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SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS AND OUR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM STANCE

by **Ganoune Diop, Ph.D.**

Director of Public Affairs & Religious Liberty,
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
Secretary General, International Religious Liberty Association

As Seventh-day Adventists, what do we, celebrate when we celebrate religious freedom? Modern religious liberty debates have recently been co-opted by political agendas. In the media, religious freedom has been described as the right not to participate in any form in same sex marriages, or the right not to pay insurance that would cover any part of the process of abortion or contraception. But there is more to religious liberty than meets the eye.

Certainly, religious liberty includes the right to worship, or not to worship. It is also the right to keep the Sabbath—to not work, or take exams, or compete—based on a conviction that the Sabbath is part of the moral law.

A BROADER DEFINITION

More broadly, however, religious liberty is the right to profess, practice, and propagate one’s faith, or lack of faith. It is the right to pass it to one’s children, or to people entrusted to one’s care. It is the right to wear symbols, and to display them in the public space. It is the right to build institutions as an expression of your beliefs, which are designed to promote one’s convictions, worldview, and values.

1. Religious freedom is a universal human right.
2. It is a fundamental freedom.
3. In most constitutions, there are provisions for the protection of religious freedom.

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4. Religious freedom is also a primordial freedom, which undergirds all the other freedoms.
5. It is central to all other freedoms.
6. It is a compound freedom, in that it contains the other freedoms. Religious freedom presupposes the freedom of thought, freedom of conscience, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, freedom to choose or to change religion or philosophy or belief.
7. It is a civil right.
8. It is a political right.
9. It is inextricably associated with the most intimate freedom: freedom of conscience.
10. It is a spiritual endowment. It is a gift from God to make covenant relationships credible in all justice and peace. No genuine and lasting peace can be achieved by means of coercion or force; therefore the need for religious freedom is not a favor from a government but a primordial gift from God.

RESTORATION OF GOD'S IMAGE IN HUMANKIND

More deeply, religious freedom contributes to what it means to be human. It is grounded on human dignity. It is motivated by the love of God. God wants people created in His image to freely enter into a covenant of love and fellowship. Love cannot be forced. Coercion cancels love but freedom is a precondition of genuine love. God's whole plan of salvation is

to restore His image, His covenant, and His offer of everlasting fellowship in love. This plan is grounded on and inseparable from freedom of religion.

To promote religious freedom is, therefore, a way of participating in the restoration of the image of God in humans.

Adventists uplift religious freedom because Jesus did. He gave his disciples the freedom to choose to stay with him or to change their allegiance in all freedom.

There is a deeper biblical aspect that deserves our attention. The concept and reality of freedom best summarizes the content of the good news.

“Freedom’ is the central theological concept which sums up the Christian’s situation before God as well as in this world. It is the basic concept underlying Paul’s argument throughout the letter...Christian freedom is the result of Christ’s act of having liberated those who believe in Him (the ‘indicative’), but this result is stated as a goal, purpose, and direction for the life of the Christian (the ‘imperative’).” Furthermore, he insightfully stated: “It was the gift of the Spirit which enabled the Galatians, as all Christians, to experience freedom (3:2-5). This experience amounted to a liberation from the elements of the world and their tyrannical regime of evil (1:4, 4:1-10), and included liberation from slavery under the Law and sin (cf 2:19; 3:13, 25; 4:5), from death (cf 2:20; 3:11; 5:25; 6:8), from ignorance of God (4:8-9), from

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The events of 2015 have been of special interest to students of Bible prophecy. A papal presidential reception at the United States White House, an address to a joint meeting of Congress, and a speech at the United Nations to the largest gathering of world leaders ever, were all covered favorably by a secular media that is often skeptical of religion and religious leaders. The popular reception, bordering on adulation in some quarters, is consistent with the Adventist end-time understanding of a rejuvenated papacy bridging the gulf between Catholicism and Protestant

America. For those familiar with Adventist biblical teaching, these events have prophetic significance.

Interestingly, the papal messages have echoed many of Adventism's values in calling for religious freedom, the protection and support of the family, stewardship of the environment, care for the poor, and the pursuit of peace. Concerns about capitalistic excess, the spreading immigration crisis, conflict in the Middle East, the need for greater moral accountability among nations and corporations has led to an appeal for international cooperation among

PROPHETIC FOOTSTEPS

By Lake Union
Conference Public Affairs
and Religious Liberty
Department



nations of the world to confront these and other global problems. However, recent papal letters continue the traditional and anticipated calls for an international religious authority to help oversee global cooperation to solve these problems, and the prospect for the observance of a mandatory day of rest to protect workers and families pose real threats to religious freedom.

EDEN'S TWIN INSTITUTIONS

Adventists have understood that in the last days, the Sabbath, instituted in Eden and found at the heart of God's law, would come under assault by those with a popular and over-zealous religious enthusiasm. However, since the 1960s, we have seen a progressive assault on the institution of marriage to the point that it has now been completely redefined by the courts.

Indeed, Ellen White alluded to a special connection between Sabbath, marriage, and the last days when she described marriage and the Sabbath as Eden's "twin institutions for the glory of God in the benefit of humanity." She then continues, "...as the Creator joined the hands of the holy pair in wedlock, saying, A man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one, He enunciated the law of marriage for all the children of Adam to the close of time."¹

Secular ideologues have led the campaign to undermine the biblical, traditional and natural view of marriage, which, like the Sabbath, is also anchored in the Ten Commandments, with the fifth and seventh commandments protecting and identifying the family unit of father, mother, and child. This secular campaign is currently the most obvious legal threat to the free exercise of conscience and religious

For those familiar with Adventist biblical teaching, these events have prophetic significance.



freedom in America.

In the face of this attack, the papacy is currently one of the strongest public voices in defense of the family and biblical marriage and giving support of the religious freedom of believers, even of government officials, to live by their moral beliefs regarding the family. While we may oppose a system, it is hard to completely criticize one who seems to be on the biblical side of an issue that is most pressing and urgent in relation to public morality and religious freedom.

PROPHETIC HUMILITY

These events remind us of the wisdom of resisting the temptation to predict exactly how last-day events

will transpire. Adventists have an important history of a closer and more careful study of the Bible when responding to real world events. That is how we discovered the truth and corrected our misunderstanding of the Sanctuary following the Great Disappointment, when it was wrongly assumed that Christ would return on October 22, 1844.

Ellen White saw her mission as directing others to the Scriptures, and her writings are replete with quotations from the Bible supporting that fact, with her primary focus being on the love of God as expressed throughout Scripture and especially through the person of Jesus Christ.

As early as 1851, Ellen White urged, “I recommend to you, dear reader, the word of God as the rule of your faith and practice. By that Word we are to be judged. God has, in that Word, promised to give visions in the ‘last days’; not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of His people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth.”² She understood and anticipated there would be challenges and problems yet to come, for which we would need the Holy Spirit’s guidance from the Bible. That is why she insisted, loudly and often, that we must personally and individually study the Bible.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SHARE

How should thoughtful Adventists respond to current events? We believe there is risk in both ignoring these developments, as well as in over-reacting to them through wholesale opposition and condemnation. We can, and should, appropriately communicate the important principle of the separation of church and state, and the religious freedom guaranteed by the United States Constitution

– that all may worship God in the manner, and at the time dictated by their conscience. These rights are basic human rights that we should protect and extend to all. Sometimes in our zeal, we may forget to extend these rights to others in real and practical ways.

The papal announcement of the “Year of Mercy,” during which Catholic priests can forgive the “sins” of abortion and divorce more easily than usual, may provide an opportunity for us to share the message of God’s free gift of grace with our friends and neighbors, emphasizing the privilege all have in seeking salvation and forgiveness directly through Christ who even now ministers as high priest on our behalf in the heavenly sanctuary. We can share the good news that, there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5 KJV) to whom all can go to receive grace, mercy and forgiveness. We can remind people that God is the ultimate protector of religious freedom and has personally ensured that each of us has the freedom to choose.

Therefore, our responses should be compassionate and redemptive, keeping in mind the appeal Ellen White made for caution and a more restrained, positive tone when dealing with these matters. “Decided proclamations of truth are to be made. But in regard to this line of work I am instructed to say to our people: Be guarded. In bearing the message make no personal thrusts at other churches, not even the Roman Catholic Church. In the different denominations angels of God see many who can be reached only by the greatest caution. Therefore, let us be careful of our words. Let not our ministers follow their own impulses in denouncing and

exposing the mysteries of iniquity. Upon these themes often silence is eloquence. Many are deceived. Speak the truth in tones and words of love. Let Christ be exalted. Keep to the affirmative of truth. Never leave the straight path God has marked out, for the purpose of giving someone a thrust. That thrust may do much harm and no good. It may quench conviction in many minds.”³

Ellen White envisioned a time when, “We may have less to say in some lines, in regard to the Roman power and the papacy, but we should call attention to what the prophets and apostles have written under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit has so shaped matters, both in the giving of the prophecy and in the events portrayed, as to teach that the human agent is to be kept out of sight, hid in Christ, and the Lord God of heaven and His law are to be exalted.”⁴

In light of this counsel, Seventh-day Adventists should endeavor to present Bible prophecy in a redemptive and positive light. Where we can, we should affirm the denunciation of abuse and evil in our world while maintaining our firm stand on the importance of the separation of church and state to the health of religious freedom.

Now is not the time to back away from our prophetic heritage. While the overall direction of events points towards a familiar and expected outcome, we may also encounter unexpected and additional developments that will expand our understanding. The experience of Christ’s disciples, and our own pioneers, should teach us new light will continue to shine on familiar themes as we grow from faith to faith. We can rest assured, based on inspiration and the authority of God’s

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word, that our foundational prophetic heritage remains true. We should be wary of reading today’s headlines back into the Bible and neither do we want to bury our heads in the perspectives of yesteryear. We must allow truth to emerge from our studies.

By the grace of God, let us not become a barrier or stumbling block to people seeking Christ. Let us be kind, considerate, winsome, and thoughtful as we share the sure prophetic pathway revealed in God’s word.

Editor’s Note: This article originally appeared in the Lake Union Herald, January 2016.

1 Ellen G. White, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 63

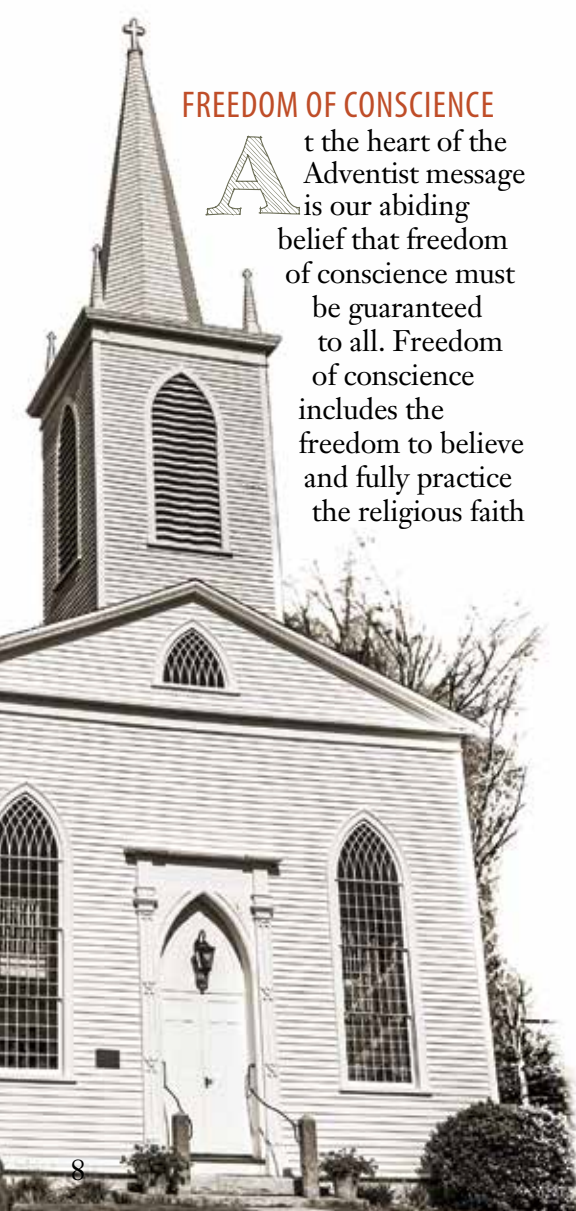
2 A Sketch of the Experience and Views of Ellen G. White, p. 64

3 Ellen G. White, *Pacific Union Recorder*, October 23, 1902

4 Ellen G. White, *Letter 57*, written to J.H. Kellogg, 1896

THE CHURCH, THE STATE, AND THE INDIVIDUAL

FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE



At the heart of the Adventist message is our abiding belief that freedom of conscience must be guaranteed to all. Freedom of conscience includes the freedom to believe and fully practice the religious faith

of choice, the freedom not to believe or practice religious faith, freedom to change faiths, and the freedom to establish and operate religious institutions in accordance with religious beliefs. We are dedicated to working for the advancement of legal and political protection of religious freedom and in support of the broad interpretation of national and international charters that guarantee the protection of this freedom.

As Christians, Seventh-day Adventists recognize the legitimate role of organized government in society.¹ We support the state's right to legislate on secular matters and support compliance with such laws.² When we are faced with a situation in which the law of the land conflicts with biblical mandates, however, we concur with the Scriptural injunction that we ought to obey God rather than man.³

The Adventist dedication to freedom of conscience recognizes that there are limits on this freedom. Freedom of religion can only exist in the context of the protection of the legitimate and equal rights of others in society. When society has a compelling interest, such as the protection of its citizens from

imminent harm, it can therefore legitimately curtail religious practices. Such curtailments should be undertaken in a manner that limits the religious practice as little as possible and still protects those endangered by it. Limitation of freedom of conscience in order to protect society from offense or similar intangible harms, from hypothetical dangers or to impose social or religious conformity by measures such as Sunday laws or other state mandated religious observances, are not legitimate limitations on freedom.

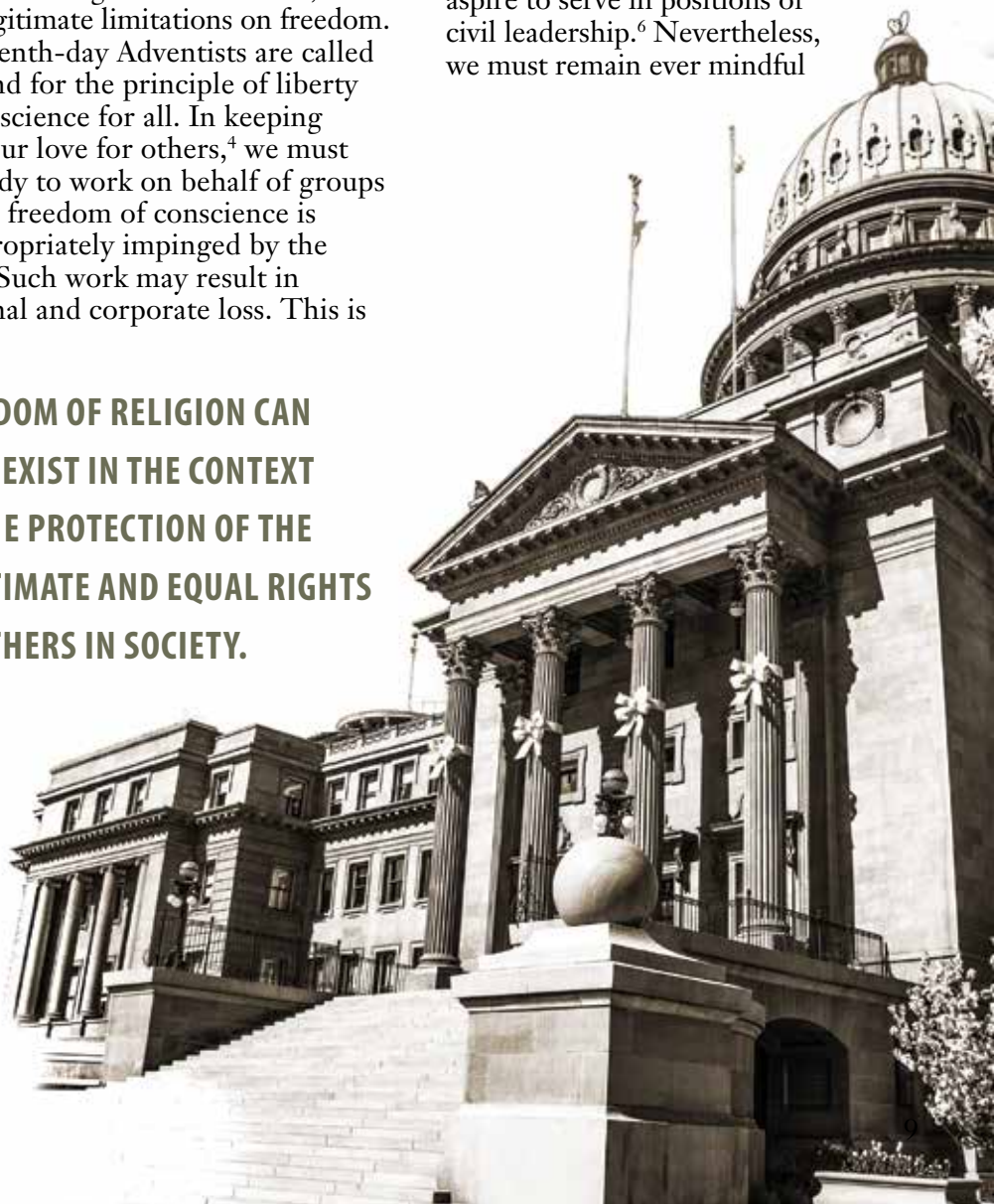
Seventh-day Adventists are called to stand for the principle of liberty of conscience for all. In keeping with our love for others,⁴ we must be ready to work on behalf of groups whose freedom of conscience is inappropriately impinged by the state. Such work may result in personal and corporate loss. This is

the price we must be willing to pay in order to follow our Saviour who consistently spoke for the disfavored and dispossessed.⁵

PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT

The growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has resulted in a corresponding growth in our ability to exert political influence in some areas of the world. This political influence is not in itself problematic. Indeed, Adventists may properly aspire to serve in positions of civil leadership.⁶ Nevertheless, we must remain ever mindful

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of the dangers that are associated with religious influence on civil affairs and assiduously avoid such dangers.

When Adventists become leaders or exert influence in their wider society, this should be done in a manner consistent with the golden

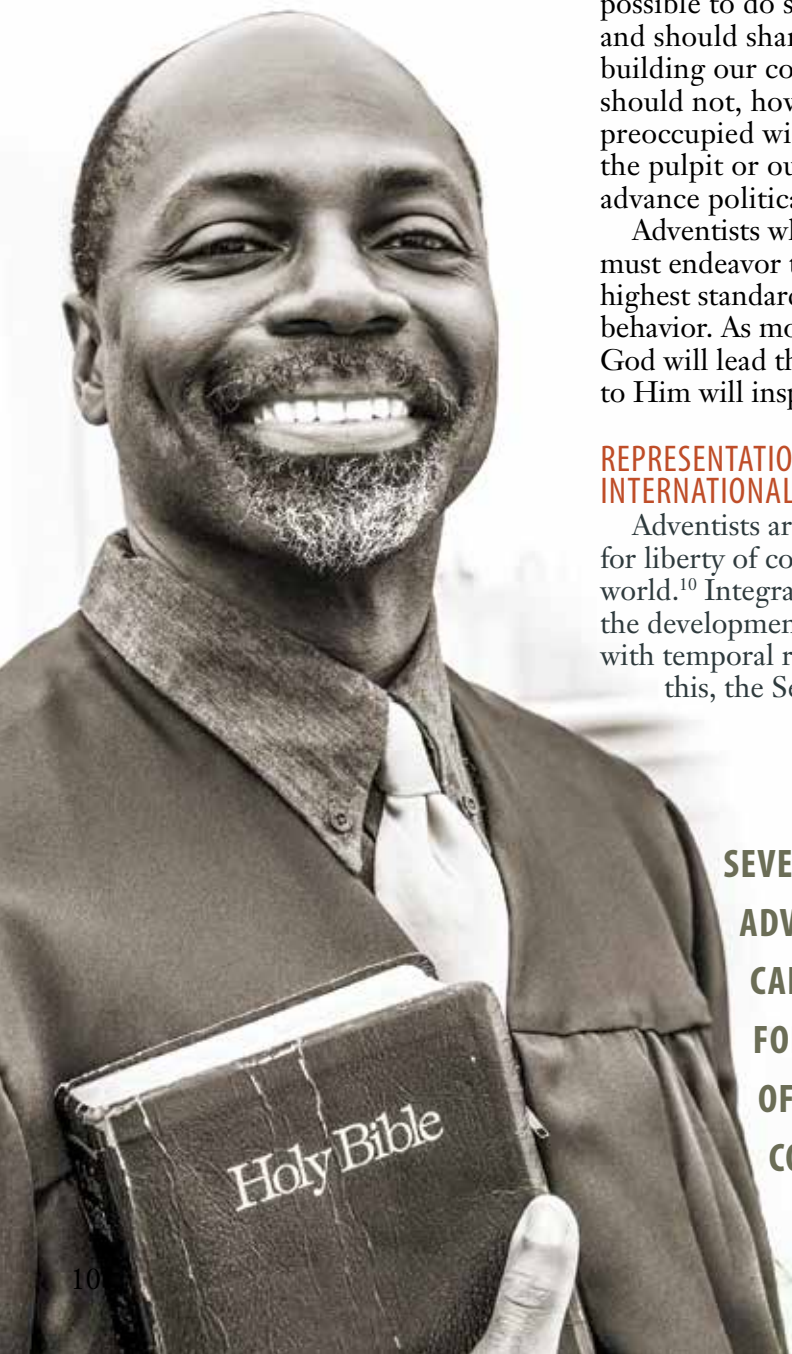
rule.⁷ We should therefore work to establish robust religious liberty for all and should not use our influence with political and civil leaders to either advance our faith or inhibit the faith of others. Adventists should take civic responsibilities seriously. We should participate in the voting process available to us when it is possible to do so in good conscience⁸ and should share the responsibility of building our communities. Adventists should not, however, become preoccupied with politics, or utilize the pulpit or our publications to advance political theories.⁹

Adventists who are civic leaders must endeavor to adhere to the highest standards of Christian behavior. As modern-day Daniels, God will lead them and their fidelity to Him will inspire their community.

REPRESENTATION TO GOVERNMENTS & INTERNATIONAL BODIES

Adventists are called to be a voice for liberty of conscience to this world.¹⁰ Integral to this mission is the development of relationships with temporal rulers.¹¹ In order to do this, the Seventh-day Adventist

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Church appoints representatives to governments and international bodies that have influence over the protection of religious liberty. This work must be viewed as essential to our gospel mission and should be accorded the resources necessary to ensure our representation is of the highest order.

EXPECTATIONS OF GOVERNMENTS

Governments are established to serve the needs of the governed. As such, they must ensure the protection of the population's fundamental human rights, including freedom of conscience. The state must also endeavor to build communities with public order, public health, a clean environment, and an atmosphere that does not unduly inhibit its citizen's ability to raise families and freely explore the facets of their humanity. It is the state's responsibility to endeavor to eliminate discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, social class, religion, political persuasion and gender and to guarantee its residents equal access to an impartial judiciary. States have a responsibility not only to protect all those living within its borders but also to work for the protection of human rights in the international community and to provide a haven to those fleeing persecution.

CONCLUSION

God has put each individual on earth with the capacity to determine right from wrong under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in accordance with His Word. This declaration, therefore, is not designed to supersede divine counsel and nor is it designed to be an authoritative interpretation of that counsel. Rather, the declaration serves to encapsulate the understanding of the Seventh-day Adventist Church at this time.

The way in which Seventh-day Adventists conduct our church-state relations has a significant impact on our worldwide efforts. We must therefore approach this area with significant thought and prayer. Working under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Adventists will continue to champion the gospel principle of freedom of conscience.

Taken from a General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Statement of Church-State Relations

- 1.1 Peter 2:13-17.
2. Romans 13.
3. Acts 5:29; "The people of God will recognize human government as an ordinance of divine appointment and will teach obedience to it as a sacred duty within its legitimate sphere. But when its claims conflict with the claims of God, the word of God must be recognized as above all human legislation. 'Thus saith the Lord' is not to be set aside for Thus saith the church or the state. The crown of Christ is to be uplifted above the diadems of earthly potentates." Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 6, p 402.
4. Matthew 22:39
5. See, e.g., Luke 4:18; Matthew 5:1-12; Luke 10:30-37.
6. "Have you thoughts that you dare not express, that you may one day stand upon the summit of intellectual greatness; that you may sit in deliberative and legislative councils, and help to enact laws for the nation? There is nothing wrong in these aspirations. You may every one of you make your mark. You should be content with no mean attainments. Aim high, and spare no pains to reach the standard." Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p 82.
7. Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you. Matthew 7:12.
8. While Seventh-day Adventists are to vote, they are to cast their vote with prayerful consideration. See Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, volume 2, p 337 (admonishing Adventists to vote); Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p 475 (stating that Adventists cannot safely vote for political parties); & Ellen G. White, *Last Day Events*, p 127 (Adventists become partakers in the sins of politicians if they support candidates that do not support religious liberty).
9. Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p 47.
10. "We are not doing the will of God if we sit in quietude, doing nothing to preserve liberty of conscious." Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to the Church*, volume 5, p 714.
11. "Kings, governors, and councils are to have a knowledge of the truth through your testimony. This is the only way in which the testimony of light and truth can reach men of high authority." Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, April 15, 1890.

Me, An Ambassador?

By Kathryn Proffitt, U.S. ambassador to Malta (1997-2001) and chief executive officer, Alumni Awards Foundation with Deena Bartel-Wagner

Imagine yourself in this scene. The leader of your nation has called you and requested that you become an ambassador to represent your nation in another country. What would be your reaction?

Kathryn Proffitt was presented with this opportunity through a series of events that could only have been directed by the King of the Universe. “I served as the United States ambassador to Malta from 1997-2001,” says Proffitt. “My appointment is proof that God has a sense of humor. He always selects the least likely individual, so there can be no doubt that it was His miracle.”

Proffitt had been trained as a dental hygienist. In the early 1980’s, she started a small long-distance telephone company called Call-America. Until this time, the Bell Corporation had a monopoly over the long-distance market. “There were just a handful of companies who pioneered the area of a competitive long distance market,” says Proffitt. “We were a small group of

David’s fighting the legendary Goliath.”

The battle continued for more than two decades. In 1993, Bill Clinton was elected president of the United States. “At this time there were more than 600 long-distance companies in the United States,” says Proffitt.

“One of President Clinton’s top priorities was to update the 50-year-old Telecommunications Act,” says Proffitt. “Technology had advanced in many ways and the Act didn’t address the changes that had occurred since it had been created.”

Part of the updating process included a meeting to discuss the reforms that were under consideration. “CEO’s from both the major and smaller communications companies were invited to meet with then Vice President Al Gore,” says Proffitt. “The Competitive Telecommunications Association held a board meeting to choose representatives from the smaller companies. After considerable



Kathryn Proffitt, right, during a 1995 holiday event with President Bill Clinton and First Lady Hillary Clinton in the White House.



At a White House event in 1997, U.S. Vice President Al Gore officially swore Proffitt into her office of Ambassador to Malta.

discussion someone said: ‘We certainly can’t show up at the Clinton White House with seven white guys. I suppose we better send Kathy.’”

With that decision, Proffitt was the only female CEO who attended the historic meeting. That meeting led to additional meetings and conference calls as the attendees became ad-hoc telecommunication policy advisers to the White House. “Although our work kept us in contact with Vice President Gore and the Clinton domestic policy staff, I never met President Clinton,” says Proffitt.

That was to change on the night that Proffitt was invited to attend a private dinner for business leaders hosted by the president.

In the hours leading up to the dinner, Proffitt spent hours in prayer asking God to give her the right words to say to President Clinton.

“I knew how divisive politics are in Washington and I didn’t want the president to know that I wasn’t a member of his political party,” says Proffitt. “As the dinner opened, the 22 invitees were given the opportunity to introduce themselves and make a statement about our industry.”

One by one, the people introduced themselves. “The longer it took to

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reach me, the more nervous I became,” says Proffitt. “I prayed silently that the Lord would give me the right word to make a good impression.”

Finally, it was Proffitt’s turn to speak. She carefully gave her name and the name of her company and industry.

“Then I announced that I was not a Democrat, but instead a registered Republican,” says Proffitt. “I couldn’t believe those words had come out of my mouth! But, it got worse. I think told the president I hadn’t voted for him and was so upset when he was elected that I cried!”

The conversation around the table was at a standstill and everyone was staring at Proffitt. Taking a deep breath, she continued with her remarks. “I finally said what I had hoped to say. I told President Clinton that I was impressed with the integrity of the White House during the telecommunication



Kathryn Proffitt, right, in July 1996 with First Lady Hillary Clinton in the White House.



At the White House in 1996, Proffitt and her son Korbin greet President Bill Clinton

All Photos credited to Kathryn Proffitt unless otherwise noted.

legislative process,” says Proffitt. “I thanked him for his support for the American people rather than the wealthy monopolies. I also said that I appreciated his threatened veto of the bill if provisions ensuring fair competition were not restored. Competition had a chance to survive because of his stance.”

Proffitt wondered what would happen as she finished her remarks. The long, awkward pause was broken as President Clinton stood to his feet. “I was shocked as the president of the United States began clapping and gave me a standing ovation,” says Proffitt.

The unplanned speech so impressed President Clinton that he remembered Proffitt. “The president learned more about my background and was impressed that I’d mortgaged my home to start a long-distance company,” says Proffitt. “He saw this as a classic American Dream story. I didn’t really know Bill Clinton, but God did!”

Following that first dinner, Proffitt was invited to other events. When Clinton ran for re-election, Proffitt was asked to serve as the national campaign chair of Republicans for the Clinton-Gore team. She was included in campaign events and high-level

meetings. This position allowed her to become personally acquainted with both President and Mrs. Clinton and Vice President and Mrs. Gore.

“On election night, I flew with senior administration and campaign staff to Arkansas where we witnessed his re-election and victory speech in the Old State Capitol in Little Rock, Arkansas.”

Once again, God’s hand could be seen in the events of man and particularly Proffitt’s life.

The United States has diplomatic relations with nearly 200 countries. Seventy to 80 percent of ambassadorial appointments to these countries are filled by career diplomats. This promotion usually only happens after years of a successful career.

The other ambassadorial appointments are filled by the personal selection of the sitting president. During a four-year presidential term, a president has the opportunity to appoint about 40 ambassadors.

Once an individual is nominated by the president, Senate confirmation hearings take place. “This is the standard for all high-level government appointments,” says Proffitt. “The hearings verify that the person



Proffitt was the only woman at this meeting of telecommunications executives in the White House’s Roosevelt Room.



Presenting credentials in Malta.

nominated is qualified to serve and represent the United States. The confirmation process is very daunting and every aspect of your life is scrutinized closely.”

Proffitt spent months in Washington as she prepared for her position as ambassador and for the Senate confirmation hearing. On November 6, 1997, she was unanimously confirmed by the Senate. Proffitt was sworn into office by Vice President Al Gore.

“Most of the 300+ million United States citizens will never have the opportunity to meet a president, let alone gain his complete trust and confidence,” says Proffitt.

“They are typically members of the president’s political party. I had no prior relationship with the president. I wasn’t a career diplomat and I was a Republican, not a Democrat. Yes, my becoming an ambassador was a miracle. And God, the King of the Universe, performed the miracle.”

For Proffitt, serving as an ambassador for her country was the highest privilege and honor in her professional life. She reminds others regularly that they, too, have been given a high honor. “Christians have been given a much

FOR PROFFITT, SERVING AS AN AMBASSADOR FOR HER COUNTRY WAS THE HIGHEST PRIVILEGE AND HONOR IN HER PROFESSIONAL LIFE.



higher, and infinitely more prestigious appointment that serving any country here on earth,” says Proffitt. “We have been called to be ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ! We are not the personal representative of an earthly president or monarch. Rather we are the personal representative of the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the Creator and Ruler of the Universe!”

“Our ambassadorial commission is found in 2 Corinthians 5:18-20,” says Proffitt. “It says, ‘God was in Christ personally reconciling the world to himself — not counting their sins against them — and has commissioned us with the message of reconciliation. We are now Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were appealing direct to you through us. As His personal representatives we say, ‘Make your peace with God.’” (*Phillips Translation*).



Presenting credentials in Malta.



Malta.

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8 LESSONS FROM MY MALTA AMBASSADORSHIP

By Kathryn Proffitt, U.S. ambassador to Malta (1997-2001); chief executive officer, Alumni Awards Foundation



This article is based on a devotional given during the Annual Council on October 11, 2016.

My experience as the U.S. ambassador to Malta shares many similarities with your sacred appointment as an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Consider these eight points, starting with the qualifications of an ambassador.

1 **AN AMBASSADOR MUST BE A CITIZEN OF THE COUNTRY HE REPRESENTS.**

In order to be an ambassador of the United States, I had to first be a citizen. Without proof of my citizenship, the U.S. Senate could have never confirmed me. In most countries, including the United States,

there are three ways you can become a citizen.

You can become a citizen by birth.

After living in the United States for a number of years, and if you are very fortunate, you can become a naturalized citizen.

You can become a citizen if a U.S. citizen legally adopts you.

To serve as an ambassador for the King of kings, you must be a citizen of God's kingdom. The Scriptures tell us that when we receive Jesus, we become citizens of the kingdom of heaven, not by birth, or by naturalization, but by adoption!

When we become Christians, we

are legally adopted as the children of God. We not only become citizens of the kingdom of heaven, but we literally become members of God's royal family (John 1: 12-13, Philippians 3:20).

2 AN AMBASSADOR MUST HAVE ACCESS TO THE HEAD OF STATE.

In the political world, power comes from having access to leadership. The more access you have, the greater your influence and power. But, as we know, it is not too easy to meet a head of state, let alone get to know one.

Furthermore, even those close to world leaders do not have unlimited access. A member of the U.S. president's cabinet cannot just walk into the Oval Office without an appointment. But, there are a few exceptions.

On one occasion, I was invited to the White House for a formal Christmas dinner with President and Mrs. Clinton. It was a beautiful black-tie event, with the White House Marine band providing lovely Christmas music. I took my son, Korbin, as my guest.

For social White House events, guests are seated by lottery rather than protocol. The guests will draw their table assignment from a beautiful silver bowl. Once again by God's divine providence, I drew a card that said Table 11. To my surprise, Korbin and I were seated at President Clinton's table for the dinner. Korbin and I dined with the president and only 3 other couples.

The entrance to the State dining room is always guarded by the Secret Service when the president is hosting

a dinner. Just as we were enjoying our first course, however, the door burst open. An uninvited guest marched in, and no one even tried to stop her.

She walked straight to Table 11 and stood next to President Clinton. His face lit up with happiness as she approached. He immediately interrupted our conversation so he could listen attentively to her.

As you may have guessed, the visitor was Chelsea Clinton, the then-teenage daughter of the president. Although she did not have an appointment, and her entrance caused quite a stir, it was obvious that her father was delighted to see her.

Chelsea had come on urgent business. I was close enough to hear what she whispered to her daddy. She pled for her curfew to be moved back so she could spend more time with her friends that evening. After some very skillful negotiations, the president granted Chelsea's request.

Because we have been adopted into the family of God, because we are His children, we can always approach our heavenly Father. Just like Chelsea Clinton, we have unlimited access.

But do we really appreciate this amazing gift? Do we understand the significance of our Lord's title and power? Do we give Him the awe and respect to which He is entitled as the Creator of the universe and the King of kings?

How often are we too busy to bother having our devotions or prayer time with the Lord? How often do we let small earthy priorities take precedence?

We would never dream of standing up a world leader. Yet we often stand

TO SERVE AS AN AMBASSADOR FOR THE KING OF KINGS, YOU MUST BE A CITIZEN OF GOD'S KINGDOM.

up the King of kings because we are too tired, too busy, or sometimes just too lazy.

I can assure you great preparation occurs whenever humans have the opportunity to meet with a world leader. For me, meeting the U.S. president was a once in a lifetime opportunity. Careful thought and attention were given to that first meeting.

By contrast, what steps do we take to prepare for our audience with our King? Our God is the Creator and Ruler of the entire universe, yet in most instances, we do little or nothing to prepare.

The priests in the Old Testament understood it was a very serious matter to enter into the presence of a Holy God. This was meant to be an example for us.

In the Bible we are told about the careful preparations the priests made before they approached the earthly sanctuary. This was especially true of the High Priest when he entered the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement.

As ambassador, I had the privilege of meeting many dignitaries and senior government officials from various countries. Whenever I met with a foreign head of state, I was always given a special briefing on the protocol that was to be followed.

The sanctuary, modeled after the throne room in heaven, was put on this Earth to teach us the necessary protocol to enter into the presence of a holy God.

While we can certainly pray at any time and in any way, I believe that by

following the pattern outlined in the sanctuary model, we can prepare our hearts and minds to more effectively communicate with our God.

Our heavenly Father longs for close communication with His children. We were separated from His presence because of sin.

When Jesus died, the veil between the apartments was ripped apart to signify our ability to enter into His holy presence. Jesus shed his precious blood to restore our ability to have unlimited access to the throne room of God.

Rather than take this incredible gift for granted, let's take full advantage of the unlimited access we have been given to our heavenly Father and his son, King Jesus.

AN AMBASSADOR MUST HAVE THE RIGHT CREDENTIALS.

After my U.S. Senate confirmation, I had the authority to act on behalf of the United States as far as my country was concerned. The government of Malta, however, did not immediately recognize my authority.

Shortly after I arrived in Malta, I was required to have a formal audience with the president of Malta to present my ambassadorial credentials. In Malta, this is a beautiful and solemn ceremony, with all of the pomp and circumstance you would expect from a former British colony.

The ambassador is chauffeured in a beautiful antique Rolls Royce from the ambassador's residence to the presidential palace. This procession is

AS CHRIST'S AMBASSADOR, YOU HAVE ALSO BEEN GIVEN POWER AND AUTHORITY TO ACT ON BEHALF OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

led by a team of white horses ridden by uniformed military officers.

After I arrived at the presidential palace, I was escorted into the palace by officials from the Foreign Ministry and the armed forces of Malta. The ceremony took place in the beautiful Ambassador's Room, where ambassadors have presented their credentials to Maltese heads of state for hundreds of years. There I presented my official letter of introduction, called a Letter of Credence, to President Mifsud Bonnici.

My Letter of Credence stated in part, "I have appointed Kathryn Linda Haycock Proffitt, a distinguished citizen of the United States of America, to represent me before your Government as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary." These important words established my authority in Malta. It meant that, by order of the U.S. president, I had unlimited power to represent my government in Malta.

As Christ's ambassador, you have also been given power and authority to act on behalf of the kingdom of heaven. Your credentials were transferred to you by Jesus before He left this Earth. (Matthew 28: 18-19; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:20).

You are ambassadors, with extraordinary and plenipotentiary power, to represent the King of kings to the people of Planet Earth.

4 AN AMBASSADOR MUST KNOW THE HEAD OF STATE.

As his ambassador, I was the personal representative of President Clinton. When Maltese guests visited my residence, they loved to look at my personal photographs of the first family.

They were intrigued and often asked me questions about them. On

these occasions, I had the opportunity to share with the Maltese people about Bill and Hillary Clinton. As his ambassador, I served as a witness, to testify to the people of Malta what President Clinton was really like.

Jesus also came to this Earth on a diplomatic mission — to show us the Father, by His life and His example. Every word that Jesus spoke was from the Father. (John 14:26, KJV; John 12:49).

As His ambassador, it is your responsibility to testify to the citizens of this Earth about King Jesus. Because you know Him personally, you can talk about Him, His character, and His kingdom: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

As ambassador for the King of kings, your life is a constant testimony about what our heavenly Father and King Jesus are really like. The quality of your study, and especially your prayer time, will be directly related to your success as ambassador.

5 AN AMBASSADOR MUST COLLABORATE WITH COLLEAGUES.

I spent many months in Washington, preparing for my mission. During this time I had to learn how the U.S. government operates internally so I could work effectively within my government. This meant becoming familiar with every department and agency.

I was required to meet with cabinet secretaries and other top government officials. The relationships I established, as well as the information I learned through these detailed briefings, became invaluable after I assumed my duties in Malta.

Whenever an issue arose, I could

pick up the phone and have access to the highest officials in any area of government. More important, I could speak to them, not just as a colleague but also usually as a friend.

The personal relationships we build within the church are equally valuable and important. Each member of the family of God has something of enormous value to share. By design God gives each one of us unique experiences, knowledge and expertise.

It is His plan for us to work corporately together for His kingdom. By working together, we will multiply our successes.

6 JESUS' LIFE DEMONSTRATES HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE AMBASSADOR.

Being an ambassador for the King of the universe is a great responsibility. But we are not left on our own to figure out what to do. Jesus demonstrated by His words and actions how to be effective diplomats. Spending time studying the life of Jesus will be the greatest preparation you can make for your diplomatic mission.

On Nov. 10, 1997, on the same day he signed my appointment, President Clinton also wrote me a long four-page letter. In this letter he outlined my authorities and responsibilities, and gave me specific instructions and counsel regarding my tour of duty in Malta.

I would like to share a few short excerpts from President Clinton's letter because I believe this counsel also applies to you as an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ. As I read, imagine a similar letter being written to you by King Jesus.

"Please accept my best wishes and appreciation for your efforts as my personal representative to the Republic of Malta. This letter

outlines your principal authorities and responsibilities."

You are God's personal representative!

"As Chief of Mission you are not only my representative in the Republic of Malta but a servant of the people of our Nation."

Following Jesus' example, we must practice servant leadership.

"I expect you to discharge this trust with professional excellence, the highest standards of ethical conduct, and diplomatic discretion. I charge you to exercise your authority with wisdom, justice, and imagination. We are at a moment of unique historic opportunity for the United States and the world."

We are living in the closing moments of Earth's history, aren't we? We are also at a moment of unique historic opportunity!

"Careful stewardship of your Mission's resources stands in the forefront of your responsibilities. I urge you to see budgetary stringency not as a hardship to be endured but as an incentive to innovation."

Stewardship will always be an important trust and responsibility for those in God's ministry.

7 AN AMBASSADOR MUST KNOW AND SUPPORT FOREIGN POLICY.

Before becoming an ambassador, I had to become very familiar with the foreign policy of the United States. Most of the questions in my Senate confirmation hearing tested my knowledge of Malta as it related to U.S. foreign policy.

I was given authority to represent my government, but this was a delegated authority, conditioned upon my obedience to the rule of the law and my unconditional support

AS CHRIST'S AMBASSADOR, YOU HAVE A SACRED DUTY TO STUDY, UNDERSTAND, SUPPORT, AND TEACH THE POLICIES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

for the official policies of the United States of America.

I served at the pleasure of the president. I knew that if I were unfaithful to this trust, I would immediately be recalled and sent home.

Although U.S. citizens tout freedom of speech, as an ambassador my personal opinions no longer mattered. I was required to faithfully articulate and fully support the policies of my government.

To illustrate, I would like to quote an additional sentence from President Clinton's letter of instructions to me: "Ultimately, there can be only one U.S. policy, which I expect you and all members of your Mission to follow and articulate."

Similarly, in God's kingdom, there is only one heavenly policy. As Christ's ambassador, you have a sacred duty to study, understand, support, and teach the policies of the kingdom of heaven. Your authority is also a delegated authority, conditioned upon your obedience, faithfulness, and loyalty to God, his laws, and His divine policies.

Thankfully, each of us has access to the heavenly foreign policy manual, the Holy Bible. The Scriptures reveal all we need to know, including a history of Planet Earth, the plan of salvation, His commandments, and the principles and policies of God's government. By studying the Holy Scriptures, you will be equipped to teach, articulate, and support the kingdom of heaven's foreign policies.

AN AMBASSADOR MUST LEAVE HIS HOMETLAND AND LIVE IN A FOREIGN COUNTRY.

The definition of an ambassador is: "The highest-ranking person who represents his or her own government while living in another country." To be an ambassador you must leave your homeland and take up permanent residency in the country to which you are accredited.

As an ambassador, I had to leave my home and live in Malta for nearly four years. My new home was the U.S. ambassador's residence in Malta. My office was at the U.S. Embassy in the capital, Valletta.

But although I lived in Malta and worked in Malta, I was not Maltese. I was still a U.S. citizen.

As an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ, you are not a citizen of this world. You are a citizen of the kingdom of heaven while here on a diplomatic mission.

As foreigners, we will naturally look different, act different, and we will have a different culture. We should stand out in a crowd. After all, we are not of this world.

As I prepared to come to Malta, I spent months immersed in Maltese history, politics and, of course, Maltese geography. One day I had a meeting with the U.S. secretary of state for European affairs, Marc Grossman.

Secretary Grossman asked me many questions about Malta and my plans for my mission. Finally, he pointed to a beautiful globe on his desk and asked me if I could identify

my country on the map.

Instinctively, I twirled the globe around and proudly pointed to the small dot representing Malta in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea.

“No, Kathy!” Secretary Grossman said. “That is not your country! Your country is the United States of America, and you must never lose sight of this fact!”

His illustration was powerful and put the focus of my diplomatic mission clearly into perspective. I never forgot that important lesson.

We are citizens of the kingdom of heaven. But do we really act and live like foreigners on this Earth? It is very tempting to become like the world, isn't it?

Many argue that by assimilating the culture and values of this world we can be more effective in winning souls for Christ. We are pressured to adopt popular views that are advanced by science and by culture, rather than God's word. We are urged to be politically correct.

But as ambassadors for the Lord Jesus Christ, it is our sacred duty to guard against compromise, whenever it conflicts with heaven's foreign policy.

We must remain faithful to God's policies even if it causes ridicule with the citizens of this world. As Christ's ambassadors, we must never be tempted to “go native.”

Always keep in mind that although we live in this world, we are aliens here. Our actions, and our words, should be consistent with our heavenly mission.

Listen to the counsel of the apostle Peter: “Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to

abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us” (1 Peter 2:11-12).

Paul says, “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 3:20).

President Clinton wrote to me on Nov. 10, 1997: “Always keep in mind that, for the Government and people of the Republic of Malta, you and your Mission symbolize the United States of America and its values.”

When I lived in Malta, how I acted, how I dressed, what I said, and what I did, testified to the Maltese what the United States of America is like.

The same is true for each of you. As an ambassador of the kingdom of heaven, your behavior will determine how others view Jesus.

Shortly before He left this Earth, Jesus prayed especially for us to remain in the world but to be separate from the world (John 17: 15-19).

When I served as ambassador, I represented my country seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Even when I was on vacation, I was still the U.S. ambassador to Malta. As Christ's ambassador, you also are always on duty. There is no such thing as a day off.

There is truth in the song we sang as children, “Do you know, oh Christian, you're a sermon in shoes ...”

As Jesus personified His Father's character throughout his life, you have the privilege of demonstrating, through your life, God's unconditional love to the citizens of Planet Earth.

OUR ACTIONS, AND OUR WORDS, SHOULD BE
CONSISTENT WITH OUR HEAVENLY MISSION.

superstition (4:8-10), and from social oppression and religious cultural discrimination (3:26-28).²

The role of the Holy Spirit concerning the reality of freedom is essential. It is the presence of the Holy Spirit in people's lives that secures freedom. Paul states in 2 Corinthians 3:17 "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit."

PROFILE OF A FREE PERSON ACCORDING TO THE APOSTLE PAUL

A free person is a person full of the Holy Spirit. A person who walks according to the Holy Spirit; a person who bears the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. A free person is one who reflects God's character. A free person is one who is willing to give up his or her freedom for the sake of others, if necessary. Just like Jesus, just like the Apostle Paul who said: "For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more...I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some. I do all things for the sake of the gospel so that I may become a fellow partaker of it" (1 Cor. 9:19-22). These words most likely inspired the reformer Martin Luther who wrote: "A Christian person is a free sovereign above all things, subject to no one." (by faith) "A Christian person is a dutiful servant in all things and subject

to everyone." (by love)

Ellen White, one of the co-founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, wrote about the depth of this freedom God endowed to every person. "It is not God's purpose that any human being should yield his mind and will to the control of another, becoming a passive instrument in his hands. No one is to merge his individuality in that of another. He is not to look to any human being as the source of healing. His dependence must be in God. In the dignity of his God-given manhood, he is to be controlled by God Himself, not by any human intelligence."³ "No man is to think that he is the owner of the minds and capabilities of his brethren. He is not to think that others must submit to his dictation. He is liable to err, liable to make mistakes, as every man is. He is not to try to control matters in accordance with his ideas."⁴

This insight is consonant with Emmanuel Kant's famous idea, according to which human beings should not be used as mere means to an end. God's given dignity precludes an instrumentalization of subjects created in the image of God.

¹Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 256.

²Ibid.

³Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1942) 242.

⁴Ellen G. White, *This Day With God*, (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1979) 192.

Director's MESSAGE



During the aftermath of a blizzard this past winter, I helped several people clean their driveways by lending them my snow blower. They were appreciative.

Then, I saw a man whose car was stuck on the ice. He could not get enough traction to move his car from his driveway into the garage. I had experienced this challenge before and had prepared myself in case it ever happened again. I went to my truck and got two acrylic mats and some kitty litter. I put the mats on the ground behind the car and tossed kitty litter in front of the rear tires. He backed the car onto the mats, gained traction, then momentum, and drove successfully into his garage.

The next day Debra and I were going out. We saw a lady whose car could not get traction because of the ice under her wheels and the slight incline of the road. I jumped out and grabbed my trusty bag of kitty litter. I threw about ten handfuls behind and in front of her car wheels.

She backed up a few inches onto the kitty litter and gained traction. Unfortunately, she stopped. When she accelerated again, her wheels spun on the ice. I repeated the process with the instruction that once she gained traction, she should keep moving. She did successfully and tooted her horn as she went on her merry way.

At that moment, I was reminded of times when I have been stuck. I prayed and supplemented my prayers by reading voluminously about how to get unstuck. I found ten success habits that I learned from Noah St. John, a success coach. Perhaps you are stuck. If not in snow or ice, maybe you are stuck relationally or professionally.

My first counsel is to trust and acknowledge God's role and place in your life. Maybe you are "cocooning" in preparation for the next phase of your life and ministry.

My second action is to listen for His voice. Perhaps I missed or need a fresh word of direction from the Lord. However, when you are listening, it must be with a discerning ear and a willing heart. Speak Lord for thy servant hears you.

If your emotional wheels are spinning and you are getting no traction, let me share these tips with you like the kitty litter I shared with others recently. Apply them. When you gain momentum again, keep moving. Ever upward. Never backward.

- 1 Take 100 percent responsibility for your life!**
- 2 Determine what you want right now, five years from now, and beyond.**
- 3 Ask empowering questions!**
- 4 Stop blaming others.**
- 5 Stop blaming yourself.**
- 6 Give yourself permission to succeed.**
- 7 Challenge your assumptions.**
- 8 Take out the trash in your head.**
- 9 Start and keep a daily Action Journal.** – In the morning write five things you want to accomplish, achieve, acquire, and experience.
- 10 Begin to keep a daily Gratitude Diary.** – At night, write five things in your day for which you are grateful.

These ten habits, practiced regularly can begin the journey of becoming the new you. In fact, you may find that the journey is as rewarding as the destinations you visit as you move through life. Never forget that change is a choice that begins or ends NOW! If you change your thoughts, you can change your life.



MEMORIAL DAY at CAROLINA CAMP MEETING

Memorial Day services have a special meaning for the Carolina Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Annually, they pay special tribute to those who have served in the Uniformed Services and to the families of those who have lost loved ones in service.

A color guard composed of Veterans

from each of the armed forces service branches start the Memorial Day evening program. A procession of colors from each service branch, along with the American flag are brought on the platform.

During this year's ceremony an opening statement was given by Elder Leslie Louis, President, Carolina





Conference. Lieutenant Commander Arthur Slagle, USN, Ret., Assistant Director, Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries-NAD, Southeast led out in the Pledge of Allegiance. Lt. Col. Ed Couser, USAFR Ret. Chaplain offered the opening prayer.

A special recognition is given each year to service members or their families. This year Melodie Homer, the wife of airline pilot LeRoy Homer was asked to share the experiences of her loss. LeRoy was a Seventh-day Adventist and pilot. On September 11, 2001 he was the first officer of United Airline Flight 93 that crashed in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. He was also a veteran of the United States Air Force.

Former service members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Marine Corps were asked to stand as their service was called. Also recognized were members of US



Public Health Service, NOAA, and the Merchant Marines.

At the conclusion of the evening meeting veterans were met by the color guard members who gave them a special recognition coin from the Conference for their service. In 2014 they were presented with a National Service Organization (NSO) coin from the ACM-NAD representative Chaplain Slagle.

SCHOLARSHIP FOR SDA MILITARY CHAPLAIN CANDIDATES

by Chaplain Gary R. Councill

“ In many unheralded and unseen ways Adventist military chaplains exercise a credible and positive influence that supports church members in uniform.”

In 2015, a scholarship fund was launched for Military Chaplain Candidates attending the SDA Theological Seminary (SDATS) at Andrews University. Donor response to this specific need achieved the university's requirements for establishing an endowment scholarship fund.

Generous contributions enabled several chaplain candidates to continue their studies and preparation for military ministry. Recently, one female candidate graduated, was hired as a ministerial intern, and was also accessioned as a chaplain into the Army Reserve. The fund directly enabled this to happen by providing financial assistance for her final year's tuition.

Two Seventh-day

Adventist Chaplains have recently been selected for promotion to O-6: Chaplain, Lt. Col., David Buttrick, U.S. Air Force, will become a colonel (the first Adventist chaplain to achieve that rank in the Air Force), and CDR John Hakanson, CHC, U.S. Navy, will pin on eagles as a Navy Captain. They join 11 other Adventist chaplains who have held or hold that rank. Two U.S. Navy chaplains have also been Admirals. These achievements do not come easy; only about eight percent of chaplains will be promoted to the senior leadership positions of O-6 and above. Currently, over one hundred Adventists serve in the U.S. Armed Forces as chaplains and/or chaplain candidates. Without a continuous flow of chaplain

candidates and chaplains in all ranks, the denomination will not always be represented with chaplains in senior leadership positions.

Senior leadership positions broaden opportunities for Adventist chaplains to influence the spiritual aspects of military service and be a voice for the free exercise of religion.

Recently at a large gathering of chaplains from many faiths, one noticed my “Adventist Chaplain” lapel pin. He approached me and verified that I was an Adventist chaplain. He wanted to hear directly from an Adventist chaplain how he could support a member of his unit with Sabbath observance during a special training event.

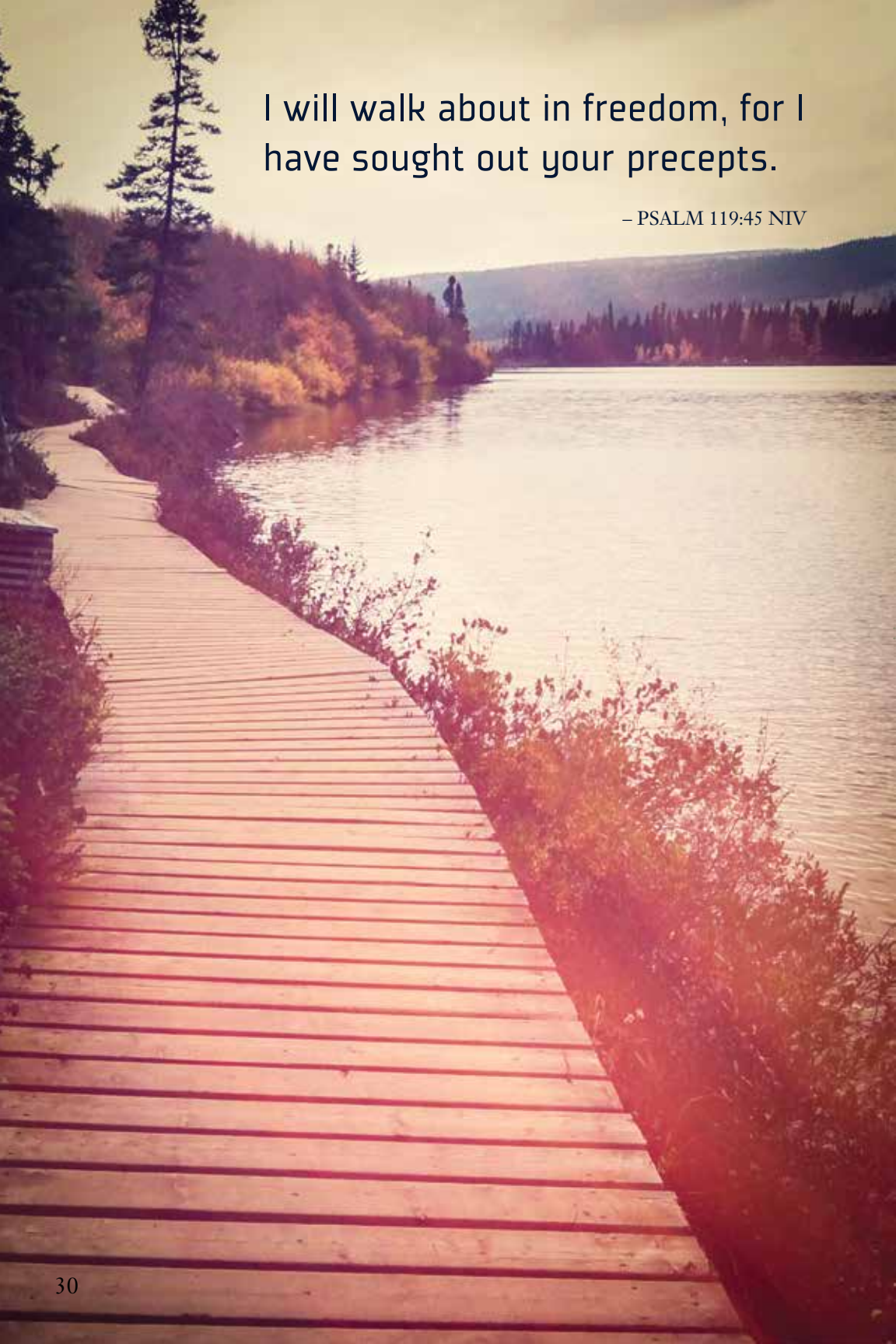
In many unheralded and unseen ways Adventist military chaplains exercise a credible and positive influence that supports church members in uniform. No doubt, you have been helped or know of someone in uniform that has been blessed by an Adventist military chaplain.

Adventist military service members are the primary reason why the Adventist Church grants ecclesiastical endorsement to pastors as military

chaplains. In North America, preparation for military ministry best begins as a chaplain candidate while attending the SDATS. While at SDATS, chaplain candidates may “test” their calling to military ministry by attending the chaplain officer basic leadership school, training with a reserve unit, and seeing if military ministry “fits” them. Unfortunately, seminary students who are called to serve as military chaplains seldom, if ever, receive financial sponsorship by a conference.

Today, thousands of Seventh-day Adventist church members serve honorably in the military services of their nations. For nearly 80 years Adventist military chaplains have provided pastoral care and religious support for church members in uniform. They serve where service members are assigned, whether on a base in their home country or deployed to far-away places. Support of seminarians who become SDA military chaplain candidates helps sustain a continual flow of qualified Adventist military chaplains ministering to church members in uniform during future years to come.

Your financial donation will help a chaplain candidate cover the cost of seminary tuition for the 2016-2017 school year. Make your check payable to the “*Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary*” and specifically mark it for the **Military Chaplain Candidate Scholarship Fund**. Mail to the SDA Theological Seminary, ATTN: Treasurer, 4145 East Campus Circle Drive, Berrien Springs, Michigan 49104-1500. Thank you for your contribution.

A scenic view of a wooden boardwalk leading to a lake at sunset. The boardwalk is made of light-colored wooden planks and curves along the left side of the water. The water is calm and reflects the warm, golden light of the setting sun. In the background, there are hills and a dense forest of trees, some of which are in autumn colors. A person is visible in the distance on the boardwalk. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and serene.

I will walk about in freedom, for I
have sought out your precepts.

– PSALM 119:45 NIV

Executive Editor:

Mario E. Ceballos
D.Min., BCC

Editor:

Deena Bartel-Wagner
 acmeditor@gc.adventist.org

Layout and Design:

Emily Harding
HardingDesign

Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries
Mario Ceballos, Director/Endorser

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

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

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

Euro-Asia Division (ESD)

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

Inter-European Division (EUD)

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

Inter-American Division (IAD)

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

North American Division (NAD)

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

Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD)

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

South American Division (SAD)

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

South Pacific Division (SPD)

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

Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division (SID)

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

Southern Asia Division (SUD)

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

Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD)

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

Trans-European Division (TED)

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

West-Central Africa Division (WAD)

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



*“It is the greatest presumption for man to assume
the right of dictation and control over his fellow men.
God is the owner of man.”*

Ellen G. White



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God &+
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World Service Organization
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists®
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