



"But you are . . . His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." —I Peter 2:9 NKJV

My Testimony

by Patricia Williams



When I was 5 years old, our family lived next to a farm that had sheep. Some Sabbath afternoons we would walk the dirt road from our house to the farm and go feed the baby lambs. One Sabbath, as I walked home with my sister 18 months older than I, sunset produced the most brilliant colors. I had never noticed anything like that in the sky before.



I asked my sister what those colors were. Without hesitation she replied, "Satan is writing your name in the sky because he is coming to take you away." In that moment, a horrible darkness entered my heart and I was terrified. I fell to the ground screaming. My father had to come and carry me home. I was so terrified I couldn't tell anyone what I was afraid of and cried hysterically until bedtime.

Then I lay in bed dreading the moment Satan would take me away. Why would he do that? Where would he take me? What would happen when I got there? Eventually I fell asleep. But that experience began years of satanic harassment of my little soul. I was unable to sleep peacefully. Some nights I awakened to a dark figure at the foot of my bed, pressure on my feet, and terror in my heart. Even when the figure was not visible, I would awake in

fear of moving a single muscle which, in my child mind, would bring back that heavy black thing. I was terrified of the dark and of being alone any time of the day.

I developed an attitude of resentment which led to rebellion and disrespect of adults, particularly my mother. This attitude was rooted in a misbelief that I was not loved. Of course this was a satanic lie, but I could not shake it. I had a lack of self-control which, combined with anger, worked havoc in my relationships. I was downright mean to other kids.



Interestingly, it also began years of blunted emotions—I was unable to cry unless something really bad happened. I became a hardened little kid.

Fear and resentment became core feelings in my soul and continued into my teen years. Three times in my teens the heavy dark presence was so strong I felt it smothering me. I was desperate to breathe, and for it to go away. I was so terrified I

“The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.” Pr. 18:10

thought my heart would beat right out of my chest. This would go on until, with the last breath in my lungs, I was finally able to whisper just one word, “Jesus!” Instantly the dark presence was gone. Instantly. GONE.

I became susceptible to things that dealt with the supernatural and avidly watched the daily soap opera “Dark Shadows” and the weekly comedy “Bewitched.”

I watched westerns on TV. In every show someone was killed, most often with guns. I read mystery novels, listened to heavy rock music, and watched sitcoms with shallow, vulgar themes, such as the Carol Burnett show. I fed my mind a steady diet of just about everything carnal that is out there.



Most of my teachers didn’t like me. I was a problem for them to deal with. Most of my friends’ parents didn’t like me. I could be so mean to their children. This only fueled my anger and resentment.



HOWEVER, God loved me enough to send Jesus to die for me. And He wasn't going to give up on me. HE sent people into my life that built a foundation for turning my life around.

When I was 8-10, Charles Cook was our pastor, and he took an interest in me. One time I was staying with their family while my mother was in the hospital and he took us to a little carnival. We rode a twirling ride where the people sit inside little cages that roll up and over and are attached to a large wheel that goes around like a Ferris wheel. After several rotations, I started throwing up and the forceful motion of the ride flung my barf everywhere. Not only in my cage with the three other passengers, which were his children, but also onto the cage below me, and onto my dear pastor. The drive home, which happened immediately after the ride could be stopped, was torture to me. But when everyone was cleaned up and the laundry started, Elder Cook teased and laughed about the experience, and that made me feel loved.



One time he came and talked to the Junior Sabbath School. He built up a scenario like those of the western-themed shows I loved—Bonanza, Gun Smoke, and the like. The climax came when the bad guy was shot and killed. He had me hooked, and I was into it. Then he looked right at me and said when we emotionally enter into that type of show and feel satisfaction when the bad guy is killed, we have just killed someone in our heart, and that is murder. I was deeply convicted.



A young couple came to our church and began volunteering with the Pathfinders. My mother was the Pathfinder leader, so the couple, especially the wife, spent a lot of time with my family. She took an interest in me and would take me to her home where I helped her clean and cook, we sewed together, and I played with her babies. She was not only a positive

example to me, but she also loved me and spoke many spiritually corrective and encouraging things into my life.



My freshman year at Thunderbird Academy a junior girl became very good friends with me. She loved the Lord and we spent long hours sharing, praying, and reading our Bibles together. A desire was awakening within me to live a Christ-centered life. I gave my heart to Jesus at the Prayer Conference at Camp Cedar Falls during my junior year. Then, as a senior, I became that kind of mentor to other girls. I wish I could say my life became an unbroken line on an upward trajectory with no backsliding or failures. But God never gave up on me.

I read a book when I was in my late 20's, "Hinds Feet on High Places" by Hannah Hurnard. It is an allegorical tale of redemption. The heroine in the story is a young woman, Much-Afraid, whose life is dominated by fears. Even her last name is Fearling. The story resonated with me because, even though anger, disrespect, resentment, and lack of self-control were all things I struggled with, it was *fear* that *dominated* my life from the moment Satan got a grip on me. Much-Afraid follows her Shepherd's voice through varied experiences until, at the end of the book, she gives her heart to the Shepherd King in complete surrender. He gives it back to her new, cleansed, and free from fear. He changes her name to Grace-and-Glory. My testimony is that this is what Jesus Christ has done for me. He changed my heart.



Do you know a young person who struggles with anger, disrespect, resentment, lack of self-control, or a combination of these things? You are probably looking at a child or youth with deep fear and feelings that they are not loved. I encourage you to show an interest in them. Come alongside them and do life things with them. Ask God to give you opportunities to show them love and encouragement. Share God's word with them gently and in positive, interesting ways. These are the experiences Jesus used to turn my life around. Praise His name!

Pat Williams



“Many look with indifference and contempt upon those who have laid the temple of the soul in ruins. But these are the objects of divine compassion.



Angels from the heavenly courts stand by the side of those who do God’s service by ministering to their fellow men. Angels encamp round about the little flock that love and fear God, and were we half awake we would feel their companionship.”

—Manuscript 48, 1898 p. 133

With Love, Gen Z—Part 5

Hello again! I’ve missed seeing your smile. It’s so beautiful, like sunshine after a cloudy day. You’re an amazing person and I hope you are taking care of yourself. Are you doing well?



I wanted to write to you something a little more raw today, maybe because I’m feeling lonely and you’re becoming my friend, a familiar place I want to share my life, experiences, and hopes and dreams with.

Life is tough right now, and sometimes just making it through the day takes all my energy. I know you mean well, asking after me. Depression, anxiety, stress, and all the rest of it are a lot to keep track of. It means a lot to me when you ask if I’m okay, if I need to talk, and how I’m doing. And it means even more to me when you listen. Like really listen.

Listening doesn’t mean you have to agree with me, it just means that you are empathetically engaged with what I am experiencing, and letting me react to it while providing a safe system for that reaction to occur in.

Too often I’ve sat alone, crying in the dark, searching for answers and staring at the black phone screen that I know will never light up with an incoming





call asking if I'm okay. I'm tired, I'm lonely, but I'm still upright and if someone asks, I'll tell them I'm okay. Even now, no one hears my heart cry, instead they add to my pain, or just abandon me to whatever demon the pain becomes. I want to find a place where I can heal, but everything confuses me. I need someone to sit with me in my pain, someone I can trust to have my back and not leave me despite me being in addiction, trauma, and pain.

What am I looking for, you might ask. Community, security, compassion, and connection. I find it where it exists. A good metric of how well I can trust you, and how much community, security, compassion, and connection exist, is if I'm there.

I hope you're taking care of yourself too, making sure to find safe places with people who listen to you too. I'm always here if you need it, and I hope you know that I love you. Even if I can't give you a hug right now, I hope you can feel it. And if you're in the dark staring at a blank phone screen too, just know I'll always be on the other end of the line for you. With love, Gen Z



“Begin this new year to the glory of God. Pray to Him, morning, noon, and night, to give you a meek and humble spirit, a mild temper, an affectionate disposition. Live as you never lived before. Begin this new year with new feelings, fresh desires, and a strong determination to glorify God.”

—The Youth's Instructor, Jan. 1, 1856.

Valued Volunteers

SPOTLIGHT ON THE AUDIO-VISUAL TEAM!

by Pastor Jeff Kinne

The headline for this month's Village Church volunteer team could also say, Vital Volunteers; Invaluable Volunteers; Undaunted Volunteers; Totally Committed Volunteers; Going-the-Extra-Mile Volunteers; Undeterred Volunteers. Those words describe the essence and attitude of this great Village Church volunteer team.



Poised at their station Friday evening for practice, early Sabbath morning for Sabbath School and Church, Sabbath afternoons, Sundays, weekdays for seminars, and memorials, this team is a BLESSING! Through the COVID pandemic, when crowds remained home; through inclement weather and busy schedules that challenge commitment; through multitudes of life situations that would be accepted as legitimate excuses, the AV team makes sure the screens in the Village sanctuary carry the important visual message.



Thank you, Bruce Reeves (lead), Rick Carlstrom, David Cowles, Ashton Ellis, and Ryan Shipowick. Before every Sabbath service, this dedicated team is preparing the Proclaim Church Presentation Software for worship. Before every memorial service and church seminar that includes projected graphics, this team makes sure the video presentation is prepared. They design slides for hymns, prepare Bible passages to accompany scripture readings, create presentation slides for upcoming church programs and activities, load and play audio and media files for services. And they do it all for the glory of God and the edifying of the body of Christ. Amen! You Go, AV Team!! We are all grateful for your dedication, expertise, and service. God bless you!

Jeff Kinne



Memories from 2023





Family Matters

A feature by Bev Donahey especially for parents of young children



New Year's Resolutions!



Ken and Carol thought their little boys needed more physical activity than only running around in the house during the cold, rainy winter. And they themselves also needed more activity. So they bought a gym membership for the year. At the end of the year they thought about their investment and realized they hadn't gone to the gym once in the entire year!

Resolutions! Statistics show that most people don't keep their resolutions. But some do! What makes the difference? Sometimes it is the resolution. An unrealistic resolution isn't likely to work. A good resolution works when we set plans in place to make it happen. Pray about the resolution and get an accountability partner.



Parents can discuss and agree on their parenting goals. Maybe one parent tends to be impatient, and one is negligent about spending time helping the children. Often the accountability partner needs to be someone other than the spouse.

Charts are helpful. List specifically what you want to do. Set a time each week to discuss your efforts and strategize for the following week. When you discuss it, be open about what was done well, and what wasn't. A chart can be encouraging or inform you to be more diligent. Pray for strength because God cares!



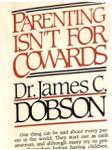
Bev Donahey believes that one of the best things on earth is a happy family. She has a college degree in psychology and a master's degree in Applied Behavioral Science. Her work experience includes providing services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, therapy with children and teenagers who have behavior problems and mental illness, and adults with addictions. She shares tips that she picks up from her experiences, friends, and research.

From the Library



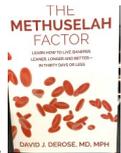
by Marcel Grondahl

Dr. James C. Dobson founded Focus On the Family and has written many best-selling books to

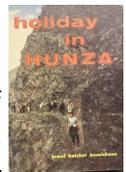


help parents. In 1987 he wrote the one we are promoting as the New Year approaches, “Parenting isn’t for Cowards.” Dobson said, “What we need now is a healthy dose of confidence in our ability to raise our children properly.” He goes on to give advice to parents in this book to help make that statement a reality.

The Adventist advantage in longevity is well known, but are the added years a burden or a joy? There is a book published in 2019 that answers that question, “The Methuselah Factor” by Dr. David DeRose. If you follow his advice, the golden years can be a time to live life to the fullest—sharper, leaner, longer and better—AND improvements can be made in thirty days or less!!! Don’t believe it? Read the book and try it!!



Back in 1960, Jewel Henrickson wrote a book, “Holiday In Hunza.” So where is Hunza? It is nestled among the peaks of the Karakoram mountain range high up in Central Asia. At the time, Hunza was independent but under control of Pakistan. The Henricksons received an official invitation to this isolated country and, oh, what an adventure it was! Imagine a country with no cars, hotel, markets, not even a jail! You will have to read the book to discover *the rest of the story*.



Do your children understand what the Great Controversy is all about? Bradley Booth has simplified the task for parents by publishing a book back in 2017 with the title “The Greatest Battle” and, yes, it is simply the book “The Great Controversy” put into words kids can understand and filled with amazing illustrations, questions and prayers to hold their attention. Read it with your children and you also will be blessed.



Michael W. Campbell: Adventist Historian

by Elizabeth Travis

History is a fascinating subject when you know the right way to study it. When we look at history, we can see how God has worked in the past, touching people's hearts and lives and growing His church. That is what this visitor to Village Church will come to talk about.

Early this coming February, Dr. Michael W. Campbell, the director of archives, statistics, and research at the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, will give a series of presentations at Village Church. These meetings will begin at 7 p.m. on Friday, February 9, and continue on into Sabbath, February 10, at the 11 a.m. church service and that afternoon at 2:30.



The talk on Friday evening, titled "Fundamentalist Beginnings," will discuss Ellen White and the beginnings of the Seventh-day Adventist church. On Sabbath morning during the sermon, Dr. Campbell will be talking about "1919: Adventism After Ellen White," fleshing out the history of the SDA church and the lessons we can learn from it. The talk on Sabbath afternoon will be called "Peril and Promise: Adventist Fundamentalism," covering the week's theme of sticking to the core of God's word and not getting distracted by things that might try to pull us away from Him.



The theme of fundamental Christian beliefs in Adventist history has always been a passion for Dr. Campbell. He has devoted a large portion of his life to studying God's word and researching the life and writings of Ellen White. After graduating from Southern Adventist University, he completed his Masters and PhD at Andrews University and spent five years in the pastoral ministry in Colorado and Kansas. He has also devoted time to teaching others how to spread God's word, spending six years training pastors in the Philippines at the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies.

Apart from his work as a pastor, Dr. Campbell is also a prolific writer. He was the assistant editor for The Ellen G. White

Encyclopedia and has written numerous articles for Ministry Magazine. He has also written many books of his own, including “We Stand on Their Shoulders, The Pocket Dictionary for Understanding Adventism,” and many other scholarly works.

The members of Village Church will be blessed by the knowledge and insight that Dr. Campbell will share with us. So be sure to mark the dates on your calendars and be ready to attend his seminar this February.

Beth Travis



Farewell good friends and fellow followers of Jesus Christ.

On June 30, 2024, I will retire from pastoral ministry in the Upper Columbia Conference where I have served since graduating from Walla Walla College in 1980. It has been an honor to be in pastoral ministry and a distinct privilege to have served the Village Church since 2011. We sensed God’s calling before our arrival at Village and are sure that He will continue to lead and bless this congregation in remarkable ways as we depart.

You have been a gracious church family, eager to serve and generous in spirit. It has been our honor to do life and ministry with you. We have marveled at what God has done and is doing through you in the Walla Walla Valley and believe He has much more and even greater work awaiting. God is a faithful and ever-present help and strength.

With my retirement, Village Church embarks on an exciting chapter. Under God’s guidance, a new generation of pastoral leadership will be selected, and new doors of opportunity, growth, service, and maturity will emerge. I am confident that God holds the future of his bride, Village Church, in His powerful and loving hands. The greatest era of His leading and miraculous working is ahead.

Thank you for allowing Wafia and me to serve among you for this season. Our lives have been deeply enriched and the friendships we’ve been honored to make will continue to be cherished in our hearts. Maranatha!





Many thanks to Cindy Solis for hosting The Village Pantry recipe page this past year!



Do you have a recipe you'd like to see featured in Village Voice?

Contact the church office at 509-525-0882



Rice Pudding

Ingredients:

- 1 cup unsweetened nondairy milk
- ¼ cup raisins
- 2 Tbsp. pure maple syrup
- 1 Tbsp. chia seeds
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- Pinch table salt
- 2 cups cooked jasmine rice



Instructions:

In a small pot over medium-high heat, mix together the milk, raisins, maple syrup, chia seeds, cinnamon, and salt. Bring the mixture to a simmer, about 5 minutes, then remove the pot from the heat and stir in the cooked rice. Cover and let rest for 2 minutes. Serve warm or chilled.

Serves 4

Recipe source: The Complete Gluten-Free Vegan Cookbook

Dear Village Voice readers,

A CNN headline from February 2023 reads, “Americans have a collective \$21 billion in unspent gift cards.” The recipient puts the card aside, neglects it, forgets it, lets it expire.

We might consider this shocking and wasteful. But could unused gift cards teach us a little about faith?

“Faith that enables us to receive God’s gifts is itself a gift, of which some measure is imparted to every human being” (Education p. 253). To *every* human being!

So how do we spend this beautiful gift? “It grows as exercised in appropriating the word of God. In order to strengthen faith, we must often bring it in contact with the word” (Ibid).

“Spending” faith just makes it grow because God’s generosity knows no limits. “In no less marked a manner than He wrought then [in Bible times] will He work now wherever there are hearts of faith to be _____ channels of His

Karen Ekkens power” (Education p. 256).



Will you spend your gift card this new year?

God bless you!

Karen Ekkens, editor



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STAFF

Editor: Karen Ekkens
Proofreader: Carolyn Gaskell
Contributing Writers: Terry Koch
Beth Travis
Marcel Grondahl
Bev Donahey
Design/Layout: Karen Ekkens
Mail Team Coordinator: Kathy Hazen



CREDITS

Clip art: clipart-library.com
Photography:
Tom Ekkens, p. 7
Dale Pettibone, pp. 8, 9
NADadventist.org, p. 12
egwhiteestate.org, p. 12



CONTACT

Village.Voice@villageadventist.org
College Place Village Church
715 SE 12th St.
College Place, WA 99324

509-525-0882