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# For God & Country

*A Journal for Seventh-day  
Adventists in Military and  
Public Service*





# GROUNDDED

By **Mario E. Ceballos, D.Min, BCC**

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A tree will grow strong and endure many years, as long as the roots firmly grip nutrient-filled, solid ground. The tree lives because it draws sustenance from the source. An edifice of any kind, whether it is a house or a tall building, survives the passing of time, wind, rain, and storms as long it has a strong foundation.

Each of us wants to be successful and wise. The Bible gives us the critical secret of success. It is: *“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat*

*upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.”*

Our success in whatever we do depends on our foundation. It is that simple. If we are attached to the Good Vine (Jesus), our success is guaranteed. Jesus said, *“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”*

Being grounded in Jesus means spending the time to learn about Him. He is GOD. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” Even though it may sound simple, it is not easy. It

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requires commitment, perseverance, time, dedication, effort, discipline, and more. Daily success includes spending a portion of our time reading from the Word of God and learning more about our Lord, Jesus Christ.

The work of sharing the gospel will also be carried out by everyday church members, like you and me. In the book *Testimonies for the Church*, Ellen G. White writes, “*The lay members of our churches can accomplish a work which, as yet, they have scarcely begun... let families that are well grounded in the truth enter, one or two families in a place, to work as missionaries.*”

Some may ask the question, what does being well grounded mean? I would like to suggest that it is something that comes naturally. For some, it means feeling a burden to share what they have learned in one

way or another with others. This will take various shapes and forms of witnessing, such as the ones described in the book *Testimonies for the Church*. “*They can distribute our publications, hold meetings in their homes, become acquainted with their neighbors, and invite them to come to these meetings.*”

It is up to you to decide what works best for you. Think outside the box. In this issue, you will read ideas of what it means to be connected or grounded to the church. May the thoughts we share help you be grounded in the new year.

<sup>1</sup> Matthew 7: 24,25. (KJV)

<sup>2</sup> John 15: 4,5. (KJV)

<sup>3</sup> John 1: 1, 14 (KJV)

<sup>4</sup> White, Ellen G., *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 8, (Review and Herald, 1904) pgs. 244, 245.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid



# WHY BOTHER?

**S**abbath morning worship choices are amazing. Through a virtual experience, you can tune in to Seventh-day Adventist Church services around the globe. From Loma Linda, California to Bucharest Romania, to the Japanese island of Okinawa, weekly livestreaming of worship services is available from the comfort of your home.

If a formal church service isn't what you seek, the plethora of recorded seminars on fascinating topics from Creation to the character of God and more are tempting and engaging. So why should you bother with the effort of attending a local congregation?

Statistics indicate that regular church attendance across denominations is declining. Contributing factors are sometimes attributed to individuals becoming more self-directed in their spirituality. A myriad of other reasons include the ability to choose other worship options, shift work hours that may change from week to week, and lives that are overextended with work, school, and other activities.

## DON'T NEGLECT WORSHIP

The Bible is clear that coming together to worship God is an act of love on our part—towards Him and towards each other. Around 35 years after Jesus' death, the Apostle Paul wrote, *“And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.”*<sup>1</sup> We are even closer today and, even more so, need to encourage each other.

It's critical to remember that members are the church and they don't just attend church. They breathe life into a congregation. Members provide the welcome and community to visitors and support to those exploring a relationship with Jesus. Who can you invite to join in the fellowship you experience?

A church community is also family. As a family, it's a place to rejoice in one another's triumphs, grieve together in loss, and support each other during life's difficult times.



## CREATE MEANINGFUL WORSHIP

When you choose to attend church, being proactive in your worship will energize you and create a meaningful experience. Be a contender for the faith by actively participating. Don't become a worship spectator by sitting back and allowing others to lead out.

Identify your spiritual gifts and use these to choose ministry opportunities through which you can bless others. If you don't know what your spiritual gifts are, you can download a Spiritual Gifts Inventory at [WorldServiceOrganization.org/resources](http://WorldServiceOrganization.org/resources). You'll learn about various spiritual gifts and how they are manifested through practice and implementation.

Jesus promised that those who worship together will receive power by joining together and seeking His Father's will. *"I also tell you this: If two of you agree here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you. For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them."*<sup>2</sup>

## ACCEPT YOUR MISSION

Why bother with walking through the church doors on Sabbath morning? As a Christian, you have

Don't become  
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a mission to participate in as you serve and share in your local church congregation. Don't allow your worship to become just a podcast or an online solitary experience. You must be more than a worship consumer. Pray for others. Hurt with them in their hurts. Celebrate together in each other's joy. Serve and be involved in others' lives. Your mission is one of life and death when you minister to others and share a hope that can only be found in the love of Christ.

<sup>1</sup>Hebrews 10:25, NLT

<sup>2</sup>Matthew 18:20, NLT

# YOU, TOO, CAN BE INVOLVED

By LTC (CH) Dan Bray, U. S. Army, Retired MS, MDiv.  
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How does one become actively involved in a local church? What tools do I need to accomplish this? Are there any special classes, licenses, or certifications to obtain?

It has been said that personal involvement in a church family can be an indicator of one's spiritual health. So, where does one start this journey?

First, decide to attend a church. Many church growth studies convey the thought that approximately only 50 percent of a given membership attends church services on a regular basis. Please realize that going to church does not automatically make one a Christian any more than going to McDonald's turns a person into a hamburger. The church is not simply made of bricks or mortar. The church has always been identified in the Scriptures as a collection of people who are in search of a lasting relationship with God.

Secondly, find a job or position in the church that fits. There are multiple opportunities for people to serve. Plus, we do not necessarily need to wait to be asked by the

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nominating committee to serve in a certain capacity. Churches are always looking for help across the spectrum of ministries including being a greeter, helping out with children's educational ministries, or offering your skills and talents to transport others to church who otherwise do not have the capability of getting there alone.

Thirdly, one of the attributes I have always admired in some people is their ability to be hospitable. I observed this type of ministry in a certain church for a number of years. Interestingly, when other church members were invited to each other's homes and they shared a meal, an activity, or even a concern, the overall spiritual health of that congregation seemed to positively soar. And, it all started out with a simple care and concern or watchfulness for others. There is an old saying that is likely appropriate here, and it goes like this: "If you want to have friends, you have to be friendly yourself."

Fourth, volunteer to cook meals for someone going through a loss. Typically, we think of a loss involving the death of a family member. However, this loss could conceivably be

more than that limited scope including loss of a job, loss of one's home, or loss of even a family. Preparing a meal for someone who is grieving lets that person know they are not forgotten and they are still valued.

Fifth, take the time to remember others' birthdays or anniversaries by writing a card to them. Many people appreciate a sincere and genuine thought regarding a birthday. Many churches will list these in church bulletins, but the personal touch of an unexpected handwritten note can add smiles that are a mile wide.

Sixth, visit those in their homes who are not able to come to services. We don't need to be prepared with a special speech or program. Rather, just being with the person and "sharing the moment" with them conveys the feeling that we are present with them and they are not abandoned.

Finally, pray. Pray for the people to the left, right, in front of, and behind us. Pray for the leaders of our church. As we pray for one another, we take the focus off ourselves and our worries and concerns. Pray that God's Spirit will use us as He desires.

# CORPORATE FASTING *for a* CORPORATE BLESSING

By Senior Chief Petty Officer Willie Scott, U.S. Navy with Deena Bartel-Wagner

*"It is a part of God's plan to grant us, in answer to the prayer of faith, that which He would not bestow did we not thus ask."<sup>1</sup>*

On Sunday, 1 April 2018, Chief Electrician's Mate Willie Scott II sent an email to twenty of his "Prayer Warriors"—a group of family, friends, and church leaders. "I asked them to join me in a season of fasting and prayer," says Scott. "This was a public profession of my faith and a petition to the almighty God, through Jesus, for His will to be done in my life and family circle."

The U.S. Navy Selection Boards were scheduled to meet, but Scott felt there were several barriers at this time for his package that would be submitted. Scott had been a Navy Chief (E-7) for five years. "I'd begun to feel stagnant in my career," says Scott. "Zero quotas in 2017 for advancement to Senior Chief in the Electrician's Mate rating further

complicated matters. I knew that divine intervention was necessary!"

Once the required documents were gathered Scott placed them in the envelope and performed one last step. "The Selection Board would convene in one month's time. Before I sent my package, I asked my wife Donesha, and our four children—Jordin, Willie III, Jaala, and Willa, to join me in prayer over the documents and for the people who would serve on the Selection Board," says Scott. "With the submission of the documents our family committed to a 67-day season of fasting and prayer."

This wasn't the first time that the Scott family had prayed over a selection package. "The idea of partial fasting during each selection process in my military career came from my

The Willie Scott Family



Aunt Carol,” says Scott. “She gave up eating beef during the Persian Gulf War in the early 1990’s while asking the Lord to keep my cousin Ann safe during her deployment on a hospital ship during the war. Several months later, my cousin returned home safely and my aunt went without beef for so long that she never craved it again.”

During the 2018 selection process, the Scott family wanted to have clear minds as they prayed in faith for the Lord to show His hand in this particular selection process. “During this fasting period, my family and I abstained from all flesh meat and

dairy,” says Scott. “Personally, I needed to take it a step further. I chose to stop eating sugar, salt, fried foods, and desserts. I also gave up drinking juice and soda. Although I ate somewhat healthily, these extra steps—some very difficult—needed to be taken. I knew these were my most loved foods and I needed to give them up in order to truly deny the pleasures of my flesh.”

Spiritual feasting is just as important as physical fasting during an intense period of seeking God’s will. The Scott family added a morning worship routine to their existing daily

“Doing this reinforced the importance of daily dependence upon God and proved to be a wonderful example to my older children.”

evening devotion time. “Doing this reinforced the importance of daily dependence upon God and proved to be a wonderful example to my older children, Jordin and Willie III,” says Scott. “At that time they were studying for baptism at the San Diego 31<sup>st</sup> Street Seventh-day Adventist Church where they serve.”

As an ordained local church Elder and Distinctive Religious Group Leader (DRGL), Scott wanted to incorporate this new spiritual lesson and lifestyle change with what his children were doing to prepare themselves for baptism. “What a blessing and honor it is to respond to Solomon’s wisdom<sup>2</sup> and the Lord’s commission,<sup>3</sup>” says Scott. “My kids witnessed first-hand the power of faith, prayer, and supplication with thanksgiving.<sup>4</sup> Their confidence in the Lord has truly been increased.”

Selection Boards for Senior Chief Petty Officer (E-8) promotions are held at the Navy Personnel Command in Millington, Tennessee once a year. Members selected for duty on the Board receive comprehensive information of every Candidate’s career history, consider each record, and are tasked with selecting the “most and fully qualified candidates” per the boards precepts and convening order.

Scott received an opportunity to visit the location of the Selection Board facility in Millington. “I was assigned TAD orders to attend a workshop in Millington in the same exact building where the Selection Board meets for their deliberations,” says Scott. “This was a very rare

opportunity. While there, I told my wife I was in the same building where Board Members meet. She said, ‘Say a prayer at the door!’”

At the next break Scott wandered over to the south wing of the building, stood in the center of the foyer surrounded by four pillars, and offered a quiet prayer asking God to ‘be with the Board Members as they sort through thousands of records, searching for the fully and most qualified candidates. “I asked God to guide their thoughts, be with their decisions, and keep them focused,” says Scott. “I asked Him to bring to their minds the names of those Candidates who worked hard to meet the mission and take care of the Sailors God placed under their charge and to bless those that brought their petitions to Him in prayer. I felt expanding the prayer to cover others was the right thing to do instead of selfishly praying for myself only.”

Day by day and week by week, the Scott family remained faithful in their commitment and they noticed a remarkable growth in their spiritual lives. “My family and I feel great, have tons of energy, and blessed assurance!” says Scott. “I encourage anyone who desires anything, to put God first. Ask Him to reveal His plans for you in agreement with your family or closest friends, through fervent prayer and faith that God’s divine will be shown.”

For the three-day period before the Selection Board announcement would be made, Scott decided to consume only water and to increase his prayer time. The day of the announcement

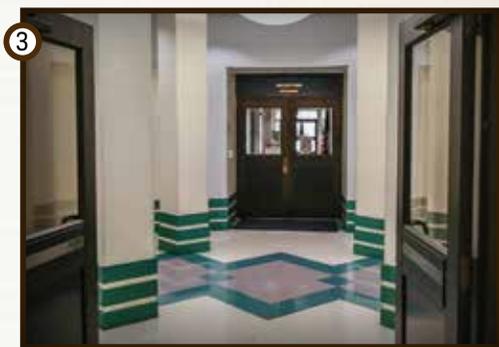
Day by day and week by week, the Scott family remained faithful in their commitment and they noticed a remarkable growth in their spiritual lives.

1. Donesha Scott proudly pins her husband's Senior Chief anchors to his collar.
2. Scott's children attach the clasps to the back of his anchors, one for each child.
3. The foyer just outside the South Wing where Selection Board Members meet and deliberate to select the Navy's newest promoted leaders.

Scott was dismayed to find that the base computers were down. "Normally I would have checked my email to learn the decision of the Board," says Scott. "As the day passed, I didn't receive a phone call or email notification about my status. I was feeling a bit weak and lethargic from the intense fasting. When the phone finally rang, it was the Commanding Officer of the Training Support Center. He wanted to check on me and that was how I heard I'd been promoted. All I could think was, *Thank you Jesus!*"

Scott's frocking (advancement) ceremony was held on 8 June 2018 at the Training Support Center in San Diego, California. In the presence of over 50 attendees, Donesha and the Scott's four children "pinned" his shiny new Senior Chief anchors on his collar. Seventh-day Adventist Chaplain (LT) Mandisa Maforah and Chief Fire Controlman Juan-Pierre (J.P.) DeLaCruz also a Seventh-day Adventist were present among the crowd.

"Chaplain Maforah is my spiritual adviser and J.P. was a member of my Adventist Military Chapel Worship Group (AMCWG) in Yokosuka, Japan. We fellowship regularly and exchange stories of how God is moving in our families lives," says Scott. "Having my family and like-minded believers at the frocking ceremony brought everything into the proper perspective and affirmed our collective faith in God.



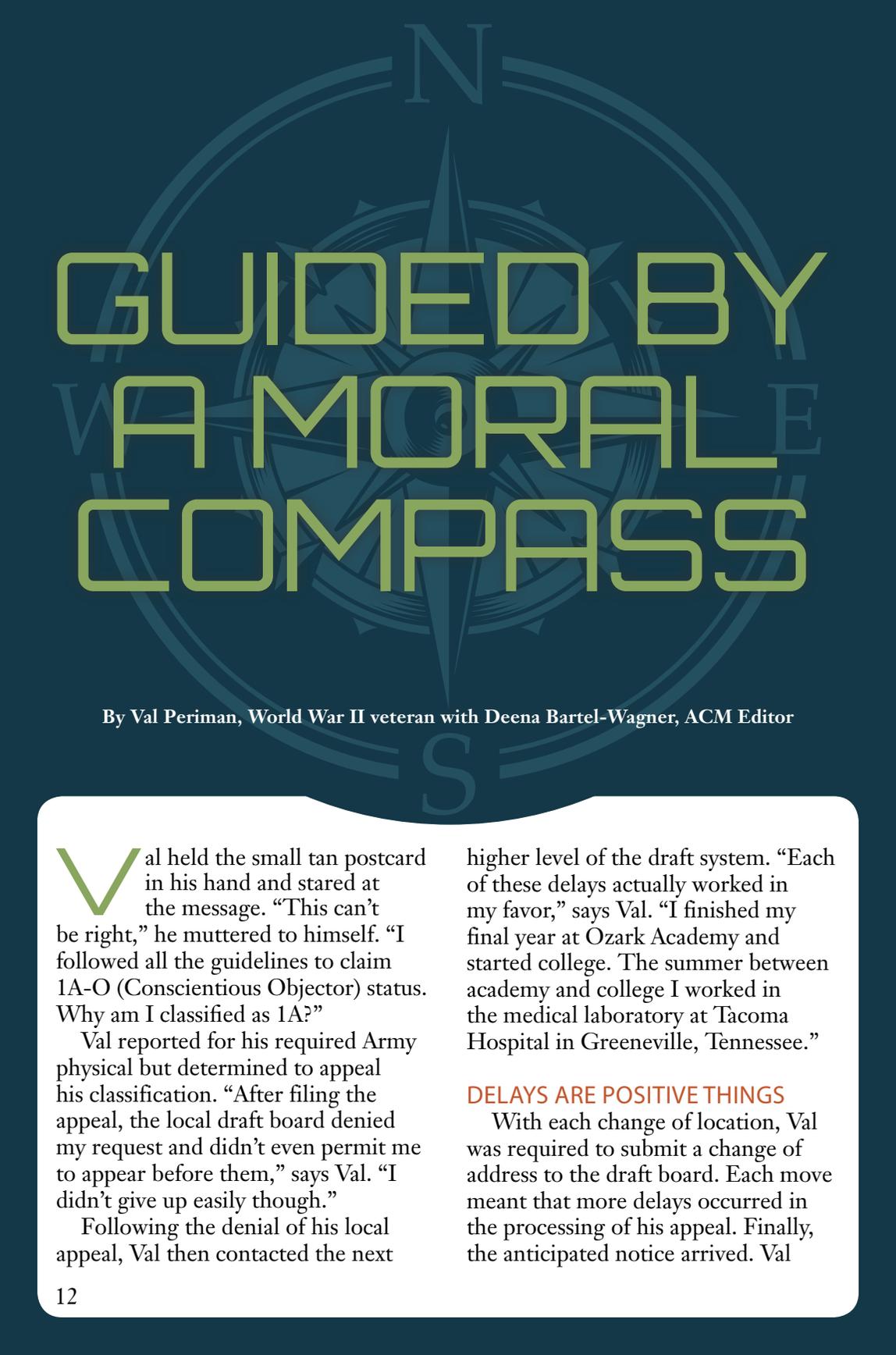
This Esther approach to corporate fasting resulted in a blessing I will share for a lifetime and has definitely planted a seed of faith in my children for the Lord to nourish."

<sup>1</sup> White, Ellen G., *The Great Controversy*, p. 525.

<sup>2</sup> Proverbs 22:6

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 28:19-20

<sup>4</sup> Philippians 4:6-7



# GUIDED BY A MORAL COMPASS

By Val Periman, World War II veteran with Deena Bartel-Wagner, ACM Editor

Val held the small tan postcard in his hand and stared at the message. “This can’t be right,” he muttered to himself. “I followed all the guidelines to claim 1A-O (Conscientious Objector) status. Why am I classified as 1A?”

Val reported for his required Army physical but determined to appeal his classification. “After filing the appeal, the local draft board denied my request and didn’t even permit me to appear before them,” says Val. “I didn’t give up easily though.”

Following the denial of his local appeal, Val then contacted the next

higher level of the draft system. “Each of these delays actually worked in my favor,” says Val. “I finished my final year at Ozark Academy and started college. The summer between academy and college I worked in the medical laboratory at Tacoma Hospital in Greeneville, Tennessee.”

## DELAYS ARE POSITIVE THINGS

With each change of location, Val was required to submit a change of address to the draft board. Each move meant that more delays occurred in the processing of his appeal. Finally, the anticipated notice arrived. Val



Val and Bev Periman

DURING INDUCTION  
AND BOOT CAMP  
VAL REALIZED THAT  
HE NO LONGER  
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ABOUT HIS LIFE.

would appear before and make his case to a Federal judge in Chicago.

“The judge questioned me on the sincerity of my beliefs,” says Val. “Then he reviewed an inch-high stack of papers that contained the FBI reports on me. I couldn’t believe the lengths the government went to assess my beliefs. Some of my friends told me later that the investigators had asked questions as far back as my grade school days!” Finally, the judge made his ruling. Val would enter military service with a 1A-O status. Now he’d wait for orders to report for duty.

While attending Union College, Val enrolled as a pre-med student. “I didn’t know how long I’d be a college student before I received my orders,” says Val, “but I wanted to take as many

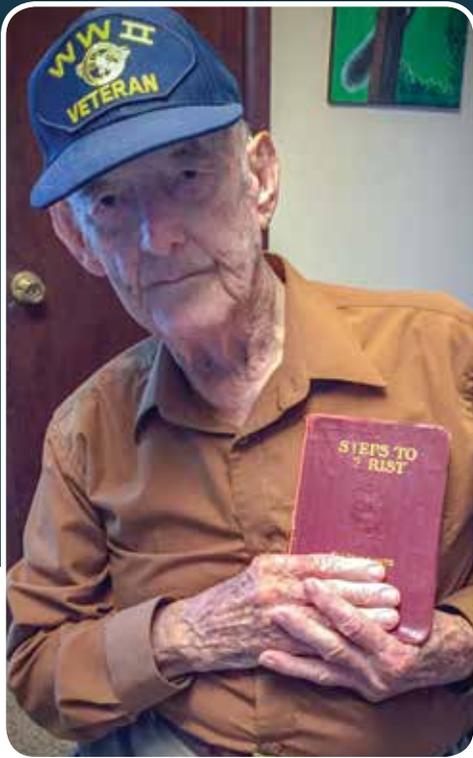
courses as possible. I also enrolled in the Medical Cadet Corps program to learn basic military practices of marching, drilling, military courtesies, and basic medic practices. This helped ease my transition a few months later as I moved from being a civilian to a soldier.”

Eight weeks after classes started, Val received his orders to report. “At that time Union College had a policy permitting students who were drafted to receive a semester’s worth of credit upon completion of 12 weeks of classes,” says Val. “I was so close to that number. The Army granted my request to delay reporting for duty.”

### TIME TO REPORT

The last night Val spent at the college, he attended the evening worship service in the Men’s Dorm. “Several of my classmates presented me with a red leather-bound copy of *Steps to Christ*,” says Val. “I carried it with me through the war, and still have it today.”

During induction and boot camp Val realized that he no longer had much input about his life. The Army directed where he went, when he slept, what he ate and wore. “I made a conscious decision that I would be the



"I AM GRATEFUL TO THOSE ADVENTISTS WHO STOOD BY THEIR CONVICTIONS BEFORE ME, THEIR SACRIFICE PAVED A MUCH EASIER PATH FOR ME."

Val with the copy of *Steps to Christ* that was presented to him just before he left for boot camp and serving in World War II.

best soldier I could be, but I would also be consistent with my moral values," says Val. "My attitude enabled me to tolerate the Army and do my work."

### BOOT CAMP AND TECHNICAL TRAINING

Boot camp molds individuals into soldiers through physical, mental, emotional, and skills training. Val's experience was typical of those who went before and after him. "During boot camp, I appreciated the MCC training I'd received at Union," says Val. "I was able to quickly adapt to the physical training and avoided some of the attention showered on others who struggled."

Val was relieved to learn that

Sabbath observance would be allowed. "I am grateful to those Adventists who stood by their convictions before me," says Val. "Their sacrifice paved a much easier path for me."

One Sabbath, Val did face a potentially difficult situation. Several soldiers went to the company clerk to get their passes. "The Sergeant informed us that we had to take a special exam that morning," says Val. "He told us that the General had ordered the exam, and no one would be excused."

On the street outside company headquarters, Val and the other soldiers stood in a circle with their hands on each other's shoulders. "We prayed that God would intervene," says Val. "About five minutes later, the sergeant came to the door and reported that we had our passes. Later we learned that an officer on the General's staff saw us praying. He knew about Adventists and said we should be given passes for church that day!"

Following boot camp, Val assumed he'd be assigned to a medical laboratory specialty. "Instead, I was sent to dental technician's school

at Fitzsimons General Hospital in Denver, Colorado,” says Val.

### UNDERWAY AT LAST

Following his dental technician training, Val’s orders were to report to Camp Beale in California. “My name came up three times on lists for the European Theater of Operations,” says Val. “Each time there were enough troops without me. I eventually was assigned to the USS Gilliam.”

Three weeks after the 400 troops boarded the ship, Val learned his destination. “I’d hoped we were going to Australia,” says Val. “Instead, we docked in Oro Bay in Papua New Guinea (PNG).”

Val’s first assignment was to work as a clerk for a Major. From there, he moved to the 360<sup>th</sup> Station Hospital at Milne Bay in southeastern PNG. “The hospital was a group of tents in a coconut grove,” says Val. “When we arrived, a corporal warned us to don a helmet anytime we stepped outside of tent. The danger wasn’t from enemy bullets, but rather falling coconuts!”

Val’s assignment at Milne Bay lasted only a few weeks. “We boarded a ship on Christmas Day, 1944,” says Val. “Again, destination unknown, but during the voyage, we learned of the invasion of the island of Leyte. That was confirmation that we were heading to the Philippines.”

### USEFUL AT LAST

In the dark of the night, the soldiers set up a hospital in the barrio of Calasiao. “When I walked in to the main orthopedic ward, I saw forty men in four rows of beds,” says Val. “Every one of them was either in traction or large casts. Finally, I felt I could do something useful.”

This hospital was the third

line of medical care for casualties. “Our patients were first treated by the company aid man. Then they were transferred to the aid station where a doctor or corpsman would perform any emergency work to keep the soldier alive. Then they were transported to our hospital. We saw casualties within minutes to an hour after they were wounded. “

As battles were fought and territory gained, Val and the hospital staff moved with the troops. A coconut grove in San Fernando served as the next location to set up equipment and tents. “I learned the duties of a circulating surgical technician here out of necessity,” says Val. “My first patient was a Filipino civilian who’d had an accident when he used TNT to fish.”

### AN END AND A BEGINNING

The news eventually came that everyone wanted to hear. The war was over and civilian life lay ahead. The Army offered Val a medical scholarship to pay for his pre-med and four years of medical school. “I would then have been obligated to serve two years in the Army Medical Corps,” says Val. “I didn’t want to be under Army supervision for another 8-10 years. I turned it down.”

Val returned to Union College and met Bev. They’ve been together for more than 71 years. Together, raised a son and a daughter, owned and operated their own business, and been active in their local church. They’ve even been part of successful lawsuits against corruption and false information.

Through it all, Val has stood by the commitment he made early in his adulthood. He’s done his best and used his moral convictions to guide his life.

# THE ADVENT AND NON-C



# IST CHURCH OMBATANCY



By **Ted N. C. Wilson, President**  
Seventh-day Adventist World Church

**T**he question of military service arose early in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Officially organized in 1863 during the height of the United States' Civil War, the new denomination almost immediately had to wrestle with how its members would respond to the call to arms.

As with other difficult questions, the pioneer leaders studied the issues, using the Bible as their guide, and concluded the position most consistent with biblical principles was non-combatancy (the conscientious objection to bearing arms).

By 1864 the young church had successfully appealed to the United States federal government for an official designation of non-combatancy, a position that it has consistently held ever since.

## POSITION REAFFIRMED FOLLOWING WORLD WAR II

In the years following World War II, the Adventist Church further elaborated on its non-combatancy position by approving a document, "The Relationships of Seventh-day Adventists to Civil Governments and War," at the General Conference session in 1954. The statement was reaffirmed and further refined at the 1954 and 1972 Annual Councils of the General Conference Executive Committee. The statement reads, in part:

*"Genuine Christianity manifests itself in good citizenship and loyalty to civil government. The*

*breaking out of war among men in no way alters the Christian's supreme allegiance and responsibility to God or modifies their obligation to practice their beliefs and put God first."*

*"This partnership with God through Jesus Christ who came into this world not to destroy men's lives but to save them causes Seventh-day Adventists to advocate a non-combatant position, following their divine Master in not taking human life, but rendering all possible service to save it."<sup>1</sup>*

## NOT A TEST

"Non-combatant service" is defined as "(a) service in any unit of the armed forces which is unarmed at all times; (b) service in the medical department of any of the armed forces . . . ; or (c) any other assignment of the primary function of which does not require the use of arms in combat; provided that such other assignment is acceptable to the individual concerned and does not require them to bear arms or to be trained in their use."<sup>2</sup>

In addition to taking a non-combatancy position, the Seventh-day Adventist Church encourages its members not to join the military. Nevertheless, it is not a test of church membership. The church "does not seek to be the conscience for any member or commander," but rather seeks to "inform the conscience and behavior of both, so decisions can be made with maximum understanding and thought."<sup>3</sup>

The Adventist Church understands that in some countries, non-combatancy options are not available, and Adventists are required to serve in their country's military. Even then, young believers are encouraged to find ways to be faithful to God while serving their country. If members find themselves in the military, whether by

personal choice or conscription, the church, through Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries and other avenues, tries to minister to them spiritually.

## HISTORIC WITNESS

Seventh-day Adventists have maintained their historic witness in favor of peace and non-combatancy throughout the 155 years of the church's existence. This position has not been hidden: in the most public manner possible, Adventist Church leaders periodically have called on world leaders to avoid conflicts and seek the Prince of Peace, who came that we might "have life and . . . have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

Probably the best-known Seventh-day Adventist non-combatant was Desmond Doss, who served as a medic in the United States Army during World War II. Doss is best known for saving the lives of 75 of his fellow soldiers during a fierce battle on the island of Okinawa.

This act of courage earned Doss the U.S. Congressional Medal of Honor. He was the first, and one of only



three conscientious objectors, ever to receive this honor.

Another lesser known, but equally inspiring story is that of fourteen Seventh-day Adventist students drafted into the British army during World War I. The inspiring experience of these faithful yet persecuted young men who stood firm in observing the seventh-day Sabbath and in refusing to bear arms is told in the 28-minute film, “A Matter of Conscience: Adventist Heroes in World War I,” produced by Victor Hulbert, communication director of the Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. You can read the story of these young men in the *Adventist Review* October 22, 2014 article, “14 Soldiers in God’s Army.”

## A PEOPLE OF PRAYER

As Seventh-day Adventists, we need to be people of prayer. While the world is engaged in battles that can be seen, many invisible but very real battles of the great controversy are going on every day. Satan and his angels are battling against each one of

us striving to at last claim this world as their own.

We need to pray for our countries, wherever we are in the world, and for the leaders of our countries. We need to pray for our fellow members, for our world church, and the unusual challenges regarding military service around the world. And most of all, we need to pray for peace—the peace that only Jesus can bring now, and in His kingdom to come, where there will be no more wars.

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Rev. 21:4, KJV). Let us pray that God will use us to reach others with the lifesaving power of the gospel through Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace and our coming King.

<sup>1</sup> Available at “What Does Non-Combatancy Mean?” *Adventists In Uniform*, <http://adventistsinuniform.org/military-service/non-combatancy/>.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*



# A Matter of INDIVIDUAL CONSCIENCE

By **Mario E. Ceballos, D.Min., BCC**

Director/Endorser, World Service Organization, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

**W**ar. It is evil because it began in Heaven by the father of evil, Satan. The Bible tells us there was a war in heaven and Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and his angels. Humans have been in a state of war until today. As God's children, we are unwilling participants of war. Today, that same serpent is creating conflicts amongst men, and our church members are drawn in those wars.

Sometimes war is between nations. Other times the conflict is between people of the same country. There may be occasions when the enemy is organized or unorganized crime, drugs, or criminals destroying our society. We live in an angry world.

What are we to do? Many Adventist chaplains serve in the military and minister to people of all faiths or to those of no faith. These Adventist pastors find themselves in the middle of wars and controversies about wars.

I have been insulted and called names because I served as a military chaplain.

Are we about war or peace? As Christians, we are to be people of peace. The Bible provides many examples of peace. Jesus, as the Messiah, was called "the Prince of Peace." But, you may ask, what about in a time of war?

In a review of the early days of our denomination when our church was in its infancy, we find evidence of the struggle with this same issue. We need to understand the struggle within the context of those times. During the United States Civil War, the church took a strong stance against slavery, and also against war. Before the United States "Enrollment Act of 1863," a military draft did not exist. A draft is "the enforcement by the government of its constitutional right to require all citizens of sufficient age and capacity to enter the military service of the country. Before 1863, many church

members were taking up arms to fight of their own volition and not due to national laws. Ellen White wrote, “I was shown that God’s people, who are His peculiar treasure, cannot engage in this perplexing war, for it is opposed to every principle of their faith. In the army they cannot obey the truth and at the same time obey the requirements of their officers. There would be a continual violation of conscience. Worldly men are governed by worldly principles. . . .But God’s people cannot be governed by these motives.”<sup>5</sup>

It must be recognized that Ellen White was speaking of the circumstances in connection with “this perplexing war”—the Civil War in the United States—during a period when military service was on an enlistment basis only. There was no provision whatsoever for the convictions of individual conscience. Following the establishment of the draft and after Adventists were granted non-combatant status, Ellen White was silent on the issue of military service, while others including her husband, Elder James White spoke on the subject.

Several years later during her 1885–1887 visit to Europe, White spoke again about military service in Basel, Switzerland. She referred to the European Military Service Laws, when some of Adventist workers employed in the printing press were drafted. “*We have just said farewell to three of our responsible men in the office who were summoned by the government to serve for three weeks of drill. It was a very important stage of our work in the publishing house, but the government calls do not accommodate themselves to our convenience. They demand that young men whom they have accepted as soldiers shall not neglect the exercise and drill essential for soldier service. We were glad to see that these men with*

*their regimentals had tokens of honor for faithfulness in their work. They were trustworthy young men. These did not go from choice, but because the laws of their nation required this. We gave them a word of encouragement to be found true soldiers of the cross of Christ. Our prayers will follow these young men, that the angels of God may go with them and guard them from every temptation.*” This statement is very telling and guides our denominational position today.

Since the statements of the pioneers, two world wars have taken place. Many conflicts and national wars too numerous to number have also scarred our world. Our worldwide membership has increased, we have become a diverse and global church, and clarity on the position of the church may be helpful.

The guidance given through the years is consistent with the church’s position on military service today. In the article, “The Adventist Church and Non-Combatancy” by Elder Wilson, you can read the official church statement.

On April 10 and 11, 2019, following the Spring Council, the World Service Organization will host a world conference on the Seventh-day Adventist Church and Military-related Service. We invite you to attend.

<sup>1</sup> Revelation 12:7–17

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 9:6

<sup>3</sup> “Enrollment Act (1863) (The Conscription Act.” Major Acts of Congress. *Encyclopedia.com*. (October 9, 2018). <http://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/enrollment-act-1863-conscription-act>

<sup>4</sup> <https://definitions.uslegal.com/m/military-draft/>

<sup>5</sup> White, Ellen G., *Testimonies*, Vol. 1, pp. 361–362.

<sup>6</sup> White, Ellen G., *Uncopied Letter 23*, 1886. (Written from Basel, Switzerland, Sept. 2, 1886.)

# The **Seventh-day Adventist Church** and **Military-Related Service** CONFERENCE

**APRIL 10-11, 2019**

General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Headquarters  
Silver Spring, Maryland

**The 2019 worldwide conference is designed to create awareness of the Seventh-day Adventist Church official position on military-related service.**

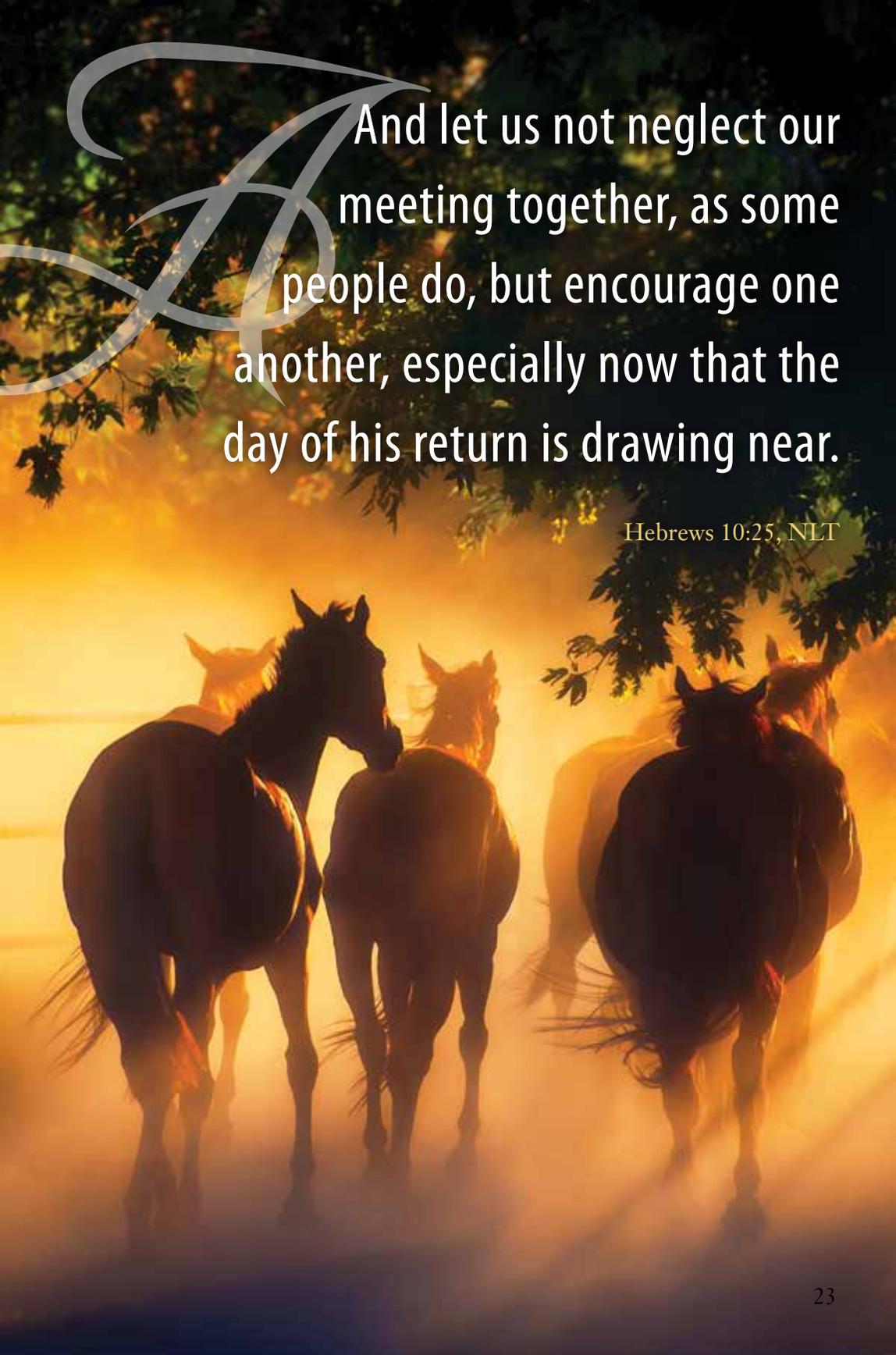
## **THE CONFERENCE WILL:**

- Explore and discuss viable options on how to support the individual member and the way they follow their conscience. Regardless of the individual's choice, it is imperative that no one be made to feel denigrated because of their decision to serve. Respect for the conscientious decision of the individual church member is crucial.
- Discuss Sabbath-keeping challenges and ways for Adventists who serve in uniform, e.g. military, police, fire, emergency services personnel, park rangers, game wardens, security guards etc. to follow their conscience and church guidance without fearing reprisals from their fellow church members and or church discipline.
- Recognize the service of Adventists serving as non-combatants, such as, but not limited to, the "Whitecoats."



**FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT**

[WorldServiceOrganization.org/2019WSOConference](http://WorldServiceOrganization.org/2019WSOConference).



And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

Hebrews 10:25, NLT



## NAD Director's THOUGHTS

Some decades ago Debra and I took our children, Jared and D'Andria, on that middle-class pilgrimage to Disney World. We saw many things. I lost \$100.00 on one side of the park, but we were on the other side of the park when I realized it. My hope in paradise was restored when we made our way to the Lost and Found office. Someone had turned in the money. We were able to recover all that we had lost.

Another indelible memory was going through what is probably the most famous ride there, "It's a Small World." You could tell who had been there because after about 15 minutes in the dark, we had all been mesmerized and had memorized the words and melody of the song.

In like fashion, as I turn my gaze upon our life and mission as Adventist Christians, another chorus that was indelibly inscribed into my spirituality, rebounded into my consciousness. The lyrics of the chorus are:

"Get right with God  
And do it now  
Get right with God  
And He will show you how  
Down at the cross  
Where He shed his blood  
Get right with God, get right, get right with God.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M1X8yJazR8o>

This song bubbled up from my memory while I was reflecting upon some of my pastoral interactions in preparation to share a case study. I had prepared to visit an aging, retired, African American sailor who was a patient on my assigned floor at the hospital. Are chaplains ever really prepared for what will happen after they knock on the door, enter, and introduce themselves?

I knocked, entered, and cleaned my hands, as I introduced myself. There were four other people in the room who appeared to be of similar age and background. When I entered the room, I was welcomed, first by the patient whom I addressed by name and the others as he introduced them. One of the men smiled broadly then said “Well, if the Chaplain is here, we know that it is time to get right with God.” He launched himself into the song.

Apparently, these men were members of a group or choir and this was one of their favorite songs. They sang with joyful harmony. Even the patient sang his verse. I was transfixed and transported to my childhood church where this song was often sung as an appeal song, after the evangelist had preached.

During that visit, the song answered my FICA Spiritual History query. When they finished singing and looked at me, I affirmed their giftedness and the sincerity with which they sang. The patient said to me, “If I did not have my faith, there is no way I could face my imminent death with joy. Do you help other patients face their demise or crisis without fear?”

It was a riveting question. Like an arrow, it pierced deep within my psyche. That is what the chaplain’s ministry of presence is all about, isn’t it? I remember stammering something about my ministrations not being as melodious as theirs had been.

We bantered a while longer as I probed some of his faith dynamics and those of his friends. After a while I asked if I could pray with him. He agreed. We bowed and I prayed. When I said Amen, they plunged into the melodious blessing of Aaron followed by the sevenfold Amen.

It was an unforgettable visit. Are you imprinting the spiritual things of life in your life? Are they so intrinsic in your daily routine that they come to mind easily? Can you say, like that aged Sailor, “I can face any crisis without fear because I have faith in my God.”

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul S. Anderson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the page.

# DEEPEN YOUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY IN 2019

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. 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*
- *Liberty*
- *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

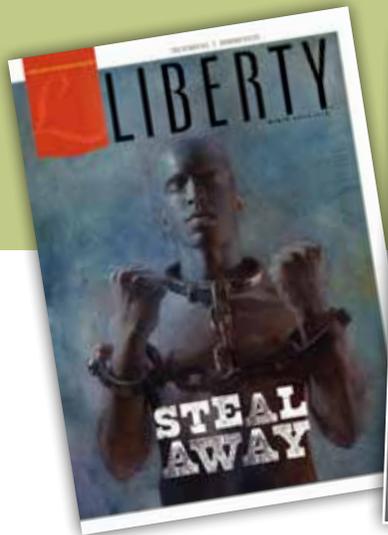
## SUBSCRIPTION ORDERS NOW ACCEPTED ONLINE

### TO ORDER SUBSCRIPTIONS AND/OR DEVOTIONAL MATERIALS:

1. Visit [AdventistsInUniform.org](http://AdventistsInUniform.org) to log in to your personal profile. *If you do not currently have a profile, click on the Sign Up button to begin the process.*
2. Once you open your profile, click on the **Resources** tab in the left-hand column and select two (2) magazine titles, in addition to *For God and Country*, *Adult Bible Study Guide*, and *Adventist Review*.

You can also order devotional books, in this section. If you have any difficulties establishing your profile, contact the webmaster at [ACMEditor@gc.adventist.org](mailto: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 [AdventistsInUniform.org](http://AdventistsInUniform.org) online profile.

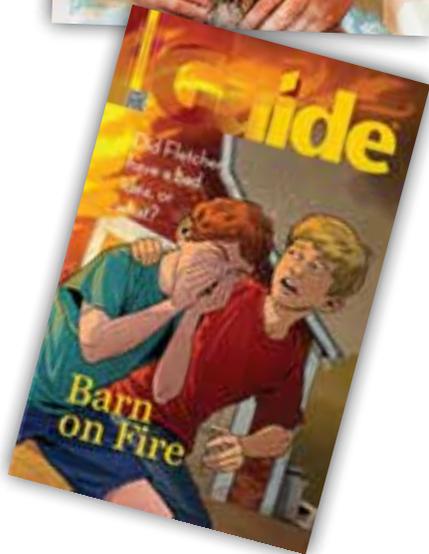
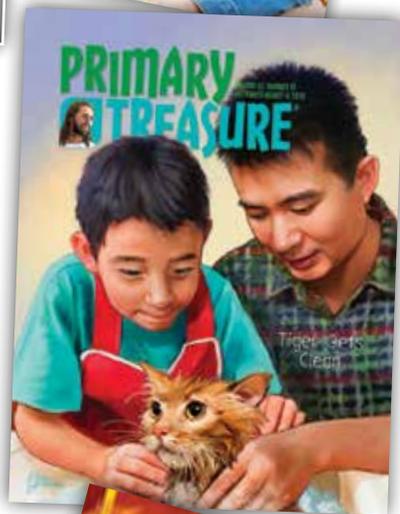


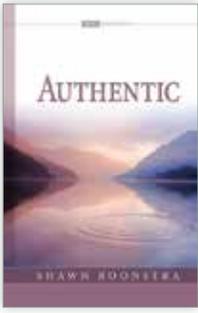
stewards of these funds. Keeping mailing lists current and ensuring that magazines are delivered is a part of that stewardship. Your understanding and cooperation will greatly assist NSO to provide effective support for you while you are representing your church and serving your country.

#### WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

To be eligible for WSO-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



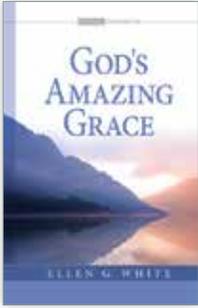


## **ADULT** *Authentic*

Shawn Boonstra

Each entry in *Authentic* is a moment of reflection, a brief peek at one small facet of the stunning picture of Jesus provided to us in the three angels' messages.

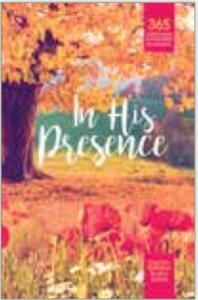
This new devotional by Pastor Shawn Boonstra is dedicated to highlighting these thirteen truths in the light of glory of Jesus Christ, our Creator and our Redeemer.



## **ADULT EVENING** *God's Amazing Grace*

Ellen G. White

As we make Christ our daily companion we shall feel that the powers of an unseen world are all around us; and by looking unto Jesus we shall become assimilated to His image. By beholding we become changed. The character is softened, refined, and ennobled. By maintaining a connection with God, we shall be enabled to diffuse to others, through our association with them, the light, the peace, the serenity, that rule in our hearts." (p. 290)



## **WOMEN** *In His Presence*

Carolyn Rathbun Sutton

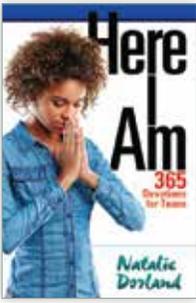
Be blessed as you walk through these inspirational stories written by women who have rediscovered an ever-present Friend—and love like they've never known. Experience their joy and unspeakable delight as they're surprised by the evidence that the One who loves them best is always near. In 365 different ways, the confident voices of God's daughters around the world declare, "I will not be shaken for I am living in His presence."



## **YOUNG ADULT** *Conviction*

Troy Fitzgerald

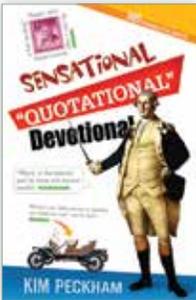
*Conviction* is refined in the fires of effort, failure, faith, and hope. You will meet biblical people stirred by conviction. You will discover what the relationship is between the Holy Spirit, the conscience, and the person you are called to be—and how you can be resolute, sure, and confident in your faith.



## TEEN *Here I Am!*

Natalie Dorland

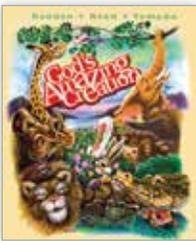
*Here I Am*, a daily devotional for teens, will help you recognize your potential for greatness with God. You've seen enough to know that the world is an evil place in need of God's love. You sense in your peers a desperation for justice. You want to make a difference. Make your devotions personal. Take time each day to be alone with God. He may be calling to your heart.



## JUNIOR/EARLITEEN *Sensational "Quotational" Devotional*

Kim Peckham

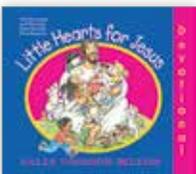
Each daily devotion in **Sensational Quotational Devotional** begins with a quotation and it ends with a Bible verse, reminding us that true wisdom comes only from God. You don't have to be famous to make a difference. If we spend time with Him, anyone—even an anonymous preteen—can make a difference.



## PRIMARY *God's Amazing Creation*

Redden + Reed + Yamada

In this Primary devotional, kids will meet sharks, bears, and puppy dogs. They'll learn each day about our wonderful, incredible world that God has made. Amazing facts are crammed in each lesson like how many mosquitoes a brown bat can catch in an hour or how horned toads protect themselves. *God's Amazing Creation* celebrates nature and will connect children early on to their savior.



## PRESCHOOL *Little Hearts for Jesus*

Sally Pierson Dillon

Here are 180 solutions to the problem of "What shall I read to the kids tonight—or tomorrow morning?" Each reading includes a game, activity, craft, or a charming and original lyric sung to a well-known tune that will entice your child to delight in our awesome God.

## 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](http://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 address shown at the bottom of the page.

- JUNIOR** – *Sensational “Quotational” Devotional*
- TEEN** – *Here I Am!*
- YOUNG ADULT** – *Conviction*
- PRIMARY** – *God’s Amazing Creation*
- PRESCHOOL** – *Little Hearts for Jesus*
- WOMEN** – *In His Presence*
- ADULT** – *Authentic*
- EVENING** – *God’s Amazing Grace*

## 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. You are automatically eligible to receive the WSO 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:

- |   |   |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Our Little Friend</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>For God and Country</i>     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Primary Treasure</i>  | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Adult Bible Study Guide</i> |

Order your subscriptions and books online at [AdventistsInUniform.org](http://AdventistsInUniform.org)  
Subscriptions are not perpetual. You must renew on an annual basis.



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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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The Bible  
knows nothing  
of solitary  
religion.

—John Wesley



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