

Ministry Update | First Quarter 2024

# SECRETS UNSEALED



## Reflections on *Learning* the *Lessons* of *History*





# Dear Friends of Secrets Unsealed

Another year has passed and we are one year closer to the Lord's coming. Hallelujah! How we should long for Jesus to come to put an end to strife, sorrow, suffering, pain, sickness, and death! Revelation 21:4 should be at the top of our minds every day!

In this newsletter, we will visit memory lane to review some events in the recent history of our beloved church. I recommend that along with the newsletter article, you also read President Robert Pierson's Farewell Address to the General Conference Annual Council in 1972 where he warned about dangers on the horizon in North America. His written speech is available on our website.

On another note, I am looking with great anticipation for our Anchor School of Theology class in March where we will study the book of Daniel, especially chapters 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11. I have been doing additional research and writing feverishly for the last several months. The class syllabus will have over 900 pages, so I invite you to register for a deep study of this vital book.

The preparatory work at our property in Tollhouse is advancing. The architectural plans have been finished, we have met with the County Commissioner to begin the permit process, and we will have meetings with the surrounding community to share our ministry plans for the future.

As of January, the Sabbath School and Worship Service will now be released separately, allowing you to dive deeper into each aspect of our worship experience. You should have received an email with these details.

We appreciate your unfailing prayers and financial support which make it possible to serve the world with the truth for this time. Each day, the workload seems to get heavier but we are comforted by the words, "My grace is sufficient for you". We have a great and united team with a single focus, to prepare the church and the world for the trouble ahead and the glorious coming of Jesus.

Maranatha,

**Pastor Stephen Bohr**



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**Office Hours**  
Monday-Thursday  
8:00 am - 6:00 pm PST

Closed Friday,  
Saturday, Sunday  
& Holidays

**Contact Information**  
5949 E. Clinton Ave.  
Fresno, CA 93727  
559.264.2300 (Intl. & USA)  
888.REV.1412 (USA only)  
info@secretsunsealed.org

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**Editor**  
Aileen Pyburn

**Layout & Design**  
Thai Yang

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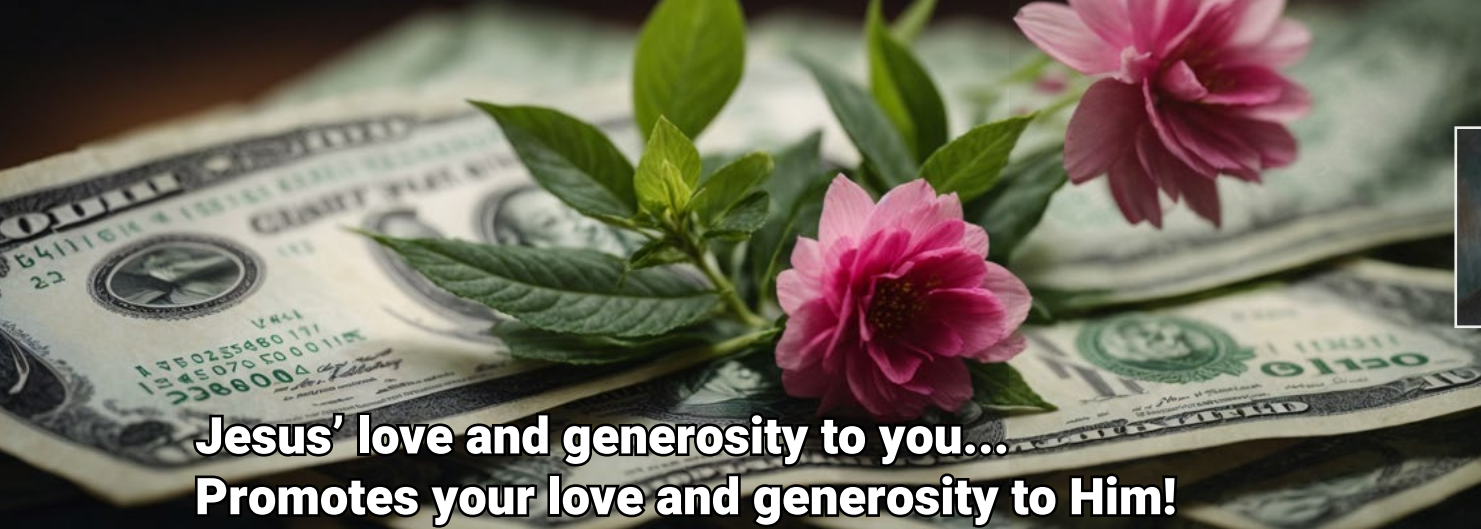
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**Pastor John Bridges**

[jthistory58@yahoo.com](mailto:jthistory58@yahoo.com)

225-505-0231

## Jesus' love and generosity to you... Promotes your love and generosity to Him!

*I'm writing to you to express our deepest gratitude for your generous donations.*

This makes it possible for so many to be touched by Secrets Unsealed Ministry. A ministry of Christ-centered messages filled with God's tender love, insightful prophetic explanations, and helpful tools for dealing with daily challenges in a confused distracted world. A ministry revealing God's forgiveness, healing, and acceptance. Here we find Peace, Righteousness, and Spirit-filled living to be experienced now. We are drawn to HIM. The closer we come to Him the more like Him we become. "Where your treasure is there will your heart be also" Luke 12:34.

The building and expansion plans unfolding, the new programs produced and materials printed and the stories shared, lives changed, YOU had a part in making possible. Every telecast produced...you had a part in it with your faithful giving and partnering with us. THANK YOU! You really did make it happen. Your gifts allow us to move forward and touch lives. YOU are being used by God to touch hearts and give the Three Angels' Message, the last message of mercy to the world.

I have a little saying I share with others: "It's hard to be thankful [grateful] and be lost". True gratitude always reciprocates and gives back. Isn't this why God says "I love a cheerful giver" 2 Corinthians 9:7.

So many of you have experienced the joy and satisfaction of cash gifts which are our lifeblood.....but there is wisdom and peace of mind in planned giving as well. By using the tools of Planned Giving: WILLS, Revocable Trusts, and Charitable Gift Annuities [which are at their highest rates in years]. They each help you be the wise faithful servant you are called to be. Thanks to many of you for those IRA rollover gifts. Have you planned this year's distribution yet?

Have you thought of naming Secrets Unsealed as a beneficiary on your retirement plan IRA/401-K or insurance policy? Each of these can have a powerful impact on changing lives for eternity and you are the agent in making it happen. If you have charitable intent for Secrets Unsealed, please call me and I will assist you. My services are gratis

to Secrets Unsealed. There is no charge to you. Questions? Give me a call. I will help you make informed choices. Preserve and protect your assets as you further God's work. Be a faithful responsible steward and fulfill your goals.

"It is as we give ourselves to God for the service of humanity that He gives Himself to us" Ellen G. White, Welfare Ministry, pg. 301.2

"Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share" 1 Timothy 6:18.

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# The GREAT PROPHECIES of the OLD TESTAMENT

DANIEL 1-11 *Part 2*

**MARCH 18-23, 2024**  
Registration is now open!

**·ANCHOR·**  
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**Studies on Daniel 11**  
- PDF Download  
Posted by: Waicuga Kinyoro  
The meticulously conducted research presented in this work is both comprehensive

and skillfully articulated, profoundly altering my perspective on the subject of prophecy. The wealth of knowledge acquired is substantial, and I highly recommend earnest examination of these materials to anyone perusing my review.



**Studies on Daniel 11**  
- PDF Download  
Posted by: Roy  
Almost mind-boggling. But when studied carefully, can only build one's faith. Thank you!



**Prophetic Principles Class 16-30**  
- PDF Download  
Posted by: Bennie Thomas  
This is a must for anyone who wants a better understanding of Bible prophecy. I highly recommend this for all Christians. Very well presented. Thank you.



**Studies on Daniel 1-10**  
- PDF Download  
Posted by: Stephen Allard  
The study notes are fantastic, the information within

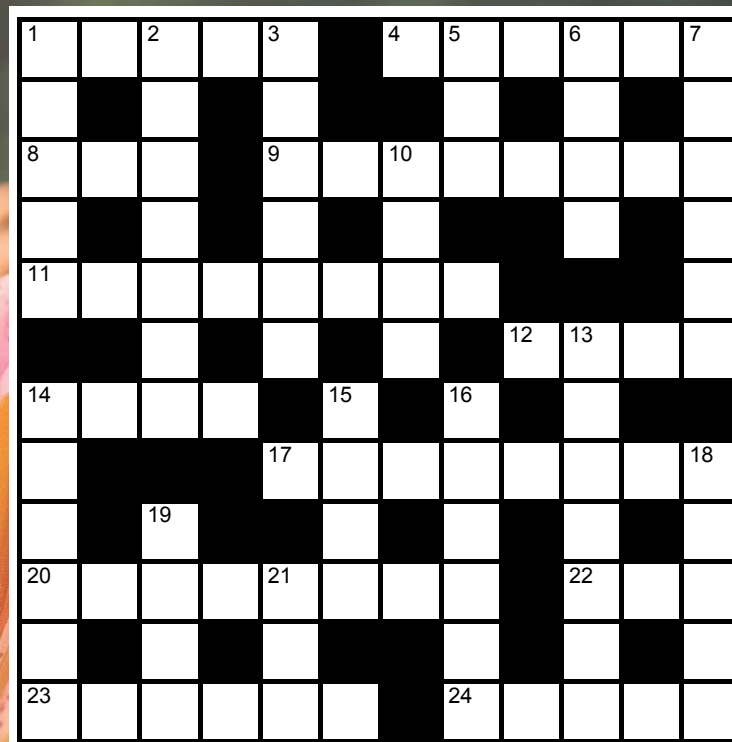
is set to a person that is in search and studying the word of God. I am amazed at the value as well the cost of such information provided as it is well worth buying at a higher price yet was able to obtain free. You can't even compare it with other information that is out there. My next goal is to donate soon for such a book so others can experience what I have as well as obtain it for the same cost. Pastor Bohr is the best.



**Revelation's Seven Trumpets**  
- PDF Download  
Posted by: Anthony  
Again, an excellent set of presentations. I stand in awe of how God can use Pastor

Bohr to deliver these outstanding lessons, so vital for our time.

## Bible Crossword Puzzle



by Philologus ©BiblePuzzles.org.uk

### Across

- 1 Calm (5)
- 4 Purim heroine (6)
- 8 Where there was no room (3)
- 9 Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar for example (8)
- 11 Mistaken identity of Jesus after resurrection (8)
- 12 Material used to make Solomon's cups (4)
- 14 Not narrow (4)
- 17 Jubilated (8)
- 20 Teaching (8)
- 22 Reverence (3)
- 23 Rabbi (6)
- 24 Place of the dead (5)

### Down

- 1 Scorpion attack (5)
- 2 Didn't heed (7)
- 3 Object of Jacob's dream (6)
- 5 Red, for example (3)
- 6 To be bruised by the serpent (4)
- 7 Observed the Sabbath (6)
- 10 Where Adam spared a rib? (4)
- 13 Fruit farm (7)
- 14 Solomon's strength (6)
- 15 Son of Leah (4)
- 16 Brother of 15 down (6)
- 18 Works (5)
- 19 Follower of the Gospels (4)
- 21 Repent (3)

## In memory of....

Mr. & Mrs. D.E. Allgood, from Anna Jo Clithero  
Arlene & George Young, from Nancy McRae  
Sandra Peterson, from Bradley Champion  
Sandra L. Peterson, from Ralph Peterson  
Lauretta Ramsey, from Anna Jo Clithero  
Scott Stovall, from Doris Ward  
Beccy Ivins, from Martha Parks  
Pat Fleming, from Mitchell Fleming



# TESTIMONIES

## from our readers

My knowledge of the Bible has been greatly improved, that has in turn resulted in my remarkable spiritual growth by Pastor Bohr's lectures. May God continue to bless this ministry.  
– **Gladstone Dupwa, South Africa**

Thank you for your email. I have been immensely blessed by the presentations by Pastor Bohr. To be honest the presentations have significantly enhanced my spirituality particularly the books of Daniel and Revelation.  
– **Jabulani via email**

Praise the Lord for Secrets Unsealed Ministry! You have helped my faith grow, and my mom's faith as well. I don't think Stephen Bohr ever sleeps and I assume most others at Secrets Unsealed have the same work ethic. THANK YOU ALL!! – **Cheyenne in IL**

We'd just like to send a heartfelt thanks to you and *Christmas Behind Bars*. The women in our block are grateful for the study guides, bibles, and other information that you are sending us. We have started doing daily Bible studies and prayer every day in here. – **Danna, prison inmate in IN**

Your ministry, especially the Anchor series, has helped me with my walk with Christ. The knowledge and wisdom I have obtained through Pastor Bohr's teachings have been so powerful and profound in my life. Thank you and please continue what you do! – **Leslie in TX**

I would like to say I truly thank you and Pastor Bohr for everything you guys have sent me in Bible study resources. I love and read everything and study it. I truly believe this is God's last sect of people, the Seventh-day Adventists. I have been raised Baptist and after studying the doctrine of Seventh-day Adventist I have come to accept it fully. This will be my people from this point on in my life. I'm so thankful Ellen G. White was able to publish all the books she could before leaving this world. She and Secrets Unsealed have literally shown me what is behind the veil so to speak. Anyway, thank you again, and may God bless you always. Happy Holidays – **Steven, a prison inmate in TN**

I can't even begin to let you know how much I have learned from you about Bible things. I had left the SDA church in the mid-70s and only returned about 2010. Never did I learn the things you explain so well. All I knew was the do's and the don'ts. You truly have the gift of teaching. Makes me so sad that my kids never learned about Jesus. I really like the fact that you don't take on debt. We should be very willing to help the cause of God. Thank you! – **Carolyn in Oregon**

Thank you so much for your response! This is a Big Blessing to me being I don't have anyone that has the money to send me a new Bible. You don't know how much this means to me. Thanks so much! – **Andrew, prison inmate in TN**

Before coming to prison, I knew nothing of the Seventh-day Adventist Church beyond the fact that it exists. Because you so graciously make your materials available to prisons, I have been introduced to your theology. I have learned that beliefs I have held for many years due to the theology of some denominations have been tragically erroneous. So I am now dedicating the time I have in this prison sentence to study. God has also blessed me with the opportunity to teach. That is my spiritual gift. I learn so I can teach. With sincere gratitude, – **Grant, prison inmate in TN**

## PLEASE GIVE TO PRISON MINISTRY

Consider the forgotten souls behind bars, yearning for redemption. In the spirit of biblical fellowship, extend a compassionate hand to those who've strayed. Not everyone is called to foreign missions, but, like missions, every believer should engage in prison ministry. **Let love triumph over judgment; join this sacred journey of restoration, making a difference in lives seeking a second chance.**



**You can partner with Secrets Unsealed and help reach prison inmates by donating to our worthy viewer fund. This fund allows us to send free resources to inmates. Text the word "secrets" to the number 91999**

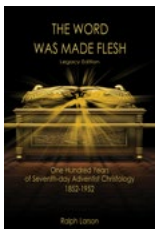


# NEW PRODUCTS



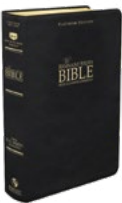
**Revelation: Practical Living in the Judgment Hour** - Norman McNulty  
Prod. Code: BKRPL ...\$19.99

In this book we discover practical applications for all of the prophecies in Revelation, and we see just how much this last book of the Bible reveals Jesus. (640 pages, soft cover)



**The Word Was Made Flesh - Legacy Edition**  
- Ralph Larson  
Prod. Code: BKTWWMF...\$19.99

At present there is a conflict in the Seventh-day Adventist Church regarding which nature Jesus took when He came to this earth. Some think he took the nature of Adam before the Fall and others after. The book *The Word Made Flesh* provides irrefutable and overwhelming evidence that before the 1950's the church believed that Jesus took the post-fall sinful nature of Adam but never allowed it to express itself in sinful acts, thoughts, or words. This book is an invaluable resource for those who want the truth about the human nature of Christ. (364 pages, soft cover)



**Remnant Platinum Edition Study Bible**  
Prod. Code: RSBPE-NKJV ...\$129.99

This extraordinary Bible has Jesus' words in blue in the O.T. making it fast and easy to discover the Creator's direct message to humanity. Jesus' words are in red in the N.T. Plus, each Bible book features brand-new "Did You Know?" introductions and full-color illustrations, giving you vital insights that will expand your ability to understand each book in its proper context and enrich your Bible study experience.



**God's Holy Men Need Mending; and So Do You!** - Charles E. Creech & Lavern M. Creech  
Prod. Code: BKGHM...\$14.95

Is there hope for the restoration of your marriage after infidelity? Do you know "What went wrong?" How will you "Work through your problems?" Can you do anything to make it better? Should you confess your infidelity to your spouse or not? How do you "Affair-Proof" your marriage? How do I determine if I or my spouse is vulnerable for an affair to occur? With so many couples, family members, and congregations experiencing the devastating damage caused by broken relationships; can anything be done to fix what has been broken, stolen, or lost? **THE GOOD NEWS IS: YES!** Discover what you can do to restore your marriage relationship! (262 pages, soft cover)



**Rome's Challenge Why Do Protestants Keep Sunday?** - Norman McNulty  
Prod. Code: BKRC... \$6.99

In 1893 Protestants were agitating for Sunday-closing laws in the United States. These reprinted articles from the *Catholic Mirror* condemned Protestants for claiming to teach "the Bible only" while adopting Sunday as the Sabbath, a day which has no authority in the Bible. It should perplex Protestant Sunday keepers to know that the Papacy claims Sunday sacredness as a sign of her authority. These articles prove very conclusively from "the Bible only" that Sunday is not the Biblical SABBATH (or rest day). (42 pages, soft cover)



**The Complete Testimony of the Fathers of the First Three Centuries Concerning the Sabbath and First Day** - J.N. Andrews  
Prod. Code: BKTCTOTF ...\$11.99

How did the Sabbath change from the seventh to the first day of the week? And who changed it? Who authorized such a drastic alteration in the Law of the God that declares that He "changes not" (Mal. 3:6)? (102 pages, soft cover)

NEW  
PRODUCTS**Born Again** - Dojčin Živadinovic

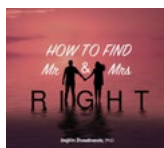
Prod. Code: BADVDSET-8...\$29.99

This seminar explains in practical ways how to respond to God's call, how to repent, and how to die to self and sin and be filled with the Spirit and born from above. You don't want to miss this one! (8 pres. on 4 DVDs)

**Mind Wars** - Eric Walsh

Prod. Code: MWDVDSET-2...\$14.99

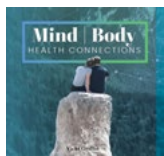
The greatest battles of the Great Controversy do not happen in the cosmic realm. Those battles are not fought in the halls of power. Instead, they are fought in the hearts and minds of men. Which side will be in control of your thoughts and intentions? The end goal of God's work in man is a character like the character of Christ. Satan works tirelessly to mar this character. (3 pres. on 2 DVDs)

**How to find Mr. & Mrs. Right**

- Dojčin Živadinovic,

Prod. Code: HTFDVDSET-5...\$14.99

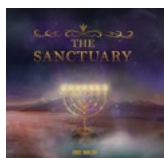
In the world of broken marriages, confused dating techniques, lustful relationships, painful break-ups, and mental health issues related to grief and rejection, how do we as Christians approach the topic of courtship and dating? This seminar reveals seven loving and biblical steps to a godly marriage. (5 pres. on 3 DVDs)

**Mind Body Health Connections**

- Vicki Griffin

Prod. Code: MBHCDVDSET-12...\$29.99\*

Brain/body systems are connected—this is especially true with your brain and gut. Together, they work as a “relay team” that powerfully affect mood, depression, and anxiety, as well as energy, weight, immune health, and addictions. Discover “keystone” brain-gut strategies for building solid mental, physical, and spiritual health—for good! through His sanctuary message. (12 pres. on 6 DVDs)

**The Sanctuary** - Eric Walsh

Prod. Code: TSDVDSET-9...\$34.95

The sanctuary of the Old Testament is often overlooked by many Christians. However, in it is the pattern of God's plan to restore lost souls. Right now Jesus is our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary. Understanding the earthly offers us the opportunity to better understand the heavenly and the work that He is doing for us now. In this series of studies, we seek to draw closer to God through His sanctuary message. (9 pres. on 5 DVDs)

## SPECIALS

\*on sale until  
March 31, 2024

## BOOKS

**from Plant to Plate Diabetes Edition**

- Tami Bivens, R. D.

Prod. Code: BKFPTP-DE...\$18.99\* (Regular \$24.99)

What if you could lower blood sugars one bite at a time? You can. Reclaim your health in the most simple (and most delicious) way possible.

**Ten Talents Vegetarian Cookbook**

- Rosalie Hurd, B.S. and Frank J. Hurd, D.C., M.D.

Prod. Code: BK10TAL...\$24.95\* (Regular \$34.95)

over 1,000 recipes, color illustrations on every page, and a health resource manual perfect for teaching nutrition classes. Also available in Spanish.

**Good News Health**

- Milton Teske, M.D.

Prod. Code: GNHDVDSET-4...\$18.99\* (Reg. \$24.95)

In this series you will gain the clearest explanation you will ever hear to help you understand how to completely reverse Type 2 Diabetes, how to understand your lipid profile LDL, HDL and VLDL, and how to reverse atherosclerotic coronary artery disease naturally. (4 pres. on 4 DVDs)

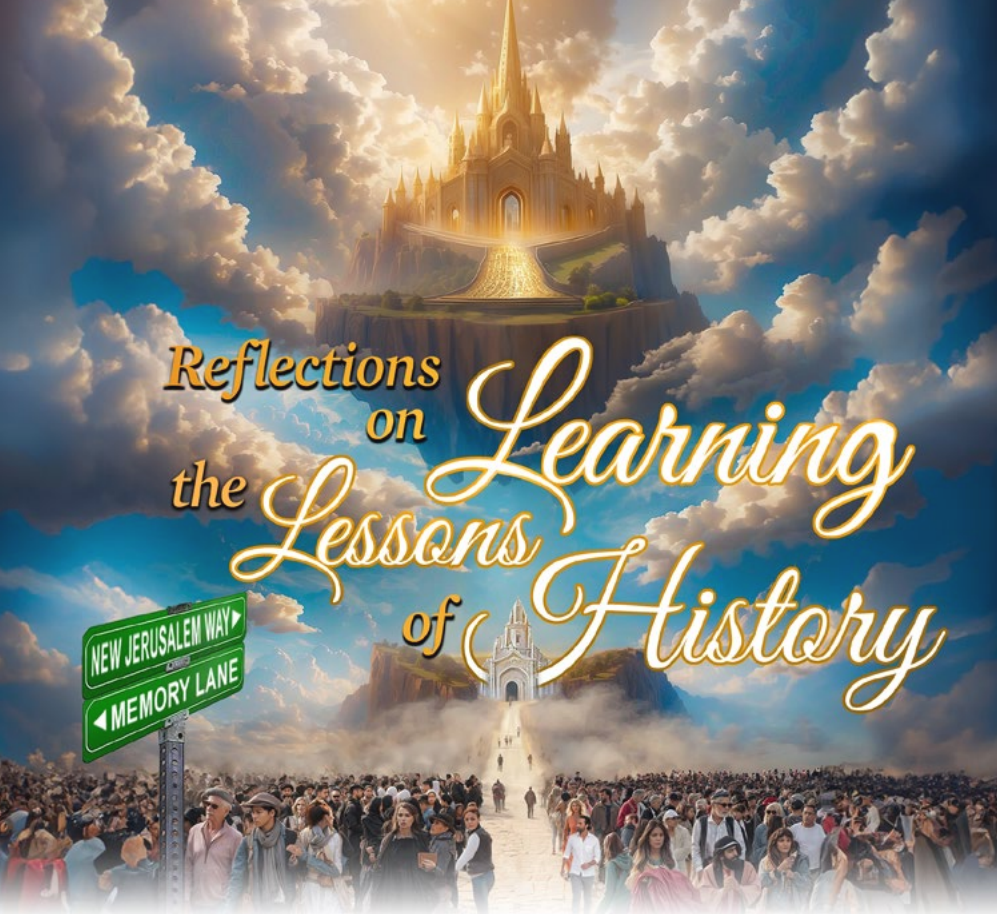
**Diabetes Undone Individual Edition****Box Set** - Tami Bivens, R. D.

Prod. Code: DU.....\$134.99\* (Regular \$149.99)

Understanding the power in your lifestyle is the crucial first step in reversing your type 2 diabetes or pre-diabetes. You can begin to reverse diabetes, right now, immediately. All without outrageous cost, without drugs, and without surgery. Kit includes the following items:

- From Plant to Plate Diabetes Edition Cookbook
- Diabetes Undone Workbook & Journal
- Diabetes Undone 4-DVDs (6-hrs) with Spanish Subtitles
- 8-Laws to a better, longer life DVD that is in English and Spanish





**I**n our newsletter for this quarter, we will go down memory lane to review events that transpired in our church in the 1990s. It is always beneficial to learn from the mistakes of history so that we do not repeat them. During this decade Ron Spear's ministry, Hope International, and its free publication *Our Firm Foundation* became popular and many embraced the message he was

preaching. Elder Spear, who was a pious man, was troubled by the downward theological trajectory of the Seventh-day Adventist Church since the 1950s and expressed concerns fearing that the church was losing its identity.

The North American Division was concerned about what they considered to be a critical attitude toward the leadership of the church, by what they saw

as a divisive spirit and the fact that Hope International was accepting tithe.

The NAD established an Examination of Hope International Committee which prepared a large report titled *Issues* where they expressed their concerns about Hope International. Spear responded to the report in April of 2000 in a lengthy article where he argued that the problem with the *Issues* publication was that it dealt with the side issue of church organization and unity at the exclusion of the serious theological issues that were at the root of the problem.

Spear was not the only one to respond. C. Mervyn Maxwell, long-time professor of church history at Andrews University, and a staunch defender of traditional Adventist theology responded as well, highlighting the real theological issues that were largely ignored by the Examination of Hope International Committee.

The present issue of our *Secrets Unsealed Newsletter* is a reproduction of the letter that C. Mervyn Maxwell, wrote to Elder Robert L. Dale at the North American Division regarding his concerns about the *Issues* publication.

The reproduction of this letter should by no means be conceived as negative criticism or disloyalty toward the leadership or the organization. It should not be seen as a call to disunity but rather to unity upon what Ellen White described as the firm platform of eternal truth:

"I beseech those who are laboring for God not to accept the spurious for the genuine. Let not human reason be placed where divine, sanctifying truth should be. Christ is waiting to kindle faith and love in the hearts of His people. Let not erroneous theories receive countenance from the people who ought to be standing firm on the platform of eternal truth. God calls upon us to hold firmly to the fundamental principles that are based upon unquestionable authority." *Counsels to the Church*, p. 326

The purpose of reproducing Dr. Maxwell's letter is constructive. The same theological concerns which have grown exponentially in the last two decades were shared by Elder Robert Pierson, former president of the General Conference from 1966-1979 in his farewell address to Annual Council. Since then, Elder Ted Wilson has openly presented the same theological concerns in

sermons at Annual Council and the plenary meetings at the last General Conference sessions. I trust that the theological ISSUES can be addressed so that the Seventh-day Adventist Church can be God's instrument to share Present Truth and prepare the world for the soon coming of Jesus.



**Pastor Stephen Bohr**

I do not agree with everything in Our Firm Foundation. I receive a complimentary copy every month, but I do not subscribe to the magazine and have never sent a donation. Ron Spear has called me on the phone a couple of times over a period of several years, but I have never called him. I would rather the magazine didn't exist. But I must add that a number of Seminary teachers, I among them, appreciate quite a bit of what is published in the paper. Though we deeply regret the critical spirit that appears at times and oppose that one-time instruction on tithing, we nonetheless wish that the best of Our Firm Foundation couple appear in the Adventist Review. We would like to see the magazine cease publication but feel that for the time being it fills a useful place in feeding Christ's sheep.



## 1. Feed the Sheep's Four Hungers

The Review has carried a variety of warnings, especially the Perth declaration, aimed against Our Firm Foundation and other private publishing ventures. What I have not yet seen but would like to see is an exploration into the reasons why these private publishing ventures succeed.

Career malcontents are going to publish critical materials no matter what any committee comes up with, and neither spiritual appeals nor demagoguery will make them stop. If the Committee is trying to reach career malcontents, they might as well quote Nehemiah and refuse to waste their time.

I therefore assume that the Committee is trying to reach, not the career malcontents, but the loyal and reasonable church members who send donations to support the independent publishers. So let us ask, why do

these readers support these private publishers? I'd like to propose four reasons, four legitimate hungers.

### a. A hunger for what appears to be solid food

Our Firm Foundation is notable for its lengthy doctrinal articles and for its republished appeals by Ellen G. White. Evidently, then, people are supporting Our Firm Foundation because they want to read lengthy doctrinal articles and they want to read earnest appeals written by Ellen G. White.

### b. A hunger for prophetic interpretation and application

Several of the independent papers consist largely of prophetic interpretation and application. Evidently, then, people pay for these papers because they want to read articles on prophetic interpretation and application.

### c. A hunger for the serious use of Ellen G. White

The conservative publications quote the Ellen G. White writings copiously and do so as if they regarded the writings as authoritative.

### d. A hunger for sincere repentance by church leadership

It is easy to dismiss the Pilgrims Press as merely salacious and erroneous. I assure you that I don't subscribe to it and only rarely even see a copy of it. But a very

large number of Adventist church members in the North American Division are aware that some of their leaders are opinionated, selfish, and power-hungry. Some of our church members hunger for evidence of humility and the character of Christ in their leaders.

Of course, a lot of our NAD members don't have these four hungers or don't have all the them. Some of them scarcely read any of our papers, not even their Union papers or the Review. And some are excited by Spectrum, with its criticism of Ellen G. White and the sanctuary doctrine and its campaign for social activism and a billions-of-years post-creation chronology.

But these less-hungry people aren't sending their tithe to Our Firm Foundation, so they aren't in the Committee's focus. Speaking about those who, I presume, are in the Committee's focus, my first suggestion for reclaiming the loyalty of people who read the independent publications is that as promptly as possible the North American Division acknowledge the four deep hungers I have listed as legitimate and meet them with (a) solid, sound doctrinal articles, (b) solid, sound prophetic interpretation and application, appropriate respect for the inspired authority of Ellen G. White, and d) evidence of humility and the character of Christ as needed among our leaders.





I have heard (the information may be incorrect) that one of the reasons the Committee is preparing a paper against the independent publications is that “third world” ministers are basing sermons on articles in Our Firm Foundation. Of course they are! Our Firm Foundation appears to meet at least three of the four hungers. By contrast, the Adventist Review usually offers little essays not over six type-written pages in length, pays only sporadic attention to the fulfillment of prophecy, virtually never cites Ellen G. White for authoritative direction, and admits the failings of denominational leadership only in extraordinary areas of finance (e.g., Davenport and Harris Pine Mills). In response to intense criticism, the Review has commendably begun the Anchor Point series; but it occupies only a fraction of the available pages.

## 2. Avoid Discrimination

The Quiet Hour accepts tithe.

The Voice of Prophecy accepts tithe.

The people at Hope International know that the Quiet Hour accepts tithe and that the Voice of Prophecy accepts tithe. Many other people either know this or assume it. If the Committee clamps down on Hope International and not on the Quiet Hour and the Voice of Prophecy, it will be guilty of discrimination. Worse, it will likely be ineffective—and will even run the risk of having Our Firm Foundation publish the facts about QH and VOP and embarrass leadership.

I do not for a moment suggest that leadership ought to crack down on either the QH or the VOP, even though acceptance of tithe by both of them is contrary to voted NAD policy. They are both doing a noble work and should be encouraged. When Elder Tucker in the 1950s accepted a call to Berrien Springs, the Northern California Conference refused to let him take the Quiet Hour with him from Oakland. Because the NCC had given the QH a small fraction of its operating cost, it persuaded itself that it had full rights of ownership. Tucker felt abused but stayed loyal. He waited till the QH in Oakland failed before resuming it in Michigan, and when he resumed it, he resolved he would never again accept even a penny from church leadership but would, if possible, give money to the church. And this he and his sons after him have done, with utmost loyalty and

devotion. To discipline the QH for occasionally accepting tithe—like Mrs. White did—from people whose hungers are not being met by leadership, would be a peculiarly abusive demonstration of “kingly power.”

Now let me enlarge the scope of discrimination. If our leadership is going to defrock conservatives, it absolutely must be even-handed and defrock supporters of Spectrum. (Who the principals of Spectrum are can be identified by a glance inside any front cover.)

Let us grant that the General Conference has a right to define where tithe should be paid. Very well, if leadership is going to defrock conservatives for defying denominational policies on where tithe should be paid, what is leadership going to do about the college staff which, scarcely waiting for the ink to dry on the denominational vote restricting extramural competition, ran an ad on the back of Insight saying (as close as I can remember), “Meet You at Court Side.” Their ad listed both the old and the newly added opportunities at their college for extramural competition.

If leadership is going to defrock conservatives for defying “denominational policy” in regard to where tithe should be paid, what is leadership going to do about the presidents of the Carolina Conference and the Southern Union? Denominational

policy requires Conference presidents and Union presidents to respond “normally within three weeks” to appeals from workers who request the Conciliation Process. A certain pastor in the Carolina Conference has appealed at least five times for the Conciliation Process over a period of nearly four years but has been given a deaf ear, in disregard of denominational policy. I have, literally, a drawerful of evidence that this pastor has probably been treated insensitively and unfairly. I have appealed as a Seminary Professor to the leaders directly involved asking them to appoint an independent their party to look into the situation and see if there might be a basis for the pastor’s complaints; but all that each of these (otherwise good) brethren has done in response has been to consult together and report to me (or not report at all) that everything has been done just right. The pastor in question has been fired and is in debt, with a wife who may well be developing cancer that they cannot afford



to treat. Two individuals who are closer to the pastor than I am, two people who for many years have been very loyal tithe-paying Seventh-day Adventists, are currently sending their tithe directly to this pastor. You can appreciate the fact, Bob, that nothing the Committee publishes on tithe paying will persuade these two people to follow “denominational policy” in regard to where to send tithe as long as the brethren I have mentioned decline to follow “denominational policy” on the Conciliation Process. I think you can see their point.

On another theme, who is speaking out officially in favor of the loyal, tithe paying Seventh-day Adventist who for decades have supported our church schools and our missionary magazines and the Voice of Prophecy, etc., who now hate to attend their own churches because of the “evangelical burlesque” (so-called Celebrationism) going on



there in a misguided attempt to retain the unconverted? Who is speaking out on their behalf? If in a given conference no one is, can leadership there in good conscience blame these loyal tithe paying Seventh-day Adventist if, after paying their tithe to the conference for decades, they now send some of it to someone who does have courage to speak out? I don't agree with them in this use of some of their tithe. I only say that if the Committee is serious about persuading such members to return to paying all their tithe to the Conference, then the Committee should persuade Conference leadership to speak up on their behalf in respect to the worship-entertainment issue.

The Committee, I say, must do all in its power to avoid discrimination against easy conservative targets while neglecting to tackle the serious problems that so deeply concern the easy conservative targets.

### 3. Evaluate Actual Losses

Inasmuch as tithe is a major bone of contention, I'd like to ask the Committee to find out just how much money the NAD is actually losing to the independent publications. Is the amount worth the blood that may be shed by a frontal assault?

To determine the money being lost to the NAD, tallying up the income of the independent



publications isn't good enough. It is my current impression that many of the Adventists who are sending donations to these publications would not start sending their money to the Conferences if these publications were today shut down. So long as their four hungers persist unsatisfied, they will send their money elsewhere or bide their time till the publications are replaced with other independent publications.

What I'm trying to say in this section is that the loss of offerings to these publications is not due to the existence of the publications but to the doubtful quality of the Review and the apparent lack of humility and repentance among some of our leaders.

I would also like to urge that the amount of money these publications are receiving is relatively small, and that the proportion of tithe involved is very small.

Suppose Hope International, the largest publisher, does actually receive \$1,250,000 a year as Ron

Spear, when I asked, told me that it does. Well, the total church contributions made by NAD Adventists is over \$600,000,000. So Ron Spear gets only 1/500th (0.2%), a sizable amount to be sure, but scarcely enough to credit him with holding up the general progress of the cause.

But what about the tithe he receives, the increment of his earnings most zealously targeted by denominational leadership? Spear says (I am told) that only about 10% of his \$1,250,000 represents tithe. By nature he seems to be an open man with figures, but let's suppose that the tithe total is closer to 20%. Twenty percent of \$1,250,000 is \$250,000—whereas NAD Adventists give \$400,000,000 tithe each year. So let's figure it out. The tithe that creeps into Hope International represents at most 1/1600th (0.0625%) of total NAD Adventist tithe paying.

Against the amount of money that might be regained by opposing the independent publications, the Committee will want to weigh the value of souls who may become discouraged by a denominational outburst. What will it profit the church to gain several thousand dollars but lose hundreds of souls!

### 4. Remove the Offense

You said in your letter that the Committee dealing with Hope International wants to be





“balanced.” This is commendable; and I expect the objective is sincere. You ask my comments in a desire to achieve this end. Inasmuch as you asked, let me continue to oblige.

What about Spectrum and its parent organization, The Association of Adventist Forums? If you don’t read Spectrum, I don’t blame you. But you probably made an exception and read about Elder Folkenberg and the anonymous donors in the August 1991 issue. Is it all right for Spectrum to be sharply critical of leadership but not for Pilgrim’s Press to be critical? What about “Growing Up with the Beasts” and “Social Reform as Sacrament of the Second Advent” in the May 1991 issue of Spectrum? These articles reinterpret the beasts of Revelation as social ills and the “remnant” as social activists. The Committee should also savor the relish with

which the magazine’s March 1992 issue, on pp. 63-64, reported that Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International won its trademark case with the General Conference. The Committee should then read the articles about Desmond Ford and by Ford himself beginning on pp. 9 and 12 of the March issue.

Inasmuch as this letter is to be published, I am deleting the names of certain individuals whose behavior and theology are strikingly out of harmony with normal Adventism. But I have privately called them to your attention.

What about the seven papers written by honor students at Walla Walla College in the spring of 1991 that have received deserved notoriety? I understand that Elder Folkenberg has reproved the WWC religion faculty, and I’m mighty glad to hope that the report is true. But will there be any real change at WWC?

What are our people to expect of Adventist education as long as strong supporters of Spectrum serve as college presidents? As long as the president of Atlantic Union College is the man who publicly praised another of our retired educators for coming out in favor of a billions-of-years post-creation chronology, can we reasonably expect our conservatives to support our schools?

As earnestly as I am capable of saying it, if the Committee is serious about reclaiming the loyalty of those people who support our independent conservative publications, I urge it first of all to set about removing the most obvious offenses.



## 5. Review Our History

Our Firm Foundation, like some of our other independent publications, (a) speaks of a “new theology” that is says arose

in the 1950s. It (b) emphasizes that Jesus had the same human inheritance as we all have, rather than having been created as clean as Adam. And it (c) talks about perfecting our characters in preparation for the second coming.

These emphases annoy a branch of our conservatives even more than they also annoy our liberals. These annoyed conservatives almost angrily scold Our Firm Foundation for emphasizing doctrines that are “not generally agreed on” in our denomination.

But does their distaste for Our Firm Foundation on these points prove that the magazine is wrong on these points?

I have taught a course in the development of Seventh-day Adventist theology for over twenty years, requiring me to do constant research. I have also lived at the Seminary with my antennae out for the same length of time, and have served as a minister since 1946. I can say unequivocally that in the 1950s Adventist theology as taught in our NAD centers did undergo a change, one that can be attributed especially but not exclusively to two of the editors of Questions on Doctrine and to at least two fascinating and influential Seminary professors—a change which has been perpetuated and (we must recognize) distorted by students who rose quickly to positions of educational and administrative prominence. Yes, indeed, there is a “new theology,” and Our Firm Foundation is historically correct when it refers to it.

Perhaps, however, we should say, more precisely, that certain views which had been held for some time by a minority were, in the 1950s, reformulated, given new emphasis, and taken up by a large group of those Adventists who enjoyed the advantage of attending our schools. I believe in our schools, but I observe that the theological cleavage which exists today among conservative NAD Adventists is largely between those who have studied the writings of non-SDA theologians

in our colleges on the one hand and, on the other hand, those who deprived of an SDA college education, have confined their study mostly to the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White. I am repeatedly struck with the way new converts, fresh from the study of the Bible and Ellen G. White, side with the older SDA theology, while so-called “second-” and “third-generation” Adventists tend to side with the new theology.

Maybe I should add at this point that I think that some language used by the QOD editors in defense of their product set an ugly stage that leadership still needs to sweep clean. Deeply embarrassed to have the Evangelicals discover that many Adventists did not agree with QOD’s new theology, the QOD editors cruelly denounced the conservatives as a “lunatic fringe.” I knew a lot of those lunatics and respected them highly. They included the fine PUC teachers who set the tone of my ministry. Well, leaders can say things like this, but it seems hardly reasonable for them to expect people they call lunatics to enjoy paying them their tithe.

The cry is often raised by the new-theology conservatives that Our Firm Foundation and similar publications are all wrong when they insist on the view

that Jesus was not given a pre-fall nature like Adam’s. These new-theology conservatives say that the publications are wrong in that they insist on a view of Christ’s nature that has never been accepted as a Fundamental Belief by the church as a whole.

But if the denomination has never taken an official stand on this subject, why is it wrong for the old-theology conservatives to publish articles on the subject but perfectly right for the new-theology conservatives to do so? New-theology conservatives such as the editors of Our Firm Foundation are frequently criticized for bringing up the issue. But let’s face it; they didn’t start the argument! The argument was started publicly by the 1949 edition of Bible Readings and the 1957 publication of Questions on Doctrine, and by certain Seminary professors and others in the years that followed. And the pot has been kept boiling by the new-theology liberals and conservatives, who now control several of our magazines and colleges. One recalls the old quip: “You started the fight when you hit me back.”

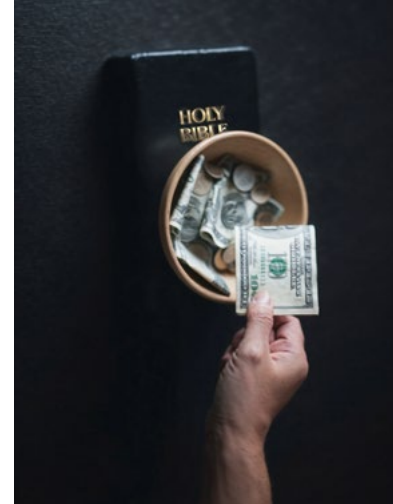


The fact that new-theology people control the chief NAD publications and colleges represents choices made by entities of the NAD. Choices involve consequences. If NAD entities have chosen such editors and presidents, NAD must expect a reaction. It is in my opinion irresponsible and unsportsmanlike for NAD to choose partisans of new-theology views which have not been officially accepted by the General Conference and then cry foul when loyal church members publish evidence in favor of the old-theology views which they committed themselves to when they became Seventh-day Adventists.

## 6. Assess the Implications of Voluntarism

I have just spoken about the convictions of people who adopted certain understandings when they became Seventh-day Adventists. If church leadership thinks the time has come to teach different views from the views being taught when these people became Seventh-day Adventists, that is one thing. But to treat people as rebellious, heretical, disloyal, and legalist because they choose to continue to believe what they sincerely committed themselves to years ago, seems gross and boorish. Commitment is precious, and church membership is sacred.

Church membership is also entirely voluntary.



Payment of tithe and offerings in the Seventh-day Adventist movement is totally unenforceable. Loyalty is unenforceable. Ours is a voluntary movement.

Members will pay or will not pay tithe as they please. They will be loyal or disloyal as they please, and no one can force them to be any different.

How important, then, that our leaders seek consensus rather than political victories. Our previous General Conference presidency was marked by increasingly sharp politicization at the expense of consensus. You and the Committee are painfully aware of this.

If leadership wants to settle for, say, a vote of 60%, let I do so. No one can stop it. But let leadership recognize that when it settles for 60% it runs the real risk of alienating many of the other 40%. Alienation and loyalty are opposite principles.



The trouble with administrating a voluntary organization on the basis of major-fraction votes is that the volunteers who are unconvinced may simply stop being volunteers. How much better, how very much better, for the church to move slowly enough and persuasively enough to secure consensus!

One of the seething causes of the current wave of unofficial publications is frustration with disenfranchisement. Church leadership, apparently intent on retaining our educated liberals, has fond ways politically and editorially to give several of the denomination's colleges, periodicals, and key administrative positions to educated liberals. Time after time our conservatives, the ones who still read the Spirit



of Prophecy, have been frustrated. Their articles have been rejected by denominational editors. And even when they have written "letters to the editor," too often their letters haven't been published unless a contrary letter was available for publication next to theirs, to make their letters look foolish. All of this maneuvering has left many of our thinking conservatives frustrated. But they love our church more than they love their money. They are alarmed at the way things are going because they care enough to be alarmed; and so, well, they speak up through their own publications, and they put their money where their mouths and hearts are. They are, after all, volunteers generous, giving volunteers who support the kind of Adventism they believe in.

## 7. Conclusion

It is my conviction, as I said in the beginning, that Our Firm Foundation ought to close down. We ought not to need it. We ought to have an Adventist Review that feeds our people's legitimate hungers without the accusing spirit and without the false tithe advice sometimes found in Our Firm Foundation. The Review—and our colleges, pastors, and teachers—should feed our people's hunger for solid, sound doctrinal instruction, for solid, sound material dealing

with the fulfillment of prophecy, and for solid respect for the inspired authority of Ellen G. White. And our administrators should use the columns of the Review to make earnest confession, acknowledging specific wrongs and offering specific restitution.

The Committee (it seems to me) should persuade leadership to act without discrimination, removing offenses, and counting the possible gain in money against the possible loss in souls.

In brief, in dealing with the supporters of Our Firm Foundation, the Seventh-day Adventist movement needs to display strong, clear-headed, moral leadership. God give us moral leadership, armed by faith, winged by prayer, and informed by the Spirit of Prophecy, its soul cleansed and its influence enhanced where necessary through public confession and repentance. -- C. Mervyn Maxwell

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**M**icrobes. Trillions of them. Bacteria, viruses, fungi, and other microscopic organisms live on or within our bodies, most of which reside in the gut. According to recent research, all these living communities make up the human microbiota, comprising about 0.3% of overall body weight.<sup>1</sup> Though commonly associated with illnesses, these living, primarily single-celled organisms usually coexist harmoniously with us, providing many vital functions in supporting human health.

### **They Work Hard for their Money**

So what do these hitchhikers do for us, anyway? From birth, the human infant is exposed to a world of microbes busy with tasks like digesting breastmilk in infancy, regulating the immune system, digesting fiber, detoxifying harmful chemicals, and influencing brain function and behavior. They also protect

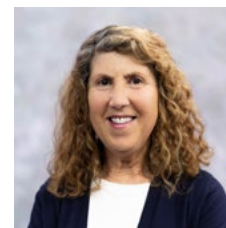
us from disease-causing bacteria and produce valuable vitamins such as B12 and K. Even more interestingly, researchers have recently found that the gut microbiota can help or cause resistance to weight loss.<sup>2</sup>

### **Happy Meals for our Bugs**

In light of the critical roles that our microbes play, let's consider what it takes to keep them happy and thriving. First, maintaining a balance of healthy and unhealthy microbes in the intestines is crucial. Imbalances in the gut microbiota (called dysbiosis) can cause an increased risk of conditions like inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), celiac disease, obesity, cardiovascular disease, allergies, asthma, and metabolic syndrome, among others. Changes in the makeup of our microbes can occur through various factors, including diet, toxins, drugs and pathogens.<sup>3</sup>

Fortunately, there are some simple things we can do to create a healthy environment

for our beneficial microscopic friends. These include eating a variety of whole, unprocessed plant foods, limiting artificial sweeteners, eating prebiotic foods, breastfeeding for at least six months, eating whole grains, eating foods rich in polyphenols (like berries, plums, apples, spinach, onion, and some seasonings) and limiting antibiotic use when possible. Eating fermented foods like yogurt or sauerkraut has also been shown to support healthy bacterial growth.<sup>4</sup> Taking a probiotic supplement can be helpful in certain conditions, such as when there is a disruption in the normal balance of bacterial growth.



**Jeanne Wheaton**  
M.S., R.D.N.

So, what are prebiotics, anyway? Prebiotics are those substances, typically non-digestible fibers, that feed our good microbes. Some foods exceptionally high in this type of fiber include apples, artichokes, garlic, onions, leeks, asparagus, berries, bananas, flaxseed, and green vegetables. Generally, fruits, vegetables, beans, and whole grains are good sources.

Sound familiar? It seems that the Adventist pioneers got it right in the 1860s when they shifted from an animal-based diet to one based on plants. Little did they know then the far-reaching benefits this diet could have, even at the microbial level.

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