Adventist World

01/2025

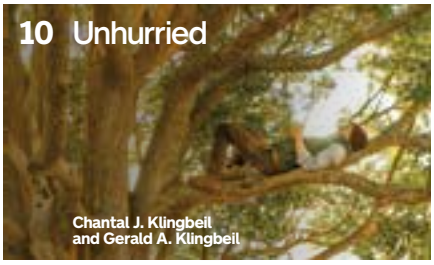
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All in God's Time





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Justin Kim

In *The Culture Map: Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business*, author Erin Meyer parses out eight cultural differences to help understand and navigate the international business world. One axis was presented for each of the eight differences to show the variant range of the global cultures and their impact on multicultural work settings.

One of the eight areas is on scheduling and the sense of time. There are some cultures that hold time to be linear. They are very intentional in their relation to time. Appointments, schedules, deadlines, and sequences are kept. Emphasis is on promptness, organization, and preparation, while tardiness is a cultural sin.

On the other hand, there are also some cultures that have a flexible concept of time. Emphasis is placed on fluidity, dynamicity, and adaptability to arising opportunities. Multitasking is encouraged, and interruptions to plans are tolerable. Illogical rigidity is their cultural sin. One culture holds preparation as its highest value, while the other holds flexibility as its highest. One places relationships, nuances, social graces, and interpersonal protocol as secondary, expensed for the sake of timeliness. The other places order, goals, arrangements, and accuracy as secondary, disposable for human interaction.

You can imagine the working relationship between individuals from these opposing cultural values. One culture would be criticized as lazy or disheveled. The other culture would be deemed cold and mechanical.

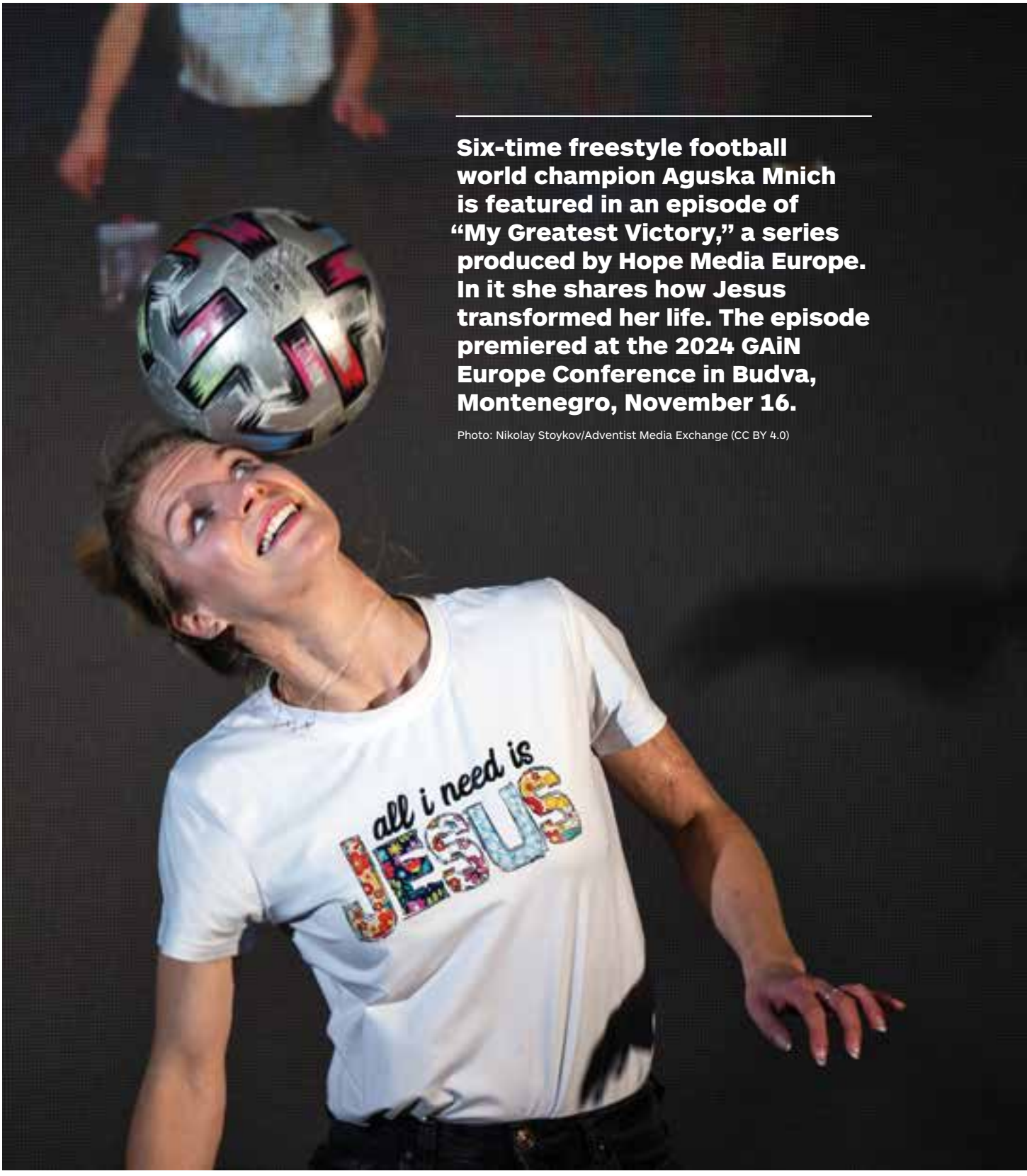
Adding to this complexity, each culture has versions of these ranges within themselves. Developed regions and urban concentrations may highlight productivity, results, efficiency, analysis, and diligence, while developing regions of rural persuasions may underscore connections, loyalty, rapport, and conduct.

What should the culture of the Advent movement be?



Adventists should rise above cultural limitations, seeing as we are called to honor both aspects. Students of Christ's prophecies are called to timeliness, as our prophetic heritage begs us to be prepared, urgent, watching, waiting, mindful of the times, and productively diligent while waiting. At the same time, students of Christ's ministry are just as much called to kindness, patience, and character, understanding the value that Christ places on fellow souls when we, at the foot of the cross, see Him crucified for humanity.

We see this in Christ's injunction to us: seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. He calls for His priorities first, assuming that we are mindful of time, order, and value. But He also calls for His kingdom, made up of souls, and His righteousness, or God's character of justice, holiness, and love. Regardless of our earthly cultures, may our two eyes be on this heavenly kingdom, one eye on being urgently timely and one eye on being loving like Christ.



Six-time freestyle football world champion Aguska Mnich is featured in an episode of "My Greatest Victory," a series produced by Hope Media Europe. In it she shares how Jesus transformed her life. The episode premiered at the 2024 GAiN Europe Conference in Budva, Montenegro, November 16.

Photo: Nikolay Stoykov/Adventist Media Exchange (CC BY 4.0)

“The mission of Adventist lawyers, notaries, and legal professionals extends beyond providing legal assistance. Christ calls us to serve the church, support its members, and reach out to those in need. Above all, God has chosen us to spread the gospel message throughout the world.”

—Nelson Paulo, religious liberty director for the Southern Asia-Pacific Division, about the launch of the Adventists Lawyers and Notaries Association. Nearly 200 Adventist legal experts from Indonesia and the Philippines attended the event in October. Participants of the event committed to upholding religious liberty and advancing the gospel throughout Indonesia, aiming to serve as advocates of both faith and justice.

Understanding Wholistic Healthful Living

Church members were asked how often they hear sermons on what wholistic healthful living looks like.

- **25%** Very frequently
- **44%** Frequently
- **25%** Seldom
- **6%** Never



Scan the QR code to view the complete survey.

N = 139,825
Source: 2022-2023 Global Church Member Survey

Data provided by the General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research

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“This award is more than I expected, as I see myself working under the Great Physician’s guidance and honoring Him. . . . I give God the glory for all that He has done.”

—Jerome Stern, retired senior medical officer from Andrews Memorial Hospital in Jamaica, about receiving the Badge of Honor for Long and Faithful Service during a ceremony of investiture and presentation of national honors and awards in October. The governor-general of Jamaica, His Excellency Sir Patrick Allen, presented the award to Stern, who served the country for 46 years in both public and private health care. Stern’s passion for promoting health led him to conduct smoking-cessation seminars.

“When God’s light is allowed to shine, no one is able to put it out.”

—Felix Wadrobert, president of the New Caledonia Mission, about the first Seventh-day Adventists that were baptized on Futuna Island. This past October three family members on the island were baptized. Kalisito Tuihamouga, one of the newly baptized members, was first introduced to the Adventist Church while visiting his daughter in New Caledonia. The message touched him, and when he returned to Futuna, he took with him a Bible, a Sabbath School lesson book, and *Listen to the Bible*, a book on the biblical teachings of the Adventist Church. He began sharing what he’d learned with his family.

“We Adventists love to be different, but if our being different does not make a difference in the lives of others, we are just being weird.”

—Reylourd P. Reyes, secretary of the Central Luzon Provinces Mission in the Philippines, during a leadership training weekend at Halvorsbøle Conference Center, Norway, in October. The event was geared toward teaching outreach methods to Norway church leaders. Reyes, who has been instrumental in planting six churches in the Greater Manila area in recent years and has experience in sharing the gospel with secular people, made the point that if we are intentional in spending time with new friends and are willing to listen to their needs, we will get opportunities to share the gospel.

60 Years

The Adventist Aviation Association (AAA) of the North New South Wales Conference in Australia celebrated in November 60 years of reaching remote communities through aviation in the South Pacific region. To mark the occasion, organizers hosted a special celebratory event. Former and current ministry members, including pilots, missionaries, and supporters, attended. During the event attendees had the chance to connect, worship together, share stories, and look back at the history of AAA.

“God in His mercy and faithfulness has chosen this place to be the right place, this time to be the right time, these leaders to be the right leaders, this project to be the right project, to bring the right message, songs, content, so people will end up in the right place.”

—Desmond Diaz, project contractor, about the groundbreaking ceremony for Hope Channel Philippines. The event took place in November at the Adventist University of the Philippines campus in Silang, Cavite, and drew leaders from the communication and Hope Channel departments of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division, as well as officers from regional church offices throughout the Philippines.



Photo: North Philippine Union Conference

Open-Air Market in Korea Raises Funds for Mission

Sahmyook University event coincides with church anniversary celebrations.

Marcos Paseggi, *Adventist World*

An open-air market at Sahmyook University in Seoul, Korea, on November 10 helped to connect rural Seventh-day Adventist producers with their urban counterparts, as it also raised funds for mission projects beyond the country's borders.

"The idea is for Adventists from rural areas to come, display, and sell local agricultural products and other goods, especially to other Adventists living in the city," organizers explained in a letter advertising the event. "Adventists are encouraged to view and purchase these products, with the goal of fostering a connection between urban and rural communities."

A second goal, organizers acknowledged, is that some of the proceedings from the sales will be donated to fund mission projects mostly in Asian countries, where the work of the Adventist Church faces some challenges because of the Muslim or Buddhist background of the population, they explained.

BUSTLING WITH ACTIVITY

In 2024 the open-air market on the Sahmyook campus included close to 70 stalls. Most of them offered fresh produce at competitive prices and traditional Korean dishes for every taste. Offers went from Asian pears and persimmons to chili peppers, raw chestnuts, and organic honey.

Other stalls offered dried mushrooms, seaweed, and homemade kimchi, all staples of traditional Korean cuisine. Still others advertised sweet options, including peanut brittle, Korean pancakes, and made-on-the-spot cookies. And among the stalls, a special section included tables and benches where members could socialize as they enjoyed the food options under the slightly warm autumn sun.

Besides food options for every taste, Adventist members visiting the stalls could purchase flowers and books. In a corner, a worker of Sahmyook Foods shared tips on healthy eating. The Adventist food company is known for going beyond profits to fund Adventist mission projects beyond the country's borders. Still another stall offered relaxing foot massages.

FOCUS ON MISSION

While the urban-rural Adventist connection was certainly part of the day's activities at the market, the organizers made sure the focus of the event on mission was visible for all guests. A double-sized stall advertised the activities and projects of the Adventist-laymen's Services and Industries (ASi) branch in the West Central Korean Conference. During the 2024 festival ASi raised funds to open a dental clinic in Lahore, Pakistan, a region added to the territory of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD, which includes Korea) only in 2023.

In the central square of the open-air market, an ASi member showed how to ring a bell to announce a personal contribution to that specific project. Other stalls raised funds either directly or indirectly through sales to fund mission initiatives in Cambodia, a country outside the NSD territory but inside the 10/40 window, a region where most of the world population lives but where Christianity is a minority religion.

"Shorter mission trips, longer mission trips, outreach projects to improve the lives of the people, and evangelistic initiatives," one of the promoters explained. "Everything is about mission."

In November the Korean Union Conference celebrated 120 years of Adventist presence in the peninsula. During the celebration church leaders and members called attention to the sacrifices of the pioneers. Leaders also shared how Adventists in Korea quickly moved from being recipients of missionaries to sending native missionaries to dozens of counties around the world. "Initiatives such as the open-air market help to raise funds to keep mission abroad alive and growing," they said.



An open-air market on the Sahmyook University campus in Seoul, Korea, helped raise funds for mission.

Photo: Marcos Paseggi, *Adventist World*

Leaders Join Forces to Fight Jiggers Infestation in Western Kenya

Two regional health departments partner to promote health and sanitation.

Malachi Odwoli, Western Kenya Conference, and *Adventist World*

The Seventh-day Adventist Church's West Kenya Union Conference (WKUC) partnered with the Western Kenya Conference (WKC) for a three-day anti-jiggers campaign in Malava, Kenya, from October 10 to 12. The initiative, spearheaded by the Health and Evangelism departments of both organizations, aimed to combat the debilitating effects of jigger infestations in the region.

Jiggers are tiny parasitic fleas that burrow into the skin and have long been a hidden yet devastating affliction in rural parts of Kenya, particularly in areas where sanitation infrastructure is lacking. The consequences of jigger infestations on human health are severe. They cause intense pain, inflammation, and secondary infections, limiting mobility, especially in children, and disrupting the ability to attend school and participate in daily activities. The physical impact, however, is only one aspect of the situation.

The emotional toll is equally devastating, health leaders said. Individuals, particularly children, suffer the stigma of visible sores and scars, which often leads to social isolation, anxiety, and depression. This stigmatization can result in a loss of self-worth, limiting access to education and reducing opportunities for community engagement.

While the physical burden of jiggers is harrowing, the psychological impact is profound. Those affected often experience deep feelings of shame and helplessness, making it even harder to overcome the challenges they face. This vicious cycle, in which physical discomfort exacerbates mental distress, underscores the urgent need for a wholistic approach to health, one that combines practical solutions with spiritual care. The anti-jiggers campaign in Malava was a shining example of this integrated approach, combining health interventions with the healing power of faith, leaders said.



Two Seventh-day Adventist church regions in western Kenya recently partnered for an anti-jiggers campaign in Malava.

Photo: Western Kenya Conference

At the forefront of the campaign, WKUC evangelism director Azaria Otieno and health director Daniel Tirop shared powerful messages of hope and healing. "To foster a truly healthy society, we must address both the physical and emotional ailments impacting our communities," Tirop said. "When individuals are freed from the burden of disease, they are better positioned to experience spiritual growth and engage fully in community life."

The campaign gained significant momentum with the involvement of key WKC leaders. Health director Angellah Omondi and evangelism director Lucas Ogwoka played instrumental roles in mobilizing local support and ensuring that the message of jigger eradication reached every corner of the community. WKC secretary Joseph Lumati also lent his support.

Throughout the three-day campaign volunteers worked tirelessly to treat individuals affected by jiggers, applying medicinal solutions to alleviate the painful symptoms and prevent further infestations. The event also featured educational outreach, offering free medical consultations as well as practical guidance on sanitation and hygiene to help prevent future outbreaks.

By addressing the physical health needs of Malava's residents, the WKUC and WKC have worked to eradicate a painful and dangerous pest and have also paved the way for greater spiritual renewal and social cohesion, leaders said. "Through continued collaboration, determination, and unwavering support, this campaign is sowing the seeds for a brighter, healthier future, where individuals can be free from the physical and psychological toll of jiggers and empowered to participate fully in both their communities and their faith."

Adventist Church Reaffirms God as Creator on Special Emphasis Day

The IAD celebrated "Creation Sabbath" as an integral part of Adventist faith.

Libna Stevens, Inter-American Division News

Seventh-day Adventist leaders recently reaffirmed God as the Creator of the universe during a special livestreamed program titled "Creation Sabbath," held on October 26 from Miami, Florida, United States. The event followed a week of creation-themed activities in Adventist schools and auditoriums throughout the Inter-American Division (IAD) territory.

"Creation Sabbath is a meaningful day that underscores the foundation of our faith and the essence of Adventist education, which seeks to understand the world and life through a biblical worldview," said Faye Patterson, IAD education director and main organizer of the event.

The day's focus was on coming together to celebrate and reflect on God's wonders in creation and remember His love and power, which are manifested in nature, she said. "We are not products of chance or purposeless evolutionary processes," Patterson emphasized. "We are intentional beings, created in the image of a loving and caring God, who has a unique purpose for each of us."

Patterson also emphasized that the celebration of creation is more than a reminder of God's six days of work; it profoundly influences our worldview, our relationships, and our environment. "In our Adventist educational institutions we emphasize that God designed every aspect of nature—every species, every plant, every facet of life—to reflect His character," she said. She added that this understanding of creation instills a sense of responsibility toward the earth and our fellow beings as stewards of God's creation.

Luciano U. González, of the Geoscience Research Institute at Montemorelos University, compared various theories on the origins of the earth, from such philosophers as Aristotle and Heraclitus, to the scientific discoveries of atoms, electrons, and protons by figures such as John Dalton and Niels Bohr. He pointed to biblical references of God's creative power and quoted writings from Ellen G. White, cofounder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

"God, the Creator, has the power to transform energy into matter," González said.

During the program leaders introduced a new project called TheoVerse Legacy, a virtual reality platform designed to bring people closer to biblical stories and clarify common questions, such as the creation story. The platform is divided into three sections: a small museum, an art room showcasing the history of some church pioneers, and a central area with books that, when opened, allow users to step into the story. The project will soon be available to educational institutions.

The online Creation Sabbath event was a key step in encouraging more schools and educational institutions across the IAD to engage in creation-themed activities. "Many schools have been highlighting creation, but we want to see all of our schools incorporate it into their curriculum each year for a full week," Patterson said.

The IAD Education Department has provided resources for teachers to help students engage in in-depth studies of Genesis, expand their knowledge, and nurture a Christian worldview. The Creation Classroom Packet includes design ideas and decorations for classrooms, science labs, and more.

"This Creation Sabbath is about inspiring our students, teachers, educators, leaders, and members alike," Patterson concluded. The goal, she said, is "to deepen our commitment to caring for our planet, building relationships marked by kindness and respect, and living with a profound sense of purpose, knowing we belong to a God who loves us and will soon return."



Students at Lázaro Cárdenas del Río Adventist School in Reforma, Chiapas, Mexico, show their creation-themed paintings and crafts.

Photo: Lázaro Cárdenas del Río Adventist School

Mission Focus

Faith Toh, Singapore Conference, Southern Asia-Pacific Division, and *Adventist World*



Members of the Adventist Active Centre in Singapore participate in a team-building activity for senior citizens.

Photo: Office of Adventist Mission, Singapore Conference

Adventist Mission in Singapore Unites to Support Senior Citizens

Initiatives seek to cater to a growing segment of membership, population.

In the busy heart of Singapore three Adventist Active Centres (AAC) are bringing people together, regional church leaders said.

Singapore is home to a rapidly aging population, with one in four Singaporeans expected to be 65 and above by 2030. As more seniors face the risk of loneliness and isolation, the need for genuine connections becomes more urgent, leaders explained. Studies show that nearly 40 percent of seniors in Singapore report feeling lonely, a factor linked to higher risks of such health issues as heart disease and depression.

The Office of Adventist Mission in Singapore is responding to this challenge, offering spaces where seniors can find comfort, companionship, and a sense of belonging through partnership with the Adventist Active Centres and Thomson Chinese church.

A STORY OF RESILIENCE AND FAITH

Chan Nean Foon is among the many seniors who found a home at the Adventist Active Centre. She strongly desired to be baptized. Only two days after sharing her wish, however, Chan suffered a brain hemorrhage and stroke. Since then, she has been under medical care, and her condition has improved.

Regular visits from Adventist church members have provided her with ongoing spiritual support, and her unwavering faith remains evident. Despite the challenges, Chan continues to express her trust in God.

ENTHUSIASM AND INFLUENCE

Amy Leong embodies the typical senior at the Golden Clover AAC. A convert from Taoism to Christianity, Amy has not only embraced her new faith but also become a beacon of inspiration for others. She volunteers in the center's activities, often bringing her family members, including her son and granddaughter, to worship services.

Leong's willingness to volunteer and her eagerness to share her faith with her sister and friends highlight the ripple effect of one person's commitment to living like Jesus.

A PATH TO RENEWAL

Jennifer Lim's journey with the Adventist Mission project began after she answered an altar call during a gospel camp. Following the loss of her husband, Jennifer had stopped attending church. She found a rejuvenated purpose and community, however, through the Adventist Mission care group at Golden Clover AAC.

Lim now engages in regular Bible studies, discovering a renewed connection to her faith and a supportive network that nurtures her spiritual growth. Her story is about finding hope and community after loss.

CELEBRATING NEW BEGINNINGS

In June, Ang Hui Eng took a significant step in her faith journey by getting baptized. Surrounded by her daughters and granddaughter, the event was a joyful celebration of faith and family.

Hui Eng's baptism represents a personal milestone and strengthens community bonds. Her family's presence highlights the intergenerational impact of faith, showing how one person's commitment can inspire and involve others.

EXPANDING OUTREACH

In addition to existing initiatives, the Kallang Trivista AAC launched a new care group to support Singapore's seniors further. The first meetup on September 26 saw an impressive turnout of 45 seniors. Leaders explained, "While attendance has fluctuated recently because of natural aging, health challenges, and increasing caregiving responsibilities, the focus remains on the quality of relationships in which everyone feels valued and loved.





Photo: Rob Mulally

Focus

Unhurried

God is never late!

BY CHANTAL J. KLINGBEIL AND GERALD A. KLINGBEIL

Timing is essential for so many things in our lives. Athletes know this well and train continually to get better at their sport, thus gaining another quarter of a second or an extra inch (2.54 centimeters) or foot (30.48 centimeters). Nobody says "I do" at a funeral. That's the language of wedding ceremonies, and even there it needs to come at the right time. Health is also linked to patterns of timing. Healthy people have healthy eating, sleeping, or exercising patterns. They know that these patterns help them to thrive.

Timing is also important in our spiritual lives; it follows patterns and rhythms established by a good Creator yearning to bless His creation. Shabbat is not just 24 hours at the culmination of a weekly cycle, but an ordering of our lives that is God-directed and at the same time aiming at blessing those around us who are—like us—part of the fabric of this God-given living system.

How can we live unhurried lives in a world that is governed by schedules and calendars? What can we learn from how Jesus, the God-man, lived His short life on earth—based on what we know from the Gospels? How do we live unhurriedly the Sabbath pattern underlying a good and perfect creation in a world infected by sin, pain, and destruction?

THE GIFT OF TIME

In the beginning God created time. The Bible speaks of the rhythm of morning and evening as God spoke this planet and its solar system into being (Gen. 1). Time is a divine gift—even following the entrance of sin. Time is the currency God uses to bless His creation, the moment of possibilities. Ecclesiastes 3:1-11 formulates these times of human existence, often in juxtaposing pairs. "The first observation of grace is found in time," writes Old Testament scholar Jacques Doukhan, commenting on the biblical text. "Unlike Greek philosophers, who saw time as a destructive power, the ancient Hebrews saw life in time. Thus, when Solomon says that there is a time for every

event (v. 1), he does not mean that there is an appropriate moment for humans to act; neither does he mean that events happen without our control in a deterministic manner. The use of the preposition le ("to"), attached to the word "all" (to everything . . .), suggests instead that all these time events, the times of human existence, are to be received as grace from God."[1]

Sabbath is an important expression of this gift to humanity during which God reminds us of our "creature-ness," our origins, and our dependence on Him for grace and salvation. We meet God in time. Even though God is not limited by time, He is committed to the perfect time for saving His creation.

IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME

The wonder of the Incarnation is that the God who is way beyond the dimensions we live in—this God who created time—actually steps into time and becomes subject to time. Paul describes this in Galatians 4:4, 5: "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons."[2] Jesus came in the fullness of time. God restricts Himself to a timetable, a great prophetic timetable that, despite Satan's repeated attempts to disrupt, knows no interruptions. It is an unhurried timetable. Jesus comes not only at the right place, but at the right time. The fact that God would voluntarily limit Himself speaks volumes about who He is. In His limitation to our time and despite all plotting and planning by the archenemy and his forces, God is never late, and He is never hurried. This gives us confidence as we face a turbulent, hurried, and unpredictable world.

JESUS' TIMING

So how did Jesus live in time? From the outset we must acknowledge that people living in the first century A.D. did seem to have a different relationship to time compared to those living in a twenty-first-century world. Lives were not governed by clocks. People looked at the sky to estimate the time of day. There were no timetables for trains or planes. Perhaps life's rhythms were gentler. Maybe that is a challenge or a call to all of us to, as far as possible, create moments of unhurried time in our lives, breathers that help us to look up for a moment, and not plan every microsecond.

But there were moments in Jesus' life that were every bit as rushed as our lives often are. Take the incident in Luke 8:41-56, for instance. Jesus had arrived in town, and a large crowd was expecting Him. Imagine a lot of people, a lot of noise, and a lot of action in the crowded streets of Capernaum.[3] It seems as if everyone wanted something from Jesus—and then came the very urgent plea from Jairus. Luke introduces him as a synagogue leader, someone of importance. Forgetting his dignity and throwing himself at the feet of Jesus, he pleads with Jesus to come to his house. The text suggests that timing matters, because his little girl is on the brink of death. This is urgent, and so Jesus slowly makes His way through the crowds that, we are told, are almost crushing Him.

This is rush-hour traffic, and Jesus makes His way on this very urgent business, but suddenly something important happens, and Jesus stops. He stops as the woman, who in faith touched His robe, is healed. Jesus sees this as an important faith-building moment for the woman and for the crowd, and so Jesus stops and takes time. Luke 8 reflects this time in the space that is given to the description of this encounter in verses 43 to 48 as Jesus makes the inquiries. The question of who touched Him seems out of time and place, as Peter is quick to point out. Yet Jesus takes the time to ask it, and the woman comes forward and in the presence of everyone she tells her story, which also takes time. She gives her testimony, and Jesus encourages her faith.

Luke underlines this urgent time push by noting that while Jesus is still speaking, a message comes. We can only imagine Jairus' mounting anxiety as the woman haltingly tells her story while Jairus has something more important for Jesus to do. Time is ticking by. The message is devastating: "Your daughter is dead," reports the biblical text. "Do not trouble the teacher anymore" (verse 49). Instead of moving faster or rushing forward, Jesus talks peace and courage to the heart of Jairus: "Do not fear; only believe, and she will be well" (verse 50).

If we were hearing the story for the first time, we would gasp at the opportunity missed. Jesus didn't take the urgency of the situation seriously enough, and it would seem that He had missed this important moment to heal the girl and work another life-transforming miracle. Even though the urgent seems to have been interrupted and the golden opportunity seems to have been missed, Jesus assures Jairus that nothing has been lost. Jesus seems to be talking about time as well. Jesus refused to be driven by the urgent. He refused to let the urgent drown out or overshadow the things in life that are really important.

We remember the rest of the story. Jesus raises the daughter of Jairus from the dead and returns her to her grieving parents. He was not slow to avoid catastrophe, but

quick to grow faith and respond to trust in His timing—even with evidence to the contrary. The Life-giver uses this miracle to speak even more powerfully to the hearts of those who witness it.

LEARNING TO LIVE IN HEAVEN'S RHYTHMS

What can we learn from God about time—this incredible commodity that we have only on loan? God's interaction with time offers us clear lessons and calls us to reflect on it. God, who lives outside of time and space, is never hurried. As Creator of time, He is also Lord over time. He holds all time—including prophetic time—in His hand and will not be rushed.

And yet He understands our complex relationship to time. Jesus came to live inside of space and be subjected to time, showing us something about how we can relate to time. His life teaches us the importance of using time wisely while not being driven by time. We need to learn to differentiate between the urgent and the important. If we don't learn to make this differentiation we will continually be driven by the urgent at the expense of the really important. So how do we stop this relentless drive of the urgent? Jesus demonstrates that we need to learn to live and walk in God's rhythm. He regularly spent time talking to God in the quietness of early morning or the darkness of night, while people were clamoring for His attention or His disciples were looking for Him to get going on the urgent.

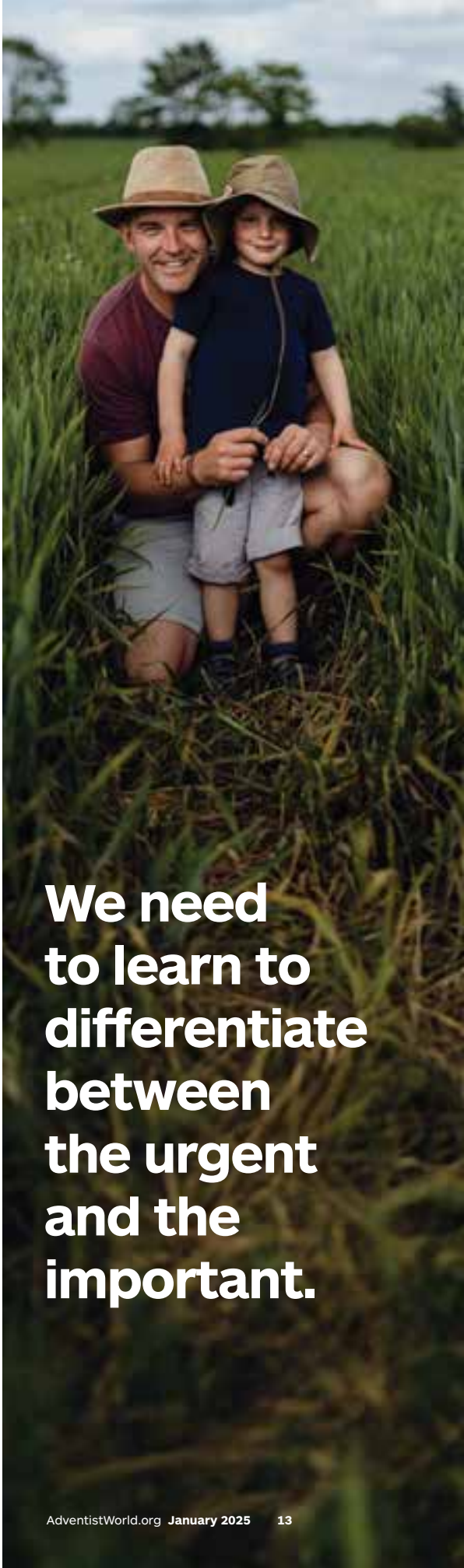
It is not easy to learn a new rhythm. Musicians say that rhythmic changes within a musical piece are very difficult, especially when we are in the middle of a song. So God gives us—every single week—a day to step back from the urgent that drives us and to reflect on what is really important. It's a moment to change the rhythm. Taking this day as an opportunity to reevaluate how we are spending our time is an important part of Sabbath (among many other important things!).

It's important to realize that our lives do not consist only of to-do lists and ticking off event boxes, but that nurturing our relationship with God and with those around us is more important than a plethora of accomplishments. How else can we learn to order our lives in God's rhythm? Perhaps we could consciously step back from the unrealistic demands of our devices that drive us 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Perhaps we can turn off some of the push notifications. Perhaps we can make the decision to put our devices down and observe, listen, feel, touch, and smell. We can learn to listen to heaven's echoes.

Letting go of the drive of the urgent isn't easy. It can feel risky—as if we are losing control of our lives. But we can afford to let go of the continuous rush of the urgent as we, with the psalmist, rest in the security that "my times are in your hand" (Ps. 31:15), knowing that a loving God is unhurried and never late.

[1] Jacques Doukhan, "Ecclesiastes," in *Andrews Bible Commentary*, ed. Ángel M. Rodríguez et al. (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 2020), p. 798.
[2] Scripture quotations have been taken from the *Holy Bible*, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
[3] Luke never explicitly mentioned Capernaum as the location of the story. Matthew 9:1 seems to suggest that Jesus had returned to "his own city," which, based on Matthew 4:13, was Capernaum.

Chantal J. Klingbeil, Ph.D., and **Gerald A. Klingbeil**, D.Litt., have served the Adventist Church for three decades internationally as professors, TV host, editor, and associate director. They now live close to the beautiful city of **Hamburg, Germany**, and serve in the Hanseatic Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.



We need to learn to differentiate between the urgent and the important.

Photo: Nataly Hanin / iStock / Getty Images Plus / Getty Images



Photo: Thai Noipho / iStock / Getty Images Plus / Getty Images

The Irony of Devotions That Count

Not quite a how-to guide

BY CALLIE BURUCHARA

For the past 14 years devotions have been the hardest part of my walk with Christ.

It's not because I don't have frameworks (I have tried them all). Nor is it because I haven't tried different times of the day, activities, or translations of the Bible (check, check, and check).

At first I struggled because I was convinced that God's love for me ebbed and flowed based on the amount of time I spent with Him. An hour of devotions meant God would be pleased with me that day, and I might even get an extra-credit blessing. If it was reduced to 15 minutes (or even worse, nothing at all), I would have to bear the punishment of God's displeasure, and I wouldn't have the right to reach out to Him throughout the day.

Gratefully, the Holy Spirit convinced my stubborn mind that Jesus' love for me is as constant as His character. I am not powerful enough to change His love by what I do or don't do.

THIS DOESN'T WORK

Then a new problem presented itself: how can I have the best devotional life possible?

See, I'm a classic firstborn—a type A perfectionist. To make matters worse, as a senior software engineer, my entire professional life revolves around finding optimal solutions, making processes more efficient, and solving problems faster. My brain is wired to look for patterns, to create systems, to optimize everything.

So naturally I approached my relationship with God the same way. There was even a brief period during which I thought I had figured it out.

I had a system: Bible reading as soon as I rise, prayer while driving to work, sermons while at the gym. I kept a pocket-sized prayer journal in which I'd write down answered prayers, just to prove to myself that I was doing it right.

I spent countless hours trying to find the perfect devotional equation. Is it 30 minutes of Bible study? 60? Should I focus on just one small passage, or read larger narratives? Should I pray before or after? For how long? Where does music fit in? Should I sing the music or just listen to it? Should I go for a walk in nature, or would that be too distracting?

If I could just figure out the ideal setup, I thought, *I could replicate it every day without having to think about it.* Like a spiritual algorithm that, once perfected, would run automatically.

But it didn't work.

The more I tried to optimize my time with God, the more empty it felt. It was like trying to have a deep conversation while constantly checking the time—technically present, but not really there. I was more fixated on my process than my God.

Yesterday morning I caught myself doing it again. I sat down to pray, Bible open on my lap, but my mind was already racing ahead to all the tasks waiting for me. I found myself unconsciously timing my prayer, as if God and I were in a business meeting with a hard stop at 7:30 a.m. I didn't have time to be there. I only had time to pretend to be.

Ellen White captures this tendency with devastating accuracy: "Many, even in their seasons of devotion, fail of receiving the blessing of real communion with God. They are in too great haste. With hurried steps they press through the circle of Christ's loving presence, pausing perhaps a moment within the sacred precincts, but not waiting for counsel. They have no time to remain with the divine Teacher. With their burdens they return to their work."[1]

That last line stops me every time I read it: "With their burdens they return to their work."

Is that your recurring experience too? Bringing your anxieties, your fears, your decisions to Jesus, only to pick them right back up again in your hurry to move on to the next thing? Like me, maybe you have all of the right elements of a devotional experience. But our hurry and inattention make them meaningless.



A RELATIONAL GOD

Here's what I'm learning: God doesn't love me any less when I rush through our time together. His love isn't dependent on how long I pray or how many chapters I read. The problem isn't that God withdraws His love when I'm rushed—it's that I become less *aware* of the love that's always there.

It's like sitting in a room with the curtains drawn. The sun doesn't stop shining just because we can't see it. But our experience of its warmth and light depends entirely on whether we take the time to open those curtains.

This is perhaps the hardest lesson for someone like me to learn: God is not a place to be successful. He's not a project to optimize. He's not a habit to improve. He's a person to have a relationship with.

According to Ellen White: "An intensity such as never before was seen is taking possession of the world. In amusement, in moneymaking, in the contest for power, in the very struggle for existence, there is a terrible force that engrosses body and mind and soul."[2]

I feel that force every day. You probably do too. Whether you're a student in Manila trying to balance studies and faith, a mother in Mexico City juggling children and prayer time, or a businessman in Nairobi attempting to maintain spiritual priorities—that "terrible force" pulls at us all.

In our digital age we've become accustomed to instant replies, immediate solutions, and constant optimization. We treat our spiritual lives like apps that need updating—always looking for the next feature, the next improvement, the next version. But relationships don't work that way. They never have.

The cost isn't always obvious at first. But over time, rushing through our communion with God leaves traces:

A subtle hardening of the heart.
A growing difficulty in hearing His voice.
A weariness that sleep doesn't seem to fix.

God's strength doesn't diminish when we rush past Him. His wisdom doesn't fade. His peace doesn't weaken. But our access to these gifts, our awareness of their presence and our ability to receive them, becomes dramatically limited by our hurry.

And yet God is never in a hurry.

PRESENCE, NOT PERFORMANCE

The Creator of the universe, the One who holds all things together, who orchestrates the movements of galaxies and knows when a sparrow falls: He is never rushed.

When Jesus walked this earth, there is no record of Him running. He had only three and a half years to fulfill every prophecy, minister to the endless needs around Him, and train a dozen disciples to carry on His work. Yet He consistently took time to notice individuals, stop for conversations, and be interrupted.

This isn't just a nice detail about Jesus' personality. It's a profound revelation about God's nature. His unhurried presence is an invitation to us—not to earn His love through lengthy devotions, but to slow down enough to realize we already have it.

I won't give you a five-step plan for having better devotions. I've tried enough of those to know they're not the answer. The very idea of "better" devotions reveals how much we're still thinking in terms of performance rather than presence.

Instead, there's one truth that's gradually changing my life: Being unrushed with God is not about time management. It's about trust.

When I rush through my time with God, it's because I don't truly believe He can multiply my time. I don't trust that being still before Him will actually make the rest of my day more manageable. My perfectionism whispers that if I'm not constantly moving, constantly producing, constantly optimizing, everything will fall apart.

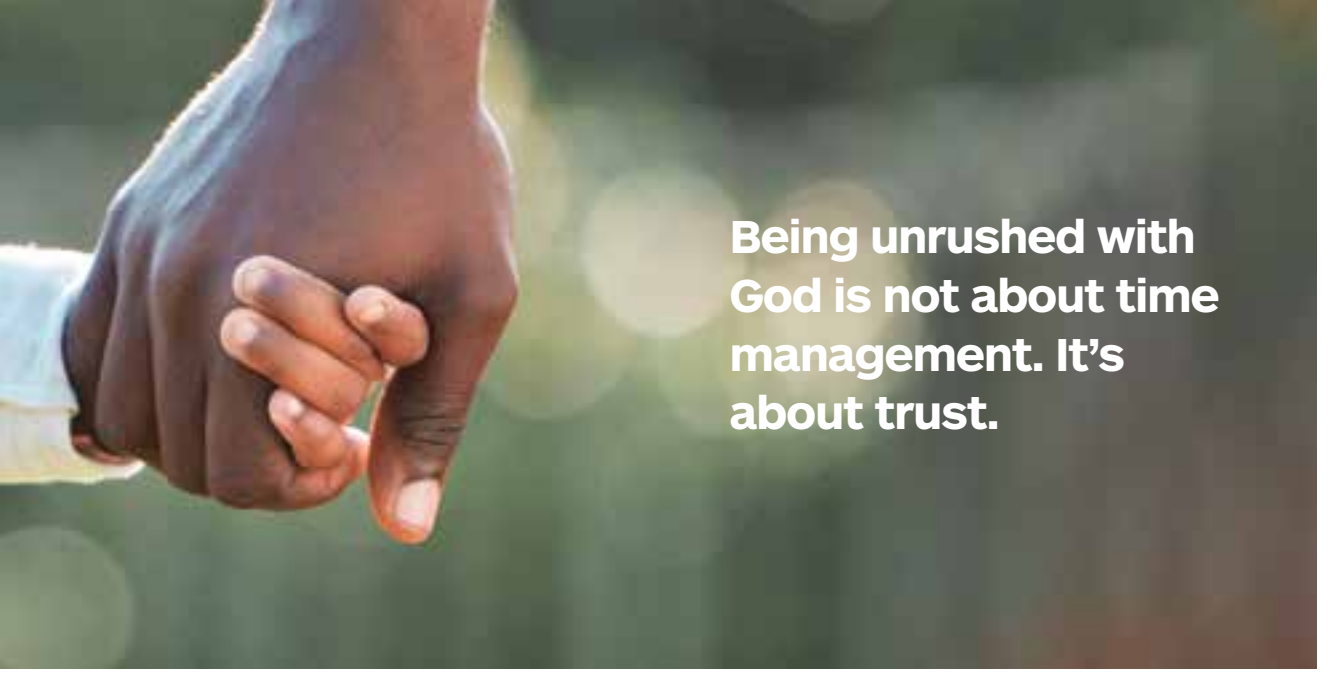
The psalmist points us to a different way: "Be still, and know that I am God" (Ps. 46:10).

Notice that the stillness comes before the knowing. Not as a suggestion, but as a prerequisite. This is yet another reason Sabbath is both the hardest and most beautiful day of the week for me: we are commanded to rest and allow our Father to remind us that He is God and we never were.

This morning I tried something different. Instead of setting a timer for my devotional time, I simply sat with my Bible and told God, "I'm here for as long as I need to be."

It felt incredibly uncomfortable. My mind kept darting to my to-do list, to upcoming deadlines, to all the reasons I couldn't possibly sit here "doing nothing."

Photo: PeopleImages / iStock / Getty Images Plus / Getty Images



Being unrushed with God is not about time management. It's about trust.

Everything in me wanted to turn this into another productivity exercise, to measure, optimize, and systematize this time with God.

But I stayed.

And in that unrushed space, something shifted. The words of Scripture began to sink deeper. My prayers became less like a recitation and more like a conversation. The silence between the words grew less painful.

I wasn't suddenly more spiritual. God wasn't suddenly more present. But in the stillness I became aware of what had been true all along: His constant love, His available strength, His unchanging presence.

I won't pretend this one morning fixed my tendency to rush. It didn't. But it reminded me of what's possible when we choose to be unrushed in God's presence.

WHEN LESS REQUIRES MORE

Maybe you, like me, are tired of rushed devotions. You're tired of carrying your burdens back to work, of pressing through the circle of Christ's loving presence without really stopping to receive His counsel.

God is not asking us to carve out huge chunks of time every day. He's not asking us to perfect our devotional routine or find the optimal spiritual algorithm. He's asking us to be fully present in the time we have, trust Him enough to be still, and wait for Him even when everything in us wants to rush ahead.

He's inviting us to know Him, not just know about Him. And knowing takes time: unrushed, unhurried, unoptimized time.

The world will keep spinning at its frantic pace. But we have a choice about whether to spin with it.

God is not impressed by our success. He's moved by our dependency. All my attempts to optimize my time with God were really just attempts to maintain control, to keep my independence intact. But true communion happens in the vulnerable spaces where we finally admit we can't optimize our way to intimacy with God.

There's an irony here that I'm only beginning to understand: the more I try to rush through my time with God to get to *real work*, the less effective I actually become. I've noticed that on days that I truly slow down with God, my mind is clearer, my decisions are wiser, and my work flows more naturally. Not because I've earned some special blessing, but because I've finally positioned myself to receive what He's been offering all along.

The math doesn't make sense on paper. How can spending *extra* time being still actually result in a more productive day? But that's exactly the point—God's economy works in ways that confound our human calculations. He multiplies what we surrender, especially our time.

Perhaps that's the real invitation in all of this: to lay down our illusion of control, to stop trying to earn what's already freely given. The very act of slowing down is an admission that we're not actually holding everything together—He is. Our rushed devotions reveal more about our trust issues than our time management skills. And maybe that's exactly where He wants to meet us, in that uncomfortable space between our drive to achieve and His call to abide.

God is speaking in the midst of this maddening rush. He's inviting us to come apart and commune with Him. Not to earn His love—we already have that. Not to access His strength—it's already available. But to become aware of these realities in a way that transforms how we live.

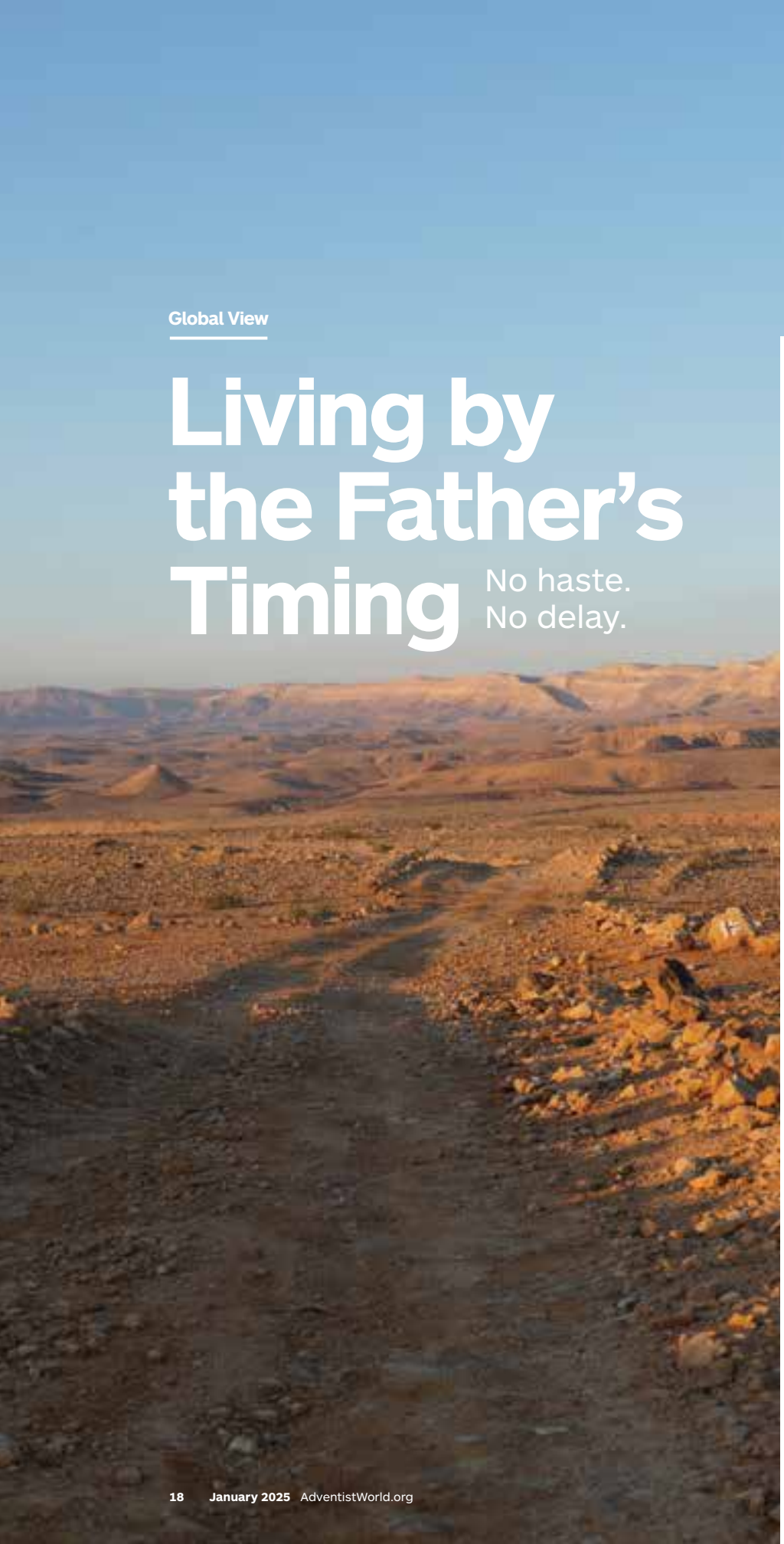
He's not in a hurry. He never has been. He's just waiting for you and me.

[1] Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1903), p. 260.
[2] *Ibid.*

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Living by the Father's Timing

No haste. No delay.



The man was desperate. The most skilled doctors had tried to save his daughter but could do nothing more. She was just 12 years old, and now she was dying. What could be done? Desperate to save his daughter's life, he decided to reach out to One he had heard could perform miracles. Although a leader in the synagogue, Jairus was not too proud to humbly ask Jesus for help.

Jesus had just returned from the other side of Galilee where He had healed the demoniacs, and a great crowd surged around Him as He stepped off the boat, eager to listen to His teachings and witness His miracles. And as usual, there were many sick people longing to be healed.

After hours of teaching and healing, Jesus, faint and weary, "left the multitude in order to partake of food in the house of Levi."[1]

It was there, at the home of Levi Matthew, that Jairus found Him and immediately fell at the Master's feet. "My little daughter lies at the point of death," he cried. "Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live" (Mark 5:23).

We are told that "Jesus at once responded to the entreaty of the stricken parent, and went with him to his home."[2]

SLOW PROGRESS

Although Jairus' home was not far, progress was slow as people pressed around Jesus, hoping to gain "His attention and His aid. The anxious father urged his way

Photo: Nataly Hanin / iStock / Getty Images Plus / Getty Images

To live like Jesus is to know "no haste and no delay," but to instead rely fully on God's timing, which is always perfect.

through the crowd, fearful of being too late. But Jesus, pitying the people, and deploring their spiritual darkness and physical maladies, stopped now and then to minister to their wants."[3]

It was during this slow journey that the woman with the flow of blood, longing to be healed, reached out in faith and touched the hem of Christ's garment. Instantly that touch of faith was rewarded. Rather than moving on, Christ took the time to call attention to this woman and publicly affirm her faith. "Daughter," He said, "your faith has made you well. Go in peace" (verse 34).

Surprisingly, "the delay of Jesus had been so intensely interesting in its results that even the anxious father felt no impatience but watched the scene with deep interest."[4] He was encouraged to see this woman healed, and believed Jesus would be able to heal his daughter, too.

Soon, however, a messenger pressed through the crowd with news that the child was dead. Hearing this sad message, Jesus immediately turned to Jairus and said, "Do not be afraid; only believe" (verse 36). With these words of hope, Jairus pressed closer to the Savior as they made their way to his home.

A PERCEIVED DELAY

Jesus' promise to Jairus is similar to what He told Martha after her brother, Lazarus, died. "Your brother will rise again," said Jesus (John 11:23).

Nevertheless, in both cases, death seemed to have occurred because of the perceived delay of Jesus.

"Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died," Martha cried (verse 21). And yet she revealed faith like that of Jairus, stating, "But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You" (verse 22).

Wonderfully, the faith of Jairus and Martha was rewarded—Jairus' daughter was restored to life and given back to her overjoyed parents, and Lazarus was raised publicly to the amazement of all.

It is interesting that two of Christ's most profound miracles—raising the dead to life—took place after a painful waiting period for those who had experienced loss. They could not understand why Jesus seemed to delay coming, and yet we are told, "God's purposes know no haste and no delay."[5]

LIVING BY THE FATHER'S TIMING

Throughout His life on earth Jesus lived by His Father's timing. He was born "when the fullness of the time had come" (Gal. 4:4). His "anointing," or baptism, and death, came at the very times given in the prophecy found in Daniel 9:24-27. When pressed by His brothers to go to the feast in Jerusalem, He answered, "You go up to this feast. I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come" (John 7:8). But when His time came, Jesus "lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: 'Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You' " (John 17:1).

To live like Jesus is to know "no haste and no delay," but to instead rely fully on God's timing, which is always perfect.

But too often we want good things to happen *now*, not later. We want to have answers to our pressing questions *now*. We want to have our problems and situations solved *now*. We long for pain to end *now*.

And yet God, in His wisdom, wants us to learn to trust Him. He often uses waiting times to build our faith and help us change and grow. Patience is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22) that is developed only under trial, so it is important not to run from difficult situations. In James 1:2-4 we are given this divine counsel:

"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing."

When we learn to trust God and wait on Him, even when the situation seems impossible, we will, looking back, see that God's way and God's timing is always best.

[1] Ellen G. White, *Redemption: or The Miracles of Christ, the Mighty One* (Silver Spring, Md.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1877, 2018), p. 93, https://media4.egwwritings.org/pdf/en_3Red.pdf.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 94.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 97.
[5] Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn. 1898, 1940), p. 32.

Ted N. C. Wilson is president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Additional articles and commentaries are available on X (formerly Twitter): @pastortedwilson and on Facebook: @Pastor Ted Wilson.



Spirit of Prophecy

The Joy and Reward of the Redeemed

Glory, when all our labors and trials are over.

If any man's work abide, . . . he shall receive a reward" (1 Cor. 3:14, KJV). Glorious will be the reward bestowed when the faithful workers gather about the throne of God and of the Lamb. When John in his mortal state beheld the glory of God, he fell as one dead: he was not able to endure the sight. But when the children of God shall have put on immortality, they will "see him as he is" (1 John 3:2, KJV). They will stand before the throne, accepted in the Beloved. All their sins have been blotted out, all their transgressions borne away. Now they can look upon the undimmed glory of the throne of God. They have been partakers with Christ in His sufferings, they have been workers together with Him in the plan of redemption, and they are partakers with Him in the joy of seeing souls saved in the kingdom of God, there to praise God through all eternity.

THE JOYS OF THE REDEEMED

My brother, my sister, I urge you to prepare for the coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven. Day by day cast the love of the world out of your hearts. Understand by experience what it means to have fellowship with Christ. Prepare for the Judgment, that when Christ shall come, to be admired in all them that believe, you may be among those who will meet Him in peace. In that day the redeemed will shine forth in the glory of the Father and the Son. The angels, touching their golden harps, will welcome the King and His trophies of victory—those who have been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. A song of triumph will peal forth, filling all heaven. Christ has conquered. He enters the heavenly courts, accompanied by His redeemed ones, the witnesses that His mission of suffering and sacrifice has not been in vain.

The resurrection and ascension of our Lord is a sure evidence of the triumph of the saints of God over death and the grave, and a pledge that heaven is open to those who wash their robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. Jesus ascended to the Father as a representative of the human race, and God will bring those who reflect His image to behold and share with Him His glory.

Photo: PrathanChorruangsak /iStock / Getty Images Plus / Getty Images



EXPERIENCING THE JOY

There are homes for the pilgrims of earth. There are robes for the righteous, with crowns of glory and palms of victory. All that has perplexed us in the providences of God will in the world to come be made plain. The things hard to be understood will then find explanation. The mysteries of grace will unfold before us. Where our finite minds discovered only confusion and broken promises, we shall see the most perfect and beautiful harmony. We shall know that infinite love ordered the experiences that seemed most trying. As we realize the tender care of Him who makes all things work together for our good, we shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Pain cannot exist in the atmosphere of heaven. In the home of the redeemed, there will be no tears, no funeral trains, no badges of mourning. "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity" (Isa. 33:24, KJV). One rich tide of happiness will flow and deepen as eternity rolls on.

We are still amidst the shadows and turmoil of earthly activities. Let us consider most earnestly the blessed hereafter. Let our faith pierce through every cloud of darkness, and behold Him who died for the sins of the world. He has opened the gates of Paradise to all who receive and believe on Him. To them He gives power to become the sons and daughters of God. Let the afflictions which pain us so grievously become instructive lessons, teaching us to press forward toward the mark of the prize of our high calling in Christ. Let us be encouraged by the thought that the Lord is soon to come. Let this hope gladden our hearts. "Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. 10:37, KJV). Blessed are those servants who, when their Lord comes, shall be found watching.

HOMEWARD BOUND

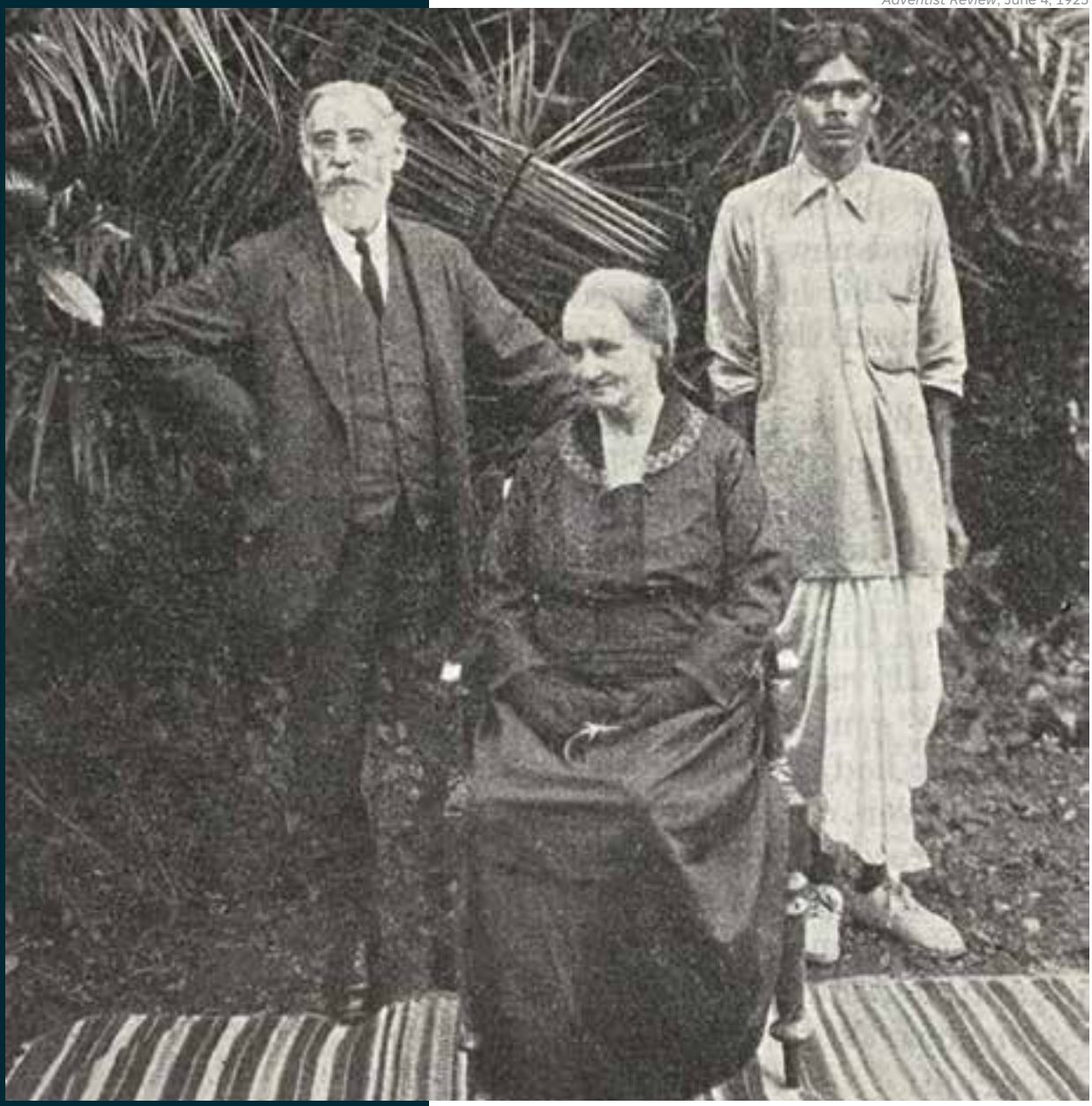
We are homeward bound. He who loved us so much as to die for us hath builded for us a city. The New Jerusalem is our place of rest. There will be no sadness in the city of God. No wail of sorrow, no dirge of crushed hopes and buried affections, will evermore be heard. Soon the garments of heaviness will be changed for the wedding garment. Soon we shall witness the coronation of our King. Those whose lives have been hidden with Christ, those who on this earth have fought the good fight of faith, will shine forth with the Redeemer's glory in the kingdom of God.

We are still amidst the shadows and turmoil of earthly activities. Let us consider most earnestly the blessed hereafter.

It will not be long till we shall see Him in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. And in His presence, all the trials and sufferings of this life will be as nothingness. "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. 10:35-37). Look up, look up, and let your faith continually increase. Let this faith guide you along the narrow path that leads through the gates of the city of God into the great beyond, the wide, unbounded future of glory that is for the redeemed. "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (James 5:7, 8).

Seventh-day Adventist believe that **Ellen G. White** 1827-1915 exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry. This excerpt was taken from *Christian Experience and Teachings*, pp. 233-236.

Adventist Review, June 4, 1925



Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Barlow, for many years missionaries in India, and Renghe Ludre, a Santali student in the Ranchi Training School, India

Heritage

William Barlow

"Carey" to the Santals

William Alexander Barlow was born in Liverpool, England, on April 3, 1862. When he was 27, he sailed to India as a missionary for the Church of England.[1] There he transferred to the independent Baptist Bethel Santal Mission, led by Pastor A. Haegert, who was also a physician. Pastor Haegert operated a hospital and two schools 25 miles from Jamtara, a village on the East Indian Railway.[2] William learned to speak Santali, and five years later married Pastor Haegert's daughter Christina, affectionately called *Santalie*.[3] Christina was born in India in 1872—two years before J. N. Andrews went to Switzerland as the first Adventist missionary.

In 1896 Elder D. A. Robinson went to observe Pastor Haegert's work and invited William to drop by the Adventist mission whenever he came to Calcutta. William did and picked up English and vernacular tracts for distribution, from which he learned to appreciate Adventist teachings.[4]

A few years later William and Christina moved to Punjab, where he worked with a military chaplain. One day William overheard the chaplain discussing the Sabbath with I. D. Richardson, an Adventist colporteur. William fetched his Bible to show Richardson his errors, but instead discovered that the Scriptures supported the colporteur! After further study, William and Christina decided to join the Adventist Church. Dismissed from his work, William began canvassing with Ellery Robinson.[5] The following year (1900), the Barlows were baptized, and returned to ministry among the Santals.[6]

A LIFETIME IN THE VILLAGE

The Barlows did not have money or land, and for three months they lived in a tent under a banyan tree outside Simultala, another village on the East Indian Railway that had a few European homes and several dozen Santali families. They survived storms that blew their tent down, as well as the dreaded cholera.

William started a school with two students. He raised funds through newspaper ads and from businesses in Calcutta and secured a few acres of land a mile and a half from town, where he built a few huts for classrooms. He planted a flower and vegetable garden and long lines of fruit trees. On Sabbaths he took the students to neighboring villages and sang and testified of God's love.[7] Meanwhile, Christina spent some time at the Adventist sanitarium in Calcutta, learning how to treat the sick.[8]

Eager to get closer to the unreached, the Barlows moved to Babumahal, nine miles into the jungle, where he built a large thatched-roof hut, a school, and a church.[9] In 1903 Barlow and his school joined the Adventist mission, which employed him to care for the mission station.[10]

A LIFETIME OF SERVICE TO THE DISADVANTAGED

Christina ministered to the women of the villages. They came day and night to her for treatment, when they were sick, when they needed clothes for babies, for needle and thread, for food, or for whatever they might need. She was like their mother, and her home was their second home.[11]

When nobody else dared to, William helped a weeping man bury one of his sons and then his wife, who died of cholera. When the father himself died, the Barlows took his other little son and educated him.[12] They also took in Chikia, a woman William found thrown out of the village for breaking caste.[13] Despite threats to her life from her family, the girl was ultimately baptized and married one of the workers of the Adventist mission.[14]

William and Christina found time to visit other villages and towns—Koro, Karmatar, Madhopur, attracting crowds on market day with William's violin. When he spoke in Hindi and Santali about the love of Jesus, many in the crowds nodded. William gave literature to all who could read.

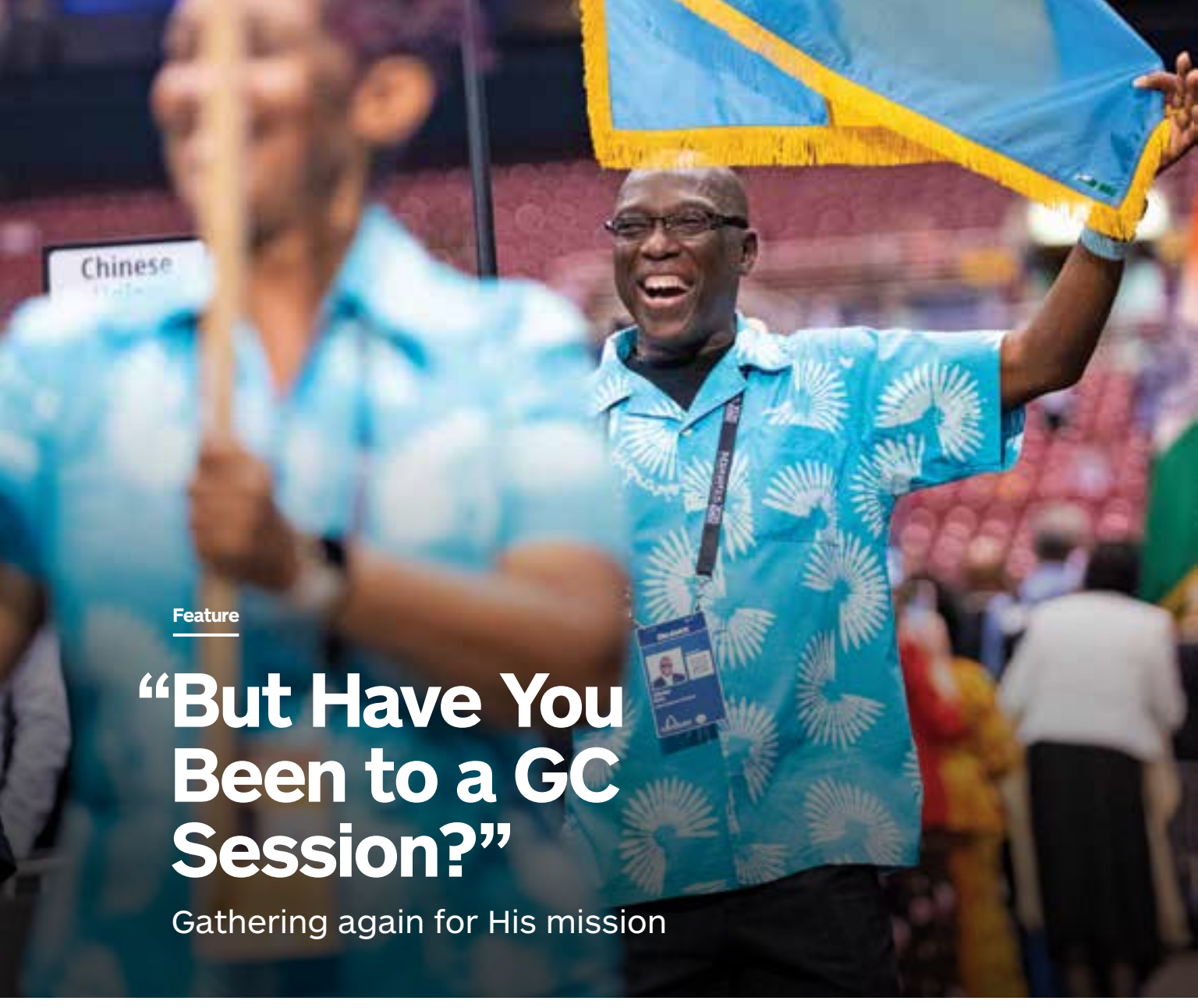
When the India Union voted for William's retirement in 1914, H. R. Salisbury, chairing the committee, described him as the "Carey of the Santals," a reference to William Carey, known as the father of modern missions. The Barlows had taken only one furlough, in 1907,[15] spending a year in Watford, England, to regain health, to arrange for their children's education, and to recruit workers for India.[16] After retirement, they remained at Babumahal on a portion of the land the church returned to them, continuing their selfless ministry to the Santals, to whom they had dedicated their lives.

Even after retirement, the Barlows continued their selfless ministry to the Santals, to whom they had dedicated their lives.

In 1926 Christina developed to an infection that turned septic. Seeking medical help, she rode a bullock cart from the jungle 10 miles to the railway station with her two youngest children, but sadly, she succumbed on the train. After her death William continued to travel, distributing literature till 1940, when the church advised him to rest because of his failing health. He retired in the hills of Shillong, where he died in 1942.

[1] W. A. Spicer, "A Mission to the Santals," *Review and Herald*, July 8, 1902, p. 13.
[2] D. A. Robinson, "Among the Santals of India," *Review and Herald*, July 14, 1896, p. 441.
[3] Freida M. Haegert, "Obituary," *Eastern Tidings*, Aug. 15, 1926, p. 4.
[4] W. A. Barlow, "How I Became a Seventh-day Adventist," *Review and Herald*, Oct. 11, 1923, p. 21.
[5] L. G. Mookerjee, "Until the Day Dawn," *Eastern Tidings*, Nov. 15, 1942, p. 5.
[6] Barlow.
[7] H. H. Votaw, Mrs. H. H. Votaw, "An Echo From the India Conference," *The Welcome Visitor*, Feb 15, 1905, p. 1.
[8] Spicer.
[9] W. A. Barlow, "Simultala," *Eastern Tidings*, September 1904, p. 35.
[10] Advisory Committee of Seventh-day Adventists, Mar. 29, 1903, p. 15, Southern Asia Division archives.
[11] Haegert.
[12] W. W. Miller, "Little Tulsi," *Youth's Instructor*, Oct 2, 1906, p. 5.
[13] W. W. Miller, "Not Forgotten," *Eastern Tidings*, November 1905, p. 6.
[14] W. A. Barlow, "From Darkness to Light," *Review and Herald*, Nov 1, 1923, p. 20.
[15] Mookerjee.
[16] *The Missionary Worker*, Mar. 4, 1908, p. 40.

Gordon Cristo is the grandson of P. B. Christo, a Simultala businessman who was converted in 1930 by Barlow's successor.



Feature

"But Have You Been to a GC Session?"

Gathering again for His mission

There is something truly moving about people coming together from all corners of the earth for a common purpose. Whether it is the Olympic Games, the United Nations General Assembly, a global climate conference, or, as in the case of the Adventist Church, a General Conference (GC) Session witnesses a global phenomenon. Whenever people of diverse nations, cultures, ethnicities, and languages gather to collaborate, uniting and working jointly to accomplish a project, it brings with it a particular realization of what connects us, what we can achieve together, and how similar we all are, despite our cultural and ethnical differences.

Unity in diversity beyond borders is inspiring to human beings. Of course, secular gatherings and a GC Session couldn't be more dissimilar in nature and purpose. What differentiates them is obviously the cause behind the gathering of representatives of all living humanity. There are undoubtedly many international conferences and meetings with good intentions and goals. As emotionally thrilling as attending the Olympic Games or any other global sporting, political, or ideological event may be, that sense of unity will go only so far and has yet to produce any lasting peace, betterment, or transformation of the human condition.

We, as a church, on the other hand, unite for a General Conference Session in love, truth, and humility for the utmost elevation of God, our Creator, and the purpose of mission, because we *know* Jesus is the only solution for broken humanity, and time is running out!

CRUCIAL GATHERING

A GC Session is perhaps the most inspiring, important, cross-cultural gathering of this day and age.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is the largest missional organization of God's end-time remnant believers. And while no human-filled organization is perfect, it is an impressive,

Photo: *Adventist Review*

Spirit-guided body that keeps God's truth not just afloat but uplifted and proclaimed. Also, don't forget the prophetic legacy and responsibility that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been granted to carry and continue!

Being a Seventh-day Adventist means being a mission-focused, Bible-believing Christian, aware of the end-times we live in, engaged in the work at hand, and mindful of the daily need for Jesus, as well as the Holy Spirit's baptism. It means joining with fellow brothers and sisters locally and globally to serve in God's effort to prepare hearts for His return. This is why our church is structured the way it is and why it is *crucial* that we gather regularly—locally and globally.

Being a representatively organized body means that every member, whether living in downtown Manhattan, the suburbs of Manilla, the countryside of Kenya, or the highlands of Papua New Guinea, exerts an influence on the direction of the world church. On a global scale, a General Conference Session, with its 2,804 delegates representing at least 150 countries, is the place to be to witness God's global remnant church in action and participate in its mission plans. From July 3 to 12, 2025, we are blessed to have the opportunity to be part of such a historical gathering again!

GC SESSION IS FULL-SCALE

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 GC Session was postponed to 2022 and scaled down in terms of non-business-related programming. The 2025 General Conference Session in St. Louis, Missouri, USA, is set to bring back the full in-person experience. Attendees can look forward to exhibitions, inspiring programs, reports and presentations, business and auxiliary meetings, women's gatherings, and a significant presence of special guests. In other words, the 2025 GC Session experience will return to what it used to be.

The main meetings will be viewable via livestream to give those who cannot attend access to the main programming. This, however, falls short of capturing the full experience of attending a General Conference Session in person.

Besides powerful worship and insightful business meetings, attendees will have much to explore, including a vast exhibit hall. Here various Adventist ministries, institutions, departments, and organizations from around the Adventist world will showcase their work and offer evangelistic materials, resources, and networking opportunities. With 50,000-plus attendees anticipated from every corner of the global mission field, the exhibit hall promises to be a prime space for unveiling new ideas and innovations for reaching the world with Jesus. If you want to learn more about what church and lay ministries around the world are doing and how you can participate, this is the place for you!

Digital tools will enhance and broaden the experience, making it accessible to a broader audience. For 10 days the exhibit hall will function as a hub for personal interactions, much like a large family reunion, where friends and alumni of the many educational institutions of our worldwide church will reconnect in person.

The upcoming session will also highlight Mission Refocus and the I Will Go strategic plan, along with other key church initiatives. These priorities are designed to motivate and guide the church into a new season of wholistic, comprehensive, and frontline mission work.

The 2025 GC Session experience will return to what it used to be.

Finally, during the GC Session, world and division leaders are prayerfully nominated, elected, and entrusted with the holy work of servant leadership to the global church for the next quinquennium.

WILL YOU BE THERE?

In just a few months Seventh-day Adventists will come from all corners of the world to gather in St. Louis, knowing God loves His church and has been with us through our ups and downs. By His grace we will unite to seek, do, and further His will, expecting an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that brings us closer to His ultimate purpose: seeing His victorious, redemptive, and glorious kingdom project finished soon!

Will you be there?

Jonathan Walter is an assistant editor for *Adventist World*.

For those planning to travel to St. Louis for the session, detailed information on logistics, accommodations, flights, and meals can be found on the official website: www.gcsession.org. The site is regularly updated with the latest information. Additionally, attendees can call the hotline at +1 301-680-6216 for further assistance.

Sabbath and Eschatology

Q Why is the Sabbath so important in last-day events?

A Let me share with you a few thoughts about the high significance of the Sabbath at the end of the cosmic conflict.

SABBATH AND GOD'S LOVE

The Sabbath is the only commandment that identifies God on the basis two of His activities: Creation (Ex. 20:8, 11) and redemption (Deut. 5:15). They are both, like the gospel, the result of the work of the Son of God (John 1:1-3, 14; Rom. 3:23, 24). Creation and redemption constitute the two most powerful manifestations of divine love known to us. Creation was an expression of divine love and wisdom (e.g., Gen. 1:31; Ps. 19:1; 8:3-6; 1 John 4:8, 16), and redemption is the most glorious expression of divine self-sacrificing love (John 3:16; 10:17, 18). God also gave us the Sabbath to remind us that He is a loving Creator. The fallen cherub will attempt to silence the testimony of the Sabbath to Creation as the first act of divine love and of the gospel of salvation through Christ's sacrificial love.

SABBATH AND GOD'S CHARACTER

Since the Decalogue is a verbal expression of God's character and the Sabbath is part of it, a change in the moral law is in fact an attack against the integrity and perfection of God's character. Any modification of the moral law of God would clearly imply that the law, and more specifically the Lawgiver, is imperfect. Consequently it would be legally and morally justifiable to disobey such an imperfect law. By changing the seventh-day Sabbath to Sunday, the fallen cherub hoped to discredit God's character and to manifest his authority over the law. When humans acknowledge his authority by accepting the change and by obeying the new commandment, they submit to him as the true legislator.

SABBATH AND WORSHIP

A change in the fourth commandment would result in the worship of a false God. The Sabbath day is a *holy* day during which humans have communion with and worship the Creator and Redeemer (e.g., Isa. 66:23). The fallen cherub modified the law by changing the commandment in which law and worship are deeply interconnected. With one change (in the fourth commandment) the fallen cherub sought to discredit the character of God and become the object of worship. The human race should be reminded that the Sabbath is a sign of God's creative power and that as such He is the only and exclusive object of true worship. Humans should hear again a proclamation of the gospel of salvation by faith in Christ that is not opposed to the law of God. The perpetuity of the law is to be proclaimed as evidence of salvation through faith in Christ that moves us to bow down before the Creator and Redeemer in heartful adoration.

SABBATH AS A SIGN OF LOYALTY

The uniqueness of the Sabbath transforms it into a sign of loyalty to God. In the Hebrew language, the Decalogue consists of 152 words (Ex. 20:3-17). At its very center we find the statement "But the seventh day is a Sabbath of/to/belonging Yahweh." This sentence became a matter of debate in the history of Sabbath-keeping. The specificity of "the seventh day" disturbed the Christian world, and it was finally removed, arguing that "the seventh day" is a ritual component in the fourth commandment without any value for Christians. In the biblical text the specificity of the commandment amounts to a sign of loyalty to God (Ex. 16:23-30). The fallen cherub opposes the end-time sign of loyalty to God, but paradoxically offers to all a specific false Sabbath as a sign of a loyalty to him (Rev. 13:16).

Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, Th.D., is retired after a career serving as pastor, professor, and theologian.



Whooping Cough's Return

Addressing the growing threat

Why is whooping cough resurging in various parts of the world, and what can we do about it?

Whooping cough, also known as pertussis, is a highly contagious respiratory infection caused by the *Bordetella pertussis* bacterium. Once nearly eradicated in many parts of the world because of widespread vaccination, whooping cough has resurged in recent years. This has been observed in such high-income areas as the United States, parts of Europe, and Australia, as well as lower-income regions.

REASONS FOR THE RESURGENCE

The current vaccine used in many countries is an acellular pertussis vaccine (DTaP for children and Tdap for adolescents and adults), which replaced the earlier whole-cell vaccine (DTwP) in the 1990s. The acellular vaccine causes fewer side effects but provides less durable immunity compared to the whole-cell vaccine. Immunity from the acellular vaccine wanes after about five to 10 years, leaving individuals vulnerable to infection.

In some regions the drop in vaccination coverage is a result of vaccine hesitancy. Misinformation about vaccines, often spread through social media and anti-vaccine movements, has led to decreased trust in vaccines. In areas in which vaccination rates drop below the threshold needed for herd (community) immunity, outbreaks of whooping cough become more likely. In many low- and middle-income countries, logistical, infrastructure, or economic challenges may hinder access to vaccines, resulting in periodic epidemics.

Pertussis has a natural cyclical pattern of reemergence, even in highly vaccinated populations. Outbreaks tend to occur every three to five years, driven partly by vaccinated individuals' waning immunity.

In high-income countries pertussis has come back because of a combination of waning immunity from acellular vaccines and vaccine hesitancy. In low- and middle-income countries the resurgence of whooping cough is often linked to incomplete vaccination coverage through infrastructure, poverty, or even conflict, resulting in periodic pertussis outbreaks.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Expanding global vaccine coverage is critical, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. International health organizations, governments, and nongovernmental organizations must collaborate to improve access to vaccines for all.

Since immunity from the acellular pertussis vaccine wanes over time, booster shots for adolescents and adults are essential. This will help reduce the transmission of the disease from adults to infants, who are the most vulnerable. Some countries already recommend booster doses of the Tdap vaccine for pregnant women, health-care workers, and people in close contact with infants.

Public health campaigns are needed to combat misinformation and vaccine hesitancy, educating the public about the safety and efficacy of vaccines. Governments and health organizations need to invest in communication strategies to rebuild trust in vaccines.

Developing new vaccines that provide longer-lasting immunity than the current acellular vaccines could be another long-term solution.

This multifaceted problem requires an intentional approach to reduce and ultimately eradicate the spread of whooping cough. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has an important role in preventing diseases through consistent messaging on healthy lifestyle; promoting appropriate immunization programs by our clinics, dispensaries, and hospitals; sharing wholeness; and serving all.

Zeno L. Charles-Marcel, a board-certified internist, is the director of Adventist Health Ministries at the General Conference. **Peter N. Landless**, a board-certified nuclear cardiologist and Adventist Health Ministries emeritus of the General Conference, is also a board-certified internist.

Photo: Annie Spratt



Angel Wire



"May I Tell You a Story?"

BY DICK DUERKSEN

Donovan Nelson loved fixing stuff, especially servicing hospital X-ray equipment as part of his work for Loma Linda University Hospital. Though he enjoyed caring for all the radiology equipment around the hospital, what he loved most was installing X-ray machines in Adventist Health International's hospitals and clinics on mission stations around the world. At least 40 new machines up and running at last count.

One assignment was to install a donated X-ray unit at a small Adventist hospital in the nearly inaccessible jungles of northern Madagascar.

An Adventist physician had opened a medical practice in the village of Andapa, just a few kilometers from the cloud-covered mountains that have now been designated as Marojejy National Park. In 1974 the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church had helped fund the new hospital here through a special Sabbath School offering.

The town of Andapa was tiny, with tin roofs and dirt streets; a place where being able to see into the body and take pictures of broken bones would be an amazing miracle.

Donovan crated up the X-ray machine, making sure all of the necessary parts and connections were safely secured in the crate; then he and the team at Loma Linda prayed that the unit would arrive safely and be exactly what the people needed. When he delivered the large wooden box to the shipping dock, he also sent a very specific letter to the physician in Andapa, a letter describing exactly how to prepare the room for the new X-ray equipment.

"An X-ray unit requires a good-size electrical wire for the power supply," Donovan said. "And that's just the beginning."

PART ONE

Many weeks later Loma Linda received a letter saying that the X-ray machine had arrived and that the clinic was ready for Donovan to come and do the installation. There was a thanksgiving celebration in the X-ray department, and many more prayers as Donovan got on the plane for Madagascar.

"The flight seemed to take forever," Donovan remembered. "When I finally arrived, one of the men proudly escorted me to the X-ray room, the place that had been prepared for the new machine. I looked around, but did not see the electrical power cable, so I asked my new friend, and he pointed to a small wire hanging from the ceiling. The wire was not strong enough to run a toaster!"

Donovan and the doctor prayed for wire, and then checked everywhere around the hospital to see if there might be a wire that could handle the X-ray unit. No luck.

Photo Courtesy of the Author

The next morning the doctor, Donovan, and a driver went downtown to the power company and asked to speak with the supervisor. No luck. The supervisor was out of town. His assistant, however, offered to help them look around the shop for the necessary wire. He took them out back, where there were several stacks of different wires scattered around a large tree. It was quickly obvious to Donovan that nothing there would work.

"The wire I needed had to be about ¾ inch in diameter, and we needed 450 feet of it! There was nothing even close to that under the tree."

The doctor, the assistant supervisor, and the driver continued searching in the tangles around the tree while Donovan wandered off around the building, praying deeply as he came to a large loading dock.

"There on the dock lay two large rolls of wire, exactly what we needed," said Donovan.

He shouted, and the other men came running, hoping Donovan was OK!

"We were all in tears," said Donovan. "Crying and thanking God. All of us! Everyone in town, and even back at the power company in the capital city, said it was impossible for the wire to be in Andapa. No one up there would have any use for that kind of wire!"

One of the men at the local train station remembered that there had been a train accident a couple years ago. "Some of the freight might have been dumped off onto the loading dock," he said.

"Angels," declared Donovan. "God's hands put the wire on the loading dock. I'm sure of it!"

The assistant supervisor was so amazed that he offered to have a crew come to the hospital and string the wire, three lines of 150 feet each!

"So we had our large wire," Donovan said. "Now for the second half of the story!"

PART TWO

Back home in Loma Linda, Donovan had made up the seven-conductor cables necessary for connecting the components of the machine. Once they were assembled, he had carefully placed them in the crate with the X-ray unit. When the crate was unpacked in Andapa, the cables were missing. Now what to do?

"After all, this was God's hospital, and He knew where we could find the necessary seven-conductor electric cables."

"Well, first we prayed," smiled Donovan. "After all, this was God's hospital, and He knew where we could find the necessary seven-conductor electric cables."

The next morning Donovan and the doctor went to town. The doctor knew the owner of a small store that sold pots and pans, dresses, umbrellas, boots, and whatever else people might buy. Donovan told the owner exactly what he needed, and asked where he might be able to find such cables in Andapa. The man rubbed his chin and thought for a bit, then went back into the far reaches of his store.

"He was gone a long time," Donovan remembered. "When he returned, he had a coil of wire in his hands. It was seven-conductor, exactly what I needed and exactly the right length!"

Again, no one in Andapa would have any use for wires like these. No one except the Adventist Hospital and Donovan!

Donovan, of course, carries all the necessary tools and connectors with him on these projects, so in a few days he had the new X-ray unit up and operating perfectly!

When he told me the story, Donovan chuckled. "Only God would put exactly the right cables and wires for me out there in the dark-green jungle. He's into miracles!"

Dick Duerksen, a pastor and storyteller, lives in Portland, Oregon, United States.

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The Promise

What a stormy day on the beach taught me about God

The July days dragged slowly by. The joy of summer vacation had long since vanished, and we primary school students were left with nothing to do and no place to go. Our daddy, we understood, was having a hard time with the death of Mom and a lot of bills to pay. He cooked, cleaned, did the laundry, and supported the three of us, all under the age of 10.

We longed to go to the seashore and enjoy the ocean waves, and we pleaded and begged Dad to go. But many a Sunday found him heading off to work to keep food on the table. One night, as I was playing with a ball in the backyard, Dad came up the sidewalk. I noticed his hunched shoulders and tired expression, but I started anyway, "Dad, can't we please go to the beach this Sunday?"

My father looked me in the eye and said, "Yes, we'll go."

I was thrilled, but wanted to seal the deal. "Dad, do you promise?"

"Yes, I promise!" he said with a tired sigh. Pictures of jumping through the waves played across my mind! Sunday could not come soon enough!

Sunday morning came, and I ran to the window; horror of horrors, large dark clouds tumbled across the sky! But I looked up and to the left, and there was a tiny patch of blue; we were going to the shore! I charged to the kitchen: "Ready to go to the beach?" My busy father looked at me with a shocked look on his face. The window over his shoulder showed a dark day with wind gusts and spatters of rain. "It's going to be cold, wet, and windy," he stated.

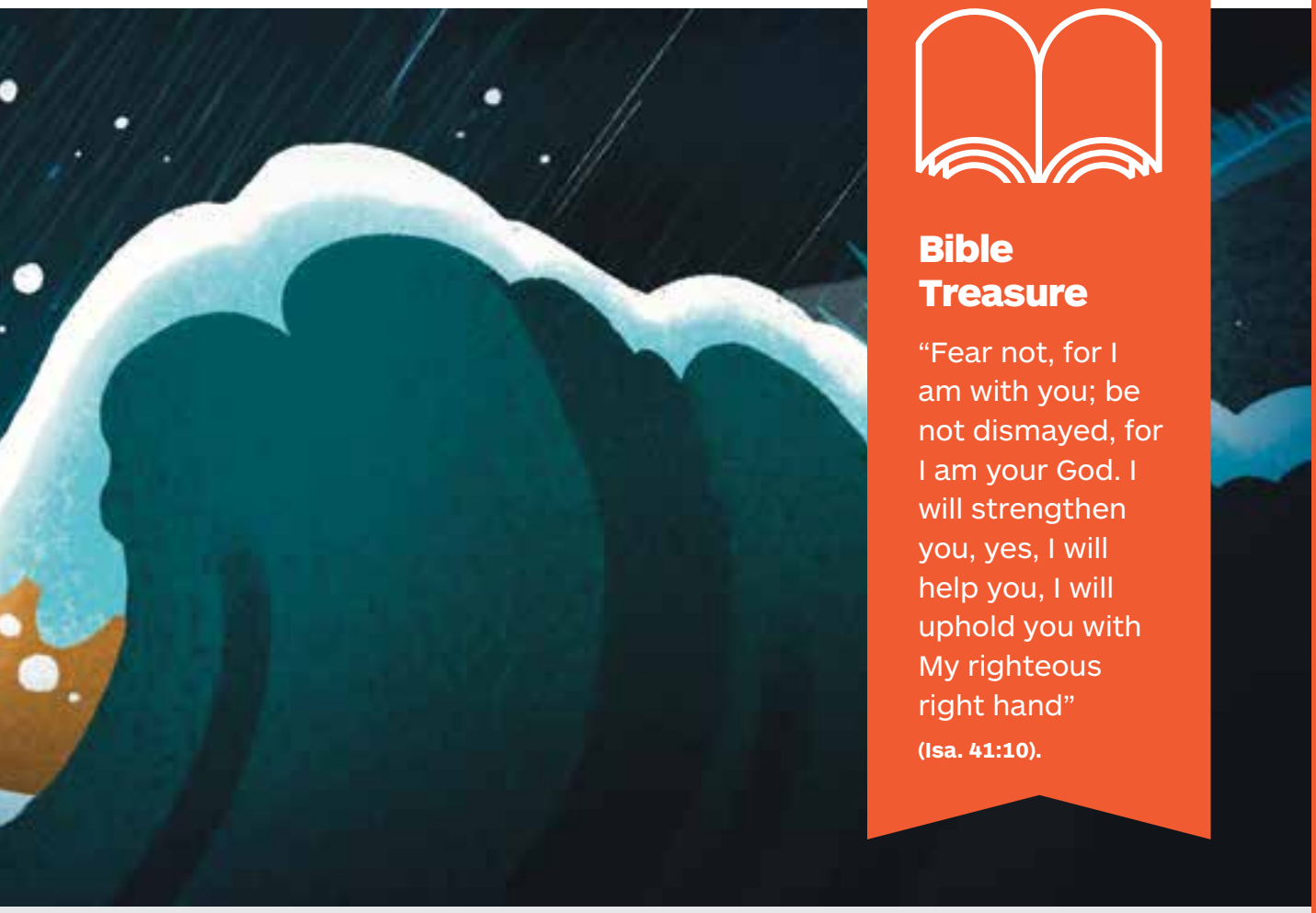
"But Dad," I pleaded, "you promised!" He looked me square in the face.

"I did," came the emphatic reply. " If you still want to go to the beach, to the beach we will go!"

The kitchen turned into a hustling, busting place of lunch preparation. Black olives to put on our fingers and eat, a can of beans, egg sandwiches, carrots, and celery all were prepared. I prayed that a downpour would not finish my dreams of swimming in the waves. We quickly put on our swimsuits and ate our oatmeal breakfast.

Illustration: Mugi Kinoshita

BY RAY "CHIP" BROWN



Bible Treasure

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand"

(Isa. 41:10).

As we drove down our street, raindrops occasionally hit the windshield. What followed was one of the quickest trips to the ocean we had ever experienced. Never had those 70 miles (112 kilometers) gone by so fast. No line of cars were waiting at the ticket booth to get in; in fact, the booth attendant looked at us with surprise that we were even there.

Out of the car we jumped, grabbing our towels and heading to the oceanfront. But what met us was not what we expected—angry waves, cold temperatures, and sand-blown winds. Our toes barely touched the water, and we were done. Brrr, it was cold! We huddled together on a blanket and pushed the sand with our feet to make a windshield. We ate some sand-encrusted egg sandwiches and shivered. Dad had brought along some warm clothing, and we gladly accepted them! Our defeat was all over our faces. He had known all along what would happen, but not a word of judgment came from his lips.

"Are you ready to go home?" he asked, a look of love and compassion stretched across his face. Yes, we were ready! Driving home, I marveled at what Father had done to keep his promise. Fifty years later the experience and lessons learned still shine bright! Promises are meant to be kept! Our heavenly Father made us a promise in His Word, and we can count on Him to fulfill that promise. "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand" (Isa. 41:10).

While shivering on the sand that day, I could never have dreamed of the challenges life would bring me. But through it all, I have had the assurance that our heavenly Father keeps His promises! He will always be there no matter the storms that come. I look forward one day to sitting on the beach in heaven and thanking Him!

Ray "Chip" Brown teaches middle school at Redlands Adventist Academy in **California, United States**. He loves spending time with his wife, children, and grandchildren, especially at the beach!

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