

NEWS AND INSPIRATION FROM THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN MID-AMERICA

# OUTLOOK

FEBRUARY 2012



**SPECIAL ISSUE: PRODUCED BY UNION COLLEGE STUDENTS**



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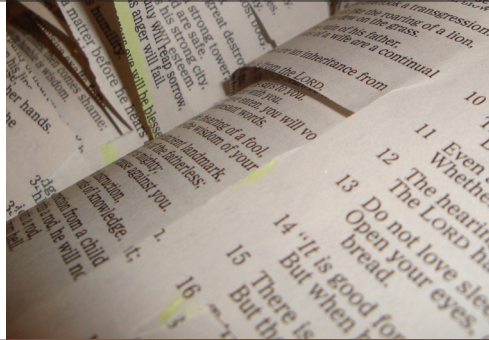


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Cover design by Hannah Smoot, a junior communication: public relations major at Union College

## IN THIS ISSUE

Once again we present the most anticipated Outlook of the year—the student-produced February issue from Chris Blake's editing class. It's refreshing to discover what our Union College students are delighted about and also what concerns them. After all, they are Seventh-day Adventists just as much as the rest of us.

And so I present to you the following articles, themed on the topic of outreach. The lead article is "Connecting with Culture: Isolation or Restoration?" It reflects one of the most important books I've read recently: *The Next Christians*. Not that I agree with everything in that book—or in these articles—but I need to know what our younger members are thinking. Who knows, the God who teaches "out of the mouths of babes" (Matt. 21:16) may have something to tell us from our young adults.

—MARTIN WEBER

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# Jesus' Prayer for All Believers

by Randy Harmdierks



Welcome to the annual student-produced issue of *Outlook*. This issue is really quite special. It's the one time each year when students have the opportunity to express their views on the topics they find most important to them.

You may or may not agree with everything you read in this issue. I certainly do not agree with every student's point of view, but I applaud each of them for their willingness to tackle some potentially controversial topics in such a public way. Some of these students have made themselves extremely vulnerable—by exposing their personal brokenness—something that takes a tremendous amount of courage. Whether or not I agree with their particular points of view, I have great respect for them all.

A lot of what you'll find in these pages are the students' perspectives on divisions in the Church. It seems as we draw closer to the end of time, we are becoming more and more polarized: young vs. old, praise music vs. hymns, liberal vs. conservative, black vs. white, male vs. female, legalism vs. cheap grace. Each side thinking the solution resides in their position. Each side missing some important lessons from the past. And so the pendulum swings.

The truth is, Satan doesn't care what position we take, so long as we're content where we are—with our eyes on each other and off Jesus.

So where does the solution reside? How do we find unity? Jesus prayed to the Father, "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me" (John 17:20-23 NIV).

Speaking of this prayer, Ellen White writes, "When Christ's prayer is fully believed, when its instruction is brought into the daily life of God's people, unity of action will be seen in our ranks. Brother will be bound to brother by the golden bonds of the love of Christ. The Spirit of God alone can bring about this oneness. He who sanctified Himself can sanctify His disciples. United with Him, they will be united with one another in the most holy faith. When we strive for this unity as God

desires us to strive for it, it will come to us" (*Counsels for the Church*, 45).

When we allow the Holy Spirit to work in us, we can be sure the result will be "love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Gal. 5:22-23). Only then will be able to see our differences as assets rather than hindrances. Only then will we become a living, breathing, working body (see 1 Cor. 12, Ezek. 37).

"Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.

"It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, (2 Peter 3:12, margin). Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, 69). We're not waiting on Christ, my friends. He's waiting on us.

What if . . . ? **0**

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Randy Harmdierks is the designer of *Outlook*.



## Meet the Students of Editing COJR 245



(left to right) Back row: Scott Larsen, Ellen Penrosa, Kyle Berg, Raschelle Casebier, Professor Chris Blake; Middle row: Hannah Smoot, Brianna Schenkelberg, Emily Syvertson, Brittney Lippincott, Mary Yonazi; Front row: Pablo Colindres, James Hall, Joash Thomas, Clint Westbrook; Not pictured: Ingrid Oberholster

## The Rabbi's Final Exam

An Editorial by Chris Blake

***“Rabbi, we know it is from God that you have come as a teacher . . .”***  
***(Yochanan 3:2, JNT<sup>1</sup>).***

“What’s going to be on the final exam, Teacher?”

Rabbi Yeshua looked deeply into His students’ eyes. Yochanan (John), Kefa (Peter), Ya’akov (James), Mattityahu (Matthew), and the rest of his talmidim (disciples) waited for wisdom from the greatest teacher who ever taught.

Earlier, Nakdimon (Nicodemus) had enrolled in Yeshua’s extension night class to inquire about births, the beginning of life. Now, the question revolved around endings.

“The final exam,” He replied, “will be about what you have done for others,

particularly those on the tenuous margins of life—the ‘least’ of people.”

“Will there be any questions on synagogue attendance?”

“No.”

“Any questions about praying before meals or praise singing?”

“No.”

The students sat in silence. Longing to help them, the Rabbi continued.

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, accompanied by all the angels, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be assembled before him and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates sheep from goats.”<sup>2</sup>

“On what basis does he separate them?”

Yeshua paused. He understood their longings and leanings. They had to first unlearn much before they could receive His teaching.

He said, “On the basis of their

involvement with hunger, drinkable water, homelessness, poverty, healthcare, and prison ministry.”<sup>3</sup>

“Really? We thought those ‘outreaches’ were peripheral issues . . .”

“They are central to holiness,” He proclaimed. “These are the primary, practical by-products of righteousness by love.

“Oh,” He raised a finger, “and one more thing about this final.”

“What is it?”

He smiled. “Though you won’t realize it, you’re taking it the rest of your life.”

Chris Blake is associate professor of English and communication at Union College.

<sup>1</sup> Jewish New Testament, translated by David H. Stern

<sup>2</sup> Mattityahu (Matthew) 25:31,32.

<sup>3</sup> See Matthew 25:33-46.

# Connecting with Culture: Isolation or Restoration?



By Emily Syvertson; design by Brittney Lippincott

**A**t 8:00 pm I restlessly longed for morning. The walls in my dorm room bored me with their invariable bricks. *What's happening outside them, beyond this campus? People must be doing far more interesting things.*

This was a mild case of the curiosities, which often plagued my boarding academy friends and me.

We felt secluded, forced to return to the dorms for the night at 7:45 after a



full day on campus. I wanted to join

the community around me; instead, they knew us only as “the school on the hill.”

**How can we connect when we aren't willing to explore?**

Now that I am out of academy, I don't experience this feeling of separation. Yet I think this attitude of seclusion extends beyond our schools and manifests itself in our adult lives. Many of us find our niche and are compelled to curl up in it, cozy

and content. But how can we connect with others when we aren't willing to explore the world we live in?

### Into the World

In John 17:14-18 Jesus prays for His disciples who are to be His ambassadors on earth. He explains that they are not of the world any more than He is. His desire is not that they are taken out of the world but protected from the evil that dwells there. In verse 18, Jesus says to God the Father, "As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world."

The world that God wants separation from refers to the evil influence of Satan on this planet. The world that God sends us into is the world of people who have yet to be saved. They are both the world because they stroll hand-in-hand; to go into the world of people and preach the gospel, we must also move about in a world full of temptation.

### Culture—Not Contamination

The mistake we tend to make as God-seeking humans is confusing culture for sin. We often think that cutting ourselves off from the masses will protect us from negative worldly influences. Nothing is further from the truth. Separation is a tool Satan uses to keep us from supporting each other. People who seem different from us may struggle with similar problems. We may never find similarities with others if we hesitate to get involved with them. What if we

reached beyond the comfortable and grasped at the cultural?

Culture is not contamination. It is a language—those who know it move about freely and communicate with others that share it. The more we become involved in cultures, the



What if we focused on restoring the world instead of leaving it?

better we can connect with others. After all, sinful contamination can reach us whether we are isolated or amidst a crowd. Understanding our culture should not be viewed as contaminating one's mind, but broadening one's social scope.

I'm not suggesting that everyone should immediately watch every movie, listen to every song, and absorb every bit of popular culture out there. Discernment is a tool God installed in our brains that can be built up and nurtured by those around

us. He also gave us a ruler to help us measure things (Phil. 4:13).

Hiding from all things cultural limits us. Ironically, we remain ignorant of the very things that affect us, whether we recognize their influence or not. By being aware of human culture and seeking to understand how it is important to us, we learn a language that everyone understands; we choose to go into the world that our fellow human beings live in.

### Following Jesus' Example

Jesus shows us how to be a part of anyone's life while remaining connected to God. He talked with, ate with, preached to, and healed both the saved and the sinners without forfeiting faithfulness to His Father. He was an extension of God's hand—His presence in sinners' lives spread the message of love. Yet He kept a balance between spending time with people and God. Time with His disciples and worship in the synagogue were important aspects of His spiritual life. On top of that, He escaped the world and went off to pray alone to His Father one-on-one.

What if we, like Jesus, found a balance between isolation and immersion? What if we kept an open mind about other people, an open eye to what is happening around us?

What if...?

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**Brittney Lippincott** is a sophomore graphic design and communication major from Blair, Nebraska.

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# Our Great Omission



Written by: Kyle Berg Design by: Joash Thomas

**C**ome and go with me to my Father's house . . ."  
**What do I do?** "Come and go with me to my Father's house . . ."  
**Should I sing?** "It's a big, big house, with lots and lots of room . . ."

Lord, please guide me! This isn't a vespers or afterglow service. This isn't a church function either. I found myself contemplating: *What if I started singing?* There he was, staring at me, drunk, a cigarette hanging from his mouth, singing praises to God. Pus oozed from the scabs on his lips, traces of blood speckled wounds on his cheeks. The strong aroma of his alcohol- and tobacco-scented breath attacked my senses—all beneath his hurting and joyous eyes. How could someone in such a condition sing praises? Head tilted, hands clapping, and feet stomping, Joe\* raised his voice to God; his home was underneath the bridge on O Street, the

main street in downtown Lincoln, Nebraska—for what did he have to praise?  
What is it about homeless people like Joe that is so unsettling? Are they as important to God as someone with a roof over their head and the appearance of having it all together? Sitting in Birmingham jail, Martin Luther King Jr. wrote that Christians are, "more cautious than courageous and have remained silent behind the anesthetizing security of stained-glass windows." As a society, we have become numb to the world around us, and that pertains to more than the homeless.  
There are youth in our churches, either overlooked or looked down upon for their sins. My firsthand experience with a young adult who suffers from a cocaine addiction has opened my eyes to a great omission of our church: we condemn the ones God calls us to help. I firmly believe the church must address this omission before we can continue the great commission Christ commanded us before His ascension: "Go

\*Names have been changed in this article.



therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19).

## What if we treated broken people like Christ treats us?

Sam was a student on my hall at Union College. As a resident assistant, one of my first encounters with him involved reporting him to the men’s dean for drug abuse. Our interactions afterward drastically changed my outlook on outreach. Everyone that has tried to reach him starts out with, “Don’t you know you are a child of God?” and “Jesus loves you. He died for you. Don’t you get it?”

No, you Bible-thumping crusaders for Christ, he doesn’t get it. Do you know why? Because for most of this “child of God’s” life he has been told that the longer he strays from Christ, the further Christ strays from him. Too many people have told him that through Christ he can conquer his addictions, but as soon as he relapses they leave him. He becomes too much of a burden.

The only way anyone can show Sam Jesus is through longsuffering actions, not words. Remember James 2:16-17? “And [if] one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and filled,’ without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.” What if we showed Sam he is a child of God by caring for him instead of just telling him we care?

### More Messages

One Monday night, Sam texted me: “Hey.”

He often sent simple one word text messages, but it was never to just say “hey”—there was always something more to it. I told him I was going to a student senate meeting, and that I was busy, but I would leave if he needed me. He told me not to worry about it, but I felt compelled to keep pushing.

“Sam, I can leave this meeting if you need me. Don’t think you are an inconvenience to me.”

He liked to use the excuse, “I don’t want to bother you,” because he felt like a burden. He eventually broke down and admitted he was struggling with his withdrawals and needed to be with someone. I bolted from my meeting, not taking the time to explain why I was leaving, met him in the school parking lot and walked him back to the dorm. For the next two hours he sat in my room, shivering because he couldn’t feel warmth no matter how hot it was, and shaking because his cravings were controlling every muscle in his hands. I turned on the TV and sat next to him, the silence broken only by the football game and my meager attempts at small talk. Finally, he got up.

“I think I’m good. I’m going to bed,” he said.

“Are you sure?” I asked.

“Yeah, I’m cool . . . I’m sorry you had to sit through all of this,” he muttered, his hands still shaking.

“Anytime, man, I’m here for you. Just text me,” I replied.

Shaking his head, he looked me right in the eyes and said, “I don’t know why anyone would want to sit through this again.”

“I care about you, Sam,” was all I could say.

As he walked out the door God gave me the realization that I couldn’t save him. It wasn’t my job. I couldn’t tell him about God’s love either; that wouldn’t cut it. I had to show him the love of God by doing exactly what I did that night. Sitting with him as he struggled with his addiction, I didn’t need words.

## What if we showed Sam he is a child of God?

What if we treated those around us like Christ treats a broken and sinful human being? (That’s you and me, by the way.) Where in the Bible does it say because Sam is a drug addict he is too far from Christ to be saved? Then why is Sam treated like an outsider? It is no wonder that drug addicts and homeless people feel uncomfortable stepping foot into a church.

Where do we place our priorities? Is it in evangelism? Why is the focus of our church bulletins and announcements centered on how much money we need for the new addition, or how behind we are compared to last year's giving? Should the time spent in our church board meetings be monopolized by the budget and how we are going to afford a new sign that is "nicer"? Are Revelation seminars really what the church needs? How can we pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit if we are missing the big picture?

How can we preach the Good News in our churches if there is a lack of unrelenting love coming from where we sit? It's easy to say, "I'll pray for the homeless, needy, poor, and widowed." But God doesn't say, "Pray for them and live your life." He demands more than just prayer. God clearly states He won't hear our prayers unless we repent from our self-centered ways (Isa. 1:15-17). He commands us to cease evil, learn good, seek justice, rebuke oppression, and defend the orphans and widows! How can we fulfill the great

commission when we have such a great omission staring us in the face?

A group of seminary students found all the verses in the Bible dealing with poverty, wealth, justice and oppression. After underlining every verse from Genesis to Revelation they cut them out of the Bible. When the scissors had been set aside the Bible was left in tatters. According to The Poverty and Justice Bible, nearly 2,000 Bible verses address the topics of poverty and justice alone.

How can so many people feel abandoned by the church? How can there be people like Sam on my hall that feel like

outcasts in church? Is it God's will or an omission of our biblical social responsibility? I'll let the torn and tattered word of God answer for itself.

As I reflect on Joe singing under the bridge on O Street, I can't help but wonder why we all aren't singing that song. "Come and go with me to my Father's house. It's a big, big house, with lots and lots of room. There's a big, big table, with lots and lots of food."

I finally started singing, and Joe's smile grew wider than before as he moved to the next person and began his song again, "Come and go with me . . ."

---

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Joash Thomas is a senior communication: public relations major from The Turks and Caicos Islands.

## The Bigger Picture

Deuteronomy 15:7-8 says, "If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of the gates in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, but you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs." Verse 10 is even more potent, "You shall surely give to him, and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your works and in all to which you put your hand." Verse 11 brings it home, "*For the poor will never cease from the land; therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy in your land.'*" Who are the poor and needy?

James 1:26-27 reads, "If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." Who are the orphans and widows?

Isaiah 1:15-17 states, "When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes. Cease to do evil, Learn to do good; seek justice, rebuke the oppressor; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow."

# More Than Just

# HOMework



Written by **Pablo Colindres**  
Designed by **Raschelle Casebier**

**W**hy do I “outreach”? Is it for recognition—pats on the back reassuring me how good a Christian I am? Do I turn down volunteer positions if I don’t receive proof I did it: a plaque, a certificate, a T-shirt? Community service hour-logs are filled, but for what reason? Do I really want to better my community, or do I just want to appear in the city newspaper as the local “Good Samaritan”? Does every penny (“Sorry, I left my change at home. . .”) I give a homeless person build credit in heaven?

## My Outreach Experience

One outreach experience really stands out for me. All I wanted was something good to film and show my peers, an example of how service does not have to be boring or tiring. I was not necessarily looking for a life-changing experience—I mean, how life-changing can ladling soup be? I was not even sure I would get anything that would keep people’s attention more

than 30 seconds. God had other plans, as He usually does. Following college student customs, we managed to fit 10 people and a camera in a two-door, four-seat car and headed to the local soup kitchen. Throughout the preparing process I did not think much of the people I was serving; rather I was engrossed with how the food I was preparing looked—after all, presentation is 80 percent of the dining experience. That was what I was pondering—trifles! When lunch hour rolled around, God awoke in me the real reason why I was there.

In those people who formed a line, I saw Jesus. I saw Him in the torn mother with her little girl, who smiled and thanked us all. I saw Him in the man who looked “normal” in an old suit, but a suit nonetheless. I saw Him in those who seemed ashamed of their condition, in those who looked as if they had not had a “square meal” in too long. They were all broken, waiting for someone to show them love. They were those who Jesus talked about on His final exam: feeding

# The Ultimate Guide to Soul Hunting

(or, Don't Try This at Home!)

29

1. Always initiate contact by referring to the victim's salvation status.
2. Follow their status (most likely "doomed" or "lost") with a "but . . . Jesus loves you."
3. We know that hell isn't burning right now, so refer to it as "the future lake of fire."
4. When they attempt to turn you away, repeat step 1.
5. If they agree to listen, you have to sound intelligent. Employ lots of theological words like "eschatological" and "glossolalia."
6. If they attempt to describe their own beliefs, laugh at their pathetic thoughts and repeat steps 1 and 2.
7. When finished with the outreach procedure, offer to baptize them right then—who knows if they'll be alive tomorrow?
8. If they refuse, repeat steps 1 and 2. Remind them of the lake of fire.
9. Make sure you have their contact information—you will be contacting them in the future, even if they don't desire it. (This is called "following up.")
10. Never leave a victim without gaining a commitment of some sort or being physically removed from the premises.

the hungry, clothing the naked, quenching the thirsty, visiting the outcasts and receiving the strangers (see Matt. 25:31-46).

Suddenly, my film became secondary (although it did turn out great). The new T-shirt did not excite me as much. It was now all about the hungry, the ones who might need more than just physical food.

## Not Just a Homework Assignment

Sometimes the so-called Great Commission can seem like Jesus' last homework assignment, and we can't turn it in late. From pulpits we are prodded to pass out flyers for evangelistic series door to door. We hear missionaries' stories of stunning miracles, hundreds of converts and exciting adventure as distant as the lands in which the stories were born.

"See," my pew neighbor says, "that is a true Christian."



Pablo Colindres serving the community during Union College's Project Impact Day

*Wait a minute now, I think. I'm a true Christian, too.*

What's the real reason I take time out of my busy(?) schedule and hand out those flyers half-heartedly, half-hoping the hours go by faster? What if, instead of an assignment, we look at outreach as spreading good news? When I receive good news, I don't hesitate to tell anyone who inquires what my overly enthusiastic smile means. Joy spreads like wildfire and people smile with the news bearer.

Wait a minute  
now . . . I'm a true  
Christian, too.

We have good news. What if we made it a point to share for the sole purpose of seeing someone smile? Romans 10:15 says, "How beautiful the feet of those who bring good news!"

I want those feet. I want the world to experience the liberating peace, joy, and love God offers. What if that were our mission? Not a "converts" count, but a "people I've made smile" count.

## What if . . . ?

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# Can You Hear Me Now?

Written by Brianna Schenkelberg  
Designed by Hannah Smoot

**Y**umm. Want some?" Alivia asks. Sanela scrunches up her nose. "Gross! I don't eat bacon."

"You don't eat bacon?" I chime in. "Is it just because you just don't like it or for religious reasons?"

"Yeah, I'm Muslim."

"Oh, cool!" I exclaim. "I don't eat bacon either. Why don't Muslims eat it?"

"Well, we believe Allah says it's not clean and we shouldn't eat it, so we don't eat pork. And I don't think it tastes good anyway. What religion are you?"

So began a beautiful friendship of three people with radically different faiths. When we go to Chili's and accidentally

order an appetizer to share with pieces of bacon on it, Sanela and I pick off the bacon and pile it on Alivia's plate. Of course,

**Listening is the strongest stone.**

my religion isn't centered on what I don't eat. Over time, Sanela and Alivia have come

to learn about my beliefs and values as a Christian Seventh-day Adventist. Likewise, I have learned a great deal from asking them about their beliefs.

Though we carry conflicting belief systems on certain subjects, we respect and listen to each other. There is no judging or predestining "correct" answers. Humans are curious beings. We wonder about things we don't know and we want to find answers. Questions provide opportunities to discuss—and like learning a new language, we begin by listening. Listening is the strongest stepping stone to outreach.

The phrases "Don't judge a man until you walk two moons in his shoes" and "try

standing in their shoes” can be applied to religion. When we place ourselves in someone else’s shoes to understand their belief system, it’s easier to find connections while respecting differences. Listening leads to learning, learning leads to understanding, and understanding leads to clearer vision.

### Express Yourself

The best way to learn about someone is to ask the person directly to express their faith in their own words.

“Little birdies” are not always credible sources. Once my mom was in the break room talking to two coworkers and she mentioned, “I’m Adventist.”

Immediately, a coworker responded, “Oh, you’re the ones who don’t do blood transfusions.” I’d laugh to see that added to our list of fundamental beliefs.

### Know Your Stuff

Knowledge about other religions also provides an outlet for open conversation. Jesus held wide knowledge about not only what He believed, but what others believed. Luke 2:46-47 says, “...they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both

listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers” (NKJ). For someone to really hear you, you have to listen to and understand them as well.

Heaven will not be made up of one religion. God has

in prayer, Jehovah’s Witnesses’ persistence and purpose, Native religion’s reverence of the sanctity found in nature. As Adventists, we believe we have found the truth and must share the life-changing news with the world. This is a crucial message, yet certainly there are truths we can learn along the way. Understanding is the key to outreach with other faiths.

James 1:19 says, “So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak...” (NKJ).

What if we put down our megaphone and removed our earplugs? What if we started truly listening?



Be swift to hear, slow to speak.  
James 1:19

the unique power to look into a person’s heart because that is how He judges a person, not which church they are a member of. Allah/God/Yaweh/the Intelligent Designer/Abba is too big to be confined to one name or one religion. What if we decided to learn from other faiths? Look at Islamic devotion

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**Brianna Schenkelberg** is a junior communication: journalism major from Wakee, Iowa.

**Hannah Smoot** is a junior communication: public relations major with a graphic design minor from Nairobi, Kenya.

# Adventist Youth: Our Present Future



Written by James Hall

Design by Raschelle Casebier

“The youth of today are the Adventist church’s future!” How often have we as a church family heard this line? Many of my peers hear this and feel as if these are mere words – a broken promise. That’s not to say our religion is broken, because I believe Adventists have the right idea with most aspects of Christianity. Spiritual approaches vary from age to age, however. That’s where we as a church struggle.

## My Family Life

I was raised in a family that would identify itself as Adventist; except my father who was raised Baptist. Though we saw ourselves as Adventist, we didn’t follow “proper” Adventism such as not eating pork and shellfish, no Saturday shopping, or going to church. We did always pray before meals and going to bed. We considered ourselves a Christian family that didn’t go to church, and I didn’t really think anything of it.

**I’m so not a  
“suit and tie  
every week” man.**

At age 16, my mother and I attended some Revelation seminars led by Pastor Steve Cook. My mother was incredibly moved by the end of the seminars, to the point that she has never been the same since. I was impressed as well. When my mother mentioned actually attending church, my initial reaction wasn’t entirely positive.

“So do you have clothes ready for Sabbath?” She asked one Friday afternoon.

“But the seminars are over,” I responded.

“Yes, but we’re going to church now.”

“What? Really?” (Imagine that with a slight whine.) I decided to go along and was baptized into the Adventist church roughly two months after I started attending. Right away I was incredibly interested, but found myself slowly losing interest.

**So I see they’ve  
been teaching you  
the wrong stuff  
in college!**

My church family loves me so much, and I appreciate and love them equally, yet I often feel uncomfortable in a church environment. I am the type of person to wear nice clothes to church, but I am not a “suit and tie every week” kind of man. (I do not own a suit, so there’s one major problem right there!) You would normally find me at church in a pair of nice jeans or shorts and a polo or nice tee.

One of the members from my home church made a memorable comment to me. This was my first conversation with him after I had been in college for a semester.

He began, “So I see they’re teaching you the wrong stuff in college!”

“What do you mean?” I responded.

“I mean they didn’t teach you how to dress properly for church!”

I was taken aback at the intensely blunt and rude way he approached the subject. Being 21, I decided to act as an adult and not say anything.

My mother chimed in with a simple, “Well, at least he’s here.”

When it comes to the current unwritten “dress code,” youth will challenge it. But if wearing nice



clothes other than a suit keeps “our future” coming to church, by all means let them! It seems an incredibly petty topic to lose our youth over.

The Bible mentions children when referring to how we should be when we approach our church life. Mark 10:14-15 says, “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.”

### **A New Approach**

According to this scripture, we should approach church as a child. Children do not care about what people wear at church (as long as it’s not offensive); they care only that they are there. This is how God sees us when we

attend. He cares that we are there, not that we aren’t in a tuxedo.

### **Verbiage for Youth**

Another concern is word choice. If you use words such as “Brethren” or “Beloved,” they likely won’t mean anything to the youth. If anything, these words will bore them. If we continue to use words that date us back to the late 1800s, then we will continue to suffer losses.

Music sung during church services is also a topic that needs to be addressed. Youth of today are often looking for a new sound that will allow them to sing loudly in their own voice instead of in a hum-drum half-alive clump of people.

While some



**Utilize the  
technologically savvy minds  
of the youth!**

in church would accept a band playing worship music along with hymns, youth sometimes feel that they don't have the authority to propose the idea to the pastor or elders. Instead of continuing to attend a church that may not fit their needs, they leave. They either find a new church that will adhere to them, or they just stop going altogether.

## Technological History

How do we keep or bring back our youth? There are many ways. When the Adventist church was established on May 21, 1863 the only means of communication and outreach was telegraph, word of mouth, and snail mail. The telephone wouldn't be invented until the 1870s.

The Adventist church began with roughly 3,500 members and saw rapid growth. By 1901, membership had exploded to more than 75,000. Now we're at 20 million or so. I can only imagine that the use of new technology – telephone, radio, TV, satellite – is one reason for this growth.

## We should turn to the youth to assist us.

In this time of immense technological advancement, we should turn to the youth to assist us in understanding how to employ today's technology. As has always been the case, youth like to know that they are needed instead of just being told that they are. Involve us. Utilize our technologically savvy minds! We have much more to offer than to just fill up the pews.

As a church, we need to re-evaluate ourselves. If we continue to ride the slow-rolling tide of 19th century Adventism, we will become responsible for the decline of interest in our religion. Allow new life to flow in on the backs of our current youth. Youth are not just the future of the Adventist church. We are the present.

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## Before You Say That... Please Think Again

**“Your music is offensive to God.”**

**“Are you really going to wear that?”**

**“Maybe in 20 years you can contribute.”**

**“You'll know better when you're as old as I am.”**

**“Forget it; we've tried that.”**

**“Please turn with me to everyone's favorite hymn.”**

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# Disillusioned Me

Written by Clint Westbrook  
Design by Scott Larsen

Imagine yourself alone in a room with no windows and no doors, your phone signal non-existent, and no Internet. Isolated and cut off from anyone and everyone, you're depressed, lonely, and frustrated.

**THAT'S HOW I FEEL IN CHURCH.**

**S**itting in the scratchy pew one Sabbath, the smell of colognes and dust in the air, I had the worst religious experience of my life. My faith in God was already weak, but my faith in religion was almost gone. The guy sitting next to me was still drunk, the smells of spiced rum breath burning my nostrils. The girls behind me were loud and distracting as they laughed and insulted everyone, the click-clacking of their fingers on their phones calling up Facebook profiles and pictures of people around them. Meanwhile the people in front of me complained about the way people around them were dressed and about how the sermon needed more Ellen White quotations. Here these people were, insulting the people around them and making it hard for anyone else to care or try. God wasn't felt in that house.

#### Small Discoveries

That Sabbath I broke inside. Something inside me said *leave*, so I left and went to Starbucks. I needed coffee and music to get my mind off the situation around me. With Radiohead in my headphones and a black coffee in my hands I finally began to relax. Glancing over, I discovered a dusty, tattered Bible sitting on the table next to me and began to flip through it. My small discoveries made the harsh realizations of the day much more difficult to deal with.

Looking at the lives of Christ, Moses, and Paul, I felt that God is someone to strive toward, not display once a week. Religion is something to live every minute of every day. So why do we preen like proud peacocks on Saturday? It feels wrong. It feels as if we care more about disguising our problems than about dedication to God.

As time passed, I began to withdraw from the friends and "church family" that I had grown

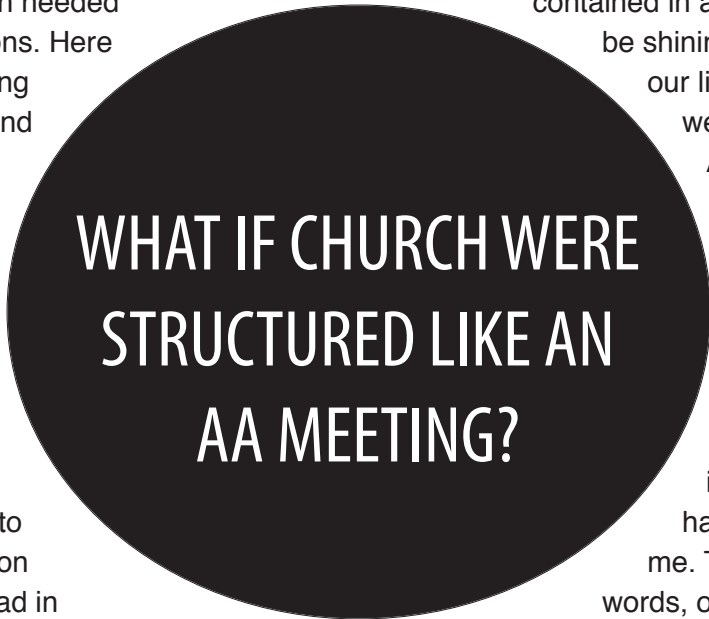
up with. I'd find every excuse possible to avoid church and began ditching. I just went to a non-Christian friend's house instead. I was lost and hurt, and the worst part—no one even noticed. I was swept up in a whirlwind of frustration and resentment.

#### Crumbling Faith

I am still in this spiral. I'll admit that without hesitation. Even now, going to church is a struggle. I have become cynical and disillusioned, and I have lost almost all faith in organized religion. To me church cannot and should not be contained in a building. Belief should be shining in every minute of our lives, not just when we are being watched. And even the darkest corners of the world know that we need to take care of our own when they are in trouble. Since I stopped regularly participating in Adventism very few have reached out to me. There have been kind words, over-used Bible verses, and sheer disbelief at my crumbling faith but nothing resembling true support. The further down this rabbit hole I go, the more depressing it becomes.

#### The Proposition

I propose that the best way to reach someone or help in their struggle is just to be there for them, lifting them up and showing true interest in their lives. Don't tell them about God; live as an influence for God. A quote from the popular animated science fiction series *Futurama* sums up this idea. The quote was from the character of God, who was met and questioned about His work in the universe. At the end of the episode He says,



## WHAT IF CHURCH WERE STRUCTURED LIKE AN AA MEETING?

“When you do things right, people won’t be sure you’ve done anything at all.” And therein may be the answer.

Which is more important – support or display? I propose that church should more resemble an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting than a dog show. When we enter church on Sabbath we are primed and trotted out on display, a smile on our faces and a skip in our step, but all we do is hide what is going on the other six days of the week. Instead of hiding, I say we bring our sins before each other and God, keeping them where they can be seen so that people can be supportive and help us with them as well as understand what we are going through.

My outlook might indeed be different if someone had reached a hand out. If someone had taken time to look at what I needed I might have felt

accepted instead of like an outsider. Everyone has their own problems, but the one thing that we need to do besides reach out into the community is to protect the people we have.

This Sabbath, look around you. Look at the people in the scratchy, back-breaking pews around you, at your friends and church family. Some of them might be struggling, just waiting for you to reach out to them. All you need to do is extend a hand.

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**Clint Westbrook** is a junior language arts education major from Wichita, Kansas.

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## LOOKING OUT FOR YOUR OWN: *WHAT IF...?*

1. *What if...*you worried less about yourself and more about your church family?
2. *What if...*instead of simply asking how someone is doing you open up about yourself and see if they do the same?
3. *What if...*church were like an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting?
4. *What if...*church weren’t just contained in a big building but in homes where people can be closer and less showy?
5. *What if...*instead of making church about appearances we made it about each other and our connections to God?

# Body Recovery

Written by Ellen Penrosa  
Design by Ingrid Oberholster

Decimation as far as the eye could see. Not a single building standing, only piles of rubble beneath skeletons of steel and rebar. The only signs of life struggling forward were the canvas tents popping up in the limited open areas. A sickening stench of damp rotting flesh and moldy trash hung in the air, covering everything like a hot smelly blanket.

A search team of students from Union College's International Rescue and Relief (IRR) program slowly made their way across the rubble toward a half-fallen apartment building. Zeus, the cadaver dog, led the way sniffing at concrete chunks

**Zeus, the cadaver dog, led the way.**

and clothing scraps. He was the only member of the team whose skin did not crawl at the anticipated horror before them. Inside the semi-dark crumbling rooms they worked their way forward with one mission: to find the dead.

"Hold up, I think he's on to something." They paused as Zeus sniffed fervently at a pile of rubble in the back corner of a disheveled bedroom.

"Easy now, watch out for that jagged metal there in the front."

"Careful!"

"The floor feels weak over here."

"Watch your step."

The bodies had been decomposing 10 to 15 days in Haiti's humidity.

By then they were unrecognizable;

their skin was sloughing off, and the extremities bore teeth marks from rats who found an easy meal.

"It's a chilling feeling to find a dead body," one student reported later. "None of our training prepared us for that."

Union College's IRR program sent four disaster response teams to Haiti in the aftermath of the immense earthquake of January 2010. The teams worked with other relief organizations in medical clinics and debris/body removal. They did it all for God, to do His work by helping people with some of the most difficult yet necessary tasks when they needed it most.

Body recovery requires a delicate

combination of speed and precision. Training and equipment is necessary because dead bodies spread diseases if not handled or disposed of properly. To ensure a population's full recovery, the dead must be dealt with just as much as debris must be cleared and removed.

Disasters manifest themselves in many variations, from international disasters like the Haiti earthquake to personal disasters like abuse or addiction. They may not always make news headlines, yet disasters happen all the time, especially in personal lives, frequently going unnoticed by the population's majority.

Emotional baggage caused by personal disasters is comparative to dead bodies from catastrophes. The baggage needs to be discovered, handled and

disposed of or else it festers and damages the person carrying it. This baggage removal often requires external help from loved ones who can offer support and encouragement.

A year ago I dealt with depression caused by emotional baggage. I abandoned everything dear to me: friends, parents, sisters, nieces and nephews. I spent most of my time hurting and alone, not knowing why I was afraid to face the world. Buried deep within myself were hurts I did not want to face—which had killed my dreams and zest for life. God, my friends and family, through their love and support, came in like a disaster response team and helped me out of my catastrophe. I worked with my therapist to discover, handle and dispose of the emotional baggage I was carrying.

## Bear ye one another's burdens.

Another method of “body removal” in personal disasters requires a more literal action. A person in an abusive relationship may need help to remove themselves from the situation. They may not have the means or strength to do it alone. Again, it takes a delicate combination of speed and precision to safely move them to a protected environment.

Delicate handling is also required when addressing a loved one's addictions, be it drugs, alcohol, sex, food, or video gaming. One misstep, no matter how well-intended the action is, can create more problems.

Handling disasters can be the most difficult endeavor anyone undertakes. Consequences and risks must be accepted. Relief groups in physical disasters risk their lives and well-being. They face dangers from disease, structurally unsafe buildings, and hazardous materials. The horrors they experience cause emotional and psychological stress. Friends and family risk relationships and sometimes their personal well-being in order to help those they care about in personal disasters.

It might test their strength to the brink of collapse, yet



A teddy bear signifies a glimpse of life in the rubble.

Courtesy JBR Student

# Rescue Relief

... to help virtually anyone who needs help

## Observe

Look around you for areas of need.

## Ask and Listen

Invite them to share their pain—listen to their story.

## Pray

Ask God for guidance.

## Seek counsel

Seek wisdom from pastors and counselors.

## Take appropriate action

Take steps to help the person in need.

there is One who is there through it all: God. When we do His work, He is there protecting and guiding. As Christians we are called to help those in need, not for our own salvation but for theirs. Helping people by meeting their immediate needs often leads to spiritual outreach as well. Aaron Kent, a graduate and now instructor with the IRR program, told me in an interview, “Meeting the basic needs of people in disasters often leads to opportunities for witnessing.”

Helping others in their disasters not only saves their immediate lives but can also save them eternally.

You don't have to be a responder to a catastrophic event to make a difference. In fact, helping with the smaller personal disasters might have the biggest impact for those suffering their own version of hell. Galatians 6:2 says, “Bear ye one another's burdens...” (KJV). This can mean helping anyone with anything they need. As

Christians, no matter where we are, we should keep our eyes and ears open for those who need “body recovery.”

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Ingrid Oberholster is a senior communication: public relations major from South Africa.

*\*\*Special thanks to Aaron Kent and all the IRR students who inspired and helped with this article.*



# Adventist— Beyond a Name

Written by Mary Yonazi

Design by Brittney Lippincott

**S**eventh-day Adventists are known for having an extended hand in missionary works, volunteering for the church, and keeping Friday-Saturday as the Sabbath. But what do we really understand about Adventism? Who are we as “Seventh-day Adventists”? An Adventist is a member of a Christian denomination who believes in Jesus’ second coming to take home those who believe in their salvation through Christ.

As Seventh-day Adventists we are known for what we represent. We represent Christ. If we want to have His identity, we may aim to do as He did. Christ was committed to His mission, so we should emulate His example. Christ came to serve us and to give us salvation out of His love and grace.

We believe we are passing through this old earth and are New Earth bound. While we are here, we believe in being disciples for Jesus and of service to others in such a way that they see Jesus through us. It is our joy to serve Him in any and many types of ways. Those may include:

- 🔥 feeding the homeless,
- 🔥 helping a disabled person clean the house, or read,
- 🔥 baby-sitting for less-privileged families,
- 🔥 or a simple act like walking someone’s dog.



We do not have to be perfect to be disciples. We are made to serve the Lord, and show others His love as we journey through this earth. We will use this time wisely, to do all for the glory of God. If we know our purpose as Seventh-day Adventists, then we can be motivated to do what we are called to do.

The time to serve the Lord is now. We should trust Him to give us the strength to do His will. On our own, we cannot achieve anything, but with Him we are assured of victory.



Glen was a young boy eager to get baptized. He had learned about baptism in his Sabbath school baptism class, and felt the need to be closer to Jesus than ever before. He was eager to get baptized especially now that there was an evangelistic effort coming up in his school. Glen rushed home to tell his parents of the meeting.

“Mom! Dad! Can I get baptized, please? I already know all the baptism notes, and I know I need Jesus in my life.”

“You’re not ready for that commitment yet.”

“But I want to get baptized.”

*Why won’t they let me?* Glen thought. *I know it’s my final decision on judgment day.*

Glen felt the decision was his, so he planned to be baptized whenever he had the chance.

## **Making the Choice**

His parents were not around to advise him on his commitment, so he decided to participate in the effort the following Monday. He sat among the throng in the middle of the crowd and waited. Between the pews, people were of all types and backgrounds; they had come from outside school, and some of his teachers and schoolmates had gathered there too. He listened as the pastor spoke of “the three angels’ message” and the call to true faith and belief, not the “beast’s” false worship, as well as the message: “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and

the springs of water” (Rev. 14:6-7, NIV).

At the end of the sermon, the pastor gave an altar call. Glen was courageous and he knew what his mission was. He discovered it was his call, and he answered it.

## **Living for God**

Alana wanted to do something special for her mother. She heard her mum say that she would take care of extra chores when she had the time. Alana knew that her mother was busy with her work and the cooking. Because she loved her mother, she thought, *Why not me? I could water the flowers and the garden too. It would help our home look beautiful.*

She wanted to surprise her mother with extra help. Alana watered all the plants the next day, then waited for her mother to come home. Her mother was overjoyed at her daughter’s thoughtfulness, and to Alana’s surprise, her mum had also bought her a present. Alana hugged her mum and felt happy to help her.

“I promise I’m going to take care of your flowers and garden from now on” she told her mother.

How many of us hesitate and don’t have the faith of a young child? Our time on earth is limited, and we have to decide to serve God. In Matthew 28, Jesus’ advice to his disciples is, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.



And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28: 19-20, NIV).

To be disciples is a serious undertaking. It requires a heart full of service. In the Bible, Jesus says, “Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you” (Matt. 17:20 NIV). If we take Christ as our role model, we will definitely succeed.

The best thing about serving God is that anyone can participate, even if they are young. God therefore gives us ample time to do it. Beneath the surface, we were all called and created to serve God, to worship Him, and to love one another.

## What if . . . we lived our calling?



**Mary Yonazi** is a junior communication: public relations major from Arusha, Tanzania.

**Brittney Lippincott** is a sophomore graphic design and communication major from Blair, Nebraska.





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Photo: ND Tourism/David Nix

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [WWW.IMSDA.ORG](http://WWW.IMSDA.ORG)

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<b>Mar 9-11</b>	<b>Iowa Honors Weekend</b> Camp Heritage
<b>Mar 23-25</b>	<b>Teen Leadership Training</b> Camp Heritage
<b>Mar 30- Apr 1</b>	<b>Family Life Ministries Training</b> Kansas City Central Adventist Church
	<i>This training weekend is for current local church family life leaders and anyone who is interested in becoming involved in the family life ministry at your church.</i>
<b>Apr 12-14</b>	<b>Elementary Music Festival</b> Sunnydale Adventist Academy
<b>Apr 27-29</b>	<b>Youth Rally/Academy Days</b> Sunnydale Adventist Academy
<b>May 29- June 2</b>	<b>Camp Meeting</b> Sunnydale Adventist Academy

**KANSAS-NEBRASKA CALENDAR**  
FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [WWW.KS-NE.ORG](http://WWW.KS-NE.ORG)

<b>Feb 3-4</b>	<b>Wichita Convocation</b> Friday vespers: Wichita Three Angels Church Sabbath: Wichita South Church
	Speaker: Jiri Moskala, Professor of Old Testament Exegesis and Theology at Andrews University
<b>Mar 24</b>	<b>Freedom in Christ</b> Kansas City One-day Women's Event 10:30 am - 4:30 pm at the Ritz Charles: 9000 W 137th Street   Overland Park, KS
	Speaker: June Madrigal, Associate Dean of Women at Andrews University
	<i>June Madrigal holds a master's in counseling, with an emphasis in marriage and family therapy from Southern Adventist University. Her passion is the pursuit of God and His transforming power in our lives by changing the way we think (Romans 12:2).</i>
	<i>Cost: \$35, includes three seminars and vegetarian or vegan lunch. To register: contact Sue Carlson or Susan Sweigart at 785.478.4726 or e-mail <a href="mailto:scarlon@aks-ne.org">scarlon@aks-ne.org</a>.</i>



## MINNESOTA CONFERENCE CONSTITUENCY MEETING NOTICES

### MINNESOTA CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Notice is hereby given that the 1st Quadrennial Session and the 107th Regular Session of the Minnesota Conference of Seventh-day Adventists is called to convene at the Armstrong High School auditorium located at 10635 36th Avenue North, Plymouth, Minnesota, on Sunday, April 29, 2012, for the purpose of electing officers and departmental directors and for the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the session. Delegates from the churches comprising the Minnesota Conference are on the following basis:

One (1) delegate for the organization and one (1) additional delegate for each twenty-five (25) members or fractional majority thereof.

The first meeting will be called to order at 10 o'clock a.m. on said date at which time all duly elected delegates shall be seated.

D. Edward Barnett, President  
Justin C. Lyons, Vice President for Administration  
Reginald Leach, Vice President for Finance

### MINNESOTA CONFERENCE ASSOCIATION OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Notice is hereby given that the 1st Quadrennial Session of the Minnesota Conference Association of Seventh-day Adventists, a non-profit corporation under the laws of the State of Minnesota, will be held in conjunction with the 1st Quadrennial Session and the 107th Regular Session of the Minnesota Conference of Seventh-day Adventists at the Armstrong High School auditorium located at 10635 36th Avenue North, Plymouth, Minnesota, on Sunday, April 29, 2012, at 10 o'clock a.m. The purpose of the meeting is to elect the officers and members for the Board of Trustees for said Association, as well as transact any other business that may properly come before the delegates. All delegates to the Conference Session are the voting members of this Corporation.

D. Edward Barnett, President  
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**Application deadline:  
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## Leading the Transformation

*Hospital leader sees America moving toward wellness and prevention—where Adventist healthcare has been all the time*



**We're not waiting for people to get sick. We're reaching out to them physically and spiritually in their own neighborhoods.**

Ask Stephen King what energizes him most about his work and he won't have to think long. For King, vice president for mission and ministry serving Colorado's four Adventist hospitals, it's the way the nation's conversations about healthcare are increasingly focused on the importance of wellness and disease prevention.

He sees it as an exciting and promising development that's been a very long time coming. "Keeping people healthy and well has always been the core of our

Adventist mission," he says. "America is finally moving toward where we've been as a church for almost 150 years."

After all, it was back in 1865 when Ellen White envisioned a revolutionary new healthcare ministry, and wrote prolifically about the connection between physical and spiritual health. "We are to labor both for the health of the body and the saving of the soul," she said, forever connecting the mission of the church and its hospitals.

King has worked with Avista, Littleton, Porter and Parker hospitals for more than 15 years, and believes the future offers unprecedented opportunities to fulfill that mission even more effectively. He sees healthcare moving closer to the communities where people live, and Colorado's Adventist hospitals have responded by opening a growing number of physician practices and outpatient clinics. "We're not waiting for people to get sick," he says. "We're reaching out to them physically and spiritually in their own neighborhoods."

As those avenues for outreach have increased, so has the challenge of ensuring that the unique Adventist mission is reinforced through each. That's why King and the presidents of each hospital work together to create an annual Christian Service Plan that describes in detail how the mission will be expressed to patients, communities, physicians,

associates—and especially churches. As a former pastor of the Boulder Seventh-day Adventist church, he feels a special burden to help every church member understand "how specific and purposeful we are about our healthcare ministry."

Included in that plan are the myriad ways Colorado's Adventist hospitals and churches already support each other in their communities and around the world. Church members regularly join hospital-sponsored mission trips, King says, and hospital associates are the primary source of donations of food and funds to the Adventist Community Service food bank. Hospitals also support Rocky Mountain Conference schools and summer camps, and church volunteers energetically participate in many hospital programs and outreach efforts.

As the hospital/church partnership deepens and healthcare in America moves toward the bedrock Adventist philosophies of wellness and prevention, King is motivated by the opportunity to expand this vital ministry in ever more innovative ways. "With our hospitals and churches working together, we'll continue to lead the transformation."

.....  
This article was submitted by Stephen King, senior vice president for mission and ministry for the Rocky Mountain Adventist Health System/Centura Health, where he serves the four Adventist hospitals in Colorado. It was written by CMBell Company.



# CREATION Health: The Power of Choice

By Mark Stoddart



CREATION Health is a wellness system that looks back to the creation story and draws from it God's plan for complete wellness. Using the acronym CREATION (Choice, Rest, Environment, Activity, Trust, Interpersonal Relationships, Outlook, Nutrition), it addresses the multi-dimensional nature of humanity dealing with emotional, spiritual, relational, mental and physical health for achieving abundant living. The first letter addresses Choice.

"Choice," says Monica Reid, MD, "is your power and right to decide. It's the realization that you have more than one option. To choose is to know your future is greater than your past; it's an attitude that considers the best is yet to be. Choice is your conviction: you are worthy of the best life has to offer" (*The Creation Health Breakthrough*).

The power to choose is one of the first gifts that God gave

to humanity. It is the gift that separates us from the animal kingdom. The beasts live their lives by instinct and complex genetic predispositions, but we who are made in the image of God have been given the freedom to chart our own destiny by the choices we make. We can choose our relationships, our location, our profession and our conduct. We can choose who or what to worship, how we eat and whether or not we exercise. There are some responses that are reflexive, but the vast majority of the actions we take are based on a choice. We choose to get out of bed, to bathe, what to wear, what to eat, to go to work or not, the route we take. Some of us are even blessed to be able to choose the kind of work we do. So many choices! Some sources say we make thousands of decisions every day and almost every one of them is the result of a choice.

There are some choices we cannot make, like our family of origin or the circumstances of our birth; but we can choose what to do with the life we have been given.

Have you ever tried to excuse yourself by saying that you had no choice? Or perhaps you tried to blame a situation or another person for causing you to do or not do something? In his book *The DNA of Relationships* Gary Smalley says, "...all of my thoughts determine all of my actions and emotions. It doesn't matter what others do to me or what circumstances I face every day, I determine all of my feelings by what I choose to think and how I choose to react to what happens to me."

## No More Excuses

For about three years I have been making excuses for my obesity. I've blamed the closing of the local gym, my sedentary job and not having the time to exercise. I have excused myself because of the pain in my lower back. I had no energy because I was stressed out about circumstances in my personal life, and my list of excuses continued. Then one day when the largest suit I owned could hardly button, I tipped the scale at the heaviest I have ever been, and my doctor

used the phrase "pre-diabetic" during my annual physical, I made the choice to stop making excuses. Up to that point I had given up control of my health to circumstances and excuses, but the power of choice helped me take back control of both my emotional and my physical health.

The power to choose is empowering. It gives us a sense of control and this sense of control can positively impact our outlook. A positive outlook can generate life giving energy. I'm a witness! Five months later I'm managing my stress, I'm happier, 27 pounds lighter and able to run eight miles without stopping. It all began with a choice that led to a plan, and the results are my testimony.

Since we are not perfect beings, we will from time to time make poor choices that may sometimes lead to unpleasant consequences. Carl Bard encourages us thus, "Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending."

.....  
Mark Stoddart, MDiv, is administrative director for Spiritual Wellness at Shawnee Mission Medical Center.

*Shawnee Mission Medical Center offers a series of lifestyle transformation classes on CREATION Health. For more information, visit [ShawneeMission.org/creationhealth](http://ShawneeMission.org/creationhealth).*

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H E A L T H



**Bachmann, Willie**, b. Oct. 22, 1911 in Henrietta, TX. d. Dec. 5, 2011 in Winner, SD. Member of Dakota Conference Church. Preceded in death by parents Pete and Bertha Bachmann. Survivors include wife Evelyn (Rankin) Bachmann; daughters Myrna Vert and Sharon Frey; son Clayton; sisters Ruth Estey, Martha VerSteeg, and Betty Anderson; brothers Pete, Ben, Everette and Carol; 6 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren.

**Bacon, Josephine (Koenig)**, b. Oct. 15, 1909. d. Nov. 24, 2011 in Two Harbors, MN. Member of Superior (WI) Church. Preceded in death by parents Elizabeth and Gotfried Koenig; husband Alvin Bacon; granddaughter Pamela Jo Evans; 4 siblings. Survivors include 8 children; 5 siblings; 29 grandchildren; 75 great-grandchildren; 45 great-great-grandchildren.

**Burgeson, Darlene N.**, b. July 23, 1938, in Minneapolis, MN. d. Dec. 1, 2011 in Alexandria, MN. Member of Alexandria and Lakes Area Churches. Survivors include husband Ted; daughters Sandra Downing, Heidi Hardele and Tammera Hewitt; sister Lorna Thompson; brother Duane Ytredal; various grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

**Burnett, Ethel (Cook)**, b. Oct. 2, 1929 in Marvin, SD. d. Dec. 8, 2011 in Woonsocket, SD. Member of Huron Church. Preceded in death by parents Gene and Else Cook; sister Vila Carpenter. Survivors include husband Harold Burnett; daughter Jessica Hofer; sons Harold and Roy Burnett; 9 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; 1 great-great-grandchild.

**Callahan, Ruth Gladys**, b. Oct. 9, 1914 in Lincoln County, NE. d. Nov. 7, 2011 in Gothenburg, NE. Member of Gothenburg Church. Survivors include daughters Rosella Baker and Chris Barnes; sons Willis and Doug Callahan; 17 grandchildren; 30 great-grandchildren; 13 great-great-grandchildren.

**Caparoon, Gordon G.**, b. June 21, 1939 in Rushville, NE. d. Aug. 31, 2011 in Chadron, NE. Member of Chadron Church. Preceded in death by

granddaughter Laraine Kolb. Survivors include wife Elsie; daughters Sharon Austin and Lori Darrough; son Gary; 4 grandchildren.

**Frick, Mary Belle (Witchey)**, b. May 29, 1910 in Alva, OK. d. Nov. 28, 2011 in Wichita, KS. Member of Wichita South Church.

**George, Celia M. (Clark)**, b. Sept. 5, 1929 in Newton, KS. d. Mar. 26, 2011 in Delta, CO. Member of Montrose Church. Preceded in death by husband Gale George; 1 sister. Survivors include Gaylah Speckman; Linda Dale; Janet Beltz; Cheri Stein; 4 siblings; 13 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren.

**Harden, Janice L. "Toots"**, b. Dec. 15, 1918. d. Nov. 23, 2011. Member of North Platte Church. Preceded in death by parents Benjamin and Esma Davis; husband Herbert "Bud" Harden; sisters Violet Hunter and Ina Ziegler; brothers Virgil, Lyle, Austin and Marshall Davis. Survivors include children Larry Harden, Linda Torske, Teresa Wright, Janelle Wise, Bette Richardson, Trace Harden, and Merri Magee; 21 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren.

**Huston Luce, Mary M.**, b. Jan. 8, 1935 in Caribou, ME. d. Oct. 3, 2011 in Fairfield, IA. Member of Fairfield Church. Preceded in death by daughter Roselie; son Eric; sister Paula; brother Gary. Survivors include daughters Rhonda Franzosie, Holly Houston and Patricia Bruegge; 9 siblings; 10 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren.

**Kleinsasser, Willard D.**, b. Feb. 2, 1928 in Onida, SD. d. Nov. 29, 2011 in Huron, SD. Member of Huron Church. Preceded in death by parents David and Susie (Unruh) Kleinsasser; wife Delores (Wipf) Kleinsasser; sister Verna Hein; brother Ruben. Survivors include wife Verna (Hofer) Kleinsasser; daughter Bonnie Rassmussen; step daughters LuAnn Clarke, Sherry McGilvrey and Vicky Chandler; step son Gary Hofer; sister Anne Oswald; brothers Erwin and Jermone; 3 grandchildren; 5 great-grandchildren.

**Trimble, Mildred**, b. July 6, 1917 in Sioux City, IA. d. Nov. 21, 2011 in Sioux City, IA. Member of Sioux City Church. Preceded in death by husband Thomas Trimble; sister Lenora; brother Warren. Survivors include daughter Nancy Reinhart; son Robert Trimble; 2 grandchildren; 4 great-grandchildren; 1 great-great-grandchild.

**Urbatsch, Barbara K.**, b. Dec. 19, 1963 in Williston, ND. d. Nov. 20, 2011 in Mandan, ND. Member of Dakota Conference Church. Survivors include son Sawyer Urbatsch; sisters Sharon Zeman, Lucille Carns, Melody Schutt and Dorothy Moldenhauer; sons Don, Cal, Allen and Les Urbatsch.

**Wetenkamp, Donald T.**, b. July 22, 1923 in Zenith, ND. d. Dec. 11, 2011 in Wahpeton, ND. Member of Wahpeton

Church. Preceded in death by parents Theodore and Bertha Wetenkamp. Survivors include wife Clara; daughters Viola Redick and Videll Ahrens; sister Alice Welharticky; 2 grandchildren; 1 great-grandchild.

**Woudenberg, John**, b. Jan. 21, 1922 in Holland. d. Aug. 14, 2011 in Ottumwa, IA. Member of Ottumwa Church. Preceded in death by sisters Jannie Ahithagen and Antoinette Knopper; brothers Adrian and Fritz Woudenberg. Survivors include wife Olga Woudenberg; daughters Antoinette Fisher, Sylvia Pettigrew and Claudia Enloe; sons John and Roland Woudenberg; sister Margaret Meelhuysen; 11 grandchildren; 5 great-grandchildren.

## SUNSET CALENDAR

Colorado	Jan 27	Feb 3	Feb 10	Feb 17	Feb 24
Denver	5:14	5:22	5:30	5:38	5:46
Grand Junction	5:29	5:37	5:46	5:54	6:01
Pueblo	5:15	5:23	5:31	5:39	5:46
<b>Iowa</b>					
Davenport	5:12	5:21	5:29	5:38	5:47
Des Moines	5:24	5:33	5:41	5:50	5:59
Sioux City	5:33	5:42	5:51	6:00	6:09
<b>Kansas</b>					
Dodge City	5:58	6:06	6:14	6:21	6:28
Goodland	5:01	5:09	5:18	5:26	5:34
Topeka	5:38	5:46	5:54	6:02	6:10
Wichita	5:47	5:55	6:03	6:10	6:18
<b>Minnesota</b>					
Duluth	5:04	5:15	5:25	5:36	5:46
International Falls	5:04	5:15	5:26	5:38	5:49
Minneapolis	5:14	5:24	5:34	5:44	5:53
<b>Missouri</b>					
Columbia	5:24	5:32	5:40	5:48	5:56
Kansas City	5:33	5:41	5:50	5:57	6:05
Springfield	5:32	5:40	5:47	5:55	6:02
St. Louis	5:17	5:25	5:33	5:41	5:48
<b>Nebraska</b>					
Grand Island	5:44	5:53	6:02	6:10	6:18
Lincoln	5:38	5:46	5:55	6:04	6:12
North Platte	5:53	6:02	6:11	6:20	6:28
Scottsbluff	5:03	5:12	5:21	5:30	5:39
<b>North Dakota</b>					
Bismarck	5:39	5:49	6:00	6:10	6:21
Fargo	5:22	5:33	5:43	5:54	6:05
Williston	5:46	5:57	6:08	6:19	6:30
<b>South Dakota</b>					
Pierre	5:44	5:53	6:03	6:13	6:22
Rapid City	4:56	5:36	5:15	5:24	5:34
Sioux Falls	5:31	5:40	5:50	5:59	6:09
<b>Wyoming</b>					
Casper	5:11	5:20	5:30	5:39	5:48
Cheyenne	5:10	5:18	5:27	5:35	5:44
Sheridan	5:09	5:19	5:29	5:38	5:48





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**Midland Adventist Academy Alumni Weekend** Shawnee, Kansas Feb. 10-11, 2012. Honor classes: Class of 2002 (10 year) and Class of 2007 (5 year). For more information contact Yara Gomez, alumni president: <http://www.midlandacademy.org>

**Washington Adventist University** celebrates Alumni Weekend, April 13-15, 2012. Join us for the grand opening of the Leroy & Lois Peters Music Center, April 14, at 8:00 p.m. Visit [www.wau.edu/alumni](http://www.wau.edu/alumni) for a list of events and activities or call 301.891.4133 for more information.

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