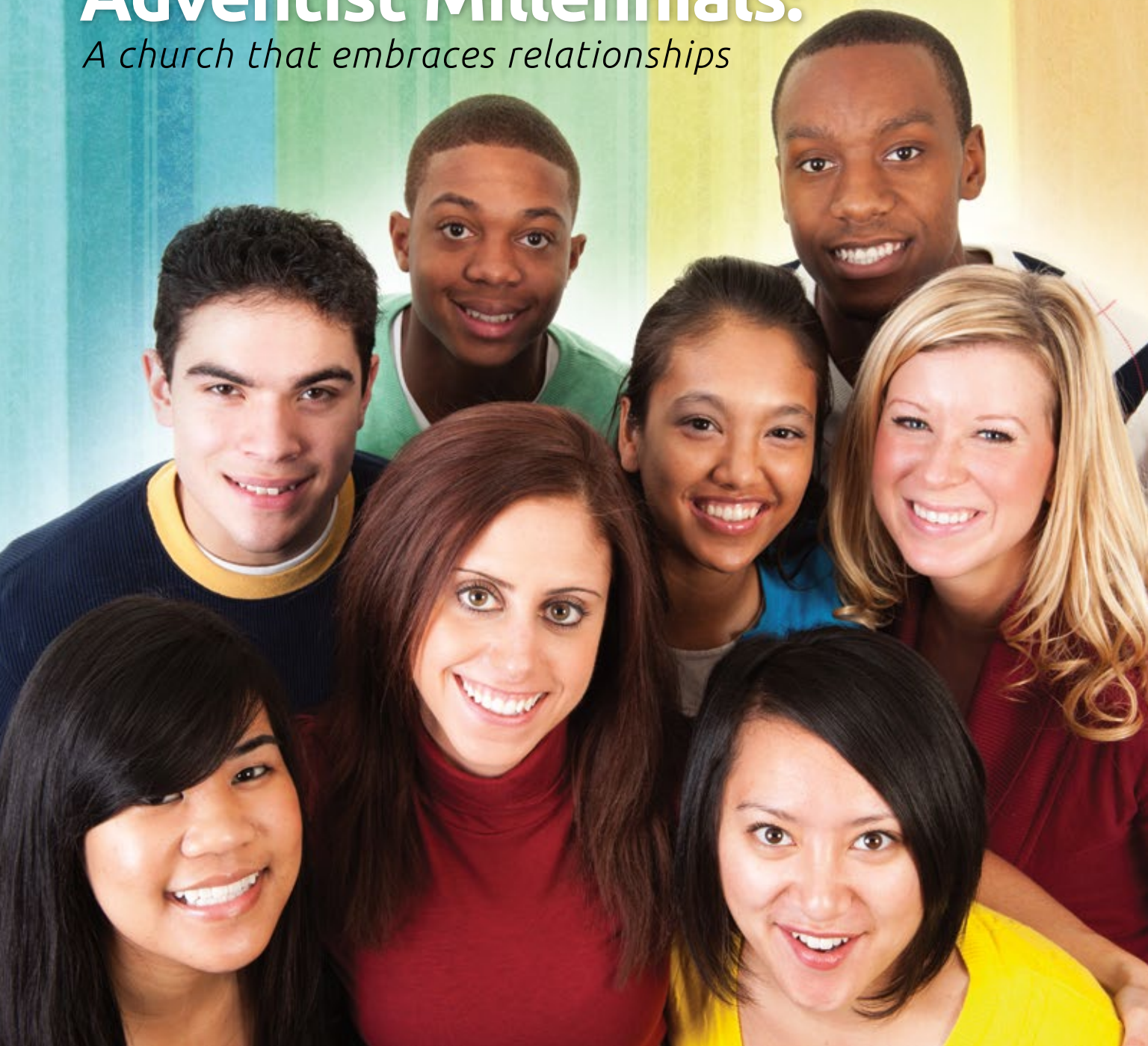


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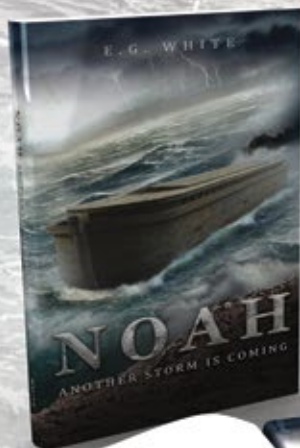


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CORRECTION: In the March 2014 issue of *Ministry*, the byline for author Kim Papaioannou was incorrect. The byline should have read, "Kim Papaioannou, PhD, pastors in Cyprus." The current chair of the PhD program at the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Silang, Cavite, Philippines, is Cristian Dumitrescu. We apologize for any confusion.

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

EDITOR

Derek J. Morris

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Willie E. Hucks II

CONSULTANTS TO EDITOR

John Fowler, Clifford Goldstein, Myrna Tetz

EDITORIAL SPECIALIST

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Melynie Tooley
advertising@ministrymagazine.org
+1 301-787-2790

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SECRETARY Jerry N. Page

ASSOCIATE SECRETARIES

Jonas Arrais, Robert Costa,
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Derek Morris, Janet Page

MINISTERIAL RESOURCE CENTER COORDINATOR

Cathy Payne
888-771-0738, +1 301-680-6508
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“When we disagree with other Christians, it is important to disagree with respect, listening to one another’s true positions rather than caricaturing one another.”

Predestination

I don’t usually write to magazines regarding their articles, but I feel compelled to thank and congratulate you for Kim Papaioannou’s article (“Predestination? A Theology of Divine Intention?”—March 2014). His exegetical explanation of the biblical use of predestination is one of the clearest I’ve read. The topic could be divisive and misunderstood, but it was handled with insight and theological depth.

—Rev. Richard Meier, Faith Lutheran Church (ELCA), South Beloit, Illinois, United States

When we disagree with other Christians, it is important to disagree with respect, listening to one another’s true positions rather than caricaturing one another. For that reason, I was deeply disappointed by the cover picture. We, who do believe in predestination, do not believe in an aloof, uninterested God who holds us as puppets on strings. Rather, we worship a loving God who rushes into a burning building to save children who set the fire and cannot save themselves.

—Barnabas Sprinkle, lead pastor, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Medford, Oregon, United States

Kim Papaioannou does a very good job drawing out the idea of intention from the biblical word *proorizō*. But I’m still left wondering.

Consider the well-known passage of Romans 8:28–30. Replace the word *predestined* with what Papaioannou believes is the better understanding, “We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also [intended] to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren. And those whom he [intended] [i.e., intended to be conformed] he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified” (RSV).

Note the difficulty here. If God intends something and, in fact, brings to completion what He intends (i.e., called, justified, and glorified), then the analogy Papaioannou makes of a parent who intends for his or her child to become a doctor doesn’t work. A parent may very well intend for his or her child to become a doctor, but the child may decide he or she wants

to become a musician instead. The parent’s intention is not realized. Is this really true with God?

In Romans 8, we don’t really find the open-endedness that the author is arguing for with his exposition of *proorizō*. Why? Because God’s intentions are, in fact, realized; what God intends, He does, in fact, bring into being! There really is no sense in the Romans text that God intends something to be but then leaves the door wide open, having to wait and see if things actually work out His way, as a parent would for his or her child. Instead, we find what God wants coming to be, that is, “called, justified, glorified.”

Additionally, Papaioannou’s statement: “God’s intentions are focused on ‘those whom he foreknew’ (Rom. 8:29), indicating that His plans are based not on arbitrary sovereignty but on the intimate knowledge of human beings and their response to the gospel” (8).

Arbitrary sovereignty? It may be arbitrary to the author, but only because of a misunderstanding of God’s foreknowledge. Simply put, God does not look forward into the future to see who will, in fact, respond positively to the gospel, so that God can then respond favorably toward them and bring them to glory. This mistake is made frequently, where foreknowledge is considered to be a kind of crystal ball that helps God see the future and thereby govern His own decisions that He makes in the present. This is not an adequate understanding of foreknowledge! To be sure, God’s foreknowledge cannot be separated from His will or what He intends. Just ask yourself this question: If God were

Continued on page 17



How millennial are you?

How *millennial* are you? If you were born between 1980 and 2000, just based on your birth date, you might automatically answer, “One hundred percent millennial.” But for the rest of us Builders, Boomers, and Busters (Gen Xers), the Pew Research Center designed a survey to help each one of us, both young and old, to answer the question “How millennial are you?”¹ I was shocked to discover that I’m more millennial than most Millennials! My score was 90/100.² As a middle-of-the-road Baby Boomer, I should have scored in the teens. Here are three contributors to my high score:

- I watched less than one hour of television in the last 24 hours. Apparently, I have a lot in common with Millennials but for different reasons. They are watching video on demand and YouTube. I’m so busy, I don’t watch anything.
- I have created my own social networking profile. I’m engaged with social media, courtesy of an interactive Bible study I teach. It took the insistence of my media coach before I finally launched into the surreal world of social media. In contrast, most Millennials live in the world of social media 24/7.
- I sent and received more than 50 text messages in the past 24 hours. In reality, I barely made that score—my exact number was 51. Many Millennials probably sent and received hundreds of text messages in the same 24-hour period.

With a score of 90/100 on the Pew Research Center test, I might fool myself into thinking that I am perfectly in tune with the Millennial generation.

But I would be sorely mistaken. My two Millennial sons would gladly testify that I have much to learn.

That’s why our lead article in this month’s *Ministry* is so valuable. We have heard many anecdotal reports about Millennials leaving Christian churches en masse, but Clint Jenkin and A. Allan Martin give us some reasons for their departure and also offer practical suggestions for connecting or reconnecting with Millennials. Citing the research of David Kinnaman, the authors note six grievances that Millennials have with The Adventist Church: intolerant of doubt, elitist in its relationships, antiscience in its beliefs, overprotective of its members, shallow in its teachings, and repressive of differences. Rather than simply reinforcing these grievances, Jenkin and Martin offer several practical suggestions for creating a positive church environment for Millennials: intergenerational relationships, a culture of forgiveness and acceptance, and platforms for sharing one’s spiritual journey—both the struggles and the joys.

These are simple suggestions, but the authors are convinced that they will work. We’d like to hear from you. What is your experience either as a Millennial yourself or building bridges of understanding and community with Millennials in your congregation?


We would like to receive more manuscripts from young leaders. You might be tempted to think that your limited years of ministry experience disqualify you from writing for a professional journal, but you’re mistaken. You bring fresh ideas and new perspectives. We can learn from each other. In fact, we *must* learn from each other.

One lesson our editorial team has learned from Millennials is that we

need to explore a variety of delivery systems for our journal. Encouraged by our Millennial technology manager, we launched a fully digital version of *Ministry* in January 2014. The response from our subscribers has been overwhelmingly positive. Digital delivery of the journal makes it more accessible

**My two
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sons would
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to Christian leaders around the world. If you have a regular subscription to *Ministry*, you can go online and request a complimentary digital version. Just follow the instructions on our Web site at www.ministrymagazine.org.

Our goal is simple: to reach as many as possible with the good news about Jesus Christ—every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, including Millennials. 

¹ “How Millennial Are You?” Pew Research Center, accessed March 24, 2014, <http://www.pewresearch.org/quiz/how-millennial-are-you/>.

² The average Millennial scored 73/100.

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

Clint Jenkin, PhD, is the vice president of research for Barna Group.

A. Allan Martin, PhD, is the teaching pastor of Younger Generation Church at Arlington Seventh-day Adventist Church, Arlington, Texas, United States.



Engaging Adventist Millennials: *A church that embraces relationships*

Fortune 500 companies to media firms to major faith communities are asking this question with interest: “What does it take to engage with the Millennial generation?”¹ The North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church² recently commissioned a study by Barna Group to investigate how its congregations can more effectively maintain engagement with this age group.

Barna Group, a Christian research firm, surveyed Millennials who were (or had been) part of an Adventist congregation in order to understand their common experiences and attitudes. The survey was followed by multiple moderated online discussions with Adventist and former Adventist young adults.

Negative perceptions

In his book *You Lost Me*, Barna Group’s president, David Kinnaman, details six perceptual grievances that Millennials tend to harbor against “the church” as a cultural institution. These grievances hold that the church is intolerant of doubt, elitist in its relationships, antiscience in its beliefs, overprotective of its members, shallow in its teachings, and repressive of differences.³

Based on this survey of Adventist Millennials, these grievances hold true to an even greater extent when it comes to the Adventist young adult perceptions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The percentages of respondents who say their experiences fit these descriptions are higher than the national norms—for all six perceptions. For example, while one in four of United States (U.S.) Millennials with a Christian background say that Christianity in America is repressive of differences, almost four in ten of Adventist Millennials say this is true of Adventist churches. And while just over one in five of U.S. Millennials with a Christian background say that Christianity in America is like an exclusive club, more than one in three of Adventist Millennials say that Adventist churches are exclusive. Almost twice as many Adventist Millennials say that Adventist churches are antiscience (47 percent) compared to U.S. Millennials at 25 percent. Adventists also score much higher among Millennials when it comes to being overprotective (36 percent vs. 23 percent) or intolerant of doubt (28 percent vs. 10 percent).

Keep in mind that these respondents were recruited from young adults who still have some connection to the Adventist Church; indeed,

some are still very active in their local congregations.

Doubtless	U.S. 10%	SDA 28%
Exclusive	U.S. 22%	SDA 34%
Antiscience	U.S. 25%	SDA 47%
Overprotective	U.S. 23%	SDA 36%
Shallow	U.S. 24%	SDA 29%
Repressive	U.S. 25%	SDA 37%

FIGURE 1. Comparing U.S. Millennials with a Christian background to Adventist Millennials, percentages of respondents who “agree strongly” that each descriptor describes their church experience.

Attitudes and behaviors

Based on their responses to various questions in the survey, respondents were categorized as either “engaged” or “disengaged” from their local congregations. Engaged respondents were those who attend services at least monthly and indicated that church is relevant for them. Disengaged did not meet one or both of those criteria. Then, key differences between these two groups were extracted from the data.

Compared to the engaged young adults within the Adventist Church, those who are disengaged have much weaker *positive* experiences—particularly when it comes to the church

they attended as children. The biggest differences were in the areas of feeling like “I can be myself” and of feeling like “doubts are tolerated.” Engaged Millennials were also much more likely to strongly agree with descriptive statements of church such as “compassion for the less fortunate,” “teaching is relevant,” “helped me understand my faith,” and “people are authentic.” (See figure 2.)

Conversely, disengaged young adults have much stronger *negative* experiences with their childhood church. The largest differences were for the statements “leaders are repressive of ideas” and “the church is overprotective of its young people.” Disengaged respondents were also much more likely to agree with the ideas that their childhood church “seemed like an exclusive club” and “the teachings seem shallow.” (See figure 3.)

Both groups were later asked about similar experiences with their current church; if anything, the differences observed here became even more pronounced as they answered questions about their current church.

However, there were no significant differences between the *behaviors* of the engaged and disengaged young adults when they were children and teenagers. In other words, we cannot look at the level of activity among the children and teens and then predict which ones will disengage from the church as young adults. But negative experiences with their childhood church (specifically with the leadership and adult members) are strong predictors of such disengagement.

What's next?

If a key factor in maintaining engagement among young adults is positive experiences and relationships with older Adventist members and church leadership, the next question is, “What does that look like?” To find out, we conducted two discussion groups via an online platform.

Each young adult discussion group lasted for three days. One group focused on college-aged Millennials,

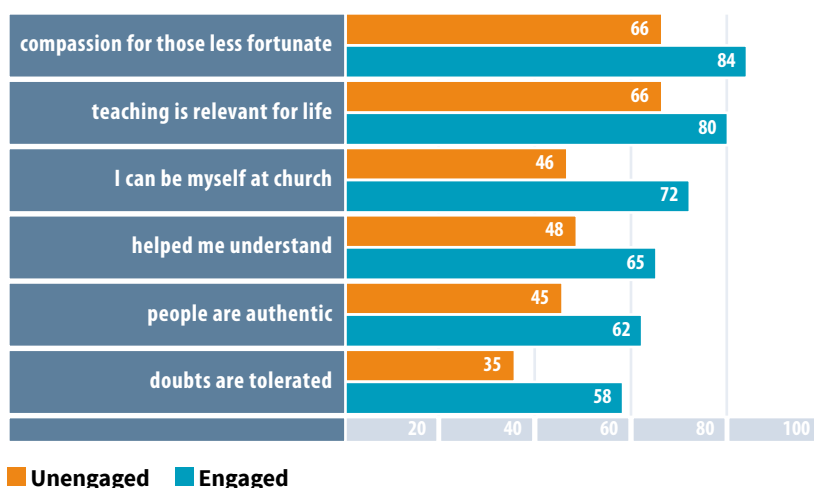


FIGURE 2. Percentages of respondents who “agree strongly” that each statement describes their childhood church.

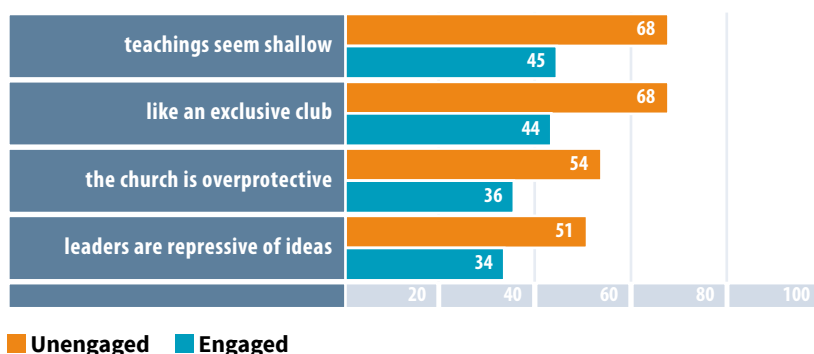


FIGURE 3. Percentages of respondents who “agree strongly” that each statement describes their childhood church.

and the other focused on post-college Millennials. All the young adults in the groups were still connected in some way to the Adventist Church, but some had cut ties with their local congregation to one degree or another.

The groups were amazingly insightful. As we listened to the stories of these young adults, hearing about the good and the bad in their upbringing and current situation, we were alternately excited and dismayed.

The excitement was from hearing so many stories of transformation and spiritual vibrancy and how these experiences happened in a social context of love and acceptance. The dismay was from hearing so many stories of personal rejection and angst. Over the course of the discussions, several themes emerged that point the way for

local congregations to create a positive environment for their youth and young adults.

Intergenerational relationships. The first key is intergenerational relationships. For so many of our respondents, their relationship with the church was determined by their relationship with older members. These were even more important than peer relationships in many cases (especially as members transitioned from teenagers to young adults).

Carla,⁴ one of the members of our college-age discussion group, remembers, “When I was younger and we started putting on Christmas plays, there were a group of elderly women who would travel to Florida every year for winter, and they would stay . . . long enough to see the play.”

Story after story would affirm the poignancy of relationships between the generations and the impression it made on Adventist Millennials. Notably, local churches do not need to figure out how to make intergenerational relationships happen; they are already happening. However, we should recognize the importance of noting that these intergenerational relationships can work both ways—both negatively and positively. The goal for local leadership

career as a bartender. I really admired the way she spoke very neutrally with him, despite thinking that he should not become a bartender. She didn't even let on that she thought it was wrong. She just welcomed him to come closer to Jesus. *She knew that Jesus could do so much better of a job leading the young man on the path his life needed to take than she did*" (emphasis added).

Forgiveness and acceptance. Nothing drives teenagers and young

peer pressure. They sang a song that said, 'There is freedom in the house of the Lord' and I just started crying. That afternoon I went back to my home church and one of my dad's friends came up to me and asked me why I was wearing jeans, and why I didn't go to church."

In one discussion group, we noticed that the same people were sharing both types of stories—how they felt accepted at first and rejected later. When we



Nothing drives teenagers and young adults from the church faster than being rejected, and nothing draws them in faster than being accepted.

can be to create a church culture that reinforces the positive interactions and reduces the negative interactions.

Many of the other observations and ideas that follow are based on a foundation of positive intergenerational relationships.

Jasmine recounts a conversation she overheard that reinforces the power of this type of supportive culture: "Recently, I overheard someone talking about a young man who was coming to the church and was trying to get a

adults from the church faster than being rejected, and nothing draws them in faster than being accepted. Both are currently happening in spades in Adventist churches around North America.

Jessica's experience captures both extremes—and on the same Sabbath. "I once visited a church near my home church that has a reputation for being really liberal. Everyone was so welcoming and casual (everyone was wearing jeans) and I felt so free from

probed on what caused the transition, they told us, in paraphrase, "the more they knew about me, the more I felt rejected."

It seems that older adults tend to look at specific struggles and assign a judgment of the young person's heart or intentions. But the young people often told us that God was using these struggles to draw them closer to Him, a process the older adults could not see.

Tracy shared her story of where her poor decision left her feeling judged

by the church as opposed to feeling comforted—unfortunately she then felt defined by a single instance of sin. “In one of my past relationships, I let my boyfriend take me too far . . . and I really can’t forgive myself. I am praying God helps me forgive myself. It is tough to overcome something that has gone against your beliefs and I was stupid enough to let it happen. Each day I pray I can overcome this.”

The stories and surveys suggest what is needed is the patience to form solid relationships that exude forgiveness and acceptance—trusting God to make the necessary changes and recognizing change also needs time. Never discard someone in the midst of a personal struggle, for it may be just what God is using to make the person into who He needs in the church.

Platforms for sharing. In addition to the relationships, many of our most engaged respondents pointed to crises—in their own lives or the lives of loved ones—as turning points in their spiritual walk. There is a power in experiencing God’s love and strength. There is a power in sharing that experience with others. And there is a power in hearing the story of another person’s encounter with God.

Callie’s story is both an encouragement to her and a testimony to others. “I almost died when I was young due to an infection. I remember waking up in the middle of the night and hearing my dad cry as he whispered prayers into my ear. . . . I also remember the doctors telling my parents that they didn’t understand what happened, but I that I was healed.”

Thomas’s story is less sensational but no less personally powerful. “God spoke to me in such an amazing way that night. I was standing in the sand, out of reach of the encroaching water, looking up at the stars and talking with God. I asked Him a question, and hoped that if His answer was “yes,” that I would know without a doubt. As soon as I said that, the water touched and went past my feet. That was a big moment in my life.”

How can Adventist faith communities make sure that their members have platforms to share with others how God has worked in their lives?

These experiences can be both positive and negative. Some of our respondents shared stories of healing, and others shared stories of struggle. Both types of stories were extremely encouraging to the other young adults in the discussion group. How can a church make it acceptable for members to share not only their victories but also their struggles? Their shared testimony could be what keeps a young person engaged with the Adventist Church, enriched by the relationships sharing stories affords.

Sharing stories, experiencing grace, intertwining lives

The findings of the research are seemingly not profound or extraordinary, yet this does not take away from their powerful relevance as the Seventh-day Adventist Church takes an honest look at engaging next generations.

As Adventist faith communities, church leaders, and adult members consider what might be keys to young adults being active and vibrantly involved with their church, might it be found in intertwining lives together? Fostering supportive intergenerational relationships, expressing forgiveness and acceptance, sharing experiences—might this be a viable alternative to the departure so many young adults are taking from church? For the Millennials surveyed, it appears to be an adamant and heartfelt “Yes!”


May generations of Adventist believers weave their stories together and find that sharing the grace-filled embrace of authentic relationships⁵ changes the lives of Millennials and older members alike.

About the research

The research cited in this article originated through a study conducted by Barna Group of Ventura, California.

The study was commissioned by the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists (NAD). A total of 488 online interviews were conducted among the population of young adults between the ages of 18 and 29 who currently attend the Seventh-day Adventist Church or who attended as a child. The survey was conducted between September 16, 2013, and September 24, 2013. The sampling error for 488 interviews is +4.3 percentage points, at the 95 percent confidence level.

Emails inviting participation in the study were sent to a list provided by the NAD; a hyperlink to the survey Web site was embedded in each email. Additionally, a link was posted on Facebook. The vast majority (394) of interviews were conducted with young adults who came to the survey via Facebook, and the remaining 91 took the survey through the email invitation. The surveys, which took an average of 16 minutes to complete, were conducted using Web-enabled survey software.

The discussion groups were conducted in September 2013 with 24 of the survey participants. Discussion group members were recruited based on their survey answers in order to include a variety of spiritual histories. There were two discussion groups—one for ages 18 to 22, and one for ages 23 to 29. Each group lasted for three days. 

1 The Millennial generation is defined as those born between 1980 and 2000.

2 The North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists represents this larger worldwide Protestant faith community, particularly as it is expressed in Bermuda, Canada, Micronesia, and the United States (www.nadadventist.org). Today, as one of the fastest growing Christian Protestant churches, 18 million baptized Seventh-day Adventist members live in 204 countries of the world. This includes nearly 1.2 million in the North American Division.

3 David Kinnaman, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church . . . and Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011).

4 All study participants’ names have been changed for privacy reasons.

5 Provocative parallels can be found in the emphasis on intergenerational church relationships noted in this survey and the work of Dr. Roger Dudley, professor emeritus at Andrews University, whose study of youth and young adults spanned over four decades. See www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2009/01/embracing-those-who-reject-religion.

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Richard A. Sabuin, PhD, serves as dean of the School of Theology, Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Silang, Cavite, Philippines.



Were **Andronicus** and **Iounian** apostles?

Romans 16:7—“Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me” (NKJV)¹—has received much attention from scholars, not because of Andronicus, but because of *Iounian*. *Iounian* (Junia) has been considered a female name. For many New Testament (NT) scholars, this name serves as evidence that female apostles existed in the New Testament church.²

Articles or books focusing only on *Iounian* attempt to prove two things: Junia is an apostle, and that this is a female name.³ This article intends to reevaluate that claim by examining Romans 16:7 in its immediate and broader contexts. Though individuals place a great deal of emphasis on the question of whether *Iounian* is a male or female name (it could be either), this question does not do justice to Andronicus who receives mention together with *Iounian*. The question to ask is whether Andronicus is an apostle or not, because to conclude that *Iounian* is an apostle requires Andronicus to be an apostle too. If Andronicus is not an apostle, then the effort of proving *Iounian* in this case to be a female name is not significant.

What is the text clear and unclear about?

“Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me” (Rom. 16:7). On the one hand, the text assures us that Andronicus and Junia were both well-known and respected members in the church of Rome and that Paul knew they were in Rome when he was writing to the church. We know that they shared a common Jewish ancestry with the apostle Paul. We can be certain that they were baptized and became Christians before the conversion of the apostle Paul. Clearly, they spent time in prison with the apostle and are coupled together in the same verse because they shared something in common with one another. The text also informs us that the apostles know them very well.

On the other hand, the meaning of the phrase “of note among the apostles” is an open question. The expression could be interpreted as *exclusive* to the effect that Andronicus and *Iounian* were well-known by the apostles or it could be seen as *inclusive* to the effect that they were *themselves* well-known apostles. Why Paul linked *Iounian* and Andronicus in the same verse remains uncertain. Were they linked together because they were

husband and wife, brother and sister, fellow prisoners, or compatriots of Paul? The answers to these questions are elusive.

Who are the apostles?

In the NT, Luke uses the term “the apostles” most frequently.⁴ Consistently, he uses this title to refer to the twelve apostles before Judas’s betrayal (Luke 9:10; 17:5; 22:14); the eleven apostles after the betrayal of Judas (Acts 1:2, 26; Luke 24:10; cf. Luke 24:10, 33); and the twelve apostles including Matthias, the replacement for Judas (Acts 1:26; 2:37, 43; 4:33, 36; 5:12, 18, 29, 34, 40; 6:6). Referring to the problem about serving tables in Acts 6, Luke still calls the apostles “the twelve” (v. 2). Later in his writing, the title “the apostles” seems to have become a specific title referring to those among the twelve apostles regardless of whether they were together in one place or not. At the time of the persecution by Saul of Tarsus, the Christians were scattered, and only “the apostles” remained in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1). Luke calls them, “the apostles who were at Jerusalem” (v. 14), among whom are “Peter and John” (v. 14). This means not all the apostles remained in Jerusalem, even though the text says that all were scattered “except the apostles.” Up to this

point, Luke has limited the title “the apostles” only to the twelve.

How about the seventy whom Jesus sent (Luke 10:1, 17)? Although they receive similar instructions from Jesus as the twelve did and are sent two by two as the twelve were (Luke 10:1–17; cf. Mark 6:7–13), they are never called apostles. If they were apostles, then there would not be a problem about the daily distribution to the widows (Acts 6:1–3). If the seventy were apostles, it may be hard to understand why the twelve were the only ones dedicated “continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word” (v. 4).⁵ Moreover, when there was a need to replace Judas, Matthias had to be elected in order to be one of the twelve apostles (1:26) even if he might have been one of the seventy (Luke 10:1).⁶ He was elected not simply to complete the number twelve (a symbol of Israel)⁷ but to do ministry by being an apostle (Acts 1:26; cf. 6:4).

Later, Luke includes Paul and Barnabas as apostles. However, he calls them “the apostles” only after he depicts the setting aside of the two for the work God has called them to do (Acts 13:2; cf. 14:4, 14). After his conversion, Paul returned to Jerusalem.⁸ There, he was with the apostles “coming in and going out,” spreading the word of God (9:28, 29). After some time, because of the attempts to kill him, he was sent to Tarsus by the church in Jerusalem (v. 30). He was sent there not only for the safety of his life but for a mission. Luke hints at this idea by using *exapostellō*, “to send out,” or the cognate verb of the noun *apostolos*, “one who is sent.”⁹ In spite of this, Paul has not been called “apostle” yet.

The same applies to Barnabas. Before being set apart for a mission (Acts 13:1, 2), he was involved in ministry. When there was a need of ministry in Antioch, the church in Jerusalem “sent out” Barnabas to Antioch (11:22), exactly as they did Paul. Again, Luke uses the word *exapostellō*, the same verb describing the sending out of Paul. Nevertheless, Luke has not yet called Barnabas “apostle” either. After they are set apart, Luke calls them

“the apostles,” even doing so twice (14:4, 14). Thus Luke considers only the twelve, Barnabas, and Paul as “the apostles.” Only those who are appointed as apostles are called “the apostles.”

Paul also gives hints about who are the ones he considers as the apostles. In 1 Corinthians 15:5–9, he gives a list of those to whom Jesus showed Himself after the Resurrection, and he connects this experience with apostleship.¹⁰

Christ appeared	to Cephas	then to the twelve (v. 5)
Then he appeared	to James	then to all the apostles (v. 7)
Last of all he appeared	also to me	the least of the apostles (vv. 8, 9)

The table above puts Peter (Cephas) as one of the twelve, James as one of all the apostles (cf. Gal. 1:19),¹¹ and Paul being the least of the apostles. This means, in addition to the twelve apostles, there are other apostles including James and Paul. Interestingly, the “five hundred” (1 Cor. 15:6) is neither linked to the twelve nor to all the apostles. Suffice it to say that these 500 brethren are not apostles. Paul also calls his travel companion, Barnabas, an apostle (1 Cor. 9:5, 6). It seems that, although many have been with Paul in his missionary trips, he does not call all of them apostles. In the prologue of his epistles, only after calling himself an apostle does he mention other names. For example, “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother” (Col. 1:1; cf. 2 Cor. 1:1). Thus, even Timothy is never called an apostle by Paul.

Also, simply being a coprisoner of Paul does not make a person an apostle. Paul calls some of his coworkers “fellow prisoners,” and they are all male workers: Aristarchus (Col. 4:10); Epaphras (Philem. 23); Silas also was Paul’s fellow prisoner (Acts 16:19–23); Onesiphorus visited Paul in prison

(2 Tim. 1:16); Onesimus also was with Paul in the prison (Philem. 10); those who were once assisting Paul in the prisons are all males: Demas, Crescens, Titus, Tychicus, and Luke (2 Tim. 4:10, 11), and also Timothy (Phil. 2:19). Of these, he considers Silas, who was his coprisoner and companion during his second missionary trip, an apostle (1 Thess. 2:2–7),¹² perhaps because Silas was also sent by the church in Jerusalem to accom-

pany Paul and Barnabas to Antioch (Acts 15:22, 27). This list demonstrates that Paul always and only had male coprisoners. This makes the case of *Iounian* being a female coprisoner a weak argument.

There are some brethren whom he sent to Corinth as “apostles” of the churches (2 Cor. 8:22, 23) to collect aid for Jerusalem. This does not mean that they have been chosen for the ministry that the twelve and the other apostles were doing. When Paul refers to the twelve or the other apostles of Christ, he uses the word *apostolos* normally with a definite article (e.g., Rom. 16:7; 1 Cor. 4:9; 9:5; 15:7, 9; Gal. 1:17, 19; Eph. 2:20; 3:5; 4:11).¹³ The word *apostoloi* in this text does not have a definite article, indicating that the word is used differently. In this context, these are two messengers sent for a one-time specific task: the collection of the gift to help the believers in Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8:19; cf. 1 Cor. 16:3). One of them was chosen by the churches (2 Cor. 8:19), and the other one was sent directly by Paul himself (v. 22), and yet both of them are called *apostoloi* (v. 23). In this case, the title *apostoloi* is applied both to the one appointed and to the one sent

personally by the apostle. Thus, this title is not used as to the twelve and the other apostles who are appointed either by Jesus Himself or by the church as the body of Christ.

The case is similar to that of Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25). He is also called *apostolos* but without a definite article, and he is also a messenger sent by the church in Philippi to minister to the needs of Paul in prison—not to preach the gospel to Paul. For Paul, Epaphroditus is a brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, *but*¹⁴ to the Philippians he is a messenger (*apostolos*). Thus, he is called *apostolos* only because he was sent by the church to bring some help from the church to Paul. The words *apostoloi* and *apostolos* in these two texts do not have definite articles. Also, both are limited by words in the genitive case: the apostles of the churches (2 Cor. 8:23), and the apostle of you (Phil. 2:25). Paul makes this limitation

only here. Thus, Paul distinguishes these “apostles” (messengers) from the apostles who are sent to bring the gospel and perform the ministry of the Word.

What about Andronicus?

This question of Andronicus’s identity comes from the ambiguous interpretation of the phrase “of note among the apostles” (Rom. 16:7). Based on the preceding discussion, “the apostles” refers to the twelve apostles and all the apostles who are sent by Jesus Christ and His church for the ministry of the Word. If Matthias, supposedly being one of the seventy, was not an apostle before being chosen to be one of the twelve, then Andronicus was not an apostle simply by having been one of the seventy.¹⁵ In this context, Andronicus was neither one of “the apostles,” nor one of those in the category of Epaphroditus and the brethren from

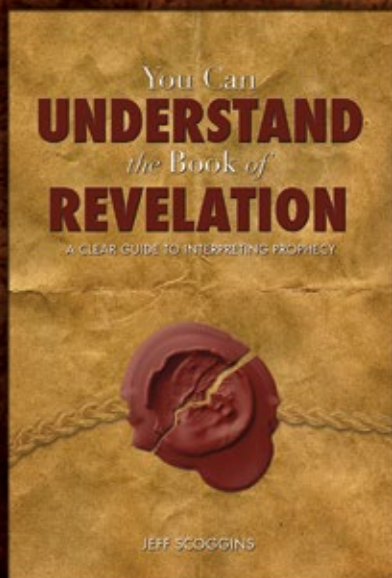
Macedonia. Moreover, the word *apostoloi* in Romans 16:7 comes with a definite article.

The fact that he is a coprisoner of Paul does not automatically make him an apostle, for many of Paul’s coprisoners are not apostles. If Andronicus was a distinguished apostle, then Luke likely would have included him in the book of Acts. He mentions Barnabas as an apostle (Acts 14:4, 14), and Paul does too (1 Cor. 9:5, 6). Nothing has been mentioned about Andronicus, even after Luke made a thorough research for his volumes (Luke 1:1–4), including interviewing Paul when Luke was with him during the first Roman imprisonment (Philem. 24), and “only Luke” was with Paul during the second imprisonment (2 Tim. 4:11).

Paul describes Andronicus as “being in Christ before me” (Rom. 16:7). If Andronicus (as well as *Iounian*) was one of the apostles, Paul might say, “the apostles before me,” as he

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does when referring to James and Peter (Gal. 1:17). Being in Christ before Paul does not automatically mean being an apostle before Paul. The evidence points to the conclusion that Andronicus is not one of the apostles.

So, what is the meaning of the preposition *en* in the phrase *episēmoi en tois apostolois*: “of note among the apostles,” or “of note to the apostles”? This is not settled conclusively by looking in Paul’s writings for the construction of adjective + *en* + dative noun/pronoun. With this construction, Paul does not consistently denote an exclusive or inclusive meaning.¹⁶ Some examples of an inclusive meaning are “the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom. 8:29), “not a wise man among you” (1 Cor. 6:5), and “sick among you” (1 Cor. 11:30). Some examples of an exclusive meaning are “lowly among you” (2 Cor. 10:1), in which Paul is considered lowly by the Corinthians; “admired among all those who believe” (2 Thess. 1:10), that is, to be admired by the believers; and “honorable among all” (Heb. 13:4), that is, honorable by all.

This inconsistency of the meaning of this construction is a weak foundation to decide what “of note among the apostles” (Rom. 16:7) means. In this situation, the immediate and wider contexts will help decide, and based on the preceding exposition, Andronicus is not one of the apostles. There is no need to change the English meaning of *en* from “among” into “by” or “to.” Andronicus, although not an apostle, could have a good name among the apostles.

In Matthew 27:16, the adjective *episēmos* directly modifies the noun *desmios*, “prisoner,” and thus means “notorious prisoner.” In Romans 16:7, the same adjective is there without directly modifying a noun. The phrase, therefore, cannot be understood automatically as “notable apostles.” Moreover, Paul never compares one apostle with the others. Instead, he compares himself with other apostles:

“For I am the least of the apostles” (1 Cor. 15:9). Interestingly, here Paul does not use the construction of adjective + *en* + dative noun, but simply adjective + genitive noun: *ho elachistos tōn apostolōn*—a partitive genitive.¹⁷ With the nominative adjective and genitive plural noun, the phrase cannot be translated as “the least apostle,” but it should be “the least of the apostles.” There is no ambiguity. For sure, Paul is one of the apostles—inclusive meaning.

The only other example of this construction in the Pauline epistles is *tous ptōchous tōn hagiōn*, “the poor of the saints” (Rom. 15:26)—obviously an inclusive meaning.¹⁸ If Paul had wanted to introduce Andronicus as one of the apostles, he would have clearly done it the same way that he has introduced himself, namely, without the preposition *en*. For this reason, Andronicus is not one of the apostles.

What about *Iounian*?

Because it has been demonstrated above that Andronicus is not an apostle, then *Iounian* is not an apostle, either. Much discussion has taken place and may continue about whether *Iounian* is a male or a female name, and I will not add to that discussion. Whether *Iounian* is a female or a male name, whether it is Junia or Junias, that person, together with men and women Paul mentions in the list, has worked for the Lord. However, *Iounian* is not an apostle. ❏

1 Unless otherwise stated, all scriptural references are from the New King James Version.

2 As far as I know, there has been only one extensive article in this last decade discussing Andronicus: David K. Huttar, “Did Paul Call Andronicus an Apostle in Romans 16:7?” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 52, no. 4 (Dec. 2009): 747, 778. In his conclusion, he states that the lexical-grammatical evidence, the evidence from the context, and the historical evidence suggests that Andronicus is not an apostle.” Ibid., 748.

3 Recently, see, e.g., Eldon Jay Epp, *Junia: The First Woman Apostle* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005); Rena Pederson, *The Lost Apostle: Searching for the Truth of Junia* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006); John Thorley, “Junia: The First Woman Apostle,” *Novum Testamentum* 38, no. 1 (Jan. 1996): 18–29; Paul Foster, “Junia—Woman and an Apostle,” *Expository Times*

117, no. 9 (June 2006): 371, 372; Nancy Vyhmeister, “Junia the Apostle,” *Ministry*, July 2013, 6–9.

4 Luke 9:10; 11:49; 17:5; 22:14; 24:10; Acts 1:2, 26; 2:37, 43; 4:33, 36; 5:12, 18, 29, 34, 40; 6:6; 8:1, 14; 9:27; 11:1; 14:4, 14; 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23, 33; 16:4. Only the plural *hoi apostoloi* (with definite article) in any case is counted.

5 Obviously, the antecedent of the first person plural pronouns *hēmas* (v. 2) and *hēmeis* (v. 4) is “the twelve” (v. 2). Luke seems to emphasize the uniqueness of the twelve by adding the personal pronoun *hēmeis*, although even without this pronoun, the sentence remains complete with the first person plural verb *proskarterēsomen* (v. 4).

6 Eusebius: *Church History, Life of Constantine the Great, Oration in Praise of Constantine*, The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, eds. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, 2nd ser., vol. 1 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), 102.

7 As suggested, e.g., by Thomas W. Martin, “Matthias,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman, vol. 4 (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 644.

8 Following Paul’s own testimony, after his conversion he went to Arabia for three years and then returned to Damascus and went to Jerusalem (Gal. 1:17–19). See also John Peter Lange, Philip Schaff, F. R. Fay, et al., *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Romans* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2008), 6.

9 See the connection between *apostellō* and *apostolos* in J. A. Bühner, “Apostellō,” in *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. by Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 142.

10 The table is adapted from Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 46.

11 This James must not be James, son of Zebedee, or James, son of Alphaeus, because these two are part of the twelve to whom Jesus has showed Himself earlier. Thus, most probably, this is James, the Lord’s brother (Gal. 1:19). Thus, with this sequence, James had been an apostle before Paul was (v. 17).

12 By mentioning the threat in Philippi (1 Thess. 2:2), Paul might have referred to his imprisonment with Silas in Philippi (Acts 16). This context may help define who the “we” is in reference to the “apostles” mentioned (1 Thess. 2:6, 7).

13 There are two exceptions. In 2 Corinthians 11:13, the word *apostoloi* is *anarthrous*, used in comparison to the false apostles, and thus does not refer specifically to the twelve or the other apostles of Christ. In 1 Thessalonians 2:6, the word is also *anarthrous*, but the context clearly suggests that it refers to Paul and Silas (1:1). Timothy is not included in the “we” and “us” of the epistle (see 1 Thess. 3:2–6).

14 The conjunction *de*, “but, on the contrary” separates what Epaphroditus is for Paul and what he is for the church.

15 As inferred by Vyhmeister, 9, following Origen.

16 Ibid., 8. Unfortunately, Vyhmeister just follows examples given by scholars who, instead of using Paul’s writing to compare with Romans 16:7, use Matthew 2:6 and even extrabiblical writings as parallels. Exegetically, this should not be the first option. Moreover, Matthew 2:6 should suggest exclusive meaning, because Bethlehem is not a ruler among the rulers of Judah. In fact, it is from Bethlehem a ruler will come out.

17 For more discussion on the syntactical construction of *person/things* + *episēmos*/other adjectives + *preposition en*, see Huttar, 748–755.

18 Had Paul wanted to say clearly that Andronicus and Junia were prominent among the apostles, he could also have used the kind of partitive genitive construction used in 3 Macc. 6:1: *Eleazaros de tis anēr episēmos tō apo tēs chōras hierōn*, “Then Eleazar, a prominent man among the priests from the country.”

Lawrence L. LaPierre, DMin, is a retired chaplain residing in San Jose, California, United States.



Deepening your **spiritual life**

Train yourself in godliness” (1 Tim. 4:7, NRSV). Paul’s instruction is of the greatest importance to those of us who are called to lead God’s people. Pastors are expected to serve God and His people with all the gifts and graces given by God to equip us for ministry. To do so, we need to be intentional about allowing God to strengthen our spiritual lives so that we can be effective pastors.

When I look back at my own ministry, which included both pastoring a local congregation as well chaplaincy in a veterans’ medical center, one question stares me in the face: Why did I let my spiritual life slide? The answer is astonishing: I was too busy caring for the pastoral needs of my parishioners. That was my highest priority. No, it was not a conscious choice to pay less attention to my spiritual needs, but at some level it had to have been a choice. It took a long time to learn that easy answers to a diminished spiritual life (“I’ll take five or ten more minutes each day for Bible study”) are not necessarily solutions. If I expected my spiritual well to provide life-giving water (see John 4:7–15), I needed to allow God to replenish my inner springs. That is the problem we all have to deal with.

Spirituality: Where do we begin?

So, how do we allow God to let us experience the ever-fresh springs of a faith life? We need time to be open to God. Even Jesus needed time in

prayer—be it in the desert, the city, or on a mountain. Is it possible we are too busy to be alone with God? Many of us can begin by finding the courage to say “No” to a nonemergency call on our day off. Others of us need to practice the discipline of solitude on a greater scale. We need to set aside a time and place every day to listen to God. Even when we are on vacation, we need to set aside time to listen to God. I have known pastors who returned during a vacation to do a funeral of an “important member” even when they had arranged for pastoral coverage in their absence. Experience shows that my frustration builds in these circumstances, and frustration is a barrier to hearing God’s voice.

Yet lack of time alone with God is only the most visible obstacle to our spiritual health. Being spiritually healthy involves the practice of disciplines such as prayer, reading the Bible, confession, and fasting. But, what is spirituality? Knowing what it involves will help us better recognize what obstructs it. Philip Sheldrake offers a deceptively simple but useful definition: “the word ‘spirituality’ seeks to express . . . the conscious human response to God that is both personal and ecclesial. In short, ‘life in the Spirit.’”¹

Life in the Spirit results in a life lived in dialogue with God with increasing openness to God’s loving presence, and in a life lived consciously as God’s servants along journeys guided and empowered by God. This involves a lot more listening and vulnerability to

God’s presence than many of us are used to experiencing.

As pastors and church leaders, we need to take the time to examine our own experience of “life in the Spirit.” We may do this on our own if we are well read in Christian spirituality. However, we stand less chance of deceiving ourselves if we have the help of a spiritual companion or peer group with whom we covenant to work together to strengthen our spiritual lives.

As part of a guided process, we ought to regularly answer the question that John Wesley expected his Methodist class members to answer every week: “How does it go with your soul?” I had no excuse for not knowing that the state of my soul was important, for when I entered pastoral ministry, the bishop who ordained me questioned me for an hour about my personal spirituality before accepting me for ordination.

Obstacles to spiritual growth

Among many obstacles to spiritual growth that pastors face, four need particular mention.

1. Preoccupation with our image. One obstacle to our spiritual growth is how we want to be regarded by the community. Many of us believe that we should be treated like other professionals because we have as many years of graduate school education as many other professionals. Why are we not more highly regarded and better paid? The issue is a shift of focus: from the

primacy of our call to serve God to our self-oriented desires for success and recognition (John 13:12–17).

2. *Buying in to the world's view of success.* Another obstacle to the pastor's spiritual health arises when we accept the world's definition of success—usually involving more people and money. In the mid-1970s, our pastor told a story of another pastor who was quite successful in ministry. How was he successful? He added, in one short period, 44 people into church membership. That act was considered a powerful witness to what the Holy Spirit was doing in that congregation. This was also a measure of “success” that some ecclesiastical leaders might like to see applied to pastors.

Some of the congregations I served liked that kind of “success.” They were not really focused on how many people came to accept Christ as their Lord and Savior. Nor did they show much interest in the spiritual state and growth of people. What was more, the matter, as one person noted, was “getting more people in the pews and more dollars in the plate.” That amounts to treating the congregation as little more than an organization whose purpose is to acquire enough income to pay the bills.

A successful pastor, from this point of view, is one who brings people in the door and convinces them to give—not their lives to Christ—but their money to the budget.

Yet, many churches are shrinking in terms of members and income, and it is difficult not to focus on the numbers that signal stability or even growth. How many of us would argue with this definition of successful ministry? On the other hand, we are left to wonder where God fits into this definition of success. Is God the “Chairperson of the board”—a distant Figure to be consulted with in a crisis or perhaps when doing long-range planning? Or is He the One actively engaged in transforming and shaping daily the subjects of the kingdom of heaven?

Mother Teresa was quoted as saying that our call is to faithfulness rather than to success. How would our denominational officials respond to Mother Teresa's view? Would they accept that being faithful was more important than being successful? Would they encourage pastors to faithfully set aside time each day to discern what God expects of them that day? Or would they honor the idea in principle and expect pastors to find the time to be faithful along

with being successful—that is, as one more task?

3. *Lack of understanding as to the meaning of spirituality.* A third important obstacle to our growth as spiritually healthy pastors is the lack of understanding in many congregations about spirituality. How many churches care enough about the spiritual health of the pastor and congregation to discuss this on a regular basis?

Some time ago I was interviewed by one church that stated quite clearly that they were interested in growing spiritually. When I was appointed their pastor, I was beginning my doctor of ministry program. I had already decided to focus on spirituality for my thesis, and this seemed like an ideal opportunity for the church and me. However, my attempts to deepen our understanding of spiritual growth and the obstacles to that growth failed miserably. I managed to gather six of us in a group (including my wife) to begin to learn about spirituality. It was soon evident that personal spiritual growth was not very interesting to most of them. It was easier to use our energies in struggling with issues of control rather than discerning and submitting to God's will.

The deformities of my character

In a past article, BBC News announced that the Dublin-based Ryanair was voted the worst of Britain's 100 biggest brands by readers of a consumer magazine.

Reacting to this, the founder and owner of the largest low-cost airline in Europe, Michael O'Leary, told shareholders that many complaints of the clients are valid and could have been solved without significantly affecting the profits.

Mr. O'Leary then proceeded to make an incredible statement: “I am very happy to take the blame or responsibility if we have a macho

or abrupt culture. Some of that may well be my own personal character deformities.”*

I could not believe my eyes. To have such an astute and aggressive businessman making a public statement and, in no mild or diplomatic words, taking personal responsibility for the widespread influence of his “personal character deformities” shocked me. It led me to start a process of searching my own character flaws and unchristian motives and tracing my contribution to the failures of my family, church, and organizations I am part of.

Revival
and
REFORMATION

“You can't whitewash your sins and get by with it; you find mercy by admitting and leaving them” (Prov. 28:13, *The Message*).

—ADRIAN BOCANEANU, MA, IS A PASTOR AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS DIRECTOR OF SPERANTA TV FOR THE ADVENTIST MEDIA CENTER, BUCHAREST, ROMANIA.

* “Ryanair's O'Leary to End 'Abrupt Culture'” BBC, September 20, 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-24177834>.

How do we encourage each other to talk about the importance of the spiritual journey of both pastors and members? We seem able to find people who will go to the front of the congregation to tell the story of why they commit their time, talents, and money to support the church. Why do we not ask members of the congregation to share how spiritual growth has been important to them in the past year? If no one talks about spiritual growth, the message sent is that it is either not important or too “private” to discuss. Neither message is healthy.

Of course, the task requires a commitment to spiritual growth on the part of the congregation and pastor. It requires a degree of mutual openness and vulnerability that is difficult to attain. When we really seek God’s guidance about everything we do, we may discover that we do not really want the guidance.

Yet, pastors need guidance. At minimum, we need help examining what impedes our interest in spiritual growth. Clinical pastoral education can help us examine our feelings and

at least consider what choices we have about how we deal with our own spiritual needs and those of our congregations. Counseling can help us to be aware of why we feel as we do. Spiritual direction or the prayerful support of a peer group can assist us in discerning God’s will. We will not find it easy to deal with our feelings that interfere with our spiritual health—feelings such as anger, resentment, guilt, and fear, among others—for these have been hidden in our unconscious minds.

4. *Holding on to anger.* Lastly, holding on to anger can hamper spiritual growth. A small church did not like the previous pastor. Nor did they have much good will toward the Annual Conference (a group of churches led by a United Methodist bishop). Many members blamed both the previous pastor and the Annual Conference leadership for the recent split in the congregation over the question of whether to build a new church. I suspect that they found it easier to be angry than to be open to God’s call to forgive and let go of their anger. Remaining angry protects us from being vulnerable to the change that results

from accepting that we are loved by God and other people. We may actually fear what such love may ask of us.

Holding on to our anger can also become so destructive that some of us leave the church. One of the sayings that I learned as a pastor is that “people vote with their feet and wallets.” The resulting feelings of loss and anxiety may be directed at the pastor regardless of how or why the loss occurred. The spiritual issue is not only alienation from God and the church but also the anxiety about the survival of the local church. Both pastor and people may be so angry and anxious that we do not have room for God to refill our inner spiritual wells. Nor do we even imagine the healing that we would experience if we would just drink of God’s “living water.”

My earliest pastoral experience with the effects of anger and anxiety was, predictably, in my student parish. I had foolishly tried to explain our denomination’s stand on an issue that was emotionally charged. Rather than lead a study group on the topic, I tried to use the few minutes I had for a “teaching moment.”

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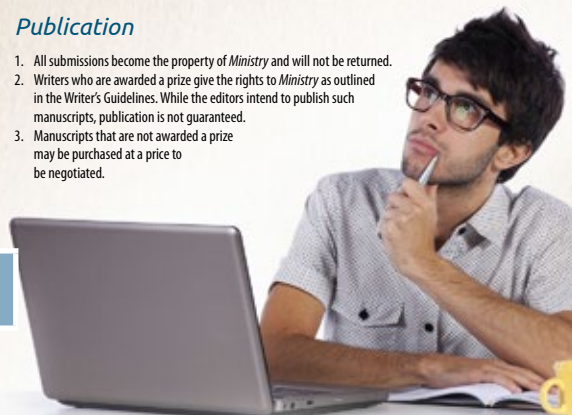
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The results were dramatic. Nearly half of the church members failed to appear for worship for the next several weeks. I was concerned, of course, but was also busy coping with my other responsibilities. I was so distracted that if I prayed about the problem at all, it was only briefly. Nor did I really listen to what God was saying. However, God found a way to get my attention. Not long after my botched attempt at the teaching moment, my wife met a woman who was part of a matriarchal clan in the area. She said to my wife, “Granny [the matriarch] is upset with Larry. He better go see her.” So, I did. I listened at length as she told me about her beliefs. I chose not to argue. I decided to accept her worldview as what she had to work with, but this acceptance was not a solution. In reality, I chose to avoid further conflict. However, I, if not the matriarch, held on to unresolved feelings of anxiety and/or anger for some time. I was not as focused on being faithful as on being successful, which, in this instance, meant avoiding further conflict as a student pastor. What I did seemed to be what I needed to do because success, as elusive


as it may be, was held up as the goal of ministry.

The outcome of that local conflict may very well have been the same no matter how I handled the issue. However, I did not show good judgment in my approach to what I knew was an emotionally charged topic. I say this because not every problem in the local church is a matter of spiritual principle nor necessarily the fault of the congregation or one of its members. Some problems arise because the solutions proposed by the pastor are not well thought out by the pastor and not the direction that God chose.

Paying attention to God

In *Vision and Character*, Craig R. Dykstra calls us back to what is essential to finding the direction that God chooses for the congregation as well as its individual members and pastor(s). He writes, “If this idea that prayer consists of attention to God seems strange to us, perhaps it is because we have given up the discipline and no longer really know how to pray. In most of our praying, our attention is neither focused nor on God.

What we attend to is largely our own selves, and this in a rather generalized and ambiguous way.”²

At the beginning of this article, we noted that spiritual health should be built on more than prayer and the use of other spiritual disciplines. However, as Craig Dykstra reminds us, we often do not discuss in our churches a serious dimension of prayer—either in worship or in study groups. We are called to be more aware of God’s presence than of our lengthy lists of what we need God to do. We are called to allow God to shape us into becoming what He needs us to be as pastors and people. This means being vulnerable to grace, which requires being open to change to become the people that God means for us to be. But then, how else are we going to become pastors whose spiritual health is built on a loving relationship with God? 

1 Philip Sheldrake, “What Is Spirituality?” in Kenneth J. Collins, ed., *Exploring Christian Spirituality: An Ecumenical Reader* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 25.

2 Craig R. Dykstra, *Vision and Character*, quoted in Rueben P. Job and Norman Shawchuck, *A Guide to Prayer for All Who Seek God* (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 2006), 301.

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LETTERS

Continued from page 4



to forsake this crystal-ball ability to look into the future to see how you would respond to His grace, would His intention for you change? No! Because what He foresees, He also intends.

—Steve LaSor, email

Several issues come to mind as I read Kim Papaioannou’s article. First, the historic evangelical understanding of predestination is contrary to what he proposes (cf. Augustine, Calvin, Luther, and Turretin).

Second, the sources he appeals to for the understanding of *proorizō* are outside any credible lexical source for

New Testament Koine Greek such as Thayers, Arndt and Gingrich, and so on—all are extrabiblical.

Third, his appeal to 2 Peter 3:9 supports an understanding contrary to what he proposes. The pronoun *you* (*humas*) requires an antecedent noun. That noun is found in 2 Peter 1:1 and 1 Peter 1:1: “those who have obtained” and “elect exiles” (ESV). Context and both biblical and systematic theology permit an ellipsis (any of you) referring to the elect, and so on.

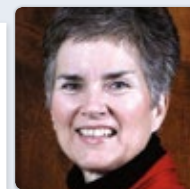
Finally, the author presents redemption as potential. The text in Revelation 5:9 clearly declares that the

redemptive work of Christ was actual, not potential: “and by your blood *you ransomed* people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation” (ESV; emphasis added). This describes an accomplished fact. The position the author takes on salvation is semi-Pelagian at best and makes salvation contingent on man’s will. The text states emphatically this is not so, “who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh *nor of the will of man*, but of God” (John 1:13, ESV; emphasis added).

Thank you for the opportunity for this dialogue.

—Tom Fillingier, Cullman, Alabama, United States

JoAnn Davidson, PhD, is professor of theology at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States.



Love and judgment:

God's triumph—Part 2

Everyone faces judgment. Throughout the Scriptures the divine voice insists with unrelenting conviction that all people stand under God's judgment because of sin. Isaiah states this in searing words: "The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, and those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left" (Isa. 24: 5, 6).¹

The judgment message has two complementary aspects: God's justice against sin on the one hand, and on the other, the extension of God's blessing to all nations along with the vindication of His love, justice, and mercy. The Scriptures clearly emphasize God's loathing of evil, linked with the certainty of divine punishment and mercy: "Therefore the LORD will wait, that He may be gracious to you; and therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you, for the LORD is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for Him" (Isa. 30:18). The Bible also reminds us that sin produces deadly guilt, and it is this guilt that often causes our blindness to God's goodness.

A failure to understand this truth often leads to a misinterpretation of Scripture. For example, we look at Leviticus as being preoccupied with

guilt, but in essence the book is a portrayal of the seriousness of sin and how God provides forgiveness and makes reconciliation possible. Leviticus is all about grace. Likewise, while Psalms speaks plainly of the human predicament of sin, again the preoccupation is not with guilt but with God who redeems sinners from their guilt.

Christopher Wright notes this: "The Creator God has a purpose, a goal, and it is nothing less than blessing the nations of humanity. So fundamental is this divine agenda that Paul defines the Genesis text as declaring 'the gospel in advance' (Gal. 3:8). And the concluding vision of the whole Bible signifies the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise, as people from every nation, tribe, language and people are gathered among the redeemed in the new creation (Rev. 7:9)."²

The standard by which all nations are judged is the mercy of God: "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion" (Exod. 33:19). If any person or any nation repents, they will be spared. If any person, any nation, chooses evil in spite of God's desire to bless, they will suffer divine judgment (Jer. 18:7–10).

We like to address and relate to God as "Father" but then express dismay when He exhibits the protective strength of a Father over His children, seeking to halt sin's harmful results.

Some Christians suppose God is like a "grandfather in the sky" with no concern for sinfulness, granting us happiness without any regard to our moral conduct. God is allowed to be loving but not allowed to judge. However, the God of Scripture declares He will bring judgment against sin and retribution on sins that damage the earth and destroy human beings created in His image. All biblical writers, and Jesus Himself, insist this.

God's judgment and mercy

God's dealing with Nineveh clearly illustrates this. God sent the prophet Jonah to pronounce divine judgment on Nineveh. The entire city repents, from the king on his throne to the least person. As a result, God "relents" and withholds His judgment from the violent city. However, this signal demonstration of God's mercy toward Nineveh is extremely frustrating to Jonah. He obviously knows God's merciful character: "'Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm'" (Jon. 4:1, 2).

God commissioned Jonah to proclaim His approaching judgment on Nineveh because of its sinfulness. But when the people repented, God's

amazing grace offered mercy and forgiveness. God pronounced judgment on the wicked yet extended redemptive grace to them, for they repented and turned away from evil.

Jonah failed to appreciate this, and hence God explains: “ ‘And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left—and much livestock?’ ” (v. 11). This final statement from God to His petulant prophet should caution us against any tendency to foist our own

- Exodus 32–34. Israel’s golden calf apostasy causes a judgment crisis, but the intercession of Moses and the repentance of Israel bring God’s redemptive grace. The psalmist understood: “The LORD executes righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel. The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to

threatening clouds of God’s justice, the prophet also speaks of God’s mercy to Egypt and Assyria and His redemptive blessing with these powerful words:

“In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the LORD at its border. And it will be for a sign and for a witness to the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they will cry to the LORD because of the oppressors, and He will send them a Savior and a Mighty One, and He will deliver them. Then the

God is passionately concerned about the sinfulness, abuse, corruption, brutality, and bloodshed that harm His children and destroy the earth He created and treasures.

attitudes on the Almighty Judge.

Compare Jonah’s attitude toward Nineveh with Abraham’s toward Sodom and Gomorrah. Jonah is called to warn Nineveh of their deserving doom but runs away from his commission and later tells God that he ran because he knew God would show compassion. By contrast, when God tells Abraham that He will destroy Sodom and Gomorrah because of its sin, Abraham accepts God’s sovereign justice, knowing that “the Judge of all the earth” (Gen. 18:25) would do right. But Abraham knows that the Divine Judge is also gracious to the repentant sinner and so intercedes with God on behalf of Sodom (Gen. 18).

Bible writers are consistent: as Judge, God will deal with sin, while at the same time, offering a way of forgiveness and salvation. This can be traced throughout Scripture. Some examples:

our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities” (Ps. 103:6–10). Many psalms celebrate God as Judge with “compassion on all he has made” (Ps. 145:8, 9, NIV).

- The prophet understood: God is gracious and compassionate. He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked but longs that they turn from their ways and live (Ezek. 18:23). His forgiveness and mercy are extended to anyone in any nation.
- Isaiah 19 provides another dramatic portrait of divine judgment and salvation. Verses 1–16 picture the judgment of God against Egypt: its heart will melt (v. 1); experiencing internal divisions will lead to a failure of its spirit (vv. 2–4); it will undergo a horrible drought, economic disaster, and administrative chaos (vv. 5–10). Against such

LORD will be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the LORD in that day, and will make sacrifice and offering; yes, they will make a vow to the LORD and perform it. And the LORD will strike Egypt, He will strike and heal it; they will return to the LORD, and He will be entreated by them and heal them.

“In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians.

“In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria—a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, says, ‘Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance’ ” (Isa. 19:19–25).

God's ultimate concerns

God is passionately concerned about the sinfulness, abuse, corruption, brutality, and bloodshed that harm His children and destroy the earth He created and treasures. So much so that what He declares about these issues takes up more space in the Bible than anything else. One thing we must not fail to understand: with God the causes of judgment never change, nor can He be accused of favoritism in His administration of justice. We all stand under judgment because of sin, and we can all turn to God and find mercy.

God can be trusted to be a just and righteous Judge. For one thing, the more any judge knows about a case, the more likely the case will be judged correctly. The heavenly court is headed by a Judge who knows the “end from the beginning.” Nothing is hidden from His eyes. He can even perceive all motives and therefore judge each case absolutely fairly: “He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness He shall judge the poor. . . . Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist” (Isa. 11:3–5).

Another essential quality for an upright judge is integrity (Exod. 23:6–8). The heavenly Judge is a “God of truth” (Ps. 31:5); “His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He” (Deut. 32:4). Wickedness will not go unnoticed, but it will be dealt with justly: “You caused judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared and was still, when God arose to judgment, to deliver all the oppressed of the earth” (Ps. 76:8, 9).

God never acts capriciously in petty anger. His judging acts are clearly related to sin and its effects—always for the purpose of delivering His people. This is underscored in Scripture (e.g., Jer. 5:12–17; 6:13–15). In fact, this is one reason biblical writers regularly rejoice that divine judgment is promised! “Let the sea roar and all it contains,

the world and those who dwell in it. Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy before the LORD, for He is coming to judge the earth; He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with equity” (Ps. 98:7–9, NASB).

According to this psalm and others, what calls for particular praise is the fact that God is coming to judge in righteousness and truth (Ps. 96:10, 13). Divine judgment is anticipated with joy because everything that is now suffering from injustice and violence will be set right. Judgment is good news!


Sin has terrible consequences, resulting either in divine condemnation or in forgiveness. God sometimes allows disaster that is “the fruit of their schemes” (Jer. 6:19, NIV; see also Hos. 8:7; 10:13), also insisting: “I will pour out their wickedness upon them” (Jer. 14:16, NRSV). God judges all “according to their ways, according to the fruit of their doings” (Jer. 17:10, NRSV; see also 32:19); “according to their own judgments I will judge them” (Ezek. 7:27, NRSV). He always is concerned about fairness and accountability, promising that the judgment will fit the crime. He mediates consequences intrinsic to the wickedness itself, yet His salvific intent is always consistent with His gracious determination to bless. For example, Jeremiah presents to both Judah and the surrounding nations the identical gift of divine forgiveness and restoration, if only they will repent (Jer. 12:14–17).

Sin contaminates and wreaks havoc with all creation. The wicked prosper (v. 1), and the innocent suffer the consequences of the effects of the sins of others. Human sinfulness affects all life, including animals and even the land. The natural world is innocently caught up in the results of sin, a testimony to the interconnectedness of life, something scientists are just beginning to understand. Therefore, not surprisingly, final restoration will include the natural world. Both Testaments insist that God’s purpose is nothing less than a new heaven and new earth where

justice will prevail universally. Nature will be restored, ending the violence the earth has had to suffer. No wonder the prophets and the psalmist plead for judgment.

The entire Bible consistently reveals the merciful character of the divine Judge without ever reducing or ignoring the terrible realities of sin. The New Testament never denies or nullifies what the Old Testament reveals about God’s comprehensive commitment to justice and His relentless hatred of all that oppresses or diminishes life. Likewise, His promise of blessing all people has never changed. Biblical writers deal honestly with the gravity of sin because they know the divine remedy.

In fact, in terms of straightforward legal thinking, God as Judge is much too lenient. He is patient, forbearing, and “slow to anger,” even relenting from bringing judgment on the wicked who repent. However, in mercy, God ultimately will completely destroy sin and its dreadful consequences.³ He has a comprehensive redemptive agenda that is open to everyone and all creation—and He yearns to finish His great salvation. Yes, “the Judge of all the earth” will do right: “The LORD is our Judge, the LORD is our Lawgiver, the LORD is our King; He will save us” (Isa. 33:22).

Dare to look into the face of the heavenly Judge and see your Savior! 

1 Unless otherwise stated, all scriptural references are from the New King James Version.

2 Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 328.

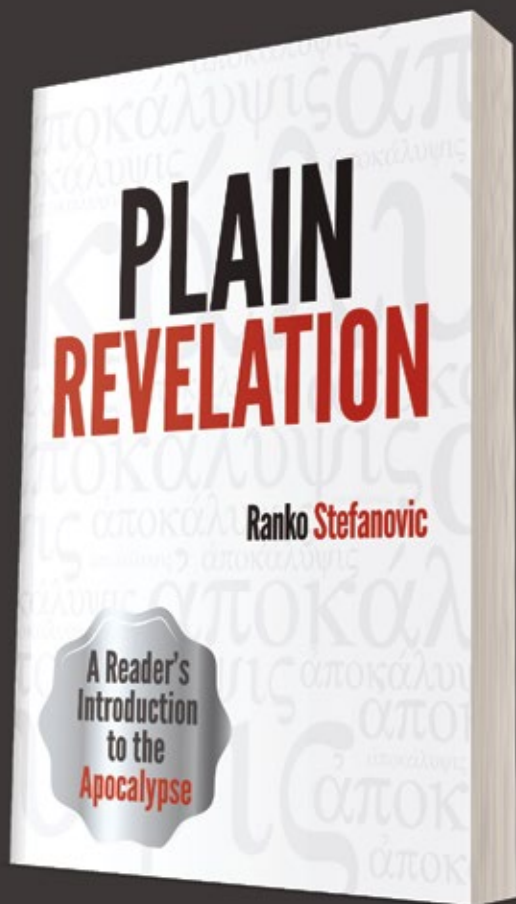
3 Ellen White describes this principle when writing about ancient Jerusalem: “Christ came to save Jerusalem with her children; but Pharisaical pride, hypocrisy, jealousy, and malice had prevented Him from accomplishing His purpose. Jesus knew the terrible retribution which would be visited upon the doomed city. . . . ‘Jerusalem had been the child of His care, and as a tender father mourns over a wayward son, so Jesus wept over the beloved city. How can I give thee up? How can I see thee devoted to destruction? Must I let thee go to fill up the cup of thine iniquity? One soul is of such value that, in comparison with it, worlds sink into insignificance; but here was a whole nation to be lost. . . . While the last rays of the setting sun were lingering on temple, tower, and pinnacle, would not some good angel lead her to the Saviour’s love, and avert her doom? . . . [H]er day of mercy was almost spent!’

“ . . . If Jerusalem will hear the call, if she will receive the Saviour who is entering her gates, she may yet be saved.” *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1940), 577, 578.

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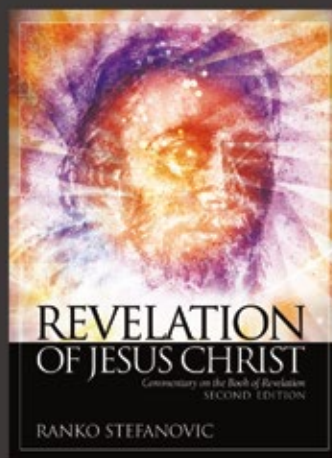


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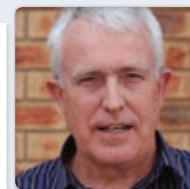
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Peter Roennfeldt, a retired pastor still active in church planting, lives in Caroline Springs, Victoria, Australia.



Samoan churches multiplying— with one pastor!

With approximately four million people representing more than 200 nationalities, the Australian city of Melbourne is truly multicultural and diverse. A Bible Belt exists in the east-to-southeast, where most churches are found, a greater amount with a Caucasian European/Australian heritage. In the early 1990s, Samoan pastor Eddie Erika helped facilitate the first Samoan church in this Bible Belt. Four years later, a North Melbourne group developed. After eight years in New Zealand, Eddie returned to Melbourne to pastor the Samoan churches.

Today, there are seven Samoan churches or fellowships (Carrum Downs, North Melbourne, Pakenham, Craigieburn, Melton, Sunshine, and Werribee), with two others about to launch. A unique feature of this multiplying network is that Eddie is the only conference-employed pastor. This is unusual for such a wide spread of churches across a city—with some more than 100 kilometers (62 miles) from each other. It is also unique because in the Samoan setting, the cultural expectations indicate that pastors head the structures of each local church. Even with minimal supervision from employed pastors, Eddie believes this network will continue to grow.

Some may wonder whether the pastor is creating a “little kingdom,” a

Samoan conference within the Victorian Conference. Might this stoke the pastor’s ego? What is the relationship with the wider network of churches? “It is a good story that needs to be heard,” says Pastor Darren Croft, executive secretary of the Victorian Conference. “At the last two elders’ conferences, the Samoan local leaders have been a significant presence, and their energy and positive attitude have been infectious for others. Statistically, the Samoan churches are one of the significant church growth stories within the conference.”

How has this network developed? Two decades ago, Pastor Eddie Erika and I worked together and I was able to observe his pastoral skills and depth of thinking. Recently, we spent some time together. I wondered, Where did this vision of a multiplying network of churches crystallize? And, how does it work?

“It started when I left the church!”

As a young man Eddie joined the many young people voting with their feet—and left the church. To him, church was a performance-oriented system in which most attendees were not involved spiritually. “I felt ordinary, alienated at the base of an organizational and cultural hierarchy,” he says. “It’s a mind-set: two controlling cultures—church and Samoan—in which your performance gives you a *lift* in status. Young people go

to church because they are told to, and, ‘it’s a meeting place.’” Eddie explains that one day when a pastor (who represented the top of the hierarchical church system) thrust an Avondale College application form in front of him. He filled it in, went to Avondale, and trained—and then, as a pastor, found himself at the top of the hierarchical pyramid and “very uncomfortable.” He says, “There is a Samoan saying that *blessings flow from the top*, but as pastors we expect *blessings to flow up*—for we are at the top, to be served.”

“It changed when I found Philippians 2.”

It was early in his ministry experience that Eddie found Philippians 2, and the realization dawned that our “attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who being in very nature God . . . made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant [slave]” (Phil. 2:5–7, NIV). “Because not many understand this scripture, I needed to bring myself back from the pinnacle of the hierarchical structure to the bottom—and proactively exalt others,” Eddie observes. “This was really threatening to others in the system.

“If I stayed at the pinnacle, all were comfortable, for they could maintain their positions as expected in the church system. It was a question of, ‘Where have you gone, Pastor? We don’t want status reversal.’”

What have you done to foster status reversal?

“First,” Eddie explained, “as a minister to all, there were barriers to be broken.” In his context, he chose to dress down—wearing jeans and a jacket to church, dressing neatly but casually, avoiding stereotypical power dressing. His actions were deliberate, intentional, challenging, and at times, confrontational—both breaking barriers and building bridges.

Second, “it’s not about me,” Eddie affirms. “It’s about the team. That’s huge. That’s what we do.” But his next step was more radical.

“We didn’t have a nominating committee meeting for four years.” Eddie was not doing away with the nominating committee process. Rather, he “wanted all to learn to think of gifts and talents, to all come and share what they have—not to vie with each other for positions.” Elders became a team with each one serving as the team leader for two to three months at a time. “The idea was to break the concept of hierarchy,” Eddie explains, “to move away from a structure that everyone was trying to climb.” Elders learned that “others can lead, I don’t have to be at the top, others have gifts.” Now that they have come back to the nominating committee system, they are asking about the talents of each person, and every elder is also the leader of a small home group. Elders now regularly (at least weekly) report back to each other with all asking each other, “Is there anything we need to do to help your group?” All are encouraged to enjoy little things rather than trying to maintain status and formalities, and not to compare themselves with others. Good soil “produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown” (Matt. 13:23, NIV).

Discussion and Bible study were used to equip members and leaders—undergirded with prayer. At 5:00 A.M. every weekday morning for three years, a group of members from the mother church, Carrum Downs Samoan Church, met in the entrance foyer of the public hospital for 30 minutes of prayer. “We had to go back to really foundational

things,” explains Eddie. “There was a lot of conflict and dysfunction. We had to do radical things to cultivate status reversal. On Sabbath and Sunday mornings, we met at the church.” In each church in the network, members now gather at 8:30 or 9:00 A.M. for 30 minutes of prayer, often followed by breakfast, before Sabbath School and worship times.

Eddie also observes that the Lord’s Supper is a perfect opportunity to cultivate status reversal. “I tell the story of Jesus, and the young people and children catch on,” Eddie explains. “When I was a child, I had my hand slapped if I reached out to participate, but Jesus affirmed the faith of the ‘little ones.’” Eddie fosters an environment of participation: deconstructing hierarchical images by not always dressing formally, cultivating team work, temporarily removing the forums where some vie for power, ensuring prayer is normative, and constantly reflecting upon the status reversal of God in Jesus, powerfully illustrated in the Last Supper. The result? The path is cleared for involvement—and consequent growth.

The next generations are returning to church, involved and coming up with their own systems and ideas. They are becoming the leaders of new groups and have a special heart for many typically alienated by churches: women, youth, and innovators.

But, how do you maintain “organizational order” while fostering status reversal?

Is it possible for such a radical process of status reversal to maintain healthy and harmonious synergy within the wider denominational hierarchical system? Some consider the pastor to be at the pinnacle of the local church structure, but Eddie says, “I function from down at the bottom.” While there is a conference expectation that he controls what is happening, he says, “I just cannot and do not see myself at the top. It’s unscriptural.” However, conference leaders have become comfortable with these systems he has in place.

1. The churches are in clusters: two in the southeast of the city, two to the north, and three in the western suburbs. These clusters combine at least once each month for Sabbath worship services: Sabbath School, worship, and youth meetings around a fellowship meal. Eddie attends the combined days but takes a low-key role. Each church takes a turn in hosting the day. Youth are very involved in planning and coordinating with lots of music and participation. The churches share what they are doing, and each learns from the other.

2. The pastor gets to most elders’ meetings, but the churches care for board and business meetings themselves. There is a strong commitment to empowering each other.

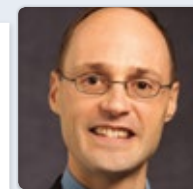
3. Groups become churches. People who are not yet members are invited to be involved in small groups, leading group activities, and these groups become the basis of new churches. A new church started in Melton (Samoan West), and soon after, the church discussed starting a new group in Sunshine (another western suburb). An open invitation was given to the whole group: “If there are some who would like to be involved in planting a new group in Sunshine, join us.” One of those who attended was a believer but not yet a member. He stepped up and, within a short time, was baptized, and a new church is now forming.

What does ministry look like for a pastor of an ever-expanding network of churches?

“My role has changed,” Eddie explains. “As overall team leader, I equip, mentor, and encourage. My task includes building others up—to equip people to build their teams. I work from home a lot, and spend most of my time in study and preparation for the role of equipping others.”

“It has been a long-term project for things to arrive where they are, with some significant challenges along the journey,” observes Darren Croft. “God’s working through Eddie and his team over that time has been remarkable.”

Stephane Beaulieu, PhD candidate, is a contract teacher at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States.



Salvation and deliverance:

Lessons from Exodus 14

The Bible is a book about what God has done and is doing to save, lead, and sanctify us. We can find expressions of just how God does this throughout the Scriptures.

For example, Exodus 14 narrates the deliverance of the Israelites at the Red Sea and the destruction of Pharaoh and the Egyptian army. Three lessons in this chapter teach about dependence on God's leading, salvation, judgment, justification, and sanctification.

At the beginning of the chapter, God led the children of Israel southward (Exod. 14:2, 9).¹ From a human perspective, this route could appear irrational, since it meant that Israel was walking in a desert and away from the Promised Land (v. 3). However, God asked Israel to do what seemed unreasonable so that He could do the impossible. God would be glorified for the significant miracle performed. God told Moses of the coming events. Why? So that when the events came to pass, the Israelites might believe God.

As we know, Pharaoh and his army pursued with chariots and horsemen until they caught up to Israel. Now Israel was afraid and cried to the Lord (v. 10). The following verses reveal our human nature when facing a desperate situation that is out of our control. The people complained to Moses: " 'Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness?' " (v. 11, NKJV).

In verses 15 through 18, God told Moses what to do, yet these actions were not carried out until verse 21. Verses 19 and 20 serve as an interlude in this passage. But even more than an interlude, these two verses are the center point of this passage, revealing God's presence among humanity. This is illustrated by the chiastic structure of Exodus 14:

- A. vv. 1–4 God will gain honor over Pharaoh so the Egyptians will know that He is the Lord.
- B. vv. 5–9 Chariots, captains, horsemen, and Pharaoh's army get ready, and the Egyptians pursue Israel and overtake them by the sea beside Pi Hahiroth.
- C. vv. 10–14 Israel is troubled, but the Lord will fight for them.
- D. vv. 15–18 God tells Moses to lift his rod and stretch out his hand over the sea.
- E. vv. 19–20 The Angel of God, as the cloud and Pillar of fire, comes between the Egyptians and Israel.
- D'. vv. 21–23 Moses stretches out his hand over the sea.
- C'. vv. 24–25 The Egyptians are troubled, and the Lord fights them.
- B'. vv. 26–29 Waters overtake the Egyptians by the sea (Red Sea), and the chariots, horsemen, and all the army of Pharaoh are destroyed.
- A'. vv. 30–31 The Lord saves Israel, and Israel believes the Lord.

First lesson

God is the Leader and Protector of His people; He is present with His people in difficulties. Three related points emerge from verses 19 and 20, the center of the chiasm:

1. *To walk in the light, we need to follow the Light.* The narrator gives us important details: the Angel of God and the Pillar were the same thing (Exod. 13:21, 22). This was the same God who appeared to Moses in Exodus 3:2. This Angel traveled in front of the Israelites. Therefore, we need to follow the Light, this Pillar.

2. *God's leading may not always appear to us as a light.* In Exodus 13:21, 22, we are told that the Angel of God had a special task. As the Pillar of cloud, His main function was to lead the people. This Pillar of cloud was also the Pillar of light. God may not always appear to us to be a light; He can also reveal Himself as a cloud (cf. Exod. 19:9; 20:18–21). However, whether God leads us in a pillar of light or cloud, we can trust and not be afraid.²

We need also to be humble when we follow the Light. God is the Leader; we are not capable of successfully leading our own lives. We need to be willing to be led; this is the reason He is in front of us.

3. *Sometimes God asks us to move ahead in faith, even though we cannot see Him in front of us.* Sometimes we do not recognize God's working in our

lives because we expect Him to be only in one form, light. Both the Pillar of cloud and the Pillar of light reveal the presence of God.³

God not only leads us, He protects us. As the Israelites advanced toward the Red Sea, the Pillar moved from in front of Israel and relocated behind them. This cloud came between the Israelites and the Egyptians as the Protector of Israel.

These verses (19, 20) reveal a powerful work already demonstrated in the previous chapters of Exodus, where darkness and light should have

Second lesson

Exodus 14:26–29, the B' portion of the chiasmic structure, reveals the amazing way God delivered Israel from the hands of Pharaoh and the Egyptian army. In verse 26, the outstretched hand of Moses parallels “the great work which the LORD had done in Egypt” (v. 31, NKJV); in Hebrew, this literally reads: “the great hand which the LORD had done over the Egyptians.” Furthermore, both the “great hand” of the Lord and the “outstretched hand” of Moses are in opposition to the “hand of the Egyptians” (v. 30), which

caused rain to pour out from heaven. In Exodus, the Lord also caused the water to divide; then the waters came back on the Egyptians (Exod. 14:26), and “the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea” (v. 27, NKJV).

A second allusion between these two stories is the “wind,” *rûah*, that divided the sea so the Israelites could walk through (v. 21). A “wind” was also used in Genesis 8:1 to dry the earth after the Flood. Furthermore, after the “wind” had gone over the earth to dry the world after the Genesis flood, in “the six hundred and first year, in

What God was about to do with Israel in having them cross the Red Sea was a type of cutting off the old way of living—that is leaving Egypt behind—and moving on to a new life.

strengthened the Israelites' faith. The ninth plague revealed the darkness that was upon Egypt as a sign to Pharaoh and his people, while Israel enjoyed light. Then, in the tenth and final plague, God revealed Himself one more time in power in how He was delivering His people Israel. The Lord that night came to Egypt, and the Egyptians' firstborn were killed (Exod. 12:23–25, 27, 28).

And at the banks of the sea, the cloud moved between the Egyptians and the Israelites, and darkness rested on the Egyptians while light illuminated Israel throughout the night. At daybreak this time, not at midnight (Exod. 14:27), the Egyptians were killed.⁴

Just as Moses said, God is the Warrior for His people, but we need to follow Him. As we follow Him in faith, He will protect us from our enemies as He leads us toward the amazing plans He has for us (cf. Jer. 29:11).

intended to kill the Israelites. The hand of God is a salvific hand, capable of saving God's people from any enemies. God is the subject of the verb “saved,” *yôšā'* (v. 30), suggesting that while Moses' hand was used to open and close the Red Sea, the saving did not come from Moses but from God, who performed the action of opening and closing the Red Sea.

God's saving of Israel in verses 21–29 alludes to Genesis 6–8, where a global flood destroyed humanity because of its wickedness (Gen. 6:13). In Exodus 14:21–29, the Egyptians were destroyed, not by a global flood or by rain but by water from the sea. Therefore, this destruction could be seen as a type of local flood destroying a nation who had enslaved Israel. Its relationship to Genesis 6–8 is strengthened by the fact that in Genesis, God closed the door of the ark (Gen. 7:16) and

the first month, . . . Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and indeed the surface of the ground was dry” *hārab* (Gen. 8:13, NKJV; emphasis added). This same noun “dry up,” *hārābā*, where the wind “dried up” the ground, is found in Exodus 14:21. When Israel crossed the Red Sea, we are told that they walked on “dry ground” *yabbāšā* (Exod. 14:29, NIV; emphasis added); “Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry ground” *yabbāšā* (v. 22, NKJV). Again, the verb “dry up,” *yābaš*, is also found in Genesis 8:14. Finally, a third allusion, using the word “cleave, divide, split” in reference to the water, correlates between Exodus 14:16, 21 and Genesis 7:11.⁵

These allusions reveal how God used a similar approach in delivering people. In both accounts, God is portrayed as the Author of judgment and salvation.⁶

Third lesson

Justification is revealed in several ways in Exodus 14, both in how the Israelites responded to God and how God worked for their deliverance. Israel's first response, when they saw the Egyptians drawing near to them, was to become afraid (Exod. 14:10) and then to complain to Moses—in reality the complaints were directed to God Himself. “‘Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, “Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians?” For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness’ ” (vv. 11, 12, NKJV).

For God to be glorified, He has to bring us to the realization of greater needs than what seems to us to be our obvious need during a time of crisis; these greater needs are the need for God and the need for self to die. What God was about to do with Israel in having them cross the Red Sea was a type of cutting off the old way of living—that is, leaving Egypt behind—and moving on to a new life. This is a picture of justification.

And Moses' answer to the people reveals the foundational principle of justification: “‘Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. . . . The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace’ ” (vv. 13, 14, NKJV). Moses was asking Israel to trust God. Trusting God is the foundation of justification, letting God have control over our plans, ideas, dreams, and goals.


Justification is what God does on behalf of His people. God stands beside those with whom He has made a covenant. God does not let His promise fall short of reality. He promised Abraham that He would make his name great and seed numerous (Gen. 12:1–3), and Israel came out of Egypt as a partial fulfillment of that promise (see Exod. 2:24; 4:22, 23; 6:5).

This justification was sealed by Israel's faith. Israel walked through the

sea on dry ground; by doing so, they had to believe that God was going to bring salvation. In turn, this symbolism of walking through the divided sea pointed to New Testament baptism (cf. Rom. 6:1–10; 1 Cor. 10:1, 2). In a sense, Israel was baptized by water. Thus, justification is God's work that divides the sea and brings deliverance. Baptism is also God's working in the lives of people.

Sanctification is also part of this story. God does not bring people to the water and then leave them there; He also changes lives from the old to the new (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:1–10; 12:1, 2). After Israel crossed the sea, the Egyptians pursued them. Again God worked for Israel's sanctification. The Egyptians' chariot wheels came off (Exod. 14:25, ESV), and the waters returned and covered the Egyptians (v. 26). Earlier, Moses told the people, “‘For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever’ ” (v. 13, NKJV). These verses reveal a new beginning for Israel, who was to leave behind the gods of Egypt and walk with the God of their salvation. For this reason, “the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD and His servant Moses” (v. 31, NKJV). God does not leave people where they are, He changes them by removing the old “Egyptian” views and influences.

Conclusion

Exodus 14 contains many lessons for us today about how God works in difficult circumstances to bring out the best in His people. First, this chapter reveals, at its center, that God is the Leader and Protector of His people; He is present with His people in difficulties. Second, Exodus 14 alludes to the ninth and tenth plagues as well as to the Flood in Genesis 6–8 and Creation in Genesis 1, revealing the salvation and judgment process in Exodus 14 as being a vital part of the overall biblical great controversy theme. Finally, Exodus 14 teaches us about justification and sanctification, in both of which God is involved, not leaving His people in the place where He finds them but leading them to a new understanding of trust, belief, and faith. 

- 1 The exact locations of Pi Hahiroth, Migdol, and Baal Zephon are unknown.
- 2 See John 1:10, 11.
- 3 See Isaiah 8.
- 4 See Peter Enns, *Exodus*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 275.
- 5 See Victor P. Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011), 217, 218.
- 6 One more brief observation: Exodus 14 is not only related to Genesis 6–8, similar words are also found in Genesis 1. For example, the word “wind, spirit” (Gen. 1:2) is in both Genesis 8:1 and Exodus 14:21. “Dry ground” also appears in Genesis 1:9, 10 as well as in Genesis 7:22; 8:7, 13, 14; and Exodus 14:21, 22. The linkage of these stories taught Israel in Exodus 14 that God is the Creator, and no other gods—certainly not the gods of the Egyptians—could do what the Lord did. He is in control of what He created, and the creation obeys His commands.

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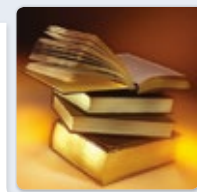
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Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet

Edited by Terrie Dopp Aamodt, Gary Land, and Ronald L. Numbers, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

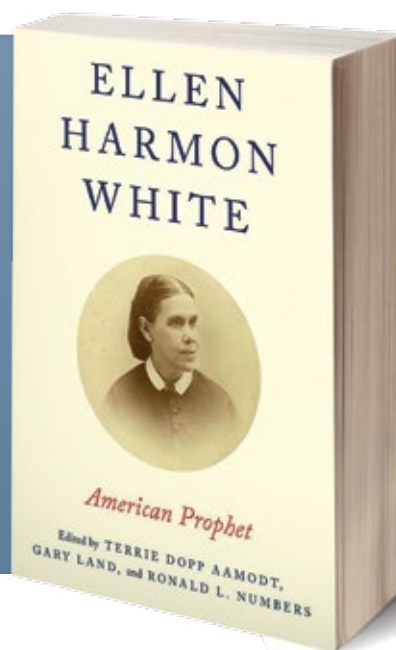
Ellen G. Harmon White finally makes it to Oxford University. For readers who know little about Ellen White (1827–1915), she was one of the most prolific female religious writers in nineteenth-century America. Not only so, this woman who had a third-grade education helped found a major denomination and sprawling educational system.

This book—a surprising outcome—goes back to an Ellen White Biography Conference (October 22–25, 2009) in Portland, Maine, her childhood hometown. This conference was historic in that it brought together most historians of Ellen White and many experts on her nineteenth-century American religious context. The participants included Seventh-day Adventists who work for the church or its institutions, others who are retired or work outside the church, and a distinguished group of non-Adventist scholars of American religion from institutions such as Harvard, Princeton, Duke, and Wisconsin. The dynamic at the conference and in the resulting book from Oxford well illustrates the challenge of biography as a genre. In the case of Ellen White, the evidence of her life and writings are just too vast, so there is the problem of selection. Which incident or statement tells who the person really is? Which reflects the “real” Ellen White? People will differ as to how well this multiauthor biography of Ellen White succeeded in achieving that balance. On the whole, I think it did as well as anyone could hope. On my part, I was disappointed in the occasional word

All in all, I was surprised by how many insights I gained into Ellen White's life and ministry from this book.

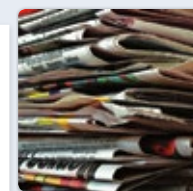
that betrayed an author's slip from historical objectivity. Did Ellen White's *Testimonies* really “betray” those who received them (12)? Was it necessary to say that Ellen White followed a “discredited historicism approach” (185)? Frankly, as a Seventh-day Adventist who believes and appreciates Ellen White's inspiration, I found the characterization of Adventist apocalyptic on pages 185–190 distasteful. But these slipups were the exception in the book rather than the rule. All in all, I was surprised by how many insights I gained into Ellen White's life and ministry from this book.

This book will not please everyone. In fact, it may offend some readers on both sides of the controversial issues, but I believe this book makes two huge contributions. First, most of us



are accustomed to reading the Bible in its ancient context, as far as possible. But we tend to read Ellen White out of context, universalizing personal testimonies in ways that can be confusing and unbalanced. This book can help readers put the writings of Ellen White in their proper balance and context. Rightly understood, she remains as relevant today as she ever was. Second, the book will also put Ellen White “on the map” of non-Adventist scholarship and culture. In the long run, the book may do more to bring her to the attention of the wider world. ▣

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



► Innovation is key to relevance in new “attention economy,” media experts say

Linthicum Heights, Maryland, United States—Pushing the boundaries is no longer enough. Seventh-day Adventist tech and media professionals at this year’s Global Adventist Internet Network (GAIN) conference, held in February 2014, were challenged to leave the boundaries in the rearview mirror or risk becoming irrelevant.

Speaking during one of the morning worship services, **Pardon Mwansa**, a general vice president for the Adventist world church, told hundreds of Web professionals that the “boundary mind-set” and the “expansion mind-set” are limiting the scope of Adventist mission and ministry. A boundary mind-set is throttled by traditions; an expansion mind-set is content reimagining those traditions. What is needed instead, he said, is a “creation mind-set.”



“It’s easier to go where others have already been. But who is it who has improved this world? People who have broken the boundaries,” Mwansa said,

citing early explorers, civil rights leaders, and tech innovators. “We will not get anywhere with a boundary mind-set.”

Author and marketing consultant **Martha Gabriel** amplified that idea in her keynote address, describing what she called “simplicity plateaus,” in which an organization stagnates at a level of technology they have mastered.

“We can’t stay here. Know the next level you need to conquer,” she said.

And, perhaps more importantly, she added, *know your audience*. In today’s attention economy, messages compete for relevance. “You need to understand what makes your audience’s hearts beat faster. If you are not part of the message they want to hear, you are part of the noise,” Gabriel said. Organizations that thrive in the attention economy know that the currency of ideas and information is no longer enough to succeed. “Ideas alone are worthless. What we need now are people who make things happen,” Gabriel said.

For Adventist pastor **Sam Neves** and a development team from the church’s British Union Conference, that meant not waiting until the church got behind a comic-book style trivia game called *Heroes*.

The first Seventh-day Adventist game for iPhone and iPad, *Heroes* was downloaded 3,000 times in the first 48 hours of its release, tripling the benchmark analysts say a mobile app should meet in its first week to be considered successful.

On the final day of GAIN, the Adventist world church Youth Ministries



department signed a deal to help support the Android release of *Heroes*. The game reintroduces players to heroic biblical characters—such as Abraham, David, and Esther—while testing their Bible knowledge with quiz questions. Players can compare scores with their friends on Facebook.

“We realized that to bring a sense of identity to a new generation, we needed to remind them of who their heroes are,” Neves said. “And what better way than to use a medium they are very familiar with?”

Said **Daryl Gungadoo**, distribution and network engineer for Adventist World Radio Europe, “Indeed, ‘gamification’ is the new frontier, and successful companies will find ways to engage their audience with games.”

Another presenter challenged the popular adage that “content is king” in social media. **Sonja Kovacevic**, content manager of LIFEconnect in the church’s Trans-European Division, proposed that instead, “the audience is king. [Our audience] prefers to trust someone they know. And they come to know us when we offer useful content. They come to like us when they enjoy our content. And they come to trust us when our content is credible, consistent, and free.” [Elizabeth Lechleitner/ANN, with additional reporting by Ansel Oliver *tedNEWS*] [▶](#)



G. T. Ng, PhD, is the executive secretary at the Seventh-day Adventist world headquarters.

Arlaine Djim is one of the charter members of the Chinese Ministry Center.

Irene Tarigan is one of the health educators of the Chinese Ministry Center.

Two taxi drivers, one tale

In the midst of chaotic traffic on a sunny day in Jakarta, Indonesia, a taxi driver picked up a passenger from a hospital near the Cideng District. “Why are you visiting the hospital today?” asked the driver.

“I have been seeing a doctor for abdominal pain,” replied the passenger. “I have just discovered that I have a tumor and will need surgery.”

The driver was sympathetic. “Why don’t you go to Club Sehat [a health club] in Cideng? Maybe they can help you. It is a place where they teach you how to live healthfully.” The passenger’s curiosity was piqued. He could not wait a moment longer and asked to be taken there right away.

“It is a place where they teach you how to live healthfully.”

Inside Club Sehat, a health lecture was taking place. He listened with interest and then made an appointment to see Liong Pit Lin, one of the principal health lecturers. She has devoted herself to lifestyle ministry after surviving three types of cancer. Lin recommended several lifestyle changes, and the man faithfully followed the new principles he had learned. Several months later, his doctor found that the tumor had significantly shrunk.

A second taxi driver, in another part of town, was a Protestant Christian. Though retired, he continued driving

as a ministry to his passengers. He was a keen listener of the weekly Adventist radio broadcasts on health and became familiar with Club Sehat through them. While attending health lectures, he became excited about the health message and started sharing it with all of his passengers. He discovered that witnessing about health crossed all religious and cultural boundaries. Today, he brings his passengers to Club Sehat on a regular basis.

What do these two taxi drivers have in common? For one, they are excited about Club Sehat. Second, they have both become ambassadors of Club Sehat. Their message is the same: if you wish to improve your quality of life, Club Sehat is the place to go. They have become ardent supporters because they have followed the health messages and have seen their own health improve remarkably. There are no expensive advertising campaigns. By word of mouth alone, the news has spread.

Club Sehat is the brainchild of a group of laypeople from five churches who are committed to reaching out to the affluent living in Jakarta, a city of 12 million people. Since 2003, they have faithfully followed Ellen White’s counsel on reaching the cities by making their churches centers of influence. They started a weekly radio broadcast on health topics, drawing a continuous stream of interested listeners to Club Sehat. After health presentations come 30-minute inspirational messages delivered by a pastor. Most guests stay for the sermon. Here, the gospel and medical missions work in concert. There are currently three Club Sehat locations.


To finance this unique ministry, a health food grocery store was opened in each club. There are cooking

demonstrations on Sundays, and the freshly cooked vegetarian foods sell out quickly. Part of the proceeds from the stores are reinvested into the ministry.

Club Sehat also offers health consultations for individuals and families. Liong Pit Lin conducts most of the consultations. As health problems are often related to spiritual maladies, she brings biblical principles to the forefront.

All over Jakarta, the affluent are looking for answers. They have lived the “good life,” yet many are afflicted with debilitating lifestyle diseases. They know medication is not a permanent solution, so they come looking for alternatives.

One of the people looking for answers was a top fashion designer. Though well-educated, he was a broken man. While on a business trip to Bali, he happened to be staying in the same hotel as Ms. Dewi, another Club Sehat health presenter. One day he chanced upon Dewi praying, and he pleaded with her to pray for his health. Dewi shared some health tips with him and invited him to attend the health lectures in Jakarta. After he returned to Jakarta, Liong Pit Lin and Dewi visited him in his home. He followed their recommendations and could not help but notice the marked improvement in his health. Later, he attended health seminars at Club Sehat and quit smoking. Today he visits regularly and often brings his friends from the entertainment world.

Except for the church pastors, all workers in this specialized ministry are volunteers. Their health ministries are lay-initiated, lay-motivated, and lay-committed. The health and spiritual messages are presented side by side, collaborating. There are no high-pressure tactics. In a quiet and sustained manner, Club Sehat serves its community. 

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