



May 2025 FAMILY MONTH

The General Conference Family Department under the leadership of Elder Adalicio Fontes de Souza has published a booklet containing readings for the Family Month of May. The American Union Family Department has arranged for this booklet to be printed in English, Spanish, and French and distributed to the churches.

The introduction presents the main theme of the Family Month: "With these readings, the Family Department seeks to honor the needs of the elderly and reinforce the profound connection we share with them. We have a moral obligation—not just as children, relatives, or members of the church—to provide not only care but also genuine love and unwavering respect. We will delve into the emotions that define this stage of life: the gratitude, the worries, and the transformative lessons that shape us all along the journey."

The eight articles can be read personally or together in meetings. Five of the readings are scheduled to be read on the Sabbaths during the month, with the first one beginning on May 3.

Links to the Readings in three languages appear on the home page of the American Union website, www.sda1888.org.

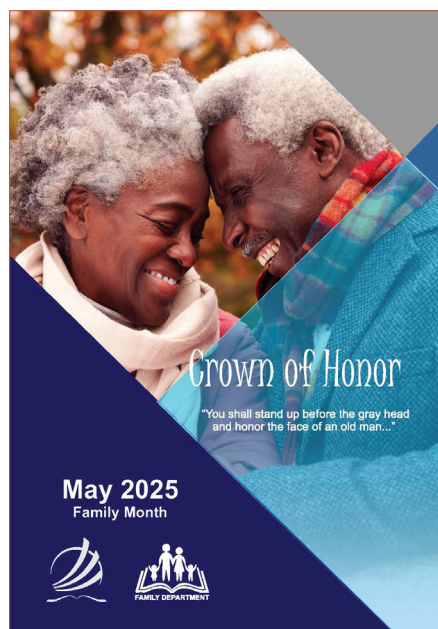
Following is an excerpt from the last reading. "The most tender regard should be cherished for those whose life interest has been bound up with the work of God. These aged workers have stood faithful amid storm and tri-

al. They may have infirmities, but they still possess talents that qualify them to stand in their place in God's cause. Though worn, and unable to bear the heavier burdens that younger men can and should carry, the counsel they can give is of the highest value.' —*Reflecting Christ*, p. 280.

"The Lord gives special grace and knowledge to the aged men who have had an experience in the work from its earliest history, and have watched it develop in its various lines of progress. Let these men be appreciated and respected. Let not the fact be lost sight of that in the past they have sacrificed everything to advance the work. Because they are growing old is no reason why they should cease to exert an influence superior to the influence of the men who have had far less study of the Word, far less experience in divine things, far less knowledge of the communications of Christ to His people.' —*The Retirement Years*, p. 34.

Example of John

"The story of John serves as a powerful illustration of how God can use older workers. When John was exiled to the island of Patmos, many saw him as someone past his time of service—an old reed, a weakling, broken, and on the verge of crumbling. However, the Lord, in His wisdom, chose to use John in an extraordinary way.



"This was the spirit and life of the message that John bore to all in his old age, when he was nearly one hundred years old. The standard-bearers are holding fast their banners. They are not loosening their hands on the banner of truth until they lay off the armor. One by one the old warriors' voices become silent. Their place is vacant. We see them no more, but they being dead yet speak, for their works do follow them. Let us treat very tenderly the few aged pilgrims remaining, esteeming them highly for their works' sake. As their powers are becoming worn and enfeebled, what they do say is of value. As precious testimony let their words be treasured. Let not the young men and the new workers discard or in any respect show indifference to the men of hoary hairs, but let them rise up and call them blessed.' —Manuscript 33, 1890; *Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 223."

HEAVENLY CELEBRATION

The baptism of Brother David Hayes

David Moreno
Western Field Vice President
Valencia, California

Where do you think you will be one year from now? This experience began one year ago, almost to the day, when a major truck accident changed one unsuspecting individual's course of life. His name is David Hayes. Now, in the year 2025, we had the blessing of being present at a heavenly celebration—his baptism.

A wonderful moment of faith and transformation took place as David publicly declared his surrender to Christ in baptism. The ceremony, led by Elder Joel Barnedo, was filled with worship, testimony, and Bible teachings that emphasized the significance of this sacred rite.

The service began with the singing of a Spanish hymn titled "In the Depths of the Sea," which speaks of how God will bury our sins in the depths of the sea; they will never be found again, and we will live with Jesus forever. Elder Barnedo then prayed, asking for blessings for David and his wife, as well as for those still contemplating their faith and baptism. He shared some personal news, that his recent health checkup showed no signs of cancer, bringing gratitude and praise to our hearts.

He then recounted David's journey to faith, which began when Elder Barnedo met David's wife, Carmen, at a supermarket over a year ago. Through prayer and Bible study, David's heart gradually opened to the gospel. A turning point came after a major truck accident, which unexpectedly gave him time to reflect and draw closer to God. He had been a truck driver for decades, and yet this unfortunate accident that left his truck completely totaled was David's call to a new life in Christ.

Elder Barnedo underscored the Biblical foundation of baptism. He spoke of Adam and Eve's fall, Jesus' baptism, and the transforming power of surrendering one's life to the Saviour. He explained that baptism symbolizes the death of sin and the birth of a new life



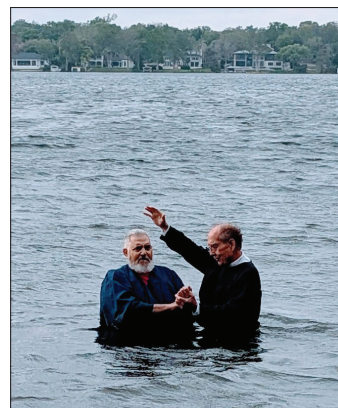
in Christ, an outward expression of an inward change. This inward change will be greatly demonstrated, for David and his wife will be moving to the Philippines next month to be near his wife's family. He has purposed in his heart to follow Jesus and share the good news of salvation when he arrives in the Phil-

ippines. Let us pray for his personal mission for Jesus.

The highlight of the service was David's baptism. As he came up from the water, the congregation praised the Lord by singing "Shall We Gather at the River." Elder Barnedo then presented a baptismal certificate to David, officially recognizing this crucial step in his spiritual journey as he was accepted into the body of Christ.

The ceremony was closed with prayer for continued strength and guidance for David and his wife. The church embraced him with love, reinforcing the importance of fellowship and support for new believers. This heavenly celebration was a wonderful experience for this brother; but it also served as a reminder to all of the power of faith, repentance, and God's amazing grace. It was a reminder that, although we may not know exactly where we will be one year from now, we can hope and pray to be nearer to Jesus—our loving Friend and Saviour—than when we first believed.

BAPTISM IN ORLANDO, FL



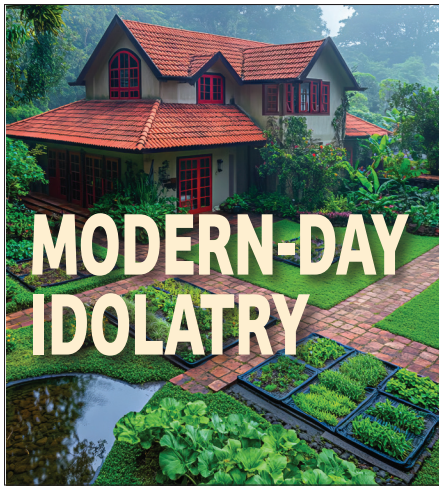
The local church of Orlando, Florida, joyfully welcomed the newest member of the family of God on Sunday, March 16, 2025.

Please join us in praying for our new brother in the faith, Jose Mario Dominguez, as he begins a new chapter in his life with our beloved Saviour.

With gratitude and kind regards,

*Your brethren in
Orlando, Florida*

**"Baptism is a most solemn
renunciation of the world."
—Counsels for the Church,
p. 295.**



Emil Bainhardt
Western Field Health Leader
Novato, California

"Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." Exodus 20:3.

When we read the first commandment, we may think of ancient people kneeling or bowing down to images of false gods. What does the Bible say about idolatry? God commanded against following or worshiping anyone or anything other than Him. Idolatry, in this sense, means to abandon the way of God for some other aim. The Bible says that living in a righteous manner should be man's purpose above all other pursuits of the flesh and mind. Modern life offers many opportunities that attract a person's attention from spiritual matters that are everlasting to shallow, temporary amusements of the world. This article will attempt to answer the following question: How are we to live out our lives and our faith in this modern industrial, progressivist, politically unstable world?

Since the fall of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, the tempter has devised innumerable distractions that lead away from God's plan for His people. However, modern communications have multiplied the possibilities of temptations that assault every believer at a frantic pace. The Bible declares that in the last days knowledge will increase. Let us look at just one of the many areas of life that try to lure us away from God—communication.

Man was created to communicate—with God and with others. History and archaeology portray it as ebbing and flowing from one type to another through the ages. Multitudes of societies had verbal or hand communication as well as symbols etched on rocks or

clay tablets. Long-distance communication included yelling, sending out smoke signals, and couriers carrying messages from one person to another. Written information was entered on papyrus, sheep skins, and paper with chalk, ink, and quills. Then movable type came along, as did printing, fountain pens, typewriters, telegraph, telephones, loudspeakers, radios, television, computers, cell phones, the Internet, emailing, texting, social networking, etc., etc. You get my drift. You have seen the rapid acceleration of these advancements with your own eyes. It seems that every single day brings some new way to communicate. We have no way of identifying or predicting its trajectory or goal. We are living on the vertical, accelerating slope of a communications revolution that has no foreseeable destination.

This same historically accelerating phenomenon is true of nearly every aspect of modern life—travel, trade, information, markets, clothing styles, goods and services, health care, and insurance, to name a few examples. There was a time when people lived their entire lives with very little change in any of these things. From the time they were born until they died, they saw very few changes in clothing, communication, travel, cuisine, or even politics.

But now, for us who live on the vertical slope of changes in everything, the anxiety of trying to live in this accelerating, goalless culture of presumed progress is also accelerating, along with crime, substance abuse, divorce, broken lives, suicide, and the unprecedented acceptance of immoral lifestyles. Such catastrophes are results of a distortion of reality that the Bible calls idolatry. It is an eternal principle that man must

put God first and have no other gods before Him. Trying to live without God in His proper place automatically leads to the destruction of one's life. But how can a person live a godly, fulfilling life in such a crazy, godless world?

Focus on that which is stable and established. It is critically important for one to take his mind away from the accelerating instability of a progressive culture and to focus it on principles of living that are offered in the Holy Scriptures.

In awe, David wrote these words: "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!" Psalm 8:3-9.

Reduce the incessant noise. To whom are we listening? Whose communications are we reading, watching, or listening to? What books, magazines, TV programs, news, blogs, and Internet pundits fill our waking moments? Sister Ellen G. White admonished her readers to guard the avenues of their souls.

Reduce financial entanglements. This means to reduce or eliminate debt, to minimize risky investments, and to learn to live modestly within one's means.

Practice social subsidiarity. Social subsidiarity holds that an individual should rely on the most basic levels of so-



cial and technological complexity to achieve goals. Thus, by relying on the household, family, community, and nature's bounties to provide as many basic needs as possible, people could free themselves from economic dependence and the political control of plutocrats, thereby regaining a measure of human dignity and freedom.

Live more simply. A life in the footsteps of Christ is a life of simplicity. "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." 2 Corinthians 11:3.

Consider a more self-sufficient life on the land. Anyone who grows his own food; takes wool from his lambs and cotton from his stalks and makes them into clothing; plants corn and hay for his animals; takes water from the ground; and obtains wood from the forest can live in an industrial world without a great deal of cash. Let him diversify so that he may live, rather than that he may grow rich.

Make more time for God. Utilizing all of the natural processes listed above will make it easier to focus on that which is most important—to make more time to talk with and listen to God. If we think of idolatry as abandoning God for another aim, we find many, many distractions around us that lead us away from our spiritual journey. Making time for God in our lives is our chief goal. By focusing on that which is stable, and not forever trying to obtain that which is elusive; by choosing not to give attention to thousands of conflicting, clamoring voices around us; by freeing ourselves from the clutching control and anxieties of debt and an uncertain financial future; by investing our lives in the immediate world around us, the specific world in which

God has planted us; and by choosing to take steps toward a life of gospel simplicity, we can become freer to commune with God in prayer, to meditate

on His Word, to hear His voice, and to receive His grace and forgiveness.

In closing, let us remember the words of the apostle Paul: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6, 7.

The *American Union Newsletter* is published monthly by the International Missionary Society, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Reform Movement, American Union. It is complimentary for members and friends and carries items of interest submitted by believers. We reserve the right to make changes as necessary and to refuse to print certain items. To submit news, send your item in an email to atramirez829@gmail.com.

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