

# FRESH Start

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE PORT CHARLOTTE SDA CHURCH



# harmony

IT'S A NEW DAY AT PCSDA!

**"The Lord's loyal kindness never ceases; his compassions never end. They are fresh every morning..." Lam. 3:22,23 NET**

## harmony

a situation in which people are peaceful and agree with each other, or when things seem right or suitable together

a pleasant musical sound made by different notes being played or sung at the same time:

Cambridge Dictionary

**Your life is the song you sing to God. As a church, our songs must harmonize with each other so that the music we create for God is a thing of beauty.**

**Before His betrayal, Jesus' prayer was that we would be as one, just as He and the Father are one.**

**This issue offers ways that we can work together harmoniously and in unity to fulfill God's mission for us.**



# humility

BY ED DANCEK, ELDER

The term “humble” is often used to refer to simplicity or a lack of impressiveness. I came from humble beginnings. My family was in the plumbing business. My grandfather was a plumber and owned the business that my dad, uncle, brother and other grandfather all worked for most of their lives. Although some of our neighbors had professional vocations, I never felt that my family was below others.

Humility is a virtue and not a statement of status. It comes when you acknowledge that there is a God, and it is not you.

I have visited two of the most beautiful places on earth to experience the night sky without light pollution – at the bottom of the Grand Canyon and at the Boundary Water Canoe Area. In both of these locations, I laid on the ground marveling at the vastness of

of space. It was impossible to count the stars. I felt so small, and my awe of God's creation truly humbled me. I also marveled at the reality that the Maker of all I witnessed humbled Himself and become a baby. He left heaven to live here on this small speck we call earth and died for you and me.

The closer we are to God, the more we will reflect His image. "If we possess the humility of our Master, we shall rise above the slights, the rebuffs, the annoyances, to which we are daily exposed, and they will cease to cast a gloom over the spirit... Lowliness of heart is the strength that gives victory to the followers of Christ; it is the token of their connection with the courts above."<sup>1</sup>

Jesus is the ultimate example of humility. Philippians 2:8 says "being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross." Before His death, at the last supper with His disciples, He was saddened by their struggles over power and greatness. "So He got up from the meal and took off His outer clothes. He wrapped a towel around His waist. After that, He poured water into a large bowl. Then He began to wash His disciples' feet. He dried them with the towel that was wrapped around Him." John 13:4, 5 NIRV

"By the ordinance of humility we are taught an impressive lesson. Christ had

"There is a God.  
It is not you."

shown to us the necessity of walking humbly before God, and of realizing what He has done for us by the gift of His Son. Many do not realize that by walking humbly with God, we place ourselves in a position where the enemy cannot take advantage of us.... Only when we submit, as willing children, to be trained and disciplined, can God use us to His glory."<sup>2</sup>

Humility allows the fruit of the Holy Spirit to be manifested in us, and opens doors in relationships to foster forgiveness and healing. May we all grow in the humility of Jesus each day.

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 301

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Reflecting Christ*, p. 261

"Blessed are those  
who are humble.  
They will be given  
the earth."

Matthew 5:5 NIRV



# forgiveness



BY PASTOR ART GRAYMAN

Some time ago I came across an article about forgiveness, written by a staff writer from the Mayo Clinic. As I read the article I was intrigued by the writer's concept of this topic which I would like to share with you:

"When someone you care about hurts you," she said, "you can hold on to anger, resentment, and thoughts of revenge — or embrace forgiveness and move forward."

This article lead me to the question "what is forgiveness?" What does forgiveness mean to us as professed Christians?

It is said that forgiveness means different things to different people "because it involves a decision to let go of resentment and thoughts of revenge." Forgiveness can be challenging, especially if the offender does not admit they're wrong. I am

sure that you and I have experienced being wronged by someone, whether by a friend or a family member or someone we trusted very much. When we hang on to negative feelings it can do great harm to our health.

Dr. Tyler VanderWeele, co-director of the Initiative on Health, Religion, and Spirituality of the Harvard School of Public Health stated "Scripture teaches us that 'forgiveness' is essential for us to enjoy a healthy relationship."

And, as François Varillon once said, "People cannot live together unless they forgive each other just for being who they are. We all need to forgive and be forgiven, over and over again, if our life together is to be life-giving, and if we are to be the agents of healing and reconciliation in the world that Christ calls us to be," -- we need to have that true spirit of forgiveness.

I don't know if you are struggling to forgive someone, or if you have to apologize—but I think that opening your heart and getting exposed to your wounds and mistakes is the key to forgiveness.

Let us keep in mind that God offers forgiveness to us when we sin against Him, and He expects us to show the same to our fellow men because forgiveness is rooted in a proper relationship with God.

Pay attention to this Biblical advice, "Then Peter came and said to Him,

'Lord if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.'" Matthew 18:21-22 NRSV In Matthew 6:14-15, says the Lord, "For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

Let us practice the spirit of forgiveness in our daily lives.

**"Forgiveness, in a psychological sense, is the intentional and voluntary process by which one who may initially feel victimized or wronged, goes through a change in feelings and attitude regarding a given offender, and overcomes the impact of the offense including negative emotions such as resentment and a desire for vengeance (however justified it might be)."**

Doka, Kenneth (2017). Grief is a journey. Atria Books. pp. 14-16; Hieronymi, Pamela (May 2001). "Articulating an Uncompromising Forgiveness" (PDF). pp. 1-2. Retrieved 2020-01-18; North, Joanna (1998). Exploring Forgiveness (1998). University of Wisconsin. pp. 20-21.



# grace and peace

BY DIANE SEDGWICK, HEAD ELDER

There it was. Staring up at me from the page of my anatomy and physiology workbook. “It” was the date that my final class assignment was due, and I was staring back at it, acknowledging that I had been procrastinating for three entire weeks before even starting on it. I had only twenty-four hours left before I needed to turn it in and my mind and stomach were churning. Where to begin... and how to even attempt to explain why it would not be

finished?

Then, just moments later, the college professor sent out a message that changed my whole outlook from one of failure to one of freedom. Every student in my class was being given an extra two weeks to complete the assignment. And my grateful heart rejoiced at the grace being offered. I did not earn it. I did not deserve it. But I received it. I was at peace.

Grace and peace. How interesting that the Bible writers, especially Paul, frequently used those two words, and in that order. As fiery Saul, he was given the gift of grace on the way to Damascus, when Jesus came to him and turned his hatred upside down. As passionate Paul, he was given the gift of peace to boldly preach the Gospel, focusing completely on Jesus' love.

At a recent Bible study of *Plain Revelation*, our group discussed Ranko Stefanovic's observation that GRACE (charis) is from a Greek greeting, meaning "I rejoice" or "I am glad." We can see the English words "charity" and "charitable" from that root word. PEACE (shalom) is a Hebrew greeting meaning harmony or absence of disturbance. Both Paul and John used this combination of greetings knowing that their letters would be heard by all those seeking the truth and grace that comes only from God. As Bruce M. Metzger pointed out, the order of the words "grace" and then "peace" is used because "grace is the divine favor bestowed upon human beings and peace is the state of spiritual well-being, which follows as the result."

David sang his songs of praise and peace over and over again not only as a young shepherd but also as a great warrior and king. He had received God's grace so many times, always undeserving of it, always grateful for it. Noah had found grace centuries earlier, as he trusted in God's ship design and plan of salvation. Isaiah

described Jesus as the Prince of Peace, which we sing about today. Paul described himself as the chief of sinners, yet he consistently shared his extreme gratitude for the free gift of grace which he delighted to share. In Jesus' own words as translated in John 16, He told us everything "so that we could have peace in Him."

We are all surrounded moment by moment by God's amazing grace. The very air we breathe is the right mixture of gases that our bodies need to sustain us. He created families and friends and gave us work to do as co-laborers with Him. We are blessed with palm trees and roses and dolphins and soaring eagles in our corner of the world. But most precious of all is the grace He gave us by redeeming us with His own life and giving us all eternity to live with Him! My soul can be at peace because His grace does not depend on what I have done for Him, but rather what God has done for me!

And because our heavenly Father has gifted us with His amazing grace and peace, and because we have been designed in His image, isn't it only right to pass that gift of grace along to others? Have you been ignored? Insulted? Gossiped about? Perhaps you are dealing with someone's anger, or carelessness, or unloveliness? Follow the GRACE and PEACE plan. Recognize your own blessings, allow yourself to be filled with God's grace, then spill it over to that other person. You will have peace. He guarantees it!

# synergy

1 + 1 > 2

BY LAURA DANCEK, EDITOR

A definition of synergy is “two or more things working together in order to create something that is bigger or greater than the sum of their individual efforts.”<sup>1</sup> That is the essence most dictionaries render. Wouldn’t it be great if you looked up “synergy” in the dictionary and it said “church”? Isn’t that what church is? It is two or more gathering and working together in order to create something bigger or greater than the sum of each

individual’s effort. And when you add in the Holy Spirit, you are talking about infinite exponentials.

The Holy Spirit has already given each of us a head start, because He gives us His gifts, referred to as “spiritual gifts.” If they go unused, His exponential blessings are hindered. When you are not using your spiritual gifts for God’s work, you are bringing down the level of what the entire church will



accomplish. That's a heavy thought!  
**Your** participation is necessary to reach our optimum potential – an exponential potential.

When I was in high school, I played clarinet in the band. Clarinets either sound good or extremely bad. There isn't much in between. If you didn't tune your instrument correctly, you could be playing an entire concert either too sharp or too flat. And if your embouchure is slightly off you squeak. When that happens, you'd better hope that all the other instruments are playing very loudly, including the percussion. The more I practiced the less I squeaked, but one time plainly stood out. During one of our big concerts, I squeaked after the song had actually ended! Somehow, I squeaked -- loudly -- right on the downbeat of what would have been the next measure. My face turned the color of our band uniforms – a bright red.



Having been part of the band in high school, and in multiple singing groups throughout my life, it is easy for me to understand the nature of synergy, and the importance that every instrument or voice plays to create a result greater than the sum of its parts. The soprano, alto, tenor and bass... the trumpet, tympani, flute, violin, and tuba all have their individual sounds and important parts to play, which when done correctly yields powerful and moving results. It isn't  $1 + 1 = 2$ . In music, as in life,  $1 + 1$  is greater than 2. A musical group exceeds the sum of its parts.

For those of you who are athletes and not musicians, you can attest to a similar exponential effect in team sports. Working together, as a team, someone's best performance inspires other players to rise to their best. Athletes are there for each other to make up for deficiencies when plays are missed. Each one has a different role to play, a different skill they excel at. Yet as a team they stand together and use every fiber of muscle, every



ounce of energy and endurance, to reach a goal that could not be reached individually.

**You** are on a team. **You** are part of a group. God calls it His church. We call it "The Port Charlotte Seventh-day Adventist Church." **You** have a role to play. **You** have gifts to employ.

For awhile now, a small group of church members has been carrying the load for the entire church. Not only does that lead to burn out, but we have missed out on seeing what our full potential could have been. The Lord's hopes for our church will not exceed the spiritual gifts He has granted it. But those gifts must be used. **Your** gifts must be used.

We are delighted that Pastor Ben will be with us soon. But when he is here, his role as pastor and leader does not mean he should do all the visitation, or all the praying, or all the planning, etc. That was never God's plan. By sending Pastor Ben, God has granted us one more opportunity to become the church He's been waiting for us to become. Let's not waste it by hiding behind excuses.

It's time for all hands on deck. It's time for us to work together in harmony and in unity. It's time to fulfill God's mission for our church.

<sup>1</sup>yourdictionary.com

[Click here](#) to find out how to identify your spiritual gifts. If you are still unsure what your gifts are, there are many different online assessments. One such assessment for Adventist Youth can be found if you [click here](#).

Additionally, you can print and fill out our talents, skills and abilities sheet, obtainable on our website, [click here](#).

When you have identified your spiritual gifts, please let the church office know so they can suggest ways for you to be involved.

Take these assessments knowing that slight changes in your answers can yield significant differences in results. Give less consideration to the exact ranking of your gifts, or scores, and more attention to what your top 4-5 gifts are.

synergy = church

“We are all woven together in the great web of humanity, and whatever we can do to benefit and uplift others will reflect in blessing upon ourselves.”

Ellen G. White. “Patriarchs and Prophets, Chapter 51

“There are different kinds of gifts. But they are all given to believers by the same Spirit. There are different ways to serve. But they all come from the same Lord. There are different ways the Spirit works. But the same God is working in all these ways and in all people. The Holy Spirit is given to each of us in a special way. That is for the good of all.”

1 Corinthians 12: 4-7 NIRV

# VBS was a MONUMENTAL SUCCESS!

Photo credits: Wave Williams





## KIDS' J.A.M.

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“We are thankful that when things change, Jesus is with us.”

Seasons are changes in the year. In Fall, the weather changes. We can wear sweaters and jackets. The leaves turn colors and fall to the ground. We like hot chocolate in cool mornings, and campfires at night. Our lives change too. We move, we go to a new school. Mom or Dad have to find a new job. Friends move away. But through all these changes, Jesus is with us.

“...He will never leave you or forsake you.” Deuteronomy 31:6



# IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Just in case you haven't heard, it is with great delight that we share the news that on August 23, Pastor Ben Shurtliff accepted the call to become the senior pastor of our church. After completing his degree at Andrews University Seminary, Pastor Ben and Tria moved to Port Charlotte in 2010 to take the associate pastor position. He is currently the senior pastor of the Brandon SDA church, in Brandon, Florida.

Ben, Tria, and their children, Gage and Hope, will celebrate their first Sabbath with us on October 22. Please keep them in your prayers as they make the transition back home.





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More church news, including new members, will be covered in upcoming issues.

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