

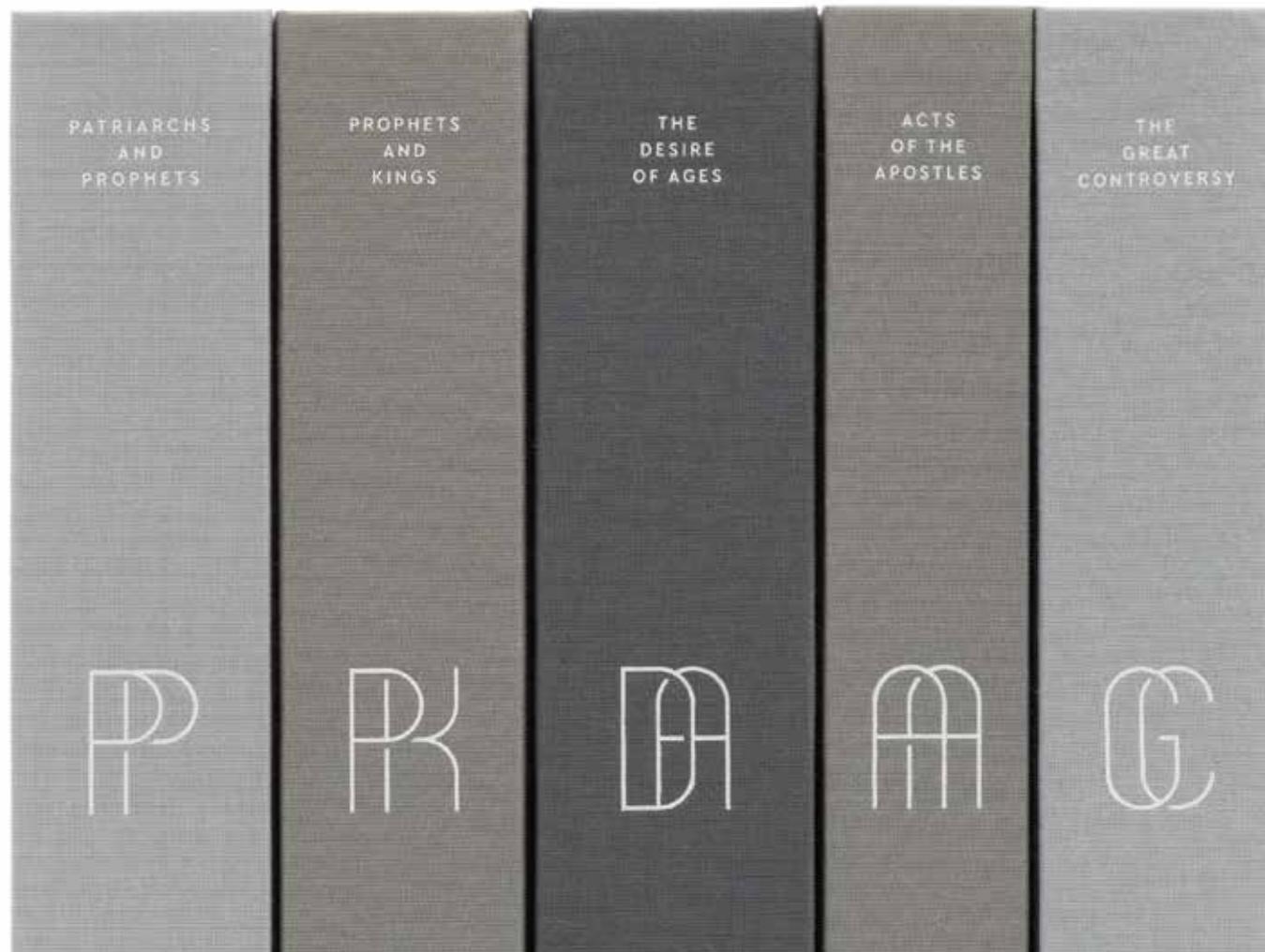
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Adventist Journey

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My Journey

God's timing is never something you can predict or feel coming. When I went back into teaching, it was another one of those experiences of, "It's right. This time is right." God opened that door and brought us back into it. I'm in Adventist education, and it's more than a job. It's definitely a calling and a ministry. Visit <https://vimeo.com/nadadventist/ajaaronlong> for more of Aaron's story.

AARON LONG,
junior high vice principal,
Burton Adventist Academy



Cover Photo by Dan Weber

Dear Reader: The publication in your hands represents the collaborative efforts of the North American Division and *Adventist World* magazine, which follows *Adventist Journey* (after page 16). Please enjoy both magazines!

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Life Without a Box

A Multisensory Approach to SABBATH SCHOOL

BY CORY WETTERLIN

Ancient Greek philosophers¹ believed that the world was made up of small static particles called atoms, separated from one another by empty space. It was also believed that if a person could break something down to its smallest components to study and understand the way these components interacted with each other,² one could have full understanding of the object being studied.³

Unfortunately, the Greek's atomistic worldview not only shaped the way in which reality was perceived, it also affected the way we live. If the best way to understand something was by its smallest components, then this must also be the best way to conduct an efficient life.⁴

Consider the relationship between science and religion as an example. Fragmented, science would stick to the study of empirical evidence and not comment on the religious or philosophical life. Religion would, therefore, stick to the study of more conceptual things

and leave the empirical evidence to science.⁵ This separated the empirical part of life from the spiritual, social, and emotional parts of life.⁶

Living Inside the Boxes

The Greek's view shaped the modernist view of reality,⁷ which has taught people to look at their lives compartmentally. For example, work, social, church, family, health—are all boxed separately.⁸ It is not a problem, therefore, to act one way at work or at home, and another way at church, in both worship service and Sabbath School.

Modernism also brought an over-emphasis to the rational (objective) over the emotional (subjective) ways of learning. When a student comes into a Sabbath School class to learn about the love of God, there will most likely be logical information shared with the child about the love of God. They will learn memory verses and perhaps hear a Bible story about Jesus dying on the cross for them to show them God's love. If taught in a dingy classroom on hard seats by a teacher with no enthusiasm, the emotional connotation of the love of God will not be a very positive one.

If instead the love of God is taught in a well-lit classroom with comfortable chairs that are soft to the touch, and students are greeted by a socially loving teacher (both inside and outside the classroom), then the emotional connotation of the student regarding the love of God will be much different. Which learning experience is more likely to draw them toward the love of God in the future?

Reaching the Whole Person

Another significant category of fragmentation is that of personhood. In atomistic thinking, individuals are identified as a person by their thoughts. Because of the atomistic

focus on the objective view of reality as the most important part of life, the objective-cognitive function is the most definitive understanding for a person to know who they are. One could argue that as long as you have your thoughts and feelings you will always be you. The criticism of this, however, is that personhood is also made up of relational aspects.

The small-group setting of Sabbath School has the potential to help build a more corporate personhood. If the setting is a welcoming one that encourages interaction with other students as part of a discussion, creative project, or service opportunity to the community, this will help to build the social personhood of the students. It will also give the student a better sense of belonging within the church body in general. A positive multisensory environment can help to keep students coming back because it has become part of who they are.

A multisensory Sabbath School experience can also help to reverse some of the effects of fragmentation on the learning process and social experience of students, which, in turn, can help dissolve the compartmentalization of life today.

"Being There" Learning

The advances in brain research have allowed for educators to discover some very interesting results concerning the environment of the classroom. Similar to how there are many different shades of the basic colors on a color wheel, there are various senses related to the five factory senses usually recognized.

The researchers describe up to 19 different senses that a person can engage in when participating in class or school outside, surrounded by nature. They call this a learning context of "being there."

The connection of this research to brain health has discovered that the more senses that are engaged,

The small-group setting of Sabbath School has the potential to help build a more corporate personhood.



In a multisensory approach, "outdoor" learning may be part of Sabbath School activities. *iStock/FatCamera*

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the more dendrites are produced in the brain. The brain becomes denser and more active through these truly multisensory experiences.⁹ This also increases the retention of the knowledge that is being shared through the teaching experience. In certain circles, this has encouraged a push for an outdoor classroom emphasis for children. Compare the rich sensory experience of a day at the creek (engaging multiple senses) with the average Sabbath School class in a church on Sabbath morning.

It is true that our children's divisions will often decorate the room, have stuffed animals, songs with mo-

tions, and a great deal of movement and interaction. These multisensory experiences are valuable. If, however, the Sabbath School class consists of children sitting at a desk for the lesson study, the learning experience has been reduced to the symbolic level of learning¹⁰ and engages only two senses. The brain growth significantly decreases, and so does retention of what is being learned.

Often, by the time our children move to junior, earliteen, or youth Sabbath School, the decorated rooms, the songs, the stuffed animals are gone, and so are the creative mind-stimulating movement

and projects. The students enter a room with a circle of folding chairs to open their Bibles, read, and have a discussion. It is no wonder that the learning retention, let alone student retention, goes down.¹¹

A Multisensory Youth Sabbath School Program

When I was the youth pastor at the Pleasant Valley church in Happy Valley, Oregon, I gathered a creative group of Sabbath School teachers. I decided to develop a multisensory learning experience for the students when they came into Sabbath School. At the time, I didn't understand any

of the research mentioned in this article; I just knew that I wanted to engage multiple learning styles and make Sabbath School a worthwhile experience.

The first general factor of the every-week experience was the atmosphere of the room. With the help of a church member who was also an interior designer, we made a warm and welcoming environment for the students to walk into. We had to be very intentional about this because we were meeting in the fellowship hall, so the decorations had to be set up and taken down every week. We bought large plants, candle holders, pillows, curtains, and other decorative items that could be spread around the room. We bought floor lamps, which allowed us to change the lighting in the room to a warmer atmosphere. We also bought large (20+) photograph frames to insert photos of the students from Sabbath School and other youth events.

The second general factor was breakfast. There was a rotating team of parents who would come in every week to make breakfast for the students. Not only does this increase the sensory input, but nothing can raise youth out of their beds and get them to church on time like knowing breakfast is waiting! The care and affection of the church for the youth could be seen, felt, and tasted every week.

A student team would also choose and lead worship music every week. The screen was used for song lyrics, illustrative graphics, and videos for teaching illustrations.

There was also a multisensory teaching team, which came up with specific, creative ways to teach the content of the Sabbath School lesson. For the study in Ezekiel we set up giant canvases made from queen-size bed sheets stretched over one-by-one-inch pieces of wood. We then brought in drop clothes, old T-shirts, and a bunch of house paint and brushes. When the students came in, we turned on an audio recording of Ezekiel 1 over the speakers and instructed the students to paint what they heard. Once the paintings of wheels-within-wheels, whirlwinds, and four-faced cherubim had been finished, we waited for them to dry, cut them out, and put them up on the wall. The rest of the 13-week series on Ezekiel had the paintings from the first week as a backdrop. There were other weeks when catapults were built with popsicle sticks, and a pile of Styrofoam bones was placed around the classroom waiting to be brought back to life.

Another intentional step taken for a different lesson series included the involvement of small-group leaders and mentors. Adult leaders were selected, and at a certain point in the lesson time the students would break into their small groups for discussion. This was



Teen members from the Pleasant Valley Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Happy Valley, Oregon, engage in a multisensory Sabbath School event by painting Ezekiel "murals" for their classroom. Photo provided by Cory Wetterlin.

The songs, the stuffed animals are gone, and so are the creative mind-stimulating movement and projects.

a hard-hitting life-issues based series that asked some significant and personal questions. These small groups gave the students a context in which to share and to grow closer to those in their groups.

Healing the Fragmentation

How does this multisensory Sabbath School class approach help to meet the concerns of fragmentation and healthy brain growth? First, the atmosphere creates a positive subjective experience for the learning that takes place every week. The students have a sense of ownership of the space, which means that they can feel that they belong to the church. This helps to lessen the fragmentation often felt between the rest of the church and the youth ministry. Multiple adult volunteers being involved heals the generational fragmentation from between the students and the adults. This was especially

true with the use of small groups during the lesson time.

The stimulating atmosphere and activities also resulted in greater growth of the brain, engaging more of the brain, and increased the retention of the material being taught. I will never forget the first chapter of Ezekiel as I think back on those paintings. If you can't have the "be there" experience when trying to teach the biblical narrative and theological concepts, immersion is the next best option.

It is financially prohibitive to travel to Jerusalem every week, but perhaps we can bring Jerusalem to the classroom. With artwork, food, small groups, and social experiences, perhaps we can get closer to the experience of visiting right from the classroom. It is more than possible to increase our students' Sabbath School experience beyond the two senses found in typical symbolic education.

Multisensory Sabbath Schools increase the learning potential of the scriptures that are

Living outside the constructs of our boxes is possible.

being taught. A sense of belonging is generated, and a more wholistic and positive connotation surrounding the learning process, and reversing the effects of fragmentation within our church and thus our society, is created. Living outside the constructs of our boxes is possible—and this can start through Sabbath School!

¹ "The atomic theory was first proposed by Democritus more than 2,000 years ago. Essentially, this theory leads us to look at the world as constituted of atoms moving in the void. The ever-changing forms and characteristics of large-scale objects are now seen as the results of changing arrangements of the moving atoms. Evidently this view was, in certain ways, an important mode of realization of wholeness, for it enabled men to understand the enormous variety of the whole world in terms of the movements of one single set of basic constituents, through a single void that permeates the whole of existence. Nevertheless, as the atomic theory developed, it ultimately became a major support for a fragmentary approach to reality. It ceased to be regarded as an insight, a way of looking, and was, instead, regarded as an absolute truth—the notion that the whole of reality is actually constituted of nothing but "atomic building blocks," all working



Two teen boys work on a portion of their Sabbath School's Ezekiel "mural," as part of their lesson experience. Photo provided by Cory Wetterlin.

together more or less mechanical."—Taken from David Bohm, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*. (London; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1995), pp. 8, 9.

² Hoyt L. Edge, *A Constructive Postmodern Perspective on Self and Community: From Atomism to Holism*. (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1994), pp. 10, 11.

³ It is now understood, however, that the cosmos is made up of much smaller particles than atoms and that they are constantly changing and interconnected.

⁴ Ted Peters, *Sin: Radical Evil in Soul and Society*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1994), p. 45.

⁵ "Science and religion are not in conflict, for their teachings occupy distinctly different domains.... The net of religion extends over questions of moral meaning and value. These two magisteria do not overlap, nor do they encompass all inquiry (consider, for starters, the magisterium of art and the meaning of beauty). To cite the arch clichés, we get the age of rocks, and religion retains the rock of ages; we study how the heavens go, and they determine how to go to heaven." —Taken from Stephen Jay Gould, "Nonoverlapping Magisterium," *Natural History*, vol. 106.2, 1997, pp. 16-22.

⁶ Douglas Sloan brings out the classic complication of the modernist emphasis on reason to the detriment of all other parts of the individual. For the Enlightenment, reason is king and no other part of the human is more significant for gaining knowledge, which as Bacon says is power. Sloan points out that this "false divorce" between reason and emotions has led to the neglect of things like "schooling of the emotional life." —Taken from Douglas Sloan, *Insight-Imagination: The Emancipation of Thought and the Modern World*, 2nd ed. (San Rafael, Calif.: Barfield Press, 2008), p. 22.

⁷ Modernity rose from the Modern Enlightenment Project, a political and philosophical movement, which is closely linked to the ethos of philosophical and aesthetic modernism.

⁸ "What complicates the matter in the 20th century is the segmentation, if not outright fragmentation, of daily life. We divide life into a number of functional sectors: home and workplace, work and leisure, white collar and blue collar, public and private. Such sectoring suits well the needs of large corporations which operate bureaucratically and impersonally. We cannot live all day long in an impersonal atmosphere, of course. So, for our own mental health we find we must secure a domain for the personal. To do so we draw a line between the impersonal atmosphere of the work or public sector, on the one hand, and the personal domain of home, family and private leisure, on the other" (Ted Peters. *Science, Theology, and Ethics*, p. 256).

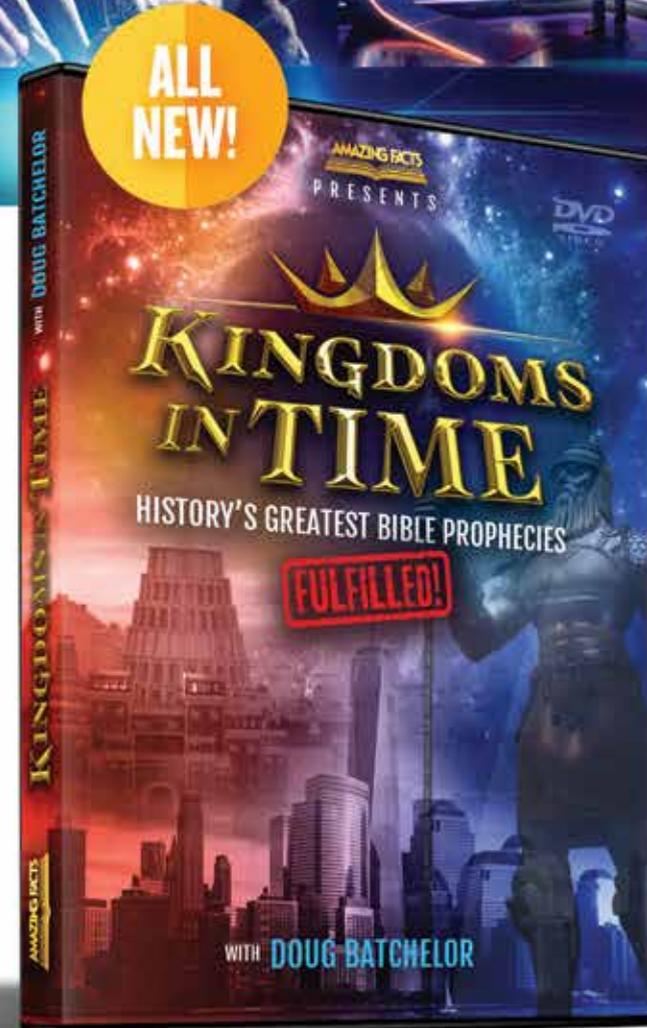
⁹ Susan J. Kovalik, and Karen D. Olsen, *Exceeding Expectations: A User's Guide to Implementing Brain Research in the Classroom*, 2nd ed. (Covington, Wash.: Susan Kovalik and Associates, Inc., 2002), 1.3-1.4.

¹⁰ The theory of symbolic learning proposes to account for the effectiveness of imagery, which suggests that the imagery helps to develop a mental blueprint by creating a motor program in the central nervous system.

¹¹ Kovalik and Olsen share that the nonuse of the newly developed dendrites in the brain will eventually cause the loss of those dendrites. It is necessary to continue the stimulation in order to keep higher brain function.

Cory Wetterlin has been involved in youth ministry for more than 15 years and is currently an adjunct professor of theology at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

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NAD NEWS BRIEFS



TEACHER BIKES FROM “WATER TO WATER” TO ATTEND CONVENTION

On August 7, most of the nearly 6,000 educators expected to attend the 2018 NAD Teachers’ Convention were checking into the event while Monte Saxby, math, physics, and computer science teacher at Skagit Adventist Academy in Burlington, Washington, was pedaling a few miles away on a bike trail along Lake Michigan. His goal of riding about 2,300 miles “from water to water” was in sight after three weeks of traveling through difficult mountain passes, scorching heat, and pockets of torrential rain.

A few minutes after 5 p.m., Saxby and his son, Craig, also a teacher, crossed the line at McCormick Place, the convention site. They were greeted with blow horns and streamers by Saxby’s wife, June, his daughter-in-law, Amanda, and about a dozen

other friends and coworkers.

Hugs and high-fives were dispensed and photos taken at the ride’s conclusion, not just for the success of the two bicyclists, but also for the scholarship money raised. One of the supporters, Aubrey Fautheree, principal at Skagit Adventist Academy, explained: “We’ve gotten sponsorships for student aid, and we’re at more than \$6 a mile for every mile they ride, so it’ll be almost \$14,000 that will go to the worthy student fund.”

Fautheree continued, “That’s not why he did it, but it’s kind of a cool byproduct.”

“I’ve always wanted to do a big bike ride across the country—or partially across the country,” said cycling enthusiast Saxby. “I thought, *Why don’t I ride to the convention?* When I mentioned it and my son said that

← Monte (left) and Craig Saxby approach the finish of their almost 2,300-mile bike ride from Washington State to Lake Michigan to attend the 2018 NAD Teachers’ Convention in Chicago. *Kimberly Luste Maran*

he’d like to do it with me, [I realized] it was a great opportunity to spend time with him and share the experience.”

Starting on July 16, the cyclists averaged 120 miles a day, except for Saturdays.

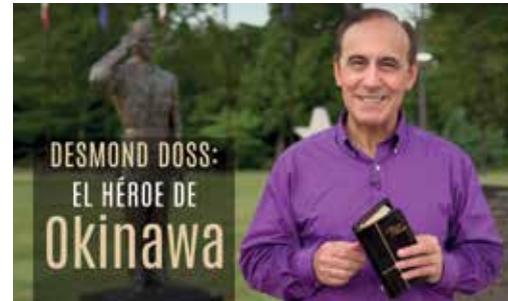
“There were lots of challenges,” said Saxby. “At the beginning, we had really warm weather. And we had several passes to go over in Washington, with days at or above 100 degrees. There was a five-mile climb in Montana with strong headwinds. That was a tough day.” Saxby added that North Dakota had tons of truck traffic—and lots and lots of hills. “And this traffic in Chicago was not a breeze either,” he quipped.

“There were days I really wanted to quit, but I knew if I just kept one more pedal, one more pedal, one more pedal, I could eventually get there. Perseverance—that’s probably the biggest lesson,” Saxby said.

“Another thing I noticed riding with my son is when we had headwinds, if I tucked in behind my son, it was really easy. If you take that to a spiritual level, if you step in line with the Son, things are better. They may not always be easier, but at least you’re making progress in the right direction.”

—*Kimberly Luste Maran, NAD Office of Communication*

↓ Robert Costa is the speaker/director for the It Is Written Spanish-language ministry, Escrito Está. *It Is Written*



Two Media Ministries Win Telly Awards

Two Adventist media ministries recently received 2018 Telly Awards for their programming. The Telly Awards, founded in 1979, honor excellence in video on all screens and devices, including social media videos; promotional videos; commercials; television programming; online commercials, video, and films; and more.

Jesus 101 earned two Telly Awards in the 39th annual Telly Awards. “With more than 12,000 entries from all 50 states and numerous countries, this is truly an honor,” said Elizabeth Talbot, Jesus 101 speaker/director. The first Telly Award was for the episode “Persecuted,” in the TV series *After God’s Heart*. The second was a People’s Choice Telly Award for “Anointed,” from the same series.

The media evangelism ministry It Is Written received six Telly Awards. “I continue to be so proud of our entire team,” said John Bradshaw, It Is Written speaker/director. “This recognition shows not only that our It Is Written team is working at an extremely high standard, but that there’s a genuine commitment to excellence in ministry.”

It Is Written’s “A Lamp Unto My Feet” won a silver award in

Volunteer Lay Pastor Recognized for “Saving” Church With One Member

With just one member still in regular attendance a year ago, the Osceola Seventh-day Adventist Church in Iowa was about to close.

That all changed when Bill Ruble and his wife, Carol, immediately got to work inviting old members back to church and visiting with prospective members, many of whom had previously attended evangelistic meetings but had not joined the church. They also recruited help from others who had been active with them in a home-based church plant for several years prior.

After a year of these joint efforts, there are now 25-30 people in regular attendance at the Osceola church. Ruble now serves as the church’s volunteer lay pastor. Recently, his ministry was recognized during a dedication service.

He credits the church’s revitalization to prayer. “I often wake up at 2 a.m. and pray for help to bring the church back,” he said.

On a typical day, Ruble gets up around 4:30 a.m., has worship with Carol, then gets ready and heads to his full-time job as a school bus driver. He spends the rest of his time giving Bible stud-

the “General Biography” category, competing against mainstream networks, including NBC Sports Group, CBS Sports, Telemundo, and InTouch Ministries.

“Effective Prayer” won two bronze awards for “General Religious/Spiritual” and “General Education.” Another “General Religious/Spiritual” bronze award was given to “The



↑ Bill Ruble (left), with wife, Carol, is presented with his certificate of dedication by Susie and Eddie Cabrera. Cabrera (right) is a pastor and coordinator for the Volunteer Lay Pastor program. *Iowa-Missouri Conference*

ies, preparing sermons, gardening, and raising pigeons.

Ruble is one of two lay pastors currently participating in the Iowa-Missouri Conference’s Volunteer Lay Pastor (VLP) program. The program just launched this year and offers resources, mentoring, coaching, and training to those who want to plant a church or bring new life to a dying church.

Ruble plans to hold an evangelistic series this fall. Ruble also hopes to build up leadership that can one day take his place, when the time comes.

“I could not even begin to do this without my wife. She is the backbone of the whole thing,” said Ruble. “Second, it is the Holy Spirit who actually does the work. I do the visiting, but without the conviction of the Spirit, it would all be for nothing.”

—*Randy Harmdierks, communication director, Iowa-Missouri Conference*

Holy City.” “Rome and the Reformation” received a bronze award for “General History.”

Escrito Está, It Is Written’s Spanish-language ministry, won a bronze award for *Desmond Doss: El héroe de Okinawa* (*Desmond Doss: The Hero of Okinawa*) in the “General Religious/Spiritual category.”

—*It Is Written and Jesus 101*

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Jeremiah 3:15, KJV

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BY DON JACOBSEN

Looking for the Hopeless

You probably have a Bible app on your phone. I do. Although it doesn't take the place of my study Bible, there are times when it's handy.

I recently learned there is a Web site that records not only how many times someone accesses a digital Bible, but also which topics are sought most frequently. Far and away, the topic most often explored on an electronic Bible is the subject of hope. Hope.

Not much of a surprise, really. Fragile economic climate, family stresses, the moral fabric of our culture shifting under us like tectonic plates gone berserk, complex diseases for which even Big Pharma can't find a pill. It's enough to keep you awake nights. In fact, last year Americans spent nearly \$45 billion on sleep aids.

That's useful information for those of us who deal in sowing and cultivating hope.

When Hopeless Meets Hope

Ellen G. White writes that, "those who surrender their lives to His guidance and to His service will never be placed in a position for which He has not made provision. Whatever our situation, if we are doers of His word, we have a Guide to direct our way; what-

ever our perplexity, we have a sure Counselor; whatever our sorrow, bereavement, or loneliness, we have a sympathizing Friend" (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 248).

Hopelessness is nurtured by uncertainty about the future. Hopelessness is intensified by finding yourself in a situation over which

you have no control. Hopelessness festers in a setting where your own bad choices have created no easy outcomes. Seems to me there is a lot of that going around right now.

And that's why we need to make sure we are purveyors of hope whenever our life touches another. And it's why when folk come to worship we must make sure they go away marinated in hope.

Remember, hope isn't generally nurtured when we sit and listen to a 30-minute lecture on how vile we are. But when we discover that there is Someone in charge, that He can totally rescue us from

our wretched record, that the end-game is in His hands, the world begins to look a different color. Worship is that event when we take our eyes off ourselves and put them on Him. No wonder Scripture says we are saved by hope!

And sometimes it just takes a seed. "Again he said, 'What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade'" (Mark 4:30-32, NIV).

Go Looking

After church on Sabbath this past spring I saw a woman I'd guess to be in her late 30s walking across the parking lot. I couldn't help but notice she was crying. Sobbing. At the far corner of the lot she sat down under a tree. I could hear her sobs from where I was standing. I approached and asked how I could help. She didn't want to talk, so I called my wife, Ruthie, to help me.

Out poured the whole sordid story. She was a hopeless addict (her words), had three children—the first born when she was 17. All three were living with different families. She had scratches on her neck; her boyfriend had just thrown her out, burned all her clothes, and smashed her phone.

The woman refused everything we tried to give her. She didn't want food, a place to sleep, or anything else we had to offer. Except hope. We told her how much God loved her. We assured her that He had a wonderful plan for her life. That there was hope. We prayed; she smiled. *She smiled!*

Hope does that, you know. That's why we go looking for the hopeless.

Don Jacobsen is part of the NAD Prayer Ministry; a version of this article was published in the HOPE Heals e-newsletter.

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OCT 27

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