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Volume 26

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EDITORIAL

Organizing for mission

It happens every quinquennium. Before I came to work at the General Conference, I had never used that word, not even in a game of Scrabble. A colleague quipped that the process surely must have the leading of the Holy Spirit, as world leaders of the church are elected without benefit of job descriptions or resumé. But it's not as it might seem. Representing a membership of 18.5 million in 216 of the 237 countries and territories recognized by the United Nations, around 2,600 delegates will gather in San Antonio, Texas, from July 2 to 11, 2015. Together, they will affirm the church's faith and mission, receive reports from the 13 world divisions of the church, elect global leadership for the next quinquennium, and vote changes to the constitution, fundamental beliefs, and church manual. All this and more occurs within 10 days of meetings.

I can't help reflecting on the events of the last session in Atlanta, Georgia. That's when I was elected as the first female director of the Department of Education in the history of the church. No one could have been more surprised than me. Moments after the election, a dear colleague enthusiastically said, "You are the right man for the job!" and we both laughed.

But it was serious business when I appeared before the Nominating Committee to explain what the Department of Education would need to do and what qualifications were needed for associates in the department. Rather than seeking to represent the world field, the emphasis was on the capacity to serve the world field. Qualifications included experience in two or more regions, language proficiency, an earned doctorate, and academic content expertise. Speeches (including my own) were made at the microphones about one candidate or another. Then I watched the bar graphs rise on the screen for various names as the Nominating Committee voted electronically. I contacted each leading nominee, and only after the individual consented to be considered could the world delegates make the final decision. At the upcoming General Conference Session, they will use electronic devices to vote, but in Atlanta votes on the main floor were by means of bright yellow cards. I'll never forget the flush of yellow as delegates voted their conscience.

The General Conference Session is like a camp meeting on steroids: the best music from around the world, inspiring sermons, colorful national costumes, happy reunions in scores of languages, whispered prayers in as many, educational and entertaining exhibits, and the largest Sabbath school and worship service one can experience this side of heaven. But what impresses me most is how we vote the business of the church: policies that coordinate our work, doctrine, weighty matters such as whether women may be ordained to gospel ministry, and the quinquennial election of leadership and personnel for a global work.

Ellen White wrote, "God has ordained that the representatives of His church from all parts of the earth, when assembled in a General Conference, shall have authority. The error that some are in danger of committing is in giving to the mind and judgment of one man, or of a small group of men, the full measure of authority and influence that God has vested in His church, in the judgment and voice of the

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For more than 150 years, these special meetings have served to keep a global, growing, multinational denomination and its churches, schools, hospitals, institutions, and membership united for mission.

Whether or not you can participate in person or by means of the Internet or television, you should inform yourself about the upcoming General Conference Session (2015.gcsession.org). I also urge you to pray that the Holy Spirit will indeed guide in all deliberations, that the church will be unified and galvanized for mission, that our hope in Christ will be affirmed, and

that the worship offered will gladden the heart of God. May the theme for this global gathering be our hope and prayer for the days to come: “Arise! Shine! Jesus is coming!”

Lisa M. Beardsley-Hardy

—Lisa M. Beardsley-Hardy,
Editor-in-Chief



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* Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press, 1948), 9:261.

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Seventh-day Adventist Church in the World

(Statistics: December 31, 2014)

- Countries and areas of the world in which Seventh-day Adventist work is established: 216
(237 countries and areas of the world recognized by the United Nations)
- Languages used in Seventh-day Adventist Publications and oral work: 947
- Churches and companies: 148,023
- Church Membership: 18,479,257

An ancient honor roll

by Jo Ann Davidson

When God names a person to the honor roll of the righteous, He recognizes a life of trusting God and His Word, *no matter what.*

We are living in an era of hero worship. Museums celebrate nearly every sport. Memorials seek to immortalize music and movie stars. Presidents build libraries to display the record of their years in office. The *Guinness Book of World Records* highlights people who have achieved unusual accomplishments. Even the postal service periodically issues stamps that celebrate certain important people. Humans love their heroes!

Interestingly, God has His heroes as well, and has memorialized some of them in His Word. When we think of biblical heroes, Hebrews 11 often comes to mind. A much older honor roll, however, can be found in the Old Testament. In Ezekiel 14, God draws attention to three people, and He does it four times in a single chapter. He says to Ezekiel: “Son of man, when a land sins against Me by persistent unfaithfulness ... even if these three men, *Noah, Daniel, and Job*, were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness” (Eze. 14:13, 14; see also vs. 16, 18, 20).

Why did God single out these three individuals in this ancient honor roll? Why wasn't Abraham included – this man who was called God's “friend forever” (2 Chron. 20:7), and who had his heartwrenching experience of being commanded by God to sacrifice his beloved son? Nor is David mentioned, the one whom God calls

“a man after His own heart” (1 Sam. 13:14). What about Moses, who received the Decalogue from God's own hand and met Him face to face (Deut. 34:10)? Then there is Elijah, with his amazing courage on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18).

As I've pondered this passage in Ezekiel, I have come to the conclusion that there are some critical matters in the lives of Noah, Job, and Daniel that are significant for us today. Let's consider each one briefly.

The case of Noah

The first thing one recalls about Noah is that he was commanded by God to build a massive ship on dry land because of an impending worldwide flood. Apparently he did not stop to ponder what people would think of him. Instead, he simply believed what God told him and started to work.

One of the first descriptions that appears in the biblical record, however, is that Noah was righteous. He “was a just man, perfect [blameless] in his generations” and “walked with God” (Gen. 6:9). For Noah to so live was not an easy matter. He lived in the midst of an exceedingly wicked generation: “The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. . . . The earth was also corrupt before God, and the earth was

filled with violence” (Gen. 6:5, 1-12).

The emphatic language of these verses suggests that the antediluvian world would react negatively to what Noah was doing. Indeed, Ellen White informs us that the people mocked Noah.¹ They ridiculed the idea of rain. Noah's warning from heaven seemed to make no sense in light of what they thought they understood of the natural world. Even the philosophers and scientists of the time reasoned that it was impossible for the earth to be destroyed by water, arguing, “The threatenings of God are for the purpose of intimidating, and will never be verified. You need not be alarmed. Such an event as the destruction of the world by the God who made it, and the punishment of the beings He has created, will never take place. Be at peace; fear not. Noah is a wild fanatic.”²

Had Noah been like some contemporary Christians who insist that we only need to know that “God is love” and that all we need to do is to “love the Lord,” the ark would have never been built. Even in the face of intense ridicule, however, we find Noah proclaiming a judgment message. We find him demonstrating genuine faith – a faith that is obedient. He showed by what he *did* that he believed God, even though he had never seen it rain.

Noah, however, was not an arrogant preacher of doom. Ellen White notes,

“When the last message of Noah was given to that degenerate age, as he stood before the people giving his warning, they turned from him to ridicule him. They had listened to the prayers of Noah that had ascended day after day in their behalf, and with his heart drawn out for them he delivered his very last message to them.”³ Yes, the antediluvians considered Noah insane. But for *120 years*, he kept building the ark according to God’s directions. Noah took God at His word. Perhaps not surprisingly, we find Noah memorialized not only in Ezekiel 14 but also in the New Testament (Heb.11:7; 2 Pet. 2:4-5).

How does Noah’s experience compare with ours today? Ellen White suggests that there are some direct correlations: “In Noah’s day philosophers declared that it was impossible for the world to be destroyed by water; so now there are men of science who endeavor to show that the world cannot be destroyed by fire – that this

would be inconsistent with the laws of nature. . . . But Noah stood like a rock amid the tempest. Surrounded by popular contempt and ridicule, he distinguished himself by his holy integrity and unwavering faithfulness.”⁴

Note the distinct parallels between the issues Noah faced and what we face today: (1) announcing God’s judgment on a resistant sinful world, and (2) doing this in the face of philosophers who insist that God is loving and would never really punish, and evolutionary scientists who deny a fiat Creator God.

The most important aspect, however, is that God commends Noah’s righteousness four times in Scripture: in the books of Genesis, Ezekiel, Hebrews, and Second Peter – Noah, a righteous man, living in a corrupt secular society.

The case of Job

Job’s experience involves several issues. His faithfulness in suffering

perhaps comes first to mind. The harsh reality of unjust suffering is often presented as an argument for unbelief. Yet no book in the Bible focuses on suffering as poignantly as does the book of Job.

Job, an upright and God-fearing man, living a respected, happy, and prosperous life, is suddenly plunged into utter wretchedness, losing his children and all his possessions. Furthermore, he is soon covered with painful boils from head to foot. Even his wife urges him to “curse God and die” (Job 2:9). What will Job do? What will his response be to Satan’s challenge hurled against God?

We know that Job was a righteous man. God has twice declared this in the prologue (Job 1:8; 2:3). Yet without being privy to this divine assessment and in the midst of intense suffering, Job expresses his profound faith in God: “I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God” (Job 19:25, 26).

There are additional issues beyond that of suffering that we must not overlook. Job was not of the “covenant line,” though the details mentioned of his life likely place him in the time of the patriarchs.⁵ This would indicate that Job is a “worthy gentile.” In the Old Testament, we observe that God is careful to record two different groups of people: (1) the covenant line in the Pentateuch, and (2) the existence of faithful believers outside the Abrahamic covenant, such as in the book of Job.

We also find striking evidence that God, from the very beginning of recorded history, wanted the two sides of the great controversy clearly delineated. The cosmic conflict between Christ and Satan was not a late development in the minds of the Israelites. God included the record of the life of Job in the earliest book of Scripture so that Satan’s adversarial role would be clearly portrayed from the outset.

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Why do these issues matter? Job was a deeply spiritual person – he regularly offered sacrifices for himself and his family; he was sensitive to the needs of the poor; he was sought for his wise counsel. Yet he was outside the divinely-elected covenant line of Abraham through which the Messiah was promised.

This is a significant point. As Seventh-day Adventists, we understand, through a study of biblical prophecies, that we are called to proclaim God's last message of judgment and salvation to a dying world. The book of Job, however, reminds us of an important perspective that must accompany our understanding of what, who, and where we are in Earth's history.

It is true God has called us to an important mission. Yet the history of Job shows us that God has faithful children outside the remnant line. While God chose Abraham to be the Father of Nations, three times He says of Job something He never says about any of the patriarchs: that Job "is blameless and upright, ... one who fears God and shuns evil" (Job 1:1, 8; 2:3). Job's life is a testimony that God's sphere of influence is much wider than we might imagine!

Perhaps we need to inform our thinking, through the witness of Job's noble life, that God has always had devout followers inside *and* outside the remnant stream. We must not be so stuffy and arrogant as to think that we alone are the people that God cherishes. Jesus Himself commented on a Roman centurion's faith: "I have not found so great a faith in Israel" (Matt. 8:10).

While we are rightly certain of our role in salvation history, God's four-chapter discourse to Job and his friends – His longest address in Scripture – reminds us that God's involvement in human history is much more extensive and complex than we can understand. God, in fact, instructs Job that He has a plan

unfolding in all of creation, a plan infinitely grander than human minds can fully grasp. We, along with Job, need to be reminded that there is so much in God's world that eludes our analysis and understanding. God's declarations convicted Job, and should convict us, as well, concerning the limitations of human wisdom.

God does have a plan for this world. Everything is not in chaos, no matter how things may appear, even when bad things happen to good people. Furthermore, as important as the Seventh-day Adventist mission is at this time, we are not the only people that God loves. Scripture, in fact, closes with God referring to those inside fallen Babylon as "My people" (Rev. 18:2, 4).

The case of Daniel

Seventh-day Adventists rightly study Daniel's prophetic materials. In Ezekiel 14, however, God commends Daniel's righteousness. What is it about Daniel's life that God acclaims? In Daniel 1, we find a portrait of a life of temperance and integrity, even though Daniel was a teenager and a prisoner of war in Babylon. Later we see Daniel maintaining his faith in God, even in the face of a death decree. Ellen White informs us that Daniel was "sorely tried" and that "he was surrounded with distrust and suspicion, ... yet he maintained a serene and cheerful trust in God, never once deviating from principle."⁶

At the same time, there is no evidence of Daniel harboring a haughty contempt for the pagan religion he found in Babylon. Nor did he casually assume that his Israelite faith was just one of several possibilities that can bring a person to God, and that it doesn't really matter which religion one chooses. The consistent record of Daniel's life negates that perspective. Daniel knew exactly where he stood. He revered the God of Heaven and faithfully maintained his distinctive worship amid great difficulty. Indeed,

when called before the very king who had taken him prisoner and destroyed his country, Daniel did not hesitate to acknowledge the God of Heaven as his source of wisdom. And he did this more than once, even at the risk of his life.

When a death decree is issued affecting Daniel, he returns to his room, opens his window and prays. The text makes clear that Daniel is not praying from mindless routine, nor was this prayer his last resort. No, he "prayed ... just as he had done before ... three times a day" (Dan. 6:10, 13).

By kneeling before his open window to pray, Daniel demonstrates heroic courage. He prefers the death sentence rather than break his communion with God. As a skilled politician high in Persia's government, Daniel is not ignorant of what is going on: "Although he knew full well the consequences of his fidelity to God, his spirit faltered not. Before those who were plotting his ruin, he would not allow even the appearance that his connection with Heaven was severed."⁷

No wonder God dramatically singles Daniel out. On three different occasions, when the angel Gabriel is dispatched from heaven in answer to Daniel's prayers to understand his visions, note how Gabriel expresses heaven's affection: once "You are greatly beloved," and twice "O Daniel, man greatly beloved" (Dan. 9:23; 10:11, 18-19). Daniel is the only person in the Scriptures so signally affirmed. Only the Messiah Himself receives such multiple divine expressions of affection, when at His baptism and His transfiguration, the Father proclaims from heaven, "This is My beloved Son!" (Matt. 3:17; 17:5).

Why these three?

Through the prophet Ezekiel, God gives pointed attention to Noah, Job, and Daniel. Why did God hold Noah in such high esteem? Could it be

because of his unqualified faithfulness amidst the prevailing skepticism of his time, of his integrity in the face of scientific and philosophical mockery of the divine command? He confronted, just as we do now, a widespread loyalty to a form of materialism where reality is defined and circumscribed by what is humanly imaginable and presently occurring. Noah, however, grasped the infinite unseen world, and this shaped his obedient faith. He followed God's commands explicitly, announcing God's judgment on sin by building a large boat on dry land, having never seen rain.

Why Job? Job traveled a tortuous route with God. Yet in the face of confusion, suffering, and pain, we find Job declaring his unmovable faith in God. Moreover, his life is also a notable portrait of the "grafted branches" God promises for the True Vine; and we stand amazed at the *quality* of these grafts!

Why Daniel? We, who are challenged by *New Testament Babylon*, have been called to the same high standards in our personal habits, pertaining to what we drink, what we eat, how we lead a simple lifestyle. Occasionally, some Seventh-day Adventists rumble that these lifestyle standards are not that important. Daniel's singular witness in Babylon's luxurious court and its results give testimony of the importance of faithfulness.

Ellen White also highlights Daniel's prayer life: "If we as a people would pray as Daniel prayed, and wrestle as he wrestled, humbling our souls before God, we should realize as marked answers to our petitions as were granted to Daniel."⁸ When we consider Daniel's steadfast prayer life, along with his determination to bring glory to the God of heaven in that premier but pagan court, and recall that he was willing to face execution rather than compromise his faith, it is not difficult to understand why God, through the prophet Ezekiel, purpose-

fully draws attention to the righteousness of Daniel.

Noah, Job, and Daniel. Each one faced a distinct challenge that demanded a profound level of faith:

- Faith in the word of God amid prevailing skepticism;
- Faith in God amid and in spite of acute suffering; and
- Faith in God in a situation of sophisticated pluralism, choosing to accept death rather than dishonor God.

These, in fact, are the very issues that Ellen White, in *The Great Controversy*, indicates that we will face as our world falls under its final judgment.

God, through Ezekiel, commends these three Old Testament "worthies" to us four times in a single chapter! When God speaks, we can believe Him. "The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver in a furnace of the earth, purified seven times" (Ps. 12:6). Throughout Scripture, God calls us to righteousness. Through the prophet Amos, He urges, "Let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream" (Amos 5:24). The psalmist adds, "For the LORD is righteous, He loves righteousness" (Ps. 11:7). Through the prophet Ezekiel, God commends Noah, Job, and Daniel for their righteousness. Thus, we can begin to understand what God means as He calls attention to these three lives: that a righteous life means trusting God and His Word *no matter what*.

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2. —, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 99.
3. —, *Christ Triumphant* (Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1999), p. 55 [MS 86, 1886].
4. —, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 99, 103.
5. Such as: (1) The types of animal herds he owns are like those described of Abraham and the other patriarchs in Genesis. (2) Job's offering sacrifices corresponds to that of the patriarchs. (3) There is no mention of the Exodus event in the book of Job, which, subsequent to its occurrence, is mentioned by almost every other biblical writer. (4) Ellen White informs us that Moses wrote the book of Job while in Midian (*Education*, p. 159).
6. White, "Daniel, an Example of Faithfulness," *Signs of the Times*, November 4, 1886.
7. White, *Prophets and Kings* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1943), p. 44.
8. White, *The Sanctified Life* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1956), p. 47.

How should Christians treat animals in research?

by Mark F. Carr

In doing scientific research, we must not forget the domain of our stewardship, so as to move away from procedures that cause pain and suffering in animals. We can and must aspire to a higher level of responsibility to God and the rest of His creation.

One of the most contested and perennial issues in how we relate to our environment is the use of animals in research. Seventh-day Adventists associated primarily with educational and healthcare institutions engage in animal research. When properly regulated under current accrediting bodies, this research is justifiable. Nonetheless, I will make some proposals that will encourage Adventists and other Christians to move away from research that necessitates pain and suffering in animals.

The use of animals in research

The prevailing arguments in favor of using animals in research programs tend toward one or another form of utilitarianism. Within a utilitarian framework, three primary rules are at work: replacement, reduction, and refinement. Established with the publication of *The Principles of Humane Experimental Technique* by W.M.S. Russell and R.L. Burch in 1959, these three Rs provide a conceptual framework for morally responsible utilitarian logic.¹ Put simply, if there are alternatives to using animals, then a researcher should replace the animals. Then, effort should be made to

reduce the number of animals in use. Finally, researchers should refine their experimental technique so as to avoid all unnecessary pain to the animals involved.

The prevailing arguments against using animals in research center on the idea of animal rights, and that basic among those rights is freedom from pain and suffering. Without turning this essay into an argument about animal rights, it is important to recognize the presence and force of this line of reasoning in the ethics of animal research. Following the basic definition of human rights to be that which any person has simply because he or she is human,² an animal rights definition would assert a certain set of protections and freedoms for all animals (or non-human animals, to be precise).³ If we choose to engage in this conversation, then we must specify to what degree animal rights exist and how those rights do or do not jibe with human rights.⁴

How animal research is conducted. Of primary concern here is the laboratory research foisted upon animals that causes them pain and suffering. Such research must be morally justified, and this is usu-

ally accomplished via national legislation and, increasingly, through international oversight groups. The single most important international oversight agency is the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International (AAALAC).

The guiding documents that provide oversight and management of the actual research upon animals make up a vast body of literature and regulation. The details are phenomenal and at least as – if not more – rigorous as those associated with research protocols using human subjects. What can we glean from these documents with regard to how Adventists might responsibly engage in research using animals in the educational and healthcare institutions that are so vital to the life of our church around the world?

Principles worth upholding. Three levels of regulation and oversight must be maintained if we are to engage in morally-responsible animal research.⁵

Institutional: All morally-responsible research must be monitored and regulated by the institutions within which it occurs. To put it negatively and within the specific context of the Adventist church, no individual

researcher/teacher in a Seventh-day Adventist educational institution should engage in research/class exercise without direct institutional oversight. This oversight must be encouraged, supported, and maintained by the institution/school.

Local: Institutional oversight must include complying with any relevant local government laws. These laws will vary widely across the nations within which the church maintains educational institutions. Regardless of variation, local legislation must be followed. For instance, vivisection (the dissection of live animals) is forbidden in England but not in the United States.

International: Independent and international accreditation offered by AAALAC should be sought after, achieved, and maintained by all Seventh-day Adventist educational institutions engaging in animal research. AAALAC provides the gold standard for any and all efforts to justify research on animals that potentially causes pain and suffering.

While these three fundamental rules can provide practical guidance for the ethics of animal research, they cannot, and do not, establish acceptable conceptual guidance for the Adventist church. The conceptual problems associated with animal research revolve around issues of morality informed by Scripture, theology, and church teaching.

A three-point proposal

As a means to encourage the church forward, I offer the following three strategies.

Proposal 1: Establish consensus that all non-human creation has moral status. Laboratory research that causes pain and death of animals must be morally justified.⁶ This very fact recognizes that there is some moral value inherent in the non-human animal creation of God.⁷

Moral value or status is a term used in ethics to help us conceptualize

“who or what is so valuable that it should be treated with special regard.”⁸ When I refer to moral status here, it is to note our intuitive, nurtured, and commanded sense that the object to which we refer is morally important. I say intuitive because, as creations of God, bearing His image, we have an intuitive sense (when we follow His will) that other parts of His creation are morally important. I say nurtured because we take Scripture seriously in our personal, familial, and congregational life, and Scripture teaches that God cares for His creation. If God cares for His creation, then we also ought to care for it. Ought implies moral obligation or status. I say commanded because we have been assigned by God a particular role and responsibility within His creation, as stewards, to value (morally value) other parts of His creation. The onus of responsibility here is ours, and it means that we should treat the rest of creation as God Himself would treat it.

To put it negatively, if we mistreat an object of His creation (one that He has told us we are responsible for [Gen. 1:26-28]), we engage in a moral wrong, a sin. For instance, there is little or no debate about the moral ramifications of crushing rocks to make gravel. Crushing the skulls of live animals in order to study brain trauma for human well-being is an entirely different moral activity, and we recognize it as such. If we do not, we are morally retarded and fail to properly reflect God’s image within His creation.

The relevant statements of the Adventist church regarding moral status emerge in two different forms, the Twenty-Eight Fundamental Beliefs and the official statements of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Fundamental Belief number six, titled “Creation,” states that humankind made in the image of God represented “the crowning work of Creation.” Echoing the words

of Genesis 1:26 (KJV), the statement notes that we were “given dominion over the world, and charged with responsibility to care for it.”⁹ As the belief is interpreted and published in *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, we find two passages: one asserts that we have a “divinely bestowed responsibility of preserving the quality of our environment”; the other notes that “because life is a gift of God, we must respect it; in fact, we have a moral duty to preserve it.”¹⁰

Proposal 2: Re-evaluate our theology of stewardship. Seen through the lens of theological ethics, what is at stake in the creation accounts of Genesis is our very identity, our role, and our place in the entirety of God’s creation. There are two principal metaphors essential to a biblical, and thus Adventist, interpretation of our role in God’s created order, namely, dominion and stewardship.

On having dominion. Humans have failed through the course of history as we narrowly interpreted dominion to mean that we could be dominators, users, takers, and abusers of the rest of the creation that God announced good. Following the metaphor of dominion, in Christian Western society, the rest of creation was thought to have value as it benefits humankind.¹¹

How humans relate to the rest of God’s creation is revealed through beliefs and actions. When something (say, a snail) has intrinsic value, it has value in and of itself. This is true simply because God created it. God does not need to command us to value the snail. The snail has value because God made it. Those of us who hold to this view typically argue that all of God’s creation has intrinsic moral value. Those who hold a different view assign value because they choose to or because God commands it. That is, there is no intrinsic value in the snail. Rather, it attains value only when we attach value to it (because God has told us to or we like what it does for us).

Of course, one can take a position on the intrinsic/extrinsic value of the rest of God's creation on a very complex scale.¹² At either extreme of a scale of value are the following two positions:

1. All things – all of God's non-human creation – are intrinsically valuable (they have moral status) because He created each and pronounced them good. Value here is essential in the entity itself.
2. All things – all of God's non-human creation – are extrinsically valuable (they have moral status) because they benefit humankind. Whether a stone or a great ape, all of the rest of creation has value only as it enhances human life. Value here is instrumental to humankind.

In my theological ethics framework, I must take the position that all things God created hold at least some moral status. Any amount of moral status imposes a moral obligation upon me as the responsible steward of God's creation.

On being responsible. The responsibility that God assigns humankind is a moral one. We have a moral responsibility to engage in a managerial role within the creation. This managerial role is best understood under the theological framework of the principle of stewardship. Stewardship, argues Bauckham, is a "vocation of caring responsibility for other creatures."¹³

My point is that we must understand the metaphor of dominion through the metaphor of stewardship and responsibility. With Bauckham, I would note that "the human relationship to the rest of creation, as intended by God according to the biblical material ... cannot be easily summed up by a single term such as stewardship."¹⁴ The expository document of Adventist fundamental beliefs blends both metaphors in its reference to Adam and Eve's responsibility: "His was the responsibility to rule graciously over

the world, imaging or reflecting God's beneficent rule over the universe." Additionally, it urges us toward the view that "as human beings, we are to act like God because we are made to be like God. Though we are human, and not divine, we are to reflect our Maker within our dominion in every way possible."¹⁵

Three official statements from the Seventh-day Adventist Church are relevant to our role as stewards of God's creation, listed here chronologically: "Caring for Creation – A Statement on the Environment," "A Statement on the Environment," and "Statement on Stewardship of the Environment."¹⁶ "Caring for Creation – A Statement on the Environment" is the only one that explicitly refers to animals. It refers to wildlife being plundered as a result of human disobedience to God. I deeply appreciate these statements, finding them among the most eloquent ever made by our church. Aside from these statements, there has been no effort to shape an ethic of responsibility aimed toward the environment in general or at animals in particular. Nonetheless, our church has called us to respect creation, use restraint in our relationship toward Earth's resources, reevaluate what we really need, and reaffirm the dignity of created life.¹⁷

Proposal 3: Move medical research beyond the use of live animals. As we use animals in laboratory and medical research, we must do so with full recognition of the previous two proposals: namely, that these animals have intrinsic moral status and that we are morally responsible as God's stewards. Clearly, conducting research on animals has instrumental or extrinsic value to both humankind and non-human animals. We benefit tremendously from this research, as does the animal world itself.

Even in light of this more pragmatic reality, the intrinsic moral worth of animals pushes us away from research that causes them pain and suffering. In cases where Adventist research is

certified by AAALAC, we can be sure that we are maintaining high standards. But high standards may take on a type of status quo that should not be acceptable to us as God's stewards. A more aspirational approach that calls us to higher standards should motivate us. If, indeed, we are called to treat animals as God Himself would treat them, we would do well to find alternatives.

Other models of research must be developed and encouraged that will discontinue the harm these animals are exposed to. The three Rs approach to minimizing pain and suffering (reduce, refine, replace) is consistent with this assertion. When carried to its logical end, the 3Rs move us completely away from the use of animals in educational and research protocols that cause pain and suffering. The *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* (one of the three primary resources used by AAALAC itself) describes replacement as follows:

"Replacement refers to methods that avoid using animals. The term includes absolute replacements (i.e., replacing animals with inanimate systems such as computer programs) as well as relative replacements (i.e., replacing animals such as vertebrates with animals that are lower on the phylogenetic scale)."¹⁸

Consistent with the *Guide*, there are two broad categories of alternatives: *in vitro*, literally "in glass," procedures are slowly replacing many animal testing and experimentation processes. Additionally, *in silico*, or computer modeling programs, are also making some inroads.¹⁹ Two simple illustrations can make the point that seeking alternatives is viable. First, observe the trend over the last 20 years wherein fragrance and skin-care product companies have found alternatives to testing their products on animals.²⁰ Second, how many of us remember when pregnancy testing involved killing a rabbit?²¹ A test once considered

alternative (using a test strip that measures hormonal levels in urine) is now considered standard practice.²²

The point is that while we may presently find it justifiable to cause pain and suffering in laboratory animals, using the best possible practices and oversight methods, we do not have to settle for this in the long term. We can and must do our best to manage this domain of our stewardship so as to move away from procedures that cause pain and suffering in animals. We can and must aspire to a higher level of responsibility to God and the rest of His creation.

Summary

Seventh-day Adventists around the world who may be involved in animal research or the use of animals in education that causes pain and suffering face an ethical issue. There are strict guidelines that must be followed in order to engage in these activities in morally-appropriate ways. Beyond these practical guidelines, we would do well to think clearly about the biblical and theological convictions of Adventists with regard to non-human animals, and our relationships to them. The church has some beliefs and statements that can serve to move us forward into more thoughtful reflection on our role as stewards in God's creation. It is our responsibility now to make the effort to move in that direction.²³

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3. The *Encyclopedia of Ethics* (note 2 above) offers an article titled, not "Animal Rights," but instead "Animals, Treatment of." A salient quote regarding the assertion and development of the idea of animal rights comes from this article: "When Mill writes that all great movements go through three stages: ridicule, discussion, adoption, those who are active in the animal rights movement understandably hope he speaks prophetically of their cause" (p. 73, Torn Regan, "Animals, Treatment of").
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5. This proposal assumes personal responsibility on the part of the researcher.
6. I would include here the routine instruction in Adventist biology curricula that utilizes live animals. In other words, all vivisection presently allowed in our educational system must stop.
7. This is not to say anything about whether or not animals are capable of being moral creatures. It is to say much about human ability and obligation as moral creatures. Part of this obligation moves us to recognize the value, the moral value, of other creations of God.
8. My colleague James Walters, PhD, used this phrase in his article "Moral Status" in the *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*. He notes also that while moral status is not a new concept, its technical use has emerged in part through public debate about the value or status of the human embryo. There is no tie to the animal rights movement or to any particular ideological camp. It is a tool that helps each of us categorize who or what is valuable to us and why. As Walters notes, we may throw pebbles on the beach into the water, "but the people bathing on that same beach are totally different. To wantonly toss one of them into the same water would constitute an immoral, reprehensible act." Using moral status as a way of framing the reasons why is commonplace in ethics. See Jim Walters, "Moral Status," *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*, 3rd ed., ed. Stephen G. Post (New York: Macmillan Reference, 2004), 1855-1864.
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Congenital Christianity

by David Kim

If your religious experience is dry and barren, if you are working hard to keep up an outward Adventist appearance without the power of Adventism, if you are busy for the Lord while feeling empty inside, if you feel as if your path in Christianity and Adventism was predetermined for you by a genealogical heritage, this article is for you: a cure for congenital Christianity.

I am a son of Korean immigrants, an elder brother, a husband, a father, a former professional cellist, and a corporate executive. Yet, as important and defining as each of these is to my identity, the most important and most defining fact in my life is that by the grace of God, I am the survivor of a chronic and deadly disease.

Millions around the world have this disease. It runs in families and is passed from generation to generation. It is a silent killer. There is no known cure for this condition without a miraculous intervention by God Himself. I am a survivor of congenital Christianity.

A diagnosis

Congenital Christianity is a spiritual condition, which in some ways resembles true Christianity, but at the core is superficial – lacking an authentic saving relationship with Christ. Perhaps you have seen this deadly disease firsthand in your church, in your family, or in your own life. Let me share a non-exhaustive list of symptoms, any one of which can be a marker for the condition.

You avoid talking about your faith at school or work, because you don't want to have to explain what you believe, or because you're embarrassed by it.

You've heard that we have distinctive biblical beliefs about death, hell, and the sanctuary, but you're not sure what they are or why they matter.

You hear people talking about the "Spirit of Prophecy," but you're conflicted about it (even though you've never actually read any of the books).

Those beasts on the prophecy seminar flyer look really bizarre to you, and you're clueless as to what it all means.

You think that the mega-church down the street, or that independent congregation on the other side of the town, would be much more fun, but you feel slightly guilty for thinking that.

You go to church most weeks, because you want your kids to have exposure, even though you don't personally feel invested in the faith.

These are just a few of the symptoms, but they should give you an idea of what we are talking about. Does any of this sound familiar? Well, I have good news and bad news.

The bad news is that, first, untreated congenital Christianity leads to eternal death 100 percent of the time. Second, while the disease is passed down, the cure is not. You cannot be saved by your parents' faith, nor that of anyone else. Third, you must affirmatively choose to be cured. It will not get better on its own.

That's the bad news. Would you like the good news? First, the good news is that there is a cure, and I am living proof. I can testify that I have been cured by the love of Jesus and the power of the everlasting gospel, and if God can save a wretch like me, He can surely save anyone. Second, it is not too late. Even if you have been suffering under the lukewarm, putrefying malaise of congenital Christianity for years and even decades, God can still reach down from His throne, touch your heart, and change it from a heart of stone into a heart of flesh. I know He can do this, because He did it for me.

Early symptoms

My story begins three generations ago, in the early 1900s, when my great

grandfather became the second ordained Seventh-day Adventist pastor in Korea. His son, my grandfather, also entered the pastoral ministry and became the first native Korean to serve as president of the Korean Union Conference. His son, my father, did not enter the ministry, but he attended Seventh-day Adventist schools all the way up to entering medical school, where he achieved the highest score in the entire country on the national medical board exams, while keeping the Sabbath in a country that required attending class on Saturdays.

That's where I come in, because I was just four months old when my father and mother came to the United States with two suitcases and a baby, so my father could pursue his medical residency in Boston. So, while I am a 1.5 generation Korean-American immigrant, I am a fourth-generation Seventh-day Adventist Christian. While many blessings come from having this history in the church, this spiritual heritage also comes with a predisposition to congenital Christianity.

My earliest spiritual memory goes back to when I was just four years old. I would come downstairs early on Sunday mornings and watch television while my parents slept. It didn't take me long to notice that every Sunday it seemed as if every channel I turned to was broadcasting a church service, and I was completely perplexed. Even at that young age, I knew that Saturday was the Sabbath.

This continued for some time, until finally one day I decided I would ask my mother what was going on. I have the distinct memory of walking into the kitchen where my mother was doing dishes, and asking her, "Uma, why are all these people going to church on Sunday? Don't they know that Saturday is the Sabbath?"

Now, before I tell you what happened next, I must explain that my mother is a godly woman. She is now a prayer warrior, a Bible worker, and a church planter amongst the Korean immigrant community. I thank the Lord for her

faithfulness, but at that time, she was in a different place spiritually.

After I asked my mother why these people were going to church on Sunday, she replied something to the effect of "I don't know," and that was the end of it. I walked away from that conversation confused, and scratching my head.

One of the primary risk factors for congenital Christianity is confusion. From my earliest childhood experience, I was confused and did not receive clear instruction at home. This is why the Lord told us long ago, "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up" (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).¹

That is Bible instruction for all time! If you leave your children confused, you increase their risk of congenital Christianity. You might think that they are too young to understand or care, but they are paying more attention than you might guess, and you have the opportunity to provide them with the vaccine of a strongly biblical, age-appropriate foundation, or leave them dangerously vulnerable on the shifting sands of confusion.

The condition worsens

The ensuing years of my childhood and adolescence read like a textbook case of progressive congenital Christianity. In sixth grade, I was pulled out of our local Adventist school for two reasons. First was the excessive PDAs exhibited by high school kids at the adjoining academy. No, I don't mean personal digital assistants. Smartphones were not the problem. I mean public displays of affection, and they were at the point where my parents no longer felt comfortable having their fourth and sixth-graders attending that school. The second reason was that the academics were not as challenging as I needed. I was becoming bored in the classroom.

So, from the sixth grade through high

school I attended public schools, which was great academically, but my faith was continually assaulted from all sides. Specifically, the assault came from the curriculum, the extracurricular activities, and peer pressure.

First, the curriculum. It was 100 percent secular and humanistic. From biology to English literature, I was exposed to the breadth of worldviews in which humanism was exalted and God was torn down.

Now, don't get me wrong. In order to witness to the world around us, we need to be able to speak the language and understand the culture. Sustained exposure to these worldviews, however, can be dangerous if we are not well grounded in the reality of God and the truth of His word. By beholding you become changed, and if all you are beholding is Darwin, Kant, Rousseau, and Richard Dawkins, without beholding Moses, Daniel, Paul, John, and Jesus, then you will be changed! At a minimum, you are setting yourself up for confusion, and more likely, you will end up in outright apostasy and even atheism.

So that was the curriculum, but beyond the curriculum were the extracurricular activities. Whether sports, clubs, arts, or academics, it seemed that everything conflicted with the Sabbath. I struggled greatly with these conflicts, because my unconverted heart wanted to accomplish much in the world, and I believed that my success depended on worldly recognition.

In my case, I was gaining success as a cellist I was one of the best in the state of California, and I was considering a career in cello performance. A key part of establishing a track record in music is the competition circuit, but time after time, I had to decline participation due to the Sabbath. It was an excruciating struggle in my teenage mind, and this struggle was compounded by the fact that some fellow Adventists did not see the issue as anything big.

The third force assaulting my faith through my formative years was peer pressure. Beginning in the sixth grade,

through my peers, I was exposed to the range of filth and wickedness that we unfortunately consider a normal part of growing up. Whether on the school bus, sleepovers, field trips, or the cafeteria, or through the popular media and various and sundry other settings, Satan was there to teach me what things are pleasurable, desirable, and required for social standing, emotional fulfillment, physical gratification, and ultimately happiness.

Of course, there are exceptions. But for every person who manages to handle the peer pressure and emerge unscathed, an untold multiple of that number see, hear, touch, taste, and smell images, media, and substances, and have myriad experiences which leave deep mental, emotional, and even physical scars that will haunt them for the rest of their lives.

There may be some of you reading this who know exactly what I am talking about. In fact, Satan may infiltrate your thinking and may even push you to the point where you wish that God did not even exist! Because if He exists and is as holy and perfect as spelled out in the Bible, you would surely be destined for eternal loss.

It was with this mindset that I limped my way through high school. All of this hurt, shame, and conflicted emotion was hidden behind a facade of perfect grades, musical accolades, and admission to world-class schools like Stanford University and the Eastman School of Music.

I was chasing the world and doing extremely well by its standards, but all the while I was ambivalent toward God, resentful toward His church, and spiritually ungrounded – cast adrift in a sea of worldliness and secularism.

The condition becomes full-blown

Against this backdrop, I went off to Eastman, and like any freshman, I was looking for a sense of belonging and affiliation. One of the places I looked for this was at the local chapter of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. Of

course, there wasn't an Adventist group anywhere on campus, but it didn't matter to me, because other than Sabbath keeping, I didn't know the difference.

I will never forget the first InterVarsity Bible study I attended. There were about 10 of us, and it was led by a senior named Drew. He was a French horn player. We went around the group, introducing ourselves: name, where we're from, what we were studying, and any spiritual background.

When it came to my turn, a dialog ensued which went something like this:

Me: Hi, my name is David Kim. I am from San Luis Obispo, California. I am here studying cello performance, and I am Seventh-day Adventist.

Drew: Seventh-day Adventist, eh? Why are you a Seventh-day Adventist?

Me: Well, my family is Adventist and I grew up that way. But beyond that, I think that the Bible is pretty clear on the Sabbath being on Saturday.

Drew: Hmmmm ... well, what about Colossians 2:16?

Me: What's Colossians 2:16?

Drew: Let's look it up and read it together.

Me: O.K. "So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths..."

Drew: Right. So by being so focused on keeping Saturday, you guys are just being legalists. Jesus freed us from the law.

I'll never forget that moment. I felt mortified as I read those words. I had never seen that verse in my life, and I had no clue what to say. You would think that someone who grew up in our church would have understood the difference between ceremonial Sabbaths and the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. But I did not learn about this growing up, and so I felt confused, betrayed, and humiliated.

I never went back to that Bible study. And I stopped going to church. My congenital Christianity had metastasized. While I never gave up the idea of God, I had no idea who He was, what to believe, or which church was the right

one. I was spiritually bewildered and checked out of church completely.

The next 14 years were a blur. I was in hot pursuit of worldly success, and I was succeeding. Over that period of time, I earned bachelor's and master's degrees in cello performance with honors and scholarships from top music schools. I performed all over the world at some of the most prestigious musical venues with world-class conductors and orchestras. I earned an MBA from one of the leading programs and worked at some of the most prestigious companies. I married my beautiful wife and had two precious children. I felt like I had achieved the American dream. My house did not have a white picket fence, but it did have a solar-heated swimming pool.

Over the years, however, the Lord had drawn me back into the church. At church, I met and married my wife when we both lived in Chicago. I was even serving as an elder when we moved out to California. But I was not yet heart-converted. I was still as confused as ever about our message. My theology and lifestyle were still a mess.

Oh yes, "the outside of the cup" was clean, but inside I was "full of extortion and self-indulgence." I was like a "white-washed tomb, which appeared beautiful outwardly," but inside I was "full of dead bones and all uncleanness." On the outside I "appeared righteous to men," but inside I "was full of hypocrisy and lawlessness" (Matthew 23:25-28).

This period of my life was marked by an intense ambivalence toward God, Adventism, and Christianity. As far as I could tell, Seventh-day Adventists were evangelicals who went to church on Saturday. I was sticking to the Sabbath out of a desire to keep the fourth commandment, but I was bringing a legalistic mindset to it.

To top it all off, I had been diagnosed with a degenerative bone condition in both of my hips, and I was suffering through multiple unsuccessful surgeries. For 10 years, I walked with a combination of crutches, canes, and pain. (I don't have these today. Praise the Lord!)

But at the time, as far as I could tell, God was leaving me to suffer through this condition on my own, and I was angry with Him.

So I focused on worldly success, though I called it “providing for my family” because it sounded better. I didn’t have personal devotions. I didn’t study the Bible. We had family worship occasionally, but only if I happened to come home early enough that the kids were still up, which was rare. I was prideful, covetous, and ambitious for worldly things. God and church were something I did for my children – just in case it was all true – but I was angry at God and consumed with the world.

The road to recovery

Yet through all of this, God was trying to reach me. There were times at church when I would hear a song, testimony, or sermon, and my heart would be touched and my eyes would become wet with tears. But I would quickly wipe them away as inconspicuously as possible and hope that nobody noticed what had happened.

In these moments, I knew that the Holy Spirit was trying to reach me, but I refused to yield to His promptings. I was still too proud, too angry, too consumed by the world, and I didn’t know God, much less trust Him. I didn’t understand the Bible and its message. It didn’t make any sense to me. I was congenitally Christian, but my heart was unconverted.

It was in this spiritual context that I was sitting in a church board meeting. It was early 2008, and we were discussing offering our first prophecy seminar in over a decade. The pastor was emphasizing the need for every member to attend to support the meetings.

I remember thinking to myself that going to church five nights a week for five weeks to listen to preaching was crazy. Maybe the weekends, but I was simply too busy at work to go to church on the weekdays. Who had time for that? I would be happy to write a check to support the effort, but there was no

way I was going to attend.

Little did I know that God had other plans for me. Come November, instead of being busy with work, I was told that I should look for a new job. This came as a total shock, but I, like many others, was caught in the undertow of the global financial crisis. The good news was that I had plenty of time to attend the meetings.

I thank God for that opportunity to hear the entire gospel message in a systematic way. As the evangelist unfolded the message step by step, night after night, I saw for the first time the logic, coherence, and reliability of the Bible and our gospel message. For the first time, I could cut through all of the clichés and assumptions tied up with our Christian faith, and I understood that the Bible could be trusted. I began to grasp why an all-powerful and all-loving God would allow suffering and evil to exist for a season. I began to comprehend the “physics” of salvation: why Jesus had to die, and what it has to do with me. I understood how God has shown us through His prophetic word all that we need to know to get us safely through to the Second Coming and beyond, if only we would read it. I saw that all of the do’s and don’ts that are commonly associated with God, His Law, and even things like the health message, are not because God is picky or arbitrary or mean, but rather that He is preparing us for a future reality in which we will live in His direct presence for all eternity, and that this is what we ourselves would choose, if we could see everything as He sees it.

For the first time, God was real to me, because for the first time, He made perfect sense.

I’ll never forget how I felt, sitting there in the hall, looking up at the PowerPoint, and realizing that the 70-week prophecy in Daniel 9 perfectly predicted the beginning of Christ’s ministry in the “15th year of Tiberius Caesar.”

I had two immediate thoughts. My first thought was, “Wow! This is incredible! This is really true!” My second

thought was, “I better do something about it!”

My life has never been the same. The Lord put me on the road to recovery, and I haven’t looked back!

Life restored

That next month was GYC² in San Jose, California, and I took that opportunity to be a local bus guide for the outreach. It was a small step, but a big deal for me, because I had never participated in any evangelism in my entire life. I thought I could handle this since I did not have to get off the bus and knock on an actual door.

I survived that experience intact, so I started to look for other witnessing and training opportunities. I attended a training seminar, AFCOE to Go, where I learned how to give personal Bible studies. I accompanied my church’s Bible worker to follow up the Bible study leads from GYC.

On the job search front, God was faithful. In the middle of the worst job market in a generation, He provided me with not just one, but six excellent opportunities, one of which brought me to the Philadelphia area, where I live today.

As I embarked on a new job in a new place just over four years ago, it is almost as if God gave me the opportunity to start life again with a clean sheet. I purposed in my heart to be faithful to God in all aspects of my life, to bring my authentic faith to everything I do each day.

It has made all the difference. Let me describe for you some of the differences I have seen in my life, not to glorify myself, but to give you tangible examples of what a transformed life can look like. I have a regular devotional life, with a depth and consistency I’ve never had before. In particular, I’m praying more than I ever have. When I suffered from congenital Christianity, I used to struggle to pray more than a few minutes at a time. As my walk with the Lord has deepened, He has built out my time in prayer to be around 30 minutes or more every morning, and I pray without ceas-

ing throughout the day in meetings and encounters with the people in my life.

The Lord is teaching me how to praise Him like David did in the psalms. He is teaching me how to pray for others. He has also given me the boldness to have spiritual conversations with everyone around me. He has taught me how to approach these conversations in a very natural way, to identify interests and plant seeds. I have been having a dozen or more spiritual conversations per week with people in my sphere of influence.

Some of these spiritual conversations have turned into personal Bible studies. Over the last few years, the Lord has given me the opportunity to study with people who have a wide range of spiritual and educational backgrounds, from atheists to agnostics to Buddhists to evangelicals, from PhDs to MBAs to lawyers and others.

The Lord has also changed my family life. I used to rush out in the morning before the kids were up and stumble back in the evening when the kids were asleep. Today, we gather for family prayer every morning, and every evening we have family worship.

God is so merciful and good! I am so thankful that He got hold of my heart while my children were still young. By His grace, my congenital Christianity will stop with me.

I am by no means perfect, but I'm different than I used to be; by the grace of God, I'll be even more like Jesus every day. Day by day, from faith to faith, and glory to glory!

The Lord is even using my musical talents in a completely new way. In my congenital Christianity, music was a way to glorify myself, to feed my ego. And it made me resent the Sabbath. I considered playing special music at church a burden and beneath me, and if I condescended to do so, I would play a secular classical piece to better showcase my skill.

Over the last few years, however, the Lord has been teaching me how to perform for His glory, not my own. The culmination of this process has been my

involvement with an amazing recording project called *The Lamb Wins*. It is an epic musical journey through the book of Revelation. The songs take you chapter-by-chapter and verse-by-verse through the entire book. It is textually rich, theologically powerful, culturally relevant, and eminently listenable.³ *The Lamb Wins* is the most gratifying musical endeavor I have ever been part of, because God has redeemed my musical talents, from glorifying my carnal self to glorifying Him.

Now, I am just a layman who grew up in the church. My story is perhaps not so unusual, but if I might be so bold, I pose to you this question: Are you suffering from congenital Christianity? Is your religious experience dry and barren? Are you keeping up appearances, working hard for the Lord, while feeling empty inside? Are you having an "elder son" experience as described by Jesus in the parable of the prodigal son? Do you feel as if your path in Christianity and Adventism were predetermined for you by a genealogical heritage passed down from your parents or grandparents? Or perhaps you came later to the faith, but have lost your first love?

I have good news for you! You too have the opportunity – in fact, the obligation – to make your own decision for Jesus, to make your own decision for revival. The choice is up to you! The cure is readily available to you. Jesus wants to destroy the congenital Christianity coursing through your veins and replace it with His saving blood.

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REFERENCES

1. Scripture references, unless otherwise stated, are from the New King James Version.
2. Generation of Youth for Christ outreach.
3. If you'd like to learn more about this project, go to www.thelambwins.com.

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PROFILE

Nathalie Walther

Dialogue with a nurse from Switzerland

Interview by Lorena Mayer

Choosing a career can sometimes prove a daunting search. Not so for Nathalie Walther. Her vocation was clear from a very early age, as may happen to other nurses. Her desire to help and make people aware of the great capital they have been given by their Creator has led – and continues to lead – her life choices and activities. Hers is a life lived with a purpose at a time in history when purpose in life can be a rare commodity.

Walther has a strong faith in her Creator God. She seeks to share hope with patients, their families, and colleagues. She also seeks to instill the love of service in her children and other young people in her local Adventist church.

Walther was born in Fribourg, Switzerland, and grew up enjoying the beautiful Swiss countryside. Even though she has a passion for the outdoors, she chose to become a nurse and spend her working hours indoors, setting aside the beauty of her land from her eyes and focusing instead on the suffering and pain within hospitals. She graduated as a registered nurse from the Geneva Nursing School. Later, she obtained a certificate in palliative care. She has worked at the renowned Geneva University Hospital and Fribourg Cantonal Hospital. Currently, she works part-time in a private hospital.



She is married to Nicolas Walther, who has worked since 2009 as managing director of the Clinique La Lignière, a renowned Adventist hospital in Gland, Switzerland. They have two children: Emma, 12, and Arnaud, 13. She is an active member of her local Adventist church, where she devotes herself to Sabbath school activities for the youth and participates in Adventist social and health projects.

■ *What motivated you to become a nurse?*

Ever since I can remember, I always wanted to be a nurse. Three people in my life had a strong influence on my decision to become a nurse: my mother, my grandmother, and a little boy named Philippe. My mother has always had a strong desire for social

welfare; she always wanted to help others. My grandmother as well. She had, near our home, an old people's home, and I would spend long hours playing with people there. It was all too natural for me to look after them, and it was great fun for them to look after me.

■ *And this boy named Philippe?*

When I was one year old, my parents brought Philippe home. He was four years old and had severe mental challenges. He needed help and a family, because his mother was also handicapped and could not look after him. He was a perfect match for my mother's outgoing love. So I grew up with Philippe, always helping and having fun with him. My experiences at home sparked my dream to become a missionary and go to Africa to help little children with big bellies, suffering from malnutrition.

■ *Did your dream come true?*

No, not really. I remained in Switzerland. We looked after Philippe for many years. He needed us in every sense: he had crises of epilepsy, he had to be taught the very basic routines of life, and his social manners were particularly funny. It was a full-time job for the whole family, and we all pitched in to make it feasible.

■ *You taught and gave much to Philippe. Did you learn something from him?*

Absolutely. We learned not to be ashamed of being with those who are different. I remember when we were teenagers, we used to go out to the city with one of my brothers and Philippe. As he didn't behave normally and said all sort of weird things, we had to get used to behaving like adults looking after a difficult child. I confess that this was not always easy, but in the end we did not really care about what people said.

■ *Is he still part of your family?*

In a sense, yes. He lived with my paternal family for about 30 years, until it was not possible for my parents to look after him anymore. He is now in a home for the handicapped, but we are still in touch, all of us: my parents, my brothers and I, and our own families. And whenever he makes life difficult for his caretakers, a phone call to my mother works wonders.

That soothes him, and he becomes "normal" again. Until the next crisis, that is.

■ *Did anyone, later in your life, play a role model for you in the world of healing and health care?*

I don't think so. But I remember a group of nurses I got to know pretty well. I had a health problem when I was 10 years old, and for two years they would come to my place and give me injections. When they left, I would go to the bin and retrieve the needles they used. Then I'd get my teddy bears and would give them injections myself. I just loved playing nurse with them.

■ *Your vocation seems to be larger than the medical world. How do you live it today, now that you are married, have two teenage children, and work as a nurse?*

With the help of my husband, I try to instill in our children love and service to others. I have told them ever since they were little that we are not here to live only for ourselves. We have received much, we need to give much. Actually, I'm passing on to them what my mother taught me. She used to tell me that we had good health, a good family, a house, and many other blessings. Then, if we wanted to be coherent with our Christian faith and with our relationship with God, we had the responsibility to give. For example, since they were little, we have prepared ADRA Christmas gift boxes that travel to orphanages in other countries. I told them that I would

not buy toys to put in the boxes; they had to choose a toy they loved and give it away. They did. And I think they learned to be sensitive to the needs of others. I realized that it could be learned. If you don't feel inclined to help others, you can learn. It does not take doing something big. It takes making yourself available and willing to do what you can.

■ *One day you made yourself available professionally, and started working as a nurse. Where did you start?*

I was extremely happy to finish my studies and finally start working as a nurse. My first position was at Geneva University Hospital. Such was my excitement that whenever I went on holidays, I missed work and longed to get back to the hospital. I have fond memories of those years in Geneva. But then we moved to Fribourg, and I was offered a job at Fribourg Cantonal Hospital, in the unit specializing in ear, nose, and throat treatment. There I was to learn a thing or two about life and death.

■ *What happened?*

I was confronted with patients with cancer and treatments that, in my view at that moment, left them incapable of doing some basic things, like eating or breathing normally. I simply could not understand why so much had to be done for patients who were so weak and sick. I would even get angry at the doctors and other nurses. I thought it would be better to spare patients those "destructive" treatments and let them live the end of their life with more dignity. But then I learned about palliative care and realized that when you're fighting a deadly disease, there's an instinct within you that makes you want to do everything possible to postpone death. You want to try every possible treatment, whatever the cost. I learned that the healthy person and the terminally-sick person have very different priorities. I needed to respect that.

■ *Palliative care training brought a new perspective to your life. Do you remember a case where it particularly helped you in your daily work?*

After surgery, we used to accompany patients back to their rooms and had the chance to spend the morning with them, making sure that all was technically fine but also bringing them personal comfort. I remember one man. He was intubated in the throat and looked at me with deep anguish. He was very scared. I held his hand, smiled at him, and spoke kindly. Suddenly, in a totally involuntary reaction, he coughed and a big mass of mucus came out of the tube and landed on my sleeve. He knew he could not help it, but I could see the guilt in his eyes. He looked at me as if saying, "Look at the mess I've done! I'm so sorry." How was I to react? It was not a pleasant sight all right, but I managed to control myself. I didn't clean up the mess as an immediate reaction. I just smiled and stayed there. I could feel he was relieved.

■ *What about the families of terminal patients?*

When one member of the family is terminally sick, the dynamic of the whole family changes. I have countless opportunities to talk with family members. It is rather difficult for me to remember a particular conversation. But, again, palliative care training helped me see things from their perspective and be more helpful to them.

■ *Working with people with cancer and seeing death on a daily basis can be extremely taxing on the medical staff around them. How did you cope?*

Indeed. If you don't have some sort of support, you simply can't make it. For me, my husband's support and encouragement has been key. He listened to my stories of the day, and he looked after the kids as much as he could. He had his own full-time job as well, but never did I have the impres-



sion that I bothered him. My children were also great in this sense and would do all sorts of little things to make me feel loved and supported. Some colleagues I had didn't have any support at home or perhaps lived alone. Either they did not last long in oncology or palliative care units, or they protected themselves to the point of just going through the motions and not giving anything of themselves.

■ *How has your faith in God helped you cope?*

Without God, life in any dimension can be empty. Many prayers go up every day as I treat patients. I remember once I was with a 40-year-old man with a malignant tumor. We knew he was quickly going to die, but nobody dared talk with him about it. One day, he looked at me in the

eyes and squarely asked, "I'm going to die, right?" I was taken aback. What could I say that would make sense? So I prayed, "God, give me the right words, please!" Somehow I knew I had to send the question back to him. "What do you think?" He gave himself the reply, "Yes, I'm going to die." This led to a very deep conversation with him about life, death, and hope.

■ *You talked with patients, their families, and surely also with your colleagues to help them cope.*

On a daily basis, I see colleagues who need to be cheered up. When I was working at Geneva University Hospital, there was this young, sportive nurse who looked after a very young patient, 17 years old, with a tumor in the knee. She saw herself in this young man and couldn't stand the

emotional roller coaster. So we would talk and try to find ways to overcome her difficulty. In the nursing ministry, sharing and supporting each other as caregivers is a great source of mutual strength and help.

■ *Currently, you are working in a private clinic, part time. Do you miss the possibility of working as a full-time nurse?*

Sometimes I miss it. But it is important for me to focus on our needs as a family. I find it a real privilege to be able to work part time, not far from home, and keep pace with my profession, and at the same time be available for my family. I cherish the possibility to cook healthy meals for them, do things together, and be there for my children, who still need me.

■ *Are you involved in other health-related activities, now that you have more time?*

I have a passion for health promotion. I've had great opportunities to contribute to health promotion activities organized by the Adventist church. In 2013, I participated in a health expo at the United Nations office in Geneva. Around 600 people working at the Palais des Nations came over and participated in physical and psychological tests. At first, they looked at us with some skepticism, but when they were done with the tests and discussions, they would go and tell their colleagues to come. It was a treat for me to be able to make them perhaps more aware of what they could do to improve their health.

■ *How does a health expo concretely impact participants?*

Something that people find very useful and interesting is that, at the end of the tests, they are given their biological age. It can be very different from their real age, depending on their sleeping, eating, and exercise habits. Lack of good habits will result in a greater biological age and vice

versa. This insight makes them aware of certain changes they need to make. In a way, a health expo serves as a driver of change. It compels people to take their health more seriously to ensure a better quality of life.

■ *Would you repeat the experience?*

I am currently helping out in the organization of another health expo, this time at the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, also in Geneva. I trust this will also be a great experience. We have also done other health expos in the École Hôtelière in Lausanne and in the city of Gland. Everywhere, people get very excited in having us back again. We have received some other invitations and will definitely have more opportunities.

■ *You are very active in your local church. What are your preferred activities?*

We are members of the Fribourg Adventist Church, a small congregation but teeming with life and projects. I am a Sabbath school teacher for young people. I trust God will use me as a positive influence for them, and bring them closer to God's Word and His mission. And, of course, whenever there are social projects, particularly with ADRA, and health projects, I am there. Church life is always very exciting for us!

■ *What would be your message to the readers of Dialogue, particularly those who are studying to become nurses?*

I always say that nursing is the most wonderful profession in the world. You have the opportunity to be close to people in their vulnerability, when they want to say or share something. You end up receiving more than you give. This fills me with purpose and the desire to go to work every day. What is fascinating about being a nurse is that there are many types of work possible, according to one's interests, which can match very dif-

ferent personalities. If you don't like technical work, you can do relational work. You can be a circulating nurse or a scrub nurse. You can do social service in the streets. There's room for many types of people. This is a very fulfilling profession. And, needless to say, it is also a perfect match for an Adventist.

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BOOKS



**Divinas maravillas:
Evidencias de diseño
y planificación [Divine
Wonders: Evidence of design
and planning]**

by Gerald E. Vyhmeister (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Asociación Casa Editora Sudamericana, 2012; 224 pages; paperback).

Reviewed by Silvia Schimpf-Torreblanca

Gerald Vyhmeister has a PhD in biology and an EdD degree. He has spent his life teaching science at Seventh-day Adventist schools in Chile, Peru, Jamaica, and Rwanda. In this book, he deftly combines his knowledge of nature and his professor's teaching ability to offer a large review of essential topics in natural sciences from a standpoint which is clearly on the side of Bible teachings.

Divine Wonders introduces us to a common thread throughout the text: namely, a description of the various wonders of God's creative power. Any pantheistic association is readily dismissed, since those wonders are not divine in themselves, but, as the title proclaims, evidence of design and planning. Thus, each chapter explicitly introduces us to God as the Master Designer.

The wonders discussed have been grouped into five major sections: wonders in origins, geological wonders, invisible wonders in action, biological wonders, and wonders in the human body. The book presents a fast-paced tour through various areas where we can clearly and definitely see the works of a wise Creator.

In the first section, "Wonders in Origins," after introducing the quandary of evolution vs. creation and the limits of science, the author discusses the origin of life, the wonders of the cell and the genome, the origin of human beings, and the debates about how the current variety of organisms came to be. The second topical grouping also presents issues related to origins, but this time from a geological standpoint. Vyhmeister tackles topics such as the age of the earth, the Flood, fossil remains, glaciers, deserts, volcanoes, and earthquakes.

The third section, "Invisible Wonders in Action," discusses a combination of issues: the biblical origin of the week; topics related to physics and chemistry, such as energy, surface tension and buoyancy; and other subjects of interest, such as hunting methods in animals and the process of aging. In the latter two – feeding through hunting and human senescence – we should ask the author whether

these are truly wonders designed by the Creator or two of the consequences of sin.

Even though the first and the last sections are related to biology, it is the fourth section that the author has specifically titled "Biological Wonders." In it, he explains biological processes such as pollination, instincts, regeneration, defenses of living beings in a hostile environment, biological clocks, and bird flight.

The author closes by describing the wonders of the human body, such as the organs related to the senses and the functioning of the digestive, excretory, skeletal, circulatory, nervous, respiratory, muscular, and reproductive systems.

Besides being a book geared to the general public, which is actually easy for both youth and adults to understand, it can also be used as a support textbook for science classes, especially at the high-school level. In keeping with its original intent, and perhaps to prevent the book from appearing to be just an academic manual, the author has not included footnotes to support his claims, although a useful bibliography provides direction for further assistance and reading.

We must stress, however, that Vyhmeister contributes much needed material for times such as these, when evolution appears – either in explicit or implicit ways – in practically every single scientific book. Thus, this work is a meaningful contribution toward understanding the marvels of life around us from a creationist perspective. As a scientist with a biblical and Christian worldview, the author has made a valuable contribution to the integration of faith and learning, and to our understanding of the wonders around us without having to question our faith in the God of creation.

This book is also a thing of beauty to hold in one's hand. It is printed on elegant, coated paper, with exquisite color pictures and drawings. Students, teachers, parents, and pastors will find beauty, order, and understanding within its covers, while once again appreciating the wonder of it all: God the Creator.

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Lost and found

by John Wesley Taylor V and Miriam Louise Taylor

When I wrapped my arms around my poor little sheep, it felt like my heart would burst – from anguish because of the pain that she was suffering, and from joy because the search had not been in vain.

“See how He associates with publicans and sinners, vile creatures. Such scum of the earth!”

The rabbis taught that a sinner must repent before God would be inclined to love him, or even pay him attention. And the Pharisees boasted, “There is great celebration in heaven when those who provoke God perish from the earth!”

So Jesus told them a story about grace and pardon, a parable illustrating the desire of the Father that no one should perish, a chronicle of God’s love for those who know that they are lost but who don’t know the way home.

The loss

I remember that day toward the end of summer. The grazing lands on the plains had become parched, and there was little water to be found. That is why our shepherd had brought us to higher ground, camping with us in one of the highland meadows.

It actually began like any other summer day, serene and bright. I felt secure and happy in the flock. I truly did not lack any good thing. That afternoon, though ... I don’t know what got into me, but I began to feel quite independent and self-sufficient, capable of managing my own affairs. Everything around me was so intriguing! It seemed tedious to forever follow where the shepherd led, rather than to explore and experience the captivating world around me.

It’s true, at first I did not stray very far. Only until something would frighten me, and then I would quickly return.

After a time, however, I became bolder. After all, nothing drastic had happened. Perhaps I would be able to take care of myself. Maybe life would be more thrilling if I did my own thing, if I took charge more often! Perhaps there were even better pastures behind that bluff ...

So, quietly, I turned my back on the

shepherd and made my escape. I don’t think that any of the other sheep even realized that I was missing – at least, none of them gave a cry of alarm.

At first, everything seemed wonderful. The grass had never been so tasty. The flowers had never seemed so vivid. I felt daring, free, and very clever.

I began to climb one of the mountains that I had been dreaming of exploring. Imagine standing on that pinnacle high above the rest of the sheep! How they would envy me!

It was there on that mountainside that my problems began. No ... in reality it was there that I began to realize that I was in trouble. My problems had begun when I abandoned my shepherd. Actually, it was before that, when I had convinced myself that I could manage things on my own. But it was there on that mountainside, where the shepherd had never taken us, that I began to realize that the matter was serious.

There was little pasturage on the slope; the mountain was covered in a thorny brush. I began to feel quite empty inside. Hunger growled in my stomach. Suddenly, I saw it: a clump of grass, right there in a thicket. I had never felt such an overwhelming desire for something. I had to have it. With effort, I forced myself into and beneath the brush to reach it.

The first mouthfuls were delicious! It seemed to be the best grass that I had ever eaten. But as I was finishing off the morsel, I began to sense a bitter, revolting taste. I regretted having tried it and decided that I had better get out. But when I tried to back out, I discovered that I was in an even greater problem. The bush was a mountain bramble, and it held me prisoner.

The more I jerked and struggled to escape, the more the thorns snagged my wool and buried themselves in my skin. Finally, panic set in and with a great surge of determination, I managed to jerk free. Several bunches of wool were left behind, however, and I retained a number of the thorns that had penetrated too deeply. I soon noticed a bright red color staining my wool in several places. My lovely wool coat! What a fool I had been!

I think it was then that I had the first inkling that I really should try to return and find my shepherd, but it only lasted a moment. The next minute I caught sight of that mountain again, and the summit seemed so much closer now! I had to see the view from the top. What stories I would have!

So I continued climbing. At those heights, there was now even less vegetation, and I had not found water for several hours. My throat was burning, my tongue felt like sandpaper, and my stomach was hurting cruelly, probably from that clump of bitter grass that I had swallowed.

What began to worry me most, however, was that the sun was beginning to set and a cold, penetrating

wind had started to blow. As it got dark, I began to feel quite alone and vulnerable. All my visions of grandeur vanished into the thin air.

Suddenly I heard the scream of a wild beast on the mountain, a terrifying sound like I had never heard before. A chill raced through my body. I was frozen to the spot! I could scarcely breathe.

The scream again sliced through the night, but this time it seemed even closer. I panicked and started running, my legs trembling uncontrollably. I was desperate; I had to find the shepherd!

I don't know which direction I ran; I couldn't see anything, and, truthfully, I didn't have the slightest idea which way to run.

Frantically, I bolted into the darkness, and suddenly my feet no longer touched the ground. I found myself falling, crashing into rocks and roots, slipping, sliding, tumbling, until I finally came to rest at the bottom of a small canyon.

What agony! All of my bones and joints ached, and my head felt as if it had split open. I'm not sure, but I think that I must have fainted for a few moments.

When I regained consciousness, I realized that I was lying in the mud on the canyon floor. It was a slimy, smelly ooze – just horrible. I tried to get up, but a sharp pain shot up my left leg. It was twisted, doubled back in a strange way. How it throbbed!

Peering into the darkness, I realized that even if I was fine, it was literally impossible to climb out and escape from the hollow where I had fallen. The canyon walls were steep and crumbling, and within the canyon, the rocks were large and difficult to clamber over.

I had never felt so bad – so depressed, so alone. If only I could be safely in the sheepfold again. If only I could again be a part of the flock. Why had I been so foolish... .

The search

I love my sheep. I love them because they are mine. I know each one by name.

I remember that afternoon when I discovered that one of my sheep was missing. How did I know? I counted them. While it is true that a shepherd counts his flock each evening as they enter the sheepfold, even during the day I frequently number my sheep. If a storm or wild beast has surprised us, it is common for some sheep to bolt, gripped with panic at the unexpected event.

That afternoon, even though everything had been quite peaceful, I felt as though something was wrong, as if one of the sheep might be missing. Quickly I checked over the flock, and indeed, it seemed that one sheep was not there. After counting them one more time, I was certain. One of my sheep had wandered away. One was lost.

I was worried and anxious. You must understand that sheep are the most helpless and defenseless of all creatures. Sheep do not possess any natural means of protection against the attacks of an enemy.

You should also know that a sheep, once lost, is not able to find its own way back to the fold. It wanders from mountain to ravine, incapable of finding the flock again. If it is not rescued, it will wander until it perishes, entangled, perhaps, in briars, mired in a pit, or trapped in a crevice, in a fault. Yes, a sheep for which no one searches, never returns.

So I took my flock to the sheepfold where they would be safe. On the horizon, dark clouds were gathering. It looked as if a storm might hit within a few hours. Furthermore, it was already late in the day. Night was falling rapidly.

Quickly, I left a message for my friends and neighbors that I had gone out to search for a lost sheep. I didn't take time to eat or rest. How could I sit down and eat, leaving my poor

sheep to fall victim to some wild beast? How could I stretch out and rest, while my sheep stumbled on frantically in the darkness?

I closed the gate to the sheepfold and headed out in search of my poor lost sheep. I wasn't sure, but I imagined that perhaps the sheep had started to climb one of the mountains that surrounded us. That often happens when a sheep is lost.

So I crossed the high plain, now windswept and desolate, and began to climb the steep hillside, searching through the tangled brush. I scrambled up through gullies, clambered over rocky outcroppings, peered over precipices, pulling myself over boulders and ledges. At nearly every step, I called my sheep by name, but there was no answer.

Night had fallen with a dense darkness. The storm that I had seen on the horizon began to lash the region. Lightning flashed from angry clouds and streaked across the sky. Thunder rolled through the canyons. A chilling, hostile wind swept down from the mountain peaks and whipped across the barren landscape. The fury of a freezing rain pelted down.

As the storm became more intense, I felt ever greater anxiety and dread. A sheep exposed to the elements under such conditions can perish in a very short time. I had to give everything that I had to find my sheep ... before it was too late.

So intense was my resolve that I hardly realized that I was exhausted, starving, and chilled to the bone. I hardly felt the briars that snagged my ankles, the rough stones that cut my hands. I hardly noticed that I was shivering violently as a result of the downpour and from fording the mountain streams.

Regardless of the pain, I had to find my lost sheep.

The find

When the storm descended, I thought that it was the beginning

of the end. The floor of the canyon where I lay began to pool. The water was frigid, and it soon soaked through my wool. The cold permeated my whole body. I began to shake uncontrollably.

The storm became fierce. The lightning was terrifying. The thunderclaps left me paralyzed with fear. Each time one fell nearby, I shuddered in panic.

Without warning, a bolt of lightning exploded on a rock at the very edge of the canyon. I recoiled in terror and wished that I would die. Never before had I felt so terrified.

Almost as if it were a dream, I began to think about my shepherd: Where would he be now? What would he be doing? Would he be trying to calm some of the lambs, taking them in his arms, as he often did when a storm would break?

Could it be that he had noticed that I was missing? What would he think of me? Maybe he would sigh, "Well, let her go, if she wants to. The 99 are good enough for me." The truth was, I was not a ram nor a prized lamb – only a generic sheep, common and ordinary.

Maybe he had thought of looking for me. But would he think, "Well, it's just too much trouble. When she comes back, then I will open the gate. I'm surely not going out to look for her on a night like this."

If only it hadn't been so late in the day when I wandered away, maybe he would have at least tried to find me. If only I hadn't strayed so far away from the fold ... if only I hadn't fallen into this desolate canyon ... if only

It seemed almost impossible now that I would find my poor lost sheep. I had been searching for her almost the entire night. What made a lump in my throat, though, was to think that if I finally found her, it might already be too late.

But I must not lose hope; I had to find her. I called again and again, but my words seemed to be lost in the wind and the darkness.

By now, I had resigned myself to die; it wouldn't be long now. Already I had lost almost all feeling in my body, and almost all desire to live.

I was about to slip into unconsciousness when I heard it It was as if my shepherd was calling me. What a tender dream, but no ... there ... I heard it again. It really was the voice of my shepherd! He was calling me. That was my name!

I don't know where I found the strength, but I let out a bleat. It was very weak, though, and was swept quickly into the darkness.

At once, I began to feel mortified. What if my shepherd were to find me in this miserable condition, in this dreadful state – fallen into this quagmire, disobedient, guilty, stained. Would he stand there, looking at me with condemnation and reproach? Would he scold me and harshly tell me that I shouldn't have become lost? I already knew that. Would he glare at me, uttering sharp words of reproof and criticism? Well, he would have all the right to do so, but I didn't think that I could endure it. That would be more painful than all that I had been through already.

So I lowered my head and kept silent. It would be best if he never found me, if he never saw me

When I heard that faint and terrified cry, my heart leaped for joy! My little sheep was still alive. My sheep needed me. My relief, however, was short lived. The weakness of the cry warned me that there was not much time left. In fact, I had not heard any further cries.

Frantically, I ran in the direction from which the sound had come. Stumbling through the darkness, I arrived at the edge of a rocky canyon. Could it be that she was somewhere down there?

Almost without thinking, I started to slide toward the floor of the canyon.

Lessons from the loss

A lost sheep cannot save itself. Lost sheep will perish unless someone goes after them, to search for them and bring them back to the fold. One lost sheep was enough to start Jesus on the search.

Lessons from the search:

The trouble and anxiety caused by a sheep's wandering do not depreciate the value of that sheep.

The search for a lost sheep must be done personally, with sacrifice.

The effectiveness of salvation does not consist in our seeking after God, but in His search for us.

Lessons from the find:

The search is not over until the sheep is found and brought back to the fold.

Some people have the idea that when a child of God falls, God becomes disgusted, fed up, and furious. This is simply not so.

God does not demand, "Get your act together first." He simply asks us to let Him draw near.

Lessons from the celebration:

God rejoices in doing us good. The joy of salvation must be shared. We cannot be happy without Jesus, and He, in His great love, cannot be satisfied without us.

A small avalanche of stones on the other side of the canyon signaled that something, someone, was rapidly descending the embankment. I don't know how I knew it, but I just felt that it had to be my shepherd.

For a moment, I felt the impulse to flee, to try and escape from his presence, but then I paused. It was fleeing from my shepherd that had brought me to this crisis. If he had come this far to look for me, maybe he still loved me.

I gave one more little cry, and instantly he was there. He stooped down, falling on his knees by my side. He scooped me into his arms, burying his face in my wool.

He didn't reproach me. He didn't condemn me. He didn't even speak of all of the anxiety and pain that I had caused him. He only took me tenderly in his arms and pressed me close to his heart, the warmth of his own life reviving me.

The celebration

When I wrapped my arms around my poor little sheep, it felt like my heart would burst – from anguish because of the pain that she was suffering, and from joy because the search had not been in vain.

Carefully, we made our way out of the canyon and headed for home. It was just before dawn. Soon the sun would break over the horizon.

I was so filled with emotion, so thankful that I did not have to return alone, that my joy found expression in shouts of thanksgiving. I began to sing out a song that lasted all the way home, "Rejoice! Rejoice! For I have found my sheep that was lost!"

As we neared home, I called out to my friends and neighbors, "Come!

Rejoice with me and celebrate! My sheep was almost dead, but now is alive again; she was lost, but now she is found!"

My heart was also bursting, from anguish because of the pain and anxiety that I had caused him, but also from joy for having the shepherd that I have. As the neighbors came out of their cabins and congratulated my shepherd, I looked down at his hands, wounded and bleeding, torn and scarred, and my heart filled with a love impossible to describe. A love that no longer could be contained within me.

How I wish that you had a shepherd like mine.

Note: This dialogue, set in the context of shepherding in biblical times, is based on Christ's parable of the lost sheep, as recorded in Matthew 18:12-13 and in Luke 15:1-7. As Christ's parable is, in reality, about people who are lost and found, this story is told in the first person from the perspective of the individuals involved in the story, using Christ's metaphor of the sheep and the Shepherd – Editors.

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FIRST PERSON

Be still and know

by Joy Devaraj

How the words of Psalm 46:9 rescued one out of death to a new resurrection, out of shame and abuse to a life of fulfillment, out of nothingness into a gem of God's own glory – A true story.

Sundari looked down the bridge into the gushing waters of Thamiravaruni, the river that feeds the southern part of Tamil Nadu, India. She was not admiring the fish that danced up, down, and round about in the waters below, nor was she watching the fishermen in small boats eagerly trying to make their living for the day. With a two-year-old daughter on her waist, and a four-year-old son in the tight grasp of one hand, she could only think of another woman of long ago, who with sorrow and grief cried out, “The Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me” (Ruth 1:20).*

Sundari thought her bitterness had filled her cup and was overflowing. Married at 18, mother of two beautiful children, she was now widowed at 23 – left to experience the curse of poverty and stare at the wilderness of time ahead. Even before her tears could dry, she became the object of derision, abuse, scorn. Not from strangers – that one can brush away – but from family, both near and extended. Her husband had left her a large house and property, but

those were taken over by the greed of those who knew him longer than she did. “Knowing longer” seemed more important than the Edenic tie that bound the hearts of two in wedlock. With one heart gone, the other heart had claim for a place to live. At least that was the definition of family in the biblical sense. But to all her relatives, near and far, she became a non-person, a castaway object of just flesh and blood.

Thus Sundari became the object of abuse. She had no one to stand up for her, to protect her from being battered, both verbally and physically. Her house and land and money were usurped. Her dignity was defiled. Her hopes were crushed. The few personal items she had were bundled up and thrown out along with her. Being driven out of a beautiful house into a thatched hut was the last straw that broke her heart. With nowhere to go, no one to lean upon, two babies to care for, she decided to take a walk to the bridge over the river.

Sundari looked below. For the last time, she thought. She pondered for

a moment, and whispered to herself, “To jump is better than to live in abuse.” Suddenly, that resolve turned into a question, even as she tightly clasped the two little gifts love had bestowed upon her: “To jump or not to jump?” And then, as if from nowhere, memory flooded her soul and confronted her with a promise she had learnt as a child and used to face every challenge – whatever the kind – that she had met in her 23 years of life. The promise was as old as humanity, as fresh as the Spirit that gave it in the first place: “Be still, and know that I am God” (Ps. 46:10).

Come wind, come weather. Come rain, come shine. Come sorrow, come joy. Come abuse, come hopelessness. Come hatred from those closest to you, come a sliver of hope that comes and disappears as the dew in the morning. Sundari reflected on the burden that she carried, and behold God seemed to tap on her shoulders and whisper into her soul, “Be still, know, I am your God.”

Sundari gripped her children ever so closely to her, turned her back on

the river, and walked firmly back to the village. Home or no home, love or hatred, whatever was or whatever was not, she knew one thing for sure: God is, and with that her faith grasped the promise: “All things are possible for one who believes” (Mark 9:23, ESV).

She learnt to be still, to be at peace with herself. She learnt what it means to have faith in God. She resolved to live by that faith, and to live for her children. From that moment on, she worked hard at any job that came her way – on the paddy fields, at home, in the banana plantations. She worked six days a week, rested on the Sabbath, and kept her hope alive by the four little bright eyes of her children. In those eyes she saw the fulfillment of her dreams, the smile of her husband, and above all God’s plan for them. If work was her way, trust in God was her light, and the hope for her kids was the ever-burning motive.

Sundari is now 68 years old. Her children and grandchildren call her blessed. They too share her foundation for a life of fulfillment: “Be still and know that I am God.”

I know this story is true. I am Sundari’s daughter. She endured every sorrow, bore every heartache, turned away from the fatal leap into the cold waters of the river, to give my brother and me an opportunity to know life, to have an Adventist education – and more than that, to experience for ourselves the promise that sustained her all through her torturous life. As a result, her favorite verse became the foundation of my faith.

What have I learnt?

First, be still. Psalm 46 speaks of fearsome earthquakes, roaring seas, crumbling mountains, raging kingdoms, fear-torn human beings. In and through it all, through every crack and instability that characterizes the flow of humanity, there is an immovable and ever-abiding assurance: “God is our refuge and strength” (Ps. 46:1). For the homeless, He is the home. For

the frightened and the abused, He is the refuge. For the weak and the persecuted, He is the strength. For those who stand on a bridge over rushing waters, He offers the reach of His hand and the embrace of His love and watch care.

So, be still. That does not mean “be inactive.” It means, stop striving, stop struggling by yourself, for yourself, or in yourself. One of the great temptations of life is the dynamic of “I” – I can do it; I can solve any problem; I am my own solution. While self-confidence is a virtue one should strive for, that in itself is not sufficient to go through the tumults and torrents we face in life. At the end of it all, there stands a bridge over perilous waters. Before we come to that moment of peril, it is good to know and affirm that with God every impossibility becomes a possibility. So let go, let God. For He “is a very present help in trouble” (vs. 2), and therefore we need not fear.

“Be still” also reminds us of the great storm that rolled over the Sea of Galilee, threatening to topple the boat the disciples were traveling in, while Jesus slept, exhausted and tired after a day-long ministry of teaching and healing. The disciples, in panic, woke Jesus and wondered whether He cared for the tragedy at hand. The response of Jesus was to rebuke the wind and the waves, and command, “Peace, be still!” (Mark 4:39). The Creator’s command “Be still” simply means “Hush.”

The answer to human panic is still hush. And listen. How often do we ask God for everything, but we don’t stop to listen or be still? The act of being still becomes more of a challenge in our hectic world. The world wants us to be busy. God asks us to be still so that we can hear the still small voice and know that beyond the storms of life, there is the rest and peace that only God can give.

Along with panic and fear, anxious thoughts plague us. Someone

has said that each day some 50,000 thoughts cross the average mind. Those thoughts aren’t always pretty. You know the ones: “I can’t believe I messed up, I can’t do it, it’s too hard, I’m a failure, I’m a fraud, I’m too old, I’m too young, he is no good.” We must learn to tell our fearful and anxious thoughts to hush. One sure way to join the psalmist in quiet meditation and say to ourselves, “Be still ... and know that God is.”

Second, know. The psalmist’s answer to human anxiety, worry, and wondering why bad things happen to good people is to know that God is, and that He will bring about the best out of our suffering. That’s what my mother experienced. She faced the sudden death of her husband, encountered abuse and suffering from those who should have been the source of her strength, and faced a dark and uncertain future. While she knew not her future, she knew Him who held her in the palms of His everlasting hands.

The knowledge of God that the psalmist talks about is not a theoretical knowledge. Knowledge of God is not history, not philosophy, not geography, not even theology. It is personal, experiential, and practical. Like Job, we need to cry out, “I know that my Redeemer lives” (Job 19:25), and be in tune with God’s will and way. Only then we can say God is in our midst and we “shall not be moved” (Ps. 46:5).

Third, “be still and know that I am God.” The ultimate refuge and defense for a hurting Christian is to experience the “One who says I am God.” He is a personal God. He knows you by name. He knows where you live. He wants to live within you (Rev. 3:20). He wants to be the commanding presence and power in your life. Only then can He change the course of your life – from the edge of destruction to the pinnacle of God’s mountain of joy.

Sundari means beautiful. That beauty was threatened at one time – debased, crushed, and nearly forgotten in the rushing waters of a swollen river. But the words of Psalm 46:9 rescued Sundari out of death to a new resurrection, out of shame and abuse to a life of fulfillment, out of nothingness into a gem of God’s own glory – along with her children. What God has wrought!

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* Except as otherwise stated, all Scripture passages are from the New King James Version.

How should Christians ...

From page 12

- Environment,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 116 (1997) 1:3-17.
12. Richard Bauckham, *The Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2010), 37.
 13. Ibid. Preface.
 14. Ibid. 33, 34.
 15. *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 99.
 16. “Caring for Creation – A Statement on the Environment,” available at <http://adventist.org/beliefs/statements/main-stat5.html>; “Statement on the Environment,” available at <http://adventist.org/beliefs/statements/main-stat9.html>; “Statement on Stewardship of the Environment,” available at <http://adventist.org/beliefs/statements/main-stat10.html>.
 17. These quotes appear in both “Statement on the Environment,” available at <http://adventist.org/beliefs/statements/main-stat9.html> and “Statement on Stewardship of the Environment,” available at <http://adventist.org/beliefs/statements/main-stat10.html>.
 18. *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* (NRC 2011), 5 (PDF, 32). Available at http://www.aaalac.org/resources/Guide_2011.pdf.
 19. For instance, there is a journal entirely devoted to molecular biology via computer: *ISB*
- In Silico Biology: An International Journal on Computational Molecular Biology*, <http://www.bioinfo.de/isb>.
20. For instance, in Europe, the European Union’s Office of Consumer Affairs has issued a directive that prohibits cosmetics companies from testing their products on animals see <http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/sectors/cosmetics/documents/directive/index-en.htm>). Available at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:1976L0768:20100301:en:PDF>.
 21. While common reference to this test often refers to the rabbit dying as a result of these pregnancy tests, this was only true in the early versions of the test in the 1920s. In keeping with the three Rs approach, later refinement of the test simply allowed for the examination of the rabbit’s ovaries to see whether or not the woman’s urine had a measurable effect on them. See <http://diiopes.com/pregnant-rabbit.asp>.
 22. See Carl Howard, “Yes, Dad, There are Alternatives,” *AV Magazine*, a publication of the American Anti-Vivisection Society, Spring, 2005. Available at <http://caat.jhsph.edu/publications/Articles/aavs.html>.
 23. I offer my appreciation to David Wolf, DVM, PhD, the chief veterinarian at Loma Linda University. He was particularly helpful in my effort to understand animal research. Additionally, I thank Stacey Butler, School of Medicine class of 2014, for offering helpful criticism of an early version of the essay.

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Contact: informes@isam.edu.ar

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Location: Lib. San Martín, Entre Ríos

Contact: informes@uap.edu.ar

www.uap.edu.ar

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www.bogenhofen.at

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Location: Gowalbathan, Gazipur

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Pacific Adventist University

Location: Koiari Park, Port Moresby

Contact: admin@pau.ac.pg

www.pau.ac.pg

Sonoma Adventist College

Location: Kokopo, New Britain Island

Contact: Isako.Esekia@pau.ac.org

PARAGUAY

Universidad Adventista del

Paraguay

Location: Asunción

Contact: informes@unapy.edu.py

www.unapy.edu.py

PERU

Universidad Peruana Unión

Location: Campus Ñaña, Lima

Contact: www.upeu.edu.pe

Location: Campus Juliaca

Contact: www.upeu.edu.pe

Location: Campus Tarapoto

Contact: www.upeu.edu.pe

PHILIPPINES

Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies

Location: Silang, Cavite

Contact: www.aiias.edu

Adventist University of the Philippines

Location: Silang, Cavite

Contact: admissions@aup.edu.ph

www.aup.edu.ph

Central Philippine Adventist College

Location: Murcia, Negros Occidental

Contact: www.cpac.edu.ph

Manila Adventist College

Location: Pasay City, Manila

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Mindanao Sanitarium and Hospital College

Location: Iligan City, Mindanao

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Mountain View College

Location: Valencia City, Mindanao

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www.mvc.edu.ph

Naga View Adventist College

Location: Naga City, Bicol

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Northern Luzon Adventist College

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A look at the 60th General Conference Session

by Wilona Karimabadi

Adventists count attending a General Conference Session as one of the highlights of their lives. Indeed, the opportunity to “Adventize” a prominent city, filling a major sports stadium to the rafters with fellow believers from all over the world, fellowshiping and worshipping together, is a special experience. During Sabbath, when thousands of visitors flood the venue, the event turns into a giant mega-church/camp meeting/reunion of sorts.

60 sessions in

The upcoming gathering will mark the 60th General Conference Session, during which delegates from all corners of the world will assemble to study, pray, worship, and review the onward progress of the church during the previous five years and plan for the challenging times ahead.

The upcoming session – to be held July 2 to 11, 2015, in San Antonio, Texas – will certainly address some hot-button topics. “Many important issues will be in focus at the session,” says General Conference secretary G.T. Ng. “Matters pertaining to the church manual and fundamental beliefs will be discussed. Of interest will be the decisions relating to women’s ordination.”

As with all sessions, nominating committee reports will be a major agenda item, as world church leaders will either continue on in their posts

or move on to other callings. While delegates to the meetings will take an active part in decision-making, thousands of church members and visitors will witness the process.

“Any church member, worker or lay person, may attend GC Session,” adds Ng. “The business meetings of the church are conducted openly and can be seen and heard by anyone. Transparency is the order of the day.”

If you are curious about the inner workings of major church business, this event presents an opportunity to come and see for yourself.

Big Sabbaths in a big house

If you’ve ever attended a large sports event in a major stadium, you’ve likely noticed that there are a lot of people in the same place at the same time. But imagine that crowd as family members – folks with whom you share something deeply in common. Sabbaths in San Antonio will be a big occasion but not just for the main service portion of the day. There will also be Friday night vespers programs on a much bigger scale than what you might be used to.

About that host city

So what else is there to do? Every GC Session includes a vast exhibition hall in the convention center, featuring booths from many Adventist entities. And yes, you will be filling up bags with lots of Adventist souvenirs.

You’ll find many ministries offering resources and information sessions throughout the exhibition hall as well.

This session also offers something significant for the millennial set: Impact San Antonio (iSA). This is the latest installment in a series that has run concurrently with previous GC Sessions. According to its website, “Impact San Antonio is a window of opportunity for the global Seventh-day Adventist young adult community (18+) to bring hope to the city. Organized in conjunction with General Conference Session, iSA is an initiative of the GC Youth Department, hosted by the NAD Youth Department.”

During any GC Session, the Impact movement provides unique service opportunities in the host city, running the gamut from street art to community service, health ministry, and even an outdoor youth rally/concert. Information can be found at www.impactsa2015.com.

Which leads us to that host city itself: San Antonio, Texas. It’s a pretty nice city to explore. For accommodations, see: visitsanantonio.com/english/browse-book/lodging.

San Antonio is perhaps most famous for the Alamo – a former mission which was the site of an important battle during the Texas revolution. Other attractions to consider include Missions National Historical Park, the River Walk and River Walk Cruise,



Alamodome - San Antonio



The concluding Sabbath brings in more than 70,000 people as seen in Atlanta, Georgia at the 2010 Session.

Sea World San Antonio, Six Flags Fiesta Texas, Morgan's Wonderland (the world's only ultra-accessible theme park for people of all abilities), the San Antonio Zoo, Botanical Gardens, and Japanese Tea Garden.

See you there?

There are great reasons to attend a GC Session, as there is something for everyone to be found there. While the host city has much to offer, there is indeed a great blessing to be found from the meetings themselves. You will hear renowned speakers and enjoy wonderful music. You will be reminded of the amazing internationality of this church, and you will hopefully renew your personal faith. Truthfully, you will likely never have the opportunity to worship with the sheer magnitude of this many like-minded believers until heaven. And that alone is an experience that points us to what we can look forward to.

Wilona Karimabadi is the *KidsView* editor for *Adventist Review*.

60th General Conference Session

July 2-11, 2015

Henry B Gonzalez Convention Center / . (B.)

200 East Market Street
San Antonio, Texas 78203

Alamodome

100 Montana Street
San Antonio, Texas 78203

**Theme:
Arise! Shine! Jesus Is Coming!**

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