



Hampden Heights Sentinel

For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.

~2 Corinthians 11:13-15 NIV~

HIGHLIGHTS:

- RJA adapting well to many changes. Page 1
- A background history on Christ's birth. Page 2
- A summation and a farewell. Page 3
- Routinely clean your brain! Page 4
- Healthy recipes....doubled! Page 5
- We can forgive the child who is frightened by the dark, but it is a tragedy when men are afraid of the light. Page 5
- Arguments don't convince anyone to love God. Page 6

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RJA News Corner

by Barbara Snyder

A Quick Review of the Year

Reading Junior Academy has experienced tremendous flux since April of 2021. In addition to knowing we were losing two valued, experienced teachers, one to retirement, we were also losing our secretary, who knew the little and big details about everything. As we continued to search, interview, and offer positions to excellent candidates, our principal and his wife were invited to a Junior Academy in Ohio, much closer to two of their children. Down 5 teaching/leadership positions!

Having said that, after much prayer and work, our current, almost totally new team arose and began to take on their positions with energy. They coalesced daily into a fine-tuned, albeit new army of dedicated Christian evangelistic advocates for Jesus, RJA, church, and community. (As yet, there is no principal.)

Our pastors too are "new". Pastor Shives arrived a short time before Covid and was met with a closed RJA after March 2020. Pastor Haakenson was new to Kenhorst Church and arrived during the summer of 2021. Both pastors have noticed the Spirit at work in RJA and are an integral part of our team. The pastors are highly visible, and together with an active elder and his wife rotate through the classrooms on

Wednesday mornings for the students' morning worship time. The children learn to love their pastors and leaders even more with each visit.

Our new secretary, although part time, has stepped up to fill in, and in the process is learning student names and grades, the parents, bus issues, computer communications, and more. One cannot function without a person guarding the gate so to speak, and answering numerous calls, and handling the health food store during work hours. And, our "other" retired secretary, never did manage to retire. She continues on filling in our knowledge gaps. Hopefully, some day she will be able to spend even more time at home.

In October, the PA Conference Superintendent of Education was observing the teachers for their yearly evaluation. Her comment to me was "You have excellent teachers. It's so exciting to see what they are doing." Our teachers were busy "providing a clean, attractive and safe environment where learning takes place and students are provided one to one computer devices and instruction with hands on learning, technology, art, and many modalities to accommodate a variety of learning styles."

To be more specific:

- Kindergarten students are memorizing the Ten Commandments and learning songs to identify and recognize the basic functions of our body organs that our Creator God has made.
- 3-4, and 5-6 grade students have classroom themes that encourage questions about nature and the environment, and fun with reading.
- All the grades are learning Spanish. Many of our children are Hispanic with Spanish spoken in their homes, but reading and writing and enunciating is a very different concept.
- The 7th and 8th grade teacher used electronic teaching materials for guidance, reinforcement, home assignments, Bible verses to utilize, ponder and more.
- The 9th and 10th grade students are specifically using online lessons to be better prepared for the future in writing. A building block of writing and literature is a needed bulwark of competent expression in all aspects of life in this global environment.
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Alabaster Box by Dave Taylor

Witnesses of Glad Tidings (Luke 2:1-20)

For millennia mankind had awaited the coming of the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One. "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Galatians 4:4-5). Seven centuries before the birth of Jesus, the prophet Micah declared, "Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). Because there were two villages of Bethlehem in ancient times, Micah was very specific in stating Bethlehem Ephrathah would be the birthplace of the Messiah. This Bethlehem was in the southern part of the Promised Land in the territory of Judah. It was sometimes called Bethlehemjudah (Ruth 1:2). The other Bethlehem was in the northern part of the country, within the inheritance of the tribe of Zebulun (Joshua 19:15-16).

It was the first Roman emperor Augustus Caesar that compelled Joseph and Mary to travel 90 miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem in order to comply with the taxing census. As a descendant of King David, Joseph registered in Bethlehem, the City of David (Luke 2:4). Interestingly, just as there are two different Bethlehems in scripture, so there are two Cities of David. In the King James Version, we find 46 scriptural references to the City of David. 44 of these references are found in the Old Testament, and refer to the city

of Jerusalem, sometimes called Zion. Only two references to the City of David are found in the New Testament and they both refer to Bethlehem. Jerusalem was the City of David by virtue of the fact that David captured the pagan fortress that originally stood there and transformed it into the capital city of Judah. Bethlehem lays claim to its title "City of David," not because of King David's mighty deeds, but by birthright; that is, as the location where David was born. These two Cities of David are located only about six miles apart.

"And so it was, that, while [Joseph and Mary] were there [in Bethlehem], the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:6-7). Perhaps no verse in all of scripture is sadder than Luke 2:7. The Lord of all creation was laid to rest in an animal feeding trough because there was no room for Him in this world. The arrival of the Desire of Nations (Haggai 2:7) went largely unnoticed. In fact, if not for the provision of supernatural testimony, the birth of the Christ Child would have only been witnessed by His parents and the domesticated beasts with whom they had found shelter.

But while shepherds were "keeping watch over their flock by night, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid" (Luke 2:8-9). The sudden appearance of a single angel, reflecting the glory of God, struck fear into the hearts of the shepherds. With kindness the angel assured

them that they had no reason to be afraid, for his purpose was to deliver a message of great joy for all people (v10). The angel continued, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; you shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" (v11-12). No longer able to suppress their own joy, the hidden compatriots of the angel revealed themselves to the shepherds. "Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (v13-14). These visitors from above praised God by singing the signature song of heaven. The angels magnified the holy law of God and stated its summary principles. They upheld the law of liberty in their praises, saying, "Glory to God in heaven" (Commandments 1-4) and "good will to men on earth" (Commandments 5-10). To these unfallen beings the perfect law of God presented no perceived restrictions or limitations, but revealed the sublime perfection of the Ancient of Days, and demonstrated the formula for true and eternal happiness.

The shepherds believed, and their belief motivated them into action. As the angelic light faded from the Judean plain, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that the Lord has revealed unto us" (v15). They went in a hurry and found the babe in a manger (v16). "And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child" (v17). When the shepherds returned to their flocks in the fields, they glorified and praised

God for all the things that they had heard and seen" (v20).

Beloved, it is my prayer that we will each emulate the behavior of those ancient shepherds by listening to the testimony of the law and the prophets, by demonstrating our belief through our actions and by sharing widely the truth that has been revealed to us.

In closing, it is my sad duty to remind you of what you already know. This is the final issue of the Hampden Heights Sentinel, and consequently, also the final article for Alabaster Box. I am a newbie in comparison to many of the Sentinel writers, who faithfully contributed for many years. I have served for almost one and a half years, with this article being my seventeenth installment. Although it has often been difficult to find writing time in my already over-stuffed life, I have been blessed by the extra time spent studying scripture, researching these articles. Thanks to Editor Bob Kondracki for his invitation to participate in this ministry, and for his patience in waiting for my frequently tardy submissions. Thanks to readers who have encouraged me by sharing their kind words of appreciation. We began Alabaster Box by reviewing the story of the costly ointment used by Mary to anoint Jesus just before His crucifixion, and we end here with the story of the greatest gift imaginable; for unto us a child is born. Merry Christmas!

You can express your appreciation for Dave's column by contacting him at:

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Going Deeper by Barbara Snyder

La Fine, Finis, La Fin, El Fin, Konets

Dear Church Family

This is the culmination of over 4 years of my monthly articles for our newsletter, the last of a monthly challenge that has taken me from the plain to the complicated, and back again. The title "Going Deeper" reflected how I think, pray, and question. I hope that in some small way you were able to share with me on the journey.

In these 4+ years I have gotten to know more leaders, more team players, more prayers than ever before. I am grateful for that. I have learned to trust others more, to pray more for what others want, to care more about how others feel. I am grateful for the experience to have served the children of our church and our school. The kids especially encourage me as I see their faces and hear their responses as their teachers lead them through each school day. I have been happy to be a part of that too in Junior, Earliteens, and Youth Sabbath School.

Bob Kondracki has encouraged me to keep writing even when he may have preferred a different slant occasionally. For him, I would keep on trucking. As for Bob, he has always had good articles, good puns and quotes to share. He brought me smiles. I am hoping our relationship continues and thrives. In reading other monthly articles, I have gotten to know Leo Pena, Dave Taylor and Ashley Richards better. Leo takes the health message seriously and it shows. He gets into the details. Dave is a writer who gives the attention the Bible

deserves. The articles he writes will put you into those Bible stories and will help readers imagine their role in the stories' purposes. We all agree that Ashley is a leader in writing skills with her touching, heart-felt expression of the love of God and children, friends and acquaintances and all those in need. And I thank Tina Kondracki for the thought and effort she has placed into coming up with a children's section. It is not easy to fill the spaces with items that will keep a child's attention. And the cooks of our group, Beth Hill and Arleen Johns! They were as different as breads and cakes, but so good. Yum. Yum.

But to get serious as I always do, I will end the year and say good-bye with these comments:

Our church has looked for the coming of Christ for over 150 years. When I first became a Christian, and then a Seventh Day Adventist, I lived this truth in quiet expectation and trust. Since then, I have had times of doubt, not of His coming, but in the living out of my day-to-day life. The last few years have resurrected the ever-present truth that the world is ripe for the end. It may not be ripe for the harvest today or tomorrow as we never know the time, but it is the season.

Never in the history of the earth, except perhaps during WW II, have all aspects of a civilized, orderly world been so out of reach. We are at a cross section of chaos in disputes between nations, pandemic issues, availability of goods and services, economic collapse, disagreements edging hatred between and among families, neighborhoods, generations,

production and consumption, law and order, marginalization of large groups of people for being born who they are and where they are from. Almost all opinions are founded on limited knowledge largely because of the over stimulation of our minds via 24 hours a day, electronic communications of all types. What a greater need for gratitude and rest in a Sabbath day I cannot imagine. I am grateful for that rest and assurance from this destructive worldly environment.

Yet noticing turmoil, knowing of end time events and prophecy is only the beginning. I have always loved the chapter in Desire of Ages entitled "The Invitation". In it is no real information about timing or end time, but of an awareness of all of heaven and other worlds watching and waiting, cheering us on to accept the invitation to know God and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent. It is a chapter of comfort, rest, and peace, of belonging and aspirations, of admiring creation as it was meant to be known. It is the first and foremost of the steps. It is all that and more in a relatively small number of pages. I often thought that there should be a pamphlet for distribution of that chapter as it summarizes the foundation of our faith, and the need to say "Yes!"

When we put on a different mind, heaven takes care of itself. In fact, it begins now. If we resort too exclusively to verbal wordiness, (please forgive me!) we'll remain stuck in our rational, left brain, right brain minds and will not experience deep change. At this time of change there is

lessening of "us" and "them." We become united. Our life becomes a prayer as the Holy Spirit lives it. "Prayer is the opening to God as to a friend."** "Prayer is sitting in the silence until it silences us, choosing gratitude until we are grateful, and praising God until we ourselves are an act of praise." *** We cannot do it ourselves. It is a gift. Sounds like Thanksgiving to me.

Jesus tells his disciples, "Be awake. Be alert...you do not know when the Lord of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, at cock crow, or in the morning" (Mark 13:33-35). Jesus is not threatening, "You'd better do it right, or I'm going to get you when you aren't looking." He's talking about the forever, eternal coming of Christ now . . . and now . . . and now. No sleeping, no living in the past or the future but every day, God's judgment is always meant for redemption. Christ is always coming into our present, daily lives. God is always present. It's we who fall asleep.

Be ready. Be alert to God in the here and now, the ordinary, the interruptions. Being fully present to the God of all things will allow you to say, "This is good. This is enough. In fact, this is all I need." You are now settled in like a parent who gazes without noise or chatter or distraction upon their beloved child. Except in this case, the parent is God and we are His children, fully cared for, fully loved.

We are practicing for heaven. Why wait for heaven when you can enjoy the holy in every moment, in everyone?

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Going Deeper (continued from page 3)

This is my good-bye to all those who have read the Sentinel since its beginning. It has been a labor of love for our church. It has not been without fault nor perfect in all things but it has been, it's

contributors all hope, an invitation to join in the efforts of our church and our school, to voice opinions, to care, to call, to answer. Enjoy your coming New Year. It is a gift. Use it wisely. We will be

praying for you.

Amen.

* Ellen White

** Richard Rohr

The Path to Better Health by Leo Pena

Brain Detox

Did you know that your body has an extensive system in place that helps detoxify your brain?

The glymphatic system refers to the system of blood vessels in the body that removes waste products from the brain and central nervous system. The glymphatic system is most active while you sleep, which is why getting a good night's rest is imperative for feeling mentally sharp. When the glymphatic system becomes disrupted, it's thought that this can contribute to some diseases of the brain, as well as symptoms like brain fog and poor memory. Researchers now believe that a well-functioning "clearance system" in the nervous system is critical for prevention of neurodegenerative disorders, such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, Huntington's disease and ALS.

Many experts believe that your brain's glymphatic system may need to work harder if you're exposed to many toxins, especially over a long period of time. Toxin exposure that affects the brain can be caused by:

- Eating a highly processed diet with inflammatory foods.
- High intake of

- alcohol.
- Drug and tobacco use.
- Use of some medications.
- Exposure to foreign substances, such as heavy metals and environmental pollutants.

While not a toxin, sleep deprivation is also linked to impaired mental capabilities. Aging also disrupts glymphatic function, such as by decreasing CSF and blood flow to the brain/pulsing of the arteries, although healthy habits can help slow this down.

What Is a Brain Detox/Brain Cleanse?

This type of cleanse usually involves steps such as prioritizing sleep, taking certain supplements that may help support brain function, eating an anti-inflammatory diet, exercising and fasting if appropriate.

How Do You Do a Mental Detox?

1. Get Enough Sleep
Getting enough sleep each night is one of the best ways to support your brain's natural detoxification process. Most adults need about seven to nine hours of sleep per night to operate at their best. Here are tips for helping you get the best sleep you can. Go to

bed and wake up at approximately the same time every day, including on the weekends/your days off. This helps regulate your circadian rhythm, which controls your energy, motivation, appetite and more.

2. Eat an Anti-Inflammatory Diet.

Due to the gut-brain connection, your diet plays a pivotal role in managing your cognitive health. Gut-related and intestinal problems, such as leaky gut syndrome, can increase inflammation, which can alter how well your organs work, including the brain, and can contribute to issues such as depression, fatigue, anxiety, and lack of concentration/focus. Your brain needs a steady supply of nutrients — including protein, healthy fats, antioxidants, omega-3 fatty acids, and essential vitamins and minerals — for you to feel your best. Emphasize these "brain foods" in your diet in order to fight free radical damage and boost your nutrient intake:

- Vegetables, such as leafy greens, beets, broccoli, bell peppers, carrots, etc.
- (Fruits and veggies are both high in bioflavonoids, carotenoids, polyphenols, thiols, anthocyanins, and other vitamins and minerals that fight free radical damage)

- Fresh fruits, including berries, oranges, etc.
- Herbs and spices, such as ginger, turmeric, garlic, rosemary, etc.
- Fermented, probiotic foods like yogurt, kefir, kimchi and sauerkraut
- Nuts and seeds
- Legumes and beans
- Complex carbs like whole grains and sweet potatoes

3. Exercise

There's some evidence suggesting that exercise may increase glymphatic activity and also improve brain plasticity, which plays a role in learning and memory. Additionally, exercise can help you cope with stress, sleep more deeply and have more energy in general.

4. Minimize Toxin Exposure

While avoiding all chemicals and toxins may not be realistic, try to reduce exposure as much as you can, such as by avoiding smoking, drug use and unnecessary medications.

5. Consider Supplements

You can help support your body's natural ability to detox by taking certain nootropics, adaptogenic herbs and supplements that nourish the liver, kidneys, gut and brain. Consider some of the following, based on your goals and current health such as milk thistle for liver support.

By Jillian Levy, CHHC

December 9, 2020
<https://draxe.com/about-us>

Recipe(s) of the Month by Arleen Johns

Editor's Note: There are actually TWO recipes of the month included in this issue. One of them was submitted by Arleen for a previous month, but I unfortunately didn't have room for it at the time.

then add wet to dry. It will be pourable. Spray an 8x8 baking dish Bake 400° F. 35-40 minutes until golden.

The combination of lemon and baking soda cause the bread to rise without eggs.

Pour into bowl and add the gluten flour, Work the gluten flour in, spread out on greased baking sheet or baking stone Bake 325 deg for 30 minutes until brown. Cool completely on rack. Pull into pieces and put through food processor with course blade. I leave mine slightly chunky

How to Soak Garbanzos:
(Rinse and place in a covered bowl overnight) They will double their size (or more) Measure the soaked beans (not dry) for this recipe
Rinse again and begin recipe

Best Easy No Fuss Vegan Cornbread

- 2 tsp lemon juice
- 2 cups soy milk
- 1 1/2 cups finely ground white or yellow cornmeal
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp salt
- 5 TBS white sugar
- 1/3 cup canola oil

Combine lemon juice & soymilk to make "buttermilk" Stir in oil
Combine all dry ingredients,

Gluten "Chicken" Salad

- 2 cups of soaked garbanzos with enough water to cover in blender
- 1/4 cup chicken-style seasoning
- 1/4 cup Bragg's Liquid Aminos
- 1 Tbs onion powder
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder

2 cups vital wheat gluten flour

In blender, blend all ingredients except the gluten flour till smooth.

Freezes well, and ready to pull out to finish making the filling.

Chicken Salad Sandwich Filling

To make sandwich filling add chopped onion, pickles (or sweet relish), celery, mayo salt (to taste). Garlic or onion powder, lemon juice

Notable Quotes selected by Bob Kondracki

Since this is the last issue of the Sentinel, I've decided to list some of my favorite quotes from this column over the years. I hope you'll find them as inspiring as I have.

A dog barks when his master is attacked. I would be a coward if I saw that God's truth is attacked and yet would remain silent. ~John Calvin~

The inferior archer, when he misses the mark, first looks for blame in his bow. The superior archer first looks for blame in himself. ~Traditional saying of Kyudo~ (Japanese archery)

The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. ~Thomas Jefferson~

The only nice thing about being imperfect is the joy it brings to others. ~Doug Larson~

History does not long entrust the care of freedom to the weak or the timid. (Speech before D-Day) ~Dwight D. Eisenhower~

Men are apt to mistake the strength of their feeling for the strength of their argument. The heated mind resents the chill touch and relentless scrutiny of logic. ~William E. Gladstone~

A man is not finished when he is defeated. He is finished when he quits. ~Richard M. Nixon~

It is foolish and wrong to mourn the men who died. Rather we should thank God that such men lived. ~George S. Patton~

Never interrupt your enemy while he is making a mistake. ~Napoleon Bonaparte~

"Caution: Cape does not enable user to fly." -Batman Costume warning label

It's always easier to defeat an opponent if he's already started the job for you ~Randy Cross~

We can forgive the child who is frightened by the dark, but it is a tragedy when men are afraid of the light. ~Plato~

Sir, my concern is not whether God is on our side; my greatest concern is to be on God's side, for God is always right. ~Abraham Lincoln~

We must reject the idea that every time a law's broken, society is guilty rather than the lawbreaker. It is time to restore the American precept that each individual is accountable for his actions. ~Ronald Reagan~

The truth does not change according to our ability to stomach it. ~Flannery O'Connor~

You can tell whether a man is clever by his answers. You can tell whether a man is wise by his questions -Naguib Mahfouz

The Supreme Court has ruled that they cannot have a nativity scene in Washington, D.C. This wasn't for any religious reasons. They couldn't find three wise men and a virgin. ~Jay Leno~

He who asks a question is a fool for five minutes; he who does not ask a question remains a fool forever. ~Chinese Proverb~

A fool learns from his own mistakes, a wise man from the mistakes of others. ~Otto von Bismarck~

At my back I often hear time's winged chariot changing gear. ~Eric Linklater~

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The Crow's Nest by Bob Kondracki

It's been a long time since I wrote an article for my column. But with so many other talented writers working for the Sentinel, I really didn't have to. However, since this is the last issue, I wanted to take the opportunity to write one last time.

Why Do We Continue to Study?

Repetition is the mother of all learning ~ Latin proverb ~

So why do we continue to study, especially something we've already learned? After all, we don't continue to study after we get our driver's license, do we? School students don't generally continue studying the material after the test is over. There are other examples, but there are also more layers to the question than might initially be apparent. Generally, we don't continue studying things that are easy to remember, or are unimportant. But things that are important sometimes require constant reinforcement. Doctors, lawyers, auto mechanics, all must keep up with the latest developments and refinements. I'm sure you wouldn't want to go to your doctor and find out he made a mistake, and then have him offer the excuse, "oh, I'm sorry, I missed that one on the test." You certainly don't want to hear your surgeon say, "Well, that's the way it used to be done. I didn't know there was a better method."

Often, we continue to study because it's important that we be accurate, familiar, and up-to-date with the topic in question. It's also just natural for humans to forget things that they aren't at least

occasionally putting to use. We are not computers; we don't have the ability to just store information away and not use it for a long time and then recall it when necessary.

This continual study concept also applies to Christians as well, and is critical to our foundational beliefs. Some will say, "Oh, I already know this stuff, it's just redundant and boring to go over it again." I've uttered this refrain myself more times than I care to admit!

And contrary to what some may think, continuing to study is not for the sake of winning arguments against people who disagree with you. I must confess that I am guilty of this one as well. I've learned the hard way that arguing with people on such volatile topics such as religion, politics, science, etc. generally doesn't solve anything, and often just creates animosity and resentment. Even if you're right, and can prove it definitively, it requires great tact...which I've never been accused of having. And it often doesn't convince anybody, because people don't generally like to admit that they're wrong. And quite frequently, NO amount of evidence is going to convince them because it simply is not what they want to believe.

There are subtle differences however, between arguing...and dialoguing. Arguing is a contest to prove who is right and who is wrong. Dialoguing is a respectful discussion to figure out solutions or answers, without pride or ego interjecting themselves. Dialoguing is more of a cooperative effort of the

participants to arrive at a correct and accurate conclusion. Again, it often takes great skill and tact to not let dialogue cross over the fine line into an argument.

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.
~ 1 Peter 3:15-16 NIV ~

So, at this point we may infer that, in the context of Christian perspective, continuing to study is for our own benefit, and for the ability to share what we know to be the truth with others through respectful and humble dialoguing. (read; not arguing) Arguments don't convince anyone to love God.

Keep reminding God's people of these things. Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen.

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

~ 2 Timothy 2:14-15 NIV ~

Now these two reasons for continuing study go hand-in

hand. We study for our own knowledge, and we study because we certainly don't want to convey information that is not correct to others. That is the easiest way to destroy any credibility we may have.

But how do we present ourselves to God as one approved to handle the truth?

I have quite a few documentaries and lectures on DVD that I repeatedly watch. My wife gets bored with them, and wonders how I can just watch the same thing over and over. Some are on archeology, some on science, many are on evolution. I also receive a daily email from Creation.com. A few years ago, I started studying evolution out of a crisis in faith, and a necessity (my daughter moved from RJA to public school, and I knew what was coming, and I needed to know the truth on this very contentious topic) Evolution is an ideal case in point of a Christian needing to continue studying, despite what we casually take for granted as the truth. Well, the results of my study were extremely eye-opening. I've written about this in previous issues of the newsletter.

A great video illustrating the reality of what we're dealing with on this particular topic, and the necessity of knowing the facts, so we are not deceived or discouraged ourselves, is the movie God's Not Dead. The movie presents an excellent example of what's going on in the world today, and how limited knowledge on our part could have a profound impact, by potentially eroding our faith, leaving us extremely
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The Crow's Nest (continued from page 6)

vulnerable if we aren't grounded in the truth. In this instance a well-read, charismatic, highly educated and very knowledgeable authority figure, a university professor, attempts to convince his class that God doesn't exist, and he can prove it if necessary. He's rehearsed his methods a million times, and he's very convincing, and very intimidating. Ironically, he knows our beliefs better than we do! And he's well prepared to refute...with authority, what we believe.

Far-fetched, you say? You better think again. Talk to college students, watch college campus interviews of students. This is the kind of duplicity the world is teaching, and if we don't know how to refute it, how does the truth then prevail? This movie doesn't address evolution directly, but if God is dead as the movie suggests, by inference evolution must then be viable. Well, we know God's not dead, and I can also assure you, from my research, evolution is very easy to refute, from so many platforms. Science, biology, archeology, astronomy, mathematics, there are a myriad of ways that even a 5-year-old could do it! But you must first learn the facts. And then you must reinforce your knowledge so you are confident in what you know. This applies to ALL our Christian beliefs. When the assaults come, and they will, we need to be prepared.

Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

~ Ephesians 6:11 NIV ~

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place
~ Ephesians 6:14 NIV ~

Of course, this whole conversation now begs the question, how do we *really* know the truth? One of my all-time favorite quotes is by the late great theologian R.C. Sproul; "Truth is defined as that which corresponds to reality as perceived by God."

First of all, I believe that if we really want to discover the truth, we must be as objective as humanly possible, even if the truth takes us someplace that we really don't want to go. That is not easy for many of us to do. We all have our bias and pre-conceived beliefs. And most of us don't take kindly to anyone who comes along and "upsets our apple cart" But let me point out that our loyalty should not be to a church, a denomination, a pastor, or a certain belief system. Our loyalty should be to God, and His truth, whatever it is! We must be willing to go where the evidence leads us. But we also need not be frightened, as so many Christians are. They are fearful that their beliefs won't hold up to rigorous inspection. But let me encourage you, The real truth is not afraid of scrutiny!

Therefore, we have an obligation to learn the truth. And when we have finally discerned the truth, then we must cling to it with confidence, like it's our life preserver in the middle of the ocean.

I must make a distinction here however. I am in no way

suggesting that we ever close our minds off to new evidence or other points of view. I find it disturbing and quite frustrating that, as Adventists, we ask others to consider our teachings and our understanding, but at the same time, we have our blinders full-on, and refuse to grant them the same courtesy. Perhaps we do have the truth. But I notice that our pride and arrogance are also on display at times. I really don't believe that when we get to heaven, Christ is going to say, "congratulations you Adventists, you had it all figured out." Being convinced, without bothering to research the truth is just as bad as not knowing the truth. There were people that flew airplanes into buildings that were convinced they knew the truth...so convinced they were willing to lose their lives for it. But that didn't make it any more valid. The truth is even more a precious commodity today, because it seems everybody wants to put their own spin on it, and manipulate it to suit their agenda. And with just so many media avenues, it's easier to do now more than ever. Many seem to succumb to the idea Vladimir Lenin proclaimed many, many years ago, "A lie told often enough becomes the truth."

Another problem that seems prevalent today is that people simply don't want to put the study and research it takes to learn the truth for themselves. They rather be spoon-fed by "alleged" professionals, whose job is to decipher what is accurate and what isn't. After all, this is what they do for a living, isn't it? Whether it's regarding religion, politics, revisionist history, etc.

That way, they can sooner get back to their jobs and careers, Facebook posts, video games, sports, or whatever other pursuits Satan has ensnared them with. But of course, as expected, the Bible warns us about this.

See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.
~ Colossians 2:8 NIV ~

So, I hope I've been able to make you understand why we need to never stop studying, no matter how old, or how knowledgeable we think we are. None of us has 100% of the answers either, although some of us think we do. We must still be willing to follow the truth, provided it has been proven to be the truth. There is no shame in admitting you are wrong at times. The shame is in continuing to cling to something that you know is wrong, whether it be for pride, comfort, inability to cope with the reality, whatever the reason.

The truth does not change according to our ability to stomach it.
~Flannery O'Connor~

I hope that, in my last article, in the last issue of this newsletter, I've given you something to think about and consider. Many times, in this column I've written about things that I've come to learn myself, and thought perhaps could be of use to others as well. God and His word are meant to be studied. We can also be confident both will hold up under the fiercest examination!

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Notable Quotes

(continued from page 5)

Truth is defined as that which corresponds to reality as perceived by God.
~R.J. Sproul~

The Lord gets his best soldiers out of the highlands of affliction.
~Charles Spurgeon~

The Christian's Bible is a drug store. Its contents remain the same, but the medical practice changes. ~Mark Twain~

Here lies the grave of Mike O' Day. He died maintaining his right of way. His right was dear, his will was strong, but he's just as dead as if he'd been wrong.
~Unknown~

Summary of Church Board Minutes from 11-15-21

submitted by Wayne Johns

**READING HAMPDEN HEIGHTS SDA CHURCH
11.15.21 BOARD MEETING MINUTES
and ZOOM 7 pm
Quorum 9 – Membership 261**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Pastor Shawn Shives, Jason Mclean, Eric Blackerby, Shirley Blackerby, Dwight Edris, Lorraine Edris, Leo Pena, Nancy Stump, , Jason Shives, Arleen Johns and Wayne Johns.

Quorum declared by Clerk @ 7:05

MEMBERS ABSENT: Cheryl Cherington, Donna Knarr, David Beard, Bob Kondracki, Paulo Acosta, Juliana Acosta.

Opening Prayer: Pastor Shawn

Devotion: Pastor Shawn – A princess that initially started as a beggar and given a choice to represent a princess or a beggar. Who do we choose to reflect?

Clerks Report: Minutes for 9.20.21 reviewed.
Motion with 1st and 2nd To accept minutes as presented.
Motion was approved.

Treasurers Report: Treasurer's report provided an overview.
Motion with 1st and 2nd To accept

Motion was approved.

FYI: completion of 2nd reading for Brenda and Leird Ymbella will occur on 11.20.21.

POF: For Tracy Charles 11.20.21 and Heather Flegler & Doreen Schweitzer will also complete POF this week or in near future.

FYI: 118 non-Adventist registered for the evangelistic meetings of which 75 attended at least one session. 20 non-Adventist attended 7 or more sessions, 5 attended Sabbath service 11.6.21 and 3 joined for fellowship meal.

FYI: Pathfinders and Adventurer induction 11.20.21

Budget for next year's evangelism series 2022, spring (CORE) and fall (Hampden), is \$16,000.00. 4/8 to 5/7/22, FSS then TW/FS with CORE providing personal door-to-door contacts for spring series.

Motion with 1st and 2nd to request \$16,000.00 for evangelism for next year.
Motion was approved.

Larry Miller submitted prices for snow removal for 2021-2022 winter season. Prices have increased (surprise) 120/hour for plowing/Skid loader and salt parking areas @ \$125.00/hour.
Motion with 1st and 2nd to accept proposal for snow removal for this

coming winter season
Motion was approved. [Larry was contacted via text]

FYI: Will plan a social 12.18.21 @ 5 pm inviting participants of evangelistic meetings. Menu: to be decided.

Department Reports
Worship Team – No report
Greeters/Hospitality – No Report
Communications – No Report

Three departments scheduled to report next month: (#1) Plant Manager – Deacon – Deaconess
Departments cycle are listed below.

BENEDICTION: Nancy Stump

ADJOURNMENT: 7:55 pm
Departments:
1-Plant Manager, Deacon, Deaconess

2-Personal Ministries, Interest Coordinator, Prayer Ministry

3-Health Ministry, SS Coordinator, Social Committee

4-AV System, Elder, Newsletter, Pathfinders

5-Safety & Security, Adventurers, Community Service

6-Worship Team, Communications, Greeters/Hospitality

RJA News Corner (continued from page 1)

A biology class has featured large fish heads for dissection. The students were abuzz with excited talking, learning and fun.

RJA also has many building, upkeep, and maintenance needs. As Providence always does, God has provided a budget for the building repairs. These repairs include replacing several security doors, updating an electric circuit overload in three classrooms, replacing fuse boxes (future) with switches, and providing metal, "no maintenance" awnings over several lower level exits and one upper exit. We are also investigating updates to our air conditioning for two classrooms.

And how can a school function effectively without the support staff for kitchen and custodial

services? We have kept on two individuals, and recruited a volunteer, who does much of our shopping. The outside too, is being delivered from the perils of snow and ice this winter by volunteers. So many details, so little time. Praise the Lord for grace to get through each hurdle.

Now, par excellence, RJA is featured in the upcoming Worthy Student Offering video distributed by the Conference. Hopefully our churches will receive copies and we can see our RJA team at work for our kids!

There is much more to say, and even more individuals to thank. I will however list our teachers, staff, and volunteers who have worked, and arrived

new this month. Just in time for the holidays and the new year, God has provided.

Kayla Federowski, Acting Principal, and 5-6 grade teacher
Stacy McLean, Secretary ...
Lorraine Edris, Fiscal Secretary
Cindy Eisenhart, Pre K and Kindergarten
Eunice Rodriguez, 1-2 teacher
Carol Rey, 3-4 teacher
Nicole Nase, 7-8 teacher
Megan Rosales, 9-10 teacher
Cynthia Wilson, Menu, and Cafeteria
Dan Brownell, Menu and Shopping
Floridama Alonzo, Custodian
Leo Pena, Enrique Peguaro,
Pastor Haakenson...Snow Removal
God is good. Amen.