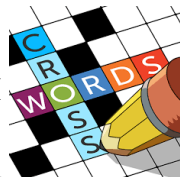




This article originally appeared in the March 2003 issue of Village Voice. Its message is still of vital significance these 21 years later.

Where to Focus by Larry Sharon



I have always liked puzzles. When I was a kid I looked for those little twisted wire ones in the stores. As I grew older I advanced to anagrams and crosswords. Then in the early 1990's came stereograms. I am sure you remember them. They were pictures within a picture. There would be a page with all kinds of designs on it of many different colors. If you looked at it just right you were supposed to be able to see a 3-D picture within the picture on the page. Nancy knew how I liked this type of thing and brought home a book with 87 different pictures in it. I happily opened up the book and began to stare at the pages. I saw nothing but the jumble of images on the page. The harder I looked the less I saw. I quit trying to see the picture within the picture and started looking at all the different designs on the different pages. I became fascinated with looking at all the weird designs. It didn't occur to me to look at the instructions. I thought I could figure it out all by myself.



When I did look at the instructions this is what it said. "The way to see the picture is called the 'view through' method. Focusing your eyes through and behind the picture does it. When you do, the picture will begin to get blurry and the eye will start to adjust. When the eyes adjust you will be able to see the 3-D picture of another dimension."



When I did what the instructions said I saw the picture. I was amazed and couldn't wait to go from page to page to see what delights awaited me.

Understanding the instructions was a defining moment for me. I recently had another "defining moment."

I had a good idea of who Jesus was. I had read the "Gospels". I had read "The Desire of Ages". I studied my Sabbath School lesson, went to church, and besides all that, I belonged to a prayer group. How could I not know who Jesus was? I knew what my church believed and how to get to Heaven. I had studied all 27 doctrines of the church (or was it 26?) and I paid my tithes and gave my offerings. I loved to talk about high and lofty subjects like "What is the nature of Christ?" And "Will there be marriages in Heaven?" It was just like the stereograms. I was staring at all the things on the pages but I couldn't see beyond them.



Then at the "More about Jesus" seminar recently held at my church I heard the instructions. They were the same instructions I had read for the stereograms. It is called the "view through" method. Look past the failures on the page of your life. Look beyond the shortcomings of others and the failings of your church. Look through to the other side of the page and focus on Jesus. When we do this our failures and the shortcomings of others will get blurry and our heart will begin to adjust. When our heart adjusts to the image of Jesus by focusing on Him every day, then the things of this world will grow strangely dim.

Larry Sharon

Now that I know to focus on Jesus I read my Bible with a deeper insight and I can't wait to turn the pages to see what delights await me. As I stay focused on Him the pictures on each page become clear. May I never lose my focus. Thank You, Jesus, for loving me.



Welcome, New Members!



Samuel Kurnayev
Baptized
November 18, 2023



A J Fowler
Baptized
December 23, 2023

Valued Volunteers

SPOTLIGHT ON PRAYER WARRIORS

by Pastor Steve Reasor



Prayer. It is basic to being a follower of Jesus. Prayer is so easy a child can do it, yet it is the greatest weapon Christians wield against the powers of darkness. Sister White reminds us that, “The prayer of faith is the key that unlocks the treasury of heaven” (Letter to Elder Daniells, 1903).

Village Church has a rich ministry of prayer. There are prayer meetings and prayer sessions. People gather as groups and individuals to pray in and for our church. Many groups and committees, gathering for other business, include significant time for prayer in their agendas.

This volunteer spotlight honors all of the prayer warriors who pray over their prayer lists every week. My family and I have greatly appreciated the many prayers sent up on our behalf these past months, and I know many others feel the same.





Jesus' brother, James, tells us, "The effective, fervent prayer of the righteous avails much" (James 5:16). In the day-to-day struggles the church and its members face, there is a prayer SWAT team

Steve Reasor

that rushes to prayer in times of trouble and distress. The volunteers for the Prayer Chain, led by Naomi Parson, are the first responders of the church when prayer is needed. When news of sickness, injury, or tragedy reaches them, they hold their brothers and sisters up in prayer. We are grateful for their ministry, and for all the prayer warriors at Village church.



With Love; Gen Z (Part 6)

Sorry I haven't been to church in a while. I've missed you, but I've been trying to work through some stuff. I understand why you let me go without reaching out, I respect that you've respected my space. But at the same time, I wish you'd at least talked to me when I saw you at the store yesterday. I remember your name. I hope you remember mine.

You're asking how's life? Well, it's rough. I've got a lot on my mind and I'm tired. Life is a lot to deal with even on the best of days and it's not really the best of days right now. Last Sabbath I climbed a mountain instead of going to church. I was there with my best friend, and we met some cool people. You know, something that always brings me back to the mountains is the way that people on the trail greet each other. It's like old friends who've just met.

Another thing I like about the mountains is just living in the moment. And at the top, that view is breathtaking. It always makes me pause and think. I live in a society where catching a breath is hard, where I'm never good enough, where my future



isn't certain or is controlled by fear. I've tried going to church, but I prefer to interact where passion and purpose are the connection that draws people together. Like hikers on a trail. We're there because we want to be, we love what we do, anyone who comes is welcome, and no one owns the rights to the mountain or the view. Most importantly, we are there to appreciate it and be healed by it, instead of picking it apart rock by rock and critiquing others' perspectives of the view.

I'm searching for a place that offers community, security, compassion, and connection. You know what has stuck with me? It's the time someone has intentionally taken to get to know me and help me with whatever I'm working on at the moment. Or when they've offered a listening ear and compassion in the midst of a personal crisis no matter how large or small it may be.



Someone once said to me, "whenever you are having a hard time, feel depressed or got a lot on your mind, just wanted to say that it's always okay to come to us, tell us what you're feeling, 'cause we have ears to listen to you and we WILL listen to you and no matter what, we will try to help you with what you're going through. We will always try to fix you guys. So, if you guys have anything, just come find us, we'll help you out."



Would you be surprised if I told you that the person who said that wasn't a church member? When I needed to hear that from my church, from my mentors, I heard silence or condemnation for my actions that were reactions toward mistreatment rather than simple defiance. I know there are times where needs can't be met. But if you are incapable of meeting the needs, don't resent me leaving for a place that does. We have reasons why we stay and reasons why we leave. Could we try talking it through with open minds sometime?

Even though I can't be with you right now to give you a hug, I hope you can feel this virtual one, and I hope you know I love you. With love, Gen Z

Family Matters

A feature by Bev Donahey especially for parents of young children

A Circle of Five

Some time ago, as alcohol and other drugs became available, quite a few people in Alaska started having problems with addictions. Families became troubled as one or both parents became chemically addicted. Children suffered from neglect, poverty, and abuse. Wives and children were beaten. After a few years, some of the alcoholics and drug addicts entered programs that helped them attain sobriety. Then they observed the devastation in their society and developed recovery strategies for entire families. One of the plans they recommended was “A Circle of Five.” Each child was to have 5 loving safe adults in his life; people that he felt comfortable with, and that cared about him. This was especially useful in an area with a harsh climate and isolation, making life uncertain.

I thought about A Circle of Five. What a wonderful plan! In the lower 48, most of us don't have the dangers of the cold wilderness and isolation that many Alaskans have. But we have many children suffering from abuse, neglect, and a sense of isolation. Children with non-addicted parents occasionally feel isolated and distressed. They could benefit from having other adults, besides their parents, that they trust and believe care about them. Someone to turn to. The circle can include grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, family friends, a teacher, pastor, neighbor, or church member. The parents look for people to make up the Circle of Five and occasionally include them in family activities from the time the child is young.



Caring people can also take the initiative and befriend families to provide a safe place for them. This is love in action, brotherly kindness, and part of being in the family of God. You and I can do this. Let's be friendly to families!



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

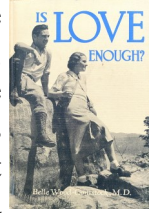


From the Library

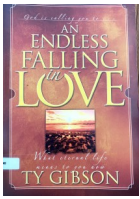
by Marcel Grondahl

Valentine’s Day is coming up, so what better choices for books than those highlighting LOVE?

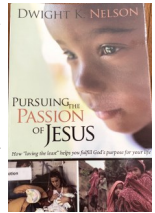
First book, first question, or rather the title of our first book: “Is Love Enough?” This is not a new book, published in 1944, but the question is eternal. Dr. Belle Wood-Comstock answers the question by detailing the roles of each person in a typical household. She talks about money matters, sex and life, the in-laws, good times and religion...there is no subject she does not tackle and her advice is excellent. An informative and interesting read.



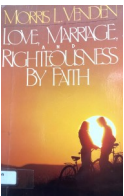
Our second book is “An Endless Falling in Love” by Ty Gibson, published in 2003. It’s not what you think when you first look at the title because this is not a love story about humans, rather it is an emotional and intellectually stimulating journey of provocative beauty in seeing God as a real Person, a Person of infinite love and passionate sensitivity. This is a complete synthesis of heart and smart. Read it, and see if you do not agree!!



Recently Dwight K. Nelson retired as pastor of Pioneer Memorial Church but not before he penned an inspirational book titled, “Pursuing the Passion of Jesus.” So what is this passion he is referring to? It is simply doing what Jesus did while on this earth. Jesus had a passionate love affair with the poor, the downtrodden, and the forgotten. We can too, if we follow the counsel in this book in personal and practical ministry to those who suffer. Read and learn.



The best speaker/writer on Righteousness by Faith, in my opinion, was Morris L. Venden. In our fourth book for the month, he weaves together several strands that touch all the hot buttons. Published in 1989, it is titled, “Love, Marriage and Righteousness by Faith.” This is not a trick title but a practical outline of true love, finding your true love, keeping that love, and then dealing lovingly with the children, the in-laws, and other such tests of character.



Farewells and Fellowship

by Elizabeth Travis

After many years of faithful service at Village Church, the time has come for Pastor Dan Solis to say his farewells.



He has announced his retirement for July 1 of this year, and, until then, will be serving the Northside, Irrigon, and Hepner SDA churches. Village Church won't be seeing as much of him as we once did, so on January 6, the members of Village Church gathered to say their goodbyes in typical Adventist fashion—with a fellowship meal.

The meal itself was a sumptuous event with plenty of food supplied by those in attendance and a great big “goodbye” cake with bright yellow frosting. There was a large crowd in the fellowship hall, so many, in fact, that the youth room next door had to be opened up to accommodate all the guests. But there was plenty of delicious food for everyone, and we enjoyed the meal immensely.



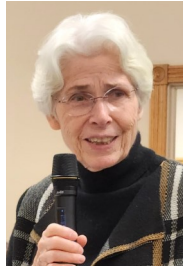
After lunch, there were some brief words from Pastor Dan and Cindy. Then the microphone was passed around the room, giving everyone a chance to talk about how much of a blessing Dan and Cindy have been during their time here and how we are all going to miss them.



People talked about Pastor Dan's work as a track and cross-country coach at Walla Walla Valley Academy, about his productions with the Village Players acting troupe and the plays they've put on, such as *The Judge*, *Journey to the Cross*, *Desmond*



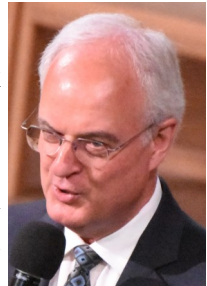
Doss, and many others. They also talked about Pastor Dan’s work with the summer camp in past years, how many young people had been impacted and later returned to help out as camp counselors. Everyone had a chance to speak and share



about how Dan and Cindy have impacted Village Church during their time here.

This time of passing the mic around also gave people the chance to share some fun and interesting stories. Solomon Avila related how he had been mistaken for Pastor Dan on numerous occasions, since they look somewhat similar, and how people would often start up conversations in which he had no clue what they were talking about. Pastor Dan also admitted that he has been mistaken for Solomon on several occasions.

Pastor Steve Walikonis shared a favorite memory from when Village Church members took a mission trip to Turkey. The trip happened to take place during the quarter the worldwide church was studying the Sabbath School Quarterly on Discipleship, authored by Dan Solis, PhD. When the people there learned he was on the pastoral staff at Village Church, and that his own son, Jonathan Solis, was part of the mission team, they were impressed! This fact gave the mission team almost celebrity status in the churches they subsequently visited.



Beth Travis



These anecdotes are just snippets of the stories people got to share that Sabbath afternoon about how Dan and Cindy have impacted this church during their many years of service and how much we are going to miss them. What better way to say farewell to two people who have been such a blessing to our community and our church family?

Goodbye, Dan and Cindy, and God bless!

Willy Nilly, Heels Over Head

by Terry Koch



Have you ever felt like pieces of gravel in a cement mixer, tossed around willy nilly, heels over head? This is how I felt following a recent song service in church.

While participating in the direction of the singing during the service of worship, I shared thoughts as an introduction to one of the congregational songs. When the singing was completed and I exited the church platform, my wife questioned me, “Did you know you announced the wrong song?” Puzzled, I glanced at her as she said, “You announced “Little Drummer Boy” but the song we were singing was “Do You Hear What I Hear?”



I responded, no, I had announced the right song. Then I glanced down at the music in my hand and suddenly realized my wife was correct! My introductory remarks had centered completely on “Little Drummer Boy” and I even announced it by title, inviting the congregation to sing it. The amazing and disconcerting thing is that my ears did not seem to hear what my lips were saying! Nor that the song we were singing was not at all the one on which I had just told the background of its creation and the meaning of its lyrics.

I cannot imagine that my faux pas went unnoticed by those in the congregation. Yet I do remember that at first I saw a number of them not singing, but soon it appeared that many began to join in. When I returned home from church, my thoughts and feelings alternated between embarrassment and humor (but definitely leaning toward the former!) How could I have done research to introduce that song and never noticed I was writing about the incorrect one? Even now, I see on the history of



my computer's search engine a website that appears to the question I had typed in seeking a connection that could be drawn between the "Little Drummer Boy" and a message or theme in the Bible!

This leads me to wonder how often we are unaware of how we come across to others, what we are doing, what or how we are speaking, or the Willy Nilly, Heels Over Head way we are living? Do we realize there may be a disconnect between what we are, and what we think we are? Do we even give any conscious thought to it?



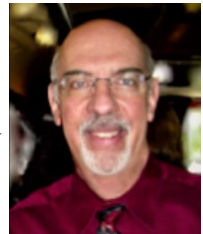
The Bible succinctly paints a convicting picture of what I could have easily been accused—though not purposefully rebellious—as one who possesses eyes and ears but does not put them to their specific use:

“Son of man, you are living among a rebellious people. They have eyes to see but do not see and ears to hear but do not hear, for they are a rebellious people” (Ezekiel 12:2, NIV).

I am reminded of a hymn in which the lyrics outline a prayer for us to be aware of our conscious thoughts, actions, and speech.

“God be in my head, and in my thinking.
God be in my eyes, and in my looking.
God be in my mouth, and in my speaking.
Oh, God be in my heart, and in my understanding” (SDA Church Hymnal, No. 678, 679 “God Be in My Head”).

Terry Koch



“When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I.” Psalm 62: 1

No-Bake Caramel Brownie Bars



Looking for a healthier version of decadence for your sweetheart? This dessert from the Complete Gluten-Free Vegan Cookbook is a palate pleaser!

Ingredients:

FOR THE BROWNIE LAYER

Nonstick cooking spray

1 cup ground flaxseed (or part almond flour)

½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder (or cacao powder)

1/8 tsp. kosher salt

1 ½ cups pitted Medjool dates

2 tsp. pure vanilla extract

Pure maple syrup, as needed

1 cup sliced almonds

FOR THE CARAMEL LAYER

¼ cup pure maple syrup

1/3 cup full-fat canned coconut milk

¼ cup coconut sugar or vegan brown sugar (optional)

3 Tbsp. smooth natural peanut butter

Pinch sea salt

FOR THE CHOCOLATE LAYER

1 cup vegan chocolate chips (or carob chips)

2 tsp. coconut oil

Instructions:

1. To make the brownie layer: Line an 8-inch square baking dish with a piece of parchment paper that overhangs on opposite sides; this sling will help you pull the bars out of the dish after baking. Spray the inside of the dish with a light layer of cooking spray. Set aside.

2. In a food processor, combine the ground flaxseed, cocoa powder, salt, dates, and vanilla. Process until the dough starts to stick together, which can take several minutes. If it seems too dry, add a teaspoon at a time of pure maple syrup. Add the sliced almonds and pulse to combine.
3. Scrape the brownie dough into the prepared baking dish, and press it to the edges so it forms an even layer. Set aside.
4. To make the caramel layer: In a medium saucepan, mix together the maple syrup, coconut milk, sugar, peanut butter, and salt and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to a simmer and cook for 15 minutes, stirring frequently at first and then continuously in the final 5 minutes.
5. Pour the caramel over the brownie layer, and place the dish in the freezer for 30 minutes.
6. To make the chocolate layer: Before removing the dish from the freezer, make the chocolate layer. Melt the chocolate and coconut oil in the microwave, heating for 30 seconds at a time and mixing in between, or use a double boiler.
7. Pour the chocolate over the chilled caramel layer, then freeze for a final 5 minutes.
8. Use the parchment “handles” to lift the brownie out of the dish and onto a plate or cutting board. Cut with a hot knife. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator, or freeze for longer storage.



Our Village church now has a listing on eBay. We have a charitable account to raise money for the Center...specifically for the Worthy Student Fund at the Academy and Rogers. If you have items to donate to raise money for that purpose please let me know. Things that sell well for us on eBay are vintage Adventist Heritage items specifically books, vintage Pathfinder memorabilia, collectables, antiques, coins, sterling silver flatware and pretty much any valuable item that can be easily shipped. You can check out the over 100 listings we currently have by going to ebay.com and in the search bar type in villagesda. Call or text (Marcel Grondahl) if you have any questions # 530 966 7187

Finding Faith & Fundamentalism

February 9 & 10, 2024
College Place Village Church



Dr. Michael Campbell, Ph.D., is director of the North American Division of Archives, Statistics & Research. He is an ordained minister who spent many years in higher education in the Philippines and Texas. Dr. Campbell is the author of several books, his most recent is *We Stand on Their Shoulders* published in 2023.

Dr. Michael Campbell

Friday, 7:00 pm
Fundamentalist Beginnings

Sabbath, 10:50 am
1919: Adventism After Ellen White

Sabbath, 2:30 pm
Peril & Promise: Adventist Fundamentalism

Dear Village Voice readers,

The winds of change are blowing at Village Church with the shifts in pastoral staff. Change can be scary, exhilarating, refreshing, annoying, or many things in between.

We are all affected by change and have choices in our own response to it. Like Israel in their relationship with Moses, we can murmur and complain against our leaders, forgetting that God is ultimately in charge of His church. Or we can uphold and support them by words of appreciation, willing attitudes, faith in God, and by our prayers.

It is sobering that Moses, when heavily provoked by the people, neglected for a moment to depend on God and struck the rock. We can be gentle with our leaders, treating them with respect and kindness. They are human, just as we are, and have their strengths and weaknesses.

Everyone has an opinion about change. But let us soberly remember Proverbs 18:21 as we

Karen Ekkens



share our thoughts with our leaders and one another, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue.”

God bless you!

Karen Ekkens, editor



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