

# Adventist Review

March 15, 2012

"One Project"  
Focuses on Jesus **10**

Dogs Eat Too **14**

Burdens to Carry **28**



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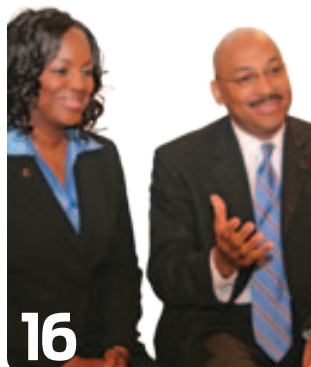
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# Adventist Review

***"Behold, I come quickly . . ."***

**Our mission** is to uplift Jesus Christ by presenting stories of His matchless love, news of His present workings, help for knowing Him better, and hope in His soon return.



16

## COVER FEATURE

**16 Home, Complex Home**  
Editor Bill Knott interviews Willie and Elaine Oliver, directors of the Family Ministries Department of the General Conference.



20

## ARTICLES

**14 Dogs Eat Too**

LAEL CAESAR

There's more than enough for all.

**20 Letter to a Bride**

ROSIE BOOM

Building a successful marriage relationship doesn't just happen.

**24 Facing God's Judgment**

DERICK A. ADU

It's not a threat—it's a promise.

**28 Burdens to Carry**

SUDHA KHRISTMUKTI

A visit to the poor side of town reveals another dimension of law keeping.



10

## DEPARTMENTS

**4 Letters**

**7 Page 7**

**8 World News & Perspectives**

**13 Give & Take**

**23 Cliff's Edge**

**27 Back to Basics**

**30 The Life of Faith**

**31 Reflections**



6

## EDITORIALS

**6 LAEL CAESAR**

I

**7 KIMBERLY LUSTE MARAN**  
**My Florida Epiphany**

## ON THE COVER

Ideally, our families are the closest thing to heaven on earth. But most families aren't ideal. What then?

Illustration by Bryan Gray

## NEXT WEEK

**Of Giants and Grasshoppers**  
Keeping one's perspective in the face of insurmountable odds

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## Not Flipping Over Burgers

» The article “Super-healthy City Flipping Over Burgers” (Feb. 16, 2012) from the *Daily Telegraph* reminds me why God has to raise up people other than Adventists to emphasize the positive benefits of healthy living.

It’s interesting that Adventists on the city council are OK with “flipping burgers.”

I am glad I don’t live in Loma Linda.

Thanks for the article.

**M. JACKSON**  
via e-mail



PHOTO: JIMMY PHILLIPS

## Becoming the Change

» My thanks to Andrew Kerbs for his article “Becoming the Change” (Feb. 16,

2012). It is encouraging to read of a young adult’s concern for sharing the message with secular college students. The church’s “greatest message is what its members live throughout the week. How we interact with the world around us is more telling of our faith than anything else.” The church is in good hands with young adults who care enough to become the change.

We are blessed in our prayer meeting service by the leadership of young adults.

**NATALIE DODD**  
Centerville, Ohio



## You Can Make a Difference

» Thank you for the good material in the *Adventist Review*. The article “Yes, You Can Make a Difference!” by Reinder Bruinsma (Jan. 26, 2012) was great. I got the point—and I’m grateful that God has an Rx for the virus!

**EDITH MEIKLE**  
Yountville, California

## In the Arena

» Regarding “In the Arena” (Jan. 19, 2012): The open suggestion that God’s remnant church should begin to facilitate and encourage Adventist athletes to enter the world of commercial sports may be the single most spiritually dangerous and morally objectionable concept ever printed in our church paper. Anyone who has a true knowledge of the warnings in the Spirit of Prophecy against sports, games, and rivalry would never make such a diabolical proposal.

The participation in sports simply as a form of exercise may have some legitimacy (see *The Adventist Home*, pp. 499-506), but to engage in competition on the interscholastic and professional levels is totally incompatible with pure Christian principles. Few things could be more antithetical to the character of the humble and self-sacrificing character of Christ than the adulation and glamorization of humans for their ability to demonstrate mere physical dominance in an activity that is essentially useless and produces nothing of real value for the needs of suffering humanity. It would clearly demonstrate to all that we are not only in the world, but also of the world.

The church’s young people are to be educated and inspired to devote all their God-given talents—both mental and physical—to the service of humankind and the proclamation of the three

angels’ messages, not to activities that foster pride, self-exaltation, and the love of supremacy over others.

**LEONARD LANG**  
Newcastle, Wyoming



## A Girl Named Virginia-Gene

» Most of the correspondents have memories of Virginia-Gene Rittenhouse as the director of the New England Youth Ensemble (see “Her Music Continues,” by Jennifer Mae Barizo, Dec. 8, 2011), but I have a memory of Virginia-Gene that is quite unique.

In the late 1940s I lived in Pasadena, California, and was employed as a rocket scientist at Caltech (the California Institute of Technology). A doctor, who was a member of the Pasadena church, invited me to his home for a recital by a young violinist named Virginia-Gene Shankel. During the recital I fell in love with this rosy-cheeked girl and her violin. It happened that I had in my pocket two tickets to a concert by world-famous

violinist, Yehudi Menuhin, and I had the wild idea to ask her to the concert. We were total strangers. However, after the recital I asked her if she would like to go with me. To my surprise and delight, she said yes, and we spent a magical evening together.

I did not see Virginia-Gene again until 50 years later, when I attended a concert by the ensemble, and she was the conductor. I wondered if she would remember me, so after the concert I went down to where she was talking with some admirers. She happened to see me coming, and, much to the amusement of onlookers, she shouted out, “John McConnell,” rushed over, and gave me big hug.

She remembered that evening so long ago when I had a date with a girl named Virginia-Gene.

**JOHN MC CONNELL**

*Citrus Heights, California*

## More on Rittenhouse

» When I was pastoring in the Elmira, New York, Seventh-day Adventist Church, the New England Youth Ensemble was scheduled to give a concert in our church on Sabbath evening. Follow-

ing the concert the Rittenhouses were to spend the night at our house. We had out-of-town guests for dinner who wanted to see the area, so, being short on time, we just stacked the dishes and drove around to see some of the places of interest.

We arrived home just in time to go to the concert. After the concert we and the Rittenhouses went to our home. There they saw all of the dirty dishes and insisted on washing them (we didn’t have a dishwasher). We were embarrassed to have them do it, but they insisted. Virginia-Gene had broken her little finger, and it was all bandaged, so Harvey washed and she dried (it was about 11:30 p.m.). They were very special people, and we had a delightful time and were honored to have them as our guests.

**DON BURGESSON**

*Mesa, Arizona*

» I enjoyed the article about Virginia-Gene Rittenhouse very much, and I suspect she would have also, had she still been living. It seems a shame we have to die before we can be recognized for our accom-

plishments. Is it sinful to compliment a living person?

**CALVIN ACUFF**

*Morganton, North Carolina*

## Our LE History

» On page 5 of the February 16 issue (Inbox) Trevor Connell writes, “I’d like to offer a correction to the interesting cover feature ‘Frontline Witnessing,’ by Sandra Blackmer.” It goes on to say that Oakwood College’s Literature Department ran a program to help students earn their educational expenses back in the 1970s, thus predating Blackmer’s 1987 as the date of one of our institutions sponsoring such a program. I would like to correct both of these datings. I attended Union Springs Academy in upstate New York from 1927 to 1931, and during all those years the academy urged students needing financial help to be student colporteurs during summer vacations. Linton G. Sevens was our school principal, and Xenophon P. Walton was our school treasurer. Both men helped students get started in this activity.

**FRANK B. WALDORF**

*Modesto, California*

» When did student literature evangelism begin? Our *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, copyright 1976, refers to literature evangelist clubs at our colleges.

The summer of 1947 Wallace Welch and I canvassed in eastern Kentucky to earn money for college. Other students did the same, but the practice began prior to that.

In the summer of 1945 Eileen Gill and Jerry Lawrence, students at Madison College in Tennessee, spent the summer with Mrs. Marple and Ms. Crawford. Marple drove them through the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference territory, where they sold *Life and Health* and *These Times* for 25 cents each. Eileen, whom I married in 1947, has a postcard picturing the motel where the group stayed [during one of their trips into Manchester] on September 18, 1945.

**DAVID MANZANO**

*Harriman, Tennessee*

*The statement in the article “Frontline Witnessing” that refers to students selling books to earn money for tuition as originating in 1987 referred only to magabooks, the focus of the article. We apologize for the confusion this may have caused.*  
—Editors

**We welcome** your letters, noting, as always, that inclusion of a letter in this section does not imply that the ideas expressed are endorsed by either the editors of the *Adventist Review* or the General Conference. Short, specific, timely letters have the best chance at being published (please include your complete address and phone number—even with e-mail messages). Letters will be edited for space and clarity only. Send correspondence to *Letters to the Editor*, *Adventist Review*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600; Internet: [letters@adventistreview.org](mailto:letters@adventistreview.org).

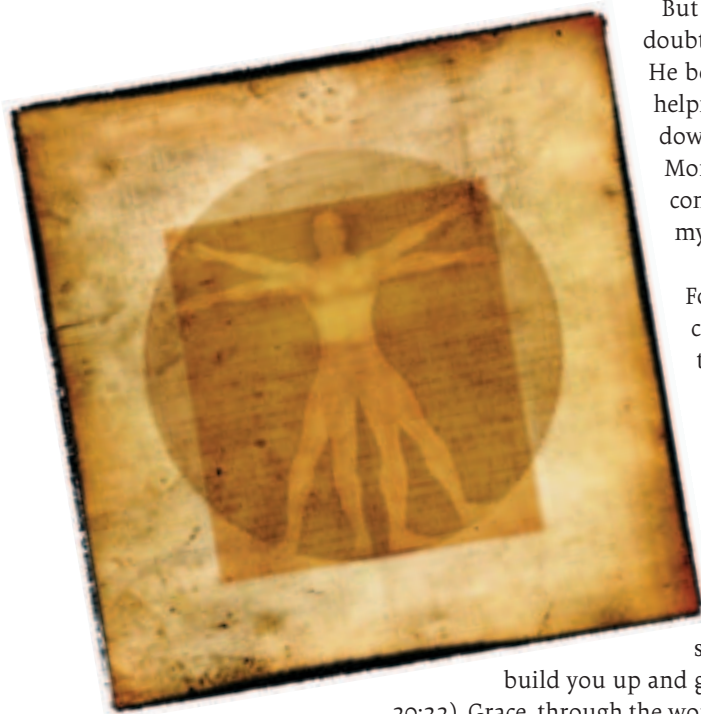
“It seems a shame we have to die before we can be recognized for our accomplishments. Is it sinful to compliment a living person?”

—CALVIN ACUFF, Morgantown, North Carolina





Lael  
**Caesar**



## I AM WHOM JESUS IS MAKING ME. AND OTHER THINGS BESIDES: FOR

example, and regrettably so, I am less than the sum of my parts—I am Lucy’s and her awesome husband Riley’s son, he known in his time as the dean of ministers in the Guyana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Besides, my wonderful wife has dedicated so much of her life to blessing me. God has tried to do so much for me through the goodness, self-sacrifice, and grace of these and many others. Given His effort and theirs, I should have turned out vastly better.

Yet I remain undiscouraged: I am, I insist, whom Jesus is making me. This is, first and last, a statement of faith, which is, in fact, the only way a Christian lives: “The life I now live in the body, I live by faith” (Gal. 2:20).

Anyone who knows me could quite easily, and depressingly, contrast my current practice with God’s ideal for me as revealed in Jesus. Or they could invoke the schizophrenic tension between the me, of the flesh, and the other me, of the Spirit, given that the two “are in conflict with each other” (Gal. 5:17). Acknowledging that struggle, some argue, is no more than facing fact. Too, it makes me more relevant to a world of strugglers. It means I can understand them better. It was the very reason Jesus came, runs this interpretation: “Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted” (Heb. 2:18). So, just as Jesus understands, I too can better understand. And because of that understanding, I will be less intolerant of my brother’s failures. And my own.

But I do not want to be more tolerant of sin in my life. And I earnestly doubt that anyone actually believes that Jesus can help me only because He became human. That would mean that He was quite incapable of helping Enoch and Elijah, or Rahab and Ruth, given that He hadn’t come down here yet, and gone into the wilderness after His baptism, etc. Moreover, the life of the flesh is no part of Jesus’ goal for me. So I have considerable difficulty finding any warrant for affirming it as part of myself. I much rather deny it.

Such denial is of course open to rather broad misunderstanding. For some, it simply means that the self-denying Christian refuses to celebrate her selfish habits. Good saints may choose to read no more than that in Jesus’ prescription on following Him in cross bearing (Matt. 16:24). But Jesus’ cross bearing is much more than simply refusing Mama Mary’s seventh helping of fig-and-date desserts. Following Him with my cross could hardly be limited to refusing my own seventh consecutive banana split. Yet we both know of times when I, as they say, just couldn’t refuse—though I should have.

Cause for despair? Not if you know what, and whom, grace is for. Paul did, as his farewell words at the harbor of Miletus show: “I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can

build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified” (Acts 20:32). Grace, through the word of grace, is for fixing people who need fixing, and guaranteeing their eternal inheritance.

So I do not despair. I am whom Jesus is making me. Clearly He isn’t finished fixing yet. I’m not what I should be; I’m not even all I myself in better moments have striven to be. So many have so often despaired of ever knowing what to do with me. But Jesus is still working on me, to make me what I ought to be. You might say, with a little plagiarism, that it took Him just a word to make the earth and Mars, the planets and the systems, the galaxies and stars. How loving and patient He must be: He’s still working on me,\* and I need not despair: *I am whom Jesus is making me.* ■

\* With a nod to Joel Hephill’s “He’s Still Working on Me.”

# My Florida Epiphany

**IT WAS DECEMBER 2004. I WAS IN ORLANDO, FLORIDA, WORKING ON**

my master's degree thesis and a special project for the *Adventist Review*. I'd scheduled a tour of Celebration Florida Hospital, and a discussion on a proposed young adult-themed magazine issue. Through an impressive circuit a friend, Allan Martin, who was pastor of the Celebration church and widely known in North America as a young adult leader, explained the architecture of, and philosophy behind, the town and the hospital.

Then came lunch. As we enjoyed a delicious meal, Allan started to talk about how millennials were creeping into young adulthood. He talked about possible ways to reach them for Jesus, and how we needed to be the ones to inspire them—all too soon we'd be the dreaded “middle-aged”—so they could take up the mantle and finish His work.

I was just cresting over 30, and I thought about my younger brother. I shook my head. Then I said something about how the upcoming generation appeared shallow, too happy-go-lucky, with interests that weren't deep. I spoke about how it seemed that all they cared about were video games and entertainment. They were apathetic.

Allan stared at me a moment. I could sense—just a little bit—disappointment as he gently corrected me: “They're not shallow. In fact, I haven't seen [a group more] in search of meaning. They are seekers. They can be reached. They want to be reached.” Our conversation continued with me agreeing—and shamefacedly apologizing.

Later I asked God to never let me forget the lesson I learned that day. I vowed that, with His help, I would always see people, regardless of age, as reachable—those millennials, my own children—and never fall into this trap again.

May my Florida epiphany stay with me until He returns. ■



Kimberly  
**Luste  
Maran**



## Searching the Archives

Did you know the General Conference Archives and Statistics Department has an extensive Web site of historical documents to be used for information, history, research, or fun? There are statistics, minutes, Adventist books and periodicals, and more all in one convenient location. Why not read a *Review* from 1890? How about searching for information on your local church? Possibly events were printed in the union paper. Was your great-grandfather an Adventist minister? Maybe there are news items you can find, including pictures. All this and more can be found just a mouse click away.

1. Type [www.ast.gc.adventist.org](http://www.ast.gc.adventist.org) into your Web browser.
2. Click on Adventist Archives.
3. To view documents, you may need to install Adobe Reader and/or the DjVu Browser Plug-in. DjVu is better for a slow Internet connection.
4. To the left of the screen you will see categories of searchable resources. You may search all of them at one time, or narrow your choice to a category or specific publication. (Tip: Restricting your search will allow for a faster response time.)
5. Type your topic into the Search box at the top, and click search. If necessary, search within the document for all hits.
6. If searching a name or place with multiple words, place them in quotations marks, e.g., “Uriah Smith.” If searching for a name with initials, try doing so with a space between initials and without, e.g., “D.A. Delafield” or “D. A. Delafield,” as publishing styles have changed through the years.

A search for February 1978 found this *Adventist Review*; William G. Johnsson's dissertation on Hebrews can be read and studied; a search for “Dwight Nelson” found this *Lake Union Herald* from 1985.





PHOTO: COURTESY CAPT. LARRY SLAGE, CHESTERTOWN VFC



60 firefighters responded to the blaze, which was brought under control in about 90 minutes.

Two ladder trucks were used to gain access to the roof, from which smoke and flames shot out. The suspect organ, a baby grand piano, at least one stained-glass window, and the church's pews were among items lost in the fire.

The Chestertown church, organized at the height of World War II, when Seventh-day Adventist evangelists held meetings, including a tent crusade, in the town, has 85 members, McDaniel said. The building, whose sanctuary was renovated in the mid-1970s and to which an addition was constructed in 1980, also held many memories.

"One woman was there" at the church after the fire, he said, telling McDaniel, in tears, "I was married in that church."

On the Sabbath following the fire, the Chestertown congregation met with a nearby Adventist church in Rock Hall, Maryland. The next day a business meeting went on as scheduled, but at a Chestertown funeral home.

McDaniel hopes the addition, which did not sustain heavy damage, will be cleaned and available for use as a temporary worship facility in about two weeks. He noted that several area non-

**CHURCH AFLAME:** Flames shoot out of the sanctuary of the Chestertown, Maryland, Seventh-day Adventist Church in the early-morning hours of February 21, 2012. No one was injured, but the blaze caused an estimated \$500,000 in damage.

## NORTH AMERICA

# Fire Racks Up \$500K in Damage at Chestertown, Maryland, Church

*Two-alarm blaze drew 60 firefighters; renovations planned*

By **MARK A. KELLNER**, news editor

**AN EARLY** morning two-alarm fire February 21, 2012, at the Chestertown, Maryland, Seventh-day Adventist Church gutted the interior of the 67-year-old sanctuary, temporarily displacing members of a congregation formed in the midst of World War II.

Damage is estimated to exceed \$500,000, Kevin McDaniel, the congregation's pastor, said. Maryland state fire investigators said an electrical problem in an old organ was likely to have caused the blaze, several media reports indicated.

The nearby Garnett Elementary School was closed because of smoke drifting over from the church fire. The school reopened the next day.

"Buildings can be replaced; it's the people that are the church," McDaniel told *Adventist Review* in a telephone interview. "The church is still here; it's the building that's out of commission."

According to fire officials and media reports, the local volunteer fire com-

pany responded to the call. On seeing smoke and flames shooting from the building, a second alarm was sounded, drawing reinforcements from the Queen Anne's, Maryland, and New Castle, Delaware, fire companies. A total of



CHESAPEAKE CONFERENCE PHOTO

**LIGHT IN DARKNESS:** Sunlight streams into the blackened sanctuary of the Chestertown church following the February 21 two-alarm blaze.



**AFTER THE FIRE:** Chestertown, Maryland, Volunteer Fire Company chief Bruce Neal, left, and Seventh-day Adventist pastor Kevin McDaniel survey the damage.

Adventist churches have offered their sanctuaries to the Adventists if needed.

And while the fire consumed physical items as well as more than a few memories, McDaniel is glad no one was injured. He views the fire as a potential opportunity for the congregation.

“Sometimes these tragedies are something that can pull you together,” McDaniel said. “I’m telling our people to press together and be united.” ■

CHESAPEAKE CONFERENCE PHOTO



## ■ NORTH AMERICA

# Soper, Temperance Advocate, Listen Editor, Passes Away

*Profiled drug-free celebrities in effort to reach youth*

By **ANSEL OLIVER**, *Adventist News Network*

**FRANCIS A. SOPER** was the longtime editor of *Listen* magazine, the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s temperance outreach that advocated a drug-free lifestyle for youth and profiled celebrities who promoted the cause.

Soper, who died January 17, 2012, at age 93, edited the magazine for 30 years, becoming the longest-serving editor in the magazine’s history. As editor from 1954 to 1984, he interviewed and featured celebrity entertainers and athletes—from singer Johnny Cash to Olympic figure skater Peggy Fleming. He also landed interviews with United States first ladies Betty Ford and Nancy Reagan.

The magazine, which launched in 1948 and ceased publication last year, was the church’s public voice of drug and alcohol prevention in the community and published in an era before cigarette packets carried warning labels. *Listen* included teaching materials and was used in high school classrooms around the United States.

As editor, Soper later held the title of associate director of what was then known as the Temperance Department at the Adventist Church’s world headquarters.

Colleagues described Soper as a gentle personality but firm in his editorial requirements.

“He was an iconic editor. *Listen* was Soper, and Soper was *Listen*,” said Stoy Proctor, former associate director of the Adventist Church’s Health Ministries Department. “He was dogged in trying to make it the best magazine.”

Soper grew up in Minnesota and graduated from Pacific Union College in Angwin, California. In 1942 he landed a job as a copy editor with the denomination’s Pacific Press Publishing Association, then located in Mountain View, California. He later became an assistant editor of several publications before becoming associate editor of *Listen* in 1952, and



PHOTO COURTESY FORD FAMILY

**TEMPERANCE ADVOCATE:** *Listen* magazine editor Francis A. Soper (right) interviews radio broadcasting legend Paul Harvey. Soper also landed interviews with famous entertainers, athletes, and U.S. first ladies during his 30 years editing the Adventist Church’s temperance magazine.

its editor two years later.

“He really loved getting to know these professionals in music and sports who made a real effort to be an example to the teenage generation they were performing for,” said his daughter Lois Ford.

His daughter Lori, in 2007, and his wife, Eunice, in 2009, preceded Soper in death. Survivors include his daughter Lois Ford and two grandsons. ■

■ NORTH AMERICA

# “One Project” Focuses on Adventists’ Relationship With Jesus

*Hundreds meet in Seattle*

By **ANSEL OLIVER**, Adventist  
News Network

**THE ANNUAL** gathering of the One Project has its roots in Japhet De Oliveira’s 2009 cancer diagnosis, which he says was a wake-up call.

With the threat of a worsening sickness looming over him, De Oliveira met with a support group for two days in a Denver hotel in 2010. He and four fellow pastors revealed and examined issues in their lives. Now, his cancer in remission, De Oliveira has seen that small group grow into an annual gathering of hundreds of Seventh-day Adventists seeking to reconnect with Jesus in their personal and corporate worship.

This year’s gathering of the One Project on February 13 and 14 brought more than 700 people to Seattle for conversa-

tions on practical applications of Jesus’ ministry in their own lives, churches, and communities. De Oliveira hopes it’s an environment in which people can honestly look at their own priorities, examine the core of Christianity, and

promote Jesus in their theology as Seventh-day Adventists.

For some it’s a place to challenge and even question one’s own beliefs.

“We’re trying to create a safe place to say Jesus is the center of our church and

**WAKE-UP CALL:** Japhet De Oliveira at the One Project in Seattle on February 13. He and four other pastors met in 2010 for spiritual support, which was the beginning of the annual gathering.

PHOTO: DELWIN FINCH



PHOTO: DARREN HESLOP

**BIBLE READING:** Lisa Clark Diller, chair of the Department of History at Southern Adventist University, reads from the Bible at the One Project. “I was born into a Seventh-day Adventist home, an environment where we knew Adventists were ‘right.’ Since then, I’ve learned the wisdom of having Jesus and being right,” she said.



PHOTO: DELWIN FINCH

**FOCUS ON JESUS:** Sam Leonor, senior chaplain at La Sierra University. He referenced the 1888 General Conference session in Minneapolis, saying, “From that meeting, Adventists emerged refocused on Jesus: crucified, living, and coming again.”

always has been,” said De Oliveira, chaplain for missions at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. He’s especially looking to support those who may become frustrated with the church.

“We love our church. I really do believe that God has called the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and I’m tired of losing people when we work so hard to bring them in,” he said.

The One Project is short on programming and long on discussions. De

Oliveira says the event format grew out of his wish to make a gathering similar to the best part of the numerous conferences he attends each year—talking with people individually. A small stage is set in the middle of a banquet room, and speakers are allowed 20 minutes to present. The event is then geared toward the 40 minutes of discussion at each table following the speaker.

“I go to so many conferences and so

many meetings, and honestly, the best part is meeting with someone over lunch,” De Oliveira said. “We didn’t want to have another event that’s packed with programming all day.”

“By reading, people will learn and change and transform their lives,” De Oliveira said.

Sam Leonor, senior chaplain at La Sierra University, highlighted the 1888 meeting of the Adventist world church

*continued on page 12*

## ■ WORLD CHURCH

# Elly Economou, Andrews University Professor, Passes

*Started Hellenic Adventist group; translated Ellen White books into Greek*

By **ADVENTIST REVIEW STAFF**

**ELLY HELEN ECONOMOU**, 83, a longtime professor of Greek at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, passed away Thursday, February 9, 2012, at the Lakeland Regional Medical Center in St. Joseph, Michigan.

A private burial was held February 16; a memorial service is slated for Saturday, March 24, at 4:00 p.m. in Pioneer Memorial church on the Andrews campus.

Born May 6, 1928, in Thessalonica, Greece, she began higher education at the Anatolia Greek-American College and finished with honors. Economou came to the United States in 1962, earning a B.A. in 1966 from Pacific Union College, Angwin, California, majoring in biblical and modern languages.

Economou chose Andrews for graduate studies, earning a master’s degree in biblical languages in 1967. In 1972 she began postgraduate work at the University of Strasbourg, France, where she deciphered a number of papyri dating back to approximately 300 B.C. for the National Library of Strasbourg. She was awarded a doctorate in 1975.

Economou was fluent in English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish, as well as modern Greek. She also had knowl-

edge of 10 other modern and ancient languages. In 1967 she began her teaching duties at Andrews as an instructor in the University’s Modern Languages Department and joined the Department of Religion & Biblical Languages in 1976. After retirement in 1999, Economou spent five years

as a part-time instructor, for a total of 37 years’ service at Andrews.

As a member of the Seventh-day Adventist church of her native Thessalonica, Economou served as an interpreter, youth leader, secretary, treasurer, and writer. She translated 18 books by Ellen G. White into Greek, including the Conflict of the Ages Series.

“Her life was dedicated to the church,” said Karnik Doukmetzian, a longtime friend and Adventist world church general counsel. Translating Mrs. White’s books “was the major effort of her life. It has blessed and benefited the Greeks all around the world,” he added.

Economou was “a very giving person who hosted many events at her

home and instrumental in starting the Hellenic Adventist Fellowship, which annually gathered at her home,” Doukmetzian said. ■



ANDREWS UNIVERSITY PHOTO

**BELOVED PROFESSOR:** Elly Economou, an expert in biblical Greek and a longtime instructor at Andrews University, passed to her rest February 9, 2012.



body at the General Conference session in Minneapolis, Minnesota, when leaders discussed righteousness by faith. “From that meeting in 1888, Adventists emerged refocused on Jesus: crucified, living, and coming again,” Leonor said.

Dr. David Kim, a family practice physician from Atlanta, said the One Project gathering was long overdue. “I grew up in a legalistic Adventist culture where the three R’s dominated—rules, regulations, and rituals. Missing was the biggest R of Christianity—a relationship with Jesus.”

The original meeting in Denver in July of 2010 brought the five pastors together for support and soul searching. De Oliveira admits he had “sort

of lost [his] way,” focusing on success as a pastor and not caring enough for his family or health. “I would only read the Bible to prepare sermons,” he said.

The original five were De Oliveira; Leonor; Alex Bryan, pastor of Walla Walla University church; Tim Gillespie, young adult pastor at Loma Linda University church; and Terry Swenson, senior chaplain at Loma Linda University.

“It was a real honest conversation,” De Oliveira said. “Some crying and a lot of praying. We said, ‘Let’s do this at least once a year.’”

The group agreed to meet annually to focus on Jesus. Each invited friends for a similar meeting the following year in

Atlanta. More than 170 people showed up.

For that 2011 gathering in Atlanta, participants may not have fully understood what they were coming to, De Oliveira said. They were each asked to read the four Gospels and the book *The Desire of Ages*, authored by Adventist Church cofounder Ellen G. White. The invitation then was simply, “Come have a two-day conversation about Jesus.”

The conversation continues later this year in Australia and Denmark, and next year in Chicago. For more information, visit: [the1project.org](http://the1project.org). ■

—with additional reporting by Bernadine Delafield and Suzanne Ocsai

## ■ NORTH AMERICA

# Adventists to Monitor Health Care Rules on Contraception

*Potential curtailing of religious liberty is concern, PARL says*

By **MARK A. KELLNER**, news editor

The recent moves by the federal government to mandate provision of contraception in employer-provided health-care is drawing a cautious look from religious liberty experts in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

A January 20, 2012, “final rule” issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services says employers—including religious institutions that are not specifically houses of worship, i.e., church-owned schools and hospitals—that provide health insurance must offer “a full range of contraceptive services to women without copay, coinsurance, or deductible,” according to a document released by the General Conference’s Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department.

“This will include all Food and Drug Administration-approved forms of contraception as well as female sterilization,” the Adventist document noted.

While that isn’t a specific concern for Seventh-day Adventist institutions—church policy does not bar the use of contraception, and health insurance offered by most, if not all, United States Adventist institutions currently covers contraceptive services—the concept of an institution being required to act against its own principles is troubling. The

leadership of one major United States denomination, the Roman Catholic Church, and several large Protestant communities, raised objections that, on February 10, caused a revision by the government, putting the cost burden on the insurance companies rather than insurers.

That move has not mollified the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, who claim the government is still requiring them to act against their conscience in providing contraceptives, medication, or services that violate their religious principles.

The Adventist Church document reflects the movement’s concerns about individual rights and the rights of faith communities to follow their consciences.

“Consistent with its longstanding practice of defending religious liberty and freedom of conscience for all, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is concerned any time government requires a religious organization to violate its religious beliefs,” the document said. “The General Conference Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department and the Office of General Counsel continue to watch this developing issue closely and will do all that is appropriate to defend and protect religious liberty and freedom of conscience.” ■



## LET'S PRAY

Have a prayer need? Have a few free minutes? Each Wednesday morning at 8:15 ET the *Adventist Review* staff meets to pray for people—children, parents, friends, coworkers. Send your prayer requests and, if possible, pray with us on Wednesday mornings. Send requests to: Let's Pray, *Adventist Review*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600; fax: 301-680-6638; e-mail: [prayer@adventistreview.org](mailto:prayer@adventistreview.org).

## SOUND BITE

"In order to 'get over' ourselves, we need to have God over us."

—**PASTOR JOE STROCK**, IN HIS JANUARY 21, 2012, SERMON ON *BECOMING LESS SELF-CENTERED AND MORE GOD-CENTERED*, AT THE SUNNYVALE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN CALIFORNIA



© TERRY CREWS

## ADVENTIST LIFE

The time had come for me to make the difficult decision to give up driving and dispose of my vintage automobile. When the man came to look it over, he was impressed with the low mileage on such an old car.

"Yes," I said. "I'm like the little old lady from Pasadena, who drove her car only to church on Sunday." He smiled. I continued, "But I'm not from Pasadena, and I go to church on Saturdays." He smiled again.

—**MARGARET L. HESLOP**, LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

## POEM

### Last Fling

With frosty crowns on their beautiful heads  
Proud daffodils bend low,  
While shivering little crocuses  
Peek through a mantle of snow.

Pussy willows, adorned in bonnets of ice,  
Are glad for their furry coats.  
The robins, in chilly wonderment,  
Have silenced their springtime notes.

Forsythia is in elegant style  
With shimmering, lacy tresses;  
Bewildered tulips try to keep warm  
Beneath their snowy dresses.

The Creator of all is not worried,  
For it's only the season's last fling.  
Today feels the cold blast of winter,  
But tomorrow shows promise of spring.

—**EDITH PADFIELD GALAMBOS**, HAMBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

**B**iblical dogs seem to get a fairly rough deal. Nobody wanted to be a dog in Bible times. Paul warned the Philippians to beware of them (Phil. 3:2). Jesus insisted that they should not be given anything holy (Matt. 7:6). Dogs, spiritualists, fornicators, murderers, and other such elements will all be excluded from heaven (Rev. 22:15). Clearly, being a dog can be bad enough. Though, thanks to Solomon, there is still hope for dogs, living dogs, at any rate, which, in Solomon's storied judgment, are better than dead lions (Eccl. 9:4).

### Not for Dogs

Jesus' disciples could tell who belonged to dog status. The woman from Syrian Phoenicia did. Everybody from that part of the world did. They were all dogs. That was the only reason, the disciples could all see, why Jesus would say what He did to the woman, regardless of her desperation. There may have been something to be noticed, cared about perhaps, or even deeply pitied about her plea. But healing was not for her.

Yes, they were men, and fishermen at that, toughened by long nights of lonely, patient vigil, and fierce fights against mad waves. But surely someone among them

had Simon Peter for their partner and workmate before they ever came together to set up Israel's new kingdom (Luke 5:10). They knew about the ties of human affection. Their triumvirate didn't begin with Jesus. They were tight before any of them ever met the Messiah. His transformation of their lives and destiny couldn't break up their closeness. And though we know little about the rest, surely they all knew something about family.

What then would be so difficult, so wrong about this poor woman's cry, that these men should behave as they did? "His disciples came to him and urged him, 'Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us'" (Matt. 15:23). Why should she be singled out for expulsion from Jesus' presence? Why couldn't she have demons cast out of her daughter? Hadn't Jesus given them power to do just that the year before (Matt. 10:8)?

The answer was yes and no. Yes, He had given them such power. But not for dogs. They had read their marching orders: They were specifically forbidden to go to the Gentiles or Samaritans. Their field was the lost of Israel (verses 5, 6).

Syrian Phoenicia was no part of lost Israel. It was worse than merely Gentile territory. It was Canaan. Jesus repeated their assignment in what they must have

## THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF GRACE

# Dogs Eat Too

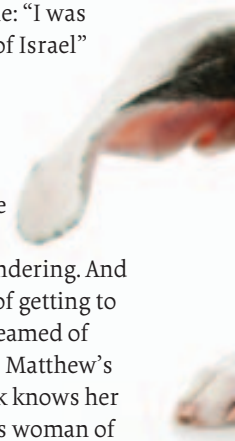
BY LAEL CAESAR

could feel a tug on his heart as this desperate mother pleaded for her "little daughter" (Mark 7:25), who was "cruelly demon-possessed" (Matt. 15:22, NASB).<sup>1</sup> Peter, at the very least, knew what it was like to long for a loved one's healing. Even if he had no daughter, he had had an ailing mother-in-law. Jesus had intervened, in his own home, to relieve his soul's distress by healing afflictions of body for someone he loved (Mark 1:30, 31). Moreover, Peter's brother loved him too, enough to bring him to Jesus (John 1:35-42). Then there was John, who had brother James for close, constant company.<sup>2</sup> Beyond their brotherhood, they

heard as unmistakable context. He followed His extended silence before her cries with a single, stern line: "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel" (Matt. 15:24).

### History of the Dogs

Canaan was the dream of generations of Israelites, the land of rest after Egyptian tyranny and wilderness wandering. And though Israelites dreamed of getting to Canaan, no Israelite ever dreamed of becoming Canaanite. Hence Matthew's ethnic marker: though Mark knows her to be Greek (Mark 7:26), this woman of





Syrian Phoenicia is still, for Matthew, Canaanite (Matt. 15:22), belonging to the people whose extermination God had ordered. Israel's occupation of the Promised Land meant cutting off the Canaanites (Ex. 23:23). God would drive them out (Ex. 33:2); He would send hornets before the Israelites to do it (Ex. 23:28). All this because of the Canaanites' wickedness. Israel was holy, and would preserve that holy status only by wiping out the unholy Canaanites (Deut. 7:1-6).

To judge by Matthew's label, the tumult of changes, military, migratory, or otherwise, through 1,500 years of time, had changed nothing. Canaanites were still around. And Jesus had come north along the seacoast to the region of Tyre (Mark 7:24), to teach them another lesson. What Mark calls Tyre, Matthew speaks of as the region of Tyre and Sidon (Matt. 15:21), reflecting the intertwining identities of these two cities in ethnic and cultural affairs, for two millennia before him. Tyre (Arabic Sour) is in mod-

ern Lebanon, 12 miles north of the border with Israel. Sidon (Saida) is another 20 miles farther north.

Except for the Israelites, Matthew's ethnic label, Canaanite, is a highly positive term. Its meaning points up the fact that the region's historical inhabitants had been excellent traders. They certainly had great material to trade. Their artisanship was consistently superior. And their prowess in multiple areas, whether

## CRUMBS OF GRACE WOULD SUFFICE FOR HER.

as business people, sailors, or boat builders, is amply celebrated: Their wares and skills became known far abroad not only by export, but because they themselves actually set up colonies overseas, for example, at Carthage in North Africa. The breadth of their fame, illustrated by the list of countries they engaged in Africa, Europe, and elsewhere, embraces a total of 35 cities, nation states, or ethnic groupings listed as trading partners in a single Bible chapter (Eze. 27).

Phoenician material and aesthetic giftedness were a continual fascination to Israel, and its constant seduction.

God's blight of drought on Israel, in protest against Jezebel and Baal's takeover, is among Scripture's most dramatic testimonies to the power of Canaan over Israel (1 Kings 17:1; James 5:17). Sidon was the hometown of Ahab's queen, who brought her father-priest's religion and culture with her to Samaria (1 Kings 16:31-33). And if God decreed their elimination 1,500 years before, and if He would have His prophet Elijah slaughter the prophets of Canaanite religion 900 years ago, why should He now grant their descendants blessings? The disciples agreed completely with Jesus' categorization. "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs" (Matt. 15:26).

### Surprise, Surprise!

No doubt the disciples could not

expect the woman to agree, though they knew for sure that Jesus was right. After all, mutual agreement is not the goal of insult, and agreement would mean accepting the canine characterization. But then, the wretched soul did agree. Not only did she agree, she justified Jesus' perspective—on two counts: "First let the children eat all they want," Jesus had retorted, because "it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs" (Mark 7:27). She was fine with that. Dogs, she agreed, could eat last. That was appropriate. But that very concession acknowledged the greater point: Dogs eat too. There would always be enough left over. Crumbs of grace would suffice for her. Because grace is not by just deserts. It is based on need. And grace is inexhaustible. There is always more.

Whether those first in line appreciated their privilege or not, the woman understood her place. She could live with leftovers scattered under the table. Because any portion of grace, by loaf or by crumb, and any access to grace, by privileged priority or by ultimate desperation, would always be enough.

Jesus made His point. And one Canaanite woman got it. He explained Himself by repeating Himself in context of miraculous intervention, and a desperate Gentile woman understood. "Woman, you have great faith!" He answered. "Your request is granted" (Matt. 15:28). That very moment the demons away in her house and in her daughter's mind had to leave. Like Rahab, and Ruth before her, she too, and her daughter, became partakers of the bread of healing and Israelite inclusion, recipients of miraculous restoration and life. ■

<sup>1</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>2</sup>I found 13 occurrences of "James and John" in the KJV, as well as two more to "the mother of Zebedee's children"; also six references to the "sons of Zebedee" in the NRSV.



**LAEL CAESAR** IS THRILLED ABOUT LAPPING UP THE CRUMBS OF GRACE. HE IS AN ASSOCIATE EDITOR OF THE *ADVENTIST REVIEW*.



# A Conversation With Willie and Elaine Oliver



**O**ne of the smallest ministry departments of the world Seventh-day Adventist Church is arguably one of its most important. Adventist Review editor Bill Knott recently sat down with Willie and Elaine Oliver, directors of the Department of Family Ministries at the church's world headquarters, to talk about the directions they have taken in their first 18 months on the job.

Visit Adventist Review online to read the Olivers' practical suggestions for family health, "The Choice of Affirmation" ([www.AdventistReview.org/affirmation](http://www.AdventistReview.org/affirmation)).

**Your predecessors were some of the longest-serving departmental leaders in the recent history of the General Conference. What's it like to follow legacy leaders and yet establish your own leadership identity.**

**WILLIE:** Elaine and I are following Ron and Karen Flowers, who served in the Family Ministries Department for 30 years, as directors for 22 years. So for decades, whenever Adventists thought about family ministries in the church, Karen and Ron Flowers were the people who came to mind. I personally worked with them most of the 22 years they directed the department. The foundation that Ron

and Karen Flowers laid is unmistakably impressive. Yet it's a great opportunity now for our church to now sharpen our proverbial pencil and see how we can continue to connect more intentionally with what's most important to Adventist families in the twenty-first century.

**What do you think has changed between 2012 and the time 30 years ago when Ron and Karen Flowers first came to the department?**

**ELAINE:** When we look at the state of marriage and family in the nation and in the world, we quickly realize that so many things have changed. We're now living in a global village: information, habits, and customs from cultures we previously didn't understand are part of our everyday experience. So many families worldwide are struggling with issues of divorce, with more stress in marriages and with changing roles and rights for women. Far more women are working outside the home than 30 years ago, and families—including Adventist families—are having to adjust to that reality. Many more parenting issues have emerged as contemporary culture has pushed ever closer into the lives of believer families.

**Would it be fair to say that persons leading out in family ministries 30 years ago could assume a sort of homogeneity of families, a kind of basic Adventist "nuclear family"?**

**WILLIE:** Like the general population, Adventists have seen an increase in the number of single-parent homes—single mothers, and, in the past decade, single fathers. The entire organism of the church is left reeling as it tries to adjust to the new realities by developing resources and even language to address this phenomenon—not primarily as a problem but as an opportunity.

**Your definition of family ministries now incorporates multiple models beyond the traditional nuclear family?**

**WILLIE:** The nuclear family of the past—once the predominant model in the West—may never again be the norm anywhere. Our focus, however, is to meet families where they are and provide them with learning and growing opportunities that will assist them in becoming stronger and healthier.

Family ministries and family life are dynamic, and they ebb and flow depending on present realities: our workloads change; our children pass through different developmental stages; we often are relocated because of our work; and more.

Speaking to the range of family types and experiences that we now find in the church must be our priority, or we risk becoming anachronistic. We aim to develop and share relevant family-strengthening materials and modalities with our membership and our communities so that we may help them cope and thrive in the midst of pressing challenges. It may sound simplistic, but it's true: if we have stronger families, we have a stronger church.

**In North American culture the divorce rate is now estimated to be as high as 50 percent.**

**WILLIE:** When I served as the North American Division director of family ministries, I commissioned a study that was completed in 2010. Despite reports

by church members and even some leaders who say

the divorce rate is the same inside and outside the church, our study for North America underlines that about one in four Adventist marriages is ending in divorce—not one in two. Our divorce rate is actually half that of the general population. And many individuals in the Adventist Church who are divorced came into the church divorced. While we still think that number is unacceptably high, it's probably less than half that of the general population.

**ELAINE:** And that's where family ministries comes in. Family ministries provides resources because families, in general, are struggling. Our commitments as Seventh-day Adventists don't make us immune to the pressures and trends going on in our society. Many families in the church find themselves overwhelmed by the pain of some kind of dysfunction. Rather than getting help for their challenges, they try to hide these realities, only to find themselves in greater pain and distress. Local congregations must become havens of confidentiality, safety, and healing, providing referrals when confronted with issues above their respective skill levels. This is possible only when our approach to family difficulty is grace-oriented, empathetic, and sensitive to the needs of our parishioners.

**A generation ago the classic reasons for ending a marriage typically included issues of infidelity or some**





# “WE CAN’T LOSE OUR OWN CHILDREN IN THE PROCESS OF TRYING TO REACH EVERYONE ELSE.”

**other severe family trauma. Is there a broader range of issues today that cause marital distress and make divorce seem a legitimate option—even among members?**

**WILLIE:** For sure. While infidelity is still among the leading reasons for divorce today, a lack of effective communication and conflict-management skills are the most prominent reasons that marriages are terminating. In the past, men were more likely to initiate divorce proceedings; today, more women are becoming disenchanted with their marriages—even if there hasn’t been infidelity—and taking the lead in dissolving their marital unions.

Economic challenges also loom large in the termination of marriages, especially in the middle of the current global recession. When men lose their jobs, they tend to lose their self-worth, and many assert themselves in physical ways to convince themselves that they have not lost control of their lives and that they are still the “men” in their homes. In this context the rate of abuse invariably climbs, as women and children experience varying levels of physical aggression from husbands and fathers, further contributing to family dysfunction, distress, and dissolution.

**ELAINE:** Traditionally, men have been the providers, so there’s still a sense of self-esteem that comes from providing for their families. That holds true even in today’s culture, in which men may say, “I want my wife to have a job or career.”

**You mean the years of *Mr. Mom* films and television shows haven’t really moved the needle on this point?**

**ELAINE:** It’s still an anomaly: there are men who are genuinely comfortable staying home with the kids and feel empowered to do so. Others have real difficulty adjusting to being the caretaker or stay-at-home parent.

**WILLIE:** More men today are staying home with their children than 30 years ago. For the past five years I’ve served on a panel of fathers at American University here in Washington, D.C.—different kinds of fathers, including stay-at-home dads whose wives make more money than they could. It simply made more sense for her to go to work since she had better insurance coverage and health benefits. Even with those seemingly powerful economic incentives men are invariably uncomfortable with not being the primary breadwinners in their homes.

**ELAINE:** In spite of the fact that all these elements contribute to marital distress, research bears out that the way couples communicate with each other—the way they resolve conflict, their interactive processes—determines whether they’ll be distressed and, eventually, perhaps, get a divorce. If families can learn how to communicate about their issues, their chances are far better that they can resolve them and enjoy a more peaceful and satisfying family life.

**WILLIE:** We often say to couples when we’re speaking at marriage events that because sin separates, couples are going to grow apart: it’s inevitable—unless they are intentional about connecting with each other every day through the power of God. We also say, “There are no perfect marriages, because there are no perfect people. So don’t become fixated on having a perfect marriage or a perfect family—there’s no such thing.” Rather, they must be intentional about inviting the power of God into their respective marriages and families every day in order to have a spirit of grace, forgiveness, and understanding: As James 1:19 says: “Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.”

**You have become well known for your marriage-strengthening seminars**

**in North America and around the world. What do you say to that typical young couple with communication challenges who don’t yet know how to draw support or nurture from their church community?**

**ELAINE:** Our marriage conferences, retreats, and seminars are focused primarily on helping couples prioritize their relationship with each other. We emphasize effective communication skills, teaching couples how to integrate their faith, their beliefs, into how they “do marriage.” Many couples are eager to say they will remain committed to their marriages for a lifetime, but they don’t know what it really takes to have a stable and satisfying marriage. The Bible provides us with a plethora of counsel on how to live fulfilling lives, but we don’t always know how to implement those principles into our marriages and other significant relationships.

We also encourage couples to find a support network, people who love the Lord and have relatively healthy and strong marriages themselves to act as mentors and accountability partners. Local churches that are intentional about providing resources and seminars and have strong marriage clubs are more likely to have couples who thrive, because they have a network of people to coach and support them through their ups and downs.

**WILLIE:** What may be even more crucial to young or struggling marriages is getting accurate information about the problems they’re addressing. Couples want to know, *How are people around us relating to that? Are we the only ones in trouble?* Once you are aware that other people struggle with the same issues, it’s a lot easier to take a candid look at them in one’s own context as a family.

Every five years the Department of Family Ministries conducts what we call

“advisories” in the 13 divisions of the world church, during which we cast a vision for family ministries for the quinquennium and also offer training. In these gatherings we train our division directors. At our March 2011 Family Ministries World Advisory we certified our 13 division directors in *Prepare/Enrich*, one of the most advanced modalities for premarital education and marital intervention, based on both biblical principles and the best social research. We have also been training union directors during the division advisories, and are now beginning to plan for training conference-level directors and pastors. The first place we did this was in Mossel Bay, South Africa, at the ministerial workers’ retreat for the Southern Africa Union, where we certified more than 500 persons [pastors and their spouses]. In North America quite a number of pastors are certified to do *Prepare/Enrich*. We’re intentionally replicating this kind of training around the world to build capacity, so couples have people on the ground who can support and help them.

**Your family also represents a family in ministry. What have you learned in the process of raising a family that informs the way you do your work?**

**ELAINE:** We’re like any other family; we are not exempt from any of the challenges of marriage and of raising children. We’ve now raised children through adolescence. Both our children are now young adults.

One of the practices we’ve been committed to doing is preserving family time—taking time to spend with our children and to have family worship. Family worship was very important to us when our kids were at home. And one of our family ministry

initiatives right now is to encourage families to revisit how they do family worship—making it a time that children, even young adult children, can enjoy being a part of this spiritual experience.

**WILLIE:** My commitment has always been to balance, and to not being gone too much from home. We hope to sensitize our leadership to greater responsibility for their own families. We can’t lose our own children in the process of trying to reach everyone else. We *have* to underscore that goal for Adventist employees around the world. Our *first* mission field is our family.

If I could do it over again, I would listen more to our children. We accomplish a lot more in passing on our values to our children when we listen more.

**Probably the most poignant moment I can recall in this building was when a senior leader offered the benediction in a meeting. He prayed, “Lord, we want You to come soon. But Lord, please don’t come until You find my son.” You could hear the gulps all around the room as so many people, in that moment of recognition, felt that this was their story too. I’m sure you’ve often heard from leaders who have given themselves prodigiously to work, but somehow wished they could “replay the tape” with their families.**

**WILLIE:** A ministry to families includes ministry to the families of those in leadership. We’re pleased that division administrations around the world are embracing the notion of stronger and healthier families, and

realizing how much it impacts the mission of the church. A successful Christian family is one of the most powerful testimonies imaginable in a world of brokenness and alienation, and we’re committed to spreading the good news of Jesus by showing what a difference He makes in the most basic social unit the world knows—the family.

Ellen White wrote, “One well-ordered, well-disciplined family tells more in behalf of Christianity than all the sermons that can be preached.”\* ■

\* Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1952), p. 32.





BY ROSIE BOOM

**B**uilding a marriage is a lot like building a stone wall,” wrote Rosie Boom to her niece Hannah on the eve of her wedding to her fiancé, Brad. The analogy came to Rosie some months earlier during a family work bee to build a stone wall courtyard in her sister’s garden, where Hannah was going to be married. This is her letter.

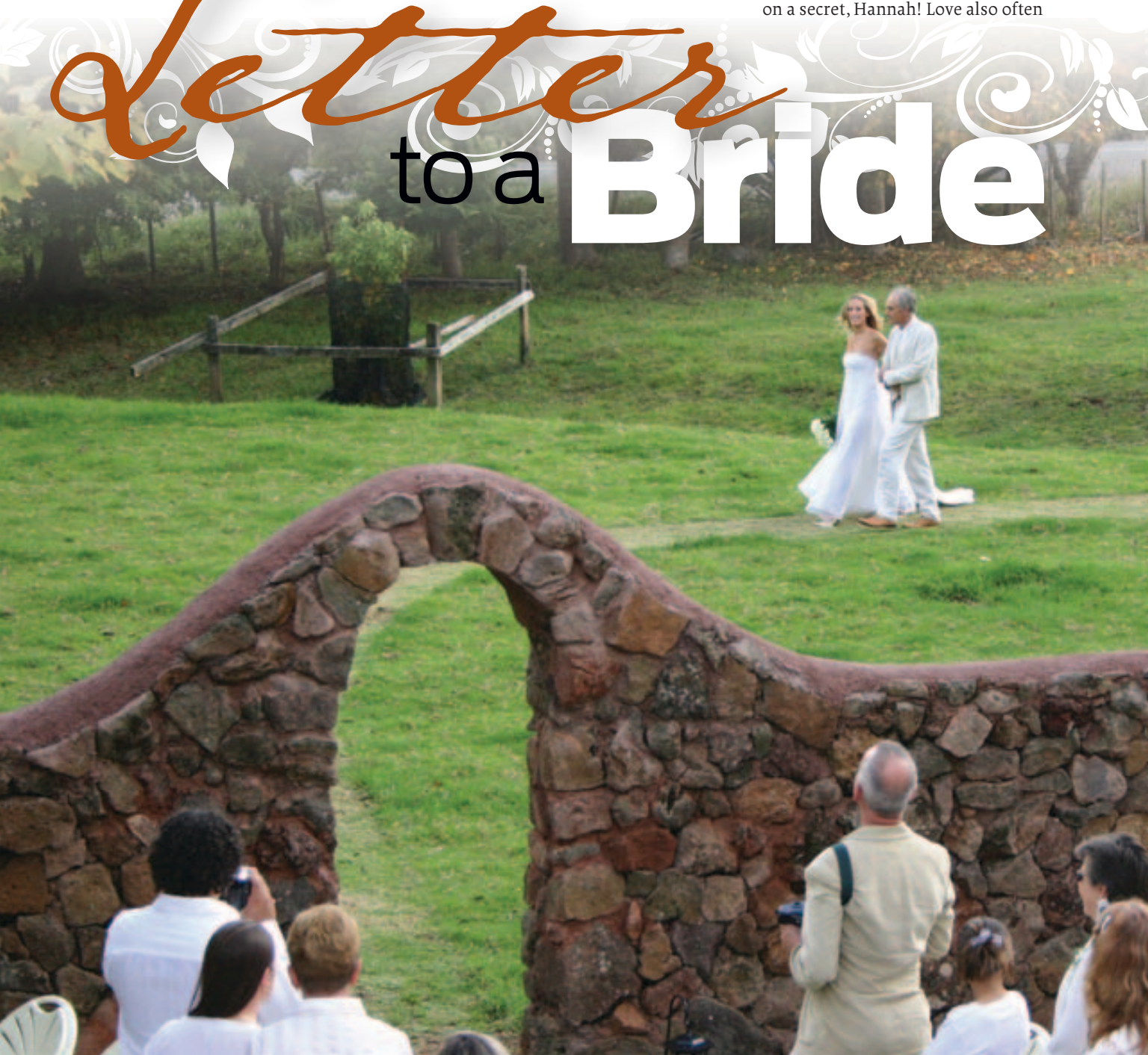
BUILDING A MARRIAGE  
STONE UPON STONE

# Letter to a Bride

*Dear Hannah,*

In a few short hours you will walk across the field, through the stone wall archway, and into the courtyard, where we’ll all be waiting. I can’t wait to catch my first glimpse of you over the wall—the wall we built for you, Hannah. For your wedding.

Building a marriage is a lot like building a stone wall. It doesn’t just happen. It takes time and lots of hard work. Thomas Edison once said that many people miss opportunity when it comes to them, because it’s dressed in overalls and looks like hard work. I’ll let you in on a secret, Hannah! Love also often





comes dressed in overalls, and it is hard work. But it's worth it!

When we began building the wall, your father made sure we chose the foundation stones very carefully. This is where our project would either succeed or fail. Choose your foundation stones carefully, Hannah. Let Christ be the one on whom you build your marriage. Don't skip here. Your wall will be only as strong as its foundation. Make Him the center of all you do. Seek His wisdom. Pray together. If you build on Christ, the Rock, then when (not if!) the storms come and beat upon your wall, it will stand strong.

Choose every stone you build with

carefully. Every time you choose to put aside your own wants and seek to meet the needs of your husband, you're building with the stone of selflessness. It is a good stone!

You'll need plenty of "patience" stones over the years, Hannah. Some other great stones to build with are thoughtfulness, understanding, gentleness, and encouragement. Encouragement is a wonderful stone to use! You'll need to encourage each other often over the years when you feel weary or discouraged.

And then there's simple kindness. In a movie I once saw, a local doctor asks one of the villagers, "Do you love your wife? If you love your wife, my advice is be nice to her. Bring in the wood before she asks for it. If she is cold, then put a shawl around her shoulders. And bring her a flower every time you come back from the field."

Simple kindnesses—they will make a strong wall.

I did a lot of thinking as I mixed the mortar for the wall. Cement, sand, water; cement, sand, water. You'll need plenty of mortar as you build your marriage, Hannah. Let the cement be commitment, let the sand be communication, and let the water be forgiveness. Every day of

your married life mix a wheelbarrowful of this mortar. Pour it in every crack.

One last thing: Remember to guard your wall. Attacks will come. Be prepared. Stand together with Brad in prayerfulness and watchfulness.

Today you and Brad will become one. Work together as a team. And don't forget, Hannah: Every now and then, stand back and celebrate your progress! Enjoy each other's company! Accept each other's help. Remember that the enemy of our souls will always seek to divide you and set you against each other.

Building a wall is a big task. So is building a marriage. Ask God to strengthen your hands. And always remember, Hannah, if part of your wall falls down, you can rebuild it!

So, dear Hannah, may the Lord's blessing be on you today as you begin to build a new life together with your husband.

With all my love,

*Rosie*



**ROSIE BOOM** IS A FREELANCE WRITER LIVING IN NEW ZEALAND.



PHOTOS BY ROSIE BOOM

**BUILDING THE WALL:** Hannah's family and friends build the wall stone by stone for Hannah and Brad's wedding.

« **WEDDING DAY:** Hannah and her father walking down the path toward the archway that leads into the garden where Hannah and Brad will be married



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR

**HERE COMES THE BRIDE:** Hannah and her father, David, walk through the archway in the wall that Hannah's family and friends built for her wedding.



# Changing the Debate

## AMID THE VERBAL COMBAT ZONE OF THE ADVENTIST BLOGOSPHERE, I'VE

lost track of how many times I've read such posts as: "Cliff, stop trying to ram your own view of Genesis down our throats" or "Goldstein, what makes you think that your narrow interpretation of Genesis is right?"

My view of Genesis? I'm flattered, except that the six-literal-days interpretation of Genesis was here to greet me back in 1980 when I joined the church. It's no more mine (as if I, alone, hold it) than are haystacks and the pre-Advent judgment.

What these posts reveal, however, is an attempt to change the debate. Those fighting Darwinism as a viable interpretation of Genesis are now deemed as narrow, parochial, and closed-minded. That's a slick move, but a false one. We're not talking about making things such as the belief that God created spotted owls before whooping cranes or salmon before goldfish tests of faith. We're talking about an ideology that, at its core, destroys all that we stand for as Seventh-day Adventists.

No question, Genesis 1 and 2 present challenges. Bible students have been trying to work their way through the Creation account for thousands of years. The issue isn't that the texts aren't without difficulties; everyone knows that they are. The issue is the "solution" Seventh-day Darwinians want to impose upon them.

For years I've been asking someone to give me a reinterpretation of the texts, based on the Darwinian worldview, that doesn't undermine almost everything we believe: the trustworthiness of the Bible, the origin of sin and death, the character of God, and the meaning of the cross. The explanations, the few I've seen, would be laughable were the issue not so serious. (My favorite, still, is the theological argument that animals don't feel pain. This deep insight gets God off the hook for the billions of years of suffering that evolution inflicted upon these unfortunate critters until the good Lord finally managed to eke a couple of homo sapiens out of the imbroglio.)

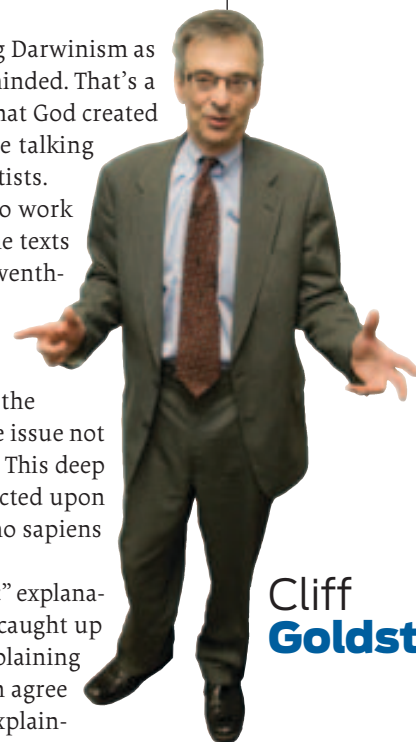
Meanwhile, I often hear the argument that Genesis was never meant to be a "scientific" explanation of origins. Who says? Maybe Genesis 1 and 2 are so scientific that science hasn't caught up yet. If science still debates whether light is a wave or a particle, it's a long way from explaining "And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light" (Gen. 1:3). Scientists can't even agree on what it means for something to be "alive," so who expects it to be of much help in explaining Genesis 2:7: "Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being"?

A young man who interprets Genesis through the lens of Darwinism has boasted to me of his strict adherence to the literal seventh-day Sabbath. I still don't get it, though. He interprets the first six days of Genesis in such a metaphorical manner that he squeezes into them billions of years. His metaphorical interpretation allows for chance and violence in the process of creation, though Genesis teaches explicitly that God precisely and purposely created everything. He interprets the first six days so symbolically that he argues for a common ancestry of species when Genesis teaches the separate creation of separate species. With the first six days allegorized into the level of myth, like Circe turning Odysseus' men into pigs, why is only the seventh day taken literally? For some, sophisticated epistemology hasn't impacted (at least not yet) the habits acquired from reading *Uncle Arthur's Bedtime Stories*.

Any belief—sacred, secular, whatever—comes with challenges, and that certainly includes our belief in a literal six-day creation as depicted in Genesis 1 and 2. But that's not the point. The point is the attempt to incorporate a radically alien theology into Adventism. And one of the latest tactics in that attempt is to change the debate in order to make those who reject this theology look narrow-minded, dogmatic, and parochial. Fortunately, the church isn't close to falling for it.

My narrow view of Genesis? Yeah, right. Mine and millions of other *Seventh-day* Adventists as well. ■

**CLIFFORD GOLDSTEIN** IS EDITOR OF THE *ADULT SABBATH SCHOOL BIBLE STUDY GUIDE*. HIS LATEST BOOK, *SHADOW MEN*, WAS RECENTLY PUBLISHED BY SIGNS PUBLISHING IN AUSTRALIA.



Cliff  
**Goldstein**



**T**he sight of the glistening knife of Shylock was enough to strike terror and fear into the heart of Antonio. He had defaulted on a loan taken from Shylock. As part of the frightening conditions of the contract, Shylock had stipulated taking a pound of his flesh should he fail to pay back the loan in time. Standing before the jury, Antonio is so overwhelmed with the dreadful sword of Shylock that his fears dominate his trial and obscure the role of the jury. All he sees across the horizon of the judgment hall is Shylock and his sword. Further, his sense of fear is heightened by the fact that Shylock remains inflexible and insists on the pound of flesh.

However, unknown to Antonio, the jury, including his friend Portia, is doing everything possible to save him from the real threats of Shylock. As the story ends, the jury frees Antonio from the menacing scythe of Shylock.<sup>1</sup>

### Why the Dread of Judgment?

Like Antonio with the terrible knife of Shylock staring at him, ready to pounce for a pound of his flesh, the thought of a coming judgment often saps our hope and smothers us with dread. After all, who is not afraid of God's wrath, which has been portrayed with gruesome horror and terror? I recall reading about the alarm and panic that gripped the hearts of the congregation when Jonathan Edwards was preaching his most famous sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." The concept of judgment, tied in with his graphic illustration of the inferno of hell, made some of the present members reach out to grab and hold tight to the columns in the church lest they slip to hell!

The scenario looks even more frightening whenever we pause to reflect on the fact that we shall be judged with reference to our works (Matt. 7:21; Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10). Besides, the truth that "all have sinned" (Rom. 3:23), coupled with the thought that "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23), is enough to snuff out all vestiges of hope in a future judgment. *Who can stand the divine searchlight?*

Ellen White captures the intensity and luminosity of God's searchlight in the following words:

"Opposite each name in the books of heaven is entered with terrible exactness every wrong word, every selfish act, every unfulfilled duty, and every secret sin, with every artful dissembling. Heaven-sent warnings or reproofs neglected, wasted moments, unimproved opportunities, the influence exerted for good or for evil, with its far-reaching results, all are chronicled by the recording angel."<sup>2</sup>

### Not the End of the Story

But that is not the full picture. Beyond the barely visible rays of light at the end of this frightful tunnel of judgment is a glowing glimmer of light and hope. Scripture presents a wonderful array of reasons we can live in joyful anticipation of God's judgment rather than shriveling up in hopelessness. Before presenting this glorious vista of hope however, let's remember who wants to frighten us about the coming judgment and distract our attention from all things but dread and terror in this judgment.

### The Chief Antagonist

Like Shylock, there is someone who scares us about the judgment. The Bible identifies him as the "accuser of our brethren" (Rev. 12:10).<sup>3</sup> He has a long-standing track record of cruelty. He was the one behind the fall of our first parents, a maestro at deception and misrepresentations. In fact, Jesus Himself identified him as the father of lies (John 8:44). He holds a doctoral degree in rebellion against God; a master's in inciting us to sin; and a bachelor's in flatteries, empty promises, and vain allurements. He is a skillful general with an incredible and intractable working experience of more than six millennia. He is committed to the destruction of humanity. He was the architect behind the suffering of Job (Job 1; 2); the fierce complainant against Joshua the high priest (Zech. 3); and currently the relentless accuser of God's people (Rev. 12:10-12).

### Our Defender

But we do not have to give way to despair because of the devil's temptations and accusations. Since the Fall, God has been on a relentless mission to reconcile us to Himself. The sanctuary service is God's operation room where our salvation is being enacted.

Let me highlight one aspect of the sanctuary service that may dispel our fears of the judgment. It has to do with the breastplate of the high priest. Exodus 28:29 describes its function like this: "So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel on the breastplate of judgment over his heart, when he goes into the holy place, as a memorial before the Lord continually."

As a child growing up in the Seventh-day Adventist Church I thought that the sanctuary service was all about calculation of historical dates and ancient movable structures in the wilderness. However, I somehow overlooked this particular element of God's rescue plan. God instructed Moses to design a breastplate for the high priest. The names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel were engraved on the breastplate. As the high priest bore the breastplate on his heart, so Jesus, our heavenly high priest, bears our names on His heart before our Father. Using a simple and yet profound imagery, Christ, the high priest, has the names of His children on His heart. This point becomes more significant when we realize that this is a judicial setting. Can

# Facing

you imagine the sense of assurance you may have when you stand before the U.S. Supreme Court knowing that the chief justice is your personal friend who knows you by name and cares about you?

The high priest wore the breastplate as a memorial before God. Interestingly, the word translated "memorial" is related to the verb "remember." Whenever God *remembers*, deliverance is not far off. This syntactical link between "God" and

“remember” occurs only four times in the Bible: in Genesis 8:1 when God remembered Noah, he and his family were all saved from the Flood; in Genesis 19:29 when God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, God remembered Abraham and delivered Lot; in the third occurrence, after struggling with the desperation and humiliation of barrenness, when God remembered Rachel, she gave birth to Joseph (Gen. 30:22); finally, after more than four centuries of hard servitude and oppression, Israel was delivered when God remembered them (Ex. 2:24).

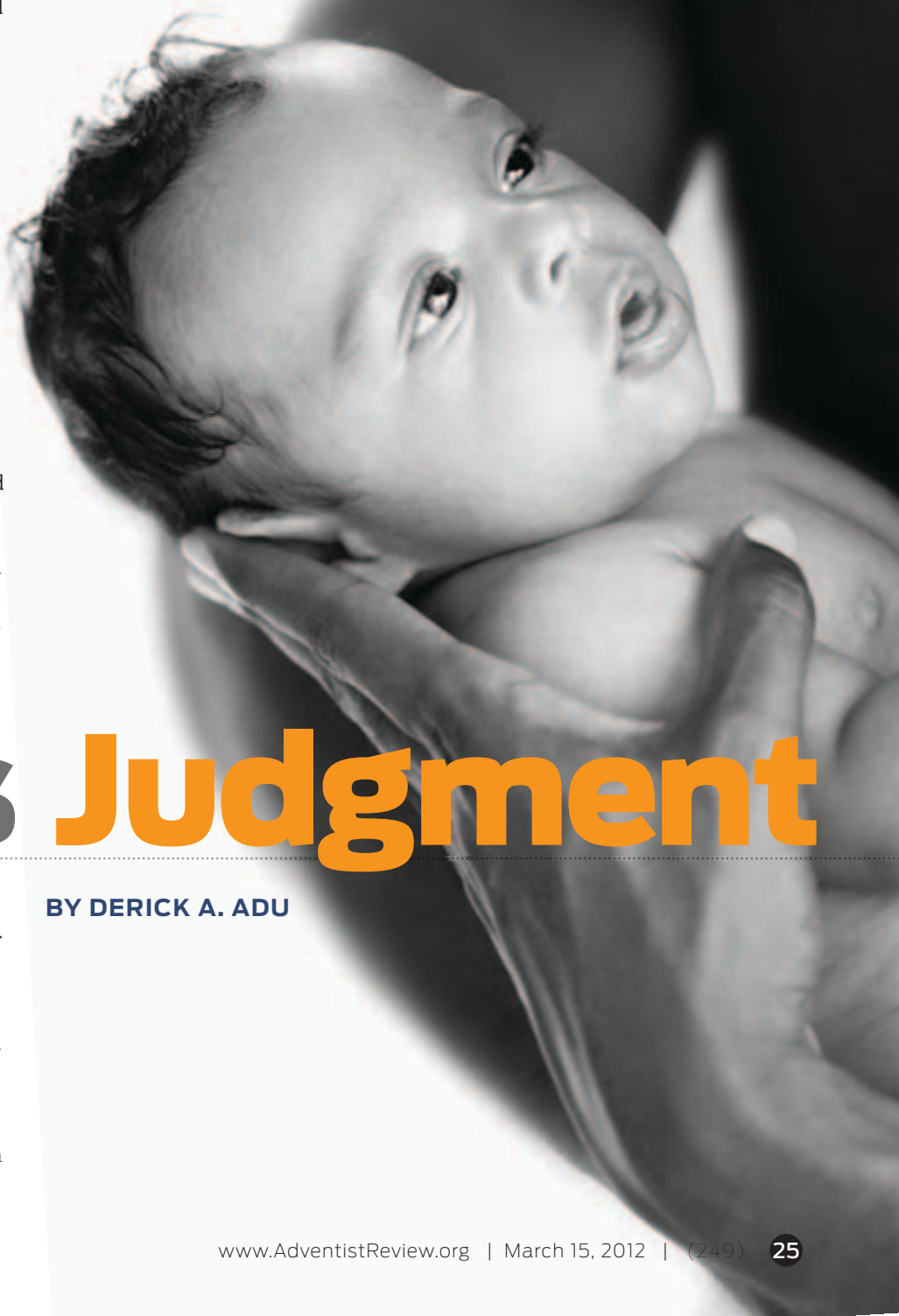
Here is the hope we can be completely confident of: Jesus, our high priest, bears our names on His breastplate and continually remembers us before God. In fact, more than being our defender, Jesus assures us that “the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son” (John 5:22). So the Defender is also the Judge—which helps us better understand another text in John 3:18: “Whoever believes in him is not condemned” (NIV).<sup>4</sup>

### Living Without Fear

Why then should we dread the judgment when Jesus has our names engraved on His breastplate making intercession for us before the Father? He is the only attorney who can say with confidence and tender sympathy: “See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; your walls are continually before Me” (Isa. 49:16).

A story is told about an angry lion that

## CONFIDENT AND SAFE IN THE ARMS OF JESUS



# God's Judgment

met a lamb. The lion was ready to pounce on the weak and helpless lamb for dinner. But surprisingly, the lamb showed no dread at all. Approaching the lamb, the lion saw a hunter behind it with his rifle cocked and ready to shoot the lion should he attempt to move farther toward the lamb. In desperation, although furious, the lion ran away disappointed.

In line with that story, we are no match for the devil, but with Jesus as the judge

BY DERICK A. ADU

and our defender, we can face the judgment without fear. With this assurance we can say with Martin Luther: “And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us, we will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us. The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not for him; his rage we can endure, for lo! his doom is sure, one little word shall fell him.”<sup>5</sup>

Knowing that Jesus is our sympathetic advocate, attorney, defender, as well as the judge in the heavenly sanctuary, the author of the book of Hebrews writes with confidence to fellow Christians: “Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive

mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need” (Heb. 4:14-16, NIV).

Being conscious of this wonderful rescue plan, Satan has sought throughout history to present God as a harsh, demanding, and relentless God, who is ready to condemn us. He seeks with growing intensity and zeal to divert our minds from this wonderful work Jesus is doing on our behalf. “The archdeceiver hates the great truths that bring to view an atoning sacrifice and an all-powerful mediator. He knows that with him everything depends on his diverting minds from Jesus and His truth.”<sup>6</sup> Instead of being afraid and dreading the coming judgment, we can live in joyful anticipation of the judgment because we know that “there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1, NIV). Jesus Himself put it this way: “God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned” (John 3:17, 18).

As children of the heavenly King, we can live without the fear of God’s judgment because with Jesus, our Best Friend and Redeemer, bearing our names on His breastplate before the Father, we have “everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but [have] passed from death into life” (John 5:24). ■

<sup>1</sup>This scene has been taken from William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* (London: Yale University Press, 1923).

<sup>2</sup>Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 482.

<sup>3</sup>Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations in this article have been taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

<sup>4</sup>Texts credited to NIV are from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

<sup>5</sup>*The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1985), no. 506.

<sup>6</sup>White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 488.



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# What a Ride!

*“If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the Lord’s holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the Lord, and I will cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.’ For the mouth of the Lord has spoken” (Isa. 58:13, 14).*

These inspired words were the catalyst for my observance of God’s holy day. Since then, not only has the Sabbath become “a delight,” but God has kept His promise to make me “ride in triumph.”

When I joined the Adventist Church in December 1979, I was an emotionally broken college dropout, a misfit who often contemplated suicide as the only way out of the numbing, indescribable pain of my wounded soul. Two years later, by the miracle of God’s grace, I returned to college and earned my Bachelor of Arts degree in theology from Columbia Union College (now Washington Adventist University). Being one of two female graduates, I wasn’t hired as a pastor, so I continued my studies at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in the Master of Divinity program. One year later the Potomac Conference assigned me to its Sligo church. While there I completed my degree and graduated from the seminary in 1989.

That same year I was invited to pastor Boston Temple, a broken-down church with 27 mostly elderly members in attendance. Again, by God’s grace we grew so fast that we had to hire an associate pastor. The tremendous reinvigoration of the congregation made it grow to almost 500 members. During his administration as General Conference president, the late Neal C. Wilson dubbed me “the resurrection lady.”

I served in Boston eight years. In 1992 we took some local street urchins, formed them into a choir, and took them to tour Washington, D.C. While there we were given an inside tour of the White House and given Christmas ornaments to commemorate the occasion.

In 1996 I was invited to become a fellow of the College of Preachers at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. That same year I accepted a call to the Campus Hill church in Loma Linda, California, as senior pastor. During my almost 14-year tenure I earned my Doctor of Ministry degree from Boston University, because at the time our seminary didn’t accept women in the program.

Since then I have traveled internationally to preach and teach; been a regular presenter on worldwide television programs; preached at a General Conference session; written and published several books; coauthored and contributed chapters to many others; and written magazine articles.

I have deliberately skipped over the hard places and heartbreaks during this incredible “ride” from a barefoot girl in Jamaica to my present position teaching preaching in our seminary.

Last year, while conducting a Week of Spiritual Emphasis at Jamaica’s Northern Caribbean University, I was invited by Governor-General Patrick Allen and Lady Patricia Allen as their overnight guest at their residence, King’s House. That’s where members of the British royal family stay when visiting the country.

To those who are unacquainted with my story<sup>1</sup> or the class culture of Jamaica, this might seem like nothing; but it was extraordinary to me. Being from a poor family, I never thought or dreamed of visiting King’s House, much less staying there as a guest. I kept pinching myself and repeating the Isaiah promise.

By God’s grace I’ve ridden in triumph; not because I keep the Sabbath, but because God keeps His promises!<sup>2</sup> ■

<sup>1</sup> See *Will I Ever Learn? One Woman’s Life of Miracles and Ministry* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn. 1996).

<sup>2</sup> The secret is explained in the chapter “Growing Up Into Christ” in Ellen G. White’s *Steps to Christ*.

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**Hyveth  
Williams**

A VISIT TO A  
COMMUNITY THAT  
REFLECTS THE  
WORLD'S HARSH  
REALITIES

# Burdens to Carry

**O**n weekend afternoons the markets wear a festive look as crowds go about their shopping. I pass through the middle of town carrying two carefully balanced sacks of grain that are tied with a rubber tube to the rear carrier of my bicycle.

Slum dwellers live outside the town limits. Nearby is a dirty little pond where filth and refuse have accumulated in a massive heap. Not far away, on a thundering, busy highway, passengers in cars, trucks, and buses pass every day, unconcerned about the existence of the place.

On this hot afternoon I see barefoot

children with matted hair and protruding bellies walking about on the hot, arid ground. They rummage through open garbage dumps by the roadside alongside dogs, pigs, cows, and vultures, each trying to salvage something worth eating or keeping.

Strangely, there is more order here than at the local marketplace, where the have-nots were haggling loudly to bring down prices and vendors were shrieking out the prices of their wares above the din of traffic.

At the dump no one even shooed the birds or animals away. They just quietly went about picking up whatever was edible or usable. Ignoring the stench, some adults pulled out discarded plastic bags and metal objects they could sell for a few rupees to be recycled.

One child, naked and covered in grime, found an odd pair of slippers, donning them immediately before anyone else could grab them. Another





fished out an old bicycle tire. He would give it to his mother, who would cut it up and burn bits of it along with discarded wood chips from a nearby factory to cook rice for the evening meal.

Newspaper writers label them “rag-pickers.”

## Searching for Someone

I was looking for a hut where a mother and her daughter lived. The assortment of huts—some merely partitions made of cloth, others with or without wild bamboo leaves—were randomly scattered over a deserted patch of land that connected a stretch of highway to nearby cities.

I asked around while beggars and malnourished children stared with curiosity. An injured laborer sat on a mound of earth covered in cement dust from head to toe, his leg wrapped in a dirty bandage.

Finally I stumbled upon them.

The mother had been born to parents who were poor and illiterate, and who considered their daughter a burden to be married off as soon as possible. She was given away to a man who not only didn't have a job, but was constantly drunk. He even stole the little bit of money she earned. She stayed with him out of sheer helplessness. One day he abandoned her, disappearing to another city, leaving her pregnant.

She barely eked out a living weaving and selling bamboo baskets, moving through various neighborhoods in and around town. Hunger, pain, and neglect had turned Shantu and her 1-year-old daughter into thin, pale, emaciated figures. Their bones were clearly visible through their torn, dirty clothes. They had no place to wash, no soap, no fresh change of clothes. India is hot and dusty, and summer temperatures can rise to 110°F in arid states that are far from the coast.

People like them simply die on the streets from thirst, dehydration, or heat-stroke. They cannot afford to buy water or find shelter to protect them from the devastating heat. Many of them simply huddle under whatever trees they can find, waiting for the sun to head toward the western horizon. They fall prey to jaundice, cholera, typhoid, and gastroenteritis from the contaminated food and water they ingest. They have no money for medicine.

My head swam from witnessing these ugly realities. Their open hut held an earthen water pot and a place to cook. I saw a pot blackened by fire standing on three bricks, a bucket of water, an old broken mug, and two empty coconut shells that served as dishes.

We lugged the grain sacks to a corner of the hut; wheat and rice, some lentils and dried beans they could use anytime. I emptied the fruit basket, laying out the chickoos, mangoes, and grapes. When I brought out a bag full of vegetables, they were the picture of delight.

I sat on a stone while the thatched bamboo roof swayed with the wind. The little one stared in wonder at the clean frocks for her, the skirts and saris for her mother.

## Rewards

I thought I was doing the giving, feeling happy from the warmth of sharing and doing something good. But I realized that my meager gifts were nothing compared to what they had given to me.

Their smiles said they were thankful. *How can anyone smile in such a place?* I wondered.

I glimpsed their resilient spirits and wondered, *How do they go on day after day?*

Their eyes danced with hope and I wondered, *How can anyone have hope in such conditions?*

And yet they had life, hope, resilience, gratitude, and much more.

I bicycled back to my home, humbled and truly grateful; I had to be. I realized I hadn't been properly thankful to God for all that He had given me. Not just for my basic necessities, but for all that I took for granted: education, home, health, work that I enjoy, and many more blessings I can't even begin to list.

The best way I can show my gratitude is to keep returning to help carry their burdens. It's my religious duty. The apostle wrote: “Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2). ■



SUDHA KHRISMUKTI WRITES  
FROM GUJARAT, INDIA.

## ? WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. What three material blessings do you enjoy that are probably unavailable to 75 percent of the world's population?
2. What are you doing to relieve some of the world's poverty? What does the phrase “think globally, act locally” mean to you?
3. Which humanitarian organizations do you trust the most to use their resources responsibly? Why those?
4. What would make it easier for you to make a meaningful contribution—financial or material—to solve the world's problems of poverty, disease, and hunger?



REUTERS/RUPAK DE CHOWDHURI



# I Can Do All Things?

*"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13, NKJV).\**

This past winter I had the privilege of coaching the sixth grade girls' basketball team at our local Adventist middle school. The Lady Rapids didn't have a coach, and my daughter Morgan was on the team. How could I pass up the opportunity?

From the start I've loved coaching these 11 girls. They have terrific attitudes and work hard at learning their positions. But we faced some challenges. First, we were a brand-new sixth-grade program, and we would be playing experienced teams. Second, four of our tallest sixth graders had moved to the seventh-grade team (which didn't have enough players). It was important for us to have realistic expectations.

Before our first practice I sat the girls down and talked to them about what must be the most popular Bible verse for Christian athletes, Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (NKJV). It seems that every Christian athlete from football player Tim Tebow to one-armed surfer Bethany Hamilton (from the movie *Soul Surfer*) finds inspiration in this verse.

"Do you think," I asked, "that being able to do all things through Christ means that you could go dunk the ball right now?" The girls smiled and shook their heads no.

I told them what this verse actually means: "I can *handle* all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13 teaches us that we can be content in any situation—whether we're winning or losing in life—because we know Christ. When Paul wrote the words "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," he was writing from a prison cell.

I told the girls that we couldn't control how high we could jump or how many games we would win, but we could control how we handled our circumstances. We could choose to carry ourselves with dignity and show respect for our opponents—whether we won or lost. We lost our first game 34 to 0.

Never in my wildest dreams did I think we'd lose by such a wide margin—that we wouldn't score a single point! Our shots rolled around the rim but just wouldn't drop. The team we played, a group of surprisingly tall home-schoolers called the Chattanooga Patriots, had several seventh graders and had been practicing together for a year. We'd been together for a week. Still, it was a traumatic experience for our players, and by the fourth quarter I couldn't help feeling the long gaze of our disappointed home crowd.

That night I barely slept. *Thirty-four to zero?* I wondered if the girls would lose confidence in themselves and in me.

The next day the girls showed up for practice positive and ready to go. Our assistant coaches and I helped them with their aggressiveness, explaining that it was possible to be aggressive and content at the same time!

Our second game was scheduled for a month later . . . against the Chattanooga Patriots, the same team! When I first told the girls, their expressions said: *Do we really have to go through that again?* But they dug in and worked all the harder. During Christmas break several of the girls—and their families—came out for optional practices. We all had the same look in our eyes: *If we could just score next time!*

The day of the game, the players looked tense during warm-ups, so I took them to a separate room to relax their minds. We talked through our anxieties, then I prayed out loud for each girl, thanking God for the gifts He's given them. Most of all we prayed that we would handle all things gracefully—through Christ who strengthens us.

Refreshed, the girls ran back to the court and played their hearts out. We lost the game but scored seven points, a big step forward. You should have heard the wild cheers from the stands when we scored our first basket—a silky-smooth jump shot from 12 feet away.

On those days when you feel like you're losing 34 to 0, remember the Lady Rapids: Calle, Drielly, Emily, Kelly, Megan, Morgan, Olivia, Sarah, Shadai, Shelby, and Sofe. Like them, you can handle all things through Christ who strengthens you. ■

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Andy  
Nash

# Say Hello to Siri

## WORLD, SAY HELLO TO SIRI. SHE'S THE HOTTEST LITTLE NUMBER ON THE

block, and if you haven't met her yet, you will. She's the perky little lass who chats with you on your Apple iPhone 4S. The engineers designed this nonliving, nonbreathing "person" to be quirky and clever. In addition, the gal even has a weird sense of humor. She fascinates folks so much that they will choose to stand in a long line for hours on a Sunday afternoon just to purchase the phone and hear her voice.

I'm told Siri can carry on a reasonably intelligent conversation with a bored owner of an iPhone 4S. When asked, she can give directions to the nearest drug store. She can advise you when it's going to rain and when to carry an umbrella. She can warn you of gridlock on the highways on which you are driving. Should you lock yourself out of your home, she will direct you to the three nearest neighborhood locksmith shops. And if you tell her to, she will remind you to feed the dog when you get home from work.

As knowledgeable and sassy as she may be, Siri doesn't hold the honor of being a partner in the first wireless conversation in human history. And if you were to guess the names Thomas Edison or Alexander Graham Bell, you'd be wrong. In the 1880s both men did invent the first-known human-designed wireless conversation tools. One created a photophone and the other devised signals transmitted along the Lehigh Valley Railroad.

To uncover the earliest wireless communication, one must go back 6,000 years to the moment the first woman and the first man lost their face-to-face connection with their Creator. Loving them too much to brush them into an oversized dustpan and then move on to His next creative project, the Father established the first mode of wireless communication—one that is so high-tech, it constantly blows my mind. It's called prayer, and the results are instantaneous.

"Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear" (Isa. 65:24). That scriptural gem has proven to be the ultimate wireless communication program, one that responds to mere thoughts and words not yet spoken. Sorry, Siri—not even you can do that.

And the system is still fully functional today. It doesn't need new apps or fancy upgrades. Better yet, the Creator promises automatic tech support 24/7. I can tell Him anything, and He hears me. There have been so many times I've called Him and He's rescued me from imminent danger. When I've been lost, He's helped me find my way home. When I feel cold or lonely, He's warmed me, quieted me, and rejoiced over me with singing (Zeph. 3:17). His response isn't canned, either—it's live, late-breaking, and up-to-the-minute.

Don't feel bad, Siri; you truly are an incredible invention, and I kind of like you. But you do have your limitations. ■



**KAY RIZZO** HAS AUTHORED MORE THAN 50 BOOKS ALONG WITH MORE THAN 1,000 ARTICLES. SHE LIVES WITH RICHARD, HER HUSBAND AND BUSINESS PARTNER, IN CALIFORNIA'S CENTRAL VALLEY. HER GREATEST TREASURES INCLUDE HER HUBBY OF MORE THAN 45 YEARS, TWO DAUGHTERS, TWO SONS-IN-LAW, TWO GRANDSONS, AND A CAT NAMED PEPSI.

# Reach Alaska

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## NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION "MAIN EVENT" JUNE 1 - 16, 2012

### SPEAKERS



Don Jackson



Ken Crawford



Fred Kinney



Dennis Jeffery



George Johnson



Elizabeth Wren  
Telford



Frank Gussler



Mike and Gayle  
Turner



Carlton Byrd



Russ Harrison



Jon Goodnow



Earl Haller



Joel Hagen



Derek Morris



Randy Roberts



Dwight Nelson

- Be there in person!
- Downlink at your local church
- All events at the Egan Convention Center in Anchorage

Camp Meeting at Sea - June 1 - 2 • ViolonBuilders - June 2 & 3

VOP Bible School Graduation - June 3

Family Reunion Concert - June 3

Alaska Conference Camp Meeting - June 3 - 10

Mad About Marriage - June 11 - 15

Revive - Spanish Series - June 11 - 15 • Revive - June 11 - 15

### MUSICIANS



Fourmen Singers



Al Ross Spear



Carole Berry-  
British



Faith First



Paul McLeod



Leroy Elliott



Gale James  
Murphy



Adrian Francis



George Bowman



Charles  
Houghbrook



Jared  
Houghton



John Curren



Karen Kishay



Jan Judd



Junior Kelly  
Burdham



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For more information or to register for event:

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