



## Coming Full Circle

### How God Restored A Faltering Marriage

**Nidia:** For most people, 2020 has been full of heartache, loss and sadness. And, although it's been a very hard year for us also, 2020 represents transformation, hope, strength and renewal. On September 19, 2020, we not only celebrated our 11th wedding anniversary but we also decided to renew our vows and recommit our love for each other after many years of marital challenges. Most importantly, we chose that day to also give our lives to the Lord and commit our lives to Him in baptism. It was a very special day because we were able to share it with our two boys, close family members and church friends that have been praying for us.

Edward and I met 18 years ago when we were 17. We started a long distance relationship since I lived in Illinois and he lived in Michigan. Edward had just lost his father to cancer and, as an only child, assumed the responsibility of taking care of his mother. Edward

turned to alcohol as an escape from the hurt and pain he was experiencing at home.

I was 25 when I finally moved to Michigan, right before we got married. I was so excited to finally not have a long distance relationship. One thing bothered me, though. He always wanted to be at the bar with his friends and sometimes wouldn't return home after a long night out. I figured once we got married and had a family things would change because he promised they would.

A few years later we had our first son. Things had definitely not changed, and now I resented him for choosing his friends and alcohol over family. I felt like a single mother raising our child while he lived a life of no responsibilities. I felt alone, hurt, frustrated and angry, but I knew I had to be strong for my son.

It was during this time that my

*"I finally reached the breaking point one day when my son asked me, "Mommy, where does Daddy live?" I realized then that, for them, it had almost become normal not having him around."*

relationship with God grew closer. He was all I had and the only thing that gave me the strength to keep going. Although I prayed hard every day for Edward to change, I also wanted to be in control of everything. I would go out to look for him in the middle of the night in frustration and anger. I would pray for him to stop drinking and throw away any alcohol or drugs that I found, only to have him leave the house and do the things I didn't want him to do.

After having our second son, things were the same, if not worse. Everything Edward worked for went straight to drugs and alcohol, instead of family. Financially things were not good, our

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By Andy Im,  
Religious Liberty Director



*“If there ever was a time when Adventists needed to stand united in our message and mission, that time is now.”*

## RELIGIOUS LIBERTY: WHAT MATTERS MOST

### Unity Among God’s Remnant People

I think we can agree that the year 2020 was unlike any we’ve ever experienced. COVID-19 disrupted normal life and ultimately the course of history. I remember thinking last year in March and April how surreal things had become. Adventist churches in Michigan were temporarily shuttered as churches scrambled to use online platforms and programming. ZOOM quickly became a thing in addition to increasing unemployment, bankruptcies, and widespread protests.

The past year also brought to the forefront how divided we are as a nation. It wasn’t isolated to 2020, unfortunately. Americans continue the debate over face masks, vaccines, and racism, to name a few. The rift is arguably most glaring when it comes to the political landscape. There’s been talk of secession and violence as the solution for righting all that’s wrong in parts of the country.

A recent poll suggests that 8 in 10 Republicans believe the Democratic party has been taken over by socialists, while 8 in 10 Democrats see Republicans being taken over by racists.<sup>1</sup> Another study conducted by the Pew Research Center concluded that political polarization is “more intense now than at any point in modern history,” and that nearly 80% of Americans admitted to having very few to no friends across the political aisle.<sup>2</sup>

It should come as no surprise to see the stark polarization along political lines. There’s a plethora of controversial issues, and Scripture informs us that the state of affairs will worsen as we near the end of time.<sup>3</sup> But this is the current challenge we face as Seventh-day Adventists. While our nation is splintering, we have not been immune to the burgeoning polarization. Instead of stand-

ing apart from the hatred and vitriol spewing from the political extremes, we’re in danger of digging ourselves into trenches where we shouldn’t be.

Society is inundated with hostile rhetoric against those with opposing political, religious, and cultural ideologies. The narrative from both left- and right-wing media outlets are littered with fighting words that paint the opposition in the worst possible terms. The danger in listening to this toxic rhetoric is we begin perceiving others through the lens of political partisanship, and not from the standpoint of God’s word. This inevitably leads us to devalue fellow humans created in God’s image, which is an explicit violation of the Golden Rule.<sup>4</sup> “A religion that leads men to place a low estimate upon human beings, whom Christ has esteemed of such value as to give Himself for them,” stated Ellen White, “is a spurious religion.”<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately, the demeaning verbiage expressed through popular media outlets and radio talk shows is becoming more commonplace within Adventism. This is reflected on our social media pages and the fight is no longer us against the world—we’re getting quite adept at squabbling with each other, too!

If there ever was a time when Adventists needed to stand united in our message and mission, that time is now. While Satan is striving to bring discord amongst God’s people, we are to stand united against his efforts. “As we approach the last crisis,” wrote Ellen White, “it is of vital importance that harmony and unity exist among the Lord’s instrumentalities.”<sup>6</sup>

It’s become cliché over the years for Adventists to emphasize the need for unity, but that shouldn’t deter us from seeking to obtain it.

*“We are coming to a time when, more than ever before, we shall need to press together, to labor unitedly. In union there is strength. In discord and disunion there is only weakness. . . . ‘Press together, press together, press together. Do not let Satan cast his hellish shadow between brethren. Press together; in unity there is strength.’”*

Furthermore, we should allow nothing to distract us from our mission in taking the everlasting gospel to a dying world. While never compromising our principles, we should be far more intentional in seeking “unity and love for one another,” because the loss of souls is at stake.<sup>8</sup> What the world needs now is a revelation of God’s love as expressed through His people. “By this all people will know that you are my disciples” Jesus stated to His disciples, “if you have love for one another.”<sup>9</sup>

### Unity in Our Eschatological Messaging

Seventh-day Adventists have a distinct understanding of religious liberty, particularly so because we have historically understood the concept from the viewpoint of the Great Controversy narrative and the final test over the Sabbath. While sharing many points in common with the evangelical community, our understanding of how the end will play out has informed our points of emphasis.

While we should remain wary of increasing encroachments upon civil liberties by state and federal authorities within the context of the pandemic, it’s important for Adventists not to forget the leading role that apostate Protestantism will play in the final moments of earth’s history.

At a time when evangelical entities are mounting aggressive partisan warfare against secular groups and ideologies by appealing to the arm of state and federal authorities, Adventists should pause

before jumping on the bandwagon. It's important to bear in mind that many Christian leaders are working to establish Christ's kingdom "as an earthly and temporal dominion," with the expectation that He is to rule through "legal enactments," that are "enforced by human authority."<sup>10</sup> Seventh-day Adventists understand, with the guidance of the Spirit of Prophecy, that it's not the "decisions of courts or councils or legislative assemblies" that the "kingdom of Christ [is to be] established."<sup>11</sup> Rather, it's the "implanting of Christ's nature in humanity through the work of the Holy Spirit," that Christ's kingdom is established, and "the human agency for the accomplishment of this work is the teaching and practicing of the word of God."<sup>12</sup>

The assumptions held widely by many evangelical thought leaders for establishing Christ's kingdom not only falls short, but, for Seventh-day Adventists, we are to bear in mind that a time will come when such enactments by legislative assemblies at the direction of Protestant leaders will be directed against Sabbath-keepers.

It is especially important as we approach the end, that we interpret political and societal events through the lens of Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy and not the narrative of our favored political parties, leaders, and pundits.

### **Conclusion: Maintain the Objective and the *Certain Sound***

Our message and mission as Seventh-day Adventists is a decided one that finds its basis in Scripture.<sup>13</sup> "In a special sense," writes Ellen White, "Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and lightbearers. . . They have been given a work of the most solemn import—the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention."<sup>14</sup>

Our objective as Seventh-day Adventists should be informed on the basis of Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy. The Democratic or Republican parties and their corresponding media outlets should not set our agenda. Now is not the time to spend our limited energies and resources in the fight against

one another, against politicians, and government authorities.

This is a critical point. We should not permit anything to thwart us from our message and mission. Social media outlets like Facebook and Twitter are replete with antagonistic, even aggressive, rhetoric against state and federal authorities. Seventh-day Adventists are counseled to take no part in such activities. Ellen White, responding to someone who was advocating for religious liberty principles, stated in 1895,<sup>15</sup> that brethren in her day had "spoken and written" many things "expressing antagonism to government and law."

She counseled explicitly against this for a number of reasons, namely that such expressions would: (1) open ourselves to misunderstanding, i.e., treason, antagonistic to law and order; (2) place us unnecessarily in opposition to civil authorities; (3) "place ourselves on record as encouraging disloyalty to our country;" (4) potentially "stir up animosity and strife;" (5) and most importantly, there would come a time when our "unguarded expressions" would be "used by our enemies to condemn us," and the "whole body of Adventists." She noted, "Let all beware, lest by reckless expressions they bring on a time of trouble before the great crisis which is to try men's souls."

The day is coming, she concludes, when they will "forbid us to proclaim the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus," and it is at that time when "it will be necessary for us to say, as did the apostles: 'Whether it be right in the sight of God to harken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard' Acts 4:19, 20."

Seventh-day Adventists have been entrusted with the single-minded purpose of sharing the three angels' messages with the world. At this hour, let us be intentional in our efforts for unity. Let's not allow political and societal considerations to fracture us as a people. And, certainly, let's not bring upon ourselves the time of trouble prematurely. That day will come, but in the meantime, we have an important work to accomplish. We need the Lord to help us, and we also need to stand united in message, mission, and love for one another.

1 <https://www.prii.org/research/amid-multiple-crises-trump-and-biden-supporters-see-different-realities-and-futures-for-the-nation/>  
 2 <https://www.npr.org/2020/10/27/928209548/dude-i-m-done-when-politics-tears-families-and-friendships-apart>  
 3 Timothy 3:1-5  
 4 Ellen G. White, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings*, p. 136.  
 5 *Ibid.*  
 6 Ellen G. White, *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 182.  
 7 Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p. 159, 160.  
 8 Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 79.  
 9 John 13:35  
 10 Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 509.  
 11 Ellen G. White, *Christ Object Lessons*, p. 386.  
 12 *Ibid.*  
 13 Revelation 14:6-12; Revelation 12:17  
 14 Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, p. 119.  
 15 <http://bit.ly/RH-1911-CivilAuthorities>

## **Every Monday morning,**

the Michigan Conference staff meets for worship and prayer. Here is the list for the following dates. Please join us as we pray for these churches and ministries.



### **FEBRUARY 1**

Boyne City/Central Lake/Gaylord  
**Pastor Chris Ames**  
 Boyne City ACS  
 Cadillac 13th/Manton/Mesick  
**Pastor Bob Benson**

### **FEBRUARY 8**

Grayling/Houghton Lake/Mio  
**Pastor Jay Clough**  
 Houghton Lake ACS Center  
 Grayling SDA Elementary  
 Mio ACS Center  
 Kalkaska/Traverse City  
**Pastor Ben Garcia**  
 Kalkaska ACS Center  
 Traverse City Elementary  
 Traverse City ACS Food Pantry

### **FEBRUARY 15**

Carp Lake/Cheboygan/Petoskey  
**Pastor Cody Francis**  
 Carp Lake ACS  
 Petoskey ACS Center  
 Frankfort/Irons/Manistee  
**Pastor Mac Mills**  
 Irons Food Pantry

### **FEBRUARY 22**

Alpena/Onaway  
**Pastor Paul Ratsara**  
 Cadillac/Lake City  
**Pastor Ariel Roldan**  
 Northview SDA Christian School  
 Cadillac ACS



# Christ's Method Alone—

## How One Classroom Is Taking Initiative

By Judy Klein

At Cedar Lake Elementary School, Pastor EJ Wolf has been training fifth through eighth graders how to be medical missionaries. This idea took root four years ago, when Wolf attended the Living Springs Retreat and trained with Barbara O'Neill.

Wolf commented that prior to his attending the retreat, he felt sick and very weak. He had difficulty lifting his arms above his head and climbing stairs. Ten days later, after the Living Springs Retreat, he said he felt “twenty years younger.”

Knowing firsthand the effectiveness of our health message, especially pertaining to natural remedies, Wolf went to the Cedar Lake school board and asked that training on natural remedies be part of the science curriculum. The plan was voted in, but unfortunately, because of COVID-19, he was unable to carry out his original plan.

COVID-19 didn't stop Wolf, however. He went to a specific teacher and asked if he could teach her class. The teacher allowed Wolf to try for two weeks.

The students love it. They are receiving hands-on experience and learning useful information they use for the rest of their lives. They enjoyed the

experience so much that Wolf was asked to continue on, even after the two weeks were finished.

While the children are enjoying the experience, they are also taking it very seriously. Wolf gave them worksheets with the science behind the remedies, so that when they share with others, they have confidence in why the remedies work.

Many of the natural remedies Wolf learned at Living Springs use common things found in the kitchen. The class did one week of poultices, such as poultices using potato, charcoal, and onion.

After that, Wolf followed with a week of how to use herbs to treat the body. In addition, they trained on hydrotherapy, both hot and cold, and charcoal and turmeric masks.

They have learned safety measures and how to build up the immune system. Myles Fleetwood, an eighth grader, said, “I

want to help other people know how to boost their immune system by teaching them the benefits of super foods.”



Students are eager to learn natural remedies to reach their communities.



Hydrotherapy is essential for healing and boosting the immune system.

Sierra Gardener, also in eighth grade, commented, “Medical missionary work is important because you can help people get better and bring them to God... I will use this knowledge to help others later on in life... I can share God through medical work.”

Wolf has been challenging his classroom

to not keep this knowledge to themselves, encouraging them to be courageous. He spoke of Daniel, who

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# PRAYER

“With dwindling numbers, our members were concerned that unless something drastic happened, the church would soon have to close. I shared with them that we should focus on prayer and see what God can do for us.”

## Prayer IS the Work

Lately I have been asking God to teach our church that prayer is the work! Why you might ask? Our church had tried many different methods of outreach with minimal success. I think most people would admit that it's easy to get discouraged when we don't see fruit from our labor, even after several years. We may feel like giving up on the idea of evangelism.

We experienced this at our church in Tecumseh, Mich. Ninety percent of our active members are past retirement age. And, while we've tried various evangelistic efforts, we haven't had many results until recently. Our average attendance has doubled over the past month. We've had more guests and visitors in the past two months than we have had in all my time here. Here is how God did it.

With dwindling numbers, our members were concerned that unless something drastic happened, the church would soon have to close. I shared with them that we should focus on prayer and see what God can do for us. I shared with them what I had seen in another church I used to pastor that had given a special emphasis on prayer. God doubled the weekly attendance; some weeks it more than tripled.

We tried for a whole quarter to only pray during prayer meeting for God to grow our church and to reach our

inactive members—we also actively tried to connect with former members.

We planned a Week of Prayer focusing on praying specifically for our church. We have had Weeks of Prayer before at our church but it was a guest speaker giving presentations and not really much time spent praying together.

Leading up to and during our Week of Prayer, we gave out the book *Daring to Ask for More* by Melody Mason. We prayed on Sabbath afternoons immediately following the worship service together. Sometimes we did United prayer format; other times we prayer walked around the church seven times.

We prayed for God to tear down the spiritual walls that prevent people from coming to church. We prayed for our neighbors to notice us and to reach out. We prayed for our community center (which has a gym) to get noticed and for people to want to rent it to help us pay for the utilities at least. We prayed for families with children to come to church. We prayed in each room and in every area of the church and the community center.

The Week of Prayer started on Sunday and ended on Sabbath with prayer sessions at 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. We gave members the option of coming to either one that worked with their schedule. On Sabbath we only prayed

together after church.

We continued praying on Sabbath afternoons leading up to an all-night prayer vigil on Friday night. The morning after the all-night prayer vigil, one elder came to church and there were 38 people there. He said it brought tears to his eyes to see God working and bringing life into our church through prayer. God answered our prayers and is still answering our prayers. A young family with three kids came to church all for the first time together. I was able to set up studies with them.

As I was praying for this little family, another name kept coming out of my mouth and I kept having to correct myself. After doing this several times, I finally asked the Lord who this other name belonged to. He brought to my remembrance someone that used to attend. He only attended occasionally because of work issues. I began praying for him and after a couple of weeks, he called me, wanting to come back to church. He came to church the next Sabbath and discovered he knew one of my elders. This elder had witnessed to the man's father before he passed away and apparently had an influence on the son.

Another answer to prayer was the Sabbath after our first all night prayer vigil. As I was outside after church, I saw a neighbor outside whom I had

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## **(How God Restored A Faltering Marriage)**

relationship and marriage were just labels and we felt more like roommates. This was definitely not the example I wanted for our boys. What hurt me most was not having him be part of the boys' lives and missing out on special school events, sporting events, and anything family related.

I finally reached the breaking point and decided to let God lead me as I focused on bettering myself emotionally and spiritually. I didn't know what path God wanted me to go on, but I also knew that the life I had been living for the past 10 years was not what He wanted in a marriage and for my children. I started taking Bible studies to prepare for baptism. I went to focus groups that helped families dealing with loved ones with drug and alcohol problems.

I didn't realize it at the time, but God was putting people in my path to help and guide me, and it wasn't until I



*"When we talked about our baptism date, we felt that doing it on our wedding anniversary would be the perfect date."*

completely gave up and put everything in God's hands that I started to see God working. I stopped trying to control Edward and only prayed about everything, even when people thought I didn't care because I wouldn't argue with him about his actions. I knew that God was in control and I told Him that I would accept anything He led me to, whether it meant separating or staying together. It was all in His hands because I was surrendering it to Him. I still prayed for Edward, even on the days I didn't feel he deserved it. When my pastor asked me if I thought Edward would accept joining us in Bible studies, I knew he would never agree. Surprisingly he accepted, and that was the beginning of God working in his heart.

**Edward:** Watching my father fight with cancer for years took a big toll on my mother and I. As a teenager, I always struggled with being around people and socializing with others. When I was 19, I was diagnosed with social phobia and put on medication to deal with my anxiety and depression. By then, I had already turned to alcohol to ease my nerves and deal with my father's passing.

Since my anxiety kept me from doing normal things everyone does on a day by day basis, I relied on alcohol to calm my nerves and enable me to function around others. Eventually, alcohol led me to experiment with other drugs to get the same relief from my anxiety and to numb my depression.

I knew I was missing out on a lot of special moments and memories during my marriage and children's lives.

Knowing that made me even more depressed and guilt-ridden, which led me to not want to face my family or hear about all the hurt I was putting them through. I would apologize and promise to change; I would pray to God so that He could help me change, but deep inside I wanted it to be on my terms. I wanted to control my drinking, but not stop it completely. The enemy

knew my weakness and every time I would have just one drink, I would spiral out of control again.

Two years ago, my doctor stopped prescribing my medication, so I tried to self-medicate. I went through two severe panic attacks and withdrawals, where I literally thought I would either lose my mind or not survive. Last year while Nidia was doing Bible studies with Pastor Darrel, I agreed to join in because I was tired of my lifestyle.

A few months later, when we dedicated our boys, our family and friends that were there all put their hands upon us and prayed over us and I felt something different in my heart in that moment. For the first time in a long time I felt joy and happiness in my heart, and

I stopped all my bad habits for two months. Just when I felt comfortable, thinking I could try just one sip of alcohol, I went back to my same old habits. I stopped doing Bible studies because I felt guilty and worthless.

Towards the end of January 2020, I finally hit rock bottom. After a weekend of being with friends, I came home and had a very emotional and intense spiritual battle that lasted several hours. During those moments, I was not able to physically call out to God or pray. The only thing I could do was write "Jesus, please help me!" on a notebook I found. I read a painting that was hanging in our living room: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." I went through a lot in those hours, but at the end God proved that if I cry out to Him for help, and surrender all to Him, He will answer and rescue me from the enemy's grip!

That night God spoke to my heart, filled me with His presence and now He is the one to fight all of my battles. Since that night, I have not touched drugs or alcohol, and my anxiety is nearly gone. Most importantly, I am not controlled by medication—only by God. I am so grateful for His mercy. He never gave up, even when I turned away from Him. He had a better plan than I could have ever imagined for my family and I.

Since that night, Nidia and I have continued our weekly Bible studies virtually with Pastor Darrel, and our marriage and love for each other has been restored. Studying the word of God together brought us closer to each other. When we talked about our baptism date, we felt that doing it on our wedding anniversary would be the perfect date—giving our lives to the Lord in baptism at the same lake where we married 11 years ago.

That day was beautiful and perfect. I truly felt that I was reborn and got a new chance at life with my family by my side and God leading the way. I'm a new person. By the grace of God, He has transformed me into the husband, father, friend, and son He created me to be.

**By Nidia and Edward Herzberg**

# PASTORAL TRANSITIONS



**Pastor Jerryn Schmidt** is the new pastor of the Saginaw and St. Charles churches. He previously ministered in Charlotte and Urbandale.

## *(Christ's Method Alone)*

is a perfect representative. It took courage to stand up and refuse to eat the king's food. "We want to train our kids to make a difference in our community," he says, "and we want to use the methods Jesus used."

Medical missionary work is how Jesus reached the majority of people. In most cases, before he spoke, he healed, and entire towns were left where there was not one sick person. As unusual as it seems, teaching others simple, natural remedies can lead them to Christ.

Wolf instilled this in his students. Seventh-grader Anna Wolf commented, "Medical missionary training has helped me to know how to help others when they are sick and share my love for Jesus at the same time."

How beautiful! Just by teaching young people a few natural



remedies, they are empowered and ready to labor for souls using the methods they have learned. All three students share the same burden...they want to use the knowledge they have to share with others the love of Jesus. Wolf and the class released a public YouTube video sharing what they learned. Each child had a role in the video, where they explained how to use natural remedies to treat the body.

The fifth through eighth grade classroom at Cedar Lake Elementary School should be an inspiration for us all. We talk a lot about the health message as the right arm of the gospel, Wolf explained, but we don't do enough. Wolf hopes that other churches will begin training their members, and young people, too, on how to use natural remedies to treat the body, using Christ's method to save souls.

## *(Prayer IS the Work)*

not met. He has never been outside when I have been there.

I went over to introduce myself, but before I could get very far, he came over to us to introduce himself. He proceeded to tell us that he was raised Lutheran but he no longer attends for two reasons: they don't preach from the Bible and they no longer sing from the hymnal.

He told us that he was just telling his grandson that the Jews and the Seventh-day Adventist's worship on the right day, the Sabbath. He told us, "I tell everyone that! When I'm in town I tell people about it." He was interested in receiving the Great Controversy and asked for five more copies to give to his family members.

It's just amazing how when a church unites together to pray and goes above and beyond the bare minimum, God answers in a big way! We have had more guests and non-

members attending in the past couple of months than we have over the past three years. We have more personal Bible studies going with people from the community than we have in the past and they all began during this season of prayer.

Prayer must be the driving force in all that we do in our personal and church life. Not a secondary thought but a driving force! In the preface to the book *Prayer* we find this statement: "When God's people pray earnestly, sincerely, individually, and collectively, God will answer. Great things will happen in and among God's people. And the world will feel the impact as the Holy Spirit comes to equip and empower His people" (*Prayer*, p. 1).

**By Nathaniel Oregon,**

Pastor, Belleville & Tecumseh Churches

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# MONTHLY CALENDAR

*Due to COVID-19, events on the schedule are subject to change.*

## FEBRUARY

5-7 Adventurer District Retreat

6 PBE Area Level

10-16 GLAA Home Leave

12-15 CAMPUS Winter Retreat

15 Office Closed  
(President's Day)

## MARCH

1-15 Camp Meeting Registration

6 PBE – Conference Level

15-18 New in Ministry

18-28 GLAA Home Leave

27 IMPACT – Literature  
Distribution Day

27 PBE – Union Level

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## NATURE NUGGET

### Three Camels

By Dr. Gordon Atkins,  
Camp Au Sable Naturalist



Photo By: Dr. Gordon Atkins

It is not clear how many wisemen came from the east that first Christmas. There was more than one, but not necessarily three. The tradition of three wisemen comes from the fact that three gifts were brought. Regardless of how many there were, they came from the east which means they must have traveled across the Arabian desert, and that almost certainly means that they came by camel.

It turns out there are three species of camel. The one-humped Dromedary is no longer found in the wild, is completely domesticated, and was probably so at the time of Christ's birth. The other two species of camel, the domesticated Bactrian Camel and the wild Bactrian Camel (now considered a separate species), have two humps. Domesticated or wild, the ability for these mammals to survive without water for long periods of time is remarkable.

One of the adaptations that make this possible is that their red blood cells are oval rather than round like most other mammals, including us. Round red blood

cells require a certain amount of water in the blood plasma in order to get through the tiniest blood vessels.

When we get too dehydrated, our blood cells have a hard time squeezing through the capillaries. Oval blood cells are more streamlined. They can squeeze through these vessels with less water, resulting in camels being able to withstand more dehydration than we can. Another feature of oval blood cells is that they can withstand greater osmotic shock, meaning they can survive the changes that happen when a dehydrated camel drinks 50 gallons of water in just 3 minutes! Our blood cells would swell and rupture from the pressure.

2020 has stretched our abilities and has put strains on our physical, emotional and spiritual being. The Bible promises that God will not abandon us during tough times. He knows what we need. He cares. Christ came at exactly the right time on that first Christmas, and He will come at exactly the right time when He returns the second time as King!