



## The Resurrection Gives Hope and Reason to Live!

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Ilse Dering was born September 18, 1934, in Riga, Latvia, a little known country in the Baltic region of Northern Europe. It is little known to us, because it was occupied and annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940, only regaining its independence more than fifty years later.

Ilse was the youngest of seven children of Julius and Ana Dering. Three of their older children died in infancy from an epidemic of smallpox that swept through the Caucasus, a region between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, where the family had fled to escape severe famine in their homeland. Ilse loved to tell me touching stories about little Ralph, Herbert, and Irene, whom she had never known, but whom she longed to meet on the great resurrection morning. Her favorite was the story about little three-year-old Ralph, who lay dying in the hospital. He had asked his Daddy for a little stuffed toy animal, but then he learned that Daddy was not able to bring him one; either he couldn't find any or he just couldn't afford to buy one. When Ilse would get to the heart of the story, which was little Ralph's guileless reply, "Don't worry, Pappi, I will play with the lions on the new earth!" you just couldn't stop the tears from flowing.

Before leaving the Caucasus to return to Riga, Ilse's Dad had painted a picture of their three little graves, but during the family's many moves it had somehow gotten lost. Recalling that sad fact brought tears to her eyes, but she always ended her reminiscing on a positive note: Jesus is coming again soon, and she will be united with all of them!

Yes, as she grew older, Ilse told me stories and experiences from her childhood, but some of what I know about her early life I learned from Margie Holmstroem Seely's book *Marie: Woman of Beauty, Mother of Courage*, that has been described as a true epic of God's providence in the life and times of her grandmother, Marie Holmstroem. In the biography, Margie also writes about the various families and individuals whose lives were blessed by their friendship with the Holmstroems, among whom members of the Dering family feature prominently. Margie writes that Julius and Ana Dering, Ilse's parents, were hospitable, kind, and extremely talented; and they always made August (Marie's husband and Margie's grandfather) feel comfortable.

Ilse was blessed with a rich heritage of faith. Her family experienced trials of fear, war, and poverty, but they remained true to their God. To escape the Soviet invasion, the Derings—Ilse's parents, brother Kurt and his wife Ruth, sister Kaethe, and little Ilse—left Latvia for Germany in the spring of 1941, when Ilse was only six years old. They stayed in a refugee camp near Leipzig. Because the father, Julius, read his Bible daily and shared his faith with others, he and his son Kurt were arrested and taken to the Leipzig prison. The mother Ana, Ruth, and little Ilse visited the SS office to ask for Julius and Kurt's release. "When will they come out?" Ana asked the officer. "They're not criminals. They've committed no crime. When will you release them?" Irritated, the officer stepped out from behind

his desk, strode over to the women, and pushed them roughly outside. "NEVER!" he bellowed as he violently slammed the door behind the women. But God worked a truly amazing miracle, one similar to the New Testament story of the imprisoned apostles Paul and Silas, the earthquake, the jailer, and their release.

Julius was sent to Leipzig to work as a lithographer, while Kurt was transferred seventy miles away to make wooden boxes in Dresden. In February 1945, Dresden was the target of Allied bombing. In four separate attacks spread out over three days, over 1,200 Allied planes dropped



more than 3,900 tons of explosives, killing approximately 24,000 people. Kurt, Ilse's older brother, decided this was a good time for him to escape. He found an abandoned bicycle and pedaled the seventy miles to Leipzig. Unbeknownst to him, Leipzig had also been bombed the previous year. In the early morning hours of February 20, 1944, 700 Allied bombers had dropped 2,300 tons of bombs on the residential and industrial areas of the city.

When Kurt finally arrived in Leipzig, the devastation he found was indescribable. He was sure his family had perished. But when he arrived at the place where his family had lived, to his surprise, there, amidst the flattened ruins of Leipzig, stood an untouched row of houses. He rushed to the doorway and pounded breathlessly. When the door opened, he could hardly believe his eyes. Every single member of his family, including 9-year-old Ilse, were safe! I remember Ilse telling me how terribly frightened she was when the air raid sirens would sound and they all had to run to the shelter! She could not stop trembling the whole time. And she didn't want to eat what little food they could find; she missed too much the special sweet-and-sour bread they had in Latvia!

Sadly, because of the starvation and brutality he endured in prison, Ilse's father's health deteriorated, and he died suddenly of a heart attack in 1947. Ilse told me that he had left the house and was on his way to buy fresh milk for her when he fell, face

down, on the street! She was thirteen at the time. Every time we've traveled to Germany, Henry and I, and last time Wesley also, visit his grave in the old cemetery in Kirchberg. He was only a few months old when his grandfather Julius died, but Henry still cries when he reads the inscription on the tombstone: "Hier ruht in Gott..." ("Here rests in God...")

In her room in our home, Ilse was surrounded by her beloved father's paintings and would point out to me places she remembered from her childhood: Riga and the River Daugau, Bad Mergentheim, where baby Henry, her brother Kurt's son, was born in January 1947 at the UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) refugee camp, Kirchberg, and various forest scenes and landscapes. However, her most precious painting was that of her Mommy, as she called her, that was done by her beautiful and gifted older sister Kaethe.

When the war was over, the Dering family wanted to immigrate to America, but they needed sponsors. Their old friend Marie Holmstroem, the protagonist of the book mentioned earlier, found sponsors for them and was also able to help with the necessary costs. Their friendship, which began before the Nazi and Soviet upheaval of World War II in the Baltic countries, has continued among their descendants for decades, and now reaches across two centuries and two continents. While crossing the Atlantic in March 1952, a fierce storm broke out, and their ship took on water. It arrived with difficulty at the Brooklyn harbor.

The Derings settled in New York, where Ilse grew up and went to school. She was a hard worker and talented designer and eventually became a partner with Ed and Adele Slutsky on W. 36th Street in the Garment District of Manhattan. In 1976 she lost her much loved, devoted mother Ana. One of the sweetest things she told me is that her Mommy loved me, and she told me that repeatedly during her last months.

Ilse built a beautiful home in Boca Raton, Florida, where she moved in her golden years. For many years she enjoyed the closeness of her family. Her brother Kurt and his wife Ruth had also retired in Boca Raton. Her sister Kaethe and her husband Bruno and their three children Perry, Sidney, and Debby also moved to Florida and lived nearby. She loved them all. She was a caring sister and a loving, generous aunt. Only

her nephew Henry and his family lived far away, in California,

At the end, we were the closest, for she came to live with us in our home! She grew to enjoy living with our family and all the attention and care she received from us, our son Wesley, his wife Jelena, and our two lovely granddaughters, Angela and Katarina. When she could no longer walk, Wesley and Jelena literally carried her down to the car for her doctor's appointment.

Ilse's father, brother, and sister were very gifted artists. Even now our walls are graced by grandfather Julius' watercolor paintings and Aunt Kaethe's pastel drawings and oil paintings. Ilse inherited a great sense of style and eye for design. In the waning months of her life, I tried to encourage and inspire her by reading and talking to her about the future inheritance of earth's saved pilgrims. I appealed to that aptitude of hers by painting for her word pictures of the mansions that Christ has prepared—the ever-flowing streams, clear as crystal, the wide spreading plains swelling into hills of beauty, the harmonious social life with the blessed angels and with the faithful ones of all ages, the occupations and pleasures that gave happiness to Adam and Eve in the beginning, the life in garden and field.

She loved these verses from the Messianic prophet Isaiah: "They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of My people, and Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." Isaiah 65:21, 22. And since she loved animals, we would talk about how "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatted calf together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox." "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Isaiah 11:6, 7, 9. She would often exclaim with delight, grab my hand, ask if I will be with her, and stammer, "I, I, I ... love you!"

Through beautiful imagery, I tried to make the attractions of heaven familiar to her thoughts, so that her memory's hall would be hung with pictures of celestial and eternal loveliness. Once I asked her, "Why do you love me?" She pointed up and said, "Because you love the Lord."



# A BLESSED MEMORY



## Ilse Dering

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I would like to share some thoughts and experiences about my Aunt Ilse. As you already read in my wife's eulogy, I was born in Germany after the war and lived with my father, mother, grandmother, and Tante (Aunt) Ilse.

Even though I was told that she fed and carried me, and pushed me around in my stroller when I was a baby, as I grew older, Ilse became more like a sister to me than an aunt. I just always knew that she cared for and loved me.

While we were still living in Kirchberg, Germany, she walked me to school (pre-school) and picked me up after school. We had an agreement that she would wait for me at the corner of the school building.

One day, school was over, and when I went outside, I didn't see Ilse waiting for me at the corner. She was late. Oh boy, was I unhappy! It so happened that there was a muddy water puddle nearby; and as I saw Ilse approaching, to show my displeasure, I threw myself in the puddle. I told her, as I was pointing to that spot, "Du solltest hier sein!" (You should have been here!) She loved to tell us that story, and she always did so with a big smile.

In 1952, our family immigrated to America, and we settled in New York City. When my grandfather Julius died and my aunt Ilse was only thirteen years old, my father promised his mother that he would always take care of her and his sister, that there

would always be a place in his home for them. My father kept his promise, and we all lived together until Verica (my wife) and I left for California 20 years later.

Ilse was a very hard worker. She left home very early in the morning and travelled by car and subway to work in the garment district in Manhattan. Her days were long and strenuous, and she often returned home late in the evenings. Occasionally she asked me to help her with her work. Some of Ilse's employees worked in the shop, while others worked at home. My job was to deliver bundles of fabric and various accessories for them to work on. I enjoyed driving and was always happy for the chance to go for a ride in her car.

One day in 1967, I asked Tante Ilse to lend me some money to buy an old car. It was a 1957 Chevy muscle car. It was beautiful! Ilse refused to lend me the money. Her reason? The car was too old. It was ten years old. But I wanted a car of my own! So, Ilse agreed to lend me the money to buy a brand-new high-performance Corvette—with my Dad's permission, of course. After about a year of hard driving, the Corvette convertible came to the end of its journey, for it was stolen right in front of our eyes, at about 2:00 a.m., when most of the city was asleep. Hearing the familiar sound of my car, I jumped out of bed to look out the window. I watched as it was slowly backed out of the garage into the dark alley, I shouted. "Stop! Stop! Stop!" The loud yelling and all the activity awoke Ilse, who lived upstairs. To frighten the thieves, she made sounds like a police siren. One thief jumped out of the car and ran. The other continued to maneuver the car out of the garage. Ilse thought of throwing a flowerpot down on the thief but was afraid she might kill him. If she had dropped the pot, though, he might have paid a stiff penalty for his crime right then and there. Instead, amid all the shouting and commotion, the Corvette and driver sped away.

I have many beautiful memories of Tante Ilse. She will always be remembered. Her memory will live in my heart, and the hope of reuniting with our loved ones in heaven will remind us to trust in Jesus always! "... I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." John 11:25. He will come again; may God bless you all!

Click on the following link to be go to a specially prepared YouTube video in remembrance of my Aunt Ilse, "Remembering Our Dear Aunt Ilse Dering": <https://youtu.be/NcwQSfAt2EI>.



A good night's sleep—oh, how we love it! But how long has it been since you had one? So many individuals today are affected by sleep issues: Sleep apnea, insomnia, restless leg syndrome, teeth grinding (Bruxism), and several scientifically named conditions that rob millions of a good night's sleep.

In recent years, a lot of research has been done on the phenomenon of sleep. Doctors know that if a person gets too little sleep, especially REM (rapid eye movement) sleep, or even too much sleep, he has a greater risk of dying sooner than those who regularly get a good night's sleep. And what is that? At least seven hours of uninterrupted sleep (7½-8 hours is better) with four or five periods of REM.

The cycles of REM sleep, which make up about 25% of sleep time, are essential for one's being able to learn and remember things. During these cycles, the brain is more active than at any other time, even more than when he is awake. If he does not get enough sleep, for whatever reason, a person's brain cannot rejuvenate properly, get rid of waste, and recompile the events of the day in order to make sense out of life. Then what happens? Lack of good sleep results in poor performance, which in turn causes stress, triggering a downward cycle of increasing insomnia, and even more stress. Adding to that is today's lifestyle with its jet lag, medications, and caffeine-laden drinks—a perfect storm leading to more mood disorders, such as anxiety and depression. And what do doctors do to try and help? Prescribe drugs. That's crazy! Drugs only exacerbate the problem, but they are just one of the sleep-killing contributors in the modern world.

The results of a January 2015 study reported in the *PNSA Journal of the National Academy of Sciences* show that

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# Thanks for Being Thankful

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One day a father and his son took a trip to the city to visit a wealthy friend and his family. The father was a bit worried since they lived on a farm in the countryside and lived simply. On their return, the father asked his son, “How did you like the trip?”

His son answered, “It was great, Dad. I learned a lot from this trip!” The man was surprised as his boy continued. “They have one dog, but we have four. They have to buy their food while we grow ours. They have walls around their property to protect them, and we have friends to protect us. They have a pool that reaches to the middle of the garden, but we have a creek that has no end. They have imported lanterns in their garden, and we have stars at night. Their patio reaches to the front yard, and we have the whole horizon. They have a small piece of land to live on, and we have fields that go beyond our sight.” The boy’s father was speechless. Then his son added, “Thanks, Dad, for showing me how rich we are.”

Maybe this story makes you smile a little, but there is more to it than just a light-hearted observation from a boy’s perspective on life. There is a powerful lesson to be learned here.

God urges us to “give thanks” sixty-two times in the Bible. Ephesians 5 reminds us: “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.” “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Verses 15, 20. He knows that being thankful in all circumstances has a powerful impact on every area of one’s Christian life. Here are some emotional, physical, and spiritual benefits of gratitude:

**1. Gratitude is an essential ingredient for joy.** There is no way to “rejoice evermore” (1 Thessalonians 5:16) without giving thanks

in everything. Verse 18.. That’s why ungrateful people are grumpy. Joy is an inner sense of contentment, which flows from a deep assurance that all of God’s purposes are good and He is in complete control of every situation. Dr. Brené Brown, a research professor at the University of Houston, discovered that all of the people whom she interviewed who had described themselves as joyful also actively practiced gratitude. The following quotation affirms her work, “It’s not joy that makes us grateful; it’s gratitude that makes us joyful.”

Ellen G. White wrote: “If we would give more expression to our faith, rejoice more in the blessings that we know we have—the great mercy and love of God—we should have more faith and greater joy. No tongue can express, no finite mind can conceive, the blessing that results from appreciating the goodness and love of God. Even on earth we may have joy as a wellspring, never failing, because fed by the streams that flow from the throne of God.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 252, 253.

**2. Gratitude can improve sleep.** Gratitude activates the parasympathetic branch of the nervous system, also called the relaxation response, while negative emotions activate the sympathetic branch. Considering that, it is no surprise that gratitude has been shown to reduce the time required to fall asleep and to increase sleep quality and sleep duration. At the end of every day, there is nothing better you can do than to thank God for His blessings and His presence through every hour of the day and to recognize the ways that He has led you, provided protection over your family, and supplied your needs. Often we forget to give Him thanks for the constant way He works in our lives. “I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for Thou, Lord only makest me dwell in safety.” Psalm 4:8.

Jacy stared at the night light. It was too bright. She pulled the blanket over her eyes. Now it was too dark! She couldn’t sleep. Jacy grabbed her teddy bear. It had a little bell inside that made noise. Jacy

shook the bear. Ting, ting, ting went the bell. That didn’t help her sleep either. She was so bored! There was no one to talk to! And it was too quiet and too dark.

Jacy started to cry. She would never fall asleep! Just then her door opened softly. “Jacy?” It was Daddy! He came and sat by her on the bed. “What’s the matter?” he asked.

“It’s too quiet! I can’t sleep. My brain just keeps thinking of things!” Jacy wiped the tears off her cheeks.

Daddy rubbed her back. “Sometimes when I can’t sleep, I sing my favorite song. And then I count my blessings.” Daddy started singing, “Count your many blessings, name them one by one. Count your many blessings, see what God has done.” Jacy hummed along. She liked this song, too. “What are some of your blessings?” Daddy asked.

“Um, my teddy bear,” said Jacy. She waved the bear to make the bell jingle.

“That’s a good blessing,” said Daddy. “What else?”

“Daddy!” said Jacy. “Daddy is a blessing.” That made Daddy smile. “And Mommy,” said Jacy. “And baby Darel. He’s kind of a blessing.” Daddy laughed.

“How about your warm bed and your night light?” Jacy nodded. She was starting to feel sleepy.

Daddy pulled the blanket up to Jacy’s chin. “You are a blessing too, Jacy. I love you.” He gave her a kiss and closed the door behind him.



Jacy hummed the song again. "Count your many blessings, name them one by one." And soon she was fast asleep.

**3. Gratitude increases resilience.** Resilience is the ability to bounce back and recover more quickly from setbacks or stressful situations. Grateful people are able to see the bigger picture and remember the positive things in their lives. As a result, they are less likely to let bad events pull them into a downward spiral and more likely to grow in times of stress.

Last year I struggled with the loss of my father, who passed away due to brain cancer. During the past months of grief, I still tried to thank God for all the wonderful moments I had lived with my father and all the lessons I had learned from him. Being thankful helped me avoid becoming trapped in depression, and instead to focus on God and all of His blessings. One person in the Scriptures in particular comes to mind when I think of resilience and gratitude and his well-known teaching about overcoming adversity. In fact, Paul talks about rejoicing during hardship in Romans 5, for "tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Verses 3-5. Many of his letters to the early church begin by expressing thanks. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." Colossians 3:17.

**4. Gratitude reduces social comparison.** Some-time last week I logged on to Instagram. I saw a picture that one of my coworkers had posted of his vacation on the Maldives. Within minutes I felt envious and secretly wished I could go there too. But right away I started to thank God for all the other places I had already travelled to and the wonderful experiences I had made.

Social comparison is a game in which there is no endpoint. It draws you to not appreciate what you have been given, but to nurture an endless desire to have what others have. The article "Teen Mental Health and Social Comparison," published on the website of the Newport Academy, states that social comparison "can be detrimental to self-esteem, self-image, and well-being. In addition, constant evaluation of oneself versus others can create a judgmental, competitive outlook. Hence, one study found that people who make frequent social comparisons are more likely to experience envy, guilt, regret, and defensiveness."



The Bible calls this act of comparison "coveting": "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's." Exodus 20:17. If you commit yourself to being deeply grateful for what God has done in your life, and remind yourself of it daily, you will be far less vulnerable to comparison and envy. If someone or something triggers that ugly feeling of negative comparison, stop and remind yourself of God's blessings.

**5. Gratitude focuses on God.** Thanking God focuses our attention on Him rather than on our circumstances. The key to a grateful heart begins with understanding His character. He knows exactly what you are going through, loves you unconditionally, and understands you perfectly. When you thank Him in tough times, He gets bigger, and the circumstances become smaller. It reminds you that you are not in control, but that you serve a Mighty God who is. It keeps you in a place of humility and dependency on Him as you recognize how much you need Him. "The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise Him." Psalm 28:7.

Some time ago I was touched by the story of Borghild Dahl. She was born in 1890 and from her early years suffered severely impaired vision. Against the advice of ed-

ucators, who felt her handicap was too great, she attended college. She eventually became the principal of eight schools. She wrote the following in one of the seventeen books she authored: "I had only one eye, and it was so covered with dense scars that I had to do all my seeing through one small opening in the left of the eye. I could see a book only by holding it up close to my face and by straining my one eye as hard as I could to the left." When she was more than fifty years old, a medical procedure finally restored much of the sight she had been without for so long. A new and exciting world opened up before her. She took great pleasure in small things, such as watching a bird in flight, noticing the light reflected in the bubbles of her dishwater, or observing the phases of the moon each night. She closed one of her books with these words: "Dear ... Father in heaven, I thank Thee. I thank Thee." Borghild Dahl, both before and after her sight was restored, was filled with gratitude for her blessings.

"Forgetting our own difficulties and troubles, let us praise God for an opportunity to live for the glory of His name. Let the fresh blessings of each new day awaken praise in our hearts for these tokens of His loving care. When you open your eyes in the morning, thank God that He has kept you through the night. Thank Him for His peace in your heart. Morning, noon, and night, let gratitude as a sweet perfume ascend to heaven." —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 253.

# Wealth of Health Seminar

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On March 21-23, 2019, a health seminar was held in Sacramento, California. We learned a lot from the Seminar, which was presented by Sister Helen Marttinen, R.N., B.S.N., from Ontario, Canada. Those who attended were greatly blessed. Following is a summary of what she shared.

## Sleep: not just for beauty

Our bodies produce melatonin, a hormone which induces sleep and prepares our bodies for sleep. Blue-light emitting electronic devices affect the body by making it think it's still daytime, causing the body to not want to fall asleep and delaying the release of melatonin.

Using such devices at night before bedtime will reset the body's circadian rhythm (the body's internal clock) to a later schedule. Therefore, it is wise to stop using blue-light emitting devices, such as iPhones, tablets, iPads, and other electronics at a reasonable time before going to sleep. Reading a regular book under normal light is a good alternative.

## Reading Nutrition Labels: What is in our food?

Sugar is in many of the foods people eat every day. It can be disguised on labels under such names as corn syrup, corn sugar, raw sugar, honey, cane sugar, brown sugar, date sugar, malt syrup, high fructose corn syrup, and others.



Helen Marttinen, R.N., B.S.N.

Educating oneself and knowing which sugars are healthier is highly recommended to live a disease-free, longer life, as sugars are highly addictive. Many foods also contain a large amount of fat. Many new labels no longer list total calories from fat. One should also keep in mind that words like "fat-free" and "low-fat" do not mean "calorie-free." Many fat-free and low-fat foods have added sugar to improve flavor.

## Memory: How do we remember?

Our brains are constantly changing, growing, reinventing, and thinking. They have to be, for this is how we grow and mature. Our environment is also always changing.

We take information into our brains through our senses: touch, sight, hearing, taste, and smell. With these five senses we create common thought patterns or "habits." Such habits can be something simple like putting your keys in a regular spot or something complicated like analyzing computer readouts for why sales are up or down by .0002 percent. Definitely amazing!

## Genetically Modified Organisms: Are GMO's safe?

According to reports, people who consumed GMOs had the following side effects:

- Increase in allergies
- Problem with the endocrine system
- Increase in aging problems
- Cancerous tumor growths

The foods that are most genetically modified are:

- Soybeans–94%
- Corn–93%
- Canola–90%
- Hawaiian papaya–more than 50%

So what do we learn from this?

Read and pay attention to food labels. That message was repeated the most throughout the seminar. We put food directly into our bodies; therefore, we should take great care to research how it is grown, what it is treated with, and where it came from.

Do not take everything on labels as a given. Double check and look up what is written by food manufacturers. There are many different websites or documents that give important information about different types of foods, what they contain, and how they are processed.





# World News: Closer to the End

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An article titled, "Pope Signs Pact With Muslims Pushing One-World Religion," written by David Fiorazo, published on February 19, 2019, <https://freedomproject.com/christ-culture/1011-pope-signs-pact-with-muslims-pushing>, speaks of unity among Muslims and Christianity. Pope Francis recently signed an agreement with Muslims in a possible push toward a one-world religion and declared that diversity of religions is God's will. But wait! Doesn't the Bible warn Christians against unifying with those who worship other gods and have contradictory beliefs?

God sent His Son to save sinners, but Allah had no son. Isn't this a problem with anyone else? There are many glaring, stark contrasts between the founders of Christianity (Jesus) and Islam (Muhammad) as well as what they taught. Jesus taught love and forgiveness, and He also instructed His disciples to "pray for those who persecute you." Matthew 5:44. But the prophet Muhammad was a violent warrior who promoted conquest, had multiple wives, and killed Jews and Christians, referring to them as infidels and sworn enemies. Look it up.

Jesus was a sinless spiritual leader who laid down His life to save mankind. He prayed, "... Father, forgive them..." (Luke 23:34), for those who crucified Him. Jesus never killed anyone. Muhammad, too, was a spiritual leader; but he became political and practiced deception as a violent military leader. Christ ruled by peace, while Muhammad ruled largely by the sword.

Nevertheless, a historic interfaith covenant was signed in the Middle East between these religious groups, and isn't it interesting that the U.S. mainstream media was virtually silent about it? Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayeb, considered to be the most important Imam in Sunni Islam, arrived at the signing ceremony with the Roman Catholic Church's leader, Pope Francis, "hand-in-hand in a symbol of interfaith brotherhood."

The pope and the grand Imam of al-Azhar signed what was referred to as "a historic declaration of fraternity, calling for peace between nations, religions, and races, in front of a global audience of religious leaders from Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and other faiths." Many gods and spirits exist; but if one religion is true, all the rest have to be false. What does the Bible say about this? "... Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are from God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world;... and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, wherefore ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." 1 John 4:1-3.

Although there are some similarities, Islam is quite incompatible with the Bible as well as with America, a society that claims to value Judeo-Christian principles and religious freedom. Islam will accept no other religions, no competing economic or political views, and no legal system except Sharia law, which would outlaw Christianity. And, by the way, did you know that Muslims who are elected to the U.S. Congress demand to be sworn in on the Quran, not the Bible? So, who or what are they swearing allegiance to?

Many passages in Islamic holy books command and justify violence in the name of Allah. What does the Quran say about other religions? "The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and his messenger and strive to make mischief in the land is only this, that they should be murdered or crucified or their hands and their feet should be cut off on opposite sides or they should be imprisoned." Quran 5:33. "(Remember) when your Lord inspired the angels....

"I will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve (defy Allah). Therefore strike off their heads and strike off every fingertip of them." Quran 8:12. The Quran contains at least 109 verses that speak of war with nonbelievers, usually meaning non-Muslims, as well as 164 verses declaring jihad, or holy war. Religion of peace—really? Islam is a social, political, and economic system (Sharia law) that uses a false deity (Allah) to advance its agenda of control. The meaning of "Islam" is "submission," and people must bow to Allah.

The God of the Bible, Jesus Christ said, "All power is given unto Me..." Matthew 28:18. Islam, however, teaches that Jesus was only a prophet. They say that He was not God; and they teach that He did not sacrifice Himself for the world's sin, nor die on the cross, nor did rise from the dead. But these are core essentials of the Christian faith! Muhammed claimed to be the last and greatest of all of God's prophets. He had fifteen wives, and he sanctioned the beating of wives. Sura 4:34. Muhammed was well known for spreading his new religion by force. Five years after his death, Muhammad's followers captured Jerusalem, and by A.D. 732 they went into Spain. Their aggression continued for hundreds of years until finally resistance rose up via the Crusades, which began in 1095.

Back to Pope Francis. Another thing that he did was to declare the Sharia-governed United Arab Emirates the "homeland of tolerance." Just look at history and news reports, and you will see that this is not true. So, the pope shook hands, kissed, and signed an agreement with El-Tayeb, an open advocate of Sharia law. In fact, in a June 2016 television interview this man stated: "The penalty for an open apostate, departing from the community [Islam], is well stipulated in sharia. An apostate must be pressed upon to repent within a variable period of time or be killed." Clearly, Islam and Christianity are mutually exclusive. Both claim to be the only true way to God, but both cannot be right. Former Muslim, Elijah Abraham, is an expert on Islam; as an evangelist, he travels worldwide to train pastors on apologetics and how to witness to Muslims. He states: "Islam is advancing

in the West with an evil agenda to convert Westerners and especially Americans to Islam and dominate the world. If that happens, the biggest loser will be the church of Jesus Christ in the West because of its loss of its religious liberty and freedom of speech.”

Nowhere in the Bible does God encourage joining with other religions. While there have been many attempts in recent years to find common ground between Islam and Christianity, the fact is that stark differences remain. It is misguided to focus on a few common teachings without considering the differences in major doctrines that are diametrically opposed to one another. This is not to say that we should not evangelize people of other faiths; but when it comes to “uniting,” Christians are often the first to compromise, and it’s often Biblical doctrine that is set aside. All through the New Testament, we read that salvation is received by faith in Christ alone; that one is saved by the grace of God through trusting in the sacrifice of Jesus. Ephesians 2:8, 9.

We know that powerful world elites are pushing uniformity and a one-world religion, but it is still stunning to see top world leaders from Catholicism and Islam make such a dramatic display. This is clearly a sign that we are coming very close to the end.

## SLEEP WELL!

*Continued from page 3*

“evening use of light-emitting eReaders negatively affects sleep, circadian timing, and next-morning alertness.” The study confirms that using light-emitting devices for any purpose several hours “before bedtime prolongs the time it takes to fall asleep, delays the circadian clock, suppresses levels of the sleep-promoting hormone melatonin, reduces the amount and delays the timing of REM sleep, and reduces alertness the following morning... which can have adverse impacts on performance, health, and safety.” —[https://www.pnas.org/content/112/4/1232?utm\\_content=&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=Sailthru&nr\\_email\\_referrer=1](https://www.pnas.org/content/112/4/1232?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Sailthru&nr_email_referrer=1).

To improve one’s quality of life, he should begin by going to bed earlier and avoiding screen time in the evening, especially in the hours before retiring. If you need to read, choose an old-fashioned book. For example, have you finished reading the Conflict of the Ages Series recently? For a revival of spirituality some good brain food before retiring will be a blessing, in addition to putting away modern gadgets and returning to natural light and words on paper.

## New from RLPA

# Project Completed!

## Sabbath School Lessons for Primary, Junior, Earliteen, and Youth all updated and redesigned with color pictures

There are 12 Lesson books for each age group (Primary, Junior, Earliteen, and Youth)—a total of 48 books. In the online Store at [www.sda1888.org](http://www.sda1888.org), see Ebooks for downloadable files. You may want to purchase all of the Ebooks to have available on your computer so you will have the information readily at hand to select the appropriate book for a child, a class, or others.

The Lesson books may also be purchased in the Store.

These Lessons were developed to give the children and youth a spiritual foundation in basic Bible teaching. The studies provide the students with opportunities to practice using their own Bibles from the very first lesson to find answers to challenging questions, all the while learning to trust the holy Word as the source of knowledge.

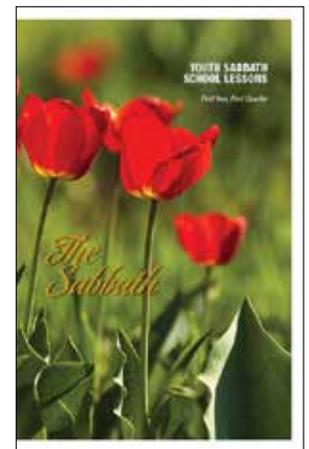
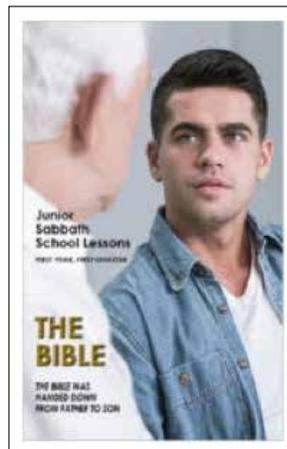
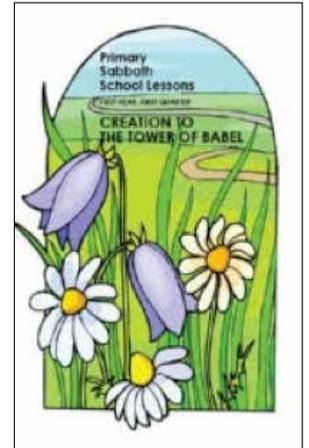
Here are a few other ways in which these Lesson books may be a blessing.

**Individuals:** A person can study at his or her own pace. The Lessons can be used to reach out to family and friends, children, young people, and adults as well!

**Families:** These are like workbooks for children and youth to study at their own pace, and parents can join in the study and/or check their children’s lessons.

**Churches and Groups:** For regular Sabbath School classes as well as supplemental material for new members and experienced believers to study individually or in small groups.

**Sharing with neighbors and friends** on topics in which they and their children are interested.



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