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Courage

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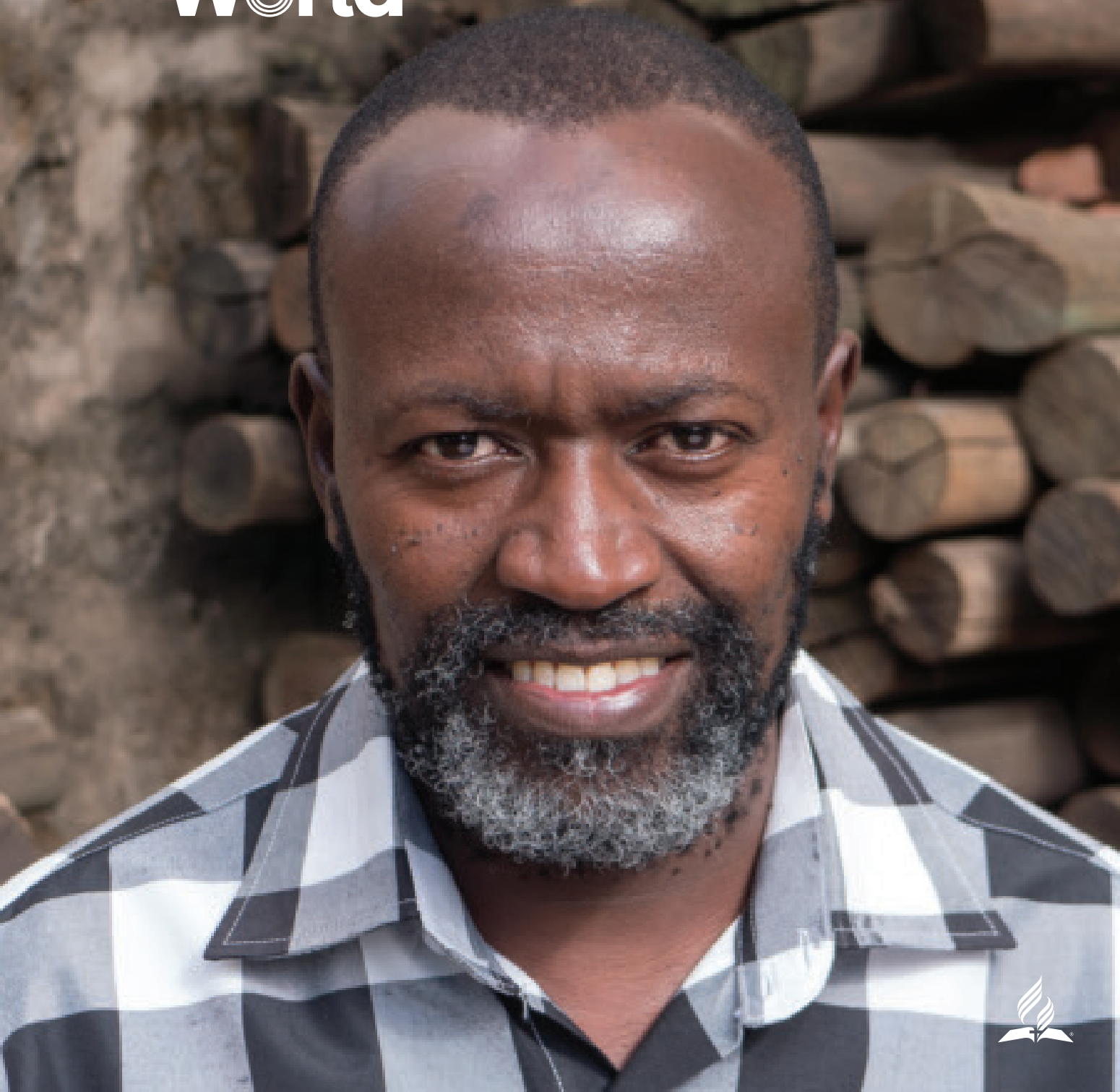
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**August 2019**

The Church  
I Want to  
Belong to Is...

# Adventist World

## COURAGEOUS



# Adventist World

## About the Cover

David Njaaga, 51, lives in Nairobi, Kenya. He sells timber and timber products at a local market. He and his wife, Mary, and two children, Eva and Alvarjoe, attend the Gloryland Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Westlands of Nairobi. David tells us: "I enjoy being an Adventist because I have learned important Bible truths, how to live healthier, obey God, and become a wholesome individual."

Photo credit: Njeri Gakuo

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## Heroes for All of Us

BY BILL KNOTT

**W**e tell the hero stories of the Bible with the best of intentions. We want to remind each other, and especially our children, of God's unmatched ability to initiate world-altering events through the effort and risk of one dedicated individual.

Moses climbs to Sinai's crest, a solitary figure wrapped in the cloud of God's presence.

David, freed at last of King Saul's cumbersome armor, walks down into the Valley of Elah to face the giant none of his countrymen will challenge.

Daniel, undaunted by the threats of retribution, prays three times a day where enemies can see him, and spends a night with hungry lions.

Mary heroically accepts her destiny as mother of the Messiah, even though it will bring her more pain than any mother ought to have to bear.

But notice with me that the courageous actions we applaud were not only the solitary acts of solitary individuals, moved by God to do what others would not do. Each was acting, in their unique context, on behalf of the wider people of God—for the good of the many—as they did their acts of bravery.

Moses intercedes with God, becoming, even with his weaknesses, a type of Christ, the great High Priest, who faithfully intercedes with us before the Father (Heb. 4:14).

David is the champion of an entire army. He enters into personal combat that will determine the destiny of all of Israel. He stands in place of all of them.

Daniel, known for praying three times a day, tells us that in his prayers he is "confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel" (Dan. 9:20). It is the representative of God's people, and not just the solitary hero, who is thrown into the lions' den.

And Mary consciously invokes in her amazing prayer (Luke 1:46-55) the choice she is making on behalf of generations both before and after her in bringing to the world a Saviour.

Heroic stories of individuals who stand against the odds are right and proper in their place, but they should never obscure that the plan of salvation is always and inevitably about the people of God—the church—whether glimpsed in the ancient tribal federation of Israel, exiled during the lifetime of Daniel, or testifying to the Spirit's power in the Roman world.

The courage to which God calls us is the courage to do more than personally significant acts of bravery. It is to think about, plan for, and act on behalf of God's people as they wait for final redemption from a world that targets them for their faithfulness and loyalty to Jesus.

As you read this month's edition of *Adventist World*, ask the Lord to make you ever more aware of how your choices and your actions benefit the faithful who await His appearing. You may very well be the person of courage we all need just now.

**The Church I want to belong to is . . . courageous.**

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

**Attendees of the 2019 Religious Liberty Annual Dinner in Washington, D.C., participate in a reception ahead of the dinner and presentations. Organized by the Adventist Church, the annual event draws government leaders and religious liberty advocates from around the United States and the world.**

Photo: Adventist News Network



## “For me, it’s an affirmation that preparation in Christian education can still provide you success in the world.”

—David Williams, professor of public health and chair of the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the Harvard University School of Public Health, and professor of African and African American studies and sociology at Harvard University. Williams was recently elected to the National Academy of Sciences in the United States, the first Seventh-day Adventist to receive that distinction. Williams holds several degrees from Adventist institutions, both undergraduate and graduate.

## “Don Schneider’s greatest passion was to introduce people to his best friend, Jesus.”

—G. Alexander Bryant, North American Division (NAD) executive secretary, reflecting on the legacy of Don Schneider, former NAD president. Schneider died on May 23, 2019, at the age of 76.

## “It’s arguably the biggest drag on economic development.”

—Jonathan Duffy, president of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), speaking about corruption at an international summit in Geneva, Switzerland. Duffy joined hundreds of interfaith world leaders to discuss fostering inclusivity and countering hate speech to enhance the protection of religious minorities, refugees, and migrants. As part of a presentation, he shared some of the global trends in migration and highlighted what drives migration.

## 100,000

The number of spiritual tracts distributed in one day in Tokyo by the 40 attendees to the Youth Rush Conference at the Setagaya youth church in Japan. Since 2011, 111 people have participated in Youth Rush Japan—a student literature program resulting in multiple Bible study requests and several individuals attending an Adventist church after being invited to do so by student workers.

## 52,000

The number of people who packed into a sports stadium in Peru as part of weekend celebrations marking the 100th anniversary of Peruvian Union University, an Adventist institution with about 12,000 students located outside Lima. To celebrate the milestone, the university is sending 100 student missionaries around the world.

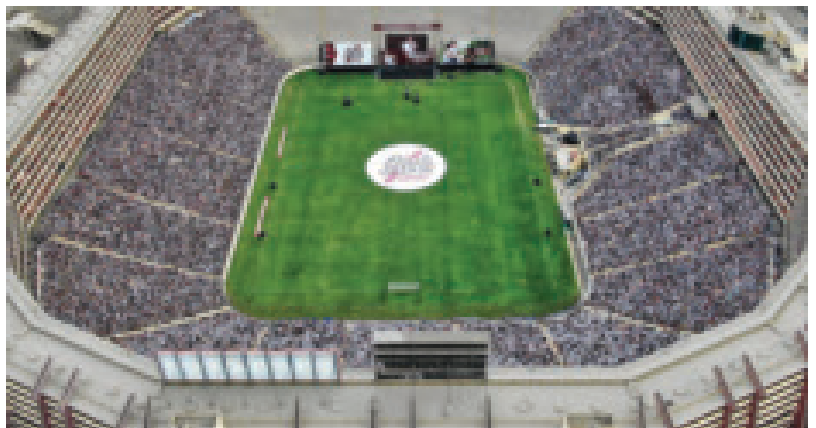


Photo: Courtesy of “Pastor Ted Wilson” Facebook Account

## US\$246,000

The amount of funds raised by Adventist-Laymen's Services and Industries (ASI) Europe attendees during the 2019 ASI Europe Convention in Paris, France. The offering will support 17 mission projects and initiatives around Europe. The convention brought together participants from Europe, Africa, and the United States. During the event ASI members shared, inspired, and motivated others with living testimonies of missionaries, ministries, and business people.

**"If stress is sustained for a long period of time, it's also going to increase the chances of a physical health condition or mental health condition developing or worsening."**

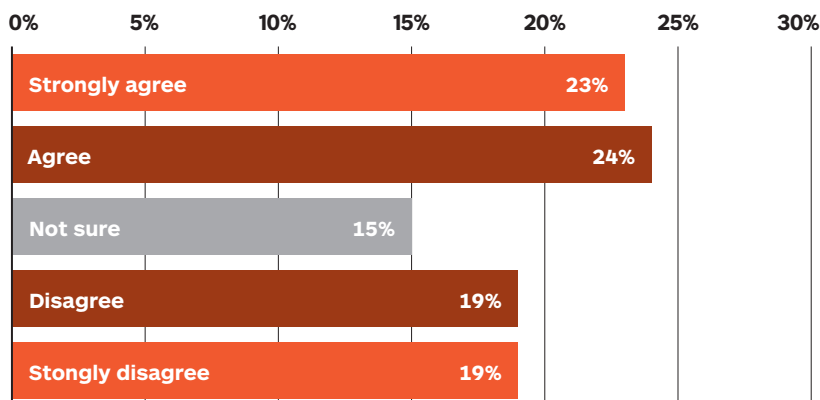
—Brian Distelberg, director of research for Loma Linda University Health's Behavioral Medicine Center, who works to uncover the impact of stress. While we can't ever completely avoid stress, says Distelberg, people can combat stress by building their resiliency by eating a healthy diet, getting enough sleep, and exercising.

## Adventists, Diet, and Salvation

Source: General Conference 2018 Global Membership Survey

GCMS 2018 Q51.5, n=55,822

**When asked, "Does diet and lifestyle contribute to one's salvation?" people responded in the following percentages:**



### Let's Be Clear

"The Adventist Church does not support the belief that following its health message ensures salvation to any degree. Salvation is a gift from God. The Adventist health message emphasizes physical health, mental health, emotional well-being, social support, and relationships as a part of spiritual growth. . . . Pastors and church leaders worldwide should pay more attention to clarifying the relationship between salvation and, among other things, the health message."—Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research.

**"He has gone from being a hard-hearted criminal to a man who cares for others and seeks to share the hope he has found in his Savior, Jesus Christ, with those who do not yet know Him."**

—Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, in a letter to the governor of Tennessee in the United States appealing for a stay of execution for Donnie Johnson, who was convicted for killing his wife in 1984. In prison Johnson was baptized as an Adventist, began a prison ministry to fellow inmates, and was eventually ordained as a local church elder. Johnson was ultimately executed on May 17, 2019.

## Seventh-day Adventist Elected Prime Minister in Papua New Guinea

By Adventist World staff and Jarrod Stackelroth, *Adventist Record*

Seventh-day Adventist James Marape, 48, was elected as the eighth prime minister of Papua New Guinea (PNG) in the capital city of Port Moresby on May 30, 2019.

His appointment comes after weeks of turmoil that rocked the PNG government and eventually led to the resignation of former prime minister Peter O'Neill.

According to BBC News, lawmakers voted overwhelmingly to elect Marape. The Al Jazeera news service reported that the PNG legislative body welcomed Marape after Speaker Job Pomat announced the 101-8 result of the vote supporting Marape as prime minister.

Marape, the country's former finance minister, is the member of Parliament for the Tari-Pori electorate in the Hela province. He is an elder of Korobosea Seventh-day

Adventist Church, and attended Kabiufa Adventist Secondary School in Kabiufa, in the Eastern Highlands province.

The official page of the PNG Parliament lists Marape's achievements, stating that he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) in 1993, and a Postgraduate Honours degree in environmental science, also from UPNG, in 2000.

According to *The Guardian*, in his speech after his election, Marape said he would work to fix the struggling economy. "We will look to maximizing gain from what God has given this country from our natural resources," Marape is quoted as saying. "This government is all about putting our country in the right place."

In a Facebook post after his election, Marape wrote that it is a privilege to be the chief servant of this nation of a thousand tribes. He added, "I don't promise I will be [the] answer to all our nation's problems, but I do promise I will give my very best effort to make a difference!"

Marape also gave credit to God for guiding his life. "Without God, I would not have come thus far from nothing, [so] the least I can do is do my best for God's children in Papua New Guinea."

Glenn Townend, Seventh-day Adventist Church South Pacific Division president, said the regional Adventist leadership congratulates Marape and promises to pray for him in this new, important role. "The South Pacific Division congratulates the Honorable James Marape on becoming the eighth Papua New Guinean prime minister," Townend said. "We pray that he will continue to receive guidance from God as he leads this significant country. His Seventh-day Adventist values and heritage will hold him in good standing."

The election of Marape marks another milestone for the Adventist Church in Papua New Guinea and around the world, as the three top leaders of the country are members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Besides Marape as head of the executive branch, the legislative branch is headed by Speaker Job Pomat. Chief Justice Gibbs Salika, also an Adventist, heads the judiciary branch.

It is a unique case in the world, according to Adventist Church leaders.



**James Marape, a Seventh-day Adventist church member and elder, was elected as the eighth prime minister of Papua New Guinea in Port Moresby on May 30, 2019.**

Photo: Adventist Record



## Taiwan Adventists: Ready for a Change

By Northern Asia-Pacific Division, and *Adventist World*

**After planting just 20 new churches in 55 years, evangelistic meetings are part of a plan to reverse that trend.**



**Leaders of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church recently met with regional church leaders in Taiwan ahead of evangelistic meetings in July 2019. Taiwan Adventists are working hard to reverse a trend of stagnant growth across the island.**

Photo: Northern Asia-Pacific Division News

After dismal church growth rates in the past five decades, Seventh-day Adventists in Taiwan are committed to reversing that trend and supporting evangelistic efforts across the island, regional church leaders said.

One of the first steps will be to increase the coordination of joint evangelistic activities in July 2019.

In 2018, at a meeting in Sapporo, Japan, leaders of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD) approved the Total Member Involvement Evangelism 2019 project for Taiwan. Leaders decided to hold simultaneous evangelistic meetings at 16 local churches in the Taiwan Conference (TWC) church region. NSD officers, directors, and staff are set to serve as speakers.

Min Ho Joo, NSD director of Adventist Mission, recently planned a plenary meeting with Taiwan pastors to prepare and pray together for Total Member Involvement (TMI) Evangelism 2019. In late February 2019 all 16 local pastors of the churches that were involved in the simultaneous evangelistic

meetings met with NSD directors and staff.

In the opening worship Noah Lai, TWC president, spoke about the significance of mission in Taiwan. "There are still very few Adventists compared to the whole population of Taiwan," he said. "The Taiwan Adventist Church has been growing slowly."

Lai reported that in 1962 Taiwan had 92 churches; in 2017 that number had increased to 112 churches. During the past 55 years only 20 new Seventh-day Adventist churches had been planted. This shows, he said, that the Adventist Church is barely growing in Taiwan.

In his sermon Si Young Kim, NSD president, talked about how to deliver the gospel to the Taiwanese people. He reminded the audience about the successful ways Jesus reached out to people and said it is a model to follow. "The church must understand and fill people's needs," he said.

Joseph Ma, TWC Global Mission coordinator, reported on how each church in Taiwan has been

preparing for TMI Evangelism 2019. He talked about the process of successful evangelism from the planning stages to the evangelistic meeting itself.

Joo, who is also in charge of the Mission to the Cities project, gave a presentation on how to make public evangelism effective and successful. He introduced the combination of a missional church with an attractional church.

"A missional church underscores where a church is headed and shows the love of Jesus by meeting the felt needs of those in the community," Joo explained. "On the other hand, an attractional church is dedicated to inviting people to come and see."

In the afternoon each local church reported on their plans for the evangelistic meetings. Before concluding the meeting, Kim and all NSD directors participated in placing a pin on each local pastor's jacket.

Regional church leaders also visited local churches to meet members and share with them as Adventists across the country prepare to reverse the trend of low growth.

# 522,523

SPD membership  
as of July 31, 2018

# 1,600

The number of people who attended the opening night of the *It Is Written* evangelistic series in Melbourne, Australia. The meetings were hosted by John Bradshaw and Eric Flickenger at four locations around Melbourne. Of those attending, at least half are from other faith backgrounds or no faith background, organizers said.

**“It can be difficult, because New Zealand is a very secular country. But there are little things we do that we believe can make a difference.”**

—Jeremy Dixon, owner of Revive café, discussing ways in which he is able to share the gospel through his plant-based restaurant in Auckland, New Zealand. Outreach methods include free copies of *Signs of the Times* magazines and cooking demonstrations hosted by the restaurant at local churches. Dixon also manufactures the number-one-selling healthy snack in New Zealand, Frooze Balls.

**“Religious freedom is valued by all Seventh-day Adventists, and to have one’s life cut short while worshipping is almost unimaginable.”**

—Glenn Townend, SPD president, responding in the wake of the Christchurch, New Zealand, mosque shootings that left 50 dead.

# 3,500

The number of baptisms per year across the Pacific Islands attributed to the work of volunteer missionaries associated with Volunteers in Action (VIA), an independent supporting ministry founded more than 20 years ago. 📌

# 160

The number of attendees to the Setting the Course educational leadership conference in Sydney, Australia, an Adventist initiative held biennially. Participants grappled with growing religious freedom challenges for Adventist schools in Australia. Among presenters was Michael Worker, Public Affairs and Religious Liberty director for SPD. Australia is the only Western democracy in the world without any positive protections for religious freedom, said Worker, a situation that is “quite alarming.”



Neil Watts, field officer for Volunteers in Action (VIA) (front, center) and a VIA team in Mendi, Southern Highlands Province, Papua New Guinea

Photo: Adventist Record





Photo: Ben White

## Laughter, a Foolproof Prescription

*An expert shares the science behind the benefits of laughter.*

When I started my career in health care, I used to emphasize the importance of the physical factors of health. As my career and knowledge matured, I spent more time learning how factors such as lifestyle, diet, gratitude, spirituality, attitude, and forgiveness also play roles in health and disease outcomes.

My idea to study laughter was also inspired by the Bible. Proverbs 17:22 states, “A merry heart does good, like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones.” This refers to the integrative medical science of psychoneuro-immunology being stated in biblical terms. This was the starting point, and is the core of whole-person care of mind, body, and spirit.

Just as people with depression have a higher propensity to have a compromised immune system, my research came to show that people who experience joyful laughter have biological translations and can influence positive responses of the immune system.

The subject was first introduced when a man named Norman Cousins was diagnosed with an autoimmune disease in the 1960s. He was editor of *Saturday Review*, and

he had a life of massive stress and distress, so he hypothesized that he would need to produce good stress—eustress—to see if he could reverse this prognosis.

I first met Cousins in 1989 when he came to Loma Linda to ask me if there were any known physiological benefits from laughter. We discovered that when people laugh, the hormone system benefits, because laughter prompts good stress (eustress) and decreases bad stress (distress). The reality of wholeness is that each body process has a biological consequence, whether for better or worse. Just as stress can suppress our immune systems and lead to sickness, laughter can have the opposite effect by improving and optimizing immune system components and blood flow, so we are more “sickness” resistant.

Laughter causes the release of endorphins, our body’s natural painkiller; serotonin, our natural anti-depressant; and good neuropeptides, chemical communicators. It also decreases cortisol, which then reduces stress, lowers blood pressure, increases oxygen intake, enhances the immune system, and reduces the risk of having heart disease or a stroke. In health care we often compartmentalize different specialties. We have physiology, biochemistry, endocrinology, and neurology all taught separately. But when we look at the whole person, we can see how interconnected the human body really is.

Laughter also triggers the production of key neurochemicals, such as dopamine, which produce calming, antianxiety benefits, as well as providing us pleasure and reward. It also increases EEG gamma wave frequency in the brain, which synchronizes brain neurons to help improve our memory and cognitive processing. Laughter has similar benefits as moderate exercise. It also increases the brain’s gamma wave frequency.

Gamma frequency is the highest frequency and is responsible for addressing information processing, improved memory, and stress reduction. We now know in neuroscience that gamma frequency enhances the brain’s cognitive levels.

The duration of the laugh is not as important as the reason behind it. Mirthful laughter, as opposed to nervous or embarrassed laughter, promotes the good high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol and has a cascade of beneficial physiological changes conducive for happiness—happiness being dopamine, serotonin, endorphins. Happiness is the optimal immune system responsiveness. Laugh as often and as much as you need until you feel good!

Norman Cousins once wrote, “Of all the gifts bestowed by nature on human beings, hearty laughter must be close to the top.” This gift, of both joy and healing, is something that can bring us together and allow us to experience the happiness God longs for us to experience.

COURAGEOUS

# The DNA of Courage

Standing tall for  
kingdom values

**W**e all recognize key moments when time seems to stand still and destinies are decided.

The man God had chosen to lead His people into *the* land had just experienced such a moment of heart-thumping quality and fear-producing intensity. Joshua was restless. Israel had made camp at Gilgal, about three kilometers (two miles) northeast of Jericho, after miraculously crossing the Jordan River and entering the Promised Land. Following the circumcision of all the males of a new generation, they were about ready to conquer the land. At least that's what they thought. Joshua must have felt less sure, for he was scouting out the territory around Jericho. He hadn't yet received his marching order from the Lord (Joshua 6:1-5), so he looked for the weak points in Jericho's defenses.

There were none!

Suddenly, his worst nightmares become reality. A man stands opposite him with a drawn sword, ready to strike (Joshua 5:13). There is no time to draw his own sword. Joshua decides to confront the stranger: "Are you for us or for our enemies?" (verse 13, NIV).

That's a good question. When we face challenging situations, we need to know who is for us and who is against us. We watch judiciously. We listen carefully. We anticipate cautiously.

"Neither," the man replied, 'but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come'" (verse 14, NIV). Joshua doesn't need to hear more. He falls facedown to the ground and worships. He recognizes God when he meets Him.

#### FOR OR AGAINST?

Sometimes it's easy to distinguish who is for us and who is against us. At other times this task becomes increasingly difficult. Issues are thorny; situations are complex; we suddenly find ourselves in one of life's gray zones struggling to clearly recognize the line dividing right from wrong.

That's when we need to meet our Commander in chief and pay attention to His marching orders. The first thing Joshua had to do on that fateful day was to take off his sandals. No intricate discussion of military strategies. No specifics of the upcoming battle. "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy" (verse 15).

Here is something we can learn. When we encounter our Creator, our Saviour, and our Commander in chief we stop everything—and worship. We rest in Him instead of pacing around restlessly, wondering what to do next. We pay attention to the Word (revealed in Scripture and communicated through the

ministry of the Spirit)—then we begin to understand God's values and discern the moments we need to stand courageous.

#### WHY US?

"Why us and why now?" was a relevant question in sixth century B.C. Jerusalem. The world was changing profoundly, and it felt as if Jerusalem was right in the crosshairs of disaster. Daniel and his three friends, all of them teenagers, were on their way to Babylon, swept away from family, home, and nation. They had been selected for reeducation and training. Babylon's new king, Nebuchadnezzar II, wanted to build his own administrative elite. They must have gawked incredulously when they finally marched through the monumental Ishtar Gate in Babylon, a huge city compared to provincial Jerusalem. Everything was bigger and stronger and better, it seemed. They were warmly welcomed at the court-connected academy of sciences. They would be well taken care of and eat from the king's table.

That's when Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah had to make a decision. Should they eat from the rich and bountiful king's table food dedicated to Nebuchadnezzar's gods and risk defilement, or should they stand out like a sore thumb and risk losing their heads (Dan. 1:3-10)? How do we make these decisions when we face life-threatening consequences?

The four Hebrew teenagers began with prayer. Then they approached their supervisor with a strange request: "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink" (verse 12, NIV). Ten days to make a point. Ten days to wait for God to do the improbable—how can 10 days of eating differently make a difference?

They did. God honored their

stand. Their faith was strengthened. They prepared for other moments where even more courage was needed. The next time things would get even rougher.

#### HAPPY ENDINGS

Daniel 3 describes one of these moments. King Nebuchadnezzar had made a huge image that must have been inspired by the image he had seen in his prophetic dream (Dan. 2). Except that this image was completely covered in gold. *Babylon would never fade* was Nebuchadnezzar's message to the world. It was a clear challenge to God's revealed future—and it also represented a challenge to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, who had been promoted to provincial leadership roles. Together with most of the leadership of the empire they were told to fall down and worship the image at the sound of an overpowering orchestra. Nearly 28 meters (about 90 feet) high and 2.8 meters (about six feet) wide—defiance against God could be seen from far off.

The music sounds, the crowd bows—but there are three young men who don't join the crowd.

Nebuchadnezzar is furious (Dan. 3:13). How can these three Hebrews challenge the absolute ruler of the universe?

They can—and they do. They recognize that worship belongs only to God. Faced with a furious King Nebuchadnezzar threatening them with immediate death in the fiery furnace, they utter these timeless words: "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold

## We pay attention to His Word—and then we begin to understand God’s values and discern the moments we need to stand courageous.

you have set up” (verses 16-18, NIV).

We hear these words from the viewpoint of those who know the end of the story. We know that a fiery furnace did not kill the three young Hebrews. Happy endings are somehow built into our cultural makeup. Yet happy endings are not only found in fiery furnaces. Happy endings, when we are called to stand courageous, are not only measured in life and death, but are characterized by faithfulness, authenticity, truthfulness, and unwavering commitment. In the midst of concentration camps and senseless deaths, courage inspired by God’s values stands tall—even if there is pain and loss. While foolishness can sometimes camouflage as courage, that’s not God’s way.

### THE JESUS WAY

We associate faithfulness, truthfulness, power, and grace with the ministry of Jesus. But did He also reflect courage?

Jesus’ Gethsemane prayer offers a potential answer to this crucial question: “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will” (Matt. 26:39, NIV). In the face of imminent pain and separation Jesus is willing to submit His will to the Father’s will. That requires courage—and trust.

There are other moments in which we can see courage at work in Jesus’ ministry. The core values of His kingdom include forgiveness, long-suffering, and patience—all elements that mark true courage.

*When somebody compels you to walk one mile with him, He taught His followers, go the second mile with them* (Matt. 5:41). He spoke about the countercultural power of forgiveness—innumerable times, again and again (Matt. 18:21, 22). He lived and encouraged loving one’s enemies (Matt. 5:43-47). When He spoke judgment on the Jewish leadership of His time (Matt. 23:13-39), He had tears in His eyes.<sup>2</sup> While He never wavered under their unrelenting criticism, His heart yearned for their transformation. Godly courage does that.

Jesus also showed courage when He engaged outsiders and those considered less important. Women and little children felt at ease in His presence. He touched (and healed) lepers (Matt. 8:1-4) and visited the homes of much-hated publicans (Luke 19:1-10). He illustrated God’s special concern for the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the stranger. Even when He told stories that illustrated God’s kingdom, it wasn’t the priest or the Levite who embodied kingdom values—it was the much-hated Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37). While Jesus did not covet conflict or thrive on controversy, He did not shy away from putting His finger where it hurt. When He engaged His opposition, He did so with kindness and compassion. The punchline describing Jesus’ conversation with the rich young man who had many possessions opens with “Jesus looked at him and loved him” (Mark 10:21, NIV). Ultimately, the young man turned away saddened. His choice, at that moment, must have hurt Jesus. We all hurt when those we love make bad decisions.

Courage means to keep on loving them. I wish we knew the rest of the story. What choices did the young man make following the Resurrection morning and Pentecost?

### THE COURAGE WE NEED

In an age of political correctness and hate speech, God needs people who can emulate courage in the midst of persecution, indifference, and irrelevance. Like Daniel and his friends, we need to know *when* it’s time to be countercultural. In line with Joshua’s encounter with the heavenly Commander in chief, this courage will bring us to worship and move forward in obedience—even if things don’t make that much sense.

After that encounter with God on the plains of Jericho, Joshua’s courage grew as he experienced God. Sometimes there were setbacks and challenges—moments his courage was about as thin and worn out as the deceptive Gibeonites’ frayed clothes (Joshua 9:4). But there was no turning back for Joshua. As he followed the Commander of the Lord’s army, he could even command the sun and moon to stand still (Joshua 10:12-14) and the impossible became possible. Living courageously and practicing godly courage as we expound on kingdom values that are countercultural isn’t always easy. What we say and what we do may not always be well received or highly praised, but as we follow our courageous Leader we can enjoy the sweetness of finding ourselves in the center of God’s will and love. ☉

\* See Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940), p. 620.

**Gerald A. Klingbeil** is an associate editor of *Adventist World* who takes courage seeing God’s enduring grace in this world.

## COURAGEOUS

John Weidner being decorated in 1946, with the United States Medal of Freedom with Gold Palm in the Hague, Netherlands

# When the Cost Is Worth It

No matter the outcome, we are called to be brave.

**T**here are two parts to this story. One has a happy ending, and the other does not. However, both sides of this story share one common denominator: to show courage in the face of horrific outcomes—even death—is what God calls us to do. Should He call us, He never leaves us to face anything alone.

### A MARKED MAN

John Henry Weidner was born to a Dutch Adventist family in Belgium in 1912. Weidner's father was a pastor who taught Greek and Hebrew at what is now Salève Adventist University in Collonges-sous-Salève, France, just across the Swiss border from Geneva. As a boy Weidner spent a great deal of time climbing the mountains around the picturesque campus, learning the ins and outs of the

terrain and its border with Switzerland. Unknown to him at the time, he was gleaning precious skills that would mean everything to the work he would undertake in later years.

After completing one part of his studies in Collonges-sous-Salève, he pursued business and law in Geneva and Paris. Weidner eventually got into the textile industry, becoming quite successful, at first in Paris, then branching out to other cities in France.

By June 1940 citizens of Paris were fleeing the city ahead of the approaching German army. The church's Franco-Belgian Union Conference was based in the French capital, where Weidner's younger sister, Gabrielle, worked as secretary to the union conference president. The union conference offices had to shift operations to the south of France, and Weidner

assisted in that relocation. At that time, he was working out of Lyon, and it was there that he soon became involved in an underground resistance organization called Dutch-Paris. This network consisted of more than 300 "agents" who operated an underground escape line from the Netherlands through Belgium and France into neutral Switzerland (using the border crossing near Collonges-sous-Salève) or through Andorra to Spain using a more dangerous route via the Pyrenees Mountains. This group ended up helping 800 Jews, 100 downed Allied aviators, and others to escape certain death under the Nazi regime.

"When the war started, I thought as a human being, *Well, that's the question: how to help people.* I thought I had a way to help them. If a Jewish person could reach



Switzerland or Spain, he was safe. Those countries were neutral. The big question was how to reach Switzerland from Holland. Everywhere there were the Gestapo, the SS, the soldiers of Hitler. The borders were closed. The border between France and Switzerland was heavily guarded, because the Nazis knew that Jewish people tried to reach Switzerland. But I knew the border between Collonges-sous-Salève, France, and Switzerland from my days at that college,” Weidner said.<sup>1</sup>

This was an extremely dangerous undertaking, and before long he caught the Nazis’ attention, landing himself on top of the Gestapo’s most-wanted list. Weidner was actually arrested and tortured on three separate occasions, and was said to have been interrogated by the infamous Klaus Barbie—known as the Butcher of Lyon. Remarkably, he always escaped death, sometimes with help, but always under harrowing circumstances.

Eventually, for reasons still unknown, a fellow Dutch-Paris operative betrayed them all when she was arrested and tortured, divulging the names and numbers of nearly 150 members of the network. As a result many were sent to concentration camps and never seen again. Weidner amazingly remained untouched.

After the war ended, he worked for the Dutch government for a time, helping to track down Nazi collaborators. But by the 1950s Weidner decided to make a fresh start in America, finding a wonderful Adventist partner in his wife, Naomi. He started a second career—opening a chain of successful health food stores in southern California known as Weidner Natural Foods. He was active in his community and local church.

Weidner’s wartime efforts did not go unrecognized, though he



↑ John Weidner (center) near the tree planted in his honor on the Avenue of the Righteous at Yad Vashem, Israel

preferred to be quiet about his life in Europe. For his courage he was awarded the United States Medal of Freedom, was made a member of the Order of the British Empire, the Dutch Order of Orange-Nassau, and was given the Dutch Medal of Resistance. France presented him with the Croix de Guerre and Médaille de la Résistance, and the Légion d’honneur. Belgium made him an officer of the Order of King Leopold, and Israel honored him as one of the Righteous Among the Nations in Yad Vashem, the country’s national Holocaust memorial. When the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum was opened in Washington, D.C., in 1993, he was one of seven persons selected to light candles recognizing rescuers.

Weidner once said: “During our lives each of us faces a choice: to think only about yourself, to get as much as you can for yourself, or to think about others, to serve, to be helpful for those who are in need. I believe that it is very important to develop your brains, your knowledge, but it is more important to



John Henry Weidner in military uniform



Gabrielle Weidner

develop your heart, to have a heart open to the suffering of others. As for myself, I am just an ordinary person, just someone who wants to help his neighbor. That is the aim of God for me: to think about others, to be unselfish. I am nothing exceptional. If I have one hero, it is God, who has helped me to fulfill my mission, to fulfill my duties, to do what I have to do.”<sup>2</sup>

John Weidner passed to his rest in 1994 in southern California—a life courageously lived in service to His Creator.

### STEADFAST TO THE END

When the Dutch-Paris operative gave up the names of 150 individuals, one name in particular meant a great deal to John Weidner—that of his sister, Gabrielle.

Remembered by those who knew her as a gentle person with beautiful eyes and a sweet nature about her, Gabrielle lived and worked in Paris during much of the time her brother was spiriting people to safety across the borders, evading capture, and escaping jail cells when he was apprehended. Doted on by her elder brother when they were children, it is not known exactly how she was involved in Dutch-Paris. But whatever she knew about her brother’s activities was a carefully guarded secret that she never betrayed.

On the last Sabbath of February 1944, the Gestapo arrested Gabrielle from morning services at the Paris Seventh-day Adventist Church. They first took her back to her apartment, which was in the same building as the union conference and conference headquarters. She was allowed to quickly gather a few personal items before being taken to Fresnes Prison, in the outskirts of the French capital. She remained there until August 1944, despite all efforts made to secure

her release. The Allies were only 37 miles from Paris by mid-August, but before they could enter the city to liberate it, Gabrielle was put on one of the last transports from Paris to the death camps. She arrived at the infamous Ravensbrück camp in northern Germany August 21, 1944. The Allies liberated Paris August 25, 1944.

From Ravensbrück Gabrielle, along with other French captives with similar classifications—her camp-issued personal card identified her as a political prisoner—was transferred to Torgau, a subcamp of Buchenwald where she was a forced laborer—a slave. In Torgau women were used for bomb and grenade production. Gabrielle’s health, which was never robust, deteriorated quickly. By October she was sent back to Ravensbrück, and then to its subcamp, Königsberg. Records made available through the United States Holocaust Museum confirm she arrived there October 29, 1944.

Königsberg was a camp designed for one purpose only—extermination. As one would expect, conditions were deplorable. Women slept on wooden bunks with paper-filled sacks for mattresses. There was hardly any food, and they were dressed in rags against the cold. Anyone too sick to work was sent to the infirmary, and this is where Gabrielle spent the duration of her days.

Madeleine Billot was a friend of John Weidner. She, too, was deported to Ravensbrück and came to know Gabrielle there. Billot survived, and after the war was able to tell John of his sister’s witness in the camp. “All the time Gabrielle gave a wonderful testimony of her faith in God,” she said. “She was in the infirmary at Königsberg, and even there she was always encouraging the others.”<sup>3</sup>

By February 1945 liberation was imminent. Women who were able

to move were led on a death march by the SS. Those too weak—as Gabrielle was—were left to die. As they did in many of the death camps in the last moments of the war, the SS set the barracks and infirmary on fire. Miraculously, Gabrielle was pulled from the flames at the very last moment. The camp was liberated February 5, 1945.

But it was too late.

Though some records state her death as having occurred February 15, 1945, a published document containing listings of all Ravensbrück prisoners states her death took place February 6.<sup>4</sup> The actual cause of Gabrielle’s death was never recorded.

Her brother John tried to find her final resting place after the war, utilizing the Netherlands Tracing Mission in the effort, but nothing was ever found. Only the Lord knows where Gabrielle Weidner rests awaiting the resurrection.

### COURAGE PERSONIFIED

The stories of the Weidner siblings had dramatically different endings. Both were raised to follow the example of Jesus, and that clearly influenced their response to the world and the difficult and horrific situations each faced. Their stories still serve as examples to each of us that even when confronted with the worst of circumstances, we can act from a place of courage and walk hand in hand with our Saviour, knowing that the One who calls us never forgets us. ☉

<sup>1</sup> Kristen Renwick Monroe, *The Hand of Compassion: Portraits of Moral Choice During the Holocaust* (Princeton University Press, 2004), pp. 102, 103.

<sup>2</sup> Carol Rittner and Sondra Myers, eds., *The Courage to Care* (New York: New York University Press, 1986), p. 65.

<sup>3</sup> Herbert Ford, *Flee the Captor* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1994), pp. 352, 353.

<sup>4</sup> *Gedenkbuch für die Opfer des Konzentrationslagers Ravensbrück 1939-1945*, edited by the Mahn- und Gedenkstätte Ravensbrück/Projekt Gedenkbuch, scientific leadership by Bärbel Schindler-Saeffkow, in conjunction with Monika Schnell (Berlin: Metropol, 2005), p. 655.

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# Called to Courage

Though the heavens fall



One of the most encouraging promises in the Bible is this one: “Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:9, ESV).<sup>1</sup>

This promise, given to Joshua following the death of Moses, was one of three God gave to His new leader.

“As I was with Moses, so I will be with you,” the Lord assured him. “I will not leave you nor forsake you. *Be strong and of good courage*. . . Only *be strong and very courageous*, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you . . . that you may prosper wherever you go” (verses 5-7).

Four decades earlier Joshua had shown unflinching courage in the face of strong pressure, even possible death. Twelve Israelite leaders had been commissioned to “spy out the land of Canaan” (Num. 13:2). After 40 days the spies returned with luscious fruit and tales to tell.

“We went to the land where you sent us,” they reported. “It truly flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. Nevertheless,” they continued, “the people who dwell in the land are strong; the cities are fortified and very large” (verses 27, 28). Thus the spies began stirring up fear and discouragement as they described the dangers of the land. But two spies did not—Joshua and Caleb. With faith in God’s promises Caleb declared, “Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it” (verse 30).

But the 10 rebels insisted, “We are *not* able to go

up against the people” (verse 31). Exaggerating they described the Promised Land as a place “that devours its inhabitants” (verse 32). Whipped into a fearful frenzy, the Israelites wanted to choose someone to lead them back to Egypt.

Seeing the grave situation, Caleb and Joshua ripped their clothes and courageously declared, “The land . . . is an exceedingly good land. If the Lord delights in us, then He will bring us into this land. . . Only do not rebel against the Lord, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the Lord is with us. Do not fear them” (Num. 14:7-9).

Rather than believing in the Lord, the people grabbed rocks to stone the courageous two for speaking the truth. Only by God’s direct intervention were their lives spared.

The courage displayed by Caleb and Joshua was not presumptuous bravado, urging some foolhardy mission. Rather, they believed God’s word, urging obedience to His commands. Thus it has always been for God’s faithful people.

## MORE EXAMPLES

Another example is David facing Goliath. The situation seemed impossible—an experienced, fully equipped, giant warrior, versus a young shepherd boy with a sling and stones.

But David knew what even Saul and his soldiers did not: the battle did not depend on them.

“For who is this uncircumcised Philistine,” asked David, “that he should defy the armies of the living God?” (1 Sam. 17:26). Going on faith gained from previous experience, this courageous young man boldly



declared, “You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand. . . . Then all this assembly shall know that the Lord does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord’s and He will give you into our hands” (verses 45-47).

More than four centuries later four Hebrew captives in Babylon stood courageously for what might be considered a “small thing.” In spite of peer pressure, they determined to eat and drink only what God approved, and He rewarded their faithfulness.

Knowing that “he who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much” (Luke 16:10), God allowed these courageous young men to face more difficult trials later.

On the dusty plain of Dura, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego stood tall when everyone else bowed to the golden idol. Summoning them into his royal presence, Nebuchadnezzar threatened instant death in the fiery furnace if they would not worship his image. “And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?” he asked (Dan. 3:15).

Bravely they answered, “If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you . . . that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up” (verses 17, 18).

God “delivered His servants who trusted in Him” (verse 28).

Years later Daniel faced a decision: stop praying or be fed to the lions. But the threat of being ripped apart by ravenous beasts did not keep him from his regular practice of praying to God “with his windows open toward Jerusalem” (Dan. 6:10).

The king could not save Daniel from the lions, but God could, as evidenced by Daniel’s testimony the morning after: “My God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him” (verse 22). Scripture explains further: “So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God” (verse 23).

## NEW TESTAMENT AND BEYOND

In the New Testament young Mary received the shocking news that she would be the mother of the Messiah, although she did not “know a man.” Realizing this unique calling would subject her to ridicule and shame, Mary humbly yet courageously responded, “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38).

Jesus Himself demonstrated courage when in Gethsemane He prayed, “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done” (Luke 22:42).

Stephen, a mighty preacher, was stoned to death. All but one of the apostles died a martyr’s death. Authorities tried to kill John by placing him in a cauldron of boiling oil. When that didn’t work, they banished him to Patmos.

Saul the persecutor became Paul, who “in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling” (1 Cor. 2:3) courageously preached Christ crucified until Nero’s executioner’s sword took his life.

Since that time millions have courageously followed Christ, often suffering ridicule, ostracism, beatings, torture, sometimes even death.

We may or may not be asked to lay down our lives for Jesus. In His wisdom, God does not reveal that to us. But He calls us to courage today and every day of our lives. Courage in “little” and “big” things. Courage to speak the truth when others are silent. Courage to stand alone when it is easier to blend in with the crowd. Courage to believe and follow God’s Word, even if labeled foolish.

We need courage to “not be bought or sold,” courage to be true and honest in our “inmost souls,” courage that does “not fear to call sin by its right name,” courage to have a conscience that “is as true to duty as the needle to the pole,” and courage to “stand for the right though the heavens fall.”<sup>2</sup> ©

<sup>1</sup> Scripture quotations marked ESV are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

<sup>2</sup> From Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1903, 1952), p. 57.

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## Devotional

# Money or Life

**T**he century-old legend of car manufacturer Henry Ford tells a stark story of Model-T color options: "You can have any color as long as it's black." History clarifies that this wasn't always true. For 12 of the 19 years that Model T's were rolling off the assembly line, they were all black. But sometimes, at the beginning, from 1908 to 1913, and again at the end of its run, in 1926-1927, the Model T was available in green, bright red, dark blue, brown, maroon, gray, as well as black. And color preferences were always for the same reason: money making. Black dried the fastest; so

Ford went with black. Then when competition, offering various colors, bit into his market share, he diversified his colors too.

Ancient sage Socrates had no market influences to influence his choices. According to the character Plato calls Crito, Socrates' choice was between exile and poison, between death at home and life in exile.

### **YOU AND ME AND CHOICES**

Our choices are more often between preferred sports, less-preferred politicians, native baseball teams and distant vacation destinations, preferences of limited consequence for eternity, and yet preferences that we have been known to fight for and even die about.<sup>1</sup>

Satan is completely aware of the importance of choosing. He still chafes at his own stupid choice for misery over eternal light. He remembers Moses' goodbye appeal that set before Israel the options of life and prosperity or death and adversity (Deut. 30:15). He was there for Joshua's goodbye, when he told Israel they could choose as they wished, but he and his house would serve God (Joshua 24:15). He knows of God's call to a girl named Ellen to bear messages to His last-day people, and of her statement that "the will is the governing power in the nature of man."<sup>2</sup> Satan knows all that humans know about the importance of choosing.

Because he knows that we believe in the power of choice, he peddles choices, multiple and variegated, important-looking, crucial-sounding choices, as well as gaudy, glamorous ones. He floods us with them and



so perplexes us: we no longer know if we should move the agenda quickly, running roughshod over issues that actually deserve more time; or take all the time each question merits, stretching our sessions into a sacrifice of intemperance where eventual resolution is awkwardly synonymous with outlasting objections and objectors.

### CHOICES AND THE TEMPORAL

How do we know that we have chosen rightly? Which of the infinite millions of decisions we make all day is optional—a choice between options all good: which dress to buy, or wear, or share; which tie to give away or throw away; which godly man to date; Uber or Lyft? Which of those myriad little ones has made our world or neighborhood so much better without our realizing it? How much of our time- and thought-investment in deliberations was well advised? How much amounted to a “worship in ignorance” (Acts 17:23, KJV), because we related to them at a level of status that common sense would hardly ascribe?

Life overflows with privileges of choosing the right hue or hymn or human. Discretion, it seems, comes parceled out, some here, some there, in rather lower quantities. Its scarcity shows in our adoration. Because there is so much more passion than discretion, we have been known to deify simply things: colors, animals, political positions, economic theories. Our spiritual passion yields holy structures where law is lower or higher than grace; or scales where works are weightier than faith, and committee memberships depend on superior financial strength or greater baptismal quantities. The batter of nonsense we so desperately fight over exposes the lightness of our living when compared to options of eternal weight.

And all the while the enemy of our salvation rejoices to have us continuously preoccupied, either with transient little matters or subjects on which simple obedience, not rigorous dispute, is our only legitimate option, and all based on our elevated estimate of the importance of our will. At times he succeeds in engaging us in “continual worry [that] is wearing out the life forces,” oblivious to the tenderly calling voice of Jesus inviting us “to lay aside this yoke of bondage” and “accept His yoke.”<sup>3</sup> His yoke, of course, “is easy”; His burden “is light” (Matt. 11:30).

### CHOICES AND FOREVER

Jesus offers the simplest of proposals to solve our problem of decision-making. Instead of striving to accumulate things to worry over He instructs us in single-minded focus. Again and again He insists on simplification: on seeking the kingdom of God first, and nothing second (Matt. 6:33). He advises that “one thing

**When God says “choose!”  
He means “live!” The  
options He presents are  
of eternal consequence.  
A right decision here  
demands the engagement  
of all our mind and will.**

is needed” (Luke 10:42): that we can get along quite triumphantly while focused on one thing: “forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead” (Phil. 3:13, NASB).<sup>4</sup> He urges that “those who accept the one principle of making the service and honor of God supreme will find perplexities vanish, and a plain path before their feet.”<sup>5</sup> Life has more complications than we all together will ever fathom or unravel.

Yet life is not always as complicated as we make it out to be. Some of our all-night deliberations, it seems, might have lasted five minutes instead, if all concerned were willing to lay aside every consideration that did not make God’s service and honor supreme. Who knows?

“Money or life!” I thank providence for the poverty and grace that have protected me from robber attack. But I’ve been told that these are the options they’ve been known to put before their victims. Jesus never tires of confronting us with equally stark options: money or life; mammon or eternity. Him alone as everything (John 14:6) or the alternative of impotence (John 15:5). It is not possible to focus too much on Him. Knowing Him is knowing life eternal (John 17:3). Our options are money or everlasting life. How much of eternity hangs on that choice? ©

<sup>1</sup> See “Town Asks, ‘Why?’ After a Little-League Killing,” [www.nytimes.com/1993/05/23/us/town-asks-why-after-a-little-league-killing.html](http://www.nytimes.com/1993/05/23/us/town-asks-why-after-a-little-league-killing.html)

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Good Health Publishing, 1890), p. 147.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940), p. 330.

<sup>4</sup> Scripture quotations marked NASB are from the New American Standard Bible, copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

<sup>5</sup> White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 330.

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**Lael Caesar**, associate editor at *Adventist World*, rejoices to choose Jesus again and again and again.



Faith in Action

# “Why Us, Lord?”

## How much pain can we bear?

**H**ave you ever received the worst news possible—news that would change your life forever? We did.

We are parents to four children—three boys and one girl. In 2007 our daughter, Gabrielle, was born with the lower part of her spine undeveloped. It's a birth defect that we previously knew nothing about called spina bifida. When Gabrielle was born, the lesion on her back by her tailbone was open and exposed. I was staring at something that was about to change our lives forever.

Spina bifida is a neural tube birth defect in which the spinal column fails to develop properly, resulting in varying degrees of permanent damage to the spinal cord and nervous system. One week after she was born, Gabrielle developed hydrocephalus. Hydrocephalus is a medical condition in which an abnormal accumulation of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) is collected in the ventricles, or cavities, of the brain.

This neural tube defect occurs within the first four weeks of pregnancy, before most women even know they're pregnant. Throughout my pregnancy all my tests came back normal, and we found out only at birth about our daughter's condition. You can imagine the shock we felt that day. Gabrielle was born with the most severe form of spina bifida called myelomeningocele.

### PREPARING FOR SURGERY

*“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps. 139:13, 14).\**

Gabrielle needed to have surgery immediately to reduce the risk of infection and to protect the spinal cord from greater damage. As a result of this opening, the nerves in her spinal column could be damaged and not work properly. To treat the hydrocephalus, a shunt had to be permanently inserted into her brain to drain the CSF. It was heartbreaking to watch our tiny and helpless baby undergo two surgeries in the first week of her life, then have to listen to her doctors talk about the many deficiencies that she would have to live with. I felt as though I was in an awful dream. I desperately wanted to wake up to a whole new world that never spoke the words “spina bifida.”

The nerves that were damaged affected various parts of Gabrielle's body. She has bladder atony with incontinence and requires intermittent bladder catheterization. There also are issues with her legs and feet. Gabrielle has had various surgeries to correct her curved feet. In those early moments I began to let fear creep in, wondering what kind of future my daughter would have. A piece of me really wanted to hold on to the hope that my little girl was going to be OK, but somehow many



Gabrielle at 2 weeks old

Photos: Courtesy of the author

negative thoughts took over. Why was it so hard to hold on to hope?

### ADJUSTING TO THE REALITY

*"I cried like a swift or thrush, I moaned like a mourning dove. My eyes grew weak as I looked to the heavens. I am being threatened; Lord come to my aid!" (Isa. 38:14).*

Once we were allowed to take Gabrielle home and begin taking care of her, I became paralyzed with incredible fears and horrible doubts. I kept asking God, *Why me?* I had so many questions for God to answer. At that time in my life I was on a crazy, emotional rollercoaster ride with endless cycles of high and low moments. One moment I felt as though I couldn't breathe and would burst into hiccupping tears. Then the next moment I was playing peekaboo with Gabrielle's feet, trying to make her smile back at me. I knew that something in me was broken, and I needed my Lord and Saviour to fix it somehow.

### A GENTLE, DIVINE REMINDER

*"The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit" (Ps. 34:18).*

Then one day after much prayer, something like a lightbulb turned on in my head. I was gently reminded that God wasn't finished with Gabrielle yet. I had to ask myself, *Isn't God the one who formed the earth in the beginning and spoke life into everything and everyone?* Yes, He is the same God who fashioned Gabrielle in my womb, blessing us with a precious girl. I needed to stop complaining and feeling sorry for myself and start asking a new question: *Why not me, Lord?*

We will all encounter challenges that initially seem insurmountable. While we wait for a solution, faith may be all we have to hold on to, and sometimes simply trusting that there will be an answer will get us



Gabrielle at her sixth-grade graduation

through those darkest moments. The key to moving forward, even in hard times, is to let our vision for life be guided not by what we can see, but by what we can imagine. That's called having faith. God is more powerful than any struggle, and I had no other choice but to believe and trust His wonderful plan for our family.

### TRUSTING IN GOD'S LOVE

*"We live by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7).*

Gabrielle is now 12 years old. She loves playing sports, swimming, and traveling. So many miracles along the way have developed our daughter into a beautiful and strong young person. She never once tells herself that she can't do anything, because she knows that God takes special care of her. I have learned that for every disability Gabrielle has, she is blessed with more than enough abilities to cover her challenges. I initially made the mistake of allowing negative thoughts about our daughter's disabilities block the wonderful future God had in store for her. But I thank God that

He did not give up on me. The Lord showed me everything I needed to know through Gabrielle's life. Every year was a milestone in Gabrielle's learning and development. She is indeed a miracle child.

God is surely not finished with Gabrielle yet. God will never forget us because He loves us that much. The worst things always come together for good in the end. Hope appears even in the worst of times to give us proof of God's presence and abundant love. As a family we have put our complete trust in God. We don't know what tomorrow holds for Gabrielle, but because we believe in Him, we know who holds tomorrow.

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jer. 29:11). ©*

\* All Bible texts are taken from the New International Version.

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Spirit of Prophecy

# Be of Good Courage

To be truly courageous demands total faith and absolute trust.

**T**here is no reason for discouragement. The good seed is being sown. God will watch over it, causing it to spring up and bring forth an abundant harvest. Remember that many of the enterprises for soul saving have, at the beginning, been carried forward amidst great difficulty.

I am instructed to say to you: Move guardedly, doing always that which the Lord commands. Move forward courageously, assured that the Lord will be with those who love and serve Him. He will work in behalf of His covenant-keeping people. He will not suffer them to become a reproach. He will purify all who yield themselves to Him, and will make them a praise in the earth.

Nothing else in this world is so dear to God as His church. He will work with mighty power through humble, faithful [men and women]. Christ is saying to you today: "I am with you, co-operating with your faithful, trusting efforts, and giving you precious victories. I will strengthen you as you sanctify yourselves to My service. I will give you success in your efforts to arouse souls dead in trespasses and sins."

Unswerving faith and unselfish love will overcome the difficulties that arise in the path of duty to hinder aggressive warfare. As those



inspired by this faith go forward in the work of saving souls, they will run and not be weary, will walk and not faint. . . .

### **GOD IS OUR STRENGTH**

Remember that prayer is the source of your strength. A worker cannot gain success while he hurries through his prayers and rushes away to look after something that he fears may be neglected or forgotten. He gives only a few hurried thoughts to God; he does not take time to think, to pray, to wait upon the Lord for a renewal of physical and spiritual strength.

He soon becomes weary. He does not feel the uplifting, inspiring influence of God's Spirit. He is not quickened by fresh life. His jaded frame and tired brain are not soothed by personal contact with Christ.

"Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." Psalm 27:14; Lamentations 3:26. There are those who work all day and far into the night to do what seems to them must be done. The Lord looks pityingly upon these weary, heavily-laden burden bearers and says to them: "Come unto me, . . . and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28.

God's workers will meet with turmoil, discomfort, and weariness. At times, uncertain and distracted, they are almost in despair. When this restless nervousness comes, let them remember Christ's invitation: "Come ye yourselves apart, . . . and rest awhile." The Saviour "giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." Isaiah 40:29.

### **COURAGE TO STAND**

Difficulties will arise that will try your faith and patience. Face

them bravely. Look on the bright side. If the work is hindered, be sure that it is not your fault, and then go forward, rejoicing in the Lord. Heaven is full of joy. It resounds with the praises of Him who made so wonderful a sacrifice for the redemption of the human race. Should not the church on earth be full of praise? Should not Christians publish throughout the world the joy of serving Christ? Those who in heaven join with the angelic choir in their anthem of praise must learn on earth the song of heaven, the keynote of which is thanksgiving.

Never let your courage fail. Never talk unbelief because appearances are against you. As you work for the Master you will feel pressure for want of means, but the Lord will hear and answer your petitions for help. Let your language be: "The Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed." Isaiah 50:7. If you make a mistake, turn your defeat into victory.

### **WALKING AND WORKING BY FAITH**

The lessons that God sends will always, if well learned, bring help in due time. Put your trust in God. Pray much, and believe. Trusting, hoping, believing, holding fast the hand of Infinite Power, you will be more than conquerors.

True workers walk and work by faith. Sometimes they grow weary with watching the slow advance of the work when the battle wages strong between the powers of good and evil. But if they refuse to fail or be discouraged they will see the clouds breaking away and the promise of deliverance fulfilling. Through the mist with which Satan has surrounded them, they will see the shining of the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness.

**Difficulties will arise that will try your faith and patience. Face them bravely. Look on the bright side.**

Work in faith, and leave results with God. Pray in faith, and the mystery of His providence will bring its answer. At times it may seem that you cannot succeed. But work and believe, putting into your efforts faith, hope, and courage. After doing what you can, wait for the Lord, declaring His faithfulness, and He will bring His word to pass. Wait, not in fretful anxiety, but in undaunted faith and unshaken trust.

"If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? . . . Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." ☉

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Seventh-day Adventists believe that **Ellen G. White** (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry. This excerpt was taken from *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 7, pp. 242-245. Bible texts are from the King James Version.





Looking Back

# Gathering, Preserving, Interpreting

How oral tradition has safeguarded Adventist heritage in Africa

**T**here is a growing interest in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Africa. The available sources of history may be divided into two categories: written and oral. A recent conference of Adventist historians held at the world headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in January 2018 discussed “Situating Adventist History.” One of the sessions examined oral history.

## WHAT IS ORAL HISTORY?

Oral history may be defined as “a field of study and a method of gathering, preserving, and interpreting the voices and memories of people, communities, and participants in past events.”\* In gathering Seventh-day Adventist history in Africa, this is a method that has been used by a number of historians. Questions have been raised about the value of oral history. We will look at a few cases that help us understand the place of oral history in Adventist African church history.

## HOW IS ORAL HISTORY ACQUIRED AND PRESERVED?

In oral communities that have oral tradition as a way of life, history is passed from generation to generation through stories and poetry. At family events, time is given to a family historian or elder—sometimes a matriarch—to retell the family story. Poets often spontaneously break into praise singing, recounting history so that the family story is preserved.

I witnessed a case when a matriarch was in the audience. A man was assigned to tell the story of the church community, how the church started.

The matriarch occasionally stood to add or correct the speaker so that the transmission of the information was factual and accurate. This constant evaluation of accuracy is built into the oral tradition system.

## THE VALUE OF ORAL HISTORY

I revisited a historic Adventist site that I had visited a few times before. All that was said about its actual location was “We do not know where the Cape Town Sanitarium was specifically located.” This lack of information bothered me, and I started to search the national archives. I received sketches of information from my search there, but nothing sufficient to locate the site. The only remaining evidence of the Cape Town Sanitarium was a road named Sanitarium Road in Kenilworth, South Africa.

One morning Eric Webster, a retired Adventist theologian, came to our Ellen G. White Research



and Heritage Center at Helderberg College in Cape Town. Webster invited me to meet a man who had information about the site of the sanitarium. I arranged everything: recording devices and all that we needed to capture the story. The only condition the man had for telling the story was that we would not record it. I put aside the equipment and listened as the man told his story.

Donald Jeffes had come with his parents from Australia. He knew the area well. I can only highlight the experience of walking with Jeffes around that neighborhood, a long distance from the site we had visited along Sanitarium Road. He showed us houses that were used for doctors' residences and nurses' homes. We went through street names, and he showed us a pattern that we would never have known without his knowledge and experience. All the street names in that area were American names,

evidence of the presence of the sanitarium in that community.

After the tour of the sanitarium site we went back to Donald Jeffes' home and he allowed us to record him. That oral record is at the Heritage Center at Helderberg College. This experience illustrates the value of oral history, not only for oral communities but for supplementing historical records and providing context.

Another time I worked with John Enang, Spirit of Prophecy coordinator at the time, and Felix Adetunji, Ellen G. White Research Center director of Babcock University, to identify and list heritage sites in the West-Central Africa Division. We visited Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, and many other countries within that territory.

During our visit to northern Nigeria we met families of Adventist pioneers who preserved artifacts and stories not found in any book. The West-Central Africa Division is committed to preserving heritage sites and stories.

The Adventist University of Africa, situated in Nairobi, Kenya, has established a museum that serves as a depository of artifacts and stories of God's leading in the early development of the church in Africa. It collects and preserves these digital accounts of local oral history for the entire continent.

#### **AFRICA'S UNIQUE STORY**

Africa has a story to tell. The oral tradition that characterizes African communities can be harnessed in many ways. Divisions of the Adventist Church in Africa are taking ownership of preserving their history for the next generation of Adventists. The younger generation has lost storytimes around the fire, in a family living room, or in a ceremony. These occasions provided opportunities for children to grasp

## **Oral history adds value to the other sources of history we have.**

God's leading in the past for a family or church. Now museums, heritage sites, and research centers preserve these stories of God's providence.

The Ellen G. White Estate has done this work in partnership with Adventist Heritage Ministries for many years. Many historic sites have been re-created so that visitors can experience early Adventist history in tangible ways.

This work needs to be strengthened in the world field. Every division should have a center that preserves the history of the Adventist work in that area. With more than 25 Ellen G. White Research and Adventist Heritage centers around the world, each of these could be used as a depository of early Adventist history.

Experiences and perspectives will otherwise be lost if we do not have individuals who tell their stories. Oral history adds value to other sources of history and is an important method for educating the future generation about the roots of our faith. ©

\* [www.oralhistory.org](http://www.oralhistory.org)

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**Michael Sokupa**, Ph.D., D.Th., originally from South Africa, is an associate director of the Ellen G. White Estate in **Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.**

## Millennial Voices

# In the Shadow of the Almighty



I have always liked trees. I have read numerous books and said countless prayers under the shadows provided by their leafy branches.

One Sabbath I decided to spend the afternoon in a field behind my church. It was a beautiful and quiet spot where I always found comfort and peace, even in the most difficult times. I took my Bible, a few books, a pile of *Adventist World* magazines, and sat under a eucalyptus tree.

I had a notebook with a list of prayer requests from people from all over the world, and I remember thinking: *Thank You, God, for allowing me to read so many books and magazines that have been published to enrich my personal experience with*

*You and those around me. I am looking forward to meeting these people in heaven and telling them that I prayed for them, that these publications have made me feel closer to them and to You as part of a big family. Please help me to always take Your Word wherever I go, and to never forget the importance of sharing the Written Word with others. Help me do more.*

Little did I know that a few years later He would give me the chance to be part of this ministry, both through canvassing and eventually as an intern in the proofreading and editing department of a large Adventist publishing house in South America. Many of the books that have blessed my life have come from that publishing house.

I spent this past summer in a quiet office, reading material produced by people who have committed their lives to God. I had the privilege of belonging to the team of translators that translated the *Ellen G. White Encyclopedia* into Spanish. I was fascinated by the stories of literary assistants and staff members who went unnoticed but who made possible the publication of the books that transformed the lives of thousands of people.

I also had the chance to meet some of the people whose names I had read many times on the copyright pages: men and women who conse-

crate themselves every morning before starting work, who worship God early in the morning and ask for His help in every step of making these important materials, from the editorial tasks to the actual printing on web presses and other heavy machinery. Every task plays an important role and is needed to finally hold a completed product in one's hands. This helped me better understand the importance of working as part of the body of Christ.

One afternoon I was glancing through the window in my office, looking at a leafy tree next to it. I suddenly remembered my prayer of many years ago, and thanked God for answering it in such an unexpected way. In my mind I could see the familiar shape of the trees in the field behind my church, and I was reminded of God's presence in my life, His constant mercy, and the hope of everlasting life we have as His children.

God still answers our prayers. "Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty" (Ps. 91:1, NIV). Find a place to meet with Him personally. Rejoice in resting in His shadow. Open your heart and tell Him your innermost desires, and enjoy His answers and blessings. Worship Him even while enduring trials. Pray for your larger family in Christ. Continue reading and sharing inspirational thoughts. Fill your mind with the gospel, with the good news we are to share with the world around us. We all play an important role in this mission God has entrusted to us—even if we think of our role as insignificant.

Sometimes it may take a tree to teach us that, as it happened to me, but it will always take living "in the shadow of the Almighty" to accomplish what we are called to do. May He always find us in His shelter, in His shadow. ☺

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**Carolina Ramos** studies translation, English teaching, and music education at River Plate Adventist University in **Argentina**. She is passionate about mission and enjoys working with children and teens.

# Questions and Answers

Q

## Why did God ask Job so many questions at the end of the book of Job?

A

The traditional view is that God was showing Job that He, not Job, is sovereign Lord of the cosmos. The problem with this answer is that Job never claimed to be competing with God for cosmic sovereignty. Allow me to offer a few suggestions.

### 1. QUESTIONS AND THE PROLOGUE

In order to gain a better understanding of God's two speeches (Job 38-39; 40-41), we should remember that Satan accused God of not ruling the cosmos with justice and love. He further argued that by being the Provider, God was buying the service of humans, who then served Him out of selfishness (Job 1; 2). In the first speech God discussed creation in general, saying little about humans. He discloses Himself as the Creator of everything: the earth (Job 38:4), the sea (verses 8-11), and all natural phenomena (verse 12). He established boundaries for inanimate creation to function in an orderly fashion (verses 4-8, 10, 11, 25) and demarcated animal behavior (Job 39:1, 2, 17). He also established the ordinances (laws) that rule the starry heavens (Job 38:31-33). God established creation not on chaos but in order, and He continues to preserve and provide for it even in a world of sin and death (cf. Job 38:39-41; 39:27-30; 38:17).

### 2. IS HE A JUST AND LOVING GOD?

Why does God care so much for the natural world? The question suggests that He does it because this is the way He is; it is His nature to care for His creation. Job certainly could not do it, because He was not even present when God began

to create (Job 38:4), and in any case Job lacks the power required to provide and preserve the natural world (verses 34-38; 39:9, 10, 19); no creature can do such a thing. Only a God of wisdom and love would care for the cosmos. He does not do it for some personal benefit, as Satan suggested, that would satisfy some unfulfilled needs in His inner being. He does it because He is good and caring. This is how He rules the universe. He cares for the impersonal wilderness, where no one lives, and sends rain to beautify it with soft green grass (Job 38:26, 27). When ravens cry to God for food, He provides it for them (verse 41). The theological implication for Job is that God still cares for him in the midst of his troubles, at least as much as He cares about the natural world. His pain and suffering have not separated them from each other. This is the implied answer to Job's concerns. Job, for his part, demonstrated that He loves God unconditionally.

### 3. GOD'S FINAL VICTORY OVER SATAN

Through the abundance of rhetorical questions, God shows Satan that He cares for every aspect of His creation without any ulterior motive, but out of pure love. Job's friends are indicted for misrepresenting God when arguing that He is practically indifferent to human suffering, and that He cares only for those who obey Him and is wrathful toward those who oppose Him. Yes, there are wicked persons, but during the cosmic conflict God sometimes uses nature to overcome them in battle (Job 38:22, 23), announces that light will ultimately reveal who they are (verse 13), and affirms their final defeat (verse 15). These ideas are further developed in God's second speech (Job 40; 41), where He describes His control over the behemoth and His defeat of Leviathan, symbols of evil within His creation. ©

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Angel Manuel Rodríguez is retired after a career spent as a pastor, professor, and theologian.



# Needed: One Cross



## “May I Tell You a Story?”

BY DICK DUERKSEN

**W**e want a cross in the youth chapel in the new church.”  
“Yeah, Pastor. Can you get us a cross?”

“It needs to be a great big cross that looks like it’s been there since Jesus was nailed on it.”

The kids all laughed; then I realized they were serious. They really wanted me, their brand-new youth pastor, to find a cross for the chapel wall. I was terrified. Not only did I have no idea where to find an “old cross,” I also knew that the members on the church board and building committee were not going to take kindly to this idea.

This was quite a group of kids, always wanting something “on the edge,” something that the more mature members would likely find distasteful. A cross in the youth chapel fit perfectly.

I tried to talk them out of it, only to discover they had taken the idea to heart and were researching what wood it should be made of, how tall it would need to be, whether it would have been sawn or chopped, and a score of other details I had never considered. I helped with the research, even suggesting that the woodworker would probably have used a soft wood since many crosses were quickly burned.

\*\*\*

I told Pastor Ken, my lead pastor, about “the cross.” He listened closely, chuckled, asked wise questions. Then

said, “The board will never buy it. Several of our key members came into the Seventh-day Adventist Church from another denomination where the people worshipped crosses, as if the cross were even more important than the Christ! I don’t believe they’ll approve of a cross hanging on the wall of the youth chapel.”

I went back to the kids with the very bad news. No cross.

They were ready for me, quoting details about how the Romans and Jews saw the cross, then adding how the disciples felt about the cross, how Mary felt about the cross, even how Jesus felt about the cross.

I was holding my own until they pulled out a quote from Ellen White, one of the early leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. “If we would be saved at last,” she wrote, “we must all learn the lesson of penitence and faith at the foot of the cross.”

We had an intense youth prayer meeting that night. Then I asked the board and building committee if they would consider a request from the youth of the church.

They agreed, and the youth (and their youth pastor) went into a week of prayer and fasting.

At the meeting I introduced the youth, then sat back to listen. The kids were clear, and just emotional enough to make their point. The committee members listened politely and asked a couple questions. Then the oldest, most conservative gentleman in the church stood.



"If our children want to place the cross of Christ front and center in their lives, I can be nothing except proud of their zeal! They've sure got my vote."

We left the meeting with full permission to do the impossible. On the way out the door one of the kids said, "OK, Pastor, now it's up to you to find the cross."

"A real, genuine, wooden cross. Four meters tall and two meters wide. A cross that looks like it's 2,000 years old and has had hundreds of Christians nailed onto it."

\* \* \*

Knowing only one woodcarver who might be up to the task, I bounced our old van up the thin trail of Highway 60 deep into the desert. About 100 kilometers (60 miles) into the journey, I saw evidence that Ralph might be home. Ralph was a woodcarver, a First Nation man whose wife and two small children lived with him in a well-used caravan trailer. Paloverde trees grew like giant weeds around his house, and beneath their poor shelter Ralph carved and painted wooden statues.

If you had a store that sold cigarettes, cigars, and other tobacco products, Ralph could carve a life-size cowboy, Indian, police officer, rhinoceros, elephant, or other grotesque being and stand it in front of your shop. "Everyone will buy more of your stuff!" Ralph laughed.

Two freshly painted wooden Indians and a cowboy stood beneath the paloverde trees, awaiting buyers. Ralph stood beside them, as if awaiting my arrival.

We shared sodas and talked about the weather. Ralph asked how my work was going. "Pastor! Never met a real pastor!" Ralph spat the words out like bitter dates.

"What do you want, Pastor Boy?"

I explained about the cross. It was a whole new idea to him.

I pulled a small folder from the van and spread my papers out on his workbench. I had copied the parts about Calvary from Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and added the chapter on Calvary from *The Desire of Ages*, a book about Jesus by Ellen White. Ralph was very quiet.

"A real, genuine, wooden cross. At least

## Tell your pastor to come get his cross. It's blocking my driveway.

four meters tall and two meters wide. A cross that looks like it's 2,000 years old and has had hundreds of Christians nailed onto it. Can you do it for the kids, Ralph?"

"Never heard about such a thing," he said. "No promises, but I'll try."

Six weeks later a gruff voice left a message on the church phone. "Tell your pastor to come get his cross. It's blocking my driveway."

I borrowed a truck and grabbed a couple of the youth for the drive. Sure enough, Ralph's driveway was filled with a cross.

"I drove 400 kilometers [250 miles] into the mountains before I found the perfect tree," Ralph began. "Cut it down. Brought it here. Chopped it with a sharp chisel, like the Roman carver would have done. No saws. Burned it. Whacked it with a spanner. Burned it again. Covered it in oil. Burned it again. Can't believe anyone would do that to another man. Get it out of here!"

It was almost too heavy for the four of us to load into my borrowed truck.

After I'd paid Ralph, the cross carver, we piled into the truck and prepared to start our journey. Then Ralph raised his hand for me to stop.

"Almost forgot," he lied. "Made this to go on the wall beside the cross. Found the words in some of the papers you gave me. OK if I keep those papers, Pastor? I can't believe any man would go through all this for me!"

Ralph thrust a wooden plaque through the driver's window. On it, carved of the same wood and painted to startle, was Christ's hardest message.

"... and follow Me. Matthew 16:24." ☺

\* Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 4, p. 374.

**Dick Duerksen**, a pastor and storyteller living in **Portland, Oregon, United States**, is known around the world as "an itinerant pollinator of grace."

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Seventh-day  
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# King of Killer Hill

**When you go through something kind of scary, you don't do it alone.**

**W**e had the coolest tree fort around. From a distance it looked like a regular oak tree, except the leaves hung all the way down to the ground. When you walked through the leaves, there was a ready-made fort!

Inside, the branches of the tree went to the top like steps. A kid could walk up the branches so high that they could poke their head out the top! Life at the tree fort was good. But life on Killer Hill was awesome.

Only the bravest attempted to conquer this "mountain." Kids rode their bicycles down this dangerous hill. Others rolled down Killer Hill. Still others jumped. My brother, Bruce, was one of them.

Bruce, known as "Boochie," was a daredevil. One day Boochie jumped Killer Hill.

A group of kids stood around to watch him jump. Boochie made a running dash and jumped into the air. But as he landed, his Tarzan sound effects changed into cries of pain.

The ambulance took Boochie to the hospital. His leg was

broken. Now his new challenge was to walk with crutches with a cast on his leg. Boochie had not conquered Killer Hill. It had conquered him.

We all have "killer hills" that we face. Ours might be family or friends who die; things we want to happen, but don't; parents who fight; or sickness. It might be trouble with homework, or brothers and sisters who tease us. Whatever our "hills," we try to conquer them, just as when my brother tried to jump off the hill. But the hills often seem as if they will break us, just as his leg was broken. Sometimes the hills seem too much for us.

The Bible says: "Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill make low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain" (Isa. 40:4, NIV).

In ancient times when a king journeyed through his kingdom, men went ahead of his chariot to flatten all the hills and fill up the holes so that the king could travel in comfort.

It would be nice to have

someone go ahead of us so that no bad things would happen. While this isn't the case, we do have Someone who stays by us. Jesus helps us conquer our killer hills. Through His power and strength, even though we may not yet see it, He is, like the men who went ahead of the king, making mountains low, crooked places straight, and rough places smooth.

As we journey with God and encounter our killer hills, we know He will be with us. He gives us faith to believe that even though we may have been broken and discouraged by our mountains, we will be OK. When we look back at our killer hills, we realize how small and insignificant they were compared to the greatness of our God. ©

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This article first appeared in *KidsView* February 2016.

## Obituaries



**JARA**, Teofila, born 3.11.1928 in Ancash, Peru; died 11.7.19 in Kings Langley Adventist Aged Care, Sydney, NSW. Teofila is survived by her son Emilio Silva and his wife Cecilia, son Walter Castro, daughters Mercedes Castro and Hilda Sologuren; grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Teofila was a faithful member of Blacktown Spanish church.

*Sarah Sologuren*



**MEINTJES**, Matthew, born 17.12.1934 in Port Elizabeth, South Africa; died 7.7.19 in Caloundra, Qld. On 15.4.1963 he married Andeline. Matthew is survived by his wife (Brisbane); daughters Sheryl and Adam (Glass House Mountains, Qld), and Cheré and Judd (Sydney, NSW); and grandchildren Jesse, Jett and Hunter. Matthew will be fondly remembered for his cheeky smile and positive outlook on life.

*Scott Wareham, Neil Marks*

**MURRAY**, Myra Anna Rose (nee Mitchell), born 27.9.1935 in Maryborough, Qld; died 8.7.19 in Cooranbong, NSW. In 1955 she married Victor, who predeceased her in 1997. She was also predeceased by her three

elder siblings. Myra is survived by brothers Tom (Kempsey, NSW) and Len (Murrindindi, Vic), sister Gwen Mawdsley (Vermont); children Paulette and David Hutton (Alstonville, NSW), Phillip and Trudy (Perth, WA), Pamela and Gary MacDonald (Charlestown, NSW), Robyn and Colin Crabtree (Cooranbong), Rosalie (Cardiff Heights) and Stewart (Hornsby); 10 grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren. Myra was an employee of Sydney Adventist Hospital for many years. A keen musician, she was a quiet achiever with immense energy. She was a gentle, hospitable lady who loved her family and Lord.

*Roger Nixon, Phil Murray*

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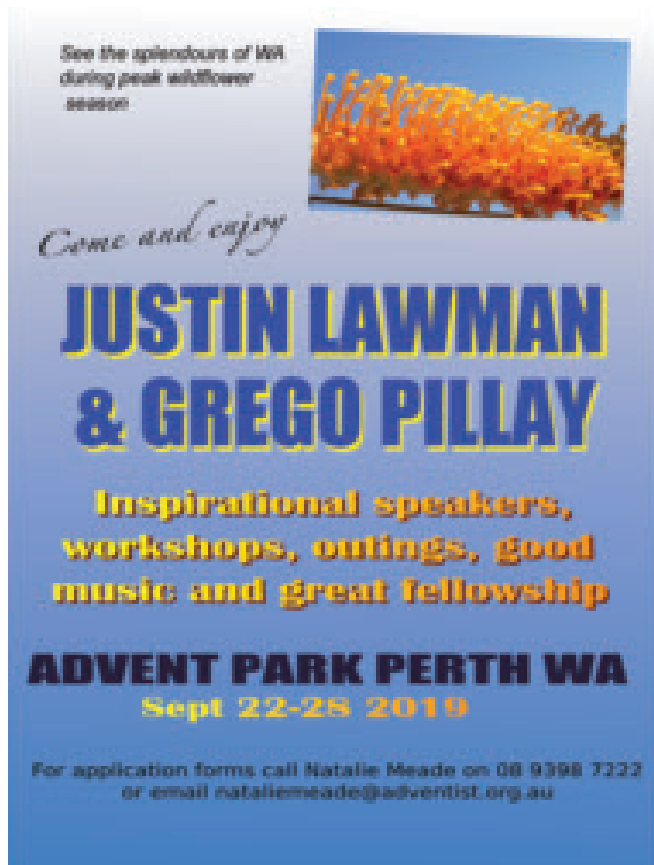


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