

Ministry[®]

JUNE 2016

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR PASTORS



Questioning God



POSTGRADUATE **MINISTRY & THEOLOGY** BY RESEARCH AND COURSEWORK

Avondale's Postgraduate Degrees in Ministry and Theology are offered through two pathways: by research or coursework.

RESEARCH PATHWAY:

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY & MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

The PhD and MPhil are complete, stand-alone degrees that are internationally recognised doctoral and masters degrees by research. Designed for students to develop advanced skills in carrying out independent and sustained research, the PhD and MPhil aim to enable you to enhance your independent learning ability for continuing professional development through acquiring the necessary skills including transferable skills, research techniques and their application.

COURSEWORK PATHWAY:

MASTER OF ARTS

The purpose of Avondale's Master of Arts (MA) by coursework is to provide further academic education at postgraduate level in biblical studies and it provides an opportunity for pastors, chaplains or involved lay people with entry requirements looking to upskill to be better equipped to serve others.

Examples of specialisation areas:

- Chaplaincy
- Youth Ministry

Find out more or apply now at www.avondale.edu.au/postgraduate

06 Questioning God?

John C. Peckham

Is it all right to dare question God?

10 Life under a magnifying glass

Pamela Consuegra

What are some practical ways of a ministerial family dealing with living life under scrutiny?

13 The second coming of Jesus and our mission: The necessity of the big picture

Jan Barna

Pastors must be bold in their efforts to set right the eschatological picture misconstrued by media.

16 Which Bible version shall we use?

Gerhard Pfandl

Explore the rich history of how God led in the translations of the Bible.

19 What is essential in biblical Christian worship?

Tami Cinquemani

Assess various biblical aspects on why worship should be about the intention to give rather than to get.

22 "Our church is financially broke"

Dan Serns

How can you simplify your church's financial system?

25 Personal happiness, self-fulfillment, and homosexuality in the church

David Penno

Are church members shifting the basis of certain beliefs from theology to philosophy?

05 Editorial

27 Revival and Reformation

28 Resources

29 Dateline

30 Practical Pointers

MINISTRY®

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

EDITOR

Derek J. Morris

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Willie E. Hucks II

CONSULTANTS TO EDITOR

John Fowler, Clifford Goldstein, Myrna Tetz

EDITORIAL SPECIALIST

Sheryl Beck

FINANCE AND TECHNOLOGY MANAGER

John Feezer IV

INTERNATIONAL EDITORS

Chinese-Robert Wong

French-Bernard Sauvagnat

Japanese-Masaki Shoji

Korean-Soon Ki Kang

Portuguese (South America)-Wellington Barbosa

Russian-Michael Kaminsky

Spanish (South America)-Marcos Blanco

Spanish (Inter-America)-Pablo Perla

INTERNATIONAL ADVISORS

Ron Clouzet, Michael D. Collins, Daniel

Devadhas, Carlos Hein, Patrick Johnson,

Victor Kozakow, Geoffrey G. Mbwana,

Musa Mitekaro, Passmore Mulambo,

Daniel Opoku-Boateng, Hector Sanchez,

Branimir Schubert, Houtman Sinaga,

Elias Brasil de Souza, Ivan L. Williams, Ted N. C. Wilson

ADVERTISING

advertising@ministrymagazine.org

SUBSCRIPTIONS/ RENEWALS/ADDRESS CHANGES

subscriptions@ministrymagazine.org

+1 301-680-6511

+1 301-680-6502 (fax)

COVER

316 Creative

LAYOUT

316 Creative

SUBSCRIPTIONS

12 issues: United States US\$32.99; Canada

and overseas US\$47.00. To order: send

name, address, and payment to Ministry®

Subscriptions, 12501 Old Columbia Pike,

Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600 U.S.A.

www.ministrymagazine.org/subscribe.

DIGITAL DELIVERY

Print subscribers can sign up for digital delivery

at www.ministrymagazine.org/digital.

TO WRITERS

We welcome unsolicited manuscripts.

Before submitting, review the writers'

guidelines at www.ministrymagazine.org.

Please send manuscripts via email to

ministrymagazine@gc.adventist.org.



Host: Anthony Kent

Cohost: Derek Morris

www.MinistryinMotion.tv

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

SECRETARY Jerry N. Page

ASSOCIATE SECRETARIES

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

MINISTERIAL RESOURCE CENTER COORDINATOR

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

PRINTER Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1350 N. Kings Rd., Nampa, ID 83687

Standard mail postage paid at Nampa, Idaho. (ISSN 0026-5314)

Member of Associated Church Press.

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

Vol. 88 Number 6 © 2016

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

Ministerial Student Writing Contest

Ministry,

International Journal for Pastors, announces its fifth Ministerial Student Writing Contest. All students enrolled in a full-time ministerial preparation program on the undergraduate or graduate level may participate.

Submission requirements

1. Writers must choose a category from the list below for their submission.
 - a. Biblical studies
 - b. Historical studies
 - c. Theological studies (including ethics)
 - d. Applied religion (preaching, leadership, counseling, evangelism, etc.)
 - e. World missions
2. All submissions must follow the Writer's Guidelines as to length, endnotes, style, and other features of the manuscript. Please carefully read the guidelines found at www.ministrymagazine.org.
3. Submit your manuscript in MS Word to www.MinistryMagazine.org/swc. Please include the following information at the top of the manuscript: your name, address, email address, telephone number, category for which you are submitting (see above), religious affiliation, name of college/university/seminary you are attending, and title of your manuscript.
4. *Ministry* will accept only one submission per writer.

Submission deadline

All submissions must be received no later than **JUNE 30, 2016.**

www.MinistryMagazine.org/swc

Prizes

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| GRAND PRIZE | \$750 |
| FIRST PRIZE | \$500 |
| SECOND PRIZE (five possible) | \$400 |
| THIRD PRIZE (five possible) | \$300 |

The evaluation panel will determine if all prizes will be awarded. The decisions of this panel are final.

Publication

1. All submissions become the property of *Ministry* and will not be returned.
2. Writers who are awarded a prize give the rights to *Ministry* as outlined in the Writer's Guidelines. While the editors intend to publish such manuscripts, publication is not guaranteed.
3. Manuscripts that are not awarded a prize may be purchased at a price to be negotiated.



Discerning the will of God

As a Christian leader, you have undoubtedly been asked this question: “How can I discern the will of God for my life?” How do you respond?

Certainly, the Lord has promised to provide personal guidance. He declared through the psalmist David, “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye” (Ps. 32:8).^{*} And again, through the prophet Jeremiah, “ ‘Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know’ ” (Jer. 33:3).

The promise of divine guidance is sure, but how does it happen? Through the ages, God has spoken directly to the hearts and minds of individuals. The prophet Isaiah promised, “Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, ‘This is the way, walk it,’ whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left” (Isa. 30:21).

But again one might ask, “How do I know if this is the voice of the Lord or just my own imaginings?” After all, there is a way that seems right, but the end of it is the way of death (Prov. 14:12). We must always test the convictions of our conscience by the revealed Word of God. If you are sincerely seeking to discern the will of God, the Holy Spirit will bring an appropriate Word of God to your remembrance. His Word confirms the convictions of your conscience (John 14:26).

Sometimes when we ask for a sign, the Holy Spirit simply points us back to the Word that has already been revealed. I met Wilbur in Nairobi, Kenya. He had been invited to participate in evangelistic meetings. Timid and apprehensive, Wilbur asked God for a sign regarding His will in this

Sometimes when we ask for a sign, the Holy Spirit simply points us back to the Word that has already been revealed.


matter. The conviction that came to him was immediate and startling: “Why are you requesting a sign? I have asked you to go into all the world, and I will be with you!” The answer was so clear. All Wilbur could say was “Thank You, Lord.”

The Lord also reveals His will to us through the counsel of godly associates. When seeking to discern the will of God for your life, always remember this: “In the multitude of counselors there is safety” (Prov. 11:14). The wise man, Solomon, also offered this admonition: “Listen to counsel and receive instruction, that you may be wise in your latter days” (Prov. 19:20). Find people who love God and love you, and listen to their counsel.

What if you take a course of action only to discover that you were mistaken? What if it becomes abundantly clear that this is not the will of God for your life? Answer: you can change course. The apostle Paul and his associates attempted to travel to Bithynia (Acts 16:7), but there were roadblocks at every turn. The Spirit did not permit them to proceed. Rather a supernatural

revelation was given to Paul to head west to Macedonia. And how did he respond? He changed course, “concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them” (Acts 16:10).

Some weeks ago it was necessary to put these concepts to the test. I was invited to assume the responsibilities as the president of Hope Channel, Inc., the global Christian television network of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I followed the guidelines spelled out in this editorial, and God’s direction was unmistakably clear. As a result, this is my final editorial as editor of *Ministry*. I leave with a mixture of sadness and a calm assurance of God’s leading each step of the way.

Is it possible to discern the will of God for our lives? Yes. Pray for a hearing heart, test your conclusions by the Word of God, and listen to counsel from those who love God and love you. Then you can testify to others with firsthand language about God’s desire to direct their steps. 

^{*} All Scripture is quoted from the New King James Version of the Bible.

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

John C. Peckham, PhD, is associate professor of theology and Christian philosophy, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States.



Questioning God?

For as long as I can remember, I have had a lot of questions; especially “why” questions. As a child, more than once I could not sleep at night because so many questions were bouncing around inside my head, particularly questions about God and His love and justice. I remember struggling with the question, “Why would a loving God finally destroy sinners?” I figured the answer would be in one of my dad’s books.

So I prayed and I looked and looked and looked. As it got later and later into the night, I kept thinking, “If I just look a little bit longer, surely I’ll find the answer.” Sometimes I found answers that I took to be satisfactory; yet, I came to learn that even such “answers” led to more questions.

I continue to ask a lot of questions now; this has been *one of the* keys to knowing God intimately. However, perhaps you have been taught or heard someone teach that we should be careful not to ask too many (theological) questions.

It is common in some circles to downgrade the importance of asking questions and seeking a deeper knowledge of God. “It doesn’t matter what we know,” some say. The trends of culture in recent times seem to undergird this. As Martin Luther King Jr. stated, “Rarely do we find men who willingly engage in hard, solid thinking. There is an almost universal quest for easy answers and half-baked solutions. Nothing pains some people more than having to think.”²

Is it important to seek knowledge about God? Of course, we must distinguish between true knowledge and that which is “falsely called ‘knowledge’ ” (1 Tim. 6:20, 21).³ True knowledge is frequently praised throughout Scripture. For example, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Prov. 1:7; cf. Prov. 10:14; 12:1; 14:18; 19:2).

In Hosea 4:6, God emphatically proclaims: “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.”

Jesus said that the greatest commandment is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind (Luke 10:27).

And Paul emphasizes a battle of the mind, “We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5; cf. Phil. 1:8–11).

Questions and answers

The knowledge of God that Paul refers to here requires plowing deep into God’s revelation, particularly in His Word. This requires a great deal of humility and teachability. If you think you know enough already, you are very unlikely to learn. If you are unwilling to ask questions and seek answers, how will you come to the knowledge of God?

Although many fear asking questions of God, it is striking to see in Scriptures how often God welcomes questions. Genesis 18 records a conversation Abraham has with God. The patriarch’s question concerns the exceedingly wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah: “Will You indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?” (Gen. 18:23). God answers “no”; Abraham does not give up: “Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You indeed sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it? Far be it from You to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?” (Gen. 18:24, 25).

God replies, “If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the whole place on their account.” And Abraham replied, “Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord, although I am but dust and ashes” (Gen. 18:26, 27). Notice that not only does Abraham ask very difficult and pointed questions, he does so with great humility and reverence.

Abraham does not stop with his first question. He repeats the same basic question: What if there are only 45, only 40, only 30, only 20, and finally: “Oh may the Lord not be angry, and I shall speak only this once; suppose ten are found there?” And He said, “I will not destroy it on account of the ten” (Gen. 18:32).

Moses also repeatedly asks God hard questions. To take just one of

many examples: when the Israelites murmur against Moses at the increased workload laid upon them by Pharaoh after Moses asks for their release, Moses asks God: “ ‘O Lord, why have You brought harm to this people? Why did You ever send me? Ever since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done harm to this

LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, “Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?” But now the LORD has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian’ ” (Judg. 6:13). Again, God unmistakably answers Gideon, bringing deliverance to His people.

lesson we should learn is: it is acceptable to ask questions of God, even hard questions, if they are humbly asked in the right spirit. However, be prepared to receive God’s answer, which may not be what you expect or seek (cf. Habakkuk). In the New Testament, likewise, imprisoned and deeply discouraged, John the Baptist

It is acceptable to ask questions of God, even hard questions, if they are humbly asked in the right spirit. However, be prepared to receive God’s answer, which may not be what you expect or seek.



people, and You have not delivered Your people at all’ ” (Exod. 5:22, 23; cf. 32–34; Num. 21).

Did God answer Moses? Indeed, with wondrous miracles and deliverance, culminating with the Exodus itself.

In a similar fashion, Gideon asks God about the severe oppression by the Midianites: “ ‘O my lord, if the

Psalm 88:14 agonizingly expresses the thoughts of many who are undergoing trials: “O LORD, why do You reject my soul? Why do You hide Your face from me?” (cf. Isa. 63:15). Such questions demanding an answer from God for personal agony and suffering are common throughout the Bible.

Consider the case of Job. Or read through the book of Lamentations. The

sends the question to Jesus: “ ‘Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?’ ” (Matt. 11:3). And then Jesus Himself, hanging on the cross, asks the most striking question of all: “ ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’ ” (Mark 15:34).

Exceedingly difficult questions indeed. Yet, Jesus encourages us to ask, though always in faith: “ ‘Ask,

and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you” (Matt. 7:7). Thus, the Bereans were commended as “noble” because “they received the word [of the apostles] with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11; cf. 1 Thess. 5:21).

Theology is relational

Nevertheless, we seem to hear more and more often sayings like: “I don’t want theology, I just want Jesus” (as if you could receive one without the other). “Don’t give me religion, give me relationship.” Teaching systematic theology, I am often made aware that some have negative opinions of theology. They often think of theology as cold, abstract, and dry.

Theology is nothing of the sort! What is at the center of true theology? God! And what is the character of God? Love. And what is love if not relational? It is a terrible misunderstanding to say

“I love God, but I don’t want theology.” It is almost like saying to my wife, “I love you, but I don’t want to know anything about you. Don’t ask me any questions, and I won’t ask you any questions.” That is not the way a relationship in marriage works. Because I love my wife, I want to know her as intimately as I possibly can.

In an analogous fashion, theology is relational. While there is an abundance of counterfeit theology, genuine theology is coming to know the living God of love Himself! “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (John 17:3).

Good questions

We hear so often: “You ask too many questions.” “You just don’t have enough faith.” “We should not ask questions like that!” Yet, in this age of increasing biblical, theological, and spiritual apathy, when people ask us *why*, particularly young people, should

we not be excited that they are asking the questions instead of turning them away because their questions make us uncomfortable?

Many react negatively to questions because they perceive such questions to be a threat. Yet, I believe that the better we come to know God, the more we come to love Him and the less threatened we are by honest questions. Truth loses nothing by close investigation.

To wrestle with God is acceptable, even as Jacob did (Gen. 32), as long as you refuse to let go of Him. Some people try to wrestle God away from them with their questions. But, as long as we are holding on to Him and seeking the truth in His Word, God can handle our questions. He is far bigger than our questions.

We are not to be skeptics (John 20:24–27) but to ask in faith. At the same time, we should always be “ready to make a defense [*apologia*] to everyone who asks you to give an

**FREE DOWNLOAD
SERMONS &
RESOURCES**

www.gcevangelism.com

Providing free download PowerPoint® - ready multimedia graphics and other resources. News and ideas to motivate and to facilitate preaching the Three Angels Messages of the everlasting Gospel of Jesus and His imminent Second Coming.

Design: EVANGELIA.CO

More information:
GENERAL CONFERENCE Ministerial Association www.ministerialassociation.org / email: costar@gc.adventist.org

GCEvangelism

account for the hope that is in you” (1 Pet. 3:15). Yet, in doing so, we need not be *defensive*.

How can I know that I am asking the right questions? It is not the content of a question that makes it good or bad but the motivation. Do you ask because you do not want to believe? Is your question itself a thinly veiled attack? Do you intend your question to be a defense mechanism? A question wielded as a weapon is a bad question. On the other hand, good questions are motivated by the sincere quest for answers. Are you asking because you genuinely desire to know while recognizing that the answer may extend beyond your grasp?

Jesus often entertained and even elicited these kinds of good questions from honest seekers, drawing them to ask the right questions that would lead them to the most important answers

(e.g., with Nicodemus in John 3 and with the woman at the well in John 4).

In seeking answers, we must remember how little we know, indeed that we do not even know how much we do not know. At times, we find what we take to be satisfactory answers to our questions; yet each “answer” may lead to more questions. Indeed, each answer may be only a partial answer, one more piece of the grand puzzle that we are still trying to put together, though we no longer may expect to complete the puzzle.

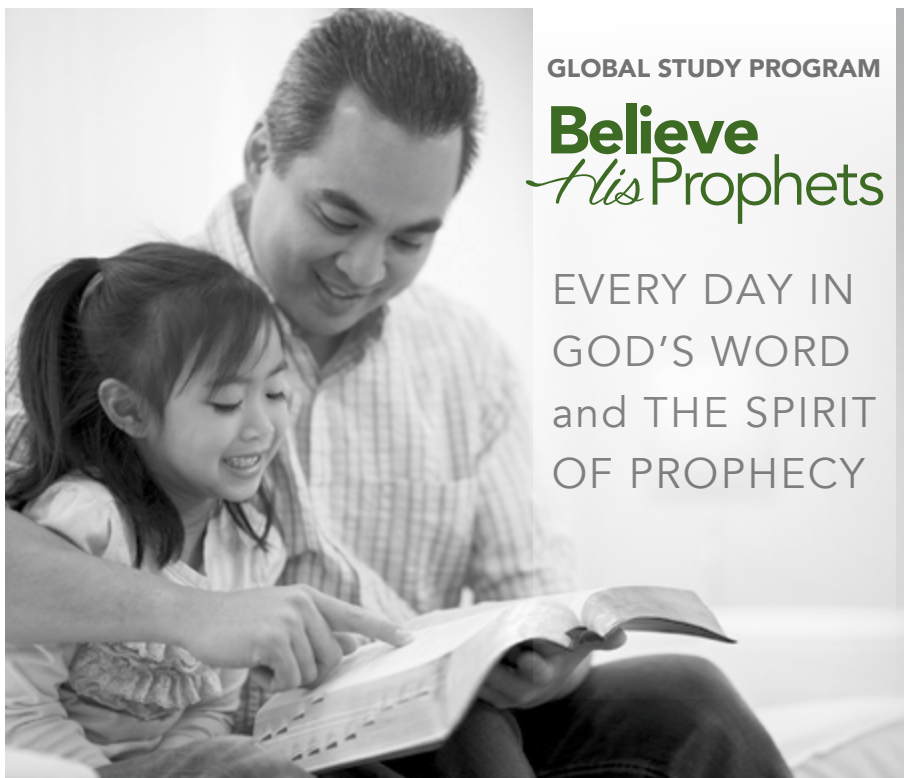
Yet, one thing we must do is to respond regularly to the invitation of James 1:5: “But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him” (James 1:5). Asking theological questions has led me to some of the most profound worship experiences of my life.

My faith in God and love for Him have grown and taken deeper and deeper root, which I hope is manifest in my life. Of course, I have still got more questions. But I never want to stop getting to know God better; similar to the way in which I enjoy growing in my relationship with my wife year after year, not seeking an endpoint where I am finished getting to know her. How could we say to God, “I love You, but I don’t want to know You more deeply?”

I want to know Him more and still more. How about you? 🙏

- 1 John C. Peckham is the author of a number of articles and books, including most recently, *The Love of God: A Canonical Model* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015).
- 2 Martin Luther King Jr., *Strength to Love* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 2010), 2.
- 3 All Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible.

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



GLOBAL STUDY PROGRAM

Believe *His* Prophets

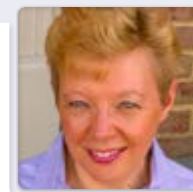
EVERY DAY IN
GOD’S WORD
and THE SPIRIT
OF PROPHECY

A worldwide study of the Bible and inspired writings

Believe His Prophets is a five-year journey through the Bible and selected writings of Ellen White.

- daily Bible readings
- daily interactive blogs
- weekly Spirit of Prophecy selections

Pamela Consuegra, PhD, serves as associate director, family life ministries, North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.



Life *under a* magnifying glass

I was not really prepared to be a ministerial spouse. Nothing prepared me for life under a magnifying glass. When I arrived at our first pastoral district, I suddenly felt as if I were a specimen under examination. And when I had my first child, the child also became a specimen. A pastor's family is, in a sense, laid bare on the table in the lab and placed under the slide. I did not realize that, when I married a minister, I was signing up for a pastoral family life that was always up for public review.

What are the challenges of living a ministerial family life under a magnifying glass, and what are some practical ways of dealing with the prying eyes? How can we turn these challenges into opportunities for blessings?

1. High expectations

For starters, I did not realize that the members' expectations would be so high. The list of expectations seemed endless: do children's ministry; attend church events, every worship service, baby showers, funerals, and weddings; lead small groups, host the visitors, have special music, cook, serve and clean up for every potluck, and on and on.

I still remember being called to a church pastorate and sitting beside my husband as the congregation talked with us about the opportunity to be their pastoral couple. A member looked at me and said, "Do you play the piano? Our

last pastor's wife played the piano every week, and we want our next pastor's wife to do that also." I calmly looked at the member and replied, "No, God has not gifted me with the ability to play the piano. I am gifted as a teacher instead."

Each ministry calling is different and based on the talents and gifts God gave you. Your contributions to ministry need to be gift based; otherwise you will be frustrated, discouraged, and overwhelmed.

It is important that you do not let expectations of members guide your behavior. Do not try to be who you are not. You are accountable to God in using the gifts and talents that He has given you. Serve by using your unique gifts in the location where God has placed you. No two pastoral spouses look the same or have the same gifts. Be the person God has called you to be and shine the light He gave you.

2. Loneliness

It is hard to escape the fact that being a pastor's spouse can be lonely. We often have ministry burdens that we cannot share with our church members. Sometimes, the need for confidentiality prevents us from doing so. Other times, we feel that none of our members can fully understand the complexities of a ministerial family. Who among your members can identify with the specific challenges of ministry? And sometimes church members do not

want to become close friends because they assume that you will be moving again soon.

Life in ministry continues to show me that my best friend is Jesus. He is the One to whom I must go. He is the One I do not have to worry about what I say and how I say it.

Yes, there are times when we need a human being in the flesh. We need to pray for at least one true friend, for this person can be more valuable to you than an entire room of acquaintances.

Frequent moves, and a district far from other family members, adds to this feeling of loneliness. What about another pastoral spouse who lives under the same magnifying glass as you? The difficulty is that our districts are often spread out over a large territory, and so the opportunity for face-to-face time is rare. The good news: today's technology enables us to chat on Skype or FaceTime. We can send them a quick message requesting immediate prayer. Do not allow distance to prevent you from developing a friendship and having a prayer partner.

I have often found that friendships actually developed to a greater degree when we moved away from the district. It freed me to talk about life in general. I no longer had to be concerned about the particulars of what was happening in the church because I was no longer their pastoral spouse. I was just "Pam," and that was a wonderful and blessed

feeling that created an environment for friendship to grow.

I believe that even Jesus needed human contact and friends. As I reflect on Scripture, I think that Jesus had special friends in Bethany. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus seemed special to Jesus, and He went to Bethany to revive His inner being. If Jesus needed special friends, we do too. We must be careful and use discernment, but if we are careful to follow biblical counsel, we can have friends. In reality, the things (gossiping, being untrustworthy, etc.) that get us into trouble when we have close friends in the church are the same

much that no one ever seems to notice. Many people know us as “Pastor so-and-so’s wife,” but they really do not know us.

Nevertheless, they do notice us. The problem is that while they might overlook us, *they also look us over*. Members notice what you are wearing, and if you are having a bad hair day, they will point it out. Your dress is either too long, or matronly looking, or too short. Your blouse is either so high that you look as if you are choking, or too low and revealing. You either have on too much makeup or you have too little and look homely. Yes, you are looked

Those are the moments when we must stop and remind ourselves that our defenses and explanations will not matter to those who criticize. Arguing and defensiveness only escalates the situation. Meanwhile, our true friends will not need any explanations.

And why do members think the pastor’s kids must be perfect and never sin? Other toddlers may run in the sanctuary, but when the pastor’s three-year-old runs down the sanctuary aisle, they have just committed the unpardonable sin.

Our children already have so many pressures placed on them, and so

Never miss an opportunity to make sure your children understand that they are not to act a certain way because they are the children of a pastor. Rather, they are to act a certain way because they are children of God.

things that get us into trouble when we have close friends outside of the church. Thus, we need to avoid those things.

3. Overlooked, yet looked over

Do you often feel overlooked? Our spouse’s ministries are public and visible. They are in front of the people, preaching, and teaching, while we are often in the nursery or in the pews trying to keep our children quiet. While our husbands are out meeting and fellowshiping with other members, we are often stuck home with sick kids! Our needs and contributions to the church family may get overlooked. We are often behind the scenes, doing so

over, and at times it seems that you will never get it right.

4. Criticized

Dealing with criticism is one of the hardest challenges. But it is not criticism of you that is most difficult; rather, it is when people criticize your spouse or your children. You have watched all week as your pastoral spouse has had emergency after emergency. There were hospital visits, a funeral, and working with a couple on a marriage intervention. Yet, you hear a church member complaining about the fact that he did not visit them that week. You take a deep breath and ask the Lord to hold your tongue.

being a pastor’s kid is not another pressure that we should allow. We need to gently remind our children that they need to walk quietly in the sanctuary because the church is a place of reverence; it should have nothing to do with the fact that they are the pastor’s kids. Never miss an opportunity to make sure your children understand that they are not to act a certain way because they are the children of a pastor. Rather, they are to act a certain way because they are children of God.

We need to learn to sift through the criticism that comes our way. If it has merit, we need to act upon it and, if possible, grow from it. However, if

unwarranted, we need to pray for that person. Learning to become a sifter of criticism takes a great deal of prayer and honest reflection.

5. No time for family

Ministry is not a nine-to-five job but lasts 24/7. You are supposed to be on duty all the time and be available whenever and for whatever you are called to do.

Yet we cannot be so busy taking care of our flock that we neglect the flock in our own fold. We need to boldly build the fence around our family time and guard its borders.

- Family meals
- Vacation time
- Family worship
- Family night
- Date night

Our ministerial spouses may need our encouragement and gentle reminders about family time. We cannot be so busy saving the world that we lose our

families. Perhaps an audit of actual time spent with our family and our calendar appointments should be considered often.

Reflect on your family priorities. Remember that God and ministry are not the same thing. Our priorities should be God, family, and ministry (church). When we put God and ministry both in the same spot, we will neglect our families of necessity, and that is wrong!

Do you take the time for a conversation with your spouse? As ministerial spouses we need to be assertive in discussing this issue. That may mean that we need to take the lead and open up the topic.

Conclusion

In the end, our struggles are not against “flesh and blood” but against Satan himself. The enemy will target us, and our families, with temptation, depression, and discouragement. Satan

does not like what we are doing. If he can attack us personally, it will affect our ministry. We all have a target on our backs that Satan has drawn. Our real battle does not present itself against our church members but against the forces of darkness.

The good news is that the outcome *has already been decided*. Jesus won that battle on Calvary. When the challenges of ministry seem overwhelming, we need to look to the Cross and know that “it is finished” already, and we can take cover in what has been done for us in Jesus.

It is often far too easy to lose sight of all the blessings that come with ministry. If we look for it, the blessings truly outweigh the challenges; the good outweighs the bad. God has given us the privilege of being on the front lines, and in partnering with Him in ministry. We just need to make sure we do not lose our own souls, and family, in the process. ❧

Welcome to the Family

By Drs. Claudio and Pamela Consuegra

Welcome to the Family will help you integrate newly baptized members into the local congregation. It involves inviting the entire church to attend one program per week over a period of six weeks.

Each two-hour program begins with a fellowship meal and music, followed by a time of learning about health, spiritual and church dynamics, and, most importantly, family and relationship issues.

Programs include:

- Communication
- Conflict Resolution
- Love Works
- Parenting
- Growing in Christ
- Celebrating Your Church Family

Improve new member retention by hosting a *Welcome to the Family* program in your church and helping all members build friendships, strengthen family bonds, and improve their relationships.

Includes a CD with PowerPoint presentations and handouts.

Catalog #351794
US\$19.95 each

ALSO AVAILABLE IN SPANISH



Find more resources at
www.adventsource.org or call 402.486.8800

AdventSource

Jan Barna, PhD, is a senior lecturer in systematic and biblical theology at Newbold College of Higher Education, Bracknell, Berkshire, United Kingdom.



The second coming of Jesus and our mission:

The necessity of the big picture

Before 1950, only four movies were made about the apocalypse. By the end of our decade, in 2019, 80 apocalyptic movies will have been produced in just the previous ten years.¹ This number represents an almost 6,000 percent increase since 1950.

If our society shows such an appetite for end-time consumption, should we not grab this opportunity and present a hope-inspiring and biblically informed vision for the future?

The need

Despite their proliferation, not all presentations of the end, which endeavor to speak in the name of the Bible, understand “the day of the Lord” in its full complexity. Historically, Christian traditions saw the end time as a blend of a postmortem heaven and hell fused with a belief in future judgment, resurrection, and the Second Coming. In this end-time imagery, these individual elements were not distinguished.² The Second Coming, and the whole eschatological package that comes with it, has been deeply misunderstood, even from the first centuries of Christianity.³

Eschatology is in need of a renewed biblical-systematic investigation. It is the overall theological framework, the Bible’s “grand narrative,” that can

create a surprisingly fresh vision of the future.⁴

What is the “day of the Lord”?

We will begin by looking at a key Pauline text.

“But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, ‘Peace and safety!’ then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief” (1 Thess. 5:1–4, NKJV).

In this well-known passage, Paul mentions “the day of the Lord.” But what does he mean by it? Paul is, of course, Jewish, so his theology is shaped by the Old Testament. He often returns to the Hebrew Scriptures when he reasons about the Messiah. So when the phrase “day of the Lord” appears in the Old Testament, what does this mean?

When Christians read “the day of the Lord,” they usually equate it with the Second Coming. But what about Paul? Undoubtedly, “the day of the Lord” included the coming of the Messiah King. But the phrase is much broader.

It also includes the arrival of the kingdom of righteousness, the deliverance and justification of God’s people, the restoration of true worship, the defeat God’s enemies, the end of sin, and the restoration of the lost paradise. “The “day of the Lord” was, then, shorthand for a whole package of divine actions.

The sequence of the day of the Lord events

Paul’s understanding is nicely illustrated in 1 Corinthians 15:22–28: “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. For ‘He has put all things under His feet.’ But when He says ‘all things are put under Him,’ it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all” (NKJV).

Paul is emphasizing a sequence, all of which is contained in phrase, “the day of the Lord.” He speaks about

“order,” “afterward,” “then,” “and then,” “when,” and “after.” For Paul, the end is not just one event but a series of events, one after the other, that leads to the restoration of God’s order and the final destruction of sin, evil, and death.⁵

What is this order? First, there will be the resurrection of the righteous dead, when Jesus comes. Second, Jesus will end the rule of God’s enemies, and this will happen through His reign *after* His coming. Third, the Son will subject Himself to the Father by handing over the rule to God.⁶ Fourth, God will become all in all.

The purpose of the final divine actions

The key element in Paul’s discussion is the defeat of evil and the full restoration of God’s rule. Evil forces are defeated during a specific activity of Christ; Paul refers to this as His reign. It becomes apparent, later in the New Testament (NT), that this refers to a legal activity that follows the Second Coming (Rev. 20:4).

Importantly, these events in the day of the Lord do not have a redemptive purpose. They are, in essence, judicial actions targeting the removal of all evil, once and for all.

What these essential Pauline images also indicate is that he regards “the day of the Lord” as historical events. They will happen at some point in redemption history. From the biblical grand story perspective, only three such major historical-transitional events impact the destiny of humanity: (1) the Fall (origin of evil), (2) the redemption by the Messiah (the solution to evil), and (3) the day of the Lord (end of evil). “The day of the Lord” is, thus, a key historical stage in the big framework of the Bible.

Toward a fuller picture

Paul, of course, is not the only one who offers key insights into the eschatological divine actions. Revelation 13–22 presents a coherent narrative and contains not only John’s description of the final story but also what Paul does not say in 1 Corinthians: that the day of the Lord does not start with the Second Coming.⁷

The overall story John depicts includes (1) the dragon’s persecution, (2)

| SEQUENCE OF EVENTS | THEME/NARRATIVE |
|----------------------|---|
| Revelation 13 | Persecution of the beasts and their activity against God and God’s people |
| Revelation 14 | God’s response to beasts through judgment |
| Revelation 15 and 16 | Signs of completion of God’s judgment of response—the seven last plagues |
| Revelation 17 to 19 | Additional descriptions and the second coming of Jesus |
| Revelation 20 | Further judgment after the Second Coming, millennial events, and the final executive judgment |
| Revelation 21 and 22 | New creation, wiping the tears away; and God is all in all |

God’s judgment, (3) seven last plagues, (4) the second coming of Jesus, (5) judgment during the millennium, (6) executive judgment after the millennium, and (7) new creation. In the overall perspective, what emerges are the specific *pre-Advent*, *Advent*, *post-Advent*, and *new creation* stages of the divine eschatological action. In other words, the unique meaning of the individual events becomes clearer once we grasp the full scope of “the day of the Lord” itself.

The rehabilitation of the biblical vision

The complex biblical picture of “the day of the Lord,” which Seventh-day Adventism began to highlight from the nineteenth century, marks a radical departure from classical conceptions of the end. However, not even Adventists have always done full biblical justice to “the day of the Lord” theme. Sometimes we have chosen clumsy language in depicting judgment, putting it and other eschatological aspects in negative light. And then, again, sometimes we have reduced the complex nature of this occasion only to an emphasis on the Second Coming and the signs leading to it, when much more is involved. The coming of Jesus will not solve the problem of evil, nor will it wipe away the tears of the saved. More is involved.

The big picture

We need to understand the “day of the Lord” in its mature biblical-

theological form, which contains several major events. Each one of those events gradually, chronologically, and logically advances God’s plan of restoration towards the eradication of evil and the full restoration of God’s good rule of peace. But this will not happen until the last event of the day of the Lord is finished. In its developed systematic shape, there are seven major events discernible in the final activity of God:⁸

(1) Pre-Advent judgment. The judgment justifies or vindicates the saints from the charges and persecution of the dragon. (2) End of the probation time and the end of judgment. The sign of this is the arrival of the seven last plagues. (3) The second coming of Christ. His second advent will bring deliverance, resurrection, and eternal life to God’s faithful. (4) Post-Advent judgment. This judgment will openly investigate the cases of God’s enemies and clarify the question of God’s righteousness and evil. (5) The third coming of Jesus and His saved. This event will bring the second resurrection to God’s enemies. (6) Execution of the judgment. This event contains the final attempt to remove God and His people but ends in the destruction of evil, and what we know as the “second death.” (7) New creation. The newly created Earth becomes the home of God’s people. Here God will wipe away all the tears and heal all nations. In this stage, the curse of evil ends. King Jesus hands over the reign to God His Father,

and God will be all in all. The story of humanity will continue where it began in Genesis 1.

Conclusion

We need to get better acquainted with the complex nature of “the day of the Lord.” This topic needs biblical rehabilitation. With so many conflicting and misleading unbiblical perspectives, the biblical vision needs a fair hearing. Biblical theology, not Hollywood screenwriters, should inform the world about the nature of the end. ❖

- 1 See “List of Apocalyptic Films,” *Wikipedia*, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_apocalyptic_films. For a detailed statistics across all media, see the Wikipedia article “List of Apocalyptic and Post-Apocalyptic Fiction.” Overall in the last 65 years—during the span of one generation—the American, English-speaking cinematic industry alone has produced some 233 apocalyptic films.
- 2 One exception to this general rule would be the work of Lutheran scholar Johann Gerhard. See Johann Gerhard, *Loci Theologici*, ed. J. R. Cotta, vol. 17 (Tubingen: 1762–1779), especially page 7, where he distinguished the various end-time actions of God more carefully.

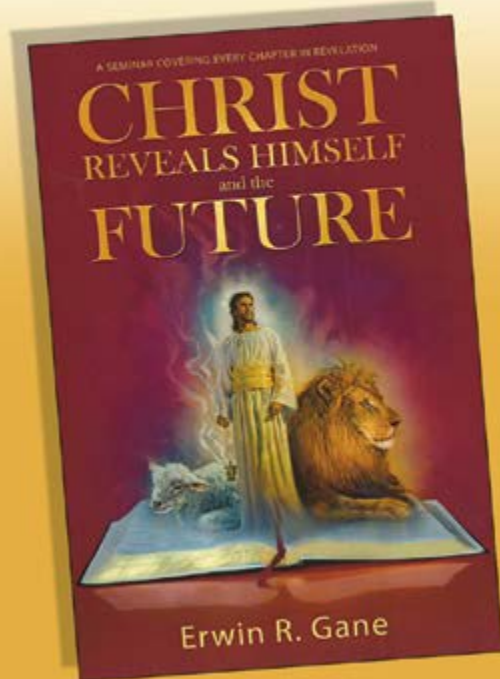
- 3 The story of salvation ends in heaven after death. This means that eschatology is not only individualized and removed from history, but also its goal becomes escape to heaven rather than God’s removal of evil from the world—a key point developed below. For example, Cyprian of Carthage (ca. 250), *Treatise VII: On the Mortality*, especially sections 21–22; in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 5, 469 and 474; Origen (ca. 225) “De Principiis,” *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 4, 293, and Hippolytus (ca 205), “Against Plato, on the Cause of the Universe,” *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 5, 222.
- 4 For the overall shape of the biblical narrative and the place of the day of the Lord stage, see my article “The Grand Story,” *Ministry*, March 2012, especially page 22.
- 5 It is a well-established fact that NT theology sees the end coming in two stages often referred to as “already/now” and “not yet.” The new age, indeed, began with the coming of the Messiah (Acts 2:32–34, 3:31; 1 Pet. 1:20). However, the old age is still present and will be pushed out by specific end-time actions of the Messiah (e.g., 1 Cor. 15:22–28). Precisely, the purpose of these final actions of God is to remove the evil age that we refer to as “the day of the Lord.” The redemptive purpose is not present in the “not yet.” For this reason the “already” of the end could be seen in fact as a separate stage in the big biblical framework. Equally, the final actions of the “not yet” could also be seen as separate stages in the biblical narrative as I have argued in “The Grand Story,” pages 21, 22, 24.
- 6 Paul is borrowing the theme for this image from Psalm 110:1, 2, 5, 6 (and partly Psalm 8:2). In the psalm, God’s chosen One is given rule in order to rule among

God’s enemies. This reign is given until the enemies are subjected to Him and God. Paul appears to pick up the concept with the additional conclusion that the Messiah Jesus, once the enemies are defeated, will give back the rule to God.

- 7 The visions of the book of Revelation are said to happen “on the Lord’s day” (Rev. 1:10). Scholars have observed that this could indicate that John was given to observe the events of history leading up to the time of the end from the “sphere of the eschatological day of the Lord.” Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 2nd ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2009), 97. For the book’s outlook, it is important to notice the key transition in the book’s focus in 11:18. This indicates a crucial transition to the end-time visions. In this context, the immediate sections in chapter 12, which introduce “the great dragon [that] was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world,” defines the fundamental purpose of what is coming up in the visions. This deals with the deceiver once and for all. For this reason, the visions of Revelation from chapters 12 to 22 can be very well seen as the scenes of the “not yet” day of the Lord. Crucially, their purpose is to judge and terminate.
- 8 While Adventist publishing houses have published scores of books with end-time focus, most of them have treated only selected aspects of the day of the Lord. In Adventism, Jon Paulien’s *What the Bible Says About the End-Time* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1994, 1998) represents a good attempt to outline the broader eschatological framework.

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

A Fresh Look at Revelation!



This newly released book is a review of what Jesus shared about Himself and the impending future, based on a long and careful study of Revelation by a scholar with a pastor’s heart. If you read these pages with an open mind, your life will be dramatically and forever changed. You will come to know far better the One whom to know is life eternal (John 17:3).

Order now at amazon.com!

For special pricing for pastors, e-mail erwiringane@gmail.com.

About the Author

Erwin Gane, M.A., M.Div., M.Th., Ph.D., retired editor of the *Adult Bible Study Guide*, has authored eight books, taught at colleges in Australia and the United States, and lectured and conducted seminars worldwide.



Gerhard Pfandl, PhD, now retired, served as an associate director, Biblical Research Institute, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.



Which Bible version shall we use?

Since the middle of the twentieth century when Bible translations began to multiply, the issue of which Bible version should Adventists use has become a bone of contention in some churches. There are those who believe that only the King James Version (KJV) should be used, while others hold that a modern translation is preferable because of the archaic language of the KJV.

The process of translating the Bible began during the third century *v.c.* with the translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek. This translation, carried out in Alexandria, was called Septuagint (LXX),¹ version of the 70, because that is how many translators were involved. The translation done in Alexandria helped provide the Bible mainly for the Jewish diaspora, especially Greek-speaking Jews who no longer spoke or understood Hebrew.

While the LXX was made for Greek-speaking Jews, in the Christian era this translation soon fell out of favor with the Jews, primarily because the newly emerging Christians adopted LXX as their version of the Old Testament and used it freely in defense of the Christian faith. “Christians came to attach some degree of divine inspiration to the Septuagint, for some of its translations might almost appear to have been providentially intended to support Christian arguments.”² The

Jews, therefore, soon produced other Greek versions.³

Christian versions

After the LXX, the oldest and most important translation of the Bible is the Syriac version called Peshitta, or “simple” version. Syriac is an Aramaic dialect that was spoken over a wide area in early Christian times, particularly in western Mesopotamia, where it was used more than Greek.

During the early beginnings of the Christian era, the churches in the East were mostly Greek-speaking; Latin was the official language in the Roman provinces of Africa and western Europe. Toward the end of the second century, therefore, we find references to Latin Scriptures in the writings of the Church Fathers. Because of the tendency of some bishops and priests to make translations of the Septuagint and New Testament manuscripts into Latin, a number of translations of various biblical texts began to appear. These fragments were later assembled and became known as the Old Latin text, also called *Itala*.

In 382, Pope Damasus I (366–384) commissioned his secretary, Jerome, to produce a new Latin Bible. Jerome first revised the Old Latin texts and produced a standard Latin text of the New Testament. After the death of Damasus, Jerome settled in Bethlehem, where he completed a new Latin translation

of the Old Testament from Hebrew in 405. Jerome’s Bible became known as the Vulgate (*vulga* meaning “everyday speech”). The Vulgate Bible was the first book to be printed by Johannes Gutenberg in 1456. In 1546, at the Council of Trent, the Vulgate became the official Bible of the Catholic Church.

English versions

Ancient Bible versions were of vital importance for taking the gospel to the pagan nations during the early centuries of Christianity. Similarly, during the time of the Reformation, translations into various languages facilitated the spread of Reformation ideas in Europe. Since then, the Bible has been translated into many languages. According to the 2015 statistics of the Wycliffe Bible Translators, the complete Bible has been translated into 554 languages, the New Testament into 1,333 languages, and one or more Bible books into a further 1,054 languages. This makes a total of 2,932 languages out of a total of about 7,000 languages spoken in the world.⁴

The first complete English translation is credited to John Wycliffe, a lecturer at Oxford University, in the latter part of the fourteenth century. Wycliffe believed that “if every man was responsible to obey the Bible . . . it follows that every man must know what to obey. Therefore the whole Bible should be accessible to him in a form that he

could understand.⁷⁵ Whether Wycliffe himself took part in the translation is uncertain, but under his influence two English versions of the Latin Vulgate were produced. One hundred and fifty years later, William Tyndale, who became proficient in Greek while attending Oxford and Cambridge, translated the Greek New Testament into English. This was published in 1525 in Germany and was then smuggled in bales of cloth back into England for distribution. Church officials opposed the circulation of his translation; they bought copies and burned them. Tyndale himself, after being betrayed by a friend, was imprisoned and executed in 1536 in Belgium. In 1535, one year before Tyndale's death, Miles Coverdale published another complete translation in English. By that time, Henry VIII had made himself head of the church in England and was ready to accept English translations of the Bible.

After James I became king of England, he authorized a new translation, which, since its publication in 1611, has been known as the Authorized or King James Version (KJV). More than 50 scholars, versed in Greek and Hebrew, were responsible for its production. It captured the best of all the preceding translations and far exceeded all of them. This version has justifiably been called the "noblest monument of English prose."⁷⁶ Based on the best of the earlier English versions, the KJV remained "the Bible" par excellence wherever English was spoken for more than three hundred years.

Nevertheless, at the end of the nineteenth century scholars felt that a revision was necessary because (1) knowledge of the Hebrew vocabulary had increased since the beginning of the seventeenth century (about 1,500 words appear only once in the Old Testament); (2) the Greek text underlying the New Testament was the *Textus Receptus* (see The KJV controversy, following) that was based on late medieval manuscripts; and (3) many English words had become obsolete or archaic; others had changed in meaning. For example, the word *knop* in Exodus 25:31 is an archaic

word for the bud of a flower or for an ornamental knob.⁷⁷ The word *prevent* (1 Thess. 4:15) in the seventeenth century meant "to go before," or "precede" rather than "to hinder."

In 1870, the Convocation of Canterbury voted to sponsor a major revision of the King James Version. When the complete Revised Version appeared in 1885, it was received with great enthusiasm, but its popularity was short-lived because most people continued to prefer the Authorized Version.

The KJV controversy

In 1516, the Dutch scholar Desiderius Erasmus published the first Greek New Testament in Basel, Switzerland, which became the basis of the *Textus Receptus* (Latin for "the received text"). Unfortunately, none of the Greek manuscripts available to Erasmus were older than the tenth century.⁸ Theodor Beza (1519–1605), a biblical scholar and successor of John Calvin in Geneva, improved and popularized Erasmus's text, which, in 1633, became known as the *Textus Receptus*. It preserves a form of the New Testament found in the great majority of Greek manuscripts.

Since the time of Erasmus, a number of older Greek manuscripts with variant readings from the *Textus Receptus* have been discovered. The most important among them are two manuscripts from the fourth century: one is called Codex Vaticanus because it was found in the library of the Vatican, and the other is called Codex Sinaiticus because it was discovered in 1844 in the library of St. Catherine's monastery at the foot of

Mount Sinai. By the nineteenth century, the number of variants among known Greek New Testament manuscripts was estimated between 150,000 and 200,000.⁹ In 1881, therefore, two English scholars, Brooke F. Westcott and Fenton J. Hort, published *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, which was based primarily on the ancient codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus.

This Greek New Testament is attacked by KJV-only defenders because most modern translations are no longer based on the *Textus Receptus*, but on the Westcott and Hort text and later revisions of the Greek texts. One of the chief arguments of KJV-only defenders is that the King James Bible translators relied on the *Textus Receptus* because it was providentially preserved from scribal mistakes and intentional changes through the centuries. By contrast, the Westcott and Hort Greek text, it is alleged, is based on manuscripts produced during a period of apostasy in the church and not providentially protected from scribal changes. "Translations based on them are therefore unreliable."¹⁰ These are interesting assumptions that, however, cannot be proven. While the fourth century certainly was a time in which false teachings entered the church, there is no evidence from the existing New Testament manuscripts, some of which come from the second and third centuries, that these doctrinal errors affected any of the Greek manuscripts produced during that time.

One of the most frequent criticisms of modern versions is the supposed omission of terms connected with the

For serious Bible study and preaching, it is helpful to consult several good versions.

divinity of Jesus. For example, where the KJV repeatedly has the phrase “Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 15:11; 16:31; 1 Cor. 5:4; 2 Cor. 11:31, etc.), modern versions read only “Lord Jesus.” The omission of the word *Christ* in these texts is seen as a denial of Jesus’ divinity. Gail Riplinger, a leading proponent of the KJV-only defenders, writes, “Texe Marrs warns, ‘New Age leaders believe and will spread the apostasy that Jesus is neither Christ nor God.’ New version editors become ‘New Age leaders by this definition.’”¹¹ She completely ignores the fact that the phrase “Lord Jesus Christ,” which appears about 80 times in the KJV, also appears 63 times in the Revised Standard Version (RSV) and 60 times in the New International Version (NIV). While the *Textus Receptus* uses this phrase more than 80 times, the older Greek manuscripts use it only about 60 times, but this does not mean that they in any way deny that Jesus was the Christ.

There are a number of places where modern versions are stronger and clearer on the deity of Jesus than the KJV. One example is John 1:18. The KJV reads, “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” Modern versions such as the New American Standard Bible (NASB) read, “only begotten God,” and the New International Version (NIV), “but God the one and only Son” instead of “only begotten Son.”

Two lengthy passages are not found in the earliest manuscripts. One is the closing verses of Mark (16:9–20) and the other is the story of the woman taken in adultery (John 7:53–8:11). Most modern versions include these passages but indicate their omissions in the ancient manuscripts in various ways. For example, the NIV has a bold black line after Mark 16:8 with a note, “The two most reliable early manuscripts do not have Mark 16:9–20.” Because we do not have the original autographs, we do not know whether these stories were lost in the process of transmission or whether they were later additions of

oral reports. Whatever the case, their omission in the ancient texts does not warrant the charge that modern versions have changed God’s Word.

Modern versions

The proliferation of new English versions in recent decades has made it necessary to consider carefully which translation one is going to use and for which purpose. First, we need to recognize that there are three basic types of translations: (1) The formal or literal translation attempts to translate as close as possible to the original wording, for example, the King James Version (1611), the New King James Version (NKJV 1982), the Revised Standard Version (RSV 1952), and the New American Standard Bible (NASB 1971, 1995). (2) The dynamic equivalence translation is not so much concerned with the original wording as with the original meaning, for example, the New English Bible (NEB 1970), the New International Version (NIV 1978), and the Revised English Bible (REB 1989). (3) The paraphrase Bible seeks to restate in simplified but relatable ways the ideas conveyed in the original language, for example, and *The Living Bible* (1971), *The Message* (1993), *The Clear Word* (2000). Paraphrases are more like commentaries. For example, KJV renders Colossians 2:9 as: “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” But *The Message* Bible provides an expanded version of the same verse: “Everything of God gets expressed in him, so you can see and hear him clearly. You don’t need a telescope, a microscope, or a horoscope to realize the fullness of Christ, and the emptiness of the universe without him.”

So, which version shall we use? For serious Bible study and preaching, it is helpful to consult several good versions. Good modern standard translations are the RSV, the NASB, and the NKJV. For personal and family devotions, a paraphrase may be used. Paraphrases, however, should not be used in Sabbath School or in the pulpit.

Ellen White and Bible versions

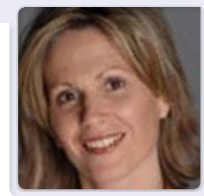
Ellen White used Scripture profusely. All her articles and books are saturated with scriptural quotations from the KJV. Did she use other versions? Yes, but sparingly. Among the modern versions that Ellen White occasionally used were the English Revised Version (1885) and the American Revised Version (1901).¹²

Ellen White did not hesitate to use other versions, but she preferred the KJV. Nevertheless, she never made the use of the KJV a criterion of orthodoxy. She was aware of the fact that copyists and translators over the centuries had introduced some changes in the text; nevertheless, she could say, “I take the Bible just as it is, as the Inspired Word,”¹³ and so should we. ❧

- 1 The word *Septuagint* comes from the Latin for “seventy” (abbr. LXX); a reference to the seventy-two Jewish elders who, according to a legendary account, made the translation.
- 2 F. F. Bruce, *The Books and the Parchments*, rev. ed. (London: Marshall Pickering, 1991), 141. In Isaiah 7:14, for example, the LXX uses *parthenos* (virgin) rather than *neanis* (young woman), which is generally used to translate the Hebrew word *almah*.
- 3 For instance, the versions of Aquila and Theodotion, among others.
- 4 See “Scripture and Language Statistics 2015,” Wycliffe Global Alliance, October 1, 2015, <http://www.wycliffe.net/en/statistics>.
- 5 F. F. Bruce, *The English Bible* (Oxford: University Press, 1961), 13.
- 6 J. H. Skilton, “English Versions of the Bible,” in *New Bible Dictionary*, ed. J. D. Douglas (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1962), 333.
- 7 R. Bridges and L. Weigle, *The King James Word Book* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1994), 196.
- 8 Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 102.
- 9 However, none of these variant readings affects any of the teachings of the Bible.
- 10 S. Thompson, “The Great Bible Versions Debate,” *Record*, July 22, 1995, 5.
- 11 G. A. Riplinger, *New Age Bible Versions* (Munroe Falls, OH: AV Publications, 1993), 313.
- 12 Michael W. Campbell, “Ellen G. White and the King James Version,” in *The Book That Changed the World*, ed. Nikolaus Satelmajer (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2012), 122.
- 13 Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958), 17.

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

Tami Cinquemani, MAWS, is worship director, Florida Hospital Church, Orlando, Florida, United States.



What is essential in biblical Christian worship?

In *The Dangerous Act of Worship*, Mark Labberton states: “Everything. That’s what’s at stake in worship. The urgent, indeed troubling, message of Scripture is that everything that matters is at stake in worship. *Worship* names what matters most: the way human beings are created to reflect God’s glory by embodying God’s character in lives that seek righteousness and do justice. Such comprehensive worship redefines all we call ordinary. Worship turns out to be the dangerous act of waking up to God and to the purposes of God in the world, and then living lives that actually show it.”¹

Immediately after completing the act of creation, God crowned what was considered “good” with *shavath*—a Sabbath day set apart as holy. Before sin entered our world, while perfection still reigned, God desired time with His creation for rest, community, and worship. God created male and female in His image with that same need, that same desire, for this sacred time. Humanity was made to worship.

Though our world has drifted far from the perfection of Eden, this one thing has not changed. Whether human beings acknowledge the Creator God or not, each human being has a void that needs to be filled with worship. Men and women seek to fill that void in many ways. Christians understand that “genuine worship is a quest for God not out of obligation or duty but freely and

earnestly in gratitude for his goodness (Ps. 27:4, 8-9; 63:1-4).”²

Deciding what is essential in biblical Christian worship requires an understanding of the question being asked. In order for worship to be biblical, it needs to be scripturally driven. In order for worship to be Christian, it needs to be Christ-centered. In order for worship to be worship, it needs to be a culturally relevant participatory offering.

Scripture-driven worship

In order for worship to be biblical, the Bible should be at the core of worship. The Bible must be read fairly, respecting the text of the entire metanarrative without additions or subtractions based on any preconceived bias. Taking the entire biblical story into consideration, we must try to understand who God is, why He calls His people to worship, and how He desires this worship to happen.

Scripture is fairly silent when it comes to instruction on how to worship. Many churches fight “worship wars” based on opinions and preferences completely unsupported by Scripture. Though styles of worship may differ from one congregation to the other, Scripture offers great latitude in the areas of music, liturgy, and congregational engagement.

The Florida Hospital Seventh-day Adventist Church offers convergence worship—exploring and utilizing ele-

ments from ancient to modern sources. Senior pastor Andy McDonald suggests, “There are two schools of thought about how to relate to the Bible, and I think we can extend them to worship practices: One group says, ‘We only do in worship what is prescribed in Scripture.’ The other group says, ‘We do in worship any carefully thought through element not prohibited in Scripture.’ By our very practice, we go beyond Scripture’s prescription in our practices and, therefore, are much closer aligned with practicing anything not prohibited specifically, or in principle, in Scripture.”³

Primary to scriptural understanding is the concept of a Trinitarian God, a God who *is* community, realizing that “how we worship God must reflect who God is—the triune God of grace—and what He has done and is doing for us in Christ and by the Holy Spirit.”⁴

Our relationship with the Trinity is how we engage in biblical worship. We enjoy communion with the Father through the priesthood of the Son by the ministry of the Spirit. Clarifying this interaction in every aspect of worship—music, word, Scripture, prayer, etc.—gives a greater understanding of God, thereby inviting authenticity and the potential for spiritual growth.

Through Scripture we also discover that it is God who initiates the act of worship. Even the words used to explain worship in Scripture “indicate the Lord

is indeed an approachable God. He not only invites His people to draw near to Him so that they might live, but He also draws near to all those who call on His name.”⁵

We live in a consumer-driven culture, and we need constant reminders redirecting our understanding of whom we gather to worship. Prayers, calls to worship, or welcoming remarks that

*We need to
know who
Jesus is
before we can
worship Him
correctly.*

suggest we have invited God to the gathering only serve to confirm this false thinking, putting *us* in charge of what is clearly and critically a celebration of community initiated by our Creator. Intentionally utilizing words and phrasing that thank God for an invitation that we, as worshipers, come together to accept—with full expectation of engaged participation—helps to shift this paradigm of consumeristic worship.

In this light, we must realize biblical worship is not about us, but about the only One who genuinely deserves our worship—God. Though blessings and healing may be a result of our time in worship, they should never be the motivation. It would be like being invited to a wedding celebration and arriving with the expectation of receiving the

attention and gifts due to the bride and groom.

Finally, scripturally driven worship continuously tells the great narrative of God’s act of creation, humanity’s fall, God’s offer of redemption, humanity’s salvation accomplished through Christ, God’s mission for His people, and the anticipated return of our Savior. This is an inclusive story that acknowledges community and meaning equally for the entirety of God’s creation.

Culturally relevant worship

“Throughout history, most worship services have been ‘multicultural’ to some degree in that they contain elements from diverse cultures, including roots in Jewish worship.”⁶ Many times, those who find it difficult to include in worship a variety of cultural elements maintain that the style or content of worship with which they are comfortable should be the only acceptable way to worship. This mind-set completely disconnects from the reality that worship through the ages has spanned geography and generation.

Culture shapes worship. If Christians are blind to the culture that surrounds them and refuse to engage and/or accept people across all cultural boundaries, churches are in danger of becoming worthless buildings filled with ineffectual people. The belief that Christians should not be a part of their culture, accepting an “us” and “them” mentality, rejects the understanding of God as the God of *all* people—regardless of ethnicity, gender, orientation, denomination, and/or socioeconomic position. Grasping this understanding and creating worship opportunities that reflect the inclusion of culture are essential. This naturally leads to worship that demands an awareness of multiculturalism. If worship is to honor God, cultural diversity must be embraced and celebrated.

Christ-centered worship

“Worship of other deities abounds in our diverse world, and rituals can appear similar in many instances. But

the role of Jesus Christ distinguishes Christian worship. Where else could we begin a discussion of worship than with Jesus Christ, the one whom God has exalted and the one to whom all creation will someday kneel?”⁷

We need to know who Jesus is before we can worship Him correctly. What separates Christianity from all other world religions is Jesus Christ. Genuine Christian worship must understand Jesus’ place in the Godhead.

Authentic Christian worship demands that the worshiper believes and accepts that Jesus Christ died and rose again for his or her sins. Without this core belief in Christ’s death and resurrection as the sole means of salvation, Christian worship has neither beginning nor meaning. “There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12, NLT).

Also central to Christian worship is the role of Jesus Christ—as co-Creator, Savior, and Mediator. We have already established that Jesus created in community with the Father and the Spirit. True Christian worship also acknowledges that our salvation, redemption, and reconnection to community with God are solely made possible by Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. “Jesus is the embodiment of God’s forgoing wrath for the sake of communion. Jesus comes to us in love to renew the friendship/communion that we rejected. Jesus comes to us with the offer of friendship with God.”⁸

Lest we conclude that Jesus’ role was completed in the past, the Bible clearly affirms that Jesus is even now petitioning God on our behalf. “For there is one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5, NLT). Biblical Christian worship acknowledges that worship should not, and truly *cannot*, take place without Jesus’ ministry in heaven. “Our high priest has passed into the heavens, not to leave us outside like the people in the Old Testament—Israel on the Day of Atonement—but to take us with Himself into the Holy of Holies.”⁹

God set up a structure for worship that reveals His deep love and unsurpassed mercy for His children. He is a personal God, a God who invites us to worship and provides a way for our worship to enter His courts with meaning and beauty. With our Savior rendering our worship, we can come before our Maker with full acknowledgement of our sinfulness and failings, confident that we are treasured, accepted, and adored.

Sadly, whether due to the intention of setting oneself apart from others or the sincere belief that these things are salvific, many churches set their worship focus primarily on doctrine and orthodoxy. Though doctrine and orthodoxy are not bad in themselves as identifiers of a church or an individual, it is dangerous to let these replace Christ as the central focus of faith and worship.

Worship as participatory offering

According to Robert Webber, “worship is an active, not passive, experience.”¹⁰ Each word translated “worship” in the Bible is a verb—an action word. Worship should not be considered as something we merely attend; worship is a call to action.

In a Barna survey conducted several years ago, 727 regular attendees of Protestant churches were asked to identify the most important personal outcome of worship. “Only 8 percent . . . cited outcomes directed to God as most important. Outcomes that benefit the worshipper were cited by 47 percent.”¹¹

Given this mind-set, worship planners find it challenging to design an experience that instructs and leads worship with the intention to *give* rather than to *get*. That kind of planning requires much effort to incorporate elements that are clearly introduced as an action toward God and allow for congregational participation.

My personal engagement with worship leaders from various

denominations in both educational as well as networking opportunities has led me to conclude that there exists a widespread, sincere desire among most of them to learn from biblical examples of participatory worship. When worship moves away from being a corporate, spectator event to become interactive and inclusive so as to embrace the rich worship practices of various cultures, the experience turns congregations into dynamic and life-transforming centers of worship, witness, fellowship, and spiritual power.

Such congregations will incorporate in their life and worship patterns the following traditional as well as modern artistic expressions:

- Biblical narratives in dramatic readings and skits
- Psalms in interactive prayer, praise, and petition
- Physical and verbal engagement and response
- Scriptural calls for justice in community and world involvement


Far beyond a ritual or doctrine, God desires His people to “act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with [their] God” (Micah 6:8, NIV). Thus the biblical call for worship extends beyond the walls of the church and tells us that worship participation is a life commandment. As David Peterson notes, the biblical Christian worship is something greater than a weekly event. “It is clear that acceptable worship involves effective ministry to one another within the body of Christ, maintaining love and forgiveness towards those outside the Christian community, expressing right relationships with ruling authorities, living expectantly in the light of Christ’s imminent return, and demonstrating love especially towards those with different opinions within the congregation of Christ’s people.”¹²

Conclusion

“Our understanding of Christian worship starts with our understanding of God.”¹³ The biblical story—the

metanarrative of God’s interaction with humanity—clearly reveals to us a God whose intention from the beginning was for a creation that lived in harmonious community. Sin caused separation between a holy God and fallen humanity. Worship provides an opportunity for the redeemed of God to reconnect with Him as our Maker and Redeemer, living lives with the assurance of salvation and a mission to share this good news with our world.

“Salvation is contained *not* in Christianity as a religion (i.e., as a system, as an institution or even as a civilization), but in the story that Christians tell—in bearing witness to the biblical God and what God has done in history for our salvation.”¹⁴

Biblical Christian worship offers us an active role in this amazing story. 

- 1 Mark Labberton, *The Dangerous Act of Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 13.
- 2 Andrew E. Hill, *Enter His Courts With Praise! Old Testament Worship for the New Testament Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001), 2.
- 3 Andy McDonald, “The Shared Table,” Florida Hospital Seventh-day Adventist Church, September 20, 2014.
- 4 James B. Torrance, *Worship, Community, and the Triune God of Grace* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 10.
- 5 Hill, *Enter His Courts With Praise!*, 9.
- 6 Kathy Black, *Culturally-Conscious Worship*, (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2000), 2.
- 7 Constance M. Cherry, *The Worship Architect: A Blueprint for Designing Culturally Relevant and Biblically Faithful Services* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 21.
- 8 Daniel M. Bell Jr., “God Does Not Demand Blood,” in *God Does Not . . . Entertain, Play “Matchmaker,” Hurry, Demand Blood, Cure Every Illness*, ed. D. Brent Laytham (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2009), 57.
- 9 Torrance, *Worship, Community, and the Triune God of Grace*, 119.
- 10 Robert E. Webber, *Worship Old and New* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982), 11.
- 11 Greg Warner, “The Sound of Music Shouldn’t Take Lead in ‘Worship Wars,’ Barna says,” *Baptist Standard*, November 4, 2002, http://assets.baptiststandard.com/archived/2002/11_4/pages/waco_barna.html.
- 12 David Peterson, *Engaging With God: A Biblical Theology of Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 178.
- 13 Cherry, *The Worship Architect*, 5.
- 14 Christopher J. H. Wright, *Salvation Belongs to Our God: Celebrating the Bible’s Central Story* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 110.

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

Dan Serns, MAPM, serves as senior pastor, Richardson Seventh-day Adventist Church, Richardson, Texas, United States.



“Our church is financially broke”

Every church goes through lean times financially. Four years ago it was our turn.¹ Our church treasurer came to me with the bad news. “Pastor, as you know, we have been falling behind on our bills each month for several years. Our church is now financially broke. We can’t even pay the utilities bill this month. What are we supposed to do?”

But today, four years later, all our bills are paid, we have a reserve fund of four months’ expenses, and our tithe two years ago was almost twice what it was four years ago. When people ask how we did it, I tell them that only the Lord can reverse a downward spiral like that, but there were three key ways we learned to cooperate with Him.

Clarify your concepts

I had heard all the excuses for why churches struggle financially. “The economy isn’t as strong.” “The church has a changing, poorer demographic.” “Millennials don’t support local churches—just the projects they like.” “People are going to give their tithe where they want to give it.” I determined to replace these ideas with clear, Bible-based concepts and show the church leaders and congregation a better way.

- **Emphasize the distinction between tithe and offerings.** Much of the Christian world does not recognize the Bible’s distinction

between tithe and offerings. Tithe is the first 10 percent of our income that we give to Jesus and His workers around the world to show our trust in Him. We do this by releasing it from our control and giving it to the world tithe fund.² Offerings, however, are any amount of our income or possessions that we give to Jesus’ work (locally, regionally, globally) to show our love for Him (Mark 14:3–9).

- **Emphasize the spiritual blessings of giving.** When talking about returning tithe and giving offerings, talk about the blessings of God. He created everything (Gen. 2:1–3; Exod. 20:8–11; Rev. 14:6, 7), so He owns everything (Ps. 24:1), including all the money in the world (Hag. 2:8). He gives us the sunshine and the rain (Matt. 5:45). He gives us every breath we breathe and every heartbeat (Acts 17:25). He gives us the ability to gain wealth (Deut. 8:18). He even gave His own Son to die for our sins (John 3:16; Rom. 6:23). He wants us to learn to trust Him in every part of our lives (Prov. 3:5–8; Matt. 6:25–34), even in the most sensitive areas such as money. He asks us to test Him so He can open the windows of heaven to us (Mal. 3:10), reduce our expenses and financial losses (Mal. 3:11), and use us to bless others (Mal. 3:12).

Generous giving is a way to express that our hearts belong to Jesus (Matt. 6:19–21; 2 Cor. 8:1–5; 9:6–8). When done with a heart full of love, it is actually a way to become more like Jesus.

- **Emphasize “how to” more than “ought to.”** Many sermons and offering appeals tell people they “ought to” return tithe and give offerings but rarely tell the stories of “how to” respond to God’s goodness. We determined that our stewardship sermons and offering calls would primarily be testimonies by church leaders and members, including children and youth, of how God was blessing homes, families, and individuals, and how they were responding to God’s goodness financially. Some members share a brief story of how they gave their first tithe or offering.

Solicit and act upon wise counsel

Our church was so financially challenged, we needed a team to provide wise counsel and assistance.

- **Financial ministries team.** I asked our treasurer to recommend a group of faithful givers that the church board might vote as our financial ministries team. We met with the team, as soon as possible, to brainstorm as many options as possible on how to correct our

situation. We prayerfully discussed options and voted each one up or down. I could see our team gelling together as we prayed, listened, shared, voted, and came to a unified consensus. We determined to meet each month to review where we were at financially and to pray for the spiritual and financial prosperity of our church and its families.

- **Church board.** We took our plan to the church board where, again, it was prayed over, discussed, modified slightly, then voted on and adopted. Church-board mentors³ filled out commitment cards. It was easy to find unity because everyone who serves on the church board must return tithe and give at least something regularly to the local church budget.
- **Entire congregation.** Finally we took the plan to the church family on a Sabbath morning.

Simplify your systems

Through the years we had developed some bad financial habits as a church that made giving more and more complex and did not really inform our congregation of our overall financial situation. In our discussions with the financial ministries team and church board, we knew we needed to simplify our systems to make it easier for people to become consistent givers and fully aware of how we were doing as a church family.

We made these decisions.

- **Simplify loose offering.** All loose offering will always go to the conference-designated offering for that Sabbath (world, conference, local) with no exceptions. We believe this builds confidence in our integrity as being a part of the global Adventist Church family.
- **Simplify ways to commit.** A church cannot have an aggressive education and evangelism program on

just loose offerings. There needs to be consistent giving by a growing number of people. We asked everyone to prayerfully commit to one of these three levels of commitment each year. When they turned in a commitment card, we sent them a confirmation letter congratulating them on their decision.

- » **Moses' 70** (Numbers 11) = Givers who will give 10 + 10, or 20 percent of their income in this way: 10 percent tithe plus 10 percent local church budget offerings.
 - » **Gideon's 300** (Judges 7) = Givers who will give tithe (10 percent) plus \$70 a month or more to local church budget.
 - » **Widow's Mites** (Luke 21) = Givers who give tithe (10 percent) plus anything monthly to local church budget.⁴
- **Simplify communication to church family on ways to give.** We changed the way we informed the

"Count Me In" Commitment Card

Here is my confidential faith commitment through June 2016. I want to be one of . . . (Check one):

- Moses' 70** (Numbers 11) = 70 givers who will give 10 + 10 (10% tithe and 10% local church budget)
- Gideon's 300** (Judges 7) = 300 givers who will give tithe + \$70 or more a month in local church budget
- Widow's Mites** (Luke 21) = All givers who give tithe plus anything monthly to local church budget

Name _____

Street Address _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail Address _____

You will be sent a thank-you confirmation. Your faithful commitment helps add gospel workers around the world (tithe) and helps lift us out of the hole, cover our needs, and establish a small reserve (local church budget).

Ways to give:

- Offering plate or drop box in church lobby
- Online giving (www.RichardsonSDA.org)
- Mail to church office

congregation about our financial situation. Every week you will see an update like this in the church bulletin and e-newsletter. This was for Sabbath, April 25, 2015.

- » July 2014–June 2015
- » Tithe to date: \$1,174,632.82
- » Local church budget
 - Yearly budget: \$569,933.00
 - Given last week: \$17,487.67
 - Given to date: \$486,188.11
 - Needed to date: \$460,330.50
- » Ways to give
 - Offering plate
 - Drop box in church lobbies⁵
 - Mail to church office
 - Give online (RichardsonSDA.org)⁶
- » Please remember to fill out your tithe and offerings in a tithe envelope. Thanks!

On the fourth Sabbath each month, I also take a few minutes before I preach to share a simple financial stewardship principle, thought, or testimony of God's blessings.

Presenting the plan

Our church finances are now strong. But I remember that Sabbath morning three years ago when, before I preached, I took about ten minutes.

"I have a difficult announcement I need to make this morning. Our church is financially broke. Our treasurer tells us that we don't even have enough money to pay our utilities bill. But I have good news and bad news for you. The good news? There is plenty of money to take care of all the facilities and ministries and Adventist education and soul winning God has called us to take care of. The bad news is that it is in your bank accounts!" I said with a smile.

I continued, "I believe that it is God's plan for each of our families and our church family to live within our means and to prosper financially. God wants all of us to pay our bills and to build up a little reserve in case of emergencies. We can all learn this together if we haven't learned it yet. This becomes vitally important whether we are old or young, rich or poor.


"I'd like each of you to take a tithe and offering envelope from the seat back in front of you and hold it up. Whenever we receive money from pay or as a gift, we need to remember that all of it belongs to Jesus. He has given it to us to learn how to manage it for His honor and glory. He calls each of us to be faithful in returning tithe, our first ten percent, to Him by releasing it to the world tithe fund. Do you see the line marked 'Tithe' on the envelope? That's where we put the first ten percent. If I receive ten dollars, then one dollar goes to tithe. If I receive one thousand dollars, then one hundred dollars goes to tithe.

"Someone might say, 'But what if the conference misuses my tithe?' That is God's business, and He will deal with them if they are unfaithful. Someone else may say, 'I send my tithe to ADRA' or 'Amazing Facts' or 'the church school.' But that isn't really tithe—that is a ten percent offering. Money only becomes God's tithe when it is fully released from our control to the 'storehouse' where it is distributed to pay for God's workers around the world.

"Besides tithe, the Lord invites us to give offerings as He blesses us. With our Richardson Seventh-day Adventist Church family, practically all of our local expenses for ministries, church school, soul winning, and facilities are paid for from the local church budget. Do you see that line on the envelope? We're inviting each of you, after returning tithe, to give generously and regularly to the local church budget.

"Now look at the card in your bulletin that says 'Count Me In.' It is a commitment card. Your church leaders are inviting you to seriously pray this week and ask the Lord what level of commitment He wants you to make this year. If your situation changes, then you might need to adjust your level, but ask Him what it should be right now, and He will let you know. We are inviting you to fill in the card and turn it in the next Sabbath or two as an act of faith.

"There are three levels of commitment—Moses' 70, Gideon's 300, and the Widow's Mite. After prayer I have personally committed to being one of Moses's 70, committed to returning ten percent tithe plus giving another ten percent to local church budget. I've already been doing this for several years and have never gone hungry. But if I were hungry, I know I could come to any of your homes and eat! And any of you who make a commitment—if you don't have enough to eat, you let any of us on the church board know, and we'll make sure you get some food. We can truly help each other. Let's see what God does with our difficult situation."

I then had prayer and preached my regular sermon message. And God has done what only God can do. He has blessed us to grow in faith, finances, and preparation for His imminent return. 

- 1 This experience happened at the Richardson Seventh-day Adventist Church in Texas in 2012–2014.
- 2 For more on the concept of the "storehouse" and the giving of tithe, see the articles at "Site," Biblical Research Institute, www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/search/site/storehouse.
- 3 Our church-board members are all called church-board mentors because their main role is to mentor groups and individuals to help them find success in their walk with Jesus, family and relationships, and ministry and mission in life.
- 4 All new members (baptisms, professions of faith, transfers) attend a new member's orientation for two hours (see www.richardsonda.org/lead). We briefly mention these three levels of commitment and invite new members to pray about what the Lord wants them to do.
- 5 We installed simple locked drop boxes in each lobby with a sign that says "Tithe, Offerings and Suggestions" and a holder for tithe and offering envelopes, commitment cards, and communication cards. We have recently added a drop box in our Kids' Zone that is lower and includes children's tithe and offering envelopes.
- 6 We signed up our church at www.adventistgiving.org. At first there was fear of how this would affect cash flow in the transition. But ultimately this has really helped people become more consistent in their giving. The giving form automatically includes tithe plus conference and world giving options. To keep it simple and focused for our local church offerings, we offer only three options—local church budget, North Dallas Adventist Academy student aid, and White Rock Lake campus (a church we are planting).

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

David Penno, PhD, is associate professor of Christian ministry, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States.



Personal happiness, self-fulfillment, and homosexuality in the church

With the legalization of same-sex marriage in the United States and other countries, the Adventist Church must face the issue of how to relate to gay individuals. We need to examine our arguments when addressing how, or even if, gay persons *who are in a sexual relationship with a same-sex partner* fit into the life of the church.

Research by the Archives, Statistics, and Research Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists¹ indicates that a growing number of church members in North America agree that a practicing homosexual could be a member in good standing and might even serve as a leader in the congregation. The research found that 49 percent of those in their 20s who were current or recent graduates from college or university would accept persons who practiced a homosexual lifestyle as members of the Adventist Church; 21 percent would approve of such persons serving as leaders in the church.

Many families in the church are directly affected by this issue as loved ones reveal their homosexual orientation and practice. A number of students at our denominational schools have indicated same-sex preferences. How,

then, can we, with faithfulness to the Word and compassion to those involved, confront the question of practicing homosexuals in the Adventist Church?

A shift from theology to philosophy

Jeffrey Stout asserts that up to the time of René Descartes, much of the thinking in the Western world was based on the idea that God exists and that He has revealed Himself and His will to humans. Therefore, theology was the queen of the sciences, and all other disciplines had to align with her. “But in Descartes’s work, theology has already become the handmaiden of philosophy, reversing the Thomistic order of things. . . . Descartes argues that questions about God and the soul ‘ought to be demonstrated by philosophical rather than theological argument.’”² This shift in foundation allowed ideas from the Enlightenment, including rationalism and individualism, to have a powerful impact on Christian thinking and belief.

In contrast, when we deal with Christians engaging in same-gender sexual activity, we must be founded on biblical theology and have a Christian worldview as our beginning point. If we make philosophy, such as rationalism or individualism, or psychology the foundation,³ we may come to wrong conclusions.

Philosophy of hedonism

For example, hedonism is an individualistic philosophy based in the idea that pleasure comprises the highest good in life,⁴ and therefore, pain should be avoided. Although hedonism did not begin with Epicurus, he is considered the father of this line of thought.⁵ In this belief system, “pleasure is the ultimate goal of action, and the yardstick for determining an action’s moral worth.”⁶ Hedonism, as a philosophical approach to life, does not condone unbridled pleasure-seeking, though the modern use of the word has taken on that connotation. Nevertheless, the core concept says that pleasure is the ultimate good in life and can make an action or practice morally acceptable.

This philosophical framework seems to undergird some of the arguments given to permit gay Christians to practice same-gender sex, the idea being that, because heterosexuals have the right to marry and attain relational and sexual fulfillment, it is unfair to deny this to homosexual brothers and sisters as well. This approach seems to assume an absolute right for Christians to happiness and self-fulfillment, as the individual deems is best; the argument buttressed at times by appeals to scientific research, which indicates that gays and lesbians are happier when

married to their partner.⁷ So hedonism, supported by research, is the starting place that leads to the acceptance of same-gender sexual practice.

In response, it might be helpful to consider the parallel plight of a heterosexual man (or woman) whose spouse can no longer engage in sexual activity because of disease or permanent injury. How would he find sexual fulfillment? Does he have a basic right to fulfill this need, despite his marriage vows and the law of God that prohibits adultery? The

attempt to reach his full potential and self-fulfillment as God, but willingly limited Himself in obedience to the Father. Moses turned away from the pleasures of Egypt and denied himself the potential of ruling one of the greatest nations on Earth in order to be faithful to God.

However, there is a confluence of theology and hedonism when the Christian continues to learn to enjoy doing God's will. "I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my

violating our relationship with Jesus, fidelity to His Word, or the best interest of others.

And believers do often suffer, and not always as a consequence of their mistakes or sins, either, as the book of Job shows. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22) said Paul and Barnabas, not too long after Paul was stoned at Lystra and left for dead. Jesus was crucified, suffering a horrible and ignominious death.

Personal happiness and self-fulfillment cannot be sought at the expense of violating our relationship with Jesus, fidelity to His Word, or the best interest of others.

argument often is that we cannot expect gay persons to simply live a celibate life and never find sexual and emotional fulfillment. How would hedonism guide the heterosexual whose spouse cannot meet his needs? Does he have the right to divorce, or find a lover, in order to find self-fulfillment? The answer, based on this philosophical foundation, would seem to be "yes." But, to be consistent with biblical theology, would it not be better to encourage persons in both situations to be faithful to God's design and law for relationships and sexual activity?

The Bible and hedonism

The Bible denies a primarily hedonistic approach to life for the believer. Jesus says in Luke 9:23⁸ that His disciples "must deny themselves and take up their cross daily." In Philippians 2, Paul describes how Jesus did not

heart" (Ps. 40:8). The key point here is that the believer's happiness is based on doing what God has asked her to do, not on what she has self-determined would be the best way to fulfillment. There are legitimate ways to seek happiness and self-fulfillment, and the Christian remains free to pursue them. Serving others, friendships, relationships with family, wholesome hobbies, and vocations that God has called us to can all bring great joy and happiness to our lives.

Ellen White concurs. "Let us never lose sight of the fact that Jesus is a wellspring of joy. He does not delight in the misery of human beings, but loves to see them happy.

"Christians have many sources of happiness at their command."⁹ Yet, this happiness is not our primary goal. Personal happiness and self-fulfillment cannot be sought at the expense of

So the life of the believer is neither total joy and happiness nor nothing but pain, loss, and suffering. Both are the lot of Christ's followers. The goal is not to eliminate all pain and suffering; nor is it to seek happiness and pleasure as the highest good. Rather it is to find fulfillment in serving God and loving others with agape love, whether that brings happiness or pain, or both.

A path forward

So, does the Bible allow for a person with same-gender attraction to act on that attraction by marriage and a sexual relationship to a person of the same sex? A number of passages strongly indicate that it does not.¹⁰ The Seventh-day Adventist position supports Scripture. Official statements from the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists¹¹ and the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary,¹²

for example, state that same-gender sexual behavior and marriage are not acceptable. These statements are not intended to harm those with same-sex orientation but, rather, to guide the church and its members in regards to what are—according to the Bible, and not hedonism—acceptable lifestyle practices. Like the heterosexual whose spouse cannot meet his or her needs, the homosexual believer is called to give a higher value to the teachings of the Bible on marriage and sex than to the individual's need for self-fulfillment. This is a very difficult choice, and individuals and families suffer much because the easier and seemingly more desirable way forward is not that which Jesus would call us to.

All of us, no matter our sexual orientation, must give up the fulfillment of certain desires for the kingdom of God. This is the path that Jesus trod before us, and He lovingly implores us to follow Him. Jesus died for us, rose again, and ministers for us at this moment in heaven above. Our names are written in the Lamb's book of life. And someday soon our Lord will return and take us to a place where there is no more sorrow,

or tears of sadness, or emotional or physical emptiness. His promise is sure.

Conclusion

We must honestly look at our thinking. Am I giving theology or philosophy the highest place? Is my love for friends and family members pushing me to displace theology with a philosophy that would allow a practicing homosexual to be a member and leader in the church? Emotions are part of the mix, as they should be. But the difficult choice includes putting the will of God above mine. The Gethsemane prayer is probably the most difficult one to genuinely lay before God.

I would suggest that the Seventh-day Adventist Church encourage its members to deny hedonism as the basis for addressing gay marriage. By keeping the teachings of the Scriptures as the foundation, we can together build a church faithful to God's Word and, in that faithfulness, a church that ministers effectively to all. ❧

1 David Trim, "Seventh-day Adventist Global Data Picture: Report on Global Research, 2011–13," Adventist Archives, PowerPoint, 2013, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Statistics/>

Other/-%20ACRep2013.pdf.

- 2 Jeffery Stout, *The Flight From Authority* (Notre Dame, IN: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 109, 110.
- 3 We certainly would not exclude philosophy and psychology from influencing our thinking; but they should not be foundational.
- 4 Aleksandar Fatic and Dimitrios Dentsoras, "Pleasure in Epicurean and Christian Orthodox Conceptions of Happiness," *South African Journal of Philosophy* 33, no. 4 (2014): 536. dx.doi.org/10.1080/02580136.2014.967594.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 523.
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 Stephanie Pappas, "Married Same-Sex Couples Are Happier," December 13, 2012, www.livescience.com/25519-married-same-sex-couples-happier.html.
- 8 All Bible references are from the New International Version.
- 9 Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home* (Nashville, TN: Southern Pub. Assn., 1952), 513.
- 10 Cf. Genesis 2:24; Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:24–27.
- 11 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Spring Meeting 2014, "Responding to Changing Cultural Attitudes Regarding Homosexual and Other Alternative Sexual Practices," Guidelines, www.adventist.org/en/information/official-statements/guidelines/article/go/0/responding-to-changing-cultural-attitudes-regarding-homosexual-and-other-alternative-sexual-practice/#_ftnref1.
- 12 "An Understanding of the Biblical View on Homosexual Practice and Pastoral Care," Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary Position Paper, October 9, 2015, www.andrews.edu/sem/statements/seminary-statement-on-homosexuality-edited-10-8-15-jm-final.pdf.

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

The call

The journey with Jesus begins with believing in Him and His grace to cover your sins. Even better, next comes the call. What is "the call"? Ask Abraham or Moses, David or Jeremiah. Ask Mary or Paul or Peter. Peter heard the call while in a sinking boat in a wild storm, and was out walking on waves as soon as Jesus said, "Come." Did Peter just want attention? Maybe, but perhaps he just wanted to be as close as possible to Jesus, even if it meant attempting the impossible.

The call is not just for Bible heroes. It is for everyone who wants to walk with Jesus. God has a unique call for

you in His mission to save the world. It starts with inviting His Spirit to transform your heart. From that point on, Jesus may lead you to your own home, your own community, or even a foreign country. Regardless, it likely will involve leaving the boat and loving others, especially the "least of these." But even on stormy waves, and possibly sinking like Peter, responding to the call of Jesus will always lead you closer to Him. He gives a promise specifically for His water-walking followers: "And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20b, NLT).

Revival
and REFORMATION
YOU, YOUR FAMILY, YOUR CHURCH, YOUR COMMUNITY

If you want to journey with Jesus, listen for His call, and be ready for a life-changing adventure!

—Andrea Keele serves as processing assistant at the Office of Volunteer Ministries, North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.



In the Beginning Was the Word: The Bible in American Public Life, 1492–1783

by Mark A. Noll, New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

What does it mean to follow “the Bible and the Bible alone”? This phrase, often referred to as *sola Scriptura* (“Scripture alone”) by the Protestant Reformers, is one that took on many new meanings in an American context. A group at the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies recently chose this volume as the inaugural book for a voluntary student and faculty book club because, although we come from many cultures from around the world, this volume explores what it means to have “all of life” directed “from the Bible” (3). As the first book in a three-volume series, this is a must-read for all pastors and students of Scripture because *sola Scriptura* has become such a loose term used by so many different religious groups, therefore making it especially difficult to ascertain precisely what this term means in its everyday use and application.

The book illustrates this point at the very beginning of the chapter “Protestant Beginnings” (30–48). Bible translations played a pivotal role during the Reformation. One key passage was Romans 3:28. William Tyndale translated the text as, “We suppose therefore that a man is justified by faith without the dedes of the lawe” (quoted by Noll, 39). Afterward Luther, in 1522, made explicit the implicit idea of “only” in order to make the passage clearer. The “principle of biblical authority ran out clearly, but the practices of Bible translation and Bible interpretation were never so clearly dispositive” (39). Thus out “of the Reformation came a sharpened focus on biblical authority” even if the appeal to Scripture, including the phrase *sola Scriptura*, was a frequent ideal from the fourteenth century onward (46). Early Protestants sought to “purify Christian

tradition, not throw it away” (48). The problem was that many different possible meanings arose out of the many meanings of *sola Scriptura*.

A primary case in point, for Noll, is the precise use of a Bible translation in early America. During this early time the only book a family owned was the Bible (114). One would expect the ubiquitous Coverdale Bible (or even the Geneva Bible) to dominate, but instead the King James Version (KJV) loomed large across America (66–70). It was a literary masterpiece that showcased superior scholarship and language, yet it was also a highly political translation. The KJV was the “perfect fit” to undergird the king’s authority (66). Much of the beauty of the prose should be credited to Tyndale, and some significant credit is also due (somewhat surprisingly) to the Roman Catholic Douai-Rheims (61). Yet the most significant aspect of the Bible in America was the versification of Scripture. This was a relatively modern innovation that allowed people to divide up Scripture into manageable portions to “proof text” and exert greater control over Scripture, rather than letting the Bible speak in its original context. Altogether this meant that the history of Scripture in America is the history of a versified Bible (59).

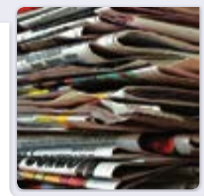
The democratic spirit encouraged lay believers to appropriate Scripture for their own purposes and control (178). One of the most common early American tropes was to compare the role of early Americans as fulfilling the role of modern Israel as they settled a new land, or God’s care and protection similar to the early New Testament Church (107). Even norms about worship changed. The long-standing Puritan/Presbyterian prejudice against singing hymns not

based directly upon Scripture gave way to the nationalistic hymns of Isaac Watts. Instead, only “rarely did the Bible itself figure as the focus of the song” (157). Even new conflicts, such as the Indian Wars and the Jacobite rebellion, showcase just how easily new religious perspectives could mesh within a new international framework. Noll goes on to argue that a fundamental cause of the American Revolution was religion (296). The Bible clearly condemns rebellion, but American preachers during the American founding era either ignored or reinterpreted such problem passages (323). “Clearly . . . exegetical precision was not required in order to enlist the Bible for the patriot cause” (303).

Another significant factor was American revivals and revivalism that were largely based upon a personal appropriation of Scripture for individual use. As a Seventh-day Adventist, I found this especially interesting because it created a greater openness to other sorts of divine revelation, including dreams, visions, and direct messages from God (202, 203). Revivals also sanctioned populist interpretations of Scripture with an emphasis upon a “plain reading” oriented toward chapter-and-verse proof texting (205). Such proof texting showcases “the persistent Protestant dilemma of Supreme trust in Scripture accompanied by divergent interpretations of Scripture” (322). This book demonstrates from history that *sola Scriptura* should not be about “proof texting” to make the Bible conveniently say what we want it to say, but instead it is absolutely imperative to let the Bible speak in its *original context* through careful *exegesis* by prayerfully listening to the

Continued on page 30





► Obama's visit to Cuba boosts Adventist hopes

Havana, Cuba—United States (U.S.) president **Barack Obama**'s historic visit to Cuba has inspired hope among Seventh-day Adventists on the island that thawing U.S.-Cuban relations might lead to greater opportunities for evangelism.

Aldo Perez, president of the Adventist Church in Cuba, was one of 20 religious leaders selected by the Cuban government to attend Obama's speech. "This was a historic moment where the church was placed among figures from both the government and religious organizations in our country," Perez said. "We had the opportunity to witness a very eloquent speech with a call for reconciliation." Conditions in Cuba have been favorable for the church in recent months. Last Sabbath, scores of young people took to the

streets as part of the Adventist world church's Global Youth Day. They wore ribbons saying "Jesus Loves You" while holding health fairs, cleaning up parks, and distributing food. Also in March, the authorities approved an Adventist Church request to use the 3,000-seat Heredia Theater in Santiago de Cuba for the final two days of an evangelistic series led by **Dwight Nelson**, senior pastor of the Pioneer Memorial Church at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Andrews University students held a week of evangelistic meetings and conducted small groups in Santiago de Cuba before Nelson's presentations. Approximately 250 people were baptized as a result of the meetings.

Adventist doctors and nurses also actively share their faith across Cuba,

said **Dayami Rodriguez**, communication director for the church in Cuba. "The work of the medical missionaries continues to strengthen in communities where there is no Adventist presence."

Israel Leito, president of the church's Inter-American Division, whose territory includes Cuba, said, "The church has done its part all these years by respecting the government and its regulations." "Now it is in a position where it is enjoying opportunities to spread the gospel more freely."

The Adventist Church in Cuba has more than 32,500 members worshipping in 460 congregations. The church also operates a seminary in Havana. [Libna Stevens, Inter-American Division]

► Shaky economy costs General Conference millions of dollars

Silver Spring, Maryland, United States—An unsteady global economy shaved 20 percent off the income received by the General Conference last year, and church leaders are reworking budgetary plans as they prayerfully seek to navigate the uncharted waters ahead. While tithe and offerings remained strong worldwide in 2015, exchange-rate losses linked to the fluctuations of regional currencies against the U.S. dollar cost the General Conference, the administrative body that oversees the Seventh-day Adventist Church, a total of \$19.4 million.

"My fears that were presented in October actually came true," General Conference treasurer **Juan R. Prestol-Puesán** said in an interview. Prestol-Puesán had cautioned church leaders at the General Conference's


Annual Council business meeting that market uncertainties might lead to the loss of millions of dollars in church income.

"We are looking at a very difficult year financially for 2017, given the number of programs and commitments that we have," he said. "Where will the Lord lead us in this? We are going to have to take it one year at a time."

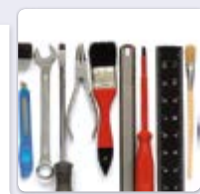
Prestol-Puesán, speaking at the Spring Council at the General Conference's headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, said this year's budget was prepared months before the end of 2015, and planners had not anticipated such a significant drop in income. The General Conference operates in U.S. dollars, but 53 percent of its income originates in other currencies.

In all, the General Conference received \$94.8 million in tithe last

year, a year-over-year decrease of \$2.2 million. However, it says, only three of the world church's 13 divisions showed losses if the tithe was calculated in the predominant division currency. World mission offerings amounted to \$84.6 million last year, a drop of \$4.2 million.

Prestol-Puesán shared that the counsel given by Adventist Church cofounder Ellen G. White was as relevant now as when she wrote it more than a century ago. "Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us, of which we know nothing," he said, reading from *The Desire of Ages*, page 330. "Those who accept the one principle of making the service and honor of God supreme will find perplexities vanish, and a plain path before their feet." [Andrew McChesney, news editor, *Adventist Review*] 

Maylan Schurch, MDiv, serves as pastor at the Bellevue Seventh-day Adventist Church, Bellevue, Washington, United States.



The sermon walk: Rediscovering an ancient practice

One day while walking past the church I pastor, I experienced an epiphany. To explain why I found this epiphany so surprising, you need to know that I had been preparing sermons nearly every week for more than three decades, and 98 percent of the sermons were “from scratch.” As I left the church and began my walk, I remembered that I had to prepare not only a sermon for that weekend but also a Friday morning chapel talk for our Adventist elementary school. But I had not decided on either the Bible passage or the topic. Gradually my mind turned to other thoughts.

Suddenly, four blocks later, I realized that an idea for the chapel talk had popped into my mind, and a few blocks later came an idea for the sermon. I had not been thinking about either of these assignments, but evidently my subconscious mind had.

This experience was so dramatic that I tried it again a week later. This time I printed out a passage of Scripture I was planning to preach on and simply read it over and over as I walked. And again, ideas began to come, and preaching patterns began to form.

From ancient times all the way up to the early 1900s, preachers and other thinkers did a lot of walking, buggy riding, or horseback riding. But then,

into our lives entered the automobile, which required far more concentration to operate. I have not quit driving since my epiphany, but I have added sermon walking to my schedule. Along those sidewalks and paths, I have discovered some practices that work for me. You might enjoy giving them a try as you develop your own.

Where I walk

My church is located at the southwest corner of what I think is the perfect metropolitan walking route. I can walk eight blocks north, eight east, eight south, and eight west again, and the only major streets I must cross are the ones at the corners of that square. The neighborhood where I live also contains many quiet streets on which I do not have to make a lot of navigational decisions. If you have a different geographical reality, you might prefer to find a hiking or biking trail.

What I take along

My Bible passage. I preach mostly expository sermons. I print out my target chapter in two-column format in four literal English versions (NJKV, NIV, ESV, NRSV) plus the original language. I use a 14-point font or larger so I will not have to squint as I walk.


A voice recorder. Most smartphones have this capability, but I would rather

trust my digital voice recorder, and I religiously change its batteries every month. Not only do I find it great for recording to-do items, board meeting discussions, or wedding- or funeral-preparation conversations, but I can feed my sermon walk ideas into it. Later, I download the messages to my computer, where I listen to them and take notes.

A developing sermon outline. About a year ago I discovered that a sermon can benefit from more than one sermon walk. If the first walk produced an outline, or at least some general notes, I will print these out and take them along (together with the Scripture passage) on a second walk.

A digital camera. Again, you can depend on your smartphone for this. As has been said, a picture is worth a thousand words—especially if the picture is of a sign, billboard, bumper sticker, or license plate with irresistible illustration potential.

Good walking gear. Do not let foot pain draw your attention away from those great ideas you are coming up with. If you suspect rain, wear a cap and raincoat.

Why not try sermon walking? It might help you craft a better message—or work through something else you might be mulling over. 


RESOURCES

Continued from page 28



Word of God. If the Bible always agrees with your opinions instead of challenging, confronting, and/or convicting your heart, then perhaps it is high time to do some prayerful heart-searching to make sure that you do not manipulate God's Word.

Such a perspective should furthermore provide a healthy dose of humility in going about such Bible study. Thus, pastors will find Noll's tracing of the Bible in early America a sobering wake-up call when he warns that this is a “general truism that when Scripture comes into a fight

that is already under way, it becomes all but impossible for the Bible to exercise an objective, unprejudiced authority” (314).
—Reviewed by Michael Campbell, PhD, assistant professor of theological-historical studies, Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Silang, Cavite, Philippines. 

Triple Your Donation Value

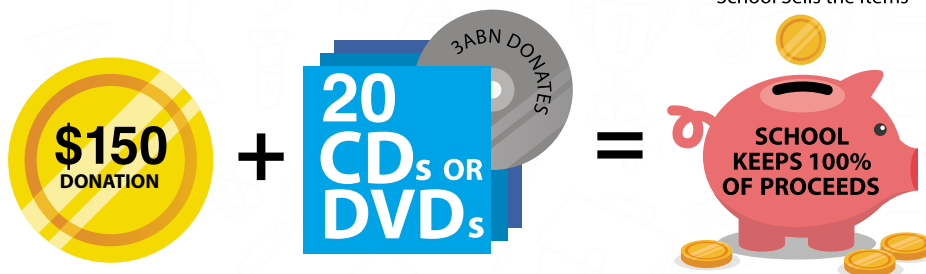
ADVENTIST EDUCATION



Project History - This fundraising project, launched during spring semester of 2015, has brought amazing results:

- As of April 2016, together we've raised over \$550,000.
- Over 270 individual schools within 47 states.
- 3ABN has sent over 37,000 CDs/DVDs valued at \$15 each to Adventist schools.
- Four NAD Conferences participating.

A unique school fundraising project to raise \$3 Million for Adventist Schools!



Schools sell these inspirational music items
AND KEEP 100% OF PROCEEDS!

To learn more visit: 3ABNSchoolFundraising.org



Order at mysdatv.org

Questions? Call 618-627-2300

Just plug it in and discover a whole world of live TV, music, program guides, photos, and more!

- Stream 3ABN directly to your TV
- No monthly fee
- Music, program guides, photos and more
- Multiple languages
- Three **mysdatv boxes*** to choose from—including a compact travel size **Dongle**
- All Adventist content
- Video On Demand

Available Streams (For an updated list visit: mysdatv.org)



*Must have internet connection.

Other Ways To Watch



Live 24/7 Streaming—3ABN.tv



Mobile Devices—(iPhone, iPad, Android™) download the **3ABN app**



Roku—Stream 3ABN directly to your TV, visit Roku.com



SDAdish—No monthly fee, visit sdadish.com or call 877.875.6532



DISH—Channel 9393, visit dish.com



Verizon FiOS—Channel 291, visit buyverizon.com

Call 618.627.4651 or visit 3ABN.tv

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Nampa, ID
Permit No. 147

Christ's method in the world's great cities

Showing sympathy
Ministering
to needs
Winning confidence
Bidding people
to follow
Jesus

Every dollar given to Global Mission goes directly to the front lines of mission, including big cities, reaching people who are still waiting to know Jesus.

THREE WAYS TO GIVE:

- Mail to Global Mission:
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904
- Secure online: Giving.AdventistMission.org
- Call 800-648-5824

Photo credit: Earley Simon



GLOBAL MISSION