"GOD WON'T LOVE YOU LESS"
OVERCOMING MENTAL ILLNESS STIGMA
Seniors fêted at Camp Au Sable. “We just want to thank you,” Ken Michieff, Camp Au Sable director, told those who attended the Golden Years Retreat held September 8–12, expressing gratitude for all they have done over the years for the Adventist Church.

Rebekah Helsius was featured on the cover of Adventist Journey magazine. Helsius designed and painted the lighthouse display at the 2019 Chosen Internation Pathfinder Camporee.

As a follow up to the upcoming General Conference Session, an invitation is extended to young people willing to dedicate their life to One Year in Mission. vimeo.com/lakeunionherald New videos added on a regular basis

Tis the season! It is the best of times; it is the worst of times. The holidays are like that for many in our community. We have some stories of celebration and encouragement, and some of tragic loss — one of which, the Brad Bolejack story starting on p. 14, is very personal to me. I was inspired by what God was doing in his life and interviewed him for an article about his ministry in the August 2005 Lake Union Herald, page 19, lakeunionherald.org Archives.

So, we have included some articles with counsel on how to process and cope with the best of times and the worst of times. We pray that you will find something in this issue which will be of encouragement to you and draw you closer to the God of all comfort, hope, joy and peace (see 2 Corinthians 1:3; Romans 15:13).

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COVER PHOTO: D’MITRI CASTRO
ON THE COVER: Brad Bolejack’s widow, Jen, photographed in Celebration, Fla.

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Enlarging Our Territory

Ten, nine, eight, seven, six . . . I still remember hearing the mind-riveting countdown echoing across Cape Canaveral with earnest expectation of liftoff on our family’s TV. Who could forget the sound of air seemingly being torn like paper as that spacecraft vaulted through the heavens?

As we commemorate the celebration of the lunar launch and landing 50 years ago, which impressively ripped open the skies puncturing the heavens above in a manner never done since Jesus ascended to heaven, we, the Seventh-day Adventist Church some 150 years ago, like the Apollo rocket but with the might and speed of angels, encircled the globe with angelic winged messages that break every societal norm assuring mankind that grace abounds and heralds a touchdown for which we all long — the return of Jesus.

As we celebrate the lunar landing, let me share another story that reminds me of the blessing of our connectedness as a church.

Recently, Sharon, my wonderful wife of 34 years, and I were at a three-day AdventHealth event called “Conference on Mission.” That Sabbath, as we were tending the meetings in place of her boss who was on a mission trip. What a blessing that she observed our “community” as people were present from many states, most of which are east of the Rockies.

I’ve heard similar statements mentioned by others, such as, “In our denomination, we rarely interact with other churches right down the street. We might get together once or twice a year for a concert, maybe.”

Thank God our pioneers recognized in our infancy that the fuel that would jettison these outstanding messages of the Three Angels to the farthest parts of the world required a global vision. That’s why the mission story and offering were regular staples of the Sabbath School society.

The phrase, enlarge my territory, taken from the prayer of Jabez (1 Chronicles 4:10), is a truism for our church. We, the Seventh-day Adventist Church some 150 years ago, like the Apollo rocket but with the might and speed of angels, encircled the globe with angelic winged messages that break every societal norm assuring mankind that grace abounds and heralds a touchdown for which we all long — the return of Jesus.

CONFERENCE ON MISSION

Recently, Sharon, my wonderful wife of 34 years, and I were at a three-day AdventHealth event called “Conference on Mission.” That Sabbath, as we were tending the worship service, Sharon stopped to ask a young lady how she became a Seventh-day Adventist. She replied, “Actually, I’m not.” What she stated next left me speechless.

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Dear Fellow Mama,

If you walked by me today and said, “Hi, how are you?” I would probably smile, “Well, and you?” to which we might nod and wish each other a wonderful day.

I might watch you walk away and marvel at how nice you looked. I may recall your Facebook post a few weeks back of a lovely vacation with smiling children. I might sigh as I think, “She sure is lucky, seems to have the perfect life.” However, I wonder what would happen if I had responded to you, “I’m exhausted. Today I’m feeling a bit defeated and could use some encouragement,” and then proceeded to break down in tears? What would happen if I was vulnerable?

Some have called it “parental burnout;” others call it an epidemic because of media and comparisons which other generations didn’t experience. Doing a web search will lead one to research studies, personal stories, and never-ending ideas and discussions of ideal parenting from experts.

Then, my dear friend, there’s the guilt. Guilt about not spending enough time with my spouse, or because we ate drive-through food yesterday, or because we parented from experts.

Stories, and never-ending ideas and discussions of ideal parenting are longer from biblical examples and guidelines from Ellen White? Are we even more frightened others and on ourselves because our lists of perfect families. One look at families in the Bible shows us that. Why do we judge? Or compare?

I recognize that the battle for the lives our children will never end until heaven. We shall not rest as we pour out our hearts for them (see Lamentations 2:19).

So, fellow mommy, in this battle that is not against each other, but against the world, can we be like Aaron and Hur in service to Moses as described in Exodus 17? Can we lift each other’s hands up when one is tired? The battle will continue to rage but, like the promise in Psalm 46:5, we need to remind each other that we will not fail, for God is within us and He will help us at the break of day! Like a strong city fortress, we will stand.

You may find it ironic that I am writing about these things; after all, I teach the Advanced Family Therapy class at Andrews University. But here I am — vulnerably writing this to you as a fellow warrior in the trenches. I tell my graduate students there are no perfect families. One look at families in the Bible shows us that. Why do we judge? Or compare?

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I will commit to look to my sisters and lift their hands. I might nod and wish each other a wonderful day. I would probably smile, “Well, and you?” to which we might nod and wish each other a wonderful day.

Sincerely,

Ingrid Weiss, M.A.

Ingrid Weiss, M.A. is assistant professor of Social Work at Andrews University, a Child and Family therapist, and constantly learning more about God because of her sons. 

The Core

I want to invite you to a different reading experience today. Are you ready? Great! Please follow the steps outlined below right now and give this a try (but do try this at your own risk!).

- Wherever you are currently sitting, scoot towards the front edge of your seat.
- Plant both feet solidly on the ground.
- Sit up nice and straight.
- Roll your shoulders back.
- Lift your chin up slightly.
- Contract your gluteus maximus (your buttckocks!).
- Contract your stomach by sucking it in and holding it.
- Now continue breathing and hold this position throughout reading this article!

Many of us don’t actually know our own core very well, so let’s take a quick look at its function and what is actually part of “the Core.” It consists of muscles in the abdomen, pelvic floor, sides of the trunk, back, buttocks, hips and pelvis. Core muscles stabilize the spine and help transfer forces between the upper and lower body. In fact, there are 29 muscles attaching to the ribs, hips, spinal column and other bones in the trunk of the body.

Lack of core muscle fitness can create an unstable spine, and stress muscles and joints. Although back pain can be the result of a sudden and traumatic injury, more commonly it is due to weak and inflexible core muscles, poor posture and poor body mechanics during activities. With the advent of modern technology, humans have started sitting more and moving less. This has contributed to poor posture and weak core muscles, as these are NOT stimulated sufficiently. Weak core muscles, especially the gluteal muscles, contribute to unstable pelvis, which can lead to increased pronation of the lower extremity. In addition, the knees and feet can be severely impacted due to forced rotation of the lower extremities and injuries may result. Other parts of the body may be forced to pick up the slack of weak core muscles.

Have you noticed how many of us have started to be permanently slouched over? It is because much of what we do each day includes a forward curve in our upper back, such as driving, typing, watching TV, etc. When the core muscles are weak, they cannot counteract this forward position. Slouching can contribute to neck tension and headaches.

The answer to many of these issues is to strategically train all core muscles to become stronger and more fit. You can build up core strength doing whole body exercises, using free weights and stability balls [just to name a few training modes] at least two to three times per week.

The best way to strengthen your entire core is to incorporate a variety of planking exercises into your fitness regimen. Planking can be modified for all fitness levels and is a great way to start activating core muscles! At a minimum, however, you could begin working on sitting in the manner described at the beginning of this article on a regular basis.

Don’t underestimate the power of a strong core! It can prevent injuries, avoid pain and discomfort. It can protect your spine, improve posture and allow all areas of the body to function properly without overcompensating for a weak core. Do not delay; get “the Core” fit by starting your training today!

To learn, read and watch more, please visit: dominiquegummell.com.

Dominique Gummell, director of Andrews University Health and Wellness
What About the Trinity? — 2

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God (John 1:1 KJV).

If the old line leadership of Seventh-day Adventism appears to have been almost unanimously antitrinitarian, what about the reformers at Minneapolis?

Here, interestingly enough, is a theological point on which E. J. Waggoner could agree with Uriah Smith, “There was a time,” Waggoner wrote in his 1890 book entitled Christ and His Righteousness, “when Christ proceeded forth and came from God, . . . but that time was so far back in the days of eternity that to finite comprehension it is practically without beginning.”

His statement remarkably parallels one that Smith made that same decade: “God alone is without beginning. At the earliest epoch when a beginning should be — a period so remote that to finite minds it is essentially eternity — appeared the Word.”

Now, if Smith and Waggoner were on the same side in regard to the Trinity, we need to ask, Where did the stimulus for change come from?

Here is where is one of the other 1888 reformers comes in. The 1888 experience literally transformed Ellen White’s writing ministry. It was in the events surrounding that General Conference session that she fully realized the ignorance of the Adventist ministry and laity on the plan of salvation and the centrality of Christ.

The years following would see the publication of her most important books on those topics. 1892 — her classic, Steps to Christ; 1896 — Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, which treated the Sermon on the Mount; 1898 — The Desire of Ages, her book on the life of Christ; 1900 — Christ’s Object Lessons, a volume on the parables; 1905 — Ministry of Healing, in which the opening chapters focus on the healing ministry of Jesus.

Nowhere in any of those books did Ellen White offer a chapter or even a paragraph on the Trinity or the full divinity of Christ, but they set forth phrases and words that would drive Adventists back to the Bible to restudy the topic. That Bible study would eventually come in. The 1888 experience literally transformed Ellen White’s writing ministry. It was in the events surrounding that General Conference session that she fully realized the ignorance of the Adventist ministry and laity on the plan of salvation and the centrality of Christ.

Lucille’s Healing

As a child growing up on the island of Jamaica, my parents were strong prayer warriors. Early mornings and late afternoons began and ended with long prayer sessions. I have occasionally tried to practice this with my children but they were not always very receptive.

In the fall of 2015, while serving on the LUC Executive Committee, President Don Livesay asked me to serve on the NAD Church Governance Committee. During these sessions, prayer was the primary feature in all our deliberations, discussions and debates. In those three years, I made great friends and renewed old acquaintances.

In the fall of 2016, I received a call from one of these friends, Dennis Williams from Seattle, Washington, asking me to visit and pray with a lady, Lucille Rhoads, in Indianapolis. She desperately wanted prayer and a visit from an Adventist church member. I quickly responded with food supplies and much intercessory prayer. Her only son was incarcerated in New Jersey, and her heartache. Our prayer was not only for the healing of Lucille but for the early release of her son.

Weeks went by. Then one day we received a call that her son had been released. We celebrated with joy and thanksgiving. Our visits and prayers with food baskets continued until a few months ago when we received a call from her son that Lucille had taken a turn for the worse, transferred to hospice care and given only three days to live. My wife and I quickly rushed to the house and offered prayers for Divine intervention. The following Sabbath, immediately after the worship service, Kevin Rogers (our pastor), my wife and I rushed over to the house, anointed and prayed for her, and again sought heaven’s intercession. With only days to live, funeral arrangements were also discussed. We left with the expectation of funeral services later that week.

Weeks went by with no call from Lucille’s son. Then one Sabbath, I revisited the house. I knocked on the door, but no one answered. I began thinking that Lucille had died and been buried, but no one had informed us. Suddenly, her son drove up and, in the front seat next to him, was a smiling Lucille. After big hugs, laughter and tears of joy, Lucille informed us that from the moment we had anointed and prayed for her, she was healed. Her energy returned and her organs revived. She threw off her breathing tubes, stopped taking her medicines, discontinued hospice care, sat up and began a new life. God had answered our prayers in a marvelous way.

Today, we continue to give God the praise for His marvelous intervention in the lives of Lucille and her son, and look forward with great anticipation to seeing them in church and becoming members.

Clayton Loney is a member of the Lake Union executive committee.
Giving Back — One Note at a Time

It’s every parent’s nightmare. Steve Martin and his wife, Mary, learned their oldest daughter — who was just nine at the time — had a cancerous brain tumor. The diagnosis was admittedly grim, but they held tightly to their faith and the medical team charged with saving their young Karly. After numerous hospital stays, surgeries, and multiple treatments of radiation and chemo, Karly made it and continues to be in remission, now at age 26.

“I had a burning in my heart to give back. I was so thankful,” stresses Steve. The professional musician and Adventist educator went straight to what he knows — music.

He found out about a nonprofit group called Sharing Notes. The Chicago-based program, which has been up and running since 2012, is founded on a mission of “improving quality of life for patients . . . through uplifting, live music performances,” often done right in their hospital rooms. Steve says it was a natural fit as he collaborated with the other musicians, giving them their time and talents. Other than getting parking fees covered, no one is paid to perform. The North Shore Church member says it’s the least he can do.

“When I play the banjo or guitar [for the patients] and see the reaction of happy smiles, my soul is lifted to a whole new level, knowing that I was able to make a positive difference,” Steve expresses passionately. He sees it as his way to give back, and his goal is to make each performance personal.

“When it comes to music, the song that speaks to their heart is what I want to give them,” he says.

Steve tells of one time in particular when he and a singer were performing in Northwestern Hospital’s cardia care unit for a woman in her mid-20s. She requested the Beatles’ song, “Hey, Jude.” Steve admits he had never played that on his banjo, but he and the singer were game and jumped into the catchy melody. “When we finished, I looked up to see tears in her eyes. She repeatedly thanked us.”

Steve explains how the woman had recently given birth to a baby boy but, due to newly discovered heart issues, she had been rushed back into the hospital, with little time to spend with her newborn. His name was Jude. Just one touching story, amid dozens, confesses Steve, who remembers his own family’s healing from cardiac care unit for a woman in her mid-20s. She had a cancerous brain tumor.

“When we were in the hospital with Karly, we had a chaplain who would come in and play the guitar. Taking the attention off self and sickness . . . the distraction was so relieving. It gave me an energy, a breath of fresh air, from those hours of the bad stuff,” admits Steve.

Now, “His healing can reach [others] through me. God has called me to do this,” says Steve. One note at a time. ●

Chen Denielle Leaw, freelance writer based in the Oual Cities of Illinois

¡Nuestro clamor unido!

“Si hubiera una convocación de todas las iglesias en la tierra, el objeto de su clamor unido debería ser el Espíritu Santo. Cuando tengamos eso, Cristo, nuestra suficiencia estará siempre presente y tendremos cada necesidad suplida. Tendremos la mente de Cristo” (Manuscript Releases, vol. 4, p. 24).

Me maravillo al pensar que ya nos estamos acercando al fin de este año y aproximándonos a una nueva década. No hay duda que el mundo social, económico, político y religioso ha cambiado muchísimo en los últimos diez años. ¿Qué eventos y acontecimientos ocurrirán en esta tercera década que comienza con el año 2020? Por supuesto, con la excepción de Dios, nadie sabe los detalles de lo que sucederá. Pero si tenemos la Biblia que nos anima a prestar atención a las señales del fin. Es importante leer otra vez el capítulo 24 de Mateo y fijarnos en la primera palabra del versículo 20. La palabra es ORAD. Aquí Dios anima a sus seguidores a que oren cuando vean las señales.

El libro Hechos de los Apóstoles nos explica que la iniciación de la iglesia de Dios comenzó con oración. Dios encomendó a los discípulos que oraran, especialmente para tener la capacidad de presentar las buenas nuevas de salvación al mundo y poder enfrentar las pruebas que tendrían. El Señor los instó también a orar para recibir el Espíritu Santo. Cristo sabía que los discípulos no tenían la capacidad de predicar y ganar almas para el reino de los cielos. Era urgente que ellos rindieran sus vidas a Dios y se sometieran al bautismo del Espíritu Santo. Gracias a Dios, lo hicieron, y como consecuencia revolucionaron al mundo de su tiempo. En la actualidad, tenemos una situación similar. A pesar del uso de la tecnología y la capacidad de movernos a cualquier lugar del mundo en relativamente poco tiempo, la realidad es que el pueblo adventista tampoco tiene la capacidad de ganar almas por sus propias fuerzas. Es necesario que nos rindamos a Dios como lo hicieron los discípulos y que creemos por el bautismo del Espíritu Santo.

Es por esto que la Unión del Lago está organizando un retiro especial dedicado exclusivamente a la oración. El retiro se llama Our United Cry (Nuestro Clamor Unido). Será el viernes y sábado, 6 y 7 de marzo de 2020 en el hotel Embassy Suites en la ciudad de Plainfield, estado de Indiana, muy cerca de la ciudad de Indianapolis. Animamos a cada iglesia que envíe por lo menos dos delegados. El costo del retiro es $55.00, pero subirá a $65.00 después del 20 de noviembre. El costo no incluye el hospedaje en el hotel pero sí el privilegio de escuchar a los oradores, el almuerzo, el material que se entregará y especialmente la oportunidad de orar unidos por el Espíritu Santo. Para inscribirse vaya al sitio web www.ourunitedcry.org.

Quisiera animar al lector a que no pierda la oportunidad de orar con nosotros en este ocasión especial. Nuestro deseo es que el resultado del retiro sea el comienzo de una revolución espiritual en nuestras vidas y en nuestras iglesias. ●

Carmelo Mercado es el vicepresidente de la Unión del Lago.
Angels in the Outfield

By Priscilla Obeng-Akrofi

MY LIFE, AS WELL AS THAT OF MY FAMILY, has much to do with a direction from Scripture, especially with regards to our status as foreigners in the U.S. As for the foreigner who does not belong to Your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of Your great name and Your mighty hand and Your outstretched arm — when they come and pray toward this temple, then hear from heaven, Your dwelling place. Do whatever the foreigner asks of you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You, as do Your own people Israel, and may know that this house I have built bears Your Name (2 Chronicles 6:23, 35 NIV).

My family and I have found in God’s Word the assurance that God is with us and listens to our prayers. This verse in Scripture helps us realize the privileges that foreigners have when they pray to God. Solomon, himself, petitioned on behalf of the foreigner, when he was dedicating the newly-built temple so that all the people of the earth may know and fear Him.

A NEW BEGINNING

In 2012 and 2013, we moved from Ghana to the United States of America for my husband to pursue the Master of Divinity program at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. The challenges and stress associated with transitioning from one continent to another were numerous. We almost got deported, and he was taken into immigration custody. One evening, as I was asking myself, “Why this challenge?”, the Holy Spirit prompted me to listen to some of Bill Gaither’s music. The song that caught my attention was a song by Charles Albert Tindley, “We’ll Understand It Better By and By.” The second verse fit my situation:

When I was in distress, I sought the Lord; I cried out to God to hear me. When I was in distress, I sought the Lord, I cried out to God for help; I cried out to God to hear me. When I was in distress, I sought the Lord; I cried out to God for help; I cried out to God to hear me. When I was in distress, I sought the Lord; I cried out to God for help; I cried out to God to hear me.

One day, during my Bible study time, I came across the biblical quotation cited at the beginning of my testimony. I was interested in studying at Andrews University, but I did not have what it takes (especially the financial strength) to study. My husband and I found the hurdles on the way to achieve that dream were more than we could surmount, so we left it at the level of dreams and wishes, never knowing when it would turn into reality.

In 2015, my husband completed the MDiv program. However, just around that time, we heard of the spousal plan that God had another plan — that plan was for me to continue my education in the English Department. The core of the whole issue was that the tuition at the English Department was expensive (way more expensive than that of the Seminary). But my husband encouraged me to move on in faith. God blessed our faith with scholarships and the strength to learn. At last, I could study English.

FAMILY CRISIS

On January 6, 2018, just as I was about to complete my studies at Andrews, an argument ensued between me and my husband that became intense. The way we dealt with it got us into trouble, especially as foreigners. We almost got deported, and he was taken into immigration custody.

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I started my studies during the last semester of my husband’s program which meant that I was going to bear the full cost of tuition for the remaining semesters when my spouse was no longer a student. I was willing to continue with the Religion program in faith at the Seminary, but God had another plan — that plan was for me to continue my education in the English Department. The core of the whole issue was that the tuition at the English Department was expensive (way more expensive than that of the Seminary). But my husband encouraged me to move on in faith. God blessed our faith with scholarships and the strength to learn. At last, I could study English.

One evening, as I was asking myself, “Why this challenge?”, the Holy Spirit prompted me to listen to some of Bill Gaither’s music. The song that caught my attention was a song by Charles Albert Tindley, “We’ll Understand It Better By and By.” The second verse fit my situation: "Temptations, hidden snares, often take us unaware and our hearts are made to bleed for each thoughtless word or deed and we wonder why the test when we try to do our best. We will understand it better by and by."

Another way God communicated with me during this crisis was through a reminder of a sermon preached the previous week at Pioneer Memorial Church. It was about forgiveness. And that was exactly what I needed to do. Another sermon that spoke to my heart at that time was a sermon by the Pathfinders on the biblical topic of “Be Still and Know That I Am God.” This, too, was an important message because I had to stay calm and trust God for His providence.

One day, during my Bible study time, I came across the biblical quotation cited at the beginning of my testimony. I was comforted by the words, “I cried out to God for help; I cried out to God to hear me. When I was in distress, I sought the Lord.” (Psalm 77:1, 2a NIV). God answered my prayers by providing the amount of money I needed for my husband to be released through the generosity of a good family friend of ours.

God listens and answers my prayers, but His answers have to be worked out or revealed through human agencies. It is interesting to note how our daily acts, which we may take for granted, may be an answer to another person’s prayer. In my story, I appreciate all the people who availed themselves for God’s answers to my prayers to be realized. They were angels in the outfield.

Finally, to the glory of God, I have completed Andrews University with a Master of Arts degree in the Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages (M.A. in TESOL). On my graduation day, I was beaming with smiles. Of all the graduates receiving their diplomas, I think I was the happiest because I knew I had come that far only by the providence of God.

Pricilla Obeng-Akrofi comes from Ghana and now lives in Berkem Springs with her husband and two children.
Remembering with Love

SURVIVING A FAMILY MEMBER’S SUICIDE

Jen Bolejack is a go-getter who juggles the schedules of three kids (from toddler to teen), regularly serves during worship service (behind a keyboard and mic), and continues her music ministry by giving lessons. A life-changing event this time last year, though, would stop her in her tracks.

For the first six months, especially, she often had to remind herself he wasn’t coming through the door. She clung to her phone, both so she wouldn’t miss his call and to capture every milestone of their newest little one. “I wanted nothing more than to tell Brad or record [Jake’s first steps] so that he could watch it later, almost as if he served in the military and was deployed for an indefinite amount of time,” says Jen. Brad Bolejack would not be coming home or calling. Jen now had to figure out how to add widow and single mom to her repertoire — two titles that weren’t in the plans.

Brad died by suicide on November 16, 2018. He was just 33 years old. Jen admits it came after years of suffering from anxiety and depression. Still, it was an abrupt ending to a life filled with so much progress and promise.

Brad had been preaching since he was 16. In fact, says Jen, that’s how they met. It was 2003, when she was a youth leader and needed a speaker for an upcoming event. A friend suggested Brad, who had already started gaining a reputation as a moving orator. Jen learned he would be at a Bible study near her Indianapolis home, so she went to check him out and see if he could preach. “I’ll be honest, I was looking for a nerdy guy, maybe in suspenders or a bow tie. What I found was a really handsome guy surrounded by all of the girls who went to this Bible study. We found out that we attended the same college and ended up having similar classes,” remembers Jen. They became fast friends and married in 2005.

Jen’s childhood church, Chapel West in Indianapolis, became their home base, but they soon traveled all over the Midwest, preaching and performing musical programs together. She served as principal of Indianapolis’ Capitol City School until they relocated to Florida in 2017 where Brad took on the role of associate pastor for the Celebration Church. They had just added a boy to the family, too — little Jakob, but a perfect storm was brewing.

Brad had been bullied as a kid, Jen shares, but had never professionally processed those rough beginnings.
When you experience such a loss, everything is out of your control. There’s nothing to hold on to but your Faith

A Change for the Worse

Since they had married 13 years before, music had been a large part of both of their ministries. “We sang for countless weddings, churches, concerts and camp meetings,” Jen recalls of their duets.

Brad was involved in a men’s praise team and had written several songs with his oldest daughter. It was normally therapeutic for him but, Jen admits, “He wasn’t finding joy in singing and performing anymore. It scared him,” she says.

Thankfully, Jen insists she’s never blamed herself for the outcome, but she does recognize that, out of ignorance, she said and did all the wrong things. “I used to tell him, ‘You just need to pray more! You have a wonderful family . . . an impactful ministry . . . Practice what you preach!'”

She regularly encouraged counseling and prayer partners for Brad and, eventually, he sought out a fellow pastor and started seeing a therapist who put him on antidepressants.

“The first week he was doing ‘amazing’ and told me he was finally ‘feeling like himself.’ By the second week, he woke up one morning in tears.” Jen recalls he told her, ‘I feel so hopeless . . . ’

Two weeks later and just hours after Jen and the kids boarded a plane, Brad was found unresponsive. “I was driving back to my parent’s house [in Indiana] with my sister from wedding dress shopping,” Jen remembers. She got a call from Brad’s best friend who was concerned about a text he’d just received from him. It read, “When Jen comes home, play this video for her. She’ll need to be surrounded by people, though, because it’ll be really hard. You’ve been such a great friend to me. Love you, man.”

Jen immediately tried to call, but it went straight to Brad’s voicemail. She became frantic, trying to reach people who were nearby and could check on him.

Friends eventually found him in the house. CPR was started and continued until paramedics arrived, but it was too late. Brad was gone.

Meanwhile, Jen and her family were trying to figure out how to get her on the next plane back to Florida. Then she received the final call. “All I could do was scream, ‘No, No, NO, NO, NO!’” Jen says her sister just held her as she sobbed.

Jen admits Thanksgiving was a blur. “Instead of preparing for several large family gatherings, we were preparing for two memorials [in Indianapolis and at Celebration]. . . . Honestly, no one wanted to celebrate Christmas. It just felt like another day without Bradley,” Jen confesses Jen.

Jen learned later it’s often advised one should be carefully monitored when starting antidepressants. “They often go through feelings of euphoria, then extreme hopelessness,” the now-educated Jen explains.

“I did what I could . . . You don’t know so many things till afterwards. Now I know.”

Birth of a Ministry

What Jen knows now could help you and/or your loved one. That’s her sincerest wish, her daily prayer, and what pushes her through the intense pain.

“I needed to do something with this. I needed to do something with his ministry . . . I needed to make sure he’s not forgotten.”

Jen and six of the couples’ closest friends knew they wanted to leave a legacy in Brad’s name, founding the BRAD Foundation. BRAD stands for Being Real about Anxiety and Depression. They wanted to try to stop the stigma surrounding mental illness, and arm others with the resources and awareness Jen felt she and Brad were never given.

Jen admits “the collaboration has been incredible.” Just six months after Brad’s death, the BRAD Foundation had its kickoff event, bringing together counselors, artists, law enforcement, musicians, and some 300 attendees from the community, eager to find relief for themselves or a loved one.

One of the main purposes of the Foundation is for all involved in the mental health struggle to understand treatment doesn’t come in one-size-fits-all. “The solution is different for everyone,” she says. While the solution to mental illness may vary, one thing is clear: Talking about mental health issues “doesn’t make you less of a Christian. God won’t love you less. You shouldn’t be made to feel ashamed.”

What’s next for the group of organizers? Jen says they’re plowing through the logistics of formally establishing The BRAD Foundation (including paperwork and retaining a lawyer, etc.). They’re also continuing to raise funds and awareness for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. And they’re already making arrangements to take the awareness program on the road. Georgia likely will be the next stop, where a pastor friend says there is a great need. Jen says she has received calls to bring it to their native Indiana, too.

Despite appearances and accomplishments, there are real consequences to the intense loss and pain of losing Brad. While Jen still teaches music lessons, she hasn’t been able to return to her full-time classroom since his death. She says becoming a single parent is one of the hardest things, “Not having someone to bounce ideas off of or consult when giving permission for something, not being able to establish rules and consequences on my own.”

Leena, now 13, has gotten straight A’s this year and baby Jakob was just nine months old when Brad died. “It’s been a terrible thing, but also one of the most freeing things,” Jen declares assuredly. “When you experience such a loss, everything is out of your control. There’s nothing to hold on to but your faith . . . God knew his struggle — He knew his heart.”

Jen says Brad’s favorite hymn was “It Is Well With My Soul.” She’s putting one foot in front of the other in hopes of making sure others have access to that fundamental peace, which seemed just out of reach for her husband.

Follow The BRAD Foundation on Facebook to find out more about their plans and upcoming events/benefits.

If you or someone you know is considering suicide, please contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255), or text “home” to the Crisis Text Line at 741-741 or go to suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

Celest Daniels Lewis, freelance writer in Quad Cities area of Illinois
Beverly Murphy entered her college freshman year full of promise, only to have her hopes dashed. At 19, she was raped and later discovered she was pregnant. “I was utterly devastated by the trauma,” she relates in an interview more than four decades later.

She knew her parents would be furious, especially since they were pillars in the church and community. Yet, because of her convictions, abortion was not an option. She said she prayed that the baby would resemble her and her family, but, at the same time, began destroying her life and the fetus with alcohol. “I just couldn’t cope,” she says.

In the midst of the anguish and pain, Beverly found what she believes was a God-sent connection, a Christian doctor who was not only an obstetrician/gynecologist but also a psychiatrist. “I knew I had to face some issues that would plague me for the rest of my life,” she acknowledges. She said she received exceptional counseling and by the time she left school, she was able to deal with most issues, including having parents who didn’t believe her story.

“Talking with my counselor gave me a handle on my situation,” she says, realizing the difference that professional help can make. “I had two friends who were in the same situation and they both rejected counseling. One young lady committed suicide, killing herself and the baby; my other friend turned to drugs and a life on the streets, leaving the baby with her mother.”

BY ESTHER GREEN
When it comes to mental health issues, we are a lot more reluctant to talk about it because there is quite a bit of shame and guilt, especially in the Christian world.

While Beverly’s situation was resolved through counseling, unfortunately there remains certain hang-ups about it in Christian circles.

“There is still a sense that if I am connected to Christ, then all I need to do is pray when things are not working right, and it should go away. Or, a person may think, ‘I am having this mental health issue because of sin in my life,’” explains Judith Fisher, director of the Counseling and Testing Center at Andrews University. “These are issues that have been repeated, even in church organizations. ‘Well, you need to go back and see what you did wrong that God may be punishing you for.’ These are beliefs that continue to keep people from reaching out and getting help.”

Fisher says that the fact of the matter is, mental health issues are just as real as medical issues. “If we have a toothache or we have a medical issue, we have no qualms with going to the doctor. We go there, and we tell people, ‘Hey, I have a toothache’ or ‘I have a broken leg,’ or something. But when it comes to mental health issues, we are a lot more reluctant to talk about it because there is quite bit of shame and guilt, especially in the Christian world.”

The question is, how do we help ourselves move past the negative associations of counseling to gain the relief and healing that’s needed? In a series of interviews, two experts offer their professional wisdom in the application of mental health interventions and therapeutic modalities available for Christians today.

Spiritual Devotions as Therapy
David Sedlacek, PhD, LMSW, CFLE, professor of Family Ministry and Discipleship at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

“The Bible and meaningful time with the Lord have found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody (KJV). If you have listened to someone’s story of hurt and pain that’s leading them to be anxious, sad or depressed, you could take that Scripture and put that person’s name in there. Make it personal, experiential, as you’re praying through it with them. “As an example, For the Lord will comfort ‘Esther.’ He will comfort all of your waste places. When I’m praying through that with someone, I ask them to name the garbage can, waste place, hurtful, damaging experiences that they’ve had. I say as they are naming them, “The Lord will comfort Zion, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, Thanksgiving, and the voice of melody (KJV).” If you have someone who has gone through something that’s very painful, you can ask them to name that place, and then have them pray through that with someone, and we can identify it and speak to the Lord about it and begin experiencing His comfort in that wilderness place.”

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Pastoral Counseling
Ray Gaeth, DMin., BCC, Diplomate, Psychotherapy associate professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling, director of Counseling Services, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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When it comes to mental health issues, we are a lot more reluctant to talk about it because there is quite a bit of shame and guilt, especially in the Christian world.
It is how we handle those storms in our lives that can mean the difference between utter devastation or, as in Beverly’s case, restored health.

There has to be established counseling goals and then the identification of the issue or issues to be worked on. The work happens for a time and then there has to be a termination of that relationship so they can go back to a parishioner and pastor relationship.

“Another way pastoral counseling is different is that we recommend that a pastor does not do more than three to four counseling sessions. The pastoral counselor helps the person, enables the person and may also pray with the person, but if there needs to be long-term counseling involved, then they need to refer them to a licensed pastoral counselor or therapist.

“Indicators that something long-term may be needed or a referral made is when a pastor is dealing with addictions or mental disorders. At the seminary, we train pastors to identify disorders like bipolarism, schizophrenia, manic depression or critical depression. These issues are beyond the scope of pastoral training. A pastoral counselor needs to be wise enough to recognize his or her limitations, to know when they can help and when they need to refer”

Both Sedlacek and Gaton have provided very practical and even insider information to help church members begin to make more informed use of the mental health resources that are freely and readily available to them. It is important to know, however, that while these tools and resources exist, they also have limits. Christians can and do have serious mental health issues that may require more specialized modalities in which other licensed practitioners are more versed.

It is how we handle those storms in our lives that can mean the difference between utter devastation or, as in Beverly’s case, restored health.

The statistics are startling, heartbreaking and deeply concerning. Tragically, in 2017, suicide claimed the lives of over 47,000 people, and was the tenth leading cause of death in the U.S. overall, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports.

Yet the numbers only hint at the profound emotional pain felt by those who take their own lives. Many of us want to know: How can we help those who hurt so much? How can we stop a suicide?

It could be anyone.

Anyone can be thinking of suicide — even a loved one or a friend who “seems fine.” But several experiences in a person’s life may increase their risk.

Risk factors include having a history of abuse, depression, alcohol or other substance misuse, or a previous suicide attempt. Having recently experienced personal loss — such as loss of a relationship, job or physical health — is another risk factor.

And while suicide occurs among people of all ages and backgrounds, rates are higher among certain demographics, such as American Indians, Alaska Natives, older men and veterans. It’s also the second leading cause of death among young people ages 10 to 34, CDC numbers show.

There are warning signs.

Even though some groups are at higher risk for suicide, it can happen to the people we least expect. It’s good to know what the warning signs are so that you can get help before it’s too late.

People having suicidal thoughts may show a number of behaviors, including any of the following:

- Talking about death a lot or saying they want to die.
- Talking about feeling trapped, with no way out of a difficult situation.
- Claiming to be a burden to others.
- Talking about feeling empty, hopeless or having no reason to live.
- Making a suicide plan — they may search online for ways to kill themselves, or try to obtain something to harm themselves with, such as a rope or a gun.
- Giving away important possessions.
- Starting to use drugs or alcohol more often.
- Withdrawing from family or friends.
- Telling loved ones goodbye.

You can help.

Not everyone who shows these signs may attempt suicide. But if there’s any concern, don’t hesitate to help. The National Institute of Mental Health recommends taking these four actions:

- Be blunt and ask. Don’t be afraid to ask the person, “Are you thinking of killing yourself?” Contrary to what you may have heard, asking this question will not put the idea of suicide in someone’s head.
- Listen carefully. Try to understand and acknowledge what they’re going through.
- Try to limit access to lethal means. For example, if the loved one you’re concerned about lives with you, you may be able to safely remove or lock up any firearms, poisons or other lethal items in the home.
- Share resources. Encourage the person to call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-TALK (8255). Or call the hotline yourself. You also might help connect the person to a spiritual advisor or mental health counselor.

Bottom line: If you know someone who is in crisis, take them seriously. If you think it’s an emergency, call 911.

Adapted with permission from Adventist Health blogpost: https://www.adventisthealth.org/blog/2019/september/you-can-help-prevent-suicide/
Leaders explore impact of faith-based health care

Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders, community thought leaders and AdventHealth board members, executives and team members came together in Orlando, Fla., for the organization’s 29th annual Conference on Mission, a three-day event centering around AdventHealth’s mission of “Extending the Healing Ministry of Christ.” This year, attendees were challenged to turn their attention for the Second Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, presented a devotion on modeling Jesus’ mission, but to demonstrate it and to wrestle with the kinds of questions we may not necessarily have answers to.”

Throughout the three days, guest speakers, panelists and participants discussed the role that faith-based health care plays in society now and in the future. The keynote speaker, David Brooks, a well-known commentator and author of The Second Mountain: The Quest for Moral Life, contrasted the ideas of personal success and meaning, and highlighted moral character as the key to mission-driven leadership.

Ron Smith, AdventHealth board chair and president of the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, presented a devotional on modeling Jesus’ ministry, which kickstarted a morning of back-to-back panel discussions. During the “Who is Our Neighbor? What Do We Owe Our Neighbor?” session, one of the panelists, Reverend Zina Jacque of the Community Church of Barrington in Illinois, posed the idea of a “poof” test — a test that essentially asks whether anyone would notice if one day we were gone. The sobering thought was accompanied by conversations around what it means to “extend” Christ’s healing ministry, and how it’s not simply about expanding into new markets, but about crossing into new frontiers and doing the mission the organization has been called to do.

In his response to the panel discussions, AdventHealth president/CEO Terry Shaw shared four key take-aways with attendees:

- We are the face of the church in our community.
- We must think about who we need as partners to address the unmet needs of our community.
- We have to stand in the breach and be present when there appears to be no solutions.
- Something being too hard is not an excuse for not getting it done.

The 2019 Conference on Mission concluded with a Sabbath morning worship service featuring a mission spotlight on AdventHealth’s Global Mission Impact program and its current Bahamas relief efforts, as well as a powerful sermon by Jimm Bunch, president/CEO for AdventHealth Hendersonville.

“I’ve been a part of AdventHealth for 30 years and the entire time our mission statement has been ‘Extending the Healing Ministry of Christ,’” Bunch said during his sermon. “It’s an inspired, God-given mission statement. And up until the last two days, I’ve paid the most attention to the words ‘Healing Ministry of Christ.’” This conference made me think of the first word, ‘Extending.’”

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Christina Hunter

Very passionate about music and a major connection to the University came through becoming a member of the Deliverance Mass Choir. Little did I know I would later become a director of the choir. I learned so much about spiritual leadership and ministry and have carried those precious experiences with me throughout my life.

Hunter went on to earn a Master of Education in Clinical Mental Health Counseling with an emphasis in Diversity and Career Counseling from the University of Missouri – St. Louis. She spent 10 years of her career in higher education and Student Life, including work as a counselor, student assistance specialist and instructor. She notes, “I provided academic, personal and career counseling to students as well as worked closely with students in crisis.”

In close contact with many Advent Health students and staff as an alum, the University eventually reached out to her about a job.

“After much prayer and exploration, I felt confident that God opened this door to allow me to return to my Andrews University community to serve our students and make a positive difference in their lives,” she says.

In her role as dean, Hunter works primarily with graduate and upper-level student residents. She provides support related to residential life and develops programming that helps residents grow mentally, socially, emotionally, professionally and spiritually. “One of my favorite events is the Thursday night ‘Love+Commune’ worship service, a weekly opportunity for our students to connect with each other and God through meaningful worship, tasty food and fellowship.”

Serving as the AUGSA sponsor gives her opportunity to further connect with students as she guides student leaders in building a community for graduate students through programming, events and support.

As director of Guest & Convention Services, Hunter oversees campus guest rooms and aims to provide memorable, comfortable accommodations with excellent customer service and great attention to detail for those visiting the Andrews University campus. “I am guided by the concept that first impressions are everything and strive to have our guest services reflect that. We are excited about the opening of the new Advent Prayer Center that will provide accommodations in addition to our Campus Center rooms,” she states. “This Center will provide a beautiful, tranquil space for our guests to enjoy a relaxing and comfortable stay on campus.”

Overall, she hopes to bring a caring spirit and personal interaction to her work. She says, “My prayer, especially for our graduate students, is that they can feel connected and valued while enhancing their academics and developing their career paths. I look forward to making a meaningful impact on this campus for our students and our guests.”

Married to Claval Hunter, a pastor, they have three children: Chloe, Isaiah and Adam.

Gillian Panigot, Media Communications manager and FOCUS editor, Andrews University.
Summit on Abuse focuses on helping to recognize and stop abuse

The Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary Chapel on the campus of Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Mich., was full during the afternoon and early evening on September 4, the first day of the North American Division’s 2019 enditnow Summit on Abuse. This is the division’s third summit, the first to be held on a university campus and was made available online over two days in English and Spanish.

The two-day summit was organized to give pastors, seminary students, teachers, volunteers, church staff and members the tools and knowledge to help end abuse within their scope of influence. The summit featured a number of experts ranging from within their scope of influence. The summit tools and knowledge to help end abuse the first to be held on a university campus on September 4, the first day of the North American Division student and abuse survivor, participates with the panel of speakers in the summit’s Q&A session in Chan Shun Hall, Andrews University.

“Why is addressing this incumbent upon the church?” asked first presenter René Drumm, who then shared the segment of Jesus’ words in John 10:10: “Living a life of abuse is not abundant living…. One person is too many.”


The second day’s topics included “El Sufrir Poder del Abuso Espiritual,” Jorge Meyer; “Aprendiendo lo que Es Violencia Domestica,” Melissa Ponce-Rodas, professor; “Dándole Voz a las Victorias Secundaria de la Violencia Domestica,” Muriente; “Como Reconocer los Tipos de Hostigamiento contra un Niño/a,” Gerry Lopez; “La Relacion Entre la Pornografía y la Violencia Domestica,” Claudio Consuegra; and “Cómo Evitar el Abuso Doble;” Melissa Ramos-Mota.

Testimonies were shared by Latoya Wright (English) and Dalia Padró (Spanish), survivors of abuse. One Facebook viewer, Nicole Crosier Parker, shared her appreciation for the summit via comment: “This. Was. Amazing. She continued, “Thank you to all of these awesome presenters, and everyone else who put so much work into this! This is how change happens!”

After the livestreams concluded, in another first, presenters and attendees were invited to a reception and Q&A session. There, audience members asked the presenter panel questions, and got to hear about real-life situations and solutions.

Presenter Perspective

First presenter, René Drumm, Ph.D., who has been doing research on domestic violence and intimate partner violence (IPV) in the church for decades, said she believes that the Adventist Church is uniquely poised to be a world leader in the area of abuse response and prevention. “The first study in the early 2000s showed that our rates of IPV are about on par with U.S. national statistics,” said Drumm. “The second study took in an in-depth look at Adventist victim/survivors of IPV, which captured my heart and energy. The pain from the survivor’s stories convinced us that the most pressing need was to train pastors to respond to disclosures of abuse. From there, the Lord opened the doors for our research team to train the pastors in our area (then Georgia-Cumberland Conference) on abuse response. We developed a 4-hour training that the conference mandated for all of their pastors with amazing and lasting results.”

Drumm concluded, “Because a significant number of people in our church are suffering with this silent affliction, we need to act. We have the data; we know what needs to be done; and we have a proven path for improvement.”

Another presenter, Ruben Muriente, said that he is participating in the summit because he wants to equip the Adventist Church with the best available resources, education and awareness possible to battle abuse head-on. Muriente is the outreach coordinator for the Family Justice Center in Tennessee, spoke both days of the summit, presenting in English and Spanish.

“My goal is to eradicate abuse in our church,” said Muriente. “At the summit, I will be presenting on the effects of abuse on children who witness abuse. I want the audience to understand that children need our help and support.”

David Sedlacek, a professor at Andrews University, said that “as a survivor of spiritual and emotional abuse, I am convinced that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has a responsibility to create safe churches — not only for our own members, but also for the communities surrounding us.”

Sedlacek believes that the enditnow NAD Summit on Abuse has provided information, testimonials and strategies to help deal with abuse and violence of all sorts. “It will help to move our church forward. . . . This is an essential element of the healing mission of the church as we prepare for the Second Coming of Jesus,” added Sedlacek.

“The enditnow Summit on Abuse is crucial for the Adventist church because it is long past time for us to take the subject of abuse seriously,” shared Sarah McDugal. “We carry a gospel mandate to accurately represent the loving character of God to those who are vulnerable and wounded. Properly dealing with abuse and abusers is an evangelistic imperative, because poorly handled abuse situations is one of the overwhelming contributors to young people leaving the church. How can we expect our young people to stay, when they too often see leaders misrepresent God’s character by protecting abusers and sweeping victims aside?”

McDugal hopes the audience comes away from the summit with a healing awareness that there are people in the church who care about counteracting abuse, a sense of freedom to speak out about pain and find support, and a connection to practical tools to be used to increase education on abuse topics.

From the NAD

While many from the North American Division administration and leadership have supported the summit in myriad ways — from hosting to planning to presenting, two gave presentations at this year’s event during the Spanish-language broadcast. Gerry Lopez, associate director of Children’s Ministries, said “It is time for our church to talk and inform about these topics, to put them out there in the open. We need to educate our leaders and members, and make them aware that this is a real problem that exists in our church. We really have to educate everyone so that we all can know how to identify the problem and help the victim.”

Lopez presented on bullying with the hope that viewers would gain a better understanding about not only what bullying is and how to prevent it, but also how to help kids deal with it. “As pastors, Sabbath School teachers, children’s ministry leaders, school teachers and parents, we must be the people that the victims of bullying can go to for help and protection. The only way that will happen is they can trust us enough to come to us; the only way we can help is if we ourselves are informed on what to do.”

“I spoke about the relationship between pornographers and intimate partner abuse,” said Claudio Consuegra, D.Min., NAD Family Ministries director. “Our hope is to shed some more light on the growing problem with pornography in our churches and communities.”

Additional Information

If you are in immediate need of help, visit enditnownorthamerica.org/get-help to connect with resources in your area.

The Seventh-day Church in North America also offers a silent whistle program that allows users to send anonymous reports of harassment. Visit silentwhistle.com. Click on “file an ethics/compliance incident report,” then enter “Adventist.” The reports go to the Office of General Counsel for the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

*Both days of the Summit on Abuse are available to watch on the NAD enditnow facebook page at facebook.com/enditnowna/

You also can watch the Summit on Abuse by visiting enditnownorthamerica.org/summit2019.

Kimberly Luxe Haver, associate director of Communication, North American Division

David Sedlacek, professor of Family Ministry and Discipleship at Andrews University, addresses both the online audience as well as those gathered at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary Chapel on September 4.

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Dozens of Academy students pledge a year to mission by age 25

Against a backdrop of fiery autumn colors, almost 50 Academy students attending leadership camp pledged to dedicate a year of their life to mission.

The students were part of a group of 75 from seven Lake Union academies who gathered Oct. 3-5 at Camp Au Sable in preparation for leadership roles in their schools. Training took the form of general sessions discussing leadership principles, sectional meetings for different student leadership roles, fellowship with leaders from different schools, and time for reflection and planning with their sponsors.

For over twenty years, the Lake Union Education Department has organized a leadership camp for junior and senior student leaders; this year featured some unique aspects.

Some students from Indiana Academy gained practical experience as the worship team. “The Lord led in that regard,” said Ruth Horton, Lake Union associate director of Education who oversaw planning for the event. “I had planned to ask one of the music teachers to lead the music, but he recommended a student, Ben Kwon, who leads praise and worship at his school. He pulled together a group of students to help him, and I met and prayed with them. I was very impressed with their intentionality in preparing for this.”

Asking students at the conference to facilitate worship at each meeting was not the only change made this year. “We added mission topics to the weekend, beginning with vespers. As they enjoyed the beautiful fall colors and time with friends both old and new, students looked forward to the spiritual highlights of the weekend, beginning with vespers.

The focus shifted from their relationships with others to their relationship with God as they shared communion, contemplat- ing Camp Au Sable director Ken Michelli’s message about the disciples’ relationships with Jesus and the stark difference between Judas and the others. He issued a call for students to dedicate a year of their lives to service before they turn 25, and more than 40 responded.

Nathan Fernandez, Andrews Academy se- nior, was one of the students who stood up. For him, it was a decision which came nat- urally. “In my sectional breakout, we talked about being part of something bigger than yourself. That inspired me to not so much focus on me and just getting my education done as soon as possible, but being part of something bigger than myself and bringing other people to Christ.”

On Sabbath, Andrews University students led in worship and asked yet another im- portant set of questions: “Do young people need the church?” and “Does the church need young people?” The resounding re- sponse was yes!

Beyond the Retreat

As they return to their schools, students take the theme of “greatness” with them. After this weekend, some leaders were thinking of simply going back to basics. Jalell Hardy, junior, Battle Creek Academy said, “I think one thing I’d like to try is doing a prayer with the school every morning over the speaker system at our school so everyone can worship together.”

Senior Hindsdale Adventist Academy stu- dent Isaac Webb had a similar plan. “One idea we talked about was a prayer commit- tee of all the pastors in our school. People can come to get prayer if they get the urge, and we can pray with them.”

Jacob Pierce, junior at Great Lakes Adventist Academy, is a class pastor and wants to figure out a time for morning dorm worship and devotional thoughts. “Our Bible teacher runs in the morning, and I thought we could invite more people to that in order to pray with us and have a devotional thought.” Another opportunity is visiting people in the community with your church pastor. “I’d like to have good conver- sations with them — what they want to see me doing, help them, see where they are.”

Cade Bolin, senior at Indiana Academy, was one of the worship leaders for the weekend and said he learned the impor- tance of prayer. “I’m hoping to mentor other students at my school,” he said, “and prepare them to be leaders by sharing the characteristics of Christ with them.”

Many students expressed appreciation for the opportunity to meet other students which allowed for cross-pollination of ideas. For instance, Andrews Academy junior Giancarlo Leonor said one idea he has is to do a vespers rake day where we rake leaves for people in the community and then have a vesper at the end of the day where everyone can come together. “We’re not a boarding school, so we want to draw people in and build our community.”

Adrian Pichardo, senior at Grand Rapids Adventist Academy, said he was moved to return to his school and try to involve the newer classes. “We heard a story about an eighth-grader invited to participate in gymnastics. One older kid devoted his time to helping him, and he lost time with his friends to be there. I want to be the person, like him, who helps others feel comfortable.”

Abigail Lopez, senior, Wisconsin Academy, is also looking forward to plac- ing a greater priority on her classmates’ well-being. “I plan to reach out more because sometimes I only reach out to specific people,” she said. “I pray that God will give me Jesus’ eyes and see the people that need me. Everyone has a purpose and some people don’t know theirs — that is what we are here for. I also plan to be more confident about my leadership skills. God is preparing me. You’re never ready for lead- ership, but God prepares you through your mistakes and through people.”

Janet Sunde, Battle Creek Academy English teacher

Right (top to bottom): dormitory resident advisors; yearbook editors; campus religious activities leaders; Student Association officers; Junior and Senior class officers
Presidentemeritus Niels-Erik Andreasen and Dominique Gummett, director of University Wellness and executive director of the Andreasen Center for Wellness shared how the Andreasen Center will better connect students on campus, noting how it will create a space for everyone to hang out and to get healthy at the same time. To socialize and to get fit. This is an opportunity for us to bring together all the different students, all the different people on our campus, as well.

The director of the Counseling & Testing Center, Judith Fisher, noted that faculty and staff also are looking forward to a healthier campus. “Our Andrews University world premiere changing institution has partnered once more with a community of friends, and today celebrates yet another investment destined to yield life-transforming results. This is an electrifying moment for each one of us, faculty, staff, members of this community of faith, who have watched with anticipation as this edifice emerged. And now, at last, the moment has come. The state-of-the-art wellness center is a symbol of our pledge to prioritizing the nurturing of our minds, our bodies and our souls as faithful stewards created in the image of a healthy God.”

Next, Paul Stokstad, co-chair of the President’s Council, shared his reflections. He said, “This is the high day for Andrews, and hopefully it will be a high day that continues on for year and year and year thereafter. So, Lord, we thank you for this wonderful gift, and we use it to your glory!”

Dan Carrick, district director for Michigan Senator Kim LaSata, shared a tribute on behalf of LaSata, State Representative Brad Paquette and Congressman Fred Upton. The message noted, “The determination exhibited by the University is an effort to provide and establish the importance of wellness to all individuals, both on campus and throughout the entire community.” It also stated, “Perhaps the most important characteristic of [the] Andreasen Center for Wellness is that the Center will focus on connecting wellness to the Creator.”

President Andrea Luxton reiterated the hope that the Andreasen Center for Wellness will be a place for both members of the campus and wider community to connect. She encouraged everyone in attendance to take the gift of the book, Rest and Redemption by Niels-Erik Andreasen, published as a special edition by the Andrews University Press. She also noted there would be plaques recognizing donors as well as room names representing various locations around the world that Andrews students call home. In particular, Luxton emphasized the Andreasen Center and for information about becoming a member, please visit andrews.edu/wellnesscenter.

Gillian Hopfelt, Media Communications manager and Focus editor.

At the end of the revial, Byrd and area pastors baptized 120 people into the Adventist Church. "It is Breath of Life's sincere desire that this project will help empower local churches to similarly experience the joy of personal outreach in preparation for public evangelism," said Byrd. "Jesus isn’t coming anywhere until the gospel goes everywhere.”

Christopher Thompson, Communication and Marketing director, Breath of Life Ministries, and Carl McCoy, director of Literature Ministries, North American Division.
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Nov./Dec.

ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

GENERAL EVENTS

Oct. 31-Nov. 1: 5th Annual Wellness Fest
Nov. 1-2: Andrews Autumn Conference on Religion and Science
Nov. 3-4: Lake Union Conference Juniors Preview Event
Nov. 11: Health Professions, Transfer and Graduate Student Preview
Nov. 16, 11:45 a.m.: Honors Church, Seminary Chapel
Dec. 3, 4-6 p.m.: Fall Honors Thesis Symposium, Butler Hall
Dec. 13: Andrews Academy Feast of Lights, Pioneer Memorial Church

HOWARD PERFORMING ARTS CENTER EVENTS

For more information on the following events and to purchase tickets, call 888-467-6442 or 269-471-3560, or visit howard.andrews.edu.

Nov. 7, 7 p.m.: Andrews Academy Concerto Night
Nov. 17, 7 p.m.: Howard Center Presents...Canadian Brass
Nov. 23, 8 p.m.: Andrews University Symphony Orchestra Thanksgiving Concert
Nov. 24, 4 p.m.: Sunday Music Series: Chi Yong Yun
Nov. 26, 7 p.m.: Andrews Academy Holiday Pops Concert
Dec. 6, 7 p.m.: Welcome Christmas Choral Concert
Dec. 7, 8 p.m.: Andrews University Wind Symphony Christmas Concert

INDIANA

Nov. 1-3: Pathfinder/Adventurer Leadership Training, Timber Ridge Camp
Nov. 12: Central Zone Prayer Meeting, 7 p.m., Indianapolis Southside Church
Nov. 15-17: Pathfinder Council Retreat, Timber Ridge Camp

LAKE REGION

Nov. 1: 2019 LRC TLT Boat Camps, Camp Wagner
Nov. 2: PARL Rally, Indianapolis
Nov. 8: Illiana Youth Federation Bible Trivia, Westside Church
Nov. 9: Illiana Youth Federation AYS, Tabernacle of Hope Church

ILLINOIS

Nov. 1-3: Young Adult Summit

LAKE UNION

Nov. 3: Adventist Community Health Initiative, Hammond/Northwest Indiana, Dynasty Banquet Hall
Nov. 10: Adventist Community Health Initiative, West Central Adventist Church gym, Oak Park, Ill.

MICHIGAN

Nov. 1-3: Public Hi C Retreat, Camp Au Sable
Nov. 10: Public Campus Ministries, Camp Au Sable
Nov. 8-10: Marriage Retreat, Crystal Mountain

WISCONSIN

Nov. 10: Hispanic SAL, North Milwaukee Hispanic Church
Nov. 17: Hispanic Women’s Evangelistic Banquet
Dec. 7: Jovenes Adventista Wisconsin Hispana (JAWN) Youth Rally, Camp Wakonda
Dec. 15: Hispanic SAL, North Milwaukee Hispanic Church

LAKE UNION

Nov. 23: Your Best Pathway to Health Expo Rally, 3 p.m., Embassy Suites, Indy West Side
Dec. 6-8: “Journey to Bethlehem,” Cicero Church
Dec. 14: “Night of Hope” music program, Cicero Church

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a member of the First Flint Church in Flint, Mich. Survivors include her husband, Ronald F. Brown; and sister, Evelyn Hoose. Private inurnment.

BURNS, Todd; age 69; born Dec. 6, 1949, in Saginaw, Mich.; died Aug. 7, 2019, in Zeeland, Mich. He was a member of the Holland Church in Holland, Mich. Survivors include brothers, Robert (Audrey) Burns and Dr. Thomas (Caroll) Burns; sisters, Beryl (Burns) Silvernale and Mimi (Burns) Sackett. Funeral services were conducted by Pastor Sean Reed; interment was at Riverside Cemetery in St. Charles, Mich.

COLE, Marjorie E. Danielsen; born April 16, 1926, in Prentice, Wis.; died Jan. 1, 2019, in Berrien Springs, Mich. She was a member of the Pioneer Memorial Church in Berrien Springs. Survivors include her husband, Wendell Cole; sons, Daniel Cole and Donald Cole; daughter, Wendy Fivash; brother, Kenneth Danielsen; five grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. Memorial services were conducted by John Glass.

DENNIS, Orville Sr.; age 91, born Dec. 5, 1927, in Morgan County, Ken.; died April 8, 2019, in Angola, Ind. He was a member of the Angola Church in Angola. Survivors include his wife, Annabel Lea (Walker) Dennis; son, Orville Dennis, Jr.; daughter, Debra Barrone; five grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren. Funeral services were conducted by Don Greulich; interment was at Fairfield Cemetery in Corunna, Ind.

DRAKE, Ann H. (Harper); age 91; born June 21, 1928, in Petoskey, Mich.; died Sept. 1, 2019, in Coopersville, Mich. She was a member of the Wright Church in Coopersville. Survivors include son, Ken Gowell; daughter, Cindy (Reus) Burkett; sister, Catherine (Bruce) Kleinhenz; five grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren. Memorial services were conducted by Bernie Andersen; inurnment was in Maple Hill Cemetery in Wright.

JONES, Janette L. (Berry); age 98, born July 13, 1921, in Evansville, Wis.; died Sept. 1, 2019, in Highland, Mich. She was a member of the Waterford Riverside Church in Waterford, Mich. Survivors include her daughters, Judy (Gary) Hiter and Jana Thompson; four grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren. Memorial services were conducted by Todd Ervin; interment was at Milton Lawns Cemetery in Janesville, Wis.

MCINTYRE, Coralee S. “Coke” (Philp); age 84, born June 7, 1934, in Marion, Ill.; died March 24, 2019, in Monmouth, Ill. She was a member of the Parkview Church in Galesburg, Ill. Survivors include her husband, John McIntyre; son, David McIntyre; daughter, Connie McIntyre; and 12 grand-children. Memorial services were conducted by Pastor Sean Reed; interment was at Riverside Cemetery in Crematory and Cemetery.

MULLER, Marian (Eaton); age 85, born June 5, 1934, in McBain, Mich.; died Aug. 13, 2019, in Holland, Mich. She was a member of the Holland Church in Holland. Survivors include sons, Kevin (Sharon) Reedling; James (Karen) Reedling; Joel Reedling, and Donald Jr. (Kim) Muler; daughter, Melody Fedney; brothers, Arnold (Barbara) Eaton, Alvin (Maie) Eaton, and Ray (Marcia) Eaton; 15 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren; and 1 great-great-grandchild. Funeral services were conducted by Pastor Sean Reed; interment was at Lakeshore Memorial Services in Holland.

SMITH, Kenneth Romane, Jr.; age 69, born June 27, 1949, in Blossburg, Penn.; died June 4, 2019, in Flint, Mich. He was a member of the First Flint Church in Flint. Survivors include his wife, Susan Lalonde; sons, Kenneth III, Aaron, and Alex; grandchildren; and 1 great-great-grandchild. Memorial services were conducted by Pastor Sean Reed; interment was at Riverside Cemetery in Crematory and Cemetery.

MISCELLANEOUS


ANDREWS UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE DEGREES — Feed the world with Agribusiness. Beautify the world with Environmental Landscape Design. Care for the creatures that share our world with Animal Science. Change the world with International Agriculture Development. See our new Agriculture Education Center at andrews.edu/agriculture; email: agriculture@andrews.edu; 269-471-6006.

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LAKE UNION HERALD

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2019

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EMPLOYMENT

FEMALE NEEDED to live with and provide care for a 92-year-old woman in her apartment in London, Ken. If interested, please contact Jan Grenz at 606-682-5890.

FLETCHER ACADEMY, Inc. — Seeks experienced Director of Information Technology, responsible for all IT functions enterprise-wide. At least a Bachelor’s in relevant field, plus technical and leadership experience required. Must be comfortable leading a team from a highly visible position, a member of the SDA Church in good standing, and enjoy working with young people in a boarding academy setting. Position is salaried exempt with full benefits package. Send cover letter and resume to Gary Carlson, CEO, at gcarlson@glitchacademy.com.

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Counting Your Blessings

By Jon Corder

THIS ARTICLE IS THE BEGINNING OF SOMETHING NEW—a spot in the Herald dedicated to stories, perspectives and insights on stewardship. My hope is that you will find it interesting, helpful, and even thought-provoking occasionally. The articles will be short, written by different authors which will bring a wealth of ideas to the table. In time, if these articles could help all of us be more comfortable with and excited over this assignment God has given—to be stewards, I would be delighted.

At the beginning of this journey, I would encourage you to start a list. You could journal it in a special notebook, you could put it on your mobile device, or you could put up sticky notes—in Bible times they used rocks. Do it in writing. This would be a list of blessings God has given. The blessing could be an answered prayer, thankfulness for a close friend, or garden produce shared by someone that loves to garden. The idea would be to review it now and then to remember how God has blessed. You could even use it to encourage others at a time when they need encouragement. Ellen White suggested this in a May 7, 1908, Review and Herald article. She wrote, “The blessings received should be promptly acknowledged. The record of them should be placed in our diary, that when we take the book in hand, we may remember the goodness of the Lord, and praise His holy name.”

James 4:8 NLT (first part) says, Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Remembering and reviewing your record of God’s blessings is one way of coming close to God, and His promise is that He will come close to you. I think coming close to God is part of being a good steward, don’t you?

Jon Corder is Stewardship director of the Lake Union Conference.
On the Battlefield

By Jeff Baxter

But then things started getting too crazy with that lifestyle, and I decided to finally go home. Soon after, I enlisted in the Marine Corps, where I got even further from Christ. The effects of a non-filling lifestyle began to take a real toll on my mood, outlook on life and, ultimately, my soul. Emptiness grew, and I became suicidal. I remember having a gun to my head, gently pulling on the trigger to see how close I could get to the “break.”

Coming from a family who loves the Lord, I still had a knowledge of spiritual things. I knew there was a God. When friends would speak crazy about our Savior, I would hypocritically correct them, saying, “I know the truth, but don’t look at me as an example.” I accepted my fate of an eternal death in the lake of fire. I would say to myself, “It’s too hard to be saved; I might as well give up, enjoy the counterfeit of this life, and burn in hell with the rest of the world.”

However, when my grandfather, Pastor P.C. Willis Sr., died, for once, I saw that it is possible to live a great life for Christ. It is possible to be cool and enjoy life how God intends it! I finally cried out to God, but not like I did before. This time was different. I wanted to be free from sin, free from depression, and sorrow. I knew the only way to peace was through Christ Jesus.

My testimony is ongoing. I still struggle and try my best to deny self when worldly temptations and discourage sneak back around. But, no longer am I that insecure runner trying to impress people; I am more fixed on running the race set before me, to please my ever-loving Creator.

Because he hath set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him. I will set him on high because he hath known My name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him (Psalm 91:14–15 KJV).

Jeff Baxter, 22, was baptized in May and has launched Battlefront Ministries to help other youth gear up for the battle against the devil’s dominions.

Blink of an Eye

By Carmen Mora

In June 2006, then seven-year-old Karina Martinez was traveling back with her family from a trip to Mexico. It was late and “I was feeling tired,” Karina recalls, “so I took off my seatbelt and laid down to sleep.” The next thing Karina remembers was her mom yelling, “Get Karina out!” When Karina opened her eyes, her dad was struggling to remove her seatbelt. The car had overturned.

Months after the accident, Zeferino, Karina’s father, a tireless missionary, was ready to get back on track conducting Bible studies. He asked Karina to join him. For years, Karina was exposed to the teachings of the Bible. After each Bible study, Zeferino would do an appeal. Karina questioned why the appeal was never directed at her, “My dad said to people, ‘Do you want to be saved?’ Do you want to serve God?’” Karina wondered, “Why am I not being baptized?” Karina considered her parents, her role models. They live out the Gospel both in word and in action, always sharing the Gospel and ministering to those in need. Her parents’ example and a realization that God spared her life for a reason drove her decision to be baptized, which she did at age 10.

By 16, Karina had developed many fears that sometimes get in the way of living life to the fullest. She was especially afraid of communicating with other people. One day her dad dropped her off at school. As she got out of the car, her backpack got trapped in the passenger door as she closed it. Her dad did not notice and drove off. Her backpack tore off and she collapsed on the ground. Miraculously, the only thing wounded was her pride. Just then she had an epiphany: the memory of the accident years ago came rushing back. If she had fastened her seatbelt to lay down in the backseat, then why was her father struggling to unhook her when the car overturned? Surely, an angel of the Lord had protected her.

From then on, she decided to live life with no fear. She has been more active in the Racine Hispanic Church, serving as Sabbath School secretary and using her artistic talents to create beautiful pieces used during kids’ programs and evangelical meetings. Now 20, Karina makes decisions to make a difference through a career in nursing, and her love for Christ is stronger than ever. “I pray every morning and every night. I have conversations with God, and talk to Him about my day — I thank Him for the bad days, too. This time with God helps me to remember that God has a plan for me.”

Karina Mora is a member of the Racine Hispanic Church.

AS A SKINNY CROSS-COUNTRY RUNNER IN HIGH SCHOOL, I mainly hung out with other skinny, cross-country runners. Runners stick together, train together and fight together, on and off the course. I loved that!

But I wanted more. Although raised as an Adventist and knowing better, I wanted to be in “the cool kid club” — the partiers, the “Free Spirit-ers,” the fashion gurus wearing designer trends, and expensive jewelry. When I went away to college, a change began. I wanted to return to Detroit just yet. Freedom tasted too good!

Cross-country runners. Runners stick together, train together and fight together, on and off the course. I loved that!

Carmen Mora is a member of the Racine Hispanic Church.

LaDonna Baxter

Jeff Baxter, 22, was baptized in May and has launched Battlefront Ministries to help other youth gear up for the battle against the devil’s dominions.

Jeff Baxter

By Jeff Baxter
In the search for balance and restoration, we turn to the healing ministry of Christ as our example. As we walk the path to wholeness, CREATION Life principles serve as our guide. And that path to wholeness is marked for us all by the biblical principles of Choice, Rest, Environment, Activity, Trust in God, Interpersonal Relationships, Outlook and Nutrition. Life-affirming transformation happens when we dwell in the presence of God.

For more information, visit CREATIONLife.com