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# Adventist Journey

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## My Journey

I grew up knowing that God had to be in my life, and that God was my one true friend. When I came here, I prayed to God, . . . I've never really had friends whom I can fit in with or friends who can understand that God is first in my life. I think that God has blessed me with great friends here—we bring each other closer to God. Visit [vimeo.com/nadadventist/ajraquelvilla](https://vimeo.com/nadadventist/ajraquelvilla) for more of Villa's story.

**RAQUEL VILLA,**  
*sophomore, Southwestern Adventist University, Keene, Texas*



Cover photo by Brisa Ramirez

**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!

*Adventist Journey* (ISSN 1557-5519) is the journal of the North American Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The Northern Asia-Pacific Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists is the publisher. It is printed monthly by the Pacific Press® Publishing Association. Copyright © 2020. Send address changes to your local conference membership clerk. Contact information should be available through your local church.

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A. Vol. 4, No. 3. March 2021. **Adventist Journey Publication Board** G. Alexander Bryant (chair), Kimberly Luste Maran (secretary), Kyoshin Ahn, Curtis Randolph Robinson, Tony Anobile, Paul Brantley, Arne Nielsen, Gordon Pifher, Bonita J. Shields, Kenneth Denslow, Daniel Weber, Julio Muñoz, Karnik Doukmetzian, legal advisor **Scripture References** Unless otherwise noted, all Bible references are taken from the *The Holy Bible, New International Version*. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

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## ADVENTIST JOURNEY

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BY LEONARD BRAND

## HOW DO WE DEAL WITH PERSONS WHO DON'T BELIEVE THAT GENESIS IS RIGHT ABOUT CREATION AND THE FLOOD?

**W**e know we have the story correct—the Bible says so. So how do we deal with persons who don't believe that Genesis is right about creation and the flood? Jesus had some harsh things to say to the Pharisees who refused to accept Him, but He used a very different approach to other people He dealt with. How do we fit that into our scenario today? We will return to that question after some stories about real encounters that illustrate a possible answer.

### The Approach

Some years ago a graduate student asked me, "What are the best arguments to use to win an argument about creation?"

My response was "None. That's the wrong approach. You should first become the person's friend. Then if they reach a point where they begin asking questions about creation, be ready to give thoughtful answers."

If we win an argument, it may seem satisfying. We have defended the Word of God. But we may have lost a friend, and lost the opportunity to be a positive influence.

In the early 1970s there was underway a national debate over teaching of such topics as creation in public schools. There was also a government-sponsored group preparing high school biology textbooks with an increased presence of evolution as the theme throughout the books. Some Adventists were seeking for a person to debate William Mayer, Ph.D., a leader in the preparation of these BSCS textbooks. The topic of the debate was to be creation versus evolution.

Ariel Roth, Ph.D., who was at that time the chair of the Biology Department at Loma Linda University (later he joined the Geoscience Research Institute) was invited to participate in the debate. Roth believed strongly in creation, but he did not think debates were a constructive endeavor, and was hesitant to accept this task. There had been too many such debates that did not seem to display a Christian spirit. I remember that as he pondered what to do, he decided that it was better to partake in the debate with a positive attitude than to leave it to someone who might take a more aggressively negative position. Roth agreed to participate if it were a friendly discussion between scholars. That is how he approached it, and after the "debate" Mayer said to Roth, "You and I are not too far apart." Mayer did not become a creationist, but they left as friends, not as enemies.



iStock/Tobiasjo

### Friends First

Paul Buchheim, Ph.D., and I were conducting geology/paleontology research in Wyoming. A national monument in that area appointed a new park paleontologist. We will call her Mary. To get Mary acquainted with the geology of the area, the monument allowed her to spend a summer working with us in our research. Mary was a secular scientist and, at times, made jokes about creationists. She often listened politely, however, to the devotional sessions with which we began our workdays. We diligently pursued our research and did not challenge her sarcasm about creationists.

During the summer several from the group, including Mary, drove to a paleontology conference. As they drove,

# KINDNESS?

## Or Set Them Straight?

Mary asked Paul some questions. She asked, “Do you people believe that humans evolved from other primates?” Paul responded that we do not. She asked other questions, and later we noticed that she no longer joked about creationists. We treated her as a friend, and as she saw that our research and the papers we published were scientific work she could respect, she became respectful and receptive of other ideas that went beyond the physical research we were doing. I don’t know just what she now thinks about creation, but as the years have gone by she remains a good friend, and we never know what the ultimate result of this

relationship will be. If we had argued with her, the result would likely have been quite different.

### **Rocks, Fossils, and Conversations**

Another geologist had disagreed with some of my published research conclusions, but we became friends. He didn’t make fun of my work, and I didn’t argue with him. He visited LLU to give us a seminar on his research. As we visited, the geologist began asking questions, saying, “I know there is something different about how you people deal with faith and science, and I would like to understand it.” This led to detailed, frank discussions on the topic.

He and I later spent several days in Arizona looking at the rocks and fossils. We learned to respect each other as scientists, and this respect carried over into other topics. He is an atheist, but we spent many hours discussing philosophy and religion, with him asking such questions as *What is heaven? What is hell? What is salvation? What do you think it requires to be saved?* The last evening of our camping trip came to a close. As I crawled into my sleeping bag after these wonderful conversations with a searching atheist, my prayer was very simple: “Please, God, no more. I can’t take any more blessings in one day.” This geologist remains a friend to this day.

### Searching for More Than Fossils

A group of scientists from Loma Linda University (LLU), Geoscience Research Institute (GRI), and Southwestern Adventist University (SWAU) spent about a decade in research on fossil whales in the coastal plain of Peru. Early in this research we met a Peruvian paleontologist we will call Sergio. Sergio seemed to know very little about theology; however, he listened politely to our devotional sessions in the mornings, and helped us cook vegetarian food when we camped. Over several years he became a dear friend.

Sergio is from the Natural History Museum in Lima, and is a productive paleontology researcher. He was a valuable scientific consultant and also provided priceless help in dealing with the local culture.

Our interaction with Sergio was a long saga—I will share only some highlights. Several times through the years, while with us, he found a type of fossil he said he'd been looking for during many years. He said, "This always happens when you guys are here!" and he attributed it to our God that he observed us serving. After one such

Jesus had some harsh things to say to the Pharisees who refused to accept Him, but He used a very different approach to other people He dealt with. How do we fit that into our scenario today?

trip I received an email from Sergio, describing some problems he was having. He said, "Please pray for me." You can bet we did pray for him.

Sergio knew almost nothing about theology, but the way he lived his life reminded me of Matthew 25:40: "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (NIV). I found opportunity to tell him so. Sergio was very poor; he had almost nothing. His work at the museum was volunteer work, as they had no money to pay him. He lived from such things as the contract pay we gave him. At the end of one of our research trips I paid him, and said, "I hope this keeps you supplied with food."

He replied, "Oh, no, I use this money to hire local people to help me with my fossil hunting. That way it gets recycled to people who are poorer than I."

After some years of this partnership Sergio was also communicating with two European paleontologists. He hoped to convince them to come study his fossil seals. They wrote back after looking us up online, and said, "Those guys are creationists. Don't work with them; get rid of them. They will ruin your reputation."

He responded, "They have their beliefs, and I don't care what they believe. In the field they work like other scientists—and better." He kept us, and removed those others from his list of collaborators.

After my last trip to Peru, I received an email from Sergio. He wrote, "It is an honor to have known you . . . in this life." What does that say? We didn't lecture him, but there is reason to believe that he is thinking of another life after this. I can't wait to see Sergio in heaven!

### The Holy Spirit's Work

Several of us biologists or geologists at LLU collaborate as researchers in one way or another with unbelievers. Our consistent experience is that although they may think our beliefs odd, as they learn about the science we do they respect us. That would not be the case if we were argumentative and tried to prove them wrong. If we become their friends, that relationship can, if they are open, someday lead them to begin asking questions. And it will be by their choice.

Jesus' responses that seem harsh were directed toward Jewish leaders who should have been an example for others, but they were arrogant and self-righteous. They saw themselves as better than other people, especially the poor and those who were struggling spiritually. Jesus' kind and loving spirit was always displayed to anyone willing to learn. We never know who is willing to learn, and our task is to reach out with a loving spirit to all our contacts.

What happens after that is the Holy Spirit's work.

*Leonard Brand, Ph.D., is professor of biology and paleontology in the Department of Earth and Biological Sciences at Loma Linda University in California.*



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# NAD NEWS BRIEFS



## Washington Adventist University Welcomes New Adventists During On-Campus Baptisms

Washington Adventist University's community continues to be one of prayer and faith. On two consecutive weekends a student and an employee of WAU made the commitment publicly through baptism at Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church on the university's campus in Takoma Park, Maryland.

Sligo has made special COVID-19 accommodations for baptism to minimize the chance of spreading infection. During each baptism the church community, friends, and family who could not attend in person can attend virtually via Zoom. The Zoom windows are projected onto the church screens, and the baptismal candidates can communicate with their friends and loved ones via the screen. Charles Tapp, Sligo pastor, said, "We want to ensure that everyone feels as safe as possible while still allowing each candidate to share their commitment with their loved ones and friends."

Rodrigo Lima, a senior student working in the admissions office, was baptized after being nurtured by fellow students and WAU staff. Lima came to WAU from Brazil and wanted to be baptized ahead of traveling back to his home. "I believe there is no greater honor than to commit my life to the service of God."

↑ Antonica Neto looks up at her friends and family on Zoom projected on the screens at Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church before being baptized by Richard Castillo. *Washington Adventist University*

Antonica Neto was baptized on a second weekend to allow for time to take the needed preventive measures between candidates. Neto is a recent addition to the WAU staff, joining the admissions and recruiting team in October 2020. Neto is Angolan, a long-time resident of the Washington, D.C., area, and is fluent in English, Portuguese, and Spanish. During her baptism she used each of these languages to express love and thanks for the support that led her to make this public commitment. "I can't explain the joy that I'm feeling right now," she said.

—Richard Castillo, *Washington Adventist University Integrated Marketing and Communication*

↓ Jared Wood, director of the Dinosaur Science Museum at Southwestern Adventist University, shows young patrons some of the exhibit materials. *Southwestern Adventist University*



## Southwestern Adventist University Professors Publish Research Paper in Peer-reviewed Journal

Every summer Jared Wood, director of the Dinosaur Science Museum at Southwestern Adventist University (SWAU), and Arthur Chadwick, director of the Dinosaur Excavation Project at SWAU, along with Keith Snyder, chair of biology at Southern Adventist University, lead a dinosaur dig at the Hanson Ranch in Wyoming. This is an ongoing collaborative research project, and they have gathered a large amount of data over the years. This research has led to the publication of a paper entitled, “Over 13,000 Elements From a Single Bonebed Help Elucidate Disarticulation and Transport of an Edmontosaurus thanatocoenosis” for PLOS One, a peer-reviewed open-access scientific journal published by the Public Library of Science.

The paper represents approximately 20 years of research by the Dinosaur Science Museum and Dinosaur Research Project. The Dinosaur Research Project refers to the dinosaur excavation and research that takes place every summer in Wyoming. Students and members of the community are both able to attend and take part in this project. SWAU became involved in this project in 1997 and began offering a dinosaur class two years later in 1999. Arthur Chad-

wick was the first SWAU professor to work on this research project, and Jared Wood has carried it on as the director since 2018.

The primary research objective of the paper is a taphonomic examination of the deposit. Taphonomy is the study of what animals were doing when they died, how they died, and what happened after they died. High-precision GPS equipment is used to catalog the location of every bone to within a centimeter to learn more about how the bones ended up in their final locations.

“Everyone wants to know how thousands of bones ended up in one location. We are finally able to give them a scientific explanation,” shares Wood. “This paper will change how bonebeds are studied and remain important for years to come. It already has close to 3,000 views on PLOS One’s website!”

Further research will continue to be conducted on the other quarries located at the ranch in Wyoming, which means other species will also be studied in this same way.

—Brisa Ramirez, *Southwestern Adventist University*

## La Vida Mission Provides Outreach to Navajo Nation

Upon entering the Thanksgiving season facing a 14-day lockdown order on November 16, 2020, because of the coronavirus pandemic, many in New Mexico, especially within the Navajo Nation, wrestled with exercising gratitude.

Staff of the La Vida Mission, a comprehensive community service center for the Navajo, located in Farmington, New Mexico—that also serves as a K-12 boarding academy—were also considering what they were grateful for, especially after their school was required to hold classes remotely under new guidelines.

As a result of the lockdown, grocery and retail stores, gas stations, and all other essential services on the Navajo Nation reservation operate on limited daytime hours. People are struggling, and many are discouraged at the increasing numbers of COVID-19 cases. This prompted La Vida Mission staff to think of their response.

“We have to [continue providing ways to] help alleviate the people’s plight,” said Dorie Panganiban, outreach director for La Vida Mission.

Staff made arrangements to contribute to a pop-up relief distribution center at a flea market on the grounds of the Crownpoint Chapter of the Navajo Nation two days after the mandate was enacted. Through partnerships with nonprofit organizations, including Partnership With Native Americans (PWNA) and Navajo Strong, La Vida Mission organized pallets of fresh produce and 100 gallons of hand sanitizer for distribution. In addition, donors provided funds to help offer free propane refills.

By the end of the day, La Vida Mission had provided food, sanitizer, and propane refills to more than 250 families.

—Dorie Panganiban, and NAD Office of Communication



↑ Staff of La Vida Mission prepare to distribute fresh produce, hand sanitizer, and propane to 250 families of the Navajo Nation. *La Vida Mission*

# NAD NEWS BRIEFS

## Historic Promotion Makes Andrew Harewood First Adventist and African American Chaplain to Reach General Rank in U.S. Army Reserve

**O**n November 1, 2020, Col. Andrew Harewood was promoted to general officer upon accepting the position of deputy chief of chaplains for the United States Army Reserve, making him the first Adventist and the first African American chaplain to become a general in the Army Reserve. With the promotion he is the third Adventist chaplain in the U.S. military to reach the general rank.

“In the military we consider our career a success when we make it to colonel. When that happened three years ago, that was a humbling experience. When [the promotion to general officer] happened, it was very surreal and very humbling,” Harewood said.

Harewood is one of three deputy chiefs of chaplains for the Army—each individually representing active duty, national guard, and the reserve—who report to the Army chief of chaplains. The Army chaplaincy leadership team oversees the religious support services within the military branch that are carried out in more than 220 countries and territories throughout the world. Harewood is the deputy who oversees the work of 700 chaplains in the Army Reserve, serving nearly 190,000 Army Reserve soldiers, their families, and Army Reserve civilians. He exercises his role from the Army’s headquarters in the Pentagon, located in Arlington, Virginia.

“Chaplain Harewood has had an exemplary career as an academician, educator, pastor, and chaplain. His new role as deputy chief of chaplains is unparalleled in the Army and among Seventh-day Adventist chaplains,” said Paul Anderson, director of NAD Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries. “He is the third Adventist military chaplain to reach this level. He joins the august company of chaplains Barry Black and Darold Bigger, who served in the U.S. Navy as chief and deputy chief of chaplains, respectively.”

Harewood has been in the Army for more than three decades and has served as a chaplain for the



↑ Andrew Harewood is the deputy chief of chaplains for the Army Reserve. He was promoted from colonel to general officer on November 1, 2020. Photo courtesy of Chaplain Andrew Harewood.

military branch for 25 years. His highly decorated career has included active military work and civilian pastoral assignments within the Adventist Church. Prior to his previous position, he was the senior pastor of the Ephesus Seventh-day Adventist Church in Harlem, New York, for four years. Even during that time, however, he still performed military duties as command chaplain for the 80th Training Command, which manages all Army training schools.

His formal promotional ceremony took place Friday, December 11, by invitation only at the historic Fort Myer Chapel, located on the grounds of Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia.

—Mylon Medley, NAD Office of Communication

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# ALL ABOUT “US”

Name: **Elfred Deynes**      Location: **Miami, Florida**      Profession: **Respiratory Therapist**

**M**any Adventists in North America have worked and are working in essential roles during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the next few magazine editions we will share, in their own words, glimpses into their lives. We thank them and many others for their service, and encourage our readers to pray for them.—Editors.

## What has been the toughest part of the past year?

For me the toughest part of these past months include looking at the uncertainty and exhaustion in the faces of many health-care providers while serving the very critical patients on mechanical ventilators, knowing that the virus could be lethal and if we aren't careful enough the same thing could happen to us or to a family member.

Another difficult adjustment has been wearing multiple layers of personal protective gear (PPE)—experiencing difficulty breathing with a face mask and trying to document with three pairs of gloves and a foggy face shield while drenched in my own sweat for many hours at a time without breaks.

I had a few experiences in which we were running out of medical equipment so we needed to prioritize, knowing that even though one patient needed it, there were others who needed it more.

Our own protective gear supply was running so low at times that we had to hang our gowns, place them in plastic bags, and reuse them several times. (Things are better now, as we have more protective gear available.)

I think that most of my strength comes precisely from my immediate family and from a principle I learned from their example.

more rewarding than serving and caring. I think that most of my strength comes precisely from my immediate family and from a

## What has been the response to your video(s) on how to use PPE and protect oneself?

The response was great! Many people were appreciative; they felt that the simple information given to them was very useful and helpful.

## Where do you get your strength?

My parents and grandmother raised me to be a person who cares about others.

They showed me that there isn't anything



↑ Elfred Deynes is a respiratory therapist working in Miami, Florida.

principle I learned from their example: “Love your neighbor as you love yourself, but love God above all things.”

## Specifically during these days, how does your faith play a part?

My faith is the one thing that keeps my engine going, much like gasoline. I can move forward only when I press on the gas pedal of faith. I know that God is watching over me and that I don't need to be afraid; “risking my life” is nothing compared to “the One who gave His.” I'm confident in His promises!

## What else would you like to share?

I would like people to know that we need to love and to care for one another. We have to learn more about working together. In times like these it's imperative that we learn the true meaning of the word “unity”; in times like these it's all about us. In health care we are learning that the only way we can make it to the next shift is by practicing selflessness, togetherness, and teamwork. Society in general needs to work the same way.

BY DON JACOBSEN

# Of Hallelujahs and Hope Vendors

**M**y friend Paul lives in the central part of the United States. His widowed mother still lives in Romania. She is 79, and she lives alone—she’s been in the same house for decades. It’s a friendly neighborhood; she knows all her neighbors, and they know her.

Paul is in touch with her regularly, and recently he received a chilling message: “Your mom has tested positive for COVID-19.” Maybe it wouldn’t be a serious case, but she is in the age bracket that is the greatest concern. Paul prayed and waited. He also sent money for food, for medicines, and to help with utilities. And he asked her neighbors to check on her, but because of the contagiousness of the virus, he discovered that her neighbors were not eager to knock on her door. With travel restrictions in place, what could he do besides pray?

One evening he phoned to check on her. She sounded terrible on the phone, and in the course of the conversation she confided to him that, besides her other symptoms, she had begun coughing up blood. His concern turned to full-blown trepidation.

Then he remembered a bunch of friends who had been at his side as prayer warriors for the past year. He spread the word around: “Mom is in a crisis; will you join me in pleading for a supernatural intervention for her?”

They did. Some began as soon as they got the word. Some prayed into the night. Some prayed all night.

The next day Paul’s mother phoned him. The coughing had stopped. Her temperature had normalized, and she was feeling better. Amazing. Not surprising, but amazing.

The year 2020 has been tough for a lot of folks, and 2021 has started out with challenges and heartache for many. COVID-19 global deaths alone have passed 2 million. That’s a lot of tears.

A couple months ago some dear friends had their 11-year-old granddaughter abducted out of an upstairs bedroom window. Unlike the majority of the more than 40 million who are carried off into human trafficking annually around the world, she

was found and returned to her parents. It is not possible to measure the anguish of that kind of statistic.

Pain comes in all shapes and sizes. Think about all the businesses that have been forced to close. How will the hundreds of thousands who’ve lost work pay their rent? How will they explain to their families that they might soon be living on the street? You and I can both extend the list of the agonies that plague our fractured planet and the people who live here.

But there is always hope, healing hope. I think of Paul and his mom—and I think of when the pandemic wins. We pray, believing, then leave it with Him. We willingly submit as our God, the Sovereign Lord of the universe, makes the final decision. He never makes a mistake—and that’s where, despite this world, the hallelujahs come from. And from where we can become “hope vendors.”

Hope vendors hurt too, but God has helped them discover where this is all going and how to find comfort and healing along the way. They’ve read the back of the Book, so they understand that the outcome is not in doubt. They weep too, but they weep tears of hope. They’ve learned to trust God and don’t ignore the pain or minimize it—they have an eternal perspective. They know what the enemy’s fate will be. They know they’re on the winning team. They see the finish line just ahead and understand that the pain is only temporary and that they are able to help energize others along the way. They vend hope.

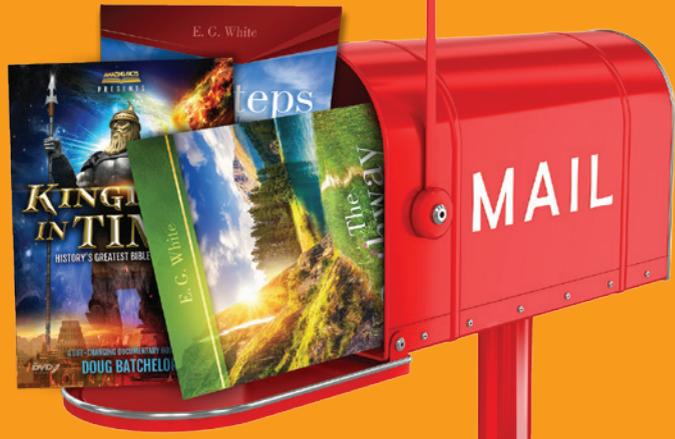
Pain comes in all shapes and sizes. But there is always hope.

*Don Jacobsen is part of the NAD prayer ministries; this article is based on stories published in the HOPE Heals e-newsletter.*

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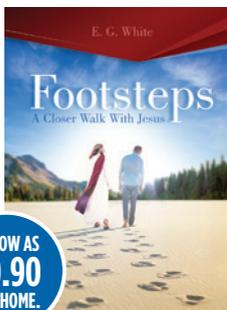
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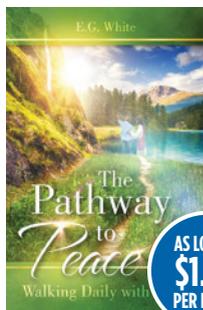
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- Cheese; non-gmo, no growth hormones/rBST, local
- Breadcrumbs; non-gmo, kosher, halal
- Canola oil; non-gmo, kosher
- Sweet & Tangy sauce; organic, non-gmo



Our recipes are simply the 'best of church 'potluck' dinners. The food that was always gone first, the food people came back for seconds and sadly, it was gone!! Remember?

Clean simple ingredients that when combined, create wonderful food for your table. With our 'Original balls', and other products, we invite 'you' to be the creative home chef.

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