October 30, 2026

NEWSLETTER

MIDDLETOWN SDA CHURCH

A GENERATION THAT KNEW NOT GOD



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October 2026

By: Reneé Russell

A GENERATION THAT KNEW NOT GOD

˝And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.˜ – Judges 2:10

Welcome back to the Middletown SDA Church Newsletter! I pray that you were blessed by our previous issue and encouraged to honor the seventh-day Sabbath as God intended from the very beginning.
In our last issue, we began exploring some of our core beliefs as Seventh-day Adventists and how they are being trampled upon today. However, in this issue, I would like to address a much larger and perhaps more uncomfortable topic: apostasy within the church.

Oftentimes, we focus on the attacks against our faith from outside influences, yet we fail to recognize the spiritual battles taking place within our own church body. Over time, we have witnessed compromises in the very beliefs and standards that have distinguished us as a people. What we are experiencing today did not happen overnight. Rather, it is the result of generations of gradual compromise, neglected instruction, and a weakening commitment to biblical truth.

In this newsletter, we will examine three important points: our failure to properly pass on spiritual knowledge to younger generations, the apostasy that can result from this neglect, and how we can safeguard ourselves and our children against the deceptions of the last days.

A Generation That Knew Not God

There is a story in the book of Judges that has always puzzled me. To understand why, we must first consider what happened in the book of Joshua.

Under Joshua's leadership, Israel witnessed the mighty power of God. They crossed the Jordan River, conquered fortified cities, defeated powerful enemies, and inherited the land God had promised their forefathers. Their victories were not accomplished through human strength alone, but through their dependence upon the Lord.

Joshua's generation had witnessed extraordinary demonstrations of God's faithfulness. One would naturally expect that the generation following them would possess an even stronger faith, having inherited both the promises of God and the testimonies of those who experienced His mighty works.
Yet Scripture presents a troubling reality.

Judges 2:7 tells us:
"And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Israel."
How, then, could a generation that did not know God arise from a generation that had witnessed His mighty power?

Further down, Judges 2:10 reveals:
"And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel."
What a sobering statement!

The generation that had experienced God's miracles eventually passed away, and those who followed did not possess the same knowledge of Him. This passage reveals the devastating consequences when faith is not personally embraced and faithfully transmitted from one generation to another.

Throughout the book of Joshua, we find examples of memorials established to remind future generations of God's mighty works. In Joshua 4, twelve stones were taken from the Jordan River as a memorial. When children asked their fathers what those stones meant, the parents were to explain how God had miraculously brought Israel across the Jordan on dry ground. These memorials were not merely historical landmarks. They were opportunities for parents to teach their children about God's power, faithfulness, and covenant promises.
God intended for each generation to know Him, not simply through the experiences of their forefathers, but through a personal understanding of His character and His Word.

Yet somewhere along the way, that knowledge was neglected, and the consequences were devastating. Judges 2:11–13 tells us that the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, forsook the God who had delivered their fathers from Egypt, and turned to Baal and Ashtaroth.

A generation that had inherited the blessings of God had lost sight of the God who provided those blessings.

Could the same thing be happening among us today?

Are We Telling Our Children or Teaching Them?

As Seventh-day Adventists living in what we believe to be the closing scenes of earth's history, this account should cause us to examine our own homes and churches.
We often hear concerns that our young people do not understand the Bible, that they are questioning our fundamental beliefs, or that they are drifting away from the church.
But have we stopped to consider why?
Could it be that many were never properly taught the principles we expect them to uphold? Could it be that we have told them what to believe without helping them understand why they believe it?
Though this does not represent the majority of those who are falling away from the truth, it represents a large enough percentage for it to be examined.
There is a significant difference between telling a child something and teaching a child something.

Telling is often a one-way communication. It presents information, instructions, or expectations without necessarily providing the reasoning or understanding behind them.
Teaching, however, is an intentional and interactive process. It involves demonstrating, explaining, providing biblical context, answering questions, and helping the learner understand both the *why* and the *how*.
Telling may produce temporary compliance, but teaching seeks to develop lasting conviction.
For example, it is not enough to tell our children that Saturday is the true Sabbath simply because the Bible says so. We must take the time to open the Scriptures and show them, line upon line, how the Sabbath was established at Creation, reaffirmed in the Ten Commandments, honored by Christ, and observed by His followers.

ARE WE PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION TO STAND?

Continued...

We must create an environment where our children feel comfortable asking questions, expressing doubts, and searching the Scriptures for answers.

Likewise, we cannot simply instruct our children to pray without teaching them how to develop a meaningful prayer life. We cannot expect them to love a Savior whom we have never helped them to personally know.
Most importantly, **we cannot effectively teach our children to have a relationship with Christ if we are neglecting that relationship ourselves.**

Our lives must demonstrate the very principles we desire them to embrace. Children learn not only from what we say but also from what we do. When they witness genuine prayer, faithful obedience, sincere repentance, and a consistent love for God, they begin to understand that Christianity is more than a collection of rules. It is a living relationship with Jesus Christ.
Deuteronomy 6:6–7 reminds us: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

Notice that God first instructs His people to keep His words in their own hearts before commanding them to teach their children.
The responsibility begins with us.

The Dangers of Apostasy and Deception

"Until the generation that had received instruction from Joshua became extinct, idolatry made little headway; but the parents had prepared the way for the apostasy of their children. The disregard of the Lord's restrictions on the part of those who came in possession of Canaan sowed seeds of evil that continued to bring forth bitter fruit for many generations." PP 544.4

When biblical knowledge is neglected, spiritual foundations become weakened. And when those foundations are weakened, individuals become more vulnerable to teachings that contradict the Word of God.
Apostasy does not always begin with an open rejection of God. Sometimes it begins quietly, through small compromises, neglected devotion, a growing indifference toward biblical truth, or a willingness to accept teachings simply because they are popular or appealing.
Over time, these compromises can lead us further from the principles we once held dear.

Matthew 24:24 and 1 Timothy 4:1-2 gives us serious warnings that should awaken within us a greater desire to study the Scriptures and examine what we believe.

Ellen G. White offers this solemn warning:
"Satanic agencies are clothing false theories in an attractive garb, even as Satan in the Garden of Eden concealed his identity from our first parents by speaking through the serpent. These agencies are instilling into human minds that which in reality is deadly error. The hypnotic influence of Satan will rest upon those who turn from the plain word of God to pleasing fables." — Maranatha, p. 59

How Can We Safeguard Ourselves Against Deception?

The answer is not found in fear, speculation, or arguments, but in a sincere and consistent relationship with Jesus Christ, grounded in the study of His Word.
Paul gives Timothy practical counsel in 1 Timothy 4:13, 15–16:

"Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine."
"Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."

We cannot defend truths we have never studied. We cannot confidently teach beliefs we do not understand. And we cannot expect our children to stand firmly upon a foundation that we ourselves have neglected to build.

Ellen White also warns:
"I say to all: Be on your guard; for as an angel of light Satan is walking in every assembly of Christian workers, and in every church, trying to win the members to his side. I am bidden to give to the people of God the warning: 'Be not deceived; God is not mocked.'" — Maranatha, p. 59
These warnings are not intended to discourage us, but to awaken us to our need for spiritual vigilance.
We must return to the basics of our faith. We must study the Bible prayerfully, understand our fundamental beliefs, teach our children with patience and love, and remain sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

A Final Appeal: Will We Be Ready to Stand?

Deception is no respecter of persons. It does not discriminate according to age, position, experience, or years of church membership. Anyone who neglects the Word of God can become vulnerable to its influence.

The message of this newsletter is simple but urgent: We must guard our hearts, strengthen our spiritual foundations, and faithfully prepare the next generation to stand for truth.

Excuses will not prepare us for the kingdom of God, nor will a borrowed faith sustain us through the trials ahead.

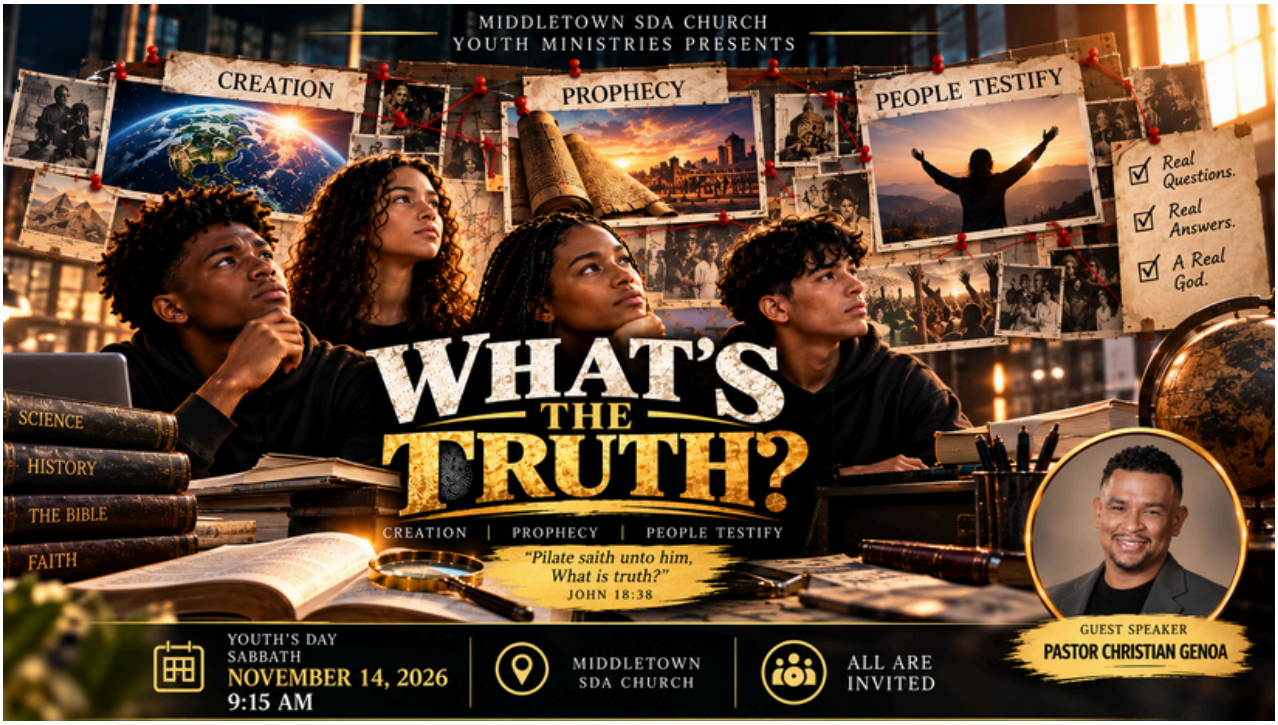
Today, I challenge you to search the Scriptures for yourself. Do not settle for merely knowing what your parents, pastor, or church believes. Discover why you believe it, and allow the Holy Spirit to establish those truths within your heart.
Do not drift toward the enticing promises of sin or the deceptive teachings of this world. Instead, cling to Jesus Christ, whose saving grace has the power to transform our lives.
A time is coming when our faith will be tested, and the strength of our spiritual foundation will be revealed. When that day comes, will we be standing firmly upon the Rock, Jesus Christ, or will we discover that we have built our faith upon the shifting sands of tradition, convenience, and compromise?

May we be the generation that not only knows the truth, but lives it, teaches it, and faithfully passes it on.

"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock." — Matthew 7:24

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UPCOMING EVENTS



In a world filled with conflicting beliefs, unanswered questions, and countless opinions, how can we distinguish truth from error? Where do we turn when our faith is challenged, and how can we be certain of what we believe?

On Saturday, November 14th, 2026, at 9:15 AM, the Middletown SDA Church Youth Ministries invites you to a special Youth Day program themed “What's the Truth?” featuring guest speaker Pastor Christian Genoa.
Through the three powerful witnesses of Creation, Prophecy, and People, we will explore the evidence of God's existence, the reliability of His Word, and the testimonies that reveal His character and transforming power.

When Pilate stood before Jesus, he asked a question that continues to echo throughout generations: “What is truth?” (John 18:38). Today, our young people are asking that same question. Rather than discouraging their doubts, we must encourage them to search the Scriptures, ask meaningful questions, and discover the truth for themselves.
Come with your questions, bring your doubts, and prepare to discover a God who is real, a Word that is trustworthy, and a truth that can transform your life.

All are invited to join us for this special day of worship, discovery, and spiritual growth!

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CREEPING COMPROMISE



Halloween: Harmless Fun or Spiritual Compromise?

Every October 31st, millions of people, young and old, celebrate Halloween by dressing as witches, demons, ghosts, and other characters. But what is inherently wrong with simply dressing up? What if we choose something seemingly innocent, such as a princess or superhero? Does that make participating in Halloween acceptable?

The name Halloween comes from All Hallows' Eve, the evening before All Saints' Day, observed on November 1st. This Christian observance commemorates the saints, including those without individual feast days. Halloween also has historical connections to Samhain, an ancient Celtic festival associated with the Druids, religious leaders in pre-Christian Britain and Gaul. During this festival, it was believed that the boundary between the living and the dead became less distinct, allowing spirits to roam among the living. Over time, ghosts, witches, fairies, and other supernatural figures became associated with the celebration.

Although Halloween has evolved into what many consider harmless entertainment, as Christians, we must ask ourselves: Does participating in this celebration align with the principles of God's Word?

The Bible reminds us to "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil." — 1 Thessalonians 5:21–22.

The question is not merely whether a costume is innocent, but whether our participation honors God and reflects our commitment to Him.

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RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

MIDDLETOWN SDA CHURCH

Our Higher Allegiance
-Claudia Douglas

MESSAGE FROM RELIGIOUS LIBERTY LEADER

"Religious liberty is a sacred gift from God—the freedom to choose whom we worship and to live according to conscience, free from coercion or manipulation by any earthly power."

-Read more on the next page



THUS SAITH THE LORD...

The kingdom of God comes not with outward show. The gospel of the grace of God, with its spirit of self-abnegation, can never be in harmony with the spirit of the world. The two principles are antagonistic....
But today in the religious world there are multitudes who, as they believe, are working for the establishment of the kingdom of Christ as an earthly and temporal dominion. They desire to make our Lord the ruler of the kingdoms of this world, the ruler in its courts and camps, its legislative halls, its palaces and market places. They expect Him to rule through legal enactments, enforced by human authority. Since Christ is not now here in person, they themselves will undertake to act in His stead, to execute the laws of His kingdom. The establishment of such a kingdom is what the Jews desired in the days of Christ.

– God's Amazing Grace, p 13

MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS

Wednesday

Children's Bible Study: 6:00 PM

Prayer Meeting- 7:00 PM

Apologetics Bible Class- Thur. 7 PM



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RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

By: Claudia Douglas

Our Higher Allegiance

Last month, we explored how true religious liberty is measured not by institutional titles or heritage, but by how we reflect the likeness and character of Jesus Christ. As the political season intensifies, discussions and debates will fill our conversations and communities. Amid these exchanges, we are called to reflect Christ within our unique spheres of influence, making this season an opportunity to live out true discipleship.

As autumn leaves turn to shades of gold and red, revealing the beauty of God's creation, may our lives likewise reveal His goodness. Let us shine in ways that lead others to glorify our Father in heaven.

How, then, do we engage in a politically charged world without losing our spiritual compass? We begin with a foundational truth:

Religious liberty is a sacred gift from God—the freedom to choose whom we worship and to live according to conscience, free from coercion or manipulation by any earthly power.

When navigating the complex landscape of civil government, we must first anchor our perspective in the Word of God, then in the reinforcing wisdom of the Spirit of Prophecy.

Foundations from the Holy Scriptures

The Bible teaches that civil governments are ordained by God to maintain order and justice (Romans 13:1–4). Yet a sacred boundary exists between the authority of the state and the domain of conscience.

Scripture also reminds us that earthly authority is temporary. In Daniel 2, God revealed the destiny of human empires through King Nebuchadnezzar's prophetic dream of a great image shattered by a stone cut without human hands. This stone, representing God's everlasting kingdom, reduced the image to chaff—a vivid reminder that earthly powers will pass away, but His kingdom will endure forever (Daniel 2:34–35, 44).

Confronted with a question designed to trap Him, Jesus distinguished our civic obligations from our allegiance to God, declaring, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21). The state may regulate civic matters, but it cannot claim the devotion that belongs to God. Scripture affirms personal choice and moral accountability before a Creator who desires freely given love, not forced compliance.

Insights from the Spirit of Prophecy

Building upon these biblical foundations, the Spirit of Prophecy offers counsel for navigating political conflict while remaining faithful to Christ. Our standing before God rests on our personal relationship with Him and a character that reflects Jesus—not on a name, political affiliation, lineage, or institutional membership

As we engage with our communities this season, let these four principles guide us:

1. Respect the Domain of Conscience: God has given each person the freedom to choose. Civil authority must not compel religious belief or worship. Coercion contradicts the freely given love at the heart of God's government.
2. Guard Against Spiritual Lethargy: Spiritual complacency leaves us vulnerable to deception. We must remain prayerful and grounded in Scripture, never allowing enthusiasm for a political candidate to eclipse our devotion to Christ.
3. Recognize the Limits of Earthly Kingdoms: Prophetic counsel warns of a time when even nations founded on religious freedom will abandon those principles and compel religious observance. Our ultimate trust must remain in God, rather than in political leaders or promises.
4. Discern Deceptive Movements: Efforts presented as moral reform may threaten freedom of conscience. We must look beyond appealing rhetoric and test every movement by the Word of God and the character of Christ.

Living a Higher Allegiance

As followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to be His disciples in thought, word, and deed. In a political climate often charged with anger, division, and distrust, our higher allegiance requires more than avoiding negativity—it calls us to make the character of Christ visible.

Every conversation becomes an opportunity to listen with humility, speak truth with grace, and treat others with dignity, even when we disagree. We can resist the impulse to retaliate, refuse to repeat words that demean others, and defend freedom of conscience for all. Through these daily choices, we bear witness to the One we follow.

Jesus declared, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). As citizens of His kingdom, may we enter this season prayerfully, asking the Holy Spirit to shape our thoughts, guide our words, and direct our actions. Let us make our allegiance to Christ evident in the love we extend, the peace we cultivate, and the hope we bring.

References

- New Holy Bible: King James Version (Genesis 9:6; Romans 13:1; Daniel 2:34; Matthew 22:21; John 18:36)
- White, E. G. (1889). Testimonies for the Church, Volume 5, p. 712.

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DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHT









From September 30th to October 10th, Middletown SDA Church was blessed to host an evangelistic series themed "**Hope for Today, Promise for Tomorrow.**" Through the leading of the Holy Spirit, Dr. Keith Albury delivered powerful, Christ-centered messages that touched hearts, renewed faith, and reminded us of the blessed hope we have in Jesus Christ. We praise God for the 16 precious souls who surrendered their lives to Christ through baptism, publicly declaring their decision to follow Him. What a beautiful testimony of God's saving grace and transforming power! As we celebrate these decisions, let us continue to uplift our newly baptized members in prayer, encourage them in their spiritual journey, and surround them with the love and fellowship of our church family. May the seeds planted during this series continue to bear fruit for the kingdom of God.

"I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." — Luke 15:7

Thank you for reading!

MIDDLETOWN SDA CHURCH NY	
www.msdac.org/newsletters	70 Highland Avenue, Middletown NY 10940

Click the Link above and it will direct you to the Website.

This newsletter was edited by the Communications Department!