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# Adventist Journey

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## My Journey

God's given me the opportunity to help shape the lives of young people. God led me to work in the public school system; this is year 22. Every day I pray to God that I will be a positive influence—a reflection of Jesus—to my students, to my colleagues, and to the families that I work with. It's the mission field God put me in.

Visit [nadadventist.org/ajjonathancalderon](http://nadadventist.org/ajjonathancalderon) for more of Calderon's story.

**JONATHAN CALDERON,**  
*elementary school teacher, Kennewick, Washington*



Cover photo by Art Brondo

**Dear Reader:** The publication in your hands represents the collaborative efforts of the North American Division and *Adventist World* magazine (Justin Kim, editor), which follows *Adventist Journey* (after page 16). Please enjoy both magazines!

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## ADVENTIST JOURNEY

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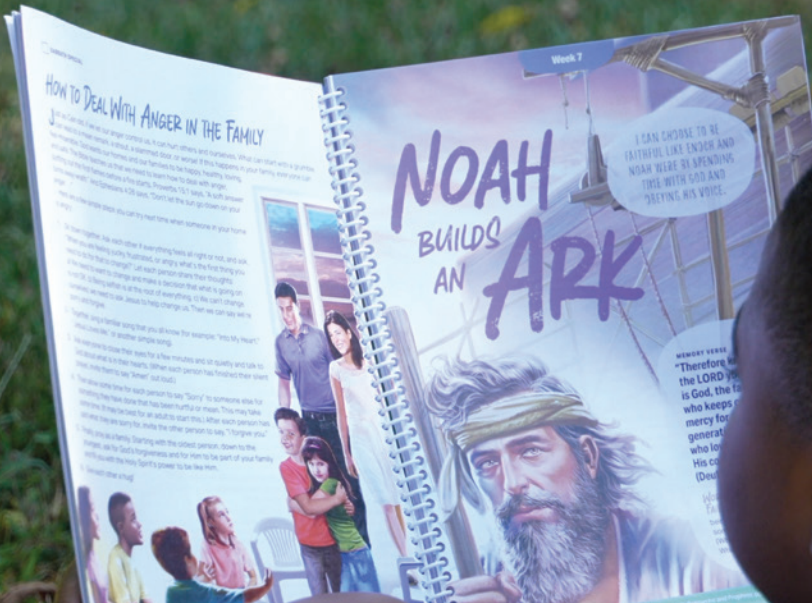
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# New Children's Sabbath School Curriculum

## to Roll Out in January 2025

The Alive in Jesus Sabbath School pilot program in the North American Division. Michele Marques/North American Division

North American Division churches encouraged to place orders for first materials of the new Alive in Jesus curriculum.

**BY KIMBERLY LUSTE MARAN, WITH REPORTING FROM NINA ATCHESON AND SHERRI UHRIG**

Sabbath Schools in Seventh-day Adventist churches around the world will see a big change as the Alive in Jesus curriculum launches in January 2025, with the rollout of materials for babies (birth through 12 months) and beginners (1-3 years). The rollout will continue for the next three years for age groups kindergarten and primary (2026), followed by junior and teen (projected for 2027), and youth (projected for 2028).

Adventist Book Center encourages ordering now in preparation for January 2025. The Alive in Jesus parent book, *Baby Steps: Growing in Jesus*, can be viewed here. AdventSource, the official leadership resource

center for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America, offers additional resources such as memory verse cards and wall murals, available here.<sup>1</sup>

Developed by the General Conference Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department in collaboration with the church's world divisions, including the North American Division (NAD), the new curriculum replaces GraceLink, Junior PowerPoints, Real-Time Faith, and Cornerstone Connections.

"Alive in Jesus is fresh, engaging, and relevant," says Sherri Uhrig, Children's Ministries director for the NAD. "One of the beautiful focuses is the engagement of parents leading

their children to know, love, and serve Jesus!"

"I believe it's time to be even more purposeful with the next generation—to build a love for Jesus and a strong knowledge of the timeless truths in His Word," said Nina Atcheson, the Alive in Jesus curriculum manager and senior editor at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department, in an *Adventist World* magazine article titled "It's Time." "Now is the time for us to focus on this. It's time to model what a life-changing friendship with Jesus is like and show our children how to spend meaningful time with God in His Word and in prayer."

Atcheson adds, “By incorporating the best teaching methods, together with what we know about growing faith, *Alive in Jesus* shares the stories of the Bible and the 28 Fundamental Beliefs with meaning, depth, clarity, and appeal. Our prayer is that children and youth, as well as parents and teachers, will know, love, and serve Jesus and live in a lifelong, abiding relationship with Him.”

*Our Little Friend*, *Primary Treasure*, and *Guide* magazine will continue as supplements for kindergarten, primary, and junior age groups, respectively.

### New for Families

Atcheson explains that much attention has been placed on how to better serve and give support to the various needs of children, parents, and teachers. With other previously published Adventist Church curriculums, for example, babies had always been grouped together with the beginner class, although there are huge developmental difference between a newborn and a 3-year-old.

Another helpful addition is the *Baby Steps* parent book, which offers spiritual encouragement and advice for milestones, along with four simple programs that revolve primarily around song. These same four programs are included in the teacher guide.

Recognizing the reality that babies’ Sabbath School time is also a time for parents, a special new resource is provided: weekly parenting small group handouts that nurture faith, for both church-attending and community parents, are provided. “The babies resource is focused first on the parents’ spiritual growth to help them impart a clear picture of God to their new baby. A strong focus on the parents’ spiritual growth, in addition to the child’s, continues through all lower levels in the new curriculum,” shared Atcheson.

Other new features of the *Alive in Jesus* student guides in other age groups include a weekly Bible story for beginners to be read each day instead of a story each month; all kindergarten lessons have daily readings, and the same stories are shared in kindergarten and primary to make it easier for parents who have children in both groups, or small churches who want to combine these classes.

Atcheson explains, “Every day an appealing narrative is shared, as children are prompted to open their Bibles, followed by rich discussion questions for families to share together, along with prayer prompts and activities that encourage personal application of the Bible message. At the end of every week, children can look forward to a special Sabbath feature, such as

“Our prayer is that children and youth, as well as parents and teachers, will know, love, and serve Jesus.”



A mother and son go through one of the stories in the new *Alive in Jesus* Sabbath School program during a training in the North American Division.  
Denis Peniche/North American Division



A Sabbath School teacher shares a resource with her class during a training for the new Alive in Jesus Sabbath School curriculum. Pieter Damsteegt/North American Division

a nature lesson, Adventist history story, family activity, or contemporary mission story.”

Other special features include beginners podcasts; an audio recording of the lessons that can be accessed on the Alive in Jesus website and app. Families can listen to a quarterly playlist of Scripture songs to help children remember their memory verses. New, original artwork on every page brings the Bible stories and messages to life in the minds of the children in fresh ways, as children from around the world see themselves in the diversity of the pictures.

“Ultimately we want to make it easy for parents to bring their children to the feet of Jesus every day through a variety of appealing approaches,” Atcheson shares.

Sabbath School teacher shares a resource with her class during a training for the new Alive in Jesus Sabbath School curriculum.

### New for Teachers

Sabbath School teachers can expect an easy-to-follow program that first speaks to the teacher’s spiritual growth before they prepare to teach. “Teachers will find both a simple program and a detailed program, along with storytelling strategies, crafts, new and familiar program music (available for download on our website and app), and the philosophy of the new lessons embedded in every program,” explained Atcheson.

From kindergarten on, teachers will have access to nature lessons, mission stories that are aligned with the weekly “Big Ideas,” collector cards, and strategies to share—which deepen the Bible

story that has been explored during the week.

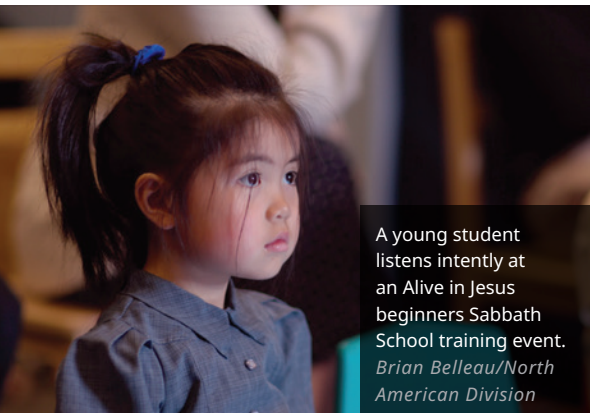
Training videos are also available on the Alive in Jesus website.<sup>2</sup>

### Kid-tested, Family-approved

Alive in Jesus was piloted globally in the first quarter of 2023. The NAD pilot consisted of the new curriculum being used in 15 churches across the division in both English and Spanish. From Alberta to Albuquerque and Texas to Toronto—and places in between—children’s divisions engaged in the new curriculum, exploring the new elements with eagerness. The teachers spent time learning the new format and implementing the lessons with a renewed passion, shares Uhrig.

Once the pilot was finished and all feedback was analyzed, the curriculum was further streamlined to become what is, according to Uhrig, Atcheson, and others, “vibrant and relevant.” Training started immediately in the unions and conferences.

For example, in the North Pacific Union Conference alone,



A young student listens intently at an Alive in Jesus beginners Sabbath School training event. Brian Belleau/North American Division

Alive in Jesus was piloted globally in the first quarter of 2023.

45 conference-level children’s ministry leaders and presenters from six conferences explored the training almost a year ago. In the Mid-America Union Conference, the Dakota Conference also participated in the pilot program. This is just a small glimpse into the many training events held in North America.

Union Children’s Ministries directors helped equip and empower conference directors and leaders as they were introduced to the curriculum, explained Uhrig. The eight-hour training was accomplished in all nine unions.

“We spent months at trainings across the division, and as part of the training we included the ‘how’ and ‘why’ through modeling babies and beginners,” said Uhrig. “Our union training included the conference teams as we trained in several foundational areas: the Alive in Jesus foundation, the faith development of children, multi-intelligences, and special needs through ‘A Place of Belonging.’ The Alive in Jesus curriculum is not difficult to use, but with such a big change from the former Sabbath School materials we wanted all our leaders to be ready. I am confident that they have the tools needed to be successful. Our children will learn how much Jesus loves them, and how much their church loves them too.”

**Let’s Pray Together**

Atcheson shared that Alive in Jesus is a distinctly Seventh-day Adventist curriculum. It shows that the Bible is the source of truth and peace in an ever-changing world. Its wholistic approach on grace, character, and mission build a love for Jesus and His message.

“But Alive in Jesus is also for you, parents, grandparents, caregivers, and leaders, as we believe it will also strengthen your walk with God. Please pray for God to lead the continued development of this new curriculum and pray for the children in your churches and spheres of influence,” appeals Atcheson.

Uhrig added, “As a children’s Sabbath School teacher, parent, or grandparent, you have a big job! We recognize this fact and see the work you are putting into leading children and families to Jesus! You are important to the children God is sending to your Sabbath School as you love, teach, guide, and nurture children into a lifelong relationship with Jesus! And as you show your children how to #SayYESToJesus!”

<sup>1</sup>Please speak to your conference children’s ministries director for launch information in your conference.

<sup>2</sup>Visit [www.aliveinjesus.info](http://www.aliveinjesus.info) for a more detailed curriculum overview, sample lessons, training videos, music, podcasts, and other resources, along with and more information about the new Sabbath School curriculum. You can also visit [www.childmin.org](http://www.childmin.org) for information.

*Kimberly Luste Maran is editor of Adventist Journey and communication director for the North American Division.*



A father and son do an interactive activity using the new beginners Alive in Jesus Sabbath School curriculum doing one of the NAD’s pilot programs. Pieter Damsteegt/North American Division

# PROCLAIMING GOD'S LOVE FOR 150 YEARS

Celebrating Pacific Press's  
Legacy of Faith, Resilience,  
and Enduring Mission

BY CHRISTELLE AGBOKA



Stephen Apola, GC Publishing Ministries associate director, presents Pacific Press president Dale Galusha with a plaque honoring the press for 150 years of excellent ministry.



Photography by Daniel Weber

On Sabbath, August 17, 2024, the Pacific Press Publishing Association celebrated its 150th anniversary in an auditorium at Northwest Nazarene University in Nampa, Idaho. The program, themed “Proclaiming God’s Love for 150 Years,” drew 300 past and present Pacific Press workers and supporters to celebrate the press’s enduring mission of uplifting Christ through literature, media, and music.

Presenters highlighted the press’s resilience through trials, including, in 1906, damage from a 7.9-magnitude earthquake and destruction from a fire two months later. The dedicated staff quickly rebuilt and never missed a weekly issue of *Signs of the Times*, their flagship publication, even producing three special editions linking the earthquake to Jesus’ imminent return.

Keynote speakers G. Alexander Bryant, North American Division (NAD) president, and Ted N. C. Wilson, General Conference (GC) president, encouraged a similar boldness among believers today. Weaved throughout the program were musical renditions by Chapel Records’ Christian Edition Men’s Chorus and Terry and Perry Mace of the Heritage Singers.

Nampa mayor Debbie Kling expressed appreciation for the press, which made Nampa its home in 1984. Referencing Isaiah 52:7, she said, “Think about the news of the gospel that’s been spread [by] the Pacific Press for 150 years, 40 in Nampa. We are grateful for you.”

Local church member Thelma Stubbs, who first encountered Pacific Press publications in her native Jamaica, was among the receptive crowd. “Pacific Press has been part of our history forever. When I saw the announcement, I said, ‘I will not miss this,’” Stubbs asserted.

### Historical Reflections and Testimonies

A video spanning 150 years, along with in-person reflections, took attendees on a historical journey. Thomas Gott, Jr., who built the Nampa facility, lauded the “four heroes”—George Gott (his father), Lowell Bach, Eugene Stiles, and Martin Ytreberg—who championed the press’s move to Nampa to counter rising costs in Oakland.

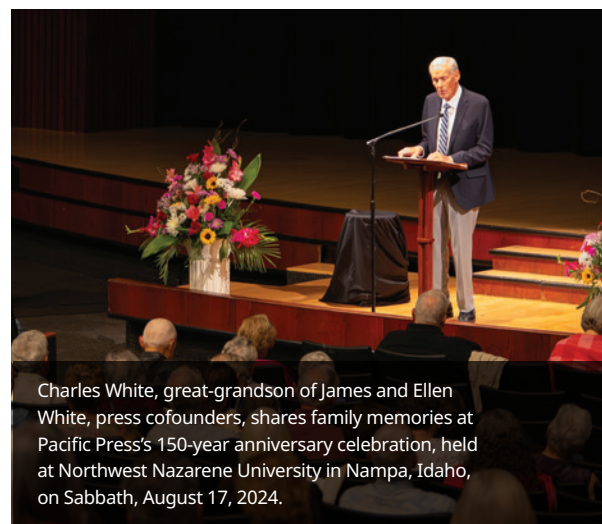
Adventist historian and educator George Knight recounted Ellen White’s 1848 vision of a regular paper, depicted as “streams of light that went clear round the world.” The Review and Herald Publishing Association arose in 1849, 14 years before the movement of less than 100 people was officially organized as a church. “It was an impossible prediction, but it moved a people who believed in a God who could do the impossible,” said Knight.

Charles White, Ellen and James White’s great-grandson, shared his family’s close connection to the press, where his grandfather, father, and a young Charles worked. He fondly remembered worship services, Christmas parties, and camping trips, stating, “[The press] wasn’t just a place to work. It was the hub of our community, the heart of what went on, the center of activity.”

For White and others, including Jerry Bartlett, who retired after 47 years with the press, the day was a joyful reunion. Bartlett and his wife, Teresa, had also attended the 100-year reunion. They appreciated seeing familiar faces, and found the celebration “so inspiring.”

Ellen G. White Estate director Merlin Burt shared Ellen White’s 1874 vision of establishing a new paper on the Pacific Coast to complement the Review and Herald. It would be the catalyst for “the message [going] in power to all parts of the world, to Oregon, to Europe, Australia, to the islands of the sea, to all nations, tongues, and people.”\* At a camp meeting in Yountville, California, 105 believers raised \$19,414, or a half million dollars today, to support this vital work.

“[The press] wasn't just a place to work. It was the hub of our community.”



Charles White, great-grandson of James and Ellen White, press cofounders, shares family memories at Pacific Press’s 150-year anniversary celebration, held at Northwest Nazarene University in Nampa, Idaho, on Sabbath, August 17, 2024.

### Global Impact

The event also recognized Pacific Press’s global impact. In 2014 it became the church’s sole publishing house in North America, operating under the division. The Review and Herald Publishing Association closed its Maryland facility but has maintained its administration and board of directors. Over the years both organizations laid the foundation for the church’s 62 global publishing houses.

Stephen Apola, GC associate Publishing Ministries director, presented Pacific Press president Dale Galusha with a plaque honoring the press for 150 years of producing “inspiring, educational, and uplifting truth-filled literature.” In



Several participants from the Pacific Press Publishing Association's 150-year anniversary celebration, including keynote presenters Ted N.C. Wilson and G. Alexander Bryant (front), pose for a group shot.

G. Alexander Bryant, NAD president, presents a message on resilience in mission at the Pacific Press Publishing Association's 150-year anniversary celebration.

a video, GC Publishing Ministries director Almir Marroni added, "Each publication is more than just ink on paper. It is a vessel of God's Word and a source of spiritual nourishment."

Among several video greetings from the press's global partners, Saul Ortiz, president of the Inter-American Division Publishing Association, praised the press "as an indispensable partner in the translation and dissemination of Adventist literature." In a surprise appearance, Ortiz and Moises Reyna, Mexican Adventist publishing house president, also gave Galusha plaques honoring Pacific Press as a global publishing leader.

### Inspiration for Today

Finally, Bryant and Wilson explored how the faithfulness of Pacific Press pioneers can inform our mission in 2024. Bryant's message, "What if We Were Them?" drew parallels between the Adventist pioneers, Christ's 12 disciples, and the present-day church. He emphasized that despite lacking finances, organizational structure, a strategic plan, or physical facilities, "[the pioneers and disciples] turned the world upside down."

Bryant noted that God often "calls His people to do the impossible," continuing, "What if we were them?" From the pioneers, he said, we learn that while God's call to mission is never easy, "if we're bold and courageous, have innovation and creativity, the Lord will lead us through any challenges."

Bryant's testimony highlighted the pioneers' influence, revealing how the publishing ministry transformed his life and ministry—from reading *The Desire of Ages* daily as a new convert and Oakwood freshman to selling Adventist books as a young pastor receiving a small stipend, leading to multiple baptisms.

"What if we were them? How would we meet [today's] challenges? What sacrificial measures would we make to reach the world with the present truth?" Bryant asked. He continued, "God

has impressed me that *we are them* to our generation. *We are them* with the messages of the three angels, the love of God, and His soon return."

He then charged attendees to use all available tools and technologies, as the pioneers did, "to carry this message to the end of the world [so] Jesus will come."

In his message, "After 150 Years . . . The Greatest Anniversary Is Yet to Come," Wilson stressed the significance of Pacific Press's role in these last days. "Pacific Press, get ready, because your most important days are not in the past 150; they are just ahead." He underscored the "dynamic privilege" for all church members of "[being] part of God's last-day Advent movement, proclaiming lifesaving messages to the world."

Before the audience became a mass choir, ending the day with a resounding medley of "We Have This Hope" and "Jesus Is Coming Again," Wilson offered a vivid depiction of Jesus' return. "We'll look up, see Jesus, and say, This is the God we've waited for. He will save us. Jesus will look down and say, Well done, good and faithful servants. And may I paraphrase, well done, good and faithful employees of Pacific Press. Enter in the joy of your Lord."

\* Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1943), p. 209.

*Christelle Agboka is news writer/news producer for the North American Division.*

BY CARL MCROY

# Hope at 30,000 Feet

## An Untapped Mission Field in the Sky

I've been flying a lot lately and have noticed something I never paid attention to before. No, it's not about the safety features. I've accepted that the "unlikely event of a water landing" means we're crashing, and if I have to blow through a tube to inflate a flimsy-looking vest, I'm doomed. *C'est la vie.*

What's caught my attention is that most of the planes I've flown on have 175 seats, also known as literature racks. Seriously, the seatback pockets often have a "Literature Only" label on them. That's basically an invitation for literature evangelism. I can't fill them all, but I can share a few books and magazines in the racks near me.

### Witness While You Wink

On my last flight I put a copy of *Words of Hope* (a condensed version of *Christ's Object Lessons*, by Ellen G. White) in the "literature rack" to my left. I positioned it so a passenger would see the title when letting down their tray table. Like many leisure fishermen, I got comfortable after casting my line and prepared to have a snack and take a nap while waiting for the "fish" to bite.

A Catholic man sat beside me, made the sign of the cross as the plane started up the runway, and prayed the rosary as we took off. I said a silent prayer as well. The higher the plane rose, the heavier my eyelids got. I cracked them open briefly as the flight attendants started offering drinks.

When the snacks and drinks arrived, my neighbor let down his tray table, saw the previously concealed *Words of Hope*, took it out, and started reading. I started nodding, partly out of satisfaction, but mostly from drowsiness. When I woke again, the man had put the book in the side pocket of his carry-on to take with him.

### God Worked With My (Little Bit of) Willingness

Why didn't I make any small talk on this occasion? Quite honestly, I was just tired. I had been flying and driving and flying some more. I had been filling my waking hours with in-person meetings, texts, emails, voice and video calls—and trying to stuff some reading and presentation preparation into my leftover

margins of consciousness. It was time for a break.

And you know what I learned from that? God still keeps His promise that His word won't return unto Him void (see Isa. 55:11). Neither God nor my brother in Christ were dependent upon my being an ordained minister, a student of theology, a fast or smooth talker, or a salesperson. All they needed was for me to exercise a minimal level of willingness to share so that my seatmate could have a closer walk with Jesus.

While some might argue that I should have offered the man Bible studies, I would simply say, "The book is a Bible study." *Words of Hope* unpacks the meaning of the 10 parables of Jesus and provides life application for them. Isn't that what a Bible study is supposed to do? That's what seemed to be happening right next to me.

### The Word Works

The Holy Spirit spoke to my fellow flier through the cover and content of that book while I quietly stayed out of their conversation. Literature evangelists often refer to our books, magazines, and tracts as silent witnesses, and this was a case in point.

Sometimes we might not feel as if we have the right words to witness. Sometimes we might be in circumstances in which we think witnessing will be awkward or offensive. Sometimes we might avoid a witnessing opportunity because we don't feel like the best version of ourselves. Sometimes it's OK to do in-flight outreach by simply giving the Holy Spirit something to work with while we rest.

*Carl McRoy is the North American Division's director of literature ministries.*

God still keeps His promise that His word won't return unto Him void.

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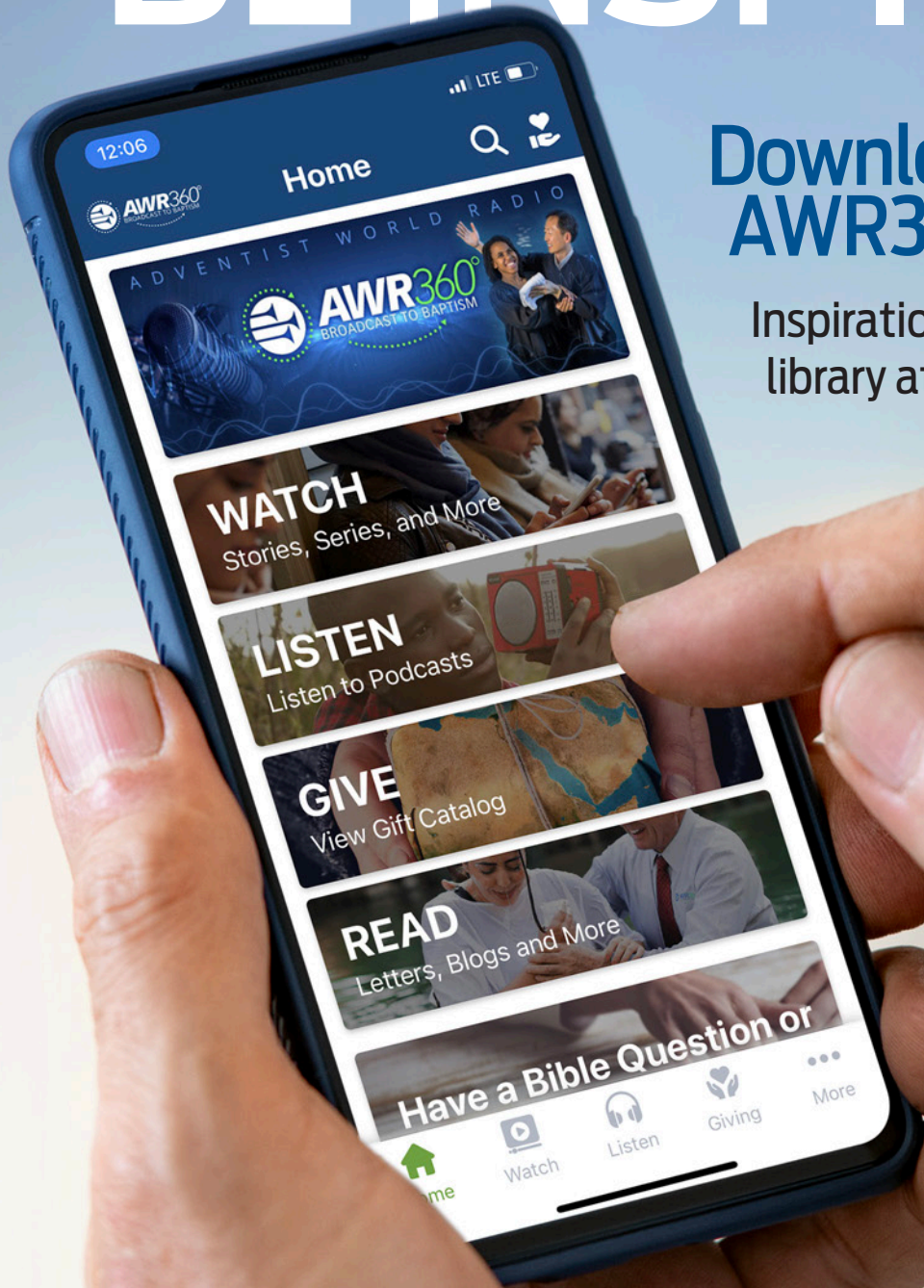
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by Doug Batchelor

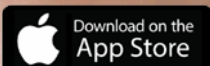
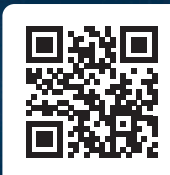


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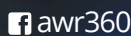
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