

Local Church



When the Waldenses put God First

The Waldenses lost everything when they put God first. Even then, they didn't give up. What can we learn from the Waldenses today that will help us put God first in our own lives?

In the 12th century, the Roman Catholic Church had prohibited the Bible from being read and understood by regular people. Persecution was certain for anyone who challenged the authority of the church and especially the Pope. The Papacy had become the apocalyptic beast depicted in the Bible.

During this dark period of human history, Peter Waldo renounced his wealth and dedicated himself to helping others. A movement started in France as lay preachers voluntarily renounced earthly wealth and lived in strict adherence to the Bible. A key emphasis of the Waldenses was to make the Bible accessible in the common language.

In 1179, Waldo and one of his friends went to Rome, where Pope Alexander the Third and the Roman Curia welcomed them. They had to explain their faith before a panel of three clergymen. The results of the meeting were inconclusive, but the Third Lateran Council in the same year condemned Waldo's ideas.

Waldo and his followers developed a system whereby they would go from town to town and meet secretly with small groups of Waldensians. There they would confess sins and hold worship services. A travelling Waldensian preacher was known as a barba. The group would

shelter the barba and help make arrangements for him to move on to the next town in secret.

They lost their positions in society and eventually had to flee to the hills and caves. They continued to put God first by explaining scripture to anyone they could find. Eventually they understood their movement to be a light in darkness. They were precursors to the Protestant Reformation and represented a remnant of people who absolutely refused to put their own comfort above the Kingdom of God.

We are called to be the remnant today—men, women and children who continue to be faithful to the Word of God by always putting the Kingdom of God first.

The Waldensians put God first, even when it cost them everything. Their courage inspires us today. Jesus gave up everything to redeem us and His love compels us to put His kingdom first in our own lives. As the deacons collect the tithe and offerings, we are challenged to put God first.

Dear heavenly Father, we worship You this morning with our tithe and offerings. We pray for the courage to put You first in our lives. In the name of Jesus, amen.



World Mission Budget

There are 7 billion people living on this planet today. Did you know that more than 42 percent of them live without any Christian presence or influence in their lives? That's approximately 3.1 billion people! Our Gospel commission is clear: "Go ye into all the world and teach all nation, baptising them in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." (Matt 28:19)

Four times a year the offering taken during our church service supports the work of Adventist mission work around the world. Today is one of those days when we have a special opportunity to help share God's words of hope and love with our fellow humans.

Appeal: Please give generously to help missionaries work in hospitals, clinics, schools and churches. Dig deep to fund the printing of literature and the preparation of broadcasts so that people who never knew about Jesus can hear His words or read about Him in their own language.

Thanks you for supporting the World Mission Offerings in order to reach a world in need. Your help is appreciated.

Dear Lord, thank you for the privilege of knowing You. Accept our offerings of gratitude today, and may their effect be multiplied in Your mission field. Amen.

Local Church



When Martin Luther put God First

Martin Luther lost everything when he put God first. Even then, he didn't give up. What can we learn from Martin Luther today that will help us put God first in our own lives?

In the 16th century, the Roman Catholic Church led people to believe that they needed the church to reach Christ and receive salvation. Persecution was certain for anyone who challenged the authority of the church and especially the Pope. The Papacy had become the apocalyptic beast depicted in the Bible.

During this dark period of human history, Martin Luther was a devout Roman Catholic priest. While reading scripture, he realised that each person could connect with God directly, without a human mediator. Under the authority of the Bible, Luther challenged the authority of the most powerful person on the planet at the time, Pope Leo the Tenth.

Luther taught that salvation and, consequently, eternal life are not earned by good deeds but are received only as the free gift of God's grace through the believer's faith in Jesus Christ as redeemer from sin. His theology challenged the authority and office of the Pope by teaching that the Bible is the only source of divinely revealed knowledge, and he opposed the exclusive concept of priesthood by considering all baptised Christians to be a holy priesthood.

He was excommunicated and persecuted by the Roman Catholic Church and the Roman Emperor. This

did not stop him from putting God first and standing firm to his convictions. In his own words, Martin Luther wrote how he felt about this struggle in the famous hymn: "A Mighty Fortress"

That Word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them, abideth;

The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him Who with us sideth:

Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;
The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still,
His kingdom is forever.

Martin Luther put God first, even when it cost him everything. His courage inspires us today. Jesus gave up everything to redeem us and His love compels us to put His kingdom first in our own lives. As the deacons collect the tithe and offerings, we are challenged to put God first.

Dear heavenly Father, we worship You this morning with our tithe and offerings. We pray for the courage to put You first in our lives. In the name of Jesus, amen.



Union Global Partnership Project:

TIMOR – LESTE

Publish his glorious deeds among the nations. Tell everyone about the amazing things he does.” 1 Chronicles 16:24 (NLT)

The Australian Union Conference has been partnering and supporting Timor Leste in mission for over 3 years. Previous offerings have contributed to the building of classrooms for students who were having their lessons in tents and supporting the installation of 5 centres of influence providing services in health, mission and all types of ministry work. In the past this offering has supported the training of local ministers by sponsoring students to get their teaching, pastoral and nursing qualifications. Your ongoing support means that there are currently a team of local ministry people on the ground in Timor Leste that are moving Gods mission forward in that region.

Appeal: As you give generously this team will continue to grow with further sponsorship, resourcing and practical assistance. What you give makes a difference in how we are Gods hands and

feet with our neighbours in Timor Leste, Please continue to pray for our partners and the challenges they face and know that your offering is making a huge difference.

Dear God, bless and multiply what is given this morning for your glory in Timor Leste. We pray for our partnership country, may the Church in Timor Leste be filled with your Spirit and be a powerful force for the Gospel in that region. Amen.

Education



When William Miller put God First

William Miller was considered a mad man when he put God first. Even then, he didn't give up. What can we learn from William Miller today that will help us put God first in our own lives?

He was a man of integrity who could not bring himself to believe the Bible to be true. But, after an unexplainable event during his time at war, Williams Miller's worldview was shattered. He asked himself, "If the laws of nature are the only possible forces acting in the universe, how did I not die when the bomb exploded so close to me?"

He decided to start a deep study of scripture. Back at his farm in Whitehall, New York, Miller committed to reading and understanding the Bible, one verse at a time. This endeavour took him two years—1816 to 1818—during which time he absolutely fell in love with his saviour, Jesus Christ.

One of the most significant discoveries Williams Miller made during this time was the prophecy of the 2300 "evenings and mornings" found in Daniel 8:14. The prophecy foretold a significant event to take place about 1843 or 1844 and he was compelled to share this knowledge with as many people as he could. However, he was not a preacher and refused to do it.

As the Holy Spirit kept impressing him to tell others what he had discovered, he asked God to be abundantly clear in this calling. If someone would ask him to share these findings, it would be a sign between him and God that he should do it. Less than an hour later, a family member arrived at the farm to ask him to share his findings.

At first, Miller was upset because God had sent this invitation immediately. But he was the kind of man who kept his word. That day Williams Miller put God first and started preaching this beautiful message that God had not abandoned the world and would soon do something great.

His preaching led to a great disappointment on October 22, 1844. Hundreds of thousands of people expected Jesus to return that day—but Jesus didn't. Instead, He started His ministry in the Most Holy Place in the heavenly sanctuary. It was from this disappointment that God called the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Today Seventh-day Adventists are preaching the good news of the soon coming of Jesus in more than 200 countries. Millions of people are now hopeful because of Miller's determination to put God first.

William Miller put God first, even when he was laughed at. His courage inspires us today. Jesus gave up everything to redeem us and His love compels us to put His kingdom first in our own lives. As the deacons collect the tithe and offerings, we are challenged to put God first.

Dear heavenly Father, we worship You this morning with our tithe and offerings. We pray for the courage to put You first in our lives. In the name of Jesus, amen.



Local Church

When Joseph Bates put God First

Joseph Bates was considered a mad man when he put God first. Even then, he didn't give up. What can we learn from Joseph Bates today that will help us put God first in our own lives?

He was a retired sea captain when he first heard William Miller's message of Christ's soon second coming. He was convinced it was true. Bates was the kind of man who put God first in everything, so he gave his energy, his money and even sold his house to help spread the news of the Second Coming.

However, great personal sacrifice followed as Bates's son rejected the message and left home angrily to start a career on the high seas. Bates doesn't give up even when everything he hoped for didn't happen. The year 1843 came and went—and Christ did not return. Then the Great Disappointment of 1844 shook the faith of Bates and the other Millerites. They were a laughingstock for those around them and were forced to rebuild their lives in utter poverty, having sacrificed everything for the cause.

Bates and others returned to their study of the scriptures to find that instead of signalling Christ's return, October 22, 1844 was the date Christ entered the heavenly sanctuary to intercede before the Father on behalf of believers.

But hardships were constant. One day Bates didn't have anything to eat at home. He pled with God and promised to remain faithful no matter what happened.

That day an envelope arrived with enough money to sustain him. God had inspired someone to send this money in preparation for the day Bates needed it most.

As he continued to study with friends, Bates discovered the truth of the seventh-day Sabbath and shared this with his fellow believers, James and Ellen White. This small group of leaders soon established the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which has grown into a worldwide movement today.

Joseph Bates put God first, even when he was laughed at. His courage inspires us today. Jesus gave up everything to redeem us and His love compels us to put His kingdom first in our own lives. As the deacons collect the tithe and offerings, we are challenged to put God first.

Dear heavenly Father, we worship You this morning with our tithe and offerings. We pray for the courage to put You first in our lives. In the name of Jesus, amen.

SPD Strategy:

COMPREHENSIVE MEDIA EVANGELISM



Now more than ever people are looking for encouragement and hope as they face the challenges of living in this complex world. In times like these everyone deserves to hear about God's love. However, as a Christian it can be tough to share your faith as it seems that people don't want to listen. The task is huge, and the times are uncertain, and we understand you can feel overwhelmed.

At Adventist Media we believe that together we can share the gospel with every nation, tribe, people and language. That's why we are producing high quality Christian resources—from books and magazines to podcasts and video clips—that are designed to help you connect with people. And we want to continue providing you with inspiring content so that you can share the gospel in relevant and effective ways anytime, from anywhere, to anyone. Your offering today will really make a difference in helping people across the South Pacific to learn more about Jesus and His love for them.

Dear heavenly Father, we worship You this morning with our tithe and offerings. We pray for the courage to put You first in our lives. In the name of Jesus, amen.



Local Church

When John Andrews put God First

John Andrews was so competent he could have become wealthy and powerful. Instead, he put God first and sacrificed everything to take Present Truth to the world. What can we learn from John Andrews today that will help us put God first in our own lives?

John Andrews was a very capable man. When he was 13 years old, he was converted and accepted Jesus as his Saviour. He cultivated a love for the Bible early in life and he taught himself to read the Bible in Hebrew, Greek and Latin.

When he studied the Sabbath message, he became convicted of its truth and decided to dedicate his life to understanding and preaching it. He helped to formulate many of the doctrines and structural documentation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. By putting God first, John Andrews dedicated his intellect and energy to serve the remnant church of Bible prophecy.

When the church decided to sponsor a missionary to Europe, John Andrews was the most capable man to do it. Despite mourning the death of his wife, Andrews gave up everything he had built and answered the call to take his family overseas. He understood the risk of poverty and disease. He was aware of the hardship to be faced. But John Andrews persevered.

In 1874, he sailed to Europe with his two children, Charles and Mary. Even though they were only teenagers, the children proved to be extraordinary young pioneers in Switzerland, editing, translating, setting type, helping tirelessly to establish the international missionary journal, *Les Signes des Temps*—The Signs of the Times.

In 1878, John Andrews attended the General Conference session and took Mary with him because he was certain that she had contracted tuberculosis. As soon as he arrived at the Battle Creek Sanitarium, his fear was confirmed. Alone in Europe, Charles wrote to his father “Our separation will be but short and then if faithful we shall meet our loved ones. So Pa, don’t feel discouraged. We pray much for you.”

John Andrews kept a vigil by her bedside during Mary’s last days. Mary Andrews passed to her rest at only 17 years of age. He returned to Europe but also died of tuberculosis a few years later.

John Andrews was the foremost intellectual in the early Adventist movement and his contributions were largely responsible for the growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Today there are more than 162,000 Adventist congregations in 207 countries and territories. Our hearts are grateful to this man who always put God first.

John Andrews put God first, even when it cost him. His courage inspires us today. Jesus gave up everything to redeem us and His love compels us to put His kingdom first in our own lives. As the deacons collect the tithe and offerings, we are challenged to put God first.

Dear heavenly Father, we worship You this morning with our tithe and offerings. We pray for the courage to put You first in our lives. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Education



When Abram La Rue put God First

Abram La Rue put God first, even when others thought he was too old to be a missionary. What can we learn from Abram La Rue today that will help us put God first in our own lives?

In 1883, Abram La Rue was a 65-year-old shepherd and woodcutter from California. He had an ambition to take the gospel to China. When he wrote to the General Conference, they said he was too old. They also said that they didn't have the money to send him. Still determined to go, La Rue negotiated his way onto a ship where he could work his way to Hong Kong. He arrived there in 1888 and began working as a colporteur for the next 14 years.

From 1888 to 1902, Father LaRue, as he was now generally called, stood alone. On February 2, 1902, Brother and Sister J. N. Anderson and Miss Ida Thompson arrived to help him. Soon after, nine people who had been led into the truth largely through Brother LaRue's efforts, were baptised. It was time to take Present Truth to China's mainland.

LaRue was a true follower of Christ, dedicated to prayer and devotion. He was patient, sympathetic and constant. His standing for 14 years alone in a distant land, carrying on a self-supporting work, shows that he had the stamina needed in pioneering work. Despite the difficulties, LaRue put God first. A few days before his death, he willed most of the little money he had to the mission in China. He gave his all to the cause he loved.

Abram La Rue was buried in Hong Kong where he had worked for 15 years. Although he did not actually set foot in China as a missionary, his pioneering work played an important role in laying the foundation for the entry of Adventism into this great land of the Orient.

Abram La Rue put God first, even when other didn't believe in him. His courage inspires us today. Jesus gave up everything to redeem us and His love compels us to put His kingdom first in our own lives. As the deacons collect the tithe and offerings, we are challenged to put God first.

Dear heavenly Father, we worship You this morning with our tithe and offerings. We pray for the courage to put You first in our lives. In the name of Jesus, amen.



Union Offering:

MAMARAPHA COLLEGE

“And then he told them, “Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone.” Mark 16:15 (NLT)

Mamarapha College is a tertiary education institute owned and operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As a RTO (Registered Training Organisation) we offer nationally credited qualifications ranging from Certificate II to Advanced Diploma for courses in Indigenous Studies, Indigenous Pastoral Ministry and Lifestyle Health Promotion.

Set in the beautiful bush surrounds of Perth’s orchard region, Mamarapha is a quiet, peaceful place where each year dozens of Indigenous students connect with God and discover how to share Him with their family and communities in a culturally sensitive way.

Mamarapha College graduates have impacted the lives of thousands of indigenous Australians through lifestyle programs, community service, public evangelism and personal faith sharing initiatives.

Appeal: Your offerings today will support Mamarapha’s core focus of training disciples to spread the Gospel of Jesus into Indigenous communities throughout Australia.



Dear God, thank you for the work and ministry of our Mamarapha College, bless the staff, students and community that are impacted by the programs and initiatives that are run. Take what we give this morning and multiply it’s impact so that many more can be blessed by the ministry of Mamarapha. Amen.

Annual Sacrifice



Prem chose to live on a small stipend in a remote town in India as a Global Mission pioneer. Before Prem arrived, there were no Adventists in the region. The nearest hospital is several hours away so pioneer Prem uses the talents God has given him to serve the town's sick. He has transformed his living room into a clinic where he lovingly teaches the locals how to adopt a wholistic lifestyle and treats their illnesses. Then he prays for the Heavenly Physician to heal and bless them.

Through Prem's compassionate words and actions, many of his former patients now come each Sabbath to the local church building. There they eagerly wait for Prem to finish treating patients in his clinic so he can teach them more about Jesus.

APPEAL: The Annual Sacrifice Offering comes at the end of Week of Prayer and is an opportunity for us to sacrifice for mission to help fund the work of Global Mission pioneers. The question is: what are you willing to give up for mission?

Father, our Global Mission pioneers continue to make great sacrifices to be laborers in Your field. Their needs are great. Please bless our sacrificial offerings to help equip these bold pioneers to reach even more people with Your love.



Local Church

When Albert Stauffer put God First

Albert Stauffer put God first when he left his own country to become a missionary. What can we learn from him today that will help us put God first in our own lives?

Albert could have continued to enjoy the safety and comfort of his home. But Albert was the kind of person who put God first, so he accepted the call from the General Conference to travel to Brazil to sell Present Truth literature.

This was 1894 and success was uncertain as he had to survive from the sale of the books and tracts he had with him. However, his task was even more difficult because they were not printed in the native Portuguese language. Thankfully, other missionaries establish a printing press and created a system to write, translate and print new materials.

Two years later, Albert and a fellow colporteur went to an evangelical church service in Curitiba, the capital of the State of Parana, in the south of Brazil. Mrs Ana Diedrich Otto was a much sought-after midwife in the city and was present at the worship service. She was disturbed when she saw two young people attending the service whom no-one knew. Clearly they were not from the city.

The following weekend, Mrs Otto noticed that the two young men were present at the church again. She then listened to them and decided to buy the book they were presenting—"Life of Jesus" in German.

The following Sunday they met again and spent the whole morning studying the Bible. As a result, Mrs Ana and her husband Oscar Emilio Otto accepted the Adventist faith.

Colporteurs have dedicated their lives to distributing life-saving literature throughout Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and many other countries in South American and the world. Every morning, from house to house they put God first with their lives. Without them, the Three Angels Messages would not be present in more than 200 countries and territories as it is today.

Albert Stauffer put God first everyday as a colporteur. His courage inspires us. Jesus gave up everything to redeem us and His love compels us to put His kingdom first in our own lives. As the deacons collect the tithe and offerings, we are challenged to put God first.

Dear heavenly Father, we worship You this morning with our tithe and offerings. We pray for the courage to put You first in our lives. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Local Church



When William A. Spicer put God First

William A. Spicer put God first as he travelled the world and set the DNA of Adventist mission. What can we learn from him today that will help us put God first in our own lives?

Spicer was only 22 years old when he sailed to England to establish the work of the church there. He then returned to the United States to serve the General Conference as the foreign mission secretary where he actively pursued various expansions like securing the land in Zimbabwe where Solusi University operates today.

Pastor Spicer then went to India in 1898, where he was one of three ordained Adventist ministers in the whole of Southern Asia. He founded the Adventist periodical there and established a good foundation for church growth.

Returning to the United States in 1902, Spicer became the secretary of the General Conference. One of the key responsibilities of the Secretariate is sending missionaries abroad, which Spicer did for 20 years. This is a difficult task because of the logistics of sending and returning families to and from every continent. Spicer created the infrastructure that allowed the Seventh-day Adventist Church to expand.

God then called Elder Spicer to become the president of the General Conference for another eight years. Spicer always put God first. Despite the difficulty and discomfort associated with global travel in the early 20th

century, he travelled internationally in almost every year of his ministry.

Sometimes putting God first involves large sacrifices we make in a single moment. William A. Spicer showed through his ministry how a life dedicated to putting God first in everything has a tremendous impact in the world.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church still sends and supports hundreds of missionary families who are taking the Adventist message to every tribe, language and people group. Spicer created this infrastructure for mission, but you and I can maintain it through our tithe and offerings. What a privilege to put God first in everything we do.

William A. Spicer put God first year after year throughout his life. His resilience inspires us today. Jesus gave up everything to redeem us and His love compels us to put His kingdom first in our own lives. As the deacons collect the tithe and offerings, we are challenged to put God first.

Dear heavenly Father, we worship You this morning with our tithe and offerings. We pray for the courage to put You first in our lives. In the name of Jesus, amen.