

INSIDE

ASI

SUMMER 2022

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TO WITNESS**

UNITED. TRANSFORMED. SENT.

2022 ASI INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION



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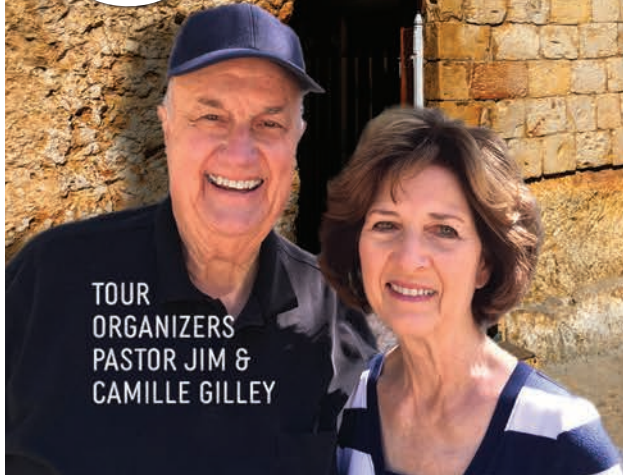
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“REVIVAL”

THE CHRISTIAN'S FAVORITE BUZZ WORD?

Christians tend to talk a lot about revival. Revival is almost a buzz word in Christian communities these days.

This year's ASI theme is “Revived to Witness: United. Transformed. Sent.” Perhaps it seems ASI is jumping on the buzz-word bandwagon. Many groups, churches, and organizations use the word revival because it sounds good—it even feels good. Who doesn't want revival? Revival is raising your hands during prayer, getting goosebumps while listening to a praise song, or feeling inspired after a powerful sermon.

Or is it? Perhaps revival is so much more than a temporary feeling.

Perhaps revival is uniting with our fellow believers. Not on a superficial level, but on a level that requires introspection of our own wrongs and forgiveness of others'. It's not always pleasant and it doesn't always feel good. Unity is letting bygones be bygones, finding common ground with someone you may not even like, and laying aside differences in pursuit of a common goal.

Perhaps revival is personal transformation but not always in the feel-good way. Transformation may mean re-evaluating personal motivations, laying aside hurtful habits you've grown to like, and giving up goals that do not serve Christ's purpose.

Perhaps revival is opening yourself to be sent—anywhere and at any time. This means giving up personal plans in light of Christ's. It may mean dropping everything to go to a place you've never gone, or knocking on your neighbor's door with a plate of warm cookies, or anything in between.

Revival is a painful work. It's giving yourself fully to Christ and allowing Him to change you, fill you, and send you where He sees fit. C.S. Lewis puts it this way: “I wonder if people who asked for God to intervene in our world, really know what they are asking. Will they want to be there when God really does intervene?”

We at ASI are seeking revival. Not the feel-good revival, but the revival that will bring about change, not only in ourselves, but in our church, communities, and across the world. Because as hard as revival may be, its rewards are infinite. Revival offers peace within ourselves and with others, direction in life, and trust and rest in Christ.

As Psalm 23 says: “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”

Revival may come at a cost, but it promises the greatest reward.

Are you ready to be revived to witness?



**KRISTI
JENSEN**

Kristi Jensen runs a communications company and serves as editor and convention planner for ASI. She believes people's stories are their most powerful witnessing tool—and she loves inspiring and equipping people to share theirs.

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What is Inside ASI?

Inside ASI is the biannual printed publication of Adventist-laymen's Services and Industries.

Address and subscription

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OUR PRAYER FOR REVIVAL

by Andi Hunsaker

Seventh-day Adventists have long looked forward to the second coming of the Lord. This has been even more true in the last two years as we have endured political dissension, strife, and pestilence. We have even said these are certain signs of the nearness of this long-awaited event. But are we seeing the whole picture? We are fatigued and dismayed by the pandemic and are saddened by events taking place and viewpoints expressed in our country. We are grieved and even astonished by divisions we have seen in our church—our own Seventh-day Adventist Church. Could it be that the Lord is calling us to a divine reset?

Ellen White said this: “A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek

this should be our first work. There must be earnest effort to obtain the blessing of the Lord, not because God is not willing to bestow His blessing upon us, but because we are unprepared to receive it.

OUR HEAVENLY FATHER IS MORE WILLING TO GIVE HIS HOLY SPIRIT TO THEM THAT ASK.

Our heavenly Father is more willing to give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, than are earthly parents to give good gifts to their children. But it is our work, by confession, humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer, to fulfill the conditions upon which God has promised to grant us His blessing. A revival need be expected only in answer to prayer. While the people are so destitute of God’s Holy Spirit, they cannot appreciate

the preaching of the Word; but when the Spirit’s power touches their hearts, then the discourses given will not be without effect. Guided by the teachings of God’s Word, with the manifestation of His Spirit, in the exercise of sound discretion, those who attend our meetings will gain a precious experience, and returning home, will be prepared to exert a healthful influence” (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 121, emphasis supplied).

On August 3, our annual ASI Convention will convene. It is our prayer that the message above will bring each of us to a recognition of the work that God wants to do in each of our lives so that the end will, in fact, be near—nearer than when we first believed. Our heaven-sent theme for this convention is Revived to Witness: United. Transformed.

Sent. Our theme text is Acts 2:1-4. We often focus on verse 1: "When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." But we need to ask the question, how did they come to be of one accord?

I think it is clear from the context provided in Luke 24 and Acts 1 that the disciples had a true conversion experience which included confession, humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer. Unity of the upper room was not natural, for we know the disciple's history. They needed repentance and confession. Do we

ARE YOU READY TO BE TRANSFORMED AND TO RECEIVE GOD'S SPIRIT?

need that ourselves? We speak of revival and reformation, but how about repentance? Is there a work that God wants to do in us so that we can be truly effective for Him?

Are you ready for this year's ASI convention? Are you ready to be transformed and to receive God's Spirit? Are you ready for sermons and testimonies that will draw your hearts out after God? Are you ready to be inspired and encouraged by your brothers and sisters in Christ?

We pray that we will not only be uplifted but be able to join Peter and John in saying, "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). My prayer is that God will speak to each of our hearts individually.



Andi Hunsaker and her husband, Bob, are both physicians and graduates of Loma Linda University School of Medicine. They make their home in Sudbury, Massachusetts.

Andi practices medicine full-time at a major teaching hospital in Boston, Massachusetts. She is a regular Sabbath School teacher in her home church in Stoneham, Massachusetts, and has a passion for the Word of God.

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Asi INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2022

REVIVED TO WITNESS UNITED. TRANSFORMED. SENT.

Have these past couple of years left you feeling isolated, alone, or discouraged? Are you struggling to find motivation or drive to share the gospel?

It's time to **find revival and rekindle your fire for Christ** through fellowship and inspiration.

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God's Light Shines in the Darkness!

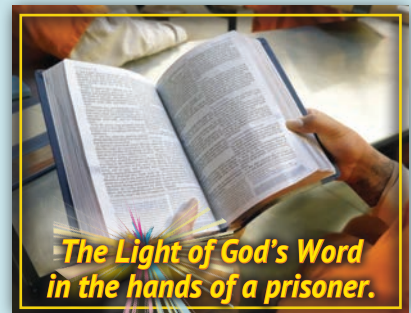
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GOD STILL HEALS THROUGH BELLA VISTA CLINICS

By Tracy and Luis Alonzo, Ed and Ruth McKenzie, and Ethel Price

Mission Projects, Inc. (MPI) supports medical, educational, and missionary outreach in the areas of Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Thailand, and the Philippines. We are grateful to have recently received a story of one of the most striking examples of God's leading and blessings.

Yasmín Gris tells how, years ago, it was just her and her husband, Dr. Guillermo Gris, who performed the surgeries for their MPI facility. They had developed some very important habits, like praying with the patients and their family before each surgery and playing and singing hymns during the surgery. In 42 years they never lost a patient and never had an infection!

Yasmín explained that, years

ago, when a patient awoke

“YOU WERE NOT THE ONLY ONES IN THE ROOM”

after surgery she said, “You were not the only ones in the room.” When asked what she meant, the patient stated she had seen three shining beings in the room with them. Dr. Gris shook it off, thinking that the patient had been under the influence of the drugs.

However, this continued to happen with other patients—three times in one week! (See Matthew 18:16.)

Recently, the MPI facility gained some new additions to their surgical team who are not Adventist, or in some cases, not even Christian. The old habits of playing hymns and praying were questioned

and the unspoken rule of the anesthesia person getting to pick the music became a problem. So Yasmín Gris consulted with her son, Dr. Jairo Gris, and they decided to play the music before the rest of the team arrived. Praying for and with the patients continued, even though the new teammates initially objected.

When they were questioned as to their practices, Yasmín shared with the team how in 42 years, God had blessed

THEY HAD NEVER LOST A PATIENT

them and they had never lost a patient and never had an infection. Now the team encourages the playing of hymns and makes sure a prayer is said before each operation. We at MPI believe the angels are



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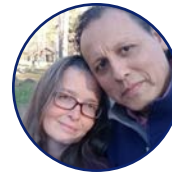
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still standing with them, not only guiding the surgeon's hands but working on the teammates' hearts.



In 2003, Ed and Ruth Mackenzie sold their home on Whidbey Island and traveled doing mission work for seven years before settling down in Yakima, Washington. They spent a lot of that time in Belize, the Philippines, Guatemala, and Mexico, as well as in other countries. They joined Mission Projects, Inc. in 2003 and have served in the role of president since 2006.



Tracie and Luis Alonzo are small business owners in the beautiful state of Tennessee. They feel blessed to have opportunities to be used by God.

For more amazing stories, visit www.missionprojectsinc.org.



Ethel Price is the Mission Projects, Inc. (MPI) newsletter editor and an MPI board member. She and her late husband, Loren, went on four mission trips with ShareHim and The Quiet Hour team, to Ghana, Ukraine, Haiti, and Papua New Guinea and love mission work. She still works as a field representative for the U.S. Census Bureau, and the Lord still sends His divine appointments and miracles!

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SCAN QR

**I was a STRANGER
and you let me in.**

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PICTURE ROLLS TESTIMONY

By Dennis and Judy Skandunas

We placed an order for two Picture Roll sets on March 8 of last year. We thought we had found someone who could hand carry them on a flight overseas, but that didn't work out. We were still longing for these tools of evangelism to reach very remote locations, so we kept praying despite the setbacks.

The only idea we could come up with was to send the rolls to a man in India who had been able to work directly with customs.

The Picture Rolls eventually reached our contact, who then forwarded them on to two very dedicated people in different locations (whose names are kept confidential for safety reasons). The first Picture Roll set arrived at its destination three weeks ago and the sec-

ond set arrived at its location last week.

THE PICTURES MAKE DEEP IMPRESSIONS ON HEARTS AND MINDS

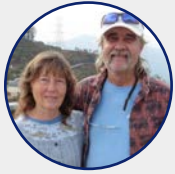
The pictures on the rolls are a very important aspect of the teaching and learning process. The pictures make a deep impression on hearts and minds. Sharon was so thrilled to receive the picture rolls after patiently waiting and praying for months for their safe arrival. It is always a miracle when the items sent arrive safely.

The pictures below show Sharon (not her real name) walking with her team for many hours in a creative-access country to reach a remote village to share Bible truths

with villagers. Sharon is able to travel between two countries and knows the languages of both, as well as English. She was born and raised a Buddhist and was asked by a Holy Spirit-inspired foreign "teacher" to be an interpreter for the messages he would present. Then, after translating, she, her husband, and son were converted. Now they are on fire for sharing the gospel and are glad to have the Picture Rolls to help do that.

"GO YE THEREFORE, AND TEACH ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST: TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU: AND, LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD. AMEN!"

MATTHEW 28:19, 20



Since 2011, the Lord has given Dennis and Judy Skandunas the great privilege of seeing how He is working in some very remote parts of the world, including in Alaska, India, and Nepal. Dennis is a painter and helps Adventist ministries paint orphanages and schools. The couple is typically gone from their home in north Idaho four to nine months of the year. They are completely self-supporting, traveling as the Lord leads.

SCAN QR

**I was a PRISONER
of darkness and
you showed me JESUS**

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What's a 24/7 Missionary?

Come find out while enjoying a special lunch with us at the ASI Convention! Plus visit ASAP Ministries at booth #802 and Angel One at booth #306!

We can't wait to talk MISSIONS with you and seek to be 24/7 MISSIONARIES together!

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JOURNAL PROMPT

“Ye are My witnesses, saith the LORD, and My servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He: before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me.”

Isaiah 43:10

What are some ways God has used you to be a witness to others?

How can you be a witness in your circle of influence?

What are some practical steps you can take to increase your circle of influence?

Challenge:

Pray and ask God to show you how to witness to those around you. Ask Him to open your eyes to see where He is already working and how you can help Him win souls.

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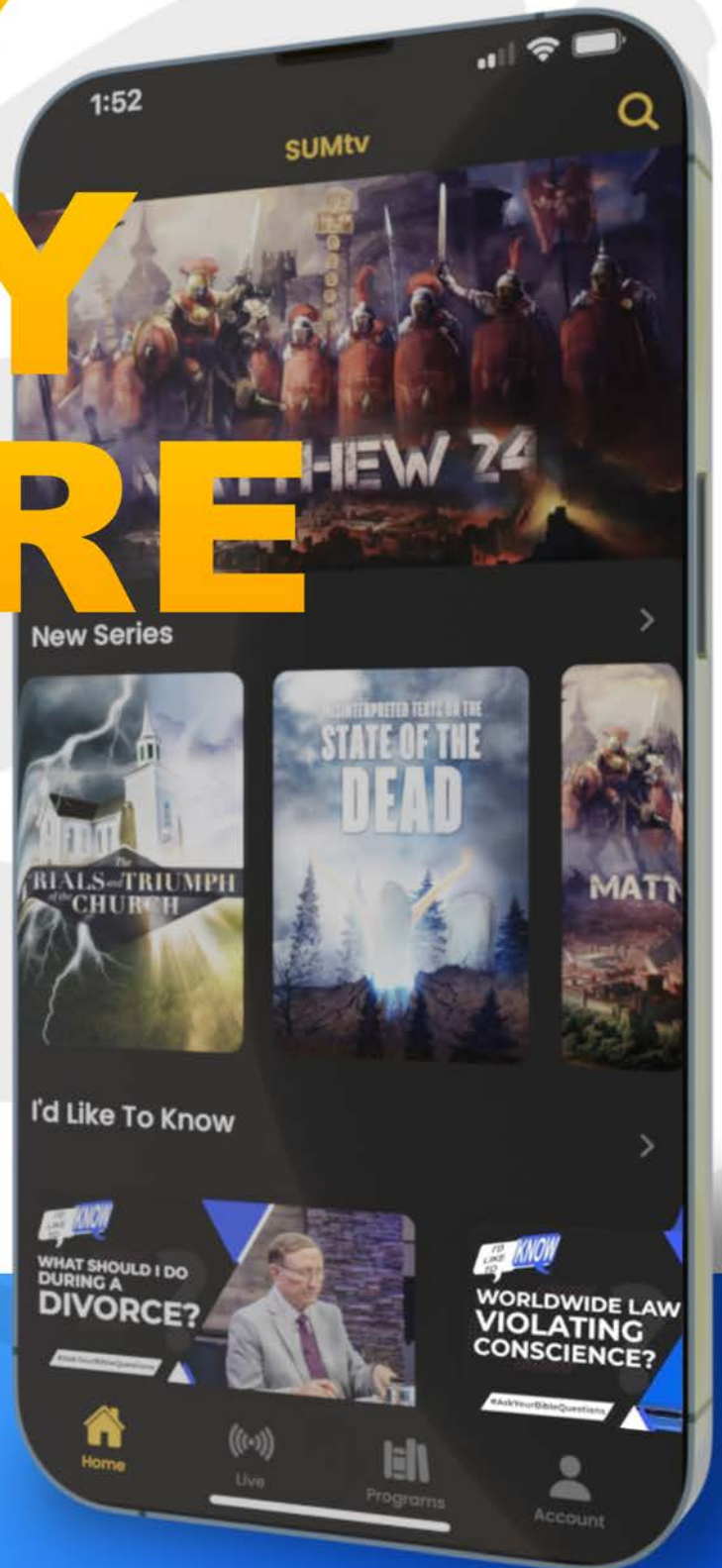
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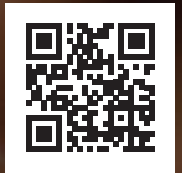
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Jesus for Asia





HANIKA'S DREAM

By Bala Patel

The first fellowship meal for our home church was finished, and there was still rice left over. The children sat together talking in the next room. Bair was visiting with the men and I sat near Hanika, a Bible worker for Himadria, listening to her chat with Reeva and waiting to ask them questions. I sat there basking in the sounds of the local language. I loved listening to Hanika and Reeva—the expressions they used and the way they ended their sentences with a quick, lilting “No?” that really meant yes. Both were quick to laugh. Reeva, our Himadri person of peace, had first heard about the Sabbath from Hanika. “Sister, when did you first meet Reeva?” I asked as soon as I got the chance to break

into the conversation.

“I met her in an office,” Hanika replied. She hesitated a moment, and I leaned forward expectantly. But I was completely unprepared for what she said next. “Actually, I saw her face in a dream. I had a dream that I needed to cross over a muddy place, and I didn’t know how. In front of me was a big mountain that I needed to climb. Reeva came and urged me to cross over the mud. Then she began boosting me up the mountain. It was very steep, but as I climbed, my hands and feet stuck to the rock, and I was able to go quickly. As I neared the top, I saw someone looking over the edge and waiting for me. It was a man in a red robe. At first I thought he was

**“ACTUALLY, I SAW HER FACE
IN A DREAM”**

a monk. But then I looked closer. On his head was a crown of thorns, and I knew it was Jesus. I reached my hand up to Him, and He reached down and took it, pulling me up to the mountaintop.

“About a month later, I saw Reeva in an office. I didn’t recognize her immediately, but later that day I realized why she had looked familiar. She was the one in my dream.” My mind whirled as the meaning of the dream settled over me. The mud and the mountain needed no interpretation. The many difficulties facing the work in Himadria were represented clearly in these two obstacles. Backslidden members, personal sins, and attacks of Satan are like mud, making the way forward difficult to see and tricky to traverse. The task of going into a closed area, look-

ing for open doors and open hearts in a place where Christianity is not wanted, loomed like a mountain. Hanika told how she had come every day to pray with Reeva, how there had been so many difficulties in Reeva's life at the time, and how Reeva had been impatient and unbelieving. I knew this part of the story because Reeva had also told it to me. "When did you have the dream?" I asked.

"A year ago last February," Hanika told me.

Her words stunned me, and my eyes began filling with tears. I looked at the two women before me with completely new eyes. It had been that February when we had been in the midst of special prayer for the Himadri Project. Many had joined us in praying. I remembered how I had prayed specifically that God would work in Himadria and touch the heart of someone, equipping them to become a person of peace who could lead the work forward. I had prayed that God would send a dream,

if necessary, to bring this person to a knowledge of His truth. In

the faces of these two beautiful ladies, I was looking at the tangible answer to one of my deepest prayers. I wanted to cry and scream and laugh all at once.

But instead, I wiped my eyes,

leaned forward, and told them about my prayer asking God for a dream and a person of peace. Hanika listened and then told me about her own prayer. "For 10 years I have prayed and cried to the Lord. I said, 'Lord, I'm not asking You for money or property or wealth. I'm just asking You to send some of Your righteous people here. You know that there are oceans between us and them. I cannot go to them. Please bring them to me.' I have cried many tears—you know that, Sister? One of my friends tells me my head is full of water."

I laughed even as I continued to wipe my tears. The three of us sat looking at each other with new eyes, seeing the answers to our prayers in each other's faces. My heart was ready to burst. It seemed the years of tears and prayers to God had been part of the labor pains of spiritual birth for Reeva and the Himadri church that God was raising up. We sat together and took a picture as the afternoon sun came through an open

window and touched the yellow concrete walls of Reeva's house. In that moment I

tasted heaven, and it was unforgettable. There is no doubt. The hardships overcome, the struggles endured, and the tears shed are all worth it even now. In my mind's eye, I can see us all before the

throne. I can see their faces when they cast down their crowns at Jesus' feet. And when I see God wipe away their tears, He'll have to dry mine, too.

Bair and Bala Patel are pen names to protect the identities of these Adventist Frontier Missions (AFM) missionaries. AFM seeks to share the gospel with the hardest to reach people in the world.

**I WAS LOOKING AT THE
TANGIBLE ANSWER TO ONE OF
MY DEEPEST PRAYERS**



MUSHROOM STROGANOFF

by Kristina McFeeters

Boil 4 quarts of water.
Add:
14 oz. Fettuccine pasta
1-2 T. salt
Cook until mostly tender.
Rinse and drain. Set aside.

Wash, chop, and set aside:
16 oz. mushrooms
1 medium onion

Blend until smooth:
2 13 oz. cans coconut milk
1 cup cashews
1 T. onion powder
1 tsp. garlic powder
1 tsp. paprika
2 tsp. Country Style Seasoning*

1-2 tsp salt, to taste
1 T. Nutritional Yeast

Saute half of onions, until browned nicely. Add half the garlic and mushrooms, and saute on medium high heat until mushrooms are brown, stirring occasionally. Pour veggies into pasta. Saute the remaining veggies the same way. Pour blender mixture into the pan of freshly sauteed veggies. Boil mixture for 1-2 minutes until mixture is creamy. Add to the pasta and other sauteed veggies and stir. Rinse blender with 1 cup water and add to pasta. Let sit for a few minutes before serving.

Enjoy!

*Country Style Seasoning

½ cup salt
¼ cup celery salt
¼ cup onion powder
¼ cup parsley flakes
1 tsp. garlic powder
1 tsp. paprika
½ tsp. summer savory OR savory
½ tsp. marjoram
½ tsp. sage

Mix together and store in a jar or sealed spice container. Use as a seasoning in gravies, soups, patties, etc. Makes a great substitute for chicken seasoning.



Kristina McFeeters is the owner of Kristina's Kitchen, a plant-based restaurant in Whitley City, Kentucky. Her passion is sharing Jesus through food with the people in the poverty region of Eastern Kentucky Appalachia.

Visit www.kristinaskitchen.org for more recipes! Join Kristina the third Tuesday of every month at 6:00 P.M. for free cooking classes streamed on Facebook and inperson in Whitley City, Kentucky.



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Stay with it! Don't give up!

Stay with it! Stay with it! Keep going! Don't give up!

These are the words I kept saying to myself as I was swimming against the big wave currents that were taking me further and further out to sea at sunset time. I had lost my surfboard on a big surf day out in the middle of Hanalei Bay, and now I was caught in the riptide that often occurs during big surf. My wife and I lived in Hawaii for 12 years. In fact, our four children were born there on the island of Kauai. It was one of my passions to get my daily exercise jogging by the seashore, and then to go for a swim or surfing session. It just so happened that at the end of a good day's work, along with a few friends, we decided to paddle out for an evening session to catch some of those beautiful waves several hundred yards out in the middle of Hanalei Bay.



Photo by Keani Andrade

We were all having a great time! And we would challenge each other to see who could get deeper "in the tube" or "in the barrel" and come out in one piece. Well, I did get deep enough into one of those waves alright, but it "closed out" and I "wiped out". Instantly my surfboard disappeared. After getting pummeled by the breakers for a while, I tried to swim toward the shore thinking that my board may have been taken in by the foam. I soon realized I wasn't making much progress regardless of how fast or how hard I was swimming parallel to the current or not. It didn't take long for me to realize that I was caught in the riptide or "the conveyer belt" without my surfboard. Soon, I was far from the surf break, and was being carried deeper out into the ocean. And the evening was approaching. Whistles for my friends were carried away by the offshore winds so they didn't even know what was happening. I was alone.

I often think how similar, sometimes, life can be when unpredictable events become a "strong current" that wants to carry us in the wrong direction. It then becomes apparent that, regardless of our own efforts to reverse the course we may be on, it just won't get us anywhere. Yet during my ordeal, I kept saying to myself, "Stay with it! Stay with it! Don't give up! Keep going! You have a wife, and children, and too many bills to pay to die now. Stay with it!" In an attempt to see further, I would often kick fast and lift myself up out of the water looking around for something to grab on to or someone to call to for help, but it was useless. I was now getting tired, and I was alone, and yes, I did think about sharks!

But wait! I'd forgotten to do something most important! I forgot to pray! So I said, "LORD, PLEASE HELP ME!" Suddenly, it was as if someone just slapped me on the back of my head and said, "I thought you would never ask". Amazingly, my surfboard showed up right next to me even though I had been looking for it for what seemed like an eternity. It took me a long time to paddle back to shore, but I did make it back home on time for dinner. I re-

(Continued on page 2)

Native American Baptisms

Last October, we saw something happening that was unexpected. We were experiencing baptisms amongst Native American communities that were coming out of the blue. This year's baptism numbers did not decrease in spite of the COVID pandemic.

We were thrilled to see several Native baptisms, and many people taking their stand for the Lord after going through the Native New Day and Native New Life



Bible video studies series produced and directed by Carlos Pardeiro of Safe TV®. Our lay evangelists are now using these series personally, but they are also available on SafeTV4U2 on ROKU and the smart phone apps. So anyone can use them to give Bible studies with them. The exciting thing is that this is precisely what our new Native brothers and sisters are doing as they eagerly share their newly found faith using this very effective Bible video series with their circle of influence. Let's keep them in prayer!

Submitted by Pastor Monte Church

Stay with it! Don't give up!

(Continued from page 1)

member saying to myself, "Well, maybe my guardian angel wanted to catch a few waves with my surfboard too".

Friends, I have discovered that it's not until we give up on our own strength and manmade solutions and let God be in charge of every detail of our lives that we will find God's always available solutions and His strength to overcome every wave that may come our way trying to drown us. *"Those who accept the one principle of making the service of God supreme, will find perplexities vanish, and a plain path before their feet."* The Ministry of Healing, p. 481 So, I encourage you today to stay with God. Stay with God! Hold on to Him! Stand firm with Him! Steady as she goes! This, too, shall pass!

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."
Joshua 1:9 (Paraphrased)

Story by Carlos Pardeiro
 President/CEO of Safe TV®



Imagine!

"Oh, how much we lose by not educating the imagination to dwell upon divine things, rather than upon the earthly. We may give fullest scope to the imagination, and yet, "Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

1 Corinthians 2:9. Fresh wonders will be revealed to the mind the more closely we apply it to divine things. We lose much by not talking more of Jesus and of heaven, the saints' inheritance. The more we contemplate heavenly things, the more new delights we shall see and the more will our hearts be brim full of thanks to our beneficent Creator." EGW Letter 4, 1885

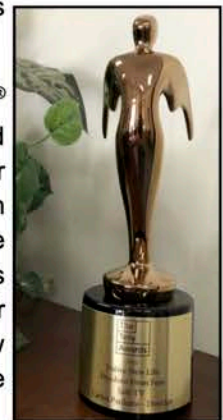
Ephesians 1:18 "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints..."

Ephesians 1:17 "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him..."

National Telly Award for Safe TV®

Once again, we are honored to have received a Telly Award for one of our latest episodes of Native New Life titled "Freedom from Fear", which is directed by Carlos Pardeiro and hosted by "Storyteller" Pastor Monte Church of the Mohican Nation. In spite of COVID restrictions and travel concerns, God provided protection to allow continued filming of this series.

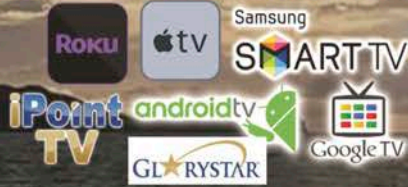
For the past many years, Safe TV® has received over 50 national and international awards including four EMMY nominations for excellence in production for which we praise the Lord. However, our greatest thrill is to see new souls surrender their lives to our Lord Jesus as they view and apply the principles of these God-inspired Bible video series.





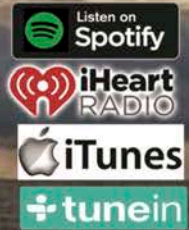
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WEST SACRAMENTO SDA CHURCH

By Zanele Malaba

“OFTEN OUR PLANS FAIL THAT GOD’S PLANS FOR US MAY SUCCEED”

THE MINISTRY OF HEALING, PAGE 473

Failed plans providentially led to the fulfillment of the mission at West Sacramento SDA Church. Previously, Pastor Sasa Anđelkovic had contacted the BRI (Build and Restore International) founder, Ostap Dzyndra, to request that a mission project be completed at his home church in Sacramento. This request filtered to the back of Ostap’s mind. However, when an upcoming mission project was canceled, Ostap dropped to his knees to inquire of the Lord what he should do next. Pastor Anđelkovic’s name came to mind in answer to Ostap’s prayer. He immediately contacted the pastor and made the trek to

survey the West Sacramento church in order to ascertain the need.

A scene of dirty gutters and windows covered with spider webs greeted the onlookers. The church doors evidenced ruining rust with paint chipping away on the doors and walls. The landscaping also told a sad story with overgrown bushes that were pushing into the exterior walls, resulting in staining. Some of the plants were growing into the trim, thereby causing further damage to the walls. The West Sacramento church was in much disrepair. In Haggai 1, the Lord makes it known that He is displeased when His house remains in ruin. Verse 8 of the same chapter reads: “Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build my house so that I may take pleasure in it and be

honored” (NIV). It is God’s will and good pleasure that we, as His people, show Him honor and reverence by taking careful consideration and care of our church structures and houses of worship.

Right away the wheels began turning as to how the repairs and restoration of W. Sacramento church would be undertaken. Measurements

RIGHT AWAY THE WHEELS BEGAN TURNING

and pictures were taken, paint colors determined, and a plan drafted. The work of building and restoring began one week later.

The Lord assembled 24 missionary volunteers within a

week who began by pressure washing the church, repairing the broken wood as well as the trim, and sealing cracks, holes, windows, and doors. Light fixtures were repaired, light bulbs replaced, and a brand new door for the maintenance shed was built. A brand new mailbox was also installed on the church grounds. The doors along with the walls were primed and painted, with 12 buckets of paint utilized altogether. It is hard to ignore the significance of the number 12, which is a number that signifies perfection. Surely the Lord was perfecting the work through the faithful labors of the volunteers.

The landscaping also received an uplift as students cleaned up the entire church property, pulling weeds and dried plants. Volunteers also removed four palm trees that had become a potential hazard to the church structure. Fencing was replaced, leaving the property a beautiful sight to behold!

Ostap had been praying for a paint sprayer, and three days before the mission would begin at the church, his cousin called him to tell him that he had purchased a new paint sprayer and offered him his old one, which was still in good condition. The miracles continued as three of the vol-

unteers brought chain saws with them that were needed to complete the work of cutting down the palm trees. The Lord saw to it that all the workers came equipped and eager to do the work. God poured out His rich blessing in such a way that the mission was concluded in four days, two days ahead of schedule!

OSTAP HAD BEEN PRAYING FOR A PAINT SPRAYER

All through the ages the Lord has called for humble workmen to come, labor in His vineyards, and finish the work. The call is not an exclusive call. Friend, the call goes out to each and every one. What remains to be answered is who will answer the call. May it be that when the call comes to us, we too, like Isaiah, may say, "Here am I. Send me!" (Isaiah 6:8 NIV).



Zanele Malaba is a writer and speaker and also serves as women's ministry leader at her local church. Her heartfelt desire is to be used as the ink horn in the writer's hand—for Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, to pen a life story that brings glory, praise and honor to Him.



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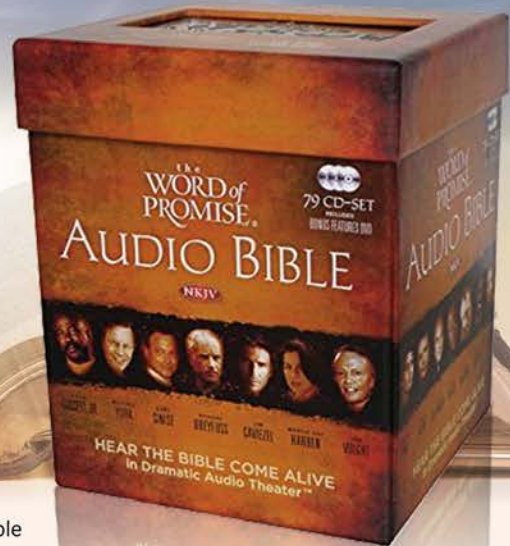
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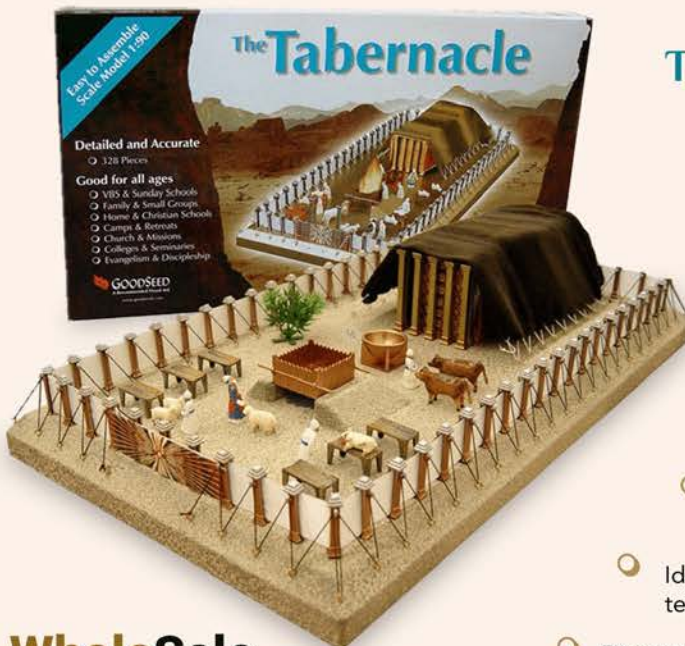
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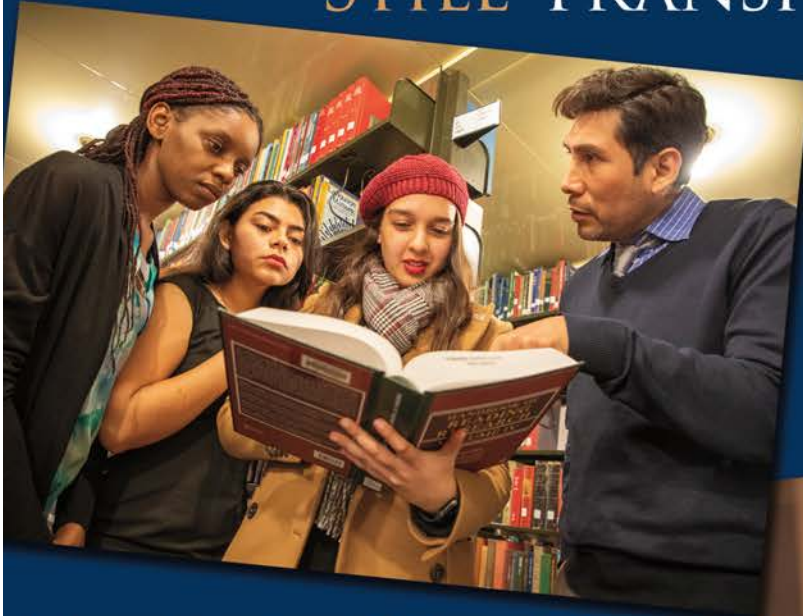


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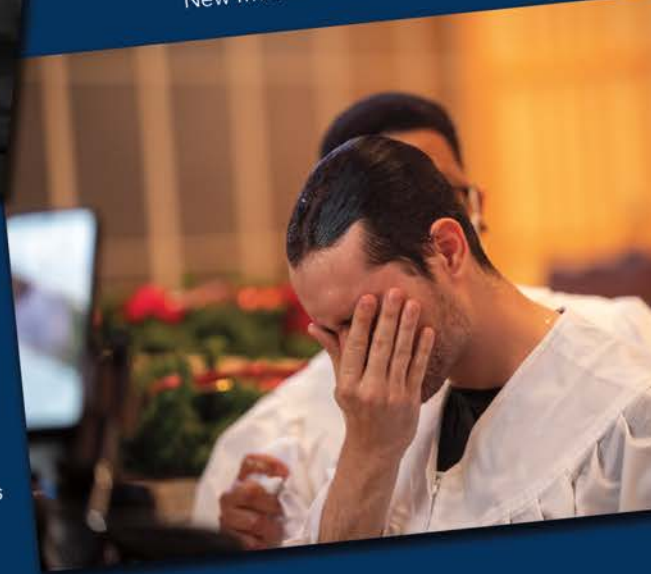
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Prisons and prisoners....someone else's problem!.....

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But what attitude should Christians have towards prisons and prisoners? Like many in our society, we could just proclaim, "lock 'em up and throw away the key!" We could just write them off, as "they got what they deserved!" But God has commissioned us to live and preach Biblical principles. God challenges us to preach the Gospel to "all creatures," which includes the prisoners (Mark 16:15). Jesus even said that to minister to the prisoners was the same as ministering to him, and to ignore them was to ignore him (Matt. 25:33-40). If we take God's word seriously, we cannot align ourselves with those who proclaim "lock 'em up and throw away the key!" God challenges us to take his message of repentance and forgiveness, and proclaim his justice and mercy, to everyone. Can we really live like it is "someone else's problem?"

We here at Christmas Behind Bars believe that God has given this ministry the responsibility to reach out to prisoners with love, sharing with them about salvation in Jesus Christ alone. **We reach out with care packages filled with snacks, soup packets, hygiene items, reading material, homemade "Thinking of You" cards, and Bibles.** We let them know that they are loved, and that there is hope for them when they come to Christ in a saving relationship.

Would you be willing to partner with us to help reach the prisoners with the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Please prayerfully consider a donation to this ministry today. We say "thank you!" to those who see value in supporting this ministry to prisoners!

(Visit our website at www.ChristmasBehindBars.org for more information about our ministry).

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A BOOK, A CHURCH, AND A WANDERING HEART

By Grant Agadjanian

While many churches were closed during the pandemic, a group of members from one of our Seventh-day Adventist churches in Oregon were gathering to study a Creative Media Ministries book: *Overcoming Through Jesus*. As the Holy Spirit moved the readers, they began to put the principles they were learning into practice, and a genuine revival took place. When their church reopened, they shared the revival and their testimonies with their church family.

One of the members of the group had a son who had walked away from God and the church several years prior. He had been on drugs for 13 years and was living in California. He happened to be visiting his parents in Oregon that weekend and attended

church with them, only to hear his dad's testimony as well as the testimonies of others who had read *Overcoming Through Jesus*. When the family returned home, the son picked up the book and began reading it himself.

HE COULDN'T PUT IT DOWN

He couldn't put it down; he read the entire book! Before returning to California, he purchased 25 more copies to take with him!

THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS WORKING

The Holy Spirit was already working on his heart. On his drive to California, he

stopped by every homeless person he saw and gave them food and new socks. Upon his arrival in California, he went to every friend he had used drugs with, and gave them a copy. Sad to say, many of them had also grown up in Adventist homes and had left the church. A few months later, this young man called me to share that he is off drugs and wants to get involved in ministry.

The beautiful gospel message which is presented with so much simplicity and clarity in *Overcoming Through Jesus* by Pastor Bill Liversidge, renews hope in those who have given up on Jesus, and brings revival to individuals and churches. It is in print in many languages around the world and distributed by the Pacific Press through all of our ABC stores in the North American

Division. You may also find it on our website at: www.creativemediaministries.org. Please pray for our ministry and the precious souls that read this book.



Grant Agadjanian was born in the former Soviet Union in 1960 and raised an atheist. He was drafted to serve in the Soviet Army in Siberia at age 20. Upon his return to civil duty, he became seriously ill. After spending

six years in hospitals, the doctors gave up, saying Grant had one year to live. During this time, Grant was given a Bible and came to believe there is a God. As he began to live according to the Word of God, his health began to improve. Today, Grant is the president of Creative Media Ministries and shares the gospel around the world.

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"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."
~ Matt 24:14

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To Seek & Save the Lost



In Luke chapter 19, we read the account of Zaccheus, who was a Publican (a rich tax collector). Zaccheus was known among his fellow Jewish countrymen as a sinner, and was hated because of his allegiance with the Romans. As a tax collector, he imposed Roman taxes on the Jews. Publicans were known to overcharge their countrymen of taxes, then keep the excess for themselves.

When Jesus came to his hometown of Jericho, Zaccheus went to see him, but he was short and had to climb a tree to see over the crowd. When Jesus came by, he called Zaccheus by name, and came into his home that day. Even though the people grumbled about Jesus spending time with a

sinner, **that simple act of love by Jesus caused Zaccheus to have a change of heart.** Zaccheus repented of his sin, and promised to give half of his possessions to the poor, and restore four times as much to anyone he had defrauded. Jesus recognized his change of heart, and spoke of his salvation to those who were present.

Jesus came to 'SEEK AND SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST.' (Luke 19:10)

The Christmas Behind Bars Outreach Ministries believes it is our responsibility to reach out to those who are like Zaccheus. Prisoners are the outcasts of society, often forgotten by their own families. Like Zaccheus, they have made grievous mistakes and often some enemies. **But Jesus sought after the outcasts, and has challenged us to love the "LEAST OF THESE" the way he does (see Matthew 25:31-45).**

Will you help us to reach out to them today?

We thank you for your continued sponsorship of this ministry, helping us seek and save the lost. We know that without Christ, there is no hope of salvation or everlasting life...



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EVERY BREATH

By Rachel Cox

The metal doors slid open and I stepped aside as a nurse and security officer rolled the gurney off the elevator. On it lay a lifeless form, encapsulated in a white body bag. The only identifying mark was the small yellow tag with the deceased's name on it. They passed by, and I boarded the elevator, its doors closing behind me. I felt the vibrations of the hydraulics as I ascended. It took only a moment before the blue number lit up, indicating I had reached my floor. As I stepped off, I noticed a nurse pushing her patient's bed onto the neighboring elevator, chatting with them as the doors sealed shut. It's hard to articulate in words the striking contrast of the last few moments. In less than a minute, life and death had rolled past me in a vivid

ON IT LAY A LIFELESS FORM...

reality check that one's life can change in an instant. As I walked back to the emergency room to care for my patients, the significance of that moment began to sink in. Six hours later, Trauma Room 3 was a buzz of activity. Like bees in a hive, nurses and doctors swarmed in as a 28-year-old's life hung in the balance. She had already gone into cardiac arrest once, only a couple minutes prior, but had spontaneously come around before we had a chance to intervene. However, the danger was far from over. I slapped on the defibrillator pads as the incessant beeping of the alarms reminded us of the gravity of the situation. Her heart was reverting back to a lethal rhythm once again.

"She has a shockable

rhythm!" the charge nurse called out. "Everyone clear!" "Clear." We echoed back as we moved away from the stretcher.

The monitor showed pulseless ventricular tachycardia, a rhythm incapable of life. She was, in all technicality, dead.

"Shocking!" In a split second 300 joules of electricity slammed her body.

"Begin CPR..." the command came. Immediately starting compressions, I could feel her small frame buckle under the pressure. 1,2,3... I pressed hard and fast. At that moment in time, her life was in my hands. "She is too young to die," I thought, as I continued to manually pump blood through her body. Yet, despite my opinion, there she lay—

lifeless.

Then, all at once, her eyes flickered and her heart began to beat again. A strong radial pulse indicated that her heart was doing its job on its own.

I dismounted from the bed and took a moment to catch my breath. Just like that, it was over. We had done our job, and she

lay there talking to another nurse.

The entire ordeal from shocking her

to the return of spontaneous circulation was less than two minutes. Twice that day I was faced with both death and life. Standing by the elevators early that evening, I saw the world's mortality data in real time, and in Trauma Room 3, at a moment of precision, I witnessed statistics, science, and medicine converge to a common point, despite the odds. What took place in Room 3 that night was a textbook story, but rarely does theory and reality meet and create a perfectly structured event.

I stepped away from bed to give the other medical personnel room to work, my body still recovering from the adrenaline that was coursing through my veins. The human tendency in that moment was to claim this woman's life as a victory of our highly skilled team. We had worked hard to

give her a second chance at life, and now she had it. Yet, despite the experience and knowledge this room represented, I knew in my heart that her life had never been in our hands, but God's alone. Mercifully, He had granted her a second chance and had used us to accomplish His plan.

THAT DAY I WAS FACED WITH BOTH LIFE AND DEATH.

to emerge from the ricocheting thoughts of my mind. It echoed the blunt fact that no one is immune to death and it can happen at any age and any time. While we may think we can hide under the cloak of youth, the only guarantee we have is the here and now. The ER has a way of shaking you out of your naiveté and giving you a hard dose of reality. You learn that one's life can be gone in an instant—ending as quickly as it began. Thus, every rhythmic heart-beat, the gentle thump of a palpable pulse, and the silent rise and fall of your chest is a precious gift from God.

EVERY BREATH I TAKE IS PROOF THERE IS A GOD.

Despite my sinfulness, God still grants me life. Every breath I take is proof there

is a God. Had my life circumstances been different, who is to say it couldn't have been me on the stretcher that night? Death doesn't choose favorites and life throws us curve balls we never predict. However, even in my most destitute form, I am a living testimony to who God is. Look past me and you will see God's mercy, long-suffering, grace, abundant love, patience, protection, and guidance—a list of attributes dwarfed by the feebleness of our earthly languages. King David put it beautifully, "Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD" (Psalm 150:6, NKJV). As Christians, may our motto be, "For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's" (Romans 14:8, NKJV).



Rachel works as an ER nurse at a trauma hospital in Georgia and lives in Tennessee. She enjoys traveling abroad, all things Europe, and the Pacific Ocean.

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