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TRYING TIMES, GREAT OPPORTUNITIES!

Marcos Faiock Bomfim, M.A., Director
Stewardship Ministries
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

I'm writing this editorial just a few days after an ISIS attack on a truck in Nice, France. This follows many other terrorist activities in Europe and throughout the world. What are the outcomes? More than eighty casualties with many children involved, increased fear, hatred, and a constant sense of insecurity. I am shocked! I can't stop thinking what I would have done had I been there! How can you escape from an entirely unexpected event like that?

But my mind goes on. Nowadays most terrorist attacks are no longer motivated by political issues as in the past. Religion, by this I mean radical and fundamentalist religion, is seen as the underlying force that drives these

heinous acts. Many people believe it's okay if you have follow religion, but they don't want you to take it too seriously. You will go crazy!

Are you like me? If you try to follow the Bible and apply its principles to your life, you must prepare now! Soon the probability of being confounded and persecuted as radicals and fundamentalists may be very high. Those who are not trained to think for themselves may also unduly blame our existence as the reason for violence and hatred in the world. Trying times!

What can you and I do to prevent this kind of situation? I keep thinking that if I apply Christ's principles to my life, I will be personally involved

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I keep thinking that if I
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in benefiting others, not destroying them. I will not wait for institutional charity to do that. I will see it as my very duty—to work for others, to help improve their lives physically, socially, spiritually, and in every other facet of life. But the sad thing is that I am not doing it! At least, not as much as God would expect! This daily application of Bible principles should be the very goal of my life. Wherever I am, whatever my position, I want my life to reflect God's hands, reaching out to a dying world with hope. Such a life is what it means to be a steward of God's grace!

Recently, I was ashamed to hear a story during a significant stewardship symposium in Brazil. One of the stewardship leaders there told us about a conversation he had with Juan,* one of the baptismal candidates. The director was shocked to discover Juan identified himself as homeless. "I was indignant," the director reported to us. "I wondered why the church wasn't helping this man?"

The director admitted to us that silently he was almost blaming the local pastor. Then he discovered that Juan's decision for baptism was because of a ministry run by a couple of church members. The couple decided to use their personal income to build rooms in their backyard to shelter homeless people. The couple planned to include their guests in

social and spiritual events. Juan was one of a long list of transformed lives! This couple didn't wait for the official relief agencies to do this work. They decided to do it by themselves!

Would you classify this couple as fundamentalists or radicals? I think so! They are following Christ's very fundamentals, and loving others in a radical way. Their actions are what all church members should do (including me)! These deeds may protect us shortly! I am pretty sure that people who are loving others will not be confused with wicked individuals who hide behind religion to harm and to destroy. Perhaps this couple will be protected in the evil days by the very ones they've tried to help. They are true stewards, giving not only their financial resources, but of themselves, first to the Lord, and then to others! Help me, Lord, to imitate them, by reflecting Your image!

The background of the entire page is a close-up, warm-toned photograph of numerous stacks of gold coins. The coins are piled high, creating a sense of wealth and abundance. The lighting is soft and golden, highlighting the metallic texture of the coins.

RICHES BEYOND MEASURE

By Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries Staff

As children, my friends and I speculated about what we would do if we ever became millionaires. Our dreams were noble: helping parents, relatives, missionaries, the poor and, of course, buying a Moped or even a car to make delivering newspapers easier as a paperboy for 120 customers on a ten-mile route. Several decades later, we no longer have to wonder. Over the span of a career in some nations' militaries, most service persons will earn more money than dreamed possible as children. Even if a person received only ten dollars /pesos (or insert the name of your local currency) per hour, their cumulative pay for fifty working years will be greater than a million. We are most blessed! So why don't we feel wealthy? Why do some people always seem to be struggling with debts, while others appear to have all they want and enjoy the "good life"?

Scripture teaches principles of sound fiscal management, what is known as stewardship. Many Christians associate the term "stewardship" with paying tithes and offerings to a church; some even view it as a religious tax, membership dues for belonging to a religious faith. A long history of burdensome church taxes and misunderstandings about Biblical principles of stewardship contribute to commonly held negative views toward this vital subject.

The Bible teaches our Creator entrusted finite humans with His created handiworks. We are God's managers of earth over all that He has given to us. He is the owner; we are the stewards. Sometimes, people think their intelligent minds and raw strength obtains their idea of success and wealth, but beware of bewitching rationale. Even the Israelites were warned against

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such pride (Deuteronomy 8).

God gave Abraham and his multitude of descendants a prosperous land for their agrarian lifestyle. That divine inheritance enabled a tribal confederation to develop into a strong nation with a diversified, regional economy. The practice of tithing (returning ten percent of their increase – not gross), obligatory sacrifices, other offerings and societal "taxes" at times amounted to a third of a family's income. Also, males were to travel to the temple three times a year for ritual observances. These systematic practices were based proportionally to the blessings and were to be given cheerfully, rather than dutifully. Proactive provisions care for the poor, years of famine and periodic redemption from "bankruptcy" (Jubilee year as proscribed in Leviticus 25-27).

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The Early Church continued the Scriptural concepts of stewardship in which collective offerings supported the needs of members and the mission of the church overall. Women of means and rich men such as Nicodemus and Joseph sustained Christ’s earthly ministry. Paul’s missionary work depended on hospitality, donations, and his skills at tent-making. Jesus expanded the principles of stewardship through parables (Matthew 25:14-30 and Luke 12:13-34), observations (Mark 12:41-44), and by confronting misconceptions (Luke 19 and 20). Christ taught about establishing right priorities, and that in giving we receive more to share. He did not dismiss the necessity of giving; instead, Jesus became the “indescribable gift” (II Corinthians 9:15) that pays our

debt for sin and makes salvation, and eternal life possible to whosoever will accept His gift of righteousness.

The Bible teaches sound principles of stewardship. As our Creator, God knows what is in our best interest for our good. Attempting to live independent of His guidance may bring temporary happiness, but does not result in lasting joy. Be content and thankful for the blessings received. Divine blessings are far greater than simply money. Life, health, strength, freedom, family, education, training, and influence are as valuable as or even more valuable than wealth or the accumulation of possessions. In fact, investing in personal character development, practical life skills, education and travel add meaning to life, expand your vision and unlike materials things, cannot be taken away. They become internal to your persona, who you are.

Recognize roles. We only acquire what God entrusts for His purposes. Humans are servants, not owners. That status is unappreciated in today’s values of upward mobility, and wanting more and more. In essence, we are God’s “funnels” to channel His blessings to help meet legitimate needs in a world filled with less blessed people, human misery and victims of accident, disaster, crime, and war. Are you blessed with leadership skills? Use them to improve the lives of all those within your circle of influence. If you have resources, instead of hoarding and guarding them, share them wisely to care for (not take care of) others in need, starting with your family. True religion first affects the family, then extends to the neighbors, workplace, and out into the greater community.

Good stewards plan ahead by budgeting (Luke 14:28-32).

Regardless of the income level, set aside some amount for what you understand God's work to be, some for the church and some for savings. Systematic savings grow slowly at first but steadily increase. Financial experts advise maintaining an amount equivalent to at least six month's income in savings. Of course, one must pay taxes and keep required insurances paid. Jesus said to give to Caesar what belongs to him and to God what is His (Luke 20:20-26). The Apostle Paul admonished believers to pay taxes and avoid debt (Romans 13). To avoid debt is easier said than done, given the cost of education, housing, and transportation today. It requires discernment to know the difference between needs and wants. For example, what vehicle will do what is necessary instead of a luxury car with lots of extras? Be willing to sacrifice "wants" to meet real needs and stay within a budget. Exercise common sense, a rare commodity in today's society where credit is almost given away and things are expected for free.

A difference exists between investing and debt. Both are risky and can incur a loss. Purchasing a modest "starter" house can be an investment, even though the transaction brings

a mortgage. That can be risky and dependent on resale when it comes time for military moves. But it can also bring some financial gain; and possibly, when you have saved sufficiently, to purchase a home mortgage free. Money paid as interest buys you only time, so avoid all credit card debt at exorbitant rates, excessive auto loans, and even school loans. It is possible to work your way through school and graduate free of student loans. If you already have those, begin paying extra towards the principle to lower the debt as fast as possible.

Stewardship comprises wise use of our time, talent, and treasure. Everyone has the same number of hours in a day. The utilization of that often determines achievement, quality of life, and success. Through education, training, and travel, we broaden attitudes, gain insights, and develop skills to use in serving God and others. Military service greatly enhances those opportunities and provides sufficient pay for supporting a family. Though a service member may not become rich off from military pay, through careful management using Biblical principles of stewardship, one can live a balanced, convenient, and comfortable lifestyle.



STEWARDSHIP

A TWO-WAY STREET

by Chaplain Gary R. Councill

Worship acknowledges and gives honor to a supreme deity. As Christians, we reverence God as our Creator and Source of all blessings in life on the Sabbath, the Lord's holy time set aside for worship. A fundamental expression of worship gives "worth to the worthy" as related in the account of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4). Each brought a sacrificial gift that he deemed would best honor God. The Bible teaches tithing as divinely prescribed stewardship. Tithing is

first mentioned when Abram gave Melchizedek "a tithe of all" (Genesis 14:20). Though broke, the fugitive Jacob, promised God, "of all that You give me, I will surely give a tenth to You" (Genesis 28:22). A tithe is one tenth. Later, tithing supported the Levites and Temple priests. At times, the Israelites gave up to a third of their increase in tithes and offerings.

The Scriptures declare everything belongs to the Lord (Psalm 24:1), even the gold and silver (Haggai 2:8). Yet, He has given it to us to manage for Him. God does not need our tithe and offerings. We tithe so "that you (we) may learn to fear the Lord your God always" (Deuteronomy 14:23). "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 9:10).

Hence, throughout the Bible God's people practiced stewardship by bringing their tithes and offerings into the storehouse (Malachi 3:10). The storehouse then was the Temple and system of



worship established by the Lord for His people. Today, Adventists define the storehouse as the church. What does that mean?

Tithe is dedicated for support of church ministry. It enables the mission of the world church organization and pastors. When tithe is returned to the church, it is all forwarded to the various administrative levels of the denominational organization. None is kept in the local church for its use. Offerings provide for support of local church expenses and programs. The clergy is paid centrally from the tithe, though military chaplains are paid by the government, saving the denomination millions of dollars in tithe each year. Being in the military complicates stewardship for church members in uniform. Where should I give my tithes and offerings? Laws about charitable giving vary among nations. For example, in the USA, "contributions to foreign organizations generally are not tax deductible." Military members who are deployed away from their church of membership often worship in a chapel on a military base. SDA Military Chapel Worship Groups usually are not organized churches and normally do not process tithe,



so giving locally while overseas is challenging. Listed below are several options for meeting stewardship responsibilities:

1. Tithe and offering monies can be set aside for safe-keeping until the service member returns home.
2. When it can be securely transmitted, tithes and offerings can be sent back to the local church where your membership is held. Frankly, local congregations do not always maintain contact with their members in uniform who are absent for

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extended periods—out of sight, out of mind! That may be one way of reminding them you are a member, and hopefully, they will send you bulletins, cards, newsletters, etc.

3. Stewardship funds directed to the Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries Department and the National Service Organization of your division will be turned over to the division treasurer. The money is then processed by the designations given by the donor.
4. If your division has established a military church and your membership is held there, you should send any tithes and offerings to the conference military church that is usually administered by the ACM Department. The ACM Director often functions as the pastor of that church.

Adventist church members serving God, church, and country faithfully witness and practice stewardship. They are modern Josephs, Daniels and Esthers. In North American, their tithes and offerings equal the support provided them by the division. In essence, their contributions cover any costs to the church for pastoral care and religious support. However, stewardship is a two-way street. The Church is not God, but is His “appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world... The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ” (*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 9). The denomination budgets nearly \$2M annually for supporting the work of chaplaincies and church members in uniform. Church members receive Bible kits, religious literature and materials, help with resolving conflicts of conscience, and give pastoral care. God blesses service members with employment, income, and the health and strength to serve in the military. Church members in the military should designate a portion of their stewardship for their national ACM Department. Tithing produces several spiritual benefits. First, it reduces the tendencies



of the heart towards selfishness and pride. Second, it promotes sharing. Better management of your assets is a third result. Tithing helps us budget, and differentiate between “needs and wants.” Sometimes, the stuff we buy fails to outlast the payments. What we own soon owns us. The Bible commands us to “owe no man anything” (Romans 13:8). Avoid debt. God’s plan for fiscal security provides a safeguard against secular materialism and guarantees a balanced outlook on life.

Stewardship provides us a means to participate in God’s activities, regardless how much or little we think we possess. When the church in Jerusalem needed help, the churches in Macedonia freely gave to assist their brothers and sisters in Christ. Then the Macedonian members were also “going through much trouble and hard time.” Paul describes them as poor, but tells how their incredible joy and deep poverty overflowed in rich generosity (II Corinthians 8:1-5). Character development requires personal involvement with God. Living on the cutting edge of experimental faith requires venturing out of the boat and walking on water like Peter did (Matthew 14:22-33).

Three offerings apply the principles of sound stewardship and will greatly bless you. First, the systematic giving of tithes and offerings. Proverbs 3:9 states we should set aside God’s portion of our increase first. “It is holy unto

the Lord” (Leviticus 27:30). Second, give proportionately of the increase received, a percentage rather than a set amount. That fulfills the command to give as we are able (Deuteronomy 16:17). God uses the same principle in returning His blessings (Luke 6:38). Third, give cheerfully (II Corinthians 9:6, 7). Our giving should reveal an attitude of joyous gratitude towards God instead of fulfilling a duty or obligation. Paul describes the Philippian believers’ giving as “a sweet-smelling sacrifice that is acceptable to God and pleases Him” (Philippians 4:18). Then he goes on to assure us that God will supply all our needs from His glorious riches.

We struggle, sweat, and spend trying to make life comfortable and convenient. Even if we manage to accumulate wealth, you can’t take it with you when you die (Matthew 6:19-21 and 16:26). You can send it on ahead. Remember the story of the rich young ruler wanting to become a disciple. Jesus told him to sell what he possessed, give to the poor, and then follow Him (Jesus). Christ also added the young man would then have treasure in heaven (Matthew 19:16-30 and Luke 18:18-30). God gives so much; the church generously supports members in uniform, but stewardship is a two-way street. How do you show your gratitude and joy for such a wonderful partnership? Psalm 116:12 asks, “What can I offer the Lord for all He has done for me?”



STEWARDSHIP PROVIDES US A MEANS TO PARTICIPATE IN GOD’S ACTIVITIES, REGARDLESS HOW MUCH OR LITTLE WE THINK WE POSSESS.

Of WEIGHTS, and MEASURES, and BIBLE TRUTH

By Master Sergeant Justin Smith, USAF, as told to Deena Bartel-Wagner

Metrology, also known as the science of weights and measures, has been a part of Justin Smith's life for almost 20 years. The preciseness that is required to do his job played a role in helping him to find focus in his life.

"When I graduated from high school I didn't know what I wanted to do with my life," says Justin. "I was certain that I didn't want to attend college since I didn't have a clear direction. My step-father had retired from the Air Force after 24 years of service. He suggested that I check into becoming an air traffic controller."

The idea peaked Justin's interest, and he investigated the possibility. Although there were no openings, he learned about being a technician in a Precision Measurement Equipment Laboratory (PMEL). The job sounded interesting, and Justin decided he would enlist in the Air Force.

"As a PMEL technician, I coordinate and provide quality repair and calibration of test, measurement, and diagnostic equipment," says Justin. "We inspect, align, troubleshoot and repair items as

diverse as scales and thermometers to oscilloscopes, spectrum analyzers, airspeed monitors, and components for all types of aircraft. Any piece of equipment that the Air Force uses comes to us for maintenance support."

After attending technical school in Mississippi, Justin requested an



assignment to a location on the West Coast. Instead, he received orders for an East Coast assignment. says Justin. "Following a trade with another person, my first assignment was in Germany," says Justin. From there, Justin served in Korea and then Misawa, Japan.

A convergence of several events in Japan changed Justin and how he lived his life. "I grew up in a Seventh-day Adventist home. I knew the doctrines, but I never had a focus on my relationship with Jesus," admits Justin. "My mother continued to pray for me throughout the years. Periodically, she would send me materials to read and DVDs to watch. One day I received a package from her that contained the Amazing Discoveries series, "Total Onslaught." This series helped him see and understand the criticality and reality of the days we now live in. "I finally realized the conflict is real, we are actively involved, whether we realize it or not," says Justin. "No one can be

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neutral. This helped me to solidly choose a side and make a stand for God. I realized that I had allowed my relationship with Jesus to slide. That was something I wanted to change."

During his time in Japan, Justin met Akira and Setsu Ogasawara. For more than 50 years, the Ogasawara's have faithfully ministered to Seventh-day Adventists who served in Misawa. "This couple is so passionate about



their faith,” says Justin. “When Mr. Akira speaks of his love for Jesus, he can’t do so without tears in his eyes. His Saviour means that much to him. I want to have that kind of a friendship with Jesus.”

A deployment to Kabul, Afghanistan brought to life the biblical verse of where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them. “During my time there, I found one other Adventist,” says Justin. “Even though we were just two people, our worship time was blessed with the presence of the Holy Spirit.”

A return assignment to Germany was a catalyst for Justin to become actively involved in the local Adventist church. “I was very involved in helping our worship group to grow,” says Justin. “Our Bible study and worship were things I looked forward to on a regular basis. The weekly prayer group was the most powerful and effective I have ever seen. It wasn’t long until the answered prayer list was larger than the current prayer requests.”

When a person takes a stand for their faith, it can bring hardship and problematic situations. Justin faced his

most rigorous test of his faith while he served in Qatar. “When I arrived in Qatar, I learned that our duty schedule was 12 hours a day, six days a week,” says Justin. “My scheduled day off was not Sabbath. I went to my flight chief and requested religious accommodation for my Sabbath.”

The conversation didn’t end on a positive note. The flight chief wasn’t willing to make a change and insisted that Justin reports for his scheduled time. “I decided to be proactive and find another technician who would be prepared to trade hours with me,” says Justin. “The flight chief became convinced that I had pressured this technician into making the switch. He again refused to allow me to take the Sabbath off.”

A visit to the chaplain was the next step that Justin took. “I was with the chaplain when he placed the call and asked the flight chief to reconsider his decision,” says Justin. “Again, the answer was no. The chief said it was too disruptive and inconvenient to allow me to have Sabbath off.”

The chaplain reassured Justin that he shouldn’t worry. “He told me



MSgt. Smith with SSgt. Tyler

that he would provide the flight chief time to think about his response and the opportunity to change his mind. Eventually, a resolution of the matter came with the option of working two half shifts that gave me the time off from Friday night to Saturday night.”

One of the benefits that Justin has experienced in his work for the military is the expansion of his view of the church as a world church. “I’ve seen that as a church, we are truly one big family worldwide,” says Justin. “While we were in Germany, our neighbors had a Romanian caregiver for their grandmother. She would see us leave every Sabbath. We’d be gone for several hours and then return home. One day she asked where we went every Saturday. Upon finding out we were Seventh-day Adventists, she told us she was also an Adventist. I’ve traveled to more than 20 countries and met Adventists in most. We have had many discussions on understanding world events in light of Bible prophecy.”

A move to North Carolina expanded Justin’s desire to be involved with the local church. “We had the opportunity to become involved with a local church plant.” Justin found

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inspiration in his ministry with the growing congregation. One of his outreach ministries included DVD distribution which brought him into contact with many people.

“I was also chosen to serve as an elder,” says Justin. “I didn’t feel I had the knowledge or the experience, but when asked to serve God how can I say no? The answer to God must always be, ‘Here am I, send me.’”

When Justin thought he’d be retiring from the Air Force, he was asked to return to Misawa Air Base in Misawa, Japan for another tour. “It seems that God’s plan is that I remain in the Air Force at this time.”

Justin seeks to bring Adventist believers together for worship and fellowship. “Being faithful to our beliefs is becoming more and more difficult while in the military,” says Justin. “I’ve seen changes in the almost 20 years I’ve served. Numerous drawdowns mean fewer people to meet increasing demands and missions. These factors can create situations that make it difficult to arrange to have Sabbath off.”

Coming together for spiritual support plays an increasingly important role for those who wear the uniform of their country. The encouragement and friendships make a difference when your beliefs are questioned or even worse, ridiculed.



Justin and Kristin Smith





The Heart

OF A TEACHER

By
Deena Bartel-Wagner

Dinah Bogomba Simba is a teacher at heart. A love for learning and passing that on to others has led Dinah to serve others as a corrections officer in Kenya prisons.

“Education has always been important to me,” says Dinah. “Even as a child, I desired to learn and attend school. My mother made many sacrifices to raise the funds to pay my school fees.”

As Dinah studied, she began to feel that her calling was to become a teacher. “I wanted to be able to help others learn and grow in knowledge,” says Dinah. “As I continued my education, I realized that the best way for me to fulfill this desire was to become a teacher.”

Once her professional studies were completed, Dinah began her teaching career. She believed that she would continue to teach in local schools for the foreseeable future. Instead, she felt something was missing. “I was happy as a teacher, but felt I was being called to do more with my training and talents,” says Dinah.

An opportunity opened that Dinah never imagined. “I learned that positions were available at the Nairobi Remand and Education Centers,” says Dinah. “Teachers were needed to work with troubled children who are being held in custody. This interested me and I applied.”

Dinah’s commitment to helping troubled youth shown through in



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A group of Seventh-day Adventist trainees at the PSTC in Ruiru, Kenya.

one of her responses during the interview process. “Each applicant was asked why they wanted to work in the program and what they expected for reimbursement,” says Dinah. “When my turn came, I told the supervisor, ‘My commitment and the work I do will tell you how much I should be paid.’”

Eventually, Dinah realized that her calling to work with troubled youth was growing. She knew that she would have to become involved even more within the corrections system. This conviction led to her applying to become a corrections officer within the Kenya Corrections System.

“Even though the qualifications and training are rigorous, the competition is stiff to enter the Corrections Service,” says Dinah. “You must be a Kenyan citizen, be both physically and medically fit, and have no criminal record.”

Corrections officers undergo a strenuous nine months of training at the Prisons Staff Training College (PSTC) in Ruiru, Kenya. The intensive government-sponsored program is an initial professional paramilitary training course that lasts a minimum of nine months. The advanced training course lasts a minimum of 15 months. Recruits are trained in prison administration and management, laws related to prison work, Human Rights training, HIV/AIDS awareness, service ethics, weapons training, and arms and foot drills.

Recruits are also required to enroll in a certificate or diploma course in Security and Correctional Science through Kenyatta University. This academic portion focuses on Kenyan laws, how government and the prison system operates, and the rights of prisoners and corrections officers. This educational focus is intended to



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are face the rigors of the disciplines and principles they are learning. During a recent training program, there were 250 Adventists among the 2,500 recruits.

Seventh-day Adventist prison services officers work in situations where other Adventists may

equip prison officers with better listening and counseling skills as they fulfill their duties.

“Although I came to the Prison Staff Training College as a professional teacher, I was required to meet all of the demands of daily training,” says Dinah. “Once I entered the main gate it seemed there was no time for rest. I was running everywhere. No one was walking.”

A typical day starts with a 3-mile warm-up walk. “Our classes included training in psychology, security management, rehabilitation training, sociology, self-defense, and weapons training,” says Dinah. “My training as an educator made classes such as psychology and sociology easier because I already had a background in those. Others were more challenging. There are days when I get up at 2:00 a.m. to study and prepare for my classes that start at 8:30.”

Spiritual support of the recruits is an important aspect of the training. “Our group of Adventist recruits meets daily for Bible study, encouragement, and spiritual nourishment,” says Dinah. “Several of the instructors at PTSC are Seventh-day Adventists. They lead out in sponsorship of the Adventist worship services.” The guidance and leadership of these instructors is an important part of sustaining the recruits as they

not be able to penetrate. Currently there are 118 penal institutions. Three of these deal specifically with youthful offenders between the ages of 15-17. An average of 56,000 prisoners are being held daily. Dinah and other Adventist corrections officers work among these individuals in professional capacities through teaching, training, and counseling. They also have the opportunity to encourage offenders to make the choice to live a life without crime. Most importantly, Dinah and others can offer why they have a hope that is greater than prison walls can contain.

During her study and training, Dinah and her husband were faced with making sacrifices. “I remember how my mother made sacrifices for me as a child,” recalls Dinah. “Now I am doing the same. My husband is studying theology at Bugema University. Our daughter is staying with a friend while we complete our training. We look forward to the day when we are reunited as a family.”

As Dinah looks forward to teaching young people who have found themselves in violation of the law, she hopes to make a difference in their lives. She seeks to give them knowledge that will assist them in their daily lives.

Life and Death on + HACKSAW RIDGE

Desmond Doss. In Adventist circles, the story of his bravery and how he faced persecution from fellow soldiers is repeated over and over. Now, seventy-one years after his heroic efforts, the Desmond Doss story will be shared with the world.

Hacksaw Ridge tells the story of Doss' enlistment and the trials he faced for taking a stand as a conscientious objector who wanted to serve his country. Although Doss was a conscientious objector and could have received a draft exemption, he chose to serve according to the dictates of his conscience, which

meant he would not carry a gun. He served in combat in the Pacific, on the islands of Guam, Leyte, and Okinawa.

His most well-known service was when Doss was tested in one of the bloodiest battles during World War II, when his fellow soldiers needed aid during the Battle of Okinawa. It was on the Maeda Escarpment that Doss ran into the fight rather than from it. He is credited with lowering 75 men to safety down the 400-foot escarpment.

"Courage and bravery can't be taught," says retired U. S. Army Colonel Charles Knapp and chair of the Desmond Doss Council. "What



many people don't know about Desmond is that before his actions on the Maeda Escarpment, he had already been awarded 2 Bronze Stars and 2 Purple Hearts. His faith carried him through unimaginable horror."

In addition to the Medal of Honor, Doss was awarded Bronze Star for valor with one Oak Leaf cluster (signifying he received 2 Bronze Stars); a Purple Heart with two Oak Leaf clusters (signifying he received 3 Purple Hearts); the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with three Bronze Stars, and beachhead arrowhead (signifying he served in 4 combat campaigns including an amphibious landing under combat conditions); the Good Conduct Medal; the American Defense Campaign; and the not so common, Presidential Unit Citation given to the 1st Battalion, 307 Inf, 77th Infantry Division for securing the Maeda Escarpment.

The movie, *Hacksaw Ridge*, has been in the making for 15 years. It opened on November 4, 2016, in 3,000 theaters and has been optioned to be shown in every major movie distribution area of the world.

There were many struggles to bring Desmond's story to the big screen," says Knapp. "Some studios thought it was too religious. Many things that had been put in place

for making the movie changed when the economy tanked in 2007-2008. After that, we had to start completely over." In February 2015, funding was obtained, and the creation of the movie was finally underway.

This isn't the first time that Doss's story has been told in film. Terry Benedict's television documentary, *The Conscientious Objector*, was created in 2004. It featured interviews with Doss and his fellow soldiers.

In screenings across the United States, *Hacksaw Ridge* received high praise for its positive portrayal of a Christian who stood for his convictions. Although it is a story of war, the central theme is one of faith and living by uncompromising principle.

The Desmond Doss Council is tasked with the mission to preserve, protect, and manage the life story of Desmond T. Doss and his intellectual properties, collections, and memorabilia in a manner that honors his legacy, his beliefs, his church, and his God.

How will you respond to questions about Desmond Doss and *Hacksaw Ridge*? Helpful talking Points can be found on page 29.

Photos Courtesy of the Desmond Doss Council



ADVENTURES in the LAND of the MORNING CALM

By Bruce Wickward, Specialist 4th Class, 8th Army, as told to Deena Bartel-Wagner

The landing craft cut through the icy waters of the Yellow Sea. Bruce Wickward huddled deeper in his newly issued uniform. *I wonder what Korea will be like?* he mused to himself. *I guess I won't have to wait much longer to find out.*

Bruce's life experiences had led him to this moment and his role in the United States Army Veterinary Corps. "My family was originally from the Pacific Northwest," says Bruce. "My grandmother graduated from the University of Idaho in the late 1800's. My parents were also alumni of that historic institution."

Bruce's family learned about Adventists while his father was the head supervisor of Golden State Dairy in California. "A doctor who lived across the street from us gave Dad a copy of *The Great Controversy*," says Bruce. "As my parents studied it, they were drawn to its message, and eventually were baptized."

The years passed and Bruce finally enrolled in college. "I wanted to become a county extension agent," says Bruce. "I was in the middle of my junior year taking agriculture courses when the draft for Korean War called me up for service. I didn't want to lose a half of a year of college, so I applied for deferment."

At the University of Idaho, every male student was required to take ROTC training. "The university is a land-grant college," says Bruce. "The Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 granted educational institutions the opportunity to sell federal lands that were given to them. The funds that were raised from the sale would endow the colleges that became known as land-grant college." These schools would then teach courses in agriculture, science, military science, and engineering.

Bruce's studies kept him busy and the semesters passed quickly. Soon graduation was looming and Bruce



came to an unsettling realization. “I really wanted to be a county extension agent,” says Bruce. “But it became apparent that Sabbath was going to be a problem. The job and my faith weren’t going to be compatible with each other. I also had three weeks before I had to report to Fort Lewis for military duty.

Arriving at Fort Lewis, Bruce learned that he was eligible for an officer’s commission because of his ROTC training. “I knew that this wouldn’t allow me to be assigned to a medical unit,” says Bruce. “As an officer, you had to be a doctor or nurse to work in the medical corps. I declined the commission.”

Bruce was sent to Camp Pickett in Virginia and joined other medical recruits to begin their training. Physical training or PT was a part of the daily routine, including calisthenics. “Three weeks after we arrived, the recruits were required to make an all-day field march,” says Bruce. “I was told that I would be driving the ambulance. So I followed behind the last of the stragglers throughout the day.”

Three weeks later the same thing happened. Another all-day field march found Bruce behind the steering wheel of the ambulance. “My curiosity got the better of me,” admits Bruce. “I



asked one of the officers why I was pulling ambulance duty.”

The officer looked at Bruce and said, “That’s simple. You are in better shape than anyone else here.” The physical demands of the farm life of his youth had given Bruce an advantage.

When basic training concluded, the soldiers celebrated with a graduation party. “I was in the barracks when the company commander came and tried to get me to attend the celebration,” says Bruce. “It got his attention when I told him that I didn’t drink and party. He took notice of me.”

With his medical training advancing, Bruce was surprised when he was asked if he would be interested in joining the veterinary corps. “I believe that my conversation with the company commander led to me being recommended to change



Korea photos: Department of Defense

what I was doing,” says Bruce.

Most people would assume that veterinary corps would mean caring for live animals. In fact, a segment of the veterinary corps oversees food inspection for the procurement and surveillance inspections of meats, meat foods, milk and dairy products, fruits, and vegetables.

“I was sent to Boston, Massachusetts and told to find a place to live, says Bruce. “My other instructions were that I had to wear my uniform while on the job and to report to work Monday through Friday at 7:30 a.m. I would have Saturday and Sunday off. I was married and our first child was born at the Army hospital at Camp Pickett. My family was able to stay with me until I went to Korea.”

Following his work in Boston, Bruce was sent to the duty station for the 1st Army Headquarters on Staten Island, New York and then to Newark, New Jersey. “This was a great assignment,” says Bruce. “My job was in procurement inspection and I primarily inspected salmon steaks used to feed the military, I checked shipment weights to ensure that the government was receiving the amounts that had been contracted.”

For eleven months, Bruce faithfully carried out his duties. Then one day,

the message came. *You are on your way to Korea.* Typically, food inspectors would be sent for a four-month training period in Chicago, Illinois. “I was fast-tracked to Korea without this training because I earned a college degree,” says Bruce.

It wasn’t long before Bruce was standing on the deck of a troop transport carrying 5,000 soldiers to Korea. “I watched as the last lights of the Washington state coastline disappeared into the inky darkness,” says Bruce. Separation from everything that was familiar loomed as Bruce contemplated what lay ahead.

“We weren’t at sea long before a ferocious three-day storm hit,” says Bruce. “Hundreds on the ship became seasick, but I wasn’t among them. Then I received a message that I was to report to the captain’s mess. The message I was given was that I was the only food inspector on the ship. I was assigned to inspect all of the food for the captain’s mess for the rest of the journey.”

A stopover in Japan brought Bruce one country closer to his final destination and he received his winter uniforms that would be necessary for the bitter cold in Korea.

Finally, as the landing barge disgorged its human cargo, Bruce knew his orders were to report



to the 121st Evacuation Hospital for rations and assignment to his quarters. "There were only ten veterinary inspectors in all of South Korea," says Bruce. "I knew there was no time to waste. The workload was heavy and we had the various countries' militaries depending on our expediency to make sure there was food for the troops."

In the freezing November weather Bruce boarded a train with broken out windows and no heat to begin the journey to the main food supply point in Yong Dong Po where he would be stationed. "During that train trip, I looked out those broken windows and saw the children begging for food," says Bruce. "It broke my heart."

Training and experience had prepared Bruce for his new assignment. "I was assigned to inspect all fresh vegetables that were flown in from Japan," says Bruce. "My job was to approve or reject the food. If I rejected it, the Air Force would have to dispose of their cargo."

In addition to his inspection training, Bruce used his medical training on several occasions. "One day I encountered an injured boy. He was missing a hand and had injured his eye. I applied a tourniquet and got him medical care at an aid station,"

recalls Bruce. "The Korean people suffered greatly from the war. They had so many needs and yet they seemed to never lose hope. That impressed me greatly."

It's been 66 years since the Korean Armistice Agreement was signed on July 27, 1953. In those intervening years, Bruce has reflected on his military experience. "The two years in the Army changed my life," says Bruce. "I have met people I would have never had a chance to meet."

Today, Bruce tells his story to students whose parents hadn't even been born during the Korean War. "Every year, I speak at eight different area high schools and tell the students about my military experience and the Korean War. I describe the difference completing my education made in my life. I encourage them to dwell on the good things in their lives and learn from the disappointments. And, I remind them that they should do the best in everything they attempt in life."

Bruce hasn't forgotten about the Land of the Morning Calm. During the passing years since he came home as a seasoned war veteran, Bruce has returned to Korea three times. He has journeyed there with fellow veterans who shared in the experience. His admiration of the Korean people and their resilience continues to this day.



EPIPHANIES in the MIDST of TRAGEDIES



In the aftermath of the Orlando, Florida shootings, I have been reflecting on one of the stories in the third chapter of the

prophetic book of Daniel.

King Nebuchadnezzar, the wizened ruler of Babylon, in a despotism of fury, tried, convicted, sentenced, and effected the execution of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Rather than hearing cries of pain, fear, and terror, Nebuchadnezzar, and all on the plain of Dura, witnessed an epiphany.

Instead of three charred, dead bodies, the King saw four living people walking about in the fire. Unscathed. The fourth, said the King, resembled the son of God. In awe and amazement, King Nebuchadnezzar summoned them out of the fire. In response to his command Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out.

Their confidence in God infuriated him. Their deliverance, by the presence of God, converted him. Curiously, he marveled at the three who emerged, but was not offended that the fourth did not emerge as well. Perhaps he intuited that as powerful as he was, he could not command the obedience of a true deity.

A friend of mine who is a Rabbi shared with me the thought that perhaps HE stayed in that fire to assure us of HIS presence in the fiery trials that we will inevitably face.

I think that it is still possible to witness epiphanies, even in contemporary tragedies.

When Christina Grimme was shot in Orlando, her brother heroically tackled and held the shooter. Bystanders immediately tended to her wounds until medical care arrived. When the shooter attacked the Pulse nightclub killing and injuring scores of people, there were countless acts of heroism that were minimally shared in the cacophony of coverage about the life and motives of the murderer.

In the rush to know more, the emphasis turns to the mind and development of the miscreant more often than the minds and characters of the heroes. We did hear a few stories of bravery. The DJ who covered and helped a wounded lady escape was certainly heroic and selfless. But what else do we know about him. We were told, ever so briefly, that several people used their bodies to shield friends from the gunfire. But, what else do we know about how they developed the impetus of character to be heroic. The police officer who first confronted the shooter was outgunned, but he did not flee. He stayed on site and called for help. When help arrived he went back in to help people escape. Still we know more about the shooter than the heroes who responded to this dastardly act.

In times of demonically inspired tragedy and the ensuing traumas, I think that we can find God in and among the first responders and people who rush to offer aid and comfort, even before the danger is mitigated. The police officers, firemen, EMTs, doctors, nurses, chaplains, and others who worked to save lives and comfort the injured and bereft showed evidence of God's presence, in that traumatic event.

Whenever and wherever the next attack of evil origin occurs, I am persuaded that we will see evidence of the divine. Hopefully, the news will focus more on the people whose characters rise to meet the crisis instead of the miscreant who causes it.

The darkness of evil can only be overcome by the flickering light of love, the effect of which is multiplied when shared. When good people stand up and do good things, evil is thwarted.

I salute all of the individuals who in their response to the crisis, reflected the character of Christ, especially the chaplains at the hospitals who ministered to the injured, wounded, dead, and family members. To all who will be the purveyors of grace and gospel during future manifestations of evil, may the feeling of doing good and right be for you, a salute from heaven.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Paul S. Anderson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping loop at the end of the last name.

VETERANS HONORED & ORDINATION and COMMISSIONING

There are
different
kinds of
service,
but the
same Lord.

-1 Cor. 12:5



VETERANS HONORED

The National Service Organization (NSO), Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries, and the NSO office of the Oregon Conference sponsored a gathering of service veterans as part of the Oregon Conference Camp Meeting.

Ivan Omaña, Assistant Director, Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries-NAD, joined 50+ veterans from the various United States military service branches in a celebration of their service. The Oregon Conference NSO provided ice cream for the veterans and their families and ACM provided commemorative coins to all the veterans in recognition of their service to our nation.

ORDINATION AND COMMISSIONING

Chaplain Wilking Jean and Chaplain Adrienne Townsend Benton were recently ordained and commissioned in a joint service at the Lake Region Camp Meeting at Camp Wagner, Cassopolis, Michigan.



HACKSAW RIDGE TALKING POINTS

WHAT DO WE SAY IF SOMEONE ASKS WHY THE CHURCH IS BEHIND THIS MOVIE OR WHY THEY WOULD PROMOTE IT?

Hacksaw Ridge was not made by or for the Adventist Church. Desmond Doss approved the telling of his story provided his beliefs, the facts, his church were properly and accurately portrayed; and that the movie would honor God. The Desmond Doss Council was charged with protecting, preserving, and managing the story to God's glory. The movie's producers have coordinated script, plot lines, and portrayal with the Doss Council for accuracy and appropriateness.

WHY WOULD ADVENTISTS WATCH THE FILM?

Neither church leadership nor the Doss Council advocates church members to see the film. The church is neither promoting nor marketing the film. Church members will be asked questions about Doss, his beliefs, his church, prayer, faith and the miraculous events leading to the award of the Medal of Honor. *Hacksaw Ridge* will motivate those questions. It will be helpful for church members to understand the full context of how these most Christian of all moral ethics are portrayed in the film and how they honor and glorify God. The movie is expected to open avenues of conversation with friends, neighbors, co-workers and family like no other witnessing opportunity has in 100 years.

HOW VIOLENT IS THE FILM?

Very violent; it is not for the faint of heart. Some scenes, while true, may be so realistic as to be disturbing. The battle for the Maeda Escarpment in which Desmond Doss is a central participant visually describes the

brutality sometimes in disturbing but accurate ways. This battle is considered by military historians to be the bloodiest of World War II. *Hacksaw Ridge* is a war movie and the first to document the battle on film. The action is all live action. Very little computer (CGI) animation was used.

DID THE FILM STAY TRUE TO DOSS'S CHARACTER? Yes.

WAS THE SPIRITUAL TONE CONVEYED CORRECTLY? Yes.

DID THEY PORTRAY ADVENTISTS IN A GOOD LIGHT?

Yes. While the film does not preach, teach or moralize, viewers come away with the seed of thought set in their minds that Doss' integrity, faith, and moral courage is synonymous with what Seventh-day Adventists believe and practice.

HOW MUCH NUDITY?

No female nudity. One barracks scene has one soldier exhibitionist (actually happened) goofing off, but there is no full nudity displayed.

WHY IS MEL GIBSON THE DIRECTOR?

Mel Gibson was chosen by the film's producer, Bill Mechanic, as the best director to accurately portray the story. His faith tradition was not a consideration.

To learn more about the Desmond Doss story and the movie, *Hacksaw Ridge*, visit:

www.desmondoss.com

www.hacksawridgeresources.com

www.hacksawridge.movie

If you are asked by friends and acquaintances about *Hacksaw Ridge*, how will you respond? The North American Division has prepared these talking points as a guide.

A black lantern with a glowing yellow light inside, hanging from a metal hook on a weathered wooden wall. The lantern has a black frame and a black base. The wall is made of horizontal wooden planks, some of which are painted blue. The lantern is lit, and the light is visible through the glass. The background is a wooden wall with horizontal planks. Some planks are painted blue, while others are natural wood. The lantern is hanging from a metal hook that is also painted blue. The lantern has a black frame and a black base. The light inside the lantern is a warm yellow color. The overall scene is rustic and warm.

*Get dressed
for service
and keep your
lamps burning.*

— LUKE 12:35

Executive Editor:

Mario E. Ceballos
D.Min., BCC

Editor:

Deena Bartel-Wagner
 acmeditor@gc.adventist.org

Layout and Design:

Emily Harding
HardingDesign

Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries

Mario Ceballos, Director/Endorser

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CONTACT US: Adventist World Headquarters National Service Organization/ACM, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904, U.S.A. Phone: 301-680-6785; e-mail acm@gc.adventist.org; URL: <http://AdventistsInUniform.org>.

The National Service Organization is the official military-relations office of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Its primary mission is to provide pastoral care and religious resources to support the spiritual well-being of Seventh-day Adventist military-related personnel.

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CORRESPONDENTS**East-Central Africa Division (ECD)**

Magulilo Mwakalonge, *ACM Director*
mwakalongem@ecd.adventist.org

Euro-Asia Division (ESD)

Oleg Goncharov, *ACM Director*
ogoncharov@esd.adventist.org

Inter-European Division (EUD)

Marius Munteanu, *ACM Director*
marius.munteanu@eud.org

Inter-American Division (IAD)

Hiram Ruiz, *ACM Director*
ruizh@interamerica.org

North American Division (NAD)

Paul S. Anderson, *ACM Director*
paulanderson@nadadventist.org

Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD)

Ron Clouzet, *ACM Director*
rclouzet@nsdadventist.org

South American Division (SAD)

Bruno Raso, *ACM Director*
bruno.raso@adventistas.org.br

South Pacific Division (SPD)

Trafford Fischer, *ACM Director*
traffordfischer@adventist.org.au

Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division (SID)

Busi Khumalo, *ACM Director*
khumalob@sid.adventist.org | Skype: handybusi

Southern Asia Division (SUD)

Ramesh Jadhav, *ACM Director*
rameshjadhav3383@gmail.com

Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD)

Houtman E. Sinaga, *ACM Director*
hesinaga@ssd.org

Trans-European Division (TED)

Patrick Johnson, *ACM Director*
pjohnson@ted-adventist.org

West-Central Africa Division (WAD)

N. John Enang, *ACM Director*
njenang@wad-adventist.org or
njenang2000@yahoo.co.uk



“The world asks, ‘What
does a man own?’ Christ
asks, ‘How does he use it?’”



World Service Organization
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists®
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600

Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 6439
Suburban, MD