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MEN AND WOMEN OF INTEGRITY

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The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, one of the oldest and a highly respected dictionaries of the English language, defines integrity as: “*firm adherence to a code of especially moral or artistic values: incorruptibility.*”¹ An example of integrity recorded in the Bible is found in the story of Job, an enigmatic man of God, as described in the book of his name.

*“And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movest me against him, to destroy him without cause.”*²

As people of *The Book* (the Bible), we are expected to be examples of integrity in all aspects of our lives,

at work, home, and church. Have you heard of a situation involving a Christian where the question was asked, “How or why did that happen? He/she is a Christian!” People are critical of what we do, how we do it, what we wear, what or how we say things, what we post on social media, what we eat, drink, who we support, etc.! It’s not fair. We are also human! We live with the same faults and temptations as anyone else. That is the challenge we face, and it is the result of society’s expectations imposed on us.

Other Christian faiths look at integrity as a virtue of their people. Here are some examples:

“The need for integrity today is perhaps as great as it has ever been. Integrity is essential if we are going to become people who positively and

Table of Contents



2 Perspective

4 As With a Pen of Iron Upon the Rock

8 Though The Heavens Fall

12 God Can Use Me Anywhere

16 Which Water Will You Supply?

20 I Wasn’t Meant to be This Man

24 NAD Director’s Message

26 Guidance for Daily Living in 2017

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powerfully impact others.”³

“The word *integrity* comes from the same Latin root as *integer* and implies a wholeness of person. Just as we would talk about a whole number, so also we can talk about a whole person who is undivided. A person of integrity is living rightly, not divided, nor being a different person in different circumstances. A person of integrity is the same person in private that he or she is in public.”⁴

Regardless of how unfair society’s expectations are of Christians, we can’t deny that we are to have integrity beyond that of all others. Often, we are looked upon by others to be models and leaders in integrity.

Scripture contains many passages urging integrity in believers—it just talks about integrity without using that term. Think of the most famous New Testament commands for Christian living: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.” (*Galatians 5:22-25, NIV*) Such a list is a command to live a life of the *highest* integrity, a life that brings goodness and blessings to all people.⁵

In the writings of Ellen G. White, we also find numerous passages on

integrity. This one caught my attention.

*“An honest man, according to Christ’s measurement, is one who will manifest unbending integrity. Deceitful weights and false balances, with which many seek to advance their interests in the world, are abomination in the sight of God.”*⁶

As we look at the different aspects of integrity in this issue of *For God and Country*, I invite you to examine your role and expectations. Be aware of what others are expecting of you, educate them on your role. It is imperative also to guard your limits, learn and practice healthy self-care techniques, know your faults, failures, challenges, and temptations. Like Job, if you ever face questions of integrity, reflect on your relationship with God and examine yourself.

May God be with you as you face the challenge of being an example of an Adventist Christian with integrity as you work and minister within your organization.

¹ www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/integrity

² Job 2:3 KJV

³ www.jashow.org/articles/christian-living/godly-living/character/integrity-the-key-to-character-and-the-cure-for-inconsistency/

⁴ www.probe.org/integrity/

⁵ www.christianitytoday.com/biblestudies/articles/churchhomeleadership/leading-with-integrity.html

⁶ Testimonies, Vol. 4, pp. 310, 311



AS WITH A PEN OF IRON UPON THE ROCK

By Chaplain Gary Wagner, D.Min.

Throughout his administration, United States president Abraham Lincoln was under fire, especially during the scarring years of the Civil War. And though he knew he would make errors of office, he resolved never to compromise his integrity. So strong was this resolve that he once said, “I desire so to conduct the affairs of this administration that if at the end, when I come to lay down the reins of power, I have lost every other friend on earth, I shall at least have one friend left, and

that friend shall be down inside of me.”¹

The definition of integrity can range from “moral soundness” to “uprightness” to “being without deceit or corruption.” As a Christian, our actions are based on godly principles that will guide our standards and values. Our word should be our bond. This is more than a character trait. Our actions should be above reproach. We should stand by our word. Our principles should never be compromised, even when under

attack. Like Lincoln, we may only have the one friend deep within ourselves, but we will know that we've done the right thing. "Everything that Christians do should be as transparent as the sunlight. Truth is of God; deception, in every one of its myriad forms, is of Satan."²

The Bible is full of references to integrity and describes the lives of many who chose to live an integrity-filled life.

TECHNICALLY, IT'S NOT A LIE

Abraham knew that God called him out of Ur. He witnessed the hand of God in the rescue of Lot, heard God's voice as he promised to make Abraham a great nation, sat with the three visitors who promised Sarah would bear a son, and witnessed a second rescue of Lot and his family.

Then he journeyed to the region of the Negev and stayed for a time in Gerar. It was here that Abraham's integrity was tested. And he failed. Just imagine the conversation between Abraham and Sarah.

Abraham: *Sarah, my love, you are so beautiful.*

Sarah: *Oh, Abraham, you can be so romantic.*

Abraham: *I'm worried that the heathen king who rules these parts might take a liking to you. If he does and learns*

that you are my wife, things may not work out so well for me. The king may decide to kill me just so he can have you.

Sarah: *Oh, well, that's not so romantic.*

Abraham: *I have a plan. We will just declare that you are my sister. Technically, that's the truth and I might be able to stay alive.*

WHAT COULD POSSIBLY GO WRONG?

With the plan in place, Abraham and Sarah met King Abimelech, and the king was smitten with Sarah. Sending for Sarah to come to the palace, Abimelech had no idea about the nightmare he would soon experience.

That night, Abimelech slept and God revealed in a dream, "You are as good as dead because the woman you have taken is a married woman."

Abimelech argued his case that he had no idea of Sarah's marriage to Abraham. He told God, "Lord, will you destroy an innocent nation? ...I have done this with a clear conscience and clean hands."³

Abimelech, the heathen, maintained his integrity, while Abraham, God's chosen, had compromised his. If Abraham attempted to tell Abimelech about the great and mighty things he had witnessed at the hand of God, how much credibility do you think Abraham had with the king?

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INTEGRITY THROUGH THE BLOODLINE OF A DECEIVER

Jacob used an opportunity of weakness—Esau’s hunger—to weaken his integrity. Although, he eventually wrested the birthright from Esau, Jacob spent many years in exile from his family. Just think of the time he lost with his parents and his brother. Imagine the guilt that Jacob wrestled with during the quiet moments in his life. All because he allowed his principles to be bent and compromised the value of his word to his father.

All was not lost, however. One wonders if Jacob shared some of those private thoughts of guilt with his son, Joseph. What Jacob lacked in standing for his principles, Joseph exemplified the complete opposite.

AN HONORABLE LIFE

During his childhood, Joseph’s brothers resented him. They knew that Rebekah was Jacob’s favorite wife. This fact probably served as an irritant that just wouldn’t go away. It was easy to take the frustration out on a younger brother. Joseph was the natural target, since he was Rebekah’s son.

One event led to another and

Joseph cowered in the bottom of a pit, with his brothers bargaining with the slave traders. With the bargain struck, Joseph found himself in the prisoner line-up trailing behind the camels on his way to Egypt.

Throughout the ordeal, Joseph must have maintained something unique about himself. He caught the eye of Potiphar and earned himself a position of trust. Just when things seemed to be looking up, Joseph faced compromising the responsibility that Potiphar placed on him. It came down to betraying his master, or standing by his principles. Potiphar’s wife tempted Joseph over and over. She hoped to wear him down. Instead, Joseph opted for a life of consistency and sincerity. He told Mrs. Potiphar, “With me in charge, my master does not concern himself with anything in the house, everything he owns he has entrusted to my care...How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God.”⁴

Repeatedly, Joseph’s integrity was tested. His family misunderstood him. Sold into slavery by his own siblings, he lived first in exile and then in prison. Potiphar’s wife wrongfully accused him and the master whom

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Joseph who wouldn't compromise against didn't even ask him for his side of the story. Despite all this, Joseph stood out while in prison and he was placed in charge of the prisoners.

INTEGRITY INSTEAD OF PAYBACK

Finally, Joseph faced the ultimate payback. His brothers waited for him to enter the dining hall. To them, he was the Prime Minister who favored them with a meal. Joseph stood outside the door, gathering his composure. This was the greatest test of his integrity. The hurt and pain of all past years could have propelled him to the ultimate payback—declaring the death decree for his 10 half-brothers. Instead, Joseph set the example of integrity when he faced his brothers, forgave them, and moved them to Egypt to live near him.

If Abraham and Jacob hadn't compromised their integrity, how much sooner might God have acted in building up a people to call His own?

OUR CALLING TODAY

In the book, *Sons and Daughters of God*, Ellen White wrote, "Let it be written upon the conscience as with a pen of iron upon the rock, that real success, whether for this life or for the life to come, can be secured only by faithful adherence to the eternal principles of right."⁵

In today's secular world, it's relatively simple to find examples of people who have left integrity behind in the dust. In your daily tasks, you influence others in ways you might not even know. If you are known for your integrity, you possess an advantage. It's your choice.

¹*Today In The Word*, August, 1989, p. 21.

²White, Ellen G., *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings*, p. 68

³Genesis 20:3-5

⁴Genesis 39

⁵White, Ellen G., *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 215





THOUGH THE HEAVENS FALL

By Deena Bartel-Wagner

While on leave, an Army private wanted an extension. Resourceful and honest, Private Smith sent a message to his commander. “No death, no emergency, request extension on leave. I’m having a wonderful time.”

The commander received the message and didn’t know how to respond. He’d heard just about every alibi in the book from soldiers asking for extensions on their leave

time. This soldier wasn’t making any excuses. He simply told the truth. He was having a great time and wasn’t quite ready to report back for duty.

Thinking it over, the commander replied, “Rewarded for your honesty. Extension of five days on present leave granted.”

The soldier chose to exhibit responsible behaviour, and with integrity intact, tell his commanding officer the truth.

GIRDERS OF STEEL

When engineers construct a building, a primary concern is the structural integrity of the building. This is critical so that the building will support the necessary weight without breaking, tearing apart, or collapsing. In short, “it is the ability of an item to hold together under a load.”¹

Throughout our daily life, we are bombarded with the temptations to allow our “structural integrity” to collapse. When life is difficult, it’s tempting to ask why is integrity even important.

A primary reason is that it is easier. Faced with making an unethical decision, it might seem easier to compromise in the short term. Eventually, trying to keep all your facts straight as you live with that decision becomes increasingly difficult. A clear conscience makes for a simpler life.

Making the choice to live an uncompromised life is something that you need to do before you get caught in the moment of being assailed by outside forces. Think about how you will react in various situations. Decide what your response will be. You must take responsibility for your actions and exhibit control over your life. Don’t rationalize from one situation to the next. Consistency on principle is vital.

“Integrity carries the meaning of quality, of being in complete unity, undivided in loyalty, and unquestioned in character,” says Taylor G. Bunch. “It represents a moral soundness, basic honesty, absolute innocence, unqualified incorruptibility, unmistakable sincerity, and loyalty to principle in

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character and conduct. In the Scriptures, integrity is synonymous with righteousness and uprightness.”²

INTEGRITY AT WORK

Employers face pressures of staff who don’t work to their full potential. Stand out in your performance when you are completing your responsibilities. Whatever length your workday is, put in the full time. In a survey conducted in England, employees reported that they were distracted from their work up to three hours a day. That averages out to 60 hours a month or a total of 759 hours a year.³ Shocking, isn’t it, but how is your integrity when it comes to time worked?

Have you ever had a commanding officer take credit for your work? How did it make you feel? Remember that, if you are tempted to do the same to someone else. If it’s not your work or idea, give credit where credit is due.

What will be your response if a commanding officer asks you to lie or

make an unethical decision? Work it out now, because when the pressure is on it's much more difficult to take a stand on principle.

INTEGRITY AT HOME

Are you one person at work, and another person at home? Would your co-workers recognize you if they could have a one-way view into your private life? Integrity is just as important, if not more so, within the family unit.

Develop the habit of sharing everything with your spouse. To be like an open book means that you live without secrecy or concealment.

When you and your spouse disagree on something, how do you react? An integrity-filled person will boycott the use of nasty, below-the-belt behaviour. Couples who can work out their differences with humanity and compassion are generally those who demonstrate integrity in all aspects of their life.

How would your children rate your integrity quotient? Breaking promises on a regular basis lowers the trust level and makes children question your honesty. Do your children see you as resolute and unwavering in the principles of life that truly matter? How you demonstrate this to them is a heritage that you are handing off to them as they grow and mature.

THE WORLD'S GREATEST WANT

"The greatest want of the world is the want of men (and women)—men (and women)—who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true

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to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall.

But such a character is not the result of accident; it is not due to special favors or endowments of Providence. A noble character is the result of self-discipline, of the subjection of the lower to the higher nature—the surrender of self for the service of love to God and man."⁴

In a world where politicians, celebrities, and average, ordinary people are willing to compromise their beliefs, their reputations, their relationships, is your conscience to duty as true as the needle to the pole? Are you willing to stand for right, though the heavens fall?

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Structural_integrity_and_failure

² <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1959/07/>

³ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/jobs/11691728/Employees-waste-759-hours-each-year-due-to-workplace-distractions.html>

⁴ White, Ellen G., *Education*, p. 57

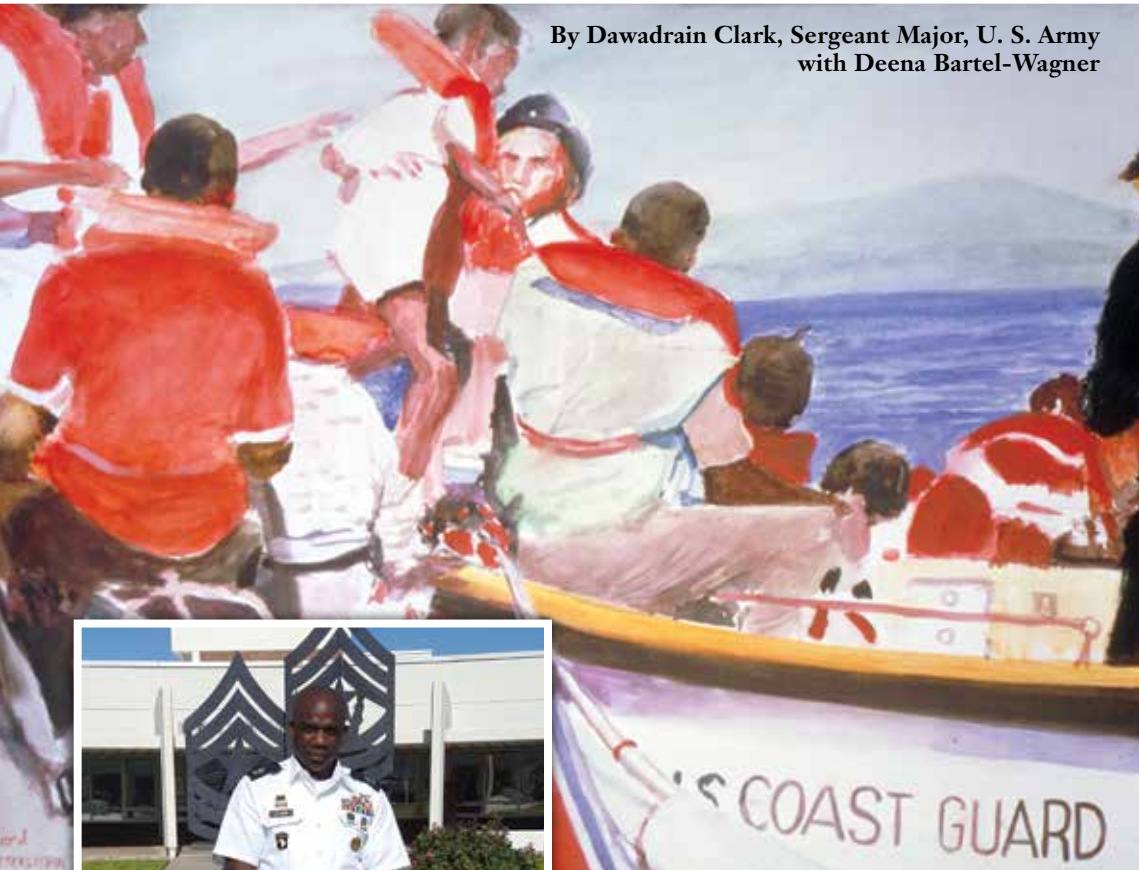
The godly walk with integrity; blessed
are their children who follow them.

– PROVERBS 20:7 NEW LIVING TRANSLATION



GOD CAN USE ME ANYWHERE

By Dawadrain Clark, Sergeant Major, U. S. Army
with Deena Bartel-Wagner



On the southeastern end of the island of Cuba lies Guantánamo Bay and the Guantánamo Bay Naval Base. From 1994-1996, the United States military operated Joint Task Force 160, to care for and process over 50,000 Cuban and Haitian refugees. For Dawadrain Clark, a newly-minted Soldier, it became the place where he realized that God could use him anywhere.

“After I left college, I was working and praying about what my next step should be,” says Clark. “While I was at work one day, a U.S. Army recruiter approached me about signing up. At first, I wasn’t very interested.”

As Clark thought about the possibility of joining the Army, he was concerned about practicing his faith. “As I prayed about what I should, I became convicted that I should enlist,” says Clark. “I was sure that I would serve out my initial enlistment and then move on to some other career.”

AN ISLAND OF REFUGEES

Following initial training, Clark was sent to his first duty station—Fort Lewis, Washington, and then quickly deployed to Guantánamo Bay Naval Base, or Gitmo. “Although Gitmo is a naval base, at that time all the service branches were supplying support to cope with the Cuban and Haitian refugee crisis,” says Clark.

Soldiers, Airmen, and Marines provided security and logistical support, while the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Navy rescued refugees from the sea.

Military personnel constructed tent cities on a former airstrip which housed the refugees. Support services, such as food and water distribution, medical services, and security, kept the refugees safe.

“When I received my orders to deploy to Guantánamo Bay, trepidation filled me,” admits Clark. “I didn’t know what to expect. We arrived at night, and that made everything seem even more surreal.”

It was the ministry of a non-commissioned officer (NCO) that touched Clark at Gitmo. “In the middle of a refugee situation, this NCO saw the need to establish and provide worship services. I participated

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in that outreach ministry,” says Clark. “Standing in the tropical heat on an airstrip converted to a refugee camp, I witnessed people worship their God. It was then that my eyes opened to the truth that God can use me anywhere, in any situation.”

Clark’s NCO taught him by example how to conduct himself as Christian while serving in the military during that deployment. “When other Soldiers harassed him about being a





Christian, he had words of wisdom that I remember today,” says Clark. “He told me that you must look at people spiritually, not carnal. ‘It is the enemy using them to get at you.’ That was sound advice that I have used through the years.”

During another duty assignment, while Clark was still a young Soldier, he approached his sergeant and asked for help in adjusting the duty roster so Clark would have Sabbaths free for church attendance. “I was able to develop a relationship my leaders through my consistent daily walk with Christ. It showed in my behavior and work ethic which helped me numerous times,” says Clark.

EVERYONE BENEFITS

Nearing the end of his second enlistment, Clark learned his next deployment was to Iraq. “I wondered if the time had come for me to leave

the Army,” says Clark. “I wrestled with my decision and prayed about it.

One Sabbath I went to church, and the pastor spoke about Christians being in the military. One of the ideas that he challenged the congregation with was, ‘The Soldiers who don’t believe in Christ will benefit from the Soldiers who do believe in Christ.’”

Clark had his answer. A ministry in the Army still existed for him. “As our company prepared to cross the border into Iraq, my company first sergeant asked that I pray for the group,” says Clark. “The pastor’s words were full of meaning as I prayed for safety for each one of our group. My prayer offered comfort and calmed nerves, and each member benefitted from the presence of God.

Today, Clark holds the rank of Sergeant Major, following 23 years of service. His military specialty is logistics. “We move the U.S. Army,” says Clark. “Our job is to manage the flow of materials and goods between the point of origin and where they are used. My current unit supports 20,000+ Soldiers.” Clark’s served in Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantánamo Bay, Germany, as well as several stateside assignments.

MAKE GOD FIRST

In each of his assignments, Clark sought to mentor others and guide them. “I’ve witnessed to a lot of people over the years,” says Clark. “A primary point that I tell other Christians is to put God first in everything you do. Then I tell them that they must pray about every decision they make. There is nothing too small to pray about.”

Wherever Clark has served, he also attempted to contact an Adventist group for church and worship. “If you can’t find one, be consistent with your personal Bible study and worship

time,” says Clark. “You don’t know who is watching, but it’s guaranteed someone is observing whether you are faithful in your spiritual walk.”

Clark encourages young Soldiers to learn how to react in stressful situations, particularly if it related to their beliefs. “When you first join the military, it’s not easy,” says Clark. “How you react to the things you can’t control makes an impression on those around you.” He reminds new recruits that respect commands respect.

“I often tell Soldiers that they must remember many people have never been exposed to Seventh-day Adventists. When people don’t know what we believe, it’s hard for them to relate to some of our standards,” says Clark. “It’s important to develop how you communicate your beliefs. Remember, the other person may be wondering if you are being real in what you are telling them. They may ask, ‘How do I know you really believe this?’”

Consistency is one of the hallmarks that Clark has established in his military life. “People say to me, ‘You never change. You are never mad. You’re always positive,’” says Clark. “I tell them I’m living what I believe.”

UNITY IN MISSION

As a couple, being unified in their personal mission is important to the Clarks. “A Soldier has a mission. The spouse of the Soldier has a harder job,” says Clark. “The spouse has to deal with the daily challenge of life, children, and work and still support their service member.”

Service to others is an important part of the Clarks personal ministry. During two tours in Germany, they served as the Distinctive Faith Group Leaders (DFGL) for the Kitzingen Chapel on Larson Barracks and the the Grafenwoehr-Vilseck Adventist Military

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Chapel Worship Group (AMCWG). “In both situations, the Adventist chaplain was preparing to leave and asked if we were willing to serve,” says Clark. “We believed God led us to volunteer for these positions.”


Living overseas is not the same as living at home. “You need to have a group that feels familiar,” says Clark. “The AMCWG provides support, a worship experience, and fellowship. Our family found that the group becomes very tightly knit. You almost feel relief to be in the presence of others who believe the same as you do. Praying and worshipping together builds a camaraderie that creates a sense of family.”

GOD CAN USE US ANYWHERE

Success at home contributes to success at work. Clark is a leader of men and women, and he understands the weight of that duty. “Being a leader gives you a responsibility and expands the scope of people you can reach,” says Clark. “How I carry myself and my behaviour breaks down walls. Others begin to trust and share what is going on in their lives.” It’s in those moments that Clark fulfills what he learned among refugees. God can use us anywhere.

WHICH WATER WILL YOU SUPPLY?

By Daniel Oginga, with Deena Bartel-Wagner



Warrant Officer II Daniel Oginga didn't intend to join the Kenya Defence Forces. A gathering crowd, the decision to see what was happening, and a missed interview changed the course of his plans.

"As a youth, I regularly participated in local church activities," says Daniel Oginga. "I attended church and all of the youth activities. When I was old enough, I became a youth leader and was invested as a Master Guide. As I thought about a life career, I wanted to move into a line of work that would not conflict with my beliefs."

PATHFINDER SKILLS AND GROWING CROWDS

Daniel's father had served as a soldier and then transitioned to the Kenyan Department of Corrections to work in prisons. "As a child, I was heavily involved in Pathfinders and Scouts," says Daniel. "The discipline, drills, uniform, and other skills appealed to me," says Daniel. "I had a desire to be a soldier, but didn't plan to pursue that course."

When Daniel secured an interview with the Ministry of Water for a position, he considered

this to be an excellent opportunity. “I was eager to learn more about the job and be chosen for the post,” says Daniel. “I left my home a civilian seeking a government position. I came home with a government job, just not the one I expected. On the way to my interview, I noticed a crowd of people running toward a building. Curious, I followed them.”

As Daniel joined the crowd, he learned that the Kenyan Defence Forces announced an opening for applications of recruits. “I wanted to learn what the requirements were,” says Daniel. “The list was broken out by education and experience. I decided to stand in the application line to see what would happen.”

More than 500 people applied, with 50 chosen for interviews. Daniel eventually was selected as one of the eight recruits who made the cut that day. “I completely missed the meeting at the Ministry of Water,” says Daniel. “In fact, I was a little stunned as I walked home, I wondered what my parents and siblings would say about my decision.” Daniel began the day a civilian and ended it as an Army recruit.

I'M IN THE ARMY NOW

With some trepidation, Daniel broke the news to his family. “My father told me that he respected my decision and gave his blessing,” says Daniel. “I sighed in relief. It was important to me that my father understood and supported my decision.”

Entering basic training brought another set of questions. How would



Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Kenyan Defense Forces practice firing maneuvers at Forward Operating Location Isiolo, Kenya.

Daniel keep faithful to his beliefs, particularly his worship and Sabbath-keeping? “You can imagine my surprise when I learned the officer-in-charge was a Seventh-day Adventist,” says Daniel. “He invited me to his home, allowed me time to study my Bible, and counseled my about staying true to my beliefs.”

With basic training finished, Daniel was posted to a large arms artillery battalion. “Upon my arrival, I informed my immediate supervisor that I was a Seventh-day Adventist,” says Daniel. “I felt it was important to be open about this information from the beginning.”

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BALANCING FAITH AND MILITARY CAREER

As the first Sabbath approached, Daniel wondered what would happen when he asked to attend church. “I reported for duty and asked for permission to attend church,” says Daniel. “My request granted, I went to church with a lightness in my heart.”

Unfortunately, not all Seventh-day Adventists experienced this type of recognition of their beliefs. “I met several fellow believers who faced denial of their requests for Sabbaths off,” says Daniel. “This piqued my interest, and I began to ask more questions. I eventually learned the problem was widespread. This deeply concerned me.”

As Daniel continued his investigation, he discovered that the Kenyan Army didn’t officially recognize Seventh-day Adventists. “I sought assistance from the National Service Organization Director at our local union office,” says Daniel. “In his capacity, he wrote a letter to the appropriate military departments and requested information about the trouble that Adventists were facing. His message was effective in drawing attention to our plight.” Today, individual church members serving in uniform can make their requests for church attendance without fear of reprisal.

As Daniel progressed in his military career, he became increasingly uncomfortable with his assignment to an artillery unit. “I was a gunner,

and this bothered me,” says Daniel. “I finally requested to be transferred to a clerical position and was granted permission to make the change. Today, I’m a supervisor and my daily schedule is Monday through Friday from 5:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. I see God’s providence with this assignment. This schedule allows me to be involved in ministry on the weekends.”

FAITH BELIEFS AREN’T JUST FOR SABBATH

Keeping an active connection with his church is important to Daniel. “I’ve been deployed several times. Even though I was far from home, I found other Adventists who welcomed me into their fellowship circle.”

Daniel served as a peacekeeper in Sierra Leone and Burundi. “During my time in Sierra Leone, I learned there was a plan in place allowing Adventist soldiers to worship with the local churches on Sabbath,” says Daniel. “As our group saw the physical needs of the church and school we decided to launch a project to aid in construction and repairs.”

Today, Daniel assists other Adventist soldiers who are deploying with Sabbath School supplies and other materials. “It’s important that our fellow Adventists feel supported while on deployment, says Daniel. “When you are far from home, it is easy to falter spiritually. Establishing a connection with local Adventist congregations provides support both for the soldier and for the congregation.”

Daniel serves as an elder in the

Langata Seventh-day Adventist Church. “We have an active ministry at the Langata Women’s Prison and at the Langata Army Barracks,” says Daniel. “The Women’s Prison houses approximately 800 inmates on a regular basis. The facility has designated four different worship sections within the population. These include a place for prison staff and their family members, inmates serving long-term sentences, inmates serving short-term sentences, and inmates condemned to the death penalty.”

Physical and spiritual needs exist within the walls of the Langata Women’s Prison. “The prison budget doesn’t allow for distribution of essential personal care products,” says Daniel. “As a church who believe that health is important, we saw a need that could be filled in an easy way. Our church supplies soap, personal care items, clothing, and even medicines to many of these incarcerated women. This outreach has broken down prejudice, not only among the inmates, but with the prison staff.”

The church has worked closely with the Women’s Ministry Department of the East Central Africa Division.

“We study with many of the inmates on a weekly basis,” says Daniel. “More than 200 children live with their mothers in the prison. This also creates a need for a children’s ministry.”

The Bible studies, Sabbath School programs, outreach, and building of relationships brings women who have committed crimes to a knowledge of their Saviour and a better life. “A baptismal service is held each quarter, and approximately 30 women are baptized. Since we began this ministry, 300 women have been baptized.”

A missed interview at the Ministry of Water has provided Daniel Oginga opportunities to share the Water of Life with others in his home country of Kenya and across borders in Sierra Leone, Burundi, and Sudan. In his journey, Daniel learned that a soldier can be faithful to duty and his beliefs. As he serves God and Country, Daniel knows that he also serves the King of the Universe.

Kenyan Defense Forces waiting for deployment on a peacekeeping mission.





I WASN'T MEANT TO BE THIS MAN

By Chaplain Jason O'Rourke,
with Deena Bartel-Wagner

The U. S. Army Ranger motto “Sua Sponte” means, “Of their own accord.”

This motto recognizes that Army Rangers choose to volunteer three times: when they join the Army, when they join Airborne School, and when they join the Ranger Regiment. Jason O'Rourke entered this world of elite, personal excellence to change his life course. What he didn't know was God had a much larger plan for Jason's life.

“I grew up with a strict Adventist upbringing,” says Jason. “I didn't realize it at the time. I understood that there were things we did and didn't do. We didn't eat other people's food because we were



vegetarian. We went to church on Sabbath because that was what the 10 commandments told us to do.”

Poverty ruled the life of Jason and his family. “I didn’t know we were poor,” says Jason. “Until the age of 12, my world was focused on Sabbath walks and collecting stamps, turtles, rocks, learning the constellations of the night sky, and memorizing Bible verses.”

A trip to Washington state and a life-altering event changed Jason as a person. Anger simmered in him and he didn’t know how to handle it. When he turned 12, his parents made a choice that added to his anger and hurt.

“My little Adventist world fell apart when I was 12 years old,” says Jason. “My parents divorced and my father moved to Cleveland, Ohio. My mother entered an abusive relationship with another man and my anger continued to build.” To deal with the pain in his life, Jason turned to football, comic books, and smoking weed. With each act of vandalism and petty theft, Jason mired himself deeper into misery and crime.

Fearing for her son’s future, Jason’s mother convinced him to enlist in the U. S. Army. “I found myself in the secretive elite company of the 3/75th Ranger Regiment,” says Jason. “We trained hard and we trained to be the best.” Three months before Jason joined, the unit he would soon be a member of returned from a mission to Somalia that is best-known today as “Black Hawk Down.”

“Training with the 3/75th was the best thing that happened to me,” says Jason. “I found meaning in my

life. Along the way I earned both the Infantry and Medic expert badges.”

As Jason listened to the stories and witnessed the emotions his fellow Rangers dealt with, he came to a sobering conclusion. “I wasn’t meant to be this man,” says Jason. “This life wasn’t what my parents tried to instill in me during my formative years. It was one of the hardest decisions when I chose to leave the Rangers after I started the training.”

With that decision, the military moved Jason to a forward support battalion. “I was promoted, and soon had orders to go to Germany as a medic,” says Jason. “While there I often found myself working in positions that were two degrees higher than the training I’d received.”

The burden of anger, guilt, and other emotions began to take their toll on Jason. He eventually confronted the fact that he had reached the lowest point in his career emotionally. “During my 13 years of active duty service, I was spending time reading the *Conflict of the Ages* series—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, *Prophets and Kings*, *Desire of Ages*, *Great Controversy*, and *Acts of the Apostles*,” says Jason. “I also studied *The Sanctuary* by M. L. Andreasen and *Lessons on Faith* by A.T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner. These books profoundly impacted my life.”

As he read and studied, Jason slowly began to realize a truth for his life. “I began to see that I was in the wrong field,” says Jason. “During one of my Army deployments, I spent time in Kosovo. It was during this time I realized that I belonged in ministry.”

Jason left the Army at the end of his enlistment for active duty, joined

With each act of vandalism and petty theft, Jason mired himself deeper into misery and crime.

the U.S. Army National Guard, and began working at Miracle Meadows, a school for at-risk youth. “I enrolled in Wright State University as a religion and philosophy student,” says Jason. “I had no intentions of attending an Adventist institution.”

As the saying goes, never say never. A friend invited Jason to attend a weekend event for the National Association for the Prevention of Starvation (NAPS). “I spent the weekend on the campus of Oakwood University and thoroughly enjoyed my time there,” says Jason. “I sang songs that I hadn’t sung since I was eight years old.” During the ride home, I realized that the weekend wasn’t a coincidence. God called me to attend Oakwood.”

Jason finished his year at WSU and planned to attend Oakwood in the fall. “I arrived on campus with no place to stay, no job lined up, and meager finances,” says Jason. “I was able to register for classes and landed a night job as Dean in the freshman dorm.”

Once enrolled at Oakwood, Jason realized the toll his life experiences had on him. The scars of childhood anger, the moral injury from several deployments, and encounters with leadership hindered healing. “I

attempted counseling, but it didn’t make sense to me and was of little help,” says Jason.

A “LIVING ON FAITH” YEAR

“My senior year became a ‘living on faith’ year,” admits Jason. “I had to move out of the dorm and bounced between the homes of four to five friends. I didn’t have money for food or gas. My car tags, registration, insurance, and driver’s license were all expired. One phone call I made during that time was to my mom. I needed money for new socks!”

The year of faith also became the year Jason discovered his true ministry calling. “I met with a recruiting representative from Florida Hospital. During that conversation, I realized chaplaincy is the ministry I’m called too,” says Jason. “Florida Hospital offered me the chance for an interview into the Clinical Pastoral Education Program (CPE). I didn’t have the money to go, but a close friend paid for my flight and the program application fee.”

During the interview, Jason decided to honestly relate his life experience. “I was sure that I would not make the list for the residency,” says Jason. “Instead, I learned that the CEO of





Florida Hospital was a former military service member. He and my soon-to-be supervisor thought I should be given a chance.”

A period of healing and renewal took hold in Jason’s life during his CPE residency. “The military provided an outlet for my controlled anger. CPE helped me resolve the issues causing the anger. I’m a stubborn person, so God had to work at a pace in my life that I would allow,” says Jason. “I finally understood the amount of grace God has extended to me. Then I asked myself, ‘if God can be patient with you, why can’t you be patient with others?’”

Today, Jason is a chaplain at Florida Hospital. “My ministry in the neurological intensive care unit and in the Emergency Department have taught me to expect the unexpected and bend with the expected,” says Jason. “My military experience provided me with skills that I use today as a chaplain. I see things clearly and quickly, assess the situation, and resolve it quickly. I also have a healthy respect for death. It is a point in time and everyone will face it, unless Jesus

comes. How do you want to deal with that fact in your life?”

Life is a celebration today for a young chaplain who struggled with anger over issues and situations that made him feel powerless. Jason thought life couldn’t get much better when he met and married Melissa. Then, he met a new little lady. “My daughter, Abrielle Joy, was born in 2013,” says Jason. “Melissa and Abrielle are my pride and joy. My experience in CPE helped me become the husband and father I am today.

For a time, Jason was a U.S. Army Ranger, walking the battlefield of man-made wars and tending the wounded. Today, he is God’s Ranger, walking a battlefield and tending the wounded of a cosmic war. He has become the man he was meant to be. “My life is nothing more than the redemption and extension of grace,” says Jason. “God brought me to Florida Hospital for healing. And now, I am here to be used by Him to heal others. It is the greatest privilege of my life.”

**"Now, I am here to be used by Him to heal others.
It is the greatest privilege of my life."**

PRAYER TIME



My parents taught me to pray, but I learned the real power of prayer from two mentors, each of whom is a prayer warrior. Aunt Mamie is 102 years old. A few decades ago, she wrote a little book called *Prayer Time*. In her book, she tells some stories about the power of intercessory prayer. Because of the effectual impact of her prayers, people call her from all over the world. She prays for people daily.

Aunt Mamie has collected pictures of families and individuals for whom she prays. She has so many that she has pasted them onto poster boards. Her prayers have solved issues, saved marriages, and changed the likely outcome of court cases. There was a time in my life when I was in the wrong place, contemplating the wrong thing. The phone rang. I answered the phone.

“I don’t know where you are or what you are doing, but God told me to call you and tell you to go home,” Aunt Mamie said.

“How did you know what number to call?” I asked.

“I am a math teacher,” she said. “God often speaks to me with numbers.”

I went home.

Another prayer warrior taught me that God sees, knows, and plans for our success. He has blessings for us that are just awaiting our arrival

at His predetermined positions. I needed to replace a car. My finances did not allow for another vehicle loan. I have always felt that the best cars are cars paid for in full.

I was bemoaning my situation when “Mom” hushed me. She prayed vehemently and asked God to remove the scales from my eyes so He could show me the car that was set aside for me. Later that night, while driving home after a class at a nearby university, I was moved to drive by a used car lot. There under the light was a car that captured my imagination. Long story short, the next day I drove that car home after paying a lot less than the asking price. Prayer works beyond the acquisition of things. It is a vehicle to commune and communicate with God. If we ever needed such a tool to talk with God, we sure do need it now.

As we celebrate or bemoan newly elected national and local leaders, I urge you to join me in thanks to God that we live in a country and culture that celebrates the peaceful transition of power.

For too long, in my opinion, we have been mired in the miasma of civil, political combat. More than any election season in my lifetime, this one has been caustic and debauched. Throughout the campaign season, I have been praying for the current leaders, the prospective leaders, and the supporters of each candidate. My prayer has been that the spirit of peace would stymie the most outspoken supporters so that the public discourse could remain civil and avoid the abuses of extremism.

Now, that the campaigns are over, the people have spoken through the process of elections. As Christians, we have the responsibility to rise above our disappointments and pray for the leaders whom God has appointed. We should pray that they are endowed with wisdom and restraint. We should pray that these new leaders successfully keep peace and stimulate prosperity, for, in their success, we will find success. We should pray that God will still open opportunities for us to share our faith in Jesus, the Christ, and the fact that He is coming again and soon.

Our mission is to be faithful to God unfailingly and to civil authorities, if their leadership is not in opposition to the revealed will of God. Let's twist the kaleidoscope and move out in our timeless mission amid these new circumstances.

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

GUIDANCE FOR DAILY LIVING IN 2017

The National Service Organization–North American Division (NSO–NAD), a functional chapter of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries (ACM), provides complimentary subscriptions of Seventh-day Adventist church publications to active duty military church members. This service has been available for more than 50 years. church and serving your country. As always your comments and suggestions on ways we can provide timely support of religious materials for your personal use are welcomed.

The complimentary subscriptions include:

- *Adventist Review*
- *Adult Bible Study Guide*
- *For God and Country*

Two journals of choice from the following:

- *Guide*
- *Insight*
- *Message*
- *Our Little Friend*
- *Primary Treasure*
- *Signs of the Times*
- *Vibrant Life*

The funding for these gift subscriptions comes in part from a shared offering received annually from churches in the North American Division. These monies are crucial to the religious support that Adventists who serve in uniform need and that the NSO–NAD provides.

NSO–NAD seeks to be good

SUBSCRIPTION ORDERS NOW ACCEPTED ONLINE

TO ORDER SUBSCRIPTIONS AND/OR DEVOTIONAL MATERIALS:

1. Visit AdventistsInUniform.org to log in to your personal profile. *If you do not currently have a profile, click on the New Member? Sign Up Here to begin the process.*
2. Once you open your profile, click on the **Subscriptions** tab and select two (2) magazine titles, in addition to *For God and Country*, *Adult Bible Study Guide*, and *Adventist Review*.
3. To order devotional books, click on the **Resources** tab. If you have any difficulties establishing your profile, contact the webmaster at ACMEditor@gc.adventist.org

Remember you must renew your subscriptions annually. If you have a PCS or change of address, you can make this change in your NSO online profile.



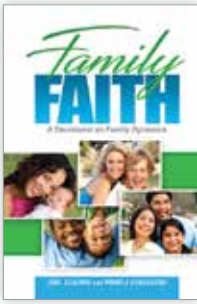
stewards of these funds. Keeping mailing lists current and ensuring that magazines are delivered is a part of that stewardship. Your understanding and cooperation will greatly assist NSO to provide effective support for you while you are representing your church and serving your country.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

To be eligible for NSO-paid subscriptions you must be a Seventh-day Adventist Church member in an Adventist church in the North American Division and in one of the following military-related categories:

- All Adventist active-duty military personnel
- DoD civilian employee of the military services stationed overseas
- DoDEA teacher or principal stationed overseas
- Military exchanges (AAFES, NEX, etc.) worker overseas
- Government contractor overseas
- Spouse living overseas with their non-Adventist military spouse





FAMILY *Family Faith*

By Claudio and Pamela Consuegra

Family Faith is a journey through God's Word that uncovers beautiful, gemlike truths that families will be able to apply to living life in today's crazy, busy, and sometimes overwhelming world. Through the stories of these ordinary people who, just like us, faced challenges and triumphs, tears and laughter, exuberance and exhaustion, we will learn how to honor God in our homes.



JUNIOR *Passport to Adventure*

By Rich Aguilera

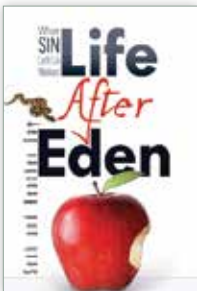
Learn about God's faithfulness in tough times; the importance of finding time every day to retreat to a quiet place to spend time with God; being a witness to others by the way you live as an imitator of Christ; and most important, "Remember Calvary!" Because of Jesus' sacrifice, we can remember that God has already won the battle for us, and if we stay close to Him, we will be on the winning side!



TEEN *Time Out!*

By Steve Case

This book is full of concrete, doable suggestions for making God real; for new ways of looking at spiritual things—how to crash without burning for the failure prone, how to toughen up spiritually, how to deal with put-downs, how to forgive. Don't miss the really powerful recipe for making new friends. Along the way you will tackle some perplexing questions. Why pray when God already knows what we need? Does God have a blueprint for your life? How can you know you're saved? "We are God's poetry," the author concludes. These devotionals will help to bring your life back into rhyme.



YOUNG ADULT *Life After Eden*

By Heather Thompson Day and Seth Michael Day

Sin devoured a once-perfect Eden and the light that God originally spoke into existence has grown dimmer ever since. The echo of God's voice in Eden can still be heard today. In the midst of darkness, "Let there be light!" As you read these devotionals, it is the authors' prayer that you will stand firm in the beams of heaven's light; that you will find purpose and meaning in *Life After Eden*.



PRIMARY *Heroes in Training*

By Vicki Redden

Invite Vicki Redden into your home, and she'll tell you 12 things that will make you a hero for God. You'll meet all kinds of heroes: boys, girls, cats, dogs, horses—even a pig named Priscilla. And with each fundelicious story you'll discover just what it takes to be God's special agent.



PRESCHOOL *Love Letters From Jesus*

By RosAnne C. Tetz

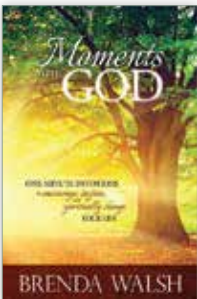
This is one of a series of interactive devotional books which will help you engage your preschooler in activities designed to reinforce the concept taught in the short devotional reading. Each book in the series features delightful, full-color art on every spread.



WOMEN *Love You More*

By Carolyn Rathbun Sutton

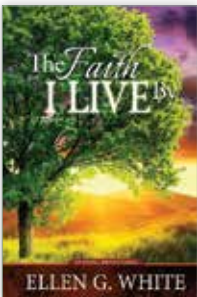
"Love you more," is often our response when someone says, "I love you." It's another way of saying "I love you more than you can imagine." Have you ever wondered if that's how God feels about us? Oh, if we could fully grasp the extent of His love for us! Once we look for it, we'll see it everywhere. As you read through these stories you will be captivated anew by the God who says, "I love you more!"



ADULT *Moments With God*

By Brenda Walsh

Unlike your typical devotional, with a reading for each day of the year, *Moments with God* is timeless. You can read one page each day or use the index to find a topic that speaks to your life at that moment. *Moments with God* overflows with encouragement, inspiration, and love that will lift your heart toward heaven.



ADULT EVENING *The Faith I Live By*

By Ellen G. White

The Faith I Live By is an inspiring and instructive devotional dedicated to covering the principal doctrines of the Christian faith, all of which are centered on the work of redemption through the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Anchored by the surety of God's Word, you will find within these pages the beautiful truths of the Bible, the Divine remedy for sin, the sanctuary of God, and how to face the final test.

DEVOTIONAL BOOKS

Adventist active-duty military personnel are eligible to receive a free devotional book, courtesy of the National Service Organization–North American Division and Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries. Guidelines for eligibility are noted on page 27. Single service members, as well as other employee categories listed on page 27 may choose **one** free devotional. Married service members may choose **two** devotional books. Order these online in your personal profile at AdventistsInUniform.org.

If you would like to purchase additional books, contact NSO for pricing. You will place your order online. We are currently unable to process online payments. Checks should be made payable to National Service Organization and sent to the National Service Organization at the address shown at the bottom of the page.

- ☐ **FAMILY** – *Family Faith*
- ☐ **JUNIOR** – *Passport to Adventure*
- ☐ **TEEN** – *Time Out!*
- ☐ **YOUNG ADULT** – *Life After Eden*
- ☐ **PRIMARY** – *Heroes in Training*
- ☐ **PRESCHOOL** – *Love Letters From Jesus*
- ☐ **WOMEN** – *Love You More*
- ☐ **ADULT** – *Moments with God*
- ☐ **EVENING** – *The Faith I Live By*

MAGAZINES

Each year NSO-NAD sends Adventist active-duty members and select government employees who meet the eligibility guidelines a one-year subscription to two magazines. Order these online in your profile at AdventistsInUniform.org. You are automatically eligible to receive the NSO publication *For God and Country, the Adventist Review, and the Adult Bible Study Guide*. Additionally, you may choose two free subscriptions of your choice from the following:

- ☐ *Guide*
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- ☐ *Liberty*
- ☐ *Message*
- ☐ *Our Little Friend*
- ☐ *Primary Treasure*
- ☐ *Signs of the Time*
- ☐ *Vibrant Life*

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– Tony Dungy



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