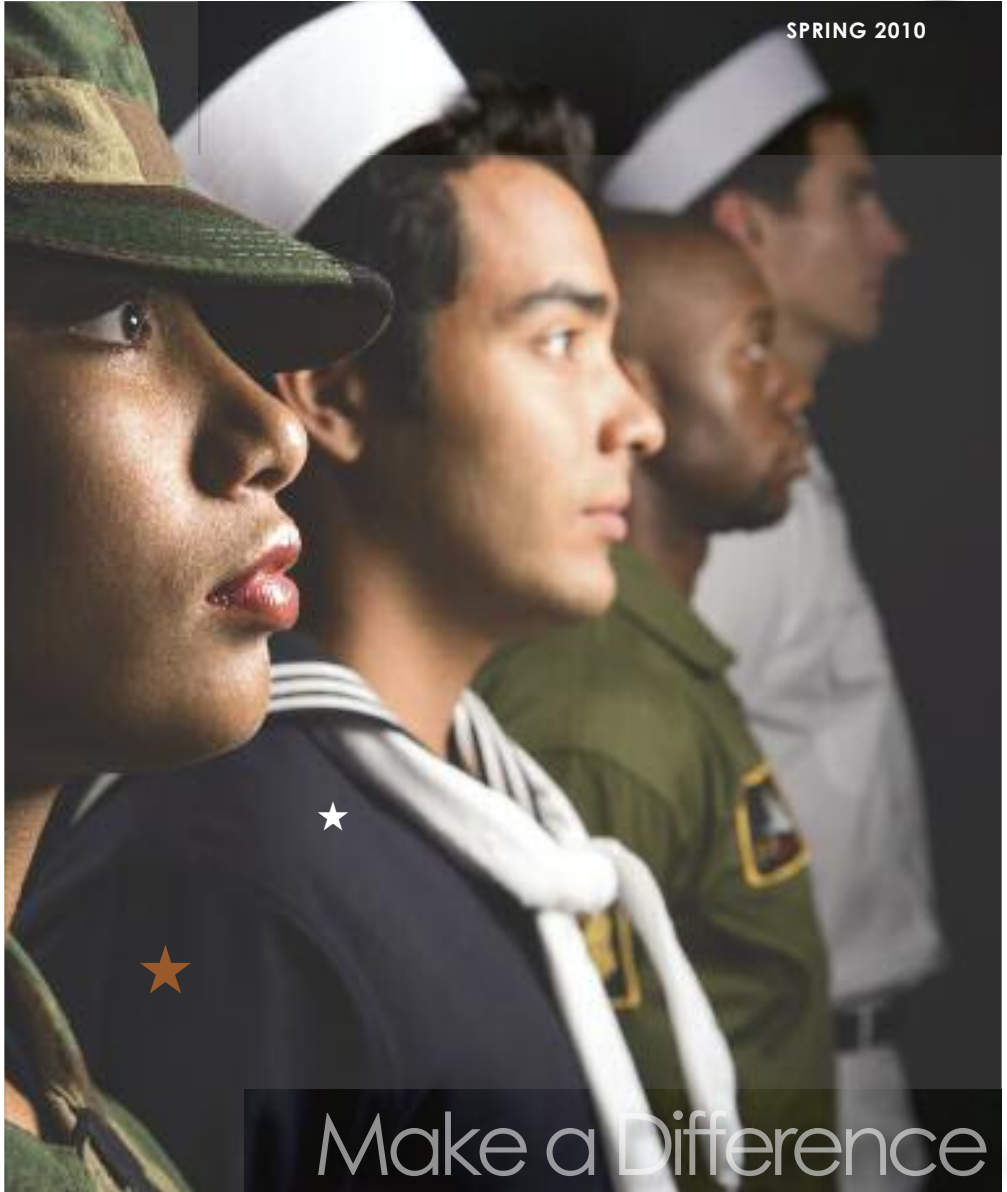


*A Journal for  
Military-Related  
Seventh-day Adventists*

# For God & **C**ountry

SPRING 2010



Make a Difference



**Gary R. Councill**  
*Director,  
Adventist Chaplaincy  
Ministries*

# Adventists and Military Service

**A**s a global faith of more than 16 million members, Seventh-day Adventists can be found in more than 200 nations, most cultural-ethnic groups, and hundreds of languages.

In matters of conscience and lifestyle that express and apply beliefs, Adventists are widely diverse from liberal to conservative in practice of religion and politics. The history and experience of Adventism within a culture group or nation also influences attitude and perspective.

Adventists hold differing views on entertainment, healthful living, morality (abortion and sexual mores), personal appearance (dress and jewelry), recreation, roles of

women, and worship expressions (music). We also have differing perspectives about an individual’s relationship to government, roles in public life, and military service.

Some Adventists would exclude displaying the national flag inside a church and reject performing any service for the government. Most pacifists readily support ministry to murderers, rapists, and robbers in prison, yet some would disfellowship military members for defending their own country!

Other church members serve in national leadership positions of government or in the military forces of their country. Many church members do not have a choice whether to serve or not (only 55 nations have ended involuntary conscription).

While differences of opinion among church members will probably continue to the end of time, hopefully Adventists can at least agree to be respectful in disagreeing on the subject. I am convinced emotional predisposition toward military service determines one’s stance more than theological objectivity. Worse, “proof texts” from inspired writings are used to defend view-

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points, rather than searching all Scripture, prayerfully seeking to determine principles and applying them to the context of today's living.

Adventists in the military serve the church in several positive ways:

1. Their discipleship provides a positive witness to large population groups that the church seldom reaches, if at all. They open doors and enter circles usually closed to most Adventists.

2. Their service demonstrates that Adventism can be practiced in any situation, and that trusting a Sovereign God determines faith rather than circumstances, comfort, or convenience.

3. They create change by working within the organization rather than “throw stones” at it from the outside. For example, Adventist chaplains were influential in providing faith MREs (field rations), creating family ministry programs, placing immersion baptisteries in chapels, and working policies for

accommodation of religious practices.

4. Their excellent duty performance brings credibility to the denomination and shows how Christians can balance being “in the world but not of the world” while simultaneously fulfilling civic responsibilities and rendering to God what is rightfully His.

5. Their courage, loyalty, and sacrifices model loving your neighbor as yourself. Many military members engage in humanitarian assistance as much or more than tactical operations. They are fulfilling the Lord's requirements “to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God” (Micah 6:8) by seeking to save life instead of take life; yet, when necessary, they are willing to lay down their own lives, defending and protecting the innocent, weak and helpless (John 15:13). That is exemplary loving service, and I salute all the saints “of Caesar's household” (Philippians 4:22, KJV).

What version?

## LETTERS TO FOR GOD & COUNTRY

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*There's no envelope in our mailbox. There's no "You've got mail" message on our computer. It's been too long since we've heard from you. Won't you please write? We want to hear from you.*

*The Editors*

# We're Proclaiming God's Grace

FOR 10 DAYS THE CROSSROADS FOR THE WORLDWIDE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH WILL CONVERGE AT THE GEORGIA DOME IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA (JUNE 24–JULY 3, 2010).

**T**he fifty-ninth General Conference (GC) session of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is slated for this venue when the business of the church will be conducted. The GC session is held every five years and for this session more than 2,400 delegates will gather along with an estimated 70,000 visitors for the conclave.

Every nation, tribe, language and people group from the 202 countries where Adventists have a presence will experience the opportunity to have their voices heard. The delegates who represent these individuals come together to reaffirm our corporate commitment as a global church to the Scriptures that are the basis of our faith. It is a time that the body of Christ can see that although many different people groups are represented, there is unity in Christ.

The theme of this GC session is "Proclaiming God's Grace." World leaders and regional reports will tell how the church has accomplished that task during the past five years. Inspiring

stories of people who have found friendship with Jesus will be told. Unforgettable music will be played. There will be reunions of friends and beloved colleagues. It will be like a little slice of heaven on earth.

With a global membership of more than 16 million Seventh-day Adventists, conducting the business of the church can be an intricate affair. It is necessary to make sure that equal representation is given to our worldwide church family. This is accomplished through the delegate selection process. The number of delegates for any given region is based upon two factors. The first is that of the numbers of baptized church members in the region. This is fairly straightforward because of the church's reporting system of baptisms.

Although the beginning roots of the Seventh-day Adventist Church took hold in the soil of North America, today one third of the worldwide membership is in Africa and another one third is in Central and South America.

## THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

The second factor is based on self-sustainability. If a region with a group of churches is able to operate without needing to accept funds from outside sources it is considered self-sustaining. The titles given to these areas are conference and union. For instance, the churches in Kansas and Nebraska comprise the Kansas-Nebraska Conference. They are in turn part of the Mid-America Union Conference, which encompasses Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming and San Juan County in New Mexico.

If a region with a group of churches needs outside funding sources to operate it is considered a mission at the local level and a union mission for a larger geographical area. For example the churches in Gabon comprise the Gabon Mission. They are part of the Central African-Union Mission.

Conferences and unions are allowed to send their president and two other delegates to represent their territories. Missions and unions missions send their president and one other delegate.

The constitution of the Seventh-day Adventist Church stipulates that 50 percent of the delegates must be laypeople,

pastors, teachers, and nonadministrative personnel.

During the GC session, delegates are kept busy with a variety of tasks during the business sessions. It is during these meetings that the offices of president, secretary, and treasurer for the worldwide church are elected. Additionally the positions of president for the 13 world divisions must be filled. There are also other positions that are voted on during this time.

Amendments to the constitution and bylaws of the church are reviewed and voted on as well as any changes or additions to the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, which cannot be changed at any time other than the GC session.

A GC session is filled with pageantry during the “Parade of Nations.” It is a time of prayer-filled decision-making. There are moments and sometimes hours that delegates wrestle with weighty issues that not everyone views with the same opinion. As God’s people continue to rely on His wisdom, the business of the church will be conducted and the proclamation of His grace will continue throughout the world.

**A**fter an interesting discussion with a Samaritan woman at the Well of Sychar, Jesus asked His disciples, “Do you think the work of harvesting will not begin until the summer ends four months from now? Look around you! Vast fields . . . are ready now for the harvest. The harvesters are paid good wages, and the fruit they harvest is people brought to eternal life. What joy awaits both the planter and the harvester alike! You know the saying, ‘One person plants and someone else harvests.’ And it’s true. I sent you to harvest where you didn’t plant; others had already done the work, and you will gather the harvest” John 4:35-38 (NLT).

Later Jesus relates the importance of seed being planted in properly prepared soil in the parable of the sower (Matthew 13). The apostle Paul echoes Christ’s comments when he resolved a popularity contest over who was the greatest evangelist in the early church: Apollos (possibly Peter?) or himself. He admonished the Corinth church that some plant, others water (nurture), but both are equal roles. God brings the results.

While interning in western North Dakota I learned these lessons about reaping results in witnessing from the ranchers—church members. Annually they prepared the soil, planted the seeds, carefully cultivated the young plants, and irrigated them as needed until the fields turned golden, ready for reaping. The wheat harvest from the Great Plains of the U.S.A. feeds the nation and much of the world. If the U.S.A. charged as much for a bushel of

wheat as we pay for a barrel of oil, many more people in the world would be hungry.

Evangelism is a process with events or steps that occur on a continuum, although not always in the same pattern or sequence. Before conversion takes place, knowledge must be gained from the Word—incarnate and written. The Holy Spirit brings conviction to the heart and guides into all truth about Jesus. Through their personal testimony and witness, Christians can create desire by positive attraction and appeal to the freewill of a nonbeliever to make a decision. The dignity of individual choice must always be respected.

Once baptism occurs, discipleship requires equally important actions: personal Bible study, prayer, and sharing one’s experience (*Ministry of Healing*, p. 100).

We are to be witnesses that God is the only God (1 Kings 8:60 and Isaiah 43:12). We are the salt of the earth and light of the world (Matthew 5:13-16); a chosen people . . . so we can show others the goodness of God (1 Peter 2:9,10).

# Harvest Time



*“Though I am one, I am still one  
and can make a difference.”*



As thrilling stories are related about many baptisms at the end of an evangelistic campaign, have you ever felt left out and wondered, “My contribution toward the mission of the church doesn’t seem to make much difference. Why try any more?”

Regardless of my best efforts to witness as a pastor, I have not had huge numbers of baptisms. Yet, I have seen consistent growth in attendance at the churches I served, mostly from inactive Adventists returning to active involvement with the Lord and His people. Of course, those numbers do not count by current ecclesiastical reckoning. So do I stop witnessing? No! God values those who prepare the soil, plant, and water as much as the pastor who baptizes converts. New members must be accepted, included, and shepherded, or the same process will need to be repeated to reclaim them, as it was to win them initially—only it will be harder.

Before you can make a disciple you must be one, and that means exercising spiritual integrity—living by principle, accountable to God and others, whether any one is watching or not, whether or not the results we desire are seen in this life. Ellen White mentions that many “lie down in their last sleep, their life-work seeming to have been wrought in vain; they know not that their faithfulness has unsealed springs of blessing that can never cease to flow (*Education* p. 36).

So be encouraged. Those who live faithfully are demonstrating by example the positive advantage of Adventism. By your service as saints in “Caesar’s household” (Philippians 4:22, NIV), you are witnessing in circles others seldom can enter. You show it is possible to be an Adventist in the military and that faith is greater than any situation or circumstance.

**T**he circle of friends gathered around the campfire singing and sharing what Jesus meant to them. As Joran looked around the circle, he felt something that he'd never experienced before. He wanted the peace that these friends displayed in their lives. It was time to make the choice to follow Jesus.

Joran didn't want this to be an emotional high that would come crashing down in the stark reality of day-to-day life. Instead, he chose a path of discipleship leading to growth in his friendship with Jesus.

When Jesus chose His 12 disciples, it wasn't a new idea. Many others before Jesus had practiced this model. Discipleship is the combination of a teacher and his students spending time together.

The teacher is to be followed and imitated. The students are to learn and reflect the ways of the teacher.

# DISCIPLE

*“Come, follow me . . .  
and I will make you fishers  
of men”  
(Matthew 4:19, NIV).*

fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19, NIV).

Our response is our promise that we will spend time with Him. Learn who He is. Imitate His ways and His character. As we grow in our discipleship role, we realize that this isn't a one-time response. It is a daily choice to renew our friendship with our teacher and Savior.

Discipleship is a continuum of growth. New Christians have much to learn about what the Bible teaches. Jesus was a man here on earth and



As Christians, we are called to be disciples of Jesus. Joran felt the call as he stood around the campfire. Some feel it when listening to an inspiring speaker. Others receive the tug on their hearts through a piece of music. However it comes, the call is urgent. It's the same today as it was when Jesus spoke it more than 2,000 years ago: “Come, follow me . . . and I will make you





# ESHIP

Savior to the world. There are habits to give up and lifestyles to change. This doesn't happen overnight, and for some it doesn't even happen in a few months time.

No matter how long it takes, Jesus continues to change our lives. He doesn't expect perfection at the moment we give our lives to Him. Instead He asks for obedience and the opportunity to work in our lives and on our hearts.

With growth our job as disciples must expand to the greater command that Jesus gives His followers. We are to seek out others and lead them to become disciples as well.

It's so much easier to stay in our comfort zone and gorge ourselves on spiritual food. At some point we must

begin to share with others who are spiritually starving.

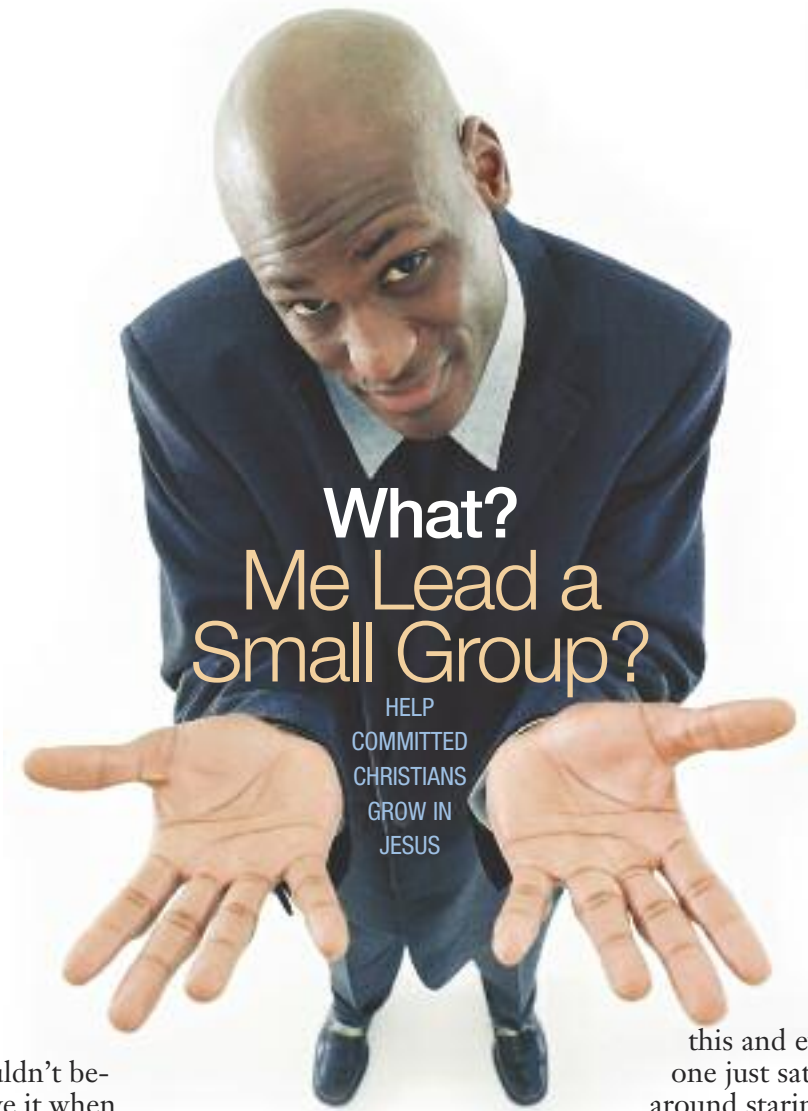
This is the next part of the discipleship process. We find others to lead to Christ and help them develop a solid foundation as they begin their discipleship journey. First, find common ground. Build relationships and grow the trust necessary for others to come to the point that they will listen to what you have to share.

Use activities that aren't overtly spiritual to open conversations about spiritual matters. This isn't about religion. It is about leading another person to an understanding that their heart seeks answers that are found in the spiritual realm and not the material goods of this world.

Now isn't the time to back off. You have to continue to

gently lead your disciples to a commitment to follow Jesus. Too often people are brought to the brink of making a decision and then everyone is afraid to ask them to make a choice. A gentle nudge may be all it takes. Don't be afraid to ask the question: "Are you ready to demonstrate your friendship with Jesus in public by following His example and being baptized?"

But wait! When they say yes, the continuum isn't finished. Lead these new Christians into their disciple-making role. They will need encouragement and guidance. You've walked the journey and know the path. Help them watch for the ruts and the roots that may tangle their feet. Remember, Jesus said: "Come, follow me . . . and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19, NIV).



# What? Me Lead a Small Group?

HELP  
COMMITTED  
CHRISTIANS  
GROW IN  
JESUS

**T**om couldn't believe it when his friend Steve suggested he lead out in a small group. His first thought was, "What? Me lead a small group?" There were plenty of things that Tom did that many people wouldn't even think of doing. He loved to skydive. Ice climbing in the middle of February was one of his favorite activities, and mountaineering was where he'd rather be any moment he had free time.

The idea of leading a small group made Tom shudder. What if he started

this and everyone just sat around staring at each other, with no one saying a word?

Even worse, what if he put out the invitation and only one person showed up? Then it would be Tom and one person staring at each other. That didn't sound appealing at all.

Maybe you are like Tom—interested but petrified of trying to start a small group. With the right planning and tools you can have an active group that provides ministry to others and brings people into a friendship with Jesus.

Small group ministry follows the example of how Jesus did His evangelism. He gathered a small group—His disciples—around Him. They learned, and loved, and did things together.

The small group ministry is personal evangelism, which is the most effective form of evangelism. When you build relationships with people first, it is easier to talk to them about your friend Jesus.

If your acquaintances are ready for a formal church service, a small group provides a place to bring them and help them feel more comfortable as they transition into understanding of who Jesus is and His gift of friendship and love.

Small groups help committed Christians grow in their relationship with Jesus as they lead others to Him. They also help the newborn Christians develop a group of friends that they know and trust as they discover their spiritual gifts and become active in the priesthood of believers.

The basis of a healthy small group will have three components:

- **Learn** The group will study some material of their choosing. This can be any range of things, from a book in the Bible to a stress-reduction seminar to a financial workshop.

- **Love** The group will covenant with each other to provide support and encouragement. Take time during the meeting to listen to the events and stresses that are impacting individual members. Encourage those who are discouraged and celebrate with those who are experiencing the joys of life.

- **Do** When a group does something for others it builds a feeling of shared accomplishment. Be creative in choosing the service that the group will perform. Plan something that is unusual and perhaps something the group

wouldn't normally undertake. See where it leads!

Small groups can incorporate the three things just mentioned in any way they choose. The type of group you lead depends on how you distribute the three areas during your group time. The three groups can be broken down into the following types.

- **Study Group** Half of the group time is spent learning, and the other half is divided between encouraging the group members and doing a project for others.

- **Support Group** Half of the group time is spent encouraging and supporting group members, and the other half is divided between learning and doing for others.

- **Ministry Group** Half of the group time is spent doing for others, and the other half is divided between encouraging group members and learning something significant.

As the group first forms, a group covenant should be composed. This should include what the purpose and goals of the group are and how often you will meet. Don't forget to include a meeting time and location(s) and how child-care will be handled.

Members need to make the group a priority and agree to participate. Members should also have the security that what is shared is done so in confidence, and that there will be support for each member.

There are many resources available for small group formation. By following the steps outlined here you can lead out in a meaningful small group that could very well change lives for eternity.

A midday break can fortify the spirit  
and enable endurance.

Duty in any headquarters can be demanding and stressful. The lights burn long after most troops have been released at 1630. So a midday break can fortify the spirit and enable endurance. One spiritual tonic for the soul is a “brown-bag” lunch-hour Bible study and discussion group. The plan is simple. Provide a relevant topic and some light snacks, invite participants to bring their own brown-bag lunch, and eat while a short video is shown on a faith lesson. You will need a DVD player or LCD projector and screen. Then hand out a discussion sheet and facilitate feedback on the video and lesson for the day. Keep it short—45 minutes.

Several study resources attract people to attend. Focus on the Family sponsors a series



of nine DVDs entitled *That the World May Know*, with Ray Vander Laan as the Bible scholar and narrator. Each faith lesson of 15 to 20 minutes is filmed on location in the Middle East. This gives the viewer insights into the archaeology, geography, and history of the region in which the biblical account that is being presented took place. Lessons cover the Old and New Testaments, the early church from the book of Acts, discipleship and Israel's deliverance from Egypt, and experiences in the Sinai wilderness.

Tony Moore produced *In the Footsteps of Paul* and is filming *In the Footsteps of Jesus*. Tony visits all the places mentioned in the book of Acts associated with the early church and missionary journeys of Paul. These faith lessons weave in Bible doctrines along with the archaeology, geography, and history of the cities. The filming really gives you a feel for the lands where Christianity grew. An older series on the seven churches of Revelation was originally made in 16mm, but has been transferred to VHS and DVD. These short clips of about 8 to 10 minutes are very thought provok-

ing and help one better understand the first three chapters of the book of Revelation.

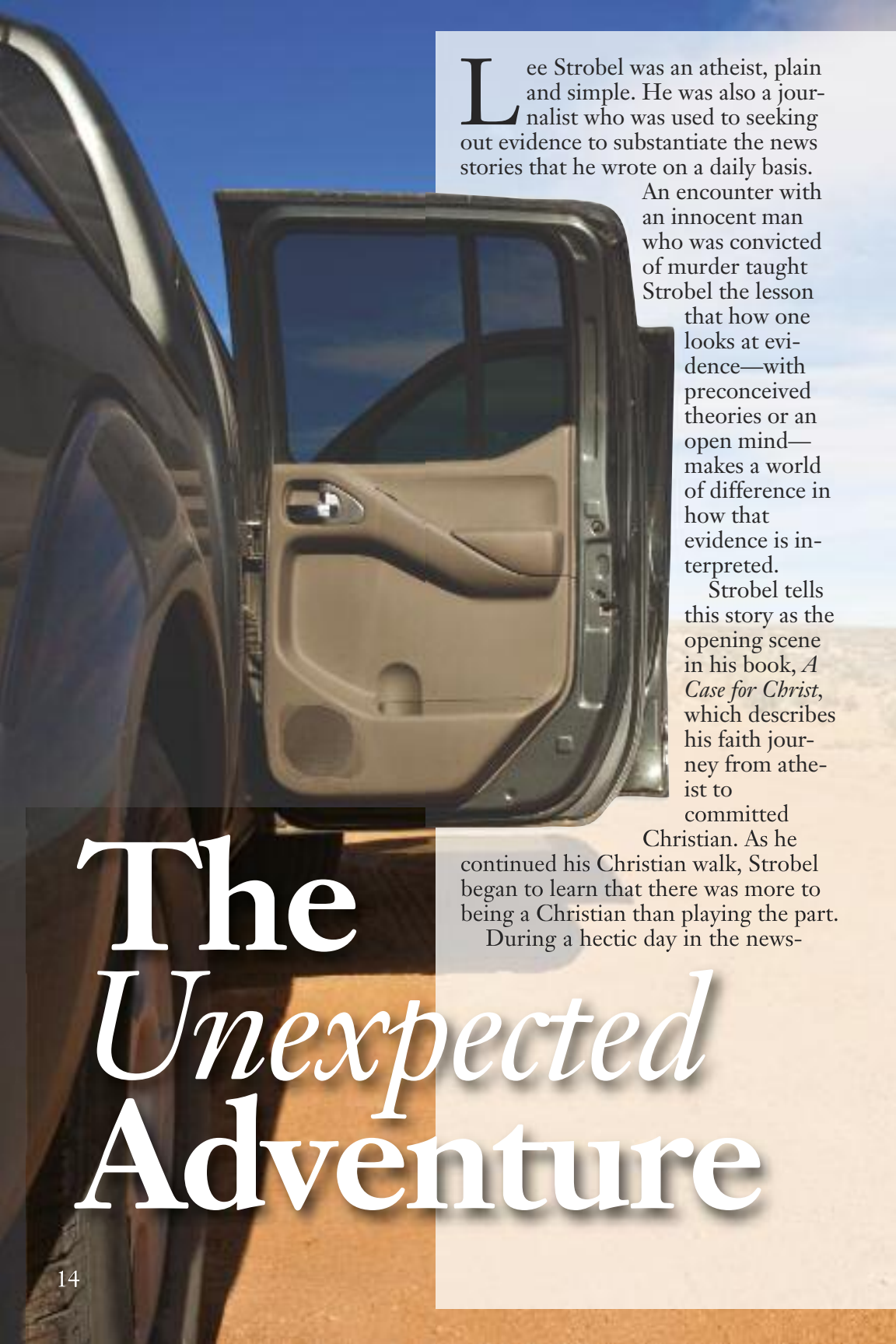
An understanding of Christian history greatly helps in appreciating and valuing your own faith. A number of biographical movies are available from most Christian bookstores on the Protestant Reformers, Bible translators, and great spiritual leaders of today. Short clips from these videos, combined with vignettes from church history and biographies can lead to some interesting discussions and inspirational insights about how and why the various denominations formed, their differences and their similarities.

The books in the *Conflict of the Ages* series by Ellen G. White can be given to participants as the yearlong series of studies progresses. Distribute paperback versions of *Patriarchs and Prophets*, *Prophets and Kings*, *The Desire of Ages*, and *Steps to Christ* with the *That the World May Know* series. Give *Acts of the Apostles* with Moore's *In the Footsteps of Paul* and *The Great Controversy* to accompany the studies on Christian history. If you would like further details about where to

obtain the visual resources and free study guides, contact Chaplain Gary Councill at ACM. When the three series are finished, students will have essentially covered the entire *Conflict of the Ages* Series of the great controversy between Christ and Satan.

Many other relevant and inspirational series are available from your base, ship or unit chaplain; ACM; Adventist Book Centers; Christian Book Distributor (CBD); Focus on the Family; and the Review and Herald and Pacific Press publishing associations. Your Adventist Military Chapel Worship Group might want to host a midweek service with Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University for families or Dr. James C. Dobson's *Life on the Edge* for older teens and young adults. Sabbath vespers or an afternoon discussion group would also be great times for spiritual growth and inclusion of your neighbors in the community.

No doubt you have good ideas that have worked for you in witnessing and outreach. Why not share them in future editions of *For God and Country*.



**L**ee Strobel was an atheist, plain and simple. He was also a journalist who was used to seeking out evidence to substantiate the news stories that he wrote on a daily basis.

An encounter with an innocent man who was convicted of murder taught Strobel the lesson that how one looks at evidence—with preconceived theories or an open mind—makes a world of difference in how that evidence is interpreted.

Strobel tells this story as the opening scene in his book, *A Case for Christ*, which describes his faith journey from atheist to committed

Christian. As he continued his Christian walk, Strobel began to learn that there was more to being a Christian than playing the part.

During a hectic day in the news-

# The *Unexpected* Adventure

room, Strobel kept his cool even though chaos reigned around him. Finally the day came to an end, with Strobel's boss asking him how he'd managed to keep so calm. He wanted to know if Strobel's "Christianity thing" had anything to do with it.

How would you respond? Would your immediate thought be like Strobel's? He'd never shared his faith with anyone before that moment. Scenarios of how to respond flitted through his mind. "Finally, I made a scary split-second decision: I resolved to take a spiritual risk," says Strobel. "I looked up at my boss. 'You really want to know? Let's go into your office.'"<sup>1</sup>

During the next 45 minutes, Strobel shared Jesus with another person for the first time in his life. He admits it wasn't smooth and as polished as it could have been, but it was sincere.

That encounter energized Strobel to take every opportunity to communicate with others the message of love and hope that can be found in Jesus. Says Strobel: "I had stumbled upon the unexpected adventure of talking with others about Jesus."<sup>2</sup>

This unexpected adventure leads Christians to experience vibrancy in their lives. It fulfills our relationship with God and keeps it from becoming routine.

In their book, *The Unexpected Adventure*, Strobel and Mark Mittleberg invite the reader on a 41-day adventure of "taking everyday risks to talk with people about Jesus."

By using the title Christian, you've signed on for the adventure. It's one that requires telling others about God's true character, which has been smeared by the devil.

Along the way you may encounter obstacles, but Strobel and Mittleberg give practical answers to fear-inducing

moments such as, "What do I say if someone asks me a question and I don't know the answer?" It's OK to say you don't know and then invite the person to search for the answers with you.

Waiting for the perfect instant to bring up spiritual matters probably means you'll never get around to doing it. Take the risk of allowing God to use your imperfect attempts to complete His perfect work through the Holy Spirit touching hearts and minds.

The unexpected adventure also means you show people you care before you share. Look for openings in conversations that lead naturally to spiritual topics. Remember to tell your story about what Jesus has done for you. Think about this and write it out. Try to condense it to 200 words. Be concise and to the point. Sometimes you may only have the length of an elevator ride to tell another person that Jesus wants to be their best friend.

Every day that slips by without you intentionally seeking ways to share Jesus means you are missing out and someone you know doesn't have the chance to know Him. What's holding you back from the adventure that awaits you?

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<sup>1</sup>Lee Strobel and Mark Mittleberg, *The Unexpected Adventure*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), p. 10.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid*, p. 11.

facebook

twitter

skype

Google voice

# Friends, Tweets, and Google Voice

Staying connected with family and friends in today's busy world is easier with the help of digital technology. No longer are people tied down to the landline that was located only at their place of business or their residence.

Today consumers have the options of communicating through various means that not long ago would have seemed like something out of a science fiction movie.

You can update friends and share photos on social net-

working sites such as

Facebook.

Keep family and friends

updated in just 140 characters

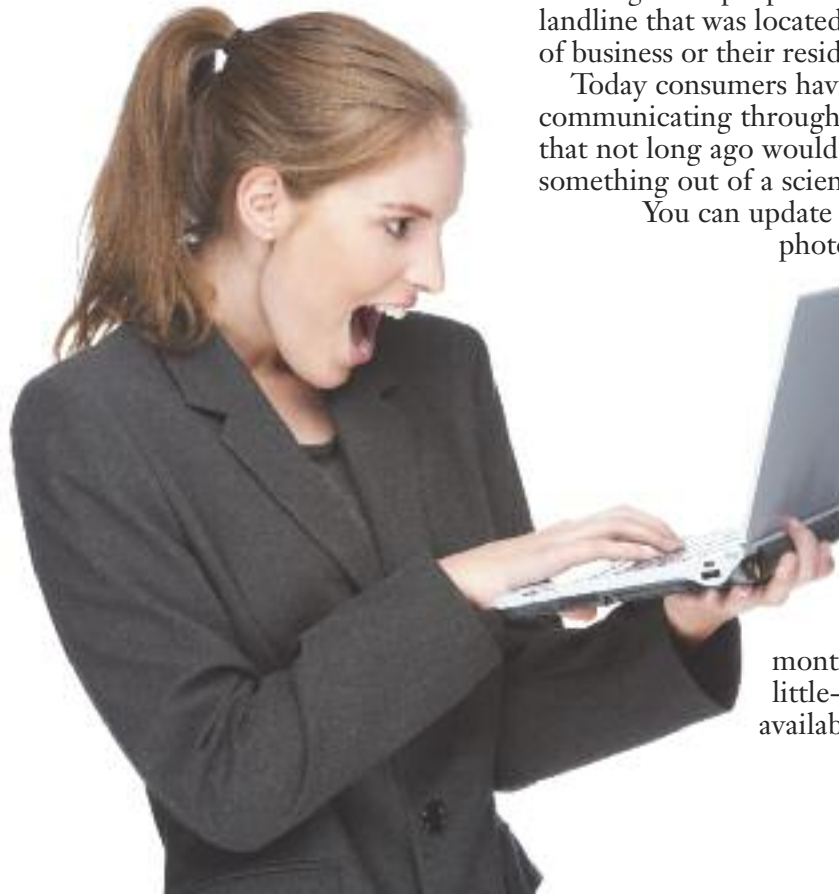
or less on Twitter. Skype loved

ones and you can talk for free or as

little as \$1 per

month. One of the

little-known services available for helping





people keep connected is Google Voice, which provides you with one main phone number that you can keep no matter where you live in the United States.

All this technology works only if you know how to utilize it for your circumstances. By choosing what fits your lifestyle and time schedule you can keep friends and family up-to-date on your life.

Facebook is just one of several social networking sites. Users establish an account at facebook.com. After that, it's time to begin building a list of friends. This can be created by searching for names of people you want to add to your friend list.

One of the caveats of any social networking site is to guard personal information. Check out the privacy settings for the site and choose how much information you want the world to know about you. You can limit personal information to the bare minimum or you can let the whole world know everything about you.

If you don't have a lot to say or want to quickly update people in your circle of influence, Twitter is a way to send text messages out to a wide group of people instantaneously. The messages you send are called "tweets" and are limited to 140 characters. You can sign up for a Twitter account at twitter.com. You will need to choose a user name that will appear with all your tweets. Take some time to consider what best represents you before choosing this name, because once you set up your account it's what you will have to use.

Within the Twitter community there are certain protocols that must be followed to be polite. Make sure you understand how to "retweet" other posts and how to keyword your own posts as well as "tweeting" to specific people.

If you want to use Twitter on a cell phone you will need to download apps that will allow you to tweet on the go. One of the hardest things about using Twitter is sending messages in 140 characters or less. With a little bit of practice you will learn abbreviations that work and how to say more in less space.

Sometimes hearing another person's voice is what you really need at the moment. Skype is one Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) that is available for free. To get started you need to sign up for a Skype account at skype.com. Calling other Skype users is free, while calls to others on both landlines and cell phones can be made for a small monthly fee. You can also use Skype for instant messaging, file transfer, and videoconferencing.

Google Voice is a service that provides one phone number that you can take with you anywhere in the United States—even if you move to a new location. Although it is by invitation only and can take up to 60 days to receive an invite, service members with a .mil e-mail address can receive an immediate invite. To apply with a .mil e-mail address visit <https://services.google.com/fb/forms/googlevoice/military/>. All others who wish to request an invitation should visit <http://www.google.com/googlevoice/about.html>.

With so much technology available it is easy to overlook one of the most meaningful ways of communication when friends and family are separated. The original written letter carries with it the opportunity to give the recipient something tangible to hold. There's nothing quite like the feeling of opening a mailbox and seeing a personal letter addressed to you.

*The NSO seeks to provide relevant ministry to Adventist members who serve their country.*



# The NSO's Ministry to Members in Uniform

**S**eventh-day Adventists who serve in the military today are often unaware that there was a time when there wasn't organized support on the part of the church to provide materials, counseling, and ministry to them.

During the Civil War between the States, the church paid a \$300 bounty in lieu of conscription for Adventists, though many did serve in the Union forces. The cost of the bounty nearly bankrupted the fledgling denomination. After Appomattox brought peace, the issues around military service were forgotten until World War I erupted and the United States entered the European conflict.

In response to problems Adventists faced when conscripted into the military during World War I, the War Service Commission (WSC) was established in July 1918 with Elder Carlyle B. Haynes as secretary. With the wel-

come news of cessation of hostilities and the signing of the armistice between the Allies of World War I and Germany, the WSC was inactivated in September 1919, with hopes that it would never be needed again.

As the winds of war began to blow in the 1930s, a few visionary church leaders proactively began preparing members for war. Dr. Everett N. Dick was instrumental in initiating the Adventist Medical Cadet Corps (MCC). Participants received marching and drilling instruction and medical training for the battlefield.

By 1940 the WSC was resurrected and given a new name: the Commission on National Service and Medical Cadet Training, with Haynes once again at the helm.

By 1942 it was renamed the WSC and was meeting the needs of service-members within the North America.



# Medical Cadet Corps

World War II revealed the need for similar training programs to be offered in other parts of the world. In 1950 the church established the International Service Commission (ISC). Through the ISC, MCC-type programs were launched in other countries.

During the 1954 General Conference session the ISC and the WSC were merged under the name National Service Organization (NSO).

During World War I an action was taken to establish a center in France for American Adventist service personnel to use as a retreat when they had the opportunity. However, the war came to an end before the center actually opened.

When the United States was drawn into World War II, temporary centers were established around the country. With the opening of the basic training center

for the United States Army Medical Service at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas, a large servicemen's center was opened in San Antonio. These temporary centers were a place where Adventist service members could observe the Sabbath away from the base.

Following the end of World War II it was apparent that American personnel would be stationed in Europe for extended periods of time. The church established servicemen's centers around the world, including San Antonio, Texas; Takoma Park, Maryland; Tacoma, Washington; Frankfurt, Germany; Seoul, Korea; and Okinawa, Japan. With the shifting of military resources and fewer personnel utilizing the centers, they have all been closed.

Today the NSO seeks ways to continue to provide relevant ministry to Adventist members who

serve their country. A North American Military Church has been established for members who are deployed; service member kits containing Bibles and other devotional materials are available to anyone on active duty or mobilized for a year or more; printed materials such as *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guides* and other supporting worship materials are made available and subscriptions to church periodicals and journals are provided upon request.

The NSO also remains faithful to its role of providing preparation and counseling to anyone in the military or contemplating this type of service. As the foundational core of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries, the NSO will continue to do so in ways that will be appropriate to the changing trends of the military and those who serve their country.

*“To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul;  
in you I trust, O my God.”*

Psalm 25:1, 2, NIV



# News Notes

*ACM has granted ecclesiastical endorsement for the following chaplains:*

**Jasmine S. Johnson**, U.S. Navy  
**Nathan Kennedy**, U.S. Army  
**Oswaldo Tanon-Maysonet**,  
U.S. Army  
**Leo M. Theoret**, U.S. Army

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*The following chaplain candidates have been granted ecclesiastical approval by ACM:*

**Arbenit Rrustemaj**, U.S. Army  
**LaToya V. Zavala**, U.S. Navy

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*The following Distinctive Faith Group leader has been approved by ACM:*

**David J. Bramhall, Jr.**, Adventist  
Military Chapel Worship Group,  
Heidelberg, Germany

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*ACM bids farewell to the following chaplains who have retired:*

Chaplain (Major) **Ronald “Jonathan” Kegley** retired after 22 years of service as an Army chaplain. He was honored by ACM at a retirement ceremony at the Presidio in California.

*Congratulations to the following chaplains upon their promotions:*

Chaplain **Jonathan McGraw** was promoted to Colonel. He has been assigned as the new strategic command AFRICOM Chaplain.

Chaplain (Major) **Milton Johnson** has been selected for promotion to Lieutenant Colonel. He reports in June to Taegu to be the Garrison Chaplain.

Chaplain **Garry W. Losey** has been promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. He is currently deployed to Balad, Iraq.

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## WHAT'S NEW WITH YOU?

*For God and Country* is designed for you, our readers. We are looking for news, stories from the field, and other items of interest. Your contributions can be sent to the editor at: [editor@VerbalOxygen.com](mailto:editor@VerbalOxygen.com). Include digital photos (as JPEG files) as well as identification of people in the photos.

Have an idea for an article but writing isn't your forte? No problem. Send us the information and we'll write it for you.

# Online Giving

**H**onoring God through faithful stewardship is encouraged of all Seventh-day Adventists. In the Bible rich blessings are promised to those who return an honest tithe and are generous with offerings to support God's work.

In response to requests from Adventist members in the United States military, the NSO has made arrangements for members in the U.S. Armed Forces serving outside the United States to be able to send tithes and offerings through the North American Division, and thus qualify for a receipt for tax-exempt contributions.

For your convenience go to [www.AdventistGiving.org/?OrgID=AN11AD](http://www.AdventistGiving.org/?OrgID=AN11AD) to make your online contribution.

Members are still encouraged to support the local expenses of their base chapel program. Military members serving in countries in other world divisions should contact their conference/union leadership or the division ACM director for further guidance in this area.



**RICH BLESSINGS  
ARE PROMISED  
TO THOSE WHO  
RETURN AN  
HONEST TITHE**



## NAD MILITARY CHURCH

### *Charter Membership*

If you are assigned overseas for six months or longer in some type of official government or military-related service for Canada or the United States (active duty in the armed forces, civilian employee, teacher, AAFES worker, contractor, or family member), then you are eligible to join the NAD Military Church. To request a transfer of your membership, visit <http://nad.AdventistChaplains.org>. Click on the link "NAD Military Church."

Membership transfer request forms are available under "Membership."

***Your NAD Military Church  
staff and board look forward  
to serving you!***



# ★ Calendar

## **APRIL Curriculum Focus for the Month—**

### **Stewardship**

**April 10** Stewardship Sabbath

**April 17** Literature Evangelism Sabbath

**April 24** Education Sabbath

## **MAY Curriculum Focus for the Month—**

### **Community Services**

**May 1** Community Services Sabbath

**May 8** Youth Sabbath

**May 15** Single Adults Sabbath

## **JUNE Curriculum Focus for the Month—**

### **Church Growth and Evangelism**

**June 12** Women's Ministries Emphasis

Day



## Designated Offerings

### **APRIL**

**April 10** Christian Record Services

### **MAY**

**May 8** Disaster and Famine Relief

**May 29** Spring Mission Appeal

### **JUNE**

**June 12** Multilingual Ministries /Chaplaincy



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“Success is not final, failure is not fatal:  
it is the courage to continue that counts.”

—Winston Churchill

For  
God & **+**  
Country

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