community through conversation

SPECTRUM

Starting a New Conversation about the Atonement • **Ancient Concepts about Divine Anger and Appeasement** • *Young Adventists Organize for Social Justice*

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community through conversation
SPECTRUM

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Above: Seventh-day Adventist cover artist Dag Trygve Hansen at the Håberget Farm where he lives and works.

About the cover art: Carved pine artwork exploring the symbols and words from the book of Revelation. Created for the Mjøndalen, Norway Seventh-day Adventist Church, it is one of three artworks in a series entitled "From Eternity to Eternity".

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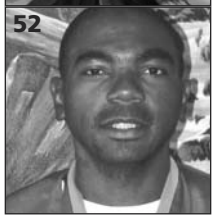

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Starting a New Conversation about the Atonement

BY BONNIE DWYER

How does the death of Jesus solve the problem of sin?

It has been described as the most perplexing question about salvation. How does the death of Jesus solve the problem of sin? As Richard Rice writes in *The Reign of God*," Christians have never reached a consensus in answer to this question." He points out that while there is an orthodox doctrine of the person of Christ, there is "no corresponding doctrine of his work." Instead, there are several prominent theories of atonement. "Each has influenced the thinking of the church from time to time, but none has ever enjoyed unanimous support."

So, too, within Adventism, where the ideas about atonement have undergone shifts. "The first Adventist statement of belief, the Declaration of 1872, denied that the atonement began on the cross. In *Questions on Doctrine*, the atonement is presented as having been completed on the cross. In the intervening period it was generally believed that the atonement began on the cross and was completed in the heavenly sanctuary" (Bull and Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary*, 2nd ed., 84). It is thus not surprising, then, that in 1952, Francis D. Nichol wrote an editorial in the *Review and Herald* responding to the question "Do Adventists Minimize Christ's Atonement?" The criticism of Adventists suggesting that they reject the atonement of Christ happens "because they believe that His atonement for sin was not completed on Calvary." In his refutation of that argument, Nichol explained, "We do not deny the atonement; we differ with some other Christian people simply as to the *time* when the atonement does its *final* work for the believer." Nichol said, "We believe that Christ on the cross made provision for the atonement for all sinners. Thus all who will may be saved. But we believe also that only those who 'endure unto the end . . . shall be saved.'" This means that Christ's "saving work of atonement cannot be completed until the end." Two decades later, the debate within Adventism about the atonement paralleled that in the larger Evangelical world—between the Penal Substitutionary and the Moral Influence theories of atonement.

At the Adventist Forum Conference, September 16–18, we will return to the subject of atonement with twenty-first-century eyes. We have invited Gregory Boyd to be our conversation partner. Boyd describes his view of atonement as being in alignment with the "Christus Victor" view of the historic-orthodox church. "I believe that Jesus died as our substitute and experienced the death-consequences of sin in our place. But I do not believe this means the Father needed to satisfy his own wrath by violently pouring it out on his Son in order to forgive us and reconcile us to himself." In this issue of the journal we carry several articles to inform that conference conversation. Jean Sheldon, who will respond to Boyd at the conference, starts us off with a look at Divine wrath and appeasement in ancient times. We have included a couple of articles from the past that show us major elements in the Adventist conversation about atonement. And we have included the reading list being shared at the conference (that lists books by several of the conference speakers on a variety of topics).

With a new discussion of atonement, we hope to bring new appreciation for and understanding of what Christ accomplished on the cross and what that means for us as Christians today. ■

Bonnie Dwyer is editor of *Spectrum* magazine.

Are Our Teachers Fit to Teach?

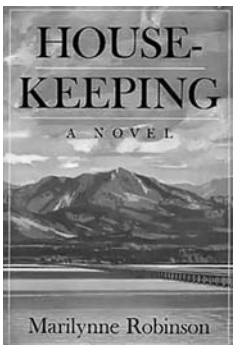
BY CHARLES SCRIVEN

When a misfit who flirts with suicide joins herself with two orphan nieces, you sense again the wonder—and fragility—of families. Sylvie, who returns to her lakeside town from a life of transience and freight trains, begins to see that she matters. Although one niece never reconciles fully with her strange presence, and finally leaves, the other, Ruthie, sticks with Sylvie through all the disappointments and scary shadows that complicate their need for one another.

One day the townsfolk notice the two of them have returned from some excursion in a freight car. After that, the tall, fat sheriff comes around, and so do well-meaning ladies with casseroles and prying questions. The courts are about to ask whether Sylvie can keep Ruthie.

Sylvie tells the ladies that families "should stay together," and also embarks upon a frenzy of housekeeping. At this, Ruthie, also alarmed, grasps a slender hope: perhaps her aunt's "eagerness to save our household" will convince the authorities that it "should not be violated."

All this is from *Housekeeping* by the Pulitzer-Prize-winning Marilynne Robinson. Because it's



set in North Idaho, where I have myself enjoyed the lakes and woods and huckleberries, I do not so much imagine as remember the milieu. But bigger reasons for loving the book are the author's lyricism, her attunement to human feeling, the Christian passion that drives and shapes her imagination. Not for a minute would I doubt her conviction that the church is itself a household, and that this household, too, should by no means "be violated."

Work such as that of John McVay and John Brunt on biblical metaphors underscores the New Testament belief that those who share the life of faith constitute a "household" or "family." Both these scholars have also been *pastors*, and I like to imagine, therefore, that they have a profounder-than-average feeling for the nuance of the metaphors. They have in any case kept before us such passages as this one from Ephesians 2: "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are . . . members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone."

And this pertains, as we dare not overlook, to current controversy over the "endorsement" initiative high-level church administrators believe necessary to assure the fitness of Adventist religion teachers for their jobs (see news article on page 8). When implemented, this initiative would, through action culminating at division-level Boards for Ministerial and Theological Education, or BMTE's, certify that teachers are teaching the church's Statement of Twenty-Eight Fundamental Beliefs. Said by administrators to be unwieldly, and by many educators (especially in the church's older sectors) to be unwarranted and dangerous, the initiative is now undergoing refinement by a special Revision Task Force. The Task Force is considering objections, but focusing on operational

Objectors see the process as an effort, from outside colleges and universities themselves, to control thought on Adventist campuses.

efficiency. And, as happened before, objectors see the process as an effort, from outside colleges and universities themselves, to control thought on Adventist campuses.

I asked several members of the Revision Task Force to respond to four question (here briefly stated): Why put energy into this now? Why isn't board oversight of college and university goings-on adequate? Is anyone considering New Testament justifications for such bureaucratic interest in classroom uniformity? Might administrators bend before overwhelming opposition to the endorsement initiative in the church's long-established areas?

The Revision Task force has no authority to change church policy; its job is to make the policy *work*.

With respect to the last question, I was told that the endorsement idea is enshrined in General Conference Working policy, and has been for at least fifteen years. The Revision Task force has no authority to change church policy; its job is to make the policy *work*.

In the end, three persons from the Revision Task Force responded to me, all in a kindly and open spirit. One was Daniel Jiao, the Executive Secretary of the Chinese Union Mission; another was Richard Sabuin, Director of Education for the Northern Asia Pacific Division. Both are comfortable with the endorsement initiative as a means of useful collaboration. As Dr. Jiao said, it just assures that when far-flung Adventist colleges hire someone from elsewhere to teach Adventist thought, the person can be counted on to do so. It will be helpful, he suggested, in just the way ministerial credentials (for persons with pastoral responsibility) are helpful. (Jiao did not mention that, typically, religion teachers hold such credentials themselves.)

Ben Schoun, now semi-retired from the General Conference but still at the Revision Task Force helm, sent thoughtful responses meant to assuage campus worry but not, certainly, to eliminate it. He made, besides nuts-and-bolts clarifications, these key points:

1. Higher education boards tend more and more to limit their attention to the performance of institutional presidents, and "too often" the president and his administrative colleagues "do not do anything about problems" the endorsement initiative is meant to address. Some teachers do shift away from full affirmation of the Fundamental Beliefs, or even "lose their faith" altogether. The church cannot allow such teachers to put Adventist college students at risk.
2. Although endorsement proper would be a function of the division-level committee, the process leading up to it would depend heavily on colleges and universities. Schoun said that appropriate school reviewers would "make sure" each religion teacher supports Adventist doctrine "as reflected in our Fundamental Beliefs," and make their recommendation in that light. If the Division BMTE should still have "questions about some teacher," these would be referred to the school for resolution. The question of *employment* itself would remain with the school.
3. The Twenty-Eight Fundamental Beliefs *can*, according to its preamble, undergo change. So, teachers may certainly ask questions and develop new ideas, but the proper testing ground for these is "with other Adventist scholars" and, ultimately, with "the General Conference in session." Conversation of this kind should not occur "in the classroom."

These views, I emphasize, came in early August from someone who has responsibility for re-drafting the section of the denomination's ministerial training handbook that deals with this process. I cannot be sure, of course, that they reflect the feelings of the entire Task Force.

Certain premises do appear, however, to hold sway: substantial distrust of Adventist higher education, and confidence in bureaucratic enhancement as a meaning of coping with distrust; the use of a voted doctrinal statement—

Scriven editorial ➔ continued *on page 64.....*

World Church News

WWW.TED.ADVENTIST.ORG/NEWS/TOR TJERANSEN/ADAMS

Proclaiming Faith by Art in Mjøndalen Church, Norway

BY TOR TJERANSEN | TED NEWS

A little bit up. Straight forward." With a steady hand, Tor Magne Eilertsen maneuvered a large forklift in the main sanctuary of the Mjøndalen Seventh-day Adventist church, Norway. There were shouts from excited members of the decoration committee as large, wooden elements were mounted on the church walls. When completed, four panels make up a red, circular installation with religious symbols and quotes from the Book of Revelation. This is just one-third of a larger installation depicting biblical themes.

The installation marked the completion of eighteen months of skilled work. More importantly, it is an expression of the personal faith of Adventist artist, Dag T. Hansen. For the Mjøndalen congregation it is also a desire to convey their faith through sight, not just through words and music.

Hansen has always been an artist, but not always an Adventist. While at art college in the 1980s, he developed a specialty in wood carving, but also fell in love with another student, Gry Shjøll, who happened to be an Adventist. With Gry as a spiritual coach, biblical faith became an ever more important part of Dag's life until, during a long mountain trek, Dag was baptized by an Adventist pastor. That fitted well with his longing to live close to nature and the God of nature. Dag and Gry married and, since 1995, have worked together on Haaberget Farm, where he has his studio.

The decision to become a Seventh-day Adventist was not an easy choice. However, for Hansen it was not good enough to go with the flow. He has brought that experience into his artwork by depicting a fish swimming against the current.

"The fish is an ancient symbol for Christ," he says. "You must have the courage to stand for what is right and true. As a young Adventist you may encounter great pressure. Daring to be a Christian may not be easy, but we must have the courage to stand by our convictions."

Hansen is secure in his faith, but he is not a man who talks if he has nothing important to say. However, through his art, he is proclaiming faith. The new artwork in the Mjøndalen church is definitely proclaiming Adventist faith, even if the messages contained in it are not always obvious. Large pieces of art are not easily ignored. "The art is there in the church. Everyone who enters the sanctuary must see it," Dag states.

That is why he uses clear symbols without wanting to be too forward. He wants Adventists who look at the art to recognize central tenets of their faith. At the same time, he hopes that those with no

Daring to be a Christian may not be easy, but we must have the courage to stand by our convictions.

WWW.TED.ADVENTIST.ORG/NEWSTOR TJERANSEN/ADAMS

We are so different. Some are lonely, others are bruised in various ways, but we all belong to the fellowship of believers.

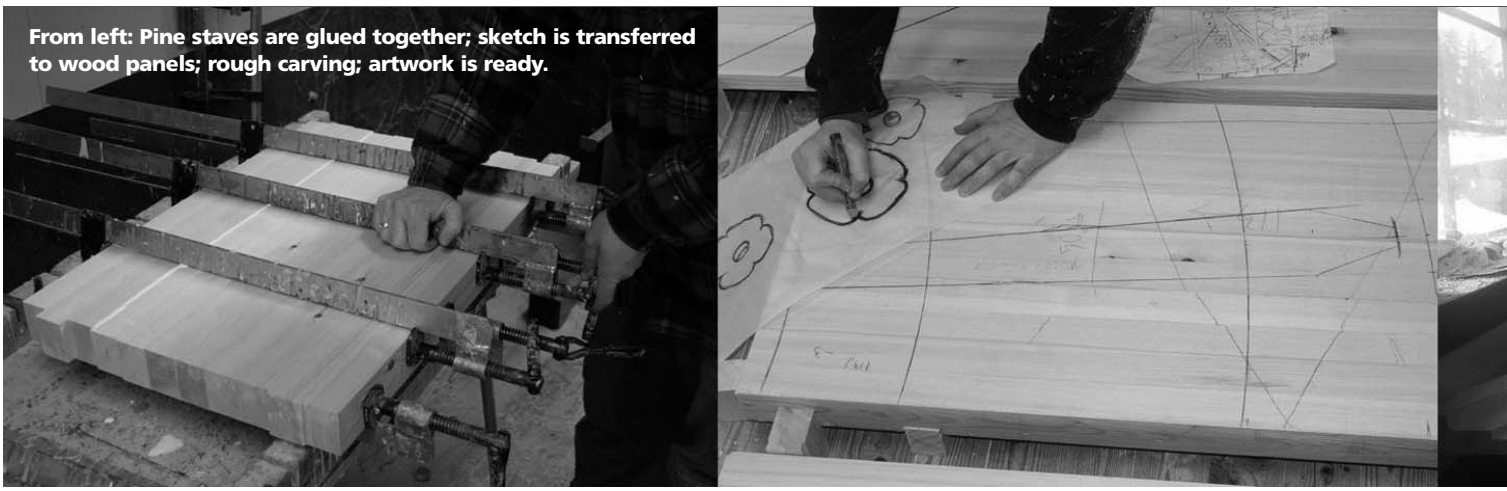
Adventist background will be inspired to reflect on the large themes of life.

Near the entrance to the sanctuary, three squares in tones of red with a golden rim represent the Word of God, the Fall and the Sabbath. On the south wall, a rectangular, deep-blue group of panels depict a bright light with strong rays, reminding worshippers that Christ is the light of the world. Along the rays are flower petals of different sizes and shapes. "I think the flowers represent the members of the congregation," Hansen says. "We are so different. Some are lonely, others are bruised in various ways, but we all belong to the fellowship of believers." The symbol of the flowers is carried over into the group of red panels—a reminder of the new earth where we will experience a perfect world with God.

One of the rays in the blue group of panels turns into the hand of a large clock. The time is five to twelve, a timely reminder that the second coming of Christ is near. "We must make a choice before it is too late," says the artist.

Hansen did not want to give the artwork a specific

HÅBERGET KIRKELIGE KULTURSMIE/ADAMS



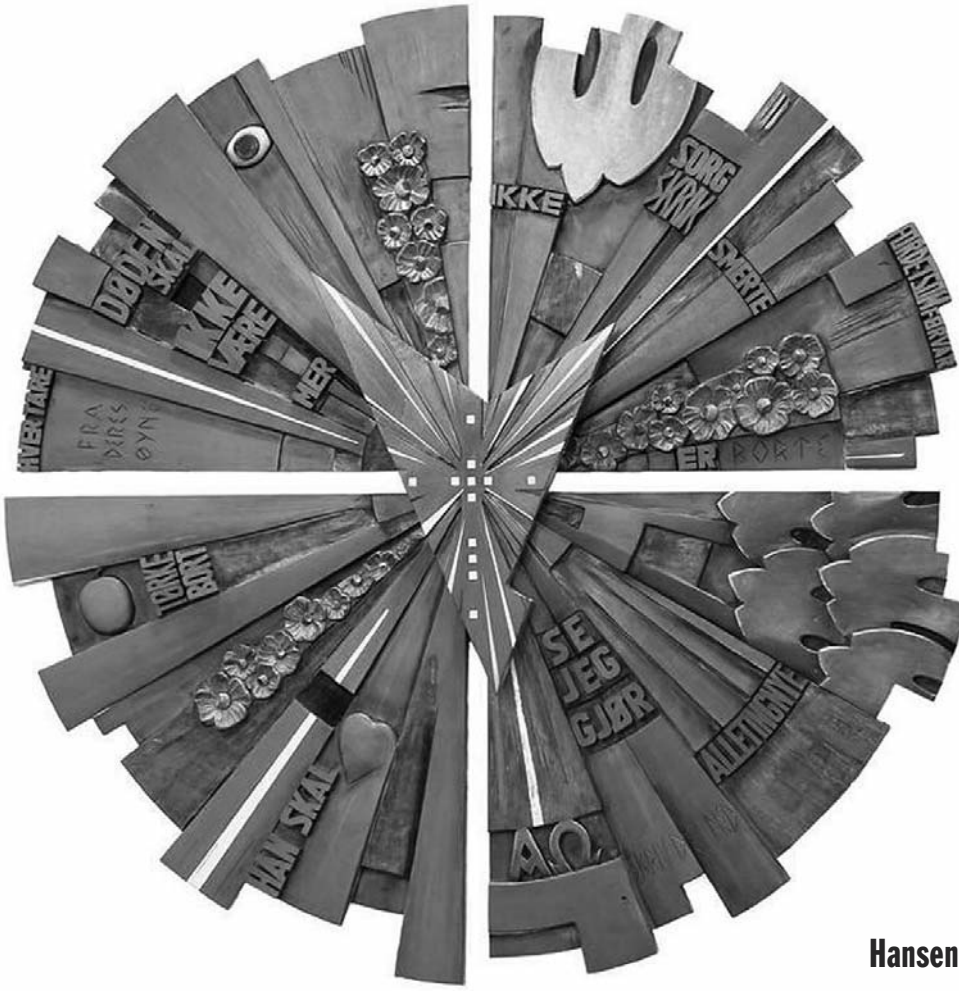
From left: Pine staves are glued together; sketch is transferred to wood panels; rough carving; artwork is ready.

title. He did not want a title to limit viewers' thinking. However, it is not difficult to understand why the working title of the artwork is *From Eternity to Eternity*. The observant viewer will recognize elements present in all three groups of panels. The apple with one bite taken in the first group of panels becomes just the core after human greed eats it away in the blue group. Thankfully, in the last group that symbolizes the new earth, the apple is once again whole.

The most prominent part of the last group of panels is the Scripture reference to Revelation, Chapter 21. "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.…Behold, I am making all things new.…Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." (Revelation 21:4–5).

Hansen recognizes that there will be varying opinions regarding the installation. He wants to provoke thought. "People must not only find the art beautiful. They must be provoked into thinking," he concludes.

Certainly those who visit the Mjøndalen church will have food for thought as they ponder the artwork. They will also recognize that the Bible is central to the faith of Seventh-day Adventists and that the Second Coming of Christ is our great hope. ■



Hansen recognizes that there will be varying opinions regarding the installation. He wants to provoke thought.

The Importance of Being Endorsed

BY BONNIE DWYER AND CHARLES SCRIVEN

"Scrap the whole project."

—Maury Jackson

For religion teachers at Adventist colleges and universities, an official endorsement process by the General Conference is part of the plan spelled out in the Handbook of the International Board for Ministerial and Theological Education (IBMTE). But many are resisting the idea, and the discussion about how to reshape the process has included not only the faculties of the universities and colleges, but also the leadership of the North American Division. In October, the Handbook will be on the agenda for the IBMTE Committee, which will forward their recommendations to the General Conference Executive Committee for approval at Annual Council.

Created by the General Conference during Robert Folkenberg's administration, IBMTE "focuses on ministry throughout its life cycle, from formation to hiring, to continuing education," according to Lisa Bearsley-Hardy, director of the General Conference Department of Education.

In 2015, a Taskforce led by General Conference Vice President Ben Schoun was created to review and rewrite, where necessary, the Handbook for the Board. The draft revisions have been shared widely within the academic community. As the commenting period came to an end in July, a lively e-mail exchange among faculty members documented the feelings of many religion teachers.

Maury Jackson launched a lively "Independence Weekend" conversation when he suggested that the IBMTE "scrap the whole project" of requiring regular General Conference/Division endorsement of theology faculty upon hiring and every five years thereafter, as outlined in a chapter of the Handbook.

The preface to Jackson's concluding statement about scrapping the whole project was a quotation from Ellen G. White's *Manuscript Releases* Vol. 17, "Every Person Has God-Given Talents Which Should Bear Fruit; Church Leaders Not to Exercise Control Over Others," (pages 196–201):

…To handle men as if they were machinery, binding their freedom by methods and terms, is an offense which God will not tolerate.…Some have been very ready to pronounce judgment upon the work of their fellow men, because it did not exactly represent their ideas. But has God pronounced them infallible? The spirit they have manifested in pronouncing judgment upon God's messengers shows their fallibility and their ignorance, both of the Scriptures and of the power of God. These men {and women} are counterworking the work of God. They have felt at liberty to make decisions and laws which would bring talent under their jurisdiction. They have placed themselves in the judgment seat, to control their fellow men. But has God appointed them to do this work? He would say of them, "What doest thou here? Who sent you on this journey? Who gave you this errand to perform? Who made you a critic and judge on matters of doctrine? Who appointed you to pick and to choose the words and expressions which My servants shall use?

Jackson hit "reply all" when sending his comment to Teresa Reeves, associate dean of the Theological Seminary at Andrews University and president of the Adventist Society for Religious Studies, as well as the person chosen by the General Conference Department of Education to assist with the documents in this latest IBMTE process. So Jackson's e-mail went to all 350 people on the ASRS mailing list, and it struck a chord. Soon others were chiming in to support Jackson's statement and to elaborate.

Stanley Patterson, also of Andrews University, prefaced his comment with an affirmation for any and all initiatives that promote excellence and quality in teaching. "Most of the IBMTE Handbook does that with the exception of the endorsement chapter," he wrote. "The endorsement chapter reflects a trend that can be tracked by actions over the last

37 years in the model constitution and bylaws embedded in the GC Working Policy. The gradual process since 1980 of marking sections in bold face type that are mandatory rather than recommendations reflects a move away from relational trust and cooperation to a legislated model that assumes control as an acceptable model for compliance and unity." He added that, "Every move that we make under control mandate is a confession that the relational trust that held our church together for the past century is no longer reliable."

In his six reasons why the church should not pursue an endorsement process, Skip Bell, Andrews University, noted that the practice would contradict biblical teaching of the nature of the church. "It is ironic that we as a church would seek to assure faithfulness in the teaching of our faculty through a means that contradicts biblical teaching regarding the church." He noted the policy would "move us further to centralization of power in a single person or group. Where power narrows to committees or positional leaders the ministering body withdraws. Or worse, they become critical."

Robert Johnston, retired professor of New Testament at Andrews University Theological Seminary, made three points in his response:

1. Those who have made a study of church history will recognize that they have seen this story before, and it did not turn out well, from an Adventist perspective. It resulted in what we have called the "falling away" (2 Thes 2:3). It was a gradual process of ever increasing creedalism and hierarchicalism, beginning with Ignatius of Antioch, proceeding on to Cyprian, then to Leo, and on into the ripened papacy. The creeds progressively tightened and narrowed doctrinal standards so as to eliminate many excellent believers because they were Monothelites, Single Processionists, and so forth, even though the scriptural basis for such close definition was indefinite or equivocal. This ultimately weakened Christendom and prepared the way for the triumph of Islam.

2. The proposed endorsement procedure requires that candidates assent to five documents, which therefore now function as normative creeds. All of them are demonstrably the products of political processes, some of which were unseemly. When I was baptized, Adventists had only twenty-two fundamental beliefs. That is what was on my baptismal certificate. When we make additions or modifications that many believers and ministers did not sign up for, that is like taking a mortgage that I have already signed and changing the numbers on it. In commercial language it could be called "bait and switch." I have no objection to revising our statements of belief if we keep strictly to their original nature and purpose. Our spiritual forebears were adamantly opposed to creeds. When lists of beliefs were first put forth they were done so as "descriptions of what Adventists generally believe," information for inquirers. They were not intended to have any normative or prescriptive force. As soon as you make such documents a test they become creeds.

3. Until 1915 The Adventist Church had a check and balance. Ellen White could rebuke a General Conference President, and she often did. We have struggled to find a substitute. God's people need this. David needed Nathan, and Herod Antipas needed John the Baptist. A major function of prophets is to speak truth to power, however unwelcome rulers may find this. In the Adventist Church today the nearest thing we have to a prophetic voice is the theological faculties of our universities and seminaries. But when the speakers of truth owe their positions to the rulers they must please the rulers, which makes it unlikely that they will speak the truth to them. They become like the court prophets of 1 Kings 22. The devil looks upon this endorsement procedure and laughs, because if it is approved and implemented he wins.

There was an occasional voice in support of IBMTE. Lester Merkil, Andrews University, wrote that there are good aspects to the committee. "Without an IBMTE committee which has a majority membership of theological educators, our field would not be properly represented in the education decisions of the church. It needs to be!" But even he said, "I think we are fairly unanimous in our understanding that a certification process is harmful. In fact, I find it hard to understand how it has remained this far in the new process."

John Matthews asked Teresa "to present to the committee a process that is more biblical than what is presented in the current IBMTE draft."

From Friedensau Adventist Univer-

sity in Germany, Stefan Hoschele wrote that his institution suggests any procedure of endorsement or other type of certification should be done in a different way, which builds on (1) trust in faculty, (2) trust in institutional boards, and (3) actual ministry (teaching, research, and ministry to the church and society). He said this related to observations previously made to the IBMTE Revision Committee that apparently had no impact on the final version. "We deplore that the suggested handbook sows seeds of distrust, and we desire to work for a church in which we can cooperate without casting doubt on each other's true Adventist Christianity."

Two dozen individual faculty members from several of the universities in North America joined the e-mail response conversation over the weekend. The faculty of the School of Theology at Walla Walla University sent the unanimous position of their entire faculty: "We would also like to add our voices to the many who have grave concerns about IBMTE's proposed endorsement process and resonate with many of the specific critiques that have already been offered. We hope IBMTE can be a resource and an encouragement rather than a centralized oversight committee. We love our church and wish to continue to minister in a climate of mutual respect, trust and familial charity as we have done for many decades."

This latest outcry over the control element of the endorsement process is not new. It has been voiced at various times during the life of IBMTE. Asked why the provision remains in the Handbook, Bearsley-Hardy says, "Because the Seventh-day Adventist church is losing a large part of its young people."

Just as faculty objections to the proposed "endorsement process" were accumulating, North American Division leaders were themselves working on a proposal for an "alternative" to the process. The Division's college presidents, although aligned with IBMTE's goal of accountability in the teaching of religion, objected earlier to the "endorsement" provision as compromising college-board responsibility and introducing risk with respect to institutional accreditation. On Tuesday, July 5, NAD administrators and Ministerial Department leaders joined college presidents and academic deans in support of a proposal that would jettison that provision.

The group's "alternative procedures" document begins with recognition of the church's "obligation" to "provide guidance" with respect to ministerial training by Adventist institutions of higher education. Although some Christian colleges require all employees to sign a "faith statement," the document says our own church has "wisely refrained" from this, out of respect both for the idea of "present truth" and for the final authority of the Bible. Compliance by faith statement, it suggests, would run counter to these convictions.

Still, constituents can and do influence ministerial training. One pathway for such influence is through institutional boards that include "conference and union church leaders." Another is through the NAD Ministerial Association, which "works closely with the Schools and Departments of religion to inform and influence" curricula related to the training of ministers. Still another is through the hiring process by which local conferences effectively assess graduates of programs for ministerial training.

These pathways assume basic trust among those involved. The IBMTE's "endorsement process" would require every religion teacher to receive (at five-year intervals) an "endorsement certificate" from a centralized authority outside of college or university structures of governance. The NAD's "alternative procedures document" objects not only to the accreditation risk this would entail but also to the implied "lack of trust of the institutions of higher education as well as of their administrators and the conference and union leaders who serve on their boards of trustees."

The document at the same time embraces IBMTE determination to "foster dynamic theological unity," "promote professional excellence," and "energize" Adventist spiritual life "through committed faculty." Although the "endorsement process" would be "counterproductive," such purposes matter. The document promises collaboration with the NAD Ministerial Association on development of a "process to assure the faithfulness of the NAD religion faculty," one "appropriate to" all North American colleges and universities, including, as is pointedly said, both Loma Linda University and Andrews University.

Under the provisions of the draft IBMTE document, proposed "alternative procedures" must receive IBMTE approval "before they are implemented." NAD leaders declare at the end of their proposal that the "best chance" for meeting agreed-upon goals for ministerial education will come through such "collaborative efforts" as they envision in their statement. ■

A Modern Exodus and the Time of the End

Strangers Among Us

THIS WINTER'S issue, (Volume 44, Issue 1) presenting a confrontation of prejudice, which included a biblical perspective on immigration through the story of Cain and Able, the Trans-European division news on the migration crisis in Europe, and the Paradise Valley Refugee Assimilation Project, added timely and much needed introspection on the role each of us have in responding to those who face forced migration. Since some time has passed since the article was published, I would like to bring to the attention of *Spectrum* readers that forced migration in Europe represents a very small number globally of those forcibly displaced.

During 2015, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC) reported 27.8 million new displacements associated with conflict, violence and disasters in 127 countries (http://www.internal-displacement.org/globalreport2016/).This is roughly equivalent to every man, woman and child in New York City, London, Paris, and Cairo taking only the possessions they can carry with them and fleeing their homes in search of safety. Recording record levels of new displacement does not take into consideration that, on average, those displaced spend approximately seventeen years outside of their homes in camps or awaiting reconstruction efforts.

More must be done to prevent displacement and lessen the time for those that have had to flee to find lasting solutions. For more information on arrivals to Europe, I would encourage readers to check updates from the International Organization for Migration at http://migration.iom.int/europe/, including IOM's missing-migrant page at http://missing-migrants.iom.int/latest-global-figures.

As Abigail Doukhan reminded us in quoting Matthew 25:35–40, when "we welcome and care for strangers we are indeed following Jesus' teaching on caring for the strangers among us."

Sincerely,
JENNIFER CLINE KVERNMO
Geneva, Switzerland

Civil Rights for LGBT Adventists

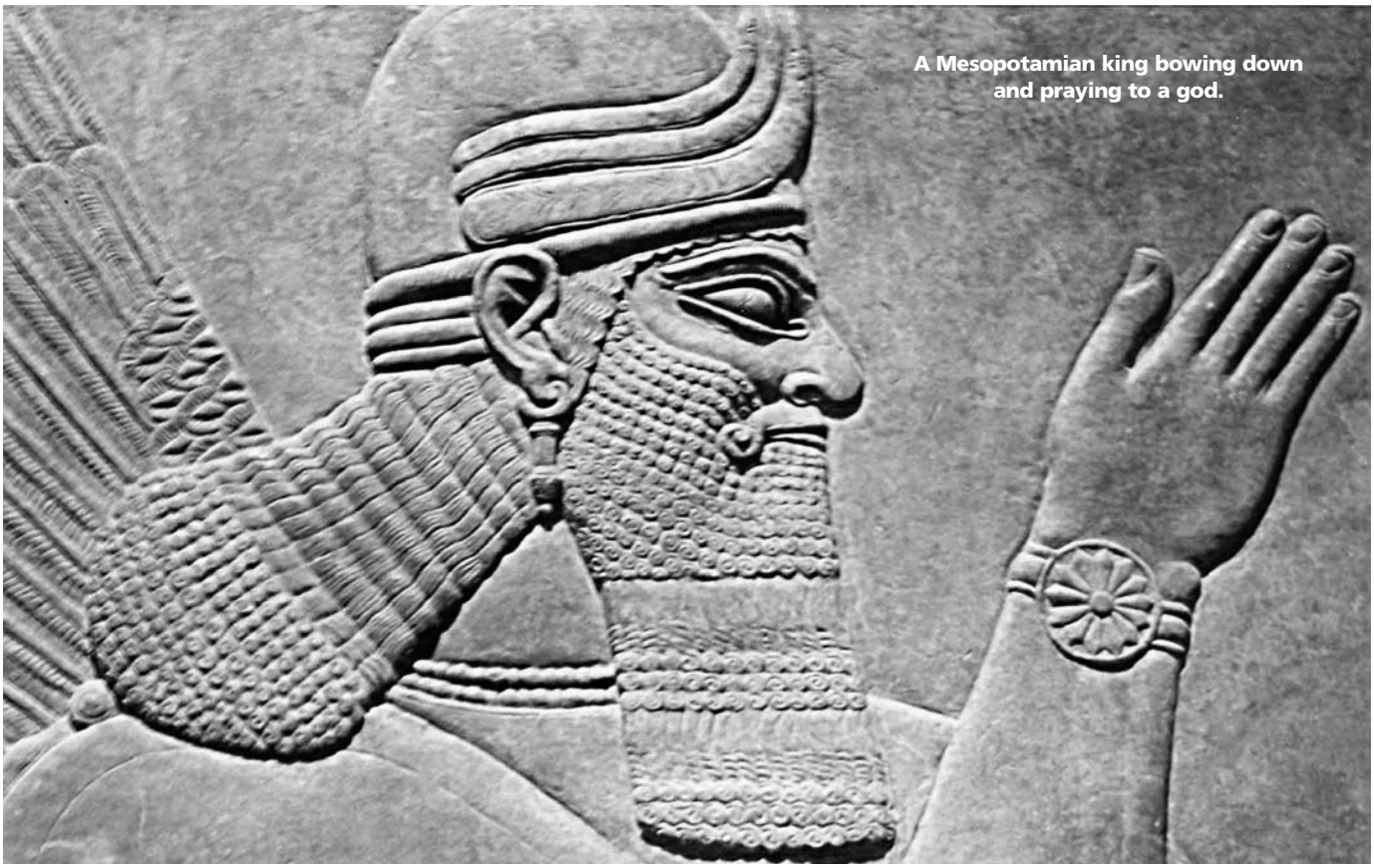
IN "The Adventist Civil Rights Movement as a Prophetic Voice for LGBT Adventists" (Volume 44, Issue 2), Mr. Perla is introducing the dirty business of the world's politics into the Adventist church . The whole article is full of the misconceptions spread in the general public that have brought our country to the confusion where we are now, in which the traditional political parties have nothing good to offer for the November elections. Approval of Mr. Perla's article will create divisions in the church, when our spiritual goal is unity, no fragmentation.

In regard to prophetic movement, the Lord Jesus said that the time of the end will be like the times of Lot.

Thank you for your attention,
JACINTO ALVARADO, MD
Bristol, Virginia

...on average those displaced spend approximately seventeen years outside of their homes in camps or awaiting reconstruction efforts.

GOD'S WRATH, JUSTICE, AND



A Mesopotamian king bowing down and praying to a god.

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ATONEMENT

Ancient Concepts about Divine Anger and Appeasement:
Mesopotamia and the Hebrew Bible | BY JEAN SHELDON

The king's wrath is a messenger of death,
and whoever is wise will appease it.
Proverbs 16:14, NRSV

In Mesopotamian, like most polytheistic religions, we can hardly uncover a consistent, coherent theology; however, certain features stand out that form a portrayal of the deities making up the pantheons of ancient Babylonia and Assyria. Perhaps the most foundational principle of ancient Mesopotamian religions, that tied their various elements together, was that of divine anger and appeasement. Why did the Babylonians and Assyrians find it so important to bring food offerings to the temples of the gods? Because human beings were created to be slaves of the gods, saddled with taking care of their needs much the same way slaves in the royal court took care of the king's needs. While fed from the same repast as the deity, the priests and other caretakers did not eat with the god, who enjoyed his meal aloof and silent.[1] And though the worshipers who brought the offerings, and the priests and temple personnel who prepared them into food, may have fed the deity primarily as their duty, they no doubt had in mind the need to keep the god happy. After all, like any slave master, a full, contented deity remained less likely to get angry, while a neglected god, like his counterpart, the king, would angrily retaliate with appropriate punishment of his slaves.

Why did kings engage in temple building and restoration as an act of duty toward the gods? A god whose temple lay in disrepair might huff off in anger, if the right deity (such as Erra) came along and taunted him about his dirty tiara (crown), leaving the helpless Babylonians to the tyrannical power of the one who incited his displeasure in order to gain the control and power he wanted so that the people would fear him.[2] Why did the priests burn incense and offer incantations? They intended to soothe the gods so that they would be inclined to answer their petitions and show them favor. Why were kings, sometimes royal officers, and even free citizens so obsessed with reading the omens? Because the Mesopotamians believed that the gods communicated with human beings by inscribing omens (as legal verdicts of reward or punishment) on the entrails (most specifically, the liver) of domestic animals such as sheep, or signs in the heavens. Such verdicts were not absolutely fixed, but one could attempt to negotiate with the gods if the omen reading portended a negative outcome.[3] If enemy forces seized the idol of the god out of the temple, they in effect seized the god himself, who had, in anger, allowed the enemy to take him to better treatment elsewhere.[4] As in the case of the three friends of Job, the Mesopotamians generally believed that all illness, loss of reputation, injustice, and misfortunes equaled punishments by the gods whom they had angered.

Though the Babylonians and Assyrians believed in justice, and kings, such as Hammurabi, hoped to gain divine favor by portraying their many acts of justice toward their citizens,[5] the gods did not concern themselves with human justice quite as much as with rituals and temple services. One Babylonian sufferer complained that the gods treated him as though he had not brought the proper offerings to the temple, ignored the days of the gods, and generally neglected them.[6] Another Babylonian sufferer contended that it did no good to make offerings to the gods.[7] At the heart of these complaints lies the assumption that if one suffers it is because the gods are angry over some ritual neglect on the part of the sufferer. While moral concerns also figure into this punishment, ritual concerns seem paramount.

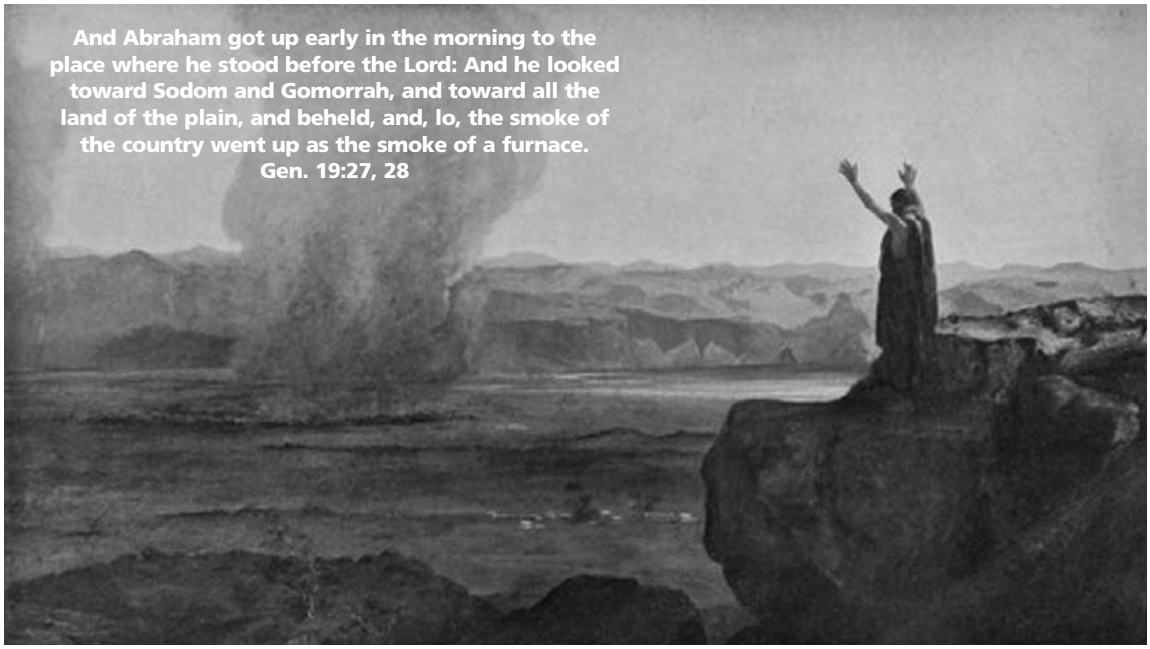
Similar to the royal domain, in the arena of divine anger, the issue at stake was not to seek a morally

Perhaps the most foundational principle of ancient Mesopotamian religions, that tied their various elements together, was that of divine anger and appeasement.

upright character that would reflect the deity's own persona, but rather to manipulate either the deity directly, or circumstances and influences involving the deity, so as to assuage his or her wrath. Such manipulations did not involve Israelite notions such as admitting one's hurtful practices, repentance of wrongdoing or reconciliation with a neighbor whom one has offended, or ceasing to practice injustice. Rather, the powerful nature and potential anger of the god seems to have served as the sole controlling factor in the relationship, requiring worshipers to do whatever they deemed necessary to obtain favor from the deity and either prevent or appease his or her anger. Though Babylonians could attempt to negotiate on some ritual level with their angry gods, a relationship of confiding trust, with the latitude to question the deity's decisions (as Abraham does over Sodom and Gomorrah), remains absent in the many prayers prayed that archaeologists have uncovered.

> *To be sure, those sovereign masters [the gods] had only rather good-natured dispositions with regard to humans, provided that everyone did his duty as a good 'servant'; and people even believed they could count on the gods' help if they had not been good servants and were expecting to be punished. But any true communication with the gods was inconceivable, so powerful and beyond reach were they believed to be: the only imaginable relationships were those of humble domestics vis-à-vis lofty and distant masters, without any other pleasure than that of accomplished duty, which has never truly delighted anyone.*[8]

This statement by Jean Bottéro sums up the relationships the Mesopotamians had with their gods. After suggesting further that for the "elite," "devout preoccupation" probably played "only a subsidiary role and did not have a powerful daily impact on the common consciousness," he states: "There was no hint of an emotional attachment, of tender searching, of authentic love, but only an attitude of reverence, of respect, of prostration, of fear, rooted in the profound conviction of a condition of servitude both zealous and modest with regard to the gods."[9] On a psychological level, however, potentially angry deities serve both to hold in check a worshiper's internal desires to completely neglect them, yet create distance between worshipers and their gods that allows them to ignore their deities for most of the time. Nevertheless, the prayers, pleading for divine appeasement, especially those, perhaps, to the patron god of Babylon, Marduk, suggest that for some, the ability to



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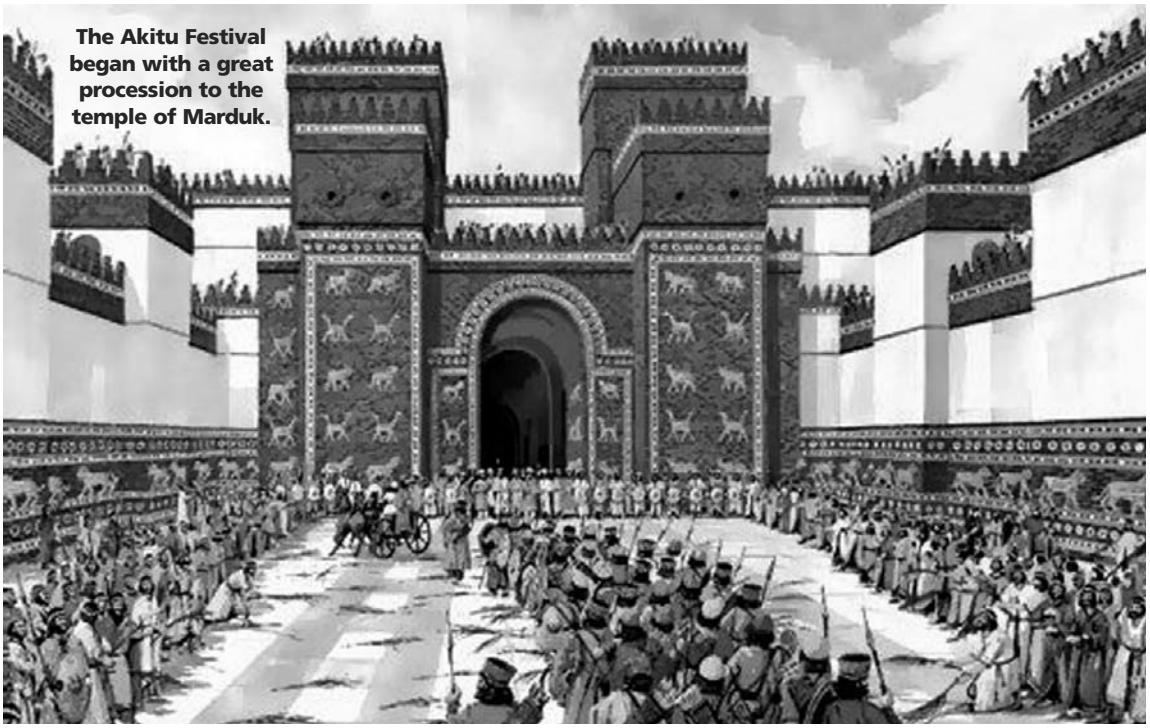


The Akitu Festival began with a great procession to the temple of Marduk.

appease an angry deity allowed the only real assurance of divine favor. For example, during the Akitu festival, the High Priest prays to Bel (Marduk), repeatedly, pleading "My Lord! My Lord, be calmed!"[10] Such a prayer was especially significant because of the humbling of the king that took place before Marduk.

> *The High Priest strikes the king's cheek, presumably to instill within the king the feeling of penitence, and drags him by his ear before Marduk. The king, forced to kneel like a servant, swears to Marduk that he has not sinned against Babylon, that he has fulfilled his obligations. Thereafter the High Priest strikes the king's cheek once more and, according to the ritual, if tears flow, then Marduk has accepted him. If tears do not flow, however, Marduk will have the king overthrown.*[11]

Prayers for appeasement seem necessary in this situation.

Another feature was utilized on behalf of kings whose lives were threatened by unfavorable omens that indicated that the gods were angry and wished to depose the king and have him slain. Both the Assyrians and the Babylonians created a ritual to offset such omens, in which they installed a substitute king (*šar puhi*) for a specified number of days; upon the conclusion, when the king was reinstated on his throne in a ceremonial banquet, the substitute king and his wife suffered the fate of execution. This slaying of "the king" made legal satisfaction to the gods by fulfilling their wishes.

The perception of angry and potentially-angry gods achieved a political status during the first millennium when bureaucracy increased under the very powerful Neo-Assyrian kings such as Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, and Assurbanipal, and the earliest kings of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. The Akkadian language[12] contains about the same number of words for "wrath" or "anger" as does the Hebrew Bible. By studying these terms in the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary, an interesting feature emerges. In those time periods, when a greater number of references exist depicting gods as angry, a fairly proportionate quantity of references portrays kings as angry.[13] This correlation suggests powerful kings came to use divine anger as a weapon to exercise control over their subjects, but more particularly, over the nations they conquered, punishing any unfaithfulness to their treaties as acts

Such verdicts were not absolutely fixed, but one could attempt to negotiate with the gods if the omen reading portended a negative outcome.

Assurbanipal

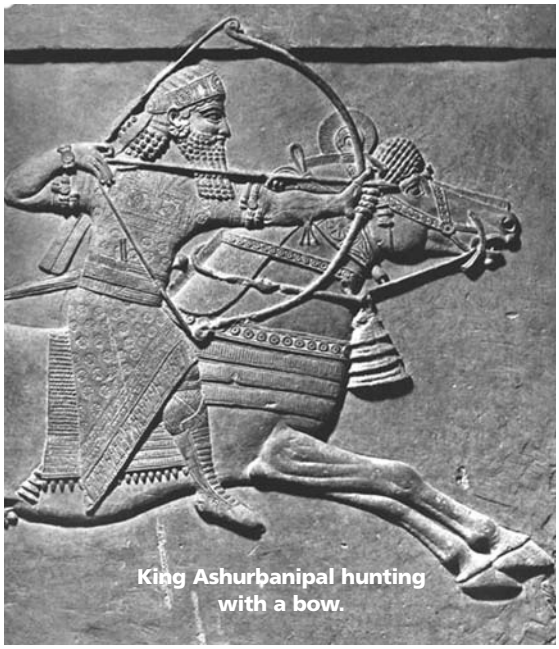
offending their gods. One such king, Assurbanipal, earned for himself the designation of "a tyrant, motivated more by thirst for personal revenge than by sound political considerations."[14] Yet, this despot could show kindness to his officers. In separate land grants, he exempts two officers from taxes, mandating protection for them throughout their lives and indefinitely in the afterlife. "Whoever disturbs [him]," Assurbanipal wrote, "and removes him from the grave where he is lying, may the king his lord be angry with him and show him no mercy, may he forbid [him] to walk in temple and palace, and by the wrath of god and king, may a bloodstained weapon await him."[15] Such language underscores the use of divine and royal anger combined to control any who dared to breach a dictum of the king.

At the heart of these complaints lies the assumption that if one suffers, it is because the gods are angry over some ritual neglect on the part of the sufferer.

Divine Anger in the Hebrew Bible

I find both parallels and major differences regarding divine anger between Assyro-Babylonian texts and the Hebrew canon. In my canonical critical reading of the Hebrew Bible, I attempt to read it as primarily story and only secondarily as law.[16] In my criteria, God's *preferred* will is stated *first* in a narrative sequence (or is tied to creation,) while all references to God's will that seem to contradict this divine preference serve as God's will acquiesced or adapted to the insisted will of the people.[17] Applying this method to divine anger, God is never explicitly referred to as angry once in the entire book of Genesis, the book of beginnings. Indeed, the only hint of divine anger occurs when Abraham pleads with God not to be angry with him in prayer, something with which God complies.[18] In the first canonical instance of anger, Cain becomes angry over God's preference for Abel's offering, and his anger leads him to fratricide. This immediate connection between anger and violence prepares the reader for the story that follows, in which Lamech kills someone for wounding him and declares his right to be avenged. In going beyond talionic law ("type for type"), Lamech's words, in turn, ominously portend the violence that culminates in the flood.[19] The only divine expression of emotion in this case is grief. Thus, in the prototypical representation of God in Genesis, God does not become angry, and human anger finds censorship. The first canonical reference to divine anger occurs in Exodus 4, when Moses finally begs God, "Please send someone else!"[20] The divine response of anger means a shift from the divine preference to acquiescing to Moses' requests. God will send someone else: Moses' brother Aaron. So divine anger in the preferred voice is letting someone have their choice. This finds an echo in Paul's description of God's wrath as "giving people up" to the results of their choice.[21]

Unlike the Babylonians, who would never seek to reason with their potentially angry deities, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Job, and the authors of the Hebrew Psalter were not afraid to wrestle with Yahweh in prayer. Likewise, the Hebrew Bible shows at least a slight reluctance to posit human beings as slaves of


King Ashurbanipal hunting with a bow.

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God,[22] thus permitting the "true communication with the gods" found lacking between the Babylonians and their deities. On the other hand, while Babylonians sought negotiations with their gods through forms of appeasement, what "turned aside" Yahweh's wrath were not rituals but sincere prayers of repentance. The sacrifices offered did not appease his anger but acted to expiate for sin and guilt, with a focus on reparation of those who committed the sin, rather than on God's anger.[23] The Hebrew verb, often translated, "to make atonement," lacks the construction required for the meaning "appeasement." Said another way, the ritual texts nowhere use the verb "to make atonement" with God or his anger as its object.[24] Canonically speaking, the very first mention of blood retaliation occurs when Abel's blood cries out to God from the ground for vengeance. Yet this voice does not belong to God; it is Abel's blood that cries out. When Cain is forced to wander, he is not cursed by God but by the ground.[25] And while the prophets speak vigorously of Yahweh's wrath, they abhor the thought of "paying God off" with blood sacrifices without any heart change. Indeed, for the prophetic voice, obedience and the exercise of justice trumps sacrifices.[26]

Nonetheless, the reader of the Hebrew Bible faces an incredibly large number of references to divine anger.[27] Only between seven and nine books do not contain an explicit reference to God's wrath. Yet in some of the narratives involving divine judgment, God, surprisingly, does not expressly get angry: the flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, and Nadab and Abihu. Added to this confusing mixture, many prophets trumpet divine anger as signifying severe retribution, yet the prophet Joel, filled with dark images for the "day of the Lord," speaks nowhere of Yahweh's anger. The many references deserve further analysis, but one thing seems consistent, especially with the evidence from Babylonia; divine anger is expressed most often in the prophets who naturally prophesied during the monarchy and often directly to the king. The correlation between royal and divine anger once again seems underscored, though in the case of the prophets, the anger they express on behalf of Yahweh seems directed against the powerful, thus perhaps speaking their own language. Not surprisingly, the prophets who represent God as the most wrathful are Nahum (*below*), who prophesies against Nineveh, and Ezekiel, who prophesied in Babylonia. Of the former, Nahum speaks against Nineveh, a city that became the capital of Assyria under Sennacherib, who, with his son Esarhaddon, and grandson Assurbanipal, formed the first of the most powerful kings of ancient Assyria.[28]

Nahum

Once again, a prophet portrays the wrath of God against the oppressor who himself is angry and who has lent support to portrayals of angry gods. Of the latter, Ezekiel speaks to the Babylonian exiles, who have refused to let register the terrible crimes done by those in power in Jerusalem, a city "full of violence,"[29] that they too have participated in filling Jerusalem with blood. Therefore, unlike the great kings of Assyria and Babylon, prophets take the images of divine anger against those who employ them in order to control their subjects and their vassals. It thus belongs to speech that reflects God's will adapted to the will of the people.

One question remains: is Yahweh's anger an integral aspect of his character? The answer should be cast in the setting of Assyro-Babylonian vocabulary for anger. Two of the Akkadian terms—*agāgu* and *ezēzu*—occur the most frequently. Though often used as synonyms, the former refers to "a passing emotion" whereas the latter implies "an inherent quality."[30] Since both of these terms are used in reference to gods as well as kings, we

The only imaginable relationships were those of humble domestics vis-à-vis lofty and distant masters.

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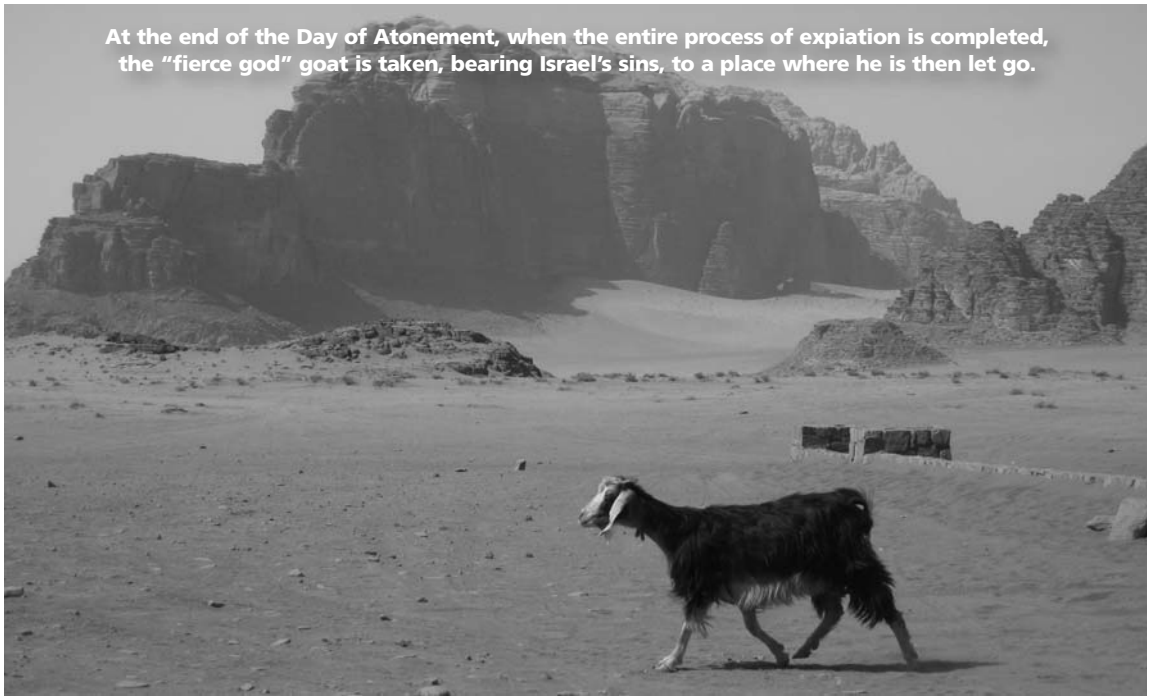

At the end of the Day of Atonement, when the entire process of expiation is completed, the "fierce god" goat is taken, bearing Israel's sins, to a place where he is then let go.

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In those time periods, when a greater number of references exist depicting gods as angry, a fairly proportionate quantity of references portrays kings as angry.

may assume that the verb *ezēzu*, when applied to a deity, represents an aspect of his persona, if not his nature. Does a counterpart to this occur in the Hebrew Bible? Nahum spoke of Yahweh as "Lord [*baal*] of anger,"[31] one of the closest instances in which anger is ascribed to Yahweh's character. Since the term *baal* can mean "master" or "owner," it remains indeterminate whether Nahum intends to refer to an aspect of Yahweh's character or to state that Yahweh controls anger, in which case, the terms for "anger" would not apply to Yahweh but represent disaster, as they often do in the later periods of Israel.[32] On the other hand, in Yahweh's self-disclosure to Moses, he does not include anger as an attribute.[33]

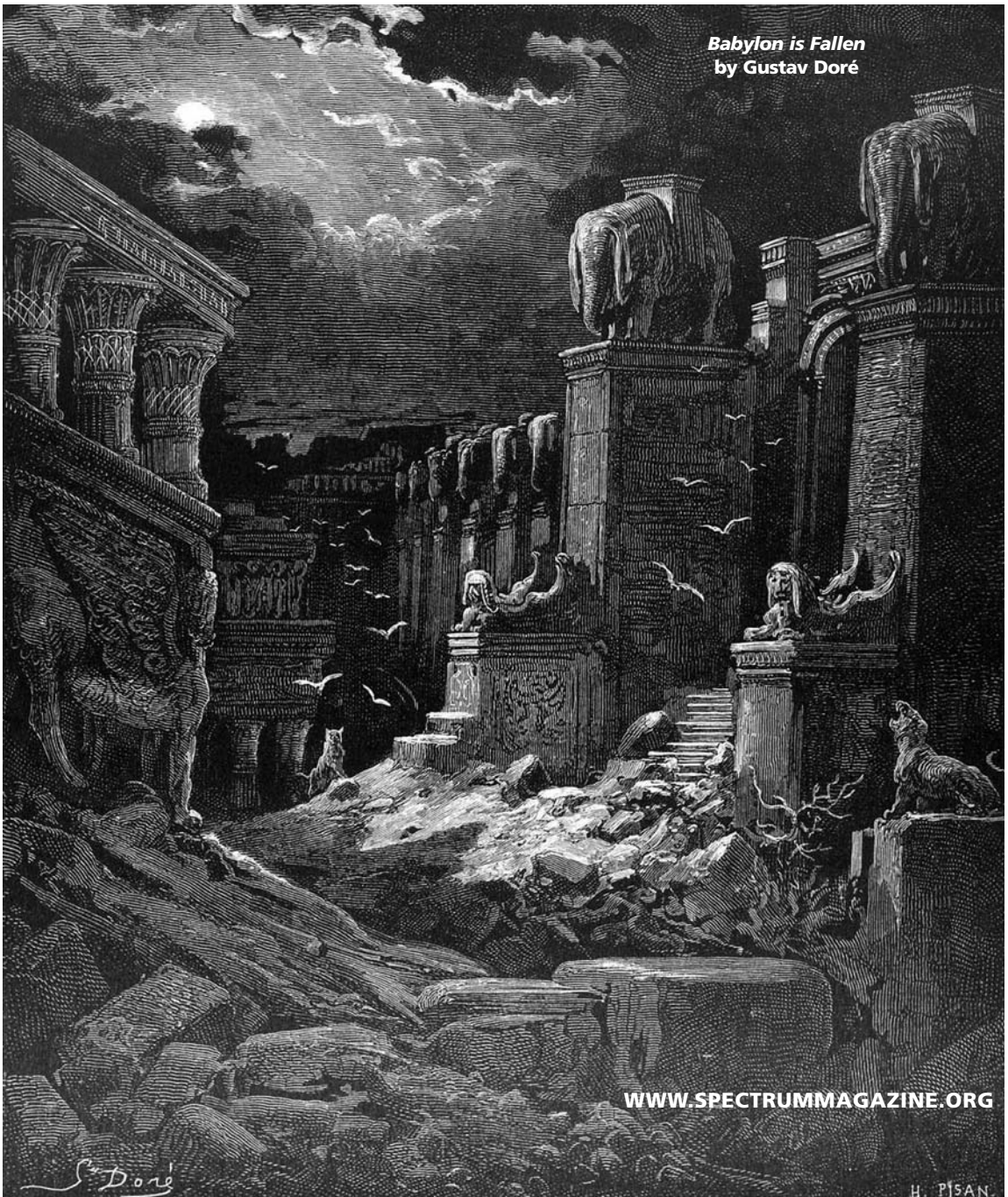
This can be balanced with two features in the Day of Atonement, the Hebrew counterpart of the Babylonian Akitu Festival. In contrast to the latter, the former involved no prayers for Yahweh's appeasement. (Except for the pleas that Yahweh "turn away" his anger, the Psalter also contains no prayers for divine appeasement.) Yet the Day of Atonement does speak to the perception of divine anger, and in a most unexpected way. According to H. Tawil, following the traditions of medieval rabbinic commentators, who viewed the goat for Azazel as a desert demon, the term Azazel represents a metathesized form of the Hebrew *ʿzz* and *ʿēl* to mean "fierce god." Yet the Hebrew cognate, *ʿzz*, is never applied to God in the Hebrew Bible. Even more significantly, the word "fierce" (*ʿzz*) is directly related to the Akkadian verb *ezēzu* that refers to fierceness as a characteristic. A Hebrew adjectival form of this word is applied to a deity in just one place: Leviticus 16. At the end of the Day of Atonement, when the entire process of expiation is completed, the "fierce god" goat is taken, bearing Israel's sins, to a place where he is then let go. The message seems clear, in light of the fact that the Day of Atonement seems to answer questions evoked by the deaths of Nadab and Abihu,[35] that the real "angry god" is a demonic figure.

Apocalyptic Synthesis

The Apocalypse contains a marked contrast between Babylonian wrath and biblical divine anger; Revelation 14:8 states that Babylon "causes all nations to drink the wine of the wrath of her fornication." Since, according to 18:3, Babylon's fornication is with kings, and since it represents the opposite of the New

Jerusalem, we may conclude that Babylon's wrath resulted from religion and government coming together to produce the ancient power of political control: royal and divine anger. Historically, the evidence suggests that angry kings ideologically reinforced the perception of angry gods. Kings then furthered their cause by appealing to divine anger for greater power.

In contrast to Babylon's anger, God's wrath is poured out (as in "give up") in 14:9–12 without mixture (i.e., without that ideological merging with "kingly power") into the cup of his indignation, a reference to the cup that Jesus drank from Gethsemane to the cross. Nowhere in the passage is God described as angry in character. Rather, the torment of those who worship the beast of power is to live in the presence of the Lamb and his angels. Just as the Day of Atonement separates God's presence from divine anger, so does the third angel. What this passage suggests is that the power-hungry, who rest upon an Assyro-Babylonian view of divine anger to enforce their decrees, are literally tortured by the presence God revealed on Sinai to Moses—of which patience is an attribute. Only this can explain how the saints can be patient. If God is an angry god, why do they need patience? They only need it if God is One whose patience only ends when anger wins the hearts of those



Babylon is Fallen **by Gustav Doré**

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God is never explicitly referred to as angry once in the entire book of Genesis, the book of beginnings.

who reject him; then he unleashes his wrath—his pouring out of his grief in having to let them have what they have chosen. ■

Jean Sheldon is professor of Old Testament at Pacific Union College, where she has taught for the last 21 years. She holds a joint PhD from the University of California (Berkeley) and the Graduate Theological Union in ancient Near Eastern Religions.

Then he unleashes his wrath—his pouring out of his grief in having to let them have what they have chosen.

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15. K 211 (ADD 647); NARGD 9, lines 27–31; K 2729 (ADD 646); NARGD 10; 25 and 26 respectively in L Kataja and R. Whiting, *Grants, Decrees and Gifts of the Neo-Assyrian Period*, State Archives of Assyria 12 (Helsinki: Helsinki University, 1995), 26, 28.

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17. A clear case of this is 1 Samuel 8, where the prophetic voice is against kingship and supports the general opposition to hierarchy in Genesis, while God acquiesces to the people's determined will.

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DISCUSSED | alienation, the worm on the hook, ransom, guilt, divine wrath, genuine love

Atonement 101: *Reviewing the Text, Terms, and Metaphors of Atonement* | BY RICHARD RICE

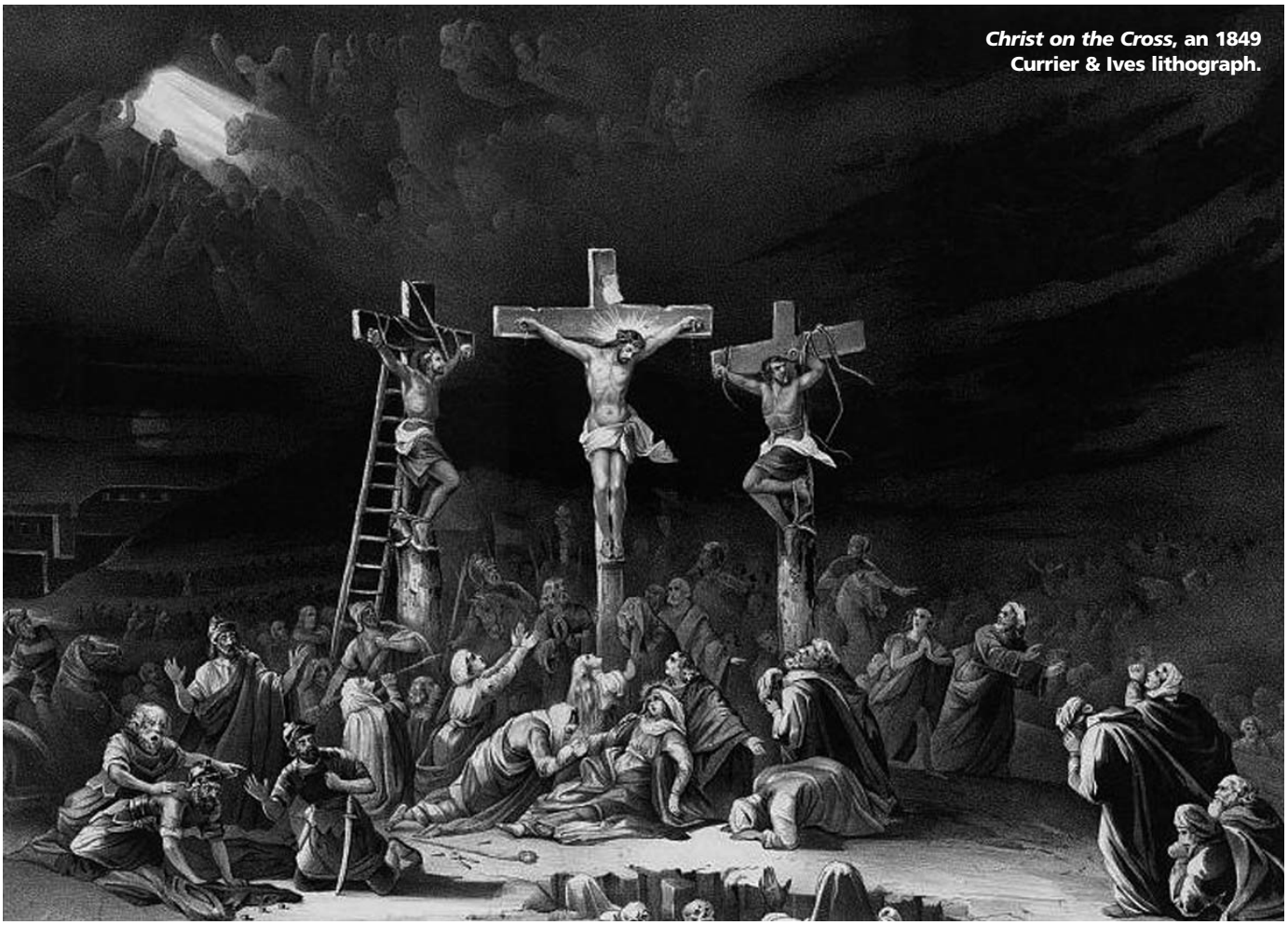
Reprinted by permission of the publisher from *Reign of God: An Introduction to Christian Theology*, 2nd ed., by Richard Rice (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1997), 191–199.

WHAT JESUS ACCOMPLISHED

We now face what is probably the most important question of all: What did Jesus' death accomplish? How does it solve the problem of sin? The New Testament gives no single answer to this question. There is no one theory of atonement in the apostolic writings; in fact, there are no theories at all. What we find instead are several striking metaphors, or symbols, describing what Jesus did. There are too many to survey here, so we will concentrate on only a few of the most important.[1]

Salvation

The most general and comprehensive term for the work of Christ is "salvation," an expression we have already



***Christ on the Cross*, an 1849 Currier & Ives lithograph.**

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used a number of times. Romans 1:16 identifies the gospel as "the power of God unto salvation," and "savior" is one of the important titles early Christians applied to Jesus (see Phil. 3:20). The very name of "Jesus," in fact, points to His work of salvation (see Matt. 1:21).

This expression recalls the long history of God's activity on behalf of the Hebrew people. According to the Old Testament, God is the deliverer, or savior, of His people, especially from Egyptian bondage and at the Red Sea (Ex. 15:2).

The Greek word for "save" can also mean "heal," or "make whole," as we have noted. This suggests that salvation involves both rescue and restoration. Christ not only delivers us from the power of sin, but also restores us to complete spiritual health.

It is also significant that the New Testament always speaks of God as the subject of reconciliation, never as the object.

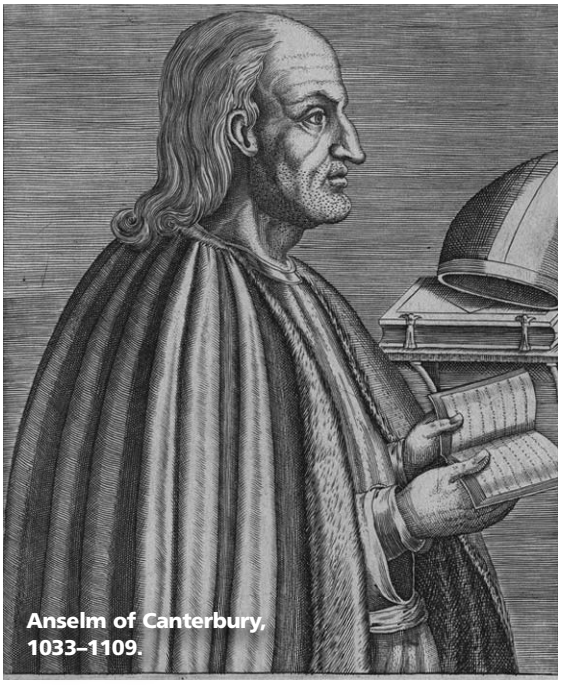
Reconciliation

"Reconciliation" is another important description of Christ's work in the New Testament. "In Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself" (2 Cor. 5:19; cf. Rom. 5:10–11; Eph. 2:16; Col. 1:20). In Christ, God overcomes the alienation which sin causes and restores a condition of peace. Because Christ brings us the peace of God, we are able to live at peace with all human beings (Rom. 12:18).

The biblical idea of reconciliation has many facets. For one thing, it is cosmic in scope; it includes everything on earth and in heaven. It is also significant that the New Testament always speaks of God as the subject of reconciliation, never as the object. God reconciles us to Him; we do not reconcile Him to us. Moreover, God seeks us while we are still hostile to Him. He makes the first move to establish fellowship with us. Reconciliation, then, emphasizes God's initiative in the work of salvation.

Redemption

The New Testament also speaks of Christ's work as "redemption" (Eph. 1:7; Rom. 3:24). This word has powerful connotations for



Anselm of Canterbury, 1033–1109.

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people in ancient times. Its basic meaning was to pay a price for freedom. It referred to the act of delivering captives, or liberating slaves from bondage. Like "salvation," this word has a vivid Old Testament background. It, too, described God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt. Mark 10:45 is the most important New Testament text to use this expression: "The Son of man came … to give His life as a ransom for many."

Scholars are divided as to whether the New Testament concept of redemption includes the idea of paying a price, or whether it is simply another word for deliverance. Either way, this description of Christ's work makes several important points. For example, it indicates that the work of Christ delivers us from hostile powers—specifically, from sin and its effects. This reminds us of the freedom that Christians enjoy (Gal. 5:1); we are no longer dominated by the forces of darkness or in bondage to sin. At the same time, "redemption" emphasizes the cost of this deliverance. God's solution to the problem of sin is enormously expensive. For this reason, Paul tells his readers that they were bought with a price; they belong to God (1 Cor. 6:20).

WHY JESUS DIED

We have reviewed several ways in which the New Testament describes the work of Christ, and before that we examined the atoning experience, or the means by which He achieved these things. We now come to what many regard as the most perplexing question in the doctrine of salvation: How does the death of Jesus solve the problems of sins? Granted that God was active in Christ for human salvation, and granted that His effort succeeded, the question remains: Just how did Christ's work achieve its results? What, precisely, made it effective?

Theories of Atonement

Christians have never reached a consensus in answer to this question. There is an orthodox doctrine of the person of Christ, but there is no corresponding doctrine of His work. Looking at the history of Christian thought, we find instead several prominent theories of atonement. Each has influenced the thinking of the church from time to time, but none has ever enjoyed unanimous support. It will be helpful to review the three most important types.[2]

1. The Ransom Theory One of the oldest interpretations of Christ's work is the ransom theory. Leaning heavily on biblical passages that speak of ransom, early Christian thinkers graphically portrayed Christ battling with the devil and defeating him once and for all. Sometimes they even described Christ as the worm on the hook which finally caught Satan. The atonement, for this theory, is God's dramatic victory over the hostile forces of sin and death.

2. The Satisfaction Theory The satisfaction theory has probably been more influential than any other. It received its classical formulation in the writings of Anselm, a churchman of the eleventh century, and it reflects the thought world of medieval times, with feudal lords and vassals and rigid codes of behavior.

According to this theory, human sin is an affront to the sovereignty of God, and God's honor demands satisfaction. This puts us in a terrible predicament. To use Anselm's words, "Sinful man owes God a debt for sin which he cannot repay, and at the same time . . . he cannot be saved without repaying it."[3] Human beings cannot be saved unless God's honor is satisfied, but this is something we are in no position to do. We are only finite, and our debt to God is infinite.

In his famous essay, "Why the God-Man?" Anselm argues that Christ solves the problem by virtue of His two natures. As a human being, He makes payment to God on behalf of the human race. At the same time, His divinity gives the payment an infinite value. Consequently, our debt to God is completely discharged. Divine honor is fully satisfied. According to the satisfaction theory, the incarnation is essential to the atonement. Jesus Christ, as man, bore the penalty for human sin and made satisfaction on behalf of all of us.

One aspect of the satisfaction theory figures prominently in many accounts of the atonement. In fact, it is probably the dominant thought in popular explanations for Jesus' death. This is the element of substitution, the idea that Jesus steps in and takes our place before God. He gets what we deserve; we get what He deserves. He accepts the punishment that our sins incur, and we inherit the privileges that divine sonship involves.

3. The Moral Influence Theory The moral influence theory arose in reaction to the satisfaction theory. It emphasizes the effects of Christ's death on human beings, rather than on God. According to this view, the atonement is a revelation of the love of God, intended to call forth an answering love in humans. Christ's death saves us by vividly portraying God's love for us and moving us to love God in return.

We can specify the central differences in these three important positions by noting where each of them locates the obstacle to

God's solution to the problem of sin is enormously expensive.

divine-human fellowship. Each theory has a distinctive view of what it is that makes atonement necessary.

According to the moral influence theory, the obstacle to reconciliation lies within human beings; our misperception of God's character needs to be corrected. Christ removes this obstacle by clarifying God's true attitude toward us.

Just how did Christ's work achieve its results? What, precisely, made it effective?

The satisfaction theory places the primary object of atonement within God Himself. According to views of this type, Christ's death satisfies the demands of God's own nature. Some of these views describe a tension within God between two contrasting qualities. His love, or mercy, makes Him eager to forgive; but His justice, or wrath, or holiness, makes it impossible for Him to forgive freely. Christ's death resolves this tension. With it, God's love provides the atonement which His holiness demands. God is merciful and just at the same time.

The ransom theory seems to place the object of atonement outside both God and humanity. It lies, instead, in the desperate situation human beings are in. We are the captives of alien powers. Sin, death, and the devil hold us in bondage. Christ saves us by breaking into their stronghold and setting us free.

The Theories Evaluated

Each theory of atonement has its strengths and weaknesses, and each view can distort certain features of Christ's work.

The strength of the ransom theory is its emphasis on God's saving initiative. Salvation is God's work from first to last. He is the source, not the object, of atonement. Furthermore, with its emphasis on the dramatic victory Christ achieved over all our enemies, this view has tremendous psychological value. It reminds us that everything has been done to secure our salvation. The path to freedom is wide open. All we have to do is take it.

The weakness of this theory is its literalistic imagery. It tends to portray the atonement as a transaction between God and the devil. Some versions even suggest that God pays off the devil in order to set us free.

There are objections to the satisfaction theory, too. Many people find it too calculating, too much like a bookkeeping system, as if Christ accumulated credit by dying to pay off our debts to God. Sin, they insist, is a matter of personal relationship. It can't be quantified. It can't be disposed of by manipulating various accounts.

The idea of Christ as our substitute also raises questions. People wonder about the ethics of this arrangement, because personal guilt isn't something that can be transferred from one person to another. No judge in a modern legal system could allow an innocent citizen to go to prison in place of a convicted criminal. How would that serve the interests of justice?

The most important objection to this theory is that it makes God the object of reconciliation. In the satisfaction theory, humanity makes atonement (in the person of Christ), and God receives it. This is contrary to the consistent biblical theme that it is God who reconciles. For the writers of the New Testament, atonement is never something we do for God; it is always something God does for us.

On the other hand, the satisfaction theory underscores the seriousness of sin, as far as God is concerned. It suggests that a part of the process of forgiveness is a manifestation of God's judgment against it. Surely no understanding of Christ's work is adequate which fails to appreciate how repulsive sin is to God.

The moral influence theory has the merit of emphasizing God's initiative in salvation, which is certainly faithful to the Bible. However, some people feel that it slights the costliness of forgiveness, that it fails to account for the enormity of sin in the sight of God. As they see it, sin is objective as well as subjective. It is not merely an unfortunate misperception of God, but a reality that must be dealt with before salvation is complete.

According to its critics, the moral influence theory also has a tendency to detract from the

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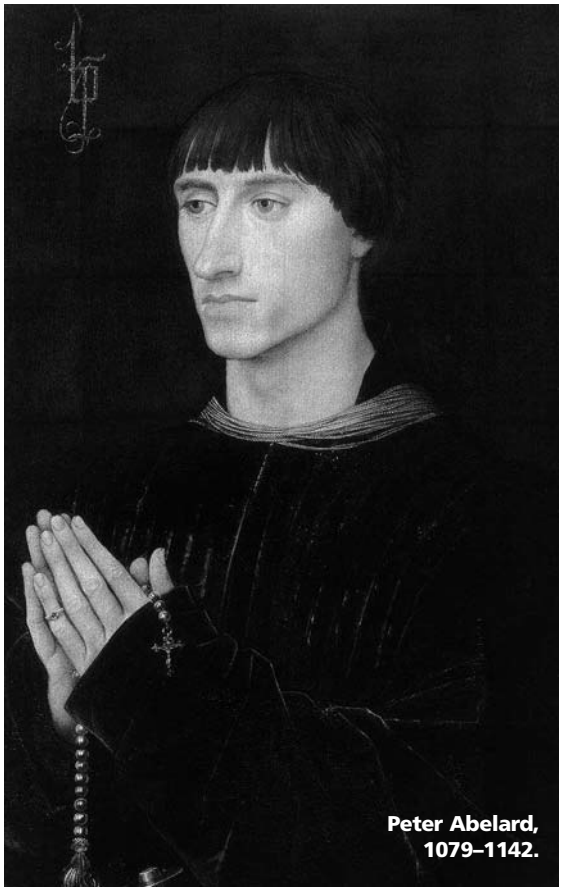


Peter Abelard, 1079–1142.

uniqueness of Christ's accomplishments. For them, this approach treats the cross as merely one of the many ways by which God communicates His love to the world. Since God has suffered from the inception of sin, and since He has always been eager to forgive, the cross did not make an unprecedented impact on God, nor was it indispensable to divine forgiveness. Accordingly, the cross represents a consequence, but not a condition, of God's willingness to forgive—the expression, but not the basis, of His grace. And such a view, they maintain, undermines the importance of what Jesus did.

TOWARD AN ADEQUATE VIEW OF THE ATONEMENT

As these observations indicate, there is no simple answer to the question: How does Christ's work solve the problem of sin? No single proposal seems adequate to the task. How, then, should we interpret the death of Jesus? What should our own view of the atonement be? It is tempting to pull these various theories together to form one comprehensive explanation, but we could do this only by ignoring their basic differences. Instead, let us begin by listing several themes which any responsible interpretation of Christ's work must consider, and see where that leads us.

The Love of God

The most fundamental theme in any Christian doctrine of salvation must be the love of God. His vast and intense concern for every human being is the basis of His saving activity. This explains why God takes the initiative in meeting the problem of sin. As soon as sin entered the world, God acted to mitigate its consequences. In other words, salvation went into effect the moment it was needed. Some texts even suggest that God formulated a response to sin before it was actually needed. The book of Revelation, for example, describes Jesus as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8; cf. 1 Pet. 1:20).

The Cost of Forgiveness

God's eagerness to forgive must not obscure the spontaneity or the costliness of His love. God's response to sin is no mechanical, matter-of-fact reaction. People often assume that it is easy for God to forgive. A notorious sinner showed no concern for the hereafter. "God will forgive me," he said, as death drew near. "That is his business."[4] There is no place in Christianity for such a casual attitude. We must never overlook the "difficulty" of God's forgiveness. Our salvation costs God dearly. Only the agony of the cross reveals the scope of divine suffering as a result of sin.

It may seem odd to insist that forgiveness is both natural and difficult for God at the same time. However, it is not always easy to do what comes naturally. A loving parent will "naturally" risk her life to save her child, but this doesn't make the action "easy" for her. So it was with God; even though He responded instantly to meet the problem of sin and will-

We are only finite, and our debt to God is infinite.

ingly gave His only Son for our salvation, He did so at an inestimable cost. We must never lose sight of "love's hard work."

The Wrath of God

A careful analysis of divine love also helps us to understand the nature of divine wrath, or justice. As we saw, certain views of the atonement assume that God's love and holiness are contrary forces, pulling in different directions. God's love makes Him willing to forgive sinners, but His holiness requires Him to punish sin. The atonement, then, provides a way to meet the demands of both attributes. The problem is that this idea equates wrath with vengeance and love with indulgence. A better way to interpret their relationship is to see God's wrath as the expression, not the antithesis, of His love.[5]

Sin, death, and the devil hold us in bondage. Christ saves us by breaking into their stronghold and setting us free.

"INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT" BY CLYDE PROVONSHA, OIL ON CANVAS, 1960. ©REVIEW AND HERALD PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION.

Clyde Provonsha painted this interpretation of the Investigative Judgement in 1960 for the Review and Herald Publishing Association. It captures well the Adventist belief that Christ's death and heavenly intercessory role are merged in the atonement process.

Genuine love takes its object with utmost seriousness. Because God loves us, everything about us matters to Him, so He cannot ignore our sins. As one theologian writes, "God must be inexorable towards our sins; not because he is just, but because he is loving; not in spite of his love, but because of his love; not because his love is limited, but because it is unlimited …"[6] God's wrath, then, is His loving response to sin. He finds it repulsive, disgusting. It distresses Him to see the ones He loves destroying themselves.

The Influence of God's Love

In order for us to accept forgiveness, we need to know not only how much God loves us, but also how seriously He takes our sins. If this sounds odd, suppose that you deliberately said something to hurt a friend's feelings, and then

felt sorry about it and asked forgiveness. Would you feel forgiven if your friend blithely dismissed the incident as if nothing had happened? Probably not. A flippant, casual attitude toward sin does not communicate forgiveness. To experience true forgiveness, we need to know that our sins are taken seriously. A manifestation of God's hatred for sin, therefore, plays an important role in communicating His love to us. It shows us how important we are to Him.

A Synthetic View of the Atonement

Once we bring God's love and wrath together, we see that atonement is not something an angry God demands, but something a loving God provides. As the supreme manifestation of His judgment against sin, the sacrifice of Christ is the supreme demonstration of God's love for sinners. His wrath is thus part and parcel of His love; it affirms the immense value God places on us.

This view of the atonement emphasizes the impact of Christ's work on our perception of God. In some respects, then, it resembles the moral influence theory. But it also stresses the importance of divine judgment in the process of forgiveness, and it insists that reconciliation is entirely the work of God. Thus, it shares some of the characteristics of the satisfaction and ransom theories, too.

Perhaps we need a variety of views of Christ's work. A great natural wonder like the Grand Canyon, or the Himalayas, invites us to look at it from many vantage points. It never ceases to impress us, and no one perspective captures its grandeur. To a far greater degree, Christ's accomplishments defy our powers of description. The more we reflect on the meaning of the cross, the more amazing it becomes. God's condescension in assuming humanity, and His mysterious willingness to bear the consequences of sin, will challenge our minds and stir our emotions forever. Eternity will not be time enough to plumb the depths of love revealed at Calvary.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST AND THE REIGN OF GOD

No aspect of salvation history tells us more about the reign of God than Jesus' crucifixion; for if Jesus is the key to understanding God, as we argued in Chapter 3, and if the cross is the central moment in Jesus' life, as we asserted earlier in this chapter, then the cross is indispensable to an adequate understanding of God. What do we learn about the reign of God from the cross of Christ?

The most obvious message from Calvary concerns the magnitude of God's love. According to the most famous text in the Bible, God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son to bring human beings eternal life (John 3:16). In giving the Son, God gave everything He had to give. He held nothing in reserve. Had the Son's mission failed, there was no alternative plan, no backup. There was no rescue that could have reversed the dreadful consequences. So, everything was "on the line" when the Son entered the sphere of human existence.

Behind the risk of the incarnation lay the risk inherent in divine creation. God created a world whose inhabitants had the capacity to accept or reject His sovereignty over them. A God of love could never be content with sheer domination. It was not enough for Him to have creatures cower before His superior might. Because He loved them, He hoped they would love Him in return, so He gave them the capacity to make their own decisions. Even when they rebelled against Him, His love persisted. He sought, not to punish them, but to achieve reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:19–21). The cross reveals the extent to which God went in order to win back His errant sons and daughters.

In revealing the magnitude of God's love, the cross also reveals the depth of God's pain. Identifying God with Jesus leads to the conclusion that what Jesus experienced in the depths of His anguish was something God Himself experienced. As Kenneth Leech puts it, "The cross is a rejection of the apathetic God … and an asser-

No judge in a modern legal system could allow an innocent citizen to go to prison in place of a convicted criminal.

tion of the passionate God, the God in whose heart there is pain, the crucified God."[7] If the Word truly became flesh, if God was indeed in Christ, then the most significant experience Jesus went through was something God endured as well. The cross is nothing less than the suffering of God.

Moreover, Jesus' suffering brings to full expression the agony that God has endured ever since sin entered the universe. To quote Leech again, "There must have been a Calvary in the heart of God before it could have been planted on that hill outside … Jerusalem."[8] Only the cross, then, reveals the full extent of what sin and salvation cost the heart of God.

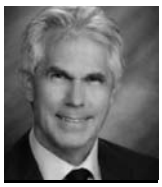
Once we bring God's love and wrath together, we see that atonement is not something an angry God demands, but something a loving God provides.

Finally, the cross tells us important things about the nature of God's reign. It demonstrates that God characteristically establishes His sovereignty in subtle and surprising ways. God can even use apparent defeat to gain victory. He employs unimpressive means to achieve grand purposes. From a human perspective, Jesus' great victory was nothing but a personal catastrophe. His mission to the Jews ended in abject failure; He was vilified by His enemies, forsaken by His friends. Yet, according to Christian faith, the drama of the ages turned on this "minor" incident during the Roman occupation of Palestine. Characteristically, then, God does not achieve His purposes through dramatic displays of supernatural power. He does not establish His reign through the application of sheer force. Instead, He works in and through events, many of the outwardly insignificant.

This principle applies in a special way to God's victory over the forces of darkness. He does not counter their blatant displays with His own. He defeats them by absorbing the full force of their power, by appearing to give them victory. He lets them rage and storm until they are completely spent. God ultimately destroys evil by letting it destroy itself.

The cross and the resurrection are the two central facts of Christian faith. Both are basic to the reign of God. The true meaning of the cross emerges in light of the empty tomb. What appeared to be total defeat turned out to be a glorious victory. Jesus submitted to death only to break its power forever. ■

Richard Rice studied at La Sierra University, the Andrews University Theological Seminary (MDiv) and the University of Chicago Divinity School (MA; PhD). He was a pastor in the Southeastern California Conference, then a member of the religion faculty at La Sierra, and is now professor of religion at Loma Linda University. In 2014, Intervarsity Academic published his book, *Suffering and the Search for Meaning.* A version of this paper was presented at the 2015 meeting of the Adventist Society for Religious Studies.



References

1. Leon Morris provides an extensive analysis of the various New Testament descriptions of salvation in *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1955). In addition to "reconciliation" and "redemption," he also discusses the meaning of "covenant," "the blood," "propitiation," and "justification." Morris' view of the atonement is noteworthy for its emphasis on divine wrath and for preferring the use of the English word "propitiation," rather than "expiation," to interpret some important biblical passages (see 154).

2. The most influential discussion of the three major theories of atonement is Gustaf Aulen, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement*, trans. A. G. Hebert (New York: Macmillan, 1969).

3. Anselm, *Why God Became Man*, Bk. 1, ch. 25, trans. Eugene R. Fairweather, in *A Scholastic Miscellany: Anselm to Ockham* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1956), 145–146.

4. Quoted in D. M. Baillie, *God Was in Christ: An Essay on Incarnation and Atonement* (New York: Scribner's, 1948), 172.

5. Many theologians have made this point, among them Anders Nygren. Nygren rejects the idea that the atonement resolves a tension within God between holiness and love, in favor of the view that "atonement is necessary, not because God's love is holy, but because it is love" (*Essence of Christianity: Two Essays*, trans. Philip S. Watson [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1960], 117–118).

6. Baillie, *God Was in Christ*, 173.

7. Kenneth Leech, *Experiencing God: Theology as Spirituality* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 316.

8. Ibid., 300.

Greg Boyd Talks God's Non-violence, Theology, and Evangelical Christianity | BY CARMEN LAU

This interview originally appeared June 17, 2016 on our website, www.Spectrummagazine.org.

Dr. Greg Boyd is the keynote speaker for the upcoming Adventist Forum conference in Silver Spring, Maryland titled "Non-violence and the Atonement". In this Q & A with Adventist Forum board member Carmen Lau, Boyd describes his ministry, his views on God's non-violence, and why he is hesitant to self-describe as Evangelical.

You are an author, academic, teacher, pastor, apologist, and have spent much energy engaging with fellow Christians and also the secular world. Could you give a brief explanation about what excites you and what drives you to stay so busy?
We live at an exciting juncture of history. The traditional triumphant understanding of the church, known as "Christendom," is crumbling. Out of its rubble is rising a grass-roots global movement of people who are captivated by the vision of a Jesus-looking God raising up a Jesus-looking people to transform the world in a Jesus kind of way. And as this new kingdom wine is bursting the old wineskins of Christendom, believers and skeptics alike are being forced to rethink everything they thought they knew about the Christian faith and life.

You have a fascinating website and I notice you post a steady stream of challenging articles. Tell me about ReKnew.
At the center of ReKnew is the very-old-yet-new idea that the love Jesus demonstrated on the cross is the full revelation of the true, non-violent, self-sacrificial character of God and of the character that God's people are called to cultivate. This stands in stark contrast to what most people believe about God and how most people understand what it means to be "Christian." Sadly, throughout most of church history, Christians have frequently allowed the simple and beautiful revelation of the cross to be hijacked by religion, politics, and the philosophical assumptions of the day. This is how the beauty of God revealed on the cross, and the beauty of the movement Jesus came to birth, were transformed into something that was often very ugly and violent. This is the sad legacy of Christendom.

Fortunately, we are today witnessing a vast multitude of people around the globe becoming captivated by the beauty of the old-yet-new revelation of the cross. ReKnew aims to serve this rising revolution by encouraging people to critically scrutinize long-held theological assumptions, by offering fresh and relevant theological proposals for consideration, and by motivating people to seriously rethink what it means to follow Jesus. Our heart is to educate, inspire, expand, and help network this growing movement of Jesus followers so that increasing numbers may come to experience, and be transformed by, the beauty of the humble, self-sacrificial God revealed in the crucified Christ.

You have agreed to be the keynote speaker at the *Spectrum* conference in Silver Spring, MD, this September on Non-Violent Atonement. Would you summarize your thoughts about atonement and salvation?
The majority of Evangelicals today believe that the main significance of what Christ accomplished on the cross (the atonement) is that He satisfied the Father's wrath against sin by being punished in our place, thereby allowing the Father to accept us despite our sin.

While the church has always understood that Jesus died in our place, the depiction of the Father venting His wrath on Jesus instead of on us—the "penal substitution" view of the atonement—originated with Luther and Calvin (though it was in some respect anticipated by Anselm in the

eleventh century). And while the church has always allowed for a variety of atonement theories, it's worth noting that, for the first 1,000 years of church history, the dominant view was that "[t]he reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8; Heb. 2:14). This is called the "Christus Victor" view of the atonement.

With the historic-orthodox church, I believe that Jesus died as our substitute and experienced the death-consequences of sin in our place. But I do not believe this means the Father needed to "satisfy" His own wrath by violently pouring it out on His Son in order to forgive us and reconcile us to Himself. And while I affirm that Christ accomplished a variety of things by His life and death and resurrection, I think that Christ's victory over Satan and the powers of darkness lies at the base of them all. I thus consider the "Christus Victor" view of the atonement to be the foundation of all other views.

With the rise of the penal substitution view of the atonement, the western church began to think of salvation increasingly in legal categories. God has thus come to be viewed as the judge, humans as the guilty defendants, and Jesus as the defense attorney who allows us to be acquitted by suffering our sentence in our place. As a result, salvation has come to be thought of primarily as an acquittal (escaping hell) that people receive when they simply believe that Jesus did this for them. Among the many unfortunate consequences of this view is the fact that Christianity has become much more focused on how we benefit in the afterlife from what God has done for us in Christ than it is focused on the beautiful things God wants to do in our present life—the relationship God wants with us, the character that God wants to cultivate in us, and the things God wants to accomplish through us now.

While legal metaphors are sometimes used to express salvation in the New Testament, the dominant way of expressing salvation is as a marriage covenant. Salvation is not primarily about being acquitted by God. Nor is it primarily about the afterlife. Rather, salvation is primarily about becoming part of "the bride of Christ" and participating in—and being transformed by—the fullness of God's life that He opens up for us in the present. For this reason, salvation is not merely about believing in Jesus; it's even more profoundly about being empowered to follow Jesus' example.

Salvation, thus, cannot be divorced from the call to follow Jesus' example of loving enemies, refraining from violence, and caring for the poor and oppressed. Moreover, salvation is about manifesting God's fullness of life by cultivating a counter-cultural lifestyle that revolts against every aspect of society that is inconsistent with the character of God and of His will for the world. And finally, salvation is about living and praying in a way that actualizes the fullness of the Lord's prayer that the Father's will would be done "on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10).

Do you consider yourself an "Evangelical Christian"?

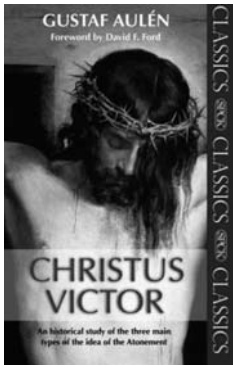
I hold to a high view of biblical inspiration and most of my theological views are in line with what would be broadly considered "evangelical." So, in this sense, I consider myself an "evangelical." But the word "evangelical," as well as the word "Christian," has become associated with many things that are radically inconsistent with the example of Jesus' life, which we are to emulate. So, I'm very hesitant to identify myself with either term until I know what my audience means by them.

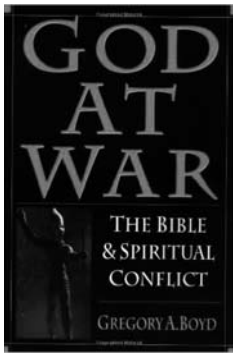
Many of our readers will recognize some commonality of beliefs between you and Seventh-day Adventist theologian, Rick Rice, of Loma Linda University. Could you explain Open Theism?

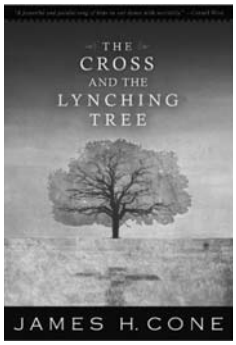
I believe God knows everything, including the past, present and future. But I also believe God created us as free agents, which means we are empowered to resolve possible courses of action into an actual course of action. And this, I contend, entails that the future contains possibilities, in contrast to the past, which is irrevocably settled. So, I hold that, precisely because God's knowledge is perfect, God knows the future exactly as it is—that is, as containing possibilities. Some things about the future are "maybes," and God knows them as such. ■

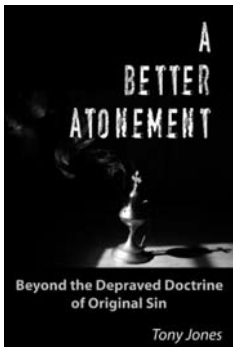
Carmen Lau is a board member of Adventist Forum, the organization that publishes *Spectrum*. She lives and writes in Birmingham, Alabama.

Adventist Forum 2016 Conference
ATONEMENT READING LIST









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God's Justice, Yes; Penal Substitution, No | BY CHARLES SCRIVEN

This article originally appeared in the October 1993 issue of *Spectrum* (Vol. 23, No. 3).

…the social gospel is the voice of prophecy…
—Walter Rauschenbusch[1]

Every truth…must be studied in the light which streams from the cross of Calvary.
—Ellen G. White[2]

Each teaching of the church interprets God. When teachings go wrong, God is diminished, and when God is diminished, so are the children of God.

No means of diminishing God is more flagrant, and none more disastrous, than readings of the cross of Christ that turn believers inward instead of outward. Nevertheless, the inner life, largely abstracted from questions of community and justice, is today a besetting preoccupation for popular, especially conservative and fundamentalist, Christianity. According to resurrection faith, the cross—or better, the life that culminates at the cross—brings God's justice into perfect focus.[3] What popular devotion overlooks is that just this fact proves the gospel is social; just this fact shows that the Maker of heaven and earth wants above all things to build community and justice. In spite of this, many professed partisans of the cross, captive not just to conservative religion but also to modern individualism, settle into pious introspection, obsessed with guilt and zealous for self-esteem but indifferent, or at least disengaged, when it comes to justice.

God and Social Justice

Read through Luther's eyes, the biblical account of atonement has seemed to support the introspective, or privatistic, understanding of the cross.[4] Luther struggled with his conscience, and brought this struggle to his reading of the New Testament, and especially of Paul. For him the overriding issue was the resolution of personal guilt, and he thought that was the overriding issue for Paul. But it wasn't. Paul's passion was community. Nothing underscores this more than his letters to the Romans and to the Galatians, where the whole point is to found a new covenant of fellowship on the fact and meaning of the cross. Yet these very letters are treated—or better, mistreated—as linchpins for accounts of atonement in which community and justice play very little part.

The fact is that Christ's atonement puts community and justice at the center. The gospel is social and the cross is the proof. Biblically speaking, any account of atonement that invites exclusive or primary attention to personal concerns is false. Any true account of atonement must—the necessity is absolute—*must* foster passion for community and social justice.

I say community and *social* justice because, as we shall see, writers on the atonement sometimes invoke God's justice without apparent comprehension of what it is according to the Bible. Anyone, however, who would truly illuminate the cross of Christ must honor the conception of justice central in the story leading up to the cross. That conception is unmistakably social.

Jesus' tradition was the Hebrew tradition. The Exodus was the definitive event in his people's history, and it recalled a God determined to build community and to meet human needs, especially the needs of the vulnerable. God was a champion of the weak. God's justice opened the doorway to joy for the oppressed, the hungry, the lonely, the afflicted. It amended inequities. It restored and enhanced the life that men and women share. It sought blessedness and peace. Justice was a standard for community, but it was no abstraction; it was covenant faithfulness, it was care and compassion,

ILLUSTRATION BY LMAX SEABAUGH

In *The Cost of Discipleship*, Bonhoeffer writes: "The cross is laid on every Christian."

it was action to reclaim lives and renew relationships.[5]

Luke declares in his fourth chapter that Jesus put this very justice, the justice of the Hebrew tradition, at the center of his inaugural sermon. Jesus took the scroll of the prophet Isaiah and identified his basic mission with Chapters 58 and 61. In both chapters, social justice and loyalty to God are the themes. And in both chapters, the first is a condition of the second; a love of justice is a test of loyalty to God.

No means of diminishing God is more flagrant, and none more disastrous, than readings of the cross of Christ that turn believers inward instead of outward.

Donald Bloesch, an evangelical writer, argues that whereas this was true of the Old Testament author, it was not true of Jesus. Jesus did speak in Nazareth of "good news to the poor," "release to the captives," "sight to the blind" and deliverance to the "oppressed." But with him these words assure freedom from "sin and death rather than from political and economic bondage."[6] As proof, Bloesch cites Luke 7:22, where Jesus responds to a question about his mission and identity from two of John's disciples: "'Go,'" he says,

> *'and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news preached to them' (RSV).*

Bloesch thinks these words undergird his claim that Jesus focused on salvation for individual souls. But this is bizarre. The remark in Luke 7 also draws from the book of Isaiah, in this case from Chapter 61 (again) and from Chapter 35. In both, the theme is sociopolitical, not merely personal, deliverance. Bloesch's claim that Jesus, unlike the Hebrew prophets, makes personal concerns fundamental, and social ones merely secondary, collapses under the weight of Scripture itself. Jesus was not the kind of political Messiah his contemporaries expected, it is true, but he certainly stood with the prophets on the question of social justice; to him it was central.

Overwhelmingly, recent studies of Jesus support this.[7] Jesus was a Spirit-filled person, a man of mighty deeds and startling insight, who banqueted with outcasts, who challenged the established social hierarchies, who championed a just and fully-inclusive form of human community. Of all the leaders in his tradition, he was "most like the classical prophets,"[8] most like the great Hebrew advocates of social justice. Indeed, Jesus' death came about precisely because of this. As the Gospels declare, he indicted the dominant culture and was deemed a threat to its future. Therefore, Jesus, knowing at firsthand the hiddenness of God and the dark night of the soul,[9] was killed.

None of this, however, subverts God's offer of personal forgiveness and his call to personal commitment. In religion, including Jesus' religion, the personal is not a frill but a fundamental. As you cannot have peace without justice, you cannot have justice without the integrity of persons. Still, readings of Jesus' life and death that make the social invisible or secondary are wrong. They are historically false. What is worse, they ratify egocentricity. Individualistic readings of Jesus' life and death nourish an obsession with the introspective, with preoccupation over personal guilt and personal prospects. And this leaves questions of community and justice, central in Jesus' tradition and in his own teaching, virtually ignored.

Social Justice and Substitutionary Atonement

In the light of Jesus' life and death, then, justice is social and justice is central. But as I have said, this is obscured in popular Christian piety. One reason, and surely one of the most important reasons, is that it is obscured in the penal, substitutionary view of the atonement, the interpretation of Jesus' life and death most common among conservatives and fundamentalist Christians. Curiously, though, in the penal, substitutionary view, God's justice figures prominently. How so?

A long theological history, going as far back as Tertullian and Cyprian,[10] underlies the

penal, substitutionary view. It is really one expression (the best-known expression) of what historians call the Latin or objective view of the atonement. After Luther, Protestant Orthodoxy, propelled by Melanchthon and his theological adversary Osiander, crystallized the basic position that since then has had immense impact on the popular religious imagination. Today, the prominent advocates include the evangelical scholar J. I. Packer and the celebrated evangelical pastor John R. W. Stott. Many Adventist pastors and teachers uphold doctrines of atonement similar to theirs.[11]

According to a penal, substitutionary view of God's justice, God requires full obedience to divine law. Any failure to obey, any lapse into sin, must be penalized, and the penalty is death. God is implacably hostile to sin, and the death penalty expresses this fact. It expresses God's consistency and integrity—both the reality of divine wrath and the holiness of divine love.

Because no human being perfectly obeys God's law, no one of us measures up to the required standard. Everyone, therefore, deserves to die. But God is merciful. God loves us, and the love persists even when we disobey. So, in order to legitimate amnesty and save us from death, God initiates a plan of self-sacrifice. The premise is that the divine self-sacrifice makes more than adequate reparation for the guilt accrued by human disobedience.

The self-sacrifice involves the mystery of incarnation. God becomes flesh in Jesus, the Son of Mary. Jesus lives, uniquely so, a life of perfect obedience. Aware that through undeserved punishment his one case of perfection can win forgiveness in every other case, Jesus resolves to die and to bear the penalty deserved by others. By faithful and fearless obedience to the law, he enrages the (disobedient) authorities. Thus he invokes, he *purposely* evokes, his own crucifixion, and thus he becomes our substitution.

God incarnate, Jesus the Son of Mary, dies *instead of us and so establishes the divine right of forgiveness*. This death, and this death alone, makes ample compensation for human wrong. The sinner may embrace this God in faith, may ask pardon and pledge commitment, and thereby benefit from the divine self-sacrifice. The death penalty, though fully deserved, loses its inexorability. God, in Christ, bears the punishment sin requires, bearing it for us and instead of us. In this way God propitiates God and now is able, in the full integrity of holy love and holy wrath, to bestow acceptance and salvation on the undeserving.

A favorite way of expressing all this is to say that God in Christ bore the death penalty as our substitute in order to satisfy the demands of justice. According to Stott, justice requires punishment. Justice must be executed in a judgment upon sin, or sin is condoned. So God, by bearing the penalty others deserve, "defended and demonstrated" the divine justice.[12] Packer writes that "the retributive principle," requiring punishment for wrongdoing, has God's "sanction" and expresses God's "justice."[13]

It now becomes clear why an interpretation of the cross can speak of justice yet obscure the fact that biblical justice is social. *The penal, substitutionary view assumes a different conception of justice from the one dominant in Scripture.* Retributive justice makes past wrongs right through punishment, but biblical justice has, overwhelmingly, a different focus. To the Hebrew mind, justice is determined, compassionate faithfulness in the building of community and the meeting of human needs, especially the needs of the vulnerable.

Romans 3:21–26 is often said to prove the penal, substitutionary account, since Paul here writes that God gave up Christ Jesus "as a sacrifice of atonement" (NIV) in order "to show God's righteousness," or as some versions say, to "demonstrate his justice."[14] But the background of the passage, as of the entire letter, is God's covenant with Israel. Paul is addressing the house churches in Rome where divisiveness between the Gentile majority and the Jewish minority is threatening community. His

The fact is that Christ's atonement puts community and justice at the center.

overall point in the letter is to lift up the cross as proof of God's commitment to connect all peoples into a single new humanity.

The distinctions that divide God's children make no sense in the light of the grace embodied in Christ. Jesus' sacrifice of atonement demonstrates not a lawyerly (and legalistic) retributive justice, but the compassionate faithfulness of God to the original community-building promises.[15] The point, as Paul writes in Romans 15:8, was to "confirm the promises given to the patriarchs" (RSV). This letter to the Romans and the letter to the Galatians attest, from the beginning to end, to the promise to Abraham: that his seed would mediate God's blessing to *all* the families of the earth.[16]

Stott writes in his book on the cross that the principle of substitution is the "foundation" of all the New Testament images of Christ's atonement. Whether "redemption" or "reconciliation" or "justification," each image of atonement "lacks cogency," he says, except in the context of penal, substitutionary doctrine.[17] The truth is the opposite. This doctrine is so individualistic that it projects modern, introspective consciousness even onto God, whose plan of self-sacrifice is essentially a self-propitiation, resolving issues of inner, divine integrity.

God's justice opened the doorway to joy for the oppressed, the hungry, the lonely, the afflicted.

God thus becomes an individualist. Stott does suggest that the cross as "revelation of God's justice" should evoke our concern with "social justice." But the discussion is brief, and the leap from the retributive conception of justice to the social conception is unexplained. Social justice receives a nod, but remains extrinsic to the basic meaning of the cross. Once Stott, commenting on Latin American theologian Jon Sobrino, remarks that Sobrino's concern to end oppression and relieve injustice are fine if he "is not denying the fundamental, atoning purpose of the cross."[18] But just these matters *are* the fundamental purpose of the cross. With respect to biblical justice, the penal, substitutionary doctrine does not illuminate, it obscures.

The cross puts *social* justice at the center. Christ represents the divine care and compassion for humanity, God's covenant-making, community-building faithfulness. The cross is God's perilous solidarity with those who by sinful disobedience injure themselves and one another as well as their Maker. The cross is God refusing to indulge disobedience, refusing to be indifferent to the harm it does. The cross is God bearing our sins, bearing them with such generosity and determination as to defeat resentments, heal the wounded, and renew community.[19] The cross is God fighting the powers of evil, struggling for the social justice that gives rise to joy.

All this is *for* us. The justice of the cross is not an abstraction in the mind of God; it is the attitude and activity of amending inequities, embracing the afflicted, welcoming the undesirable—in short, of making shared life both joyful and strong. But we dare not forget that Christ on the cross represents us as well as God. Christ represents the true destiny and mission of humanity, as well as the true destiny and mission of God.

In *The Cost of Discipleship*, Bonhoeffer writes: "The cross is laid on every Christian."[20] In New Testament light, this admits of no rebuttal. The Gospels, the various New Testament letters, the Apocalypse of John—all say repeatedly that Christ involves the believer in the sharing of his whole mission, the danger and the suffering as well as the eventual victory.[21] As Gustavo Gutierrez remarks, "To believe is to proclaim the kingdom as Christ does—from the midst of the struggle for justice that led him to his death."[22]

In one of her essays on language, Iris Yob remarks that metaphors are "semantically potent." They are not, in other words, mere decoration; they have power, over and above prosaic speech, to shape the way we think and live.[23] That is why the alert community will always subject its metaphors, especially its favorite metaphors, to critical analysis. And

that is why the penal, substitutionary doctrine again invites attention.

Substitution is a metaphor when applied to the atonement. The metaphor suggests, to invoke the familiar world of sports, that one person becomes involved while another rides the bench or stands along the sidelines. The suggestion is wrong. Christ on the cross acts for us and on our behalf, not instead of us. Christ represents true God and true humanity and is, as the first letter to Timothy declares, our mediator.[24] But Christ was not our substitute. We are, with Christ, a community of fellow sufferers.[25] The cross is laid on every Christian.

In the light, then, of Christ's atonement, justice is social and central—and self-involving; for each believer and for the church as a whole, justice is a task to perform as well as a gift to receive. Knowing human sinfulness and divine forgiveness through the cross, true believers realize the equality of all before God and lay aside the arrogance of self, class, race, and gender in order to embrace "the larger fellowship of life."[26] Through the church's task of social justice the promise to Abraham finds fulfillment today; God saves through partnership with people called for witness.[27] Instead of backing away from the struggle for justice, the community of Christ becomes, by its participation, the nucleus and vanguard of a new humanity of peace and joy.

Justice and a Non-Violent God

The cross illuminates justice in still another way: by exposing and challenging the violence in human life. In his remarkable book, *Sacred Violence: Paul's Hermeneutic of the Cross*, Robert G. Hammerton-Kelly explores Paul's hermeneutic of the cross with a view especially to the way human rivalry and envy give rise to "sacred violence."[28] Typically, he writes, individual human beings deal with their competitive desires and their consequent rage at each other by uniting in a common hostility against someone else or some other group.

Human beings cannot survive a chaos of sheer conflict among individuals. Cooperation is required. But the energy that fuels cooperation is sacred violence: the fervor of the group against a common victim. This energy is what explains the in-group/out-group mentality so pervasive in human life.

Paul's critique of the Judaism of his day precisely aimed at sacred violence, at the human tendency to channel rivalry and envy into victimizing, or scapegoating, forms of group loyalty. At first when he came to know the story of Christ's atonement he resisted it, and resisted it violently. Gentiles were outsiders in his thinking; they—and those who relaxed the boundaries—were dangerous, were legitimate scapegoats. His conversion occurred, not in a paroxysm of introspective guilt, but as he was on a mission to persecute Christians in Damascus. Paul was a religious man, zealous enough to seek out and harm the enemies of his people's sacred law, and confident enough to think he himself was blameless in honoring that law.[29]

But on the road to Damascus, Paul met the risen Christ and was converted. He began to regard the cross as an "epiphany" of the violence in the Judaism of his day,[30] and henceforth disavowed what he saw as Judaism's use of the Torah "to exclude the gentiles and to glorify itself." Through "the lens of the cross," he saw that his people's law had been "deformed to the service of violence." He saw that he himself had been infected with this violence.[31]

Jesus' ministry and message was a reaching out to the victims of the human penchant for in-group/out-group thinking. He drew from his heritage the themes of sacrificial service and universal loyalty. He espoused nonviolence. He called for the love of the enemy. For all this, he was executed.[32] But on the Damascus road, Paul met Jesus resurrected, and embraced him as the Messiah, the Messiah of Jews and gentiles alike.[33]

From that day forward Paul became an advocate of a justice configured by the cross, a justice shaped by the universal love of Christ

As you cannot have peace without justice, you cannot have justice without the integrity of persons.

and shorn of the distinctions and violence engendered by in-group/out-group thinking,[34] In light of Christ's atonement, justice is both radically inclusive and radically nonviolent.

Jesus was not the political Messiah his contemporaries expected, it is true. He rejected the group loyalties men and women so doggedly cling to and authorized not only a universal love but also a vision, rooted in Isaiah, of nonviolent, suffering service. This is an unexpected form of politics, but it is still politics, still a strategy to shape society. Mennonite theologian John Driver calls it "a new kind of power, the power of servanthood."[35] The cross, in short, illuminates the meaning—and the means—of justice.

Thus he invokes, he *purposely* evokes, his own crucifixion, and thus he becomes our substitution.

According, then, to the light that streams from the cross of Calvary, the gospel is social and the cross is the proof. From this perspective, God's justice is social, his justice is central, his justice is self-involving, his justice is radically inclusive and radically nonviolent. All this follows from Christ's atonement, and all this condemns egocentric—and as we now also see, group-centered readings of the cross. God's business, and God's joy, is community. ■

Charles Scriven chairs Adventist Forum.

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1. Walter Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978 [first published in 1971]), 279.

2. Ellen White, *Sons and Daughters of God* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1955), 221.

3. Two New Testament passages that link the Resurrection with the belief that Jesus is the revelation of God are Romans 1:4 and Colossians 1:18, 19. I borrow the "focus" metaphor from H. Richard Niebuhr, who in *Christ in Culture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1951), 29, writes that Christ "exists . . . as the focusing point" of the movement of God toward humanity and of humanity toward God. Both divine and human being are illuminated by other means—by the prophets of old, e.g., or the church of today—but the focus is imperfect in Christ.

4. Here the classic essay is Krister Stendahl's "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," in the author's *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 78–96.

5. The relevant Hebrew words include *sedez/sedaqah* and *mispat*, with *hesed*, meaning "steadfast love," an important part of background. For another application, see Bruce C. Birch, *Let Justice Roll Down* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991). From the Bible consult, for example, Deuteronomy 10, Psalm 146, Isaiah 1, 2, 58, and 61. For a study of community-building as the basic impulse of the biblical tradition, see Paul D. Hanson, *The People Called* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986).

6. Donald G. Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology*, Vol. II, *Life, Ministry and Hope* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978–1979), 156, 157.

7. For two summaries of twentieth-century scholarship, see John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), and Marcus J. Borg, *Jesus: A New Vision* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1987); for studies of individual Gospels see Richard Cassidy, *Jesus, Politics, and Society* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1978), on Luke; and Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988), on Mark; for an historical study of Jesus and social revolution, see Richard A Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987).

8. So writes Borg, in *Jesus: A New Vision*, 150.

9. On this see Jurgen Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990), 169.

10. The classic, and much discussed, short history of the doctrine is Gustaf Aulen, *Christus Victor* (New York: Macmillan, 1969 [first published in 1931]).

11. Among them, Smuts van Rooyen, Desmond Ford, Norman Gulley, and Richard Fredericks. The latter's account appeared in "The Moral Influence Theory—Its Attraction and Inadequacy," *Ministry* (March 1992), 6–10.

12. John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 211.

13. J. I. Packer, "What Did the Cross Achieve?" *Tyndale Bulletin*, XXV (1974), 30.

14. The KJV, RSV, and NRSV translations say "righteous" or "righteousness"; the NEB and REB translations say "justice."

15. For an essay connecting Paul's doctrine with the

Hebrew idea of justice, or covenant faithfulness, see Sam K. Williams, "The 'Righteousness of God' in Romans," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, XCIX (1980), 241–290. For a collection of essays on Romans, in which matters I am here discussing figure prominently, see Karl P. Donfried, ed., *The Romans Debate: Expanded Revised Edition* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991).

16. See Galatians 3: 6–9, 13, 14, and Genesis 12:1–3. For a similar world-embracing vision, see Isaiah 42: 1–4.

17. Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 168. 18.

18. Ibid., 292, 334.

19. The sentence reflects the analysis of forgiveness found in James McClendon's *Systematic Theology: Ethics* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1986), 224–229.

20. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), 99.

21. Besides *The Cost of Discipleship*, which cites numerous biblical passages in developing its theme of following Christ, consult the compendium in Chapter 7 of John Howard Yoder's *The Politics of Jesus*.

22. Gustavo Gutierrez, *The Power of the Poor in History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 20.

23. The phrase is from page 2 of a manuscript on "Teaching in the Language of Religion," to be published in the journal *Religious Education*.

24. 1 Timothy 2:5.

25. See Philippians 3:10.

26. Rauschenbusch's phrase, from *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, 273.

27. Consider Genesis 12:2, 3 and Luke 1:72–75.

28. Hamerton-Kelly's book, *Sacred Violence: Paul's Hermeneutic of the Cross* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), draws on the theory of the Durkheimian critic and sociologist Rene Girard, who argues that "sacred violence" is the energy that drives social systems.

29. See Philippians 3:4–6.

30. Hamerton-Kelly, *Sacred Violence*, 65.

31. Ibid., 8–10.

32. The works cited in footnote 7 all support these claims.

33. Hamerton-Kelly is taking issue in his book with those writers, among them Gager and L. Gaston, who, after Franz Rosenweig, argue that "Jesus is not the Messiah of Israel but only the Messiah of the gentiles" (186). Paul actually broke with the Judaism he knew.

34. Hamerton-Kelly does raise questions, at the point of his doctrine of election, about Paul's consistency in rejecting in-group/out-group thinking (138, 139).

35. John Driver, *Understanding the Atonement for the Mission of the Church* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1986), 91.

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THE CHURCH

We Stand for Justice, Love, and Salt | BY NATALIE MONKOU

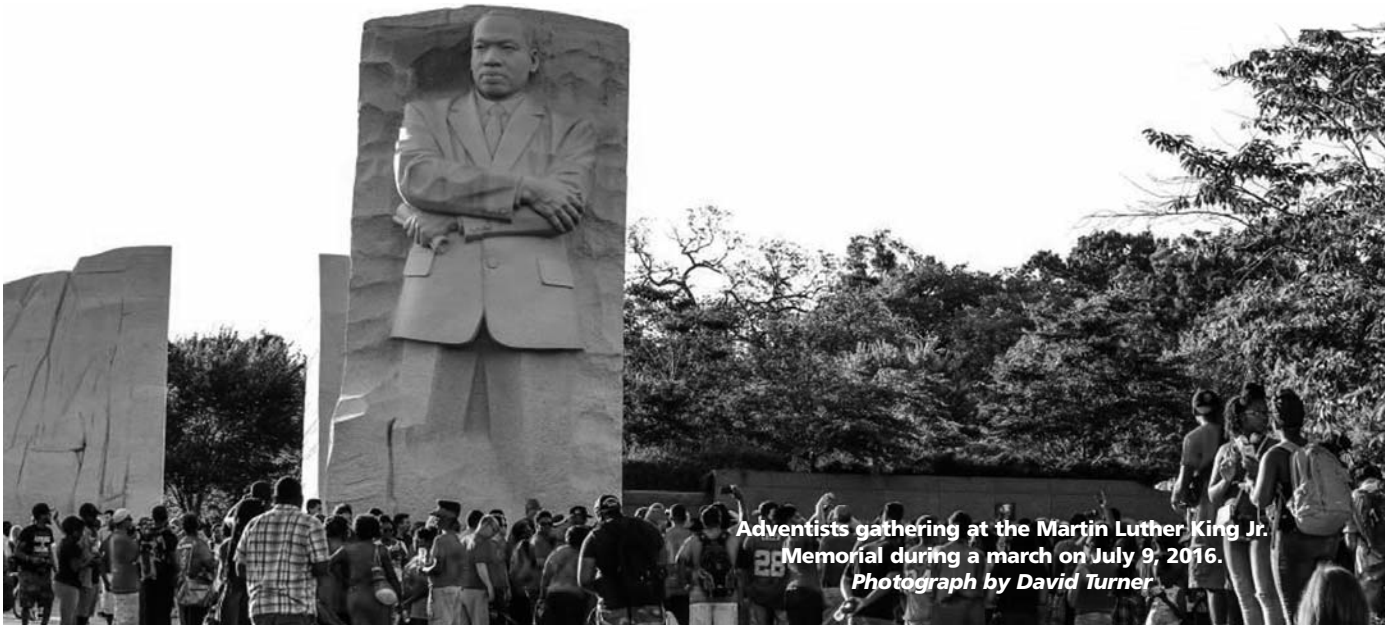
The church is called to demonstrate love.

That one sentence resonated with me during the "We Stand for All" rally on a recent weekend. While wearing red, on the afternoon of July 9, 2016, hundreds of Seventh-day Adventists walked from the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D. C. to the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial to show their care, concern, and support for change in our nation following the deaths of two black men and five police officers. The rally, organized by leaders in the North American Division, including Dan Jackson and G. Alexander Bryant, brought together local conference leaders in the Columbia Union, local pastors, members, and even witnesses that happened to be standing nearby.

At the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, attendees prayed together, sang black hymns and anthems, and listened to church leaders and pastors as they spoke out against the acts of violence and encouraged the audience to take action in their respective communities through acts of service, organizing workshops with local law enforcement, and getting involved with voter registration drives and education.

I was proud to identify myself as an Adventist that day. The week before had been traumatic, heavy, and filled with the burden of helplessness. When the rally was first announced, it was an easy decision to participate because my silent prayers alone would not be enough. They would have been the equivalent of a quick pat on the back to the family members of the men we lost last week.

This past year has been relentless in continuously showing us another cruel consequence of sin and the human condition in the absence of God's love. Christianity's relevance in the world we live in today is tested each time tragedy strikes in communities with a church building and the presence of its members is rendered absent.



Adventists gathering at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial during a march on July 9, 2016. ***Photograph by David Turner***

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I was proud to identify myself as an Adventist that day.

The rally was just a start. And it should be recognized as a great one.

I stood with people that I knew but also individuals that I did not know. I stood with people who share the color of my skin and individuals who do not. And we stood together, bonded by our desire to verbally acknowledge that we had witnessed revolting and horrific scenes of injustice in Louisiana, Minnesota, and Texas.

Acknowledgment is the first step in healing. Visibly standing together as representatives of Christ is a step in healing.

The church is called to demonstrate love.

As a collective body of people—tied through our faith—Adventists should desire to play a role in standing up for the rights of those who have lost them, and actively demonstrate love.

Love and obedience to God go hand in hand and, without both, we cannot influence change in the world. We cannot be a light.

In Matthew 5, Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, he sets the expectations for His followers by using salt as a metaphor to demonstrate the importance of influence in the Christian experience. Jesus says,

> *Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*
> *(Matthew 5:13–16, KJV)*

Jesus' use of "salt" shows how much he understood how to connect with men and women, no matter their age or color. All believers, regardless of gender and economic status, are called to provide light to the world through their influence. What is the purpose of the church if we hide when tough issues arise? And if we delay, what messages will stand in the gap? At a time when the world is watching tragedy unfold in every area of life, indifference and lukewarm rhetoric does not show the world that we are confident in who God is.

Debra Anderson speaks at a march where a thousand Adventists gathered. ***Photograph by Richard Gordon***

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David Franklin pastors the Allegheny East Conference's Miracle City Church in a Baltimore neighborhood less than six miles from the spot where Freddie Gray died in police custody last April. ***Photograph by David Turner***

To be effective, we have to leave the church building more often, meet and develop genuine relationships with people we do not know, and address the issues that affect them on a daily basis. To be effective, we cannot be complacent in perfect church attendance or use our faith in name only. Using our influence to create change also means that we have the responsibility to filter our actions and our responses through the lens of restoration and healing.

Even Ellen White underscores the importance of being effective Christians through action and just proclaiming our belief in God. In *Desire of Ages* she states that "our profession of faith may proclaim the theory of religion but it is our practical piety that holds forth the word of truth. The consistent life, the holy conversation, the unswerving integrity, the active, benevolent spirit, the godly example—these are the mediums through which light is conveyed to the world" (Chapter 30).

Last weekend, I witnessed the hurt not just from the people who were outside of my church, but those who were also within. The rally gave them (and me) an opportunity to witness love from a collective body of people that was willing to make an effort to tackle big issues rooted in bias, fear, and discrimination.

The rally showed how Christians can influence the conversation, not just from within the General Conference, but to show the world that the kingdom of God is a place where love, faith, light, justice, hope, and peace are part of the foundation.

The church is called to demonstrate love.

We are reminded in Micah 6:8 to act justly, love mercy, walk humbly, and we know that we are called to be salt to the world.

So let us do just that. ■

Visibly standing together as representatives of Christ is a step in healing.

Natalie Monkou is a member of Capitol Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church in Washington, D. C.

Online Group Organizes Young Adventists for Social Justice | BY ALITA BYRD

Tiffany Llewellyn, a twenty-nine-year-old Adventist social worker from New York, has tapped into the frustration many young black Adventists are feeling this summer, and is harnessing it to create a vibrant organization to fight for positive change. Alita Byrd's interview was posted on the *Spectrum* website on August 14, 2016:

You are the co-founder of an organization called Adventists for Social Justice. What inspired you to start this group? What is it all about?

Following the death of Alton Sterling by police officers [on July 5, 2016], I was frustrated. I was hurting, and other members from church were over-spiritualizing the issue on social media. I just wanted a place that allowed for Christians to hurt together when these incidents happen.

[Co-founder] Jermaine Anthony and I had a conversation shortly after. We were conflicted because we wanted to get involved, we wanted to march, protest, advocate to city officials—we felt overwhelmed with the need to simply do something. On the other hand we felt crippled by the church's silence on issues such as these and we weren't sure how to proceed.

We decided to start a Facebook group to see if there was anyone else who felt similarly; within two days the group had grown to about 2,000 people. The following day I woke up to another death by police: Philando Castile. It was heartbreaking. There had been many similar deaths in history that ripped just as deeply. I had struggled through Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Akai Gurley, Sandra Bland, Tamir Rice, and all the other profiled innocent lives lost at the hands of police brutality. I had learned how to mask my emotional trauma to simply push through another day, and another one. Eventually I couldn't continue as usual.

We decided to host a conference call to gather ideas and develop an action plan. That call maxed its limit, and people could not get on. It was then we realized we were feeding a hunger of many Adventist youth who shared our passion for getting involved in social injustices around our country.

Who are the members of Adventists for Social Justice?

ASJ's membership is comprised of anyone who has a passion for social justice issues, is open to partner with us, wants to uphold our church's values, and feels the importance of getting involved. We understand that allies exist within various racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic classes. We are intentional about remaining all-inclusive.

Why is such a group necessary?

I would have to ask how it cannot be? Whether we choose to accept the responsibility or not, this group is long overdue. Our denomination must experience a paradigm shift in our identified goals internally and externally as it relates to the community. The church is a hub—when a community is hurting the question is asked "Where is the church?" We have been given a mandate by God, which also happens to be our organization's mission to "do good, seek justice, correct oppression, bring justice to the fatherless and plead the widow's cause." This should be the focus of the church on a micro and macro level. We cannot seek to evangelize without first understanding the implications. We cannot misrepresent Christ as if He is not burdened by the injustices within society. We cannot preach passionately about Esther and Joseph, confident about what God called them to do, and be silent when it matters most. No, this group is not only necessary, it is overdue.

What has your group accomplished so far?

We are still in the developmental phase of building this organization; however, we have been able to mobilize and organize across states. We have encouraged our

members to explore their communities and get involved in events and movements that share our vision. We have succeeded in providing resources for education and training within our Facebook page—the wealth of information shared there is unimaginable. We have been able to identify various chapter leaders across some states, develop an action plan, and are getting ready for a multi-state launch in September. I think a crucial aspect has been providing a place to belong, to hurt, to be angry, to be empowered. This is just the beginning!

What are your short-term and long-term goals?

Our short-term goals include the official launch of our organization, which will include town halls, church trainings, and community events across various states. This will occur in September. We are also in the process of planning our first annual Social Justice Summit in November, which will be a training ground for those seeking information on how to effectively get involved in social action. We will also identify one core goal we can centralize around for the next quarter, such as voting education. We want to be intentional in how we measure success.

Long term, we are in the process of becoming a nonprofit organization. We want to collaborate with community leaders, other organizations, and city officials to meet the needs of each neighborhood. We intend to work within the law and policy arenas to advocate for improved policing laws; we also want to be channels to restore trust between the police and civilians. We intend to help create businesses within communities to increase our economics and boost financial freedom, in efforts to restore and build resources needed for minority communities. We aim to develop mentorship programs, health programs, and educational programs. Social justice is multi-layered and comprehensive, and we want to ensure we are not narrowly focusing on the issues at hand.

Internally, we want to encourage our churches to open up the dialogue. We plan to work with church leadership to develop a theological framework for social justice. The Sabbath School quarterly has done a phenomenal job with beginning the discussion; now where do we go from here? With a framework developed and implemented in our churches and schools, members can feel comfortable knowing that as a denomination we understand the importance of getting involved.

Do you think social media (Facebook) made it possible to form Adventists for Social Justice?

Absolutely! When we decided to start the Facebook group, the idea was to invite our friends who may share our burden. We never imagined it would grow to over 3,000 people within such a short time. That is the beauty of social media.

What topics or issues has the online group mainly focused on?

Education, policies and law, police reform, community development, economic empowerment.

Have you started any groups like this in the past? What experience do you have with activism? Social justice issues? What skills do you have that have helped you to organize this group?

This is my first group of its kind. I have marched and protested in the past around various issues; for example, housing, gun violence, lack of resources for minorities, etc. I believe I have the leadership and organizational skills that will help make this group sustainable. Social action, social justice, and meeting community needs have been my priority from the age of thirteen. I also work with an amazing team of people who really take this group to a new level. Passion will drive any vision, and we have both in abundance. With access to resources the sky is the limit.

What is your day job?

My career is in the field of social work where I am licensed to practice. I work as a clinical social worker as an in-home individual and family clinician, doing therapy for children and adolescents with severe psychiatric disorders. Previously, I worked in New York City as an in-home multi-systemic therapist for juvenile offenders. Every single day I go into these same communities I serve, with nothing but a computer and a folder between me and the residents. I see the needs of my clients and their neighborhoods first hand, and have always been at the front line advocating for more resources to be poured into under-resourced neighborhoods. These same kids that are gunned down because they appear "dangerous" represent any of the youth I work with or speak to daily. This is not only real—it's personal.

Byrd interview ➔ continued *on page 64...*

DISCUSSED | correspondence Bible study, Pass It On cards, t-shirts, baptism

Lessons in Making Disciples from the Anchorage Prison Ministries Program | BY JULI MILLER

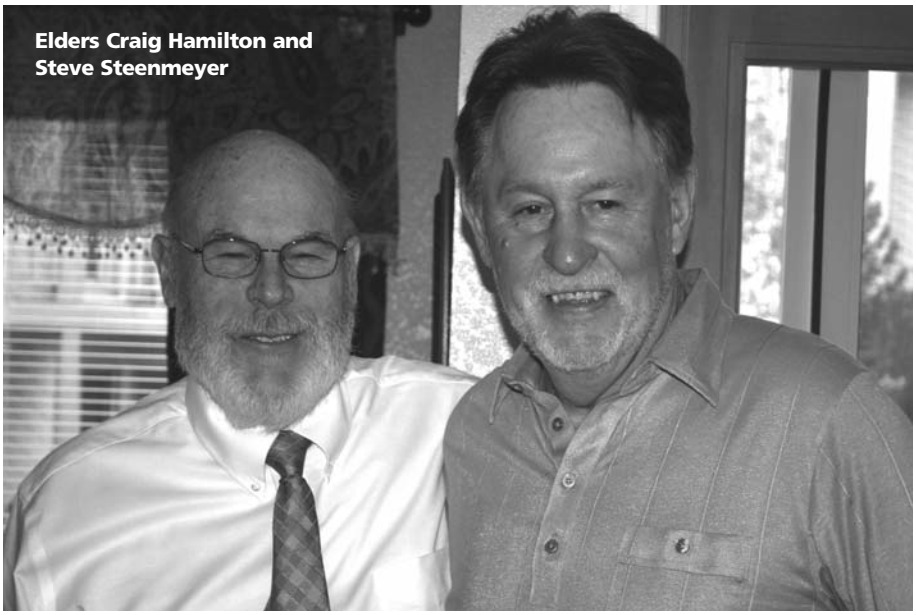
Seeds first sown ten years ago in Anchorage are now bearing remarkable fruit. Donovan Kack, the pastor of the Hillside O'Malley Church at that time, and Bible worker Jordan Peck, sought to train church elders and other members to develop and sustain an outreach ministry. The concept of a *jail* ministry—where people are housed prior to trials or serving short sentences, as opposed to *prisons* where longer sentences are completed—took hold as a place to start.

Together with a few church members such as head elder Lane Campbell, Kack and Peck navigated the Department of Corrections' paperwork, four-hour training, and background check requirements for church members to be approved for access to correctional facilities and to conduct religious programs. Thus a small group began to regularly visit the jails, as well as some halfway houses, establishing friendships and facilitating worship services and Bible studies. Pastor Kack also developed a series of Bible studies, called *The Power of the Cross*, for use in these settings.

Two years later, in 2009, Steve Steenmeyer was baptized, joining his wife Tina as a member of the Hillside O'Malley Church. Steve remembers that Tina, who had not been an Adventist very long herself, called his attention to the Great Commission of Matthew 28, emphasizing the imperative to "make disciples," and explained that this must be his focus as a follower of Christ.

Previously a theater major at Whitman College, and co-owner of a dinner theater, Steve was a quick study on this new role of gathering and training new disciples. He volunteered in the correctional ministries activities of his church and determined to learn how best to bring this special audience into discipleship with Christ. Steve's commitment, energy, and organizational abilities soon became apparent to others, and he accepted the invitation to direct the correctional ministries for the Hillside O'Malley Church.

"Begin with the end in mind" had been standard procedure in his years as a successful entrepreneur in an array of businesses. He applied the same approach to prison ministries. He fixed the imperatives of John 15:16 to "bear fruit—fruit that will last" and to "love each other" as his compass heading. And he kept his eyes open for better tools with which to plant, nurture and harvest spiritual fruit.



Elders Craig Hamilton and Steve Steenmeyer

The Voice of Prophecy (VOP) organization then entered the stage. In 2011, in concert with the Alaska Conference, VOP executed a statewide direct-mail campaign inviting every postal customer to enroll in *Discover Bible School* (DBS), a series of twenty-six correspondence Bible lessons. This would prepare the ground for a ten-day evangelistic series planned for the Anchorage Conven-

Tony Pouesi, Tina Steenmeyer, and Kathy Shipp. Tony's Mom flew up from Washington state for Tony's baptism; Kathy is now attending an Adventist church not far from her home and studying for baptism.

tion Center in July 2012.

The Alaska Conference hired Tina Steenmeyer to coordinate response to DBS enrollments in Alaska. She oversaw the timely mailing out of lessons, grading of completed lessons along with personalized notations, and training local churches so they could develop longer-term relationships with the DBS students.

From his ringside seat, Steve was able to envision the role DBS could play in nurturing disciples in the correctional facilities. The orderly progression of correspondence studies pulled inmates into an organized study of the Bible and could provide the glue for an ongoing relationship, even when the church volunteers were not visiting the inmates.

In August 2012, Steve and Lane began inviting the prisoners who attended their Bible study classes at the jail or at the halfway houses to sign up for DBS. Enrollment cards were on all seats at all services, and attendees were reminded of the opportunity to participate in the free Bible studies at the beginning and closing of each meeting. There was also an option to enroll for a thirty-lesson, *Native New Day* VOP series, especially created by and for Native Americans.

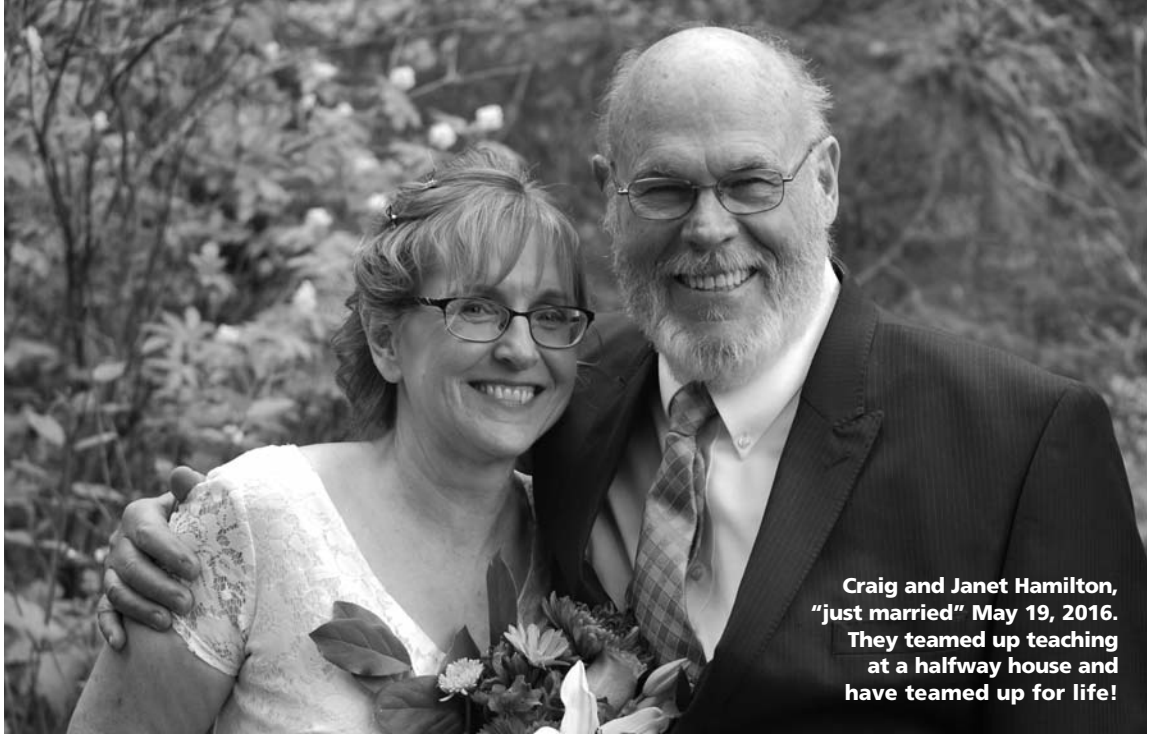
The Hillside O'Malley Church continued using the DBS Bible study series as a core piece of its prison ministries, even after the VOP evangelistic campaign concluded. The flow of enrollment cards has been continuous from the beginning. There are usually ten new students per week, with an average of 100 or so active ones at any time. A total of over 2,000 people have signed up since the DBS program began, and an average of 22 percent of them complete a series. Many students also enroll in the *Bible Prophecy* or *Christian Lifestyle* study series after completing the first series, deepening their knowledge of the Bible as well as their relationships with the program team.

The DBS students frequently send notes along with their answer sheets. "I really want to thank you for these lessons. Ever since I came to prison on this charge, I've made a commitment to change my life. It's kinda funny that a guy gave me an SDA Bible when I got here, and then I followed through with doing these lessons. I will say it has helped me in more ways than you will ever know."

Together, Steve and Tina formed a supporting tag team for Tony. "This young man got into trouble in a fishing-port bar and faced a sentence of seven to seventeen years," explains Steve. Tony found a DBS Pass-It-On card while he was in a pre-trial jail in Anchorage and began studying diligently. "Tina was correcting his lessons and felt impressed to tell me I should go visit this student, so I did," Steve explains.

Tony had begun to regularly pray the prayer of

Previously a theater major at Whitman College, and co-owner of a dinner theater, Steve was a quick study on this new role of gathering and training new disciples.



Craig and Janet Hamilton, "just married" May 19, 2016. They teamed up teaching at a halfway house and have teamed up for life!

David in Psalms 51:10: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Steve could see Tony's transformation as the weeks passed. When it came time for Tony's trial, Steve was unable to attend because he was already committed to going to another one. So, Tina went, walking into a courtroom where there was a very hostile atmosphere for Tony, as the family of the victim who died was there. Tina decided to leave the proceedings, but she thought she heard the Holy Spirit coaxing her to go back as she was putting the car key into the ignition.

The flow of enrollment cards has been continuous from the beginning.

Tony, and his mother, claim that it was the comments Tina made on Tony's behalf that changed everything. As a result, Tony's sentence was time already served, plus three years' probation. Steve and Tina brought Tony to the Greater Works Center to live and restart his life. Tony was baptized, his mother enrolled in DBS and is preparing for baptism in Shelton, WA, and Tony has introduced a handful of his childhood friends to DBS.

When Tony isn't working at his job as a cook, he is often in downtown Anchorage. "He's designed these t-shirts with messages on them that get people's attention," says Steve. Tony converses with the homeless and others on the streets, providing encouragement, friendship, and spiritual resources. "Tony prays for his employer, he prays for his mom, he prays for his old and new friends. He is on fire for God."

As in a watch, there are many moving parts to this ministry. The "Welcome" enrollment cards include a space to write prayer requests. Volunteers at the church faithfully lift up each request in numerous prayer teams. A Pass-It-On card is inserted into lesson packages once a person has completed at least two sets of lesson mailings, so students can encourage someone else to engage in Bible studies. This simple act of discipleship—sharing opportunity to have a guided study to the Bible—continuously generates new enrollment requests.

With his characteristic attention to consistent quality standards, Steve makes sure there is a one-day turnaround on grading lessons, adding helpful scriptural references and encouraging words, and then sending that material back with the next set of lessons. "Treat it just like a serious business!"

Just as a business would find ways to stay in touch with customers, Steve makes sure that the program logs each new DBS student into the government website so that it will receive notifications if the inmate is moved to another facility. Not only does this support the continued mail exchange of lesson materials, but churches located near a facility to which a student is transferred can be notified and encouraged to visit and establish a relationship.

"We want to keep graduates from the DBS

studies in our sphere of fellowship, so I have designed another correspondence course, called *Journey to Transformation*, to keep the study relationship alive," Steve announces. He hopes to add it to the ministry toolkit soon.

Steve estimates that there are currently 200–300 DBS graduates—"a good-sized congregation!"—within the Alaskan correctional facilities who are nominal Seventh-day Adventists as a result of their DBS experience. About a dozen new members of the Hillside O'Malley church, and one at the Wasilla church, have roots to the DBS series, and others are attending an Adventist church but have not yet been baptized. There was a baptism in July.

Got Mail?

With the plethora of instant communications avenues available to most people today, rushing to see if one has a personal letter delivered by the U.S. Postal Service doesn't seem like the highlight of one's day. Unless you are behind bars. Restricted from cell phones and internet access, inmates long to have an envelope in the daily mail drop with his or her name on it. This connection with someone "out there" is part of the draw for enrolling in the DBS programs; you get mail.

Recently, Steve added the *Discover Friends* program as another means to further cultivate relationships nurtured through DBS. Volunteers for this develop a pen-friend relationship with an inmate, or one who has been released, and exchange cards or letters. Steve believes this will be an effective way to continue to encourage and perhaps mentor people, as they move from place to place and face new challenges within or outside correctional facilities.

A Refuge Along the Way

Other pathways for ministering to those behind bars, or those being released, are being taken. First, the Greater Works Center with accommodations for six people was organized in 2014 to provide transitional housing and support for those who have completed a DBS series and wish to be in an Adventist environment as they integrate back into general society. "We wanted to establish this halfway house because we understand the desperation some people faced because they had nowhere safe to go to begin their life again on the other side of the bars, especially if they wished to practice an Adventist lifestyle," Steve elaborates.

Since August 2014, Craig Hamilton has served as the first volunteer on-site resident manager for the live-in Center. With a master's degree in Social Science and a twenty-seven-year career in the State of Colorado in the field of mental health, he had also participated in programs for the homeless and for substance abusers. Through his involvement with prison ministries in Colorado, he became friends with inmates who were later transferred back to Alaska. This led to his taking a very long motorcycle ride up to visit them and connecting with the Steenmeyers, who recognized

Anna Mathis and Rose Waller, lay leaders at the Hiland Mountain Women's Prison.

He fixed the imperatives of John 15:16 to "bear fruit —fruit that will last" and to "love each other" as his compass heading.

Tony, and his mother, claim that it was the comments Tina made on Tony's behalf that changed everything.

he had the skills and interest to make the transitional work at the Center successful.

In addition to creating a safe home environment and guiding each resident to appropriate resources for successful re-entry into society, Craig sees to it that spiritual activities are woven into the weekly routine. There is a daily group devotional period and church members often join them for Sabbath vespers service. Residents also attend Sabbath School and the worship service at the Hillside O'Malley Church. "Each man living in the Center represents the fruit of sharing God's good news and each enriches the church family with his testimony. Many members have become friends and mentors," observes Craig. "I also am richer by my experiences here beyond my imagination. I have learned to trust God more than I ever knew I could."

Joining Forces with Others at Rescue Mission

Local Adventist church members also support the Anchorage Gospel Rescue Mission with donations or as volunteers, including serving on the board. Each month, the faith-based nonprofit organization offers overnight housing to over 2,000 people and serves over 7,500 meals, in addition to its assistance with sobriety, work preparedness, and job searches. There is a nightly worship service in the chapel, and Adventist volunteers take responsibility for a regular schedule of these, and constantly become acquainted with new Mission guests.

Bob first connected with Adventists while he was participating in the Mission's New Life Discipleship program. He followed up on an invitation to attend an Adventist church nearby and met Steve in the Sabbath School class. The immediate connection Bob felt prompted him to ask Steve to be his mentor, and they began to spend time together horseback riding. One of Steve's prior businesses involved providing horse-outfitting services for hunters and horse-drawn sleigh rides for tourists. Steve happily reports that Bob is now on the staff at the Gospel Mission, using his prior experience in warehousing and food distribution to organize inventory at the Mission and looking for new opportunities to disciple someone else.

Fishers of Men Busy Behind Bars

Steve's eyes sparkle as he talks about Robert, who received a DBS Pass-It-On referral card and began attending Bible study classes in the prison. Steve decided to meet privately with Robert and observed his hunger for learning more Bible truths. Before long, Robert was leading in Bible studies, signing other people up for DBS, and even organized a foot-washing service for a group in his unit.

With Steve's encouragement, Robert accepted a transfer to a correctional facility where the majority of inmates have sentences of over twenty years, but the facility contains a "faith unit." The chaplain at this unit is very cooperative, recognizes the character transformation in Robert, and is offering more access to religious materials via computers. Numerous graduates of DBS are in this unit, and more will be headed that way in the future. Steve sees great opportunities for Robert to lead out in Bible studies, worship services, and the development of more disciples while they are behind the bars.

Growth Spawns Reorganization

In the Greater Anchorage region, there are now about thirty volunteers from five churches ministering to people in eight prisons or jails (including a women's prison), three halfway houses, and five federal facilities. When an inmate has a federal violation, he/she can be transferred to an out-of-state federal institution. Steve and his team try to stay in touch and keep lesson materials and communications flowing. One such inmate wrote in April: "If you did not receive my last courses, please send replacements. I refer to them in a small Bible study I have here at Atwater. There's quite a large mission field here."

In 2013, Steve also accepted the responsibilities as Alaska Correctional Ministries Coordinator, so he also contemplates ways to broaden the outreach to the prison population across the vast landscape of the largest state in the USA. In

addition to the geographic challenges, he notes the long-standing cultural and language barriers connected with the native communities who also inhabit isolated places, 80 percent of which are generally only accessible by air. Some can be accessed seasonally by waterways.

To establish a sustainable structure for the two core programs of prison ministry and transitional living, a formal change of status is underway to transfer these under the umbrella of two separate 501(c)(3) organizations. Steve points out that this will make it easier to incorporate additional support systems for the expanding programs, while continuing to allow church members to participate as donors or volunteers.

Prison ministries hasn't just been life-changing for inmates. Lane, one of the earliest volunteers in the program, looks back at the evolution of the prison ministry with humble gratitude and amazement. "I would never have dreamed I would be involved with something like this. It felt so awkward at the beginning to go into a jail or a halfway house, but I made it a habit to pray for the Holy Spirit to be with us and learned to trust the Lord." For Lane, a painting contractor, evangelism through prison ministries has become his lifestyle. "It's not an occasional event or activity. I organize the painting work I accept so it won't interfere with the group services or many individual sessions I do each week. Along with other volunteers, Campbell also drives 250-mile roundtrip to Seward numerous times a month to minister to inmates at the only maximum-security facility there. "If we don't have time to be involved with ministry, if we are too busy making ourselves comfortable on this earth, we do not have the right priorities."

As Steve applies his knowledge and experience from the theatrical stage, and a variety of business ventures, to the enterprise of bringing in new disciples for the Kingdom of God, he likes to emphasize the power of compounding. "If I can reach one person this year, the next year there are two of us planting seeds of discipleship. The following year there are four of us. In twenty years, there would be 1,048,076 people if each person continued to bring in one more each year. That's the kind of soul harvest we wish to bring in, and it can happen if everyone becomes an active disciple." ■

Adventist travelers to Sun Valley, Idaho frequently visit the small Seventh-day Adventist Church in neighboring Hailey, Idaho where **Juli Miller** is a member. It was there she learned of the Anchorage Prison Ministries from a visitor passing through. Juli is a health care consultant and a member of the *Spectrum* editorial board.

Tony converses with the homeless and others on the streets, providing encouragement, friendship, and spiritual resources.

Former inmates at Hiland Mountain Women's Prison attending Sabbath service with Tina Steenmeyer, right.

When Pen Strikes Paper | BY JULI MILLER

A thank you note seemed in order. I had been reading *True Notebooks*, by Mark Salzman, in two nonstop sessions, quietly weeping and laughing out loud through the rich flow of comic, tragic, and searing passages of innocence and recognition. In this nonfiction work, Salzman recounts the transformative experience of conducting a writing class for teenagers incarcerated in Los Angeles Central Juvenile Hall while waiting for their court trials and sentencing. Many were being tried for murder. Kevin Jackson had shot at several members of a gang, killing one.

At the beginning of his first class, Salzman asks a shy Kevin, "What can you tell me that would give me some sense of who you are?"

"I don't know who I am. Somebody lost, I guess," the tall orphan answers. And then Kevin writes his first piece of many poignant pieces for Salzman. He describes a Saturday after both his parents had died. His third grade teacher picked him up at his grandmother's place and took him to the Museum of Science & Industry. She bought him a "Slinky" at the museum gift shop, they had hamburgers and ice cream for dinner, and she gave him a goodbye hug. "I know it wasn't a spectacular day, but I cherish that day because that was the only person that took time out of their life to help me make it through the death of my parents," he concludes. From that point on, Kevin was my favorite among a raucous collection of characters living behind bars.

Salzman becomes a role model for Kevin and provides him writing prompts that elicit prose with clarity and emotional power. The book chronicles Kevin's personal growth and assumption of a leadership role with his peers. He also develops an affectionate and respectful relationship with a number of the authority figures. Kevin is clearly interested in and capable of transcending his background and transforming his life.

And then comes the reeling shock: a sixty-six-years-to-life sentence handed down to Kevin. He is immediately transferred to an adult maximum-security prison to begin a long and bleak stretch of time.

The book closes with the poem Salzman receives from Kevin a few months later.

Dear Friend

Hello, there old friend
At the moment I'm kind of down
It seems as though this is the end
I haven't had the chance to see you around.

I've been sitting here bereft,
Alone, locked down
But now I have a window
And see you every night
Times are hard, but I'll be all right.

Gun towers, barbed wire is all I see
No matter how far I travel
I glance up, and there you'll be.
It's good to have a friend like you
At times you help me shine through.

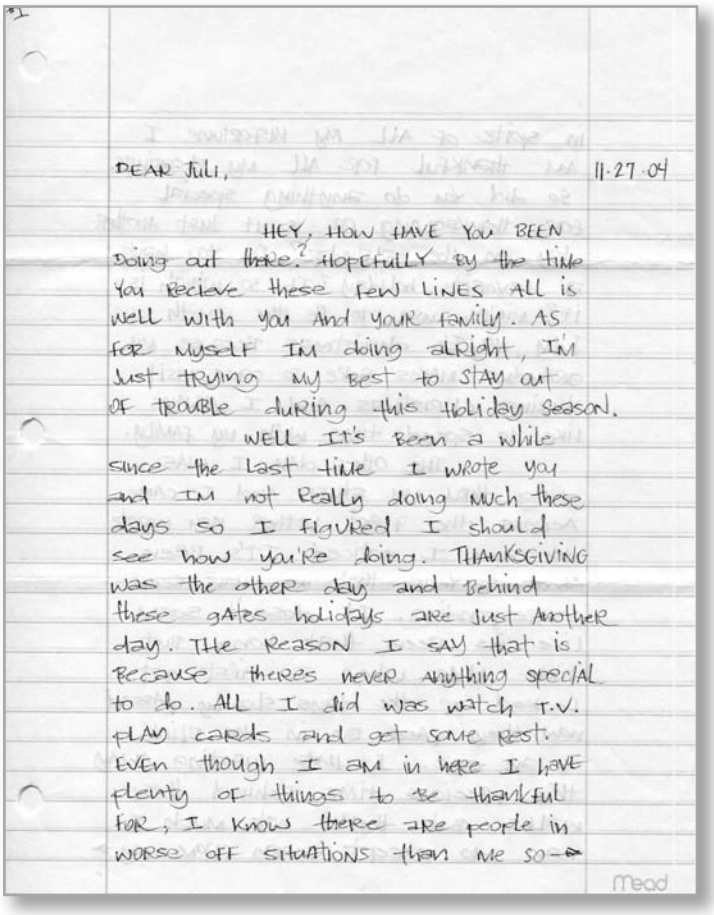
I still have a long journey to go
But I'll be free again
I'll use this time to grow
In not just one way, but all
There's a lot for me to learn
So I'm gonna start like a baby, with a crawl.

Though the road may seem
Long and far
Eventually I'll make it

Dear old friend, North Star.

With swollen eyes, I searched for Salzman's email address. I had met him at the Sun Valley Writers Conference numerous times, as he had become one of my favorite authors after I read *Iron and Silk* and *Lost in Place*, two other autobiographical books. He had given me his email address so we could work on arranging some presentations for him at La Sierra University, my alma mater, where I occasionally did guest lectures or sponsored programs for the English and Communication students.

Did he happen to have the prison address for Kevin? I wanted to thank him for allowing Salzman to share the pieces he penned while in juvenile hall. Mark sent the address. I mailed out a brief note of appreciation and jumped back into my busy schedule. I did not want to think about the book any more because the ending left me feeling angry and sad.



DEAR JULI, 11-27-04

HEY, HOW HAVE YOU BEEN doing out there? HOPEFULLY BY the time you Recieve these few LINES ALL is WELL WITH you And YOUR FAMILY. AS FOR MYSELF IM doing ALRIGHT, I'M Just TRYING MY BEST to STAY out OF TROUBLE dURING this Holiday Season.

WELL IT's Been a while since the Last time I WROTE you and IM not Really doing MUch these days so I FIGURED I should see how you're doing. THANKSGIVING was the other day and Behind these gATES holidays ARE Just ANOTHER day. THE REASON I SAY that is Because theres never anything special to do. ALL I did was watch T.V. PLAY cards and get some Rest. EVEN though I AM in here I HAVE plenty of things to be thankful FOR, I KNOW there ARE people in WORSE OFF SITUATIONS than me so—

Mead

Soon I was opening a letter from Ironwood State Prison. The precise penmanship and correct spelling, the standard letter format, and the warm and gracious comments surprised me as much as receiving a response from Kevin.

Though I couldn't rescue Kevin, I could write back, keep the ball in play—let him know someone on the outside remembers him and where he is. And now we have been sending this ball back and forth through the prison bars for over thirteen years. In the age of texting, posting, and tweeting, we exchange handwritten letters mailed in stamped envelopes and hope the prison mail system will deliver both ways so Christmas and birthday cards can be opened in time. He often writes about the boredom and isolation that are his constant companions—"Loneliness is poison to the soul"—and the daily struggle to not let his surroundings or setbacks discourage him for long. His customary closing words "and so, until pen strikes paper again" or "until I land at your doorstep again" always make me smile.

We exchanged simple tidbits about ourselves in the early letters, seeking common ground as we perceived many contrasts in our lives besides the fact that he was a twenty-something and I was old enough to be his grandmother. His favorite holiday had been the Fourth of July—we both love exploding fireworks. However, now that he was behind bars, he looked forward to Christmas most of all since that was when his grandmother or aunt promised to visit him.

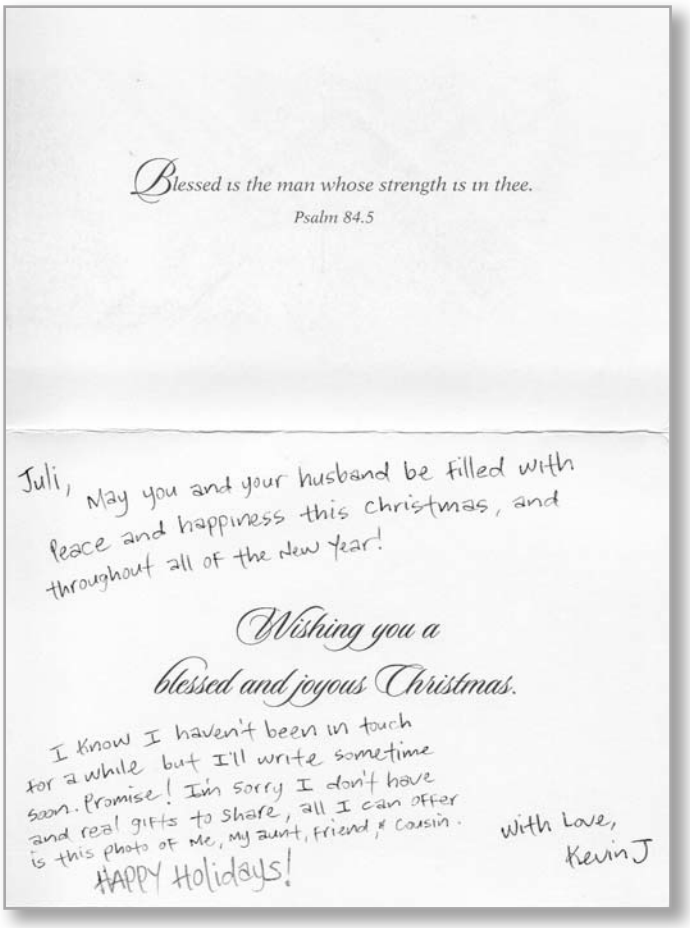
I don't know who I am. Somebody lost, I guess.

He couldn't imagine what it was like for me to spend substantial time in the mountains where elk and moose roam, trout hide in the shadows of year-round streams, and aspen leaves shimmer below big blue skies. A "city boy," he yearned for peace, tranquility, open spaces and freedom from noise and air pollution. The farthest distances Kevin had traveled from Los Angeles were to Las Vegas and Oakland, places

And now we have been sending this ball back and forth through the prison bars for over thirteen years.

heavy on concrete and light on nature.

During the first stage of our letter exchanges, I was constantly traveling for my work with resort properties or with healthcare clients: the Great Lakes, Myrtle Beach, Pensacola, San Juan Islands, Napa Valley, San Francisco, Lake Tahoe, and Sacramento. On weekends, my husband Barry and I would be in the mountains of Idaho or Montana to ski, bike, hike, fish, or fly the back-country river canyons and mountain ridges with a year-round flow of friends or family of all ages from around the country.


Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee.
Psalm 84.5

Juli, May you and your husband be filled with peace and happiness this christmas, and throughout all of the new year!

Wishing you a blessed and joyous Christmas.

I know I haven't been in touch for a while but I'll write sometime soon. Promise! I'm sorry I don't have and real gifts to share, all I can offer is this photo of me, my aunt, friend & cousin.

With Love, Kevin J

HAPPY Holidays!

Kevin would note the contrast between the enormous variety of activities, people and locations in my life and his severely limited world. "I think I'm burned out on this place after seeing the same people and doing basically the same thing day after day…I know one thing: this vacation I'm on now sure isn't that much fun." With guilt, I sent him many postcards with a few short lines because I didn't have much time to write long six- or eight-page letters like he did. "Those postcards are like a small vacation from every day prison life…It makes me miss my freedom more, and I realize I could be doing so many other things besides sitting in jail."

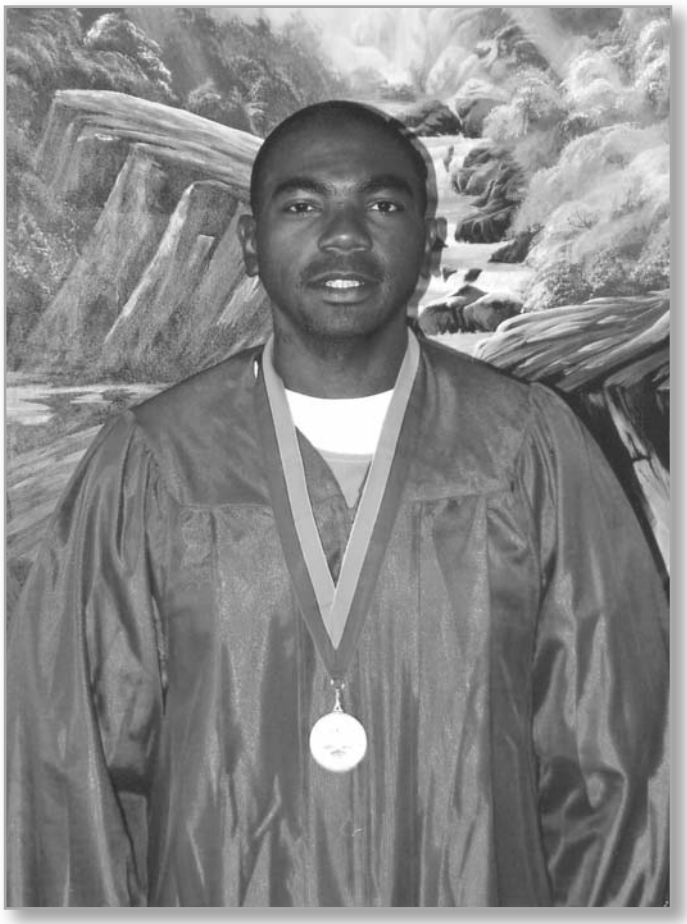
I worked with resort clients who were trying to decide what kinds of luxury brand coffee makers, spa soaps, or organic bed and bath linens to use in sumptuous hotel suites. Another client sold legacy ranches with thousands of acres of wildlife habitat, blue-ribbon trout streams, timber stands or grasslands to people who would vacation there a few weeks each year. Most recently, I assisted a client with launching a private-jet charter club so members could travel in Lear jets with maximum ease and lower costs. Every letter from Kevin made these high-pressure projects seem to be relatively insignificant missions.

I began to pray that someday I could take him for a summer hike in the mountains with our dogs, or snowshoe through winter forests and toss a few snowballs at each other. He'd probably love feeling the warmth of a crackling campfire and hearing the howling coyotes. He said he wanted to go flying with me. Was there any way he could be released before I was dead or too old to do anything?

Kevin mentioned tutoring someone else for GED exams, loaning personal items to a new prisoner who did not yet have access to any of his belongings, or signing up for a new correspondence class when he had sufficient funds from family members to enroll. He strived to stay busy, to steer clear of troublemakers, and to work on an associate college degree in social and behavioral science. Kevin pushed himself to organize his study time and do well, despite all the prison distractions, so he could develop discipline and perseverance that would be a tool for success if he were ever free

again. He attended AA and NA sessions to learn more about recovering from addiction, though he had never been involved with drugs or alcohol, and he looked forward to Bible study groups where he became more acquainted with the power and promises of God. His constant refrain of wanting to make the best use of his time and improve himself made me feel like I needed to step up my game, too.

Fairly early in our exchanges, we discovered we were both NBA and NFL fans. Our letters would usually get longer during the championship playoff stretches each year. Kevin was a Laker fan, and I cheered for the San Antonio Spurs, bragging about the prowess of Duncan, Ginobili and Parker. He was relieved when Kobe finally received the MVP award and proud that the Lakers could advance without Shaq. "I guess it is time for the Lakers to rebuild. Your Spurs look like they're headed for the finals!" During football season, he'd root for the California NFL teams but also keep an eye on my Boise State Broncos. We both imagined the fun of watching games together some day. "I guess we will have to keep praying for that miracle," he penned.



In 2007, Kevin's emotional anchor and key link to others in his family, his grandmother, died and things worsened at the Ironwood State Prison in Blythe, California. "The Knuckleheads," as he called them, would get into gang or racial confrontations in the exercise yard, often when it was 110 degrees out there and their cells were suffocating hot boxes. Not only did this throw them all into miserable weeks of lockdown status, but no visitors were permitted for months, including the Christmas holiday season.

Kevin reached out with two special requests: Would I apply for visitation privileges? Would I be willing to send him a quarterly package since nobody in his family was able to do that for the time being? "When it feels like it's too much or too hard, I bow my head in prayer and ask the Lord to give the strength to keep going. I know that He is the only one who can give me peace and comfort during my most trying times."

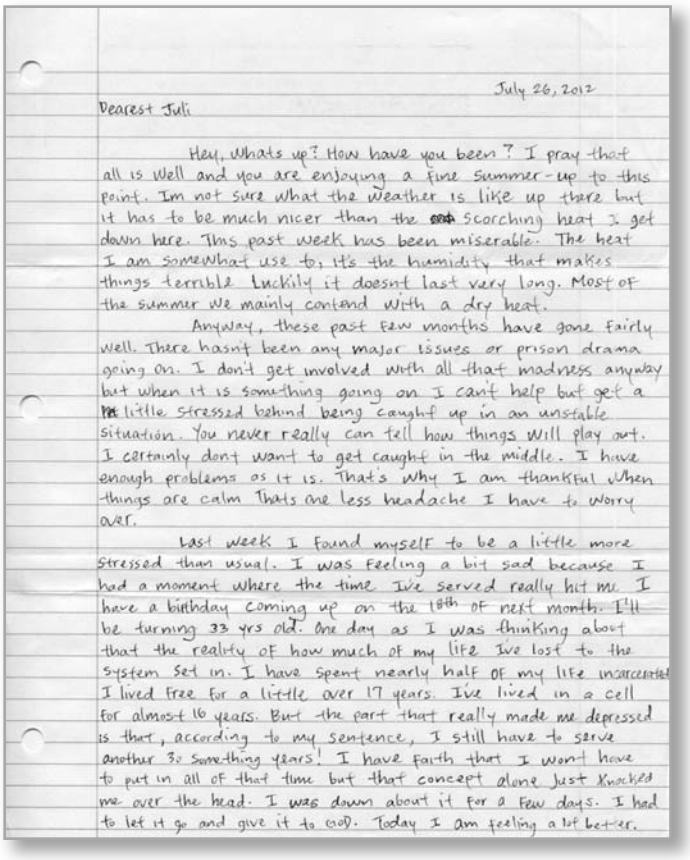
I submitted the documents for visitation approval, and I learned how to order a package of assorted items for him every three or four months. What does a young man in a desert-prison cell select from a catalog sanctioned by the prison authorities? Jif creamy peanut butter, pepper jack cheese, mackerel fillets, jalapeno potato chips, double-chocolate cupcakes, Dolly Madison crunch donut gems, Irish Spring soap, Refreshing Waterfall shampoo, Cool Zone antiperspirant, mouthwash, and crew socks and Hanes t-shirts.

Kevin acknowledged his sweet tooth. "I always loved dessert. One of my aunts, who passed away from breast cancer, used to make the best peach cobbler. She knew I loved it. So

His constant refrain of wanting to make the best use of his time and improve himself made me feel like I needed to step up my game, too.

every Christmas and Thanksgiving she would make a dish especially for me to take home. That is one of the things I miss most…."

Kevin promptly sends a thank you note every time he receives the quarterly package. "Thank you for always being there and supporting me. I can't even explain what it has done for me to know that someone out there truly cares for me. Growing up, one of the main reasons I got mixed up with the wrong crowd is I wanted to feel loved and accepted. They made me "think" they cared and were my friends… I see today that you are what I've always sought. I thank you for showing me that REAL love. Today I want to make my REAL friends proud of me."



July 26, 2012

Dearest Juli

Hey, whats up? How have you been? I pray that all is Well and you are enjoying a fine summer - up to this point. Im not sure what the weather is like up there but it has to be much nicer than the ~~one~~ scorching heat I get down here. Ths past week has been miserable. The heat I am somewhat use to, it's the humidity that makes things terrible. Luckily it doesnt last very long. Most of the summer we mainly contend with a dry heat.

Anyway, these past few months have gone fairly well. There hasn't been any major issues or prison drama going on. I don't get involved with all that madness anyway but when it is something going on I can't help but get a little stressed behind being caught up in an unstable situation. You never really can tell how things will play out. I certainly dont want to get caught in the middle. I have enough problems as it is. That's why I am thankful when things are calm Thats one less headache I have to worry over.

Last week I found myself to be a little more stressed than usual. I was feeling a bit sad because I had a moment where the time I've served really hit me. I have a birthday coming up on the 18th of next month. I'll be turning 33 yrs old. One day as I was thinking about that the reality of how much of my life I've lost to the system set in. I have spent nearly half of my life incarcerated. I lived free for a little over 17 years. I've lived in a cell for almost 16 years. But the part that really made me depressed is that, according to my sentence, I still have to serve another 3? something years! I have faith that I won't have to put in all of that time but that concept alone just knocked me over the head. I was down about it for a few days. I had to let it go and give it to God. Today I am feeling a lot better.

In fact, Kevin has behaved like a very good friend to me all these years. Always asks about my family and my dogs. Worries about all the joint surgeries my husband and I have had. Expresses relief that our home survived several big wildfires. Wishes me safe travels and a good time when I go to my school reunions or vacations. Encourages me on tough consulting projects that require very long and intense hours. Sends holiday and birthday greetings.

With those optimistic words from Kevin, I found myself believing he might not reach old age behind bars.

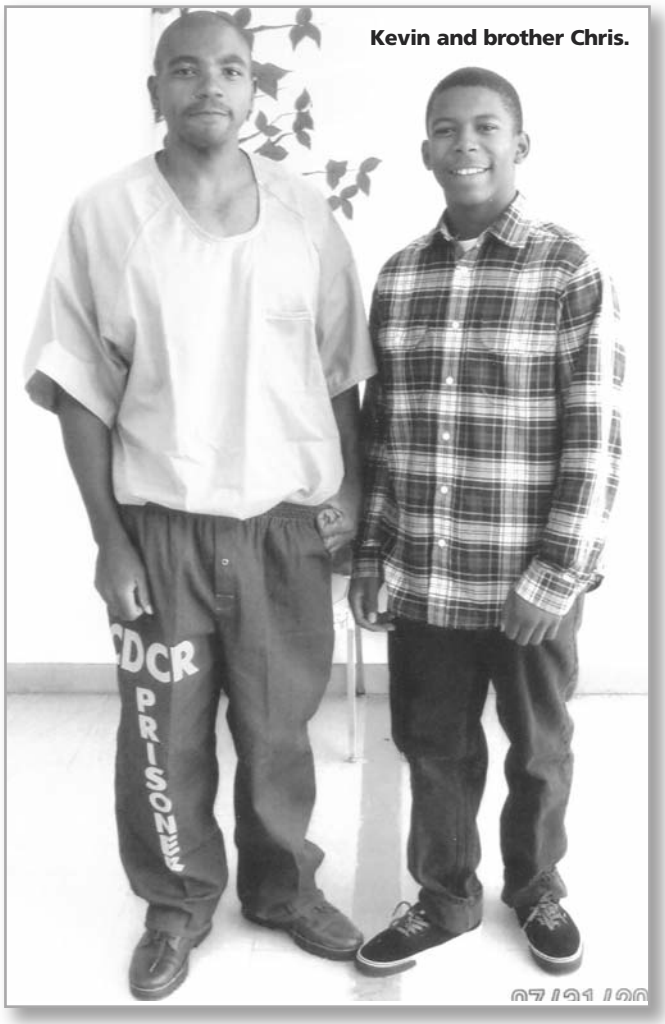
In 2009, Kevin wrote about a political event for the first time. "I watched the inauguration of our 44th president…. I didn't think I would ever see a person of color become president, but it's very encouraging to see people moving past old, outdated practices and beliefs. It gives me hope that one day something could change with the courts that would allow me to taste freedom again." With those optimistic words from Kevin, I found myself believing he might not reach old age behind bars.

I began to pay more attention to prison ministry and transitional programs, as well as judicial developments in California. I remembered the Delancey Street Foundation's impressive legacy in San Francisco. At no cost to taxpayers or clients, the organization provides a home, training, support and work for people who are starting over after incarceration. More recently, Father Greg Boyle, a Jesuit priest, founded Homeboy Industries in a gang-neutral part of Los Angeles on the edge of Chinatown. My friend, filmmaker Freida Mock, produced *G-Dog*, a documentary about Father Greg and his organization which has redirected the lives of thousands, offering a second chance to find a life with healthy purpose, skills and relationships: Jobs Not Jail; Nothing Stops a Bullet Like a Job; Planning a Future Instead of a Funeral. If only Kevin could be released before 2041. There was a movement in California to change the parole process for prisoners who had committed crimes as juveniles and received adult sentences. We both clutched the possibility quietly and tightly.

New developments and anxieties appeared in his letters during 2012 and 2013. For years he had continuously applied for a chance to work, but he was at the bottom of the list because his

sentence was so long. Finally, he was given a job in the dining room as a line server. This meant scooping food onto plates and cleaning the floors after meals were served. Pay was eight cents an hour. They deducted 55 percent for restitution he owed. At the end of the month, he cleared $2 or $3. As Kevin wrote, "The only real benefit is that we are allowed to eat whatever food is leftover."

There was increasing talk about moving large numbers of inmates to other facilities as the state reorganized the types of inmates and programs at many sites. Kevin fretted about the hardship it would be for his family to visit him if he was farther away from the LA area. And he was insecure about learning how to survive in a different set-up where he might be "rotting away for another 28 years."



Kevin and brother Chris.

Folsom Prison became his new home in 2013. Years ago, I had lived in nearby El Dorado Hills when Folsom was not much more than the Folsom Dam; the prison was made famous when Johnny Cash sang "And I ain't seen the sunshine since I don't know when, I'm stuck in Folsom prison, and time keeps draggin' on." I was embarrassed that I had not made it down to visit him at Ironwood Prison after I had been approved to do so. So, I planned to apply for visitation privileges at Folsom Prison and meet him in person there someday.

Kevin described the move to Folsom as a nightmare. The multi-day bus-trip transfer, with shackles on his ankles and wrist, was long and miserable. His personal things were withheld for weeks upon arrival. There were so many prisoners that they were stuck in their cells most of the time and lines were long for everything. Showers, toilets, phones and exercise yard privileges were limited, as were access to classes, self-help groups and job training. In his desperation, he spent much time in prayer. "I'm putting it all on His shoulders and keeping the faith that my journey in this life is all part of His divine plan." He wanted to request a transfer to another prison, where he might have a chance at finding a job or receiving training as a paralegal aide or alcohol and drug counselor.

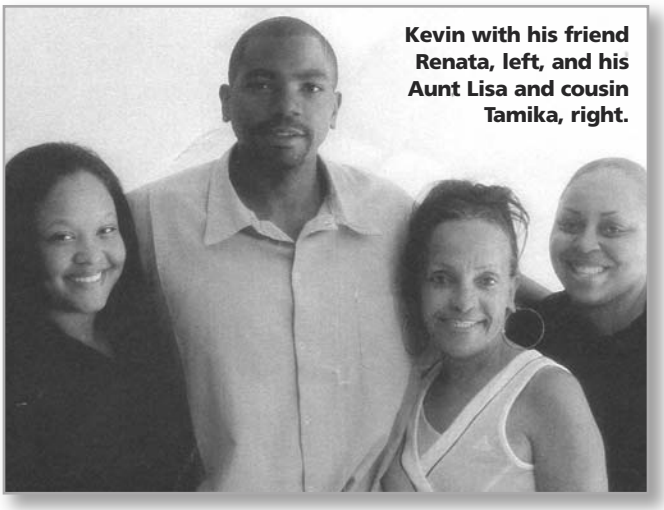
Then a few things shifted for Kevin. Standing in the exercise yard one spring day, he glimpsed the rolling green hills surrounding the prison. And a flock of geese passed overhead. After a decade in the scorching desert, where the wildlife consisted of "insects, reptiles and critters," to see hills covered with green grass, leafy oak trees and water fowl winging their way through the skies was refreshing. Nature calmed his soul.

The January 2014 passage of SB260 in California created hope, turmoil and fear in Kevin's

Standing in the exercise yard one spring day, he glimpsed the rolling green hills surrounding the prison.

Knowing there was a chance to be outside the prison bars before he would be an old man raised hopes for an earlier exit from the iron cage.

soul. The bill, entitled *Justice for Juveniles with Adult Prison Sentences*, established a new parole evaluation process for young offenders who had received adult sentences. Knowing there was a chance to be outside the prison bars before he would be an old man raised hopes for an earlier exit from the iron cage. But it was daunting to wonder if he could find *pro bono* legal assistance to work with him in time to request and prepare adequately for the parole hearings. What if he was disqualified for a hearing? What if he had to wait ten or fifteen more years to be selected for a hearing? What if he was not determined to be a suitable candidate for release by the commissioners? Failing was frightening. "I sit in here some nights and think about how being in the free world is going to be…Last time I was out there I was just a teen. I didn't have any real responsibilities…I've never had a job. Never had a car. Never even had to pay a bill…I will really be starting from scratch as a grown man." By now, he had spent more of his birthdays behind bars than outside.



Kevin with his friend Renata, left, and his Aunt Lisa and cousin Tamika, right.

On April 23, 2016, Kevin wrote to let me know he is scheduled for a September 14 initial hearing with the parole board. I thought of certain statements he made in letters in the past year: "I know in my heart I will never commit another crime…I am confident that I can restart my life and be a productive citizen." He was determined to be someone his family and friends could be proud of again. I also remembered his remarks about raising himself on the streets of Compton after his parents died and then putting so much solitary effort into learning how to resolve feeling insignificant, unloved and depressed.

"These days I have trouble staying in the moment. I am already thinking about my life beyond these walls…." And I'm ready to bake him a peach cobbler.

This relationship started with my writing a thank-you note to Kevin in 2003. Now I will write a letter of support for him to share with the commissioners at the hearing in September.

And then I must remember to write Kevin one more thank-you note.

For keeping me aware of the freedoms and abundance in my life.

For reminding me how relatively trivial most annoyances, disappointments or problems outside of prison bars tend to be.

For demonstrating how a lonely teenager caught up in a gang culture can cross over to a redemptive path despite all the barriers.

For confirming the transformative magic of friendship, of being a North Star for someone.

For putting a spotlight on the forgiveness, second chances, and possibilities God promises to all and requests we offer each other.

For putting a face on why we must keep working to improve the criminal justice system.

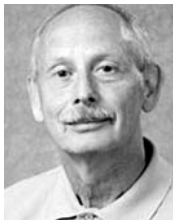
For being brave enough to join Mark's writing class and allow pen to strike paper. ■

Visit InsideOutWriters.org where Jimmy Wu, one of the original students in Mark Salsman's class, is now on the staff. The mission is to reduce juvenile recidivism rates.

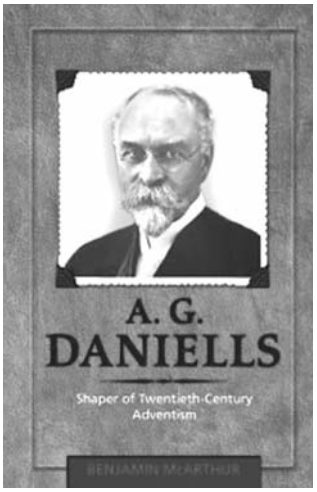
Juli Miller is a member of the *Spectrum* editorial board and a health care consultant. She lives in Sun Valley, Idaho where she regularly attends the Sun Valley Writers Conference. It was there that she first met author Mark Salzman who introduced her to several of his juvenile hall writing students, with whom she became a pen pal.

A Review: *A. G. Daniells: Shaper of Twentieth-Century Adventism* by Benjamin McArthur | BY GILBERT M. VALENTINE

According to George Knight, General Editor of the Adventist Pioneer biography series, no other person did more to shape the Adventist church for its dynamic journey through the twentieth century than Arthur G. Daniells (*below*). An ordained Adventist minister for fifty-three of his seventy-six years, Daniells is best known for being the longest-serving president of the General Conference (1901–1922). Eighty-two years after his death, readers now have the opportunity of meeting him and making an assessment of his extraordinary life and work.



In the pages of a thoroughly researched, significant new biography, Ben McArthur (*right*), Professor of History at Southern Adventist University, has written a truly engaging study of Daniells (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2016). It is the first full-length biography of this influential leader and is distinguished by its rigor, informed analysis, and insight. It sets new benchmarks for the way in which it seeks an understanding of Daniells' leadership in the wider social and cultural context of his time. Pacific Press has been bravely willing to publish a picture of Daniells and his growing church that is encouraging and inspiring, and yet at the same time a frank critique that acknowledges with candor the "warts" and the sometimes "not pleasant" face of both the man and the church. Right at the beginning, after telling the reader that he has trudged through the many pages of the early *Review* exploring the context for Daniells' formative years, McArthur, with the best of Adventist credentials, writes that he came away from the survey with the clear impression that early Adventism was characterized by "a culture of hectoring" and "bickering leadership," and a "pervasive undertow of guilt." The church called believers to a life of witness and service that involved "unremitting effort" where "more was never enough." Such a call was "intended to inspire," McArthur writes, but at times proved intimidating. Daniells' conscience was nurtured in this background of piety and a keen sense of an imminent advent and it propelled him into a life of satisfying service and achievement for his Lord.



Daniells is best known for being the longest-serving president of the General Conference.

If there was an Adventist Pulitzer for excellence in writing. McArthur's volume would be a top contender this year for several reasons. Southern's history professor brings a wry humor and freshness to his writing style that makes the engrossing narrative highly enjoyable. The concise and elegant prose is enlivened by a deft use of metaphor and a gift for colorful turns of phrase. According to McArthur, Daniells "could scratch his pedagogical itch," (303) display "a tin ear to his

TOP: WIKIMEDIA.ORG/WIKIPEDIA/COMMONS/THUMB/D/DE/DANIELLS; RIGHT: SOUTHERN.EDU/MEDIA/IMG/ACADEMIC-SITES/HISTORY

The church called believers to a life of witness and service that involved "unremitting effort" where "more was never enough."

hearers" (233) and helped the church in Australia to "put legs under its dream" (70) in the founding of Avondale. Alonzo Jones (*top right*) could be a "bulldog, snapping at Daniells's legs," (183) and John Harvey Kellogg (*bottom right*) was guilty of "blistering his ear" (189). If the routine tasks of his office "were parsnips and spinach, global mission was his apple pie" (255). In fact, Daniells "found every which way to put foreign missions as a priority for the church. Bent every tree, pruned every nonessential expense to free up money for mission," (270).

FROM TOP: ADVENTPIONEERBOOKS.NET; NNDB.COM/PEOPLE

Another delightfully engaging characteristic of McArthur's narrative is his illuminating use of historical parallels that bring new understanding to Daniells' leadership skills and challenges. We learn that, in the implementation phase of Daniells' early General Conference presidency, he adopted strategies akin to those of General George Washington in his early years. Daniells' return to the United States from Australia in 1901, however, was "not in the manner of Julius Caesar returning from Gaul to claim a crown." Later, as a mission-focused president, Daniells was like General George Marshall who, confined to Washington, D. C. during World War II, was obliged to let others lead on the front line. Daniells had to be content to be the recruiter and strategic planner for mission advance, rather than being on the front line himself (280). Alonzo Jones was a firebrand, like a Patrick Henry; he advocated for the 1787 Articles of Confederation, which lacked a strong executive. "History proved Henry wrong just as it proved A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner wrong" (178).

McArthur brings a superb scholarly background and training to the study of Daniells. He has a PhD in American history from the University of Chicago and is associate editor of Oxford's influential twenty-four-volume *American National Biography*. This enables him to provide rich, contextual, social and historical background to many of the crucial denominational developments that took place during Daniells' time in office. In understanding these developments against the social and religious happenings of the wider society and viewing them through the lens of Max Weber's sociological theories, McArthur casts fresh light on many of Daniells' decisions and helps us understand the pressures he was often under. This is illustrated particularly in his analysis of Daniells' prominent role in reorganizing the church in 1901.

McArthur analyzes the major reorganization of Church structure that broke up centralized denominational power in 1901–1903, against the background of the anti-trust movement that took on centralized business monopolies in America at the turn of the century. With regard to top-heavy concentrations of monopoly power, Daniells did for the church what Theodore Roosevelt did for America. McArthur cites the wide-spread discussion in society about the kingly power of industrial titans like John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie. The debate over the use of the term "president," and the nature of this office in church governance structure, takes on new meaning when understood against the background of the debate in the wider society about "captains of industry" who tightly controlled their empires through interlocking corporate directorates. The conflict with Kellogg is also illuminated by this broader historical context and illustrates McArthur's point that developments in the church do not occur in a social vacuum. His analysis of both the growth and the increasing bureaucratization of the church following the period of reorganization is masterful. The increasing growth of institutions highlights "Adventism's paradoxical genius for putting institutional legs under an apocalyptic vision of the future" (289). McArthur's skill as a historian, complemented by his own experience as an administrator, adds insight and depth to these discussions (103–105).

Another episode for which the provision of a fresh contextual background proves illumi-

nating is Ellen White's abortive 1909 attempt to introduce a meat-abstinence pledge for the church. The historical context of scandals in the meat-packing industry, and the agitation of muck-raker Upton Sinclair (*right, top*) over lack of hygiene, give valuable context. Daniells, himself a meat-eater, pushed back against White (*right, center*), who had just recommitted to vegetarianism. Daniells felt that the pledge initiative was unworkable and that its potential for generating internecine strife in the church was too great (310–311). McArthur's assess-ment is that Daniells "had his ear closer to the ground" than either Ellen or her son W. C. White on this issue (312).

Daniells as president was challenged in the difficult and sensitive area of race relations in Washington, D. C., at the time the General Conference moved its headquarters there in 1903. In Doug Morgan's highly informative biography of Lewis C. Sheafe (*above*, in this same Adventist Pioneer series) we get Sheafe's perspective, and that of the African American community, on the injustices and tensions. The lack of access to health and education services and the deep prejudice that worked against the black community at this time manifested itself in the Church. McArthur gives us Daniells' perspective on the conflicts over race in Washington and his commitment to prioritize evangelism over every other concern. This, however, did not mean integrated evangelistic endeavor. That was too much like social activism (225). McArthur, though sympathetic to Daniells, wonders whether the president opted for a difficult but ultimately "unwise compromise," and that this was a case of "moral blindness on the part of the Church." He echoes Morgan's assessment that this was indeed "a lost opportunity" for the Church. "Denominational culture was narrow-cast and often rigid" (243). He is not willing to simply gloss over the evidence that in some of Daniells' difficult interactions with Sheafe's black church in Washington, D. C., he was guilty of "casuistry" and a "lack of complete candor" as he yielded to the administrator's temptation to argue on the basis of a "certain parsing of the facts." McArthur considers that Sheafe "could be excused his skepticism" toward Daniells and that this episode of Daniells' administration shows "a less than pleasant face of denominational history" (231–235). McArthur's chapter on the "Color Line" should cast helpful light on the lingering racial tensions in the church of today.

There are other intriguing episodes that McArthur's treatment sheds new light on and which each by itself would make the price of the book worthwhile. These include Daniells' mammoth conflict with Kellogg (although McArthur overlooks the attempted coup d'état in 1902) and the relocation of the denomination's headquarters to Washington, the conflict over "the daily," and the discussion of Daniells' role in the historic 1919 Bible Conference. Students of leadership studies might wish for a little more use of the lens of social psychology theory, perhaps in the area of change and conflict management, to enlighten us concerning Daniells' leadership skills and style. Nevertheless, such students and church leaders at every level will find the book a mine of helpful leadership insights.

New Insights on the Prophet

This is a work of serious but accessible scholarship about important church leaders who worked closely with Ellen White. By reading it, we gain not only new insight into the contribution that these leaders made to the church, but we also get a much deeper insight into the dynamics of White's work. In this volume we see White's special gift and we also see new and more realistic perspectives on the way her gift interacted with other leadership

If there was an Adventist Pulitzer for excellence in writing. McArthur's volume would be a top contender this year for several reasons.

FROM TOP: HTTP://THELITTLELOWERLAYER.WEEBLY.COM/UPTON-SINCLAIR; HTTP://NOTICIAS.ADVENTISTAS.ORG/PT/NOTICIA/DATAS-ESPECIAIS/CARTAS-E-MANUSCRITOS-INEDITOS-DE-ELLEN-WHITE-SAO-PUBLICADOS/; ADVENTISTPEACE.TYPEPAD.COM

McArthur casts fresh light on many of Daniells' decisions and helps us understand the pressures he was often under.

roles in the church. We see that Daniells valued the counsel of White and submitted his judgment to her counsel. His dying days were spent writing a book affirming his convictions in *The Abiding Gift of Prophecy*. But we also see a Daniells who gently pushed back at times, suspended judgment on occasion, and at other times worked around what was difficult and, perhaps, impractical counsel. McArthur's analysis of the tussle between charisma and the establishment over the financing of Madison College in 1907, for example, suggests that a leader could at times disagree with White and survive (308–309).

The pressure on Daniells to focus on city evangelism and then to resign from the presidency is another example of a problematic episode which McArthur is willing to address frankly, yet constructively. One gets the sense that both W. C. White and Daniells had to delicately tip-toe their way around the aging seer at Elmshaven until she reversed herself. There were clearly broad values to the church that accrued from the prophetic call for greater commitment to city evangelism in 1910. But Daniells' mission to New York, McArthur points out, was not in itself a success, though it may of necessity have been reported as such. For Daniells, the additional demands of evangelism at that time imposed a heavy long-term cost on his health—an unhappy result of adhering to White's counsel. Understating the matter, McArthur acknowledges that this was a "difficult episode" for both Daniells and W. C. White (320 ff).

The perceptive critique of Daniells' oversight of the denomination's move of its headquarters to Washington, and its subtle manipulating of Ellen White's image, is also revealing. There were many influences at work in the decision to locate in the nation's Capital, and Ellen White's role was not especially significant. She was actually more interested in New York as a site, reports McArthur. But in the official statements by Daniels and in the write-up by the *Review*, the role of White was idealized and overstated as the determining authority for the choice. Her advice, it was explained by Leon Smith, "was entirely independent of any statements or representations made to [her] by members of the committee." This, according to McArthur, simply did not line up with the facts. He observes that perhaps "this slanted version of prophetic advice" may have been intended "to dampen the expected resistance in Battle Creek." But, he observes, "propagating White's prophetic messages as a pure distillation of divine counsel—free of human influence—would ultimately return to haunt the church" (163).

McArthur also observes that Daniells, too, tended to see things in idealized terms when later recalling events. He reports, for example, that Daniells described White as offering unwavering support during the Kellogg crisis, although this is not matched in the contemporary materials from his own pen (192). The over-high claims for White could rebound with a distinct downside. It did so in 1919, when the results of the subtle, unrealistic image-making fostered at Elmshaven became a problem that church leaders had to address.

Daniells would need to figure largely in any accounting of the 1919 Bible Conference, and McArthur's treatment of this episode in Daniells' leadership is comprehensive, nuanced, and frank. Particularly helpful is the penetrating analysis of the fundamentalist currents both outside and within that buffeted the church at the time. Why Daniells gave in to the false allure of fundamentalism is a problem, says McArthur. The president refused to allow the stenographic transcripts of the sensitive discussions to be circulated. McArthur notes that the reasons related primarily to the sensitivity over the church's failed prophecies concerning Turkey during World War I, which led to confusion and uncertainty over prophetic hermeneutics. The frank discussions about White and inspiration were of secondary concern. Nevertheless, in McArthur's view, the events of 1919 constituted an important crossroads for the church and, as Daniells faced them, he came "within an inch of being a transformational leader." Ultimately, however, he

faults Daniells for a "failure in leadership." Such was the turbulence of the criticism and the cultural cross currents of the times. The president faced "a situation with complexities beyond his ability to solve" (386). Among other issues, such as the length of his tenure, it was criticism over Daniells' frankness about Ellen White that brought an end to his leadership in the highly political General Conference session of 1922.

Along the way, in this richly tapestried story, there are a number of seemingly trivial observations about Daniells, which add color and texture that enrich our take on the man. Daniells heard President McKinley speak at a convention in Buffalo just the day before McKinley was assassinated. John Burden of Loma Linda fame, with whom Daniells had to work, had been earlier removed from every denominational committee he had served on in Australia because of his dogmatic ways. He suffered "a surfeit of conscientious convictions," according to his supervisor (272). Such rigidity "was the vice of Adventism's virtue," writes McArthur.

McArthur's superb biography of Daniells makes a valuable contribution to Adventist historiography with its mastery of the abundant primary sources now available. It also draws from and builds on a rich accumulation of related and complimentary secondary studies. In this way it represents a significant maturing of historical and contextual analysis of the denomination and its leaders. This new historical analysis began in the 1970s with a number of ground-breaking studies, and it continued on into the 1980s and beyond. McArthur also benefits from the wide range of serious scholarly analysis of the beginnings of the church in Australia, initiated by Arthur Ferch at the time of the church's centennial events in Australia in 1985. This went well beyond superficial hagiography, as does McArthur's study. In the USA, studies by George Knight and his doctoral students at Andrews added to the foundation of knowledge through dissertations. There has also been continuing work by Ron Graybill, Jonathan Butler and others. The rich documentation in McArthur's extensive footnotes, for example, cite the sociological insights of Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart in *Seeking a Sanctuary*, an impressive number of informative secular histories, and a range of scholars as diverse as Ronald Numbers, Michael Campbell, Donald McAdams, Jerry Moon, Gilbert Valentine, Ronald Graybill, Barry Oliver, Richard Schwarz, and Arthur White, to name just a few. McArthur is thoroughly familiar with this literature and his treatment of Daniells is the richer for it. Each new volume in the Adventist Pioneer series, it seems, is able to benefit from the previous volumes and the portraits thus become clearer, fuller, and more real.

Daniells could never be accused of living "an unexamined life," observes McArthur. He was thoughtful, reflective, and passionately convinced that Adventism had a message the world needed to hear. McArthur's examination of his life will both surprise and inspire. It opens rich new vistas of understanding on the development of Adventism. It is a story that is absorbing until the very last page and it will be the standard reference work on Daniells for many years to come. ■

New Zealander **Gilbert M. Valentine** is professor of Leadership and Administration at La Sierra University and has a special interest in the area of leadership and Adventist history. He is author of a scholarly biography on W. W. Prescott (2005), a history of the White Estate entitled *The Struggle for the Prophetic Heritage* (2006), and a study of the political influence of Ellen White in *The Prophet and the Presidents* (2011). Recently he co-edited, with Woodrow Whidden, a Festschrift for George Knight entitled *Adventist Maverick* (2014). He is married to Kendra Haloviak Valentine, who also teaches at La Sierra University, and enjoys visiting his Kiwi homeland with him.

McArthur gives us Daniells' perspective on the conflicts over race in Washington and his commitment to prioritize evangelism over every other concern.

Scriven editorial ➔ continued *from page 4...*

recall that human majorities, like humans in general, see through a glass darkly—as a litmus test for sound teaching; the notion that conversation about the adequacy of our beliefs is proper to a professional or empowered elite, but not to ordinary members such as the young adults who attend our colleges.

Sustaining the faith of young Seventh-day Adventists is certainly compatible with the metaphor of the church as a "household" shaped by apostles, prophets and, most importantly, Jesus Christ. But the three premises I have listed need to be examined under New Testament light, and no one I wrote to took up my question about biblical justifications for what is going on. High administrators face overwhelming amounts of work, but they still have an obligation to show how the endorsement initiative, so deeply controversial, meshes with the spirit of the New Testament (or even, as I might add, the spirit of our pioneers). If such work is avoided, does that not constitute a "violation" of the "household"? If key premises that drive the initiative fail to represent New Testament sensibility, after all, they surely put the faith of us all, along with our very unity, in gravest peril.

No one I wrote to took up my question about biblical justifications for what is going on.

Maybe it's a fool's errand to urge such attention to Scripture by high-level administrators. Given their busyness, and perhaps also their biases, only someone self-deceived, it might be said, could hope for such a thing. But discord will follow implementation of this initiative. So, if hoping for attention to Scripture is naive, ceasing to hope is worse. In a household, ceasing to hope is the final betrayal. ■

Charles Scriven chairs Adventist Forum.

Byrd interview ➔ continued *from page 45...*

How would you rate the Adventist church on issues of social justice? Are we doing well or not so well?

To be fair, some churches and pastors are involved and doing a fantastic job. They simply "get it." I have had the pleasure of conversing with some of them; but sadly they are in the minority. As a church, I think we have quite some way to go. Hopefully Adventists for Social Justice can be a channel to get us where we need to be.

How did you become an Adventist? How involved are you in your church?

I was raised within the Methodist religion, and came into Adventism through my mother, who was Adventist at the time. She placed my brother and me in Adventist school at Northeastern Academy, and I never left. I currently attend the Mount Zion SDA Church in Hamden, Connecticut, although the majority of my spiritual training occurred at Rogers Avenue in Brooklyn, New York. I've been involved in Youth Ministries for the entire fifteen years I have been in the church. I serve as the Youth Leader at my church. I've served as a chaplain for the Brooklyn South Staten Island Youth Federation. I've served on multiple committees. I was recently asked to serve as a Young Adult Member on the Atlantic Union Executive Committee. I remain very much involved as I believe in order to see the change I desire, I have to be present and accounted for. ■

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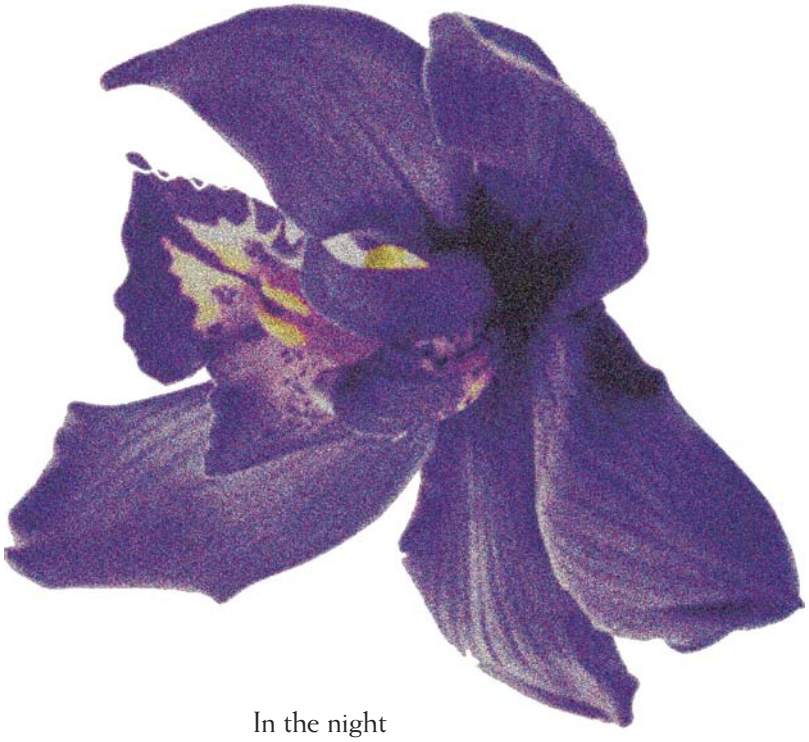
The Blessing

BY MARY MCINTOSH



Sometimes in the dark
at night
you wake up.

You remember the orchid,
purple, its stamen, yellow,
the velvet inside

Its folds of purple
lavender, white. Shiny,
dusted with yellow.

And the stamen
straight, unyielding
its furry tip.

It was late at night,
you were tucking him in, your father,
his bones in angular
ridges under the blanket,
his body a suggestion of flesh.

You wanted to say something
right, to ease the pain but instead
you kissed him and prayed,
breathing "goodnight"

And as you turned
you caught the words so
familiar, yet never before spoken,
"Goodnight, my darling."

When he died you found

An orchid.

In the night
you remember,
you must tell someone
its secret.

Someday you will bend
to a tiny ear
convoluted in pink
warm spirals of perfect
delicate flesh

And whisper

Mary McIntosh, PhD, is a poet, freelance writer, and editor who has taught English at Pacific Union College, Weimar College, and other colleges in the Northwest. She conducts workshops for aspiring writers and is active in writers' groups in the Ashland-Medford, Oregon, area.