is Babylon; to those who profess no faith, or a faith that has nothing to do with the God of the Bible.

In His mercy, God gives every human being alive one last opportunity to hear and see the message in living color. Then everyone will either choose to stand with God’s people; or insist on venturing forward on their own, trying to save themselves.

You and I have the opportunity to get in on the action. Jesus’ invitation is: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me” (Rev. 3:20). ☉

* Ellen G. White, *Early Writings* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1882, 1945), p. 304.

Jared Thurmon is lay pastor of the **Adairsville, Georgia**, Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Heralds of God's Judgment

Seventh-day Adventists have always been people of prophecy.

The first half of the nineteenth century saw modern rationalism intensifying its attacks against the Christian faith. While winds from the French Revolution deified human reason, evolutionary biology regarded nature as its own creator. Deists portrayed God as someone who does not intervene in human affairs.

For historical critics, the Bible was full of religious myths and inaccuracies; its prophecies merely a literary style without any bearing on the present. Postmillennialists suggested that the reign of God would be established on earth through social reforms. God and His Word were utterly questioned.

Into that challenging context, biblical archaeology began a journey that has repeatedly confirmed the historicity of the Bible. The three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12 garnered attention, warning the world of God's impending judgments and His offer of salvation. This article will provide a brief overview of the early Adventist understanding of those messages and later refinements of that understanding.

EARLY ADVENTIST VIEWS

Protestant expositors of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries tended to view the three angels of Revelation 14 as "emblematical heralds of the progressive reformation from popery"¹ While some authors regarded the mission of those angels as already fulfilled, others saw it as still being carried on.

William Miller and his followers became increasingly convinced that the great Second Advent movement was proclaiming the first angel's message by warning the world of "the hour of His judgment" (Rev. 14:7). Some Millerites believed that the preaching of the second angel began in the summer of 1843 with Charles Fitch's famous sermon titled, "Come Out of Her, My People" (Rev. 18:4; cf. Rev. 14:8). Millerites paid little attention to the message of the third angel.

After the October 1844 disappointment, Sabbathkeeping Adventists assumed that the messages of the first two angels were already fulfilled by the Millerite movement, and that their own emerging movement had to preach only the third angel's message (Rev. 14:9-12).

In his pamphlet *Second Advent Way Marks and High Heaps* (1847), Joseph Bates demonstrated how the sequential preaching of those messages

unfolded the basic doctrinal components of the Adventist message.² In the years that followed, Sabbathkeeping Adventists further revised and strengthened their doctrinal system as integrated by the foundational themes of both the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14 and the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12.³

In 1858, Ellen White portrayed those messages as the three steps of access to the solid platform of present truth, with two distinctive groups climbing stairs. The first group were those who went through the Millerite period and early Sabbathkeeping Adventist experiences and accepted the messages as originally preached. The second group was formed by people who later climbed the stairs without being part of the original proclamation of the messages.⁴ This illustration helped consolidate the notion that although the three angels' messages started to be preached in sequential order, all three should be preached simultaneously.

LATER ADVENTIST REFINEMENTS

Sabbathkeeping Adventists saw the proclamation of the three angels' messages as unfolding the whole system of present truth. In the early days of the movement two expressions



of these messages received special attention. One was “the hour of his judgment is come” (Rev. 14:7), which was considered an allusion to the post-1844 phase of Christ’s priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary (cf. Dan. 7:9-14; 8:14).

The other expression was “the commandments of God” (Rev. 14:12), with its emphasis on the abiding nature of the Decalogue and the seventh-day Sabbath. This view was grounded on the conviction that justifying faith does not make void God’s law (Rom. 3:31).

Over the years Seventh-day Adventists have considered themselves as the obedient “saints” who “keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (Rev. 14:12). They even relate several of their beliefs to these two doctrinal subjects.

For example, after Ellen White’s 1863 health reform vision, basic health principles were regarded as expressions of those commandments. After the 1888 General Conference Session in Minneapolis, the doctrine of righteousness by faith was seen as a crucial part of the “the faith of Jesus.” This perception fostered a more Christ-centered approach to preaching “the everlasting gospel” in the context of “the hour of his judgment” (Rev. 14:6, 7).

At the 1952 Bible Conference in Takoma Park, Maryland, F. D. Nichol presented an insightful paper: “The Increasing Timeliness of the Threefold Message,” providing a helpful list of doctrines and prophetic forecasts set forth in those messages.⁵ More recently, Adventist authors and preachers have placed a renewed emphasis on the creationist emphasis of the first angel’s message (Rev. 14:7).

Adventist scholars have recognized that the expression “worship Him who made heaven, and earth, the sea and springs of water” (Rev. 14:7) doesn’t reflect primarily the Genesis creation account but rather the fourth commandment of the Decalogue, which reads, “the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them” (Ex. 20:11).

The three angels’ messages of Revelation 14 are probably the richest, most encompassing cluster of doctrinal glimpses in the Apocalypse of John, and even in the whole Bible. No wonder that in 1903 Ellen White spoke of these messages as “the most solemn truths ever entrusted to mortals” and of their proclamation as “a work of the most solemn import.”⁶

The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to “make

disciples of Jesus Christ who live as His loving witnesses and proclaim to all people the everlasting gospel of the three angels’ messages in preparation for His soon return (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Rev. 14:6-12).”⁷ If the messages of Revelation 14 were so relevant to early sabbathkeeping Adventists and succeeding Adventist generations, should not those messages be even more relevant to us, who are much closer to the second coming of Christ? Let’s believe and boldly proclaim those important messages to the whole world. ©

¹ Thomas Scott, *The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: Translated From the Original Greek, With Original Notes, and Practical Observations* (London: Bellamy and Roberts, 1791), on Revelation 14:6, 7.

² Joseph Bates, *Second Advent Way Marks and High Heaps, or a Connected View, of the Fulfillment of Prophecy, by God’s Peculiar People, From the Year 1840 to 1847* (New Bedford, Mass.: Benjamin Lindsey, 1847).

³ Alberto R. Timm, *The Sanctuary and the Three Angels’ Messages: Integrating Factors in the Development of Seventh-day Adventist Doctrines* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Adventist Theological Society Publications, 1995).

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1858), vol. 1, pp. 168, 169.

⁵ F. D. Nichol, “The Increasing Timeliness of the Threefold Message,” in *Our Firm Foundation* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1953), vol. 1, pp. 543-622.

⁶ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 9, p. 19.

⁷ www.adventist.org/articles/mission-statement-of-the-seventh-day-adventist-church/ (posted Oct. 15, 2018).

Alberto R. Timm is an associate director of the Ellen G. White Estate at the General Conference.



Global View

Our True Mission

Reaching the world
for Christ

In these distressing, chaotic, uncertain times, with a worldwide health crisis, racial tensions, human relations challenges, economic volatility, rejection of a biblical moral lifestyle, rampant natural disasters, and more, we are faced with an urgent question: What is the very important mission God has called us, His church, to carry out during these tumultuous end times?

Seventh-day Adventists have been called for a special work—to lift up Christ and His Word, His righteousness, His sanctuary message, His health message, His saving power in the gospel, His three angels' messages, and His soon coming.

We are to assist in the work of the Holy Spirit, pointing people to the cross of Christ and His intercession for us in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary. We are to do this as Jesus did, touching peoples' lives directly in practical, spiritual ways.

JESUS' MISSION STATEMENT

In the Gospel of Luke we see Jesus worshipping at the synagogue in Nazareth, as "His custom was" (Luke 4:16), on the Sabbath. He was asked to read from the Scriptures and was handed the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Opening the scroll, He read: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (verses 18, 19).

In reading this passage, Christ clearly identified Himself as the "Anointed One," the Messiah, and outlined His mission.

Reflecting on this passage, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* states: "The gospel of Jesus means relief for the poor, light for the ignorant, alleviation of distress for the suffering, and emancipation for the slaves of sin."¹

A BALANCED MINISTRY

Christ's ministry was a *balanced* ministry—alleviating temporary suffering, but always with eternal, spiritual results in mind. He came to release not political captives, but those who were captives of Satan. He offered spiritual release from sinful bondage.

Today there are so many captives to sin—immorality abounds; drugs, alcohol, and tobacco hold many in a slavish grasp. Pornography, envy, anger, hatred, bigotry bind people in sin and sorrow.

Jesus came to set people free from the heavy burden of sin; to open the eyes of not only those who were literally blind, but even more so those who were spiritually blind; and to set at liberty those oppressed or "bruised"

in a spiritual sense—people who were discouraged (see Isa. 58:6; 42:4). God calls us to reach out to such individuals with hope and healing, pointing them to the Savior, who alone can heal, who alone can transform hearts.

Jesus showed compassion and love for those who were poor and did not view them as cursed of God, as was generally thought at the time. We, too, are to follow Christ's example in ministering to the poor, relieving suffering—both temporal and spiritual—and helping spiritual captives find true freedom in Christ.

RESTORATION, NOT VENGEANCE

As He read from Isaiah that day in Nazareth, it is interesting that Jesus ended with the phrase, “to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord,” stopping short of the rest of the verse—“and the day of vengeance of our God” (Isa. 61:2).

That is significant, because this last phrase encapsulated what the Jews expected from the Messiah—a deliverer from Roman oppression and tyranny, bringing in social reforms and justice—as they viewed it. Christ was clear about His mission, stating that “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight” (John 18:36).

Ellen White gives further insight into Christ's true mission: “The government under which Jesus lived was corrupt and oppressive; on every hand were crying abuses—extortion, intolerance, and grinding cruelty. Yet the Saviour attempted no civil reforms. He attacked no national abuses, nor condemned the national enemies. He did not interfere with the authority or administration of those in power. He who was our example kept aloof from earthly governments. Not because He was indifferent to the woes of men, but *because the remedy did not lie in merely human and external measures. To be efficient, the cure must reach men individually, and must regenerate the heart.*”²

This was the focus of Christ's mission. He knew that no political agenda, no social reforms, no earthly justice, could solve the real problem; only He could affect the heart change necessary to bring about the reform society so desperately needed. The same is true today.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is clearly identified through divine inspiration: “In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the Word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import—the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention.”³

Jesus knew that no political agenda, no social reforms, no earthly justice, could solve the real problem.

These messages, centered on Jesus, provide what the world needs most—the everlasting gospel: “Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people” (Rev. 14:6).

This message is *inclusive*—no one, no race, no nationality, no country, is to be left out. It is an important message *for all*. And we are commissioned by God to give it.

These messages portray the substance of Jesus' mission statement outlined in Luke 4: bringing the everlasting gospel to the poor; healing brokenhearted, contrite people; bringing liberty to captives of sin; restoring sight to those who are spiritually blind; and freedom for those oppressed by sin.

The three angels' messages are filled with hope as they lead to the restoration of the image of God in human beings, having the righteousness of Christ at their very core—pointing us to true worship and right living, all through the power of Christ dwelling in us through the Holy Spirit.


The three angels' messages are the embodiment of revival and reformation, reviving hope in our hearts and reformation in our lives. As we reach out to a hurting world, ministering to many needs today through Total Member Involvement, let us, as Jesus did, always keep the eternal in view, realizing that only He can regenerate hearts. ©

¹ *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1978), vol. 5, p. 728.

² Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940), p. 509. (Italics supplied.)

³ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 9, p. 19.

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



Devotional

It's Time to Secure Our Tomatoes

What does it mean to watch for Christ's soon coming?


We awoke at 12:30 a.m. to wind gusts of nearly 100 kilometers (60 miles) per hour whipping through the tree branches and whistling in and out of our open windows. Our blinds fluttered and bumped against wooden frames. Gleams of lightning made bright patches through the slats of plastic. Dry leaves rustled across the driveway below. Raindrops could be heard smacking against the glass.

As I lay in bed, in that stage between drowsy and wide awake, all I could think about was my garden. Arguably, I should have been more concerned about the massive tree five meters (15 feet) from my bedroom window, or the old chimney whose imprisonment in ivy had long ago left it cracked and vulnerable, or the greenhouse doors that were still propped open in our yard, or my car that was parked outside of the garage and at risk for the approaching hail. But that's not how a tired mind works. It wasn't any of those things—nor the kale, broccoli, cabbage, corn, or even peppers that I was worried about. It was my 40 blossoming tomato plants.

AN IMPRESSION

Earlier in the evening, unaware that a storm would hit us in the night, I had been watering my garden after a hot and dry 32°C (90°F) day. As I took pride in the neat rows of harbingers speaking of an abundantly stocked pantry and freezer for the winter, I suddenly had the impression that I needed to stake up and secure my tomato plants.

I had started them from seed three months earlier, and now their



starlike yellow blossoms and—in some cases—already round, green tomatoes, were heavily weighing down their little branches. This was most noticeable as each plant took the brunt of the stream from my hose, bending, swaying, and drooping in the mock rainstorm. I knew that it was time to give them extra support. As I looked at my watch and was reminded that it was nearly 9:00 p.m., I shrugged. It didn't have to be done now. I would do it soon. They seemed to be fairly strong and hearty. It wouldn't hurt to wait.

Several hours later, however, as I listened to the storm howling around our house, my mind was filled with regret. Why hadn't I checked the weather? Why hadn't I listened to the impression God had given me while watering my garden? Why hadn't I already prepared for this eventuality *before* I even saw that there was a need?

HEART PREPARATION

In spite of my worry, the storm, of course, continued, bringing with it unrelenting wakefulness.

Then I realized, as I often have, the hopelessness of my anxiety, and instead began to claim several of God's promises that have become special to me over the past several years of gardening: Proverbs 3:9, 10, Malachi 3:10-12, and Deuteronomy 11:13-15. Then, with the furrows of my heart prepared to be more grateful, obedient, and receptive to God's will, an even deeper spiritual theme began to surface as I pondered my current situation in light of the condition of the world around me.

A NEW LESSON FROM AN OLD VERSE

When I was a child, I memorized—as likely many of us did—Matthew 25:13, “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming,” for a Primary Sabbath School project, or perhaps in Bible class at my local Adventist elementary school. Over the years I have at times quoted or contemplated this verse while thinking about the last days. I “know” the verse well.

I'm familiar with the parable of the wise and foolish virgins that comes right before it. I've read and unearthed more about the whole passage in *Christ's Object Lessons*. I've shared worship thoughts on it with my students. But have I really lived this verse out in my day-to-day life? Have I really been watching earnestly? Am I using the time that has been given to me to the very best of my ability? Or am I putting off the weightier spiritual matters for “a better time” as I did with my tomatoes—a time more convenient for me in the midst of my worldly or business-as-usual pursuits?

As I lay in bed with these questions swirling about as noisily in my head now as the storm outside, I was distinctly conscious of the fact that it would have been folly to go into my garden at that moment to help my tomatoes withstand the storm. Similarly, and in a spiritual sense, it's too late to think about preparation for the storm when the storm is already upon us. The time to prepare for the storm is now, even when we don't see it coming in the forecast.

Have I really lived this verse out in my day-to-day life? Have I really been watching earnestly?

A RENEWED PURPOSE

We Adventists *do* see a storm in the forecast. Yes, we have been facing some storms in our world over the past several months—storms centered on health, race, politics—but these are not yet *the storm* that we know is gathering. We don't know exactly what that storm will look like. We don't know precisely what it will sound like. We don't even know specifically when it will hit us.

But we should be watching and waiting and preparing now. We should be “staking up and securing our tomatoes”—strengthening and building our faith, shoring up our hearts, storing up God's promises in our minds, seeking the Lord earnestly, and listening to the leading of His Holy Spirit. Then when it comes, by God's grace our branches will be ready to endure the blast because they are securely established in the vine of His strength. ☺

Emily Gibbs lives in **Cedar Lake, Michigan, United States**, where she teaches English at Great Lakes Adventist Academy. She and her husband, Jacob, are looking forward to welcoming their first child, a daughter, in early November.

Us and Us

Sometimes we can help; sometimes we need help.

Driving past the supermarket, I saw an old woman, burdened with groceries, struggling down the footpath. Pulling up to a red light at the intersection, I watched with dismay as she fell into some bushes beside the path. Quickly parking, I ran to see if she needed help.

By the time I arrived, I noticed that her shopping bags had broken; she was dazed and sitting on the curb. “Are you all right?” seemed a reasonable question.

But her response was incomprehensible. Maybe she didn’t speak English. On closer inspection she didn’t seem any older than me. “Can I help you?” I asked.

This time the response was definitely English, just muffled and slurred—something like “I’m not doing so well.” Thinking back to all I’d heard about people having strokes, I put my hand on her shoulder to steady her swaying body and asked if I could call an ambulance.

That question seemed to confuse her. But now that I was close, she turned to look at me with eyes wide open. The odor on her breath told me all I needed to know. Still, maybe her “alcohol breath” meant she was experiencing diabetic ketoacidosis. “Have you been drinking?”

She didn’t say anything for a moment, then slowly nodded.

How wrong my initial judgment had been! This wasn’t an old woman suffering the infirmities of age; this was a middle-aged woman who had been drinking and couldn’t navigate the sidewalk. In my sheltered life I don’t encounter many people like that, and I struggled to think what I should do. She couldn’t be left there in the gutter beside the road; it was far too dangerous. Should I call the police and have them take care of the situation? That may have been

the easiest solution—maybe the smartest one too—but it somehow didn’t seem right.

I told her to stay where she was, and ran back to my car for some replacement bags to hold her groceries. While I was repacking frozen cheesecake, a gallon of milk, chips, and other junk food, it was hard not to be judgmental. This was clearly someone not making the best choices in life.

As I worked, she told me that she lived a block away, but she couldn’t remember the address. I asked if I could carry her groceries home for her, and that’s how I found myself walking hand in hand through the middle of my town with a woman too impaired to walk unaided, wondering what my fellow church members would think if they saw me.

As we made slow progress, I asked her name. It took several garbled attempts before I understood that it



was Sharon;* at least I think it was Sharon; it could have been Shannon, Susan, or a very slurred Rebecca.

Then she told me something that came out with clarity and pathos: her best friend had just died. Who knows if that was true? Maybe this was a standard excuse she used whenever she was drunk in public, but it worked with me. This was a fellow human being; someone with a name, who understood the meaning of love and realized the pain of loss.

NOT SO FAST

After an awkward public hug and loud declaration that I was the best person she had ever met, I walked back to my car with much on my mind. Sharon's life is completely foreign to me, and I can't imagine the series of events that led to someone drunkenly staggering home late one morning with frozen cheesecake, milk, and chips.

It's easy to dismiss people whose lives are so different from our own, and almost automatic to think in terms of "them," not us. Somehow "they" are less valuable than those of us who live the health reform message, understand the Bible's prophecies, and generally enjoy sober, comfortable, middle-class lives.

Encountering the humanity of those we don't understand is confrontational. Everyone feels love, loss, grief, and joy as we do. The uncompromising equality revealed in Scripture encourages us to see this. When we start to feel somehow better than others, the Bible reminds us, "For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:22). In fact, Scripture history reveals this in stark clarity. We celebrate heroes of the faith because of the great things they did. But Noah drank to excess (Gen. 9:21); Solomon says that he sought "to gratify my flesh with wine" (Eccl. 2:3). All fell short.

Reality is at least four dimensional, and the Bible shatters systems of thinking that place humans into one dimensional "us" and "them" categories.

The very beginning of Scripture lucidly reveals that our ancestry leads back to Adam and Eve. They fell short, just as we do, but all humanity is related through this couple. There is a profound significance to this that is pointed out in Luke's genealogy of Jesus when he lists, finally, "Adam, the son of God" (Luke 3:38). Adam, the father of us all, had a Father, the Creator of all things. Adam's sin may have separated humanity from God, but Jesus Christ, the Son of man, restored us as "children of God" (1 John 3:1).

On Creation Sabbath, the fourth Sabbath of every October, let's reexamine our understanding of biblical

Let's reexamine our understanding of biblical Creation.

Creation. Have we given lip service while still entertaining unbiblical ideas about fellow humans created in God's image, possibly even fellow believers? Creation leads logically to a radical and humbling egalitarianism. Every neighbor to whom we think ourselves superior, everyone we despise for their ancestry, every homeless addict, every desperate refugee struggling to survive, every murderer on death row, the Creator God values each of us so much that He gave His own life to save us—and us, not us and "them."

Every human, no matter who they are or what they have done, was created in God's image, with an identical claim on our Creator's grace. God "makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:45). Creation Sabbath is for us to share this gospel of grace in deeds, not just words, especially with the "Sharons" and other neighbors among us who struggle and thirst for hope and love.

"A new commandment I give to you," said Jesus, "that you love one another" (John 13:34). ☺

For more information about Creation Sabbath and practical ideas on how to promote and plan this special day, visit creationsabbath.net.

* Not the actual name she gave, or at least I think she gave.



Tagaytay Central Adventist Church members hold a community Vacation Bible School.



Tagaytay Central—a Hot Church

Both physically and spiritually

The Tagaytay Central Seventh-day Adventist Church is unlike any other Adventist church I've known. It's surrounded by the lush tropical vegetation of Luzon island in the Philippines, and is located inside the Taal Volcano, overlooking the large lake encircling the volcano's cone. The Tagaytay Central church is therefore hot. And not only physically; it's also spiritually hot. Besides vigorous Sabbath School discussions and wide-ranging activities for children and youth, the church is actively involved in mission to the city.

SMALL IN SIZE—BUT NOT IN ACTION

The Tagaytay Central church has fewer than 100 members and some time ago celebrated its seventh anniversary. But in spite of being small in number, the members

recently baptized more than 120 people following an evangelistic program in San Jose Barangay. Church members have routinely responded to numerous invitations to support mission projects in churches that are part of the same district, and as far away as the capital, Manila (about 65 kilometers [40 miles]). The Tagaytay Central church has a high membership turnover, as it's a short-term home for many people coming to the city for temporary work. It's not difficult to baptize people in the Philippines; the challenge is to disciple them and to help them grow in Christian maturity.

The church envisions becoming a center of hope in its community. Members discussed and prayed about opening a vegetarian restaurant; instead, they opened a part-time bakery and pastry shop that currently produces on demand. Their

goal is to equip a vegetarian mobile canteen in the bustling and fast-expanding tourist city of Tagaytay, where wholesome food would be accompanied by spiritual literature.

A CHALLENGE BECOMES A BLESSING

About five years ago Tagaytay Central church leaders were startled to discover that they didn't have the appropriate ownership documents for the church property. In essence, it didn't belong to them. Sadly, the property was transferred to new owners, who asked the church members to vacate. The members prayed to God for a solution. Land in Tagaytay is extremely expensive, and the church members couldn't afford to purchase another property.

The church building is surrounded by exclusive gated residential communities, golf courses, hotels, restaurants, and amusement parks—all competing for a piece of the vista of the lake and volcano. In spite of this situation, however, the new owners agreed to allow the Adventists to continue to operate at their current location, and the church is still there today. They know, though, that they can be asked to leave at any time. That challenge, however, has proved to be a blessing.

The members determined to use whatever time they had left at this location to maximize their missionary effectiveness. They worked as if

they would remain there long-term, but at the same time they were prepared to leave any day.

The members discovered a displaced community located in a steep ravine in San Jose barangay, and they began to visit with the people and provide for their practical needs. Visiting families in the ravine provides a great deal of exercise just from walking down the ravine and then back up to the main road. A number of the people—because of arthritis and other mobility issues—are condemned to live in the ravine permanently, especially those in wheelchairs. There’s no sewage system, and landslides occur when it rains heavily or during tropical storms or typhoons. Ambulances cannot access the community; patients have to be lifted and carried to the main road by friends or family.

One man who is confined to a wheelchair accepted Jesus and was baptized. He had no source of income, and was dependent on others to survive. Church members taught him how to weave doormats from cloth rags, and a businessman offered to purchase his mats. Neighboring schools also regularly buy doormats from him, especially during the rainy season. Meanwhile, small stores began to sprout up in the ravine, offering food and other needed items.

MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS

Most of the population in Tagaytay is young, so Adventist church members decided to organize Vacation Bible Schools (VBS) for children. They started with holding one VBS every year in a different location; but in 2019, the entire church was involved in offering VBS experiences in five barangays concurrently. Not only adults but also young people and even children helped their guests discover God and His call to be missionaries for Him. Everyone was exhausted by the time the VBS event was over, but they felt very happy with and rewarded by the results. By God’s grace, total member involvement was a reality.

Determined to serve the needs of the community around them, church members discovered a large number of single mothers who had no income or support for their families. A new idea was born—to teach the single mothers to sew and sell clothing to provide an income for their families. A rundown shelter near the church was completely refurbished and made ready to host the Livelihood Project. Church deaconess Hilkie Dogwe offered her time and skills to teach the women to sew. With help from an Adventist lay group called Working in God’s Service (WINGS) in Manila, as well as from

benefactors from as far away as Australia and the United States, sewing machines were purchased and the project started. Every morning begins with a Bible devotional reading. After the sewing lesson, church members demonstrate how to cook healthful food, then everyone eats lunch together. The Livelihood Project has resulted not only in training people to generate income for themselves and their families, but also in having several of the young mothers and others come to know Jesus and be baptized.

The enthusiasm of Tagaytay Central church members is contagious. They may not be a large church with ample resources, but with God’s blessings and assistance from others, the members are making a difference in their local community by using their God-given talents to serve others. They pray that the Lord will continue to use them as influencers for the glory of God.

**Note: After the Taal Volcano erupted on January 12, 2020, followed by the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic in March, the Tagaytay Central church members have been unable to visit the people they were helping and to maintain their outreach activities. They continue to do what they can, such as recruiting police officers to deliver bags of rice to those living in the ravine, as well as diapers and baby formula to some of the women who were part of the sewing classes. Please pray that the Lord will provide ways for the church members to reach out to those in need and share with them the message of Jesus’ love.—Editors. ©*



Adventist members teach young single mothers in the community how to sew and make clothing to sell.

Cristian Dumitrescu teaches missiology at the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies in the **Philippines** and is serving as pastor of the Tagaytay Central Adventist Church.

God's Glory Revealed

Q

What was God's purpose when He appeared to the Israelites on Mount Sinai?

A

Exodus 19:16-20; 20:18-21 and Deuteronomy 5:22-27 contain a description of what is called a theophany (Greek *theos*, "God," and *phaino*, "to appear/be visible"). The theophany at Mount Sinai is the most glorious manifestation of God in the Old Testament, and it certainly had a central purpose.

1. THE THEOPHANY

The manifestation of God to human eyes was accompanied by natural phenomena. A thick or dense cloud covered the mountain, making it impossible to see what was occurring (Ex. 19:16; 24:15, 16; Deut. 4:11; 5:22). The sound of thunder accompanied lightning flashes (Ex. 19:16; 20:18) and the powerful sound of a trumpet (Ex. 19:16, 19). The Lord descended "in fire," and the mountain was covered by a smoke that ascended "like smoke from a furnace" (Ex. 19:18, NIV; 20:18, NIV). The mountain appeared to be burning (Deut. 4:11; 5:23) as the Lord allowed the Israelites to see His "great fire" (Deut. 4:36). These supernatural phenomena conveyed something that went beyond human comprehension: "And to the eyes of the sons of Israel [in their opinion] the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a consuming fire on the mountain top" (Ex. 24:17, NASB;* cf. Deut. 4:24). They were observing the majestic and magnificent brightness of the glory of God that to them looked like an unapproachable fire (Deut. 5:24). They trembled and kept their distance (Ex. 20:18).

2. THE VOICE OF GOD

The sound and visual phenomena were intended to identify the place where God was located within creation. The people knew that God was present on the mountain, but they saw only His glory, they did not see

God's form (Deut. 4:12). The God who displayed the glory of His presence to the people was not to be confused with natural phenomena because He spoke; He was a person (Deut. 4:12; 5:22-24). They heard the voice of the Lord giving them the Ten Commandments (Deut. 4:12, 13; 5:5; 9:10). For the Israelites the true God was recognized primarily through His Word, not through a physical form. What predominates in the theophany and is determinative is not the visual but the spoken Word, although both were present.

3. THE DIVINE INTENTION

God intended to use His Word "to test you" (Ex. 20:20) or "discipline you" (Deut. 4:36, NIV), in the sense of instructing them particularly with respect to who He was. Here we find the purpose of the theophany. God said to the Israelites, "I will take you as My people, and I will be your God" (Ex. 6:7). This statement forms the very foundation of the covenant. When the people arrived at Sinai to meet with God (Ex. 19:17), He had already, out of His infinite love, chosen them as His people by redeeming them from the land of Egypt (Deut. 4:37). Now the Lord was testing them by letting them decide whether they wanted Him to be their God or not. He came to them in a glorious display of His majesty to introduce Himself personally (Deut. 5:32, 33). His theophany, particularly His unmediated speech to them, revealed that "the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other" (Deut. 4:39, NIV). The response of the people was positive, and they accepted Him as their God (Deut. 5:27).

The theophany at Sinai pointed to the theophany of God on Golgotha, where God displayed the glory of His infinite sacrificial love for sinful humanity (1 John 4:9-12). The question is whether we are willing to accept Him as our Savior and Lord. ☺

*Scripture quotations marked NASB are from the *New American Standard Bible*, copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

Angel Manuel Rodríguez, now retired, is former director of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference.



Health & Wellness

A Vegetarian Lifestyle

Does credible science support it?

I am 30 years of age and have decided to return to the Adventist Church. Growing up, I heard a lot about the value of a meat-free/vegetarian lifestyle based on Adventist research. Is there other credible science supporting this lifestyle?

Yes, there is a large body of robust, peer-reviewed health science on the benefits of a plant-based diet that supports the Adventist health message and lifestyle. It's current and growing by the week.

Research on Adventists, our lifestyle, and our diet is also robust and internationally recognized. This research is consistent with work done in settings other than within the Adventist Church. This information may be useful in guiding varied populations with different cultures and eating habits across the world. This is confirmed by estimates that while 5 percent of adults in the United States endorse vegetarian diets, approximately 38 percent of adults in India (the second most populous country in the world) identify as vegetarian. Large studies are required to show the benefits of various diets, and also the reproducibility of such benefits across different populations, regions, and territories.

Recent studies include data that show that a higher intake of tofu (a condensed soy product) is associated with lower risks of coronary artery disease, related heart attacks, and death.¹ Another large study confirmed that plant-based dietary patterns, especially those emphasizing the use of healthful plant-based sources such as fruit, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, and nuts, may be beneficial in the primary prevention of type 2 diabetes.² This benefit is not shown with the predominant use of unhealthy plant-based foods such as refined grains, starches, and sugars, which were consistently associated with an increased risk of type 2 diabetes. Yet another large study has shown that changing from animal

to plant-based protein sources results in improved longevity; the most marked improvement was noted when switching from red meat and eggs to plant-based protein sources.³

This information is beneficial if we follow it. We often encounter the knowledge-behavior disconnect—we know something to be true, but we don't practice that habit. For example, most people know that it's healthy to exercise daily; yet not all of us do it. We have a golden opportunity to learn about and implement coaching skills that will encourage and enable behavior change even virtually on a webinar-type basis. We need support and accountability to ensure healthy changes.

It's exciting and encouraging that there's current and sound research confirming the findings of the Adventist Health Studies, and not only regarding nutrition but also the benefits of exercise; adequate sleep and rest; careful exposure to sunshine, fresh air, and pure clean water; trust in God; the practice of gratitude; and strong, supportive, and resilience-building relationships. We are, indeed, blessed to live in a time when science continues to confirm the instructions given in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.

"Have faith in the Lord your God and you will be upheld; have faith in His prophets and you will be successful" (2 Chron. 20:20, NIV). ©

¹ L. Ma, G. Liu, M. Ding, et al., "Isoflavone Intake and the Risk of Coronary Heart Disease in U.S. Men and Women: Results From Three Prospective Cohort Studies," *Circulation* 141 (2020): 1127-1137, doi: 10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.119.041306.

² Frank Qian, Gang Liu, Frank B. Hu, et al., "Association Between Plant-based Dietary Patterns and Risk of Type 2 Diabetes," *JAMA Intern Med.* 179, no. 10 (2019): 1335-1344, doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2019.2195, published online July 22, 2019.

³ Jiaqi Huang, Linda M. Liao, Stephanie J. Weinstein, et al., "Association Between Plant and Animal Protein Intake and Overall and Cause-specific Mortality," *JAMA Intern Med.*, doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2020.2790, published online July 13, 2020.

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

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



Angel Music



“May I Tell You a Story?”

BY DICK DUERKSEN

There’s a bunch of Spanish-speaking Pathfinders up at the end of the valley who need a ride to the train station in Denver.”

The report came to me as bad news, raising my level of frustration. The 1985 Camp Hale Pathfinder Camporee, the very first international camporee for Pathfinders in the North American Division, had ended the day before. All the clubs had packed up and left for home. The welcome tipis had been taken down. The blacksmith shop had been disassembled and placed in the truck that was taking it home. Even the tall replica of the Washington Monument that had stood as the centerpiece of the camporee grounds was gone, its pieces unscrewed, packed, folded, and trucked away in a container that was headed home to Washington, D.C.

I was the camporee facility coordinator, driving around the valley in my tired Jeep, making sure that all remnants of the event were disappearing. Our Forest Service permit said that the valley was to be returned to the condition it was in before we had arrived, and that “no mark of our presence shall remain.”

That included the large stage and video screens, the headquarter tents, the water pipes, the bridges we had built over the Eagle River, the flag we

had hung on the Eastern Butte, all of the 50-plus motor homes we had rented as temporary motel rooms for special guests, and every single tent peg Pathfinders had pounded into the Camp Hale dirt.

The camporee had been an awesome success. “The best evangelistic program the church has ever given its youth,” one leader announced. “The best experience of my life,” a young Pathfinder told me.

The Camp Hale Camporee was over. Everyone was on their way home. Except for a few workers and a 35-person Pathfinder club from Mexico City, Mexico.

I had been smiling contentedly in the rapidly emptying valley. Then Carl told me about the club from Mexico.

“Are they waiting for a bus to pick them up?” I asked.

“I think you’d better go talk to them,” he answered, then drove away in his dust-covered pickup.

I started the Jeep and drove down the road past where the headquarters tent had stood, over a small hill to where the club was waiting.

“Crazy,” I mumbled to myself, noticing a dark-gray storm cloud slipping into the valley. “I wonder why I didn’t know they were still here? They should have been gone hours ago!”

The Pathfinders were sitting beside the road, singing *Más allá del sol*, and waving at me.

"Can I help you?" I asked, fearful of the answer.

"No. I think we're fine," the director told me in broken English. "We're waiting for a bright-red bus."

"A bright-red bus?" I asked, incredulous, noticing that the storm was getting closer.

"Yes. We've asked God to pick us up in a bright-red bus and take us to meet the train at the Denver railroad station. Our train leaves at midnight."

My mind quickly calculated how long it would take even a fast "bright-red bus" to get from Camp Hale to the station. Probably five hours with the traffic. The bus would have to show up in the next 30 minutes.

"What bus company have you contracted with for the trip?"

"Only God," he responded with a shrug. "God knows we don't have enough money to rent a bus, so we've asked Him to send us one of His bright-red ones."

* * *

A few hours earlier I could have sent the entire club home in the fleet of rented motor homes. But all those vehicles were now gone. I could have shoehorned them into half-empty buses with several other clubs. Those were also gone. It was late, about to rain, and there were no buses, no motor homes, not even an empty semitruck in the valley. Nothing. *Nada*. Just my Jeep and Carl's work truck.

"Would you like to say a prayer with us?" the director asked.

I joined them, all of us praying for God's "bright-red bus" to come. Quickly. Then I drove back up the valley to make sure all the showers had been removed. My mind rumbled with questions. *Why hadn't they done a better job of planning? Why hadn't they told me about their problem earlier—when I could have helped? Isn't it presumption rather than faith when you expect God to do the impossible on your time schedule?*

"They're Yours, God," I said aloud. "I can't help them now. Please send them Your bus. Bright-red, if You happen to

"We've asked God to pick us up in a bright-red bus and take us to meet the train at the Denver railroad station."

have a spare one available." I wish my prayer had been more sincere.

I drove on, checking on this and that and worrying about my friends from Mexico. If the storm didn't get them, where would they sleep tonight?

A strange dust cloud began swirling on the road toward me. A few moments later a vehicle slowed, then stopped right beside my Jeep. It was a bus. A bright-red bus. Empty.

"Hey there," the driver shouted from his window. "I'm so sorry I'm late. I was supposed to pick up a group of Pathfinders from Pennsylvania, but engine trouble kept me away."

I remembered the Pennsylvania group and told him we'd been able to put them together with another club.

"OK," he said. "But since I'm here, is there anything else I could do for you? I'm going on to Denver, and the mileage is already paid."

"Yes, sir," I smiled, and pointed far down the road to where 35 Pathfinders from Mexico were already putting on their backpacks. "There's a full busload of Pathfinders waiting for you, and I believe you're right on time."

The driver smiled. "I was hoping I'd find a load in the valley."

As the bright-red bus pulled away, the driver began blowing a series of long, loud notes on his air horn. *Angel music*, I thought. ☺

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

Adventist World

Publisher

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

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To Writers: We welcome unsolicited manuscripts. Address all editorial correspondence to 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600, U.S.A. Editorial office fax number: (301) 680-6638

E-mail: worldeditor@gc.adventist.org

Web site: www.adventistworld.org

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

Vol. 16, No. 10



Seventh-day
Adventist Church



Turning Talent Into Gold

What are you good at? Do you jump high or run fast? Do you cook yummy food? Do people come to you for help? Maybe you draw pictures or sing?

Maybe you're like me: you write well. I love writing. When I can't figure out what to say, I write it down first. Whenever there was a youth day at church, I was chosen to say whatever I'd written. When I was really young, I'd even make stories about characters I imagined, or sometimes wrote stories about

my friends (I still do this).

We all have different talents. Some people play instruments. Some people are good at making others feel better when they're sad. Everyone's talents working together makes us like a healthy body working for Christ. The Bible agrees!

The apostle Paul wrote: "For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to

all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully" (Rom. 12:4-8, NIV).

God has blessed us with talents that we should use to honor Him. No one talent is better than another, just as no



Bible Treasure:

“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do”

(Eph. 2:10, NIV).

one body part is better than another. They’re all important. I mean, how boring would it be if we were all good at the exact same thing?

Jesus told a story about three servants with “talents” (in this case, gold). They were supposed to hold them for their master while he traveled (Matt. 25:14-30). Once the master left, the servant who was given five bags of gold put it to good use and ended up with 10 bags. The servant with two bags of gold ended up with two more bags. The servant who

was given one bag of gold didn’t put his gold to good use; instead he buried it in the ground.

When the master returned, the servants who were given five bags and two bags to hold were able to show the master their new bags of gold. But the servant with one bag had nothing to show. The master was angry with that servant and gave his one bag to the servant with 10 bags. He then sent the servant who had done nothing with his share of “talent” away.

In the same way the master

expected the servants to increase the “talents” he gave them, our Master wants us to use the talents He gave us to help others.

What talents do you have? Draw three gold coins and write a talent you have on each one. Try to use all three talents this week to help someone have a better day. ©

This article first appeared in *KidsView*, October 2017.

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