



FRED BISCHOFF
adventist pioneer library

HAND IN HAND

“AND THEY WALKED hand in hand off into the sunset. . . .” There’s something about an ending like that which intrigues the imaginative soul. All’s well that ends well. Together . . . into the future . . .

Could God’s ending in the great controversy read something like that? Except maybe a sunrise rather than a sunset?

Do we realize how dark this world is? Are our eyes too adjusted to the dark? Ellen White’s first vision showed her the dark realities. “I seemed to be rising higher and higher, far above the dark world. . . .” She saw “a straight and narrow path, cast up high above the world.” The Advent people were walking on it, but became weary. “Jesus would encourage them by raising His glorious right arm, and from His arm came a light which waved over the Advent band, and they shouted, ‘Alleluia!’ Others rashly denied the light behind them [the midnight cry] and said that it was not God that had led them out so far. The light behind

them went out, leaving their feet in perfect darkness, and they stumbled and lost sight of the mark and of Jesus, and fell off the path down into the dark and wicked world below” (*Early Writings*, p. 14).

At the end of the vision she related, “Then an angel bore me gently down to this dark world. Sometimes I think I can stay here no longer; all things of earth look so dreary. I feel very lonely here, for

DO WE REALIZE HOW DARK THIS WORLD IS?

I have seen a better land. Oh, that I had wings like a dove, then would I fly away and be at rest! After I came out of vision, everything looked changed; a gloom was spread over all that I beheld. Oh, how dark this world looked to me. I wept when I found myself here, and felt homesick. I had seen a better world, and it had spoiled this for me” (*Ibid*, pp. 19-20).

If we learn to walk with Jesus here in the darkness, hand in hand,

we are safe. And our future, into the sunrise, is secure with Him. “There will always be obstacles before us, but we are to follow our Leader, and meet our difficulties unitedly, hand in hand” (*Upward Look*, p. 141). The future is not lonely, nor is the present.

But did you know we often present a lonely message? “The third angel’s message is the proclamation of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus Christ. The commandments of God have been proclaimed, but the faith of Jesus Christ has not been proclaimed by Seventh-day Adventists as of equal importance, the law and the gospel going hand in hand” (*Selected Messages*, Vol. 3, p. 172). Let’s present them, let’s live them, “hand in hand.” It will lighten this dark world with glory, and hasten the Sunrise.



NICOLE STALLINGS
class of 2014

MY ARISE EXPERIENCE

BEING HOME HAS made me realize what a privilege attending ARISE was. Jesus Christ was undoubtedly there! From the first class, my mind was full and my heart was beating for Him. Every instructor had a love for Christ that I had never seen before. No matter where anyone was in their walk, there was never any judgment or condemnation. They were real people, and during every class they humbled themselves before Christ with prayer for the Holy Spirit's leading. It was evident by the end of every session that God was speaking through them.

It was at this program that I began to allow Christ to heal my shattered heart. I know now that I was being crushed by the weight of guilt and shame. I realized these were burdens I no longer had to bear alone. Everything was centered on the love

Jesus has for sinners like me, and with each passing day my walls were breaking down.

I began to see the cross in a whole new light and learned how to center Christ in every doctrinal truth. I learned that I could "know" the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation inside and out, and yet without the love of Christ in my heart, it would profit me nothing.

I saw the power of prayer and the true meaning of discipleship. I realized that getting out of your comfort zone and into the community does make a difference. I met people who are waiting for Christlike Christians to show them

that they are loved and that there is a GOD OF LOVE waiting to embrace them. I saw the mighty hand of God during every outreach. The stories that we shared after outreach brought tears to my eyes on so many occasions, and with each story my faith increased. I realized you don't have to know everything in order to show people Christ, but through small acts of kindness, someone's life can forever be changed.

"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord."

Ephesians 5:8-10

"God could have reached His object in saving sinners without our aid; but in order for us to develop a character like Christ's, we must share in His work. In order to enter into His joy—the joy of seeing souls redeemed by His sacrifice—we must participate in His labors for their redemption."

Ellen White
Desire of Ages, p. 142

"As witnesses for Christ, we are to tell what we know, what we ourselves have seen and heard and felt. If we have been following Jesus step by step, we shall have something right to the point to tell concerning the way in which He has led us. We can tell how we have tested His promise, and found the promise true. We can bear witness to what we have known of the grace of Christ. This is the witness for which our Lord calls, and for want of which the world is perishing."

Ellen White
Desire of Ages, p. 340



At ARISE, I encountered the glorious gift of friendship. I have seen the good, the bad, and the ugly sides of my classmates (and myself), yet I would gladly give my life for them. I saw the charming character of Christ in every one of them. I will never forget every smile, every laugh, and every tear that we endured together. I have not just friends for a lifetime, but a family.

My heart was abundantly filled with the love that Christ has for me. I knew He loved the world, but for the Son of God to love me? I must say that I have fallen deeply in love with Jesus Christ, in such a way that I cannot imagine life without Him. I learned to walk with Christ, trusting in His covenantal faithfulness, because where I fall short, His mercy and grace abounds much more.

One of the most important things

I learned is that the closer we come to Jesus, the closer our love and compassion grows toward others. Before ARISE, I found it very difficult to actually love people. I discovered how to let Jesus take hold of the reins of my heart. The more I saw how gently Christ handled me, the more I changed how I handle His children.

I also learned some of the valuable lessons of our Advent history. After these special classes I came to appreciate how biblical the Advent movement really is! A new kind of fire was set ablaze in my heart to go share Christ's last message to the world. What a privilege it is to be a co-worker with Christ and to share the three angels' messages. Christ is waiting for His people to manifest His character in their own lives, and to be active laborers with Him!

We are loved, we are not slaves, and we are not accidents. God himself manifested in flesh came down to us and said, "I have called you friends . . ." I can honestly say I have found my Best Friend. I have met my Father, who loves His daughter more than His own life. Sometimes He has to rebuke and chasten me, but it's always out of love. He wants me to grow and be more mature yet never forget my need and my dependence on Him, because He wants to give me all my heart's desires. We are ALL a part of this love story and the God of love desires a relationship with us! He is truly a God named Desire.

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BEAUTIFUL TESTIMONY AT
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