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Adventist Journey

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My Journey

I play the piano and the viola, but I have a singing ministry as well. Singing is a comfort to me. It's one way that I like to share God's Word and, well, just God. After the shooting, as the ambulance I was in arrived at the hospital, I started singing "God Will Take Care of You"—and I just kept singing. Visit <https://vimeo.com/nadadventist/ajsamanthagrady> for more of Samantha's story.

SAMANTHA GRADY,
high school junior, and Pathfinder



Cover Photo by Dan Weber

Dear Reader: The publication in your hands represents the collaborative efforts of the North American Division and *Adventist World* magazine, which is inserted halfway through *Adventist Journey* (after page 8). Please enjoy both magazines!

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ADVENTIST JOURNEY

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Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School 11th grader Samantha Grady is a Pathfinder and member of the Pompano Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church in Florida.

Dan Weber



Samantha's STORY

Reflecting on an
all-too-familiar narrative

BY KIMBERLY LUSTE MARAN

During fourth period Samantha Grady and her classmates at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida were learning about the 1936 Summer Olympics in Germany and the Holocaust. The students were typing on their computers when shots rang out.

Samantha froze in disbelief until her best friend, Helena, nudged her. "Sam," said Helena as she pushed Samantha in front of her, and the girls dashed to the side of the classroom where two boys had moved a file cabinet. The sounds of shots grew louder as the students squeezed together behind meager protection, quietly shaking, texting, crying.

Helena whispered in Samantha's ear, "Grab a book, grab a book!" Both girls took books off the shelf and clutched them before their faces. The book Samantha held was flimsy, but having it steadied her. As the gunman turned the AR-15 rifle into their classroom, she thought, *I'm not going to die. I'm going to survive this.*

The deafening, staccato thwack of bullets as they broke glass, pierced flesh, and ricocheted off furniture and walls was all the students could hear for long seconds. As Samantha saw classmates get hit, a heaviness propelled her forward. The heavy feeling didn't abate as bullets continued striking the wall. Afraid to move, afraid to make a sound, Samantha stared at her injured

Below: Students and visitors stop in front of the Parkland, Florida, high school where 17 were killed and 17 were injured during a February 14, 2018, mass shooting.

Pieter Damsteegt



classmates. Recognizing how seriously wounded Helena was, Samantha focused on keeping her best friend calm as the gunman moved away from their classroom. In the fraught silence, Samantha—and others—dialed 911.

Another classmate hiding behind the laptop cart noticed Samantha's injuries and told her that she was "grazed." Samantha dutifully repeated this to the operator. The students whispered to each other and waited. Samantha gingerly checked pulses and comforted classmates. Soon they heard male voices outside the door. Risking a quick peek, Samantha saw "SWAT" printed on the men's uniforms. "It's the police," she said with relief. "OK, we're safe."

A police officer broke out the bottom of the window, unlocked the door, and entered the room. He asked who was injured. The students replied accordingly, as they were able. Those who could leave unassisted were quickly escorted out of the building. They were told to run across the street and up the hill. The shooter was still at large.

Fear drove Samantha to race toward the hill. She stopped behind a truck and called her parents. "There was a shooting," she said to her stunned mom. "I'm OK. I'm hurt, but I'm OK. I promise you I'm OK. . . . If you don't see me, I'm in an ambulance."

Samantha tapped one of the ambulance personnel and, showing him where she could feel stickiness seeping through her black shirt, said, "I'm injured."

The paramedic checked her, asked her to sit down, and told other care providers that she was shot "through and through." Samantha was soon helped into an ambulance. One bullet had grazed her, another had ricocheted into her chest.

As they arrived at the hospital, Samantha started singing "God Will Take Care of You." The chorus, the verses . . . she kept singing as she was treated.

As they arrived at the hospital, Samantha started singing "God Will Take Care of You." She kept singing as she was treated for gunshot wounds.

After more than five hours in the hospital, and 15 staples later, Samantha was released. Her parents, who had frantically driven to the hospital, took Samantha home. Church families who had gone to the hospital in support also departed.

Samantha's physical recovery took several weeks; emotional and psychological recovery continues.

Some might say Samantha was lucky. Samantha and her family know it was more. The accompanying interview, which took place one month after the Parkland shooting, contains insights into their family and their faith.

Kimberly Luste Maran is an associate director of communication for the North American Division.



Turn page for Grady family interview.

Samantha's Story

Faith and family help Florida high school shooting victim recover.

KIMBERLY LUSTE MARAN:

We've learned what happened the day a gunman entered your high school, but let's go back briefly to fourth period. What thoughts went through your mind?

SAMANTHA GRADY (SG): Before he came to our classroom, when I initially just crouched there, I distinctly remember thinking, *I am not going die. I am going to survive this.* That helped me calm down. It helped me focus on what was at hand and what I had to do to get out of that situation. I really do think it was a reassurance from God because if I did not have that reassurance, I don't know what would've happened.

If I hadn't known God, if my upbringing hadn't been what it was, I would have been completely terrified in that situation and my future would have been uncertain. I'm just happy that that reassurance came in the upbringing that I had.

You mention your upbringing. You've grown up with your

church family. What's that been like for you and your parents?

SALLY GRADY: We are a close church, a close family. Sometimes after sunset we'll even hangout in the parking lot to talk and so forth. But when this incident took place, the support was tremendous. Everyone was calling. They were crying; they were so caring. Many came to the hospital. I said to my husband, "If we did not belong to the Pompano Beach church, or belong to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, we would have been alone." We've had calls from Alaska, South Africa, all over. That's a tremendous blessing.

JAMES GRADY: The phones never stop ringing. It's always a member. Some call every day asking, "How is she doing?" But we've heard from people who moved, left this church, and moved to Georgia and other parts of the country.

SG: I've known everyone since I was about 9 years old so just growing up with them the bond

This [tragedy] was something real. People were hurt and people died.

gets tighter. We have our orchestra that we play with on Sabbath and we have a little orchestra chamber group as well. So we have little activities that we used to do, and camping with Pathfinders. That was real; you really get to know a person when you go camping.

You're a junior in high school and in the Pathfinder Team Leadership Training (TLT) program. What motivated you to continue with Pathfinders?

SG: I'm not the best speaker in public, I find it hard to collect my thoughts sometimes. Until recently I wasn't a leader. Just being a part of the TLT thing, I knew it'd force me to get out of my shell and take on a leadership position.

Doing all those activities, participating in Pathfinders, just brought us all close together and, you know, we are a family. I can honestly say that all these people who go to this church are my brothers and sisters, not only in spirit but in connection because I grew up with them. It's like a family here and it's always been that way and always will be.

You play the piano and viola, and you have a singing ministry. What else are you involved in, and why?

SG: I'm in the orchestra at my school. I'm also in a club with friends called First Priority, a non-denominational Christian club where we all come together and



James, Samantha, and Sally Grady stand together in the foyer of the Pompano Beach church in Florida. *Dan Weber*

read Scripture, pray, and eat together. We have youth pastors speak too.

I'm also in our school's medically based club, which I love. It's for students who want to go into the medical field. They do competitions, but they are on Sabbath, so I don't go. But I do study the information, and listen to the speakers they bring in. I've always wanted to be a pediatrician. I love kids and I've always wanted to help people; so those two criteria point toward doctor/pediatrician.

You mentioned the friendships you've made in the clubs at school. Your best friend Helena died from her wounds. Tell us about her.

SG: Helena was amazing. Although a lot of people described her as quiet, I don't remember her that way. If anyone was in trouble, she would put her own things aside and just go to that person and help them. Not only that, but she came to church with us for a few months, every week, which was really nice.

She also joined First Priority with me. We would go almost every Wednesday to hang out, read and worship. . . . Helena was selfless in the shooting situation. She got me to move, and she was the one who told me to hold up the book. When I was shoved, either it was the bullet entering my system or it was her pushing me out of the way. I like to think it was her pushing me out of the way. The fact that she pushed my shoulders and said, "Go"—without her I don't think I would have gotten to the spot I did, which really helped save my life.

I miss her. But I'm very thankful to her. Although it's a horrible thing that she is not here anymore, I'm still super thankful that she did take the initiative.

Helena, as you've described, was an important factor in your survival. You also mentioned prayer. How has prayer helped you through this entire ordeal?

SG: I did pray while I was crouching in the classroom, while I had the rush of reassurance. I prayed, "God, it's in Your hands; You know what You're doing." Just having that foundation of trust in God, recognizing that He knows what He's doing, helped. It helped to calm me down, praying that "God, You are in control, You know what you're doing."

This [tragedy] was something real. People were hurt and people died. I've gone forth and been interviewed because I want people to know what happened. Unfortunately, 17 people died, but one thing I do have to say is that God is in control.

My prayers have definitely changed. Prayer is more meaningful. It's a comfort. Knowing that God's in control and just praying throughout the whole ordeal helped a lot and definitely reaffirmed my faith.

Mr. and Mrs. Grady, how has this experience affected you?

JAMES GRADY: I can't begin to tell you how much we love Samantha. She is just so precious. I could talk for a long time about what actually happened, but when we got that phone call I nearly died.

We ran to the car; I drove to the hospital like a lunatic. We were just two inches away from losing her and I can't get that out of my mind. I pray every chance I get, thanking God for what He did for us. I feel so bad for the parents who lost their children. I can't imagine what they're going through.



Helena Ramsay is remembered by friends and family on the front lawn of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. Ramsay and 16 others lost their lives as a result of a mass shooting at the school. *Pieter Damsteegt*

It was a disaster, a terrible situation, and a 17-year-old kid shouldn't see something like this that they have to carry for the rest of their life. At least now they're doing something about it. Thank God there have already been changes as far as Broward County is concerned.

SALLY GRADY: I do believe God saved Samantha for a reason. I pray for Samantha at night when she's sleeping. I go over to her bed and I pray for her, I always have. We pray constantly.

Samantha, we've talked about how you've been involved in creating awareness, talking about the problem of violence in schools. What would you tell a high schooler who's now afraid?

SG: First, God is with you and you're not alone in your fear. . . . One thing my mom always says that has stuck with me is that God never gives you anything that you can't bear.

The fact that this has come into your life, the fact that you're feeling all of this terrible emotion and just overwhelmed feeling, doesn't mean you can't bear it. You've got this; you can work your way through it. God is with you, and from the perspective of a person who went through this, it will get better. Even if you've lost someone.

If you're terrified of going to school, I understand. I may not be terrified of going to school, but I understand the fear. Every day I regain some level of that comfort of being back there but, either way, it's still a process. With God's help all things are possible.

Visit <http://www.nadadventist.org/news/samanthas-story> for more, including the video interview with James, Sally, and Samantha Grady.

THIS MAGAZINE
CONTINUED AFTER

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Enrolling in Blue Mountain Academy is not just the beginning of an exceptional academic experience, but it is a spiritual investment as well. We know affording Adventist education can be difficult, so we offer multiple forms of financial aid—and over \$200,000 in scholarships! Our scholarships recognize you for the things you already do—from good academics to playing an instrument to involvement in your church, such as Pathfinders. Check out our website for our full list of scholarships.

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EDUCATION STRENGTHENED THROUGH FUNDRAISING

BY PHILANTHROPIC SERVICE FOR INSTITUTIONS

Tests and testimonials prove that students emerge from Adventist educational experiences with an education for which no apology is needed. Even more important, the corollary effects of spiritual and faith decisions, as well as opportunities for wholistic growth, are significant and observable.

So how can our K-12 schools, especially academies, maintain their quality and continue to grow as well? One vital aspect is finances and fundraising. The Philanthropic Service for Institutions (PSI), a North American Division department, addressed these challenges and more during a February 2018 meeting with school representatives from across the division.

“Finances are crucial,” said Lilya Wagner, PSI director. “No longer are subsidies and tuition income sufficient. A significant number of academies have engaged in fundraising, one aspect of academy operations that is relatively new and, at times, not accepted as a positive factor or even a necessity.”

Wagner added, “Fortunately, the academies that can prove that fundraising does work in that educational setting are growing.” Proof of this came during the mid-February meeting of 14 NAD K-12 schools.

The mix of academies and one large elementary school ranged from those experienced in successful fundraising to newcomers eager to undertake this type of program. During PSI staff-facilitated meetings that spanned two days, participants shared successful strategies, discussed problems and issues, learned new and useful information, and considered how more academies could become engaged in achieving sustainable income through fundraising.

“Paramount in the discussion was the concept, widely accepted in the nonprofit

world, that the context is highly important—the more successful the institution, the more people will want to see it move forward and will support it with funds,” said Wagner. “These 14 institutions are all part of an ongoing program of PSI, the Model for Academy Philanthropy [MAP].”

The institutions include Thunderbird Academy (Arizona); Greater Miami Academy, Forest Lake Academy, and Forest Lake Education Center (Florida); Pine Forge Academy (Pennsylvania); Fletcher Academy and Mount Pisgah Academy (North Carolina); North Dallas Adventist Academy (Texas); Red River Valley Junior Academy (Manitoba, Canada); Indiana Academy (Indiana); Highland View Academy (Maryland); Shenandoah Valley Academy (Virginia); and Greater Atlanta Adventist Academy (Georgia).

Building the Program

PSI also convened a meeting approximately a year ago of academies that have successfully implemented, maintained, and expanded their fundraising, whether or not they were part of the MAP program. This group, the Advancing Academy Philanthropy (AAP) participants, was convened by invitation and offered suggestions for programs and materials, most of which PSI has developed and disseminated.



Representatives from 14 Adventist academies and schools in North America gather for meetings at the NAD headquarters in Columbia, Maryland.

Mark Lindemann

While it is still true that fundraising is at times not practiced in some NAD organizations or subsectors, Wagner said “It’s important to note that many schools in that most valuable subsector of the division—the educational system—have made great strides in engaging in fundraising and have seen results.”

“Fundraising has allowed us to not turn away any student because of finances,” said PSI meeting attendee Janel Haas Ware, Development and Alumni Relations director for Shenandoah Valley Academy.

“Fundraising is partnership engaging,” said Chris Juhl, Forest Lake Education Center principal and meeting attendee. “It’s about people wanting to invest in a program that’s meaningful to the children.”

PSI is an office that serves the NAD as a consulting service unlike any other in the Adventist system. Visit www.philanthropicservice.com for more information.

NAD NEWS BRIEFS



AT EHUDDLE, ATTENDEES ENGAGE IN EVANGELISTIC LEADERSHIP VISIONING

More than 200 Adventist pastors and church and institutional leaders from across the North American Division (NAD) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church gathered February 19-21, 2018, for the third eHuddle, an annual evangelism visioning and leadership meeting.

Representatives this year included pastors and administrative leaders from each of the NAD's nine union conferences and almost every one of the 59 conferences; Adventist health-care officials; and school administrators.

"We aren't here to delete the word 'evangelism,'" said Jose Cortes, Jr., NAD Ministerial Association associate director and church planting and evangelism director, at the beginning of the first session of eHuddle. "We're here to continue a conversation that has already begun to redefine evangelism for North America. We're here to contribute and help create a shared vision that contains the definition, evangelism outcomes, and best practices."

The five specific outcome areas voted previously include engaging, empowering, and equipping all members in evangelism and mission; fostering acceptance, access, and spiritual safety in all our churches; providing intentional discipleship for all members; supporting multiplication of community-based church plants; and encouraging church leaders to provide multiple opportunities for people to make decisions for Jesus through baptism and membership.

The mix of presentations, video stories, and discussion sessions also allowed attendees to focus on ways "to reach, retain, and reclaim the people of North America with Jesus' mission and message of compassion, hope and wholeness," the NAD's definition of evangelism as shared at eHuddle.

"This eHuddle comes as a response to requests for help from our pastors across the division," said Cortes. "Our leaders, our members, and our churches should embrace evangelism in North America

David Franklin, pastor of the Miracle City church in Baltimore, Maryland, offers practical ways for churches to build a quality reputation in their communities.

Pieter Damsteegt

as a lifestyle. Not as something that we do, but as something that we are—something everyone can be a part of—and this meeting outlines practical approaches to spreading the Word of God in our division."

During the three-day meeting more than 12 special presentations, most of them live-streamed on Facebook, were followed by visioning discussions around tables. Speakers covered a wide range of topics, including church revitalization, reaching missing members, church membership trends, and ministering to large people groups (including young adults and single mothers and their families).

Rowell Puedivan, an eHuddle attendee and pastor of the Eau Claire/Chippewa Valley district in Wisconsin, with five churches and one lay-led church plant, especially appreciated learning about the Growing Young ministry, which helps connect young adults to church, and single moms' ministries.

"It's good for us to hear experiences by different people in different ministries, whether it be traditional evangelism or more progressive evangelism, any evangelism," Puedivan said. "A lot of times we compartmentalize in our ministries. We say, 'This is evangelism and this is just outreach.' But really it's a way of life. Everything that we talked about here today, if we put that into the right context, we [see] that outreach is evangelism, personal or collective."

—*Kimberly Luste Maran,*
NAD Communication

Jacob Prabhakar poses with a patient during the January 2018 It Is Written's Eyes for India clinic.

It Is Written

Fresh Produce Giveaway Lays Foundation for “Friendship Evangelism”

On April 8, 2018, thousands of pounds of spinach, kale, mango slices, and bananas were distributed at the NAD headquarters to residents in need.

Responding to advertisements placed on Facebook, shared with students in local public schools, and posted in a nearby food bank, approximately 125 people filled reusable grocery bags—provided by Adventist Community Services (ACS)—with fresh greens.

“We have a high school group that donates pantry canned goods, but we don’t get the fresh vegetables. So this is an excellent opportunity,” said Edwinda Qualls, a resident of Parkview Senior Complex.

The giveaway was organized by the NAD Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department, which arranged for 25,000 pounds of food to be donated from grocery stores. Representatives of ACS and NAD administration were also among the dozens of volunteers who assisted during the outreach.

“We made a promise that the building would be used for mission to reach the community,” said Dan Jackson, NAD president. “But this is an unexpected surprise. We had no clue we could get a hold of [this much] food that we could give to the community.”



EYES FOR INDIA BRINGS SIGHT TO THE BLIND

It Is Written’s Eyes for India team was recently invited to a Hindu temple to open the eyes of blind people. From January 3 through 17, 2018, the medical team conducted cataract eye surgeries in the remote forest village of Hardiakol, Barabanki, in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, India’s most populous state. A total of 1,672 cataract surgeries were performed. After the procedures, printed materials were shared with the patients.

Led by Jacob Prabhakar, M.D., It Is Written’s Eyes for India project

seeks to restore sight to some of the estimated 15 million blind people living in India through a simple cataract surgery and intraocular lens implantation. “This initiative will help as many as possible and restore their hope and sight,” said Prabhakar.

“Thousands of lives have been changed in just days by a simple eye surgery,” Prabhakar said. “People who were once blind are now able to see because of the kindness of many donors who make this happen on a regular basis.”

—Cassie Matchim Hernandez,
It Is Written

The team was left with one third of the food by the time the distribution ended. This was in stark contrast to the previous food giveaway in November when the 17,000 pounds of food available ran out because of the large turnout.

This year’s predicament, however, created another opportunity. Organizers of the giveaway donated the remaining food to a local food bank and the county’s Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center. Volunteers were also encouraged

to take some leftover food to share with their neighbors.

“Volunteers responded positively; it really turned into friendship evangelism,” said Melissa Reid, associate director of NAD Public Affairs and Religious Liberty. “God showed us that He doesn’t always work in the same way—He just wants us to be consistent when it comes to our willingness to supply the needs of others.”

—Mylon Medley, NAD
Communication

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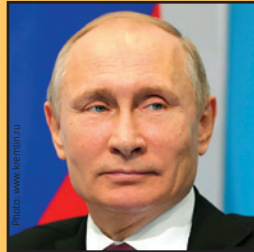
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BY DANIEL R. JACKSON

Where We Were, Where We're Going

Evangelism continues to be the lifeblood of the church. We'll never do away with it, but it may morph.

Where We Were

It's a fundamentally different world. In order for us to understand where the challenges lie, we need to understand where we've come from. We need to understand that people in this church dreamed huge dreams. I remember when we were reaching 4 and 5 million members, and we thought that was pretty good. Today we have about 20 million members—and 20 million isn't where membership needs to be.

People with names such as William Fagal, George Vandeman, and H.M.S Richards, Sr. helped shape the church. I was recently at one of our colleges talking to a group of young people, and I mentioned the name H.M.S. Richards. The person looked at me and said, "Who's that?" We need to *not* forget, but rather remember the dreams and visions and the exploitation of technology that occurred in the past. To forget about foundations is foolish. We cannot throw out everything as we explore the new.

Look Forward

As we keep the past in mind we need to recognize a new reality, and Jesus helps us with this. We need to look forward. There is a commonsense element to the idea of creating new things. When we read

carefully the words of Jesus we discover that He urges newness. He urges new wineskins (Matt. 9:17; Mark 2:22). He doesn't say abandon the old, but He says to try the new.

This quote, sometimes attributed to Henry Ford, is apt: "If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said, 'Faster horses.'" It takes time, but change is not only inevitable but possible, and it may be mediated in the name of Jesus. It will be, it can be, and it should be good.

There will be a movement here. The world that we live in today is not like the world of yesterday. We used to be the purveyors of

knowledge. Today, at best, we facilitate community. We must look forward.

Commit to the Lord

"Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans" (Prov. 16:3, NIV). We must lay our plans before the Lord. This is, after all, a spiritual enterprise. This is not about a job, a career, or an organization. The plan of salvation is not about the Seventh-day Adventist Church. But the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been given the privilege of being a facilitator of the plan God has for this planet. It's about God's plan to redeem human beings.

How do we think through the world we live in? Look at the issues that confront us and how we may speak effectively to our world for Jesus Christ. Think practically. Then just do it.

It takes courage to do traditional evangelism. It takes courage to introduce new elements in terms of how we reach out. It takes courage.

The time has come to quit worrying about someone complaining, because someone will always complain. Complaints and complainers will always be with us. But if out of fear we hesitate or drop an initiative that God has laid on our heart, then we're better off golfing.

Get Ready

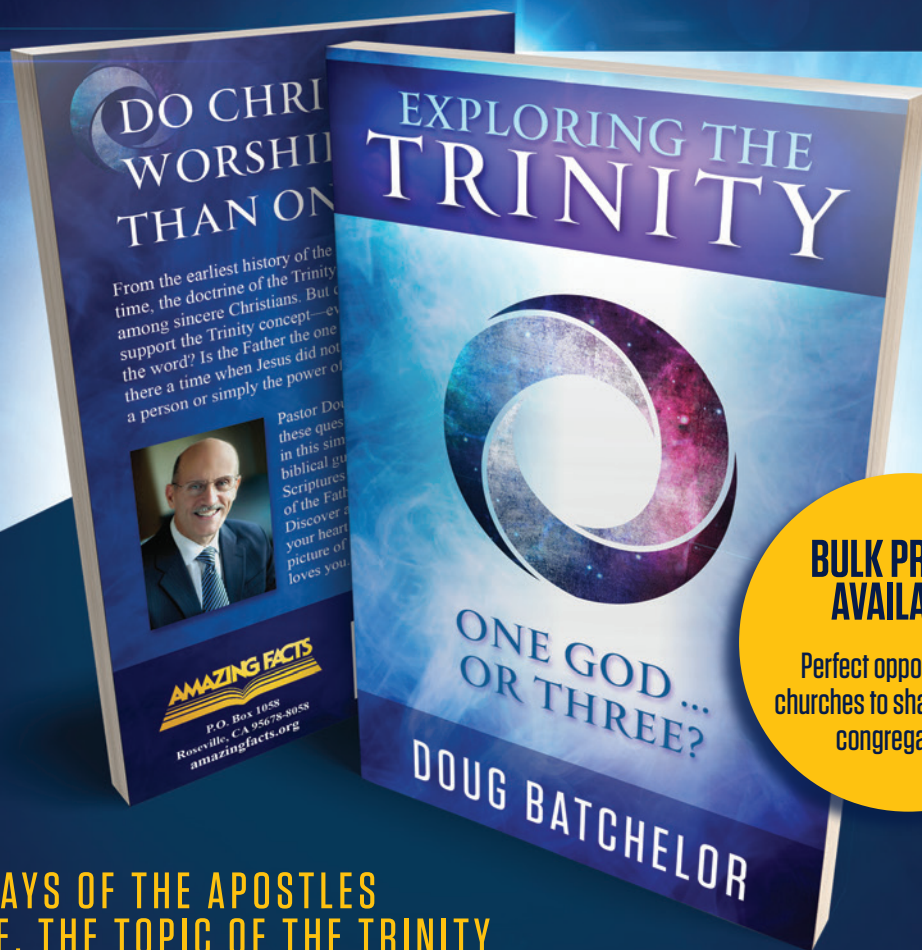
This is about the souls of human beings for whom Jesus came to give His life; God has called us for the special purpose of conveying that. It doesn't matter where we are on Planet Earth. It doesn't matter whether we're in Australia or Canada, the United States or Bermuda, Guam, or Micronesia. Just do it. Don't be afraid. Move ahead.

Daniel R. Jackson is president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America. This article is based on Jackson's address at the 2018 eHuddle in February.

Evangelism continues to be the lifeblood of the church. We'll never do away with it, but it may morph.

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